

Main points

- 'The Third and Final Continent' is written by Jhumpa Lahiri.
- The Story focuses on the lives of Indians in diasporic situations. Diaspora refers to those people who are living outside their country.
- The narrator of the story is of Indian origin.
- The narrator faces extremely difficult financial situations.
- In 1964, he left India to live in London.
- London :- Shared apartments with other "Penniless Bengali Bachelors, struggling to educate and establish themselves abroad".
- In 1969, the narrator is married to a typical Bengali Indian girl named Mala.
- Gets a job in the department of a library in America.
- Spends his first night at the YMCA in Central Square, Cambridge in a small room with a cot, a desk and a small wooden cross on one wall.
- Finds a room of rent in a quiet place for eight dollars per week.
- The room was owned by an extremely old woman named Mrs. Croft who lived all alone.
- Mrs. Croft though old but had an authoritative voice. She was disciplined and punctual and expected the narrator to be the same.
- Care and affection is developed between the narrator and Mrs. Croft.
- Mala arrives in America and gets adjusted to the ways of a foreign country.
- Mrs. Croft regards Mala as "a perfect lady". Generation of love and intimacy between the narrator and Mala develops.
- Narrator settled down in America with Mala and a son.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. **'The Third and Final Continent' is a short story written by -**
 - a. D.H. Lawrence
 - b. Mulk Raj Anand
 - c. Arundhati Roy
 - d. Jhumpa Lahiri
2. **When did the narrator of the story 'The Third and Final Continent' leave India ?**
 - a. 1876
 - b. 2001
 - c. 1964
 - d. 1988
3. **Who is the narrator of the story 'The Third and Final Continent'?**
 - a. The bengali man
 - b. Mrs Croft
 - c. Helen
 - d. Mala
4. **What is the narrator's name ?**
 - a. Jhumpa Lahiri
 - b. Mala
 - c. Arnav
 - d. None of these
5. **For how many days did the narrator sail on SS Roma ?**
 - a. A week
 - b. Three weeks
 - c. Four weeks
 - d. Two weeks
6. **What was the name of the Cargo Ship?**
 - a. Cape Size
 - b. SS Roma
 - c. Defender
 - d. Dauntless
7. **The narrator left his native land in 1964 for-**
 - a. England
 - b. Italy
 - c. France
 - d. China
8. **What did the narrator do in London to support his life?**
 - a. Worked in a cafe
 - b. Worked at the University library
 - c. Cleaned the utensils
 - d. Worked as home tutor
9. **How old was the narrator when his marriage was arranged?**

- a. 30 Years b. 32 Years
c. 34 Years d. 36 Years
- 10. Where did the narrator get a full-time job?**
a. London b. Paris
c. America d. Mexico
- 11. In which university did the narrator get a job?**
a. MIT b. GIT
c. Harvard University d. CIT
- 12. From where did the narrator buy the book 'The Student Guide to North America'?**
a. America b. London
c. Calcutta d. Boston
- 13. How much did the book 'The Student Guide to North America' cost?**
a. 2 Shillings four pence
b. 5 Shillings five pence
c. 7 Shillings six pence
d. 4 Dollars
- 14. What did the Americans call an 'elevator'?**
a. A stage b. A staircase
c. A ladder d. A lift
- 15. Americans drove on the _____ of the road.**
a. Left side b. Right side
c. Centre d. Both (A) and (B)
- 16. Who was the President in 1969?**
a. Richard Nixon b. Gerald Ford
c. Jimmy Carter d. Ronald Reagen
- 17. The first meal of the narrator in America was-**
a. Hamburgers b. Hot dogs
c. Milk and chapati d. Milk and cornflakes
- 18. Where did the narrator stay in America initially?**
a. Boston Hostel b. YMCA
c. The Cabot Lodge d. The Farrington Inn
- 19. What rent did the narrator pay his landlady?**
a. Eight Dollars per week
b. Eight Dollars per month
c. Ten Dollars per week
d. Twenty Dollars per month
- 20. What was the narrator's wife's name?**
a. Bela b. Leela
c. Mala d. Kalawati
- 21. Who was Helen?**
a. Colleague of the narrator
b. Mrs Croft's daughter
c. A friend of Mala
d. A neighbour of Mrs Croft
- 22. How old was Mrs Croft?**
a. 90 years b. 96 years
c. 100 years d. 103 years
- 23. Narrator's father died of-**
a. Cancer b. Encephalitis
c. Brain stroke d. Tuberculosis
- 24. How old was the narrator when his father died?**
a. 25 years b. 18 years
c. 16 years d. 14 years
- 25. What did Mala bring for the narrator from Calcutta?**
a. Two pullover sweaters
b. Two pairs of drawstring pyjamas
c. A packet of loose darjeeling tea
d. All of these
- 26. What had Mrs Croft not seen ever?**
a. A woman in skirt
b. A woman in sari
c. A woman with short hair
d. A woman with mini skirt
- 27. Which was the third and final continent where the narrator lived for 30 years?**
a. North-America b. Europe
c. Asia d. Africa
- 28. What was the real age of Mrs.Croft?**
a. 95 years b. 103 years
c. 100 years d. 80 years
- 29. What does Mrs Croft say about Mala?**
a. A perfect lady b. An Indian lady
c. A foreigner d. None of these
- 30. The narrator belonged to which state of India?**
a. Bombay b. Calcutta
c. Kerala d. Lucknow

