

CHAPTER

6

ON THE FACE OF IT

—Susan Hill

Chapter Analysis

Question Type & Marks	Year					
	2016		2017		2018	
	D	OD	D	OD	D	OD
SA	-	-	-	-	1	1
LA	1	1	-	-	-	-

Introduction :

This is a play featuring an old man Mr. Lamb and a small boy named Derry. Derry suffers from a complex. When one side of his face gets burnt, he always remains withdrawn and defiant. He doesn't like to be near people as he can't stand their uncharitable looks and remarks. Mr. Lamb himself has a tin leg but has a very positive attitude towards life and people. He shows the right way of judging men, matters and life to young Derry.

Summary :

1. Derry Enters Lamb's Garden

Derry walks slowly and cautiously through the long grass. He enters Lamb's garden. Mr. Lamb speaks to him when he is close at hand. Derry is startled. He is apologetic. He didn't know if there was anybody there. Mr. Lamb tries to make Derry comfortable. Mr. Lamb says that he can pick up crab apples. Derry need not go away on Mr. Lamb's account. Mr. Lamb doesn't mind who comes in the garden. The gate is always open. Derry did not need to climb over the wall of the garden. Derry says he didn't come there for stealing apples. Mr. Lamb assures him that he can stay there.

2. Derry's Burnt Face

Derry says that people are afraid of him. They look at his face and find it terrible and ugly. Even when, he himself sees his face in the mirror, he is afraid of himself. Mr. Lamb says that he will get the ladder and a stick and pull down crab apples. He makes jelly from them. Derry doesn't want Mr. Lamb to change the subject. He wants to talk about himself. Mr. Lamb thinks that perhaps Derry's face got burnt in a fire. Derry corrects him. Derry says he got acid all down on that side of his face and burnt it all way. The acid ate up his face.

3. Lamb Has a Tin Leg

Mr. Lamb is old. Derry is young. Derry has got a burnt face. Lamb has got a tin leg. Similarly, one green plant is called a weed and another a flower. All are life. Mr. Lamb lost his leg. Some kids call him "Lamey Lamb". A tin leg and a burnt face are not the only things to be taken notice of or to be stared at. There are so many other things like crab apples, weeds and sunflowers. They deserve our attention and Mr. Lamb enjoys life and people as much as he can.

4. Derry Suffers from a Complex

Derry says that people have already told him many fairy stories to console him. They say that it is not important what you look like. People tell these comforting lies only to console him. But Derry knows that he will not change. He will stay as a 'monstrous beast'. No one will kiss him ever. Only his mother and she too kisses him on the other side of his face. He doesn't care if nobody ever kissed him. Mr. Lamb asks Derry if he doesn't care to be kissed by pretty girls. Girls with long hair and large eyes. Will he not like to be kissed by the people he loves? Derry replies that no one will ever kiss and love him. He is grieved that he won't ever look different. Even when he grows as old as Mr. Lamb, he will look the same. He will still only have "half a face". Mr. Lamb replies that Derry may have a 'half face' but the world has got a 'whole face'. He should look at it.

5. Derry Indulges in Self-pity

Derry is obsessed with what people say and comment. People remind Derry that there are people even worse than him. They might be blind, dumb or may be mad by birth. Sometimes people can be very cruel. A woman looked at him. She said to another woman. "Look at that, that's a terrible thing". She told her that only a mother could love such a

face. Mr. Lamb advises Derry to keep his ears shut. Derry says that he doesn't like being close to people. He can't stand people staring at him and passing cruel comments about him.

6. Mr. Lamb Shows the Way

Mr. Lamb reminds Derry that he can't lock himself up in a room and never leave it. Then, he narrates to him the story of a man who was afraid of everything in the world. So he went into his room, locked the door and stayed there. A picture fell off the wall on to his head and killed him. Mr. Lamb says that he enjoys life as it comes. He sits in the sun and reads books. He is not fond of curtains. Mr. Lamb motivates Derry. Derry has got two arms, two legs, eyes and ears. He has got a tongue and also a brain. He can get on the way he wants like all others. And if he chooses, he can "get on better than all the rest". Derry asks "How?" Mr. Lamb replies that Derry can live the same way as he himself does. For him everybody is welcome. The gate is always open. Derry says that there are some people whom he hates. Mr. Lamb says that hatred is more harmful than a bottle of acid. Derry gets up and prepares to go. He says he will come back. Mr. Lamb says that generally people say so but never come back.

