

In The Attic - Memoir Of Wladyslaw Szpilman

Summary

1. The First Encounter (ആദ്യത്തെ കൂടിക്കാഴ്ച)

- During WWII, Wladyslaw Szpilman, a Jewish pianist hiding in ruins, is discovered by a German officer who asks about his profession.

രണ്ടാം ലോകമഹായുദ്ധകാലത്ത്, തകർന്നടിഞ്ഞ കെട്ടിടങ്ങളിൽ ഒളിച്ചിരിക്കുകയായിരുന്ന ജൂതനായ പിയാനിസ്റ്റ് വ്ലാഡിസ്ലാവ് സ്‌പിൽമാനെ ഒരു ജർമ്മൻ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥൻ കണ്ടെത്തുകയും അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ തൊഴിലിനെക്കുറിച്ച് ചോദിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.

2. The Piano Performance (പിയാനോ പ്രകടനം)

- The officer leads Szpilman to a piano and asks him to play; despite being out of practice for over two years, he plays Chopin's Nocturne in C sharp minor.

ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥൻ സ്‌പിൽമാനെ ഒരു പിയാനോയുടെ അടുത്തേക്ക് കൊണ്ടുപോയി അത് വായിക്കാൻ ആവശ്യപ്പെടുന്നു; രണ്ട് വർഷത്തിലേറെയായി പരിശീലനം ലഭിച്ചിട്ടില്ലെങ്കിലും അദ്ദേഹം ചോപ്പിന്റെ (Chopin) നോക്ടേൺ വായിക്കുന്നു.

3. The Hiding Place and Protection (ഒളിത്താവളവും സംരക്ഷണവും)

- After realizing Szpilman is Jewish, the officer helps him hide in a secret loft above the attic to keep him safe from discovery.

സ്‌പിൽമാൻ ജൂതനാണെന്ന് മനസ്സിലാക്കിയ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥൻ, അദ്ദേഹത്തെ മറ്റുള്ളവർ കണ്ടെത്താതെ സുരക്ഷിതമായി ഇരിക്കാൻ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന് മുകളിലുള്ള ഒരു രഹസ്യ മട്ടുപ്പാവിൽ ഒളിച്ചിരിക്കാൻ സഹായിക്കുന്നു.

4. Acts of Kindness (കാരുണ്യപ്രവൃത്തികൾ)

- The officer brings Szpilman bread and jam, and later provides a warm eiderdown and a German military overcoat to survive the winter.

സ്‌പിൽമാന് അതിജീവിക്കാനായി ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥൻ ഭക്ഷണവും ജാമും എത്തിച്ചു നൽകുന്നു. കൂടാതെ ശൈത്യകാലത്തെ അതിജീവിക്കാൻ കമ്പിളിപ്പുതപ്പും ഒരു ജർമ്മൻ സൈനിക കോട്ടും നൽകുന്നു.

5. The Final Meeting (അവസാന കൂടിക്കാഴ്ച)

- Before his detachment leaves Warsaw, the officer says goodbye; Szpilman gives his name and offers to help the officer at Polish Radio after the war.

വാർസോയിൽ നിന്ന് തന്റെ സൈനിക വിഭാഗം പോകുന്നതിന് മുമ്പ് ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥൻ യാത്ര ചോദിക്കുന്നു. സ്വിൽമാൻ തന്റെ പേര് വെളിപ്പെടുത്തുകയും യുദ്ധശേഷം പോളിഷ് റേഡിയോയിൽ വെച്ച് ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥനെ സഹായിക്കാമെന്ന് വാഗ്ദാനം ചെയ്യുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.

6. Liberation and Survival (മോചനവും അതിജീവനവും)

- Warsaw is liberated in January 1945; Szpilman is nearly shot by Polish soldiers for wearing the German coat but eventually proves his identity.

1945 ജനുവരിയിൽ വാർസോ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യമാക്കപ്പെട്ടു. ജർമ്മൻ കോട്ട് ധരിച്ചതിനാൽ സ്വിൽമാനെ പോളിഷ് സൈനികർ വെടിവെക്കാൻ ഒരുങ്ങിയെങ്കിലും ഒടുവിൽ അദ്ദേഹം തന്റെ പോളിഷ് സ്വത്വം തെളിയിക്കുന്നു.

