

SELVI

R.K. NARAYAN

1. What was Selvi's profession? How does R. K. Narayan describe her popularity?

⊗ Selvi was a singer by profession.

⊗ R. K. Narayan describes Selvi as a divine being and to the people her voice was like goddess Saraswathi.

2. "What was the name of Mohan's house? Where was it situated?"

⊗ Mohan and Selvi lived in Lawley Terrace.

⊗ It was situated on the road to Mempi Hills, five miles away from the city.

3. Who was the original owner of Lawley Terrace?

⊗ Sir Frederick Lawley was said to be the original owner of the building.

4. Why does R. K. Narayan describe Mohan as financial expert?

⊗ R. K. Narayan describes Mohan as a financial expert because all the time he always remains

busy in thinking of money income and even during concert, he always remains busy in doing complex arithmetic about the money calculation regarding music concert. Besides, Mohan knows how to avoid income tax.

5. Who was Mohan? What was his early profession?

⊗ Mohan was the husband of renowned singer Selvi.

⊗ He was a studio photographer in his own studio in his early life.

6. How did Mohan come to know with Selvi's family?

⌘ Once Selvi received prize in school music competition and for her school magazine she needed a photo. So, her mother brought her to a studio owned by Mohan. From then, as a well-wisher of their family, Mohan became familiar to their family.

7. “She went through her career like an automaton”—Name the person referred to here? Why is the person compared to an automaton?

⌘ Here Selvi is the referred person.

⌘ Selvi is compared to an automaton because she performed every act or spoke every word as she was directed by her husband Mohan. She had not own desire or intention.

8. “I cannot bear the sight of anyone”—Who is the speaker? Why cannot the speaker bear the sight of anyone?

⌘ Here the speaker is Selvi.

⌘ The speaker cannot bear the sight of anyone because she is in sorrow due to her mother’s death and now, she can realize that she had neglected her mother very much.

9. “Ungrateful wretch”—Who is the speaker and who is called ‘ungrateful wretch’? describe the occasion.

⊗ Here the speaker is Mohan and Mohan called Selvi 'ungrateful wretch'.

⊗ After several negligence, when at last Mohan came to meet his wife Selvi at her mother's house at 11PM, Selvi did not welcome him. Rather she told him to go away because it was not the correct time to meet a lady. At that time, Mohan remarked the quoted statement.

10. "Still a lot of time"—Who is the speaker? About whom was this remark been made and when?

⊗ In the story Selvi by R. K. Narayan, Selvi could have made this remark for her husband Mohan.

⊗ After every concert, when she was mobbed by autograph hunter, her husband Mohan would call her otherwise she might be

late for train. At that moment Selvi wished to say the quoted line.

11. How did Mohan take care of Selvi's beauty?

⊞ Once Mohan realised that Selvi needed some touching up. According to his direction, her eyebrows were trimmed and arched. For her complexion, he selected the corrected skin cream and talcum powder. Thus her beauty got a confounding classification.

12. How did Mohan follow Gandhiji?

⊞ Mohan was blind follower of Gandhiji. He wore only cloth spun by hand and gave up all inessential luxuries. He led his life in very simple way.

13. How did Selvi confuse her audience when she came on the stage?

⌘ When Selvi came on the stage, she looked radiant than dark, brown or fair. It made the audience confused and guessing and debating them over the original skin colour of Selvi.

14. Who was Varma?

⌘ Varma was the owner of Boardless hotel. He was one of Selvi's worshippers. He liked to hear the conversation among customers about Selvi and to him Selvi was goddess Saraswathi.

15. What was Varma's long-time desire? Did his desire come true?

⌘ Being a blind worshipper of Selvi, it had been a long-time desire of Varma to offer Selvi, the goddess Saraswathi a cup of coffee or sweets from his own hand.

⌘ But whenever he carried gifts for her, she took it and turned him back from the porch with a word a formal word of thanks. So, his desire did not fulfil completely.

16. How did Mohan keep Selvi in the Lawley Terrace?

⌘ In the Lawley Terrace, Mohan kept Selvi in the house like a fortress of invisible walls. He made her fatted to spend her life in solitary confinement. She was not allowed to talk or meet anyone with Mohan's presence.

17. How were visitors treated in their house?

⌘ All day long, visitors used to come to meet or see Selvi. But none of them were welcomed in the house except the selected personalities. Rest of them took seat wherever they got and returned home when they lost their patience.

18. How was the house the Mohan? When was it built?

⌘ Mohan's house was called Lawley Terrace. It displayed arches, columns, gables. It had six oversized rooms built on two floors. The doors and windows were made in Gothic Style.

⌘ This house was built in East India Company days by Sir Frederick Lawley whose statue stood in the town square.

19. Describe the tree which was special among the other trees situated in the Lawley Terrace property?

⌘ The Lawley Terrace property was wooded with huge trees and among them, a tree that might be Elm or Oak or Beech is very special. It was told that Sir Frederick brought the seedling from England and planted that. It was the only one of its kind in India.

20. Why had Lawley Terrace no inhabitant? Why did Mohan choose to buy it?

⌘ Lawley Terrace had not tenant because it was said that Sir Frederick's ghost used to hover about the house and this type of many tales were told in Malgudi about this house.

⌘ Mohan did not hesitate to buy the house because he knew that Gandhiji's non-violence made the country free from British and being

a follower of Gandhiji he believed that he would be able to rid the place of a British ghost by the same technique.

