INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

Class: XII	**Department: ENGLISH**	**2026 - 27**
VISTAS	**Topic: ON THE FACE OF IT : SUSAN HILL**	

Summary -

The play "On the Face of It" brings out the idea that people who have a handicap/physical impairment of some kind generally suffer from a sense of loneliness and mental pain.

Derry climbs the wall of Lamb's Garden and enters it. He thinks that the garden is uninhabited. He is surprised to find Lamb there. The behavior of Lamb surprises him because he does not show interest in his half- burnt face. He draws Lamb's attention towards his face. He tells him that his face is ugly and horrible. Nobody likes him. The people show signs of fear when they look at his face and avoid his presence. They call him a poor boy because one side of his face is burnt. Even his mother kisses him on the right side of his face.

Lamb draws Derry's attention towards his garden. He tells him that he has a tin leg. He lost his leg in the war. The children call him 'Lamey-Lamb'. He tells him peculiar things. He tells him that he lives in the house alone without curtains. He does not want to shut out the world. The buzzing of bees is singing for him. He loves reading, picking crab apples and making toffees for children. He tells Derry that the people have other things to do and see rather than looking at him. The bitterness and hatred he has inside him could be more damaging than the acid that burnt his face or the bomb that blew up his leg. He tells him that he should look at all those people who are in pain but never complain or cry. He should think about those who are worse than him.

The positive attitude of lamb, his kindness and his ability to do things himself without any help impresses him. He promises him to comeback. Although his mother stops him yet he goes to meet lamb. Lamb falls down from the ladder. Derry finds Lamb lying on the grass. In this way we find that Lamb teaches Derry the art of discovering beauty and leading happy life.

CHARACTER SKETCH
LAMB

1. LONELY MAN
2. TIN LEG
3. POSITIVE APPROACH TOWARDS LIFE
4. KEPT HIMSELF ALWAYS BUSY WITH ACTIVITIES
5. REVIVES THE DEAD FEELINGS OF DERRY TOWARDS LIFE

CHARACTER SKETCH
DERRY

1. YOUNG BOY WITH BURNT FACE
2. LIVES SECLUDED FROM OTHER CHILDREN
3. INSECURE ABOUT THE WAY HE LOOKS
4. SUFFERED MANY RUDE REMARKS
5. TRANSFORMS HIMSELF AFTER SPENDING TIME WITH MR LAMB

COMPETENCY BASED QUESTIONS-

MR LAMB : Sit in the sun. Read books. Ah, you thought it was an empty house, but inside, it's full. Books and other things. Full.
DERRY : But there aren't any curtains at the he windows.

(i) The description of the house indicates that Mr. Lamb _____.

(ii) The expression does not like shutting things out, shuttingthings in ' suggests Mr. Lamb's

(a) welcoming nature.

(b) poverty-stricken existence.

(c) lack of resources.

(d) confused state of mind.

(iii) Mr. Lamb spends his time_____.

I. reading books

II. cooking meals

III. shutting things out

IV. enjoying beauties of nature

Which of the following options are appropriate ?

(a) I and IV

(b) II, III and IV

(c) I and II

(d) I and III

(iv) On the basis of the extract, study the two statements, I and IIgiven below :

I. Mr. Lamb liked meeting people.

II. Mr. Lamb accepted life as it came.Choose the most appropriate option :

(a) I can be inferred from the extract, but II cannot.

(b) II can be inferred from the extract, but I cannot.

(c) Both I and II can be inferred from the extract.

(d) Neither I nor II can be inferred from the extract.

2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

MR LAMB: I'm not fond of curtains. Shutting things out, shutting things in. I like the light and the darkness, and the windows open, to hear the wind.

DERRY: Yes. I like that. When it's raining, I like to hear it on the roof.

MR LAMB: So, you're not lost, are you? Not altogether? You do hear things. You listen.

DERRY: They talk about me. Downstairs, When I'm not there. 'What'll he ever do? What's going to happen to him when we've gone? However will he get on in this world? Looking like that? With that on his face?' That's what they say.

i. Why is Mr. Lamb not fond of curtains?

(a) Because he does not like shutting things out.

(b) Because he likes shutting things in.

(c) Because he does not like the light and the darkness.

(d) Because when it's raining, he likes to hear it on the roof.

ii. "So you're not lost, are you? Not altogether?" Why does Mr. Lamb say so?

(a) Mr. Lamb comments that some humanness is still left.

(b) Mr. Lamb remarks this to fill him with positivity, to boost Derry's self-confidence and to change his negative

approach towards life.

