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11.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall

- have biographical details of the poet
- have elucidation of the poem

By the end of the unit, you should be able to

- learn about poetic elements
- evaluate the poem significantly

11.1 INTRODUCTION

"My Imagination is a Monastery and I am its Monk"-Keats (in his letter to Shelley) rightly expresses his poetic spirit in his own words. Authoritative imagination and subtle sensibility are the central characteristics of Keats' poetry. Being a romantic poet, he has explored the empire of emotions in his works and has taken a voyage across the

very essence of life. As life leads to death, Keats has also portrayed the daintiness of death. He had gone through many spheres of life and had seen the face of life and death very closely and that is why he could recite his occurrences in pain and pleasure both through his pen. ‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci’ is an expression of his experiences of life shaped in the form of ballad, an ancient form of narrating a story in musical poetry consisting of rhyme and rhythm. It is a narrative entailing both pains and pleasures of life.

11.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Keats (1795-1821)

John Keats was one of the most prominent romantic poets in English literature. He was one of the very famous trio of Romanticism: Keats, Byron, Shelley. Keats was born on 31 October, 1795 in London, England. His works got published just before four years of his death on 23 February, 1821 at the age of 25 only. Poetry of Keats became more popular after his death and by the end of 19th century he had been considered as one of the most treasured poets of English literature. Sensual imagery was the prime feature of his poetry.

John Keats was the eldest child of Thomas Keats and Frances Jennings in the family. He did his schooling at local Dame school and later was sent to John Clarke’s school at Enfield where his interest in classics was developed. Keats lost his father at the age of eight in 1804 and his mother got remarried but she left her husband afterwards and all the four children were sent to the house of their grandmother Alice Jennings at Edmonton. When Keats was 14, in 1810, his mother also passed away. Keats started his medical studies at King’s College, London in 1815 and by 1816 he decided not to go in medical profession. He had written ‘An Imitation of Spenser’, a poem in 1814 when he was 19. He was very much inspired by two poets: Leigh Hunt and Lord Byron. His first poem in print was ‘O Solitude’, a sonnet which was published in Leigh Hunt’s magazine ‘The Examiner’ in May 1816. His first collection ‘Poems’ was out in 1817 which did not get a huge success but could grab the attention of readers and arouse the interest of publishers. His first collection made him good friend to Richard Woodhouse, a learned lawyer of the time, later who documented and archived most of the works of Keats. Keats befriended Isabella Jones in 1817 and she had been an inspiration for many of his romantic poems. Later in 1819, Fanny Brawne came in his life and the relationship ended with disease and depression that got reflected in his

works such as 'The Eve of St. Agnes' and 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' where love and death both are recited.

By September 1820, Tuberculosis took hold on Keats and he left for Rome and passed his last couple of months in Rome. John Keats died on 23 February 1821 and was buried in the Protestant Cemetery, Rome. As per his wish, it was written on his tombstone: Here lies One Whose Name was writ in Water. Keats's letters were published in 1848 and 1878. His other famous works include 'Ode to a Nightingale', 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' and 'Ode on Melancholy', 'Endymion'. His very famous lines from 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' are; "Beauty is truth, truth beauty' that is all Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know".

11.3 ABOUT THE POEM

'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' was written by Keats in 1819 and published in 1820. Title of the poem was taken from 'La Belle Dame Sans Mercy' by Alain Chartier (15th century). The title means 'The Beautiful Lady without Mercy'. This poem is a ballad narrating a story of a knight and a lady. Poetic expression of love and death is at its peak in this classic masterpiece by Keats. It contains twelve stanzas of four lines in each having the rhyme scheme of ABCB. Iambic Tetrameter is the basic structure of the poem in which one iamb is an unstressed, followed by stressed syllable. Fourth line of each stanza does have only three stressed syllables where as in first three lines of each stanza there are four stressed syllables used. It is simple in structure and mysterious in mood. The original version and the published version of the poem are slight different and critics consider the original version more striking.

