

Chapter – 6 The Third And Final Continent

Understanding The Text

Q1. Indicate the details that tell us that the narrator was not very financially comfortable during his stay in London.

Answer. The chapter is full of instances that provide the base for the justification that the narrator was not very financially comfortable. He's travelling in the third class cabin being the initial one. The description of the place where he used to live which he states as icy cold washroom, and how they took turns in the cooking curry which they ate with their hands on a table which was covered with newspaper. He also didn't have a knife provided that he used the spoon to slice the eggs. All these details clearly state that he was not at all financially comfortable as he made the use of each penny wisely.

Q2. How did the narrator adjust to the ways of life first in London and then in Cambridge, U.S.A.?

Answer. The narrator's bachelorhood has been shown as one full of adjustments. As making judicious use of what he had in hand was important, he had to think twice before making any expense. The various details provided in the chapter regarding the adjustments that he made provide justice to this statement. Initially, he started working in a library and accommodated with people of a similar kind, particularly bachelors. They shared everything ranging from food to toilet. This was a time when he was a bachelor, after that he got married things changed otherwise. Although he bagged a full-time job that did not raise the standards completely. The budgetary aspect remained the same. In addition, he had to make changes in his routine to make slots to buy milk and other essentials. Thus, all his life was a series of adjustments.

Q3. What do you understand of the character of Mrs Croft from the story?

Answer. Mrs Croft has been depicted as a very stern and authoritative figure. She wants to question all the possibilities and was quite specific about whether the narrator was from Harvard or Tech, to make the decision regarding the renting out of her flat. Her character is seen as that of a lady who has an outer hard shell but is soft and tender from inside. This change is seen in the story when the chapter unfolds. Her character could be moulded as per the situation. The author was amazed to know that she was 103 years old.

Q4. What kind of a relationship did Mrs Croft share with her daughter Helen?

Answer. The relationship between the mother and the daughter was more practical than emotional. The daughter was not empathy towards her mother rather she merely fulfilled the duties towards her as an obligation and not a single task done by her was out of love and affection. The relationship that both of them shared was not at all

considerate and simply the obligatory duties that the daughter had to fulfil. She had no regard for her mother that she was 103 years old.

Q5. How does the narrator bring out the contrast between the Indian way of life and American society? Do you think his wife Mala adjusted comfortably to the new way of life?

Answer. The narrator brings out the contrast in the Indian way of living and the American society as the story is full of ample examples that proved it was adjusting in the American society is not an easy task for the Indians. No, Mala, the narrator's wife was not able to adjust completely in the new atmosphere. She was not at all comfortable moving to an altogether new place where everything was completely different.

Q6. How does the bond of affection between Mrs Croft and the narrator evolve?

Answer. The bond of affection evolve between Mrs. Croft and the narrator as every evening they started spending time together. It was when the narrator returned from the library, Mrs. Croft would call him, tap on the empty space on the bench, talk about the flag on the moon and declare that he was splendid. That was the everyday routine that they both followed that developed into an affectionate bond as the same attention was not given by Mrs. Croft's daughter, so where she received attention from, she was inclined towards that.

Talking About The Text

Q1. Living abroad is challenging in many ways.

Answer. The practical application of the popular saying, "Atithi Devo bhava" isn't as beautiful as it appears to be. There are many challenges that one has to face while living abroad. The main problems that arise are the issues of finding a place to live, the job security and most importantly the adjustment factor. No matter how glorious position an Indian secures while living abroad, an Asian will never be accepted fully even after gaining the residential rights of that particular place. Thus, living abroad is that far fetched dream that appears to be every charming but actually adjusting oneself into that atmosphere is full of compromises and sacrifices.

Q2. The Indian family system offers more security to the aged than what is found in the West.

Answer. This statement is completely true and the story provides the main evidence in this concern taking the example of Mrs. Croft. She was 103 years of age, and yet she lacked the proper care that was required. However, if we compare the culture of the Indian family system, the elders are kept at the topmost priority. It is often said that the elders are treated as the second form of God. The utmost level of respect is provided to them along with the care. They are not considered a burden, unlike the western culture that takes up the responsibilities only to fulfil the obligatory part. Thus, it is true that the

Indian family system offers more security to the ages as compared to the western culture.

Q3. The eccentricities of the old are often endearing.

Answer. It is a general human trait that the old people develop strange habits, or we can say they develop eccentrics. But it's also true to say that the eccentrics of the old are often endearing because we develop the tendencies for having them. The forgetfulness of the old is considered humorous. They demand strange things that they haven't consumed in life and thus the childlike nature of the old is compared to being endearing.

Appreciation

Q1. Discuss the manner in which the author interweaves details of the narrator's family with the flow of the main narrative.

Answer. The details of the narrator's family are an important element to understand the narrator's perspective in dealing with the elders. It was told in the initial part of the story that the narrator was close to his mother that was the reason that he developed a close and affectionate relationship with Mrs Croft. Thus, the details of the narrator's family were important for understanding the main narrative as the closeness in order to Mrs Croft is an outcome of the same. Also, the other reason that the narrator was affectionate towards the elders was that he had an Indian background and this trait was prominent in the Asians, which was the main lack in the Western cultures.

Q2. 'Mrs. Croft's was the first death I mourned in America, for, hers was the first life I had admired; she had left this world, at last, ancient and alone, never to return'—how do these lines encapsulate the bond that is possible between two strangers?

Answer. The main reason behind the narrator being close to Mrs. Croft was that he was highly homesick. He found it very difficult to adjust among the western culture. Among the huge compromises that he had to make in order to adjust himself, Mrs. Croft was something that he found peace in. Being an elderly woman, she was a mother like a figure for the narrator and he was highly engrossed in her. Spending part with her had become an indispensable part of his day or more importantly his life. All the little things, providing her with the rent on time, heating her soup and the other activities that he took up was his escape from the world. Thus, all these conditions show us the deeply encapsulated bond between the two.

Q3. Examine the pieces of conversation in the story. How do they reflect the worldview of each of the speakers?

Answer. The main character of the story apart from the narrator was Mrs. Croft. There are various pieces of conversations that show us how the dealing of the lady

prominently different. In the starting when she was unsure whether to provide the narrator with the house or not, then she was firm was questioned the narrator that whether he was from Tech Or Harvard. This was the basis that she judged the narrator on. However, on seeing the letter of recommendation, her viewpoint changed. Later she developed an affectionate bond with the narrator. Thus, the differences in the pieces of conversation show how initially the elements of doubt are turned to trust.

Q4. There are many instances of gentle humour in the story. Point out some of these and state how this contributes to the interest of the narration.

Answer. There are many instances of gentle humour in the story. Some of them include: How the old lady had the habit of remarking the flag on the moon and saying that it was splendid. And apart from herself making this remark, the more important element of humour was that the narrator has to compulsorily reply saying splendid. Another example was how Mrs. Croft on meeting the narrator's wife, Mala, said with disbelief that she was a perfect lady.