(c) When Derry says that he likes the sound of raindrops on roof, Mr Lamb comments that life has not distorted

his vision totally.

(d) All of the above

iii. Why did Mr. Lamb help Derry?

(a) He wanted to see Derry happy and confident

(b) He wanted Derry to fear the world

(c) He wanted him to feel sorry for himself.

(d) He wanted Derry to lose confidence in himself.

(a) Because Mr. Lamb loved children

(c) Because Mr. Lamb showed confidence in him

iv. What made Derry share his feelings and fear with Mr. Lamb?

(a) Because Derry had no one to share his feelings with

(b) Because Mr. Lamb loved children

(c) Because Mr. Lamb showed confidence in him

(d) Because Mr. Lamb threatened him to tell

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

Question 1.
What qualities of Mr. Lamb attracted Derry to him?
Answer:
Derry suffers from a terrible complex. But his meeting with Mr. Lamb is a turning point in his life. He gives confidence to Derry and encourages him to develop a positive attitude towards life. Derry's life now has a new meaning and purpose and for this all the credit goes to Mr. Lamb's motivation and words of encouragement.

Question 2.
What did Derry's mother think of Mr. Lamb?
Answer:
Derry's mother did not think very highly of Mr. Lamb and claimed to have heard not really good things about him. She had been told and warned by people about Mr. Lamb and so she tells Derry not to go back to him. She also tried to hold him back but he does go back to Mr. Lamb.

Question 3.
What consolation did people give when they saw his acid burnt face?
Answer:
Derry's face was burnt by acid on one side. When people saw Derry's acid burnt face they tried to console him by telling him fairy tales. They said that it was not important what he looked like. Derry knew that people lied and showed sympathy only to comfort him and that he would not change and would continue to look like a 'monstrous beast'.

Question 4.
Mr. Lamb told Derry the story of a man who hid himself in his room. Why did the man do so and with what result?
Answer:
Mr. Lamb told Derry the incident of a timid man who hid himself in his room and refused to come out lest he should meet some fatal accident. But, ironically, he died in his room itself because a picture hanging on the wall fell off it, landed on his head and killed him.

Question 5.
Why does Mr. Lamb leave his gate always open?

Answer:
Mr. Lamb always keeps his gate open because he does not mind strangers entering his house, He is an extremely social person and is ever ready to welcome anyone who enters his garden.

Question 6.
How does Mr. Lamb keep himself busy when it is a bit cool?

Answer:
When it gets a bit cool Mr. Lamb pulls down the ripe crab apples from the trees with the help of a ladder and a

stick. He then makes jelly from them as that is a good time of the year to pick and make jelly out of orange and golden crab apples.

Question 7.
What peculiar things does Derry notice about the old man, Lamb? (All India 2017)
Answer:
Derry thinks that the old man. Mr. Lamb, is peculiar and says peculiar things. Derry notices that although Mr. Lamb talks about his friends he has not seen anyone visiting the old man, who lives all by himself. Even when he asks Mr. Lamb to name his friends, Mr. Lamb fails to give him any name. Mr. Lamb refuses to admit his loneliness. Also, he asks Derry questions he does not understand. There are no curtains at the windows in his house. He likes the light and darkness and hears the wind with the window open.

Question 8.
Who was Derry? What did he suffer from? (Comptt. Delhi 2019)
Answer:
Derry is a complex-ridden fourteen year old boy. He is a victim of inferiority complex after acid accidently spilled and burnt one side of his face. His handicap has filled him with bitterness and so Derry suffers more on account of the pain that his own views of how everyone hates him, causes him.

Question 10.
In what sense is the friendship between Mr. Lamb and Derry fruitful?
Answer:
After his meeting with Mr. Lamb, Derry is gradually able to shed his complexes and rediscover the joys of life. Mr. Lamb gives confidence and motivates him to move forward in life. Derry's short interaction with Mr. Lamb leaves an indelible imprint on the young boy's mind and his attitude towards life undergoes a drastic change.

Q11. Comment on the moral value of the play.
Suggested Answer / Value Points-
The moral of the play is very loud and clear. The physically disabled should focus on the brighter side of life and not brood over their 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
.
Q12. Mr. Lamb says to Derry; 'it's all relative, beauty and the beast', what essentially does hemean by that?
Suggested Answer / Value Points-
Mr. Lamb tells Derry that it all depends upon people's individual perceptions. A thing is abeauty for one while that beauty may be a beast for others.

