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English — Class 9

Chapter(s): The Snake and the Mirror

Maximum Marks: 39

Time Allowed: 1 Hour 10 Minutes

Section A — MCQ & Assertion-Reason (1 mark each)

Q1. In the story, the doctor keeps admiring himself in the mirror. Which inference best explains why this detail is placed just before the snake appears? [1 mark]

- A) It establishes his insecurity so that the later theft feels more tragic than comic.
- B) It heightens the irony: his self-importance is punctured by sudden, real danger.
- C) It proves he is irresponsible with patients, making the snake episode a punishment.
- D) It foreshadows that the snake will attack because mirrors attract snakes.

Q2. Which chain of events is most logically supported by the text as the reason the doctor manages to escape without provoking the snake? [1 mark]

- A) He screams loudly, the snake gets startled, and it slips off his arm.
- B) He stays motionless, the snake turns to the mirror, and he exits quietly while it is distracted.
- C) He strikes the snake with the book, and it retreats to the roof beam.
- D) He blows out the lamp, and the snake cannot see him in the darkness.

Q3. The doctor says, "I was after all a bachelor, and a doctor too on top of it!" What does this line most strongly reveal about his mindset at that moment? [1 mark]

- A) He is evaluating his professional ethics because he fears making medical mistakes.
- B) He is building a self-image of importance and desirability based on status.
- C) He is regretting becoming a homeopath because it pays too little.
- D) He is hinting that he has already chosen a wife whom he will soon meet.

Q4. Which statement best captures the humour in the doctor's speculation about the snake at the mirror (moustache, eye shadow, vermilion spot)? [1 mark]

- A) It is humour through factual explanation of how snakes recognise predators.
- B) It is humour through attributing human grooming choices to an animal in a crisis.
- C) It is humour through describing medical terminology in a simplified manner.
- D) It is humour through insulting the snake to reduce fear among listeners.

Q5. When the doctor returns the next morning with his friend(s), the room is 'cleaned out'. Which conclusion is most consistent with the narrator's tone and the detail of what is left behind? [1 mark]

- A) The thief is portrayed as purely heroic because he leaves the doctor's belongings untouched.
- B) The incident is presented as a final comic twist: the loss is real, but the 'insult' is narrated wryly.
- C) The author suggests the snake itself stole the belongings, completing the supernatural theme.
- D) The doctor admits he had imagined the whole night and nothing actually happened.

Q6. Assertion (A): The story becomes humorous partly because the narrator's imagination stays active even when he is in real danger.

Reason (R): The narrator jokes about the snake making grooming decisions (like wearing a vermilion spot), which is an exaggerated personification. [1 mark]

- A) Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A.
- B) Both A and R are true but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- C) A is true but R is false.
- D) A is false but R is true.

Q7. Assertion (A): The narrator's quick escape depends on a shift in the snake's focus rather than on the narrator's physical strength.

Reason (R): The snake moves from the narrator's arm to the table and approaches the mirror, allowing the narrator to leave quietly. [1 mark]

- A) Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A.
- B) Both A and R are true but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- C) A is true but R is false.
- D) A is false but R is true.

Q8. Assertion (A): The 'rats' detail is used to create a realistic setting and also to build the narrator's unease before the snake appears.

Reason (R): The narrator says there was a regular traffic of rats to and from the beam, showing the room's neglected condition. [1 mark]

- A) Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A.
- B) Both A and R are true but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- C) A is true but R is false.
- D) A is false but R is true.

Q9. Assertion (A): The narrator's comment about the thief's 'sense of cleanliness' shows that the story uses humour even after the danger has ended.

Reason (R): The thief leaves behind the dirty vest, which the narrator calls a 'final insult'. [1 mark]

- A) Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A.
- B) Both A and R are true but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- C) A is true but R is false.
- D) A is false but R is true.

Q10. Assertion (A): The narrator is presented as completely fearless because he says, "I didn't jump. I didn't tremble. I didn't cry out."

Reason (R): The narrator immediately adds that there was 'no time' to do any of those things, showing the reaction is about suddenness, not bravery. [1 mark]

- A) Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A.
- B) Both A and R are true but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- C) A is true but R is false.
- D) A is false but R is true.

