



INDIAN SCHOOL MUSCAT
SENIOR SECTION
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
CLASS XI
MOTHER'S DAY
J B PRIESTLEY



Summary

- Annie Pearson was a mother and a wife and she had a ruined family.
- She saw that her children and husband considered her like a slave at home, supposed to make food for them and iron their clothes and all the rest of the household chores.
- She longed for a change but was not prepared to make this change.
- One fine day, Annie was paid a visit by her neighbour Mrs. Fitzgerald. She was a very strong character, a symbol of feminism or at least, a person who was much ahead of her time.
- Having found Annie in such a mess, Mrs. Fitzgerald felt sorry for her so she decided to do something for the hapless. She exchanged her character with Annie's and Annie's with hers.
- Hereafter the play catches everyone's attention.
- When Doris Pearson returned from work, she was shocked to see her mother (that was Mrs. Fitzgerald in Annie Pearson's body!)
- Then when Cyril entered, matters had worsened. Son and daughter had never seen their mother drinking liquor and smoking cigarettes after cigarettes!
- Finally came George Pearson. When he saw what his children had seen and heard more than what the children had heard, George found no tongue in his mouth. His wife had never been like this. She called him a name that his friends teased him with at the club and laughed at him.
- She declared that she had decided not to cook for them, iron their clothes and wait for them to have food. She made it very clear that she was not willing to work in the house unless she were paid due respect and be thanked for every favor.
- The family learnt a great lesson that day. Later, the two friends returned their characters and the play ends happily, Annie Pearson duly accepted and respected.

Characters

- **Annie Pearson**

A humble woman and mother of two teenage children is the submissive and docile protagonist of the play. She is neglected by her family and treated as a slave. Living her life in servitude, she has forgotten her individuality and the respect that she deserves in her family. She lives for her family and has forgotten that she has a life of her own. She is the sufferer in the play. Because she is not fond of correcting her husband and children, Annie is expected to be a silent figure in the family, doing all the work for all.

- **George Pearson**

Annie's husband, though a man of self-importance, he is not respected in the society as he expects. At the club that he is a member, people call him nicknames. The only place he feels dominant is in front of Annie. He is a pretentious man who would never shout at the bartender for being late but would never fail to shout at his wife. He is taken aback when his wife calls him by his name.

- **Doris Pearson**

Doris is a ruined girl of around 20, the elder. She is already into an affair with a young man of the name Charlie Spence. She expects her mother to be doing works for her and doesn't understand her mother's struggles.

- **Cyril Pearson**

He is the son of Pearsons. Like his sister Doris, he too takes his mother for granted. He is a spoilt child and wants all the things to be done by his mother. He is someone who doesn't do something that is not liked by him. Mrs. Pearson parallels herself with him when she says 'I've joined the movement' for she also refuses to do what she doesn't like.

- **Mrs. Fitzgerald**

Mrs. Fitzgerald is Pearson's neighbour and an exact contrary of Mrs. Pearson. She is a bold and dominating woman who lives life on her own terms. She had spent her years in the Eastern countries where her husband had been a Lieutenant Quartermaster. She had learnt a little magic and black-magic there and is now ready to apply a little magic to help Annie, her friend. She is aggressive in nature and talks aggressively with the Pearson family while acting as Mrs. Pearson. She is 'older, heavier and has strong sinister personality'.

Answer the following questions in 30-40 words.

1. Who is Mrs. Fitzgerald? What does she advise Mrs. Pearson?
2. How was Annie Pearson responsible for her fate?
3. Why do the two women exchange their personalities?
4. Why does Doris feel snubbed and humiliated?
5. Doris and Cyril find their mother a changed person. What do they conclude?
6. Do you agree that Doris and Cyril's behavior with their mother was extremely rude and unheard of?
7. What does Mrs. Pearson say about her demand of two days off?
8. How does Mrs. Pearson make fun of her husband?
9. What was Mrs. Fitzgerald's final advice to Mrs. Pearson?
10. 'Mother's Day' is a play with a social message. Do you agree?

Answer the following questions in 100-120 words:

Q1. How does Mrs. Fitzgerald put Doris, Cyril and George in their places?

Ans. Mrs. Fitzgerald knows some magic. She uses it to change her personality with that of Mrs. Pearson. Soon Mrs. Pearson's daughter, Doris, comes in. She asks Mother for tea, but Mother says that there is no tea ready for her. Doris had wanted her mother to iron her yellow silk. But the mother refuses to do any ironing for her. Doris has never seen her mother behave like this. She is in tears. When Cyril and George come in, they, too, receive the same kind of treatment. Mother tells them that henceforth she, too, will work eight hours a day and five days a week. While all this is going on, Mrs. Fitzgerald (who is in fact Mrs. Pearson) enters. The two ladies change back into their real personalities. They heave a sigh of relief when Mrs. Pearson calls them back with a smile. But now they have learnt their lesson. Thus Doris, Cyril and George are brought to their places.

Q2. Bring out the theme of the play 'Mother's Day'.