

# The Little Girl - Katherine Mansfield

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## Answers to NCERT Questions

### THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

Given below are some emotions that Kezia felt. Match the emotions in Column A with the items in Column B.

A	B
1. fear or terror	(i) father comes into her room to give her a goodbye kiss
2. glad sense of relief	(ii) noise of the carriage grows fainter
3. a “funny feeling, perhaps of understanding	(iii) father comes home
	(iv) speaking to father
	(v) going to bed when alone at home
	(vi) father comforts her and falls asleep
	(vii) father stretched out on the sofa, snoring

**Ans:**

A	B
1. fear or terror	(i) father comes home (ii) speaking to father (iii) going to bed when alone at home (iv) father stretched out on the sofa, snoring

2. glad sense of relief	(v) father comes into her room to give her a goodbye kiss (vi) noise of the carriage grows fainter
3. a “funny feeling, perhaps of understanding	(vii) father comforts her and falls asleep

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## II. Answer the following questions in one or two sentences.

### 1. Why was Kezia afraid of her father?

**Ans:** Kezia’s father was very strict and dominated everyone in the house. He appeared to be big in size from where she could see him. He never seemed to smile, so Kezia was always afraid of him.

### 2. Who were the people in Kezia’s family?

**Ans:** Kezia’s family consisted of her father, mother, grandmother and herself. Alice, the cook was also considered as a part of the family.

### 3. What was Kezia’s father’s routine

(i) before going to his office?

(ii) after coming back from his office?

(iii) on Sundays?

**Ans:**

(i) Before going to his office, her father would give her a casual kiss and in return, she would wish him good bye.

(ii) After coming back from his office, he would ask for a cup of tea, newspaper and for his slippers. He would ask Kezia to pull off his boots and take them outside.

(iii) On Sundays, he would stretch out on the sofa, his face covered with his handkerchief, his feet on one of the best cushions, sleeping soundly and snoring.

### 4. In what ways did Kezia’s grandmother encourage her to get to know her father better?

**Ans:** Kezia’s grandmother encouraged her to get to know her father better by sending her to the drawing room on Sundays to have a nice talk with him. She told her to make a pin-cushion as a gift to her father on his birthday.

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### **III. Discuss the questions in class with your teacher and then write down your answers in two or three paragraphs each.**

#### **1. Kezia's efforts to please her father resulted in displeasing him very much. How did this happen?**

**Ans:** Kezia's efforts to please her father resulted in displeasing him very much. On Sundays, her grandmother would encourage her to interact with her father. He would invariably be sleeping on the sofa and she would patiently wait for him to wake up. On waking up, he would accuse her of staring at him and would tell her that she looked like a little brown owl.

Once, her grandmother suggested she should make a pin cushion for her father's birthday. She worked diligently on making the pin-cushion, stitching three sides of the cushion with double cotton with great care. She searched for scrap to stuff the cushion. Since her grandmother was out in the garden, she went to her mother's room. There she found some papers lying on the bed table. She tore them to pieces and stuffed them in the pin-cushion. But the papers were her father's speech for the Port Authority. He rebuked her for touching things that did not belong to her and punished her by hitting her little palms with a scale.

#### **2. 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?**

**Ans:** It was for the first time that Kezia was exposed to a father in the form of Mr Macdonald, who had come in to live in their neighbourhood. She noticed that this gentleman was very warm and cordial with his children. He would play, laugh and enjoy with the children. Macdonald and his children shared a very friendly relationship.

It was unfortunate that Kezia's father was in contrast, very harsh, and unfriendly along with being a strict disciplinarian. He would beat her, demand her undivided service, but would never spend quality time with her. She wished desperately for her father to be like Mr Macdonald.

#### **3. How does Kezia begin to see her father as a human being who needs her sympathy?**

**Ans:** Once when her mother fell ill, Kezia's grandmother accompanied her to the hospital. Kezia was left at home in the care of Alice, the cook. At night, after she was put to bed by the cook, she had a nightmare. She woke up shivering with fright. She called for her grandmother, but to her surprise, her father came to her. He had gone up to her bed with a candle in his hand. He blew off the candle, bent down to her, held on to her hand and picked her up. He took her to his bed, pulled the covers around her and made her sleep next to him.

