

'ON THE FACE OF IT' BY SUSAN HILL

GIST OF THE LESSON

- The play depicts beautifully yet grimly the sad world of the physically impaired.
- It is not the actual pain or inconvenience caused by a physical impairment that trouble a disabled man but the attitude of the people around him.
- Two physically impaired people, Mr. Lamb with a tin leg and Derry with a burnt face, strike a band of friendship.
- Derry is described as a young boy shy, withdrawn and defiant.
- People tell him inspiring stories to console him, no one will ever kiss him except his mother that too on the other side of his face
- Mentions about a woman telling that only a mother can love such a face.
- Mr. Lamb revives the almost dead feelings of Derry towards life.
- He motivates him to think positively about life, changes his mind set about people and things.
- How a man locked himself as he was scared-a picture fell off the wall and got killed.
- Everything appears to be the same but is different- Ex. of bees. And weeds
- The gate of the garden is always open.
- Derry is inspired and promises to come back.
- Derry's mother stops him but he is adamant saying if he does not go now it would be never.
- When he comes back he sees lamb lying on the ground
- It is ironical that when he searches a new foothold to live happily, he finds Mr. Lamb dead.
- In this way the play depicts the heart rendering life of physically disabled people with their loneliness, aloofness and alienation.
- But at the same time it is almost a true account of the people who don't let a person live happily.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

Q1. Who is Derry? What self-opinion does he hold?

Derek, also called Derry was a young boy of 14. He was a quiet, shy and defiant boy. One side of his face was totally burnt by acid. He was a victim of inferiority complex.

Q2. How does Lamb try to remove the baseless fears of Derry?

Mr. Lamb influences Derry by his optimistic philosophy. He advised him not to give attention on other's comments, try to be internally pure and strong and eliminate the negativity of life.

Q3. What did Derry's mothers think of Mr. Lamb?

OR

Why did Derry's **mother** stop him, going to Mr. Lamb?

Derry's mother does not hold a good opinion about Mr. Lamb. She has heard many things about the old man, therefore stops Derry to visit Mr. Lamb.

Q5. Why does Derry go back to Mr. Lamb in the end?

Actually Mr. Lamb has taught Derry, the most important lesson of life. He advises him not to care about the comments made by others. He now no longer cares about his burned face or

looks. He is more concerned what he thinks and feels what he wants to hear and see. He knows if does not go back, he will never go back. Therefore he returns back.

Q6. Comment on the moral value of the play?

The moral of the play is very loud and clear. The physically disabled should focus on the brighter side of life and not to brood over the shortcomings. The society should accept them as they are and expand their social interactions .in this way they can fight out the loneliness, depression and disappointment.

Q7. Mr. Lamb says to Derry; 'it's all relative, beauty and the beast', what essentially does he mean by that?

Mr. Lamb tells Derry that it all depends upon people's individual perceptions. A thing is a beauty for one while that beauty may be a beast for others.

Extra questions for practice

1. What is the attitude of Mr. Lamb to the small boy who comes to the garden?
2. "I'm not afraid. People are afraid of me," says Derry. What do people think on seeing his face? How do they react then?
3. Why does Lamb's argument fail to console Derry?
4. What makes Derry think that the old man is always alone and miserable? What does he tell the old man?
5. What argument does Derry give to convince his mother why he wants to go the old man's garden?
6. How does Mr. Lamb explain his concept of the world?
7. What does the author want to communicate through the incident of the buzzing/humming of bees?
8. Do you think Mr. Lamb was equally lonely and dejected? Why / Why not?

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

Q1. The actual pain or inconvenience caused by a physical impairment is often much less than the sense of alienation felt by the person with disabilities. What is the kind of behavior that the person expects from others?

Value Points:

Actual pain or inconvenience caused by physical impairment is often less than the sense of alienation felt by the person with disabilities – Physical disabilities – caused pain once in life time – But after it this physical disability – set chain for other actions – caused mental agony –

-called Lamely lamb, mothers were afraid of sending the children because of his tin leg.

-Derry -burnt face –everyone pities him-only a mother could love that face -Both Mr. Lamb and Derry have been the victims of verbal atrocities – -Mr. Lamb takes comments lightly –

-But Derry does not have the attitude like Mr. Lamb – -Attitude of the people needs to be changed -Do not want sympathy but accept them as they are -Wounds get healed –but bitter comments never forgotten leaves a scar

QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

1. What is the theme of the play? How has it been worked out?
2. Compare and contrast the characters of Mr. Lamb and Derry.
3. What is the bond that unites old Mr. Lamb and Derry the young boy? How does the old man inspire the small boy?
4. Comment on the appropriateness of the title.
5. The play is full of psychological revelations about the adolescent psyche. Discuss