



3. The Little Girl

BEFORE YOU READ

- *Do you feel you know your parents better now, than when you were much younger? Perhaps you now understand the reasons for some of their actions that used to upset you earlier.*
- *This story about a little girl whose feelings for her father change from fear to understanding will probably find an echo in every home.*

1. To the little girl he was a figure to be feared and avoided. Every morning before going to work he came into her room and gave her a casual kiss, to which she responded with “Goodbye, Father”. And oh, there was a glad sense of relief when she heard the noise of the carriage growing fainter and fainter down the long road!

a figure to be feared:
a person to be feared

In the evening when he came home she stood near the staircase and heard his loud voice in the hall. “Bring my tea into the drawing-room... Hasn’t the paper come yet? Mother, go and see if my paper’s out there — and bring me my slippers.”

2. “Kezia,” Mother would call to her, “if you’re a good girl you can come down and take off father’s boots.” Slowly the girl would slip down the stairs, more slowly still across the hall, and push open the drawing-room door.

slip down: come
down quietly and
unwillingly

By that time he had his spectacles on and looked at her over them in a way that was terrifying to the little girl.

“Well, Kezia, hurry up and pull off these boots and take them outside. Have you been a good girl today?”

“I d-d-don’t know, Father.”



“You d-d-don’t know? If you stutter like that Mother will have to take you to the doctor.”

3. She never stuttered with other people — had quite given it up — but only with Father, because then she was trying so hard to say the words properly.

given it up: stopped doing it

“What’s the matter? What are you looking so wretched about? Mother, I wish you taught this child not to appear on the brink of suicide... Here, Kezia, carry my teacup back to the table carefully.”

wretched: unhappy

on the brink of suicide: about to commit suicide

He was so big — his hands and his neck, especially his mouth when he yawned. Thinking about him alone was like thinking about a giant.

4. On Sunday afternoons Grandmother sent her down to the drawing-room to have a “nice talk with Father and Mother”. But the little girl always found Mother reading and Father stretched out on the sofa, his handkerchief on his face, his feet on one of the best cushions, sleeping soundly and snoring.



The little girl always found Mother reading and Father stretched out on the sofa.



She sat on a stool, gravely watched him until he woke and stretched, and asked the time — then looked at her.

“Don’t stare so, Kezia. You look like a little brown owl.”

One day, when she was kept indoors with a cold, her grandmother told her that father’s birthday was next week, and suggested she should make him a pin-cushion for a gift out of a beautiful piece of yellow silk.

5. Laboriously, with a double cotton, the little girl stitched three sides. But what to fill it with? That was the question. The grandmother was out in the garden, and she wandered into Mother’s bedroom to look for scraps. On the bed-table she discovered a great many sheets of fine paper, gathered them up, tore them into tiny pieces, and stuffed her case, then sewed up the fourth side.

laboriously: with a lot of effort or difficulty

wandered into: went into, by chance

scraps: small pieces of cloth or paper, etc. that are not needed

hue and cry: angry protest

That night there was a hue and cry in the house. Father’s great speech for the Port Authority had been lost. Rooms were searched; servants questioned. Finally Mother came into Kezia’s room.

“Kezia, I suppose you didn’t see some papers on a table in our room?”

“Oh yes,” she said, “I tore them up for my surprise.”

“What!” screamed Mother. “Come straight down to the dining-room this instant.”

6. And she was dragged down to where Father was pacing to and fro, hands behind his back.

“Well?” he said sharply.





Mother explained.

He stopped and stared at the child.

“Did you do that?”

“N-n-no”, she whispered.

“Mother, go up to her room and fetch down the damned thing — see that the child’s put to bed this instant.”

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7. Crying too much to explain, she lay in the shadowed room watching the evening light make a sad little pattern on the floor.

Then Father came into the room with a ruler in his hands.

"I am going to beat you for this," he said.

"Oh, no, no", she screamed, hiding under the bedclothes.

He pulled them aside.

"Sit up," he ordered, "and hold out your hands. You must be taught once and for all not to touch what does not belong to you."

"But it was for your b-b-birthday."

Down came the ruler on her little, pink palms.

8. Hours later, when Grandmother had wrapped her in a shawl and rocked her in the rocking-chair, the child clung to her soft body.

"What did God make fathers for?" she sobbed.

"Here's a clean hanky, darling. Blow your nose. Go to sleep, pet; you'll forget all about it in the morning. I tried to explain to Father but he was too upset to listen tonight."

But the child never forgot. Next time she saw him she quickly put both hands behind her back and a red colour flew into her cheeks.

9. The Macdonalds lived next door. They had five children. Looking through a gap in the fence the little girl saw them playing 'tag' in the evening. The father with the baby, Mao, on his shoulders, two little girls hanging on to his coat pockets ran round and round the flower-beds, shaking with laughter. Once she saw the boys turn the hose on him—and he tried to catch them laughing all the time.

tag: a children's game of catching one another

Then it was she decided there were different sorts of fathers.

Suddenly, one day, Mother became ill, and she and Grandmother went to hospital.

