

INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR
THE THIRD LEVEL- VISTAS
CLASS XII
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH-2021-22

SUMMARY OF THE LESSON:

‘-The Third Level’ is a story that weaves together a psychological journey of the narrator into past, present and moves towards future.

□ -Charley- 31 year old, an American narrates his unusual experience of having been to the third level.

-He discovers brass spittoons, flickering gas lights, everyone dressed, like 1890’s with old fashioned beards, side burns, fancy moustaches, engine with funnel shaped stack, newspaper - The World, few ticket windows etc. in the third level.

□ -Charley goes to get the ticket for Galesburg - Illinois- Wonderful town, big houses, huge

lawns, plenty of trees, people with lots of leisure time and surprises when the clerk says

that it is not currency and he will be put behind the bars.

□ Wife worried -takes him to his Psychiatrist friend

□ -He refuses to believe -says it a waking wish dream fulfillment as he could not face the

modern world which is full of fear, insecurity, war, worry, stamp collection a refuge from

reality.

□ Charley desperate to go to Galesburg & so exchanges new for old currency. But could never

find the third level. □ Sam’s disappearance has something to do with Galesburg as he was fond of the place.

□ One day while going through his stamp collection, he finds an envelope, containing a letter

of July 18, 1894 written by Sam, who is living at Galesburg, assertions the Third level.

QUESTIONS

Was the Third level a medium of escape for Charley? Why/Why not?

Yes, Charlie was engulfed in the trials and tribulations of life so he created the third level himself to

seek refuge in it. It eased his tensions and pressures and provided him a platform to relax.

2. Why is Grand Central compared to a tree?

Grand Central was compared to a tree because it was pushing out new corridors and staircases like

roots. There may be a tunnel under the city up to Times Square and another to Central Park.

Nobody knows about them. For many people it has been an exit, a way of escape through the years.

So it is possible that it may have the tunnel Charlie got into.

3. How did Charlie realize that he had reached the third level?

Charlie saw brass spittoons, flickering gas lights, everyone dressed like in the 1890's with mutton

sleeves side burns and moustaches. The engine was with a funnel shaped stack. The newspaper

was dated June 11 1894. There were fewer ticket windows. This made him realize that he was on

the third level.

Opening – Charley, an ordinary man

Charley was quite an ordinary man from New York. One evening he reached the Grand Central Railway Station, New York, after a long day's work in the office. This was what happened at the station:

- He was in a hurry to get home. His wife Louisa was waiting for him.
 - Having found no train from the first level of the station, Charley went down to the second level.
 - While waiting for a train on the second level, Charley found a door and tunnel down.
 - Curious as he always was, Charley suspected it was a mysterious tunnel.
 - Following the tunnel, he took steps down and reached the third level of the station. But, Grand Central has only two levels! How is this third level possible? Charley remained wondering. Wondering at the old fashioned train engines, at the hundred year old fashion, men with long mustache, women dressed in the old French style, a man pulling out his watch from pocket, gas lamps and spittoons...
 - From a newspaper, he learnt the time – 1895!
 - Charley knew one thing for sure – time traveling!
 - He had got into similar tunnels in the past – under Roosevelt Hotel, under Times Square...
 - In the past he had got into more such mysterious tunnels and caves but always a question remained without answer – why was he not able to go back to those places once again!
 - Anyway, now, in the third level of the Grand Central Station, he had not much time to ask questions – Louisa was waiting at home.
 - He went the ticket counter and asked for two tickets to Galesburg – the 1895 Galesburg or more clearly, a hundred years old Galesburg – where he was born.
 - When he paid the cash at the counter, the clerk suspected him for tendering fake currency. Threatened, Charley ran out of the third level and reached home.
- Questions & Answers

(TO BE DONE IN THE NOTEBOOK)

1. **How did Charley reach the third level of the Grand Central Station?**

Grand Central Station, New York, has only two levels. One evening Charley reached this station and then walked down the second level to catch an early train

to his home. While he was on the second level, he strangely happened to notice a doorway down. He followed the steps and reached the third level which was never heard or seen by anyone. In the third level Charley saw a hundred year old world and people.

