

UNIT 3

What made Mrs. Slater believe that the grandfather was dead?

Mrs. Slater believed that the grandfather was dead because he was lying still, cold, and unresponsive in bed after saying he didn't want dinner and was going to bed early.

Why does Mrs. Slater decide to shift the bureau from Grandfather's room before the Jordans arrive?

Mrs. Slater decided to shift the bureau from her grandfather's room because she feared that her sister **Jordans** might claim it, so she wanted to take possession of it before **Jordans** arrived.

Who is the dear departed? What do you know about his family?

The "dear departed" refers to Abel Merryweather, the grandfather. His family consisting of his two daughters, Mrs. Slater and Mrs. Jordan and their respective husbands are more interested in his possessions than his well-being.

Who discovered that the grandfather was dead? What made him/her think so?

Mrs. Slater discovered the grandfather lying still and cold in bed and assumed he was dead because he was unresponsive.

What made the grandfather change his will?

Abel Merryweather decides to change his will after witnessing the greed and insensitivity of his daughters, Mrs. Slater and Mrs. Jordan. Abel's decision is also influenced by his realization that neither daughter truly wants to care for him out of love, but rather for material gain.

What was Atzel's problem in the new paradise?

Atzel's problem in the new paradise was that he soon became bored and restless. The repetitive nature of the food, lack of activities, and isolation from his loved ones made him realize he preferred the challenges of life.

What do you know about Atzel?

Atzel was a young man who, influenced by stories from an old nurse, believed that paradise was a place of endless comfort and laziness. He developed a strange illness where he thought he was dead so he could go to paradise early.

What does the phrase 'a fool's paradise' mean?

The phrase "a fool's paradise" refers to a state of happiness or contentment based on illusion or false beliefs, which will ultimately lead to disappointment when reality sets in.

Why did Atzel become ill?

Atzel became ill because he convinced himself that he was dead, influenced by his desire to escape life's responsibilities and enjoy the ease and luxury he believed awaited him in paradise.

What was told to Atzel about Paradise by the old nurse?

The old nurse told Atzel that in paradise, there was no need to work, study, or take on any responsibilities. One could eat lavishly, sleep in, and enjoy endless leisure.

What was the condition of Atzel when Doctor Yoetz visited his home?

When Dr. Yoetz visited Atzel, the boy was pale, thin from fasting and lying in bed, convinced he was dead.

What did Atzel do to go to paradise?

Atzel lay down in an open coffin, allowing his family to stage a fake funeral, convinced that he had successfully "died" and entered paradise.

What was the only way to go to paradise according to Atzel?

According to Atzel, the only way to go to paradise was by dying.

How was the room prepared for Atzel in “The Fool’s Paradise”?

The room was prepared to resemble paradise, with walls draped in white satin, candles burning day and night, and servants dressed as angels.

What did Atzel eat in paradise?

In paradise, Atzel was served lavish meals such as the meat of wild oxen, the flesh of whales, fruit like pomegranates and persimmons, and sacred wine

Explain the circumstances that made the grandfather change his will.

The grandfather, Abel Merryweather, discovered that his daughters, Mrs. Slater and Mrs. Jordan, were only interested in his possessions. When they thought he was dead, they immediately began dividing his belongings without any respect for him. This act of greed and selfishness angered Abel, leading him to reconsider his will. He realized that his daughters cared more for his things than for him, which prompted him to decide to change the will so that his belongings would go to the one who looked after him until his death.

Discuss the three things that the grandfather plans to do the next Monday.

The grandfather, Abel, has three important tasks planned for the next Monday. First, he intends to visit his lawyer to alter his will, ensuring that his estate goes to the person who cares for him until his actual death. Second, he plans to pay his overdue insurance premium, an essential financial responsibility. Finally, he reveals that he is getting married to Mrs. Shorrock, the widow who runs the 'Ring-o'-Bells,' because he feels like a burden to his daughters and believes she would take good care of him.

Bring out the reasons for the grandfather’s decision to change his will.

Abel Merryweather decides to change his will due to the clear evidence of his daughters’ greed and lack of genuine care. When his daughters, Mrs. Slater and Mrs. Jordan, wrongly assumed

he was dead, they immediately began to divide his possessions without any respect for his memory. They prioritized material gain over familial love and this deeply disappointed Abel. Realizing they were more interested in what they could inherit than in his well-being, he chose to rewrite his will to leave his possessions to whoever cared for him until his actual death.

