

## CH-5 DESIREE'S BABY

29/07/21  
2/10

### Get Going



[A] ① Why was Madame Valmonde amused at the thought of Desiree and her baby?

Ans → Madame Valmonde vividly remembered the day when she first saw Desiree as a baby. In her mind, Desiree would always be her little girl. So, it was amusing for her to think that Desiree was all grown up and had become a mother herself.

② Why did Madame Valmonde shudder at the sight of L'Abri?

Ans → L'Abri was the name of the villa where Armand and Desiree lived after getting married. As we know from the story, L'Abri was a sad looking place. The house looked gloomy and was shadowed by oak trees. The slaves of the house looked miserable under the strict rule of Armand. However,



it was a livelier place under  
Monsieur's father as he was  
an easy-going and indulgent  
master.

③ Why was Madame Volmonde startled  
on seeing the baby? How was her reaction  
different from the way Desirée talked about <sup>the</sup> baby?

Ans Madame Volmonde was startled to  
see the baby because she  
instantly recognized the differ-  
-ence in the colour of its  
skin. she knew that the baby  
was black. Desirée however, was  
unmindful of this fact. She loved  
the baby dearly <sup>and</sup> was overjoyed  
that it was healthy <sup>and</sup> was growing  
fast.

④ What made Desirée believe that  
Monsieur was very happy  
about the baby?

Ans Desirée was certain that Monsieur  
was happy about the baby  
because she knew that he



wanted a boy. Moreover, she had observed a great change in his behaviour towards the slaves ever since the time the baby was born. He has stopped punishing them and was lenient even to the ones who made up excuses to skip work.

⑤ What were the incidents that made Desiree realise that things were beginning to change?

~~Ans~~ Certain incidents made Desiree realise that things were changing. There was a mysterious change among the slaves. Distant neighbours started paying visits to the house for no reason. However, Armand's behaviour worried Desiree the most. He spoke to her with averted eyes and there was no love in his eyes. He would



avoid Desiree and her baby, and would often stay away from home. Moreover, he became harsh towards the slaves.

[10] (i) 'That was the way fell the Xulignys fell in love, as if struck by a pistol shot.' What does this tell us about the Xuligny family?

Ans This line tells us that the Xulignys were very impulsive and passionate in nature. At the end of the story, we find out Xernand's father had also fallen in love with a black woman and married her. He went to the extent of never letting his wife meet her own son to avoid social stigma, but that did not stop him from being with his beloved. Similarly, in the



beginning, Armand had also not cared about Desiree's obscure origin and married her.

② Why do you think Monsieur Valmonde grew practical when it came to getting Desiree married?

Ans → ~~Mr~~ Monsieur Valmonde loved Desiree and wanted the best for her. Due to Desiree's obscure origin, he had to ensure that Armand would take care of his daughter and respect her just the same. As a father, he didn't want her obscure past affect her marriage with Armand. He wanted to ensure that allowing Armand to marry her was the right thing to do.



③ How was Xumard's treatment of his slaves different from that of his father?

Ans Xumard's father was a more indulgent and kind master as compared to Xumard. Under him, L'abri was a happy place. In contrast, under Xumard, the slaves hardly smiled and L'abri turned into a gloomy and sad looking place.

④ Desiree looked at the ~~boy~~ baby and then at the boy fanning him, and let out a cry of shock. Why?

Ans Looking at the boy, the similarity between him and the baby suddenly became apparent to Desiree. Before that moment, her love love for the baby had blinded



her to the discrepancies that everyone else had noticed. For the first time, Desiree saw the baby in a different light and was well shocked at the realization.

⑤ Desiree strongly protested the accusation of not being white. However, Madame Valmonde did not. Why?

Ans → The story does not mention whether Desiree was aware of her origin or not. However, in her letter to Valmonde, she asked her to tell Armand that she was indeed white. This probably indicated that even though she knew that the Valmondes were not her real parents, she was not aware



of her uncertain origin. In that case, Desirée's protest was understandably innocent and sincere. On the other hand, if we assume that Desirée knew about the ~~was~~ uncertainty regarding her birth, her protest was still most heart-felt. It was more out of her indignation at being questioned than out of uncertainty about the colour of her skin. She couldn't believe that Vermand would doubt her honesty and desperately wanted him to believe her. Madame Volmonde, on the other hand, was more practical and knew that she couldn't truly vouch of her daughter's skin colour. However, that didn't change her love for Desirée and the baby, and she welcomed them with open arms.



⑥ Why did Stromard think that 'Almighty God had dealt cruelly and unjustly with him?' Do you agree?

Ans → During the time the story is set in, white people considered the black people inferior to them and enslaved them. We know that Stromard, unlike his father, thought that blacks were beneath them and treated them harshly. Thus, he thought that it was unfair that his own wife and child turned out to be black.

⑦ Why do you think Stromard's mother never left her own country?

Ans → Stromard's mother never left her own country because she didn't want anyone, especially



her own son to know that she was black, she knew that if the secret were to lead a normal life.

Q Did Stromand really want Desiree to leave? Support your <sup>answer</sup> with evidence from the story.

Ans Yes, Stromand wanted Desiree to leave him and go. There are many lines in the story that support this. Firstly, when Desiree asked him, he clearly said that he wanted her to leave. It is also mentioned that he didn't love her anymore. A close reading of the story reveals that Stromand was aware of the pain he was causing her, but he still didn't change his decision.



# Vocabulary Junction

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Page \_\_\_\_\_

- ①
- (a) S
  - (b) M
  - (c) S
  - (d) S
  - (e) S

② (a) preparing handle more responsibilities.

(b) courageous leader.

(c) a huge rock falling on my head.

(d) water flowing from the stream.

(e) large fluffy cottons balls.

- ①
- (a)
  - (b) (i)
  - (c) (ii)
  - (d) (iii)
  - (e) (iv)

- ②
- (a) definitely
  - (b) probably
  - (c) Maybe
  - (d) Perhaps
  - (e) surely