

Scholar Isaac Asimov was one of the 20th century's most prolific writers, writing in many genres. He was known for sci-fi works like *Foundation* and *I, Robot*.

Born on January 2, 1920, in Petrovichi, Russia, Isaac Asimov immigrated with his family to the United States and became a biochemistry professor while pursuing writing. He published his first novel, *Pebble in the Sky*, in 1950. An immensely prolific author who penned nearly 500 books, he published influential sci-fi works like *I, Robot* and the *Foundation* trilogy, as well as books in a variety of other genres. Asimov died in New York City on April 6, 1992. The on *The Fun They Had* is one of the most popular fictional works written by him.

### **Introduction of the lesson- The Fun They Had**

#### ***INTRODUCTION***

This story is set in future when books and schools as we have now perhaps will not exist. Two students of that period about 150 years advance from today find a printed book. They are surprised very much. They talk about the schools and books of the old period. They compare those schools with those of their own which are situated in their homes and have mechanical teachers to teach them. They find their own schools dull and boring. They think that it was great fun to study in the schools of old times when all the kids in the area went there to learn the same thing by a man teacher.

( इस कहानी की रचना भविष्य काल में की गई है जब शायद आज की तरह के स्कूल और पुस्तकें उपलब्ध नहीं होंगे। आज से लगभग 150 वर्ष बाद के काल में दो विद्यार्थी एक छपी हुई पुस्तक को देखते हैं। वे बहुत हैरान हो जाते हैं। वे पुराने जमाने के स्कूल और पुस्तकों के बारे में बात करते हैं वे उस जमाने के स्कूलों की अपने जमाने के स्कूलों के साथ तुलना करते हैं, जोकि उनके घरों में स्थित है और उन्हें पढ़ाने वाले शिक्षक तकनीकी शिक्षक है। उन्हें अपने स्कूल भददे और नीरस लगते हैं। वे सोचते हैं कि पुराने जमाने के स्कूलों में अध्ययन करना बहुत ही रोचक होता था, जब क्षेत्र के सभी बच्चे एक मनुष्य अध्यापक से एक जैसा

सबक सीखने के लिए जाते थे।)

### **Introduction(2):**

“The Fun They Had” is a short story that falls in the category of science fiction and has the future year 2157 as its background setting. It takes us into a world where computers will play a major role in educating children. Schools that use paper books and that encourage mutual interaction between teachers and students will cease to exist.



### **Plot/ Theme / Central Idea of the Lesson/ Literary Analysis of The Fun They Had/ Main Idea**

The story “The Fun They Had” by Isaac Asimov is about the year 2157 when every child has his own machine teacher and schools like today do not exist anymore. Asimov wrote this story in 1951 for a syndicated newspaper page. Later “The Fun They Had” was published in “Fantasy and Science Fiction” magazine.



In the year 2157, the thirteen-year-old Tommy finds an old book. He and Margie, who is eleven, find it strange that the words on paper do not move after having

been read. Nowadays they only read stories on the computer screen. The book is about school centuries ago. Margie is very surprised that in the past pupils had a person as a teacher and that all children of the same age learnt the same thing and went to a schoolhouse with other children. Margie wants to read more of the book but first, she has to learn with her machine teacher whose level is too advanced for her and she thinks the school in those days was much better than today. Ultimately the theme is to understand the importance of the present time lively school atmosphere in which we keep on finding faults over nothing.

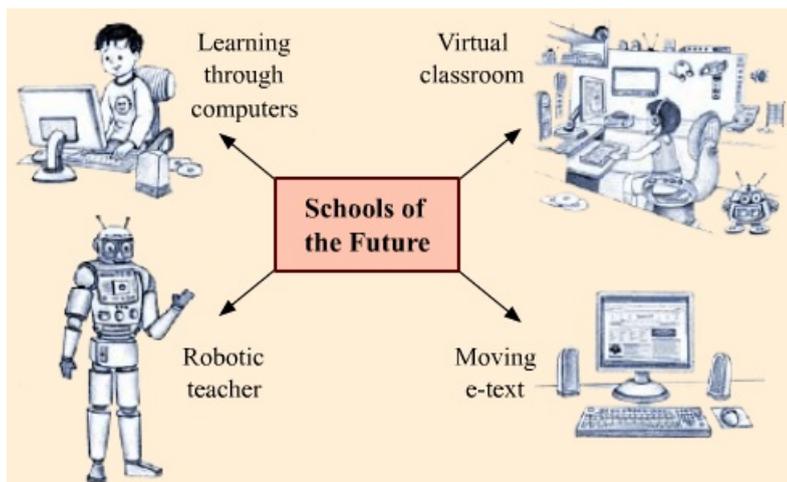
### Go to the NCERT Solution "The Fun They Had"

#### Theme

The main theme in the short story 'The Fun They Had' is that of education. More specifically, the narrative deals with the future of education which will become increasingly Computerized and estranged from social interactions.

#### Message

The author's message is one of warning against the dangers of computerized homeschooling which deprives children of the benefits of the personal interactions between students and teachers, which help them to develop many social skills.



#### JUSTIFICATION OF THE TITLE

The title quite suits the story, "The Fun They Had". Tommy and Margie find an old book and learn how the schools were different in the past from their time and how much fun the children studying in those school had. It also gives us a glimpse of future education.

#### Important Word-Meanings of difficult words from the lesson- The Fun They Had

[ PAGE 1 ]: **Exist** = to be in being = अस्तित्व में होना ; **virtual** = real वास्तविक ; **imagine** = suppose/think = कल्पना करना ; **crinkly** = with many folds = सलबटों वाला ; **awfully** = terribly = भयानक ढंग से ; **waste** = useless = व्यर्थ ।

[PAGE 2] : **Guess** = assume = अनुमान ; **million** = ten lakh = दस लाख ; **telebooks** = books on television screen = टेलीविज़न के पर्दे पर आने वाली पुस्तकें ; **attic** = a space just

below the roof used as a store = अटारी ; **scornful** = contemptuous = घृणा का भाव होना ;  
**geography** = study about earth and its objects = भूगोल ; **worse** = not better = खराब ;  
**slot** = a given space = दरार ; **punch code** = a number with some hole = छिद्र संख्या ;  
**fault** – problem = दोष ; **geared** = adjusted the speed = स्पीड सही करना ; **pattern** =  
design/system = ढांचा ।

[PAGE 3] : **Disappointed** = unhappy = निराश ; **sector** = part = भाग ; **blanked out** = got  
plain without any writing = साफ हो गया ; **stupid** = fool = मूर्ख ; **loftily** = in a superior  
way = विशिष्ट अंदाज में ; **regular** = (here) normal = सामान्य ; **betcha** = to make a bet = शर्त  
लगाना ; **dispute** = disagree with = असहमति ; **screamed** = cried loudly = जोर से चिल्लाया ;  
**kids** = small children = छोटे बच्चे ; **adjusted** = to make set = समायोजित करना ।

[PAGE 4] : **Funny** = (here) interesting = रोचक ; **probably** = possibly = संभवतया ;  
**nonchalantly** = not showing much interest = अनिच्छा पूर्वक ; **tucked** = to fold/put =  
ढबाना , **beneath** = under = के नीचे ; **except** = excluding = के सिवाय ; **lit up** = lighted =  
प्रकाशित होना ; **arithmetic** = a subject which provides the study of numbers = अंकगणित ;  
**insert** = put = डालना ; **flashing** = shining = चमकना ।

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### **Moral/ Message of the lesson – The Fun They Had**

The author's message is one of warnings against the dangers of computerized  
homeschooling which keeps away the children from the benefits of the personal  
interactions between students and teachers, which help them develop social skills  
as well as many more things. So without criticising the present schooling we should  
understand the value of the present lively education system and enjoy it to the  
fullest.



**Go to the NCERT Solution "The Road Not Taken"**

**CHARACTERS**

## **Margie**

Margie is an eleven-year-old girl who represents future students in the twenty-second century. She is a typical young girl who dislikes school which is highly personalised and includes a television and a mechanical teacher. She studies in the comfort of her home. Her homework is checked by her mechanised teacher, a computer, and she also gets lessons from it. Margie does not like her school because she is confined to a room and has to study alone at a fixed time every day.

Margie is a curious girl. When she finds a real book in Tommy's hands, she is eager to know about its contents. In fact, she wants to read the book herself. However, she is surprised that the book describes a school of the yesteryears which had real men as teachers and classes were conducted in a special building. She is fascinated to learn that in those times the students of the same level studied together. She concludes that the old system was much better as the students had so much fun when they studied together and could help each other. It is through Margie that the author has projected a contrast between the schools of today and the schools of the future.

## **Tommy**

Tommy, a young boy of thirteen years, plays an important role in the story as he is the one who finds a book about the schools from yesteryears. The entire action of the story begins after that. He represents the students of the future era when education will be absolutely mechanised and automated.

Tommy is very curious. As soon as he discovers a real book, he starts reading it. However, he does not like the idea of printed books which, according to him, are a waste once they have been read.

Compared to Margie, he is not as sensitive to the contents of the book. He has an air of superiority – he snubs Margie when she expresses her ignorance about old schools. But he does believe in sharing, and when Margie's mother calls her to attend the school he assures her that they can finish the book later. Tommy has been used by the author to contrast the school education of the twentieth-century with that of the twenty-second.

