Refund - One Act Play: Summary 02

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The Refund is an unusual story. A student who was a bad performer in school comes back to the school as a young man and wants a refund of all the fees that he paid. He jeers his professors, calling them names and tells them that they were as much “good for nothings” as he was and since he did not derive any value from them, it is only rightful that he be paid back all his tuition. He also threatens the school with legal action if they don’t return his money. The Principal is livid, but the Maths teacher sizes up the situation quickly and proposes a solution.

She says that each of the teachers would administer an oral quiz to him and if he gets even one question right, then he is deemed to have passed all his exams and so he will not be entitled to any refund, otherwise he can be given a refund if he fails to answer ALL of the questions correctly. According to her plan, every professor should ask him two questions – one easy and the other hard. The young man agrees to this proposition since he is determined to get his money and so he looks forward to answering every question incorrectly even if he knows the right answers to some or all of them. So, one by one, the teachers quiz him – the Biology professor, the English professor, the Chemistry professor and the Physics professor but he answers all of them incorrectly and is quite delighted at the progress he is making. The Principal feels uneasy but the Maths professor assures her that she can handle it. Finally it is the turn of the Maths professor. She says she is going to ask him the easy question first.

Her first question is, “If we represent the speed of light by X and the distance of the star Sirius from the Sun by Y, what is the circumference of a one-hundred-and-nine-sided regular polyhedron whose surface area coincides with that of the hip-pocket of a state railway employee, whose wife has been deceiving him for two years and eleven months with a regimental sergeant major of hussars”.

The young man is flummoxed with this question but recovers quickly and says “28 apricots” as the answer. There is tension in the air as the Principal and other Professors look expectantly in the direction of the Maths Professor, who coolly says that it is the wrong answer and that the correct answer is 27 apricots. The young man is greatly relieved and looks extremely happy in flunking this quiz. The Maths teacher turns around to the horrified Principal and coolly says that the young man is right about asking his fees back and that the school should refund him.

The Maths teacher turns to the young man and asks him how much the school owes him. Overjoyed at the prospect of getting some money, the young man goes over each year and the fees for that year in detail and comes up with the final amount the school owes him. All along as he is counting mentally and saying what is due to him, the Maths teacher writes the figures down on a piece of paper and calculates the total. Finally the teacher acknowledges to the young man that his mental arithmetic adds up correctly. The young man says that they can bet on it since he has it all worked out.

That is when the Maths Professor drops the bombshell that her asking him what the school owed him was her “hard” question and that since he got it right, he has now passed his course with flying colors and so the school doesn’t owe him anything now. That is when the young man realizes that he has been tricked and as he prepares to leave the school in disgust, he is mocked at by each of the professors in turn.

REFUND FRITZ KARINTHY (degree first year)

15. REFUND

FRITZ KARINTHY

INTRODUCTION:-

Refund was written by Fritz Karinthy one of the most famous Hungarian writers. His works such as You Write Like this, A Trip around My Skull and Professor, won him a lot of recognition. Refund was adopted by the American playwright Percival Wilde for a general audience. Refund brings out the extraordinary sense of parody, word play in karinthy’s literary art.

EXPLANATION:-

The play is about a good- for- nothing fellow called Wasserkopf who goes back to the school in which he had studied and demands a refund of the fees he had paid. He claims that he had learnt nothing at school.

Wasserkopf, a former student of a school, tells the principal that as he has not learnt anything.  He is entitled to a refund. A re-examination says, would prove his claim that he had not gained any knowledge.

The principal is taken a back. He describes the matter with the teachers. All of them are puzzled. The maths teacher says that all the teachers must ensure that Wasserkopf some has passes in the examination. Even if Wasserkopf gives wrong answer, he should not be failed. Otherwise other students too might ask for a refund. All agree to this suggestion. Thus, while Wasserkoff is determined to fall, the teachers are equally determined to make him pass.

The teachers understand that Wasserkopf objective is to fail in the re-examination as he wants a refund. So they decide before hand that they should accept whatever answers Wasserkopf may give and ensure that he passes.

The History teacher asks Wasserkopf how long the thirty seven meters. All the teachers unite to justify their answer. The physics teacher asks a question about optical illusions. In reply Wasserkopf call the teacher on ------. but this is accepted as the correct answer. The Geography teacher asks what the capital of Brunswick province is Wasserkopf answer that the answer is “same”. The teachers claim it is the right answer.

The teacher ask very easy questions. Though Wasserkopf gives ridiculous answers they justify every answers. The mathematics teacher then asks a meaningless question and Wasserkopf gives an equally meaningless answer. The mathematics teacher says that Wasserkopf has failed. She tells Wasserkopf to calculate the amount of that should be refunded. Delighted, Wasserkopf makes calculations and reaches the figures of 6,450 crowns. The mathematics teacher then says that his calculation was actually a question in the test. She says that Wasserkopf is a mathematical genius. The teacher declares that Wasserkopf has passed the exam. In this way they succeed in activity Wasserkopf.

CONCLUSION:-

A single exam is used to assess the capabilities of the student. Then too, fivolus excessively elaborate questions may be asked. The career of the student hinges on his performance in this exam. The dramalist polices from at teachers too. Some teachers are not bothered about the welfare of the students. They may also be under tremendous pressure to make undeserving students pass as their job and promotion may depend on the “pass percentage” of students.