



By Robin Klein

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Thinking about the Poem

1. How old do you think Amanda is? How do you know this?

Answer:

Amanda must be about 9–10 years old. She is a school-going girl. The things that her mother scolds her for are all typical instructions given to a 9 or 10 year old girl.

2. Who do you think is speaking to her?

Answer:

Her mother is speaking to her.

3. Why are Stanzas 2, 4 and 6 given in parenthesis?

Answer:

Stanzas 2, 4 and 6 are given in parenthesis because they are the thoughts of the child in between the instructions that she is being given by her mother, which are given in stanzas 1, 3 and 5. The scolding by the mother and the child's thoughts are placed in alternate stanzas by the poet.

4. Who is the speaker in stanzas 2, 4 and 6? Do you think this speaker is listening to the speaker in stanzas 1, 3, 5 and 7?

Answer:

In stanzas 2, 4 and 6, the speaker is the child, Amanda. No, she is not listening to her mother who is the speaker in stanzas 1, 3 and 5. She is lost in her own dreams and doesn't listen to what is being said to her.

5. What could Amanda do if she were a mermaid?

Answer:

If Amanda were a mermaid, then she would drift slowly on a languid emerald sea. She would be the sole inhabitant of the relaxed green sea and would move slowly on it.

6. Is Amanda an orphan? Why does she say so?

Answer:

No, Amanda is not an orphan. She says so because she wants to be alone. She wants to roam around in the street alone and pattern dust with her bare feet. She finds silence 'golden' and freedom 'sweet'. It is for this reason that she calls herself an orphan.

7. Do you know the story of Rapunzel? Why does she want to be Rapunzel?

Answer:

She wants to be Rapunzel because she wants to live alone. Rapunzel lived alone in a tall tower and had long, beautiful hair. She was held captive by her grandmother, who came up the tower by climbing her long hair. The girl also wants to live alone in a tower as she would not have to care about anything as life in a tower would be tranquil, peaceful and rare. However, she also decided that she would never throw down her hair for anyone to come up as she wanted to live alone always.

8. What does the girl yearn for? What does this poem tell you about Amanda?

Answer:

The girl yearns for a life of freedom. The poem tells us that she is an imaginative girl who is constantly nagged by her unimaginative parent.

9. Read the last stanza. Do you think Amanda is sulking and is moody?

Answer:

No, Amanda is neither sulking, nor is she moody. She is simply longs for her freedom. She wants to go out and play where she likes.

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