As the poem is written in the form of ballad, it does contain certain prosodic elements of the ballad, like the very first is 'repetition' because ballad is the form of literature which is to be sung and told to the people so repetition keeps audience engaged with the flow of the ballad. Moreover, ballad belongs to oral tradition and that is why it uses simple and archaic language in which folktale can be narrated easily. Throughout the poem, tone of the ballad is interwoven with silence and death with the imagery of 'no birds sing, 'wither'd plants' and 'alone and palely loitering' knight. Metaphors are used to make the poem more lyrical and appropriate with the setting of the poem, like 'lily on brow'-as the lady is associated with the flowers, it indicates the impact of the lady on the knight. Most of the time, flowers are presented in the poem in a very symbolic manner. Beginning and end of the poem reflect the season of autumn but the episode of fairy lady reflects the season of spring, such a shift in the cycle of the season adds the mysterious movement in the poem. Dreams, dew and water are the elements of romantic poetry which are used significantly by Keats in the poem. Rhyme pattern of ABCB and iambic meter of the poem maintains the rhythmic structure of the poem

which is also a characteristic of the poetry of Romantic age. Alliteration and assonance

Are also used several times in the poem: "For sidelong would she bend, and sing a fairy's song", "wept and sighed full sore, and there I shut her wild wild eyes with kisses four" The knight believes that the fairy lady loves him but he does not understand why she takes him to her grove and disappears-this sets the irony in the poem. Tone of the poem remains worshipful and sad at the same time. Nightmare of dead soldiers leads the poem to conflict and to climax further where the knight finds him alone and sick. The environment itself in the poem is personified as dying and gloomy.

As the poem is written during Romantic age (end of 18th century) by a romantic poet, John Keats, it does echo many of the elements of Romantic poetry such as sublime-thoughts and actions beyond ordinary experience. Further romantic poetry deals more with emotions rather than reason and intellect. Here also the swing of the situations in the poem excites emotions and not the intellect. Keats said, "I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination" and the poem also significantly takes up the imagination as beauty and truth at its peak here. Imagination was considered as a spiritual force to make the world better especially through poetry during the Romantic age. Love for nature and relationship with external nature was seen as source of great inspiration in romantic poetry and in this poem too it stands true. Melancholy, nostalgic feeling and allusions intermingled with supernaturalism-these were few more prominent characteristics of romantic poetry and all these are significantly visible in the poem 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'.

11.4 TEXT

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever-dew,

And on thy cheeks a fading rose
 Fast withereth too.
I met a lady in the meads,
 Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
 And her eyes were wild.
I made a garland for her head,
 And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
 And made sweet moan
I set her on my pacing steed,
 And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
 A faery's song.
She found me roots of relish sweet,
 And honey wild, and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
 'I love thee true'.
She took me to her Elfin grot,
 And there she wept and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
 With kisses four.
And there she lullèd me asleep,
 And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!—
The latest dream I ever dreamt
 On the cold hill side.
I saw pale kings and princes too,
 Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—'La Belle Dame Sans Merci
 Thee hath in thrall!'
I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
 With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
 On the cold hill's side.
And this is why I sojourn here,
 Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
 And no birds sing.

11.5 INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

This ballad is written in three iambic tetrameter lines with the fourth diametric line. Simplicity of structure woven with supernatural elements is the distinctive feature of the poem as a ballad. Keats has narrated this musical story of love and death with the setting of austere winter. Last line of first stanza ‘no birds sing’ sets the mood of melancholy and it gets repeated at the end of the poem with a slight difference. Unfortunate fate of the Knight is emphasized by repeating few lines from the very first stanza at the end of poem. This poem is all about the experience of love and pains and pleasures caused by beloved. A knight forgetting his responsibilities falls in love with a beautiful lady having no mercy and finally this leads him to death-like situation. The lady in the poem is erotically attractive and seems to have supernatural powers. She attracts the knight with her wild eyes and ultimately it escorts him to the sensual pleasures resulting into death. To make it easy to understand, this ballad can be divided into four sections:

