

talk
to
me!

LET'S TALK EMPOWERMENT. LET'S TALK ENGLISH

Beehive

3: The Little Girl

by

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1. Summary

This story was written by Katherine Mansfield. It is about a little girl called Kezia, who has a very strict father. He scolds her and humiliates her very often. So she is scared of him. When her father leaves for office, she feels relieved. When he comes back home, she is full of fear again. Kezia's grandmother loves her, and tries hard to make her comfortable with her father. Grandmother suggests that Kezia make a pin-cushion as a birthday gift for her father. By mistake Kezia tears her father's important papers into pieces, to stuff into the cushion. Her father is furious, and hits her with a ruler. This makes her even more fearful of her father. One day Kezia's mother falls ill and Grandma takes her to hospital. Kezia is very scared of being alone in the dark. At night she gets bad dreams which scare her. She cries out for her Grandmother and finds her father standing beside her. He picks her up, consoles her and gives her the love that she has missed. She understands that her father works really hard. That is why he does not have so much time for her.

2. Do you know the meaning of Corporal Punishment?

Corporal punishment or physical punishment is a punishment that gives physical pain to a person. It is most often given to young children, especially at home and in schools. The United Nations has said that any form of discipline involving violence is unacceptable. It says that children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally.

The practice of physically punishing children is still common. People want to believe in the age-old saying, "Spare the rod and spoil the child". This means that if you don't beat the child, you will spoil the child. However, there is no proof that beaten children grow up into better adults compared those who are brought up in a loving and caring environment. A 'rod' cannot take the place understanding. There are a many ways to explain the difference between good and bad behavior to children. Physical abuse only hardens the minds of the children, and they start to hate those who are punishing them. They may also look for ways to take revenge. Sometimes their young minds may accept violence as the correct way.

Then they may grow up to be abusive adults believing in the power of violence.
Either of these is wrong.
Corporal punishment is the same as child abuse and it needs to stop.

3. Vocabulary

1. **A figure to be feared** – a person to be feared
The principal of the school was a **figure to be feared**.
2. **Avoided** - stayed away from somebody or something
I **avoided** the stray dogs because I was afraid of them.
3. **Casual** - not formal
The dress code for tomorrow's meeting is **casual**.
4. **Fainter** – weaker
The child's cries grew **fainter** and fainter as she slowly fell asleep.
5. **Slip down** – come down quietly and unwillingly
The thief **slipped down** the stairs and ran out through the back door.
6. **Terrifying** - very scary
It was so **terrifying** to see the man fall off the wall.
7. **Stutter** - talk with continued involuntary repetition of sounds, especially the consonants in the beginning of the word. Example... 'D...d...d..on't'
The child **stuttered** when the bully teased her.
8. **Given it up** – stopped doing it
The little girl no longer bit her nails; she had **given it up**.
9. **Wretched** - miserable, unhappy
The child felt **wretched** when her father died.
10. **Brink** - edge; a point at which something, typically something not very nice, is about to happen;
Her grandfather had a heart attack and was on the **brink** of death.
11. **Suicide** – taking one's own life
He committed **suicide** because he could not bear the pain of his illness.

12. **Stretched** - to push something to make it longer. In this chapter to push out your arms and legs to relax
The father **stretched** out on the sofa to read the newspaper.
13. **Sleeping soundly** - in a deep sleep
The labourer is **sleeping soundly** because he is so tired.
14. **Gravely** - seriously
The Principal looked at the naughty student **gravely** and told him that he was being expelled from school.
15. **Pin-cushion** - a small, soft cushion into which pins can be pushed to keep them safely until needed.
I have never seen anyone use a **pin cushion** to keep their pins.
16. **Laboriously** - with great effort
My grandfather walked up the stairs **laboriously** because he was so weak.
17. **Wandered into** – went into, by chance
I just **wandered into** the garden to admire the flowers.
18. **Scraps** - waste material, small pieces, left overs
There are many people who will buy **scraps** to recycle.
19. **Discovered** - found out
I **discovered** a new game for the child.
20. **Stuffed** - filled too much
I **stuffed** the fridge with too many things, so the door would not close.
21. **Hue and cry** - a noisy expression of public anger or disapproval
There was a **hue and cry** in the prison when the prisoner escaped.
22. **Screamed** - talked loudly in anger or fear
My mother **screamed** at me for not having finished my homework.
23. **Instant** - immediately
Please fetch the ball for me this **instant!**
24. **Fetch** - to get
The dog **fetches** the ball for the master.

25. **Clung** - held on tightly
The child **clung** onto her mother when she heard the loud thunder.
26. **Tag** – a children’s game of catching one another
My cousins and I were playing **tag** in the garden.
27. **Hose** - pipe
There was a big tear in the **hose**, so the gardener could not water the plants.
28. **Nightmare** - scary dream at night
I had a nightmare that my house was being robbed.
29. **Tucked** - slip into something
When I was young, my mother used to **tuck** me into bed every night.
30. **Snuggled** - to get into a position to feel safe and comfortable
The cat **snuggled** into the blanket.

4. Questions

- 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. How does Kezia begin to see her father as a human being who needs her sympathy?
3. 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?

5. Grammar

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.

To understand what synonyms and antonyms mean click on the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5jw86FsCBI>

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 _____ 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.

- He says he will enjoy the ride.
- Father mentioned that he was going on a holiday
- No one told us that the shop was closed.
- He answered that the price would go up.
- I wondered why he was screaming.
- Ben told her to wake him up.
- 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 am not afraid,” _____ the woman.
- “Leave me alone,” my mother _____.
- The children _____ that the roads were crowded and noisy.
- “Perhaps he isn’t a bad sort of a chap after all,” _____ the master.
- “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.

6. 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	

7. 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.