How does Mrs. Slater plan to outshine the Jordans?

Mrs. Slater plans to outshine her sister, Mrs. Jordan, by appearing more prepared and stylish for their father's supposed death. She dresses herself and her family in half-mourning attire, confident that the Jordans will not have thought about mourning clothes yet. This gives her the satisfaction of appearing more dignified and respectable. Additionally, she wants to take possession of their father's bureau and clock before Mrs. Jordan arrives, securing these items for herself.

Sketch the character of Atzel.

Atzel is a young man who is deeply lazy and unmotivated, largely due to the stories he heard from an old nurse about the ease and comfort of paradise. He detests hard work and study, preferring to escape into a fantasy where he believes that death is the gateway to a life of endless comfort. His desire to reach paradise leads him to feign death, which causes great distress to his family. However, after a period of time in a simulated "paradise," Atzel realizes the emptiness of such a life and yearns for real human experiences, indicating a transformation from laziness to appreciating life's challenges.

How did the parents of Atzel follow Dr. Yoetz's orders?

Atzel's parents, Kadish and his wife, strictly followed Dr. Yoetz's unusual orders despite their initial confusion. They prepared a room to resemble paradise, complete with white satin drapes, candles, and servants dressed as angels. They even held a mock funeral, placing Atzel in an open coffin as if he were dead. Although this was a strange request, the parents trusted Dr. Yoetz and carried out his instructions in hopes of curing their son's delusion that he was already dead and in paradise.

Was Atzel satisfied with his life in paradise? Give some examples.

Atzel was initially satisfied with his imagined life in paradise, enjoying the luxurious meals, servants, and leisure. However, his satisfaction quickly faded as he realized the monotony of paradise. He ate the same food every day, could not visit anyone, and had nothing to do. He missed his family, longed for work and activity, and became increasingly frustrated with the isolation and lack of purpose in paradise. His dissatisfaction culminated in him wishing he could leave, realizing that a life without challenges or change was unbearable.

Did Atzel become normal at the end of the story? Give examples.

Yes, Atzel became normal at the end of the story. After experiencing the reality of a "fool's paradise," Atzel realized that life was much better than the passive existence he had imagined in paradise. His realization began when he found that paradise was dull and repetitive, offering no activities, variety in food, or companionship. This led to his desire to return to life, as seen in his words, "I would rather chop wood and carry stones than sit here." After returning to his

family, Atzel embraced life with a newfound appreciation, eventually marrying Aksah and becoming a diligent merchant.

How did Atzel come back to earth?

Atzel returned to earth when one of the servants in the staged paradise told him there had been a mistake and that he was not dead. Overwhelmed with joy, Atzel eagerly accepted the news, and the servant blindfolded him, leading him through the house to a room where his family was waiting. The blindfold was removed, revealing the bright sun and a cheerful garden, signalling his return to life. Atzel then joyfully reunited with his family and embraced life with a renewed sense of purpose.

Why did Atzel want to leave paradise after a few days of stay there?

Atzel wanted to leave paradise after a few days because he found it monotonous and unfulfilling. The food was the same every day, there was no distinction between day and night, and there were no activities to engage in. He also missed his family and friends, and the isolation of paradise made him realize that life, with all its difficulties, was more satisfying. His growing dissatisfaction is evident when he says, "I would rather chop wood and carry stones than sit here," highlighting his realization that living an active, engaged life was preferable to the passive existence in paradise.

Justification of the Title and its Irony in "The Dear Departed"

The title *The Dear Departed* is laced with irony. At face value, the term "dear departed" is often used to refer to a loved one who has passed away. However, in Stanley Houghton's play, the term takes on an ironic twist as the deceased, Abel Merryweather, is neither dear to his family nor truly departed. The characters, his daughters Mrs. Slater and Mrs. Jordan, along with their husbands, show little genuine grief over Abel's supposed death. Instead, they are consumed by greed, eagerly dividing his possessions among themselves. This heartless behaviour contrasts sharply with the sentimental phrase "dear departed." The irony is further heightened when Abel turns out to be alive, exposing the selfishness and materialism of his family. Therefore, the title is a critique of how society often places greater value on wealth than on familial bonds, making "The Dear Departed" a biting commentary on human nature.

