

## The Address by Marga Minco



**Marga Minco**

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

The story is about the human predicament that follows the Pre-War and Post-War periods. Mrs. S was a Jew and a rich lady. Whereas, Mrs. Dorling was a non-Jew. The girl, daughter of Mrs. S, had lost her house and her mother during the war and now she had decided to come back to take her possessions from Mrs. Dorling, an acquaintance whose address was given by her mother years ago.

When she reached the house, the woman treated her with a cold reception and didn't let her into the house. She decided to go back anyway and then she met her daughter who let her in and told her to wait inside. When she saw all the possessions in front of her, she couldn't connect with them and decided to leave the house.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Marga Minco is a Dutch journalist and author. She lives and works in Amsterdam. She was born on March 31, 1920 in the village of Ginneken, in the southwest of the Netherlands.

## SUMMARY:

The Address begins with a victim of war going back to her native place. It is about a daughter who returns to her home in Holland. She goes there to search for her mother's belongings after the war. When she reaches her native place, she does not receive

a warm welcome. She follows the address she has with her. It is House Number 46 in Marconi Street. A woman opens the door and refuses to recognize the girl on the door. The author notices the woman wearing her mother's green knitted sweater. Thus, she became sure that she was in the right place. However, the woman did not deny not knowing her mother.

Despite the author's resistance, the woman did not entertain her and closed the door on her. The author was going back when she started thinking about the bygone days. She got the address from her mother years ago. After returning to her home post-war, she noticed a lot of things missing from the place. Her mother had given her the address of Mrs Dorling. She learned that Mrs. Dorling is an old acquaintance of her mother. Thus, her mother handed over all their valuable possessions to Mrs. Dorling to keep them safe. Thus, after many years, the author thought of going back to take their possessions. Thus, after being told to go away by Mrs. Dorling on her visit, she goes back once again. On her second visit, a fifteen-year-old girl opened the door.

We learn that the mother was not at home. The author told her about her wish to meet her mother. The girl takes her in the house. To the author's surprise, she noticed the room full of things her mother possessed. The room was not similar but the things were all very familiar. She started to feel so uncomfortable. She now had

no desire to possess her mother's belongings. Thus, she left the home and thought of forgetting the address and the thought of ever getting those things back.

## सारांश:

**Address (अङ्गदेश)** अभिभाषण की शुरुआत युद्ध की पीड़िता के अपने मूल स्थान पर वापस जाने से होती है। यह एक बेटी के बारे में है जो हॉलैंड में अपने घर लौटती है। वह युद्ध के बाद अपनी माँ के सामान की तलाश में वहाँ जाती है। जब वह अपने मूल स्थान पर पहुँचती है, तो उसका गर्मजोशी से स्वागत नहीं होता है। वह अपने पास मौजूद पते का अनुसरण करती है। यह मार्कोनी स्ट्रीट में हाउस नंबर 46 है। एक महिला दरवाजा खोलती है और दरवाजे पर लड़की को पहचानने से इंकार कर देती है। लेखक ने महिला को अपनी माँ के हरे रंग का बुना हुआ स्वेटर पहने हुए देखा। इस प्रकार, उसे यकीन हो गया कि वह सही जगह पर है। हालांकि महिला ने अपनी माँ को न जानने से इंकार नहीं किया।

लेखक के प्रतिरोध के बावजूद, महिला ने उसका मनोरंजन नहीं किया और उस पर दरवाजा बंद कर दिया। लेखिका वापस जा रही थी जब उसने बीते दिनों के बारे में सोचना शुरू किया। उसका पता उसकी माँ से बरसों पहले मिला था। युद्ध के बाद अपने घर लौटने के बाद, उसने देखा कि वहाँ से बहुत सी चीजें गायब हैं। उसकी माँ ने उसे श्रीमती डोरलिंग का पता दिया था। उसे पता चला कि श्रीमती डोरलिंग अपनी माँ की पुरानी परिचित हैं। इस प्रकार, उनकी माँ ने उन्हें सुरक्षित रखने के लिए अपनी सारी मूल्यवान संपत्ति श्रीमती डोरलिंग को सौंप दी। इस प्रकार, कई वर्षों के बाद, लेखक ने उनकी संपत्ति लेने के लिए वापस जाने का विचार किया। इस प्रकार,