## **Summary in English- The Fun They Had**

### **DETAILED SUMMARY**

On the day of 17 May 2157, Tommy found a real book. He showed it to Margie. Margie was eleven years old. She had never seen a real book before. She had once heard from her grandfather about the printed books. It was a very old book. Its pages have turned yellow and crinkly. They turned its pages and read them. Tommy found it just a waste. They had no printed books. Their books flashed on the television screen. Tommy who was of thirteen had read more books on the television screen than Margie.

Tommy told Margie that it was a book about school. Margie always hated school. Her school was situated in a room in her home. It was in the room next to her bedroom. Her Mechanical teacher flashed on her television screen at a fixed time daily except on Saturday and Sunday. She had to attend alone. This mechanical teacher asked her questions, gave her homework and checked it. It also checked the assignment test papers and awarded them.

Margie's mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test. Margie's performance had been going from worse to worst. Her mother called for the County Inspector. He set the speed of the mechanical teacher right up to the level of an average ten-year child. Tommy told Margie that hundreds and hundreds of years ago there was old kind of schools. Those schools were situated in a special building. Men teachers taught in them. All the kids in the area went there and learnt the same thing. Margie thought that it would be great fun to study in those schools. She wanted to read about those funny schools.

Just then Margie's mother called Margie to attend her school. Margie was reluctant but she had to go inside her schoolroom nonchalantly. It was right next to her bedroom. Her mechanical teacher was on and waiting for her. It asked Margie to put her homework in the proper slot. Margie did so with a sigh. the mechanical teacher was teaching her the mathematics topic of fractions but she was thinking about the schools of the old days and the fun they had.

#### **Summary (2):**

On May 17, 2157, Tommy, a young boy of thirteen happens to find a book in the attic of his house which he shows to Margie, a girl of eleven. The book is centuries old and its pages are yellow and crinkly. Both Tommy and Margie are amazed to see that the words in the book are fixed on the pages and do not move as they do on a screen they are accustomed to. Actually, they have been born and brought up in an era of advanced computers and T.V. with a mechanical teacher giving lessons at home.

Margie recalls that once her grandfather had told her about how stories were printed on pages in the times of his grandfather.

Tommy considers books a waste because, unlike computers, they cannot have new words after one has finished reading them. Margie is disappointed when Tommy tells her that the book is about a school because she dislikes schools. Her concept of a school is a T.V. screen with machines giving lessons in various subjects. The T.V. has a special slot where the students have to submit their homework which is checked and marked by the machine in no time. Margie's dislike for a school has been intensified these days because the mechanical teacher has not been functioning properly. Margie's mother calls the County Inspector to examine the cause behind the error. The Inspector disbands the mechanical teacher and finds

that Margie was not at fault for her poor performance. Actually, the geography sector had been fixed at a speed that was too fast for the little girl. The Inspector is able to set the speed to Margie's level but she is unhappy to have the teacher put in order. She had hoped that it would be taken away for some time and she would be relieved of the trouble of taking so many tests.

Tommy informs Margie that the book is not about their kind of school which has a T.V. with mechanical teachers. It is, on the other hand, about the old kind of schools which used to work hundreds of years ago. He tells her that the old schools were special buildings where lessons were taught by men and not by machines. The students of one level were taught together by the same teacher in the same room.

Tommy and Margie discuss how earlier many students adjusted their level with the same teacher, unlike their own schools where every teacher is attuned to the requirement of the individual student. They haven't even read half the book when Margie's mother reminds her that it is time for school. Margie's schoolroom is right next to her bedroom. She has to study at regular hours because her mother considers it right to study at a fixed time every day. As the mechanical teacher is teaching the addition of proper fractions, Margie is lost in her thoughts about the working of schools in old times. She believes that the kids must have enjoyed going together to school. They must have had fun going to the same school, studying the same things and being able to help one another.

### **Summary (3)**

Tommy finds a 'real book' which has been printed on paper in the attic of his house. He shows the book to Margie. Together, they both take a look at it. The book is really old and the pages are yellow and crinkly. In the year 2157, this kind of books doesn't exist anymore. In this time, words are moving on a television screen. This television contains over a million books. That is the reason, Tommy thinks that they are much better. Margie inquires what's it about. Tommy says that it is about school. Margie hates school and cannot understand why someone would write about it. She is having problems with learning geography from her 'mechanical teacher'. It is black, large and has a screen on it. It teaches the students, gives them exercises and asks them questions, all in a special room in their own house. It can also calculate the marks in no time. Margie hates the slot where she has to insert her homework or test papers. Once the geography sector of her mechanical teacher has geared too quick so that her marks are getting worse and worse.

The County Inspector slows it after one hour. He is really nice to Margie. She hopes that her mechanical teacher would be away for a long time. Tommy says that the

book which he has found, is not about their type of school, it is about school centuries ago. They find out that students back then had a man as a teacher who taught the girls and boys, gave them homework and asked them the question. They had a special building. And they learned the same thing if they were of the same age.

At first, Margie does not understand how a person could be a teacher and how the students were taught the same thing because her mother says that education must fit each child's mind, but these schools are funny and she wants to read more about it. Then it is time for Margie and Tommy for their school. Margie goes to the schoolroom in her house, where the mechanical teacher stands. It is already on because the lessons are always at regular hours. She was thinking about the old school system and how much fun the children must have, learning and spending time together.

## **Summary in Hindi – The Fun They Had- Full Text**

### **DETAILED SUMMARY in Hindi**

17 मई 2157 के दिन टॉमी को वास्तविक पुस्तक मिली उसने इसे मार्गी को दिखाया । मार्गी ग्यारह वर्ष की थी । इससे पहले उसने कभी भी वास्तविक पुस्तक नहीं देखी थी । एक बार उसने दादाजी जी से वास्तविक मुद्रित (छपी) पुस्तकों के बारे में सुना था । यह एक बहुत पुरानी पुस्तक थी । इसके पन्ने पीले और सलवटों वाले हो गये थे । उन्होंने इसके पन्नों को पलटा और उन्हें पढ़ा । टॉमी को यह बातें व्यर्थ सी लगी । उनके पास छपी हुई पुस्तकें नहीं थीं । उनकी पुस्तकें टेलीविजन के पर्दे पर चमकती थीं टॉमी जोकि तेरह वर्ष का था मार्गी की तुलना में टेलीविजन के पर्दे पर अधिक पुस्तकें पढ़ चुका था ।

टॉमी ने मार्गी को बताया कि यह पुस्तक स्कूल के बारे में है मार्गी हमेशा से ही स्कूल से घृणा करती थी । उसका स्कूल उसके घर पर एक कमरे में स्थित था । यह उसके शयनकक्ष से अगले कमरे में स्थित था । शनिवार और रविवार के दिनों को छोड़कर उसका तकनीकी शिक्षक प्रतिदिन टेलीविजन के पर्दे पर एक निर्धारित समय पर चमकता था । उसे अकेले ही उसके सामने उपस्थित होना पड़ता था । यह तकनीकी शिक्षक उससे प्रश्न पूछता था । उसे गृहकार्य देता था और उसे चेक करता था । वह परीक्षा पत्रों को भी चेक करता था और उनके अंक देता था।

मार्गी का तकनीकी शिक्षक उसे एक के बाद एक टेस्ट देता रहता था । मार्गी का प्रदर्शन बंद से बदतर होता जा रहा था । उसकी माँ ने काउंटी इंस्पेक्टर को बुला भेजा । उसने तकनीकी शिक्षक की गति को एक औसत दस वर्ष के बच्चे के स्तर पर का दिया ।

टॉमी ने मार्गी को बताया कि सैकड़ों वर्ष पूर्व यहाँ पुरानी किस्म के स्कूल हुआ करते थे । वे स्कूल विशेष किस्म के भवनों में स्थित होते थे । उन स्कूलों में पुरुष अध्यापक पढ़ाते थे । क्षेत्र के सभी बच्चे यहाँ जाते थे और एक जैसा सबक सीखते थे । मार्गी ने सोचा कि उन स्कूलों में अध्ययन करना बहुत रोचक होता होगा । यह उन रोचक स्कूलों के बारे में पढ़ना चाहती थी ।

तभी मार्गी की माँ ने उसे स्कूल में उपस्थित होने के लिए बुला लिया । मार्गी स्कूल से उपस्थित नहीं होना चाहती थी परन्तु वह अनिच्छापूर्वक स्कूल कक्ष के अंदर चली गई । यह उसके शयनकक्ष से आगे कमरे में स्थित था । उसका तकनीकी शिक्षक कार्यरत अवस्था में था और उसकी प्रतीक्षा कर रहा था । उसने मार्गी से कहा कि यह उचित दराज में अपना गृहकार्य डाल दे । मार्गी ने एक भारी सांस के साथ ऐसा किया । तकनीकी शिक्षक उसे गणित विषय का भिन्न वाला पाठ पढ़ा रहा था लेकिन मार्गी पुराने जमाने के स्कूलों और उनमें होने वाली रोचकता के विषय में सोच रही थी ।

## Character Sketch

**Margie Jones:** Margie Jones is an eleven-year-old girl living in 2157. She is homeschooled by a mechanical teacher. She has a friend named Tommy. Margie has a diary in which she writes about finding a 'real book'. The event had a strong impact on her. From her conversation with Tommy about the book and school in the past, Margie comes across as naive, having little knowledge about the way school was in the past.

**Tommy:** Tommy is Margie's friend, who is older than her, being thirteen years old. He comes across smarter than the little girl because he has seen more tele-books and he has more knowledge about how the school was "centuries ago".

