

On Killing a Tree Questions & Answers

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On Killing a Tree Summary:

The poem 'On Killing a Tree' describes the process of cutting a tree completely. Ironically, through the description of the process, the poet presents a severe criticism of human cruelty and insensitive nature in chopping down trees for material benefit. The poet appeals to its readers not to cut trees that give us the necessities of life and sustain them. Therefore one must not cut trees but plant more and more trees. Apart from this, the poet gives readers several lessons. Through the poem, the poet tells us about the sturdiness and resilience of trees such that they take all kinds of admonitions but refuse to die. Similarly, we too must be strong and determined to face any challenges in life. Next, the trees in the poem symbolize the evil patterns that are deeply inherited within us. We may think that we have gotten rid of it but they may suddenly appear until and unless we put in our best efforts. Lastly, the poem states that we must complete our work efficiently and wholeheartedly.

Q. 1. Can a "simple jab of the knife" kill a tree? Why not?

Ans: No, a simple jab of knife does not have the ability to kill the tree. It has to go through various processes. If its root is not removed from the earth, it will sprout again.

Q.2. How has the tree grown to its full size? List the words suggestive of its life and activity.

Ans: The tree consumes the earth, and rises out it feeding upon its crust. It absorbs years of sunlight, air and water.

Q. 3. What is the meaning of “bleeding bark”? What makes it bleed?

Ans: ‘Bleeding bark’ means the twigs which are cut mercilessly. They leave a liquid substance. If any part of the human body is cut, it starts bleeding. In the same way the liquid substance comes out from the branch of a tree. The human beings’ axe makes it bleed.

Q. 4. The poet says “No” in the beginning of the third stanza. What does he mean by this?

Ans: ‘No’ is used to emphasize the perspective that chopping or hacking will not be sufficient for killing a tree.

Q. 5. What is the meaning of “anchoring earth” and “earth cave”?

Ans: It means that the earth protects it like a mother. ‘Earth Cave’ implies a hole inside it. The tree allows its roots to spread underneath. The earth protects it and fosters it. It provides all the essential ingredients to the tree.

Q. 6. What does he mean by “the strength of the tree exposed”?

Ans: The stem/root is the strength of a tree. When the tree is pulled out, its strength is exposed.

Q. 7. What finally kills the tree?

Ans: Pulling out the tree from the mother earth and scorching and choking it in the sun and air kill the tree. It becomes brown, dry and gets hard. Eventually it dies.

Additional Questions

Short answer type questions

Q. 1. How does a tree become strong?

Ans: A tree grows and expands gradually. Various forces of nature including the earth help in its growth. A tree grows on earth, feeds on its crust, absorbs years of sunlight, air and

water. It makes them strong.

Q. 2. How do the sun and the air contribute in the killing of a tree?

Ans: The sun and the air harden and wither the exposed roots of the tree and kill it. The sun and the air are the two essential elements that help in the growth of a tree. Left to themselves, they will never kill a tree. But if the roots are exposed and kept in the sun and air, the tree will wither away and die.

Q. 3. What is the most important thing to do while killing a tree?

Ans: The most important thing to do while killing a tree is to ensure that the root is pulled out of the earth. A tree is not killed all of a sudden. So long the roots are intact inside the earth, the tree remains alive.

Q. 4. How the tree gets killed in the end?

Ans: The tree will go through a process of browning, hardening, twisting and withering. Then ultimately, the tree gets killed. A tree takes a long time to get it killed. Only when the roots are exposed, scorched and choked, the process of dying start.

Q.5. Describe the growth and expansion story of a tree.

Ans: The story of growth and expansion is gradual and methodical. The seed is sown into the earth. It sprouts. It grows slowly consuming the earth. It feeds on its crust. After years of absorbing sunlight, air and water of the atmosphere, it grows into a tree. Its 'leprous hide' sprouts leaves and branches making it huge in size.

Q.6. Describe the healing power of a tree that doesn't allow it to die so soon.

Ans: It takes much time to kill a tree. Nature gifts every tree with a healing touch that won't allow it to die. If we cut the bark with a knife, the bleeding bark will heal. Then, from close to the ground green twigs will appear. If it is left unchecked, the tree will expand again to its former size.

Q. 7. Describe various processes that lead to the ultimate death of a rootless tree.

Ans: The roots are the most sensitive parts hidden in the earth for years. The tree gets air and water through them. When a tree is uprooted, it follows certain steps till it finally dies. It goes, through scorching and choking in the sun and air. Browning, hardening, twisting

and withering are the processes that lead to the ultimate death of a tree.

Long answer type question

Q.1. Write the critical appreciation of the poem 'On Killing a Tree'?

Ans: The poem itself is modelled as a plant growing from the seed. The first line states "It takes much time to kill a tree." Then the process of growth of the tree is described. It is presumed that the tree has grown from its seed.

The seed develops the root. The root works its way through the rocks and stones of the soil. The trees grow slowly by feeding upon the earth's crust absorbing years of sunlight, air and water. There is a fight during the development of the tree which is suggested in the poem. The survival of the tree, in spite of the efforts to kill it, is shown by the lines. "And from close to the ground".

Q. 2. Describe the pulling out of the roots and the various processes of withering and dying of a tree after it.

Ans: The roots are the most sensitive parts of a tree. They remain hidden inside the earth for years. First root is to be pulled out of the anchoring earth. It is roped tied and pulled out entirely. The strength of the tree is totally exposed. Then starts the process of scorching and choking. The rootless tree is scorched in the sunlight. It is choked as it doesn't get necessary oxygen for its survival from the air. Then the colour fades and hardens. It loses its proper shape. It twists and withers. Finally, it dies down.

Value based questions

Q.1. After reading the poem, what similarities can we draw between trees and some great people of yesteryears?

Ans. Trees go on live on for years. There are some trees in the Amazon forest which are said to be more than five hundred years old. We may take some lesson from them to spread our roots deep inside the earth. There had been some great people of yesteryears who still live in our memories. They had spread their roots inside our consciousness and as a result refuse to die. The hidden root gives all the sustenance to a tree. One needs to snap this source of life to kill a tree.

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