21. How did Mohan earn so much money to buy the house?

⊞ Mohan earned money to buy the house when Selvi lent her voice to film star who just moved her lips following Selvi's singing.

22. How did Mohan build Selvi's image to the high stature?

⊞ Mohan built Selvi's image to the high stature by effortful publicity and word-of-mouth recommendation and winning the favour of every journalist and music critic.

23. What happened when Selvi's name acquired a unique charm?

⊗ when Selvi's name acquired a unique charm, her photo began to appear in every popular paper and magazine. Her demand for concert began to increase. Organizers of concerts began to come to her from all over the country.

24. How did Mohan behave with organizers and why?

⊗ When concert organisers came to book a show, Mohan would tell them that the schedule is tight so they might leave their proposal and might contact in October in 1981.

⊗ Thought there was vacancy in schedule, Mohan always did so only to preserve the rarity value of Selvi.

25. What happened when Mohan accepted anyone's concert proposal?

⊗ When Mohan accepted any organizer's proposal, that organizer felt grateful and willing paid half of the exorbitant fee in advance without receiving any receipt. Sometimes Mohan would tell them that all the earnings would go to a fashionable social service organization having well-known members.

26. How did Mohan keep good public relation?

⊗ Besides earning money, Mohan kept an eye on public relation. And that's why he joined selected and exclusive parties. Sometimes he invited eminent men and

woman as well as international figure to dinner at his house.

27. Which photographs were on the wall of Mohan's house?

⊞ On the walls of Lawley Terrace, there were framed photographs of Selvi and Mohan with different strangest personalities like Tito, Bulganin, Yehudi Meuhin, John Kennedy, Nehru Family, Pope, Charlie Chaplin, Yogis, sportsman, political figure. All the photos were taken under various circumstances and backgrounds.

28. Where did Selvi's mother live and how was their house?

⊞ Selvi's mother lived in a back row of Vinayak Mudali Street in Kolkata. Their house

was a small one with tiles falling off. They had not much wealth to repair them.

29. From where did Selvi Learn her music?

⊗ She learnt her music from her mother. Her brother and sister accompanied her on their instrument.

30. Why did Mohan visit Selvi's house? What did he do then?

⊗ As well-wisher of Selvi's, Mohan very often visited Selvi's house in Vinayak Mudali Street in Kolkata.

⊗ Then he sat in a single chair, drank coffee. Very often, he requested Selvi to sing a song for him. When Selvi began to sing, to impress her, he dramatically left the chair, sat down on

the floor with closed eyes in an attitude that as if he had been absorbed in the song and behaved in a way that he should not sit on a high place like a chair in front of such an inspiring artist.

31. How did Selvi react when she saw the huge Lawley Terrace for the first time?

⊗ When Selvi saw the huge Lawley Terrace for the first time, she did not react at all. She just walked through the house as if she was going through the museum and she was just heard to remark that the house looked big. Even the gigantic furniture of the house did not make her surprised.

32. What did Selvi do when she was called to “pack and get ready”?

⌘ When Selvi was told to pack and get ready, she filled a trunk with her clothes, toiletry and tonic pills and got ready for journey. She even did not ask where they were going for concert. She just sat in the reserved seat when she was told to do so.

33. How did Selvi's appearance amazed the audience?

⌘ Selvi became so famous that all her followers considered her the goddess of Saraswathi. When her name was announced in the concert hall, the hall became fulfilled. When she came on the stage, audience was thrilled and gave a thundering ovation. As soon as she just started singing, a silence fell among the audience.

34. What did Mohan do during Selvi's concert?

⊞ During Selvi's concert, as per the custom, Mohan occupied the centre seat of the first row in the hall and pretended to be absorbed completely in her melody. Actually, he did money calculation in his mind and noticed the special guest's reaction to Selvi's song. Besides he noticed whether anyone had entered the hall with tape-recorder.

35. How did Mohan plan Selvi's concert?

⊞ Though Selvi was the singer, she had no right to plan or choose her song. Her husband Mohan did all of them. Mohan would tell Selvi to Sing Thyagaraja's song, Todi composition etc. Even he suggested her not to sing song like of Pallavi.

36. When did Mohan do when any heavyweight guest visited Lawley Terrace?

⊞ When any heavyweight guest like MD of a textile mill or a newspaper editor visited Lawley Terrace, Mohan would call Selvi and as a custom, Selvi would come out of her room after ten minutes. Then she would convey a namaste and smile with her palms gently pressed together.

37. What did the distinguished guests do after meeting Selvi in Lawley Terrace?

⊞ After meeting Selvi in Lawley Terrace, the distinguished visitor generally mentioned Selvi's last concert. They confessed how they were moved deeply by her song and also, they told how a particular song kept ringing in her ear all the evening.

38. What made Mohan gratified?

⊞ When Mohan noticed that Selvi spoke and acted as he had taught her to speak or express gestures and attitudes, it made Mohan supremely gratified. Also having made Selvi a successful celebrity, he took pride in it.

39. How did Mohan separate Selvi from her family?

⊞ After marriage and fame, Mohan gradually isolated Selvi from her family. Whenever Selvi wanted to meet her mother and family, somehow Mohan rejected or ignored the proposal showing less important reasons. Sometimes he suggested to bring her family in Lawley Terrace. Thus, he isolated her.

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