

Grade VII

Lesson 6. Mystery of the Talking Fan

POETRY

SOUL OF THE POEM

The poem beautifully captures the movement of the much familiar and mundane objects around us, which in today's time are a very essential part of our existence. The poem discusses the movement of a ceiling fan. The poet discusses the sound made by the ceiling fan comparing it to human chatter, though unknown and incomprehensible.

STANZAWISE EXPLANATION OF THE POEM

Stanza 1

Once there was a talking fan-
Electrical his chatter.
I couldn't quite hear what he said
And I hope it doesn't matter
Because one day somebody oiled
His little whirling motor
And all the mystery was spoiled-
He ran as still as water.

Reference The above lines have been taken from Maude Rubin's poem, 'Mystery of the Talking Fan.'

Context The poem, in these lines, closely observes the movement of the ceiling fan, calling its noise chatter.

Explanation The poem opens with the personification of the fan, being given human attributes such as the ability to talk and chatter. The poet calls the fan's noise an 'electrical chatter.' The poet is unable to comprehend what exactly it means and before the poet could succeed in decoding the mystery, somebody oiled its motor. Ever since, it functioned in such a smooth manner that no noise could be heard. The 'talking fan' fell silent.

1. Fans don't talk, but it is possible to imagine that they do. What is it, then, that sounds like the fan's chatter?

The noise created by the fan's motor due to lack of oiling was being compared to the fan's chatter.

2. Complete the following sentence.

(i) The chatter is electrical because.....

The fan functions on an electrical motor and the noise was being produced by its motor

(ii) It is mysterious because.....

The poet was unable to comprehend what the fan was saying

3. What do you think the talking fan was demanding?

The talking fan seems to be demanding some attention. It was demanding oiling. The moment it was oiled, it fell silent.

4. How does an electric fan managed to throw so much air when it is switched on?

An electric fan comprises of three blades and a whirling motor. The moment it is switched on, the motor starts and begins to rotate, forcing the blades to move in circular movement. This generates a lot of pressure, which forces the air downwards in all directions.

5. Is there a 'talking fan' in your house? Create a dialogue between the fan and a mechanic.

Yes : There is a talking fan in my house, which perhaps requires some oiling.

A : hi I just realised that you are a talking fan.

Talking fan : Oh great! Finally! I had been waiting for someone to pay attention to my chatter.

A : Why so?
I never knew you were trying to seek attention.

Talking fan : Of course, I was. What else am I expected to do when nobody Worries about my maintenance. My parts in a wretched state. They need some oiling to function smoothly. Alas, nobody is bothered.

A : Is that what's troubling you? I'll make sure that I ask mom to call a mechanic for you . The mechanic would take care of your problem and offer solution.

Talking fan : Thank you so much. That would indeed be kind.

CHAPTER PRACTICE

Very Short Answer type questions

1. What does the phrase, "he ran as still as water" mean?

The phrase, "he ran as still as water" meant that it began to function smoothly.

2. What was troubling the talking fan?

The talking fan was being troubled by lack of oiling on its various parts, disabling him from functioning smoothly.

Short Answer type questions

1. Why was all the 'mystery' spoilt?

The poet could hear the chatter of the fan, though she could not understand it. But soon, the scope to decode and comprehend it was lost as the fan's motor was oiled by someone. Thereafter, the talking fan became silent.

2. Who do you think or understand what the talking fan wished to convey?

The talking fan seemed to be very noisily and continuously chattering. Perhaps, besides the poet the others could hear it too. Though the poet was curious, she never made an attempt to understand what the talking fan said. Or perhaps before she could, the message was decoded by the person who attended to the needs of the fan by oiling its motor.

Extract Based questions

Directions (Q. Nos. 1-6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.

I couldn't quite hear what he said

And I hope it doesn't matter

Because one day somebody oiled

His little whirling motor

And all the mystery was spoiled.

1. Why does the poet say, "I hope it doesn't matter"?

The poet was hoping that the fan's chatter didn't make much difference.

2. Who oiled the motor?

The poem doesn't indicate who oiled the motor, but it surely wasn't the speaker.

3. What was the connection between the motor and the fan's chatter?

The lack of oil in the motor was responsible for the noise produced by the fan.

4. Who is the 'he' in the first line of the extract?

- (a) The poet (b) The mechanic (c) The talking fan (d) The mother

The talking fan

5. Why did the talking fan's chatter come to an end?

(a) Somebody repaired the motor.

(b) The poet asked him to shut up.

(c) The fan fell on the ground.

(d) The poet left the house.

(a) Somebody repaired the motor.

6. Choose the synonym of the word 'whirling'

- (a) Rotating (b) Chatting (c) Obscurity (d) Story

(a) Rotating



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