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Class 12 English (Vistas) Notes

SHOULD WIZARD HIT
MOMMY?



Key Notes and Important Questions with Answers

Should Wizard Hit Mommy?

By John Updike

The story, 'Should Wizard Hit Mommy?' deals with a child's view of the world and the difficult moral questions she raises during her story sessions with her father. It also raises the issue whether parents should decide for their children or children should decide for themselves.

Jack is the protagonist of the story. His story telling sessions with his daughter Jo began two years ago. Each story was a variation of a basic story line. The main character was always a small creature named Roger who faced a problem. To solve his problem, Roger would go to the owl who in turn asked Roger to go to the wizard. The wizard would finally solve his problem. But of late, the story telling sessions had become tiresome for Jack as Jo was growing up and questioned everything she heard.

One Saturday, Jack told Jo a story about a new animal — Roger Skunk. Roger Skunk smelt very bad, so bad that no one played with him. All the animals of the forest teased him and called him Stinky Skunk. Roger Skunk, then, went to the owl and told him his story. The owl sent him to the wizard who made him smell like roses for the price of a few pennies. Roger Skunk was happy as he could now play with his friends. But the Skunk's mother didn't like the smell of roses. She was very angry and took Roger back to the wizard, hit him on his head and ordered him to change Roger back to his original smell. Roger Skunk once again smelt very bad.

But Jo did not like the ending of the story. She did not like the idea that Roger Skunk had no friends. She wanted her dad to change the ending and make the wizard hit mommy. Jack told her that it would be wrong because a mommy is always right.

– By John Updike

Point to Remember

1. Jack fabricated a story to tell to his two year old daughter Jo.
2. He created a basic plot where the main protagonist was an animal named Roger, a small creature.
3. The animal had a problem and went to the owl. The owl advised him to go to the wizard.
4. The wizard solved the problem and charged Roger Pennies more than however he also guided him on how to get the required pennies.

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5. One day Jack told Jo a story about Roger Skunk who smelled so bad that the other animals ran away from him.
 6. Roger Skunk went to the owl who in turn sent him to the Wizard who changed his foul smell to sweet smell of roses.
 7. Roger Skunk was ecstatic and ran to the jungle to play with the other animals, who loved his smell very much.
 8. When he reached his house, his mother scolded him for the new smell.
 9. The mother took him to the wizard.
 10. Roger's mother shouted at the wizard and hit him hard on the head.
 11. The little Roger got the foul smell again and was very sad.
 12. Jo did not like the behaviour of the mommy and wanted her father to hit mommy.
 13. Jo's mother is annoyed at Jack's taking so much time in telling the story.
 14. Jack is in a dilemma whether to go to help his wife in her work or to change the end of the story of his daughter.

Short Answer Questions

1. How did the Wizard help Roger Skunk?
Ans. The wizard was moved by Roger skunk's story. On finding his magic wand he chanted some magic words & granted that Roger should smell like roses.
2. How did Roger Skunk's Mommy react when he went home smelling of roses? How did the Skunk's mother get him his old smell back?
Ans. Roger Skunk began to smell like roses. Mommy asked about the smell. Roger Skunk replied that the wizard had given him the smell. The mother did not like that and asked Roger to come with her. Mother was furious to learn about the wizard who had changed his original smell. She immediately visited the wizard and hit him on his head and asked him to restore the original smell.
3. Who is Jo? How did Jo behave in 'reality phase'?

Ans. Jo is Jack's 4 year old daughter. She is not a patient listener. She does not take things for granted and tries to see things in her own way.

4. Why did Jo want the wizard to hit mommy?

Ans. Jo was drawing a parallel between mommy skunk and her own mother. She perceived both of them as an interfering factor in the independent growth of their children. So, she wanted wizard to hit mommy as she had failed to empathize with her son's (baby skunk) problem of not having any friend.

5. Was Roger skunk's mother justified in forcing him to retain his original smell?

Ans. Up to some extent I agree with the point of view of mother but not with the way she behaved. She wanted her child to retain his unique identity. But, she resented the rose smell very sternly. The child should have been taken in to confidence and should have been made aware of the pros and cons.

Short Answer Questions for Practice

1. Why did Roger Skunk go to the Wizard?
2. Why did Roger Skunk go to visit the owl?
3. How did the Wizard fulfil young Skunk's wish?
4. What was the cause of Roger Skunk's sadness?
5. Why was Skunk happy after meeting the Wizard?
6. What was unique about the story that Jack told?

Long Answer Questions

1. How does Jo want the story to end? Why?

Ans. Children have a very different view of life than that of adults. They dream and live in their imaginative world. Jo does not like the ending that mommy should hit the wizard. Rather she wants that the Wizard

should hit the Mommy for her failure to realize the problems of Roger Skunk. She calls her 'Stupid Mommy' and insists for a change in the storyline. She has got sympathy for Roger Skunk. She thinks it to be unfair on the part of the mother to go to the Wizard and get Roger his bad smell again.

2. Drawing inference from the lesson "Should Wizard Hit Mommy", elucidate perception of imposing parents ?

Ans. In the lesson 'Should Wizard hit Mommy', Mother Skunk did not support the idea of a changed identity for baby Skunk. The story says that Roger Skunk felt alienated because of his bad smell. The elders failed to recognize his feeling and pain. His mother vehemently opposed the changed smell. She perceived the bad smell as unique characteristic of a Skunk. But, her reaction was impulsive.

She could have responded in a subtle manner to make the child understand her point of view. A healthy discussion in an amiable environment leads to agreeable solution.

Long Answer Questions for Practice

1. What is Jack's way of telling stories? Why is it appealing?
2. What does Jack want to convey through the story of Roger Skunk?
3. How is Jack's childhood interwoven in the story of the stinky Skunk?
4. How does Jack assert his authority as a father over his daughter?
5. What part of the story did Jack himself enjoy the most? Why?
6. Why does Jo want the Wizard to hit Mommy? Justify your answer on the basis of the story ?
7. The parents sometimes do not understand the moral fibre of the children. As a result they feel isolated." Justify the statement in the context of the lesson.
8. Roger Skunk's mother did not want to retain the changed smell of the young Roger. Why are mothers so strict with their children? Are they justified? Why or why not?

