

## **“The Hangman” by Maurice Ogden**

**Directions: Answer the following questions on your own paper.**

### **Stanza 1 Questions**

1. What did the Hangman build?
2. Where did he build it?
3. What is hemp?
4. What did the townspeople wonder?
5. Who does the Hangman say the structure is for?
6. Who did the Hangman hang first?
7. How did the townspeople feel about this? Why?

### **Stanza 2 Questions**

8. What did the townspeople say when they saw the hangman had not left?
9. In your own words, explain why the Hangman had not left.
10. What do you think happened to the one who spoke out against the Hangman?
11. AThe gallows-tree had taken root.@ Explain what this sentence means.

### **Stanza 3 Questions**

12. Who was the third person the Hangman executed?
13. What do the townspeople ask the Hangman after the third execution?
14. Who was the fourth executed?
15. How do the townspeople react after the sixth execution?
16. Line 5 - ADid the gallows grow@? Explain what is meant by this.

### **Stanza 4 Questions**

17. According to the speaker, why has the Hangman called for him? (line 1)
18. Why did the Hangman really call out for the speaker? (lines 3, 4, 5, and 6)
19. What does the Hangman ask the speaker?
20. Read lines 6, 7, and 8. What is the point of the entire poem?

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### **Stanza One Answers**

1. a scaffold
2. by the courthouse side
3. the fiber used to make rope
4. who he raised the gallows tree for
5. “He who serves me the best, shall earn the gallows tree.”
6. a man from another land
7. They were sad that the Hangman took him, but glad it wasn't them. They felt bad for him, but they wanted to live.

### **Stanza Two Answers**

8. “Hangman, have you not done, yesterday, with the alien one?” (Aren't you finished; isn't he the one you came to hang?)
9. He said the gallows wasn't raised for just him. He wouldn't go to all the trouble for just one man.
10. He was hung/executed.
11. The gallows tree had just begun the job it was meant to do.

### **Stanza Three Answers**

12. a usurer (loan shark) and infidel
13. “Is he the one who has served you well and faithfully?”
14. a man with a dark, accusing song that had scratched out comfort long and hard (inference – maybe a black man, or other dark-skinned race)
15. “Hangman, Hangman, is this the man?” – and then quit asking
16. The Hangman continued to kill because others allowed it to happen – fed by cowardice of others

### **Stanza Four Answers**

17. because he wants him to help the Hangman take down the gallows because there is no one left to hang
18. because he was the one who served him the most faithfully and the best with a coward's hope
19. Who has served me the most faithful, and where are the others who might have stood by your side?
20. Various: (1) This poem relates to the Holocaust and how Hitler, just like the Hangman, killed all those different from him.  
(2) how prejudice can grow, like the gallows tree, if it is allowed to spread  
(3) to stand up for what is right