

Summary of The Little Girl

'The Little Girl' is the story of a little girl, Kezia who misunderstood her father's strictness and usually remained scared of him. She kept a distance from him, whenever he would be at home. She considered him to be as big as a giant. She would often get nervous and stutter while talking to him. She longed for his love and affection like her neighbour Mr Macdonald.

Once she was kept indoors as she was affected by cold. Her grandmother suggested that she make a gift for her father's birthday next week. They decided that Kezia would make a pincushion for him. Kezia made a beautiful pin-cushion; but she accidentally made a mistake. She filled it with bits of paper that she got by tearing her father's important speech. She was punished for that. This incident further estranged Kezia from her father.

She would often look at the neighbours, the Macdonalds playing joyously in their lawn. Mr. Macdonald was such a good father and played so lovingly with his children. She wondered he might be a different sort of father.

Once her mother fell ill and was hospitalized. She was left alone at home under the care of the cook. At night she had a nightmare and woke up screaming. She found her father standing by her bedside. He picked her up and took her to her room. He tucked her up in his bed and soon fell asleep. Kezia felt secure lying near her father. She realized that her father was not as big as a giant. She felt the beating of her father's loving large heart. Finally, she realized her father was very loving and had a generous heart.

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Question and Answers

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

A	B
1. fear or terror 2. glad sense of relief	(i) father comes into her room to give

3.a "funny" feeling, perhaps of understanding	her a goodbye kiss (ii) noise of the carriage grows fainter (iii) father comes home (iv) speaking to father (v) going to bed when alone at home (vi) father comforts her and falls asleep (vii) father stretched out on the sofa, snoring
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Ans.

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

II. Answer the following questions in one or two sentences.

1. Why was Kezia afraid of her father?

Ans. Kezia was afraid of her father because he was strict. He stared at her and even gave her physical punishment. Instead of the love and affection that Kezia sought from her father, he gave her scoldings which instilled a fear in her mind. Her father's giant structure also terrified little Kezia.

2. Who were the people in Kezia's family?

Ans. In all there were four members in Kezia's family – her strict father, her stern mother, a loving grandmother and Kezia herself.

3. What was Kezia's father's routine

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

Ans.

i) Before going to office, Kezia's father would visit Kezia in her room, give her a kiss and then leave for work in his carriage.

ii) After coming back from office in the evening, Kezia's father would order that tea be brought for him in the drawing room. He would order for his slippers and the newspapers in a loud voice.

iii) On Sunday afternoons, he would stretch out on the sofa, his handkerchief on his face, his feet on one of the best cushions, and would sleep soundly and snore.

4. In what ways did Kezia's grandmother encourage her to get to know her father better?

Ans. Kezia's grandmother wanted Kezia to have a strong bond of love and affection with her parents. In order to develop that, she encouraged Kezia to go downstairs every Sunday afternoon to spend time with her parents and to get to know them better.

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

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

Ans. Kezia was at home as she was down with fever. Her grandmother suggested that she make a surprise gift for her father as his birthday was approaching. Kezia and her grandmother planned that Kezia would make a pin cushion for him and her grandmother gave her a piece of yellow –

coloured silk fabric for it. Kezia stitched the cushion from three sides and was looking for pieces of torn cloth or paper to stuff into the cushion.

As her grandmother was out in the garden, the innocent child reached her parents' room. She found a heap of paper lying on the bed table, tore the sheets of paper into tiny bits and stuffed it into the cushion. Kezia was glad that finally, the surprise gift was ready but, in fact she had committed a serious mistake of destroying her father's speech that he had prepared for the Port Authority.

Kezia's father was angry with her and wanted to teach her an important lesson, not to touch anything that did not belong to her. So, he hit Kezia's palms with a ruler to teach her a lesson.

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?

Ans. Mr Macdonald, Kezia's next door neighbour had five children. Kezia often saw them playing in the garden.

One day, she peeped through a gap in the fence and saw them having fun. Baby Mao was sitting on Mr Macdonald's shoulders, his two daughter stuck to his coat's pockets and they ran all around the flower beds, laughing and having fun. His sons opened the hose on him and he tried to catch them.

This fun scene made her conclude that there were different kinds of fathers. Mr Macdonald was different from her father. He was not strict, played with his children and they laughed all the while.

On the other hand, Kezia's father was always angry at her. He remained busy with work and later, was too tired that he slept most of the time. He stared at her, scolded her for stammering and being silly.

His strict nature made Kezia wonder that what for had God made fathers.

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

Ans. One day, Kezia's mother was taken ill and went to the hospital. Grandmother too accompanied her. Kezia was left alone with the cook, Alice to look after her. At night, Alice put Kezia to bed but Kezia was reluctant to sleep without her grandmother as she would go to her in case she got scared by a nightmare. Alice put Kezia to sleep all alone and ordered her not to scream and disturb her father who was asleep in the

next room. But she was again bother by the nightmare of a butcher with a knife, a rope and a dreadful smile. Kezia screamed and called her grandmother. Upon hearing her screams, her father woke up. He was holding a candle and lifted Kezia in his arms. He took her to his room and comforted her. He lay Kezia in his bed and told her to rub her feet against his legs to make them warm. Kezia felt his affection and snuggled towards him. At that moment, Kezia realized that her father worked really hard was a tired poor man who needed sympathy and concern. There was no one to look after him. Although he was big and not as soft as grandmother, Kezia realized that he loved her, and she had affection for him.

Grammar Exercises

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* when the meeting was over.
 - The chief guest was *pleased* to announce the name of the winner.
- i. Use an appropriate word from the synonyms given above in the following sentences. Clues are given in brackets.
- (i) She was _____ by the news of her brother's wedding. (very pleased)
 - (ii) I was _____ to be invited to the party. (extremely pleased and excited about)
 - (iii) She was _____ at the birth of her granddaughter. (extremely happy)
 - (iv) The coach was _____ with his performance. (satisfied about)
 - (v) She was very _____ with her results. (happy about something that has happened)

Ans.

- (i) She was thrilled by the news of her brother's wedding. (very pleased)

- (ii) I was delighted 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. 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 Mangeshkar.
- (vi) You have to cook a bit more as my friend is a big eater.
- (vii) What a big heart you've got, Father dear.

Ans.

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

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 apologised for coming late to the party.

Ans.

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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," _____ the woman.
- (ii) "Leave me alone," my mother _____.
- (iii) The children _____ that the roads were crowded and noisy.
- (iv) "Perhaps he isn't a bad sort of a chap after all," _____ the master.
- (v) "Let's go and look at the school ground," _____ the sports teacher.
- (vi) The traffic police _____ all the passers-by to keep off the road.

Ans.

- (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 master.
- (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.