



Poetic Devices Used in the Poem

Alliteration: Repetition of initial consonant sounds in the same line.

- Stop that slouching and sit up straight
- I thought I told you to clean your shoes
- Stop that sulking at once, Amanda!

Allusion: A reference to statement, person, place etc. from history, religion, literature or any other field.

- Mermaid – To be free and contained in their own. (Taken from fairy tales)
- Rapunzel – Who lived alone on a tower for a long time. (Part of German fairy tale)

Metaphor: A device which compares two things or qualities which are unlike.

- Orphan – Who don't have nagging parents above their head as Amanda's.
- Languid, emerald sea – languid and emerald type qualities are assigned to sea.
- Silent is golden
- Freedom is sweet

Rhyme Scheme: aaba ccc aada eee aafa ggg aaha

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow:

1. (I am an orphan, roaming the street.
I pattern soft dust with my hushed, bare feet.
The silence is golden; the freedom is sweet.)

(a) Who is 'I' in the above extract?

'I' in the above extract is Amanda.

(b) Why does the speaker want to be an orphan?

The speaker wants to be an orphan because she thinks that an orphan has more freedom than herself. According to the speaker an orphan enjoys a carefree life and she too longs for that freedom.

(c) What is the orphan doing?

The orphan is wandering in the street making pattern in the dust with her bare feet.

(d) What do you mean by 'hushed bare feet'?

Feet without shoes which do not make any sound.

2.

Don't bite your nails, Amanda!

Don't hunch your shoulders, Amanda!

Stop that slouching and sit up straight,

Amanda!

(a) Who do you think could be the speaker in the stanza?

I think the speaker is Amanda's mother.

- (b) What is expected from Amanda?
Amanda is expected to sit straight.
- (c) Why do you think Amanda is being instructed/scolded?
Amanda is being scolded because the speaker wants to refine her conduct and manners.
- (d) What is the tone of the speaker?
The tone of the speaker is very commanding/authoritative.
3. (there is a languid, emerald sea,
Where the sole inhabitant is me-
A mermaid, drifting blissfully.)
- (a) Who does 'me' stand for?
Amanda
- (b) How does 'me' feel?
She feels withdrawn/lonely
- (c) Who is 'me' compared to?
Mermaid
- (d) Which word in the extract means opposite of 'sorrowfully'?
Blissfully.

TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED:

1: How old do you think Amanda is? How do you know this?

Amanda is about a 9-10 year old school going girl. She is being scolded for things typical for that particular age. Her parents are trying to inculcate in her good manners and etiquette. Amanda is very innocent and immature.

2: Who do you think is speaking to her?

One of her parents is speaking to her. Most probably it is her mother. In a traditional household, mother is held responsible for the conduct of child. In this case also, the range of instructions suggests that the speaker is Amanda's mother.

3: Why are stanzas 2, 4 and 6 given in parenthesis?

Stanzas 2, 4 and 6 are given in parenthesis because they reflect the inner thoughts of Amanda. They can be taken as the reaction of the child for the instructions given in stanzas 1, 3 and 5. Here, there is an alternate sequence of scolding of the mother, and corresponding reaction to it given by the child. Also, parenthesis is used here to make the reading of the poem friendly.

4: Who is the speaker in stanzas 2, 4 and 6? Do you think this speaker is listening to the speaker in stanzas 1, 3, 5 and 7?

Speaker of the stanzas 2, 4 and 6 is the child, Amanda. No, she is not paying any attention to the speaker of stanzas 1, 3, 5 and 7 as she is lost in a world of her own. Her imagination provides her an escape from her sorry reality.

5: What could Amanda do if she were a mermaid?

Amanda wishes to be a mermaid so she could carelessly move along on a languid (relaxed) emerald sea. She just wishes to be carried away by the green sea waves slowly and gradually. Amanda longs for a place where she is all by herself as her happiness is not dependent on any other human being. Hence, she desires to be a mermaid because for a child, mermaid is a symbol of freedom and wonder.

6: Is Amanda an orphan? Why does she say so?