## Value Points

- Margie and Tommy are students of future schools.
- Tommy finds an old book about school in the attic. They turn yellow, crinkly pages of the book and are surprised to see still words in the book.
- They thought the old book to be wastage of resources, as it was to be thrown after one use. But tele-books last longer and contain many books together.
- Margie hated school as her teacher gave her test and she performed badly.
- She hated the slot for putting homework and test papers.
- Margie's mother called County Inspector who came with all his equipment and repaired it in an hour.
- Margie wasn't happy as she thought he would take the teacher for a few days.
- County Inspector told her mother that Margie's bad performance in Geography was due to the faulty setting of her teacher.
- Tommy explained that centuries ago the schools were not like theirs. They had a man as a teacher who taught students different subjects, asked questions and gave homework also.
- Margie couldn't believe the man to be smart enough to have knowledge about different subjects.
- Tommy told her that the school was in a special building and students would go there and children of same age group studied the same things.
- But Margie's mother had told her that every child has to be taught according to his needs.
- Now Margie was interested in reading more about the old funny schools.
- Tommy and Margie attended school at a fixed time.
- Margie thought about the old schools where kids had a lot of fun studying together and playing.
- The computer screen of her 'teacher' was flashing new chapter in arithmetic on the addition of proper fractions. But Margie was lost in the thoughts of old school.

## Vocabulary

**Headed**—titled; **Crinkly**—full of wrinkles; **Awfully**—very much; **Funny**—humorous; **Supposed to**—expected; **Throw**—send through the air; **Million**—ten lakhs; **Plenty**—many; **Attic**—space just below the roof to store things; **Scornful**—hateful; **Mechanical**—connected with machines; **Shake**—to move— **Sorrowfully**—sadly; **County**—region; **Inspector**—a person who inspects. **Tool**—equipment; **Slot**—a given space, time or position; **Calculate**—to count; **Marks**—score; **In no time**—very



Ans. (D) her grandfather

5. **Why were the pages of the book were yellow and crinkly**

- (A) it was a very old book                      (B) Its colour was yellow  
(C) they were yellow because                (D) none of these

written in yellow ink .

Ans. (A) it was a very old book

6. **How were the words in the book?**

- (A) moving    (B) Steady  
(C) getting unprinted after reading            (D) none of these options is right

Ans. (B) steady

7. **How old was Margie?**

- (A) ten years    (B) eleven years  
(C) twelve years                                      (d) thirteen years

Ans. (B) eleven years

8. **How old was Tommy?**

- (A) ten years    (B) eleven years  
(C) -14, /elve years                                (D) thirteen years

Ans. (D) thirteen years

9. **Where did Tommy found the book?**

(A) in the attic (B) in the school

(C) in a shop (D) in a library

**Ans. (A) in the attic**

10. **What was Margie scornful about?**

(A) the printed book (B) the school

(C) Tommy (D) e-mail books

**Ans. (B) the school**

11. **What do you mean by a mechanical teacher?**

(A) television (B) a teacher who teaches with instruments

(C) a real teacher (D) all the options are correct

**Ans. (A) television**

12. **What was Margie's mechanical teacher giving her?**

(A) tests in mathematics (B) tests in geography

(C) a sound beating (D) good marks

**Ans. (B) tests in geography**

13. **Margie's mother called the County Inspector to**

(A) teach Margie (B) give her good marks

(C) take her to other schools (D) set the mechanical teacher right

**Ans. (D) set the mechanical teacher right**

14. **Margie's mother shaken her head sorrowfully :**

- (A) at Margie's poor performance in tests (B) at the old times of schools  
(C) at the printed books (D) at the mechanical teacher

**Ans. (A) at Margie's poor performance in tests**

**L5. Who was around little man?**

- (A) the County Inspector (B) the mechanical teacher  
(C) the real teacher (D) Tommy

**Ans. (A) the County Inspector**

16. **Why had the inspector tools and wires with him?**

- (A) he was to set Margie right (B) he was to set the mechanical teacher right  
(C) he was to check Margie's mother (D) none of these options

**Ans. (B) he was to set the mechanical teacher right**

17. **How long did it take the inspector to set the mechanical teacher right?**

- (A) one hour (B) thirty minutes  
(C) two hours (D) one month

**Ans. (A) one hour**

18. **Which part of the mechanical teacher did Margie hate most?**

- (A) screen (B) the whole box

- (C) slot (D) none of these

**Ans. (C) slot**

19. **How did Margie feed her homework in the mechanical teacher?**

- (A) in a punch code (B) in written papers  
(C) by speaking (D) none of these options

**Ans. (A) in a punch code**

20. **Margie was doing worse and worse in?**

- (A) Geography (B) Maths  
(C) Physics (D) English

**Ans. (A) Geography**

21. **What did Tommy and Margie mean by a regular teacher**

- (A) a male teacher (B) a female teacher  
(C) a good teacher (D) a mechanical teacher

**Ans. (D) a mechanical teacher**

22. **Select the title of the story of Tommy and Margie**

- (A) A Real Book. (B) The Fun They Had  
(C) The Fun with Printed Books (D) A Printed Book

**Ans. (B) The Fun They Had**

**Go to the NCERT Solution**

### **The line to Line Explanation in Hindi- The Fun They Had**

#### **पाठ का संपूर्ण हिंदी अनुवाद**

#### **[PAGE 1]**

जो कहानी हम पढ़ेंगे वह भविष्य के उस समय में लिखी गई है जब आज की तरह पुस्तकें और स्कूल अस्तित्व में नहीं होंगे। तब बच्चे पढ़ाई कैसे करेंगे?

नीचे दिया गया चित्र आपको कुछ जानकारी प्रदान कर सकता है।

समूह बनाकर अपने विद्यालय से संबंधित तीन ऐसी चीजों के बारे में विचार विमर्श कीजिये जो आपको अच्छी लगती हैं और तीन ऐसी चीजें जिन्हें आप बदलना चाहते हैं। उन्हें लिख लीजिए।

- क्या आपने टेलीविजन या कंप्यूटर की स्क्रीन (पर्दे) पर शब्दों को पढ़ा है? क्या आप ऐसे समय की कल्पना कर सकते हो जब सभी पुस्तकें कंप्यूटर पर उपलब्ध होंगी, और कागज पर छपी पुस्तकें नहीं होंगी? क्या आपको ऐसी पुस्तकें अच्छी लगेगी?
1. मार्गी ने आज रात ही इसके बारे में अपनी डायरी में लिखा था। पृष्ठ शीर्षक **17 मई, 2157** पर उसने लिखा आज टॉमी को एक वास्तविक पुस्तक मिली। वह एक बहुत पुरानी पुस्तक थी। एक बार मार्गी के दादा जी ने

## [PAGE 2]

कहा था कि जब वह एक छोटे बालक थे तो उनके दादा जी उन्हें बताया करते थे कि एक समय ऐसा था जब सभी कहानियों की छपाई कागज पर होती थी।

वे पीले पड़ चुके और सलवटों वाले पत्रों को बदल रहे थे, और उन्हें यह बहुत अधिक हास्यास्पद लग रहा है कि वे शब्द उसकी टेलीविजन की स्क्रीन से भिन्न केवल एक ही स्थान पर खड़े हुए थे। और जब वे पहले पढ़ चुके पृष्ठ को निकालते थे तो उन्हें वे शब्द बिल्कुल उसी स्थान पर मिलते थे जहाँ पर उस समय थे जहाँ उन्होंने पुस्तक को पहले पढ़ा था।

2. 'छी', टॉमी ने कहा, 'यह कितनी व्यर्थ बात है। जब आपने पुस्तक पढ़ ली है तो इसे फेंक दीजिए, मेरा तो यहीं मानना है।'

हमारे टेलीविजन की स्क्रीन (पर्दे) पर लाखों पुस्तकें हैं और इस पर और बहुत-सी पुस्तकें हो सकती हैं। मैं उसे नहीं फेंकूंगा। 'मेरे टेलीविजन पर भी ऐसा ही है,' मार्गी ने कहा। वह ग्यारह वर्ष की थी और उसने अभी उतनी पुस्तकें नहीं देखी थी जितनी टॉमी ने देखी थीं। वह तेरह वर्ष का था।

उसने कहा, 'तुम्हें यह पुस्तक कहाँ से मिली?'

'मेरे घर से।' उसने बिना ऊपर देखे इशारा किया, क्योंकि वह पढ़ने में व्यस्त था। 'अटारी में'

यह किसके बारे में है?'

