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AP Literature 2A

POD Response 1

Terence, This is Stupid Stuff

Terence, This is Stupid Stuff talks about a poet named Terence who writes about depressing poetry. He mentions the fact that drinking liquor changes the way you see things so you're in a happy daze. However, when sober and awake, reality isn't so pleasant. He says to "face it as a wise man would" and tells about King Mithridates who was wise enough to evade his enemies that tried to poison him, and in the end was able to live a long life.

Figuratively analyzing this poem, Terence is being made fun of because his poems are depressing and is told to write something that is not so gloomy for it killed a cow and would eventually kill them as well if they had to listen to it because it is "stupid stuff." In his defense, Terence compares happy poetry to liquor. He mentions the pewter pot and how those who look into it "see the world as the world's not." As one glances into the pewter pot or consumes liquor, it shows something different from what's really there, blockading reality.

Yet, when one wakes up after being drunk, reality crashes down and the happy feeling is gone. Terence talks about approaching life the way a wise man would by "train[ing] for ill, and not for good." He then brings in a great example of how a life of a king was in the past. There was a chance that they could have been poisoned by their enemies, but Terence tells a tale about a king that was wise enough to survive and reign for a long period of time.

This king, Mithridates, consumes poison a tiny portion at a time, and gradually increases his dose to eventually be immune to poison. His guests are awe stricken as he consumes his meal

without being affected by the poison that they put in his food. In the end, the king came out as the one unaffected, but his guests were not so lucky for they were poisoned by the king. The story of Mithridates concludes as he is able to live a long life as an old man.

People tend to avoid the difficult things in life and try to block it out with something that will make life seem happier, but by being like Mithridates and gradually strengthening oneself by taking the poison, one can become stronger and live life longer by facing these challenges straight-on in order to live a long life as the king created for himself.

The entire poem was formatted in a rhyme scheme of AA, BB, CC and so forth, giving the poem a certain flow to it. It is also told in first person along with some dialogue at the beginning. The way the author formatted the poem seemed as if each stanza is chronologically placed in that specific order for a reason. The first stanza criticizes Terence of his poetry, and preceding that, he defends himself by comparing something that was familiar to those he was speaking to. He then brings in the fact that there is something to be learned from all of this and reinforces his statement by telling a story that carries with it a deeper meaning to conclude the lesson.