

Revision Notes
CHAPTER – 6
The Browning Version

The present extract is from The play “The Browning Version” written by Terence Rattigan which is focussed on two contrasting school teachers Mr. Crocker Harris and Mr. Frank They are different in age, temperament and devotion to their profession. Frank is young more social while Mr. Harris is middle aged and reserved. Frank lacks involvement and devotion while Crocker Harris is feared as a hard task master. The one act play also presents the hidden rivalry among the people of the same profession through the characters of these two teachers. It also describes the reaction of a student of Mr. Crocker Harris, towards his teachers.

It vividly brings about the agony of a dedicated teacher who has a strict attitude towards his students and the attitude of a teacher who represents the corrupt way of most of the so called modern teachers who are fond of flattery and have false egos and envious of the teachers who are true to their profession..

It starts with the conversation between a school boy Taplow and another teacher Mr. Frank. In fact, it happens that Taplow is given some extra work by Mr. Harris on the last day of the week as a punishment for being absent for one day in the class. Teachers like Frank encourage student like Taplow to make comments on their fellow teachers. Frank asks Taplow not to wait for Crocker Harris and leave. But Taplow waits for him.

In between Millie, the wife of Crocker Harris arrives there and sends him to chemist's shop with a prescription. The play exhibits that the boy Taplow is much afraid of his teacher and has to stay till his arrival. In this extract the author brings out the character of Crocker Harris through Taplow in a direct contrast to Frank.

The play highlights the wrong and corrupt practices prevalent in education system since ages and also have come to the height now-a-days. It shows that there is no doubt teachers who are friendly with students more than needed, certainly liked by students but in the long run the teachers who are honest, sincere and devoted to their profession possess a respectful, and

dignified place in the core of their heart. Today the education has been commercialised and true teachers have become hard to find so it is the duty of every student and teacher and stakeholders to take lesson from Mr. Harris and Student like Taplow. There is no doubt that the teaching strategies have totally changed but a teacher is a teacher in real sense if required distance is maintained between a student and a teacher their relationship becomes healthy as the saying goes-'Access of everything is bad'. We should not forget that a teacher is not only a teacher but a friend, a guardian and a parent.

Students should also take a lesson from Taplow who was instigated by Mr. Frank to leave but he continued to accomplish his task. They should also be respectful, sincere and true to their teachers. Both of them will succeed if they go hand in hand.

Childhood

The speaker pondered deeply upon the spiritual questions of life and ultimately realized the fact that his childhood days had finally gone for good and would never return. Childhood would now only remain in his memories. He wondered if the end of childhood was the day he ceased to be eleven years old and became independent mentally as well as physically as independence is the first step towards adulthood.

The time when he realized that Heaven and earth could not be found in Geography and never could be. Where did his childhood go? Was it the time he realized that adults were not all they seemed to be? They talked of love and they preached of love, but did not act so lovingly nor practiced what they preached. Was that the day.

Where did his childhood go? Was it when he found out that his mind was really his? To use it whichever way he chose? To produce thoughts that was not those of other people but his and his alone. Was that the day? Where did his childhood go? It went to some forgotten place that is hidden in a baby's face. That was all that he knew and that was all that he remembered.

The poet feels that heaven and hell are not real places because they cannot be located in geography. In the poem 'Childhood', the poet is trying to realize the time when he lost his childhood, when he became mature enough to understand the worldly things. So he keeps saying, "when did my childhood go?" He finally realizes that his his childhood is gone to "some forgotten place", "that is hidden in an infant's face.

"Wordsworth in his poem, My Heart Leaps Up, said, "Child is the father of man". Markus Natten in his poem 'Childhood' has tried to explain the same thought. It is child who is noble and pure in her/his thoughts and heart. A child appreciates the nature's beauty and innocence in the world. A child is one who teaches a human being to selflessly appreciate simple love and natural wonders.

The poet feels nostalgic about his childhood. Childhood means innocence and loss of it means loss of innocence. The poet suffers from a sense of loss and speculates when he suffered that

loss. He ponders over the difference between innocence and hypocrisy and comes to the conclusion that perhaps when he learned to see through the crafty and hypocritical nature of adults he lost his childhood. He repeats the same question throughout the poem- 'When did my childhood go?' but in the last para his question changes and he wants to know the place where did his childhood go' and finds the answer that it is hidden in an infant's face.