2. **What was Charley's strange experience at the Grand Central Station?**

The Grand Central Railway Station, New York, has only two levels. It is a common fact. A simple, normal, man, Charley, once took an unknown way down to the third level of this station. He got lost in a 100 year old world there. People, fashion, currency and dressing were different there. Even though it was difficult for Charley to believe what was happening, he had no other choice than believing the reality. He thought of living there, a world behind his time, because the 1894 world was more peaceful, fragile, innocent and secure. He tried to get two rail tickets to his hometown Galesburg; one for his wife, indeed. But Charley failed to get the tickets as the clerk at the ticket counter suspected him and his currency notes. Charley ran away, got out of the third level and finally reached the present world and got home.

3. **How did The World help Charley to confirm his doubts regarding the existence of a third level?**

The World was a popular newspaper which stopped its publication before 1994. Having reached the third level of the Grand Central Station, Charley noticed that the World was still available. He saw that day's edition of the World and the date, June 11, 1894 and confirmed that he was back in 1894. In the beginning, when he reached the third level, Charley was confused. Whatever he saw in the third level told him that he had travelled back to the past. This was confirmed when he saw The World, a newspaper of the past that was no more published. The lead story said something about President Cleveland and it was printed June 11, 1894.

4. **How did Charley ascertain that he had reached the 1894 world?**

Charley reached the third level of the Grand Central Railway Station, New York. Amidst his fresh amazement, Charley could not relate the possibility of being in a hundred year old world. But when Charley observed the dim gas lamps, brass spittoons, old styled costumes of men and women, moustaches and beards generally worn by men, string-watches and so on, Charley began to doubt that he had become part of the old world yet he still didn't know which year it was. Charley got it resolved only at the sight of The World, the newspaper that bore the date of 1894 with a piece of news of President Cleveland.

5. **Why did Charley run away from the third level?**

Charley was greatly amazed when he reached the hundred year old third level and was planning to buy two rail tickets to Galesburg where he had spent his childhood. But when he took out his money to pay the fare, the clerk found out that

his notes were fake and thought that Charley was attempting to fool him. He warned him that he would call the police. Seeing that there was nothing good about police and jail in the hundred year old Galesburg, Charley ran away.

6. What was Sam's answer to Charley's dilemma?

Charley met his psychiatrist friend Sam and told him about this experience. The psychiatrist interpreted it as a mental disorder. Indicating his hobby of stamp collection and this sort of experiences, Sam explained his abnormality to be 'escaping from the struggles of life by fantasizing.' Soon his friends and wife began to consider Charley as a mental patient. But how! Charley was no abnormal. He was a happy man who loved his wife and friends and stamps. But the rest of the world believed Charley was abnormal, a dreamer.

7. How did Charley's friends relate his stamp collecting habit to his being abnormal?

Charley had a collection of stamps. When he told his friends of his peculiar experience at the Grand Central Station, all his friends believed that he was not mentally well. They said that he was worried as anyone in the modern world and by spending time with his stamps he was escaping from realities.

8. Does Charley agree that stamp collecting habit is a way of escapism? Why?

No, Charley doesn't agree with this claim of his psychiatrist friend. Charley's grandfather was a stamp collector yet he was a happy man and he never ran away from any reality. Another stamp collector was President Roosevelt, the American President who won the World War II. From these two people Charley believed that stamp collecting habit does not mean escapism.

9. Do you see an intersection of time and space in the story?

Yes, there are a lot of instances that tell us about the intersection of time and space in the story. First intersection being the one between the first two levels of the Grand Central Station and its third level which is based somewhere in the 1890s whereas the former exists in the present times. Also when Charley went to buy tickets for Galesburg which existed in 1894 while he and his wife exists in the present times. Not to ignore the old fashioned architecture of the third level in contradiction to the modern interiors of the first two levels. Lastly, the letter dated 18th July, 1982 that Charley found also throws light upon the intersection of time and space as both the sender (Sam) and the receiver (Charley) exist in the present times.

10. Apparent illogicality sometimes turns out to be a futuristic projection?

Discuss.

A. While a lot of the world's greatest inventions were made by people who were criticized for their ideas. Audiences used to mock at them for being illogical. Sighting the example of Thomas Edison who invented the light bulb, no one believed in him at first but all he had was an idea and its realistic projection in mind. The idea here tells us how important it is to sometimes follow one's insight and have hope for it holds the capacity to change the world through its futuristic projections.