

Reading Questions: "The Rape of the Lock" by Alexander Pope



As you read, answer each of the following questions on notebook paper.

1. Based on his letter to Arabella Fermor, how does Pope seem to view the female gender?
2. What is a sylph? According to Pope, who introduced the idea of sylphs? Who may be familiar with them?
3. Identify the line(s) on which the narrator invokes the muse.
4. What does Belinda's guardian sylph reveal to her in her "prolonged... balmy rest"?
5. Identify the 4 types of spirits, the kind of woman that becomes each, and the element (or humor) each represents.
6. Who is Belinda's guardian sylph? Why has he revealed himself to Belinda?
7. Many epic poems include an arming scene. Identify such a scene in Canto I.
8. Who is responsible for guarding Belinda's favorite ringlets? Who covets them?
9. How does Ariel prepare for the imminent disaster?
10. Who or what is referred to often as nymph? What is a nymph? Is this an appropriate word?
11. Use 3 or 4 adjective to describe the card game.
12. Why is Ariel unable to warn Belinda? Why do his powers expire?
13. Explain the irony on line 158 of Canto III.
14. Who or what replaces the sylphs and Ariel?
15. What is in the bag that the Goddess gives to Umbriel?
16. Describe Thalestris.
17. Summarize the main points of Clarissa's speech. How do the people react to it?
18. Describe the battle between the men and the women.
19. What is the fate of Belinda's curl?
20. Describe the tone of "The Rape of the Lock."