

Understanding the Text

1. Name the two characters in this story whom Eveline liked and loved, and two she did not. What were the reasons for her feelings towards them?

Answer. The two characters Eveline liked and loved were her mother and Frank. Eveline's mother bore the torture inflicted upon her by her husband and took care of the entire family by providing all comforts to her children. Frank was her very kind, manly, open-hearted lover, and he admired her very much. He was the only hope for her future, who would get her out of the problems she faced.

She hated her father and Miss Gavan as they both used to criticise her, and they had always been harsh towards her. Her father used to drink and humiliate her, whereas Miss Gavan always passed comments on her.

2. Describe the conflict of emotions felt by Eveline on the day she had decided to elope with Frank.

Answer. Eveline loved Frank a lot, and when she decided to elope with Frank and marry him, it was not easy for her as all her memories of childhood, happy days, mother and siblings flashed in front of her eyes like a movie. She felt sentimental about the memories of her brothers, Harry and Ernest, who had left her house. The music played by the organ player reminded her of the day her mother died.

On the other hand, she wanted to run away from her father's cruelty and start a new respectful life with Frank in Buenos Aires. However, the promises she had given to her mother were that she would keep the house together as long as she could. The flash of memories kept haunting her, which did not let her go away with Frank.

3. Why do you think Eveline let go of the opportunity to escape?

Answer. Eveline let go of the opportunity to escape with Frank because she was stuck with the responsibility towards her family. The promises she had given to her mother were to keep her family together and never get separated. Even though she hated her father, she was worried about him. Her duty towards the family was much more important than escaping from home, which prevented Eveline from leaving home.

4. What are the signs of Eveline's indecision that we see as the hour of her departure with Frank neared?

Answer. As the hour of her departure with Frank neared, Eveline suddenly got restless and turned pale out of fear, whether she was doing right or wrong. She also felt depressed and cried out of anguish. She also prayed to God to direct her to the right path and perform her duties in the right way. In the end, her conscience did not let her give up on her duties, and she skipped the idea of eloping with Frank.

Talking about the Text

1. Deciding between filial duty and the right to personal happiness is problematic. Discuss.

Answer. Eveline, in the story, was in a confused state of mind to choose between responsibility and happiness. To keep the promise she had given to her mother, she had to look after the family, stay together, and not let family relationships break. For this, she had to sacrifice her precious life. Even though she had an opportunity to start a happy and peaceful life with her beloved Frank, all the promises, memories and relationships flashed in front of her eyes, making her give up her dreams and embrace the well-being of her family.

Often, there is a conflict in one's life when a person has to choose from among their personal life, family, happiness, and future. Eveline also went through the same situation, making it difficult to choose between her abused life with her family and escaping with her beloved one. Thus, in society, choosing happiness becomes problematic and selfish, pulling back a person to fulfil their filial duty and sacrificing their personal life.

2. Share with your partner any instance of your personal experience where you, or somebody you know, had to make a difficult choice.

Answer. Students can frame the answer based on their own experience.

Appreciation

1. The description in this story has symbolic touches. What do you think the 'window', the 'gathering dusk', the 'dusty cretonne and its odour' symbolise?

Answer. In the story, Eveline, the writer symbolizes the words 'window', the 'gathering dusk', the 'dusty cretonne' and its 'odour' as follows:

The world outside the window represents perception. From the narration, we can say that the outside world is new and unfamiliar to Eveline. She feels happier being with her loved one than being with her cruel family. She has seen and faced so many difficulties in her life that she doesn't consider herself to be part of the outside world. She believes the world won't accept her.

Similarly, 'gathering dusk' and 'dusty cretonne and odour' symbolizes boredom and lifelessness. Eveline has worked for her salary day and night for her family all her life keeping the promise given to her mother. It portrays her hopeless life. Hence, the writer has compared Eveline's life to the room's darkness, showing the burden of memories and boredom in her life.

Thus, the author has drawn a variation between opportunity and painful memories.

