

ELEGANT MODULE BY ASHRAF VVN

UNIT 3 THE BALLAD OF FATHER GILLIGAN

GLOSSARY

Doze off- to go to sleep

Flock- people in the Parish

Grieve - worry

Grumble – to murmur

Mavrone- an expression of sadness

Nod- to move ones head up and down to show agreement

Obligation- duty

Peep- to look something quickly and secretly

Sod- surface of the soil

Sway- to move from side to side

Vocation – profession

Weary – tired

1. PROFILE

1. Prepare a short profile of W.B.Yeats using the hints given below

Name : W.B.Yeats

Birth : June 13, 1865, Ireland

Famous as : Irish poet

Awards : Nobel Prize for literature in 1923
Notable Works : The Tower, The winding stair and Other Poems
Died : January 28, 1939

W.B.YEATS

The famous poet W.B.Yeats was born on June 13, 1865 in Ireland. He was an Irish poet. He got award the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923. His notable works are The Tower, The Winning stair and other poems. He passed away on January 28, 1939.

APPRECIATION

The poem ‘The Ballad of Father Gilligan’ was written by W.B.Yeats.it is a ballad. It tells the story of a hard working priest and about his parishioners. The poem illustrates how God intervenes in the life of an earnest priest at a time of immense need. Father Gilligan was a tired out of his priestly obligations during an epidemic in his parish. One evening Father Gilligan was sitting in a chair, he happened to know that God, the divine had sent an angel to perform last communion of the dying man.

His parishioners were bed ridden or dead or buried. He was worried about his parishioners. He complained that he had no rest, nor joy, nor peace. Realizing his fault, he sought forgiveness from God. He justifies that himself that his mind was willing but his mind was weak. He was eager to reach the house of the sick man.. Realizing his mistake the priest rode recklessly to the house of the sickman. He

thought that he died without receiving the last sacrament. But his wife told him that the man died happily after the departure of priest.

The poem is rich with beautiful images and poetic devices. The time references 'moth-hour', 'sparrow chirp' are notable. Use of images and similes show the commendable use poetic craftsmanship of W.B. Yeats in the poem.

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS

1. Why was Father Gilligan weary night and day?

Peter Gilligan was an old priest. He rendered selfless service and worked hard day and night for the poor and needy. His parish was in the grip of an epidemic and half of the people were affected by the disease and they were dying one after another.

2. What is the significance of the word "flock"?

"Flock" refers to the people who were under the charge of the priest. The priest is considered to be a shepherd and the people are sheep.

3. Why were his flock either in bed or lying under green sod?

They were either affected with fatal epidemic or they had already become victims of the deadly disease.

4. Why did another man send for Father Gilligan? Why is the man referred to as 'poor'?

He was sent for the priest to receive the last sacrament and thereby he could go to the heaven.

5. Why did Father Gilligan seek forgiveness from God? What justification does he give to God for his errant words?

It was his God-given duty to look after the parishioners. So his desperate outburst was sin and challenge to God. It was his exhausted body and not his spirit that complained of the state of his life.

6. Why is the Time called 'moth-hour'?

The poor illiterate villagers never possessed a clock or watch. They always told time by the changes which took place from time in nature. It is the evening hour.

7. What is meant by 'upon the time of sparrow –chirp'?

It refers to early morning.

8. What does the line 'And rode with little care' indicate?

He was anxious and concerned about the sick. He rode recklessly to their house without bothering his own safety.

9. Why is the sick man's wife surprised to see Father Gilligan?

Her husband had received the last sacrament from the priest and died happily. But she was surprised to see the priest again.

10. Why was the priest overcome with grief at the words of the widow?

The priest was heartbroken for failing to provide his religious duty to the dying man.

11. 'He knelt him at that word'. Why?

The widow's words made Father Gilligan realize that God had extended his helping hand to him. The priest was humbled and knelt.

12. How did God save Father Gilligan from damnation?

God sent one of his messengers to perform the last sacrament of the stickman.

13. 'He Who hath made the night of stars/For souls who tire and bleed,' What do these lines mean?

God brings ease to the laboring mankind by spreading over the earth. God had made the night for the troubled humanity.