7. Derry Comes Back but Mr. Lamb Dies

Derry comes home. His mother warns him not to go back there. Derry assures her that she need not fear. Only an old man with a tin leg lives there. He has a huge house and a garden. He is Mr. Lamb. He says things nobody else has ever said. Derry runs to Mr. Lamb's garden. He opens the garden gate. He cries that he has come back. Suddenly, there is a crash. The ladder falls back, Mr. Lamb also falls down with it. He dies. Derry begins to weep. He goes on crying "Lamey-Lamb! I did come back".

Short Answer Type Questions

[2 marks each]

(Answer the following questions in about 30-40 words each.)

Q. 1. Who was Derry? What problems did he have?

[Comptt., Outside Delhi Set-III, 2017]

OR

Who was Derry? What did he suffer from?

[Comptt., Delhi Set I/II/III, 2012]

Ans. Value Points : – fourteen year old boy with one side of his face disfigured with acid
– kept to himself, did not mix with people
– full of frustration and anger
– could not take criticism

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2017] 2

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

Q. 2. Why does Derry tell Mr. Lamb that he is afraid of seeing himself in the mirror in the story 'On The Face of It'?

[CBSE, SQP II, 2013]

Ans. 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 that he too is afraid of himself when he sees his face in the mirror. 2

Q. 3. What consolation did people give Derry when they saw his acid burnt face?

[CBSE, SQP I, 2012, Comptt. Outside Delhi Set-I, 2010]

OR

How do people console Derry when they look at his face?

[Foreign Set III, 2017]

Ans. Value Points : – people console him – by quoting the fairy tale- 'Beauty and the Beast'
– said 'it is not what you look like but what you are inside is important'

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2017] 2

Detailed Answer : 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 a wheel-chair, or are crazy and dribble.

Q. 4. How do people react to Derry's face?

[Foreign Set II, 2017]

Ans. Value Points : – they stare at him

– feel afraid of him

– pity him [CBSE Marking Scheme, 2017] 2

Detailed Answer : When people looked at Derry's burnt face, they kept staring at him. They often reacted as if they were afraid of him. Some of them pitied him and consoled him by saying sympathetic words.

Q. 5. How did Mr. Lamb keep himself busy when it was a bit cool?

[Delhi Set-I, II & III, 2012]

Ans. Value Points : Gets a ladder and a stick and pulls down the crab apples / makes jelly / enjoys the humming of bees in his garden / sits in the Sun / reads books / makes toffee with honey.

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2012] 2

Detailed Answer : When it's a bit cool, Mr. Lamb keeps himself busy by getting a ladder and a stick and pulling down the crab apples. He then makes jelly out of them. He keeps enjoying the humming of bees, reading books and sitting in the sun.

Q. 6. What peculiar things does Derry notice about the old man, Lamb?

[Outside Delhi Set-I, 2012]

Ans. Value Points : That he leaves the gates always open / welcomes strangers / the way Derry was treated / received by Lamb / he spoke things that others never did / lives in a huge house and a garden without curtains.

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2012] 2

Detailed Answer : Mr. Lamb always leaves his gates open to welcome strangers. He lived in a big house without curtains. Derry also found Mr. Lamb's conversation peculiar. He did not understand the questions Mr. Lamb asked him. He asked Derry to always keep his ears shut. Then, he told him the story of the man who locked himself in his room to escape from any kind of danger and died when a picture fell off the wall on his head and killed him.

Commonly Made Error

- Some students answer vague points about the nature of Lamb and not specific observations of Derry.

Answering Tips

- The answer must cover all the observations noted by Derry about Lamb during their first meeting.

Q.7. Why does Derry stay away from people ?
[Outside Delhi Set II, 2015]

OR

How did Derry's handicap damage his life ?

[Comptt., Outside Delhi Set I, 2015]

OR

Why does Derry say : "I'm not afraid. People are afraid of me ?"

Ans. Derry suffers from the complex that most of the physically impaired persons suffer from. He has become withdrawn and defiant. He has got a burnt face. He thinks that he is the ugliest person on the earth. People find his face very terrible. So he is not afraid of the people but they are afraid of him. 2

Q.8. What changes took place in Derry when he met Mr. Lamb ?
[Comptt., Delhi Set I, 2015]

Ans. 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 avoided 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 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 realized that it doesn't matter how he looked. What matters is how he treats himself and life. He became positive again. 2

Q.9. In what sense is the friendship between Mr. Lamb and Derry fruitful ?