1-Stanza 1 to 3: Questions and observations of the stranger, speaker in the poem

2-Stanza 4 to 6: Reply given by the knight (I met, I made, I set)

3-Stanza 7 to 9: The knight further talks about the lady (She found, She took, She lulled)

4-Stanza 10 to 12: The knight expresses his experience (I saw, I saw, I sojourn)

Stanza-1 to 3:

In the very beginning of the poem, the speaker finds a ‘knight at arms’ nearby lake and tries to know what ails him, what is the reason of his painful state. The knight looks very pale as if he is dying. In the first stanza itself it has been mentioned that the sedge (plants) are dried and birds have migrated probably. This indicates the season of autumn or early winter. The opening of the poem reminds of medieval fairy tales and perhaps Keats intended to do so. This is how the poem begins with an inquiry of the unknown speaker to the knight.

In second stanza, the first line of the poem gets repeated, perhaps because the knight has not yet answered the question of the speaker. Here the unknown speaker narrates the situation of the knight with two more adjectives: ‘haggard’ and ‘woe-begone’ means the knight looks sick and depressed. As in the first stanza, dried plants and absence of birds, these two elements were mentioned, here in second stanza the speaker makes it clear that it is late autumn because crops have been harvested and the squirrel has filled his store with the food for winter.

Third stanza of the poem portrays the picture of pain-stricken knight with few more details. The speaker sees flower of lily on knight's brow and finds anguish on his forehead. The flower of lily stands for death. Further, the speaker says that knight's face looks so pale as if the rose is fading from his cheeks. Thus, first three stanzas create the setting for the poem to narrate the story further. In the season of early winter, in cold, nearby lake the knight is in the arms of the speaker and the sick and pain-stricken situation of the knight has been narrated by the speaker.

Here in line two, 'Alone and palely loitering', consonance of 'L' sound adds the musical element to the structure of the poem. The use of adverb 'palely' matches the internal rhyme with 'ail thee'. Lily and rose are also used as metaphors here to describe paleness of knight's face. This is how the poem opens up mysterious mood in first three stanzas.

Stanza 4 to 6:

In this part of the poem, the knight replies to the question of the speaker. He describes his meeting with fairy lady. In stanza one to three 'I' stands for the speaker but here 'I' represents the knight as he shares his experience of love with the beautiful lady. In fourth stanza, he says-"I met a lady in the meads". He describes her as 'full beautiful' and 'fairy's child'. Further, he talks about her long hair, light foot and wild eyes. Sensuality enters into poem from this stanza. Eyes of that fairy lady are illustrated as 'wild' which indicates the erotic influence that she has.

Fifth stanza adds much more physical elements. The knight says that he made garland of flowers for her and bracelets too. A special remark of 'fragrant zone' is given here which signifies the female body part and further it has been said that she looked at him, loved him and made 'sweet moan'. This clearly portrays the physical pleasures of love that they enjoyed. So this is how the poem moves on adding substantial aspects of love-making. The influence of beauty's charm has won over the knight and he indulges into exotic phase of love.

Sixth stanza begins with 'I set her on my pacing steed' which apparently means that she enjoys the ride of knight's horse which is in motion but this can also be interpreted as the sexual pleasures as the horse symbolizes sexual power. The knight confesses here that after having such erotic moments with her, whole day he could not think of anything else. Here the lady sings the fairy's song. This part of the poem deals with two different elements: one is addition of sensuality and another is increasing supernatural impact of the lady.