'स्कूल के बारे में।'

3. मार्गी ने तिरस्कारपूर्वक ढंग से कहा। 'स्कूल? स्कूल के बोरे में लिखने की क्या बात है हैं मुझे स्कूल से घृणा है।'

मार्गी हमेशा से ही स्कूलों से घृणा करती थी, लेकिन अब यह इसे पहले से भी अधिक नफरत करने लगी। तकनीकी शिक्षक उसे भूगोल में टेस्ट के बाद टेस्ट (परीक्षा) दे रहा था और वह बार-बार बुरा प्रदर्शन करती रही थी और उसकी माँ ने दुःख से अपना सिर हिलाया काऊंटी इंस्पेक्टर को बुला भेजा।

4. वह एक लाल चेहरे वाला छोटे कद गोल-मटोल-सा व्यक्ति था और वह अपने साथ औजारों और तारों का का बक्शा लेकर आया था वह मार्गी पर मुस्कराया और उसे एक सेब दिया, तब उसने शिक्षक को खोल दिया। मार्गी को आशा थी कि उसे इसे दोबारा से जोड़ने के बारे में नहीं पता होगा, लेकिन वह इसके बारे में सब कुछ ठीक तरह से जानता था और लगभग आधे घंटे के पश्चात और एक बार फिर काफी बड़ा और काले तथा भददे रूप एक बड़ी स्क्रीन वाला जिस पर सभी प्रकार के पाठ दिखाए जाते थे और प्रश्न पूछे जाते थे। वह इतना बुरा नहीं था

## [PAGE 3]

जिस भाग को मार्गी सबसे अधिक घृणा करती थी वह था 'दराज' जिसमें उसे अपना गृहकार्य और परीक्षा पुस्तिकाएँ डालनी पड़ती थी। वह उन्हें हमेशा ही एक छिद्र कोड के रूप में छः वर्ष की आयु से ही सीखती रही थी, और तकनीकी शिक्षक देर में ही अंकों की गणना का देता था।

काम समाप्त होने पश्चात इंस्पेक्टर मुस्कराया और मार्गी के सर को थपथपाया। उसने उसकी (मार्गी) की माँ को कहा, 'इसमें छोटी लड़की की गलती नहीं है, श्रीमती जोन्स। मुझे लगता है कि भूगोल वाले हिस्से की गति थोड़ी अधिक हो गयी थी। ऐसी चीजे कई बार हो जाती है। अब मैंने इसकी गति को एक औसत दस वर्ष की लड़की के स्तर पर कर दिया है वास्तविकता यह है कि उसकी प्रगति का संपूर्ण प्रदर्शन बिल्कुल संतोषजनक था और उसने मार्गी के सिर को थपथपाया'

मार्गी निराश थी। उसे आशा थी कि वह अध्यापक को अपने साथ ले जाएगा। एक बार वे टॉमी के शिक्षक को लगभग एक माह के लिए ले गए थे क्योंकि इतिहास वाला भाग एकदम से बिल्कुल साफ हो गया था। इस लिए उसने टॉमी से कहा, 'कोई स्कूलों के बारे में क्यों लिखेगा?'

#### 6. टॉमी ने बहुत ही विशिष्ट नजरों से उसकी ओर देखा।

'क्योंकि यह हमारी तरह का स्कूल नहीं है, मूर्ख। यह पुरानी किस्म का स्कूल था जोकि सैकड़ों वर्ष पहले हुआ करते थे,'

उसने विशिष्ट अंदाज में शब्दों का सावधानीपूर्वक उच्चारण करते हुए कहा, "शताब्दियों पहले"।

मार्गी आहत थी। 'ठीक है, मुझे नहीं मालूम कि उस समय उनके किस प्रकार के स्कूल हुआ करते थे। उसने उसके ऊपर से झुककर के थोड़ी देर के लिए पुस्तक को पढ़ा, तब बोली, 'चाहे जो भी हो, उनका भी तो शिक्षक होता था।'

'अवश्य ही उनका शिक्षक होता था, लेकिन यह एक नियमित शिक्षक नहीं होता था। वह एक इंसान होता था।'-

'इंसान? इंसान शिक्षक कैसे हो सकता है?' -

"अच्छा वह लड़कों और लड़कियों को चीजों के बारे में बताता होगा भी उन्हें गृहकार्य देता होगा और उनसे प्रश्न पूछता होगा।'

#### 7. 'एक इंसान शिक्षक इतना तीक्ष्ण बुद्धि वाला नहीं हो सकता।'

'वह अवश्य ही हो सकता है। मेरे पिता जी मेरे शिक्षक जितना ज्ञान रखते थे।'

'वह उस जितना जानता है, मैं शर्त लगाता हूँ।'-

मार्गी इस विषय पर विवाद पैदा नहीं करना चाहती थी। उसने कहा यहा, 'मैं नहीं चाहूँगी कि एक अजनबी व्यक्ति मेरे घर में मुझे पढाने आए।'

टॉमी हंसी से चिल्लाया। 'मार्गी तुम अधिक नहीं जानती हो। अध्यापक घरों में नहीं रहते थे। उनके पास एक विशेष इमारत होती थी और सभी बच्चे वहाँ जाते थे।'

'और सभी बच्चे एक ही बात सीखते थे?'

'अवश्य ही, यदि वे एक ही आयु के होते।'

8. 8. लेकिन मेरी माता जी कहती हैं कि एक शिक्षक को तो प्रत्येक लड़के या लड़की, जिसको वह पढाता है, के मानसिक स्तर के अनुसार समायोजित किया जाता है और प्रत्येक बच्चे को अलगअलग प्रकार से पढाना पडता है।'

'इस प्रकार का कार्य वे (विद्यार्थी) उस समय नहीं करते थे।' यदि तुम इसे पसंद नहीं करती हो तो तुम्हें पुस्तक को पढने की अवश्यकता नहीं है।'

'मैंने यह तो नहीं कहा कि मैं इसे पसंद नहीं करती हूँ,' मार्गी ने एकदम से कहा।

#### [PAGE 4]

वह उन मजाकिया स्कूलों के बोरे में पढना चाहती थी।

उन्होंने अभी आधी पुस्तक भी नहीं पढी थी कि तभी मार्गी की माँ ने आवाज लगा दी, 'मार्गी !, स्कूल !' मार्गी ने ऊपर की ओर देखा 'मम्मी, अभी नहीं।'

'अभी ! श्रीमती जोन्स ने कहा। 'और शायद टॉमी का भी समय हो गया होगा।

मार्गी ने टॉमी से कहा "क्या स्कूल के पश्चात मैं पुस्तक को तुम्हारे साथ कुछ और समय के पढ सकती हूँ?'

9. 'शायद', उसने लापरवाहीपूर्ण ढंग से कहा। यह सीटी बजाता हुआ चला गया, धूल भरी पुरानी पुस्तक उसकी बाजू के नीचे दबी हुई थी।

मार्गी स्कूल के कमरे के चली गई। यह कमरा उसके शयनकक्ष से अगले वाला था और तकनीकी शिक्षक कार्यरत अवस्था मे था और उसकी प्रतीक्षा कर रहा था। वह शनिवार और रविवार को छोड़कर प्रत्येक दिन उस समय चालू (कार्यरत) अवस्था में होता था, क्योंकि उसकी माँ कहती थी कि यही छोटी लड़की नियमित समय पर सीखती हैं तो वसे अच्छे से सीख जाती है।

स्क्रीन प्रकाशित हुई , और उसने कहा , आज का अंकगणित का सबक सही भिन्नों का योग करने के बारे में है ।  
कृपया कल का गृहकार्य उचित दराज में डाल दो ।'

10. मार्गी ने एक आह के साथ ऐसा किया । वह पुराने ज़माने के उन स्कूलों के बारे में सोच रही थी जब उसके दादा के दादा एक छोटे बच्चे थे । पुरे पड़ोस के सरे बच्चे आते थे , स्कूल के प्रांगण में हँसते और चिल्लाते रहते थे , कक्षा के कमरे में इकट्ठे बैठते थे और (छुट्टी के पश्चात सभी) शाम के समय इकट्ठे ही घर जाया करते थे । वे एक जैसा सबक सीखते थे , इसलिए गृह कार्य के बारे में एक दूसरे की मदद कर सकते थे और आपस में गृहकार्य के बारे में बातें कर सकते थे ।

और शिक्षक इंसान होते थे .....

तकनीकी शिक्षक स्क्रीन पर चमक रहा था : जब हम भिन्नों 1/2 और 1/4 को जोड़ते हैं तो -'

मार्गी इस विषय में सोच रही थी कि पुराने दिनों में बच्चे उस स्कूल को कितना पसंद करते थे । वह उस मजाक के बारे में सोच रही थी जो वे किया करते थे ।

### **Extract Based / comprehension test Questions and Answers of The Fun They Had**

**Read the extracts and answer the questions that follow.**

#### **PASSAGE 1**

Margie even wrote about it that night in her diary. On the page headed 17 May 2157, she wrote, 'Today Tommy found a real book!' It was a very old book. Margie's grandfather once said that when he was a little boy his grandfather told him that there was a time when all stories were printed on paper. They turned the pages, which were yellow and crinkly, and it was awfully funny to read words that stood still instead of moving the way they were supposed to — on a screen, you know. And then when they turned back to the page before, it had the same words on it that it had had when they read it the first time.

**Questions :**

**(i) What did Margie write in her diary?**

**(ii) Had Margie ever seen a book before?**

**(iii) 'They' turned the pages. Who does 'They' refer to?**

**(iv) What was funny about the book?**

**(v) Why had the pages of the book turned yellow and crinkly?**

**Answers :** (i) On the page headed 17 May 2157, Margie wrote, 'Today Tommy found a real book!'

(ii) No, Margie had never seen a book before.

(iii) They are Margie and Tommy.

(iv) The words in the book stand still instead of moving.

(v) The pages of the book had turned yellow and crinkly because it was very old.

**PASSAGE 2**

'Gee,' said Tommy. 'What a waste. When you're through with the book, you just throw it away. I guess. Our television screen must have had a million books on it and it's good for plenty more. I wouldn't throw it away.' 'Same with mine,' said Margie. She was eleven and hadn't seen as many telebooks as Tommy had. He was thirteen. She said, 'Where did you find it?' 'In my house.' He pointed without looking because he was busy reading. 'In the attic.' 'What's it about?' 'School.

