

# Collegedunia NCERT Notes

NCERT Revision Notes

## Chapter 6: The Third and Final Continent

The Third and Final Continent class 11 English (Woven Words) notes help you revise plot, characters, immigrant experience, marriage, Mrs Croft, themes, language and NCERT answer frames.

### Also see:

[Chapter](#)

[6 NCERT](#)

[Solutions](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[NCERT Book](#)

[PDF](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Handwritten](#)

[Notes](#)

Practise textbook answers for The Third and Final Continent.

Read the official Jhumpa Lahiri story before revision.

Use visual notes for last-minute recap.

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## **1 Chapter Snapshot**

Jhumpa Lahiri's story follows a Bengali narrator who leaves India, studies in London, begins work in America, marries Mala and slowly finds home across three continents.

## 1.1 Core Facts

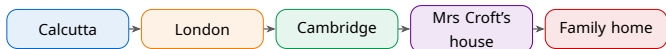
| Point         | What to remember                                                | Exam use                        |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Author        | Jhumpa Lahiri, Indian Bengali writer and Pulitzer Prize winner. | Use in context answers.         |
| Narrator      | A Bengali immigrant who speaks in the first person.             | Use for point of view.          |
| Main settings | Calcutta, London and Cambridge near Boston.                     | Use for migration theme.        |
| Key figures   | The narrator, Mala, Mrs Croft and Helen.                        | Use for character sketches.     |
| Turning point | Mrs Croft calls Mala a perfect lady.                            | Use for marriage and belonging. |

### **Core idea**

*The chapter turns an ordinary immigrant life into an achievement. Survival, care and*

*adjustment become as meaningful as the moon landing.*

#### Life movement



## 1.2 One-minute Reading Route

- Track each place as a stage of adjustment, not just as background.
- Notice small objects: cornflakes, soup cans, saris, keys, rent envelopes and tea.
- Read Mrs Croft as comic, strict, vulnerable and dignified at the same time.
- Connect Mala's arrival to the narrator's own loneliness in foreign cities.

### **First revision move**

*Separate the public event from the private story. The moon landing is famous, but the narrator's quiet migration is the emotional centre.*

## 1.3 Opening Vocabulary

| Word or phrase | Meaning in context             | Use in answer                 |
|----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| LSE            | London School of Economics.    | Shows student life in London. |
| Hollered       | Shouted loudly.                | Use for Mrs Croft's voice.    |
| Clamorous      | Loud and forceful.             | Use for tone.                 |
| Foyer          | Entrance hall of a house.      | Use for Mrs Croft's house.    |
| Mortified      | Deeply embarrassed or shocked. | Use for narrator's reaction.  |

### **CLCMB**

*Remember the journey stages as CLCMB:  
Calcutta, London, Cambridge, Mrs Croft,  
Belonging.*

## 2 Plot Sequence

The plot is built from small domestic scenes. Lahiri avoids melodrama and lets ordinary details show the narrator's

struggle, discipline and emotional change.

## 2.1 From India to London

The narrator leaves India in 1964 with little money. In London he lives with other Bengali bachelors, attends LSE lectures and works in a university library.

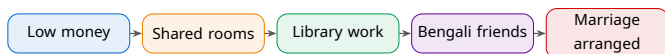
| Detail            | What happens                              | Meaning                                        |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Ship journey      | He sails on the SS Roma for three weeks.  | Migration begins with discomfort and distance. |
| Shared house      | Bengali bachelors live crowded together.  | Community helps survival abroad.               |
| Food habits       | They cook egg curry and drink tea.        | Old habits continue in a new country.          |
| Arranged marriage | His family arranges his marriage to Mala. | Duty follows him across continents.            |

### ***Immigrant networks***

*Students abroad often create small*

*communities around food, language and shared rooms. Lahiri shows this without romanticising the hardship.*

#### London adjustment



## 2.2 Arrival in America

The narrator lands in Boston when the moon landing has just made America celebrate itself. His own arrival is quieter, lonelier and more practical.

- He stays at the YMCA in Central Square.
- He starts work at Dewey Library at MIT.
- He learns American words like elevator, busy and thermos.
- He eats cornflakes and milk because they are cheap and familiar enough.
- He reads the newspaper to understand the new country.