Additional Short Answer Type Questions:

Q1."Mind the apples!", says Mr Lamb. Why do you think, does he issue this instruction, to whom and how many times?
Ans. Mr. Lamb issues this instruction to Derry, a boy of fourteen, who climbs over the garden wall and enters the garden. He asks Derry twice to mind the apples which have been blown

down by the wind from the trees and strewn in the grass. He (Derry) could puthis foot on some apple, fall down and hint himself.

Q2. What is the attitude of Mr Lamb to the small boy who comes to his garden ? Ans.
Mr Lamb's attitude to the small boy is quite gentle, protective and accommodating.Like an elder in the family offering advice and instructions to the younger members, Mr.Lamb advises the young boy to mind the apples lest he should trip. He also advises the boynot to feel afraid.

Q3. What explanation does the small boy offer for coming into the garden? How does Mr. Lamb react to it?
Ans. The boy thought that this was an empty place. He did not know there was anybody there. Mr Lamb assures him that it is all right. He asks the boy what he is afraid of. He tells the boy that the house is empty as he is in the garden and is likely to stay there.

Q4. "T 'm not afraid. People are afraid of me," says Derry. What do people think on seeing his face? How do they react then?
Ans. On looking at Derry's face they find it bad and frightful. They think that it is the ugliest thing they have ever seen. They call him a poor boy as one side of his face has been burnt by acid. Some of them are afraid of his ugly and horrible face.

Q5. How does Mr Lamb change the subject from ugly face to ripe apples? OR

How does Mr Lamb keep himself busy when it is a bit cooler ?
Ans. There is a momentary pause in the conversation. Then Mr Lamb changes the subject. He says that when it is a bit cooler, he will get the ladder and a stick. Then he will pull downthose ripe crab apples. He makes jelly. He calls these orange coloured and golden apples magic fruit. September is a good time to make jelly. He tells the boy that he could help him.

Q6. Why, according to Derry, has the old man changed the subject?
Ans. Derry says that people always change the subject. They don't ask him about his physical impairment. They simply pretend that it is not true and isn't there. They don't want the boy to mind and get upset. He thinks that the old man has changed the subjectbecause he is afraid to ask him about his burnt face.

Q7. "You got burned in a fire," says Mr Lamb. What do you think, had happened to Derry's face?
Ans. Derry's face did not get burned in a fire. He got acid all down that side of his face and it burned it all away. Derry says that this acid not only ate his face up, it also ate him up. One side of his face is ugly and it won't ever be any different.

Q8. How does Mr Lamb react to Derry's query: 'Aren't you interested'?
Ans. Mr Lamb tells Derry that he is interested in anybody and anything. There's nothing God made that does not interest him. Fruit and flowers, trees and herbs, grass and weedsall interest him. Even stuff or rubbish is interesting. He finds no essential difference between a "weed' and another 'flower' as both represent life—developing or growing.

Q9. "We're not the same", says Derry. How does Mr Lamb try to convince him that there is no essential difference between them?

Ans. Derry and Mr Lamb are both of the same species. They represent various stages of growth. Derry is young, Mr Lamb is old. Both suffer from the same physical impairment.Derry has a burnt face. The old man has got a tin leg. But this physical disability is not important. What is important is that both are alive. Derry is standing there whereas Mr Lamb is sitting.

Q10. How, according to Derry, does the tin leg not trouble Mr Lamb? What explanation does the old man offer?

Ans. Derry thinks that the old man can put on trousers and cover up his tin leg. Then no one sees it. So, people don't have to notice and stare at, as they do at his face. Mr Lamb replies that some people do notice and stare at his disability. Some don't. In the end, theyget tired of it. Moreover, there are plenty of things to stare at.

Q11."There's plenty of other things to stare at." Which 'things' are worth staring at and why?

Ans. According to the old man there are plenty of things to stare at. These include crab apples or the weeds or a spider climbing up a silken ladder, or his tall sun-flowers. All of them are beautiful and 'growing'. Derry is surprised at the mention of 'things'. Mr Lamb tries to convince him that it is all relative. Then he mentions 'Beauty and the Beast'.

Q12. How does Derry interpret the fairy story 'Beauty and the Beast'? What does he feel about himself?

Ans. Derry says that he has been told that story before. It teaches us that outward appearance does not matter. It is what one is inside that is important. Handsome is thathandsome does. Beauty loved the monstrous beast for himself. When she kissed him, he changed into a handsome prince. No one except Derry's mother kisses him. She too kisses him on the other side of the face. He has developed a negative attitude and says he does not care ' "if nobody ever kissed" him.

