3.The Little Girl (Beehive)

Q1: Why was Kezia afraid of her father?

A: Kezia was afraid of her father because he was very srict. He always commanded her. He never played with her. He had big hands and a heavy face. His face looked big to Kezia when he yawned. She was terrified with the manner in which he looked at her over his spectacles.

Q2: Who were the people in Kezia’s family?

A: There were her mother, father, grandmother and herself in the family. Besides them there was Alice their cook also.

Q3: What was Kezia’s father’s routine?

A: (I)Before going to office: He would go into her room to give her a casual kiss.

(II) After coming back from his office: He ordered for a cup of tea to be brought in the drawing room. He asked his mother to bring him the newspaper and his slippers. He asked Kezia to pull off his boots and leave them outside.

(III) On Sundays: Kezia’s father would stretch out on the sofa. He would cover his face with his handkerchief, put his feet on one of the cushions and snore while sleeping soundly.

Q4: In what ways did Kezia’s grandmother encourage her to get to know her father better?

A: Kezia’s grandmother encouraged her to get to know her father better by sending her to the drawing-room to talk to her parents on Sunday afternoons. She told Kezia to make a pin-cushion out of a beautiful piece of yellow silk as a gift for her father’s birthday.

Q4: Kezia’s efforts to please her father resulted in displeasing him very much. How did this happen?

A: Kezia’s efforts to please her father resulted in displeasing him. On every Sunday, her grandmother sent her down to the drawing-room to talk to her father and mother. But her father scolded her by calling ‘little brown owl’. The next effort was when her grandmother suggested that she should make a pin-cushion as a birthday gift for her father. His birthday was falling next week. She worked diligently on making pin-cushion, stitching three sides of the cushion with double cotton with great care and effort.

She could not find anything to stuff it with. Her grandmother was busy in the garden. She went to her mother’s room to get some scrap She found sheets of some fine paper on the bed-table. She gathered them. She tore them into pieces. Then she filled the cushion with them. She did not know that the sheets of fine paper she had torn up were written with her father’s speech to be given in the Port Authority the next day. Her father scolded her for touching the thing that did not belong to her. He punished her by hitting her palm with a ruler.

Q5: Kezia decides that there are “different kinds of fathers”. What kind of father was Mr Macdonald and how was he different from Kezia’s father?

A: Mr Macdonald was their next door neighbour. He had five children. Kezia compared her father with him. Mr Macdonald was a loving, gentle and forgiving father. Whenever she looked at their house, she saw that he was always smiling and playing with his children. He treated his children in a friendly manner.

He was just opposite to Kezia’s father. He never punished his children. He played with them whenever he was free. Whereas her father was very harsh. He never played with her. He was always busy at his work. He never expressed his concern or affection to the little girl who was really scared of him. She was so afraid of her father that whenever she communicated with him, she would stutter.

Q6: How does Kezia begin to see her father as a human being who needs her sympathy?

A: Kezia’s mother fell ill. Her grandmother had to accompany her to the hospital. Kezia was with Alice, their cook. At night she was all alone in her bed because Alice had gone to her home. Kezia had a nightmare---- a butcher with a knife and rope. She woke up shivering with fright. She called for her grandmother. She was surprised to find her father standing near her bed. He took her in his arms and made her sleep next to him in his bed. She was half asleep. She crept close to her father. She snuggled her head under his arm and held tightly to his shirt. Her father asked her to rub her feet against his legs for warmth. Her father made her sleep there. This made her understand that he has to work hard every day . So he is so much tired that he can not be like Macdonald.She expressed her altered feeling for her father by telling him that he had a ‘big heart’.