

Emile Zola Society, London

Quiz 2021 : based on *La Bête Humaine*

1. **Where (i.e. city/town/village) would you expect to find (a) Mlle Guichon, (b) Cabuche, (c) Vandorpe, (d) Mme Bonnehon (e) Denizet?**

Le Havre (ch 3), Bécourt (ch), Paris St. Lazare (ch 1), chateau de Doinville (ch 1), Rouen (ch 4)

2. **Which item, worn by Séverine, leads to Roubaud's discovery of her relationship with Grandmorin?**

The gold and ruby 'serpent' ring worn next to her wedding ring. (ch 1)

3. **When Roubaud is summoned to Paris (by the operations manager of railways), what is his major transgression in the eyes of the company?**

His Republican sympathies as shown by his remark to the sub-prefect: 'you will not always be the masters'; *mais le terrible était la parole qu'il avouait lui-même: «Vous ne serez pas toujours les maîtres!»*
On le soupçonnait d'être républicain. (ch1)

4. **Flore considers three different plans to avenge herself on Séverine before executing the one that finally causes the tragic accident. What are they?**

(a) Denounce Séverine to the authorities by revealing her past with Grandmorin

(b) There is a temporary diversion of Le Havre trains to the Dieppe line where a ballast train waits for repairs. Prevent Ozil from reversing this, so that the Paris express will crash into the ballast train.

(c) Remove a rail from the track, on an embankment, thus maximising damage to the train and passengers. (ch10)

5. **What is the significance of these numbers - 293, 608, 2516? They all appear in the novel.**

293 – the extra wagon added on for Grandmorin to travel from Paris to Barentin (ch1)

608 – new railway engine, successor to Lison (ch12)

1516 – manufacturer's number on Grandmorin's watch (ch4)

6. **How is Misard duped into marrying Mme Ducloux?**

She claims to have found the FF1000 hidden by Phasie, and will only reveal the hiding place if Misard marries her. (ch12)

7. **Order these stations as they appear going from Paris to Le Havre: Barentin, Malaunay, Mantes, Motteville, Oissel, Sotteville.**

Mantes, Oissel, Sotteville, Malaunay, Barentin, Motteville (chapters 1, 2, 3, 9 or a railway map !)

8. **How does Séverine betray herself to Camy-Lamotte during the fateful interview at his house in the Rue du Rocher?**

She says 'People like us do not kill for money, there has to be another reason'. Knowing Grandmorin very well, and helped by her obvious agitation, he guesses the reason. (ch5)

9. How much was Grandmorin's estate worth when he died? How much did he leave to 'des femmes de toutes les classes' (roughly all classes/sorts of women)? What implications does this have for the legality of his will?

3700000, of which 1700000 left to various women, less than half, so allowed under law (ch4)

*Comprenait-on cela? des legs si nombreux, si importants, qu'ils atteignaient presque la moitié de la fortune, une fortune de **trois millions sept cent mille francs**! Et à des personnes qu'on ne connaissait pas pour la plupart, à des femmes de toutes les classes!*

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*Pendant qu'il se désolait ainsi, les dents serrées, montrant le sot qu'il était, le provincial à passions têtues, enfoncé dans l'avarice, M. Denizet le regardait de ses gros yeux clairs, à demi cachés, et sa bouche fine exprimait un dédain jaloux, pour cet impuissant que **deux millions ne satisfaisaient pas**, et qu'il verrait sans doute un jour sous la pourpre suprême, grâce à tout cet argent. —Je crois, monsieur, que vous auriez tort, dit-il enfin. **Le testament ne pourrait être attaqué que si le total des legs dépassait la moitié de la fortune, et ce n'est pas le cas.***

10. Name three tunnels on the route from Le Havre to Paris.

Le Roule (near Gaillon ch 5), Malaunay (ch2), Rolleboise (10km Mantes ch 5), Batignolles (ch1)

11. In the eyes of Jacques Lantier, what is Lison's only fault?

Consumes too much oil. (ch 5) *un trop grand besoin de graissage*

12. Give the time period over which the action in the novel takes place; month and year required (e.g. March 1956 to May 1957).

February 1869-July 1870 (ch1 *un ciel gris du milieu de février*, and then ch 12 – declaration of war *Il faisait très lourd, une nuit de juillet*, ch12)

13. What was the vital piece of evidence against the Roubauds destroyed by Camy-Lamotte?

The assignation note to Grandmorin, asking him to be on the 6.30 train that evening. (ch 12)

14. Why does Jacques Lantier embark on his flirtation with Philomène?

Not mainly from sexual attraction, but to see if the murder of Severine has finally cured him of the urge to murder every woman he is attracted to. *'Et il n'y avait pas eu là seulement une minute de curiosité sensuelle, il céda surtout au désir de faire une expérience: était-il définitivement guéri, maintenant qu'il avait contenté son affreux besoin? celle-là, pourrait-il la posséder, sans lui planter un couteau dans la gorge?'* (ch 12)

15. The author leaves us guessing at the end – the train speeding on driverless. If you were stationmaster of one of the intermediate stations, able to send and receive telegrams across the railway network, how would you go about stopping the train without any casualties?

Make sure there is a safe/clear track for the train to keep going till it runs out of fuel.