

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 3: THE LITTLE GIRL



THE LITTLE GIRL

~Summary~

-by Katherine Mansfield

Kezia is Afraid of her father

The little girl Kezia was afraid of her father. She always wanted to avoid meeting him. She felt relieved when he went out of the house as his presence made her uncomfortable out of fear. Kezia used to stammer in front of her father whereas with others she used to talk normally. He appeared so big to Kezia that she would compare him with a giant. Kezia's grandmother wanted that Kezia should talk to her parents more and therefore on Sunday afternoons she would send her to the drawing room to talk to them, where they would be relaxing.

Kezia Makes a Birthday Gift for her Father

When one day Kezia had a cold and she did not go to school, her grandmother suggested her to make with her own hands a pin-cushion as a birthday gift for her father, whose birthday was next week. So Kezia stitched three sides of it. Then, not finding any scraps to fill it with, she filled it by tearing into small pieces some papers which she found on her mother's bedroom table.

Then, she completed the pin-cushion by sewing its fourth side. Later, her father was very angry when he could not find the papers on which he had written the speech to be given to the Port Authority next day. When Kezia was asked, she told her father that she had torn up and stuffed the papers in the pin-cushion she had made! So her father punished her by hitting her hand with a ruler to teach her not to touch anything that did not belong to her.

Kezia's Neighbours : The Macdonalds

Kezia was jealous of the happy family living next door Mr Macdonald, his wife and five children. Mr Macdonald was always playing with his children when he was free. They were laughing and enjoying each others' company. That is when Kezia realised that there were different kinds of fathers.

Kezia's Opinion about her Father Finally changed

When Kezia's mother fell ill and had to be hospitalised, Kezia's grandmother went to look after her, leaving Kezia to be looked after by Alice, the cook. While sleeping, Kezia had a frightful nightmare of a butcher with a knife and rope and woke up crying, to find her father standing there. He took Kezia with her to his room and lay down beside her to give her comfort. He slept off due to being tired. That is when Kezia realised that he had to work very hard and felt sorry for tearing up his papers. She told him that he had a very big heart.

Conclusion of The Little Girl

In the chapter – The Little Girl teaches us how a loving and caring relationship between parents and children can help in strengthening the bond and attachment in the family. We should try to understand each other instead of finding faults in others.

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NCERT SOLUTIONS

Questions (Page No. 38)

(Thinking about the Text)

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

A	B
1. fear or terror 2. glad sense of relief 3. a “funny” feeling, perhaps of understanding	(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

Answer:

A	B
1. fear or terror 2. glad sense of relief 3. a “funny” feeling, perhaps of understanding	(iv) speaking to father (iii) father comes home (v) going to bed when alone at home (vii) father stretched out on the sofa, snoring (i) father comes into her room to give her a goodbye kiss (ii) noise of the carriage grows fainter (vi) father comforts her and falls asleep

II. Answer the following questions in one or two sentences.

Question 1. Why was Kezia afraid of her father?

Answer: Kezia was afraid of her father because he was extremely strict and commanding. He never played with her. He used to give her a terrifying look over his spectacles.

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

Answer: Kezia's family comprised her father, mother and grandmother and herself.

Question 3. What was Kezia's father's routine?

(i) before going to his office?

(ii) after coming back from his office?

(iii) on Sundays?

Answer: i) Before going to office, Kezia's father would come to Kezia's room and give her a goodbye kiss.

ii) After coming back from his office, he would order his tea to be brought to the drawing room and would ask his mother to get his papers and slippers. He would then order Kezia to take off his boots.

iii) On Sundays, he would stretch out on the sofa with his handkerchief on his face, his feet on one of the best cushions, sleep and snore.

Question 4. In what ways did Kezia's grandmother encourage her to get to know her father better?

Answer: Kezia's grandmother would encourage her to know her father better by asking her to go down to the drawing room and have a nice talk with her father. She also asked Kezie to stitch a pin-cushion out of a beautiful yellow silk piece and give it to her father as a birthday present.

III. Discuss these questions in class with your teacher and then write down your answers in two or three paragraphs each.

Question 1. Kezia's efforts to please her father resulted in displeasing him very much. How did this happen?

Answer: Kezie stitched three sides of the pin-cushion. She was confused at what to fill the cushion with. Grandmother was not around. So, Kezie went to her parents' room to ask her mother for some scrap. But, her mother wasn't there in the room.

Kezie then saw some sheets of papers on the bed table. She collected them all, tore them into small pieces and stuffed the cushion with those pieces.

Her efforts to please her father resulted in displeasing him very much when at night her father searched for those sheets of paper on the bed table. The sheets of paper had the speech for Port Authority. Her father scolded and beat her with a ruler for touching things that did not belong to her.

Question 2. Kezia decides that there are "different kinds of fathers". What kind of father was Mr Macdonald, and how was he different from Kezia's father?

Answer: Kezia decides that there are "different kinds of fathers".

Mr Macdonald was a loving father. He was very gentle and forgiving. He used to play and laugh with his children. He was friendly with them.

He was quite different from Kezia's father. Her father was very strict and unfriendly.

Question 3. How does Kezia begin to see her father as a human being who needs her sympathy?

Answer: One day, when her mother and grandmother were at the hospital, Kezia was left at home with Alice, their cook. At night, she had a nightmare. Shivering with fear, she called for her grandmother but saw her father near her bed. He took her in his arms and carefully tucked her on his bed. He then lay down beside her. Half asleep, she went close to him, snuggled her head under his arm and held onto his shirt tightly.