### ***Plot mistake***

*Do not write that the narrator immediately loves America. He first experiences noise, loneliness, confusion and careful budgeting.*

### America adjustment ladder

1. Find a cheap room



2. Learn new words



3. Manage food and money



4. Read local news



5. Prepare for Mala

## 2.3 Mrs Croft's House

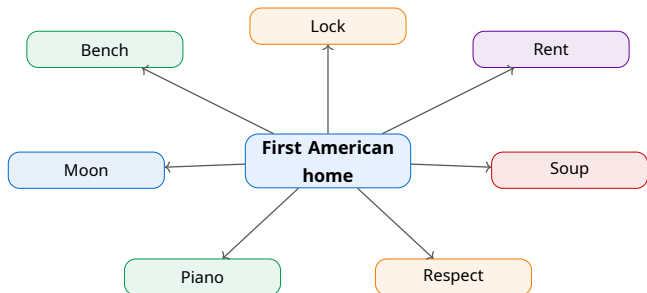
The narrator finds an eight-dollar room in Mrs Croft's house. The house gives him order and quiet after the YMCA, but Mrs Croft gives the place its real meaning.

| Scene         | What happens                           | Why it matters                |
|---------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| First meeting | Mrs Croft orders him to lock the door. | Shows her strict control.     |
| Moon line     | She makes him say splendid.            | Creates their ritual.         |
| Rent envelope | He places money in her hands.          | Builds respect.               |
| Helen's visit | He learns Mrs Croft is 103.            | Turns comedy into awe.        |
| Final visit   | Mrs Croft praises Mala.                | Begins closeness in marriage. |

### ***Ritual***

*The repeated word splendid looks comic, but it becomes a bridge between two strangers from different worlds.*

**Mrs Croft house web**



## 3 Character Sketches

The chapter's characters are shown through gestures. Lahiri often reveals feeling through food, clothes, room arrangements and brief conversations.

### 3.1 The Narrator

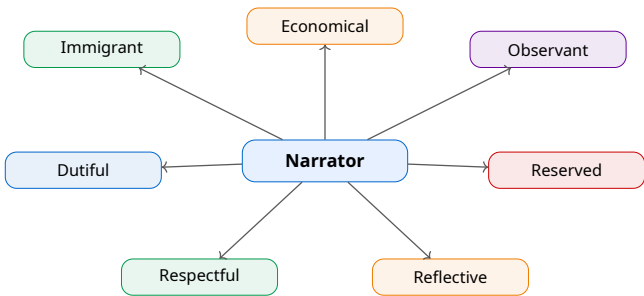
The narrator is disciplined, observant, economical and emotionally restrained. He survives by learning routines before he learns affection.

| Trait      | Evidence                                                      | Answer line                        |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Practical  | He budgets, eats cornflakes and studies newspaper ads.        | He adjusts through discipline.     |
| Respectful | He calls Mrs Croft madame and pays rent carefully.            | He honours age and formality.      |
| Reserved   | He does not comfort Mala at first.                            | He needs time to feel intimacy.    |
| Reflective | He later measures ordinary survival against the moon landing. | Memory gives meaning to migration. |

### **Character answer order**

*Begin with his migration, then his discipline, then his relationship with Mrs Croft and Mala, and end with his mature reflection.*

## **Narrator map**



## 3.2 Mrs Croft

Mrs Croft is strict, old-fashioned, comic and admirable. Her strength matters because she has survived more than a century and still lives with dignity.

| Aspect       | Source detail                                               | Meaning                                    |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Age          | She is 103 years old.                                       | Her survival amazes the narrator.          |
| Voice        | She hollers commands.                                       | She is forceful despite physical weakness. |
| Values       | She insists on propriety and chaperones.                    | She belongs to an older moral world.       |
| Independence | She lives alone with weekly help.                           | She represents dignity in old age.         |
| Kindness     | She calls the narrator a gentleman and Mala a perfect lady. | Her approval creates emotional warmth.     |

### ***Old age and dignity***

*Mrs Croft challenges easy pity. She needs help, but she also commands respect and keeps her own rules.*

### ***Character mistake***

*Do not describe Mrs Croft only as eccentric. Her*

*eccentricity is linked with courage, loneliness, humour and self-respect.*

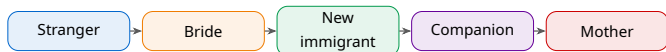
### 3.3 Mala

Mala begins as a stranger in an arranged marriage. Her adjustment becomes visible through small acts of care, food, clothing and shared laughter.

| Stage           | What happens                                         | Meaning                                 |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Calcutta        | She cries after marriage and misses her parents.     | She has been uprooted suddenly.         |
| Arrival         | She refuses oxtail soup and brings knitted sweaters. | She carries Indian habits into America. |
| Apartment       | She cooks, cleans and learns the new routine.        | Domestic rhythm builds closeness.       |
| Mrs Croft visit | She laughs and receives approval.                    | The marriage begins to soften.          |
| Later life      | She becomes strong and happy in America.             | Adjustment turns into belonging.        |

### ***Mala's importance***

*Mala is not just the narrator's wife. She helps transform an immigrant room into a shared home.*



### 3.4 Helen

Helen reveals the practical reality behind Mrs Croft's fierce surface. She brings soup, opens cans and explains her mother's age and past.

