

DRAMA EVER YOUNG

A. Answer the following questions.

1. Describe Mrs Payne Dexter's appearance as described at the beginning of the play.

Ans:- Mrs. Payne Dexter has a wrinkled face. She has a vibrant personality, a perfectly shaped figure and worldly humorous eyes which makes her appear younger than her age. Her white hair is well marcelled, her hands well — manicured which flashed with rings. She wore a lavender brocade evening gown and a dog collar of diamonds and uses a diamond studded lorgnette.

2. Why don't the other women around Mrs Payne, Dexter get the same deferential treatment from the debutantes?

Ans:- The other women around Mrs. Payne Dexter do not get the same differential treatment from the debutantes because they do not create the atmosphere which demands their attention. Mrs. Payne Dexter, on the other hand, would terrorize the debutantes which make them side step for her.

3. Why is Mrs Blanchard getting tired of the cane?

Ans:- Mrs. Blanchard is getting tired of the cane because she always has to move around with it. She does not like the politeness that people show her, by helping her sit, walk or move around everywhere she goes. Their politeness to her infirmity is an insult, according to her.

4. Who is Oliver Trent?

Ans:- Oliver Trent is an American lieutenant and an outrageous flirt He had a love affair with Mrs. Blanchard and Mrs. Courtney Page and many other women.

5. How did Harlow Bingham die?

Ans:- Harlow Bingham died of an accident in a horse race.

6. Why wouldn't Mrs Courtney' Page allow her husband to gift her the string of pearls before their marriage?

Ans:- Mrs. Courtney Page wouldn't allow her husband to gift her the string of pearls before their marriage because they symbolize tears are believed to bring sadness.

7. What does Mrs Dorchester do in the nick of the moment to assuage Mrs Blanchard's fear?

Ans:- To assuage Mrs. Blanchard's fear, Mrs. Dorchester made up a story about the amber locket that she was wearing and connecte it to the same amber locket Mrs. Blanchard gave to Oliver Trent

8. How did Mrs Dorchester happen to get hold of the talisman?

Ans:- Mrs. Dorchester got hold of the talisman from her son, who brought it from the Philippines. The same Chinese servant who served Oliver Trent also served her son and it was the servant that gave him as a talisman. Her son became superstitious about it and made into a bracelet for her.

9. What gave Mrs Blanchard the strength to walk out without her cane?

Ans:- The ecstasy she had on hearing that Oliver Trent was alive and that he had always been in love with her all those years after they had departed, gave Mrs. Blanchard the strength to walk out without her cane.

10. How did Mrs Dorchester happen to have an amber charm?

Ans:- The amber charm that Mrs. Dorchester had was given by her father on her twenty first birthday, so that she could save a lock of her blonde hair.

B. Read the following lines and answer the questions.

1. I always linger over my coffee. I always did with Thomas when he was alive. Our family has always lingered over the coffee. Does the response of Mrs Payne- Dexter reveal that family traditions are important to her, or is it more about her sense of self-importance:'

Ans:- The response of Mrs. Payne Dexter about lingering over her coffee does not reveal the importance of family traditions to her, rather it is more about her sense of self importance. There is an air of dominance about her in the reply.

2. No! I shall live another twenty years at least, if only to see these young things grow into the troubles of married life, and it will please me. What do these lines indicate about Mrs Payne- Dexter's opinion about the young debutantes:'

Ans:- Mrs. Payne Dexter's opinion about the young debutantes was that these young people does not have any respect for their superiors and that they behave and think so highly of themselves. She had a prejudice against the youngsters and was highly jealous of the present generation that it would please her to see the young people grow into the troubles of married life.

3. I have played a trick on him What was the trick that Mrs Blanchard played on her husband?

Ans:- The trick that Mrs. Blanchard played on her husband was that now, since he is ready to settle down, sit before the fireplace and watch her knit, she is not ready for that. She would rather play "roulette" then sit beside the fireplace and knit.

