

# The Proposal

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## Answers to NCERT Questions

### THINKING ABOUT THE PLAY

**1. What does Chubukov at first suspect that Lomov has come for? Is he sincere when he later says “And I’ve always loved you, my angel, as if you were my own son”? Find reasons for your answer from the play.**

**Ans:** At first, Chubukov suspected that Lomov had come to borrow money. He was not sincere when he told Lomov he had always loved him and that he was like his own son. He had decided that he would not give Lomov any money if he tried borrowing from him. If he truly meant what he said, then he would not have thought of not giving him money. He said so only because Lomov had come with the proposal to marry his daughter.

**2. Chubukov says of Natalya: “ ...as if she won’t consent! She’s in love; egad, she’s like a lovesick cat...” Would you agree? Find reasons for your answer.**

**Ans:** Chubukov thinks that Lomov was a good marriage prospect for his daughter. He had been waiting for this proposal. When Lomov expressed his doubt regarding Natalya’s consent to the proposal, Chubukov immediately told him that she was in love with him. However, this was not true. Natalya did not seem to be in love with Lomov at any point in the play. It seemed like she was more attached to her land, meadows and dog than to Lomov. In fact, the way they kept getting into arguments about trivial matters suggest that neither Lomov nor Natalya was in love with the other.

**3. Answer the following questions :**

**(i)** Find all the words and expressions in the play that the characters use to speak about each other, and the accusations and insults they hurl at each other. (For example, Lomov in the end calls Chubukov an intriguer; but earlier, Chubukov has himself called Lomov a “malicious, doublefaced intriguer.” Again, Lomov begins by describing Natalya as “an excellent housekeeper, not bad-looking, well-educated.”)

**(ii)** Then think of five adjectives or adjectival expressions of your own to describe each character in the play.

**Ans: (i)** Several words and expressions have been used by the characters to describe each other. Some of them are as follows:

**Chubukov:** grabber; intriguer; old rat; Jesuit

**Natalya:** a lovesick cat; an excellent housekeeper; not bad-looking, well-educated

**Lomov:** a good neighbour; a friend; an impudent; a pettifogger; a malicious, double-faced intriguer; rascal; blind hen; turnip-ghost; a villain; a scarecrow; a monster; the stuffed sausage; the wizen-faced frump; boy; fool

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## THINKING ABOUT THE LANGUAGE

**1. This play has been translated into English from the Russian original. Are there any expressions or ways of speaking that strike you more Russian than English? For example, would an adult man be addressed by an older man as my darling or my treasure in an English play?**

**Read through the play carefully, and find expressions that you think are not used in contemporary English, and contrast these with idiomatic modern English expressions that also occur in the play.**

**Ans: Expressions not used in contemporary English**

- i. "my darling", "my beauty", "my precious", "my angel", "my beloved" (Here, an older man is addressing an adult man.)
- ii. "... and so on ..." (Here, it is used after a sentence in order to complete it.)
- iii. "... and all that sort of thing." (not explaining what it is, just leaving it as it is)
- iv. "... and all that." (again leaving the sentence as it is)
- v. "the scarecrow", "the stuffed sausage", "the wizen-faced frump" (In this way, they hurled insults at each other.)
- vi. "And how many you be getting on?" (Here, Lomov is asking Chubukov about his well-being.)

## Modern English expressions

- i. "Madam", "my heart", "honoured Natalya Stepanovna" (used by Lomov for Natalya)
- ii. "Honoured Stepan Stepanovitch" (used by Lomov for Chubukov)
- iii. "I beg your pardon..."
- iv. "My dear fellow" (Chubukov addressing Lomov)
- v. "malicious, double-faced intriguer", "fool" (Chubukov insulting Lomov)

**2. Look up the following phrases in a dictionary to find out their meanings, and then use each in a sentence of your own.**

- i. You may take it that
- ii. He seems to be coming around
- iii. My foot's gone to sleep

**Ans:**

- i. You may take it that I am lying, but in fact it will help you in long run.
- ii. He seems to be coming round after the trauma of his father's death.

iii. After the three hour long yoga session, my foot's gone to sleep.

