



QUESTION BANK – THE ADDRESS

Class: XI

Sub: ENGLISH

SUMMARY

The narrator is Mrs. S.'s daughter, who returned to her hometown after the war to look for her mother's items after her mother died. Mrs. Dorling, an old colleague of her mother's, answered the door at House Number 46 on Marconi Street. The woman was dressed in her mother's green knitted cardigan, so the narrator recognized her. She inquired whether the woman knew her mother. Despite the narrator's desire to speak with her for some time, the woman was not willing to and she closed the door.

The story shifts to a time when her mother was alive and her homeland, Holland, was in the midst of a war. For a few days, she had returned to her hometown. She discovered that a number of items were missing amongst her mother's things. Mrs. S had informed her daughter about Mrs. Dorling, who had removed all the vases, antique plates, and china after promising to keep them secure. She would take something home with her every time she left their house.

On the way home on the train, the narrator remembered seeing Mrs. Dorling leave their house the next day with a hefty suitcase. Mrs. Dorling's features and broad back had caught her attention for a brief while. She inquired her mother about the woman's location. The narrator's mother told her about the address at the time: 46 Marconi Street.

After the liberation battle ended, the narrator returned to her hometown. She decided to return after the first failed visit. Mrs. Dorling's 15-year-old daughter opened the door for her this time. The narrator opted to wait for Mrs. Dorling because she was not at home. She walked alongside the girl down the corridor. She noticed an antique iron candle-stand next to a mirror. She was led into the family room. She found herself in the middle of things she remembered as having belonged to her mother. However, she was distressed to see them organized in such an unappealing manner. She took a seat at a table and realized the tablecloth was hers. Her mother had left a burn mark on the edge, which had not been corrected.

1. Daughter

The narrator lives in Holland. Life has changed drastically for her after the liberation war. Her early life. She enjoyed a happy life, with her family. She had all the belongings in her house to make life comfortable and cozy. Transformation in Her Life. The liberation war in Holland brought a sea-change in her life. Earlier, she had all the things to cling to; relations and possessions; now she has none. She even had to leave her house. Now she lives in a rented small room trying hard to collect the loose ends of life.

Her Final Resolve. After war, the life had once again started treading upon the normal, track. She became curious to have a look, touch of her old stuff lying 'safe' in house No. 46 in Marconi Street. She took a train and went there. But Mrs. Dorling refused to recognize her. The girl had no option except to return. But again, she tried. This time Mrs. Dorling's daughter, a fifteen-year-old girl opened the door. She let her in. The narrator found her old familiar things lying in ugly way in a strange atmosphere. She felt horrified and oppressed. She decided to forget everything about her past and to start her life in a new way with her rented room and less cutlery. The narrator's final resolve talks about her optimistic view about life. Life has to go on. Better forget the sour past to make your future a bit easier.

2. Mrs. Dorling

Mrs. Dorling was an old acquaintance of Mrs. S and lived in Macroni Street 46. She appears a very mysterious lady with greedy heart and shrewd mind. She contacted Mrs. S, only at the time when the war in Holland was about to break. She convinced Mrs. S to hand her all the possessions to her sole self to keep them safe. Mrs. S is taken in. She is too simple to question the appropriateness of the demand. Mrs. Dorling insisted to take away Mrs. S's all the belongings. She would come early in the morning so that she could complete her 'errands', unnoticed by the neighbors. One by one she took away all the stuff from Mrs. S's house. But she didn't keep those things 'safe'. She used them; the narrator came to know about it on her visit. Her meanness didn't stop here only. When the narrator (Mrs. S's daughter) visited her, she refused to recognize her. Dorling behaved in a cold manner and thought she would have died during the war. When the narrator recognized the cardigan as her mother's she was shrewd enough to hide herself behind the door. It was clear that she didn't want to return those valuables. She was not the same as her mother told and with her daughter's wish she entered the house. Dorling flaunted the things and explained that these all are antique. She was cold and a pestered woman who tries to fulfill her greed through her friend's valuables. Later when the narrator visited her house the second time, her fifteen-year-old daughter told that her mother was out on her important 'errand'. It all clearly proves that Mrs. Dorling was such a fellow who would go to any extent to profit herself. Her character is typical of such rogues who crop, soar at the time of wars. Such people are after gold only.

