

her back with her hands on the pillow above her head.

Lecture No-26

The first three stanzas establish an atmosphere of bitter cold and old age in a great medieval castle, "St. Agnes Eve" - "Ah! bitter chill it was!"

The story now moves on with the description of Madeline's beauty. After conducting Angel outside her chamber, Madeline comes so hurriedly so her chamber that the tapes in her hand goes out. This prepares the ground for the meeting of the lovers in Madeline's bed chamber. Madeline is unaware of the presence of Porphyro, she redressed herself. Keats gives an aesthetic description of her ravishing beauty, her fair breast as she knells down in her prayer. She prepares to retire and takes of her cloth one by one. It is at this point that the dream of her future husband turns into reality.

"Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet."

After their confession of mutual love, Porphyro persuades Madeline to escape to a home. He was ready for "over the Southern moor". The last three verses of this narrative poem describe how Porphyro and Madeline, after a night of violent magnetic storm, escape from the castle.

Keats is an expert story-teller. The plot of the story is well managed. It has a beginning, middle and an end. This story is of as gorgeous stuff as ever romance was composed of. The Eve of St. Agnes is a masterpiece of construction not elsewhere equalled by the poet.

X
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