4. Be shocked if you want to-I am free now and can speak of it. What can Mrs Blanchard speak of, now:'

Ans:- Mrs. Blanchard had separated from her husband and so, she can now speak freely of her love for the lieutenant who had played so well in arousing her husband's jealousy. She revealed the truth that there was only one man in her whole life whom she really loved and it was not her husband but the lieutenant.

5. But it isn't a happy thought not to be needed. What did Mrs Payne- Dexter say to make Mrs Dorchester respond in this way?

Ans:- Mrs. Dorchester responded this way when Mrs. Payne Dexter told her that it was only because she thought she must help her children. Her help was not actually needed. They would not want to hurt her feelings by letting her know that they do not need her. Mrs. Payne Dexter took care of her grandchild so that its mother could go and play a game of card or to save the nurse's bill for her son while he spent his money playing polo at the club.

C. Answer the following questions in detail.

1. Of all the characters in the play, Mrs Dorchester appears to be the one who is grounded on reality.Do you agree? Give reasons.

Ans:- Yes, it is true that of all the characters in the play, Mrs. Dorchester is the one who is grounded on reality. She wears decent eye glasses unlike Mrs. Payne Dexter who wears lorgnette simply to add some distinction to her manners. When Mrs. Payne Dexter gets jealous of the young debutantes she knocks some sense of reality into her head by telling her that they have had their share of days and so they should sit back and give them a chance. Her gracefulness and good nature can be seen in the way she handles the financial matters after the death of her husband, such a family loving and caring wife is not seen in the play except her. Mrs. Dorchester is that kind of women who lives without hurry. She believes "in accepting old age with as good a grace as possible", which the other women finds ridiculously old fashioned. She loves her husband deeply and it seems to her that it is the love that should hold them together but she cannot believe that it actually does. This shows how grounded she is on reality. Also, it is through her that Mrs. Blanchard could walk again without the support of the cane. She felt that she needed to say something to revive her because she was afraid she would die, which was successful.

2. Mrs Courtney-Page appears very reasonable when she gets to know that her fiance was the love of Mrs Blanchard's life. Is it because she empathises with Mrs Blanchard or because she is not really in love with her fiancé?

Ans:- Mrs. Coutney Page does not seem to really love Mr. Oliver Trent. It was not because of her empathy that she appeared reasonable towards Mrs. Blanchard. She would have a different attitude if her love was true. No wonder, she joined the other two women into tricking Mrs. Blanchard so that she would walk again without the support of the cane, with no reluctance. She was engaged three times, married once, once widowed and now has another fiancé, which clearly indicates that she never ever really loved a man. It was as if she took pride in the number of men she had in her life that she would wear the strands of pearl around her neck. She, herself said that she shall not marry Oliver Trent but only keep the pearls- the fourth, the largest and longest strand. When asked if she loved him she simply replied that she can always find someone. This showed that she was not really in love with her fiancé.

3. Mrs Payne-Dexter appears to be the imposing personality in this group of women. Comment.

Ans:- Mrs. Payne Dexter is that kind of woman who has a vibrant personality. She does not show much sign of aging even though she has a wrinkled face. She looks magnificent in the diamonds and gowns she wears. Her most imposing quality is that she has the authority of a leader. She is that kind of woman who always likes to be superior than the rest of the people around her. She liked to linger over the coffee not because of family tradition but because of the self importance that she assumed to herself. She said this "dominatingly" when told by Mrs. Dorchester about it. She has a certain manner about her and loves to impress people by her manners. The lorgnette she carried around adds distinction to her manners. She takes pride in her status and the role that she played towards society as a "dowager", and as "a member of the society that once ruled New York". She demands respect from the young debutantes as long as she is alive. Whenever she is around, she creates the kind of atmosphere which demands the attention of the young people around her. Mrs. Payne Dexter terrorize them that everywhere she goes they "side-step" for her and that is how she gets differential treatment from them. She holds the "whip had" over everyone.

