

St. Andrews Scots Sr. Sec. School

9th Avenue, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi – 110092

Session: 2025-2026 – Notes

Class –X

Subject – English.

Topic – Chapter –The Letter

Q. Answer the following questions:

1. "Ali displays qualities of love and patience". Give evidence from the story to support the statement.

Ans. Coachman Ali, an erstwhile hunter turns over a new leaf when his daughter goes away. He is left to lead a life of loneliness. Ali is characterised as a person possessing a great deal of patience towards all the people who ridicule him. Also, the love for his daughter prods him to make daily trips to the post office which he indulges in, with a lot of patience, guided by his faith in the ways of God.

2. Why did Ali give up hunting?

Ans. Ali was a renowned hunter in his heydays. But as he was reaching the dusk of his life, his daughter leaves for her marital home. This affected Ali very severely. Realisation dawned on him. He understood the importance of love, separation and human relationship. He pined for his daughter, and regretted having orphaned the fledglings and calves of the several animals and birds that fell to his bullets. Subsequently, Ali the hunter laid down his rifle.

3. What impression do you form of the postmaster after reading the story "The Letter"?

Ans. The postmaster was quite cruel initially, as he maltreated Coachman Ali. He did not consider him to be a sane person. In fact, once he called him a great pest and nuisance. Later, however, when his daughter fell sick and he was waiting for her letter, he got Miriam's letter. At that time, he felt guilty and repented for treating Ali badly.

4. "Tortured by doubt and remorse, he sat down in the glow of the charcoal sigri to wait." Who is tortured by doubt and remorse? Why? What is he waiting for?

Ans. The post master was one among the numerous people who were extremely unkind towards coachman Ali. However, it was when he finds himself in a similar situation that he realises the pain and anxiety of a father. The postmaster was waiting for information from his daughter. He could not bear the anxiety even for a day or two. Ali had been suffering for more than five years. He was filled with remorse because of his behaviour towards Ali. The doubt pertained to the fantasy of having interacted with Ali, who was, on enquiry reported to have died three months ago. The post master sat by the hot sigri, waiting for his daughter's letter, repenting for his act, and tortured by the meaning of the apparition, he had seen in the early hours of the morning.

5. In the story 'The Letter'. Ali is a lonely man. How does the writer bring out Ali's loneliness?

Ans. Ali lived with his daughter in the village. Now, she was married and had gone away to Punjab with her husband. Ali was now all alone. Every day he went to the post office and sat there, on a bench outside the post office, waiting for his daughter's letter. The writer while describing Ali's journey to the post office says he walks his lonely way, where except for the occasional bark of a dog, the distant steps of a workman going early to work, or the screech of a bird disturbed before its time, the whole town was wrapped in deathly silence.



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6. Why was the heart of the postmaster brimming with sympathy for Ali?

Ans. One day trouble came upon the postmaster. His daughter fell sick and was in another town. He was anxiously waiting for some news of her well-being. After spending just a single night in suspense, anxiously waiting for news of his daughter, his heart empathised with the old man who had spent innumerable nights in anticipation. His newly-awakened father's heart understood Ali's anxiety.

7. You are the clerk, Lakshmi Das, who received the five gold coins from Ali. Write a page in your diary describing your feelings from the time you received the coins to the time you laid the letter on Ali's grave.

Ans. 5 August 2025

Tuesday

9:30 p.m.

Dear Diary

I was startled when the old man Ali stopped me at the post office and laid five gold guineas from an old tin box onto my hands. Seeing me surprised, he told me that these gold coins would be useful to me as these could never be of any use to him. In return, he asked me for a favour. He requested me to forward Miriam's letter to his grave.

I was even more shocked. As he left, there were tears in his eyes. I was touched by his emotions. Nevertheless, I was happy to have got the five golden guineas which I quickly put in my pocket. Ali was never seen again. No one bothered to inquire about him. However, three months later a letter addressed to 'Coachman Ali' finally did arrive. I was assigned the task of finding Ali. On inquiring, I found to my dismay that old Ali had died. I knew I had to fulfil his last wish, which he had requested of me with a lot of sorrow, eyes brimming with tears. I was shocked to see the rough and tough hunter crumble in this manner. I did not expect that to be the last interaction with the coachman.

Along with the postmaster, I went to Ali's grave and placed the letter on it. I didn't know why, but after doing so, I felt a sense of fulfilment within myself. Ali had given me the golden guineas in the presence of God, and somewhere deep within my heart I was extremely satisfied to fulfil the old man's wish.

Lakshmi Das



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