

Grade VIII - English

Lesson 7. When I set out for Lyonesse

Poetry

Soul of the Poem

The poet travels to an imaginary place, called Lyonesse. He shares details his journey and the impact it had upon him in this poem, the draft of which was found immediately after his return from the parish where he had gone to supervise the restoration of a church. The poet sets out for Lyonesse which was hundred miles away. It was winter and the entire foliage was covered with frost. The poet was very lonely. What experiences the poet would undergo, on reaching Lyonesse, nobody could guess. No prophet, no wizard not even the poet himself could guess what would be the nature of his sojourn.

When the poet returned from Lyonesse, people observed that the poet's eyes were bright with happiness. All around people silently admired the radiance and the glow that reflected on the poet's face. The reasons behind this happiness and radiance were incomprehensible, but something had drastically changed.

Stanzawise Explanation of The Poem

Stanza 1

When I set out for Lyonesse
A hundred miles away,
The rime was on the spray;
And starlight lit my lonesomeness
When I set out for Lyonesse
A hundred miles away.

Reference :

The above lines have been taken from Thomas Hardy's poem,
'When I set for Lyonesse.'

Context :



The poet in these lines gives details of the atmosphere when the poet set out for Lyonesse.

Explanation :

The poet sets out for an imaginary place, Lyonesse. This place was a hundred miles away.

It was a starlit winter night when the poet starts for this journey. The frost had layered all the leaves. The poet sets out on this journey all by himself.

Stanza 2

What would bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there,
No prophet durst declare;
Nor did the wisest wizard guess
What would bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there.

Reference :

Same as above

Context :

The poet in these lines meditates upon what this journey might have in store for him.

Explanation :

The poet meditates what might happen to him or occur while he would be staying at Lyonesse. The poet believes that it was difficult for him to guess what might happen. Nobody could predict the events or occurrences of his sojourn. Neither a prophet nor a wizard or magician could predict what might happen to the poet during his journey. The poet is trying to say that during his stay at Lyonesse something happened, but nobody could have foretold this.

Stanza 3

When I returned from Lyonesse
With magic in my eyes,
All marked with mute surmise



My radiance rare and fat homeless,
When I returned from Lyonesse
With magic in my eyes.

Reference :

Same as above

Context :

The poet in these lines shares with the readers the impact that the journey had upon him.

Explanation :

When the poet returns from the church, there was a certain brightness in his eyes. People observed him with silent admiration. They observed a unique radiance on the poet's face. It seemed as if the poet had attained a secret knowledge at Lyonesse which left a glow on his face and immeasurable happiness in his eyes.

NCERT Folder

Working with the Poem

1. In the first stanza, find words that show

- (i) That it was very cold. (ii) That it was late evening.
(iii) That the traveller was alone.

Ans.

- (i) The word 'rime' shows that it was very cold.
(ii) The word 'starlight' shows that it was very cold.
(iii) The word 'lonesomeness' shows that it was very cold.

2. (i) Something happened at Lyonesse. It was

- (a) Improbable (b) Impossible (c) Unfathomable

Ans: (c) Unfathomable

(ii) Pick out two lines from stanza 2 justify your answer.

Ans. "No prophet durst declare;
Nor did the wisest wizard guess."

3. (i) Read the lines (stanza 3) that implies the following.

'Everyone noticed something, and they made guesses, but didn't speak a word.'



(ii) Now read the line that refers to what they noticed.

Ans. (i) "All marked with mute surprise."

(ii) "My radiance rare and fat homeless."

Chapter Practice

Very Short Answer Type Questions

1. What time of the day did the poet set out on his journey?

The poet set out for his journey towards evening. The word 'starlight' proves so.

2. How far was Lyonesse?

Lyonesse was a hundred miles away.

3. What happened at Lyonesse?

On his return from Lyonesse, there was a remarkable change to be seen in the poet. However, the exact nature of the event remains unknown, but it left a huge impact on the poet.

4. What change did the people notice in the poet?

There was a unique radiance on the poet's face and a certain brightness in his eyes.

5. Where had the poet gone?

The poet had gone to visit a parish, to supervise the restoration of a church.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Where was Lyonesse?

Lyonesse was considered to be the mythical birthplace of Sir Tristram, in England and was believed to have been submerged by the sea. In this poem, it is an imaginary place to which the poet travels.

The poet calls it Lyonesse because he thought it as remarkable as Lyonesse.

2. What happened to the poet when he returned from Lyonesse?

On his return from Lyonesse, the poet seemed to be a changed personality. His face and eyes glowed as if with acquirement of some new found knowledge or secret.

The poet seemed more happier, confident and content, "with magic in my eyes." His journey left an impression on his personality.



3. Were these changes expected changes?

No, these were not expected changes. None of these changes were foreseen. The poet believed that there couldn't possibly have been someone who could have predicted these changes.

They were so sudden and unique that it was difficult for him to imagine its knowledge by anyone.

Value Based Questions

1. Do you think that the journey away from the material world to the spiritual realm was responsible for the changes seen in the poet?

Yes, the poet's journey away from the city, which is symbolic of material fairs and pleasures into the religious and spiritual realm symbolised by the church is responsible for the changes seen in the poet.

The poet is able to cast away worldly desire and temptations and is perhaps able to surrender himself before the divine light of God and church. These events are responsible for a mysterious glow and radiance, that was seen in his eyes and on his face.

Extract Based Questions

Extract 1

Directions (Q. Nos. 1- 6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.

'What would bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there,
No prophet durst declare;
Nor did the wisest wizard guess
What would bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there.'