- She visits weekly from Arlington.
- She understands her mother's habits but also complains about them.
- She shows that Mrs Croft was once a piano teacher.
- She helps the narrator see Mrs Croft as vulnerable.

#### ***Helen answer***

*Mention Helen when answering about Mrs Croft's family relationship. She shows care, irritation, duty and distance at once.*

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## 4 Themes and Ideas

The story's themes grow from movement, memory and quiet human contact. It presents immigration as ordinary in fact,

but extraordinary in feeling.

## 4.1 Migration and Adjustment

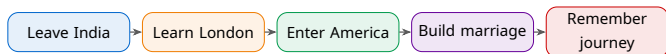
The title names the narrator's movement across India, England and America. Each continent demands a new habit, a new vocabulary and a new emotional balance.

| Place             | Adjustment                                     | Theme link                       |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| India             | Family duty, marriage and memory.              | Origin and responsibility.       |
| England           | Shared rooms, study and Bengali bachelor life. | Survival through community.      |
| America           | Work, money, language and solitude.            | Self-making in a new world.      |
| Mrs Croft's house | Respectful routine with a stranger.            | Belonging through human contact. |
| Family home       | Marriage, son and citizenship.                 | Settlement across generations.   |

## HABIT

*Use HABIT for migration answers: Home, Adjustment, Belonging, Identity, Time.*

### Migration arc



## 4.2 Loneliness and Companionship

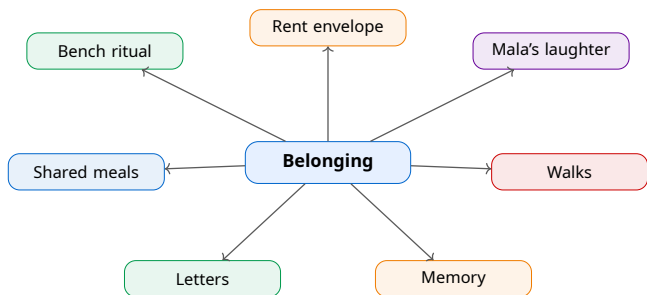
The narrator begins America alone at the YMCA. Companionship first appears in a strange form: ten minutes each evening beside Mrs Croft.

- The YMCA is noisy but emotionally empty.
- Mrs Croft's house is quiet and ritual-bound.
- The narrator's care for Mrs Croft grows through tiny acts.
- Mala's arrival creates responsibility before affection.
- Laughter in the parlour becomes the first shared emotional moment.

### Companionship

*The story suggests that companionship does not always begin with love. Sometimes it begins with routine, courtesy and repeated presence.*

## Companionship web



### 4.3 Marriage and Emotional Growth

The arranged marriage begins formally. The narrator and Mala barely know each other, but shared life gradually creates affection.

| Moment             | Emotional meaning                         | Exam use                   |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mala's letter      | Distance and loneliness remain formal.    | Use for early awkwardness. |
| Airport meeting    | The narrator acts dutiful, not romantic.  | Use for arranged marriage. |
| First week         | Food, keys and household rhythm develop.  | Use for adjustment.        |
| Mrs Croft's praise | The couple smile at each other.           | Use for turning point.     |
| Later memory       | They become partners in grief and family. | Use for mature love.       |

### ***Theme mistake***

*Do not claim the marriage becomes loving in one scene. The parlour scene begins the lessening of distance, but love grows over time.*

## 4.4 Old Age, Memory and Survival

Mrs Croft makes the narrator think about age, widowhood and endurance. Her survival contrasts with his mother's decline after widowhood.

| Character         | Old age or memory detail                   | Meaning                                     |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Mrs Croft         | Lives alone at 103 and commands the house. | Age can hold dignity and force.             |
| Narrator's mother | Sinks into mental illness after widowhood. | Loss can break a household.                 |
| Narrator          | Remembers each room, meal and person.      | Memory turns ordinary survival into wonder. |
| Son               | Sees the rent as unbelievable.             | Generations measure the past differently.   |

### ***Family systems***

*The chapter lets students compare care for the aged in Indian and Western settings without making either world simple or perfect.*

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## **5 Symbols, Motifs and Language**

Lahiri's prose is quiet and exact. Repeated objects and phrases carry emotional meaning without heavy explanation.