श्रीमती डोरलिंग द्वारा अपनी यात्रा पर जाने के लिए कहे जाने के बाद, वह एक बार फिर वापस चली जाती है। अपनी दूसरी यात्रा पर, एक पंद्रह वर्षीय लड़की ने दरवाजा खोला।

हमें पता चला कि माँ घर पर नहीं थी। लेखक ने उसे अपनी माँ से मिलने की इच्छा के बारे में बताया। लड़की उसे घर ले जाती है। लेखक के आश्चर्य के लिए, उसने देखा कि उसकी माँ के पास की चीजों से भरा कमरा है। कमरा एक जैसा नहीं था लेकिन चीजें बहुत जानी-पहचानी थीं। वह बहुत असहज महसूस करने लगी थी। अब उसे अपनी माँ की संपत्ति पर अधिकार करने की कोई इच्छा नहीं थी। इस प्रकार, उसने घर छोड़ दिया और पता भूल जाने और उन चीजों को वापस पाने के बारे में सोचा।

## CHARACTER SKETCH:

**Marga Minco:** She is a Jewish girl who faced the pain, sufferings, and losses, including the irreparable loss of her dear mother in war. She is a brave and courageous girl who faces the challenges of a lonely life after the war is over.

**Mrs. Dorling:** She was an extremely rude person that can be well judged by the way she treated the narrator. She faked complete ignorance when asked if she recognised the narrator. She was extremely unwilling to strike a polite decent conversation with the narrator.

**Mrs Dorling's daughter :** She is not of the same spirit as her mother. She permitted Mrs.S' daughter to enter her home. Mrs Dorling's daughter was a good girl. She knew nothing about Mrs S or how her mother acquired those 'nice things'. She was totally ignorant about them.



Mrs S: She was the mother of the narrator. The war in Holland proved to be a disaster for her. She was forced to part with all her precious and nice belongings. Mrs Dorling exploited her fear. She assured her that all things would be in her safe hands. But neither Mrs S nor her daughter ever received them again. The poor lady couldn't survive the war.

### KEY WORDS:

1. Acquaintance – social contact
2. Beckoned – signaled
3. Chink – narrow opening
4. Crick – cramp or spasm in muscles
5. Cumbersome – unmanageable
6. Enamel – an opaque or semi-transparent substance that is a type of glass
7. Endured – suffered
8. Fleeting – for a short time
9. Hanukkah – The Feast of Lights, a Hebrew festival in December
10. Jamb – side post of a window, fireplace or doorway
11. Jangling – ringing
12. Liberation – Liberty or Freeing
13. Lugging – carry a heavy object with great effort
14. Midst – middle
15. Muggy – humid
16. Musty – stale
17. Pewter plate – plate made of a gray alloy of tin
18. Pityingly – feeling sorrow
19. Reprovingly – critically

Mrs.S' daughter:  
a Jewish girl  
brave and courageous  
faced the pain, sufferings, and losses  
lost her dear mother in war

->Goes to- : Mrs. Dorling  
House Number 46,  
Marconi Street, Holland  
an old acquaintance of her mother  
not the same as her mother  
extremely rude person  
an opportunist

Setting: Post War Period

Theme: The Address revolves around the theme of crisis that we as an individual encounter in our daily life. War brings destruction, pain, and loss of lives which impact humans in various ways.

Purpose: To acquire her mother's belongings: To acquire her mother's belongings

It further reiterates that both past and future are illusions, and all we have with us is the present.

A moving story of a daughter who goes in search of her mother's belongings after the War.

20. Vain – hopeless

The daughter(Marga Minco) was a Jewish girl

Her family had been sent to the concentration camps and killed.

Had suffered a lot and to cover those losses she thought to go to the address to get back all those valuables to cherish her mother's memories.

Goes to Dorling's house and finds that the valuables have turned sour for her.

Dorling behaved in a cold manner and thought she would have died during the war.