**' Questions :**

**(i) What is a waste for Tommy?**

**(ii) What sort of books did Margie and Tommy have in their schools?**

**(iii) How old were Margie and Tommy?**

**(iv) Where did Tommy find the book?**

**(v) What was that book about?**

**Answers :**

**(i) Printing books on paper is a waste for Tommy.**

**(ii) They have moving books on their television screen.**

**(iii) Margie was eleven and Tommy was thirteen years old**

**(v) Tommy found the book in his house in the attic. (v) It was about 'School'.**

### **PASSAGE 3**

Margie was scornful. 'School? What's there to write about school? I hate school.' Margie always hated school, but now she hated it more than ever. The mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test in geography and she had been doing worse and worse until her mother had shaken her head sorrowfully and sent for the County Inspector.

**Questions :**

**(i) Name the writer of the story 'The Fun They Had'.**

**(ii) What was Margie's opinion about school?**

**(iii) What had been doing her mechanical teacher?**

**(iv) What were Margie's responses?**

**(v) Why was the County Inspector sent for?**

**Answers :**

(i) Issac Asimov.

(ii) Margie hated school.

(iii) Her mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test in geography.

(iv) Margie's responses were very poor.

(v) The County Inspector was sent to check the mechanical teacher.

**PASSAGE 4**

He was around the little man with a red face and a whole box of tools with dials and wires. He smiled at Margie and gave her an apple, then took the teacher apart. Margie had hoped he wouldn't know how to put it together again, but he knew how all right, and, after an hour or so, there it was again, large and black and ugly, with a big screen on which all the lessons were shown and the questions were asked. That wasn't so bad. The part Margie hated most was the slot where she had to put homework and test papers. She always had to write them out in a punch code they made her learn when she was six years old, and the mechanical teacher calculated the mark in no time.

**Questions :**

- Who was around little man?
- What did he do to the teacher?
- What had Margie hoped?
- Which part of the mechanical teacher did she hate most and why?
- (v) How did she write her test papers?

**Answers :**

(i) The County Inspector was a round little man.

(ii) He took the mechanical teacher into pieces.

(iii) Margie had hoped that the County Inspector would not know how to put it together.

(iv) She hated the slot most because she had to put her homework and test papers in it.

(v) She wrote her test papers in a punch code.

### **PASSAGE 5**

The Inspector had smiled after he was finished and patted Margie's head. He said to her mother, 'It's not the little girl's fault, Mrs Jones. I think the geography sector was geared a little too quick. Those things happen sometimes. I've slowed it up to an average ten-year level. Actually, the overall pattern of her progress is quite satisfactory.' And he patted Margie's head again.

Margie was disappointed. She had been hoping they would take the teacher away altogether. They had once taken Tommy's teacher away for nearly a month because the history sector had blanked out completely. So she said to Tommy, 'Why would anyone write about school?'

#### **Questions :**

(i) 'The Inspector smiled after he was finished'. What was finished?

(ii) What was the problem with the mechanical teacher?

(iii) At what level did the Inspector set it?

(iv) The mechanical teacher was set right but Margie was disappointed, why?

(v) What trouble had been there once with Tommy's teacher?

#### **Answers :**

(i) He had reassembled the mechanical teacher all right.

(ii) Its geography sector was geared a little too quick.

(iii) He set it up to an average ten-year child level.

(iv) She had hoped that she would get a long vacation until her mechanical teacher was repaired.

(v) Its history sector had completely blanked out.

### **PASSAGE 6**

'Maybe' he said nonchalantly. He walked away whistling, the dusty old book tucked beneath his arm. Margie went into the schoolroom. It was right next to her bedroom, and the mechanical teacher was on and waiting for her. It was always on at the same time every day except Saturday and Sunday because her mother said little girls learned better if they learned at regular hours. The screen was lit up, and it said: 'Today's arithmetic lesson is on the addition of proper fractions. Please insert yesterday's homework in the proper slot.'

#### **Questions :**

**(i) 'Maybe', he said nonchalantly. Who does 'he' refer to?**

**(ii) Where was Margie's school situated?**

**(iii) What was the routine of Margie's mechanical teacher?**

**(iv) What topic was Margie going to learn that day?**

**(v) Find a word from the passage which has the meaning same as 'showing not any**

**interest'.**

#### **Answers :**

**(i) 'He' refers to Tommy.**

**(ii) In her house in the room next to her bedroom.**

**(iii) It flashed at the right time daily except on Saturday and Sunday.**

**(iv) She was going to learn the addition of proper fractions.**

**(v) Nonchalantly.**

### **PASSAGES FOR PRACTICE (UNSOLVED)**

### **PASSAGE 7**

Tommy looked at her with very superior eyes. 'Because it's not our kind of school, stupid. This is the old kind of school that they had hundreds and hundreds of years ago.' He added loftily, pronouncing the word carefully, 'Centuries ago.' Margie was hurt. 'Well, I don't know what kind of school they had all that time ago.' She read the book over his shoulder for a while, then said, 'Anyway, they had a teacher.' 'Sure they had a teacher, but it wasn't a regular teacher. It was a man.' 'A man? How could a man be a teacher?' 'Well, he just told the boys and girls things and gave them homework and asked them questions.'

#### **Questions :**

- (i) Name the lesson and its author.
- (ii) 'Tommy looked at her with very superior eyes.' Who does 'her' refer to?
- (iii) Which schools were Tommy talking about?
- (iv) 'But it wasn't a regular teacher. It was a man.' With reference to this lesson tell who was a regular teacher.
- (v) 'A man? How could a man be a teacher ?' Who said this?

### **PASSAGE 8**

Margie did so with a sigh. She was thinking about the old schools they had when her grandfather's grandfather was a little boy. All the kids from the whole neighbourhood came, laughing and shouting in the schoolyard, sitting together in the schoolroom, going home together at the end of the day. They learned the same things, so they could help one another on the homework and talk about it. And the teachers were people. The mechanical teacher was flashing on the screen: 'When we add fractions 'A and 'A -' Margie was thinking about how the kids must have loved it in the old days. She was thinking about the fun they had.

#### **Questions :**

- 'Margie did so with a sigh.' What did Margie do with a sigh?
- What was a special feature of the schools in the old times?
- (iii) What was the feature of learning in the schools of old times?
- (iv) What topic was the mechanical teacher teaching her?
- (v) What was Margie thinking about

9. Margie's grandfather once said that when he was a little boy his grandfather told him that there was a time when all stories were printed on paper. They turned the pages, which were yellow and crinkly, and it was awfully funny to read words that stood still instead of moving the way they were supposed to —on a screen, you know.

#### **Questions**

- (i) What did great grandfather tell about stories?
- (ii) How were the pages of a real book?

(iii) Why were the words funny?

(iv) What did Margie think about the words?

### Answers

(i) The great grandfather told that there was a time when stories were printed on paper.

(ii) The pages of the real book were yellow and crinkly.

(iii) The words were funny because they were stood still.

(iv) Margie thought that the words were supposed to move on a screen.

10. Margie always hated school, but now she hated it more than ever. The mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test in geography and she had been doing worse and worse until her mother had shaken her head sorrowfully and sent for the County Inspector.

### Questions

(i) Who was Margie?

(ii) Who was the County Inspector?

(iii) How did Margie perform in geography?

(iv) Why was the Country Inspector called for?

### Answers

(i) Margie was a girl of eleven years.

(ii) He was a computer mechanic.

(iii) In geography, her performance was worse.

(iv) The Country Inspector has called for the repairment of her mechanical teacher who was not functioning properly.

11. He was around the little man with a red face and a whole box of tools with dials and wires. He smiled at Margie and gave her an apple, then took the teacher apart. Margie had hoped he wouldn't know how to put it together again,

### Questions

(i) Who is 'he' here?

(ii) Why did the man have a box of tools?

(iii) Why did he take the teacher apart?

(iv) What was Margie's hope?

### Answers

(i) 'He' is the Country Inspector here.

(ii) The man had a box of tools because he was a computer mechanic who repaired dysfunctions of mechanical teachers.

(iii) He took the teacher apart for repairing it.

(iv) Margie hoped that the mechanic would not know who to put the teacher together again.

12. The Inspector had smiled after he was finished and patted Margie's head. He said to her mother, "It's not the little girl's fault, Mrs Jones. I think the geography sector was geared a little too quick".

### Questions

(i) Why did the Inspector pat Margie's head?

(ii) Who was Mrs Jones?

(iii) What did the Inspector say to Mrs Jones?

(iv) Why did Margie not do good in geography?

### Answers

(i) Inspector patted Margie's head to cheer her up because her performance was not as bad in geography as it was considered by her teacher.

(ii) Mrs Jones was Margie's mother.

(iii) The Inspector said to Mrs Jones that it was not Margie's fault that she could not do good in geography.

(iv) Margie did not do good in geography because the geography sector of the mechanical teacher has geared a little too quick.

13. Margie was hurt, "Well, I don't know what kind of school they had all that time ago". She read the book over his shoulder for a while, then said, "Anyway, they had a teacher".

### Questions

(i) Why was Margie hurt?

(ii) Which book did she read for some time?

(iii) When was the school in the old book in existence?

(iv) What was Margie sure about?

### Answers

(i) Margie was hurt because Tommy called her stupid.

(ii) She read the old book that Tommy found for some time.

(iii) It was in existence centuries before.

(iv) Margie was sure about the teacher that the children had in school centuries ago.

14. Margie wasn't prepared to dispute that. She said, "I wouldn't want a strange man in my house to teach me."

Tommy screamed with laughter. "You don't know much, Margie. The teachers didn't live in the house. They had a special building and all the kids went there."

