

B.A. Second

The Return of the Native By Thomas Hardy : Important Short Questions Part II

Question-1- 'And if you hear a frog jumped into the pond with a flown, like a stone thrown in, be sure you run and tell me because it is a sign of rain' – Who said this and to whom? Was the jumping of a frog really a sign of rain? If not, what did it signify?

Answer- This was told by Eustacia to her assistant, Johnny whom she had employed to keep the bonfire burning.

The jumping of a frog was not really a sign of rain. It was the sound of the stone thrown into the pond, which was the signal of Wildeve's coming to meet with Eustacia.

Question-2- 'I neatly lit the fire Witch of Endor called up samuel' – Why did the speaker compare herself with the 'Witch of Endor'?

Answer- Eustacia here compares herself to the 'Witch of Endor'.

It is a biblical reference where it is told that the witch of Endor called up the dead Samuel to prophecy on the death of Saul and the passing of his kingdom to David. Eustacia here suggests that she possesses, like the witch of Endor, to call Wildeve. She has that power over him. The comparison indicates that Eustacia is a proud woman with a lot of confidence on her power.

Question-3. 'This was a small human hand, in the act of lifting pieces of fuel into the fire, but for all that could be seen the hand, like that which troubled Belshazzar was there alone' – Whose hands were refer to here and in what context?

Answer- Here the 'hands' were the hands of Johnny, the little boy who was employed by Eustacia to feed in Bonfire.

The little boy was not visible from behind the bush. Only his little hand was seen lifting pieces of fuel into the fire. Here Johnny's hands remind one of the mysterious hands seen by Belshazzar, the king of Babylon. The severe hand wrote the prophecy of his death on the wall.

Question-4. Who is the 'queen of night' and why is so called?

Answer- Eustacia is the 'Queen of Night'.

She is so called because of her fondness of walking at night in Egdon. In her appearance also Hardy bestows some nocturnal qualities. Her eyes possessed nocturnal mystery. Her hair contained more darkness than that of cold wintry night. And above all, Eustacia's presence to the dark heath almost increased the beauty of the night.

Question-5. What was Eustacia's native place? How did she come to stay with her grandfather at Egdon?

Answer- Budmouth was Eustacia's native place.

Eustacia is the daughter of bandmaster of a regiment. After the death of her mother Eustacia's father left off thriving and drank too much and ultimately he also died. So Eustacia was left to the care of the grandfather who used to live at Egdon Heath. Since wreck, her grandfather started living Egdon Heath along with Eustacia.

Question-6. 'In Heaven she will probably sit between the Heloises and the Cleopatras' – Who were the Heloise and the Cleopatra? Who will sit between them in Heaven? What does the expression suggest?

Answer- i) The love of Heloise and Abelara are debrated for its constancy and purity. In contrast, Cleopatra, who is said to have cohabited with both Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, is an emblem of deception.

ii) Eustacia will sit between them.

iii) The expression suggests that Eustacia bears the pure and faithful love in her mind like Heloise while sometimes her love flicker's like Cleopatra. Thus she rests between both the extremity of pure and unfaithful love.

Question-7. Who were 'the high Gods' of Eustacia? What does her selection of such heroes indicate?

Answer- i) The 'high Gods' of Eustacia were William the Conqueror, the Earl of Strafford and Napoleon Bonaparte.

ii) Her selection of such heroes indicates her unconventional nature. The heroes she selected are all notorious persons. Hence Eustacia's selection of heroes is unconventional.

Question-8. 'Egdon was her Hades' – What is Hades? To whom Egdon was Hades? Explain her attitude to Egdon.

Answer- 'Hades' in Greek mythology is the underworld or hell. It carries the sense of hellish torture and suffering.

For Eustacia Egdon Heath is as troubles once a place as hell.

Eustacia hates Egdon Since she was taken from Budmouth to Egdon. She disliked the change. She always finds it antagonistic.

Question-9. When and how did the reddleman come to know of the secret affairs of Wildeve and Eustacia?

Answer- When the little boy, Johnny Nunsuch, was going back to his house at night, he changed to meet the reddleman inside the van. Assuming that the riddle man meant no harm to the boy, he revealed what he had seen and heard to the reddleman. The boy further told that he had heard Wildeve confusing that he liked Eustacia the best and confirming his love by making it the whole reason

for not marrying the other woman. In this way the Needleman came to know the secret affair of Wildeve and Eustacia and also the reason of Wildeve's not marrying Thomasin.

Question-10. 'Here was a Scylla Charyledean position for a poor boy' – What is meant by the Scylla Charyledean position and in what context?

Answer- The phrase 'Scylla – charyledean position' is taken from a Greek myth. Scylla is a treacherous rock and Charybdes is a whirlpool. They lie on opposite sides of the straits of Messina off Sicilian coast. It was quite risky and frightening for the sailors to pass through either of them. Hardy here describes the situation of the little boy Johnny by the phrase. While returning home after firing Eustacia's bonfire, Johnny was frightened by some mysterious light and smoke from a pit. But as he returned to Eustacia to ask for her help, he finds her talking to Wildeve. He felt that Miss Eustacia will be furious to be disturbed at this moment. It was thus equally dangerous for Johnny to follow either course.

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