2. Note how the narrative proceeds through the consciousness of Eveline.

Answer. It is true to say that the story's narration mainly revolves around the actions that happen virtually and are not valid in the real world. Most of the actions usually don't take place in real life. The writer in the story is trying to showcase the thoughts through the events in Eveline's mind since her childhood. The writer depicts the scenes through Eveline's thoughts and emotions in a precise way. Thus, we can say the narrative proceeds through Eveline's consciousness.

3. In the last section of the story, notice these expressions

(i) A bell clanged upon her heart.

(ii) All the seas of the world tumbled upon her heart.

(iii) Her hands clutched the iron in a frenzy.

(iv) She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal.

What are the emotions that these images evoke?

Answer. All the above-depicted expressions evoked the emotions of fear and weakness. Eveline was confused about whether to go ahead with her happiness or the promise given to her mother to stay back and fulfil her duties towards her family. She was in great pain, and her heart was very heavily loaded with emotions, making it impossible for her to go away with Frank. All these instances depict her loneliness and the burden of leaving her family for personal benefit.

4. Do you think the author indicates his judgement of Eveline in the story?

Answer. The author focuses more on Eveline's struggles, helplessness, and conflict between family, personal life, past, and future. The writer uses Eveline's character to depict the story. The author does not make any judgement on Eveline.

Task

Underline the parts that are parallel in the following sentences:

- She had consented to go away, to leave her home.
- Strange that it should come that very night to remind her of the promise to her mother, her promise to keep the home together as long as she could.
- She prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty.
- Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms.
- Her time was running out but she continued to sit by the window, leaning her head against the window curtain, inhaling the odour of dusty cretonne.
- Not long before, when she had been laid up for a day, he had read her out a ghost story and made toast for her at the fire.

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Task

Mark the stressed syllables in the following words chosen from the lesson. Consult the dictionary or ask the teacher if necessary.

photograph	escape	changes
threaten	excitement	farewell
Illumined	sailor	sacrifice
invariable		

Answer.

Word	Number of Syllables	syllables	Stressed Syllable
photograph	3	pho-to-graph	pho
threaten	2	threat-en	threat

illuminated	3	il-lu-mined	lu
invariable	5	in-var-i-a-ble	var
escape	2	es-cape	cape
excitement	3	ex-cite-ment	cite
sailor	2	sail-or	sail
changes	2	chan-ges	chan
farewell	2	fare-well	fare
sacrifice	3	sac-ri-fice	sac

Stop and Think

1. Why did Eveline review all the familiar objects at home?

Answer. Eveline reviewed all the familiar objects at home because she felt nostalgic. She wanted to escape from her annoying family and wanted to lead a happy and peaceful life with her beloved one, Frank. All the wonderful and happy memories from her childhood days with her siblings flashed in front of her eyes like a movie. This further dissuaded her from going away from her family.

2. Where was Eveline planning to go?

Answer. Eveline was planning to run away from her house, from her troublesome family. She wished to be with her beloved Frank and start a happy and peaceful life in a new city, Buenos Aires, far from her father and her old monotonous lifestyle.

Stop and Think

1. Who was Frank? Why did Eveline's father quarrel with him?

Answer. Frank was an Irish sailor and a man whom Eveline loved and admired. She loved him so much that she wanted to elope with him and lead a respectful life. He was a very kind and open-hearted man who wished to marry Eveline. But Eveline's father had found out about the affair and was against her wish. He had forbidden her from saying anything to him. Hence, Eveline's father did not like him and quarrelled with him about their affair.

2. What significance does Eveline find in the organ player's appearance on the day she had decided to leave?

Answer. When the organ player appeared, she remembered the street organ that was played the night before her mother's death. When Eveline decided to leave the house, the good old memories with her siblings – the promises she had given to her mother that she would take care of her family and would never get separated – all flashed in front of her eyes like a movie. These instances held her back and forced her to fulfil her duties, and stopped her from going away with her beloved Frank.