She saw her father go off to sleep before her. She understood that he had to work so hard every day which made him too tired to behave like Mr Macdonald. She told his father that he had a big heart.

Questions (Page No. 38-40) (Thinking about Language)

I. 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.

Question 1. Use an appropriate word from the synonyms given above in the following sentences. Clues are given in brackets.

- She was _____ by the news of her brother's wedding. (very pleased)
- I was _____ to be invited to the party. (extremely pleased and excited about)
- She was _____ at the birth of her granddaughter. (extremely happy)
- The coach was _____ with his performance. (satisfied about)
- She was very _____ with her results. (happy about something that has happened)

Answer:

- She was **thrilled** by the news of her brother's wedding. (very pleased)
- I was **delighted** to be invited to the party. (extremely pleased and excited about)
- She was **overjoyed** at the birth of her granddaughter. (extremely happy)
- The coach was **pleased** with his performance. (satisfied about)
- She was very **happy** with her results. (happy about something that has happened)

Question 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.

Now, consult a dictionary and find out the meaning of big in the following sentences. The first one has been done for you.

- You are a big girl now. **older**
- Today you are going to take the biggest decision of your career. _____
- Their project is full of big ideas. _____
- Cricket is a big game in our country. _____
- I am a big fan of Lata Mangeskar. _____
- You have to cook a bit more as my friend is a big eater. _____
- What a big heart you've got, Father dear. _____

Answer:

- You are a big girl now. **older**
- Today you are going to take the biggest decision of your career. **most crucial**
- Their project is full of big ideas. **amazing**
- Cricket is a big game in our country. **popular**
- I am a big fan of Lata Mangeskar. **great**
- You have to cook a bit more as my friend is a big eater. **glutton**
- What a big heart you've got, Father dear. **magnanimous**

II. Verbs of Reporting

Study the following sentences.

- “What!” *screamed* Mother.
- “N-n-no”, she *whispered*.
- “Sit up,” he *ordered*.

The italicised words are verbs of reporting. We quote or report what someone has said or thought by using a reporting verb. Every reporting clause contains a reporting verb. For example:

- He promised to help in my project.
- “How are you doing?” Seema asked.

We use verbs of reporting to advise, order, report statements, thoughts, intentions, questions, requests, apologies, manner of speaking and so on.

Question 1. Underline the verbs of reporting in the following sentences.

- He says he will enjoy the ride.

- b. Father mentioned that he was going on a holiday.
- c. No one told us that the shop was closed.
- d. He answered that the price would go up.
- e. I wondered why he was screaming.
- f. Ben told her to wake him up.
- g. Ratan apologised for coming late to the party.

Answer:

- a. He says he will enjoy the ride.
- b. Father mentioned that he was going on a holiday.
- c. No one told us that the shop was closed.
- d. He answered that the price would go up.
- e. I wondered why he was screaming.
- f. Ben told her to wake him up.
- g. Ratan apologised for coming late to the party.

Question 2: 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

- a. "I am not afraid," _____ the woman.
- b. "Leave me alone," _____ my mother .
- c. The children _____ that the roads were crowded and noisy.
- d. "Perhaps he isn't a bad sort of a chap after all," _____ the master.
- e. "Let's go and look at the school ground," _____ the sports teacher.
- f. The traffic police _____ all the passers-by to keep off the road.

Answer:

- a. "I am not afraid," **declared** the woman.
- b. "Leave me alone," **shouted** my mother .
- c. The children **complained** that the roads were crowded and noisy.
- d. "Perhaps he isn't a bad sort of a chap after all," **remarked** the master.
- e. "Let's go and look at the school ground," **suggested** the sports teacher.
- f. The traffic police **ordered** all the passers-by to keep off the road.

Questions (Page No. 40) (Speaking)

Form pairs or groups and discuss the following questions.

Question 1. This story is not an Indian story. But do you think there are fathers, mothers and grandmothers like the ones portrayed in the story in our own country?

Answer: Yes, there are fathers, mothers and grandmothers like the ones portrayed in the story in our own country. In a run to make their children disciplined enough, parents sometimes forget that their child needs their love and care too. They forget that their one is yet to learn and accept his/her environment. Giving the kid time, compassion and care is very necessary so that the kid grows up having good bond with his/her parents. Punishing and creating an extremely strict image of oneself only makes children slip away from their parents' hands emotionally.

Question 2: Was Kezia's father right to punish her? What kind of a person was he?

You might find some of these words useful in describing him:

Undemonstrative, loving, strict, hard-working, responsible, unkind, disciplinarian, short-tempered, affectionate, caring, indifferent

Answer: No, Kezia's father was not right to punish her. He should have understood that Kezia is a child and that it is okay for her to make mistakes. He could have explained her how important those papers were to him and that she should never do such a thing again.

He is a father who is undemonstrative, strict and short-tempered. He also has a loving and affectionate heart but he lets his disciplinarian behaviour get the better of him. He does unkind actions like beating her with a ruler but then he is also a caring dad who pacifies her when she wakes up from a bad dream.

Questions (Page No. 40) (Writing)

Question 1. Has your life been different from or similar to that of Kezia when you were a child? Has your perception about your parents changed now? Do you find any change in your parents' behaviour vis-à-vis yours? Who has become more understanding? What steps would you like to

take to build a relationship based on understanding? Write three or four paragraphs (150–200 words) discussing these issues from your own experience.

Answer: Do it yourself.

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