"And all the kids learned the same thing?"

"Sure, if they were the same age."

### Questions

(i) What was the dispute?

(ii) According to Tommy, where do teachers live?

(iii) What did the kids learn in old school?

(iv) What can be said about the old school?

### Answers

(i) The dispute was about the teacher of the old school.

(ii) They live in a special building.

(iii) In the old school, all the kids learnt the same thing.

(iv) The old school was a special building and all the kids went there.

15. "But my mother says a teacher has to be adjusted to fit the mind of each boy and girl it teaches and that each kid has to be taught differently."

"Just the same they didn't do it that way then. If you don't like it, you don't have to read the book."

### Questions

(i) Why should a teacher be adjusted?

(ii) Who said it and to whom?

(iii) How should each kid be taught?

(iv) Who does 'they' refer to here?

### Answers

(i) A teacher should be adjusted to fit the mind of each boy and girl.

(ii) Tommy's mother said to Tommy.

(iii) Each kid should be taught differently as per his/her level of understanding.

(iv) Here 'they' refers to 'men as teachers' in the past schools.

16. Margie went into the schoolroom. It was right next to her bedroom, and the mechanical teacher was on and waiting for her. It was always on at the same time every day except Saturday and Sunday because her mother said little girls learned better if they learned at regular hours.

The screen was lit up, and it said: "Today's arithmetic lesson is on the addition of proper fractions. Please insert yesterday's homework in the proper slot."

### Questions

(i) Who was waiting for Margie in her schoolroom?

(ii) What did Margie's mother say about little girls?

(iii) What was the mechanical teacher famous for?

(iv) What did Margie learn that day?

### Answers

(i) Margie's mechanical teacher was waiting for her in the schoolroom.

(ii) Margie's mother said that little girls learned better if they learned at regular hours.

(iii) He was always punctual.

(iv) That day, there was an arithmetic lesson in which she learnt the addition of proper fractions.

17. She was thinking about the old schools they had when her grandfather's grandfather was a little boy. All the kids from the whole neighbourhood came, laughing and shouting in the schoolyard, sitting together in the schoolroom, going home together at the end of the day.

### Questions

(i) Who is 'she' here?

(ii) Where did her grandfather's grandfather read?

(iii) Where did the kids in the old school read?

(iv) What similarity do you find in the kids of old school?

### Answers

(i) 'She' is Margie here.

(ii) He read in the old school.

(iii) They read in the schoolroom.

(iv) All the kids learned the same lesson and helped one another with homework.

18. All the kids from the whole neighbourhood came, laughing and shouting in the schoolyard, sitting together in the schoolroom, going home together at the end of the day. They learned the same things, so they could help one another with the homework and talk about it.

And the teachers were people...

### Questions

(i) What kind of school Margie's great grandfather read in?

(ii) What kind of teachers taught in the old school?

(iii) Why were the kids given the same homework in the old school?

(iv) How did the kids of the old school have a great sense of cooperation?

#### **Answers**

(i) He read in the old school.

(ii) The teachers were people and taught in the old school.

(iii) In the old school, the kids were given the same homework because they learned the same thing in the old school.

(iv) The kids of the old school had a great sense of cooperation as they sat together, learned the same thing and helped one another with homework.

#### **The Fun They Had by Isaac Asimov worksheets- (Will be available soon)**

##### **Main Characters of the Story- The Fun They Had**

The most important character in the short story "The Fun They Had" by Isaac Asimov is Margie. She is the main character whose perspective has been followed by the narrator. Secondary characters are Tommy, Mrs Jones and the County Inspector.

##### **Give a character sketch of Margie Jones from the chapter The Fun They Had**

Margie Jones is an eleven-year-old girl living in 2155. Except for this information, nothing much is revealed about the girl's outer characterization. We also know that she is homeschooled by a mechanical teacher and that she has a friend named Tommy. Margie's inner characterization is revealed through her actions and her attitude towards school in her time and the past. The fact that Margie has a diary in which she writes about finding a 'real book' indicates the event had a strong impact on her. From her conversation with Tommy about the book and school in the past, Margie comes across as naive, having little knowledge about the way school was in the past, and very mistrustful.

## Give a character sketch of Tommy from the chapter The Fun They Had

### Tommy

Tommy is Margie's friend, who is older than her, being thirteen years old. He comes across as smarter than the little girl because he has seen more telebooks and because he has more knowledge about how school was "centuries ago".

### Extra Very Short Answer Type Important Questions

**1. On what date did Margie make an entry in her diary about the real book?**

**Ans.** She did so on 17 May 2157.

**2. What did Tommy find?**

**Ans.** He found a real book.

**3. How old was Margie?**

**Ans.** She was eleven years old.

**4. How old was Tommy?**

**Ans.** He was thirteen years old.

**5. What was the real book, that Tommy found, about?**

**Ans.** It was about 'School'.

**6. What did Margie hate?**

**Ans.** She hated school.

**7. What had the mechanical teacher been giving to Margie?**

**Ans.** The mechanical teacher had been giving test after test to Margie in geography.

**8. Why did Margie's mother send for the County Inspector?**

**Ans.** She sent for the County Inspector because Margie had been doing worse and worse in her geography tests.

**9. Why did Margie hate slot most?**

**Ans.** Margie hated slot most because she had to put homework and test papers in it.

**10. What was wrong with the geography sector of Margie's mechanical teacher?**

**Ans.** The geography sector of Margie's mechanical teacher was geared a little too quick.

**II. What do you mean by a regular teacher?**

**Ans.** It means the mechanical teacher that appears on the television screen at the fixed time.

**12. What is the name of Margie's mother?**

**Ans.** Her name is Mrs Jones.

**13. On which two days there came no mechanical teacher on the TN. screen?**

**Ans.** On Saturday and Sunday.

**14. What subject did Tommy learn?**

**Ans.** He learnt history.

**15. Name the writer of the lesson 'The Fun They Had'.**

**Ans.** Isaac Asimov.

**Go to the NCERT Solution "The Sound of Music Part I"**

**Pogo dynamite**

**SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS (to be answered in about 30 – 40 words each)**

**Q1. Who are Tommy and Margie? How old are they?**

**(Textual)**

**Ans.** Tommy and Margie are students from the year 2157. They are neighbours and spend time together like children of their age usually do. Tommy is a thirteen-year-old boy and Margie is an eleven-year-old girl.

**Q2. What did Margie write in her diary?**

**(Textual)**

**Ans.** On 17 May 2157 Margie recorded in her diary the discovery of a real book by Tommy. It was a very old paper book with yellow and crinkly pages.

**Q3. Where did Tommy find the book and in what condition?**

**Or**

**Describe the book that Tommy had found in the attic.**

**Ans.** Tommy found a real book in the attic of his house. The pages had turned yellow and crinkly because it was at least two hundred years old. Moreover, it was all covered with dust as it had been lying in the attic for ages.

**Q4. Had Margie ever seen a book before?**

**(Textual)**

**Ans.** No, Margie had never seen a book before till she saw the one that Tommy had found in the attic of his house. She had only heard about books from her grandfather who himself had not seen any. He too had heard about a printed book from his own grandfather.

**Q5. Did Margie like the printed book? Why/Why not?**

**Ans.** Margie was so excited to know that Tommy had found a 'real' book which was unlike the on-screen books she used to read, that she recorded the discovery in her diary. As she turned the yellow and crinkly pages of the book with Tommy, she found it awfully funny to read it. While Tommy found it a waste, Margie was fascinated by it and liked it.

**Q6. What things about the book did Margie find strange?**

**(Textual)**

**Ans.** Margie lived in an era of mechanical education with telebooks stored in a machine. So she found it strange that the words in the printed book remained fixed unlike the moving ones on her television screen.

**Q7. "What a waste!" What is Tommy referring to as a 'waste'? Is it really a waste?**

**Ans.** Tommy thinks that the paper books with words printed and fixed on them are a waste. Once a book is read, it becomes useless and must be thrown away because it has the same content. Actually, printed books are not a waste. They can be read by many people over and over again and should be preserved for future generations.

**Q8. What do you think a telebook is?**

**(Textual)**

**Ans.** A telebook is a compact book in an electronic form. It is stored in a computer and can be read by scrolling its pages up, down or sideways on a screen.

**Q9. How does Tommy find the telebooks of his own time to be better?**

**Ans.** Tommy felt that his telebooks were better than the printed books of the ancient times because they could be stored on television and read again and again. They occupied very little space as compared to the printed books and need not be discarded once they had been read.

**Q10. Where was Margie's school? Did she have any classmates?**

**(Textual)**

**Ans.** Margie's school was inside the comfort of her house. It was just next to her bedroom. It was a customised school, set up exclusively for her according to her level and needs. No, she did not have any classmates.

**Q11. Why had Margie started hating her school?**

**Ans.** Margie never liked school. But recently her hatred had increased because of her poor performance in geography tests. Her mechanical teacher gave her one test after another and her performance went on becoming worse and worse.

**Q12. Which part of her school did Margie hate the most?**

**Or**

**What did Margie hate the most about her school?**

**Ans.** The part that Margie hated most was the slot where she had to put homework and test papers. She always had to write them in a punch code that she was made to learn at the tender age of six. Besides, the mechanical teacher calculated her marks in no time which left no scope for Margie to relax after submitting the assigned tasks.