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**You must have noticed that when we report someone's exact words, we have to make some changes in the sentence structure. In the following sentences fill in the blanks to list the changes that have occurred in the above pairs of sentences. One has been done for you.**

**(1)** To report a question, we use the reporting verb asked (as in sentence Set 1).

**Ans:** To report a question, we use the reporting verb asked.

**(2)** To report a statement, we use the reporting verb \_\_\_\_.

**Ans:** To report a statement, we use the reporting verb declared.

**(3)** The adverb of place here changes to \_\_\_\_.

**Ans:** The adverb of place here changes to there.

**(4)** When the verb in direct speech is in the present tense, the verb in reported speech is in the \_\_\_\_ tense (as in Sentence Set 3).

**Ans:** When the verb in direct speech is in the present tense, the verb in reported speech is in the past tense.

**(5)** If the verb in direct speech is in the present continuous tense, the verb in reported speech changes to \_\_\_\_ tense. For example, \_\_\_\_ changes to was getting.

**Ans:** If the verb in direct speech is in present continuous tense, the verb in reported speech changes to past continuous tense. For example, am getting changes to was getting.

**(6)** When the sentence in the direct speech contains a word denoting respect, we add the adverb \_\_\_\_ in the reporting clause (as in Sentence Set 1).

**Ans:** When the sentence in direct speech contains a word denoting respect, we add the adverb respectfully in the reporting clause.

**(7)** The pronouns, I, me, our, and mine, which are used in the first person in direct speech, change to third person pronouns such as, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_ in reported speech.

**Ans:** The pronouns, I, me, our and mine, which are used in the first person in direct speech, change to second person pronouns such as he/she, him/her, their or his/hers in reported speech.

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**Here is an excerpt from an article from The Times of India dated 27 August**  
**Rewrite it, changing the sentences in direct speech into reported speech. Leave**  
**the other sentences unchanged.**

“Why do you want to know my age? If people know I am so old, I won’t get work!” laughs 90-year-old A. K. Hangal, one of the Hindi cinema’s most famous character actors. For his age, he is rather energetic. “What’s the secret?” we ask. “My intake of everything is in small quantities. And I walk a lot,” he replies. “I joined the industry when people retire. I was in my 40s. So I don’t miss being called a star. I am still respected and given work, when actors of my age are living in poverty and without work. I don’t have any complaints,” he says, adding, “but yes, I have always been underpaid.” Recipient of the Padma Bhushan, Hangal never hankered after money or materialistic gains. “No doubt I am content today, but money is important. I was a fool not to understand the value of money earlier,” he regrets.

**Ans:** 90-year-old A. K. Hangal, one of the Hindi cinema’s most famous character actors, laughingly asked why we wanted to know his age. If people knew he was old, he would not get work. For his age, he is rather energetic. We asked him what the secret was. He replied that his intake of everything was in small quantities and he walked a lot. He said that he had joined the industry when people retire. He had been in his 40s. So he did not miss being called a star. He was still respected and given work, when actors of his age were living in poverty and without work. He said that he did not have any complaints, adding that he had always been underpaid. Recipient of Padma Bhushan, Hangal never hankered after money or materialistic gains. He said that no doubt he was content at present, but money was important. He said regretfully that he was a fool not to understand the value of money before.

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## **Additional Questions**

### **Extract Based Questions**

**Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow:(4 Marks each)**

**1.** It’s cold... I’m trembling all over, just as if I’d got an examination before me. The great thing is, I must have my mind made up. If I give myself time to think, to hesitate, to talk a lot, to look for an ideal, or for real love, then I’ll never get married.

- Who is saying, “I’m trembling all over as if I had got an examination before me”?
- What is the great thing that the speaker is talking about?
- What state of Lomov’s mind does the passage reflect?
- Why did Lomov not want to wait for real love?

**Ans:**

- Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov is saying this line.

- b. The speaker is talking about real love and marriage.
- c. His mind reflects that this way he would never get married because it is difficult to get an ideal or real love.
- d. Lomov did not want to wait for real love because he was anxious to get married.

2. He is old, but I wouldn't take five Squeezers for him. Why, how can you? Guess is a dog; as for Squeezer, well, it's too funny to argue. Anybody you like has a dog as good as Squeezer you may find them under every bush almost. Twenty-five roubles would be a handsome price to pay for him.

