

Chapter 3.: The Little Girl

Thinking about the Text

Question I:

Given below are some emotions that Kezia felt. Match the emotions in the Column A with the items in Column B.

Answer:

A		B	
1.	fear or terror	(iii)	father comes here
2.	glad sense of relief	(iv)	speaking to father
3.	a funny feeling, perhaps of understanding	(v)	going to bed when alone at home
		(vii)	father stretched out on the sofa, snoring
		(i)	father comes into her room to give her a goodbye kiss
		(ii)	noise of the carriage grows fainter
		(vi)	father comforts her and falls asleep

Question II:

Answer the following questions in one or two sentences.

1. Why was Kezia afraid of her father?

Answer:

Kezia was afraid of her father because he was an authoritative person who never clearly expressed his love for her. Besides, his appearance, with his big hands, neck and mouth, made him even more scary to the little girl.

2. Who were the people in Kezias family?

Answer:

Kezias family consisted of her mother, father, grandmother and herself.

3. What was Kezias fathers routine.

- (i) before going to his office?
- (ii) after coming back from his office?
- (iii) on Sundays?

Answer:

- (i) Before going to his office, Kezias father usually went into her room to give her a casual kiss.
- (ii) After coming back from his office, he ordered for tea to brought into the drawing room. He also asked his mother to bring him the newspaper and his slippers, and Kezia to pull off his boots.
- (iii) On Sunday, Kezia's father would stretch out on the sofa. He would cover his face with his handkerchief, put his feet on one of the cushions and sleep soundly.

4. In what ways did Kezias grandmother encourage her to get to know her father better?

Answer:

Kezias grandmother encouraged her to get to know her father better by sending her to the drawing room to talk to her parents on Sundays. She also suggested Kezia to make a pin cushion out of a beautiful piece of yellow silk as a gift for her fathers birthday.

Question III:

Discuss these questions in class with your teacher and then write down your answers in two or three paragraphs each.

1. Kezias efforts to please her father resulted in displeasing him very much. How did this happen?

Answer:

As suggested by her grandmother, Kezia decided to make a pin cushion out of a beautiful piece of yellow silk for her father's birthday. After stitching three sides of the cushion with double cotton with great care and effort, Kezia was stuck as to what to fill the cushion with. Since her grandmother was busy in the garden, she searched her Mother's bedroom for scraps. Finally, she discovered sheets of paper on the bed table. She gathered these, tore them up and filled the cushion with the torn pieces.

Unfortunately, her efforts to please her father not only went in vain but also had an unanticipated consequence. This was because the sheets she had torn were her fathers speech for the Port Authority. Her father scolded her for touching things that did not belong to her and punished her by hitting her palm with a ruler.

2. Kezia decides that there are different kinds of fathers. What kind of father was Mr. Macdonald, and how was he different from Kezia's father?

Answer:

Kezia decides that there are different kinds of fathers after secretly watching her next-door neighbour Mr Macdonald play with his children.

Mr. Macdonald had five children. He was a doting and indulgent father who used to spend a great deal of merry time with his children. One day, Kezia saw them playing 'tag', while the baby, Mao, was seated on his shoulders and the two girls hung to his coat pockets and happily ran around the flower beds. Another day, she watched the boys turn the hose on Mr Macdonald and the way he playfully tried to catch them.

Kezia's father, on the other hand, hardly spent any time with her. Everyday, he came back home tired after his day's work and busied himself with the newspaper sipping his evening tea. Even on Sundays, he spent his time sleeping on the sofa.

3. How does Kezia begin to see her father as a human being who needs her sympathy?

Answer:

With her mother and grandmother at the hospital, Kezia is left at home in the care of Alice, the cook. At night, after she is put to bed by the cook, she has a nightmare.

She calls for her grandmother but, to her surprise, she finds her father standing near her bed. He takes her in his arms and makes her sleep next to him. Half asleep, she creeps close to him, snuggles her head under his arm, and holds tightly to his shirt. Her father asks her to rub her feet against his legs for warmth.

Her father goes off to sleep before her. This makes her understand that he has to work hard every day and this leaves him too tired to be like Mr Macdonald. She expresses her altered feelings for her father by telling him that he has a 'big heart'.

Thinking about Language

Question I:

Look at the following sentence.

There was a glad sense of relief when she heard the noise of the carriage growing fainter...

Here, glad means happy about something.

Glad, happy, pleased, delighted, thrilled and overjoyed are synonyms (words or expressions that have the same or nearly the same meaning.) However, they express happiness in certain ways.