**Q13. What subjects did Tommy and Margie learn?**

**(Textual)**

**Ans.** Tommy and Margie learnt a lot of subjects like History, Geography and Mathematics.

**Q14. What kind of teachers did Margie and Tommy have?**

**(Textual)**

**Ans.** Margie and Tommy had mechanical teachers. They were not real persons but televisions which had different subject sectors. These teachers were customised to the level of a student. In case of malfunction, they were disbanded and repaired.

**Q15. Why did Margie's mother send for the County Inspector?**

**(Textual)**

**Or**

**Why did Margie's mother shook her head one day and send for the County Inspector?**

**Ans.** Margie's mother sent for the County Inspector because Margie had been performing poorly in Geography. The repeated fall in her daughter's performance disappointed her. So, she decided to call a specialist, the County Inspector, who could locate the problem and correct it.

**Q16. What views did Margie's mother have about teachers and learning?**

**Ans.** Margie's mother was very particular about her child's education and made sure that Margie attended her tele-school regularly and studied properly and punctually. She believed that a tele-teacher had to be adjusted to the mind of each student and that each student had to be taught differently. Whenever she noticed a snag in Margie's tele-teacher, she sent for the County Inspector to get the snag removed so that Margie did not miss Out of her school and learning.

**Q17. What was the County Inspector trained to do?**

**Ans.** The County Inspector worked as a technical expert. He was trained to identify and rectify errors in the functioning of the system installed in the mechanical teachers.

**Q18. What idea do you form of the County Inspector as a person?**

**Ans.** The County Inspector was certainly a kind-hearted man. Instead of finding fault with Margie, he gave her an apple and told her mother that if Margie was not performing well, it was not her fault, but the fault of the mechanical teacher. He aligned the speed of the geography sector keeping in mind the level of the girl. Before leaving, he patted Margie on the head and expressed satisfaction at her performance.

**Q19. Why was Margie doing badly in geography? What did the County Inspector do to help her? (Textual)**

**Ans.** Margie was doing badly because the speed of the geography sector had been fixed too fast for her level. The County Inspector slowed down the speed to suit the level of an average ten-year-old. As Margie was of eleven years, she was comfortable with the new level set by the County Inspector.

**Q20. "Margie was disappointed," says the author. Why was she disappointed?**

**Or**

**How did the County Inspector disappoint Margie?**

**Ans.** Margie was disappointed because she hated school and hoped that her mechanical teacher would be taken away for repairs as Tommy's teacher was once taken away for a month. But when the County Inspector promptly repaired and reset it at her home itself, she was unhappy.

**Q21. What had once happened to Tommy's teacher? (Textual)**

**Ans.** Once, Tommy's mechanical teacher had developed a fault and its history sector had blanked out absolutely. The teacher had to be taken away for repairs and it had taken a month to put it in order.

**Q22. Did Margie have regular days and hours for school? If so, why? (Textual)**

**Ans.** Yes, Margie had regular days and hours for school. She studied from Monday to Friday at the same time every day. Although her school was a large black

television screen installed in her own house, she had to attend it regularly. Her mother thought that young girls learnt things better if they studied them at regular hours.

**Q23. How does Tommy describe the old kind of school?**

**(Textual)**

**Ans.** Tommy describes the old school as a special building where all the children went to study together. The students of the same age-group learnt the same things which were taught by human teachers.

**Q24. How does Tommy describe the old kind of teachers?**

**Ans.** Tommy tells Margie that the teachers in olden times were not mechanical but real men. They taught various things to boys and girls, gave them homework and also asked them questions. The teachers went to a special building called the school where they taught the children in the classrooms.

**Q25. How did Margie react when Tommy told her that twentieth-century schools had human teachers?**

**Or**

**Why did Margie remark, "How could a man be a teacher"?**

**Ans.** Margie made this remark when she heard Tommy mention that children were taught by human teachers in the times gone by. She could not believe the truth of Tommy's comment because she had not seen any human teacher; she was used to studying with the help of her mechanical tele-teacher only. Moreover, she believed that a human teacher could not match the mechanical teacher in intelligence and knowledge.

**Q26. Who interrupts Margie and Tommy's conversation? Why?**

**Ans.** Margie and Tommy were lost in unravelling the exciting mystery of the 'real' book that the latter had found in his attic, when Margie's mother interrupted them saying "Margie! School!" and she even suggested to Tommy that it was time for him to attend school, too.

**Q27. When Margie went to her school, what did the teacher on the screen teach?**

**Ans.** When Margie went to her school, which was a room next to her bedroom, the mechanical teacher taught an arithmetic lesson on the addition of proper fractions. It taught her how to add the fractions  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

**Q28. Why couldn't Margie concentrate on the Arithmetic lesson?**

**Ans.** Margie could not concentrate on the arithmetic lesson because her mind was pre-occupied with the thoughts about the school that Tommy had just described her. She was awestruck to learn that children studied together and were taught by real persons in these old schools. She thought how much fun those students must have had while studying together.

**Q29. Why did Margie think that children must have loved to go to school when her grandfather's grandfather was a little boy?**

Or

**Why did Margie feel that children in old times had fun while studying in school?**

Or

**why does Margie feel that learning was fun in the schools of the past?**

**Ans.** Margie attends a tele-school, which is just a machine in the room next to her bedroom and she studies alone unlike students of the schools in the bygone times. She feels that learning was more fun in those days because hundreds of children had the opportunity of congregating and studying together with the help of human teachers and printed books. Schools were huge buildings where a lot of activities could be carried out by students in groups. Compared to that, her present school is much too mechanical, boring, monotonous and demanding, and she hates it.

**Q30. What was Tommy's opinion about the 'real book'?**

**Ans.** Tommy found the 'real book' a waste as once read you, just throw it away. It did not seem interesting and useful. The words were fixed on it and not any other thing can be printed on it.

**Q31. How does Tommy describe the old kind of teachers?**

**Ans.** He says that the old teachers did not live in the house. They had a special building and all the kids went there. They gave homework to students. They were not mechanical teachers, but human beings.

**Q32. Who was the Country Inspector? What was his work?**

**Ans.** The country Inspector was the man who repaired the mechanical teacher. He adjusted the level of the teacher as per the child's requirements and intelligence.

**Q33. Why was Margie doing worse in geography? What did the County Inspector do to help her?**

**Ans.** Margie had been doing worse in geography because the mechanical teacher was very fast in displaying the questionnaire. The County Inspector adjusted its speed up to an average ten-year level. Thus, the mechanical teacher's speed was controlled appropriately. The County Inspector assured that the overall pattern of Margie's progress was quite satisfactory.

**Q34. Did Margie have regular days and hours for school? If so, why?**

**Ans.** Yes, Margie had regular days and hours for school because her mother said little girls learned better if they learned at regular hours.

**Q35. Why did Tommy pronounce the word 'centuries ago' carefully?**

**Ans.** Tommy pronounced the word carefully because he wanted to lay stress on the fact that the school was very old and it was quite different from theirs.

**Q36. What had once happened to Tommy's teacher?**

**Ans.** Once Tommy's teacher was taken away for about a month because the history sector had blanked out completely.

**Q37. What is the 'slot'? Why does Margie hate it?**

**Ans.** 'Slot' was a space in the mechanical teacher where each student is to put his homework and test assignments for marking. Margie hates it the most because she has to work hard to punch code for answering homework.

**Q38. Evaluate 'The Fun They Had' as a futuristic story.**

**Ans.** 'The Fun They Had' is a futuristic story. It tells us about the revolutionary changes that will come in the field of education in the 22nd century. Technology will replace the concept of old schools and printed books. Margie and Tommy are the students of the year 2157. They are taught in their bedrooms serving as virtual classrooms. A mechanical teacher will replace a human teacher. Computers and e-books will replace old printed books.

**Q39. How will the e-books be different from the old books that existed centuries ago?**

**Ans.** The very concept of 'the books' will change in the 22nd century. The e-books will replace old books. The books will not be printed on papers. The words will move on a TV/computer screen. The television screen may have more than a million

books on it.

40. **What did Margie's mother think about the teacher' and 'the school'?**

**Ans.** Margie's mother thought that every child had a different intelligence and capacity to understand things. The mechanical teacher should be adjusted to fit the mind of each boy and girl it taught. Each kid had to be taught differently. She thought that little girls and boys would learn better if they learned at regular hours at the 'school'.

**Q41. Describe the characteristics of the old school? How did it influence Margie?**

**Ans.** The old school had several characteristics — the children went to a big building. The man worked as a teacher and taught the boys and girls. The teacher gave them homework. He also asked them questions. They sat together and studied the same subject. In the old school, children studied and played together. It was quite opposite to the school that has been talked about in the chapter. Margie was very much influenced by the old school. In her class, she was busy thinking about the fun the children had at that time.

**Q42. Will future schools be completely devoid of humans and human values? Give a reasoned answer.**

**Ans.** Certainly, a revolutionary change will come in the field of education in future. The mechanical teachers and tele-books will dominate the scene. Every student will be taught by the mechanical teacher according to his or her ability. However, the institution of schools will remain in one form or the other. Human teachers will not disappear altogether. Education will never be completely devoid of humans and human values.

**Q43. Why did Tommy and Margie think the old book a wastage of resources?**

**Ans.** Because they found the words in the old book not moving. The pages had turned yellow and crinkly. Moreover, the old book could not last long.

