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Topic :- "Porphyria's lover" - R. Browning

Question :- A critical appreciation of
"Porphyria's lover" written
by Robert Browning.

Ans ⇒ Robert Browning was born on May 7, 1812 in England. He was one of the popular Victorian poets though he lived in a period of great political and economic activity, his poetry is untouched by ~~the~~ any of these trends. Browning's interests are wide and varied but primarily he was a poet of men. His business was soul-dissection or mind exploration.

The poem 'Porphyria's lover', which is in form of monologue is also a study of the abnormal lover who ^{has} murdered his beloved. In the very first stanza we find a youngman sitting in his cottage on a stormy midnight. The storm was vigorous, it had damaged the elm-tree and agitated the waters of the lake. At this moment, Porphyria arrived in the cottage

noiselessly, she lit the fire in chimney and make the room warm with fire and her presence. After this, ~~she took off her wet cloak~~ she took off her wet cloak, gloves and shawl and when she removed her hat, her beautiful yellow damp hair fall down her shoulder. Then she sat down near her lover. In this entire period, the lover didn't show any activity and he remain passive towards her.

Porphyria called him but he did not answer then she caught his arm and put it round her waist. Next she brought his head on her shoulder and covered it with her yellow hair. She revealed how much she loved him and that's why she had come here while a feast was going on at her home. She had not been able to control her passion for him, she came to him ignoring all the social norms.

Here we find the stormy night suddenly changed into a warm and ~~bea~~ beautiful night. However, ~~the~~ Porphyria's behaviour is not acceptable according to the rules and conditions of Victorian age. She out of her passion decided to give herself to her lover completely and ever. This confession of her made her lover too happy and proud. He found that at this moment, Porphyria worshipped him. This discloses not only

surprised him but also led him to think that what he should do at this moment when she belonged to him completely in all her beauty, goodness and purity.

This is the moment when we find that Browning is more interested in the psychology and motives of his character than in their action. Normally a lover would show equal amount of love and passion to his beloved at such moment. but contrary to it the lover ~~decided~~ took ~~take~~ a different decision to immortalize this moment. He wound her long yellow hair thrice round her throat and strangled her to death.

Later on he justifies his act that she died a painless death and opened her eyelids and explained that her blue-eyes are still laughing. Even it seems lunatic when he claimed that her cheeks was once more blushing when he kissed her.

From here onwards we find the lover which is earlier in a passive mood now become active. After kissing her he raised her head and rested it on his shoulder. It seemed to him that her head was glad to have lost its life in exchange for the gain of her lover's love. Porphyria would never know how her wish to give herself to the lover would be fulfilled. Throughout the night

they sit like this and to our utter surprise
the lover said that even God did not
speak a word. It is a very powerful descrip-
tion of the frenzy of love that wants to
appropriate everything for itself.

In this short story Breckenridge
focuses the readers attention not on
the grimness of the murder, but on the
importance of that supreme moment
when the girl gave herself up to her
lover. Such a moment may never come
again in the whole life time of the lovers,
who was anxious to solemnise this intense
moment. Prophyria's love was gained once
and for all - she could not belong to
anybody else. It is a very powerful description
of love. The poet discovers a soul of
good even in things evil.