**ARMS AND THE MAN**

**Summary**

The Serbo-Bulgarian War is on and the Serbians are on the verge of losing. The young Bulgarian noblewoman Raina Petkoff is told by her mother that her fiancé, Major Sergius Saranoff, is the hero of a cavalry charge in which the Bulgarians have beaten the Serbs. Raina is lost in thoughts of her fiancé when a Serbian officer quietly enters her room and asks her not to alert anybody about his presence. Though he appears menacing at first, it soon becomes clear that he is more scared of Raina than she is sacred of him. Raina is shocked to hear that he does not believe in the ideals of nationalism, heroism or patriotism, which she holds very dear. He goes on to tell her that when he goes on war, he carries chocolates instead of ammunition. He then tells her about his experience of the day’s cavalry charge and Raina realises that her fiancé is in fact not a hero. But her ideas of chivalry and heroism are too dear to her, and she does not accept the intruder’s version. The intruder’s subtle hints about Sergius’ so-called heroism angers Raina and she asks him to leave the room. The intruder requests her to let him remain in the room as he may be killed. She acquiesces, and when she goes out of the room, he falls into a deep sleep on her bed. Raina takes pity on him lets him rest.

**Understanding the Text**

1. **Rearrange these sentences in the order in which they occur in the play:**

**1.** Catherine is excited as she hears that the Bulgarian forces have just won the battle against the Serbians.  
**2.** Catherine informs Raina that Sergius is the hero of the hour.  
**3.** Raina raises her fiancé’s picture above her head and calls him her hero.  
**4.** Louka announces that some of the fugitives have been chased into the neighbourhood.  
**5.** Raina hears gun shots.  
**6.** A Serbian soldier enters the room.  
**7.** Raina goes to the chest of drawers and comes back with a box of chocolates.  
**8.** The man tells her that all soldiers are scared of war.  
**9.** The Serbian soldier makes fun of Sergius.  
**10.** Raina orders the stranger to leave.  
**11.** Raina tells her mother, ‘The poor darling is worn out. Let him sleep.’

1. **Answer these questions:** 
   1. **What news did Catherine bring?**

**Ans**: Catherine brought the news that there had been a battle between the Serbians and the Bulgarians at Slivnitza. Serguis had led the troops in battle and won it.

* 1. **Whose picture did Raina hold?**

**Ans**: Raina held Serguis's picture.

* 1. **Which act of Sergius’ makes Raina happy?**

**Ans**: Sergius’s leading the troops bravely and winning the battle made Raina happy because he actually lived up to her ideals of courage and heroism.

* 1. **Who enters Raina’s room? What does he say?**

**Ans**: A Serbian soldier entered Raina’s room and threatened Raina to keep quiet. He said that he did not want to be caught, and threatened to shoot her if she made a single noise.

* 1. **How does Raina try to help the stranger?**

**Ans**: Raina tried to help him in various ways. First, she offered him shelter instead of alerting people. She offered him chocolate creams when he said he was hungry. Later, when the Bulgarian officer went into her room to search for a purported fugitive, she hides him behind the curtains.

* 1. **How does the stranger describe the great cavalry charge?**

**Ans**: The stranger was laughing when he described the cavalry charge. He was amused because according to him, a cavalry charge is a funny sight, and likened it to throwing a handful of peas against a windowpane. First, one comes, followed by the second and the third close behind, and the rest in a lump. The young soldiers could be identified by their wildness and the old ones by their reluctance to fight.

* 1. **Why does Raina tell her mother that they should let the soldier sleep?**

**Ans**: She felt that the soldier needed to rest as he was tired and had not slept for many days. He seemed harmless; hence she asked her mother to let him sleep and not to wake him up.

1. **Answer these questions with reference to the context:**
   1. ***‘Shsh! Don’t call out; or you’ll be shot. Be good; and no harm will come to you.’***  
      **a. Who is the speaker?  
      b. Who is being addressed?  
      c. Where is the speaker coming from?  
      d. How does the person being addressed respond to the speaker?**

**Ans**:

**a.** The speaker is the Serbian soldier who had just entered Raina’s room.  
**b.** He is talking to Raina.  
**c.** The speaker has just come in from outside, after escaping from Bulgarian soldiers who were trying to shoot him, just after they won a war against the Serbians.  
**d.** Raina saw the man after lighting the candle, and she looked at him in disdain. She is revolted by the idea of a soldier running away, because it went against her ideals of heroism and courage.

* 1. ***‘Don’t hate me; I am a Swiss, fighting merely as a professional soldier.’***  
     **a. Who is the speaker?  
     b. Who is being addressed?  
     c. Why does the speaker say so?  
     d. What does this line tell you about the speaker?**

**Ans**:

**a.** The Serbian soldier is the speaker here.  
**b.** He is speaking to Raina.  
**c.** He says so because he does not really have any lofty feelings as a soldier, and is not bound by any sense of nationalism, patriotism or duty. He is a professional soldier who fights so that he can draw a salary, and he does not have any permanent or real enemies.  
**d.** This tells us that he is an ordinary, practical and realistic man making a living, who is not fooled by ideals of nationalism or patriotism, which are fanned by politics.

* 1. ***‘I never saw anything so unprofessional. Throwing a regiment of cavalry on a battery of  
     machine guns, with the dead certainty that if the guns go off not a soul will survive!’***  
     **a. Who says this to whom?  
     b. Who is being spoken about?  
     c. Why is the act considered unprofessional?  
     d. What is the listener’s reaction to this statement?**

**Ans**:

**a.** The Serbian soldier says this to Raina.  
**b.** The man is talking about Sergius.  
**c.** It was considered unprofessional because no sensible person would throw a regiment of cavalry on a battery of machine guns.  
**d.** She was initially excited to hear that the man had seen the cavalry charge, and was eager to hear more about it, because according to the news she got, Sergius was the hero of the hour. But when the stranger made this comment, Raina got angry and asked him to leave.

* 1. ***And there was this Don Quixote, thinking he’d done the cleverest thing ever known, whereas he ought to be court-martialled for it.’***  
     **a. Who says this to whom?  
     b. What is the speaker talking about?  
     c. Who is the Don Quixote who is being spoken about?  
     d. Why should the person be court-martialled?**

**Ans**:

**a.** The Serbian soldier says this to Raina.  
**b.** He is talking about Sergius leading a cavalry charge against a regiment of artillery.  
**c.** The man is talking about the legendary anti-hero of Cervantes, Don Quixote, and compares Sergius to him. Both are foolish and adventurous at the same time, a dangerous combination. They both revel in the ideals of chivalry and heroism.  
**d.** Sergius' move went against all rules of war, and he put many soldiers' lives at stake. If the Serbians had the right cartridges, one cannon shot from their side could have killed all the Bulgarian soldiers in the regiment.

* 1. ***‘The poor dear is worn out. Let him sleep.’***  
     **a. Who is the speaker?  
     b. Who is being addressed?  
     c. Who is the poor dear?  
     d. Why is the person worn out?**

**Ans**:

**a.** Raina is the speaker here.  
**b.** Raina’s mother Catherine is being addressed.  
**c.** The Serbian soldier is being described as ‘the poor dear’.  
**d.** The man is completely drained after the battle at Slivnitza, and has not slept for many days, and is hence worn out.

1. **Think and answer:** 
   1. **What is the attitude of Raina towards the stranger?**

**Ans**: Raina is patient towards the man and listens to everything he has to say. Her initial fear and disgust goes away when she realises that he is a practical man. She is concerned for him and is sympathetic towards him.