[HOTS] [Comptt., Delhi Set III, 2014]

Ans. Value Points :

- Lamb helps Derry overcome his sense of inferiority
- advises him not to pay too much attention to what others thought about him; to open up his heart to let love enter / to celebrate life and its wonders
- brings about a positive change in Derry's attitude
- Mr. Lamb got the company of Derry to enjoy more often [CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 2

Detailed Answer : Mr. Lamb is optimistic whereas Derry is pessimistic and has an inferiority complex. Mr. Lamb helps him overcome his inferiority complex and advises him not to pay much attention to what others thought about him. He asked him to enjoy life and the beauty of nature. He brings about a positive change in Derry.

Commonly Made Error

- Some students answer it explaining similarities between Derry and Mr. Lamb.

Answering Tips

- The answer must state how each helped the other.

Q.10. Why does Derry's mother not want him to go back to visit Mr. Lamb ?

[Delhi / Outside Delhi 2018]

Ans. Being new to the area, Derry's mother knew little about Mr. Lamb. Moreover, he lived all alone and had no contact with the outside world. She had seen children tease him and had heard people talk adversely about him. So, she does not want Derry to be in his company.

- Was new to the place and had not much personal information about him/ had heard adverse remarks made by people about Mr. Lamb/ Lamb leading a lonely life, no contact with outside world/ earlier, children used to tease and chase him, so would not be a healthy company for her son. [CBSE Marking Scheme 2018] 2

Q.11. Why did Derry insist that he would go back to Mr. Lamb ?
[Comptt., Delhi Set II, 2015]

OR

What qualities of Mr. Lamb attracted Derry to him?
[Outside Delhi Set-I, 2009]

Ans. Derry is a young boy who suffers from a sense of inferiority complex because of his burnt face. He comes to Mr. Lamb's garden in search of loneliness, where he met Mr. Lamb. Mr. Lamb is very social. He keeps the gate open for everybody. Mr. Lamb has a tin leg, children tease him by calling "Lamey-Lamb". But he does not mind it. Derry is surprised to see a man who has a problem and suffers from no complex. Mr. Lamb motivates Derry to move forward in life. 2

Q.12. Why did Mr. Lamb help Derry ?

[Comptt., Outside Delhi, 2014]

Ans. Value Points :

- out of empathy and concern – both were handicapped; understood each other's plight
- to save the boy from self-pitying habit

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 2

Detailed Answer : Mr. Lamb and Derry both were handicapped. So, out of empathy Mr. Lamb understood Derry's plight and helped him to come out of his self-pitying habit.

Long Answer Type Questions

[6 marks each]

(Answer the following questions in about 125-150 words.)

Q. 1. What was Derry's infirmity ? How had it made him withdrawn and defiant ?

[Foreign, Set-III, 2014]

Ans. Value Points :

- had his face burnt by acid
- suffered from a tremendous sense of inferiority complex
- always conscious that his face was bad, terrible and the ugliest thing, people afraid of him, nobody would ever kiss him
- became withdrawn and defiant – didn't trust people

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 6

Detailed Answer : Derry's face had been burnt by acid. He suffered from a tremendous sense of inferiority complex. He was always conscious of the fact that his face was burnt 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.

Q. 2. Derry sneaked into Mr. Lamb's garden and it became a turning point in his life. Comment.

[HOTS] [Delhi Set I, 2016]

OR

Who was Mr. Lamb ? How did he make Derry gain confidence and come out of his shell ?

[Comptt; Delhi Set I/II/III, 2017]

Ans. Value Points

- Mr. Lamb – physically handicapped man with tin leg / lived alone
- Mr. Lamb not repulsed by Derry – accepts him as he is
- does not pity Derry
- does not react to Derry's rudeness
- does not force him to stay and listen to him
- makes him realise that handicaps are not obstacles
- opens the world to him : tells him to wait, watch and listen/doesn't expect him to do anything difficult

(Any two)

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2016] 6

Detailed Answer : Derry is a fourteen-year-old boy with a face burnt by acid. Mr. Lamb serves

Q. 13. If you were to give a different ending to the story, 'On the face of It' how would you end it ?

[Outside Delhi Set-I, II & III, 2013]

Ans. A different ending to the story would be on a happy note. Both Derry and Mr. Lamb collected crab-apples and lived merrily together. We should accept life as it comes. 2

as an ideal 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 hyper-sensitivity 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 ears shut. Nor does he possess a large and generous heart like that of Mr. Lamb, whom children called 'Lamey-Lamb' but Mr. Lamb does not mind it. He plays with them and gives them jelly and toffees. Derry, on the other hand, has developed a perverted mindset. The worst is that Derry distrusts the world and its people. We find a change in Derry towards 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 no more seems important to him.