After a while, unable to sleep, Kezia crawled up to her father, snuggled under his arm and held on to his shirt tightly. She felt comfortable. Her father asked her to rub her feet

against his legs for warmth and fell asleep. At this point, she realised how tired he was after a hard day's work. She understood why her father could not devote much time like Mr Macdonald. It dawned on her that he was a human and needed sympathy. With this realisation, she sighed and told her father, "What a big heart you've got, Father dear."

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## THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE

**I. Glad, happy, pleased, delighted, thrilled and overjoyed are synonyms (words or expressions that have the same or nearly the same meaning). However, they express happiness in certain ways.**

1. Use an appropriate word from the synonyms given in the following sentences. Clues are given in brackets.

- (i) She was \_\_\_\_\_ by the news of her brother's wedding. (very pleased)
- (ii) I was \_\_\_\_\_ to be invited to the party. (extremely pleased and excited about)
- (iii) She was \_\_\_\_\_ at the birth of her granddaughter. (extremely happy)
- (iv) The coach was \_\_\_\_\_ with his performance. (satisfied about)
- (v) She was very \_\_\_\_\_ with her results. (happy about something that has happened)

**Ans:** (i) thrilled (ii) delighted (iii) overjoyed (iv) pleased (v) happy

**2. Study the use of the word big in the following sentence:**

He was so big—his hands and his neck, especially his mouth

Here, big means large in size.

Now, consult a dictionary and find out the meaning of big in the following sentences. The first one has been done for you.

- (i) You are a big girl now. older
- (ii) Today you are going to take the biggest decision of your career. \_\_\_\_\_
- (iii) Their project is full of big ideas. \_\_\_\_\_
- (iv) Cricket is a big game in our country. \_\_\_\_\_
- (v) I am a big fan of Lata Mangeskar. \_\_\_\_\_
- (vi) You have to cook a bit more as my friend is a big eater. \_\_\_\_\_
- (vii) What a big heart you've got, Father dear. \_\_\_\_\_

**Ans:**

(ii) most important (iii) great (iv) popular (v) huge (vi) great (vii) large-hearted

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**II. We use verbs of reporting to advise, order, report statements, thoughts, intentions, questions, requests, apologies, manner of speaking and so on.**

**1. Underline the verbs of reporting in the following sentences.**

- (i) He says he will enjoy the ride.
- (ii) Father mentioned that he was going on a holiday.
- (iii) No one told us that the shop was closed.
- (iv) He answered that the price would go up.
- (v) I wonder why he was screaming.
- (vi) Ben told her to wake him up.
- (vii) Ratan apologised for coming late to the party.

**Ans:** (i) says (ii) mentioned (iii) told (iv) answered (v) wondered (vi) told (vii) apologised

**2. Some verbs of reporting are given in the box. Choose the appropriate verbs and fill in the blanks in the following sentences.**

were	complaining	shouted	replied	remarked	ordered	suggested
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- (i) "I am not afraid \_\_\_\_\_ the woman.
- (ii) "Leave me alone, my mother \_\_\_\_\_.
- (iii) The children \_\_\_\_\_ that the roads were crowded and noisy.
- (iv) "Perhaps he isn't a bad sort of a chap after all. \_\_\_\_\_ the master.
- (v) "Let's go and look at the school ground, \_\_\_\_\_ the sports teacher.
- (vi) The traffic police \_\_\_\_\_ all the passers-by to keep off the road.

**Ans:**

(i) remarked (ii) shouted (iii) were complaining (iv) replied (v) suggested (vi) ordered

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## **SPEAKING**

**Form pairs or groups and discuss the following questions.**

**1. This story is not an Indian story. But do you think there are fathers, mothers and grandmothers like the ones portrayed in the story in our own country?**

**Ans:** The story may not have an Indian background but our fathers, mothers and grandmothers do have the characteristics portrayed in the story. Mothers are concerned about the family, and grandmothers try to bond the grandchildren with the members of the family. Fathers do sometimes appear to be stern and strict.

However, in today's day and age, with life becoming more and more competitive, parents have joined the rat race to make money at the cost of compromising on the quality of the children's life. Money is replacing time and love. Children need the care and concern of parents to grow as mature adults.

