**Women in Literature**

**Answer Question 1. You should spend 1 hour and 15 minutes on this question.**

1. **Write a critical appreciation of this passage, relating your discussion to your reading concerning Women in Literature. [30]**

*This passage involves a meeting between Basil Doye and Alix Sandomir, both artists. Basil, a First World War soldier, is home on leave with an injured hand; Alix’s brother has died at the Front.*

Alix saw him first; he looked listless and pale and bored and rather cross, as he

had done last time she saw him, a week ago. Basil was finding life something

of a bore just now, and small things jarred. It was a nuisance, since he was on

this ridiculous fighting business, not to be allowed to go and fight. There might

be something doing any moment out there, and he not in it. His hand was really

nearly all right now. And anyhow, it wasn’t much fun in town, as he couldn’t

paint, and nearly every one was away.

His eyes followed a girl who passed with her officer brother. He would

have liked a healthy, pretty, jolly sort of girl like that to go about with … some

girl with poise, and tone, and sanity, and no nerves, who never bothered about

the war or anything. A placid, indifferent, healthy sort of girl, with all her fingers

on and nothing the matter anywhere. He was sick of hurt and damaged bodies

and minds; his artistic instinct and his natural vitality craved, in reaction, for the

beautiful and the whole and the healthy…

Looking up, he saw Alix standing at the corner of the Strand, leaning on

her ivory-topped stick and looking at him. She looked pale and thin and frail

and pretty in her blue coat and skirt and white collar. (The Sandomirs never

wore mourning.) He went up to her, a smile lifting his brows.

‘Good. I was just feeling bored. Let’s come and have tea.’

Alix wasn’t really altogether what he wanted. She was too nervy. Some

nerve in him which had been badly jarred by the long ugliness of those months

in France winced from contact with nervous people. Besides, he suspected

her of feeling the same shrinking from him: she so hated the war and all its

products. However, they had always amused each other; she was clever, and

nice to look at; he remembered vaguely that he had been a little in love with her

once, before the war. If the war hadn’t come just then, he might have become

a great deal in love with her. Before the war one had wanted a rather different

sort of person, of course, from now; more of a companion, to discuss things

with; more of a stimulant, perhaps, and less of a rest. He remembered that they

had discussed painting a great deal; he didn’t want to discuss painting now,

since he had lost his finger. He didn’t particularly want cleverness either, since

trench life, with its battery on the brains of sounds and sights, had made him

stupid…

**Rose Macaulay, Non-Combatants and Others, 1916**