No, Amanda is not an orphan, though she wishes to be one. She is so much stressed with the continuous nagging of her parents that she imagines herself to be better without them. The mere

presence of her parents around her depresses her. Amanda is a little girl who seeks 'golden' silence and 'sweet' freedom. She wishes to roam around streets and draw patterns with her bare feet. Indeed it is horribly depressing that Amanda expects being an orphan.

7: Do you know the story of Rapunzel? Why does she want to be Rapunzel?

Rapunzel's story revolves around her life on a tower. Rapunzel was made to live on a high tower by a witch. She eventually got used to living there. She was happy and satisfied with her life. Rapunzel had very long golden hair, using which the witch used to pay her a visit. The fate of Rapunzel took a turn when one day a prince came to meet her using her hair. The witch had punished both of them by separating them. Finally they met after a couple of years only to be united forever this time.

Amanda wishes to live like Rapunzel on a high tower away from everyone. She seeks peace and harmony. That is the reason Amanda wishes to be like Rapunzel. However, she also makes a point that in order to avoid being disturbed she would never let her hair down for anyone to climb to her. She needs no one to make her life happy.

8: What does the girl yearn for? What does this poem tell you about Amanda?

A girl like Amanda yearns for freedom and space for herself. She is incapable to fulfil the expectations of her parents. Amanda is no less than a symbol for all the children who face similar fate irrespective of class, colour or nationality. Traditional societies demand a certain type of behaviour from the individuals and the training to produce such begins at a very young age. Parents ignore the innocence and understanding level of their children and thereby the young ends up killing their imagination and thoughts.

9: Read the last stanza. Do you think Amanda is sulking and moody?

No, Amanda is neither sulking nor moody. She is simply not interested enough in the nagging business of her parents. Amanda cares more about her imagination and thought process over the manners her parents are trying to inculcate into her.

Extra Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and choose the correct option

Question 1 :

Don't bit your nails, Amanda!

Don't hunch your shoulders, Amanda!

Stop that slouching and sit up straight,

Amanda!

i) Who is giving instructions to Amanda!

- a) Teacher
- b) Grandmother
- c) Mother**
- d) Father

ii) What does Amanda do to her shoulders?

a) Stretches

b) Hunches

c) Keep them loose

d) None of these

iii) What is Amanda's sitting posture?

a) Sitting straight

b) Bending on the chair

c) Slouching

d) Not sitting at all

iv) What is the literary device used in the third line?

a) Metaphor

b) Alliteration

c) Personification

d) Simile

Question 2 :

(There is a languid, emerald sea,

where the sole inhabitant is me-

a mermaid, drifting blissfully.)

i) Who do these lines refer to?

a) Amanda

b) Mermaid

c) Amanda's sister

d) None of these

ii) Why is this stanza given within brackets?

a) to show inner thoughts of mother

b) day dreaming by Amanda

c) to show the contrast

d) Both (b) and (c)

iii) Give the word from the stanza which means “free flowing act of going with motion and force”.

a) languid

b) Blissfully

c) Drifting

d) Emerald

iv) Why does Amanda want to be sole inhabitant of sea?

a) Away from noise

b) Away from mother

c) Away from this noisy and disturbing atmosphere

d) Away from everyone

Short Answer type Questions and Answers

1: Write a short note on the title of the poem?

The title of the poem is Amanda as it revolves around the upbringing of a little girl named Amanda. Her life is full of struggles where she is denied freedom and expression. Amanda is so much irate (angry) that she escapes reality by living in her imaginative world. Through this gateway she experiences calmness, away from her nagging parents.

2: Why is Amanda getting scolded for having chocolate?

Amanda is getting scolded for having chocolates as previously it had caused her acne. Amanda's mother is very particular about such things. Amanda is made conscious about her physical appearance. It is very sad that at such a young age Amanda is made to worry about natural experiences.

3: How life on a tower would be different from life anywhere else for Amanda?

Life on a tower for Amanda would be very different from her reality. Just like Rapunzel, even she desires to live on top of a tower, away from everyday chaos.

Amanda suffers due to the constant nagging from her parents. She seeks, a place full of peace and serenity (total silence), where there is no one to disturb her. Hence, she wishes to live on a tower.

4: Why does Amanda seem moody most of the times?