Section B — Very Short Answer (2 marks each)

Q11. Answer in exactly TWO sentences: The doctor says he smiled at the mirror earlier, and later he "forgot [his] danger and smiled feebly" when the snake was near. Contrast what each smile reveals about his self-perception. [2 marks]

Q12. Answer in exactly TWO sentences: Explain why the doctor's room details (no ceiling, open yard wall, rats moving on the beam) are important for understanding how the snake could enter and why the doctor felt unsettled even before seeing it. [2 marks]

Q13. Answer in exactly TWO sentences: The doctor calls the vest left behind by the thief a 'final insult'. Explain what this phrase suggests about both the thief and the narrator's tone. [2 marks]

Section C — Short Answer (3 marks each)
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Q14. Answer in 3 numbered points with headings (about 130-160 words): Evaluate how the story uses contrasts to create humour. Your points must cover (i) possessions vs aspirations, (ii) mirror-thoughts vs snake-thoughts, and (iii) danger vs the ending about the theft/vest. [3 marks]

Q15. Answer in 3 numbered points with headings (about 130-160 words): The doctor claims he did not jump or cry out, yet he says he was "turned to stone." Analyse this as a comment on courage vs helplessness, using textual evidence. [3 marks]

Q16. Answer in 3 numbered points with headings (about 130-160 words): Imagine you are advising a student on how to narrate a frightening incident humorously, as in 'The Snake and the Mirror'. Derive three techniques from this story and illustrate each with one specific reference to the text (no direct quotations needed). [3 marks]

Section D — Long Answer (5 marks each)

Q17. The story turns a life-threatening moment into humour. Analyse how the narrator uses contrasts to create this humour while also revealing his character. Answer in 220-280 words with: 1 introductory sentence, 5 numbered headed points (2 sentences each), and 1 concluding sentence. [5 marks]

Q18. The story creates comedy out of fear by making the narrator's mind race even when his body is frozen. Analyse how Vaikom Muhammad Basheer achieves this effect through narrative voice and detail selection. Answer in 220-280 words: write (1) ONE-sentence introduction, (2) 5 numbered points with headings (each point exactly 2 sentences), and (3) ONE-sentence conclusion. Your points must include: (a) how the setting details prepare the tone, (b) how the first-person voice shapes our judgement of the doctor, (c) how the mirror functions as a comic device at two different moments, (d) how timing/sequence of actions produces humour in the escape, and (e) how the ending with the theft/vest changes the emotional 'aftertaste' of the incident. [5 marks]

Section E — Case Study (4 marks each)

Q19. Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow: [4 marks]

A school's Eco-Club runs a "Room-Safety Audit" after a student narrates a frightening incident similar to the doctor's experience in a rented room. The club surveys 40 single-room rentals near the school. Their notes show: 22 rooms have open ventilation gaps near the roof/beam area; 28 rooms store food uncovered at night; 31 rooms lack proper lighting after 10 p.m. (depend on dim lamps); and 18 rooms keep a mirror or reflective surface near the study table or bed. In interviews, students say they feel "safe enough" if the door is locked, and several admit they often ignore repeated small sounds (like scurrying or soft thuds) because they assume it is "normal."

The club wants to design a one-page advisory that is not fear-mongering but actually changes behaviour. They decide to connect practical safety steps with a lesson from the story: sometimes attention is captured by what flatters or distracts, and real danger arrives quietly. They also plan a short role-play showing how humour can coexist with learning, but only if the message is clear.

- (i) Using the survey data, identify ONE risk factor that is most widespread and explain in one sentence why it increases vulnerability in situations like the doctor's. (1 mark)
- (ii) The club wants a slogan that uses the story's idea of distraction without sounding preachy. Write ONE slogan (maximum 12 words) that captures this message. (1 mark)
- (iii) Propose TWO specific advisory points for students that combine (a) an action step

from the case data and (b) a lesson from the doctor's behaviour during the incident. Write your answer as two numbered points. (2 marks)

English — Class 9
Chapter(s): The Snake and the Mirror

Section A — MCQ & Assertion-Reason (1 mark each)

A1.

Answer:

Correct option: (B)

It heightens the irony: his self-importance is punctured by sudden, real danger.

Explanation:

The doctor's grooming and self-admiration create a contrast between his imagined 'handsome' identity and the immediate life-threatening reality when the snake coils around him. This sharp shift is central to the story's humour and irony. Hence, option (B) is correct.

A2.

Answer:

Correct option: (B)

He stays motionless, the snake turns to the mirror, and he exits quietly while it is distracted.

Explanation:

The doctor describes being 'turned to stone' and holding his breath while the snake shifts its attention to the mirror, moving onto the table. He then quietly leaves through the door, using the snake's distraction as the enabling condition for escape. Hence, option (B) is correct.

A3.

Answer:

Correct option: (B)

He is building a self-image of importance and desirability based on status.

Explanation:

The line comes while he is grooming himself and trying to 'make his presence felt,' linking bachelorhood and being a doctor to attractiveness and social value. It shows vanity and an aspirational self-image rather than professional worry or an actual

marriage plan. Hence, option (B) is correct.

