# Moll Flanders by- Daniel Defoe

1. In which year Moll Flanders was published?

Ans. 1722

1. Name the full title of Moll Flanders.

Ans. The fortunes and misfortunes of the famous Moll Flanders.

1. On which real characters does Moll Flanders based on?

Ans. Elizabeth Adskin

1. How many section are there in Moll Flanders?

Ans. Nine

1. Daniel Defoe is famous for which novel?

Ans. Robinson Crusoe

1. Name the husbands of Moll Flanders.

Ans. First husband, Robin

Second husband, Draper (Tradesman)

Third husband, Plantation Owner

Fourth Husband, James or Jamy

Fifth husband, Banker

1. Name the place of the setting of Moll Flanders

Ans. London and Virginia (America)

1. Name the sub-title of the 9 sections of Moll Flanders

Ans. Section 1, The Youth

Section 2, The Colchester

Section 3, Drapers and Captains

Section 4, The Bath Guy

Section 5, Marriage in Lankashire

Section 6, Marriage to a Banker

Section 7, Law Breaking

Section 8, Prison

Section 9, Freedom and Travel

1. Name the prison where Moll Flanders was born.

Ans. Newgate Prison

1. Where did Moll Flanders stay after the death of nurse?

Ans. In the family of Mr. Mayoress

1. How many children did Moll Flanders has from her first husband?

Ans. Two

1. Name the husband of Moll Flanders who was her half brother.

Ans. Plantation Owner

1. How many children did Moll Flanders has from her third husband Plantation Owner?

Ans. 3 (three)

1. Where did Moll Flanders settled at the end of the novel?

Ans. England

1. With whom did Moll Flanders finally live in England?

And. With her fourth husband, James.

# Discuss Moll Flanders as a picaresque novel.

**Ans.**

Moll Flanders is considered an example of a picaresque novel. These novels usually employ a first-person narrator recounting the adventures of a scoundrel or low-class adventurer who moves from place to place and from one social environment to another in an effort to survive. Basically, it is a picaresque novel. As per the objection of the one critic, it also comes under “Quasi-Picaresque”. Finally, we can say it has the elements of Picaresque, Quasi-Picaresque, Puritanism, Romance, Crime narrative. In England, Moll Flanders was probably the first novel in this literary term. The term Picaresque was initiated or derived from the Spanish word Picaro (Rogue). A Picaresque novel is one which describes the adventures, tricks, thefts, wandering of a low born protagonist. Moll has the qualities of a Picaro, as she wanders and applies different tricks for survival and she is also a low born due to her birth to a whore and a thief. She enjoys sexual freedom. She cannot be contrasted except “Wife of Bath” in English literature who enjoys the company of husbands and lovers in her whole life.

Moll turns to be religious after a long voyage of crime and sins. She goes on the path of repentance. This feature of Moll makes this novel in doubt whether it is right or not to treat it as a Picaresque novel. Picaresque novel is never religious while Moll is religious at the end of novel. But, the major portion of the novel deals with Picaresque elements of Moll i.e. adventure, crime, sexual freedom, loose-structure and long strings of episodes revolving around Moll as whole. For, this conflict of Picaresque gives another term to novel which may be called as: “Quasi Picaresque Novel”.

The term Romance, originates from Anglo-Norman and Old French romanz, Romans, which means story of Chivalry and love. Romance has totally a different conception in English Literature. It means romantic stories, Chivalrous feats of heroes/heroines and knights. Romance appears in Moll Flanders when she lives her life with the gypsies. Another romantic element comes when she becomes a gentle woman by getting married with a gentle man, as a wife of younger son of a rich family. But, her married life is finished after her husband’s death. Romantic element again rises with the incest theme of Moll appears in her imagination when lying in the arms of her husband but she thinks that she lies in the arms of her husband`s elder brother. Incest theme really commits when unknowingly, she has three children with the next husband who turns out to be her own brother.