Stanza 7 to 9:

This section of the poem portrays the activities of fairy lady with the knight. 'She found me...', 'She took me...' and '...she lulled me'-these are the pictures portrayed by the knight himself about the beautiful lady. In seventh stanza, the knight talks about what she did with him after their emotional encounter. She fed him with relish of sweet, honey wild and manna-dew. This 'manna' has been referred to in Jewish scriptures as 'heavenly food'. When Israelites were freed by Moses in Egypt, they ate this food in the state of wandering to find the promised land where milk and honey would flow. Israelites were freed from slavery and were looking for their peaceful destination. Here the knight has also been enslaved by the fairy lady under the sway of love and its consequences. The lady says something in strange language which was inferred by the knight as 'I love thee true'. Here the supernatural element of the lady reaches far higher and the allusion becomes more intoxicating.

Eighth stanza takes the encounter of fairy lady and knight one step ahead. The lady drives the knight to her 'elfin grot' means her supernatural inhabitant, cave and here she cries and sighs loudly. Seeing this, the knight does not understand the reason of her cry and sigh but being blind in her love, under the glamour of her beauty, he kisses her eyes four times. Here the eyes are described as 'wild wild', which was already mentioned earlier about her eyes but here the knight says 'wild' twice, probably to show the rising impact of her eyes on him.

In stanza nine, the knight tells that the lady lulled the knight in the cave and made him asleep. Then he saw a dream during the sleep which was never seen by him earlier. He expresses his sufferings by saying 'ah! woe betide!' because while it is horrible experience for him to recall this dream while talking to the unknown speaker. This particular expression adds the flavour of typical medieval romantic setting in the poem.

Stanza 10 to 12:

In tenth stanza, the knight recites his dream sequence. In the dream, he saw many other kings and princes who were 'death pale'. Keats has used 'Pale' three times in two lines, probably to indicate the reaching hands of death. A biblical reference from the Book of Revelation is reminded here because the fourth horseman of Apocalypse was death riding on pale horse. This refers back to the 'kisses four' mentioned in eighth stanza. After these four kisses of knight on fairy lady's 'wild wild' eyes, he moves on towards death and sees the dream of dead kings and princes which were seduced earlier by the beautiful lady. Describing his dream further, the knight says that in his dream all those pale faces of kings,

warriors were uttering “La Belle Dame Sans Merci”. Here comes the title of the poem which has been taken by Keats from 15th century work by Alain Chartier. This horrifying remark by pale warriors puts the knight ‘in thrall’ and makes him feel bondage of alluring beauty. This French title translates ‘the beautiful lady without mercy’.

In eleventh stanza, the knight states that the starved mouths wide open were warning him about the lady. Here ‘gloom’ means the dusk, the sun of the knight’s glory also seems to be setting down and this makes the mood of the poem gloomy too. By the time, the knight wakes up from the dream and finds him alone suffering in cold by the side of hill. The fairy lady is disappeared all of sudden and the knight finds himself in tones of pains. So the entire sequence of the poem was dream like situation or what that is left over to the readers to interpret.

Last stanza of the poem proclaims the reason of knight’s suffering. The knight says to unnamed speaker that this is why ‘I sojourn here’ and this why he is ‘palely loitering’ though the sedge is withered, dried up and no birds sing anywhere. The ending lines of the poem repeat almost the same words which began the poem and this is how Keats brings the reader back to the beginning with slight variation of the words at the end. The dismal outside signifies the dreary, bleak, and miserable inside of the knight and as the end of the poem revolves around the beginning of the poem, it may be a sign of a new start for a new victim of obsession in the form of ‘merciless woman’.

Conclusion:

The poem leaves the readers with a scope of interpretation on why the knight is dying but it makes a clear sense that due to his emotional encounter with fairy lady, he has been facing death-like situation. He has been left ‘alone and palely loitering’ in the cold winter where ‘no birds sing’. The knight is facing the dangers of obsession, romantic and erotic fascination. Anyone can be at the fate of ‘knight at arms’, if one gets lured to neglect one’s responsibilities with the intention of pampering obsession. Pleasures of moments in love may turn into consequences of pains at any time.

11.6 PROGRESS TEST

Find out the correct answer from the given options.

