



INDIAN SCHOOL MUSCAT
SENIOR SECTION
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
CLASS XI
The Address
Marga Minco



SUMMARY

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 likeminded 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 robbed them of all human rights. They first put them in confinement centers known as ghettos and then to the concentration camps which were built in many places in Germany and other occupied territories and killed them in millions. 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.

The story 'The Address' is all about human predicament that follows war. The story narrates how a daughter goes to her native place in Holland in search of her mother's belongings after the war.

In the beginning of the story it is narrated how the protagonist was given a cold reception when she went to her native place after the war in search of her mother's belongings. After ringing the bell of house Number 46 in Marconi Street, a woman opened the door. On being introduced, the woman kept staring at her in silence. There was no sign of recognition on her face. The woman was wearing her mother's green knitted cardigan. The narrator could understand that she had made no mistake. She asked the woman whether she knew her mother. The woman could not deny this. The narrator wanted to talk to her for some time. But the woman cautiously closed the door.

The narrator stopped there for some time and then left the place. In the subsequent sections, the memories of the narrator's bygone days come to light. Her mother had provided the address years ago during the war. She went to home for few days. She could find that various things were missing. At that time her mother told her about Mrs. Dorling. She happened to be an old acquaintance of the narrator's mother. Lately she had renewed contact with her and had been coming there regularly. Every time she left their house she took something home with her. She told that she wanted to save all their nice possessions.

The next day the narrator saw Mrs. Dorling going out of their house with a heavy suitcase. She had a fleeting glimpse of Mrs. Dorling's face. She asked her mother whether the woman lived far away. At that time the narrator's mother told about the address: Number 46, Marconi Street. After many days after the war, the narrator was curious to take record of the possessions that must still be at Number 46, Marconi Street.

The concluding part of the story describes the second visit of the narrator. As the narrator's first visit yielded no result so she planned to go once again. Interestingly, a girl of fifteen opened the door to her. Her mother was not at home. The narrator expressed her wish to wait for her. The girl accompanied her to the passage. The narrator saw an old fashioned iron candle holder hanging next to a mirror. The girl made her sit in the living room and went inside. The narrator was horrified to find herself in a room she knew and did

not know. She found herself in the midst of familiar things which she longed to see again but which troubled her in the strange atmosphere. She had no courage to look around her. But she no longer had desire to possess them. She left the room, resolved to forget the address and move on.

Answer the following questions in 30-40 words:

1. How did Mrs. Dorling react when the narrator said, "I'm Mrs. S's Daughter?"
2. How did the narrator conclude that she had come to the right address?
3. Who had given the narrator the address, when and under what circumstances?
4. What do you think was the reason of Mrs. Dorling's indifference towards the narrator?
5. How did the narrator's doubts about Mrs. Dorling come to be true?
6. What does the narrator remember about Mrs. Dorling as she saw her for the first time?
7. What did the cutlery used by Mrs. Dorling's daughter remind the narrator?
8. Explain: 'I stopped, horrified. I was in a room I knew and did not know.'
9. How was the narrator able to recognize her own familiar woollen table-cloth?
10. 'Of all the things I had to forget, that would be the easiest'. Explain the significance of the narrator's remark.

Answer the following question in 150 words:

1. "The Address" is a story of human predicament that follows war. Comment.

'The Address' by Marga Minco deals with a fundamental dilemma: whether to cling to the memories of the past, or forget it and reconcile with the present.

War often leaves us in terrible predicaments. It creates many difficult and unpleasant situations for human beings. The experience of the narrator clearly illustrates this. The war had caused many physical difficulties as well as emotional sufferings to her. She has lost her mother. She went to 46, Marconi Street to see her mother's valuable possessions. The behavior of Mrs. Dorling clearly exemplifies her greedy and callous nature. She has stored all the valuable belongings of the narrator's mother, but she refuses to recognize the narrator. She does not even let her in. The presence of her mother's possessions in strange atmosphere pains her and loses importance as they are now separated from her mother. She could get no solace or comfort her.

2. Comment on the significance of the title of the story 'The Address'.

(introduction – title apt – spring wheel of the action – whole action centres around it – suggestive title and occurs at the beginning, middle, end of the story – beginning – narrator doubts – whether mistaken – wrong address – middle part of the story – reveals how she comes to know the address – mother informs about the address – ends dramatically – resolves to forget the address – belongings – no value – forgetting address easy)

3. What impression do you form of the narrator?

(introduction – devoted daughter – loves and respects her mother – does not approve of her soft behavior -keen observer – notices even the slightest change in the surroundings - sensitive and cultured woman – disapproves of the way her precious, antique things are used by Dorling's family – daring and forward looking woman – ready to live in present - realist– forget address)