The title of the novel covers almost a paragraph so that readers take keen interest and they have the keen curiosity to know Moll Flanders. The full title suggests that Moll is not an ordinary person but in real sense a picaro (rogue) who wanders from one place to another as a whore, criminal, thief, wife, mistress. She is on the voyage from sins to repentance. The name of the protagonist is also significant, as Moll stands for a woman of loose morals and Flanders stands for immortality. Moll Flanders is a Picaresque novel in real sense of English literature. The story of novel tells us the fall of a woman by her own low moral values and ends with the re-birth of Moll after repentance. Moll is born in Newgate prison, her mother who having been convicted of felony, is to be transported to Virginia. Her mother is also a fallen woman. Initially Moll is not a character of low moral values. After having birth in Newgate Prison in London, she is handed over to relatives of her mother`s. Moll, a little girl wanders into the midst of a band of gypsies and is taken away by this group form one place to another till she runs away from them in the town of Colchester. Before, this incident, she is like an innocent girl, but this unfavourable condition changes her destiny. Run away from gypsies, Parish Officials handed her over to the care of a good woman who is a teacher and runs her own school. She teaches her to live a life of a gentle woman not life of a fallen woman. But, circumstances unfavoured her life, as this teacher dies and after this teacher`s death, Moll is given shelter by a wealthy aristocratic family where she learns knowledgeable things for life in the company of the daughters of the family. Moll learns writing, dancing, speaking French and singing. Her beauty with her learning makes her an aristocratic household. But destiny wants different for her. The elder son of the family traps Moll by the trick of flattery, to seduce her. And, this young man forces her to marry his younger brother. She is totally trapped by the elder son. She enjoys her married life as a wife the younger son of the family but she is in the feeling of incest in her mind, as even in her husband`s arms, she thinks to be in his elder brother`s arms. The younger son of the family dies after five years and again she feels lonely in world of happiness.

After this, she moves ahead to search a man to whom she can get marry and settle down and finally she find a linen draper who wooes her and wins her as his wife. The linen draper flees away to France, due to heavy debts on him. She finds herself a grass-widow, if not actually a widow. She is again a lonely woman in the world of colours. Moll again searches a man of wealth to be her perfect match. Finally she gets a man who seems wealthy to her and who, in turn, thinks her to be wealthy widow. After marriage, they find themselves the poor one who does not have anything as they were thinking. And the tragedy happens, when she learns about her husband that he is her own step brother, when she finds her husband`s mother as her own mother too in Virginia. She discloses this incident to her husband, who is no more her husband. She shocks of her living with her own brother as his wife. Her mother suggests her to live an incestuous life with him. This is something intolerable. She leaves them and returns back to England. After this tragic incident, she becomes a hired mistress for six years and also gives birth to three children of a man who is already a married one. This shows her falling moral values. Then Moll goes to a village in Lancashire in the company of a woman who is trickster and who introduces her to a man who seems to be a rich one. The man gets the impression that Moll is a rich widow; and so he marries her. Soon, the world of illusion dismisses. Now, Moll becomes a mid wife introduces by the Land lady to whose house Moll leaves after returning to London. Moll addresses this Land lady her Governess. Now, after giving birth to child, she marries to a man working in the Bank of England even when her husband of Lancashire is still alive but she does not any hope of his coming. Her marriage with this man of bank proves fruitful and they enjoy the life happily. But after five years of this marriage and giving birth to two children, the man dies of continuous depression due to financial crisis.

Now, Moll is forty-eight years old and she has no beauty charm and no temptation left her. So, she becomes a thief compelled by her avarice. She continuous her thefts to costly goods, obtained by tricks and so many things. She is favoured her luck and continued to adopt theft as her profession. Then comes the day when Moll`s luck forsakes her. She is caught in the act of committing a theft. She is taken to Newgate prison. This is the place, where she was born and where she has now been brought to suffer the consequences of all her crimes. Now, she has feeling of disgust and she is overcome by remorse, but this is not her true remorse. Then, her Governess comes to meet her and advises her to confess her misdeeds in front of Clergy man. Then, Moll confesses all her misdeeds in front of clergy man and this time she regrets in true sense. She realises herself to the lowest-level and the spiritual effect of the clergy man`s discourses-all these combine to bring about Moll`s regeneration. Moll now undergoes a transformation. Here, is a rebirth of Moll Flanders. She sheds all the evils of her life and now she knows the path of peace that only comes through repentance. Moll is now a true penitent. There is the combination of many things against her to make her a hardened sinner. She is an inborn evil character and her bad luck and so many things are the results of her life.

# Moll Flanders is a story of a lady who has inherited a proclivity to evil, and in whose life that aptness finds a lot of scope. The novel contains a number of dramatic situations and happenings to force Moll for doing sin in her own life until she realized her all evils and move towards repentance. Moll provides a human face to crime. But, we have to recognise Moll as a person, who suffers and triumphs, loves and loses, a person with a versatile personality to be able of doing so many things but has down moral values, sometimes she is - an innocent face. At last, she learns the lesson of repentance. In conclusion we may say that there is a hope of salvation even for the most hardened sinner. The only key to all the problems is the repentance and it is because of this repentance that Moll is able to adjust herself after such a long list of evils with the world and she is leading a life in Virginia, far away from England. Till the end of her life she spends her life in a state of repentance.

