

She was one of those pretty, charming women who are born, as if by an error of Fate, into a petty official's family. She had no dowry, no hopes, nor the slightest chance of being loved and married by a rich man-so she slipped into marriage with a minor civil servant. Unable to afford jewels, she dressed simply: But she was wretched, for women have neither caste nor breeding-in them beauty, grace, and charm replace pride of birth. Innate refinement, instinctive elegance, and wit give them their place on the only scale that counts and these make humble girls the peers of the grandest ladies. She suffered, feeling that every luxury should rightly have been hers. The poverty of her rooms- the shabby walls, the worn furniture, the ugly upholstery caused her pain. All these things that another woman of her class would not even have noticed, made her angry. The very sight of the little Breton girl who cleaned for her awoke rueful thoughts and the wildest dreams in her mind. She dreamt of rooms with Oriental hangings, lighted by tall, bronze torches, and with two huge footmen in knee breeches made drowsy by the heat from the stove, asleep in the wide armchairs. She dreamt of great drawing rooms upholstered in okl silks, with fragile little tables holding priceless knickknacks, and of enchanting little sitting rooms designed for tea-time chats with famous, sought-after men whose attentions all women longed for. She sat down to dinner at her round table with its three-day-old cloth, and watched her husband lift the lid of the soup tureen and delightedly exclam: "Ah, a good homemade beef stew! There's nothing better!" She visualized elegant dinners with gleaming silver and gorgeous china. She yearned for wall hangings peopled with knights and ladies and exotic birds in a fairy forest. She dreamt of eating the pink flesh of trout or the wings of grouse. She had no proper wardrobe, no jewels, nothing. And those were the only things that she loved-she felt she was made for them. She would have so loved to charm, to be envied, to be admired and sought after.

Questions:

- 1. Which word best describes the actual living conditions of the couple and why?**
- 2. Which line best demonstrates the couple's true economic standing and why?**
- 3. According to the passage, what can be stated about the marriage of this woman?**
- 4. What can be inferred about the values of both husband and wife?**

- 5. What is the main idea of the passage?**

Q1 Which word best describes the actual living conditions of the couple and why?

The word which best describes the actual living conditions of the couple is "poor". It is because the couple had rooms having shabby walls, worn furniture, and ugly upholstery. The wife did not have expensive (clothes) wardrobe, and they ate simple food on an ordinary table having a three-day-old cloth. However, the wife dreamt of a luxurious lifestyle which her husband could not afford.

Q2 Which line best demonstrates the couple's true economic standing and why?

The sentence "the little Breton girl cleaned for ~~the~~^{her} wife" shows that the couple (had) was a middle-class family

who had a simple lifestyle. In their class, poverty of rooms like shabby walls, worn furniture, and ugly upholstery was really common. As the husband was a minor civil servant, so the couple could not afford rooms with Oriental hangings, lighted by expensive torches, and other luxuries which the wife always wanted. Thus, they had a middle-class lifestyle.

Q3 According to the passage, what can be stated about marriage of this woman?

According to the passage, it can be stated that the wife was discontented with her marriage. She was a pretty woman who, by an error of fate, was born in a petty official's family. As there were no chances of being married by an (rich) ^x opulent man, she slipped into a marriage with

a minor civil servant. She believed that she deserve every luxury in life but her husband could not afford this that. That is why, she was very unhappy with her marriage life.

Q4 What can be inferred about the values of both husband and wife?

From the passage, it can be inferred that the husband was an individual satisfied with his simple lifestyle. On the other hand, his wife was extremely materialistic and believed that she deserve every luxury of life. She wanted to be envied, admired, and sought after. For instance, while having dinner on their old dining table, the husband was happy whereas the wife dreamt of elegant dinners. This shows contrast between their values.

Q5 What is the main idea of the passage?

The main idea of the passage is that traditional social hierarchies do not apply to women. In them, beauty, grace, and charm substitute pride of birth. Innate refinement, instinctive elegance, and wit determine social standing of a woman. These traits make humble girls equal to the grandest ladies. Thus, the passage mainly discusses how a pretty woman suffers because she believes her beauty entitles her to a higher social status and luxurious lifestyle.