Commonly Made Error

- A few of the students write the summary of the story.

Answering Tips

- The answer must explain the change in perspective of Derry towards life and society as a whole.

Q. 3. How is Derry's and Mr. Lamb's behavior and attitude different towards people because of their physical impairment ? [CBSE, SQP 2014-15]

Ans. Value Points :

Derry's behaviour – avoids seeing and meeting people – as people afraid/avoid to look at him – ugly – call him poor boy - hates to talk to people – people unsympathetic and cruel.

Mr. Lamb's attitude – loves to meet and talk to people – garden house open to all children – children tease him – make fun of him – Mr. Lamb not troubled – not afraid and shy of his physical impairment. [CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014-15] 6

Detailed Answer : Mr. Lamb and Derry both are physically impaired, Derry has a burnt face whereas Mr. Lamb has an artificial leg, but they both are very different in their behavior and attitude towards life. Derry avoids seeing people because he believes that people are afraid of him, he hates talking to people because he thinks that they are unsympathetic and cruel towards him.

Mr. Lamb loves talking to people. He has a garden which is open to all people. Though children tease him, he gladly shares toffees with them. Mr. Lamb has a very optimistic outlook towards life. He is neither afraid nor shy of his physical impairment.

Q. 4. Derry said "It ate me up." How did that fact affect his attitude towards life ? [Outside Delhi Set-I, 2013]

Ans. This incident affected Derry not only physically but also emotionally. Everyone's sympathy and adverse comments made him withdraw into his own shell. He isolated himself from the rest of the world and started hating people and life. People's sympathetic remarks and advice made him bitter. He had no friends with whom he could share his feelings. Thus, the acid not only ate up his face, but also it ate up his psyche completely. 6

Q. 5. What is the bond that unites the two-the old Mr. Lamb and Derry, the small boy ? How does the old man inspire the small boy ?

[Delhi Set-I, II & III, 2013]

OR

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

[Comptt., Delhi Set-I, II & III, 2011; Delhi Set-I & II, 2008]

OR

How did Lamb try to give courage to Derry ?

[Outside Delhi Set-I, 2010]

Ans. Derry is a fourteen-year-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 hyper-sensitivity 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 ears 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. 6

Q. 6. As Mr. Lamb told why did a man lock himself up in his room and what happened to him?

[Comptt., Delhi Set-I, 2013]

Ans. The man locked himself up because he was scared of everything. Everything in this world, like a bus might run over him or a man might breathe deadly germs onto him, or a donkey might kick him to death, or lightening might strike him down, or he might love a girl and the girl would leave him, and he might slip on a banana skin and fall and people who saw him would laugh their heads off. So he went into his room, locked the door, got into his bed, and stayed there. But unfortunately, a picture fell on his head and, at last, killed him. 6

Q. 7. What benefits did Derry reap from his association with Mr. Lamb ? [HOTS] [Delhi Set-III, 2014]

Ans. Derry was a fourteen-year-old young boy who suffered from a sense of inferiority complex due to his acid-burnt face. He never accepted himself like that and therefore, he was never able to reconcile himself with his physical disability. But, there was a positive change in him when he came into association with Mr. Lamb. He was surprised to notice that Mr. Lamb, despite his physical impairment, was an optimistic and cheerful man. He never felt miserable or pitiable. He played with children and always kept the doors and windows of his house open so as to welcome everybody at all times. This left a deep impression on Derry's mind. He liked the way Mr. Lamb took his disability and learnt how to deal with people and things that come in the path as hurdles. His attitude towards life took a turning point and he became a different man who wanted to meet the world with open arms like Mr. Lamb. 6

Q. 8. Both Derry and Lamb are victims of physical impairment but much more painful for them is the feeling of loneliness. Comment.