Reference to Context

1. Perhaps I was mistaken. I thought, perhaps it isn't her. I had seen her only once, fleetingly, and that was years ago. It was most probable that I had rung the wrong bell. The woman let go of the door and stepped to the side. She was wearing my mother's green knitted cardigan.

The wooden buttons were rather pale from washing. She saw that I was looking at the cardigan and half hid herself again behind the door. But I knew now that I was right.

(a) **The lady hid herself behind the door because the author was looking at_____**

(I) the lady (II) things placed in the house

(iii) the cardigan (iv) the name plate

(b) **What was the colour of the cardigan?**

(I) green (II) pale (III) red (IV) pink

(c) **which of the following doubts the author had about the lady of the house?**

(I) author had reached the wrong house

(II) author was not wearing red cardigan

(III) author forgot to carry proof of address

(IV) author could not recognize the face of the lady

(v) probably it was not the lady she was looking for

(i) 1,2,3 (ii) 1,4,5 (iii) 2,4,5 (iv) 3,4,1

(iv) **Why did the colour of the buttons of the cardigan fade?**

(i) due to heat (ii) due to washing

(iii) due to dying (iv) none of the above

2. **I was home for a few days and it struck me immediately that something or other about the rooms had changed. I missed various things. My mother was surprised I should have noticed so quickly. Then she told me about Mrs. Dorling. I had never heard of her but apparently, she was an old acquaintance of my mother, whom she hadn't seen for years. She had suddenly turned up and renewed their contact. Since then she had come regularly.**

(a) **What did the narrator notice at her home?**

(I) few guests have come (II) various things were missing

(iii) a new table was put in the room (iv) none of the above

(b) **Why was the author's mother surprised?**

(I) her daughter got angry

(II) her daughter had put on weight

(III) her daughter did not inform about her visit

(IV) her daughter quickly noticed the changes at the house

(c) **which of the following expression does not convey the meaning 'she was an old acquaintance'?**

(I) she was an old buddy (II) she was an old friend

(III) she was an old colleague (IV) she was an old lady

(d) **which of the following is true about Mrs. Dorling?**

(i) she was a new friend of mother

(ii) she was an old acquaintance of mother

(iii) mother had not met her for many years

(iv) she had always remained in contact with mother

(v) recently she had started coming to mother regularly.

(a) 1,2,3

(b) 2,3,5

(c) 1,4,5

(d) 1,3,5

3. I had got up late and, coming downstairs, I saw my mother about to see someone out. A woman with a broad back. “There is my daughter,” said my mother. She beckoned to me. The woman nodded and picked up suitcase under the coat-rack. She wore a brown coat and a shapeless hat. “Does she live far away?” I asked, seeing the difficulty she had going out of the house with the heavy case. “In Marconi Street,” said my mother. “Number 46. Remember that.”

(a) Why did the mother introduce her daughter to the woman?

(I) they were seeing each other for the first time

(II) the author was not bothered to meet the woman

(iii) author had just woken up

(i) the woman was in a hurry to go

(b) The author looked at Mrs. Dorling when she came home. Which of the following things the author didn’t notice about the woman?

(I) green cardigan

(II) broad back

(III) black shoes

(IV) brown coat

(c) why did the mother want her daughter to remember the address of the woman?

(I) she may need to contact her later

(II) she may like to take back things taken by the woman

(III) it was a hint to the author to collect things later from the woman

(IV) all of the above

(d) The phrase ‘to see someone out’ has been used in the extract. Which of the following does not have the similar meaning?

(i) to see someone off (ii) to say someone good bye

(iii) to keep someone off (iv) to send someone off

4. And one day I noticed I was curious about all the possessions that must still be at that address. I wanted to see them, touch, remember. After my first visit in vain to Mrs. Dorling’s house I decided to try a second time. Now a girl of about fifteen opened the door to me. I asked her if her mother was at home. “No”, she said, ‘my mother’s doing an errand,’ “No matter, I said, ‘I’ll wait for her.’

(a) Which ‘possessions’ is the author talking about?

(I) things in the house of her mother (II) things owned by herself

(iii) things taken away by Mrs. Dorling (i) things stolen from her

(b) Which of the following is not a synonym of curious?