A4.

Answer:

Correct option: (B)

It is humour through attributing human grooming choices to an animal in a crisis.

Explanation:

The doctor imagines the snake making human-like cosmetic decisions, which is an exaggerated personification. This comic imagination clashes with the seriousness of the situation, creating humorous effect. Hence, option (B) is correct.

A5.

Answer:

Correct option: (B)

The incident is presented as a final comic twist: the loss is real, but the 'insult' is narrated wryly.

Explanation:

The theft is serious, yet the narrator treats the leftover dirty vest as a 'final insult' and jokes about the thief's 'sense of cleanliness.' This balances reality (loss) with humour (wry commentary). Hence, option (B) is correct.

A6.

Answer:

Correct option: (A)

Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A.

Explanation:

The assertion is true because the narrator continues thinking and imagining while frozen in fear, producing comic commentary in a tense moment. The reason is true and directly exemplifies how his imagination creates humour by personifying the snake's 'beauty' concerns. Hence, option (A) is correct.

A7.

Answer:

Correct option: (A)

Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A.

Explanation:

The assertion is true because the doctor does not fight the snake; he avoids provoking it

and relies on timing. The reason states the key plot movement-snake to mirror-which creates the exact opportunity for the silent exit. Hence, option (A) is correct.

A8.

Answer:

Correct option: (A)

Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A.

Explanation:

The assertion is true because the rat sounds and 'shared room' detail establish an uncomfortable, lived-in reality and tension. The reason gives the specific textual evidence about rat traffic and the room's structure, explaining how setting and unease are built. Hence, option (A) is correct.

A9.

Answer:

Correct option: (A)

Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A.

Explanation:

The assertion is true because the narrator continues to joke about events (theft) after surviving the snake incident. The reason correctly identifies the comic 'final insult' detail that directly explains how humour is sustained. Hence, option (A) is correct.

A10.

Answer:

Correct option: (D)

A is false but R is true.

Explanation:

The assertion is false because the text shows extreme fear ('turned to stone') rather than fearlessness; the lack of jumping/trembling is not proof of courage. The reason is true: 'no time' explains the absence of outward reaction as a result of sudden shock. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Section B — Very Short Answer (2 marks each)

A11.

Answer:

The first smile shows confident vanity: he admires his own attractiveness and wants to look important as a bachelor doctor. The later feeble smile shows nervous self-awareness, because the danger forces him to see his 'handsome' self as powerless and vulnerable in

front of death.

A12.

Answer:

The open structure (no ceiling and exposed beams) makes it believable that creatures like rats-and a snake-could move above him and drop down suddenly. The steady 'traffic of rats' and the night noises create a tense, uneasy atmosphere, so the doctor is already alert and uncomfortable before the real threat arrives.

A13.

Answer:

It suggests the thief stole valuable items but rejected the dirty vest, implying a picky 'cleanliness' standard that makes the loss feel mockingly personal. The narrator's tone is wry and comic because he turns even a humiliating detail of theft into a joke instead of narrating it only as tragedy.

Section C — Short Answer (3 marks each)
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A14.

Answer:

- 1) Possessions vs Aspirations: The doctor's reality is modest-an unelectrified rented room, meagre earnings, about sixty rupees, and one black coat-yet he behaves as if he must look impressive. This gap between what he has and how grandly he imagines himself creates comic irony.
- 2) Mirror-Thoughts vs Snake-Thoughts: Before the snake appears, his mind is on grooming and an 'attractive' smile, trying to 'make his presence felt.' When the cobra coils around him, the same mind becomes intensely alert, even praying internally, but he still imagines the snake as a vain creature admiring itself.
- 3) Danger vs Comic Ending: The threat is real and paralysing, yet the narration stays light. Even after surviving, the theft is narrated with a punchline-the dirty vest left behind-so fear and loss are both filtered through humour.

A15.

Answer:

- 1) Outward Control: The line "I didn't jump... I didn't cry out" can look like courage, but the narrator immediately clarifies there was "no time" for those reactions. The stillness is forced by suddenness and shock, not chosen bravery.
- 2) Inner Helplessness: "I was turned to stone" shows paralysis and terror; he cannot move a muscle while the hooded head is inches from his face. The repeated mention of darkness around the room intensifies this helplessness.

3) Mind as Survival Space: Even while frozen, his mind stays active—he senses a "great presence" and tries to write "O God" on his "little heart" in imagination. This mental activity highlights fear realistically and also leads to a practical outcome: staying still prevents provoking the snake until it shifts to the mirror.

A16.