Analysis of the Underlying Theme of "The Dear Departed"

The theme of *The Dear Departed* revolves around the moral decay and materialism present in family relationships. Houghton's play satirizes the shallow, self-serving nature of the Slater and Jordan families, who are more focused on material gain than on love or respect for their father. The hurried division of Abel's possessions before his death is symbolic of how the family values property over relationships. The play critiques the erosion of traditional family values, highlighting how wealth has replaced genuine care and affection. The humour of the play lies in its dark satire, as Abel, believed to be dead, returns to witness the true nature of his daughters, reinforcing the theme of moral degradation.

Social Message Conveyed by “The Dear Departed”

The play *The Dear Departed* conveys a powerful social message about the deterioration of familial values and the prioritization of materialism over human relationships. Through the callous behaviour of Mrs. Slater and Mrs. Jordan, Houghton critiques how death is treated as an opportunity to gain wealth rather than a moment for reflection or mourning. The disregard for Abel’s emotional and physical well-being illustrates the broader societal tendency to value wealth and possessions more than personal connections. The play ultimately serves as a commentary on the disintegration of moral values in an increasingly materialistic society. By depicting the greed and hypocrisy within a family, Houghton calls attention to the need for genuine care, respect, and integrity in relationships.

Analysis of How Dr. Yoetz Treats Atzel in “The Fool’s Paradise”

In *The Fool’s Paradise*, Dr. Yoetz employs an unconventional yet effective method to cure Atzel of his delusion. Atzel, who believes he is dead and longs for the ease of paradise, is treated by Dr. Yoetz through a simulation of his imagined afterlife. Recognizing that Atzel’s laziness and dissatisfaction with life stem from his romanticized view of paradise, Dr. Yoetz crafts a false version of paradise where Atzel can experience firsthand the emptiness of a life without challenges or responsibilities. By indulging Atzel’s fantasy, Dr. Yoetz subtly leads him to realize that true happiness lies in the effort and fulfillment of living. Through this creative therapy, Dr. Yoetz enables Atzel to come to terms with the value of life and its inherent struggles. His method highlights the importance of self-realization in the healing process.

Demonstrate how Atzel learns the value of life in the story “The Fool’s Paradise”.

In Isaac Bashevis Singer’s story “The Fool’s Paradise,” Atzel learns the value of life through a transformative experience that shatters his previous misconceptions. At the beginning of the story, Atzel is a young man who is disillusioned with life and obsessed with the idea of heaven. He believes that life is full of suffering and that the only real happiness lies in death, where he imagines he will rest eternally in a paradise filled with ease and luxury. His desire to escape the hardships of life becomes so intense that he convinces himself he is dead, refusing to engage in daily activities and choosing to stay in bed, waiting for his "heaven."

Atzel’s family becomes deeply concerned for his well-being, so they seek help from a wise old doctor named Dr. Kadish. The doctor, rather than administering typical medical treatment, devises an unconventional plan to cure Atzel. He decides to humor Atzel’s delusion by staging an elaborate ruse: the family pretends that Atzel has died and has entered paradise. They create a "paradise" for Atzel where he is provided with all the comforts he had imagined heaven to offer—endless food, servants at his beck and call, and no work or responsibilities.

At first, Atzel is thrilled, believing he has finally achieved what he had longed for. However, as time passes, Atzel becomes increasingly bored and dissatisfied. The endless indulgence begins to feel empty, and the lack of meaningful activity or human connection leaves him feeling unfulfilled. The so-called paradise he had idealized turns out to be hollow and tedious. Atzel comes to realize that the pleasures of paradise are meaningless without the context of real life, where effort, growth, and personal relationships bring genuine joy and satisfaction.

This shift in perspective leads to Atzel's awakening. He understands that life, with all its challenges and struggles, is valuable because it gives people the opportunity to experience personal growth, connection with others, and a sense of purpose. Atzel begs to return to the world of the living, and when the doctor finally agrees, Atzel is overjoyed to re-engage with the responsibilities and pleasures of life. He is now eager to embrace his work, family, and future, having learned that true happiness comes not from escaping life's difficulties but from embracing them and finding meaning in everyday experiences.

Through this clever and imaginative trick, Singer shows that the value of life is not in avoiding hardship but in appreciating the richness that life offers through work, relationships, and growth. Atzel's journey from delusion to enlightenment serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of living fully, rather than seeking to escape into a false paradise.