

ON THE FACE OF IT

- Susan Hill

Theme: The play deals with two characters, Derry and Mr. Lamb. The two have something in common- they are physically different and deficient. While Mr. Lamb is lame, Derry has a half- burnt face. Both of them have been mistreated by the society. The attitude of the people towards Derry and Lamb reflects the callousness of society towards the physically impaired. The title suggests that there are facts or situations that seem completely different than what they are presumed to be on the surface. Secondly, it also refers to the disfigured face of the protagonist.

NOTES

The play depicts beautifully yet grimly the sad world of the physically impaired. It is not the actual pain or inconvenience caused by a physical impairment that trouble a disabled man but the attitude of the people around him.

Two physically impaired people, Mr. Lamb with a tin leg and Derry with a burnt face, strike a bond of friendship. Derry is described as a young boy- shy, withdrawn and defiant. People tell him inspiring stories to console him; no one will ever kiss him, except his mother that too on the other side of his face. Mentions about a woman telling that only a mother can love such a face.

Mr. Lamb revives the almost dead feelings of Derry towards life. He motivates him to think positively about life, changes his mind set about people and things. How a man locked himself as he was scared- a picture fell off the wall and got killed. Everything appears to be the same but is different- Ex. of bees. And weeds.

The gate of the garden is always open.

Derry is inspired and promises to come back. Derry's mother stops him but he is adamant saying if he does not go now it would be never.

When he comes back he sees Lamb lying on the ground.

It is ironical that when he searches a new foothold to live happily, he finds Mr. Lamb dead. In this way the play depicts the heart rendering life of physically disabled people with their loneliness, aloofness and alienation.

But at the same time it is almost a true account of the people who don't let a person live happily

SOLVED QUESTIONS

Q.1 Who is Derry? What self-opinion does he hold?

Derek, also called Derry was a young boy of 14. He was a quiet, shy and defiant boy. One side of his face was totally burnt by acid. He was a victim of inferiority complex.

Q.2 How does Lamb try to remove the baseless fears of Derry?

Mr. Lamb influences Derry by his optimistic philosophy. He advises him not to give attention on other's comments, try to be internally pure and strong and eliminate the negativity of life.

Q.3 What did Derry's mothers think of Mr. Lamb?

OR

Q.4 Why did Derry's mother stop him, going to Mr. Lamb?

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.

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

Actually Mr. Lamb has taught Derry, the most important lesson of life. He advised 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 with what he thinks and feels and is sure of what he wants to hear and see. He knows if does not go back, he will never go back. Therefore he returns back.

Q.6 Comment on the moral value of the play?

The moral of the play is very loud and clear. The physically disabled should focus on the brighter side of life and not to brood over the shortcomings. The society should accept them as they are and expand their social interactions. In this way they can fight out the loneliness, depression and disappointment.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

Q.1 The actual pain or inconvenience caused by a physical impairment is often much less than the sense of alienation felt by the person with disabilities. What is the kind of behaviour that the person expects from others?

Suggested Value Points- Actual pain or inconvenience caused by physical impairment is often less

→ than the sense of alienation felt by the person with disabilities Physical disabilities

→ Caused pain once in life time

→ But this physical disability - set chain for other actions - caused mental agony- Called Lamey lamb, mothers were afraid of sending their children because→ of his tin leg.

Derry - burnt face - everyone pities him-only a 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.→ They do not want sympathy but we need to accept them as they are.→ Wounds get healed - but bitter comments are never forgotten.It leaves an→ indelible scar

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