**2. Was Kezia's father right to punish her? What kind of a person was he? You might find some of these words useful in describing him:**

undemonstrative	loving	strict	hardworking
responsible	unkind	disciplinarian	short tempered
affectionate	caring	indifferent	

**Ans: Clues:**

- Kezia's father was a very strict disciplinarian.
- He comes across as very unkind and indifferent.
- Nightmare --- realisation
- hardworking
- fatigued
- therefore short tempered
- mother's illness may be bothering him
- responsibilities
- She realises he is caring and affectionate.

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## **Additional Questions**

### **Extract Based Questions**

**Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow: (4 Marks each)**

**1. To the little girl he was a figure to be feared and avoided. Every morning before going to work he came into her room and gave her a casual kiss, to which she**

**responded with “Goodbye, Father. And oh, there was a glad sense of relief when she heard the noise of the carriage growing fainter and fainter down the long road!**

In the evening when he came home she stood near the staircase and heard his loud voice in the hall. “Bring my tea into the drawing-room... Hasn’t the paper come yet? Mother, go and see if my paper’s out there—and bring me my slippers.

- (a)** Why did Kezia feel ‘a glad sense of relief’ when her father left for work?
- (b)** What impression do you get of Kezia’s father from the given extract?
- (c)** How is a carriage different from a car?
- (d)** What did the father want on his arrival from the office?

**Ans:**

- (a)** Kezia felt a glad sense of relief because she seemed to fear her father.
- (b)** He seemed to be dominating and over bearing.
- (c)** A carriage is drawn by one or two horses, while a car is run on petrol, diesel and gas.
- (d)** He wanted his tea to be brought into the drawing room and wanted to read the newspaper.

**2. On Sunday afternoons Grandmother sent her down to the drawing-room to have a “nice talk with Father and Mother. But the little girl always found Mother reading and Father stretched out on the sofa, his handkerchief on his face, his feet on one of the best cushions, sleeping soundly and snoring.**

- (a)** Why did the Grandmother send the girl down to the drawing room?
- (b)** What did she see in the drawing room?
- (c)** Where do you think the father should be sleeping?
- (d)** Find a word from the passage that means ‘reclined’.

**Ans:**

- (a)** Grandmother sent the girl down to her parents, so that she could get to know them better.
- (b)** She noticed her mother reading, while her father was reclining on the sofa with his face covered with his handkerchief and his feet on one of the best cushions, sleeping and snoring.
- (c)** He should be sleeping in the bedroom.

(d) Stretched

**3. One day, when she was kept indoors with a cold, her grandmother told her that father's birthday was next week, and suggested she should make him a pin-cushion for a gift out of a beautiful piece of yellow silk.**

Laboriously, with a double cotton, the little girl stitched three sides. But what to fill it with? That was the question. The grandmother was out in the garden, and she wandered into Mother's bedroom to look for scraps. On the bed-table she discovered a great many sheets of fine paper, gathered them up, tore them into tiny pieces, and stuffed her case, then sewed up the fourth side.

(a) What did the grandmother tell Kezia to do?

(b) What did Kezia use, as stuffing in the pin-cushion?

(c) Why was Kezia not in the garden with her grandmother?

(d) Find a word from the passage which is the opposite of 'effortlessly'.

**Ans:**

(a) Kezia's grandmother suggested her to make a pin-cushion as a gift for her father's birthday.

(b) She took many sheets of fine paper from the bed table to stuff the pin-cushion.

(c) Kezia was in the comfort of her house as she was suffering with influenza.

(d) Laboriously

**4. But the same old nightmare came — the butcher with a knife and a rope, who came nearer and nearer, smiling that dreadful smile, while she could not move, could only stand still, crying out, "Grandma! Grandma! She woke up shivering to see Father beside her bed, a candle in his hand. "What's the matter? he said.**

(a) Why did she cry 'Grandma! Grandma'?

(b) Why was she shivering?

(c) Who do you think she saw in her dream? What did she do?

(d) Find a word from the passage which means 'frightful'.

**Ans:**

(a) She cried for her grandmother because she was frightened after seeing a nightmare.

(b) She was shivering with fear, as the nightmare was a dreadful one.



(c) In her nightmare, she saw a butcher with a knife and a rope. He was coming closer to her with a dreadful smile on his face. She was paralysed with fear, and began crying out aloud.

(d) Dreadful

**5. Crying too much to explain, she lay in the shadowed room watching the evening light make a sad little pattern on the floor.**

Then Father came into the room with a ruler in his hands.

"I am going to beat you for this, he said.

"Oh, no, no, she screamed, hiding under the bedclothes.

