

Amanda By Robin Klein

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

1. Don't bite your nails, Amanda!  
Don't hunch your shoulders, Amanda!  
Stop that slouching and sit up straight,  
Amanda!

- (a) Amanda is getting instructions for what purpose?
- (b) Give a synonym of 'hunch'.
- (c) What does the speaker of above lines instruct Amanda in the first stanza?
- (d) What is the literary device used in the third line?

**Answer:**

- (a) Amanda is getting instructions as a part of her upbringing. Her conduct and manners are getting refined for future purposes.
- (b) Bend.
- (c) Amanda is getting instructed for biting her nails and sitting lazily with her shoulders bent.
- (d) Literary device used in third line is Alliteration. 'Stop that slouching and sit up straight'.

2. (There is a languid, emerald sea, where the sole inhabitant is me – a mermaid, drifting blissfully.)

- (a) Why are these lines given within brackets?
- (b) Give the word from the passage which means free flowing act of going with the motion and force?
- (c) What is the role of mermaid here?
- (d) Which word in the extract means opposite of 'sorrowful'?

**Answer:**

- (a) These lines are given within brackets because they reveal the inner thoughts of Amanda. Brackets are used for visual contrast between what Amanda is saying and what her mother is instructing.
- (b) Drifting means free flowing act of going with the motion.
- (c) Mermaid is a part of Amanda's fantasy in her own created world. As mermaid sails in a sea carelessly and effortlessly, similarly Amanda longs to do so in a place where she is all by herself.
- (d) Blissfully is opposite of sorrowful.

3. Don't eat that chocolate, Amanda!  
Remember your acne, Amanda!  
Will you please look at me when I'm speaking to you,  
Amanda!

- (a) Why is Amanda not looking at the speaker?
- (b) Find the word in the extract which means same as consume?
- (c) The speaker is so worried about acne. What does it show?
- (d) Which word in the extract means the same as 'to gaze'?

**Answer:**

- (a) Amanda is lost in her own thoughts and is paying no attention to instructions being given

to her. That is why she is not looking at the speaker.

(b) Eat means same as consume.

(c) Speaker being worried about acne shows how much importance is given to physical beauty in a household. Amanda is prepared for the unforeseen future. Natural experience such as acne is also taken care of at any cost.

(d) To look means the same as 'to gaze'.

4. (I am an orphan, roaming the street,  
I pattern soft dust with my hushed, bare feet.  
The silence is golden, the freedom is sweet.)

(a) How come silence is golden?

(b) Give a synonym of 'roaming'.

(c) What is Amanda upto in this stanza?

(d) What poetic device is used in this stanza?

**Answer:**

(a) Silence is shown golden using the poetic device metaphor. By making silence golden the poet is estimating the worth of silence. For Amanda seeks peace and calmness, which is absent in her reality.

(b) Wandering.

(c) Amanda is again taking refuge in her imagination. Here, she wishes to be an orphan, away from her nagging parents. Amanda wants to roam aimlessly in streets and draw patterns using just her bare feet.

(d) The poet uses metaphor such as 'orphan', 'silence is golden', and 'freedom is sweet'.

5. (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)

(a) Does Amanda live on a tower?

(b) Why will Amanda not let down her bright hair?

(c) What is the underlying poetic device used in this stanza?

(d) Find from the passage a word which means the same as 'serene'.

**Answer:**

(a) No, Amanda stays at her place. Here, she is imagining herself to be Rapunzel who lived on a tower.

(b) Amanda is aware about the story of Rapunzel. In the story of Rapunzel all the mishappening and misfortunes are brought to her by letting down the hair. Amanda also wishes to live alone and carefree, without any disturbance.

(c) Poet uses allusion here as the underlying poetic device.

(d) The word is 'tranquil'.

6. Stop that sulking at once, Amanda!  
You're always so moody, Amanda!  
Anyone would think that I nagged at you,  
Amanda!

(a) Is Amanda really sulking?

(b) Why does the speaker care for others?

(c) Give the word from the passage which means same as unstable.

(d) What poetic device has been used in the first line of this stanza?

**Answer:**

- (a) Amanda is not sulking. She just doesn't care about instructions given to her as she is lost in a world of her own.
- (b) The whole poem revolves around the aspect that how one is presented in a society. Speaker doesn't wish to be regarded as a nagging parent in the society, so Amanda is expected to put up a happy face all the time.
- (c) Moody means same as unstable.
- (d) 'Alliteration' has been used in the first line; words 'stap' and 'sulking' start with the same sound.

**ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:-**

1. 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.

2. How life on a tower would be different from life anywhere else for Amanda?

**Answer:**

Life on 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, where there is no one to disturb her. Hence, she wishes to live on a tower.

3. Why does Amanda seem moody most of the times?

**Answer:**

Amanda seems moody most of the time 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 defence against such reality is her imagination where she often escapes to. Hence, it makes her look moody and uninterested.

4. 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 and make pattern using her bare feet. Being Rapunzel means she could live carefree on a high tower. Amanda wishes to be these so that she could avoid her suffocating reality.

5. How does it help Amanda to be an orphan?

**Answer:**

Amanda feels troubled around her parents, so she wishes herself to be an orphan. As then only she could live a life of her own without much hassle.

6. 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.

**7. 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.

**8. 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.

**9. 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.

**10. 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.