- a. Who does 'he' refer to?
- b. Whom does Squeezer belong to?
- c. Who is the speaker of these lines?
- d. What would be a handsome price to pay for Squeezer?

**Ans:**

- a. He refers to 'Guess', the dog.
- b. Squeezer belongs to Chubukov.
- c. Lomov is the speaker of these lines.
- d. The handsome price to pay for Squeezer would be twenty-five roubles.

3. She's willing and all that. I give you my blessing and so on. Only leave me in peace!

- a. To whom is the speaker giving his blessing?
- b. Why is he giving his blessing?
- c. Who is giving his blessing?
- d. What is she willing for?

**Ans:**

- a. The speaker is giving his blessing to Lomov and Natalya.
- b. He is giving his blessings because both are willing to marry each other and Chubukov agrees to it.
- c. Chubukov is giving his blessing.
- d. She is willing for her marriage with Lomov.

4. Last year we lent you our threshing-machine, although on that account we had to put off our own threshing till November, but you behave to us as if we were gypsies. Giving me my own land indeed! No, really, that's not at all neighbourly! In my opinion, it's even impudent, if you want to know.

- a. What did the speaker do last year?
- b. What happened after that?
- c. How did Natalya try to prove that they were at least good neighbours?
- d. Why Chubukov had to delay their threshing till November?

**Ans:**

- a. Last year, the speaker lent their threshing-machine.
- b. After that, they had to put off their own threshing till November.
- c. They lent their threshing-machine to Lomov the previous year that delayed their own threshing till November.
- d. This was because they had lent it to Lomov, their neighbour.

**5.** No, you're simply joking, or making fun of me. What a surprise! We've had the land for nearly three hundred years, and then we're suddenly told that it isn't ours! Ivan Vassilevitch, I can hardly believe my own ears. These Meadows aren't worth much to me. They only come to five dessiatins, and are worth perhaps 300 roubles, but I can't stand unfairness.

- a. Who is making fun of whom?
- b. For how long did they have the land?
- c. Who is the speaker of these lines?
- d. What has been unfair with the speaker?

**Ans:**

- a. Lomov is making fun of Natalya.
- b. They had the land for nearly three hundred years.
- c. Natalya is the speaker of these lines.
- d. The land that the speaker has had for nearly 300 years have been told that it isn't theirs.

**6.** Then you make out that I'm a landgrabber? Madam, never in my life have I grabbed anybody else's land and I shan't allow anybody to accuse me of having done so. Oxen Meadows are mine!

- a. Who is 'madam' in the above lines?
- b. In which situation does Lomov call himself a 'landgrabber'?
- c. What had happened to the speaker?
- d. What will he not allow?

**Ans:**

- a. Natalya is the 'madam' in the above lines.
- b. Natalya accuses Lomov of grabbing Oxen Meadows. So Lomov says that he is not a landgrabber.
- c. The speaker got infuriated with Natalya for having called him a landgrabber.
- d. He will not allow anybody to accuse him of having grabbed anyone's land.

**7.** Oxen meadows, its true, was once the subject of dispute, but now everybody knows that they are mine. There's nothing to argue about. You see my aunt's grandmother gave the free use of these Meadows in perpetuity to the peasants of your father's grandfather, in return for which they were to make bricks for her.

- a. Who is the speaker of these lines?

- b. Who is he speaking to?
- c. What was the 'subject of dispute'?
- d. What did the peasants do for them?

**Ans:**

- a. Lomov is the speaker of these lines.
- b. He is speaking to Natalya.
- c. The ownership of Oxen Meadows was the subject of dispute.
- d. The peasants worked for forty years for them, making bricks.

**8.** I can make you a present of them myself, because they are mine! Your behaviour, Ivan Vassilevitch, is strange, to say the least! Up to this we have always thought of you as a good neighbour, a friend; last year we lent you our threshing-machine, although on that account we had to put off our own threshing till November, but you behave to us as if we were gypsies. Giving me my own land, indeed! No, really, that's not at all neighbourly. In my opinion, it is even impudent if you want to know.

- a. Who is speaking to whom?
- b. How had she helped her neighbour?
- c. What did the speaker do last year?
- d. What happened after that?