Answer:

- 1) Use a Self-Important Narrator: Let the narrator describe themselves with exaggerated pride so the later fear looks funnier. Here, the doctor carefully grooms, values his looks, and links his bachelor-doctor status to importance.
- 2) Insert Comic Personification in Crisis: During the peak danger, add an absurd but controlled imaginative thought that does not break the plot logic. The doctor imagines the snake admiring itself and making human-style grooming decisions while it looks into the mirror.
- 3) End with a Wry Aftershock: After the main danger, add a realistic consequence but narrate it with a twist. The room being robbed is serious, yet the narrator frames the thief's leaving behind the dirty vest as a 'cleanliness' joke and a final insult, maintaining humour till the end.

Section D — Long Answer (5 marks each)

A17.

Answer:

Basheer's narrator makes fear funny by placing a self-important young doctor inside an absurdly dangerous situation.

- 1) Poverty vs Self-Projection: The doctor lives in a bare rented room, counting his meagre savings and possessions, which sets a humble reality. Yet he performs confidence in front of the mirror, showing a need to look "important" despite his limited status.
- 2) Mirror as Character-Revealer: His grooming is not vanity alone; it reveals ambition and insecurity as he tries to "make his presence felt." The mirror becomes a stage where he imagines a grand identity before reality interrupts.
- 3) Fear as Frozen Comedy: When the snake coils around his arm, the narration stays oddly controlled, almost clinical, which creates comic tension. His body is "stone," but his mind races, and that mismatch makes the terror strangely amusing.
- 4) Snake's 'Vanity' as Satire: The narrator imagines the snake deciding about moustache, make-up, and vermilion, turning a predator into a comic rival at the mirror. This personification satirises the doctor's own preening by reflecting it through the snake.
- 5) Ending Irony and After-Humour: His dramatic escape contrasts with the anticlimax of

losing belongings to a thief, and the final "insult" is the leftover dirty vest. The doctor's witty comments about cleanliness keep the humour alive even after danger.

Thus, humour arises from sharp contrasts that expose the narrator as ambitious, self-aware, and capable of laughing at himself.

A18.

Answer:

Basheer turns a potentially terrifying encounter into humour by letting the narrator's self-aware voice filter danger through irony and carefully chosen details.

1) Setting as Pressure-Cooker: The unelectrified rented room, darkness beyond the door, and the "traffic of rats" create a claustrophobic background that primes readers for dread. Because these details sound ordinary and factual, the later shock feels sharper-and the comedy arises when such a grim space hosts vanity and absurdity.

2) First-Person Voice and Self-Exposure: The doctor narrates himself as ambitious, image-conscious, and slightly theatrical, so we see his ego before we see the snake. This voice invites judgement and laughter because he admits his flaws openly, making him both unreliable in self-importance and reliable in honesty.

3) Mirror as Double Comic Trigger: Before the snake arrives, the mirror supports self-admiration, turning the doctor into the butt of gentle satire. During the crisis, the mirror redirects the snake's attention, and the same object becomes the hinge that flips terror into farcical "beauty" speculation.

4) Timing and Sequence in the Escape: The narration stresses simultaneity-his turning and the snake's landing-so suspense spikes without melodrama. Humour follows because the "heroic" escape depends less on bravery than on quiet opportunism when the snake chooses the mirror.

5) Ending and the Aftertaste of Irony: The theft episode deflates the relief of survival, shifting the story from fear to social comedy about poverty and human pettiness. The dirty vest left behind functions like a punchline that restores the narrator's mockery of himself and of others.

Thus, the story's comedy is not accidental; it is engineered through a candid voice, a symbolic prop, and a sequence that lets chance, not heroism, control the outcome.

Section E — Case Study (4 marks each)
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A19.

(i) Using the survey data, identify ONE risk factor that is most widespread and explain in one sentence why it increases vulnerability in situations like the doctor's.

Answer:

The most widespread risk factor is lack of proper lighting (31/40 rooms), because dim light reduces visibility and reaction time, making it harder to notice or track sudden movement like a snake entering from above.

(ii) The club wants a slogan that uses the story's idea of distraction without sounding preachy. Write ONE slogan (maximum 12 words) that captures this message.

Answer:

"Don't let small comforts distract you from quiet dangers."

(iii) Propose TWO specific advisory points for students that combine (a) an action step from the case data and (b) a lesson from the doctor's behaviour during the incident. Write your answer as two numbered points.

Answer:

- 1) Secure entry routes (close ventilation gaps, keep windows screened) because danger can arrive silently from above; like the doctor, stay alert to repeated sounds instead of normalising them.
- 2) Improve visibility and reduce attractors (use a bright light, avoid uncovered food at night) so you can assess risk quickly; like the doctor's calm exit, respond with controlled, planned movement rather than panic.