Q13. How, according to Derry, do people try to console those suffering from some physical impairment?

Ans. They ask the person to look at all those people who are in pain and brave. They nevercry or complain. They don't feel sorry for themselves. Then the person is asked to think of all those persons worse off than him. One might have been blinded or born deaf, or confined toa wheelchair, or be crazy and dribble. Since Derry has none of these disabilities he is far better placed.

Q14. Why do these arguments fail to console Derry ?

Ans. Derry has developed negative attitude. He says that the arguments to console him willnot make his face change. He feels more hurt and pained by the comments of persons or what he overhears. Once he heard a woman in the street whispering to another, "Look at that, that's a terrible thing. That's a face only a mother could love." Derry calls it cruel of them.

Q15. How does Mr Lamb try to remove the baseless fears of Derry'?

Ans. Derry has developed withdrawal symptoms. He doesn't like being near people. Mr Lamb tells him the story of a person who was afraid of everything in the world. So he went into his room and locked the door. He got into his bed and stayed there for a while. Then apicture fell off the wall on to his head and killed him.

Q16. Which fears did the man suffer from? What is the common factor in all of them?

Ans. The man feared that a bus might run him over, or a man might breathe deadly germs onto him, or a donkey might kick him to death or lightning 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. Most of these fears are imaginary.

Q17. What peculiar things does Derry notice about the old man?
Ans. Derry thinks that the old man is peculiar. He says peculiar things. He asks questions which Derry does not understand. There are no curtains at the windows in his house. Helikes the light and darkness and hears the wind with the windows open.

Q18. What does Derry listen about himself? How does he react to it?
Ans. Derry listens to what his parents talk about him downstairs when he is not there. They seem to be anxious about him and his future. What he will ever do and how will he ever get on in that world. What is going to happen to him with that bum mark on his face. They say what is going to happen to him when they have died.

Q19. In what ways does Mr Lamb inspire Derry to overcome his physical disability?
Ans. Mr Lamb tells Derry that he 'has got two arms, two legs and eyes and ears. He has gota tongue and a brain. He will get on the way he wants, like all the rest. And if he chooses and sets his mind to it, he could get on even better than all the rest.

Q20. "People are never just nothing. Never." Why does Mr Lamb say so? Why does he advise Derry not to hate anyone?
Ans. Mr Lamb says that he has friends everywhere. Derry says that the people passing us in the street are not our friends. Mr Lamb tells him that they are not enemies either. When Derry says they are "Just nothing", Mr Lamb makes this remark. He tells Derrry that hatred does more harm than any bottle of acid. Acid only bums the face, but hatred may bum a person away inside.

Q21. How should people be judged?
Ans. People should not be judged by what they look like. They must be judged by their actions. Appearances may be deceptive. On the other hand, people with physical impairments overcome their disabilities and perform wonderful feats in different spheres.

Q22. How, according to Mr Lamb, can one overcome of sense of hurt or humiliation caused by remarks at one's physical disability?
Ans. Mr Lamb does not provide a straight forward solution. He says that in the street kidsshout "Lamey-Lamb" at him. Still they come to his garden. They are not afraid of him because he is not afraid of them. He simply ignores their comments. He concentrates on other things which are encouraging and positive.

Q23. What possibility does Derry indicate in the old man's act of getting the crab apples down? What is its dramatic importance?
Ans. Derry says that if the old man fell down the ladder and broke his neck, he might lie onthe grass and die, in case he was alone in the garden. This observation proves prophetic.
The last scene shows the ladder falling back with Mr Lamb. The playwright uses the deviceof foreshadowing to prepare us for the eventual end.

Q24. What does Derry want to know? How, according to the old man, can he know that?

Ans. Derry wants to know what he could do. The old man tells him that he does not know everything. He can't tell the boy what to do. He has to find it out himself by waiting, watching, listening sitting here or going there. Derry says that he wants something no one else has got or ever will be. Something just his own.

25. What makes Derry think that the old man is always alone and miserable? Whatdoes he tell the old man?

Ans. Derry asks Mr Lamb whether the persons who come there talk to him and ask him things. As usual, Mr Lamb says that some do, some don't. He asks them as he likes to learn.This makes Derry think that nobody ever comes there.

He tells the old man that he is there all alone by himself and miserable. He says no one would know if he were alive or dead and nobody cares.

Q26. Why does Derry's mother oppose his going back to the old man's garden?

