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Ncert Solutions For Class 10 English Literature Drama The Dear Departed Summary

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Unlocking the World of Satire: A Complete Guide to The Dear Departed

Navigating the Class 10 English Literature syllabus can feel like a journey through a rich landscape of stories, poems, and plays. Among the most engaging and thought-provoking pieces is the one-act play, *The Dear Departed* by Stanley Houghton. For students seeking clarity and depth, finding reliable **NCERT Solutions for Class 10 English Literature Drama The Dear Departed Summary** is essential not just for exams, but for truly appreciating the wit and social commentary woven into the text. This article serves as your comprehensive companion, breaking down the plot, characters, themes, and key questions to help you master this classic piece of literature. Whether you are preparing for a test or simply want to understand the play's timeless relevance, you have come to the right place. Let us step into the peculiar world of the Slater family and discover the drama that unfolds when they believe their patriarch has passed away.

About the Playwright and the Context of the Drama

Stanley Houghton (1881-1913) was a prominent English playwright associated with the Manchester School of dramatists. His works are known for their realistic depiction of middle-class life, often laced with biting satire and sharp dialogue. *The Dear Departed*, first performed in 1908, is a brilliant one-act comedy that exposes the greed, hypocrisy, and superficiality that can lurk beneath the surface of family relationships. Written in the early 20th century, the play reflects the changing social dynamics of Edwardian England, where material concerns often began to overshadow traditional family values. Understanding this context enriches any **NCERT Solutions for Class 10 English Literature Drama The Dear Departed Summary**, as it highlights why the characters behave the way they do.

Detailed Summary of The Dear Departed

Scene 1: The Hasty Mourning in the Slater Household

The play opens in the sitting room of the Slater family, a modest but functional home. Mrs. Slater, a bustling and domineering woman, is busy making preparations. She has just received news that her father, Abel Merryweather, has "passed away" in his sleep. Instead of genuine grief, her primary reaction is one of frantic, calculating energy. She instructs her daughter, Victoria, to put on her best black dress and, more importantly, to be careful and not touch anything in her grandfather's room.

Mrs. Slater's first and most telling action is to take her father's new slippers and lock them away. She reasons that since her sister, Mrs. Jordan, will be coming over, she must secure any valuables before they arrive. This

act of petty theft sets the tone for the entire play. She also instructs her husband, Henry, a meek and passive man, to put on his "respectable" black coat. Henry, who is more concerned with his own comfort and the inconvenience of the situation, reluctantly complies. The initial summary of this scene is crucial for **NCERT Solutions for Class 10 English Literature Drama The Dear Departed Summary** as it establishes the themes of greed and pretense.

Arrival of the Jordans: A Competition in Grief

The atmosphere becomes tense with the arrival of Mrs. Jordan, her husband Ben, and their daughter. Unlike the Slaters, the Jordans are slightly more pretentious. Mrs. Jordan immediately begins to express her sorrow, but it feels equally performative. The two sisters engage in a thinly veiled competition over who loved their father more. They argue over minor details – who was told first, who arrived quicker, and who is more devastated by the loss.

A key point of conflict arises over the insurance policy and the fate of Abel's belongings. The slippers are mentioned, and Mrs. Slater is caught in a lie when she claims she had given them to her father just last Christmas. The conversation quickly turns to the division of property. Mrs. Slater tries to claim her father's bureau, while Mrs. Jordan sets her sights on the clock and his gold watch. The hypocrisy is laid bare as they squabble over material possessions before their father is even buried. This element of competition is a central focus in any detailed **NCERT Solutions for Class 10 English Literature Drama The Dear Departed Summary**.

The Shocking Twist: Abel Merryweather is Not Dead

The climax of the play arrives with a sudden and dramatic twist. Just as the families are actively planning the funeral and dividing the spoils, a loud knocking is heard from upstairs. Everyone freezes in terror. The sound is not from a ghost, but from Abel Merryweather himself, who is very much alive. He had simply been in a deep, drunken sleep, which his family mistook for death.

Abel descends the stairs, confused and annoyed by the commotion. He is a sharp, no-nonsense old man. The family is thrown into a panic. The fake mourning instantly evaporates, replaced by awkward attempts to explain away their behavior. Abel is not fooled. He quickly pieces together what has happened. He sees the new slippers in his daughter's hand, the black clothes everyone is wearing, and the guilty looks on their faces.

Scene 2: Abel's Revenge and a Lesson in Values

The second scene takes place the following morning. The family is trying to salvage the situation. Mrs. Slater and Mrs. Jordan try to convince their father that they were just mistaken, but Abel sees through their lies. He is deeply hurt by their greed. When they again resume their argument over his possessions, Abel decides to teach them a lesson.