The little girl was left alone in the house with Alice, the cook. That was all right in the daytime,



The little girl saw through a gap the Macdonalds playing 'tag' in the evening.

but while Alice was putting her to bed she grew suddenly afraid.

10. "What'll I do if I have a nightmare?" she asked. nightmare: a bad dream
"I often have nightmares and then Grannie takes me into her bed—I can't stay in the dark—it all gets 'whispery'..."

"You just go to sleep, child," said Alice, pulling off her socks, "and don't you scream and wake your poor Pa."



But the same old nightmare came — the butcher with a knife and a rope, who came nearer and nearer, smiling that dreadful smile, while she could not move, could only stand still, crying out, “Grandma! Grandma!” She woke shivering to see Father beside her bed, a candle in his hand.

“What’s the matter?” he said.

11. “Oh, a butcher — a knife — I want Grannie.” He blew out the candle, bent down and caught up the child in his arms, carrying her along the passage to the big bedroom. A newspaper was on the bed. He put away the paper, then carefully tucked up the child. He lay down beside her. Half asleep still, still with the butcher’s smile all about her it seemed, she crept close to him, snuggled her head under his arm, held tightly to his shirt.

tucked up: covered up nicely in bed

Then the dark did not matter; she lay still.

“Here, rub your feet against my legs and get them warm,” said Father.

snuggled: moved into a warm, comfortable position, close to another person

12. Tired out, he slept before the little girl. A funny feeling came over her. Poor Father, not so big, after all — and with no one to look after him. He was harder than Grandmother, but it was a nice hardness. And every day he had to work and was too tired to be a Mr Macdonald... She had torn up all his beautiful writing... She stirred suddenly, and sighed.

“What’s the matter?” asked her father. “Another dream?”

“Oh,” said the little girl, “my head’s on your heart. I can hear it going. What a big heart you’ve got, Father dear.”

KATHERINE MANSFIELD



❁ Thinking about the Text

- I. 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	(i) father comes into her room to give her a goodbye kiss
2. glad sense of relief	(ii) noise of the carriage grows fainter
3. a “funny” feeling, perhaps of understanding	(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

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

1. Why was Kezia afraid of her father?
2. Who were the people in Kezia’s family?
3. What was Kezia’s father’s routine
 - (i) before going to his office?
 - (ii) after coming back from his office?
 - (iii) on Sundays?
4. In what ways did Kezia’s grandmother encourage her to get to know her father better?

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

1. Kezia’s efforts to please her father resulted in displeasing him very much. How did this happen?
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?
3. How does Kezia begin to see her father as a human being who needs her sympathy?


❁ 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.
1. Use an appropriate word from the synonyms given above in the following sentences. Clues are given in brackets.
 - (i) She was _____ by the news of her brother's wedding. (very pleased)
 - (ii) I was _____ to be invited to the party. (extremely pleased and excited about)
 - (iii) She was _____ at the birth of her granddaughter. (extremely happy)
 - (iv) The coach was _____ with his performance. (satisfied about)
 - (v) She was very _____ 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*.

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

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


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.

1. Underline the verbs of reporting in the following sentences.
 - (i) He says he will enjoy the ride.
 - (ii) Father mentioned that he was going on a holiday.
 - (iii) No one told us that the shop was closed.
 - (iv) He answered that the price would go up.
 - (v) I wondered why he was screaming.
 - (vi) Ben told her to wake him up.
 - (vii) Ratan apologised for coming late to the party.
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

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

Speaking

Form pairs or groups and discuss the following questions.

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?
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

Writing

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.



Rain on the Roof



When the sky is covered with dark clouds and it starts raining, have you ever listened to the patter of soft rain on the roof? What thoughts flashed through your mind as you heard this melody of nature? Read the poem to find out what the poet dreamed of while listening to the rain.

When the humid shadows hover
Over all the starry spheres
And the melancholy darkness
Gently weeps in rainy tears,
What a bliss to press the pillow
Of a cottage-chamber bed
And lie listening to the patter
Of the soft rain overhead!

Every tinkle on the shingles
Has an echo in the heart;
And a thousand dreamy fancies
Into busy being start,
And a thousand recollections
Weave their air-threads into woof,
As I listen to the patter
Of the rain upon the roof.

Now in memory comes my mother,
As she used in years ago,
To regard the darling dreamers
Ere she left them till the dawn:
O! I feel her fond look on me
As I list to this refrain
Which is played upon the shingles
By the patter of the rain.

COATES KINNEY



GLOSSARY

tinkle: short, light ringing sounds

shingles: rectangular wooden tiles used on roofs

woof: weft, i.e. the threads woven across the loom

ere: old poetic word for 'before'

refrain: a repeated part of a song or a poem; here, the sound of the rain

list: old poetic word for 'listen'



Thinking about the Poem

- I. 1. What do the following phrases mean to you? Discuss in class.
 - (i) humid shadows
 - (ii) starry spheres
 - (iii) what a bliss
 - (iv) a thousand dreamy fancies into busy being start
 - (v) a thousand recollections weave their air-threads into woof
2. What does the poet like to do when it rains?
3. What is the single major memory that comes to the poet? Who are the "darling dreamers" he refers to?
4. Is the poet now a child? Is his mother still alive?
- II. 1. When you were a young child, did your mother tuck you in, as the poet's did?
2. Do you like rain? What do you do when it rains steadily or heavily as described in the poem?
3. Does everybody have a cosy bed to lie in when it rains? Look around you and describe how different kinds of people or animals spend time, seek shelter etc. during rain.