English Word	Malayalam Meaning	Contextual Meaning
Abruptly	പെട്ടെന്ന്	Suddenly and unexpectedly
Absurd	പരിഹാസ്യമായ	Completely illogical or ridiculous
Agitation	പരിഭ്രമം	A state of anxiety or nervous excitement
Artillery	പീരങ്കിപ്പട	Large-caliber guns used in warfare
Attic	മട്ടുപ്പാവ്	A space or room just below the roof
Beckoning	ആംഗ്യം കാണിച്ചു വിളിക്കുക	Making a gesture to encourage someone to come
Dejected	നിരാശനായ	Sad and dispirited
Detachment	സൈനിക വിഭാഗം	A group of troops sent away on a separate mission
Dismal	ശോകകരമായ	Depressing and dreary
Eerie	വേടിപ്പെടുത്തുന്ന	Strange and frightening
Eiderdown	തുവൽപ്പുതപ്പ്	A heavy quilt filled with feathers
Enquiringly	അന്വേഷണാത്മകമായി	In a way that shows curiosity
Fury	കടുത്ത ദേഷ്യം	Wild or violent anger
Ghetto	ചേരി	A part of a city occupied by a minority group
Gloomy	ഇരുണ്ട / വിഷാദപരമായ	Dark and poorly lit

English Word	Malayalam Meaning	Contextual Meaning
Gratitude	നന്ദി	The quality of being thankful
Hastily	ധൃതിയിൽ	With excessive speed or urgency
Impatient	അക്ഷമനായ	Showing a tendency to be quickly irritated
Inferno	നരകം	A large fire that is dangerously out of control
Liberation	മോചനം	The act of setting someone free from imprisonment
Loft	തട്ടിൻപുറം	A room or space directly under the roof
Monotonous	വിരസമായ	Dull, tedious, and lacking in variety
Murmured	പിറുപിറുത്തു	Said something in a low, soft voice
Naive	നിഷ്കളങ്കമായ	Showing a lack of experience or wisdom
Pitch dark	കുരിരുട്ട്	Completely dark
Reassuringly	സമാശ്വസിപ്പിക്കുന്ന തരത്തിൽ	In a way that removes doubts and fears
Shriek	അലർച്ച	A high-pitched piercing cry or sound
Slumped	തളർന്നിരുന്നു	Sat or fell down heavily
Stammered	തപ്പിത്തടഞ്ഞു സംസാരിച്ചു	Spoke with sudden involuntary pauses
Unyielding	വിട്ടുവീഴ്ചയില്ലാത്ത	Not giving way to pressure; firm
Venture	സാഹസം	A risky or daring journey

III. Phrases and Idioms (പ്രയോഗങ്ങൾ)

- En masse: കൂട്ടമായി (All together or in a group).
- Lose heart: ഡൈറൂം കൈവിടുക (To become discouraged).
- Racking my brains: തലപ്പുകഞ്ഞു ആലോചിക്കുക (To think very hard).
- Take to her heels: ഓടി രക്ഷപ്പെടുക (To run away quickly).
- Despatched me to the next world: കൊലപ്പെടുത്തുക (Sent to death).

1. Write-up (7 Marks)

Question: Prepare a write-up on Wladyslaw Szpilman's struggle and survival in the ruins of Warsaw during the Second World War.

Answer:

In the Attic

"**In the Attic**" is a powerful story of survival from the memoir of **Wladyslaw Szpilman**, a Polish Jewish pianist. During World War II, Szpilman faced the horrors of the Holocaust and was forced to live in a dismal ghetto. To stay alive, he hid in the ruins of Warsaw. The story focuses on his time in an attic where he was discovered by a **German officer**. Instead of arresting him, the officer showed deep humanity.

When the officer discovered Szpilman was a pianist, he asked him to play. Szpilman played the piano with his stiff, dirty fingers. Moved by the music, the officer provided him with food, such as bread and jam, and a warm eiderdown. The officer expressed shame for the German atrocities and encouraged Szpilman to "hang on" until the war ended.

After the liberation of Warsaw, Szpilman was almost killed by Polish soldiers because he was wearing a German military overcoat given to him by the officer for warmth. He eventually convinced them of his identity and walked free after six years of hiding, ready to begin a new life.

2. Narrative (7 Marks)

Question: Imagine you are Wladyslaw Szpilman. Narrate the incidents of your survival as described in the text.

Answer:

My Struggle for Survival

For nearly six years, I lived in constant fear. After losing my home, I took refuge in a ruined building, hiding in a dark attic. My life changed when a German officer discovered me. I told him I was a pianist, and he led me to a piano. Though my hands were shaking and my fingers were stiff, I played for him. That music created a bond of humanity between us.

The officer became my secret protector. He brought me loaves of bread and jam when I had nothing to eat. He moved me to a safer loft and gave me his own military overcoat to survive the freezing December frosts. He told me to "hang on" because the war would be over by spring.

When Warsaw was finally liberated, I stepped out wearing that German coat. Polish soldiers mistook me for the enemy and opened fire. I had to shout "I'm Polish!" to save myself. After two weeks of care, I finally walked the streets of Warsaw as a free man, leaving the death and ruins behind me.

3. "After surviving the war, Szpilman is back at Polish Radio again. Imagine you are a podcaster and Szpilman agrees to do a podcast episode with you. Taking cues from the excerpt, prepare the script of a radio podcast."

