



L. 6 On The Face Of It

By Susan Hill



Summary

- 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 band 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- Derry is described as a young boy shy, withdrawn and defiant.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.

Q1 Answer the following questions in 30-40 words:

a) Who was Derry? What did he suffer from ?

Derry is a young boy who came to Mr. Lamb's garden. One side of his face had been burnt by acid.

b) Why does Derry tell Mr. Lamb that he is afraid of seeing himself in the mirror in the story ' On the face of it' ?

Derry's face is burnt with acid. Derry says that people are afraid of him. They look at his face and find it terrible and ugly. So he says he too is afraid of himself when he sees his face in the mirror.

c) What consolation did people give Derry when they saw his acid burnt face?

People often asked him to look at those people who were in pain, are brave ,never cry, never complain and don't feel sorry for themselves . They also asked him to think of those who were worse off. He was better off than those people who were blind, born deaf, or are confined to wheel-chair, or are crazy and dribble.

d) What changes took place in Derry when he met Mr. Lamb?

When Derry met Mr. Lamb , his perspective towards life and himself changed. Derry had an acid burnt face due to which [people either used to pity him or were scared of him. This had made Derry-bitter and he had withdrawn into his own shell. He started avoiding meeting people talking to them or being in anyone's company. He had come to Mr. Lamb's garden thinking that it was an isolated place.

But Mr. Lamb made him see a different side of life. He told him what is out is outside is not important rather we should focus on what is inside. He made Derry see the beauty of life again. The sound of the rain, blossoming trees, chirping birds, everything was beautiful around him. Derry realised that it doesn't matter how he looked. What matters is how he treats himself and life. He became positive again.

Q2 Answer the following questions in 100-150 words :

a) What was Derry's infirmity? How had it made him withdrawn and defiant?

Derry's face has been burnt by acid. He suffered from a tremendous sense of inferiority complex. He was always conscious of the fact that his face was curd and ugly. As a result people were afraid of him and nobody would ever kiss him. It made him withdrawn and defiant in the sense that he stopped trusting people. He always thought that if people were looking at him, then they were passing derogatory remarks about him.

b) How did Mr. Lamb's meeting with Derry become a turning point in Derry's life?

Derry is fourteen years old boy with a face burnt by acid. Mr. Lamb serves as an ideal person for Derry. Mr. Lamb has a tin leg. But he never allows his disability to sour the joys of life. Derry on the other hand makes himself quite pitiable and miserable. His hypersensitivity is like an open wound. He can't stand people staring at him. Even cruel and uncharitable remarks upset him. He can't keep his years shut. Nor does he possess a large and generous heart like that of Mr. Lamb. Children call him 'Lamey-Lamb' but he does not mind it. He plays with them and gives them jellies and toffees. Derry has developed a perverted thinking. The worst is that Derry distrusts this world and its people. We find a change in Derry in the end. Mr. Lamb's ideas leave their imprint on him. He is free from that complex now. He doesn't care about his burnt face and it is no more important to him.