14. What do you understand about the character of Father Gilligan from his words 'Had pity on the least of things'?

Father Gilligan had firm faith in the power of God. He expressed his gratitude when he knew that God had sent one of his angels to perform the last sacrament to the

dying man. Father Gilligan had been doing his duty as a priest perfectly in his parish. He was performing the last rites to the dying men day and night. It shows his deep religious belief and nobility in his duty.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. What do you mean by “under green sods”?

“Under green sods” means the people who are dead and are buried in the graves which were covered with grass.

2. What do you think might be the reason for wide spread disease and death in Father Gilligan’s parish?

Some fatal epidemic disease might be the reason for the wide spread disease and death of a large number of people in Father Gilligan’s parish.

3. What impression do you form of father Gilligan?

Father Gilligan is a simple, kind and a noble priest. He is an embodiment of selfless and dedicated service. He is a God fearing and pious man who does his duty as a devoted priest. He helps the poor and needy who were suffering from an epidemic and stood day and night at the bed side of the dying man to perform his last rites. He does not care for his own health and safety.

4. Why did the old priest complain? What was his complaint?

When a message came from a poor man who has been dying and needed his earnest service and then the old priest began to complain because of his tiredness due to his hard work day and night and he had no time to take rest.

5. What did he realize thereafter?

He realized soon after that he had made a mistake in uttering unholy words being a priest he should not have made such complaints. He felt guilty and asked forgiveness from God. He said that was his body that spoke not his spirit.

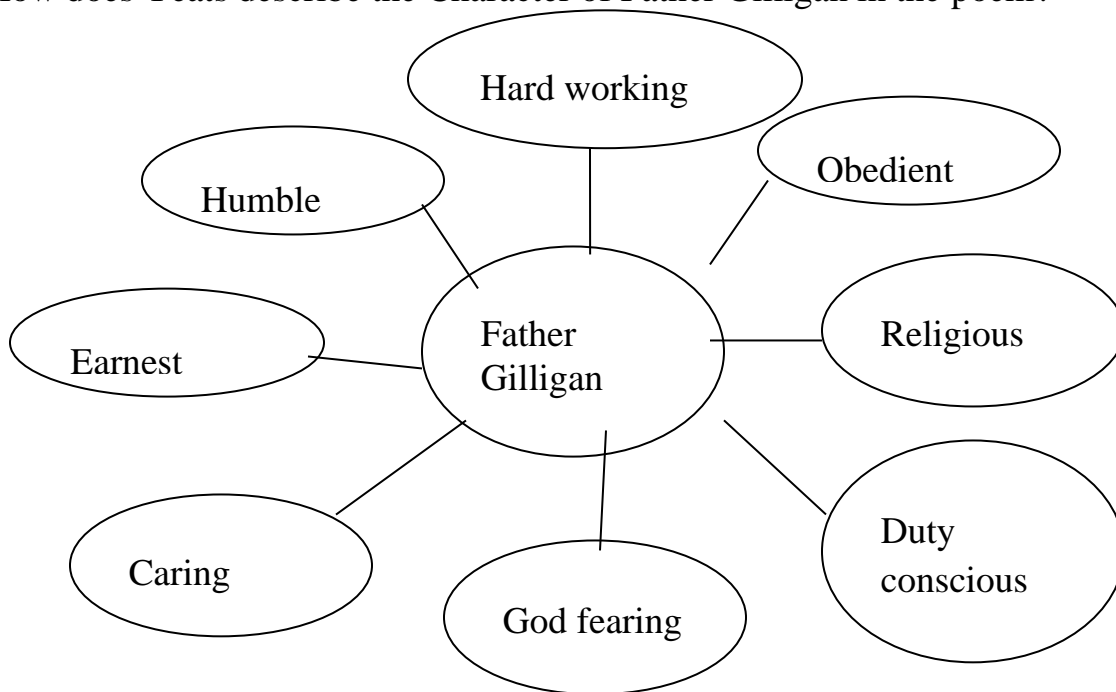
6. Do you think Father Gilligan’s complaint was genuine?

Yes, his complaint was genuine. He became tired and over worked though he was willing to do his duty but he could stretch his strength beyond limit. It was his physical weakness that made him to speak such unholy words.

Pick out instances of visual and auditory images from the poem

Visual	Auditory
Green sods	Sparrow-chirp
Stars	Pray
Moth	Leaves shake in wind
Rocky lane, Fen	Opening the door

How does Yeats describe the Character of Father Gilligan in the poem?



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