

THE ADDRESS By – MARGA MINCO

Short Answer Questions

1. “I was in a room I knew and did not know.” Why does the narrator say that she was in a room which she knew and yet she did not know?

Answer: The second time the narrator went to Mrs. Dorling’s house she was taken inside the house by Mrs. Dorling’s daughter. When the door of the living room was opened to her, she went inside and she was immediately horrified by whatever she saw inside the room. The room was full of all their belongings which had been taken away by Mrs. Dorling at the beginning of the war. She felt she ‘knew’ the room because it was full of all her belongings and as the room was not theirs but was a different room and the things were kept in a different manner she felt she ‘did not’ know the room.

2. Why does the narrator come back without claiming her belongings?

Answer: The narrator came back without claiming her belongings. She says that the objects which are linked in our memory immediately lose their value when those objects are seen after some time in strange surroundings. All her belongings, the silver cutlery, the clothes etc. had lost their charm when they were seen in Mrs. Dorling’s house. She knew that if taken back they would again seem strange in her new small rented room.

What change did the narrator notice in her rooms when she was home for a few days?

She noticed that various things were missing. – Mother was surprised that she noticed so quickly – told that Mrs. Dorling would keep things safely.

3. Why did the narrator resolve to forget the address, No 46, Marconi Street?

Narrator turns up to collect the belongings – they aroused nostalgic feeling – true owner no more – the ‘stored’ things reminded the uncharitable Mrs. Dorling and her own tragic past – better to forget.

4. Justification of the title

Short story revolved around the No 46, Marconi Street – starts with the address where the Jewish family suffer – ends with the narrator forgetting the address.

Long Answer Questions

‘Have you come back?’ said the woman. ‘I thought that no one had come back.’ Does this statement give some clue about the story? If yes, what is it?

Answer: The sentence uttered by the cruel woman Mrs. Dorling gives us clinching clues about the story.

The story has been set on the aftermath of the destructive Second World War. By the end of the war in 1945, some 60 lac Jews who were staying in Germany and other territories occupied by the German Nazi forces, had been killed systematically by the German Nazi forces led by Adolph Hitler, something which is known as the Holocaust. Hitler and the other like-minded Germans had considered the Jews along with some other races of people as people of inferior racial quality and as enemies and threats to the German society and nation and that is why they targeted the Jews and robbed them of all human rights and first put them in confinement centers known as ghettos and from the ghettos they took them to the concentration camps which were built in many places in Germany and other occupied territories and killed them in millions by putting them in gas chambers and also by other all types of cruel methods. When the war ended in the year 1945, some of the Jews got liberated from the concentration camps by the Allied Armies.

The narrator in the story is unmistakably such a survivor of the concentration camps. While others from her family had died she survived the war and came back in search of her belongings which had been taken away by Mrs. Dorling from her mother at the start of the war. By the quoted sentence Mrs. Dorling refers to the holocaust saying that she had thought that none of the narrator’s family members had been lucky enough to come back.

2. The story “The Address” is divided into Pre-War and Post-War times. What hardships do you think the girl underwent during these times?

Answer:

Value Points:

- War affects the fortunes of many
- Mrs. S and her family left their town for safety purpose
- she died – the daughter returned
- told the tragic story.
- Before the War the narrator returns home
- finds things missing
- Mrs. Dorling takes things away
- – the narrator doubts Mrs. Dorling. After War narrator returns to take her belongings
- – the uncharitable Mrs. Dorling’s behaviour and ‘stored’ things unsettles her – things reminds her mother’s memories
- – Becomes nostalgic – wants to forget tragic past – resolves to forget the address and does not take things.

3. “The Address” is a story of human predicament that follows war. Comment.

Answer:

Value Points:

- Wars always bring death and destruction. Wars cannot end conflict.
- In Holland a Jew family suffered
- disrupted the life of Mrs. S and her family -before War left town for safety
- Mrs. Dorling took chance
- grabbed her costly things.
- Mrs. S died – the daughter returns – visits Mrs. Dorling, No. 46, Marconi Street

- she shows her uncharitable character – denies recognition
- in her second visit the narrator found the daughter of Mrs. Dorling
- found her belongings – became nostalgic – recalled mother – felt sorry for her tragic death
- – ‘things’ reminded the tragedy she had to undergo – resolved to leave things and forgot the address –
- War changed narrator’s life – lost mother and costly things.

Questions for Practice

Long Questions:

1. What picture of corrupt human mind you find portrayed in the character of Mrs. Dorling. What is your idea about her daughter?
2. What are the character traits of the narrator? Why is that she has been given no name in the story?

Short Questions

1. Highlight the pain of loss and frustrations and helplessness in the mind of the narrator.
2. Is the story able to paint the horrible pictures of the inhuman Nazi atrocities on the European Jews during the Second World War?
3. You find out that the narrator managed to come back from somewhere. Where has she managed to come back from? (From the Nazi concentration camps, the death camps, gas chambers, from the jaws of death)
4. Why does the narrator say she knew and did not know the things? What does that mean?
5. What changes of normalcy does the story speak about? (bread of a lighter colour, which was of a darker colour for Jews during the War etc.)