Read the sentences below

- She was glad that the meeting was over.
- The chief guest was pleased to announce the name of the winner.

1. Use an appropriate word from the synonyms given above in the following sentences. Clues are given in brackets.

(i) She was delighted by the news of her brothers wedding. (very pleased)

(ii) I was thrilled to be invited to the party. (extremely pleased and excited about)

(iii) She was overjoyed at the birth of her granddaughter. (extremely happy)

(iv) The coach was pleased with his performance. (satisfied about)

(v) She was very happy with her results. (happy about something that has happened).

2. Study the use of the word big in the following sentence.

He was so big - his hands and his neck, especially his mouth...

Here, big means large in size.

Now, consult a dictionary and find out the meaning of big in the following sentences. The first one has been done for you.

- (i) You are a big girl now. older
- (ii) Today you are going to take the biggest decision of your career. _____
- (iii) Their project is full of big ideas. _____
- (iv) Cricket is a big game in our country. _____
- (v) I am a big fan of Lata Mangeskar. _____
- (vi) You have to cook a bit more as my friend is a big eater. _____
- (vii) What a big heart youve got, Father dear. _____

Answer:

- (i) older
- (ii) most important
- (iii) excellent
- (iv) huge (in popularity)
- (v) great
- (vi) a lot or above average (in quantity)
- (vii) a good and kind

Question II:

Verbs of Reporting

1. Underline the verbs of reporting in the following sentences.

(i) He says he will enjoy the ride.

(ii) Father mentioned that he was going on a holiday.

(iii) No one told us that the shop was closed.

(iv) He answered that the price would go up.

(v) I wondered why he was screaming.

(vi) Ben told her to wake him up.

(vii) Ratan apologized for coming late to the party.

2. Some verbs of reporting are given in the box. Choose the appropriate verbs and fill in the blanks in the following sentences.

were complaining	shouted	replied
remarked	ordered	suggested

(i) I am not afraid, replied the woman.

(ii) Leave me alone, my mother shouted.

(iii) The children were complaining that the roads were crowded and noisy.

(iv) Perhaps he isn't a bad sort of a chap after all, remarked the man.

(v) Let's go and look at the school ground, suggested the sports teacher.

(vi) The traffic police ordered all the passers-by to keep off the road.

Speaking

Form pairs or groups and discuss the following questions.

1. This story is not an Indian story. But do you think there are fathers, mothers and grandmothers like the ones portrayed in the story in our own country?

Answer:

Even though the story is not an Indian one, we can closely associate with it because the characters portrayed are not unusual in the Indian context. Ours is a patriarchal society and authoritative fathers like Kezia's are a standard. Similarly, suppressed wives and mothers, and doting grandmothers are commonly found in Indian households.

2. Was Kezia's father right to punish her? What kind of a person was he? You might find some of these words useful in describing him:

undemonstrative	loving	strict	hardworking
responsible	unkind	disciplinarian	short-tempered
affectionate	caring	indifferent	

Answer:

While it was imperative to make Kezia realise her mistake and to teach her a lesson, her father should have tried to understand the child's position as well.

Kezia's father comes across as a strict disciplinarian who ordered things around in the house. As a short-tempered person, he punishes Kezia for her mistake. However, it would be wrong to call him unkind since towards the end of the story we find him to be an affectionate and loving father. He is not indifferent; rather, as a responsible father who works hard all day long, he does not get time to show his love and care.

Writing

Question 1:

Has your life been different from or similar to that of Kezia when you were a child? Has your perception about your parents changed now? Do you find any change in your parents' behaviour vis-a-vis yours? Who had become more understanding? What steps would you like to take to build a relationship based on understanding? Write three or four paragraphs (150-200 words) discussing these issues from your own experience.

Answer:

My life has been somewhat similar to that of Kezia's. As a child, I was punished for being naughty, even though my parents were quite loving and caring.

Yes, my perspective about my parents has changed with time. As a young child, I used to be scared of their anger at my mischiefs and also found them too strict for my liking. Now, I realise that they always had their best intentions in mind.

Growing up, my behaviour has changed and so has my parents'. They, too, try and see things from the perspective of a teenager. However, I feel I have become more understanding with regards to their wishes and biddings.

A relationship based on mutual understanding is of the best sort. Hence, to achieve that I would like to make as many efforts as possible on my part. Spending more time with my parents, discussing and explaining issues concerning both can help build mutual respect and regard. I would also express my appreciation for whatever they do for me and calmly convey my own expectations. Instead of getting irritated with their excessive concern, I would try to see things from their perspective.

(A model answer has been provided for students' reference. It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer based on their own experience and understanding.)