### **5.1 The Moon Landing**

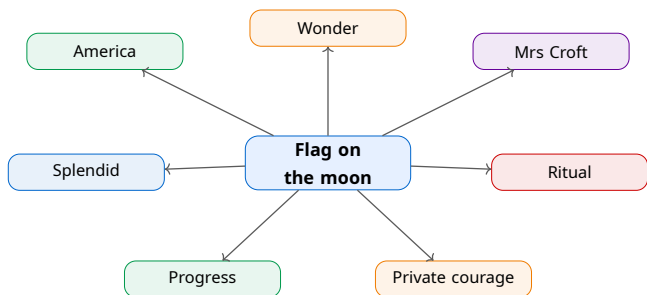
The moon landing is a public symbol of progress. Mrs Croft keeps repeating it, while the narrator later compares it with his own ordinary journey.

| Moon detail      | Story function                                                   | Theme                |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| National holiday | America celebrates the astronauts.                               | Public history.      |
| Say splendid     | Mrs Croft turns history into ritual.                             | Comic connection.    |
| Flag removed     | Narrator protects her feeling by not correcting her.             | Kindness.            |
| Final comparison | Astronauts spent hours on the moon, he spent decades in America. | Private achievement. |

### ***Symbol answer***

*Write both meanings. The moon landing marks American achievement. It also helps measure the narrator's migrant courage.*

### **Moon symbol web**



## 5.2 Food and Domestic Objects

Food marks adjustment in every place. Egg curry, cornflakes, soup cans, oxtail soup and chicken curry all reveal culture, budget and relationship.

| Object or food      | Where it appears                      | Meaning                      |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Egg curry           | London house and first meal for Mala. | Bengali continuity.          |
| Cornflakes and milk | YMCA and early Cambridge days.        | Cheap adaptation.            |
| Soup cans           | Mrs Croft's kitchen.                  | Age, routine and dependence. |
| Oxtail soup         | Mala's flight.                        | Cultural discomfort.         |
| Darjeeling tea      | Mala's gift from India.               | Home carried abroad.         |

### ECSSD

*Food memory code: Egg curry, Cornflakes, Soup, Sari, Darjeeling tea.*

## 5.3 Conversation and Gentle Humour

The chapter uses short, repeated conversations. Mrs Croft's commands, Helen's practical tone and Mala's first exchanges reveal personality.

- "Say splendid" creates comic repetition.

- "No lady visitors" shows Mrs Croft's strict code.
- Helen's remarks show affectionate irritation.
- Mala's oxtail soup line creates gentle cultural humour.
- The final "perfect lady" line opens emotional connection.

### ***Dialogue as character***

*Short speech can reveal a whole worldview.*

*Lahiri lets characters speak in their own rhythms instead of explaining them fully.*

#### **Dialogue function**



## **6 NCERT Answer Frames**

Most NCERT questions ask students to explain adjustment, character, affection, cultural contrast and narrative technique. Use evidence from scenes, not only theme names.

## 6.1 How to Answer Text Questions

### Answer ladder

1. Name the issue in the question



2. Quote or paraphrase one scene



3. Explain what it shows



4. Connect to migration or relationship



5. Close with Lahiri's larger point

### **SEEC method**

*Use SEEC: State, Evidence, Explain, Connect.*

*It keeps literature answers focused and source-based.*

## 6.2 Important Question Frames

| Question type                | Best opening                                                | Evidence to add                                                |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Financial hardship in London | The narrator was not comfortable financially.               | Third-class cabin, crowded rooms, shared toilet and egg curry. |
| Adjustment abroad            | He adjusts by observing routines and learning local habits. | Cornflakes, thermos, newspaper, language differences.          |
| Mrs Croft's character        | Mrs Croft is strict, eccentric and admirable.               | Lock command, moon ritual, rent, perfect lady.                 |
| Indian and American contrast | The story contrasts family duty with individual living.     | Mala's sari, Mrs Croft living alone, Helen's weekly visits.    |
| Bond of affection            | Their bond grows through respect                            | Bench ritual, rent envelope, final visit.                      |