1. Meter used for ‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci’ is _____.

- A. Trochaic B. Iambic C. Spondaic
2. Title of 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' is taken from the work of _____.
A. Alain Chartier B. Alexander Pope C. Alain Prost
 3. 'Pale' warriors, it refers to the fourth horseman of _____.
A. Almighty B. Alice C. Apocalypse
 4. Reference of Apocalypse has been taken from _____.
A. Bible B. Jewish script C. English literature
 5. In the first stanza of the poem 'I' refers to _____.
A. Unnamed speaker B. Knight C. Fairy lady
 6. The knight makes _____ for fairy lady.
A. Path B. garland C. residence
 7. 'Wild wild eyes' of fairy lady stand for _____.
A. distraction B. attraction C. fear
 8. Most of the times the setting of the poem seem to be the season of _____.
A. Summer B. monsoon C. winter
 9. 'Elfin grot' means _____.
A. supernatural ocean B. supernatural lake C. supernatural cave
 10. 'Manna-dew' stands for _____.
A. Worldly food B. food for animals C. heavenly food

11.7 LET US SUM UP

The speaker in the poem finds 'knight at arms' alone in painful state and asks him for the reason of his 'loitering'. This speaker might be the poet or even the reader. The knight replies him and says that he fell in love with a fairy lady and forgot about everything in alluring, erotic charm of the lady. Further, he states that the lady invited him to her 'fairy cave' where he made love to her and got fascinated by her 'fragrant zone'. After this sensual encounter with the lady, she 'lulled' him asleep and he saw a nightmare where he found many kings and princes dead whom the lady seduced earlier. Then all of a sudden he finds himself alone in pains at the hillside somewhere. Throughout the poem, flowers are metaphorically used as symbols of love and death both. Moreover, with reference to flowers, 'fragrant zone' is used in 'euphemism' for fairy lady's feminine anatomical zone underneath belt. Setting of the poem more often seems to be autumn or early winter but the sequences with lady also seem to be spring or summer; this adds the supernatural end product in the presence of the fairy lady and it makes the story a fairy tale

in a sense. ‘Granary’ of squirrel is also a kind of metaphor used in terms of personification of human activities. Use of ‘elfin grotts’ adds the fantasy in the story and ‘lulled’ asleep brings onomatopoeia which is supposed to be meant in the poem. Consonance of the sound ‘th’ in ‘Hath thee in thrall!’ really makes anyone wake up when the knight narrates his experience of waking up from the dream. After this dream sequence, the knight is found nearby a lake which symbolizes the stagnancy of life if it is misled by the obsession. ‘Moist’ and ‘dew’ are also used to indicate the momentary existence of life perhaps. ‘Manna-dew’ is also a metaphor used to indicate the search in obsession which goes in vain. ‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci’ gives the feeling of an allegorical medieval kind classic fairy tale with desolate backdrop, knight, fairy and bizarre progression.

11.8 KEY WORD

Allegory	An extended metaphor in which objects, persons and actions stand for extended meaning
Ballad	Ancient form of story-telling in poetic form which can be sung
Consonance	Repetition of the same sound
Metaphor	When one thing is described as another thing
Onomatopoeia	Words that resemble in sound what they mean
Personification	Giving human traits to non-living objects

Difficult Words:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ➤ Ail- pain, suffering | ➤ Moan- sigh, utterance |
| ➤ Loiter- waiting, lingering | ➤ Steed- horse, pony |
| ➤ Wither- dry up | ➤ Elfin- fragile, weak |
| ➤ Sedge- a kind of plant | ➤ Grot- cave, grotto |
| ➤ Haggard- sick, pale | ➤ Thrall- Having been under influence |
| ➤ Woe-begone- depressed, sad | ➤ Gloam- sunset, setting down |
| ➤ Wither- dry, shrink | ➤ Sojourn- break, stop over |

11.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Que: Write a note on the poem,