1. I identify the speaker.

- (a) The poet (b) Lyonesse (c) The prophet (d) The wizard

Ans. (a) The poet



2. What is Lyonesse?

- (a) An imaginary place (b) An imaginary name
(c) The lioness (d) A game

Ans: (a) An imaginary place

3. The word sojourn means.....

- (a) A holiday (b) A brief stay (c) A vacation (d) A house

Ans: (b) A brief stay

4. What according to the poet nobody could have predicted?

According to the poet, nobody could have predicted the impact of the sojourn on his personality.

5. What happened at Lyonesse?

Some improbable incident occurred at Lyonesse. An incident that left a life-changing impact on the poet.

6. Choose one adjective from the lines and use it to make a sentence of your own.

Wise - the sayings of the old people are the wisest.

Extract 2

Directions (Q. Nos. 1- 6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.

When I set out for Lyonesse
A hundred miles away,
The rime was on the spray;
And starlight lit my lonesomeness
When I set out for Lyonesse
A hundred miles away.

1. Where did the poet set out for?

- (a) Lyonesse (b) England (c) Greece (d) Rome

Ans. (a) Lyonesse

2. The word 'rime' means.....

- (a) Winter (b) Frost (c) Snow (d) Stars

Ans. (b) frost



3. How far was Lynnonnesse?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| (a) Ten miles away | (b) Hundred miles away |
| (c) Five hundred miles away | (d) Fifty miles away |

Ans: (b) Hundred miles away

4. Who all accompanied the poet on this journey?

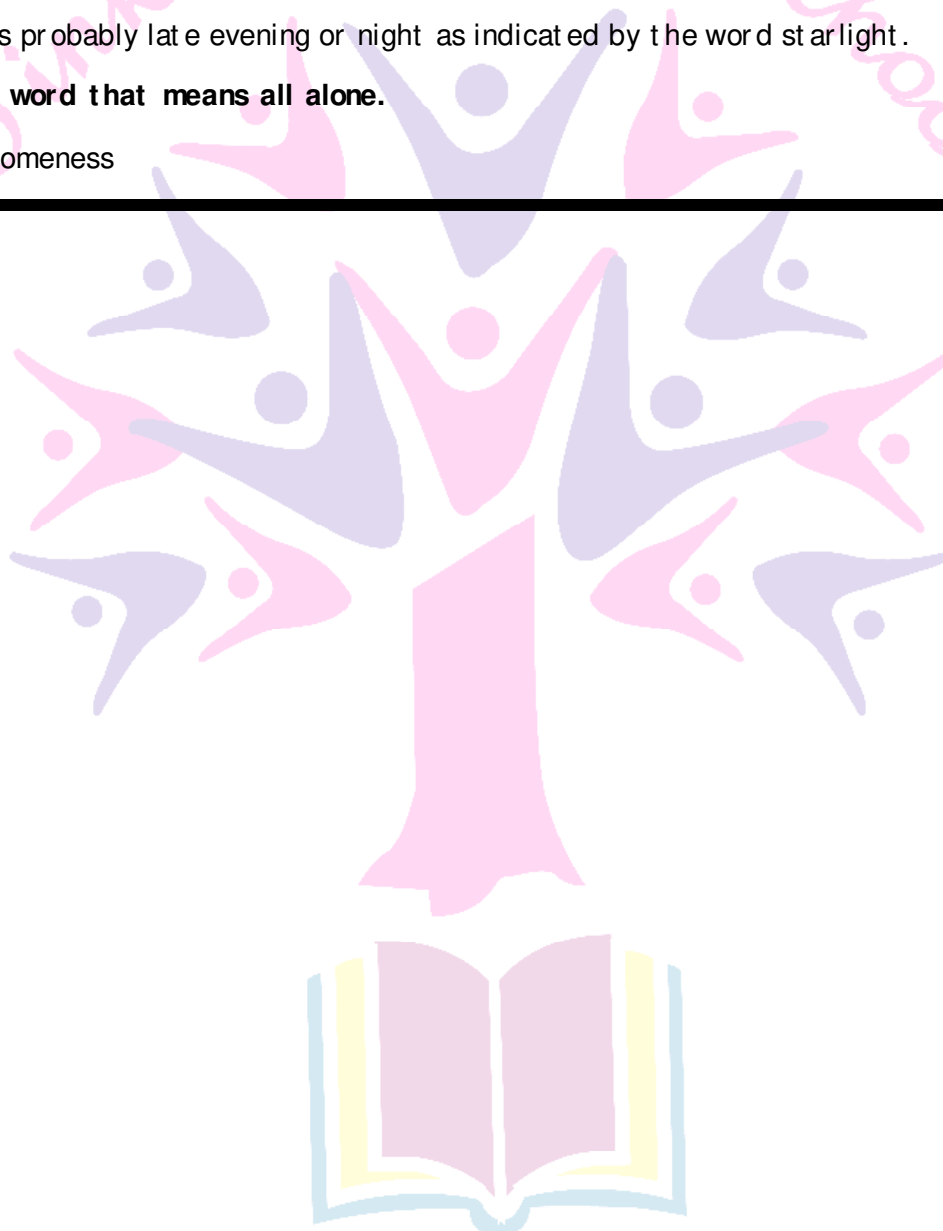
No one. The poet was all by himself when he set out on this journey.

5. What time of the day it was when the poet set out on his journey?

It was probably late evening or night as indicated by the word starlight.

6. Choose a word that means all alone.

Lonesomeness



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