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**10-12-2022**

**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)**

**END SEMESTER EXAMINATION - DECEMBER 2022**

**III SEMESTER BA/BSC/BCOM/BBA/BCA/BVC/BSW**

**L2 GENERAL ENGLISH: L2 GE 322 (REGULAR)**

**TIME: 2 hours Max marks: 60**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

**1. This paper is for students who have chosen the REGULAR General English course.**

**2. Please mention English - Regular in the Subject Column.**

**2. This paper has THREE printed sides**

**3. You will lose marks for exceeding word limits.**

**4. You are allowed to use a dictionary during the examination.**

**I. Read the following article titled “From Hoarder to Nurturer, How Gardening Helped Me Grow”by Anisha Ralhan from *Arré* published on September 8, 2022.**

I wasn’t born with a green thumb. I have killed more plants than Weiss and Benioff have killed the beloved Starks in ‘Game of Thrones’. I have been infamously called the Ted Bundy of horticulture. My long list of victims includes a bamboo bonsai, a cactus, and a succulent whose name I didn’t bother to find out. I didn’t murder them intentionally, of course. As a single, independent women living in a new city in her early twenties, I was too busy finding a boyfriend, nursing hangovers and stalking Brad Pitt online. I just happened to do what I saw a lot of people doing.

After the death toll rose to a double-digit number, I stopped buying plants and accepted my leaf-less existence the way one accepts one’s flat feet or freckles—without paying it any further attention whatsoever. Back then, I promptly skipped the Insta stories featuring garden herbs that my digital acquaintances were working on. When a friend told me excitedly that she had bought plants but no furniture for the flat she was to move in the next week, I rolled my eyes. Each time I read bios that had the words ‘plant papa’ in it, my brain shook in horror.

I was convinced gardening is dumb, and boring—a hobby for people with no social life, so to speak.  It’s 2022. I’m no longer single, in my twenties or a Brad Pitt stalker. I see my three friends once in three months. I don’t bar-hop, I get high on Ikea promotions. I also have a humble balcony garden. Undead. Thriving rather. Sometimes I sit and try to think how this transformation has come about. How did I go from plant-hopping to caring, nurturing them like my own?

It all began with an aloe vera sapling that my mother-in-law pulled out of her well-pruned garden after hearing me complain about the useless anti-acne serums I had burned a sizeable chunk of my monthly salary on. Given my horrific past, my first reaction was to come clean and confess my crimes. I wanted to warn her that aloe’s blood would be on her hands. Not mine.

I remained quiet. The promise of acne-free skin was too tempting to pass. Selfish motive still, you could say.

Shockingly, Al grew tall despite all odds. It survived the menacing sun with little to no water week after week. It survived in a less than ideal home (a ceramic pot without drainage holes—my first rookie mistake), it survived the haunting gaze of Mowgli, my cat. Al was resilient and this resilience quite possibly began to rub off on me. Impressed by my plant’s tremendous fortitude, I brought home a modest four-inch basil. Then marigold. Followed by jade and mint. After a few failed attempts, I learned to propagate herbs with stem cuttings. Meanwhile, My Google search history indicated all signs of me turning into a crazy plant lady. I began sneaking out to nurseries on the pretext of picking up groceries. I spent a significant amount of my waking hours listening to random strangers on the Internet explain the difference between potting soil and potting mix. I had finally found something to give myself to, without the caveat of risking my health or emptying my pockets.

Like maybe anti-ageing creams, long-massages, and the cumbersome act of saving old receipts, gardening, is one of those things that make sense only as you grow older. It’s an experience situated outside the body and yet its therapeutic, humbling effects are almost all internal. There is the slowing down of heart rate as you mindfully water your greens, there is the dopamine released when you sight a butterfly humming around your desert rose. There is the quiet buzz of inhaling scented jasmine that doesn’t come out of a glass bottle. These are basic things really, but in the middle of hectic, systematised lives they have begun to represent for me an oasis of organic calmness. A relationship that only delivers more than it demands.

Like all forms of therapy though, gardening takes time to grow on you. It’s not going to satisfy you like maybe the click of an app. Fancy Bonsais and plants look good in the background of your workplace, but in the real world they have to be nurtured, cared for. It’s this process that grounds you, maybe instils in you the patience that none of us have today. You can’t will a seed into germinating quickly. You can’t add a sapling to the cart and expect it to arrive at your doorstep in twenty minutes, fully bloomed. It’s clichéd, of course, but with nurturing little saplings of your own, it’s the journey. A journey that saved me in times of mental exhaustion.

**I.A. Answer ANY FIVE of the following questions in 4 – 5 sentences each:**

**(5X5=25)**

1. How did thewriter become interested in gardening?

2. Why does the writer say her relationship with plants ‘only delivers more than it demands’?

3. What does the writer mean by ‘gardening takes time to grow on you’?

4. The writer calls her aloe vera plant ‘Al.’ What does this name suggest about her relationship with the plant?

5. How does the article show you the writer’s frustration with the plants? Explain using an example from the passage.

6. The writer accepted her ‘leaf-less’ existence initially. How would you describe her experience towards the end of the passage?

**I.B. Answer the following questions in about 100–150 words each. (2X10=20)**

6. Do you think gardening isa hobby for people with no social life or does it enhance social life? Argue your points with examples.

7. The writer confesses her crime of killing the plants. Is she right in calling it a crime? Explain.

**I.C. Answer ANY ONE of the following questions in about 150–200 words. (1X15=15)**

8. The writer presents gardening as a way to ease mental exhaustion. What methods do you adopt when you are in stress? Write an argument in favour of your hobby as a stress buster.

9. “Gardening is one of those things that make sense only as you grow older.” Do you agree? Explain. Have you had any such experience with a plant or animal? Narrate your experience.