

LORD BUDDHA PUBLIC SCHOOL

CLASS-10

SUB.-ENGLISH(TEXTBOOK)

CHAPTER-4

About the Poet

Robin Mc Maugh Klein is an Australian author of books for children. She writes Children's and young adult fiction. Some of her famous books are Hating Alison Ashley, People might hear you, etc.

Introduction to the lesson

Robin Klein has expressed the views of a little girl, Amanda who is constantly pointed out by her mother for making mistakes. Mistakes which she considers so as they are not part of the code of good conduct laid out by the society in which we live.

Amanda Summary of the poem

The poem describes a girl named Amanda and her mother who is nagging her for her mistakes. She is first pointed out most probably by her mother for biting her nails and for not sitting in the right posture. The mother also feels that Amanda sits in a very lazy manner. To this, Amanda imagines herself as a mermaid who lives a calm and relaxing life in the beautiful green sea. Further, she is nagged for not cleaning her room and shoes and also for not doing her homework. She then imagines herself to be an orphan because she is now fed up of being watched by her parents continuously. She says that she would have enjoyed her freedom then, by making the patterns of her bare feet on the sand and would live a peaceful life. Next, Amanda is scolded for eating too many chocolates as this causes pimples. She is also scolded for not listening to her mother. So, now Amanda thinks of being Rapunzel, a character from a fairy tale and wants to live in a huge tower like her. In the tower she will be alone and will live a peaceful life and will never allow anyone to come in. Finally, the mother asks her to stop being moody because she doesn't want anyone to blame her for harassing her daughter. At this time the poet has not written any reaction from Amanda's side. This constant nagging has made her so sad that she has even stopped to imagine herself as someone else. She used to do so in order to escape from the continuous harassment and dominance of her parents.

EXERCISE

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.

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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.

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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.

EXTRA QUESTIONS

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Question 1.

Don't bite your nails, Amanda!
Don't hunch your shoulders, Amanda!
Stop that slouching and sit up straight,
Amanda!

- (a) Amanda is getting instructions for what purpose?
- (b) Give a synonym of 'hunch'.
- (c) What does the speaker of above lines instruct Amanda in the first stanza?
- (d) What is the literary device used in the third line?

Answer:

- (a) Amanda is getting instructions as a part of her upbringing. Her conduct and manners are getting refined for future purposes.
- (b) Bend.
- (c) Amanda is getting instructed for biting her nails and sitting lazily with her shoulders bent.
- (d) Literary device used in third line is Alliteration. 'Stop that slouching and sit up straight'.

Question 2.

(There is a languid, emerald sea, where the sole inhabitant is me – a mermaid, drifting blissfully.)

- (a) Why are these lines given within brackets?
- (b) Give the word from the passage which means free flowing act of going with the motion and force?
- (c) What is the role of mermaid here?
- (d) Which word in the extract means opposite of 'sorrowful'?

Answer:

- (a) These lines are given within brackets because they reveal the inner thoughts of Amanda. Brackets are used for visual contrast between what Amanda is saying and what her mother is instructing.
- (b) Drifting means free flowing act of going with the motion.
- (c) Mermaid is a part of Amanda's fantasy in her own created world. As mermaid sails in a sea carelessly and effortlessly, similarly Amanda longs to do so in a place where she

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is all by herself.

(d) Blissfully is opposite of sorrowful.

Question 3.

Don't eat that chocolate, Amanda!

Remember your acne, Amanda!

Will you please look at me when I'm speaking to you,
Amanda!

- (a) Why is Amanda not looking at the speaker?
- (b) Find the word in the extract which means same as consume?
- (c) The speaker is so worried about acne. What does it show?
- (d) Which word in the extract means the same as 'to gaze'? [CBSE 2016]

Answer:

- (a) Amanda is lost in her own thoughts and is paying no attention to instructions being given to her. That is why she is not looking at the speaker.
- (b) Eat means same as consume.
- (c) Speaker being worried about acne shows how much importance is given to physical beauty in a household. Amanda is prepared for the unforeseen future. Natural experience such as acne is also taken care of at any cost.
- (d) To look means the same as 'to gaze'.

Question 4.

(I am an orphan, roaming the street,
I pattern soft dust with my hushed, bare feet.
The silence is golden, the freedom is sweet.)

