

La Belle Dame Sans Merci

By John Keats



John Keats

- Born on 31st October 1795
- One of the greatest English poets and key figure of the romantic movement
- Best known for his works such as 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' , 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'.
- He died at a young age of 25 due to tuberculosis.
- His poems were indifferently received in his lifetime but his fame grew after his death.
- Epitome of young, beautiful , doomed poets.



Title

La Belle Dame Sans Merci

(A beautiful lady without mercy)

Keats took the title from a French poem. It means a beautiful lady without mercy. She is very beautiful and charming. She attracts knight with her beauty and charm. After that, she deserts him. She has deserted many other men in men in the past. She is a cruel and heartless lady. She is a temptress. The title is highly suggestive and appropriate.

LAMIA, LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI, &c.

By John Keats



*London: George Routledge & Sons L^{td}
New York: E. P. Dutton & C^o*

FORM OF THE POEM

Ballad

A ballad is a short story told in verse. This poem is a ballad. It tells us about false and unrequited love. It tells the story of a knight. He is entrapped by a beautiful lady. Then he is deserted. He is left alone and pale. This poem tells the story through dialogues. The dialogue is between the narrator and the knight. In the first three stanzas the narrator asks questions from the knight. In the rest of the poem, the knight answers the questions of the narrator. The setting is medieval. The atmosphere, characters and incidents in the poem have been built up to make the poem a ballad

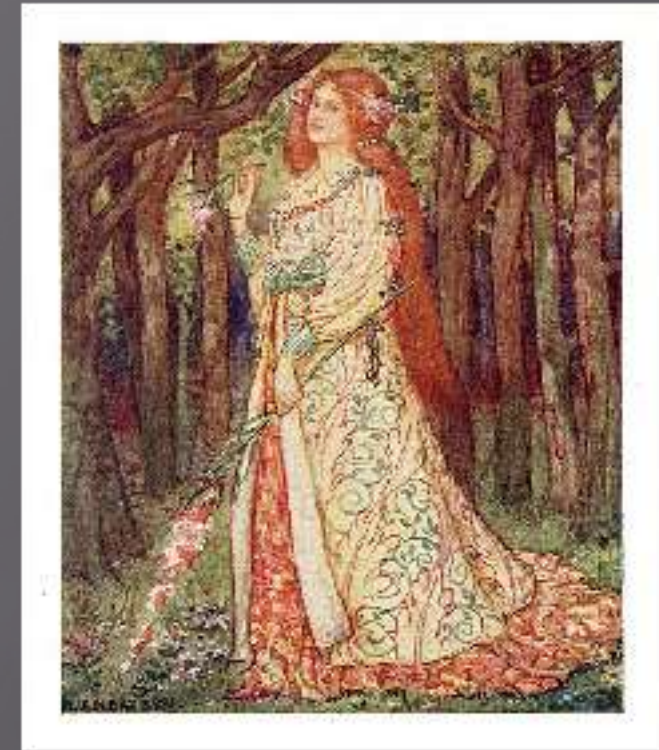
Introduction

La Belle Dame Sans Merci is one of the most famous poems in the English Literature. It tells the story of a knight who is deceived by a beautiful lady. In his dream, he comes to know that beautiful lady has deceived many other men in past. It is actually the story of poet himself. He loved a lady named Fanny Brawne. She left Keats and he was disappointed. The Knight in the poem is Keats himself and the beautiful lady is Fanny Brawne.



Summary of the Poem

It was the end of autumn season and there was no greenery anywhere. Birds and squirrels had gone to their nest and everything was deserted . But a knight was wandering alone. He looked pale and mentally disturbed. The narrator asked him why he looked so miserable. The knight answered that he met a very beautiful lady . She looked like a fairy' s child. The knight offered her ornaments made of flowers. She looked at knight as if she loved him deeply. Then the knight put the lady on his horse and wandered all the day. She took him to a fairy' s cave. She cried bitterly to prove her love. Then knight planted four kisses on her eyes. She sent the knight to sleep. While sleeping knight saw a dream. In his dream, he saw pale kings, princes and warriors who warned the knight that he had been deceived by a beautiful lady without mercy. They too had been cheated by the same lady. He woke up and found himself alone. He had been deserted by the beautiful lady. Because of this , he lost his peace of mind and looked miserable.



Themes

- Love- Unrequited love
- Heartbreak
- Despair
- Death
- Illusion vs Reality
- The Supernatural



