

Chapter 5  
Best Seller

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**3. Based on your reading of the story, answer the following questions by choosing the correct option.**

(a) The narrator says that John was "\_\_\_\_\_ of the stuff that heroes are not often lucky enough to be made of." His tone is sarcastic because \_\_\_\_\_.

- (i) he hated John
- (ii) he felt that John was a threat to him
- (iii) John was not particularly good-looking
- (iv) nobody liked John

**Answer**

(iii) John was not particularly good-looking

(b) Pescud felt that best-sellers were not realistic as \_\_\_\_\_.

- (i) American farmers had nothing in common with European princesses
- (ii) men generally married girls from a similar background
- (iii) American men married girls who studied in America
- (iv) American men did not know fencing and were beaten by the Swiss guards

**Answer**

(ii) men generally married girls from a similar background

(c) "*Bully*", said Pescud brightening at once. He means to say that \_\_\_\_\_.

- (i) he is a bully
- (ii) his manager was a bully
- (iii) he was being bullied by his co-workers
- (iv) he was doing very well at his job

**Answer**

(iv) he was doing very well at his job

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(d) The narrator says that life has no geographical bounds implying that \_\_\_\_\_.

- (i) human beings are essentially the same everywhere
- (ii) boundaries exist only on maps
- (iii) one should work towards the good of mankind
- (iv) he was happy to travel to other countries

**Answer**

(i) human beings are essentially the same everywhere

**4. Answer the following questions briefly.**

(a) One day last summer the author was travelling to Pittsburg by chair car. What does he say about his co-passengers?

**Answer**

The compartment was full of affluent people, men and women, sitting in their chair-cars. Women were fashionably dressed in brown silk dresses with laces and veils. Men appeared to be

travelling on account of business.

**(b) Who was the passenger of chair No.9? What did he suddenly do?**

**Answer**

The passenger of Chair No. 9 was a man from Pittsburgh named John, an old friend of writer. He suddenly threw his book between his chair and window. The name of book was the 'The Rose Lady and Trevelyan', one of the bestselling novels of the present day.

**(c) What was John A. Pescud's opinion about best sellers? Why?**

**Answer**

Pescud believed that the stories about best-sellers were not realistic. The themes revolved around romances between royals and commoners, fencing, imaginative encounters and all the stuff that never happens in real life. In real life, one would always select a prospective bride from a similar background.

**(d) What does John say about himself since his last meeting with the author?**

**Answer**

John, since his last meeting with the author was on the line of general prosperity. He had his salary doubled twice and had bought “a neat slice of real estate.” His company was to sell him

some shares of stock the coming year. Much settled in life, he had even taken some time off to experience some romance of which he tells the author next.

**(e) How did John's first meeting with Jessie's father go? What did the author tell him?**

**Answer**

John's first meeting with Jessie's father was successful, since it set the tone for a possible alliance in future. John not only made his proposal, stated his intentions in clear terms, but also made Jessie's father laugh with his anecdotes and stories.

**(f) Why did John get off at Coketown?**

**Answer**

Jessie had fancied some petunias in one of the windows and she wanted to plant them in her new house. So Pescud thought of dropping at Coketown to dig or get some cuttings of flowers for her.

**(g) John is a hypocrite. Do you agree with this statement? Substantiate your answer.**

**Answer**

Yes, I believe that John is a hypocrite. The word hypocrite means the person tries to show what he is not. John is such type of man. He said that he did not believe in the romance portrayed

in best sellers. He believed the stories too good to be true. However, his own story was fantastical. His wife, the only daughter of the oldest family in Virginia, met him, an ordinary travel salesman of a plate glass company, in a journey where he would have least expected to find his life partner. Their courtship also was too fantastical, and even after all the episode, the fashion in which Pescud criticised love stories of best sellers proves him to be a hypocrite.

(h) Describe John A. Pescud with reference to the following points:

Physical appearance

.....

His philosophy on behaviour

.....

His profession

.....

His first impression of his wife

.....

His success

.....

..

### Answer

Physical appearance: John was not particularly good looking

His philosophy on behaviour: A man should be decent and law abiding in her/his hometown

His profession: A travelling salesman for a plate glass company

His first impression of his wife: A very fine girl, whose job was to make this world prettier just by residing in it

His success: Much successful John had had his salary raised twice in the previous year and his company was to give him a few shares as well.

**5. Complete the flow chart in the correct sequence as it happens in the story.**

*Hint: it begins from the time John Pescud first saw Jessie till the time they marry.*

- (1) Jessie takes a sleeper to Louisville.
- (2) Pescud sees a girl (Jessie) reading a book in the train.
- (3) Pescud speaks to the girl (Jessie) for the first time.
- (4) Pescud follows her but finds it difficult to keep up.
- (5) Pescud goes to the village to find out about the mansion.
- (6) Jessie arrives at Virginia.
- (7) Pescud meets Jessie's father.
- (8) They get married a year later.
- (9) Pescud instantly gets attracted to the girl (Jessie)
- (10) Jessie informs Pescud that her father would not approve of them meeting.
- (11) They meet alone two days later.

**Answer**

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- (8) They get married a year later.

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**6. Irony refers to the use of words to convey a meaning that is the opposite of their literal meaning. Working in pairs, bring out the irony in the following:**

**(a) The title of the story, “The Best seller”.**

**Answer**

The Best Seller is supposed to be most popular and likeable. But John Pescud throws the best seller “The Rose Lady and Trevelyan” to the floor of the chair car. He later says that all bestsellers have the same unrealistic romantic stories.

(b) Pescud's claim, "When people in real life marry, they generally hunt up somebody in their own station. A fellow usually picks out a girl who went to the same high-school and belonged to the same singing-society that he did."

### **Answer**

Pescud told the author that unlike the stories of the bestsellers, in real life people marry somebody in their own place. Someone who has been educated in a similar type of school and has grown up in a similar background. Yet the irony behind his claim is seen in his own life history. The moment he saw the unknown girl on the train, he fell in love with her, without much knowledge about her. He followed her to her destination and even after finding out that she lived in Elmcroft, Virginia, in a 50 room mansion, belonged to the oldest family in the state and her father was a descendent of the belted Earls he did not give up his pursuit. In spite of coming from totally different walks of life-he being an ordinary travelling salesman, their paths met and he went on to marry her.

(c) The name Trevelyan.

### **Answer**

Trevelyan is the hero of the bestseller novel "The Rose Lady and Trevelyan." Pescud condemns such best sellers and makes fun of its unrealistic characters. But at the end of the story, the author calls Pescud a Trevelyan because he had behaved almost like the hero of the bestseller.