Dorling flaunted the things and explained that those all were antique.

So she made up her mind to leave all those things along with those bad memories attached to it there itself and moved on.

### MCQ:

1. Question. After reading "The Address", how would you describe Mrs. Dorling?

- (a) Materialistic
- (b) Selfish
- (c) Opportunist
- (d) All of the above

**Ans. (d) All of the above**

2. Question. In total, how many times did the author visit the given address?

- (a) Twice      (b) Once
- (c) Thrice      (d) Never

**Ans. (a) Twice**

3. Question. The author had come to visit Mrs. Dorling \_\_\_\_\_ the war.

- (a) during
- (b) before
- (c) after
- (d) Not mentioned in the story

**Ans. (c) after**

4. Question. At the end, what does the author decide?

- (a) To forget the address
- (b) To visit next year again
- (c) To remember the address forever
- (d) None of the above

**Ans. (a) To forget the address**

5. Question. Why did the author leave Mrs. Dorling in a hurry?

- (a) Because she was getting late for the train
- (b) Because she no longer wanted to stay there
- (c) Both (a) and (b)
- (d) None of the above

**Ans. (c) Both (a) and (b)**

6. Question. According to the author, when do we notice the things in the house?

- (a) When they are out of our sight
- (b) When they are used
- (c) When they are shown
- (d) All of the above

**Ans. (a) When they are out of our sight**

7. Question. In what condition did the author find the living room?

- (a) Haphazard
- (b) Well arranged
- (c) Empty
- (d) Old fashioned

**Ans. (a) Haphazard**

8. Question. "I was in a room I knew and did not know." What does the author mean by this?

- (a) She saw familiar things but in unfamiliar surroundings
- (b) She saw unfamiliar things but in familiar surroundings
- (c) She did not recognize the things she saw
- (d) She did not want to remember anything

**Ans. (a) She saw familiar things but in unfamiliar surroundings**

9. Question. Unlike Mrs. Dorling, her daughter was \_\_\_\_\_ towards the author.

- (a) rude            (b) mature
- (c) hospitable   (d) mean

**Ans. (c) hospitable**

10. Question. Why had the author come to visit Mrs. Dorling?

- (a) Because Mrs. Dorling had belongings of author's mother
- (b) Because Mrs. Dorling called her
- (c) Because she missed Mrs. Dorling
- (d) None of the above

**Ans. (a) Because Mrs. Dorling had belongings of author's mother**

11. Question. How does the author describe Mrs. Dorling when she saw her the first time during the war?

- (a) A woman with a broad back
- (b) A woman with a round back
- (c) A woman with a straight back
- (d) None of the above

**Ans. (a) A woman with a broad back**

12. Question. Mrs. Dorling took the possessions of the things on the pretense of \_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) using them
- (b) selling them
- (c) keeping them safe
- (d) Both (a) and (b)

**Ans. (c) keeping them safe**

### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS:

Q1. How did Mrs Dorling react when the narrator said, “ Mrs. S’s daughter”?

**Ans.** Mrs Dorling held her hand on the door as if she wanted to prevent it opening any further. Her face showed no sign of recognition. She kept staring at the narrator without uttering a word.

Q2. What two reasons did the narrator give to explain that she was mistaken?

**Ans.** She thought that perhaps the woman was not Mrs Dorling. She had seen her only once, for a brief interval and that too years ago. Secondly, it was probable that she had rung the wrong bell.

Q3. How did the narrator conclude that she was right?

**Ans.** The woman was wearing the green knitted cardigan of the narrator’s mother. The wooden

buttons were rather pale from washing. She saw that the narrator was looking at the cardigan. She half hid herself again behind the door. She reacted: Who had given the narrator the address, when and under what circumstances?

Q4. What did the narrator learn about Mrs Dorling from her mother?

**Ans.** Mrs Dorling was an old acquaintance of the narrator’s mother. The latter had not seen her for several years. Then she suddenly turned up and renewed their contact.

Every time she left that place she took something with her—table silver, antique plates, etc.

Q5. What impression do you have of the narrator’s mother on the basis of her conversation with (i) Mrs Dorling and (ii) the narrator?