Ans. ‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci’ is a ballad written by one of the romantic poets John Keats (1795-1821). This ballad was originally written in 1819 and was published in 1820. The title of the poem has been taken from an ancient work of 15th century by Alain Chartier. It is written

in Iambic Tetrameter with rhyme scheme of ABCB. As a ballad, the poem narrates a fairy tale of the love between a knight and a fairy lady. The setting of the poem is early winter and it has 12 stanzas which can be further classified as inquiry of unnamed speaker, reply of knight, knight's encounter with fairy lady, fairy lady's action, and knight's dream sequence. The poem begins with unnamed speaker's question to the knight and in response to that the knight narrates the story of his love for fairy lady. The character of fairy lady remains mysterious throughout the poem. The knight does all his activities in the poem under the supernatural impact of beautiful lady. They make love to each other in a fairy cave where the knight has been driven by the fairy lady herself. She lulls him asleep and he sees a dream and in his dream he sees wide open pale faces of other warriors warning him about the beautiful woman. They utter the title of the poem 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' which means 'a beautiful lady without mercy'. Ultimately, the knight wakes up from the dream and finds him in suffering with a dying pale face. The plants nearby the lake are dried and no birds sing over there. A dreary outside signifies the painful inside of the knight. Entire poem narrates the story of pains caused by pleasures of love and here love stands for obsession. It has been warned by repeating the beginning lines at the end of the poem that the unfortunate fate of the 'knight at arms' can be of anyone else if one forgets one's responsibilities for certain obsessions. The poem in supernatural setting and mysterious mood deals with the theme of love, pain and pleasure of life, women and feminine allure, supernatural and realistic aspects of life and above all the theme of abandonment of obsession.

Answer the following questions:

Que 1: What is the central theme of 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'?

Que 2: Explain the significance of time in 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'.

Que 3: Where does the narrator meet the knight?

Que 4: What are the literary devices used by John Keats in this poem?

Que 5: How does this poem become a romantic poem?

Que 6: What are the mysterious elements used in the poem?

Que 7: Why is the knight loitering in the poem?

Que 8: Explain the significance of 'Elfin Grot' and 'Manna-dew' in the poem.

Que 9: In what manner metaphors of flowers are used in the poem?

Que 10: What is the significance of the knight's dream sequence?

11.10 FURTHER READING SUGGESTED

Books:

- Gittings, Robert (1964). *The Keats Inheritance*. London: Heinemann.
- Gittings, Robert (1987) *Selected poems and letters of Keats* London: Heinemann.
- Houghton, Richard (Ed.) (2008). *The Life and Letters of John Keats*. Read Books.
- The Complete Poetical Works of John Keats. Ed. H. Buxton Forman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907.
- The Complete Poetical Works and Letters of John Keats. ed. Horace Elisha Scudder. Boston: Riverside Press, 1899.
- O'Neill, Michael & Mahoney Charles (Eds.) *Romantic Poetry: An Annotated Anthology*. Blackwell. 2007.

E-resources:

- Recitation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBVjr-MjWgs>
- Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8lMp1Nl2Ow>
- Short film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Za8I78YkzqY>
- Movie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xza6Xx73Gvc>

❖ **Answers**

Answers of 1.6 Progress Test:

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10
b	a	c	a	a	b	b	c	c	c

Answers of 1.9 Questions: (Ans.1 to 10)

Que 1: What is the central theme of ‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci’?

Ans. It is very difficult to decide one theme of the poem because this poem is a complex mixture of many themes. Pains and pleasures of love remains at the centre. Apart from this, theme of betrayal, feminine allure, inner and outer versions of reality, abandonment, and death philosophy are also interwoven. Medieval romance is at the centre.

Que 2: Explain the significance of time in ‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci’.

Ans. The poem begins with the present time when the knight is at arms of unnamed speaker and further it shifts to the past of the knight and once again it revolves around the present time at the end after the dream sequence of the knight. The setting of the poem seems to be early winter or autumn and while the knight is narrating his encounter with the fairy lady, it also seems to be the time of spring and summer too. Hence, it can be said that the changing time factor makes the entire poem sounds more supernatural in its atmosphere.