- (a) How come silence is golden?
- (b) Give a synonym of 'roaming'.
- (c) What is Amanda upto in this stanza?
- (d) What poetic device is used in this stanza?

Answer:

- (a) Silence is shown golden using the poetic device metaphor. By making silence golden the poet is estimating the worth of silence. For Amanda seeks peace and calmness, which is absent in her reality.
- (b) Wandering.
- (c) Amanda is again taking refuge in her imagination. Here, she wishes to be an orphan, away from her nagging parents. Amanda wants to roam aimlessly in streets and draw patterns using just her bare feet.
- (d) The poet uses metaphor such as 'orphan', 'silence is golden', and 'freedom is sweet'.

Question 5.

(I am Rapunzel, I have not a care;
life in a tower is tranquil and rare;
I'll certainly never let down my bright hair)

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- (a) Does Amanda live on a tower?
- (b) Why will Amanda not let down her bright hair?
- (c) What is the underlying poetic device used in this stanza?
- (d) Find from the passage a word which means the same as 'serene'.

Answer:

- (a) No, Amanda stays at her place. Here, she is imagining herself to be Rapunzel who lived on a tower.
- (b) Amanda is aware about the story of Rapunzel. In the story of Rapunzel all the mishappening and misfortunes are brought to her by letting down the hair. Amanda also wishes to live alone and carefree, without any disturbance.
- (c) Poet uses allusion here as the underlying poetic device.
- (d) The word is 'tranquil'.

Question 6.

Stop that sulking at once, Amanda!
You're always so moody, Amanda!
Anyone would think that I nagged at you,
Amanda!

- (a) Is Amanda really sulking?
- (b) Why does the speaker care for others?
- (c) Give the word from the passage which means same as unstable.
- (d) What poetic device has been used in the first line of this stanza?

Answer:

- (a) Amanda is not sulking. She just doesn't care about instructions given to her as she is lost in a world of her own.
- (b) The whole poem revolves around the aspect that how one is presented in a society. Speaker doesn't wish to be regarded as a nagging parent in the society, so Amanda is expected to put up a happy face all the time.
- (c) Moody means same as unstable.
- (d) 'Alliteration' has been used in the first line; words 'stap' and 'sulking' start with the same sound.

Short Answer Type Questions [2 Marks each]

Question 1.

Write a short note on the title of the poem?

Answer:

The title of the poem is Amanda as it revolves around the upbringing of little girl named Amanda. Her life is full of struggles where she is denied freedom and expression. Amanda is so much irate that she escapes reality by living in her imaginative world. Through this gateway she experiences calmness, away from her nagging parents.

Question 2.

Why is Amanda getting scolded for having chocolate?

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Answer:

Amanda is getting scolded for having chocolates as previously it had caused her acne.

Amanda's mother is very particular about such things.

Amanda is made conscious about her physical appearance. It is very sad that at such a young age Amanda is made to worry about natural experiences.

Question 3.

How life on a tower would be different from life anywhere else for Amanda?

Answer:

Life on tower for Amanda would be very different from her reality. Just like Rapunzel, even she desires to live on top of a tower, away from everyday chaos. Amanda suffers due to the constant nagging from her parents. She seeks a place full of peace and serenity, where there is no one to disturb her. Hence, she wishes to live on a tower.

Question 4.

Why does Amanda seem moody most of the times?

Answer:

Amanda seems moody most of the time because she is trying to make an escape from her sorry reality where she is nagged most of the times. It is indeed a sorry state for a small child like Amanda to bear. Here the only defence against such reality is her imagination where she often escapes to.

Hence, it makes her look moody and uninterested.

Question 5.

Why does Amanda wish to be a mermaid, an orphan, or Rapunzel?

Answer:

Amanda wishes to be a mermaid so she could drift alone by blissfully languid, emerald sea. She yearns to be an orphan so that she is able to roam the sea and make pattern using her bare feet. Being Rapunzel means she could live carefree on a high tower.

Amanda wishes to be these so that she could avoid her suffocating reality.

Question 6.

How does it help Amanda to be an orphan?

Answer:

Amanda feels troubled around her parents, so she wishes herself to be an orphan. As then only she could live a life of her own without much hassle.