ANSWER KEY

1-d, 2-c, 3-a, 4-d, 5-b, 6-b, 7-a, 8-b, 9-d, 10-c, 11-a, 12-b, 13-c, 14-d, 15-b, 16-a, 17-d, 18-b, 19-a, 20-c, 21-b, 22-d, 23-b, 24-c, 25-d, 26-b, 27-a, 28-b, 29-a, 30-b

VERY SHORT QUESTIONS

1. **What was the name of the ship in which the Narrator went to London ?**

Ans. The narrator went to London in SS Roma, an Italian cargo ship.

2. **When did the narrator get married and at what age ?**

Ans. The narrator got married in 1969 at the age of 36.

3. **Where did the Narrator spend his first night ?**

Ans. The narrator spends his first night at the YMCA in Central Square.

4. **How long did the Narrator stay at the YMCA ?**

Ans. The narrator stayed there for six weeks.

5. **Where did the narrator work in America ?**

Ans. The narrator worked at the Dewey Library.

6. **Who is Mala ?**

Ans. Mala is the wife of the narrator. She is the daughter of a school teacher in Belehata.

7. **What does the Narrator is able to see in his son's eyes ?**

Ans. In his son's eyes, the narrator can sense bewilderment, curiosity and an urge to explore the world which originally led him to travel to foreign land.

8. **How did the narrator prepare his first meal in America ?**

Ans. The narrator's first meal in America consisted of a small carton of milk and a box of cornflakes.

9. **In which language did Mala and the writer speak ?**

Ans. Mala and the writer spoke in Bengali language.

10. **How was Mala draped in a saree ?**

Ans. Mala was draped in a sari following the Indian traditions of a newly wed bride. Her sari partially covered her head which was a sign of her bridal modesty.

SHORT QUESTIONS

1. **Explain the relevance of the title of the story?**

Ans. The title of the story is very apt because it revolves around the narrator's shifting from one continent to the other. The story depicts that the narrator can

survive life on three continents and he adapts to the situation wherever he goes.

2. **How did the narrator sail in the first three weeks of his journey?**

Ans. In the first three weeks of his journey, the narrator sailed on SS Roma, an Italian cargo vessel, in a third class cabin next to the ship's engine. The ship sailed across the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and finally to England.

3. **What was the narrator's first impression of Mrs. Croft?**

Ans. The narrator explained Mrs. Croft as a stout and an extremely old woman with a mass of snowy hair on her head. As the narrator stepped into the house, she sat down on the bench placed at the bottom of a staircase.

4. **What kind of relationship did Mrs. Croft share with her daughter Helen?**

Ans. The relationship of Mrs. Croft and Helen was very peculiar. It was devoid of love and affection. Helen carried on her responsibilities towards her mother as a mere schedule.

5. **What was the appearance of Mala at the airport?**

Ans. When the narrator went to the airport to receive Mala, he noticed that the free end of her sari did not drag on the floor. In fact it was nicely draped on her head. Her arms were stacked with gold bracelets. She had a red dyed colour on her forehead, symbolic of 'suhag' in Indian tradition.

LONG QUESTIONS

1. **Give a character sketch of Mrs. Croft.**

Ans. Mrs. Croft was narrator's elderly landlady. When the narrator meets her, he notices that due to ageing her features were not prominent. She seemed very old and weak but had an authoritative voice. She is old fashioned which is evident from her clothing style. She is very concerned about propriety and does not entertain miniskirts. She is a very orthodox lady who had very strong ideals that needed to be followed without any questioning. Mrs. Croft was 103 and that after her husband died she taught piano lessons to support her family. As the story unfolds, it is learnt that she is a tough lady from outside but her innerside is soft and compassionate.

2. **How does Jhumpa Lahiri portray the diasporic situation of an Indian in the story 'The Third'**

and Final Continent ‘?

Ans. Lahiri in her stories focuses on the psychological conflicts and physical challenges of diasporas. The Third and Final continent shows the life of an Indian who went to England with utmost difficulty and lived there in difficult situations. The narrator saw numerous variations in his life and he had to adjust himself in London as well as in America. He worked in a library and adjusted in his accommodation sharing food, toilet etc.. His life at the YMCA was intolerable because of inconvenient living conditions. Through his narration, we learn how he adapts to the new cultures wherever he travels to.

3. Mala was deeply rooted in her Indian traditions yet she managed to adjust to the ways of an unknown and foreign land. Discuss.

Ans. Mala is a typical Indian lady who is married in an arranged marriage system to the narrator. She is nine years younger to her husband. She knows how to cook, knit, embroider, sketch and recite poetry. In an unknown country she fulfills her responsibilities very well. She adapts to the ways of a foreign land but sticks to her own cultures and traditions as well. Mrs Croft announces Mala as 'a perfect lady'. In the years to come Mala and the narrator become more comfortable in America and even become American citizens. She tries to nurture some Indian values in her son too.