He pulled them aside.

"Sit up, he ordered, "and hold out your hands. You must be taught once and for all not to touch what does not belong to you.

(a) What was the girl doing in the room?

(b) Why had her father come to her room?

(c) How did the girl try to avoid her father when he came to her room?

(d) Find a word from the passage which is the opposite of 'whisper'.

**Ans:**

(a) The girl was crying.

(b) He wanted to punish her in order to make her understand that she should not touch things that did not belong to her.

(c) She tried to hide under the bedclothes to avoid the physical punishment her father had come to inflict on her.

(d) Screamed

**6. "But it was for your b-b-birthday.**

"But it was for your b-b-birthday.

Down came the ruler on her little, pink palms.

Hours later, when Grandmother had wrapped her in a shawl and rocked her in the rocking-chair, the child clung to her soft body. "What did God make fathers for?

(a) Who is talking to whom in the first line of the extract?

(b) Who comforted the girl and how?

(c) What does 'pink palm' signify?

**(d)** How does the little girl express her grief?

**Ans:**

**(a)** Kezia is talking to her father.

**(b)** Kezia's grandmother comforted and put her to sleep by strapping her in a shawl and rocked her in the rocking-chair.

**(c)** The 'pink palm' signifies the tender hands of the little girl.

**(d)** She expresses her grief by asking God, "What did God make fathers for? She is wondering whether the role of the fathers was only to beat their children.

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### **Short Answer Questions (30-40 words: 2 Marks each)**

**1. Describe Kezia's father as she saw him.**

**Ans:** She saw him as a short-tempered, domineering and a strict disciplinarian. He worked for his family and in-turn, he expected everyone to obey his command, and be at his beck and call. He was not able to express his softer emotions, and was a lonely man who did not know how to interact or play with his only child, Kezia.

**2. Did Kezia's father appreciate her gift? Why/Why not?**

**Ans:** Kezia could not give the pin-cushion personally to her father, instead her mother gave the gift to him. She had laboriously stitched the pin-cushion but she had stuffed it by tearing papers she had taken from her mother's bed table, not realising the paper contained the great speech that her father had to address at the Port Authority. This greatly angered him and he did not appreciate the gift as she had taken things that were not hers, and that too without permission.

**3. Why do you think, Kezia stammered in her father's presence?**

**Ans:** Kezia stammered in her father's presence because he was over bearing. He did not extend to his little child any love or affection. On the contrary, he would beat her often. This made her very afraid of him. Out of fear, she would stammer every time, she came in front of him.

**4. How and why did Kezia's father comfort her to sleep?**

**Ans:** Kezia's father comforted her to sleep when she had a frightening dream. When he heard his child cry out in her sleep, he came running up to her, carried her to his room and put her to sleep, by just giving her the comfort of his presence. She snuggled close to him, rubbed her leg against his legs and calmly, rediscovering her father, she went into deep slumber.

**5. Do you feel Kezia's father did right to beat her with a ruler?**

**Ans:** No, he could have controlled his anger and listened to her reason, after all she was just a child. He could have sat her on his lap and explained the importance of not touching things that did not belong to her. Kezia once saw the Macdonald's two boys turn the hose pipe on their father and he tried to catch them laughing all the time. Father-child bond is created with love and understanding, not by domination and strict discipline.

**6. Write a short paragraph on the importance of the role of parents in a child's life.**

**Ans:** A normal family consists generally of father, mother, siblings, and grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins, if it is a large family. Whatever is the structure of a family, nuclear or large, it is very important to establish a close relationship between all the members. The most crucial relationship is the one between the parents and their children. Love, care, correction, trust, faith, the right and wrong are what one teaches the children. It is essentially the parents who have this role to play.

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**Long Answer Questions (100-150 words: 8 Marks each)**

**1. Mother has been ill and grandmother has to accompany her to the hospital. You are now in the care of your father. You are afraid of his domineering presence. Write a letter to your friend, describing your relationship with your father and your regret for having misunderstood him.**

**Ans:**

House No. F- 216

Sector-12

New Friends Colony

Date: 17 June 20XX

Dear Penelope,

Guess what? I made an important discovery about my father. I always feared his presence. Grandma was always the mediator between us as I could never bring myself to approach him. He appeared like a fierce giant.

