



# INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

NOTES - (2020-21)

## MOTHER'S DAY- by J B Priestley

Class: XI

Sub: ENGLISH

### INTRODUCTION

The play 'Mother's Day' written by J.B. Priestley is a hilarious comedy which reveals the practical experience and status of Annie Pearson, a devoted wife and doting mother, whose efforts are ignored by her family.

### THEME

This humorous play portrays the status of a woman in her household. The playwright brings out the plight of a wife, who is also a mother, very realistically in the play. Mrs. Annie Pearson is not treated well by her husband and children. With the help of her neighbor Mrs. Fitzgerald's magic spell which temporarily allows both the women to interchange their personalities, she stands up for her rights. Mrs. Annie Pearson's family is shocked at the change, but they learn to behave properly with her so that she gets the respect that she deserves. Through the play, the playwright J.B. Priestley wants to convey a message that everyone should respect, care, and help the lady of the house for all the hardships and sacrifices she makes for her family.

### CHARACTERS

**Mrs. Fitzgerald:** Mrs. Fitzgerald is Mrs. Pearson's neighbor. She is a strong-willed, and smart woman. She knows magic which she has learned from the east and has a strong and sinister personality. She is heavy set, has a deep voice and speaks in an Irish accent. She is very angry to hear about the way Mrs. Pearson's family treats her and decides to put an end to it. She convinces Mrs. Pearson to exchange their personalities, so that she can discipline the latter's family members in the body of Mrs. Pearson.

**Annie Pearson:** Mrs. Pearson appears to be a meek, timid, confused and nervous type of woman in her forties. She is a devoted wife and a doting mother whose unconditional but excessive love and care has spoiled her husband and two children. She is ignored and made to work throughout the day. Although she feels sad about the neglect and ill treatment that she suffers, she endures everything uncomplainingly. However, she undergoes transformation in her personality with Mrs. Fitzgerald's help and becomes more assertive towards the end of the play.

**Doris Pearson:** Doris Pearson is Mrs. Annie Pearson's pretty daughter in her early twenties. She looks pleasant but is rude and spoiled. She makes her mother wait on her all the time and gives orders to her as if her mother is the servant of the house. She doesn't understand her mother's struggles but at last she learns not to take her mother for granted.

**Cyril Pearson:** Cyril Pearson is Mrs. Annie Pearson's son who is the masculine counterpart of Doris and is equally demanding like his sister. He is in the habit of taking his mother for granted. He considers his work very important and believes that he deserves to enjoy his evenings. He makes his mother work all the time doing one thing or the other for him. Like Doris, Cyril is also indifferent and insensitive towards his mother and never sympathizes with her. He ultimately learns to behave properly with his mother and give her the respect that she deserves.

**George Pearson:** George Pearson is Annie Pearson's proud and spoilt husband who thinks highly of himself. He is about fifty years old. He is fundamentally decent but solemn, self-important, pompous, heavy, and slow-moving type man. He is an indifferent husband who is predominantly concerned about his own comfort, ease, and happiness. He spends most of his free time at the club, playing snooker and hanging around with his friends who make fun of him, calling him Pompy-ompy- Pearson. At the end we find him a changed husband who starts caring for his wife.

### **SUMMARY**

The play portrays the practical experience of a mother, Mrs Pearson. On a daily basis, her children disrespect and disregard her. In her own home, she was treated as a slave. Thus, she feels a lot of pain and embarrassment every day not only from her daughter Doris and son Cyril but also from her husband George Pearson who has completely ignorant of his wife's plight.

Mrs Pearson life changes when she meets Mrs Fitzgerald her neighbour and a fortune teller, with whom she discusses her family members and their terrible behaviour. Mrs Fitzgerald (strong and sinister personality) recommends that they exchange personalities using magic, so as to teach her family a good lesson. At first, Mrs Pearson doesn't agree but after some encouragement, she agrees.

After that, Mrs Fitzgerald casts a spell and swaps her personality with Mrs Pearson. In a matter of seconds, their personality switch and Mrs Pearson who was calm and composed is now smoking and drinking and Mrs Fitzgerald is now sitting idle.

The scene changes, and now Mrs Pearson is in her home and Doris enters home. She hands her a dress and asks her to iron it, as she has to go on a date with her boyfriend Charlie Spence. Also, she even objects her mother's smoking. When she asks her, Mrs Pearson replies very harshly and advise her to do her work herself. Further, she makes fun of her boyfriend. Afterwards, Doris feels miserable and starts crying when her mother rebukes her.

After this, her son Cyril enters, asks his mother hurriedly if his tea is ready. Mrs Pearson advises him to prepare it himself. After seeing his mother's reaction and his sister crying he raises his voice. Also, calls Mrs Fitzgerald an old hag to which Mrs Pearson instructs him to mind his language.

When the children talk about being worn-out after work. She makes it very clear to both of them that they all will work equally from that day onwards. And she will not work at weekends and enjoy time off with her friends.

At that point, Mr Pearson enters the house and expresses his surprise on seeing her wife drinking and smoking. He objects when Mrs Pearson makes him realise that if he can drink then she can too. Further, she tells him that instead of spending his time with her he is spending time with people who are making fun of him behind his back.

Mrs Pearson on seeing her family insulted asks Mrs Fitzgerald to stop the charade. However, she doesn't let her speak until she teaches all of them a good lesson of respecting and honouring their mother. Soon after they switch personality again. And after that, the son, daughter, and husband learn their lesson and start supporting their mother and wife.