

6. WHEN YOU ARE OLD

..... W.B. YEATS.

COMPREHENSION I

1. THE POET IS ADDRESSING

ANSWER a) a young woman the poet has loved.

2. IN LINE TWO, THE WORD 'BOOK' REFERS TO

ANSWER b) book of poems.

3. THE WORDS 'GLAD GRACE' SUGGESTS

ANSWER a) her physical beauty.

4. 'PILGRIM SOUL' MEANS THE SOUL

ANSWER a) which is immortal. c) Which is in quest of true love

5. WHAT DOES THE PHRASE 'YOUR CHANGING FACE' SUGGEST? 'Your changing face' suggests material and physical beauty, changing or fading due to old age.

It also suggests that when she felt sad and was in sorrow, that would be depicted on her face and the poet could recognize it.

6. 'LOVE FLED' CONNOTES

ANSWER a) the death of the man who loved her. c) the death of the man who loved her.

COMPREHENSION II.

1. HOW IS THE 'ONE MAN' DIFFERENT FROM THE MANY OTHERS WHO LOVES THE LADY? (IMPORTANT)

The 'one man' refers to the poet. He is different from the other because he loved the lady truly and accepted her the way she was. He waited for her for a long time for her to approve his love.

The speaker expresses his deep and undying, unconditional love for the lady. When she was young, she had many suitors and admirers who had loved her for her physical beauty and grace which might be of real or fake sentiments. Their love was transitory. But the poet cared for her despite her sorrows that depicted on her face and mood swings that she suffered. He loved for her inner soul or the immortal soul (pilgrim soul). The poet's love was in contrast to the 'glad grace' of her other admirers. His love for her was beyond physical beauty. He never loved her for her outer appearance or beauty, who would like to attain it in some other birth too. And even after he was dead, he would watch her amidst the crowd of stars.

2. Does this poem bring out the transient nature of beauty as against permanence of love? How? (IMPORTANT)

Yes, certainly the poem brings out the transient nature of beauty as against permanence of love. He uses the phrase, 'old and grey', 'full of sleep', 'slowly read', as being comfortable in her life, lazy in her age, then living her life dozing idle. In the next stanza, the poet says that when she was young, many of her admirers surrounded her, who loved her for her 'glad grace', or physical beauty either with real or fake sentiments. The phrase 'glad grace', is contrasted to the sorrows of her 'changing face', The only person who loved the lady for her sorrows also, was the poet himself, who loved for her immortal soul and her fading beauty. But the lady failed to recognize and understand that the poet's love was true and permanent. The transient nature of her beauty aspires for permanence of love. She had ignored his unconditional love for her. The poet after waiting for a long time for the lady to realize that his love was the only true one, he would have died pining for her love.

3. COMMENT ON THE USAGE OF TIME FRAME BY THE POET.

Here, the poet blends the trinity of time- past, present and future.

The poet had loved a lady who rejects his true love several times. He wants to make her realize and understand his true love for her. So the poet writes a book of poems for her in which he addresses his beloved saying that when she is aged, she should read that particular book which will remind her of her youth. The lady then, will be old approaching her peaceful years with full of grey hair and sleepy eyes sitting in front of fire place. And 'slowly read' the book. As she starts to read, she is taken back in time to recollect her past when she had innocent looks of her eyes. She would go back to her deep memories of youth which follows her like her shadows.

The poet also says that his beloved would also regret how many admirers loved her for her 'glad grace' or her physical beauty and also understand that the poet was the one who loved truly for her 'pilgrim soul' (immortal soul) and also loved her when her beauty had faded. But later, she will realize it was all past and her true love has vanished and the poet is dead and would be watching her amidst a crowd of stars.