**Ans:**

- a. Natalya is speaking to Lomov.
- b. She had helped her neighbour by lending the threshing-machine.
- c. She lent her threshing-machine to her neighbour, Lomov.
- d. They had to put off their own threshing till November.

**9.** Well, there! It's you, and papa said, "Go, there's a merchant come for his goods."

- a. Who is the speaker of the above lines?
- b. Why does the speaker's father mention the vision as 'a merchant come for his goods'?
- c. Whom is the speaker talking to?
- d. What did Natalya's father say to her?

**Ans:**

- a. Natalya is the speaker of the above lines.
- b. Lomov had come to marry Natalya. Chubukov considered 'Lomov' as 'Merchant' and 'Natalya' as 'his goods'.
- c. The speaker is talking to Lomov.
- d. Natalya's father said that there was a merchant for his goods.

**10.** You see my aunt's grandmother gave the free use of these Meadows in perpetuity, to the peasants of your father's grandfather, in return for which they were to make bricks for her.

- a. Who is the speaker of these lines?
- b. What type of relationship has been described in these lines?
- c. Who is the speaker speaking to?
- d. What did the peasants do?

**Ans:**

- a. Lomov is the speaker of these lines.
- b. They had a cordial relationship as they were neighbours.
- c. The speaker is speaking to Natalya.
- d. The peasants made bricks for the grandmother of Lomov's aunt.

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### **Short Answer Questions (30-40 words: 2 Marks each)**

**1. What do you think would have been Chubukov's reaction on hearing the reason for which Lomov had come to his house?**

**Ans:** When Chubukov came to know that the reason of Lomov's coming to their house is to marry Natalya, he was overwhelmed with joy. He embraced and kissed Lomov and told him that he was hoping for this for a long time. He told Lomov that he had always loved him as if he was his own son.

**2. What justification did Lomov give to Natalya and Chubukov to prove that he is the rightful owner of Meadows?**

**Ans:** Lomov told Natalya and Chubukov that his aunt's grandmother gave the Meadows for the temporary and free use of Chubukov's grandfather's peasants. So he is the rightful owner of the Oxen Meadows.

**3. Lomov was a quarrelsome person. Justify.**

**Ans:** Lomov was a quarrelsome person. He came to Chubukov's house to propose Natalya. But he started arguing about the meadows and insisted that those meadows belonged to him. Later, he kept on proving that his dog Squeezer is better than 'Guess' – the dog of Chubukov's. He did not care for his health or his proposal, but kept on fighting for one or the other reason. It proves that he was a quarrelsome person.

**4. There is a certain way in which the characters speak in the play, "The Proposal". What does it tell us about the Russian men?**

**Ans:** As the story belongs to the Russian characters, so through the dialogues of the characters, we come to know a lot about Russian men. According to the story, the Russians are very particular about their dress and have particular dresses for the

special occasion. Secondly, they are hypocrites. They show off to be sweet, but the very next moment, they started fighting. They pretend to be good neighbours but within their heart, they have so many grudges. They love to have dogs as a pet and consider their pet better than the other one. All of them are stubborn, short-tempered, quarrelsome and rigid.

**5. Lomov went to Chubukov's house and was seeking permission so that he could trouble him with a request. What is the trouble that he is talking about?**

**Ans:** Lomov went to Chubukov's house to ask him to marry his daughter, Natalya. He asked Chubukov for Natalya's hand. This is the trouble he was talking about.

**6. Natalya was not Lomov's real love. But still, he wanted to marry her. Give two reasons for his decision.**

**Ans:** Though Lomov was not in love with Natalya, he wanted to marry her because he was suffering with a weak heart and sleep-sickness. He wanted a companion who could look after him.

**7. Natalya calls Lomov a 'landgrabber'. Justify the statement.**

**Ans:** Lomov and Natalya argue over the ownership of Oxen Meadows. Natalya calls him a 'landgrabber' as he claims his ownership over it. Lomov says that he is not a 'landgrabber' as he has never done so and would never let anyone do so.

