

ENGLISH CORE 'B' [ALTERNATIVE ENGLISH]

POEM

CHAP. - 05

MARTHA

Walter De La Mare

About the Poet :- Walter De La Mare was born at Chariton in Kent in 1873. His father was a church warden. He studied at St. Paul's School where he founded the Chorister's Journal. His childhood song published in 1902, he established himself as a renowned poet. He possesses the power of bridging the border between reality and fantasy, with a most admirable invention.

SUMMARY :- There was a beautiful lady called Martha who used to narrate stories to children in the hazel glen. Her eyes were clear grey. If you look at her face you will find the story is flowing out of her mouth in the calm and peaceful atmosphere. It seemed that everyone is dreamt who so ever is present there. While revealing the story, she usually sit with her two beautiful and slim hands clasping her banded knees. The listeners used to bend on their elbows and paid exact attention to her story.

Her outward appearance, her voice, her narrow chin, her small lovely head betrayed the meaning and common comprehension of her

story. After hearing her story when you go to bed at night you will surely dream the theme of fairies and gnomes stealing out of the green leafy light. It is true after her when she is no more, her beauty, her sweet voice will always go on enticing you. Till the hazel is there and the sun light is there. Scene always keeps on hovering on our mind and heart long after that. It meant it casts a permanent impression on our heart to be happy in future. This is the proof of the poet's power in drawing the scene between reality and fantasy.

### SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTION:-

Q17 Describe the effect of Martha's story telling on the listeners?

Ans The effect of Martha's stories on the listeners was very great. They forgot the real world around them. They were lost in the world of the stories. So, the unreal world became real for them. The listeners were always too much charmed.

Q27 Why did Martha tell her stories under bushes and shrubs in a valley?

Ans Martha is a poem of mystery and love. It has a dream like quality. Fairies, gnomes and other supernatural creatures are the natural

parts of the poem's vision. They could not have been suggested in the setting of a drawing room or city park. Hence the setting of the poem has been transferred to a bushy and shreuby valley.

Q37) Why did the story told by Martha was calm and tranquil?

Ans Martha's mastery as a teller of children's tales lay in her knowledge of child psychology. She did not want to frighten the children with violent and hot stories. No doubt her special field is the supernatural world of fairies, gnomes and spirits. But she took special care to present her story in calm and calculated ways.

Q4) What was the highest reach of Martha's art of story telling?

Ans Martha was a master story-teller. She specialized in telling supernatural stories to children. The stories were told in the eerie atmosphere of the bushy valley on the mountains. Martha's way of story-telling was wonderful. With the gestures of her hands, eyes, head, chin and by modulating her voice she created proper atmosphere and attuned children to it. The imaginary became real and the real was forgotten. The children themselves felt to have transferred into a distant past to which the story belonged.

Q5) Describe Martha's features.

Ans Martha is a poem of eeriness which has the quality of a dream. So, Martha, the old lady and the teller of tales, is also made to have eerie features. She is very lean and thin. She has clear grey eyes. While telling her story she sits in such a way as her thin hands are clasped round her bended knees. Her chin is narrow. Her voice is also peculiar. All these features and her gestures play key-part in story telling.

### LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS :-

Q1) Attempt a critical appreciation of Martha.

OR

Show your acquaintance with Martha.

OR

Show that you have read and enjoyed the poem Martha.

Ans Martha is a very famous poem composed by Walter De la Mare. It is a children's poem and children all through the ages have enjoyed it. 'Martha' is also to an extent a poem about riddles of existence as the poet's master-piece "The listeners" is. The poem shows that existence is more than a matter of reason and common sense. The supra-rational layers of existence are shown through suggestiveness and by.

creating an atmosphere of dream.  
The lady Martha partakes both of the normal and supernormal world. She is adept at telling stories. She tells her supernatural stories in the proper settings of bushy valleys on the mountains. At least the atmosphere of the story and its meaning are conveyed through Martha's gestures and by the modulation of her voice.

The real is gone and the unreal takes possession of the scene. The listeners feel as if they belonged to the age gone-by to which the story belongs. The suspense is gradually built up. At last the real valley with the sun and other solid objects is transformed into the setting of the story.

The great efficacy of the poem lies in the ease with which it makes the unreal real. It also makes the mystery and eeriness of existence flash before our eyes. By using words of common speech and the rhythm and tone of speaking voice magical effects are produced. The poem has the qualities of a powerful lyric. It is made up of seven stanzas of four lines each. The second and fourth lines of each stanza rhyme together.

Q27. Discuss the dream like flavour of Martha.  
OR

Discuss Martha as a lyric poem.

Ans. Martha is a typical lyric of Walter De La

More. It is a poem of mystery and sorcery. In the poem, the poet has an eye on the middle of existence. The writing would have not produced the desired effect. So the poet in this poem evokes the mystery and sorcery of existence by creating the aura and atmosphere of dream.

The whole poem beginning with the first line seems to be an exercise in inducing dream. With the magic power of the verse, the poet makes readers responsive to his views. The readers are not like the children who forget the real and get lost in the unreal. Yet they partake of the experience communicated in the poem.

Martha's being a children's poem gives enough scope for the infusion of the mysterious and the visionary. And this is done through flavour and machinery of a dream though in Martha's case the children are only in waking-dream or day-dream. A dream atmosphere is created. The listeners become dreamers and they are face to face with fairies, gnomes and other spirits. As Martha's fades away the valley too fades and the listeners are transformed into "that distant past to which the story belongs."

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