

St. Andrews Scots Sr. Sec. School

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

Session: 2026-27- Notes

Class: X

Subject: English

Topic: Literature.

CH- The Letter

Answer the following questions :

Q1. Ali in the story 'The Letter' is a lonely man. How does the writer bring out Ali's loneliness?

Ans. Ali was completely alone and spent everyday waiting for a letter from his only kid, Miriam. The author claims that Ali walks his own lonely way to the post office, save for the sporadic bark of a dog. The town was dead still, broken only by the distant footfall of a worker arriving early for work or the shriek of a bird startled before its time.

Q2. "Ali displays qualities of love and patience". Give evidence from the story to support the statement.

Ans. Ali visited the post office regularly for five years, arriving early and waiting patiently on the same bench until closing time. He endured the jokes and insults of the postmen without complaint and kept coming back in faith. Even in old age, he trusted that a letter would come and, showing deep love and foresight, he arranged for five golden guineas to be given to the clerk to ensure a letter would be delivered to his grave if necessary. These actions show his steady love and remarkable patience.

Q3. What impression do you form of the postmaster after reading the story 'The Letter'?

Ans. Initially, the postmaster appears haughty, impatient and insensitive; he treats Ali rudely and fails to understand his anxiety. Later, when he waits anxiously for news of his own daughter, he undergoes a change. He feels deep remorse for his earlier behaviour, becomes repentant and shows compassion. This transformation reveals that beneath his official manner he has a human heart capable of sympathy.

Q4. Why was the postmaster keen to deliver the letter to Ali himself? What were the changes in him after he delivered the letter?

Ans. The postmaster wanted to deliver the letter himself. The sight of happiness and satisfaction on Ali's face would give the postmaster satisfaction and make him guilt – free.

The postmaster was a changed person after he delivered the letter to Ali's grave. He no longer treated the envelopes and letters as pieces of paper. He now realized that each envelope contained a letter which was a 'warm, beating heart'. A 'warm, beating heart' implies that he now realized that a letter was full of feelings and emotions sent by a person to another. Now he knew the importance of these feelings for both the persons. He became humane towards them.

Q5. Tortured by doubt and remorse, the postmaster sits in the glow of a charcoal sign that night, waiting for news of his daughter. As he sits, he writes in his diary. As the postmaster, write a diary entry in about 150 words outlining your feelings about the day's events.

Answer:

3rd December 2026

Thursday

10 p.m.



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Dear Diary

I cannot banish the image of Ali from my mind. Today I behaved badly towards him, brusque(rude) and impatient, and called him a 'pest' without trying to understand his pain. Later, while waiting for news of my own daughter, I saw an envelope that I thought would bring tidings of her, but it was addressed to Ali. The shock of that moment and the thought of the years he has spent hoping for a letter have filled me with deep remorse.

I realise now how cruel and thoughtless my manner has been. The anxiety I felt tonight has taught me compassion; I know at last what it is to wait for a child's letter. If I can, I must undo the harm I have done and treat others with the kindness I would wish for myself in such a time of need.

The Postmaster



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