Amanda seems moody most of the times because she is trying to make an escape from her sorry reality where she is nagged most of the times. It is indeed a sorry state for a small child like

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Amanda to bear. Here the only defence against such reality is her imagination where she often escapes to. Hence, it makes her look moody and uninterested.

5: Why does Amanda wish to be a mermaid, an orphan, or Rapunzel?

Amanda wishes to be a mermaid so she could drift alone by blissfully languid, emerald sea. She yearns to be an orphan so that she is able to roam the sea (streets) and make pattern using her bare feet in dust. Being Rapunzel means she could live carefree on a high tower. Amanda wishes to be these so that she could avoid her suffocating reality.

6: Do you consider Amanda's mother to be a nagging mother?

Amanda's mother is indeed a nagging mother. She is all about instructions and finding faults. No doubt it is her responsibility to instill good values in her daughter, but not at the cost of her child's happiness. One should know how to strike a balance between maintaining responsibilities and taking good care.

7: Is Amanda at fault at all?

Amanda is not at fault at all. It is too harsh for a small child to understand the concept of acne and not eating a chocolate. Love of parents is missing from Amanda's life. It is with pity that we look towards Amanda. There is nothing worst for a child who wishes to be an orphan. Amanda just seeks freedom from overpowering environment around her.

8: What is the central theme of the poem Amanda?

The poem Amanda by Robin Klein highlights the importance of upbringing of a child. It points out that upbringing doesn't involve making a child responsible and fit for the society only. It is important to note that upbringing involves understanding from both the sides. One cannot just force a child to be civilized and good mannered. Love and proper care is required in nurturing of a child.

Long Answer Type Questions and Answers

1: Discuss the importance of proper upbringing with reference to the poem Amanda by Robin Klein.

Upbringing plays an essential role in personality development of an adult. Whenever we wish to admire or criticise someone, we question the upbringing of that person. Robin Klein's poem highlights the tension in the 'proper' upbringing of a child. To instill good values and moral principles in a growing child comes as a foremost duty for the parents. However, the poem Amanda shows how a child feels trapped within the cluster of instruction. Amanda is no less than a victim in this situation. No proper space is given to her creativity. She is instructed for everything. As a result, she feels trapped and seeks an escape. Her imagination proves to be her escape and also her defence against her nagging parents. Situation of Amanda is so worse that she wishes to be an orphan, in order to get rid of her parents. She imagines enacting various roles varying from mermaid to Rapunzel. Amanda wishes to live alone and carefree. It is very important to understand the situation of Amanda where her freedom is cut short by constant instructions and guidelines. Proper balance should be maintained when dealing with such delicate issues. Love and care should always be part of this two way transaction.

2: How does Amanda tackle the nagging nature of her parents? Explain with examples from the poem. What values does it portray about Amanda?

Amanda is a small girl who is termed as moody for her careless behaviour. But it is very surprising to know that this is her defence mechanism to shield against her nagging parents. Amanda is getting instructions from her parents, which becomes too much to handle for the small girl. She is told not to bite her nails and sit in a proper position. Amanda's response to it is her world of imagination where she is a mermaid drifting effortlessly by the languid sea.

Further, she is asked about cleaning her room and finishing her homework to which she reacts being an orphan roaming in the street and making patterns with her bare feet. Amanda then faces

the heat for eating a chocolate, which had once caused her acne. She takes the form of Rapunzel and wishes to live on top of a tower away from everyone in her imagination.

Amanda's parents are upset over her behaviour and casualness, but she stays in her own world. All these portray Amanda in a positive light and her parents in a negative light. We as readers feel very sorry for a childlike Amanda.

3: State the key points in the poem Amanda. What do you learn from it?

Every child is special itself, and requires a great deal of patience and love to make them understand this. Parents should give proper space to children, as they learn through experiences as well. Children do tend to learn certain bad habits, to undo that requires great level of understanding and right approach. One cannot teach one's child everything in one day and expect him/her to behave properly henceforth.

4: Escapism is one way to run away from harsh realities. Discuss in context to the poem.

By going through the whole poem, we come to know that Amanda's parents, specially her mother, keep instructing Amanda all the time. Amanda's mother's intention may be to discipline her daughter and make her a mature person. But very frequent checking and instructing using so many don'ts, leave no space for the child.

