7. A Tryst with Destiny

COMPREHENSION

Read the following story and answer the questions that follow.

The young seagull was alone on his ledge. His two brothers and sisters had already flown away the day before. He had been afraid to fly with them. Somehow when he had taken a little run forward to the brink of the ledge and attempted to flap his wings, he became afraid. The great expanse of sea stretched out beneath, and it was such a long way down – miles down….He ran away back to the little hole under the ledge where he slept at night…His father and mother had come around calling to him shrilly, upbraiding him, threatening to let him starve on his ledge unless he flew away. But for the life of him, he could not move.

That was twenty four hours ago. Since then nobody had come near him….The sun was now ascending the sky, blazing warmly on his ledge that faced the south…Now there was not a single scrap of food left….And between him and his parents, there was a deep, wide chasm.

Only his mother was looking at him. She was standing on a little high hump on the plateau… Now and again, she tore at a piece of fish that lay at her feet, and then scraped each side of her beak on the rock. The sight of the food maddened him….

He waited a moment in surprise, wondering why she did not come nearer, and then, maddened by hunger, he dived at the fish. With a loud scream, he fell outwards and downwards into space. His mother had swooped upwards. As he passed beneath her, he heard the swish of her wings. Then, a monstrous terror seized him and his heart stood still. He could hear nothing. But it only lasted a moment. The next moment, he felt his wings spread outwards. The wind rushed against his breast feathers, then under his stomach and against his wings. He could feel the tips of his wings cutting through the air. He was not falling headlong now. He was soaring gradually downwards and outwards. He was no longer afraid. He just felt a bit dizzy. Then, he flapped his wings once and he soared upwards… And around him his family was screaming and praising him, and their beaks were offering him scraps of dog-fish.

He had made his first flight.   – 'His First Flight' by Liam O'Flaherty

A **Answer the following questions.**

    1. What made the young seagull afraid?

    _____

    2. How were his parents attempting to make him fly?

    _____

3. What was left to eat after twenty four hours?

_____

_____

4. How did his mother provoke him to fly?

_____

_____

5. What was his feeling when he first took a flight?

_____

_____

B **Fill in the blanks with suitable words from the box.**

| monstrous training maddened skim heart flying |
| dive flap brink still chasm deep ledge wide |

1. He ran to the _____ of the _____ and attempted to _____ his wings.

2. His parents flew about his brothers and sisters, _____ them in the art of _____, teaching them how to _____ the waves and _____ for fish.

3. Between him and his parents, there was a _____, _____ _____.

4. The sight of food _____ him.

5. A _____ fear seized him and his _____ stood _____ with terror.

GRAMMAR

A **Add the verb in the tense form given in the brackets to complete each sentence below.**

1. She _____ a song they had heard years ago. [sing – Past Progressive]

2. Mr James _____ the work on the fence. [complete – Present Perfect]

3. I _____ to Ambala tomorrow. [go – Simple Future]

4. Seema _____ since three o' clock. [Work – Present Progressive]

5. Lalit _____ me to call you urgently. [ask – Simple Past]

6. The lions in the zoo _____ a special meal. [eat – Past Perfect]

7. We _____ a speech by a special guest today. [hear – 'going to' form – Future Progressive]

8. The bullock that _____ the cart is tired. [pull – Present Progressive]

B **Change the tense of each verb as indicated below.**

1. See   -   Future Continuous
2. Play   -   Present Progressive
3. Light   -   Simple Past
4. Speak   -   Past Perfect
5. Go   -   Present Perfect
6. Stay   -   Future Progressive
7. Give   -   Past Perfect
8. Look   -   Present Progressive

VOCABULARY AND WRITING

A Write a letter to the Principal of your school asking for leave for one day as you have to go to see a dentist.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

B Use the phrases given in the box to complete the following sentences.

turn up   held up   worked out   carried away   pulled up

1. He was _____ by his temper.
2. I was _____ by the traffic.
3. Sarita was _____ by the teacher for untidy work.
4. Smita has said that she would come, but failed to _____.
5. Mohan _____ the answer to the problem quickly.

C Make sentences with the following words.

1. attempt   : _____
2. upbraid   : _____
3. starve   : _____
4. gradually : _____
5. headlong : _____