Ans. Derry's mother tells him that she has heard things about the old man. In fact, she has been warned. Though they have lived there for three months, she knows what is worth knowing and Derry is not to go back there.

Q27. What argument does Derry give to convince his mother why he wants to go to the old man's garden?

Ans. Derry says that the old man has a tin leg. He lives in a huge house without curtains. He has a garden. Derry wants to be there and listen to things that matter. Things nobody else has ever said. Things he wants to think about. They are not about his face and how he looks.

Q28.What makes Derry resolve to go to the old man?

Ans. He no longer cares about his face and looks. He is more concerned with what he thinks and feels, what he wants to see and find out and hear. He knows that if he does not go back there, he will never go anywhere in that world again. He wants the world. He no longer shuns it or avoids the people.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. **What is it that draws Derek towards Mr. Lamb in spite of himself?**

   Ans: When Derek meets Mr. Lamb for the first time – wants to run away – feels embarrassed. However the old man startles him with his strange talk – Derek is surprised – Mr.Lamb does not mind his stealthy entry – further surprised when Mr. Lamb says he's not as ugly as he believes himself to be – Mr. Lamb talks about his interest in everything created by God including weeds – encourages Derek by saying "you've got two arms, two legs…you'll get on the way you want, like the rest". Mr.Lamb'stalk about everything and everybody being essentially the same, his notion of beauty being relative, his concept of the world and friendship mesmerize and baffle Derek – fascinated by the old man. Derek sheds his complex of being ugly – rediscovers the joy of life. It is not only Mr.Lamb's strange ideas that attract Derek but also his loneliness and longing for company – he returns to him at the end- the two have a great affinity – both have suffered loneliness – both long for company.

2. **What is the significance of Derek's words, "I thought it was empty…an empty house" in the play?**

   Ans: Derek climbs over the boundary wall and enters Mr. Lamb's garden – Lamb not surprised at this as he's used to seeing children coming in to steal and eat apples – but

Derek has come into the garden out of curiosity – when Lamb sees him, Derek is embarrassed and tries to give an explanation.
Derek's words are significant – points out to his terrible sense of frustration, loneliness and isolation on account of his severely burnt face – these words also prompt Lamb to speak about his loneliness – these words go a long way in Lamb's understanding of Derek's character and his subsequent efforts in helping Derek come out of his inferiority complex, poor self-regard and self-rejection – these words are a bitter reminder of the bitterness that has crept into Derek's mind due to other people's dislikeand hatred for his ugly face – a desperate cry of a fourteen-year-old boy for love and acceptance.

3. What is the bond that unites the two—old Mr Lamb and Derry, the small boy ? How does the old man inspire the small boy?
Ans. It is the bond of physical impairment that unites old Mr Lamb and the small boy, Derry. He got his leg blown off during the war and since then he has a tin leg. Derry got one side of his face burnt by acid. Their respective disabilities have not only caused pain and suffering to the body but to their mind and soul as well. They have to live with their physical impairment. Mr Lamb has adjusted himself to the ways of the world and stopped bothering about what people call him. He keeps himself busy in meaningful activities like picking apples, making jelly, bee-keeping and preparing toffee from honey. He loves reading books, hearing music, observing beautiful things and thinking about them. He inspires the small boy by saying that he has all the God-given organs intact. He has to decide what to do. He must work for it and then he can outshine even the others. Derry admits that 'Handsome is he who handsome does.' For him his face or how he looks does not matter now. He has become positive and has started thinking differently.

4. What impression do you form of Derry, the small boy, in the play 'On The Face Of It' ?
Ans. Derry is a fourteen year old boy who is very withdrawn and defiant. One side of his face has been burnt by acid and it looks very ugly and frightful. This incident has made him a victim of inferiority complex.
Derry is highly sensitive to what others—his parents, family friends, well-wishers or even total strangers say about him. Their anxiety, concern, fear and revulsion pains himmore than the bum did.
Derry is quite intelligent. When Mr Lamb mentions the story 'Beauty and the Beast', Derry at once comes out with its moral: 'Handsome is as handsome does.' He, however, evokes self-pity by saying, "I won't change… and no one'll kiss me ever."
Derry is sensitive to the sufferings of others. He arouses sympathy for himself by making enquiries about the old man's leg, pain and how he passes his life alone. Derryhas the capacity to learn. He is impressed by the old man's way of life in spite of physical handicap. In the end, he does not bother about his face or looks and wants tosee, hear, learn and think and do what no one else has done. In short, Derry is a developing character.

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