

The Little Girl

Module 1/4

1/4 - Handout

About the author



Katherine Mansfield

Born: 14 October, 1888, Wellington, New Zealand

Died: 9 January, 1923, Fontainebleau, France

Katherine Mansfield is New Zealand's most internationally famous author. She was a writer of short stories, poetry, letters, journals and reviews, and changed the way the short story was written in the English language. Even before she died at the age of thirty-four, Katherine Mansfield had achieved a reputation as one of the most talented writers of the modern short story in English.

One of her famous quotations is: "Act for yourself. Face the truth".

This lesson, "The Little Girl", presents before both parents and children a long line of thoughts and one or two lessons to learn.

Parents need to punish their children when it is necessary to do so and children who have been punished exceedingly or not at all undergo a poor formation.

Kezia is the main character of this story.

Kezia's father belongs to that set of parents who punish their children more out of anger and less out of their matured will.

His act of harsh corporal punishment meted out to his little child was unjustified and disproportionate; Kezia tore into pieces his very important speech-sheets.

On the one side the sheets were important for him; but the fact that Kezia was a small and an innocent girl; and she unintentionally ruined them in order to make a birthday gift for him stands strongly against the father's quick-to-punish attitude.

SUMMARY OF THE LESSON

Kezia was a little girl who lived with her mother, father and grandmother. She was afraid of her father and used to avoid him.

But every morning before going to business, her father came to her and gave her a perfunctory kiss, to which she responded with "Good-bye, father."

She used to feel relieved on seeing her father go to his office.

In the evenings, she used to wait near the staircase for her father to arrive. But once her father arrives home, she listens to his loud manly voice in the drawing room! She feels intimidated.

Kezia's mother would call her and ask her to come down and take off her father's boots. She would slowly walk to her father because she was afraid of her father's serious look at her through his spectacles. Kezia's father would try to talk to her; but his way of conversation always made Kezia nervous and she stuttered in front of him. He appeared to her as harsh, rude and critical. He used to warn her that if she stuttered again, her mother would take her to the doctor.

In his over-enthusiasm to develop the child's personality and manners, Kezia's father was very often judgmental in his words, especially whenever he spoke to the family members and Kezia.

Kezia was afraid of her father because "he was so big" - his hands, his mouth and his neck.