[Outside Delhi Set II, 2016]

Ans. Value Points

- Mr. Lamb and Derry – having different sorts of physical disabilities
- Mr. Lamb had a tin leg
- Derry – acid burnt face
- both suffered alienation from society
- not accepted by society
- loneliness caused constant pain for Derry but Mr. Lamb reconciled
- both expected a kind and considerate behaviour from others
- do not want sympathy
- Derry dislikes being pointed at, nicknamed, mocked at or made fun of : Mr. Lamb reconciled
- Derry sensitive about mother kissing only on the other cheek

(Any three)

[CBSE Marking Scheme, 2016] 6

Detailed Answer : Derry's main problem is his burnt face. One side of his face had been burnt by acid. He suffers from a tremendous sense of inferiority complex. He is always conscious of the fact that his face is "bad", "terrible" and "the ugliest thing". People are "afraid" of him. He tries to escape from people. He allows himself to be alienated from the world. On the other hand, Mr. Lamb doesn't allow his physical disability to come in his way. He accepts life as it comes. He has a positive attitude towards life, things and people. He doesn't find solace in escapism. Children tease him by calling him "Lamey-Lamb" but he doesn't mind it. One of his legs was blown off in the war. But he is full of life and enjoys it to his best. He enjoys sitting in the sun, reading books and growing weeds and flowers.

Derry is withdrawn and defiant. He doesn't trust people. He thinks that no one will ever love and

kiss him except his own mother. He can't stand people staring at him or passing uncharitable remarks. He is touchy and hyper-sensitive. Mr. Lamb is open-minded and open-hearted. All are welcome. He loves everybody and everything. He teaches Derry how to handle people and things.

- Q.9. Both Derry and Lamb are physically impaired and lonely. It is the responsibility of the society to understand and support people with infirmities so that they do not suffer from a sense of alienation. As a responsible citizen, write in about 100 words, what you would do to bring about a change in the lives of such people.**

[HOTS] [Outside Delhi Set-I, 2014]

Ans. Value Points :

- will try to be supportive / considerate
- will not be just sympathetic but will be encouraging / be empathetic
- will treat them as equals / encourage them to take part in all activities
- will advocate inclusive education / not separate schools
- will campaign for social acceptance
- will raise hope and encouragement / empowerment.

(Any three)

(Any relevant answer, with or without reference to the text, first or third person account should be accepted.) [CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014] 6

Detailed Answer : Like Derry and Lamb, there are so many persons in this world who are impaired and lonely. They suffer from an inferiority complex and a sense of alienation. They remain aloof and turn themselves into a recluse. It is our duty to accept them and make them realise that this world belongs to them as well. We should treat them in a kind and sympathetic way. We should not look down upon them with pity in our eyes as they will feel bad and disheartened with such treatment. We should accept them with open arms and make them realise that their disability is not their fault. We should fill their hearts with hope and optimism and allow them to feel equal with the rest of the world.

Commonly Made Error

- Some students waste effort on answering the problems faced by such people.

Answering Tips

- Instead, the answer must focus on suggesting ways in which they can be better taken care of.

- Q.10. Optimism in one's attitude helps deal with all the challenges in life. Prove the statement by referring to the character Mr. Lamb from the chapter "On the Face of It".**

[SQP 2018-19]

Ans. Value Points:

- Derry- physically handicapped (burnt face), knows he is different, has poor self-esteem, feel victimized
- Mr. Lamb- physically handicapped (does not have one leg) but has positive attitude, he is understanding, friendly towards people, provides confidence to Derry
- example of bees/ weeds in the garden/man afraid of death/beauty and the beast etc./children calling him Lamey Lamb/no curtains in house/ attitude of "waiting, watching, listening"

[CBSE Marking Scheme 2018-19] 6

Detailed Answer : Derry was a fourteen year old young boy who suffered from a sense of inferiority complex due to his acid-burnt face. He never accepted himself like that and therefore, he was never able to reconcile himself with his physical disability. He had a poor self-esteem and felt victimized. But, there was a positive change in him when he came in association with Mr. Lamb. He was surprised to notice that Mr. Lamb, despite his physical impairment, was an optimistic and cheerful man. He had a positive bent of mind. He never felt miserable or pitiable. He played with children and always kept the doors and windows of his house open so as to welcome everybody. He was very warm and friendly towards Derry. He told him that he had a weed garden because he felt weeds are also green living plants like others. Why should, then, they be called weeds. He also said that children called him 'Lamey lamb' whenever he went out into the streets but he didn't feel bad about it. He, on the other hand, made toffees to give them to the children whenever they met him. Derry was quite impressed with his attitude of 'waiting, watching, listening'. This provided confidence to Derry and he was a changed personality after meeting Mr. Lamb. Thus, we can say that optimism in one's attitude helps deal with all the changes in life.

