

The Little Girl

Katherine Mansfield

Q. 1. Why was Kezia scared of her father?

Ans:

Kezia's father was a busy man and had little time for the little girl. Being a very disciplined man, he was strict with Kezia as well and she would at times get harsh words of scolding and physical punishment from him. He never displaced any soft feelings for his little daughter nor did he play with her like Mr Macdonald. All he did was giving her a perfunctory kiss rather than a loving one. Moreover, he was a large man, and his size, too, terrified the little girl. So scared was Kezia of him that she felt relieved when he was gone from home.

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

Ans:

There were four people in Kezia's family - her father who was very strict, her mother who was stern and aloof, her soft-hearted and loving grandmother and little Kezia herself.

Q. 3. What was Kezia's father's routine before going to office and after coming back in the evening?

Ans:

Before going to office, Kezia's father would come to her room, give her a perfunctory kiss and leave for work. He would return in the evening and in a loud voice ask for his tea, the papers and his slippers to be brought into the drawing-room. He would wait for Kezia to help him take off his shoes and exchange a few words with Kezia.

Q. 4. What was Kezia's routine when Father returned from office?

Ans:

When Father returned home from office, mother would tell Kezia to come downstairs and take off her father's shoes. She would also be told to take the shoes outside. Father would ask her a couple of questions and she would stutter out her replies. He would order her to put his teacup back on the table and then she would make good her escape from his presence.

Q. 5. What was Father's and Kezia's morning routine?

Ans:

Before going to his office, Kezia's father would come to Kezia's room and give her a perfunctory kiss. She would respond with "Goodbye, Father". Since she was afraid of him,

she always felt relieved after his departure.

Q. 6. Why did Kezia go slowly towards the drawing-room when mother asked her to come downstairs?

Ans:

Kezia was afraid of her dominating father. He always scolded her for one thing or the other and did not display any soft feelings or affection for his little daughter. So frightened was she of him that she went very slowly towards the drawing-room when she was asked to come downstairs to take off his shoes.

Q. 7. Why was Father often irritated with Kezia?

Ans:

Kezia was very scared of her father. She stuttered when he spoke to her. Also, the terrified expression on her face irritated him. In his presence she wore an expression of wretchedness. He felt that with such an expression, she seemed as if she were on the verge of suicide.

Q. 8. What was unusual about Kezia's stuttering?

Ans:

Kezia was able to speak without stuttering to everyone in the household but her father. In her father's formidable presence she could barely speak and she stuttered as she attempted to speak to him.

Q.9. Why did Kezia stutter while speaking to Father?

Ans:

Kezia's father's had a loud and domineering personality and he frequently frequent rebuked her for her behaviour and appearance. His constant criticism and scolding shook her self-confidence. Moreover, his large size frightened her. Though Kezia tried her best to please him, she found herself tongue-tied while talking to him. This made her stutter in his presence.

Q.10. Why did Kezia feel that her father was like a giant?

Ans:

Kezia felt that her father was like a giant because he had very big hands and neck. His mouth seemed big especially when he yawned. He had a loud voice and would often call out orders. In addition, his stem and cold behaviour made the little girl think of him as a giant.

Q. 11. Why did Kezia avoid her father?

Ans:

Kezia avoided her father because she was afraid of him. She saw him as a harsh, emotionless person who never spoke to his daughter affectionately. He reprimanded Kezia for making mistakes. Kezia stammered in front of her father since he was a very huge and giant-like figure lacking in the warmth of a father.

V. TEXTBOOK EXERCISES

Thinking about the text:

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

A

- 1 fear or terror**
- 2. glad sense of relief**
- 3. a funny' feeling, perhaps of understanding**

B

- (i) father comes into her room to give 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

Ans:

1 fear or terror - (iii) father comes home

2. glad sense of relief - (ii) noise of the carriage grows fainter

3. a funny' feeling, perhaps of understanding - (iv) speaking to father

Thinking About Language:

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.

Use an appropriate word from the synonyms given above in the following sentences. Clues are given in brackets.

(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 the 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. Study the use of the word big in the following sentence:

He was so big-his hands and his neck, especially his mouth..

Here, big means large in size.

Underline the verbs of reporting in the following Sentences.

1. He **says** he will enjoy the ride.

1) Father **mentioned** that he was going on a holiday.

2. No one **told** us tha the shop was closed.

3. He **answered** that tho price would go up.

4. I **wondored** why he was scrcaming.

5. Ben **told** her to wake him up.

6. Ratan **apologised** for coming late to the party.

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)

1. "I am not afraid", **Remarked** the woman.
2. "Leave me alone," my mother **shouted**
3. The children **were complaining** that the roads were crowded and noisy.
4. "Perhaps he isn't bad sort of a chap after all", **replied** the master.
5. "Let's go and look at the school ground", **suggested** the sports teacher.
6. The traffic police **ordered** the woman.