Children need love and caring attitude of their elders. An advice in the form of nagging leaves a very harmful impression on the child's mind. The reality becomes harsh for them and they try to escape these realities by indulging in their own fantasy world.

Here in this poem, life of Amanda is quite frustrating as Amanda is forbidden to do anything without seeking permission. Continuous instructions of her mother and correcting her all the time leave a very negative impact on a child's personality. In such situation the child adheres to a defence mechanism where she imagines herself to be free and without parents so that no nagging is done.

Amanda drifts into an imaginary situation to escape from the harsh realities of her life. The parent's behaviour is forcing her to do so, as a result there will not be a balanced development of her personality. Parents need to understand that their child also requires freedom and his/her own space. If no space is given, child will develop one or the other complex which may hamper his/her normal growth.

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

(1) Who was Amanda? What idea do you form of her through the poem?

Amanda was a little school going girl. She seems to love fairy tales, stories like Rapunzel and mermaids. She does not like too many instructions or nagging which make her sulk and moody. Then she does not listen to her mother attentively and starts daydreaming.

(2) What message does the poet want to give through the poem- 'Amanda'?

The poet wants to convey that parents in their endeavour to make their children well-behaved, well-mannered, give them too many instructions or nag them. Too many instructions and too much control is resented by children. They get bored and fed up. They should adopt positive measures acceptable to children. Otherwise they will stop listening to them and indulge in daydreaming like Amanda did.

(3) Why does she dream to be an orphan?

Amanda thinks orphans lead a carefree life. She feels that an orphan has more freedom than herself. There is no one to pester them with instructions. They can wander in a street and make patterns in the soft dust with their bare feet. They don't have to clean the shoes or room or do the homework.

- (4) Who is the mermaid in 'Amanda' what does 'she' wish to do?
The mermaid is Amanda herself as imagined by Amanda. She wishes to drift blissfully on a dreamy emerald sea without anyone else accompanying her.
- (5) Is the purpose of someone constantly giving instructions to Amanda being fulfilled? Explain.
No, Amanda sulks and becomes moody when her mother gives too many instructions. She does not listen to her mother and does not care to follow her but she can't dare to ignore her either, so she sulks.
- (6) Amanda imagines herself to be Rapunzel, yet would not like to do what all she did. Identify and state the reasons for her decision.
Amanda wants to be Rapunzel to live a peaceful life in a tower where no one gives any instruction and doesn't have to do any work. But she doesn't want to escape with a prince like Rapunzel does. She never wants to escape and leave such a peaceful atmosphere, with no instructions and no work to do.
- (7) Bringing up teenagers can be both a challenge and fun. How far do you agree? Express your views with reference to Amanda's life.
Bringing up teenagers is truly challenging and fun. Teenagers can be rebellious and apparently hot-headed with a highly independent perspective. In such circumstances, yelling at them, and nagging them as done in the poem with Amanda, will only make matters worse. Forcing decisions on them only makes them more detached, as we see in Amanda's case, where she wishes to be lone mermaid, an orphan, or the lonely Rapunzel. To make things fun, one must become a friend where needed.
- (8) Why is Amanda asked not to eat chocolate?
Amanda already suffers from acne. If she eats chocolate, it will aggravate her problem further. That is why she is asked not to eat chocolate.
- (9) What is the fear of the speaker that is explained in the last stanza?
In the last stanza, the speaker advises Amanda not to remain moody and sulking. The reason behind this is that she does not want to expose it before others. Otherwise people will think that she was irritated by the speaker. It was her fear.
- (10) What picture do you form of Amanda's mother/parents after reading the poem 'Amanda'?
Amanda's mother seems to be an overprotective mother. She believes that Amanda is still a girl and must live her life as her mother wants. Being a girl, she needs constant tutoring and taking instructions from her. She should be very careful the way she sits and stands. She should not bend down but sit up straight. She forbids her eating chocolate as it would not be good for pimples. Her constant nagging leads her daughter far away from her. Amanda escapes into the world of dreams imagining herself a mermaid, an orphan or a fairy. She doesn't look at her mother while she is speaking to her. Amanda's mother fails to understand why her daughter remains unhappy and moody. She only asked her to stop sulking lest people should blame her mother for nagging her.