

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 7: THE OPEN WINDOW



THE OPEN WINDOW

~Summary~

-by Saki

"**The Open Window**" is a short story written by **Saki** (a.k.a. H. H. Munro). It deals with a curious encounter between Mr Nuttel and Vera.

Framton Nuttel, a man with a **nervous** disorder, travels to the **country** to improve his **health**; he also carries the **letters** of introduction from his sister. As Mr Nuttel visits and awaits **Mrs Sappleton**, Vera, her fifteen-year-old **niece**, receives and entertains him. **Vera** informs Mr Nuttel that Mrs Sappleton keeps the **French window** open because she believes that her husband and brothers, who **died** in a bog three years ago, would **return** one day. When Mrs Sappleton arrives, she promptly excuses herself for the open window and informs him that she expects the men to return from shooting anytime soon. Mr Nuttel, believing that Mrs Sappleton is mentally **unstable**, becomes **uncomfortable** and tries to change the topic by talking about his illness. Later, much to his **surprise**, he sees the "dead" men and their dog **approaching** the window. Believing that they are **ghosts**, he flees.

As the men enter, the husband enquires Mrs Sappleton about the strange man who had then bolted. Mrs Sappleton, on the other hand, is **confused** as to why Mr Nuttel had fled. **Vera** then tells her family that the sight of their little **spaniel** must have scared their guest away. She recounted an incident when Mr Nuttel was supposedly chased by a pack of **stray dogs** in India. He then had to spend the **night** in a freshly dug grave in a **cemetery** with 'those creatures snarling and foaming above him'.

Finally, the author concludes by stating that '**romance at short notice was Vera's speciality**', revealing how both the incidents narrated by Vera were invented and baseless. The story's ending discloses the **irony** of Mr Nuttel's situation: he had come to **cure** his nerves but ended up making them **worse**.

~Conclusion~

The Open Window illustrates that we should not believe other people's words blindly, who often try to manipulate or convince us to believe them. Besides, the lesson also teaches students that we should not deceive or manipulate others minds by creating fake stories or rumours unnecessarily. Here we brought you the CBSE Class 8 English It So Happened Prose Summary of The Open Window that must have helped 8th Standard students to have a thorough understanding of the chapter.

NCERT SOLUTIONS

Questions (Page No. 57)

(Comprehension Check - I)

Question 1. Why had Framton Nuttel come to the “rural retreat”?

Answer: Mr. Framton Nuttel was suffering from a nerve disorder and was worried about his health condition. His doctor recommended him to take a break from his city life. Hence, he had come to the “rural retreat” as a measure to undergo treatment for his nerve problem in the peaceful environment of the countryside.

Question 2. Why had his sister given him letters of introduction to people living there?

Answer: Nuttel did not know people in the countryside. Hence, his sister gave him letters of introduction to people living there so that he would not feel lonely and isolated while he visited the countryside for his nerve ailment treatment. She was aware that he would speak less and his nerve disorder would get worse from moping. One among of those letters of introduction was of Mrs. Sappleton.

Question 3. What had happened in the Sappleton family as narrated by the niece?

Answer: The niece told Mr. Nuttel that around three years ago, Mrs. Sappleton’s husband and her two young brothers went off for their day’s shooting. They never returned. While they were crossing the moor to their favourite shooting ground, all three of them were engulfed in a treacherous piece of bog. It was a dreadful wet summer and even the places that were once safe in other years suddenly gave way without any warning. However, their bodies were never recovered.

Questions (Page No. 60)

(Comprehension Check - II)

Question 1. What did Mrs. Sappleton say about the open window?

Answer: When Mrs. Sappleton met Mr. Nuttel, she said that husband and her two young brothers would enter the house through the open window. Hence, she kept it open till it was dark and hoped that Mr. Nuttel had no problem in keeping the window open.

Question 2. The horror on the girl’s face made Framton swing around in his seat. What did he see?

Answer: When Framton turned around his seat after seeing the horror on the girl's face, he noticed a silhouette of three men with guns and a dog in the midst of evening light. Then there was a hoarse young voice that called out to the dog. Seeing this, Nuttel agreed to the description given by Vera and realized it was indeed right.

Questions (Page No. 61) (Comprehension Check - III)

Question 1. Why did Framton rush out wildly?

Answer: Vera told Mr. Nuttel that her aunt, Mrs. Sappleton's husband and her two young brothers were missing for three years. When Framton saw a silhouette of three men with guns and a dog in the midst of evening light, he thought these were their ghosts and he rushed out wildly in fear.

Question 2. What was the girl's explanation for his lightning exit?

Answer: The girl explained that Framton made a lightning exit because of the spaniel dog. She mentioned that Nuttel told her that he had a horror of dogs. He was once hunted into a cemetery somewhere on the banks of the Ganges by a pack of dogs, and had to spend the night in a newly dug grave with the creatures snarling and grinning and foaming just above him. Hence, that time when he heard the spaniel bark outside, he left the place in lightning speed.

Questions (Page No. 61) (Exercise)

Discuss in small groups.

Question 1. Is this a mystery story? Give a reason for your answer.

Answer: While explaining the mystery of the big open French window, Mrs. Sappleton's niece created an imaginative story with a mysterious backdrop. Later, when the three men with guns arrive with a dog, it made Framton believe as though he had seen ghosts and he rushed out of the house wildly in fear. Hence, we can say that the story "The Open Window" contains various elements of a mystery.

Question 2. You are familiar with the 'irony' of the situation in a story. (Remember the cop and the Anthem in Class VII Supplementary Reader!) Which situations in 'The Open Window' are good examples of the use of irony?

Answer: Irony refers to a situation in which something which was supposed to have a particular

result, on the contrary, it has an opposite or different result. In the story, 'The Open Window', Mr. Framton Nuttel goes to visit the countryside with the hope to find a cure for his nerve ailment. But when Mrs. Sappleton's niece plays a prank on him, he could not deal with fear and makes a lightning exit from that place. He mistakes Mrs. Sappleton's husband and her two young brothers to be ghosts and leaves the house without bidding a goodbye to her.

Question 3. Which phrases/sentences in the text do you find difficult to understand? Select a few and guess the meaning of each. Rewrite a simple paraphrase of each.

Answer: **Masculine habitation** – This implies that some male persons used to live in the room.

Bertie, why do you bound – The word bound means to jump or leap. But in the story, it refers to Ronnie, Mrs. Sappleton's youngest brother who would often say this to scare her.

Came into the nice division – This refers to nice people.

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