



Q21. Why does Jo insist that her father should tell her the story with a different ending—where the wizard hit that mommy?

Ans. Jo was not convinced that the little animals eventually got used to the way the little skunk was and did not mind it all. It was just the opposite of what her father had said at the beginning. (The other tiny creatures called him Stinky Skunk and would run away, leaving Roger alone to shed tears.) Later, when the wizard made the skunk smell like roses, the other little animals gathered around him and played with him till dark. Hence Jo wanted the wizard to punish the stupid mommy.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1. Why did Jack conduct the ‘story-session’ and what story did he tell? How did he ensure active participation of the listener in the development of the story?

Ans: Jack started telling bed-time stories to his two-year-old daughter Jo (Joanne) two years ago. Now she was four-year-old and had recently entered the reality phase. Jack would tell her stories in the evenings or for Saturdays naps.

Each new story was a slight variation of a basic tale. The central character was a small creature named Roger. He could be Roger Fish, Roger Squirrel, Roger Chipmunk or Roger Skunk. Roger had some problem and went for help to the wise, old owl. The owl would tell him to go to the wizard. The wizard would perform a magical spell that solved the problem. He would demand more pennies than Roger had. He would direct unhappy Roger to the place where extra pennies could be found. Roger would then feel happy and play games with other small creatures till dark. Then he went home to his mommy. His daddy arrived from Boston and they had their supper. The story would end with the description of the items of supper.

Since the plot of the story and the actions and reactions of the various characters remained the same, both Jo and Jack would enact typical scenes. Thus, Jo felt involved in the story.

Q2. What problem did Roger Skunk have? How was it solved?

Ans: Roger Skunk smelled very bad—in fact so bad that none of the other little woodland creatures would play with him. Whenever Roger Skunk went out to play, all the other tiny animals would cry: ‘Uh-oh, here comes Roger Stinky Skunk.’ Then they would run away. Roger Skunk would stand there all alone. Two little round tears would fall from his eyes. Roger Skunk walked along very sadly and came to a very big tree. There was a huge, wise, old owl on the topmost branch of the tree. He told the owl that all the other little animals ran away from him because he smelled very bad. The owl admitted that he did so. Skunk wanted to know what he could do and cried hard. The owl advised Roger Skunk to go to the wizard who lived in the dense forest over a little river. The wizard too observed that the Skunk smelled awful. He asked what he wanted. Roger Skunk told his problem. The wizard found his magic wand and asked Roger Skunk what he wanted to smell like. Roger thought and said, “Roses”. The wizard chanted a magical spell. There was a smell of roses all around the wizard’s house. Roger Skunk now smelled like that of roses

Q3. Why, do you think, was Roger Skunk's mommy angry ? Does her anger seem justified? What did she decide to do?

Ans: Roger Skunk's mommy was angry because he had lost his God-given smell. He no longer emitted the foul smell he was born with. On the other hand, he had an awful and unusually sweet smell of roses. She wanted her young one to smell the way a young skunk should. This smell was God-given protection against danger. The predator could be kept at bay.

The newly acquired smell of roses, howsoever pleasant and sweet smelling could endanger the skunk's life by attracting the predators to the tiny skunk. She wanted to know who had done so. She felt very angry at the wizard. Her anger is justified because by his simple act he had put the life of the young skunk in danger. No mother can act peacefully or rationally when there is some danger to her young one. Hence, she at once decided to go to the wizard with Roger Skunk so that his foul smell might be restored and his life might be free from dangers.

Q4. Comment on the ending of the story 'Should Wizard Hit Mommy'?

Ans: The story does not end with the wizard being hit by the mother. Joanne, who believes the fictional characters to be real, wants her papa to tell the story that the wizard hit the stupid mommy. Instead of having a nap, she kicks her legs up and sits down on the bed. Jack advises her to have a rest.

When he went downstairs, he found that his wife, Clare had spread the newspapers and opened the paint can. She was wearing an old shirt of his on top of her maternity smock. She was stroking the chair rail with a dipped brush. He heard footsteps moving overhead and scolded Joanne.

Jack watched his wife labour. He had come there to help her, but the story-session had filled him with utter weariness. Clare remarked that it was a long story. Jack uttered only three words: 'The poor kid'. He felt caught in an ugly middle position. Though he felt the presence of his wife there, he did not wish to speak to her, touch her or work with her. It leaves us baffled. We begin to ponder over human relationships. Thus, the ending is thought provoking.

Q5. Why, do you think, the title has a question mark? How far do you find it a convincing and appropriate title?

Ans: The question mark in the title 'Should Wizard Hit Mommy?' focuses the reader's attention on the two well-wishers of the main character—Roger Skunk. The wizard solves Roger Skunk's problem of bad smell and gives him the smell of roses at his request. The skunk's mother is angry, because her baby has been deprived of the bad odour which a skunk of his age should emit. This bad odour is a sort of armoura protection against predators who are kept away by the dirty smell. The mother skunk hits the wizard on the head and forces him to restore the foul smell to the skunk.

Jo, the four-year-old girl, for whom the wizard is a real do-gooder, can't digest his humiliation at the hands of a stupid mother. From her point of view, the smell of roses make skunk popular among the other little animals.

The story can take either direction and ending depending on the point of view of the adult or child. The author very cunningly seeks the reaction of his readers by putting a question mark at the end of the title. One may approve of it or reject it. Thus, the title is quite convincing and appropriate one.

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