Every morning, he would give me a casual good bye kiss, but I always felt stifled (suffocated) when he was at home. He showed no sympathy or patience. I would stammer whenever I spoke to him. On his return from office, he would insist to pull off his shoes and carry his tea cup back to the table. Once, he scolded and beat me for innocently tearing up his speech that he was to address at the Port Authority.

Hey! But he isn't an ice berg. This I discovered when unfortunately my mom fell ill and was hospitalised and grandmother had to be with her at the hospital. That night, as

usual, I had that awful dream and I screamed. The very next moment, I noticed father was by my bed side. He had lifted me in his arms and carried me to his bed. I felt so safe with my dad. Now, I realised my father was not that bad, he had a big heart and I could hear it beat. I had never felt so warm and loved by him before. Now, I realised how hard he must be working all day.

I just hope mother gets fine soon and back home.

Love,

Sandra

**2. As Kezia's father, make a diary entry of the day you warmed up to your little daughter.**

**Ans:**

Sunday, 10 June 20XX

8: 25 p.m.

Dear Diary,

I heard little Kezia crying aloud. My heart bled. The poor baby was crying out loudly. Mother was out at the hospital attending Kezia's mother. I had dozed off and was shocked to hear her desperate cries. I lit the candle and ran up to her room. Until that moment when I went up to her, I did not realise how afraid she was of me. She was already shivering because of what seemed like a nightmare. I carried my little angel, took her to my room and put the little darling to sleep. It was such a wonderful experience. Her warm breath against my chest, and her little fingers holding tightly on to my shirt made me realise what I had been missing for so long. A very warm feeling of exceptional love towards little Kezia blossomed in my heart. I hugged her tightly and both of us slept like babies. She is with me tonight also. Feeling very happy. Strange!!

Good night

**3. Kezia was crying. Her grandmother was away at the hospital with her mother. Her father had slipped into deep sleep. He did not hear the child crying. How would you conclude the story? Write a paragraph.**

**Ans:** Well, it was a very sad situation. The dreadful dream was disturbing her on and off. What was troubling her? Was it the fear of her father? Or normal nightmares that everyone is frightened by?

The little girl woke up shivering in a state of panic. She was shouting out for grandma, who was not at home. Crying desperately, Kezia knew her dad was at home. She mustered up the courage, and quietly crawled up to her father's room. Will daddy get angry with me? Will he beat me? The girl was in a dilemma. She stood outside his door. He suddenly opened his eyes and saw her tear-filled eyes, looking at him desperately.

He felt a sudden ache in his heart. "What happened?" he asked in his hoarse voice. She stammered, "I i i i , aaaam sssscared. He was torn apart. He picked up his little daughter and hugged her warmly. This was the beginning of a new relationship, between a newly awakened father and his little baby.

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## **Self- Assessment Test**

### **Extract Based Questions**

**Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.**

**1. "I am going to beat you for this, he said. "Oh, no, no, she screamed, hiding under the bedclothes.**

He pulled them aside.

"Sit up, he ordered, "and hold out your hands.

You must be taught once and for all not to touch what does not belong to you.

- (a)** Who has come to beat whom?
- (b)** What did he pull aside?
- (c)** What lesson does he want to teach her?
- (d)** "I am going to beat you for this. What is this?

**2. That night there was a hue and cry in the house. Father's great speech for the Port Authority had been lost. Rooms were searched; servants questioned. Finally, Mother came into Kezia's room.**

"Kezia, I suppose you didn't see some papers on a table in our room?

"Oh yes, she said, "I tore them up for my surprise.

"What! screamed Mother. "Come straight down to the dining-room this instant.

- (a)** Why was there 'hue and cry' in the house?
- (b)** 'I tore them up for my surprise'. Who said these words and to whom?
- (c)** How did the mother react to Kezia's honest response?
- (d)** What was the surprise?

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### **Short Answer Questions**

**1.** Write a short paragraph on the joy, Kezia experienced, while sleeping beside her father.

2. Do you think, Kezia had torn the papers deliberately? Explain.
  3. "What did God make father's for? Explain.
  4. Write a short note on Kezia's relationship with her grandmother.
  5. What did the Macdonalds make her feel?
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### **Long Answer Questions**

1. Write an article on, "The family you would like to have.
2. Neeta's father worked in a glass factory. .... very short tempered.....lost his eyesight..... Complete the story.
3. What message does the author wish to convey through Kezia's story?