### ***Answer mistake***

*Do not answer only from memory of the plot.*

*For each response, include at least one concrete object, line or scene.*

## **6.3 Appreciation Questions**

| <b>Appreciation focus</b> | <b>What to mention</b>                        | <b>Best scene</b>                               |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Family details            | They interrupt and deepen the main narrative. | Mother's death and Mala's adjustment.           |
| Bond between strangers    | Respect can grow without long conversation.   | Mrs Croft's obituary and narrator's grief.      |
| Conversation              | Speech reveals worldview.                     | Mrs Croft's propriety and moon line.            |
| Gentle humour             | Humour softens loneliness.                    | Oxtail soup, miniskirt arrest, splendid ritual. |

## ***Appreciation answer***

*In appreciation answers, discuss method. Name the device first: memory, contrast, repetition, humour, dialogue or first-person narration.*

## **7 Quick Reference Summary**

Use this section for final revision before class tests. It gathers the key scenes, themes, character points and exam-ready lines.

### **7.1 One-page Summary**

- The narrator moves from Calcutta to London and then to America.
- He learns American life through work, food, language and observation.
- Mrs Croft's house becomes his first real American home.
- Mrs Croft is strict and funny, but also dignified and admirable.
- Mala's arrival begins as duty and grows into companionship.
- The story turns ordinary immigrant survival into a quiet achievement.

**Final check**

*Before submitting, check three points: place, person and feeling. Lahiri's story needs all three.*

**7.2 Fast Revision Table**

| Need      | Best point                                  | Best scene                                  |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Plot      | Journey across three continents.            | Ship to London, flight to Boston.           |
| Character | Mrs Croft is fierce, funny and dignified.   | Say splendid and perfect lady.              |
| Theme     | Belonging grows through small routines.     | Bench visits and shared home.               |
| Symbol    | Moon landing parallels migrant achievement. | Flag on moon and final reflection.          |
| Technique | First-person memory gives intimacy.         | Older narrator looks back on early America. |

### ***Why it matters***

*The chapter shows migration as more than travel. It is the slow building of language, shelter, dignity and love.*

## **7.3 Last-minute Memory Bank**

This bank gives short, exam-ready links between event and meaning. Use it when a question asks for explanation, not summary.

| Memory cue    | Scene to recall                              | Meaning to write                                |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Eight dollars | The rent for Mrs Croft's room.               | A modest room becomes emotionally important.    |
| Splendid      | Mrs Croft's moon landing ritual.             | Repetition creates humour and connection.       |
| Soup cans     | Helen opens cans for her mother.             | Care for the aged is practical and imperfect.   |
| Sari          | Mala covers her head and adjusts to America. | Tradition travels with the immigrant.           |
| Obituary      | The narrator mourns Mrs Croft.               | A stranger becomes part of his American memory. |

### ***Final theme line***

*The story says that ordinary migration can be heroic because it asks a person to rebuild food, speech, work, love and memory in a new world.*

### ***Last-minute mistake***

*Do not compare the narrator with the astronauts as if one is greater than the other. Lahiri uses the contrast to honour quiet, ordinary endurance.*

### ***Closing sentence bank***

*End answers with a balanced line: Lahiri makes private adjustment as memorable as public achievement.*

## **7.4 Sample Paragraph Starters**

Use these starters to shape long answers. Add one source detail after the first sentence, then explain its meaning in your own words.

| Question focus | Starter                                                                                    | Detail to add                                        |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Migration      | Lahiri presents migration as a series of small adjustments rather than one dramatic event. | Cornflakes, thermos, newspaper and YMCA room.        |
| Mrs Croft      | Mrs Croft appears eccentric at first, but the narrator gradually understands her dignity.  | Lock command, rent envelope and age of 103.          |
| Mala           | Mala's arrival makes the narrator see his own foreignness from another angle.              | Sari, oxtail soup and first apartment.               |
| Humour         | The humour in the story is gentle because it reveals                                       | Say splendid, no lady visitors and miniskirt correct |

## ***How to expand a starter***

*After the starter, write one scene, one feeling and one theme. That gives every paragraph plot, emotion and interpretation.*

- For a five-mark answer, use two starters and two scenes.
- For a short answer, use one starter and one exact detail.
- For an appreciation question, name the narrative technique before the theme.
- For a character sketch, move from action to value: what the person does, then what it shows.

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- [Next Notes: Glory at Twilight](#)