**Q44. What difference did Margie's mother find in the old school?**

**Ans.** Margie's mother was of the opinion that children should be taught according to their individual needs. But in the old school, the children of the same age group studied the same things

**Important Long/ Detailed Answer Type Questions- to be answered in about 100 -150 words each**

**LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS (to be answered in about 100 – 150 words each)**

**Q1. How did a chance discovery of a paper book leave Margie and Tommy awestruck?**

**Ans.** Margie (9) and Tommy (13) are neighbourhood friends in the year 2157. It is an age of total automation, mechanisation, digitalisation and computerisation. Children do not go to a school building and they are not taught by a human teacher. Instead, their teacher is a tell teacher, a computer like a machine that has millions of books. It can be customised according to the age and learning needs and abilities of individual students. Reading is done on a screen that displays movable text. So, one day when Tommy finds an old, dusty paper book in the attic of his house, he shares the exciting news with his friend Margie and together they are awestruck, for they had hitherto never seen or heard about a book that had no screen but only fixed text on pages that had to be flipped with fingers. As the duo kept reading the book further and further, their excitement kept growing. They were awestruck to discover that ancient schools were huge buildings where hundreds of children studied together with the same syllabus, the same subjects and carried out the same activities and tasks. They were taught by real human teachers with the help of real books. Margie believes that students those days must have had a lot of fun studying together.

**Q2. What are the main features of the mechanical teachers and the schoolrooms that Margie and Tommy have in the story?**

**(Textual)**

**Ans.** Tommy and Margie are young school-going children in the year 2157. Schools and teachers have an entirely different form from the ones in the twentieth century. Margie and Tommy's school is not in a separate special building but in a room in their respective houses where the television or the mechanical teacher is placed. Each student has to sit and study alone with the help of the mechanical teacher. The 'teacher' assigns tests to the students and assesses their progress. The speed of the different subject sectors is fixed according to the age level of each student. There is a special slot in the tele-teacher where students have to insert their homework. If the mechanical teacher develops any fault, there are engineers to repair it. Sometimes the fault may be a major one and it takes longer to repair it, as was the case when Tommy's history teacher developed a snag.

Thus, the mechanical teachers and schoolrooms of Tommy and Margie are fully computerised and are completely different from the present day schools.

**Q3. Why did Margie hate school? Why did she think the old kind of school must have been fun?**

**(Textual)**

**Ans.** Margie hated school because it did not have any fun. Her schedule was too regimented and she had to study at a fixed time on all days of the week except Saturdays and Sundays. She did not have any classmates to study with and seek help from. Her mechanical teacher sometimes developed a snag and assigned the tests that were quite difficult for her. Constant failure to perform well in such tests was disappointing for her. There were times when she wanted a break, but the technical advancement of 2157 did not give her a chance. The County Inspector took just a little while to set right the Geography sector of her teacher.

She thought that the old kind of school must have been fun because unlike her school, the ancient schools were in special buildings where the students from the whole neighbourhood came laughing and playing. Students of the same level would be in the same room and were taught by human teachers. The students would sit together in the schoolroom, go home together, learn the same things, help one another with the homework and talk about it. Hence, schools in olden days did not restrain their students but gave them a chance to grow up together.

**Q4. Do you agree with Margie that schools today are more fun than the school in the story? Give reasons for your answer.**

**(Textual)**

**Ans.** Margie's school, as described in the story, seems to be a boring place where learning is a mere task. In comparison, schools today are more fun. Students get a chance to come out of their homes and travel to reach school. On their way, they laugh, play and have so much fun. The schoolyard too is a great open place where the students get a chance to interact informally with each other. They get an opportunity to share their experiences and help each other. Their learning schedule is also flexible and gives them enough time to have fun. They have so many extra-curricular activities which teach a lot of skills in a fun-filled way. Their teacher is a real person who makes them sit together and teaches them the same topic. In this way, they learn to adjust and adapt which helps them develop the values of tolerance and cooperation. Hence, Margie's view that schools today are more fun than her school is totally justified.

**Q5. Suppose you are Margie. Write a diary entry dated 17th May 2157 about Tommy's real book that he found in his attic.**

**Ans.**

Tuesday,

17th May 2157

10.00 p.m.

Dear Diary

It has been a wonderful day for me as I have seen a real, hard-bound printed paper book. In fact, Tommy found the book in the attic of his house when he was cleaning the cupboard of his grandfather. It consists of about 200 pages which have become yellow and crinkly with time. It is a strange experience to read the words fixed on its papers unlike the ones in my telebooks that keep moving as I scroll.

When I turn the page, I find the same words again. The book is about a school from olden times, about two centuries ago. Can you believe that in those times a school was not a room in one's own house but a special building dedicated to the purpose of teaching and learning! The students of the same level studied the same things sitting together in the same classroom. It is really wonderful to think that the teachers were men and not machines. I really believe that it must have been great fun for children to go to such schools together, laughing, joking, playing, and teasing each other. How wonderful it must have been that the students helped each other with lessons as well! I wish I could travel back in time and study in one of those schools.

Margie

**Q6. Why did Margie hate school? Why did she think the old kind of school must have been fun?**

**Ans.** Margie hated school because she had a mechanical teacher. It was at her house. She was supposed to sit in that room alone to complete her home task or assignments. The part Margie hated the most was the slot where she had to put homework and test papers. She thought that the old schools must have been fun because the students used to sit together in the classroom. They enjoyed, laughed and shouted in the schoolyard, going home together at the end of the day. They learned the same things so that they could help one another with homework and talk about it. All the teacher were people. Children needed a company to enhance their skills. If they are isolated, they get depressed and dejected.

**Q7. The old schools are considered fun by the modern generation. Explain.**

**Ans.** The ancient schools consisted of Gurukuls in which the students stayed in the building with the guru. Then with the change of time Gurukuls changed into schools. Hence the teacher and the student have a formal relationship. In these schools, teachers are human beings and books are real ones made of paper. Now with times, the modern generation's school replaced by e-text and computers. The future generation would envy when they come to know about the old system of education in which all the kids went to school together. They studied together, played together. They could have better innovative minds as they got a chance to discuss things with each other. The old system of education in which 'man' as a teacher could influence his students by the charisma of his personality. Future

generation would utter what fun the schools were long ago.

**Q8. Do you agree with Margie that schools today are more fun than the school in the story? Give reasons for your answer.**

**Ans.** There is no doubt that today's schools have more fun than the school discussed in the story. This school has nothing but a mechanical teacher with no emotions and sentiments. It does not have the ability to understand the psychology of a child. Moreover, it guides a pupil according to its adjusted modes. But today's schools work for the overall development of a child. They are given training in leadership, sports, politics and science. They learn how to adapt themselves to the new surroundings and cope with strangers. The students sit and learn together forgetting their caste, colour and creed. These activities don't give vent to the feelings of depression, alienation and segregation.

**Q9. Will the existing schools and teachers become totally irrelevant in future 'school'? Give a reasoned answer.**

**Ans.** Naturally, schools that existed centuries ago will not be the same in the coming centuries. The system of education will be highly computerised and mechanical. The 'school' will have no separate building. Nor will they be taught the same thing together. The mechanical teacher will be a big TV screen, good for a million books. The mechanical teacher will be adjusted according to the age and capacity of the student. But it will be an exaggeration to say that everything about the old schools will disappear. Even the future schools can't be completely devoid of the human angle. Perhaps the institution of the old schools and teachers will remain. Human involvement can't disappear altogether.

**Q10. Describe the characteristics of old schools. How did they arouse so much interest in Margie and Tommy?**

**Ans.** The good old students reflected the charm and romance of their times. Every school had its own buildings. Students from different parts of the town went there for studies. All the students in a class were taught the same things. They received the same kinds of homework. Hence, students could help one another. The teachers were real human beings. The books were printed on papers.

There was an air of romance about the old schools. Margie's interest was around about them. She got the relevant information about them from Tommy. In comparison to her mechanical teacher and her 'school', the old schools charmed Margie. She was fascinated by the way children went to their schools. They studied together. They were taught the same things. It was easier for them to help one another. Margie was rather envious of the fun the children had in old schools.

**Q11. Can you imagine a school without teachers and books? Give your opinion on the basis of the lesson 'The Fun They Had'.**

**Ans.** No one can deny the role of modern technologies in our lives and in our studies. Nowadays education is changing but schools without teachers and without books are beyond imagination. Without teachers, teaching would not be good because no one would be there to explain and to teach as well. No student would like the environment, it would be like an office. Teachers are very important for education. Teachers not only teach us different subjects but they also teach us to live in discipline and to live together. Teachers resolve the student's problem and doubt and if they aren't in schools the students don't study enough. As in the lesson Margie does not like her school, she finds it tedious as she does not have the opportunity to be with other students and to do every work together. Modern technologies can be taken as an aid to improve the standard of studies but the schools without books and teachers will never be preferred.

**Q12. What is the role of a teacher in the life of a student? How is a human teacher better than a mechanical teacher?**

**Ans.** Teachers play a very important role in the life of a student. They not only provide bookish knowledge but also inspire their student to live a meaningful and successful life. They burn themselves like a candle throughout their lives to remove the darkness and ignorance from their student's life. This can be done by a human teacher only. A mechanical teacher can provide ample knowledge on various subjects but he/she can not boost up their student to do something distinguished. There is a single mechanical teacher having various sectors geared up according to the level of the child. There is no companion, no playground and no fun at all. The teaching is mechanical and monotonous. Thus the human teachers are better than the mechanical teachers in many ways. They know individually intellect of their students which help them to guide them individually according to the mental level of students.

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**Value Based Questions and Answers of The Fun They Had (Will be available soon)**