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## The Open Window

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## SUMMARY OF THE LESSON

The narrator, Framton Nuttel had some nervous disorder. He needed complete rest and no mental excitement. He was advised to settle in the country for cure. When he was preparing to migrate to the country his sister gave him a few letters of introduction to all the people. She knew these. One was addressed to Mrs. Sappleton.

Framton called her house. He knew nobody else there. Mrs. Sappleton was upstairs. Her niece Vera received the stranger. He didn't know whether Mrs. Sappleton was married or widowed. So the young girl, Vera decided to have some fun. She told him that the great mishap occurred some three years ago. She said that her aunt's husband with her two young brothers and a dog had gone out for day's shooting through the window. While crossing the grassland they sank into wet marshy ground. They never returned. Even their dead bodies could not be recovered.

Vera continued with her cooked up story. She said that poor aunt always kept the window open every evening. She thought that the hunting party would come back someday and enter through that window. Her husband carried a white waterproof coat while her youngest brother was in the habit of teasing her by singing 'Bertie, why do you bound?' Framton got frightened.

It was a relief to him when the aunt walked into the room. She hoped that the girl must have been amusing him. She added that the aunt was waiting for her husband and her two brothers to come home anytime. They would enter through the window and spoil her carpets with their muddy boots.

Framton made an effort to turn the talk to some other topic. So he started telling about his ailments. But the aunt's eyes were constantly turning to the open window and the lawn. She looked feeling bored with his details of illness.

Suddenly she saw the party returning home just in time for tea. Framton also saw through the open window with horror. Three

figures were walking towards the window. They all carried guns. One of them recited the song, saying, Bertie, why do you bound?

Framton took them all for ghosts. He collected his hat and stick. He ran out madly. He forced a cyclist run into a hedge.

Vera's uncle enquired about the stranger. The aunt described him as an extraordinary man Mr. Nuttel, who could only talk about his illnesses. Nuttel had perhaps, seen a ghost. But Vera said calmly that the stranger had a horror of dogs. Once the poor fellow had to spend the night in a grave with dogs growling above him.

Vera was good at finding occasions for fun.

## TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

## COMPREHENSION CHECK

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1. Why had Framton Nuttel come to the "rural retreat"?

Ans. Framton Nuttel was suffering from some nervous disorder and worry. So he decided to spend a few days in some village and relax in peace.

2. Why had his sister given him letters of introduction to people living there?

Ans. His sister knew that Framton would meet very few people in the countryside. He would feel lonely and bored. His condition could grow worse. So she gave him letters of introduction to all people she knew there. One was addressed to Mrs. Sappleton.

3. What had happened in the Sappleton family as narrated by the niece?

Ans. The niece played a practical joke on Sappleton when she came to know that he was a total stranger. She said that her aunt's husband, two brothers and a dog had gone for hunting through the window three years ago. They never returned. But the aunt was still hoping to see them back through the open window.

## COMPREHENSION CHECK

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1. What did Mrs Sappleton say about the open window?

Ans. Mrs Sappleton said that her husband and brothers would be entering the house any time. The window was kept open till it was dark. They would enter through the open window.

2. The horror on the girl's face made Framton swing around in his seat. What did he see?

**Ans.** Framton swung around to know the reason for the girl's horror. Soon he saw three figures coming towards the window.

### COMPREHENSION CHECK

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#### 1. Why did Framton rush out wildly?

**Ans.** The niece had told Nuttel that her aunt's husband and brothers had been missing for three years. When Framton saw them coming, he thought they were ghosts. So he rushed out wildly in fear.

#### 2. What was the girl's explanation for his lightning exit?

**Ans.** The girl explained that Framton had a bitter experience of the dogs. So he made a sudden exit on seeing the dog.

### EXERCISE

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#### Discuss in Small groups.

#### 1. Is this a mystery story? Give a reason for your answer.

**Ans.** The open window is not truly a mystery story. It shows the fertile imagination of a young girl. She plays a practical joke on Framton and tells a cooked up story. Poor Framton falls a prey to her prank and runs out of the house hurriedly.

#### 2. You are familiar with the 'irony' of the situation in a story. (Remember the cop and the Anthem in Class VII Supplementary Reader!) Which situations in 'The Open Window' are good examples of the use of irony?

**Ans.** 'Irony' refers to the contrast between what is intended or expected and what actually occurs. The open window has irony of situation. Poor Framton goes to countryside for rest and relief from his nervousness. But Mrs Sappleton's niece plays such a joke that he suddenly rushes out. He mistakes Mrs Sappleton's husband and brother as their ghosts.

#### 3. Which phrases/sentences in the text do you find difficult to understand? Select a few and guess the meaning of each. Rewrite a simple paraphrase of each.

**Ans.**

- Came into the nice division – The category of nice people.
- Masculine habitation. – The room seemed to suggest that there lived some male persons there.
- 'Bertie, why do you bound? – Bound means 'jump'. But here it means a person whose behaviour is unpleasant to other people.