**8. How and why did Lomov come to meet the Chubukov family?**

**Ans:** Lomov came in a formal evening dress — wearing a jacket and white gloves. He had come to meet the Chubukov family to put his proposal for Natalya. He wanted to marry her.

**9. How can you say that Natalya was not convinced that Oxen Meadows were owned by Lomov?**

**Ans:** Natalya was not convinced as she said that they owned Oxen Meadows for nearly 300 years. It was surprising and ridiculous if someone else claimed it to be his own. Chubukov also joined the quarrel.

**10. What did Natalya say about Guess?**

**Ans:** Natalya said that Squeezer was superior to Guess —Lomov's dog. Lomov said that his dog Guess was better than Squeezer. Natalya believed that Guess had become old and ought to be shot. She also claimed that Squeezer was a hundred times better than Guess.

**11. What is the ailment that Lomov is suffering from?**

**Ans:** Lomov is 35 years old. It is high time that he should settle for a quiet and regular life. He is suffering due to a weak heart and sleep-sickness. In need of a companion, who may look after him, he wants to get married.

**12. Describe Lomov's first meeting with Natalya.**

**Ans:** Lomov goes to his neighbour Chubukov's house to ask for the hand of his daughter Natalya. He is in a fix how to make the marriage proposal. He talks in a roundabout manner. He makes a mention of his Meadows which touch their birchwoods. At this, a quarrel ensues between them over the ownership rights of the Meadows.

**13. What kind of a man is Lomov?**

**Ans:** Lomov is a man of thirty-five years old. He is really a very funny and comical character. He comes to make a proposal to Natalya. But he is so nervous and excitable that he continues quarrelling with the girl over trifles, and fails to make the proposal. He has no confidence and no self-control. He suffers from the fits of epilepsy.

**14. Who is the heroine of the play?**

**Ans:** Natalya is the heroine of the play, 'The Proposal'. She is twenty-five years old. She is still unmarried. It causes a great worry to her father. Natalya wishes that somebody should love her and propose to her. Her father calls her 'a love-sick cat'.

**15. Why does the proposal remain unmade during Lomov's first visit?**

**Ans:** The proposal remains unmade during Lomov's first visit because Lomov is very much nervous and excitable. He beats about the bush. When Natalya comes, Lomov begins to quarrel with her about a piece of land. He gets very much excited and leaves the room, cursing and threatening the old man and his daughter, Natalya. He forgets all about the proposal.

**16. Why is Natalya so anxious to marry Lomov?**

**Ans:** Natalya is an ugly, middle-aged woman. She knows that only a fool like Lomov can marry her. So, the moment she comes to know that Lomov had come to propose for marriage, she cries and shouts and forces her father to bring Lomov back.

**17. How does Chubukov join the quarrel between Natalya and Lomov?**

**Ans:** Chubukov comes in and finds Natalya and Lomov quarrelling. When he finds that they are quarrelling about the ownership of the Oxen Meadows, he also becomes angry. Instead of calming them down, he also starts quarrelling. He claims to be the owner of the Meadows. He insults not only Lomov but also his ancestors.

**18. What is the cause of the second quarrel between Natalya and Lomov?**

**Ans:** Lomov starts praising the qualities of the dog Guess. But Natalya says that her dog squeezer which she purchased for 85 roubles is much better than Lomov's dog Guess. Both of them praise the qualities of their dogs. Now they start quarrelling over their dogs. They again start shouting at each other.

**19. What is Chubukov's guess about the purpose of Lomov's visit?**

**Ans:** Lomov calms himself down and begins to tell him the purpose of his visit. He tells him that he came to him many times in the past also for his help, but he did not help him. Chubukov guesses that perhaps he has come to ask for a loan. He makes up his mind not to help him in any way.

**20. Why was Lomov brought back by Chubukov?**

**Ans:** Chubukov wondered how Lomov dared to make a proposal of marriage. Natalya was startled to hear it. She forced her father to bring Lomov back. Chubukov rushed out most unwillingly to request Lomov to come back. Lomov agreed to come back.

**21. How does Lomov behave when he is excited?**

**Ans:** When Lomov is excited his heart starts palpitating. His right eyebrow starts twitching. His foot goes to sleep. In the play, he becomes so excited that he falls unconscious.

