

The Third Level(L 1 from Vistas)

Q1. What does the third level refer to?

Ans. The third level refers to here is the world between desire or dream and reality. It is a world of fantasy that we create for ourselves to escape from the fear, anxiety, worries and current day problems.

Q2. Would Charley ever go back to the ticket counter on the third level to buy tickets to Galesburg for himself and his wife?

Ans. I don't think Charley would ever go back to the ticket counter on the third level. It was a world of fantasy that Charley had created. So he exchanged all his savings for 1894 currency to buy tickets from the third level to Galesburg, Illinois. However, he could not find the third level again as it did not exist.

Q3. Do you think that the third level was a medium of escape for Charley? Why?

Ans. I think the third level was a medium of escape for Charley from the mad race of modern times. Charley had to confront with the harsh realities of life which made him seek escape into the world of fantasy, the happier times of the past.

Q4. What do you infer from Sam's letter to Charley?

Ans. Charley came across Charley's letter mysteriously. The envelope that he found among his oldest first day covers contained a letter dated July 4, 1894. It bore the address of his grandfather and the postmark showed the picture of President Garfield. The letter was addressed to Charley. In the letter Sam had informed that he was living on the third level. He had also told Charley and his wife to keep looking for the third level. All these show clearly that the letter was a product of Charley's imagination.

Q5. The modern world is full of insecurity, fear, war, worry and stress. What are the ways in which we attempt to overcome them?

Ans. The modern world is full of insecurity, fear, worry and stress. We are at constant struggle with these harsh realities for our existence. To overcome them, some involve in productive activities like writing poems, reading, watching movies, attending social events, doing social service, etc. Some people like Charley create in their fantasy a world, which is between their desire and reality and seek respite by transporting themselves to it mentally. They travel back in time to the past which they believe was a happier era. Some people cherish nostalgic memories of the past to escape from the harassing present.

Q6. Do you see an intersection of time and space in the story?

Ans. Yes, the story clearly shows an intersection of time and space. Firstly, the first two levels of Grand Central station are located in the present time while the third level existed in the 1890s. Secondly, Charley and his wife, Louisa, live in the present time yet Charley goes to get old currency to buy tickets to go to Galesburg. The old architecture of the platform at the third level is different from the platform of the modern times. The archaic manner of dressing by the people and the newspaper, The World, dated June 11, 1894 also overlap with Charley's real time world and existence.

Q7. Apparent illogicality sometimes turns out to be a futuristic projection. Comment

Ans. It is true that apparent illogicality sometimes turns out to be a futuristic projection. Many scientific inventions sounded ridiculous and absurd till some brilliant minds gave them a concrete shape. Before the Wright Brothers invented the first aeroplane, nobody could have dared to believe that man could fly. Inventions like television and smartphone were conceived in dreams but now part of our everyday reality. All these emphasise the fact that fantasies that seem illogical at one point of time may turn out to be revolutionary things that change the future of the mankind.