

## **POEM-1(THE CASTLE)**

**Read the given lines and answer the questions that follow in a line or two.**

### **STANZA -I**

*All through the summer at ease we lay,  
And daily from the turret wall  
We watched the mowers in the hay  
And the enemy half a mile away  
They seemed no threat to us at all.*

#### **i. Who does “we” refer to?**

We refer to the soldiers guarding the castle.

#### **ii. How did the soldiers spend the summer days?**

The soldiers spent the summer days stress free and relaxed by watching the mowers at the hay.

#### **iii. What could they watch from the turret wall?**

They could watch the mowers and enemy was found up to the distance of half-a-mile.

#### **iv. “at ease” refers to?**

Free from worry, relaxed atmosphere.

#### **v. What is turret wall?**

A small tower on top of the castle. They watched the mowers from the top of the castle.

#### **vi. From where the mowers watched?**

The mowers were watched from the turret wall.

#### **vii. Threat refers to?**

A person or thing likely to cause damage or danger.

### **STANZA -II**

*For what,  
We thought, had we to fear with our arms and provender load on load  
Our towering battlements, tier on tier  
And friendly allies drawing near  
On every leafy summer road*

#### **i What is provender?**

Provender means food.

#### **ii What are towering battlements?**

Towering battlements are defensive architecture such as the city walls or castles in which gaps indentations, which are often rectangular, occur at intervals to allow for the launch of arrows.

#### **Iii Who said these words?**

One of the soldiers said these words.

#### **iv Why were they not afraid?**

They were not afraid because they had enough arms to fight and food for many days.

**v. What is the meaning of “drawing near”?**

“coming closer”

**vi. What do these lines convey?**

These lines convey that the friendly armies are coming to help them.

**vii. Why were the soldiers confident that they were safe?**

The soldiers were confident of the physical strength of the castle. They had plenty of weapons and food in stock.

**viii. Who are friendly allies?**

Friendly allies are helping or supporting nations or armed forces.

**ix. What does the poet mean by “every leafy summer road”?**

The castle is surrounded by pleasantries of spring and nature.

**STANZA -III**

*Our gates were strong, our walls were thick,  
So smooth and high, no man could win.  
A foothold there, no clever trick  
Could take us dead or quick,  
Only a bird could have got in.*

**i. How safe was the castle?**

The castle’s gates were strong, the walls were thick

**ii. What was the firm belief of the soldiers?**

The firm belief of the soldiers was no man could win the castle.

**iii. What was challenging?**

Only a bird was challenging

**iv. Which aspect of the castle’s strength is conveyed by the above line?**

The strength of the gate and the wall is conveyed the above line.

**v. What does “quick” refer to?**

Quick refers to alive.

**STANZA -IV**

*What could they offer us for bait?  
Our captain was brave and we were true.  
There was a little private gate,  
A little wicked wicket gate.  
The wizened warder let them through.*

**i. What does “bait” refer to?**

Bait refers to bribe or prey.

**ii What could they offer us for the bribe?**

No one could be lured to enter. Our captain was brave and we were all true and loyal to our king.

**iv Who does 'Them' refers to?**

"Them" refers to enemies.

**v. What is meant by wizened warder?**

The wizened means an aged or old aged warder.

**vi Who let the enemies through?**

The wizened warder let them (enemies) through the private gate.

**vii What attitude of the soldiers do these lines convey?**

These lines convey the confidence of the soldiers.

**viii What does the soldier say about the captain and the soldiers?**

The captain was very brave and the soldiers were very true to the captain.

**ix What do you mean by a „wicked wicket gate“?**

A wicked wicket gate is an evil small door or gate.

**STANZA -V**

*Oh then our maze of tunnelled stone*

*Grew thin and treacherous as air.*

*The castle was lost without a groan,*

*The famous citadel overthrown,*

**i.. Bring out the contrast in the first two lines.**

The first line the poet says the castle is strong as stone. In the second line the poet says that it has become thin as air.

**ii. What happened to the castle?**

The castle was seized by the enemy soldiers.

**iii. Why did the castle grow thin and treacherous as air?**

The castle grew thin and treacherous as air because their winding and confusing path grow weak thin as the air and paved the way for the enemies to enter.

**iv. What is Citadel?**

The Citadel means castle.

**v. Is their cause was lost without a lament?**

Yes, their cause was lost without a lament.

**vi. What does cause refers to?**

Cause refers to prime aim.

**vii. By whom the Citadel was over thrown?**

The Citadel was over thrown by the enemies and all its secret galleries became empty.

**viii. Does the secret galleries became empty?**

Yes, their secret galleries became empty.

**STANZA -VI**

*We could do nothing, being sold*

*Our only enemy was gold*

*And we had no arms to fight it with.  
Our only enemy was gold,  
And we had no arms to fight it with.*

**i..Why couldn't they do anything?**

Because they were betrayed by the warder. They could not do anything to win an unspecified battle.

**ii. Why did they feel helpless?**

They felt helpless because it was a shameful act of the old guard and they could not tell this shameful tale to anyone until his death.

**iii. Why did the poet say “our only enemy was gold”?**

The enemies captured their castle by bribing their guard. So, the poet says their enemy was gold.

**iv. What does the word “it” refers to?**

“It” refers to the “gold”

**Identify the figure of speech used in the following lines.**

- a) A little wicked wicket gate. - Alliteration/Personification
- b) Oh then our maze of tunnelled stone - Apostrophe
- c) Grew thin and treacherous as air. - Simile
- d) How can this shameful tale be told? - Rhetorical question
- e) Our only enemy was gold. - Personification/metaphor

**Explain the following with reference to the context in about 50-60 words each.**

**a) *They seemed no threat to us at all.***

Reference:

This line is taken from “The Castle” written by Edwin Muir.

Context:

The narrator talks about the confidence of the soldiers.

Explanation:

The soldiers were watching from the turret wall. They could see the mowers in the hay and the enemies half a mile away. Their castle had strong gates and the walls were thick and tall. So the enemies posed no threat to them.

**b) *How can this shameful tale be told?***

Reference:

This line is taken from “The Castle” written by Edwin Muir.

Context:

The narrator reveals the shameful act of the old guard in this context.

Explanation:

The soldiers were very confident that the enemies could not enter their castle because they had very strong gates and thick tall walls. But all their

strength became very weak due to the treacherous act of a wizened warder. He received bribe and opened the gates to the enemies. This tale of shame cannot be told to others.

**c) *I will maintain until my death.***

Reference:

This line is taken from “The Castle” written by Edwin Muir.

Context:

The narrator lamented over the disloyalty of the greedy warder. As it was a shameful tale, he decided not to reveal it to anyone until his death.

Explanation:

The soldiers were very confident that the enemies could not enter their castle because they had very strong gates and thick tall walls. But all their strength became very weak due to the treacherous act of a wizened warder. He received bribe and opened the gates to the enemies. This tale of shame cannot be told to others. He has decided not to reveal this to anyone till his death.

**d) *Our only enemy was gold***

Reference:

This line is taken from “The Castle” written by Edwin Muir.

Context:

The narrator insists that his only enemy was gold.

Explanation:

The soldiers were very confident that the enemies could not enter their castle because they had very strong gates and thick tall walls. Moreover, they had enough quantity of stock and more amenities and provisions for the soldiers. They thought that the enemies could never win over them. But a wizened warder after receiving gold from the enemies opened the gate to the enemies. So the castle fell to the hands of the enemies. Their enemy was not human but gold. So they could not fight.