

5. Should Wizard Hit Mommy

"Should Wizard Hit Mommy" is a lesson by John Updike who presents the worldview of a little child. Jack used to tell stories to his daughter Jo in the evenings and for Saturday naps. Every story was a product of his head. This custom began when she was two. It continued nearly for two years. Each new story was a slight variation of the basic tale. Every story had a small creature, usually named Roger. It could be Roger Fish, Roger Squirrel or Roger Chipmunk. In every story Roger went to the wise owl and the owl would send Roger to the wizard.

Today's story was about Roger Skunk. It was a new animal. They must talk about it at nursery school. Jack had got a new hero. He started the story: "Once upon a time, in the deep dark woods, there was a tiny little creature by the name of Roger Skunk." He smelled very bad. He smelled so bad that other little creatures would not play with him. They would run away. Roger Skunk would stand there all alone. Two round tears would fall from his eyes. Little Jo could already guess what would be the storyline next. She asked "Won't he see the owl?" Jack continued. There lived a big wise owl in the tip top of a tree. Roger Skunk told him his pathetic tale. The wise owl advised him to go to the wizard.

At last, Roger Skunk came to a little white house. He had to cross the dark woods and the swamp. A little old man came out. He had a long white beard and a pointed blue hat. Roger Skunk told the wizard how all the little animals ran away from him. He smelled very bad. The wizard asked Roger not to get very close to him. Inside the house, all magic things were jumbled together in a big dusty heap. The wizard demanded seven pennies. Roger had only four. He started crying. The wizard sent him to a magic well where Roger found three pennies. He took them back to the wizard. The wizard was very happy and made him smell so good. They played games and laughed all afternoon.

Roger Skunk's mommy asked him what that 'awful smell' was. Roger replied that he himself smelled like roses. The wizard made him smell like that. She told Roger that they were going right back to "that very awful wizard". But Roger cried that he smelled so bad before that all other animals ran away. The mother said that she didn't care for that. Roger Skunk used to smell the way a little Skunk should have smelled. They went to the wizard. She went there with an umbrella and hit that wizard right over his head. The wizard made him smell very bad again.

Jo didn't like the end of the story. Poor little Roger Skunk was made to smell bad again. She wanted her father to make a little change in the story. She wanted her father to tell her that the wizard took "that magic wand and hit that mommy". She insisted on making that change in the story. But her father made no change in the ending.

WORD- MEANING:

Variation=difference, **Basic**= fundamental, **Wizard**= magician, **Swamp**= marshy land, **Awful**= terrible,

POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. Jack (father) used to tell stories to Jo (little daughter).
2. Every story had a little variation from the basic tale.
3. Each story had a little creature Roger, a wise old owl and a wizard.
4. New story was about Roger Skunk.
5. Roger Skunk smelled very badly.
6. All little animals kept away from him and didn't play with him.
7. He went to the wise old owl who advised him to go to the wizard.
8. The wizard demanded seven pennies. Roger had four and found three more in a magic well.
9. He gave the wizard seven pennies who made Roger Skunk smell like roses.
10. Roger became happy and other animals began to play with him again.
11. Roger's mother got angry. She didn't like her son smelling of roses.
12. His mother took him straight back to the wizard and hit the wizard on his head.
13. The wizard made Roger Skunk smell bad again.
14. Roger's mother was very happy now.
15. But Jo wanted a little change in the story. She wanted that the wizard hit the mommy and Roger smelled roses again.
16. But Jack made no changes in the ending.

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Who is Jo?

Ans: JO is a four – year- old girl. Her full name was Joanne.

2. What was the sequence of the stories which Jack told his daughter ?

Ans: The hero of the stories was a small animal. When he had a problem, he went to an old wise owl who directed him to a wizard for the solution of the problem.

3. How did Jo feel about her father's stories ?

Ans: Jo felt inclined about her father's stories. She took interest in them.

4. Describe Roger Skunk ? What was his main problem ?

Ans: Roger Skunk was a little animal. He smelled very badly. All other animal kept away from him. Two round tears rolled down from his eyes.

5. What did Roger Skunk say to the wizard ?

Ans: He said that all the little animal ran away from him because he smelled very badly. Nobody liked to come or play with him.

6. What did the wizard do when Roger begged him for help ?

Ans: The wizard took his magic wand and chanted a spell. The whole of the wizard house was full of roses.

7. How did Roger Skunk find three more pennies?

Ans: The wizard asked him to go to the end of the lane and turn around three times. He would find three pennies on the well. Roger obeyed.

8. What part of the story did Jack himself enjoy the most ?

Ans: Jack himself enjoyed the wizard's conversation with the little Skunk the most. The wizard's voice was one of Jack's own favourite effects.

9. Why didn't Roger Skunk's mommy like her son smelling like roses ?

Ans: Roger Skunk smelled very badly. His mother didn't care for such things. Roger was a Skunk. He must smell like a Skunk and not like roses.

10. Why did Roger Skunk's mommy go to the wizard ?

Ans: She went to the wizard to make Roger Skunk smell like Skunk not like roses. The wizard made him smell very bad again.

11. What is the logic by which, according to Jo, the wizard should hit mommy ?

Ans: Jo thought the wizard had great power of magic, he should have hit mommy when she hit her umbrella right over his head.