He announces that he has changed his will. He declares that he is going to marry Mrs. Shorrocks, the landlady of the local pub, "The Ring o' Bells." He will leave everything he owns to her, including the bureau and the clock that his daughters covet. The sisters are horrified, and their facade of concern finally crumbles. Abel criticizes them for their materialism and lack of genuine affection. He asks them why they didn't fetch a doctor or show any real concern for his well-being. The play ends with Abel triumphantly leaving the house, ready to start a new life with someone who values him for who he is, not what he owns. This powerful conclusion is a highlight of the **NCERT Solutions for Class 10 English Literature Drama The Dear Departed Summary**.

Character Analysis: The Pillars of the Play

Abel Merryweather

Abel is the moral center of the play. He is a practical, sharp-witted, and independent old man. Despite being the victim of his family's greed, he is not a passive character. He takes control of his own destiny and delivers a

fitting punishment. His decision to marry Mrs. Shorrocks is not just spiteful; it is a rational choice for a man who wants companionship and respect in his old age.

Mrs. Slater

Amelia Slater is the epitome of selfishness and hypocrisy. She is greedy, dishonest, and quick to act on her impulses. She is the one who initiates the looting of her father's belongings. She bullies her husband and tries to dominate her sister. Her character represents the worst of materialistic tendencies.

Mrs. Jordan

Elizabeth Jordan is more pretentious than her sister but equally greedy. She tries to maintain a veneer of social respectability and is often critical of the Slaters' lower standards. However, when it comes to claiming her father's property, she is just as ruthless. Her rivalry with Mrs. Slater is a source of much of the play's comedy.

Henry Slater and Ben Jordan

These two husbands are largely passive figures. Henry is weak, lazy, and always looks for the easy way out. He is more concerned with his meals and his comfort than with the family drama. Ben is slightly more observant but also lacks the moral courage to stand up to his wife. They serve as foils to the dominant women in the play.

Victoria Slater

Victoria is the only character who shows genuine discomfort with the family's actions. She is a young girl who is confused and upset by the greed and hypocrisy she witnesses. She acts as a conscience for the audience, reminding us of the moral norms that are being broken.

Major Themes and Literary Devices

Greed and Hypocrisy

This is the central theme of the play. The daughters mourn not the loss of their father, but the inconvenience of his death to their plans. Their immediate reaction is to secure their inheritance. This hypocrisy is laid bare for the audience to see and judge. A good set of **NCERT Solutions for Class 10 English Literature Drama The Dear Departed Summary** will always emphasize this sharp critique of society.

Family Relationships

The play explores the fragility of family bonds when tested by materialism. The relationship between the sisters is not one of love but of rivalry. Their connection to their father is transactional. The play asks a vital question: what is the true value of family when money is involved?

Appearance vs. Reality

The entire plot hinges on this theme. The appearance of death (Abel in a deep sleep) is mistaken for reality. The appearance of grief is a performance for social expectations. The characters pretend to be caring children while being driven by self-interest.

Satire and Irony

Stanley Houghton uses satire to mock the social pretenses of the middle class. The most powerful device is dramatic irony. The audience is fully aware of the family's greed while they continue their charade. The final irony is that Abel, the "dear departed," is not departed at all, and he gets the last laugh.

Key Questions and Answers for NCERT Solutions

For students seeking **NCERT Solutions for Class 10 English Literature Drama The Dear Departed Summary**, here are some common and important questions that appear in exams and assignments, answered concisely.

Q: Why did Mrs. Slater take her father's slippers?

A: Mrs. Slater took the new slippers to prevent her sister, Mrs. Jordan, from claiming them. It was an act of pure greed and a calculated move to secure a valuable item for herself before the inheritance could be discussed.

Q: Describe the relationship between Mrs. Slater and Mrs. Jordan.

A: Their relationship is based on rivalry and pretence. They are competitive with each other and harbor jealousy. They try to outdo each other in expressing false grief and both are equally interested in getting their father's valuables. They do not share a genuine sisterly bond.

Q: How does Abel Merryweather discover the truth about his family?

A: Abel discovers the truth through several clues: the black clothes everyone is wearing, their startled and guilty reactions upon seeing him alive, the argument over his possessions, and most importantly, his own sharp observation. He is not fooled by their weak explanations.

Q: What is the significance of Abel's decision to marry Mrs. Shorrocks?

A: Abel's decision is his way of taking revenge on his daughters for their greed and lack of genuine love. It is also a declaration of his independence. He chooses a life of companionship with someone who values him, rather than being a burden or an asset to be fought over by his family.

Q: Who is the most humorous character in the play? Give reasons.

A: Many find Henry Slater to be a humorous character. His lethargy, his focus on food, and his clueless comments in the midst of high drama provide comic relief. His inability to grasp the seriousness of the situation and his simple-mindedness contrast sharply with the scheming women around him.

Why This Play Matters for Class 10 Students

Reading and analyzing *The Dear Departed*is not just an academic exercise. The play is a mirror held up to society. It encourages students to think critically about values, relationships, and the true meaning of family. It teaches a powerful lesson about the dangers of materialism and the importance of genuine affection over superficial gestures. The drama is also a masterclass in satire and dialogue, showing how a story can be both entertaining and deeply meaningful. By working

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