4. Over what did Mrs Blanchard grieve for forty years? What had caused the grief?

Ans:- Mrs. Blanchard had grieved for forty years over her husband's notorious unfaithfulness towards her. She had been grieving for it because she never had the sense to get rid of him. She did not have the courage to divorce him even though it was necessary for her to have done so because she was very young and divorce was not being done in those days. That was why she had been living in disillusionment and had been a fool for forty years for not giving up on her husband.

- 5. While narrating how she (Mrs Dorchester) got hold of the amber locket, she cleverly manages to get vital information out from Mrs Blanchard to lend credibility to it. Cite those instances.**

Ans:- In the process of narrating how Mrs. Dorchester got hold of the amber locket, she cleverly manages to get some vital information from Mrs. Blanchard. When Mrs. Dorchester was telling how his son brought it from the Phillipines, given to him by a Chinese servant, Mrs. Blanchard excitedly added that it is "the locket". The nickname that Oliver Trent kept for Mrs. Blanchard was also revealed through her when she said that it was "Dee-dee" which meant "dear". Mrs. Dorchester also managed to get the name of the man, Oliver Trent, when she was narrating how the Chinese servant helped him to escape by smuggling him into a boat. Mrs. Blanchard reminded her that the name was Oliver Trent. All these instances lend credibility to the narration.

- 6. 'Mrs Blanchard, it is a life-tragedy, but not a line of it shows in your face.' What is her response to this comment? Do you agree that love does keep one young?**

Ans:- Mrs. Blanchard responded that she would never let such a life tragedy show in her face. The reason was that her mind was always engrossed in the thought of how Mt Oliver Trent should not see an old wrinkled face, after he had cherished the memory of her youth. She had always harbored a secret thought that her husband might die and that she might be free to reunite with Oliver Trent again. Her mind had always been in love and that was how she could remain young. Love can be an inspiration to a person to feel young. It inspires a person and makes him forget about retiring in life by always exciting the person for being in love. It has influence not only on the person but also those who are related to the person in any way. It spreads through air, sight and sound. However, love can have different faces with varied different effect. A person, who is in love, can be adversely affected if it turns out to be an unsuccessful love. In such cases, love has the opposite effect. It depends on the kind of love a person is in that determines whether the person stays young or grow older.

- 7. Are the women in the play really as liberated as they are made out to be or are they held back on some accounts because of their gender? Cite instances from the play.**

Ans:- In the early twentieth century some significant changes took place in the condition of women. The attitude towards the position of women began to change. This was unlike the 18th and 19th century when the women's place in the society was found deteriorating. With the advent of 20th century, women achieved certain degree of freedom of expression and behaviours. As per the presentation of the chief characters in the play 'Ever Young', we can well see it. For example in the ykplay, Mrs Blanchard says, "I am not ready to sit before the fireplace and I would rather play roulette than knit". It is a direct challenge to the attitude that a divorced or widowed woman must

confine herself to the memories of her husband or let her plight of husband less life. Another instance for this is Mrs. Courtney-Page's dialogue: "Why should a woman remain in bondage when there is at every turn a new chance for a better alliance". According to her "A woman can marry any man she wants" and she proved it: "I was engaged three times, married once, once widowed, and now I have another fiancé". All these instances show that women were liberated and enjoyed the same liberty as the opposite sex.

8. In the play, the book Truth and Youth is mentioned twice. Is this a clever ploy by the playwright to remind the readers that truth and youth is the parallel theme of the play?

Ans:- We have two instances in the play on different occasions where the book 'Truth and Youth' is found mentioned. The book somehow reflects the state that Mrs. Blanchard was in paralleling the theme of the play. If we rid ourselves of the illusion of old age we can remain ever young, and Mrs. Blanchard is a true depiction for this. We do not have to pay for youth. We just have to think it and be it. It is very simple only if we have faith.