# Character Sketch of Moll Flanders

**Ans.**

Moll Flanders is the main protagonist of Defoe’s novel “Moll Flanders”. She was born in a Newgate Prison and was orphaned at the age of year and a half. She uses her body and charm to attract young men and fortunate wealthy upper class man to fall in love with her. She came from a poor family class background and lived in poverty. In order to obtain most of the luxurious life, Moll started to cheat off people and indulge in criminal activities.

The character of Moll is rebellious since she did not adhere to the societal stigma and conventions. Woman was strictly asked to follow certain norms and conventions and she rebelliously abandoned all the rules and laws constructed by the society. She literally used her body as a way to increase her fortune and wealth so that she can get rid of her poverty and live a luxurious life.

Moll has a clear conscience to her actions. She was a woman of practical sensibility since she indulged in many criminal jobs , prostitute and married many husbands yet she has a reason. The reason was that if England had a better opportunity to serve the orphan children then she would be living a life in a better condition rather than cheating and crime. She believed that she has the right to serve herself and find fortune for herself in order to live a lavish life and she continues on a journey to establish a good fortune.

The flaw in the character of Moll Flanders was her pursuit for money and capital. Capitalism played an important role during their time and since capital is the only solution to bring her out of the poverty, she started to seek for rich man and marry them off for money. Her pursuit for money made her to lose her innocence and she was later captured and sends again to the Newgate Prison where she was born. She was a cunning woman who was able to escape from the prison and she married Jeremy who was a wealthy plantation owner and hence she was able to satisfy her life with luxury.

Moll Flanders is born to a mother who has been convicted of a felony and who is transported to America soon after her birth. As an infant, Moll lives on public charity, under the care of a kind widow who teaches her manners and needlework. She grows into a beautiful teenager and is seduced at an early age. Abandoned by her first lover, she is compelled to marry his younger brother. He dies after a few years, and she marries a draper who soon flees the country as a fugitive from the law. She marries yet again and moves to America, only to find out that her husband is actually her half-brother. She leaves him in disgust and returns to England, where she becomes the mistress of a man whose wife has gone insane. He renounces his affair with Moll after a religious experience.

Moll's next marriage offer is from a banker whose wife has been cheating on him. Moll agrees to marry him if he can obtain a divorce, and meanwhile she travels to the country and marries a rich gentleman in Lancashire. This man turns out to be a fraud--he is as poor as she is--and they part ways to seek their fortunes separately. Moll returns to marry the banker, who by this time has succeeded in divorcing his wife. He dies soon after, however, and Moll is thrown back upon her own resources once again. She lives in poverty for several years and then begins stealing. She is quite talented at this new trade and soon becomes an expert thief and a local legend. Eventually she is caught, imprisoned, and sentenced to death. In prison at Newgate, she reunites with her Lancashire husband, who has also been arrested. They both manage to have their sentences reduced, and they are transported to the colonies, where they begin a new life as plantation owners. In America, Moll rediscovers her brother and her son and claims the inheritance her mother has left her. Prosperous and repentant, she returns with her husband to England at the age of seventy.

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1. **Discuss Defoe’s Moll Flanders as a feminist novel.**

**Ans.**

Moll Flanders is one of the masterpieces written by Daniel Defoe, the founder of the realistic novel. Compared with the contemporary writer, Defoe runs in front of the times by his female consciousness to protect women’s rights representatively at early times in England. In Moll Flanders, Daniel Defoe portrayed an image of a woman named Moll Flanders. She was born in Newgate prison because her mother was a thief. Since her birth, she lost her parents and was brought up in an orphanage. Under the pressure of making a living, she got married for five times and she even gave up her self-esteem to be a mistress. As time went by, Moll gradually lost the charm of appearance, she also lost the means to support her living. As for a woman like her without enough education, she had no other choice but to be trapped into the fatal cycle to be a thief like her mother. At last she was expelled to Virginia. But what was fortunate was that she finally lived a life she dreamed of with her diligence and wisdom. England was still a patriarchal society in 18th century. For women, the best way to gain social status and acquire recognition was marriage and it was thought to be the only way. However, under the influence of the Enlightenment, Defoe advocated that men and women should be equal in all aspects of social life and family life. His broad view helped him create the great piece of Moll Flanders. Nevertheless, to some extent, Defoe’s feminism inherits from patriarchal consciousness.

In Moll Flanders, Moll Flanders was merely a victim of the male-centered society. She was driven by all the forces of the world to pursue the immoral things. The inner conflicts of Moll Flanders was well recognized just as she felt what she did was contradictory to what she thought when she got married with the banker friend, “but I, prompt by that worst of Devils, Poverty, returned to the vice Practice, and make the advantage of what they call a handsome face, be the relief to my necessities, and beauty be a pimp to vice”(Daniel, 1971, p. 188). It is evident that what Moll Flanders did was not exactly out of her choice. What she intended to do was to get rid of poverty. At that time, money had the power to determine almost everything, including marriage, status, and even people’s fate, especially women’s fate. It was not her own fatal propensity that strengthened Moll’s behavior but the continuous stimulation of the socio-economic necessity: “Give me not poverty least I Steal” (Daniel, 1971, p. 191). Such poverty brought about a lot of problems for people, particularly for women like Moll.