(I) uncanny

(II) anomalous

(III) queer

(IV) clamorous

(c) Find a word from the extract which means same as ‘chore’

(I) curious (II) try

(III) errand

(IV) matter

(d) The phrase ‘in vain’ has been used in the extract. Which of the following is an incorrect use of the phrase ‘in vain’?

(i) He tried in vain to stop the water flow

(ii) I tried in vain to escape several times from jail

(iii) my first request was in vain

(iv) my first computer was in vain

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. Why does the narrator think that she has rung the wrong bell?

The narrator thinks so as the woman owner of the house shows no sign of recognition. She refuses to recognize the narrator.

2. How does the narrator realize that she has rung the right bell?

The woman occupant of the house was wearing the green knitted cardigan of narrator's mother though the wooden buttons had become pale from washing. When she realized that the narrator was looking at her cardigan, she became conscious and half hid herself behind the door. Then the narrator knew that she had rung the right bell.

3. Who was the woman with the broad back? Why did she take away all the nice things from narrator's house?

The woman seemed an old acquaintance of the narrator's mother whom she hadn't seen for years. The war for liberation had broken out. It was supposed that they would have to leave the house. In that case, their all the household articles would be left behind. Perhaps the woman Marconi Street, the woman with broad back was unaffected with the war. So, to keep safe the nice things at the narrator's home, she carried them away.

4. Why did the old possessions of the narrator lose their value?

After war, when the life returned to normalcy, the narrator decided to see her old possessions at Number 46, in Marconi Street. But as he reached there the things lost their value firstly because they were arranged in a tasteless way. Secondly and more importantly, the things had an association with the relations which no more existed. So, the narrator better felt it right to leave them behind.

5. Why did Mrs. S ask her daughter to remember the address of Mrs. Dorling?

Mrs. Dorling had taken the valuable possessions of Mrs. S for safe keeping. Mrs. S wanted her daughter to remember the address so that she could claim their belongings some day after the war.

6. "I was in a room I knew and did not know," says the narrator in the story 'The Address'. What prompted her to make this observation?

The narrator found herself in the midst of things she was familiar with and which she did want to see again. However, she found them in a strange atmosphere where everything was arranged in a tasteless way. The ugly furniture and the muggy smell created the feeling that she didn't know the room.

7. Why was the narrator horrified when she entered the living room?

When the narrator entered the living room she was horrified because she felt as if she was in a room she knew and did not know. She found herself in the midst of things she wanted to see again but which distressed her in the strange atmosphere. She was oppressed to see them arranged in a tasteless manner.

8. What were the narrator's feelings initially about the things that had been left with Mrs. Dorling?

The narrator was not interested in claiming the things that were stored with Mrs. Dorling as

‘the things’ were lifeless possessions. They were not important as dear and loved ones whom she had lost during the war. Her mother did not survive after the war. Moreover, she was afraid that they would remind her of her past.

9. Who was Mrs. Dorling? Why did she visit Mrs. S’s house frequently?

Mrs. Dorling was merely an acquaintance of Mrs. S. Mrs. S belonged to a wealthy Jewish family and all her possessions were beautiful and of great value. The Second World War broke out and the Jews were persecuted everywhere. The Germans were in control. Jews had to leave their homes and possessions behind to save their lives. In this background Mrs. Dorling revived her acquaintance with Mrs. S and carried away suitcases and sacksful of precious things saying she wanted ‘to save’ all the nice things.

10. Have you returned?’ the woman inquired. ‘I had assumed that no one had returned.’ Does this statement reveal anything about the plot? If so, what exactly is it?

The statement quoted provides us with a hint about the plot. It indicates that the two families were acquaintances who knew one other and lived in close proximity to one another. During the war, many families fled the country to seek sanctuary in another location, while others remained in the same location. Mrs. Dorling believed that Mrs. S’s family had died during the war, which is why she was so chilly to the girl who came to see her.

11. The story is split into two parts: pre-war and post-war. What difficulties do you believe the girl faced during this time?