**22. How does Natalya lay claim to the piece of land called the 'Oxen Meadows'?**

**Ans:** Natalya says that the land belonged to her family for the last three hundred years. Now suddenly, Lomov lays his claim to that land. She says that the land is not worth much in terms of money. But as a principle, she won't let Lomov claim it.

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**Long Answer Questions (100-150 words: 8 Marks each)**

**1. Neighbours must have a cordial relationship which Lomov and Natalya do not have. Describe the first fight between them.**

**Ans:** Neighbours must have a cordial relationship which Lomov and Natalya do not have. Although he had come there to propose Natalya, he started fighting with her over a small piece of land. This land adjoined her land and his Oxen Meadows touched her birchwoods. Natalya told Lomov that Oxen Meadows belonged to her, but Lomov claimed that the Oxen Meadows are his. Lomov tried to convince Natalya by telling her that his aunt's grandmother gave the Meadows for temporary and free use to Chubukov's grandfather's peasants. They did not demand money for it for a long time, so the Chubukov's misunderstood that the Meadows belonged to them. While Chubukov insisted that yelling could not prove anything because everyone knows that Meadows belong to Chubukov's since last three hundred years. Both threatened each other.

**2. The proposal was forgotten amidst argumentation. Which right approach should have been followed by both parties?**

**Ans:** Lomov came to Chubukov to propose Natalya. Both are neighbours and at the right age to marry. But instead of forwarding the proposal, both of them started fighting over truffles. Firstly, they fought over a small piece of land called Oxen Meadows. Both of them claimed that the land belonged to them and not the other one. Somehow the

argument came to an end and they started fighting over dogs and claimed that each of their dogs were better than the other one. The proposal was forgotten amidst all these arguments. The situation might be different if both the parties had followed the right approach. Oxen Meadows would belong to both of them if they got married. Similarly, dog was the very petty thing to argue about while marriage is going to take place. There should not be any ego in between them. They should be polite and patient to each other. They should not be rigid and stubborn. Their priority should be their marriage and not meadows or dogs. Only the proposal could be carried on.

**3. “The way Chubukov, Natalya and Lomov fought over petty issues is against the behaviour and mannerisms of good neighbours.” Comment. What would you have done to resolve the issue? (if you were in the place of Chubukov)**

**Ans:** Lomov and Chubukovs were neighbours. Lomov came to Chubukovs to propose Natalya. But instead of proposing, they started fighting over petty issues like Oxen Meadows and quality of dogs. This is not the quality of good neighbours. Neighbours should live like friends. There should be a positive relationship between the two neighbours.

There should be understanding and patience among neighbours. The fight between Lomov and Chubukovs could have been avoided, if handled carefully. The issue of meadows could be resolved calmly and quietly by a good conversation. There must have been some documents showing the ownership of the meadows or both the parties could be convinced by making them understand that if they got married, the Meadows will belong to both of them.

Similarly, the issues of dog could be solved instead of counting the negative points of each other's dogs. They can discuss the positive features of the dogs. Thus, the issues could be resolved.

**4. Write a brief character sketch of Lomov.**

**Ans:** Lomov is a man who is of marriageable age. He also suffers from a weak heart and sleeplessness. So he is desperate to settle down in life, and lead a quiet and regular life. Despite his ailments, Lomov was a rich and prosperous farmer. This makes Chubukov secretly wish him to marry his daughter Natalya. As for Lomov, he did not love her, though he was desperate to have a life partner, and so marry Natalya. Lomov was however hesitant to ask for her hand from Chubukov. That made him beat around the bush, argue with Natalya and leave without proposing. Thus, we can find that Lomov's conditions overpower the other traits he has. He is an eligible, assertive, rich bachelor, who will be liked by any girl. However, we also know that he is nervous, lacks confidence and is prone to talk in a long-winded manner.

**5. Describe how Chubukov got Natalya married with Lomov.**

**Ans:** Chubukov was thinking that Lomov had come to borrow money from him but when he told him that he had come to propose to his daughter, he was overjoyed and even

shed a tear. He kissed and embraced Lomov. He told Lomov that he was hoping it for a long time. He also told Lomov that he loved him as his own son.

