



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (2021-22)

Class: X

QUESTION BANK – AMANDA

Sub: ENGLISH

**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

**AMANDA SUMMARY EXPLANATION OF THE POEM**

**Stanza 1**

Don't bite your nails, Amanda!

Don't hunch your shoulders, Amanda!

Stop that slouching and sit up straight,

Amanda!

**Explanation**

In the above lines, Amanda is getting instructed, most probably by her parents for biting nails and sitting lazily with her shoulders bent. The tone of instruction here is not a friendly one and thus fails to make any sense to Amanda. The poet here, focusses on the aspects related to the upbringing of a child (girl) and how parents go to any limit to bring proper sense to their child. Amanda is thus, getting trained for the society she is a part of. The pressure of making oneself presentable to the society triumphs over every other behaviour and manners. The last phrase or word 'Amanda!' is used with an exclamation mark which shows the irritation and frustration of the parent.

**Stanza 2**

(There is a languid, emerald sea,

where the sole inhabitant is me-

a mermaid, drifting blissfully.)

### **Explanation**

It is to be noted that the above lines are given within brackets. Brackets are used to provide more meaning to the phrase. Here the poet uses it to present the imagination of the little girl, the free-flow of pure thoughts. Amanda uses her imagination as an escape point from day-to-day commands of her parents.

She feels suffocated in the real world and thus finds peace in her very own created world where there are no restrains. She imagines herself to be a joyful mermaid sailing without any confines alongside soft waves of the green sea. This world of Amanda is free and contained in itself and her happiness doesn't require any other human being. For a child, mermaid is a symbol of freedom and wonder.

### **Stanza 3**

Did you finish your homework, Amanda?

Did you tidy your room, Amanda?

I thought I told you to clean your shoes,

Amanda!

### **Explanation**

Amanda is now being asked about whether she has finished her homework, or tidied up her room and also whether she has cleaned her shoes. This set of instructions marks a shift from the instructions given in Stanza 1. Now Amanda is being coached about the things that are related to her surroundings. The pattern of instructions explains that how every aspect of her is related to questioning and proper guidance. She is being disciplined for every little thing, making her lose her freedom. Her innocence is eventually getting lost with passage of time. The way these instructions are delivered points out the regular nature of these lessons. Her name being called again with an exclamation mark shows that the parents seem to be losing their cool and are troubled.

### **Stanza 4**

(I am an orphan, roaming the street.

I pattern soft dust with m hushed, bare feet.

The silence is golden; the freedom is sweet.)

### **Explanation**

In this stanza, we once again see Amanda's reaction to her mother's harsh words. Amanda withdraws into another imaginary world. The very first line is awfully depressing where Amanda imagines herself to be an orphan suggesting how much frustrated she is with continuous questioning of her parents specially her mother. She has no shoes on her feet and instead she is getting them even dirties by making designs on the dusty ground with them. However, she makes no sound while

making these dusty designs. She cherishes the silence as well as the freedom to do as she likes that world of her imagination. Her love for silence is a result of the shouting and yelling of her parents.

### **Stanza 5**

Don't eat the chocolate Amanda!

Remember your acne, Amanda!

Will you please look at me when I'm speaking

to you, Amanda!

### **Explanation**

The set of instructions provided here indicate how much essential it is for Amanda to understand the value of external beauty, and steps to be taken to preserve it from a very tender age. Amanda is stopped by her parents from eating a chocolate as previously that had caused her acne. Here, we see how a child is made conscious of a natural experience such as acne. However, Amanda is still lost in her own thoughts and doesn't care enough to look up to her scolding parents. This carelessness further angers the parents and they ask for her attention when she is being scolded. The role of appearance in the society is given more significance than the basic values and creativity.

### **Stanza 6**

(I am Rapunzel, I have not a care;

life in a tower is tranquil and rare;

I'll certainly never let down my bright hair!)

### **Explanation**

Amanda is still lost in her down dreams She pictures herself to be the long golden-haired Rapunzel who lived in a castle and had no care about anything. Amanda imagines that the life of Rapunzel must have been very peaceful and fantastic in the tower. But she wishes to evade the fate that was met out to Rapunzel as she is unwilling to let her hair down. Amanda doesn't want her peace to be disturbed anyhow. She seeks a life which is away from any other human form. We can see here how the presence of her parents and their inhuman behaviour had made her against any human connection. Hence, she only wanted to live by herself as the presence of another being in her life would require her to act in a certain way. Amanda wanted to live as a free and happy person.

### **Stanza 7**

Stop that sulking at once, Amanda!

You're always so moody, Amanda!

Anyone would think that I nagged at

you, Amanda!

## **Explanation**

The parents keep instructing Amanda on the dos and don'ts, but Amanda remains lost in her own dreams. The parents believe that Amanda is not reacting because she is annoyed. Amanda's behaviour has made her parents look bad and they are worried about their image. They are concerned about how society will perceive them if their child always remains in a foul mood. They want to prove themselves as responsible parents who manage to balance out what the child wants and what the society expects out of Amanda. However, they have already failed in their efforts.

## ***Central Idea of Poem***

The poem deals with the upbringing of a small girl, Amanda. It highlights the struggles faced by the child. Poet Robin Klein makes an important point that a child should never be denied freedom and space.

Though it is parents who are responsible for proper upbringing of their child but that should not make a child feel trapped. Here, Amanda is prepared to be acceptable in society, and this training needs her freedom to be cut short. Her imagination is not given enough space, thus making her so angry that she wishes to be an orphan. The continuous nagging (continuous fault-finding) has, thus, made her moody.

## **THINKING ABOUT THE POEM (PAGE 62)**

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

**Answer:** 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.

### **Question 2: Who do you think is speaking to her?**

**Answer:** 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.

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

**Answer:** 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.

### **Question 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?**

**Answer:** 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.

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

**Answer:** 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.

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

**Answer:** 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.

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

**Answer:** 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.

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

**Answer:** 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.

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

**Answer:** 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.

**Extract Based 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

**Answer:** i) c) Mother

ii) b) Hunches

iii) c) Slouching

iv) b) Alliteration

**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

Answer: i) a) Amanda

ii) d) Both (b) and (c)

iii) c) Drifting

iv) c) Away from this noisy and disturbing atmosphere

### ***Short Questions and Answers***

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

**Answer:** 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.

**Question 2: Why is Amanda getting scolded for having chocolate?**

**Answer:** 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.**

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

**Answer:** 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.

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

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

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

**Answer:** 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.

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

**Answer:** 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.

**Question 7: Is Amanda at fault at all?**

**Answer:** 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.

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

**Answer:** 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 Questions and Answers*

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

**Answer:** Upbringing plays an essential role in personality development of an adult. Whenever we wish to admire or criticize 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 defense 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.

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



**Answer:** 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 defense 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 eat 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 river.

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.

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

**Answer:** 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. (*my fingers are tired; hence I can't type anymore*)

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

**Answer:** 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 form 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 defense 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.