*All that I am or ever hope it be, I owe to my
angel Mother.*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN



Notes for the Teacher

Units 4–7

4. A TRULY BEAUTIFUL MIND

- * The story of Einstein tries to show him as a human being, a fairly ordinary person who had his likes and dislikes, his streaks of rebellion, and his problems. The class can think about how a 'great person' was perceived before being recognised as 'great': it is not as though great people are born with a special sign that allows us to recognise them instantly! What qualities in a person, then, make them a genius or a great person?
- * You can take the help of a science teacher to explain Einstein's Theory of Relativity, to talk about Einstein, and build inter-subject cooperation.
- * The exercise of matching headings to paragraphs in the lesson is useful for finding the topic sentence or to scan a paragraph for specific information. Students may be asked to provide a different heading if they feel some other point is equally important.
- * Students should be guided to write a newspaper report. Note the points given below. Illustrate them by bringing examples from newspapers into the class, and ask students to bring their own examples.
 - A report should have:
 1. A headline
 2. Name of the reporter e.g. 'By a Staff Reporter', etc.
 3. Place, date, source (the source may also be given at the end of the report).
 - The beginning is usually an expansion of the headline. The middle paragraph gives the details. It is followed by the conclusion or the summing up.
 - The report should be brief, but the headline and the style should be eye-catching.
 - Sometimes important points are given in a box in the centre of the report.
 - Regarding the language of the reports:
 1. passives for past action (for example: It is found ..., ... has been unearthed.)

2. present tense for statements (The document contains..., The manuscript describes...)

- ✱ This unit has a passage for dictation, an anecdote. Dictation is an exercise that requires the individual participation of each student. It fosters unconscious thinking, and draws attention to language form. Students can also be given opportunities for self or peer correction after the dictation.
 - Students should first read the passage silently, noticing the use of punctuation marks.
 - The passage to be dictated should be read aloud twice in the class with proper intonation, and pauses between meaningful phrases.
 - The passage is read a third time for students to check through.

5. THE SNAKE AND THE MIRROR

- ✱ 'The Snake and the Mirror' is a complex story of self-discovery that is humorously told. The narrator is a vain and foolish young man who in a moment of crisis realises that he is "poor, foolish and stupid". The questions are designed to help the students notice the humour in the narration.
- ✱ This unit has a formal, expository passage for dictation. Students should be encouraged to learn the spellings of unfamiliar words beforehand. The dictation of such passages also encourages the development of grammar in the students' minds, as they recall complex language.
- ✱ The Writing task is based on a sketch from a photograph that tells a story. Encourage the students to read the words given alongside the sketch. Let the students form pairs or groups to talk freely about the sketch before they start writing.
- ✱ A new kind of activity introduced in this lesson is to compare two translations of the beginning of a story. This activity suggests to the students that language is not 'fixed'; there are different ways of experiencing an idea, which also lead to small changes in the idea that is expressed. This activity should be done as a fun activity.

6. MY CHILDHOOD

- ✱ The autobiographical account of childhood embodies the themes of harmony and prejudice, tradition and change. The questions guide the children to identify the instances of the themes.
- ✱ A map reading activity is given in this unit. Students will find out the geographical location of Dhanushkodi and Rameswaram, and the languages spoken at that time by different communities. This

will develop a critical understanding of how life and society in the deep south changed and developed over the years. Dhanuskodi and Rameswaram are on an island, the Pamban Island, off the Tamil Nadu coast.

- ✱ The dictionary work encourages children to identify the contexts, literal and metaphorical, in which the given words occur. You may find other such words to add to the exercise.
- ✱ The dictation exercise in this unit requires the rearrangement of jumbled paragraphs. Ideally this kind of dictation should be carried out with passages that the students have not seen before.

The teacher dictates the three parts of the given passage, in random order, one to each group in class, for example part two first, then part three, and finally part one. The class has to share information in order to put the text together in the right order. This can be a class activity directed by the teacher.
- ✱ The Speaking exercise includes an activity requiring students to ask other people for their opinion on the topic.

7. PACKING

- ✱ This is a humorous story about the confusion and mess made by inexperienced packing. Draw the attention of the students to the antics of Montmorency, the dog. Help students to find humorous elements in the story such as Jerome finding his toothbrush inside the shoe and Harris squashing the tomatoes. Draw their attention to humour in the narration, such as “Montmorency’s ambition in life is to get in the way and be sworn at,” or the beginning of the narration “Packing is one of those many things that I feel I know more about than any other person living.(It surprises me myself, sometimes, how many such things there are.)”
- ✱ An activity in this unit is to collect examples of instructions and directions such as those given in pamphlets for different products. An example has been provided of a pamphlet with instructions in different foreign languages. The purpose is to encourage students to find other such pamphlets as a fun activity.