What happens?

A farmer describes his young wife’s withdrawal while revealing his own frustration.

The main idea

The farmer’s account exposes how sympathy can coexist with a failure to respect another person’s freedom.

1. “Three Summers since I chose a maid,”

Method: Agency

The opening centres the farmer’s decision, not a mutual agreement.

2. “We chased her, flying like a hare”

Method: Simile

The pursuit makes the bride seem hunted.

3. “And turned the key upon her, fast.”

Method: Action

The practical detail exposes confinement beneath claims of concern.

4. “her eyes, her hair, her hair!”

Method: Repetition

The fractured ending reveals intensifying fixation rather than understanding.

Form and structure

A dramatic monologue in six unequal stanzas; rural speech and shifting line lengths develop an uneasy personal voice.

Development, voice and tone

Marriage and flight — Baffled. The farmer recalls the bride’s fear while presenting the marriage as his own choice.

Capture and domestic life — Uneasily descriptive. Images of vulnerable animals reveal a woman who seeks safety away from men.

Attic and final outburst — Frustrated and desirous. The speaker’s attention narrows to her body, leaving the threat unresolved.

Context

Mew gives the husband the speaking role while making the young bride’s fear visible through the limitations of his account.

Comparison links

Porphyria’s Lover: possessive narrators. Follower: a contrasting rural relationship.

Recall question

What can the reader infer beyond the farmer’s explanation?