12. How does Jo want the story to end ?

Ans: Jo wanted that the stupid mommy should have been punished. The wizard should have taken the magic wand and hit it very hard on her head. Jo wanted her little hero smell of roses.

13. Why does Jack think the end of the story should not be changed ?

Ans: Jack thinks that if the end of the story is changed, the purpose of the story fails. The point is that the little Skunk loved his mommy more than he loved all the other little animals and she knew what was right.

14. What is Jo's perspective and how does it differ with Jack's ?

Ans: The world of adults lacks romance and beauty. Jo's world is a dreamy world of romance and beauty. She can't afford to see her hero Roger smelling very bad again. He must smell of roses.

PREPARED BY:

KHIMA NAND,

LECTURER ENGLISH,

G. I. C. GORANGCHAUR (PITHORAGARH)

2. AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM IN A SLUM

This is a poem written by Stephen Spender. It deals with the themes of social injustice and class inequalities. The children of a slum – school present a very pathetic picture. They have pale and lifeless faces. Their disorderly hair are torn around like rootless wild plants. They keep their heads down. Their growth is blocked and they inherit the diseases of their parents. They do have dreams.

Neither literature nor the institutions have anything to do with these unfortunate children. The “belled and flowery” world of the rich is quite foreign to them. The map of the world is drawn according to the will and whims of the mighty. Their world has no relation with the world of dirty slums. The world of the children living in slums is confined to narrow streets sealed in with a lead sky. Their stinking world is far, far away from the spacious world of rivers, capes and stars. There is no use of literature and Shakespeare for the children of slum school. The pictures of flowers, bells and beautiful valleys have no meaning for them. The map of the world is meaningless for them. It does not include their narrow lanes and cramped holes in it. The world of the rich has so many beautiful things. It has ships, sun and love. They tempt these children. They try to steal them. These children live on the heap of waste. All their time and space are spent in the foggy slums. These ugly slums are like little hells and blots on their maps. All the governors, teachers and other responsible persons owe a duty to these children. The world of these people and children of slum school will have to be abridged. Anything that blocks the progress of these slum children will have to be broken. Their world must not be confined to narrow lanes and cramped holes. It must expand to the vast golden coasts of the azure sea. They must be given complete freedom to express themselves. The pages of the books must open for them. Only those who have the warmth and strength of the sun create history.

WORD – MEANING:

Rootless= uprooted, **Cramped**= narrow, **Holes**= lairs, **Foggy**= full of fog, **Slum**= dirty settlements, **Blots**= blemish, **Azure**= sky- blue

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. The school children of slums present a very pathetic and miserable picture.
2. They have pale faces. They are like rootless wild plants.
3. The burdens of life keep their head weighed-down.
4. They do have dreams.
5. Literature and the works of Shakespeare are useless for them.

6. This civilized world is of importance only for powerful persons.
7. The map of the world is meaningless for them.
8. The future of these children is 'foggy' and uncertain.
9. They live in narrow streets 'sealed in with a lead sky'.
10. The slums in which they live are like hells.
11. The windows to the world of joys and comforts are shut for them.
12. Governors, teachers and the powerful people must bring them out of their dirty slums.
13. Everything that binds them should be broken open.
14. Their world must expand. They must have freedom of expression and learning.

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. How do the faces of the children of the slum look like?

Ans: The faces of the children of slum school look pale. Their hair look like rootless wild plants.

2. Who is the unlucky heir and what is he reciting?

Ans: A lean and thin boy having a rat's eyes is unlucky heir. He is reciting how his father developed that knotty disease.

3. Where are donations and pictures of Shakespeare's head placed?

Ans: All donations and pictures of Shakespeare's head are hanging on the sour creamy walls.

4. What is the future of these children?

Ans: The future of these slum children is uncertain and bleak.

5. What does the map on the wall signify?

Ans: The map on the wall signifies the world drawn and bartered by the rich and the mighty.

6. Who are these children? What is their world like?

Ans: These are school children living in dirty slums. Their world is foggy, narrow and polluted.

7. What kind of future does the poet foresee for them?

Ans: The poet doesn't foresee any future for the slum children. Their future is not bright but 'foggy'.

8. Why is Shakespeare 'wicked' and the map 'a bad example' for these children?

Ans: Shakespeare and his works are of no use to them. He can't help in improving their cursed fate. Nor does the map of the world concern them. This map doesn't include their world of narrow lanes and holes.

9. What tempt them and why?

Ans: Ships, sun and love are all such beautiful things. They tempt these children as they don't possess them.

10. How do they live in their 'holes'?

Ans: They live like rats in their cramped holes. Fog and darkness dominate their lives.

11. How can 'this map' become 'their window' ?

Ans: This map of the world is shaped and owned by the rich. It must also be thrown open to the poor children of slums. Only then will it become 'their window'. They will be able to peep inside it.

12. What have shut upon their lives like catacombs ?

Ans: Their dirty surroundings have blocked their progress and growth. They have been shut inside them like the underground graves.

13. What will happen if the children come out of the bonds that bind them ?

Ans: Then their world will be extended to the golden sands and azure waves and to the green fields.

14. Who create history ?

Ans: They create history whose language has the warmth and power of the sun.

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KHIMA NAND,

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G. I. C. GORANGCHAUR (PITHORAGARH)