In fact, Chubukov secretly wished Lomov to marry his daughter as he knew that Lomov was a rich and prosperous farmer, and his only daughter could lead a comfortable life with him. No wonder, he was overjoyed to know that Lomov was there to propose to his daughter.

#### **6. Bring out the humorous element in the one-act play, 'The Proposal'.**

**Ans:** The one-act play, 'The Proposal' is full of humorous element. The characters in the play behave ridiculously. Lomov comes to propose to Natalya. But he cannot talk in a straight-forward manner. He beats about the bush. He starts quarrelling with her over a piece of land. When he comes back, he quarrels about the superiority of his dog. Chubukov is also a humorous character. He knows that Lomov has come to ask for his daughter's hand in marriage, even then he quarrels with him. We laugh at the words used by them and their behaviour. The sudden marriage of Lomov and Natalya creates laughter. Chubukov puts his daughter's hand in Lomov's in a foolish manner. Lomov is a comic character. His complaints about his poor health provoke laughter. Thus, the play gives us a lot of laughter.

#### **7. Give a brief character sketch of Natalya.**

**Ans:** Natalya was twenty-five years old and the daughter of Chubukov. She was a good housekeeper, not bad to look at and educated, that was why, Lomov wanted to marry her. She could be a good wife to him. Natalya wishes that somebody should love her and propose to her. Her father calls her 'a love-sick cat'.

She secretly loved Lomov. She became hysterical when she came to know that Lomov had come to propose to her. She asked her father to call him back. To please Lomov, she asked him to forgive her and agreed to his ownership of the Oxen Meadows.

She was greedy and short-sighted. She got the whole field of hay cut. She was also very inquisitive and wanted to know why Lomov was dressed up formally.

She was touchy and short-tempered and fell into contradiction and argument on two occasions—once over the ownership of Oxen Meadows and second time over the superiority of her dog Squeezer.

She is as rigid as Lomov. She is not ready to give up even after getting ready to marry him.

#### **8. Describe the first meeting of Lomov and Natalya.**

**Ans:** Lomov goes to his neighbour Chubukov's house to ask for the hand of his daughter Natalya. When he talks to Natalya, he becomes nervous. He is in a fix how to make the marriage proposal. He talks in a round-about manner. He beats about the bush. He makes a mention of his Meadows which touch their birchwoods. At this, a

quarrel ensues between them over the ownership of the Meadows. Both of them claim the ownership and start rebuking each other. In the meantime, Chubukov comes there. Instead of pacifying them, he also joins the quarrel. He abuses Lomov which worsens the situation. Lomov is deeply upset. He leaves Chubukov's house and forgets about the marriage proposal.

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## **Self- Assessment Test**

### **Extract Based Questions**

**Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.**

**1.** We just get along somehow, my angel, thanks to your prayers, and so on. Sit down, please do... Now, you know, you shouldn't forget all about your neighbours, my darling. My dear fellow, why are you so formal in your get-up!

1. Who is the speaker?
2. 'You shouldn't forget all about your neighbours'. What does the speaker wish to say here?
3. Who is the speaker speaking to?
4. What did the speaker mean by 'so formal in your get-up'?

**2.** What a surprise! We've had the land for nearly three hundred years, and then we're suddenly told that it isn't ours! Ivan Vassilevitch, I can hardly believe my own ears. These Meadows aren't worth much to me. They only come to five dessiatins and are worth perhaps 300 roubles, but I can't stand unfairness. Say what you will, I can't stand unfairness.

1. Who speaks the above lines and to whom?
2. How much are the Meadows' worth?
3. What cannot the speaker stand?
4. What is difficult for the speaker to believe?

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### **Short Answer Questions**

1. Why was Stephen Chubukov not happy to welcome Lomov in his house?
  2. What request did Lomov make to Chubukov?
  3. Why is Lomov anxious to marry Natalya?
  4. What was Lomov's opinion about Squeezer?
  5. Justify the title of the play, 'The Proposal'.
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### **Long Answer Questions**

1. How does Lomov go to Chubukov's house? How does he react when he tells him the real purpose of his visit?
2. Give a character sketch of Stephan Stepanovitch Chubukov.
3. Describe the controversy between Lomov and Natalya about the Oxen Meadows and their dogs.