Que 3: Where does the narrator meet the knight?

Ans. The narrator meets the knight beside the lake on the side of a hill during early winter.

Que 4: What are the literary devices used by John Keats in this poem?

Ans. The main literary device used in the poem is repetition which is the prime feature of traditional literature like ballad. Moreover, to add poetic affluence, Keats has also used consonance, metaphor, onomatopoeia, personification and allegory in the poem.

Que 5: How does this poem become a romantic poem?

Ans. As the poem deals with the theme of love and romance woven with certain supernatural sequences, it becomes a romantic poem by default. Moreover, it deals with elements of nature as metaphor and emotions along with imaginations. It portrays individual experience and self-expression too. To name a few more characteristics of romantic poetry, melancholy, medievalism, supernaturalism and sensuality can be mentioned and all these poetic elements are very much present in this poem.

Que 6: What are the mysterious elements used in the poem?

Ans. The poem is all about the fate of a knight who falls in love with a mysterious lady who allures him with her ‘wild wild eyes’. The knight

has been driven to fairy lady's 'elfin grot' by her supernatural impulsion and she lulls him asleep after love-making. The knight sees a dream just like a fairy tale in which he sees pale warriors warning him about the fairy lady. These pale faces are uttering the words "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" which means a beautiful lady without mercy. The lady in the poem leaves the knight alone loitering by the side of hill where the unnamed speaker finds the knight at his arms. The knight is having lily on his brow and the colour of his fading and getting pale as if he is about to die in grief of love. This is how the entire momentum of the poem becomes pretty mysterious.

Que 7: Why is the knight loitering in the poem?

Ans. After having a very sensual encounter with fairy lady, the knight has been betrayed by the lady and has been left alone. Before this the knight was brought to fairy lady's cave and she lulled him asleep. The knight saw a horrifying dream of other dead warriors warning him about the mystifying lady. Suddenly he wakes up and finds himself alone in the pains of betrayal.

Que 8: Explain the significance of 'Elfin Grot' and 'Manna-dew' in the poem.

Ans. The mention of 'elfin grot' and 'manna-dew' makes the poem more mystical because the place where little angel, supernatural being lives is called elfs and the lady brings the knight to her cave where some supernatural incidents happen with the knight. 'manna-dew' refers to heavenly food offered to Israelites in Jewish scripture and here the lady also feeds the knight with such supernatural food and then she lulls him asleep. After his dream sequence, the knight all of a sudden wakes up and finds him all alone. The fairy lady is disappeared and the knight is suffering from tones of pains for being betrayed by the beautiful lady without mercy. Thus, both the elements add some prominence to supernatural impact in the poem.

Que 9: In what manner metaphors of flowers are used in the poem?

Ans. Metaphor of flowers is used in two different ways. First, the knight mentions that he made flower-garland and bracelets for the beautiful lady and here he mentions 'fragrant zone' of the lady. This is how the knight talks about her anatomical feminine body part and it adds sensuality to the poem. Apart from this metaphor of flower is also used as 'lily', the symbol of death which is found on knight's brow and another flower is 'rose' which is used to indicate the fading face, paleness of the knight. So, metaphors of flowers are used to specify the shift from sensuality to sadness in the fate of the knight.

Que 10: What is the significance of the knight's dream sequence?

Ans. The knight's dream sequence makes the poem more supernatural by providing the evidence of mysterious role of the fairy lady. After a very erotic encounter with the lady, the knight is lulled to sleep by the lady and then the knight sees a dream in which he gets warning about the mysterious activities of the lady. Other dead warriors who were seduced and betrayed by the lady utters "La Belle Dame Sans Merci". It is the dream sequence which provides a sudden shift from dream to reality and makes the knight aware of betrayal of the lady.