

On the Face of It

–By Susan Hill

Points to Remember

1. Mr. Lamb is sitting all alone in his garden.
2. Suddenly Derry entered the garden thinking no one was inside the house.
3. Derry is scared to see Mr. Lamb sitting in the garden.
4. Mr. Lamb told him that his gates were always open for all the people.
5. Mr. Lamb assured him That he could stay there if he wanted to sit there.
6. Derry told him that the people were afraid of his burnt face and hated him.
7. Mr. Lamb convinced him that both of them were similar as both of them were lonely and with one disability.
8. Mr. Lamb also told him that he did not bother about what other say.
9. Derry was affected by the positive thoughts of Mr. Lamb.
10. Gradually Derry was able to realise that he too was better than many people.
11. He decided to go to inform his mother and come back to help Mr. Lamb.
12. When Derry came there again, he was shocked to see that Mr. Lamb had fallen from the ladder and bled to death.

Short Answer Questions

1. Why did Derry avoid people?
Ans. Derry used to avoid people, became reclusive and introvert. Actually, his physical deformity took a toll on his mental health. He perceived that everybody was looking at and thinking about him.

Thus, he developed a sort of inferiority complex and shut himself with in his self imposed confinement, out of reach of the outer world.

2. Why did Mr. Lamb keep the door of his home open?

Ans. Mr. Lamb was projected as the other side of the coin, in sharp contrast of reclusive and cocooned Derry. Mr. Lamb was a forthcoming fellow with open personality despite his physical impairment. He had many friends and welcoming attitude towards one and all. His open personality is represented by the open doors and curtain less windows of his home.

3. Why Did Derry come back to meet Mr. Lamb?

Ans. Mr. Lamb's attitude towards life changed the mindset of Derry in short meeting. Derry found wings, a new perception about himself which opened a whole new world for him and gave him a new lease of life. Though, his mother tried to stop him to revisit Mr. Lamb, but Derry never listened to her.

4. What did Derry's mother think of Mr. Lamb?

OR

Why did Derry's mother stop him, going to Mr. Lamb?

Ans. Derry's mother does not hold a good opinion about Mr. Lamb. She has heard many things about the old man, therefore, stops Derry to visit Mr. Lamb.

5. Why does Derry go back to Mr. Lamb in the end?

Ans. Actually Mr. Lamb has taught Derry, the most important lesson of life. He advises him not to care about the comments made by others. He now no longer cares about his burned face or looks. He is more concerned what he thinks and feels, what he wants to hear and see. He returns to Mr. Lamb.

6. How does Mr. Lamb influence Derry?

Ans. Lamb tells that he is old and has a tin leg. Children tease him calling Lamey-Lamb, but still they come to his garden. They are not afraid of him because he is not afraid of them. He is never bothered about his old age or tin leg as life has many more things to offer.

Short Answer Questions for Practice

1. How does Derry's attitude change?
2. What is it that draws Derry towards Mr. Lamb?
3. What do you think the play "On the Face of It" is all about"?
4. How does Lamb try to remove the baseless fears of Derry?
5. "I'm not afraid. People are afraid of me", say Derry. What do people think on seeing his face? How do they react then?
6. What argument does Derry give to convince his mother why he wants to go to the old man's garden?
7. How does Mr. Lamb explain his concept of the world?
8. Do you think Mr. Lamb was equally lonely and dejected! Why!

Long Answer Questions

1. The actual pain or inconvenience caused by a physical impairment is often much less than the sense of isolation felt by the person with disabilities. How can we help and support them?

Ans. Actual pain or inconvenience caused by physical impairment is often less than the sense of alienation felt by the person with disabilities. Physical disabilities cause pain once in life time and cause mental agony.

Mr. Lamb is called Lamely Lamb and mothers were afraid of sending the children because of his tin leg. Derry has burnt face and everyone pities him. Only the mother could love that face. Both Mr. Lamb and Derry have been the victims of verbal atrocities. Mr. Lamb takes comments lightly. But Derry does not have the attitude like Mr. Lamb. Attitude of the people needs to be changed. Disable persons do not want sympathy but to be accepted them as they are. Wounds get healed but bitter comments never forgotten and leaves a scar.

Long Answer Questions for Practice

1. Compare and contrast the characters of Mr. Lamb and Derry.

2. What is the bond that unites old Mr. Lamb and Derry the young boy? How does the old man inspire the small boy?
3. Comment on the appropriateness of the title.
4. Give the character sketch of Derry.

Value based Questions

1. Children like Derry who are physically challenged suffer quietly throughout their life. Prepare a speech to be given in the morning assembly giving your suggestion to them as well as the other students so that they can lead a comfortable and pleasant life inspite of their challenges.
2. Mr. Lamb's meeting with Derry changes him from a scared child to a confident boy. What qualities and attitudes are required to bring such changes in the personality of the other persons.
3. Life of Derry is full of insecurity and seclusion but he overcomes it in the end. Mr. Lamb's brief association affects a change in the kind of life he may lead in future. Write an article in 100 words on "How seclusion and alienation can be removed by love and affection".