Moll Flanders set on such a background so that Moll Flanders showed her feminist thoughts not only in her childhood, but also in her adulthood, “Her feminism was original and was much influenced by gypsies’ thoughts of freedom”. When she was eight, she should be sent to some rich people’s home to be a maid. However, she did not want to be a housemaid radically, so she talked to her Mistress every day that she had the ability to support herself through her own diligence. When she was young, Moll had the chance to get in touch with the women of upper classes. For one thing, she admired those women, because they wore beautiful clothes and lived a wealthy life; for another, she wanted to become such a woman in the future. Yet, she decided to realize her dream through her hard work without doing illegal things. At that time, she made her ambition to be a “Gentlewoman”. Maybe she did not understand what is “Gentlewoman” clearly. To gain a proper status in the society is also the aim of feminist movement.

After the death of the younger brother, Moll had no one to rely on. Since then, she made up her mind to live a life with legal methods on her own. Her independence was strengthened as time went by. In the patriarchal society, women with independent spirit were viewed as pioneers. Defoe does not have better ways for females to elevate their status, his only solution is to advice women to educate themselves so that they have the power to survive in the masculine world. Moll had good “learning abilities”. She had learned cheating from her affairs with the elder brother. Moll and the elder brother had relationship, yet, the elder brother turned her into the wife of his younger brother, “diligently did… cheat him, and had the Thanks of a faithful Friend for shifting off his Whore into his Brothers Arms for a Wife” (Daniel, 1971, p. 58). Through the experience, Moll firstly knew how gentlemen could behave. They would use any method to satisfy their affections, and sometimes give up humanity and justice to secure themselves. Moll gradually grasped something important from her marital life. She wanted to use what she had learned to remind her female friends that males and females were equal. In her mind, the disadvantages of women in marriage related to men mostly, “the Disadvantages of the Women, is a terrible Scandal upon the Men, and it lies here, and here only” (Daniel, 1971, p. 74). Moll thought that a hasty marriage was always the reason why a woman got a terrible husband in the most time so she advised women to obey the rules of a good marriage and think twice before they leaped, then females would have a happy marital life, “In a Word, there is no Woman, Deformity, or lost Reputation excepted, but if she marriages well, may be married safely one time or other”. (Daniel, 1971, p. 76). These words seem to be the feminist manifesto. She encouraged women to choose a satisfied marriage based on her own life experience. In Moll’s adulthood, her feminism mainly is shown in her love affairs and marital life, which presents her rebellious spirit. Since then, her feminist sparking cast into her rest life.

At first, Moll led the young lady to say to the people around her that it was she who terminated the engagement with the captain because he lied. She discovered that the captain had got married and did not have the fortune as he claimed. What’s worse was that he was very bad-tempered. Hence, she deemed that it was improper to marry him. In the meanwhile, Moll embellished the rumors by continuing making up story of the captain. Thus the captain’s reputation was destroyed. He had no choice but to go back to the door of the young lady. Then the lady “had her full Revenge of him” (Daniel, 1971, p. 71). The success of the revenge owed to Moll. She fought for the equality between men and women for herself, at the same time she helped her friend to play the equal role in love affairs and in the marriage. Defoe uses a large amount of words to express the process of Moll’s revenge. One of the reasons is that it is the first success of Moll in the marriage market, though she is only a director in this case. The revenge presents Moll’s wisdom clearly and implies her resistance against the traditional custom. To some extent, her pursuit for equality represents the awakening of feminism because the most important sign of feminism is to realize the equality between men and women. That Moll fight against men shows Moll’s resistance against the male-centered world.

In conclusion we may say that in the manmade society, a woman like Moll from a low social status merely has no property so as to live a tough life in the patriarchal society. However, in order to survive, she tries every possible way to support her life. In the beginning, she deems that marriage is the best choice. However, five failures in the marriages make her know that she has no other choice but to be independent. Later, she realizes that being independent seems not to solve all the problems that life brings to her. Thus, she begins to pursue the equal rights between men and women. She is so courageous that she is not fettered by the social situation of that time. Indeed, she does so much that can’t be accepted by the cotemporary people and the society, it has to be admitted that what she has done is driven by her pioneering feminist thoughts, and her courage to break the traditional rules in the patriarchal society is worthy of encouragement.

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