

“The Dinner Party” by Mona Gardner
Comprehension Questions

Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. The setting of this story is a party in India. Describe the party and its guests.
2. Paraphrase the argument between the young girl and the colonel.
3. Do you agree with the young girl or with the colonel? Support your opinion with a reason.
4. Why does the hostess make such a strange expression with her face?
5. Why did the young native boy put a bowl of milk on the verandah?
6. Why doesn't the hostess tell her guests that there is a cobra in the room?
7. Why doesn't the American scientist jump up and scream when he realizes that the cobra is under the dinner table?
8. What challenge does the American scientist present to the other guests? What is this contest supposed to prove?
9. What is the surprise at the end?
10. Why is the surprise ending significant to the conflict? (Hint: remember the argument that the colonel had with the young girl!)