The story is set in the years leading up to and following World War II. Before the war, the girl’s family was wealthy, and they possessed valuable belongings in their home. When the war broke out, Mrs. Dorling reconnected with them and began visiting them again. She began carrying the valuables with her whenever she visited, believing that such items should not be thrown away if they were to leave the place. The girl had been through a lot; her mother had died, and she was forced to live in a rented apartment. She found it extremely difficult to return to the location where she spent her youth, and she demanded the return of her stuff. She noted how the things were placed in a distasteful fashion when she went to meet Mrs. Dorling. She could no longer connect with them, and she had lost interest in them. As a result, the young lady made the decision to leave the residence and forget the address.

12. What made the story’s narrator wish to forget the address?

Mrs. Dorling kept the valuable objects in her house until the war was ended because she didn’t want them to be lost if they decided to leave the area during the war. Mrs. Dorling’s address, ‘46, Marconi Street’, was given to her by her mother. She remembered her address and decided to pay her a visit. She was apprehensive about returning to the location because it triggered so many memories from her past. When she saw all of the belongings, she found them to be arranged in an unappealing manner, and she became disinterested in them. She couldn’t connect with the items and decided she wouldn’t stay at the house any longer since she didn’t want to ruin the nice memories she had with them. She eventually chose to forget the address and avoid returning to the location.

13. The Address is a story about a human’s plight after a conflict. Comment.

Human beings are always subjected to a great deal of misery during battle. It brings them both death and devastation. 'The Address' revolves around the same subject. During the war, Mrs. Dorling took all of Mrs. S.'s belongings and vowed to keep them safe. The protagonist's mother died, and all of the protagonist's belongings were left with a friend. Years later, the girl decided to pay a visit to the house whose address her mother had given her years before. She received no pity from the woman, who even took little effort to recognize her. She assumed her entire family had passed away. The young lady desired to reclaim her belongings. She refused to let the girl into the house. She appeared to be a woman devoid of human feelings. As a result, the battle also affected the humanity in people and not just physical destruction.

14. Comment on the significance of the title of the story The Address.

The title of the story 'The Address' is quite apt. It is the spring wheel of the action. In fact, the whole action centers round it. The title is quite suggestive and occurs at the beginning, middle and end of the story. Marga Minco focuses the reader's attention on it by the narrator's doubt whether she was mistaken and her self-assurance that she had reached the correct address. The middle part of the story reveals how she came to know the address. It was her mother who informed her about the place where Mrs. Dorling lived and asked her to remember it. The story ends dramatically with the narrator's resolve to forget the address. The wheel comes full circle. She had remembered the address for so many years and now since the belongings of her mother stored there have lost their usefulness she finds that forgetting this address would be quite easy.

15. In what respect was the second visit of the narrator to 46, Marconi Street different from the first one? Did she really succeed in her mission? Give a reason for your answer.

The second visit of the narrator to 46, Marconi Street, was different from the first one in one respect. During the first visit, the narrator could not get admittance in the house, whereas during the second one, she was led to the living room, where she could see and touch some of the things she had wanted so eagerly to see. She had visited this place with a specific purpose—to see her mother's belongings. The touch and sight of familiar things aroused memory of her former life. These objects had now lost their real value for her since they were severed from their own lives and stored in strange circumstances. Thus, her mission to see, touch and remember her mother's belongings was partly successful. She resolved to forget these objects, and their past and move on. This is clear from her decision to forget the address.

16. Give a brief account of the narrator's first visit to 46, Marconi Street. What impression do you form of Mrs. Dorling from it?

In the post-war period, when things returned to normal, the narrator became curious about her mother's possessions that were stored at Mrs. Dorling's house. Since she wanted to see them, she took the train and went to 46, Marconi Street. Mrs. Dorling opened the door a chink. The narrator came closer, stood on the step and asked her if she still knew her. Mrs. Dorling told her that she didn't know her. The narrator told her that she was the daughter of Mrs. S. Mrs. Dorling kept staring at her in silence and gave no sign of recognition. She held her hand on the door as if she wanted to prevent it opening any further. The narrator recognized the green knitted cardigan of her mother that Mrs. Dorling was wearing. Mrs. Dorling noticed it and half hid herself behind the door. The narrator again asked if she knew her mother. Mrs. Dorling asked with surprise if she had come back. She declined to see the narrator or help her.