



Q6. What impression do you form of Derry, the small boy, in the play 'On The Face Of It' ?

Ans: Derry is a fourteen year old boy who is very withdrawn and defiant. One side of his face has been burnt by acid and it looks very ugly and frightful. This incident has made him a victim of inferiority complex.

Derry is highly sensitive to what others—his parents, family friends, well-wishers or even total strangers say about him. Their anxiety, concern, fear and revulsion pains him more than the burn did.

Derry is quite intelligent. When Mr Lamb mentions the story 'Beauty and the Beast', Derry at once comes out with its moral: 'Handsome is as handsome does.' He, however, evokes self-pity by saying, "I won't change... and no one'll kiss me ever."

Derry is sensitive to the sufferings of others. He arouses sympathy for himself by making enquiries about the old man's leg, pain and how he passes his life alone. Derry has the capacity to learn. He is impressed by the old man's way of life in spite of physical handicap. In the end, he does not bother about his face or looks and wants to see, hear, learn and think and do what no one else has done. In short, Derry is a developing character.

Q7. Which qualities of Mr Lamb have impressed you most?

OR

Draw a character sketch of old Mr Lamb.

Ans: Mr Lamb is the protagonist in the play. He dominates the play from beginning to end. He impresses us as a sensitive, watchful, kind, considerate and sympathetic person. He is quite gentle, accommodating and protective. He is more concerned about the boy's well-being than the apples.

He is a victim of alienation due to his physical impairment. Though he keeps his gates open and says he has many friends, actually he lives alone and is quite miserable. He loves company and wants to talk. He shares his thoughts even with the young boy.

Mr Lamb is like a modern communicator and a psychologist who believes in drawing out the best of an individual. His tactful handling and peculiar questions make Derry shed some of his firmly fixed notions and respond to the things of the world around him. Thus he is a source of inspiration to the depressed and gloomy.

Mr Lamb is pragmatic. His way of life is an object lesson for all who suffer some physical handicap or the other. One can always undertake some meaningful activities which give life some purpose and aim and save it from boredom. Even in his fall with the ladder, he exhibits Christ-like grace.

Q8. Comment on the ending of the play 'On The Face Of It'. How far do you find it effective ?

Ans: The ending of the play is quite suggestive. Mr Lamb, who has been picking apples, falls down along with the ladder. As Derry enters the garden, he finds total silence pervading there. He is surprised and shocked to see Mr Lamb on the ground. He hopes it is all right. He kneels near Mr Lamb and announces that he has come back and he is there. He implores the old man to get up and talk. As the old man does not respond to Derry's repeated requests, he begins to weep.

The ending is quite dramatic and stageworthy. The old man with

the ladder under him is a Christ-like figure. It is a pathetic ending, no doubt, but it does not spread gloom. Rather, it acts like a beacon light. The old generation has handed over the charge to the younger one. It is like a soldier making an exit with the satisfaction of mission accomplished. The old man has handed over his philosophy of life to Derry and inspired him to find out what he wants to be. Thus, though the old man expires physically, his ideas inspire Derry to pursue higher goals and Achieve them. In this sense, the ending is quite effective and meaningful.

Q9. What do you understand by 'On The Face Of If ? Do you think the title 'On the Face of If is appropriate? Give reasons in support of your answer.

Ans: 'On The Face Of It' is used to say that something seems to be good, true, etc. but that this opinion may need to be changed when you know more about it.

Apparently, the play seems to be an interaction between two persons suffering from physical impairment. Being a drama of ideas, it has minimum physical action. The old man's efforts to strike up a friendship with a young boy of fourteen, who is very withdrawn and defiant, seems to be the main issue. The old man's effort is worth appreciation.

However, as we go on reading further, more is in store for us. We learn the mental anguish, emotional starvation and physical distress of the physically challenged who are unable to lead normal life among normal persons. The play is not didactic but it inspires people like Derry, who have some physical blemish, to ignore it as well as comments of people about it. They should set goals for themselves and strive to outshine even the other normal persons. Thus, the title is quite appropriate and highly suggestive.

Q10. Both Derry and Lamb are physically impaired and lonely. It is the responsibility of society to understand and support people with infirmities so that they do not suffer from a sense of alienation. As a responsible citizen, write, in about 100 words what you would do to bring about a change in the lives of such people. [All India 2014]

Ans: Both Mr. Lamb and the young boy Derry have one thing in common—they are physically impaired. Both are victims of these disabilities after birth. Such type of people should not be reprimanded but they must be honoured with. They must be given respect and honour in the society. If somebody looks upon them with pessimistic approach, they may never be able to come out of their sorrow. But they will go into the world of alienation. As a responsible citizen, it must be our duty to provide them a respectable place in the society. Then only they can come into the mainstream of the society and live like a normal people. They must not be reminded of their disabilities. Only then we can play the role of a responsible citizen.

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