

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 4: A THING OF BEAUTY



A THING OF BEAUTY

~Summary~

-by John Keats

Stanza- 1

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever
Its loveliness increases, it will never
Pass into nothingness; but will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing."

Explanation: The poet speaks of the permanent nature of beautiful things which give us eternal joy. Their loveliness keeps on increasing and never fades away. The everlasting beautiful sight of beautiful things is stored in our memory. They give us peace, just like a quiet shady place gives us a sleep full of sweet dreams. A sound sleep results in the good health of our body and mind, as it provides us tranquility and mental peace.

Stanza- 2

"Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the Earth,
Spite of despondence, of the in human dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching: yes, inspite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits."

Explanation: When we wake up the next morning after a sound sleep, all the beautiful memories of our sweet dreams help us to strengthen our bond with Earth. That is why the poet feels that every morning we prepare a wreath of flowers that binds us to Earth more strongly.

Hopelessness, sadness and lack of noble ways are a part of human life. Life is full of trials and tribulations, lost faith and disappointments, which result from our own doings. We harm ourselves by following unhealthy and wicked paths. But inspite of all this, some wonderful sights of nature help us to shed sad and grim thoughts. They remove the veil of gloom, bringing about hope and optimism in our lives.

Stanza- 3

"Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old, and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gains the hot season; the mid forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms;"

Explanation: The poet now goes on to list these objects of beauty. He says that the sun, the moon, old and young trees which provide shade to sheep, the daffodils, the greenery surrounding them, the cool and clear streams which provide respite in the heat of summer and the bushes growing in the forest with musk-roses blooming amidst them, are all eternal sources of joy and pleasure.

Stanza- 4

"And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read;
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink."

Explanation: The poet adds on further to his list. According to him, there is beauty even in death. He finds beauty in imaginary stories people have made about our dead ancestors who were deemed as heroic and mighty. The poet goes on to say that all the lovely tales that we have heard can also be placed among such things of beauty, as they have a sublime effect on the human spirit. All beautiful things are like an endless fountain from the heavens, sent by God himself, so that mankind may enjoy these precious gifts.

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NCERT SOLUTIONS

Questions (Page No. 99)

(Think It Out)

Question 1. List the things of beauty mentioned in the poem.

Answer: Everything which is present in nature is a source of pleasure and a thing of beauty. A few of them are – the moon, the sun, young and old trees, small streams with clean water, daffodil flowers, blooming musk-roses and the mass of ferns. All of these are the things of beauty. They are a source of constant pleasure and joy.

Question 2. List the things that cause suffering and pain.

Answer: There are numerous things which cause us pain and suffering. Disappointment and malice are the biggest source of our suffering. The lack of noble qualities is the other one. Our evil and unhealthy ways give birth to many sufferings and troubles which dampen our spirits. In our lives, they act as a pall of sadness.

Question 3. What does the line, 'Therefore are we wreathing a flowery band to bind us to earth' suggest to you?

Answer: The poet is a beauty lover. In order to discover beauty, he uses his senses. The link between nature and man is everlasting. The 'things of beauty' are similar to the beautiful flower wreaths. Every day, we seem to weave a flowery band which keeps us connected with the beauty of the earth.

Question 4. What makes human beings love life in spite of troubles and sufferings?

Answer: There are numerous things which bring us sufferings and troubles and dampen our spirits. In spite of such unpleasant things, some form of beauty brings happiness and love in our lives. A thing of beauty eliminates the pall of sufferings and sadness, which makes us love life.

Question 5. Why is 'grandeur' associated with the 'mighty dead'?

Answer: The 'mighty dead' were very dominating and powerful people during their own times. They were 'mighty' and great because of their achievements. Our eyes are dazzled by their noble works. We imagine that the mighty dead forefathers will achieve grandeur on the doomsday. Therefore, 'grandeur' and 'mighty dead' are associated with one another.

Question 6. Do we experience things of beauty only for short moments or do they make a lasting impression on us?

Answer: By being in contact with the things of beauty, we feel happy as they create a lasting impression on us. At the outset, the poet makes it clear that a thing of beauty is happiness forever. It is a source of constant pleasure and joy. Its beauty never diminishes or declines. Its loveliness keeps increasing with every moment. Its value stays undiminished and never passes into nothingness. The pall of sadness which covers our dark spirits is removed.

Question 7. What image does the poet use to describe the beautiful bounty of the earth?

Answer: A very beautiful image is used by John Keats to explain the beautiful bounty of the earth. It is the everlasting fountain with immortal drink. From heaven, it constantly pours into our hearts. Therefore, the beautiful bounty of the earth is known as 'an endless fountain of immortal drink'.

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