

St. Andrews Scots Sr. Sec. School

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Session: 2026-2027 Notes

Class : XI

Subject : English

Chapter- A Photograph

Answer the following questions

Q1. What can you say about the childhood of the poet's mother?

Ans: The childhood of the poet's mother must have been filled with fun and happiness. This is clear from the snapshot of the sea holiday. They are enjoying their holiday. The mother of the poet laughs when looking at the snapshot even after many years have passed since the sea holiday. All this shows us that it was a very pleasant childhood.

Q2. The sea 'appears to have changed less' in comparison to the three girls who enjoyed the sea holiday. Comment.

Ans: The poet compares the mortal nature of human beings with the eternal nature of the sea or natural objects. With the passage of time, the poet's mother died but the vast sea has remained as it was since the photograph was taken.

Q3. Why does the poet feel nostalgic?

Ans: The poet sees an old photograph of her mother in which she was standing on the beach with her two cousins - Dolly and Betty. They were enjoying themselves. The photograph captured her mother's sweet and smiling face. At that time, she was around twelve years old. The poet remembers how her mother used to laugh whenever she looked at that old photograph. But time has passed and now the poet has been left only with the memories of her mother. Thus, she feels nostalgic.

Q4. Its silence silences," writes Shirley Toulson. The loss of her mother has silenced her. Do you think that this attitude of the poet is the right attitude to live life? Why/ why not?

Ans: There is no doubt that Shirley Toulson has given a very touching tribute to her mother by remembering her through her verses. It is apparent that she is very much nostalgic and is grieving at the loss of her mother. Though she says that over the years she has adjusted to her mother's absence, but circumstances have surely filled her with silence and a deep void. We cannot deny that it hurts very much to lose someone, but the attitude shown by the poet at the end is not the right way to live your life. Life will keep going on even if we stop to lament our loss. Loss is universal. It is the law of nature. We cannot let ourselves get depressed just because of this. It is also understandable that we will grieve. However, grieving to the point of hampering the normal functioning of our lives is not acceptable.

Q5. 'Both wry with the laboured ease of loss.' The poet is missing her mother. What is the role of the mother in forming the personality of a child?

Ans: A mother's role in shaping the personality of a child is of paramount importance. The child watches his/ her mother intently and learns about the world and how to react to it at the initial stages. The mother can play an important role by making the child to deal constructively with mistakes, forgive others, handle frustration, show kindness and share love. When a mother is nurturing and caring the child, it will develop a healthy bond with not only the mother but will be willing to form new relationships with others. Children and adults both want a sense of independence and autonomy. It is very important on a mother's part to offer choices to the child. This makes the child feel that he/she is smart enough to make choices. The mother's thoughts nourish a child's mind and soul as her personal attention nourishes a child's body. She is a child's first teacher. She tries to imbibe such values that may help a child lifelong.