**Ans.** The narrator’s mother was a kind-hearted, generous and liberal lady. She was fond of collecting valuable things. She is more worried about the physical risk to Mrs Dorling than losing them to her. She thought it an insult to tell her friends to keep those things forever.

6. What does the narrator remember about Mrs Dorling as she saw her for the first time?

**Ans.** Mrs Dorling was a woman with a broad back. She wore a brown

coat and a shapeless hat. She picked up a heavy suitcase lying under the coat rack and left their house.

She lived at number 46, Marconi Street.

Q7. Why did the narrator wait a long time before going to the address number 46, Marconi Street?

**Ans.** Initially, after the liberation, she was not at all interested in her mother's belongings lying stored there. She was also afraid of being confronted with things that had belonged to her mother, who was now no more.

8. When did the narrator become curious about her mother's possessions?

**Ans.** The narrator became curious about her mother's possessions as normalcy returned in the post-liberation period. She knew that those things must still be at the address her mother told her. She wanted to see them, touch and remember.

Q9. How was the narrator able to recognise her own familiar woolen table-cloth?

**Ans.** The narrator first stared at the woolen table-cloth. Then she followed the lines of the pattern. She remembered that somewhere there was a bum mark which had not been repaired. At last she

found the bum mark on the table-cloth. This helped her to know that the narrator came to know that the cutlery they ate off every day was silver?

Q10. Why did the narrator suddenly decide to leave?

**Ans.** The narrator had visited 46, Marconi Street for a specific purpose—to see her mother's belongings and touch them. However, these objects seemed to have lost their value in strange surroundings and on being severed from the life of former times.

### LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS:

Q1. 'Have you come back?' said the woman. 'I thought that no one had come back.' Does this statement give some clue about the story? If yes, what is it?

**Ans.** The quoted statement gives us a clue about the story. It means that the two families were acquaintances who knew each other and stayed nearby. During the war, many families left the land to take refuge in another place while some of the families stayed back at the same place. Mrs. Dorling thought that the family of Mrs. S died during the war and that is why she gave such a cold reaction to the girl who came to visit her.



Q2. The story is divided into pre-War and post-War times. What hardships do you think the girl underwent during these times?

**Ans.** The story is based on the pre-War and post-War period. The family of the girl was rich before the war and they had valuable possessions in their house. When the war started, Mrs. Dorling established contact with them and started visiting them again. She started taking the possessions with her whenever she would visit as she believed if they would leave the place, such things should not be wasted. The girl suffered a lot, her mother died and she had to live in a rented place. She found it really difficult to go back to the place where her childhood was spent and she wanted her belongings back. When she went to meet Mrs. Dorling, she noticed how the things were arranged in a tasteless manner. She could no longer connect to them and she lost her interest in them and partly she was afraid. The girl finally decided to leave the house and forget the address.

Q3. Why did the narrator of the story want to forget the address?

**Ans.** Mrs. Dorling kept the valuable items in her house until the war was over as she didn't want them to lose during the war in case they decided to leave the place. Her mother gave her the address of Mrs. Dorling '46, Marconi Street'. She remembered the address and decided to visit her anyway. She

was afraid to visit the place again as it brought back many past memories. When she saw all the possessions, they were arranged in a tasteless manner and she lost interest in them. She could not connect with the things and thought that she would not stay at the house any longer, she would destroy the good memories she had with those items. She finally decided to forget the address and not to go back to that place.

4. 'The Address' is a story of human predicament that follows war. Comment.

**Ans:** War always brings a lot of suffering to human beings. It brings them both destruction and death. 'The Address' is based on the same theme. During the war, all the belongings were taken by Mrs. Dorling who promised to keep them safe. The mother of the protagonist died and all the possessions were left with the acquaintance. Years later the girl decided to visit the house whose address was given by her mother years ago. The woman showed no sympathy to her nor did she take time to even recognize her. She thought everyone in her family had died. The girl wanted to take back her belongings. She didn't allow the girl to enter the house. She seemed like a woman who didn't have any human emotions. So, the war leaves the world desolated and it cannot be healed.