Question 7.

Do you consider Amanda's mother to be a nagging mother?

Answer:

Amanda's mother is indeed a nagging mother. She is all about instructions and finding faults. No doubt it is her responsibility to instil good values into her daughter, but not at

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the cost of her child's happiness. One should know how to strike a balance between maintaining responsibilities and taking good care.

Question 8.

Is Amanda at fault at all?

Answer:

Amanda is not at fault at all. It is too harsh for a small child to understand the concept of love and not eating a chocolate. Love of parents is missing from Amanda's life. It is with pity that we look towards Amanda. There is nothing worst for a child who wishes to be an orphan. Amanda just seeks freedom from the overpowering environment around her.

Question 9.

What is the central theme of the poem Amanda?

Answer:

The poem Amanda by Robin Klein highlights the importance of upbringing of a child. It points out that upbringing doesn't involve making a child responsible and fit for the society only. It is important to note that upbringing involves understanding from both the sides. One cannot just force a child to be civilised and good mannered. "Love and proper care is required in nurturing of a child.

Long Answer (Value Based) Type Questions [4 Marks each]

Question 1.

Discuss the importance of proper upbringing with reference to the poem Amanda by Robin Klein.

Answer:

Upbringing plays an essential role in personality development of an adult. Whenever we wish to admire or criticise someone we question the upbringing of that person. Robin Klein's poem Amanda highlights the tension in the 'proper' upbringing of a child. To instil good values and moral principles in a growing child comes as a foremost duty for the parents. However, the poem Amanda shows how a child feels trapped within the cluster of instructions. Amanda is no less than a victim in this travesty. No proper space is given to her creativity. She is instructed for everything. As a result, she feels trapped and seeks an escape. Her imagination proves to be her escape and also her defence against her nagging parents. Situation of Amanda is so worse that she wishes to be an orphan, in order to get rid of her parents. She imagines enacting various roles varying from mermaid to Rapunzel. Amanda wishes to live alone and carefree. It is very important to understand the situation of Amanda where her freedom is cut short by constant instructions and guidelines. Proper balance should be maintained when dealing with such delicate issues. Love and care should always be part of this two way transaction.

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Question 2.

How does Amanda tackle the nagging nature of her parents? Explain with examples from the poem. What values does it portray about Amanda?

Answer:

Amanda is a small girl who is termed as moody for her careless behaviour. But it is very surprising to know that this is her defence mechanism to shield against her nagging parents. Amanda is getting instructions from her parents, which become too much to handle for the small girl. She is told not to eat her nails and sit in a proper position. Amanda's response to it is her work of imagination where she is a mermaid drifting effortlessly by the languid river. Further, she is asked about cleaning her room and finishing her homework to which she reacts being an orphan roaming in the street and making patterns with her bare feet. Amanda then faces the heat for eating a chocolate, which had once caused her acne. She takes the form of Rapunzel and wishes to live on top of a tower away from everyone in her imagination. Amanda's parents are upset over her behaviour and casualness, but she stays in her own world. All these portray Amanda in a positive light while her parents in a negative light. We as readers feel very sorry for a child like Amanda.

Question 3.

State the key points in the poem Amanda. What do you learn from it?

Answer:

Every child is special in itself, and it requires a great deal of patience and love to make them understand this. Parents should give proper space to children, as they learn through experiences as well. Children do tend to learn certain bad habits, to undo that requires great level of understanding and right approach. One cannot teach their child everything in one day and expect them to behave properly henceforth. It is natural for a child like Amanda to seek freedom at her place, to curb that freedom means to make her angry and moody. Growing up of child should not be about dos and don'ts only. To have nagging parents judging every action of child would do more harm than good. Robin Klein points to the fact that Amanda is forbidden to do anything without seeking permission. Everything she does it is corrected by her mother all the time, she cannot perform a single thing according to her will. She can't sit lazily around, she can't eat chocolate for that could cause acne. Life of Amanda is very suffocating and limited in itself. She yearns for freedom and choice. Her mother doesn't understand the fact that Amanda is innocent and naive, she is too small to understand the benefits of advice. Only thing that matters to Amanda's mother is what society will make of Amanda. We witness miserable failure of parents when Amanda wishes to be an orphan so that she could be free.