Podcast Script: A Story of Survival

Characters:

- **Host:** The interviewer.
 - **Wladyslaw Szpilman:** The famous Polish pianist who survived the war.
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Host: Welcome to our podcast. Today, we have a very special guest, Wladyslaw Szpilman. Many of you know him as the great pianist from Polish Radio. Mr. Szpilman, thank you for being here.

Szpilman: Thank you for having me. It is good to be back at the radio station.

Host: We have read your story about hiding in an attic during the war. On December 12, a German officer came to see you for the last time. How did you feel when he told you he was leaving?

Szpilman: I was very scared. I asked him, "But how will I survive the street fighting?". I felt alone and worried about the future.

Host: The officer gave you a very hopeful answer. What did he say?

Szpilman: He told me that if we both survived this "inferno" for over five years, it was God's will for us to live. He also brought me bread and a warm eiderdown to keep me safe.

Host: Before he left, you shared your name with him for the first time. Why was that important to you?

Szpilman: I wanted to show him my gratitude. I told him, "If anything happens to you, if I can help you then in any way, remember my name: Szpilman, Polish Radio". I wanted to return his kindness.

Host: How did the officer react to your offer?

Szpilman: He smiled a shy smile. I think it made him happy to know that even in a war, people can still care for one another.

Host: That is a wonderful story of hope. Thank you, Wladyslaw, for sharing it with us.

Szpilman: Thank you. It is a pleasure to be a free man again.

4. Diary Entry (6 Marks)

Question: Draft a diary entry for Szpilman on the day he walked through the streets of Warsaw as a free man.

Answer:

9 August 1945
Sunday

What an unforgettable day! For the first time in nearly six years, I have walked the streets of Warsaw as a free man. I can hardly believe that I survived the "inferno". I feel as though I have returned from the dead. I am deeply indebted to the German officer who found me in the attic. While others were killing my people, he gave me bread, warmth, and hope. His words—"You must hang on"—kept me alive during the loneliest weeks. I am safe now, but my heart is heavy. My family is gone, and the ghetto is now nothing but ruins. I am entirely alone, but I must start a new life. I will return to my music at Polish Radio and honour those who didn't make it.

5. Personal Letter (6 Marks)

Question: Szpilman writes a letter to a friend about the kindness of the German officer. Prepare the letter.

Answer:

XY Villa
Warsaw
Poland -07

9 August 1945

Dear Sam,

I hope you are safe. I am writing to you with joy because the war is finally over and I am free. I have survived a nightmare that lasted six years.

I spent my final months hiding in a cold attic. I would not be here today if it weren't for a miracle. A German officer discovered me, but instead of killing me, he protected me. He brought me food and a warm eiderdown. He even gave me his coat to survive the frost. He was a kind man who felt "ashamed" of the war, and his kindness saved my life.

It is painful to look at the ruins of the ghetto and realize my family is gone. However, I have promised myself to start again. I am currently being cared for by our military and hope to be back at the Polish Radio soon.

Yours lovingly,
Wladyslaw Szpilman

6. Character Sketch: Wladyslaw Szpilman (6 Marks)

Question: Prepare a character sketch of Wladyslaw Szpilman based on the text.

Answer:

Wladyslaw Szpilman

Wladyslaw Szpilman is a resilient and talented Polish Jewish pianist whose character is defined by an incredible will to survive. He is a man of deep artistic passion; even after years without practice, his performance of Chopin is powerful enough to move an enemy officer.

His resilience is seen in his ability to endure extreme hunger, freezing cold, and the crushing weight of loneliness after losing his entire family. Despite his trauma, Szpilman retains his sense of gratitude and humanity. This is evident when he offers to help the German officer after the war by sharing his name and profession, "Szpilman, Polish Radio," as a return for the life-saving kindness he received.

He is a cautious and observant man, qualities that allowed him to remain hidden for years. Ultimately, Szpilman represents the triumph of the human spirit over the horrors of war.

7. Character Sketch: German Officer (6 Marks)

Question: Prepare a character sketch of the German officer (Wilm Hosenfeld) based on the text.

Answer:

The German Officer (Wilm Hosenfeld) is portrayed as a man of deep compassion and high moral character who stands in contrast to the cruelty of war. Despite being a soldier for the invading army, he possesses a soul that appreciates art and respects human life. When he discovers Szpilman, he chooses to protect him rather than arrest him, showing great courage and kindness.

He is a man of conscience who admits to being "ashamed" of the German atrocities. His practical help—providing food, a warm coat, and a safe hiding place—shows his genuine desire to save a fellow human being. He is also an optimist who encourages Szpilman to "hang on" and believe that life is "God's will".

His "shy and embarrassed" smile reveals a humble nature. The officer represents the presence of humanity and goodness even in the darkest times of conflict.