

English Notes



Vistas Chapter-5

Should Wizard hit Mommy

Author: John Updike

Introduction

The chapter **Should Wizard Hit Mommy?** presents the sensitive reaction of a small girl to a moral issue in a story told by her father. It highlights the **psychological richness and curiosity of a child's mind**.

The story shows the difference between **a child's sense of justice and an adult's sense of authority and values**.

Story Background

Jo is a four-year-old girl who enjoys listening to stories from her father **Jack**. Every evening, especially during **Saturday afternoon naps**, Jack tells her a story.

Jo becomes deeply involved in the stories and feels emotionally connected to the characters and events.

Jack's stories usually follow a **fixed pattern**:

- The main character is always **Roger** (an animal).
- Roger always faces a **problem**.
- He visits a **wise owl** for advice.
- The owl sends him to a **wizard** who solves his problem.

Roger Skunk's Problem

In this particular story, the character is **Roger Skunk**.

Roger Skunk is a good and obedient child, but he has a serious problem — **he smells very bad**.

Because of his unpleasant smell:

- Other animals refuse to play with him.
- They avoid him and make fun of him.
- Roger becomes very sad and lonely.

The **old owl** advises Roger to visit the **wizard**, who may help him solve his problem.

The Wizard's Magic

Roger Skunk goes to the wizard.

The wizard asks Roger what he wants. Roger requests that his **bad smell be changed**.

The wizard performs magic and **changes Roger's smell into the fragrance of roses.**

Roger becomes very happy because:

- The other animals now like him.
- They agree to play with him.
- He finally gains acceptance and friendship.

Roger Skunk's Mother

However, when Roger goes home, his **mother notices the change in smell.**

She is unhappy and angry about it. She believes that Roger should **not change his natural identity.**

She takes Roger back to the wizard.

Roger's mother **hits the wizard** and orders him to restore Roger's original smell.

The wizard obeys her and changes Roger's smell back to that of a **skunk.**

Roger quietly accepts his mother's decision.

Eventually, the other animals **get used to his smell** and stop complaining.

Jo's Reaction

When Jo hears the ending of the story, she becomes **very upset and dissatisfied.**

She strongly believes that **Roger's mother is wrong.**

According to Jo:

- Roger was happy with the smell of roses.
- His mother should not have forced him to change back.

Jo wants the wizard to **hit Roger's mother** for her mistake.

She insists that her father **change the ending of the story.**

Jack's Reaction

Jack refuses to change the ending.

He supports the decision of Roger's mother and believes that **parents have the right to guide and control their children.**

Jack also wants to **maintain his authority** as a father and storyteller.

For him, the mother's decision is correct because she wants Roger to **accept his natural identity.**

Moral Conflict

The story creates an important moral question:

Do parents have the right to impose their decisions on their children?

Jo represents the **child's viewpoint**, which values happiness and fairness.

Jack represents the **adult viewpoint**, which emphasizes authority, discipline, and acceptance of reality.

This conflict shows the **difference between the innocent imagination of children and the practical thinking of adults**.

Short Summary (120–150 Words)

The story **Should Wizard Hit Mommy?** presents a conversation between a father, Jack, and his four-year-old daughter, Jo. Every evening Jack tells Jo a story in which the main character is usually an animal named Roger who has a problem and goes to a wizard for help.

In this story, Roger Skunk smells very bad and other animals refuse to play with him. On the advice of an owl, he visits a wizard who changes his smell to that of roses. All the animals then happily play with him. However, Roger's mother disapproves of the change and forces the wizard to restore Roger's original smell. Roger quietly accepts his mother's decision.

Jo strongly disagrees with this ending and feels that the wizard should have punished Roger's mother. The story highlights the **difference between a child's sense of justice and an adult's belief in parental authority**.

2. Important Characters

Jo

- A four-year-old imaginative girl.
- Curious and emotionally involved in stories.
- Believes in fairness and happiness.
- Questions adult authority and moral decisions.

Jack

- Jo's father and storyteller.
- Believes in parental authority and discipline.
- Represents the adult perspective in the story.

Roger Skunk

- A young skunk who smells very bad.
- Feels lonely because other animals avoid him.
- His problem represents a child's desire for acceptance.

Roger Skunk's Mother

- Strong and authoritative.
- Believes Roger should accept his natural identity.

3. Themes

1. Parent–Child Conflict

The story shows the clash between **children's desires and parents' authority**.

2. Child Psychology

Jo's reaction shows how children expect **fairness and happiness in stories**.

3. Identity and Self-Acceptance

Roger's mother believes he should accept his **natural identity as a skunk**.

4. Moral Perspective

Children and adults interpret moral situations differently.

4. Title Explanation

The title **Should Wizard Hit Mommy?** reflects Jo's strong reaction to the story's ending. She believes Roger's mother acted unfairly by forcing the wizard to restore Roger's bad smell. Jo thinks the wizard should punish the mother. The title highlights the **conflict between a child's sense of justice and an adult's belief in authority**.

5. Important Exam Questions

1. Why did Roger Skunk feel unhappy?

Roger Skunk felt unhappy because he had a very bad smell. The other animals avoided him and refused to play with him. This made him feel lonely and sad.

2. Why did Roger go to the wizard?

Roger went to the wizard on the advice of the old owl. He hoped that the wizard could change his bad smell so that other animals would like him.

3. Why was Roger's mother angry?

Roger's mother was angry because the wizard changed Roger's natural smell to the fragrance of roses. She believed Roger should remain a skunk and accept his natural identity.

4. Why did Jo disagree with the ending of the story?

Jo believed the ending was unfair. Roger had become happy after his smell was changed. She felt that his mother should not have forced the wizard to restore the bad smell.

5. What moral question does the story raise?

The story raises the question of **whether parents have the right to impose their decisions on their children** or whether children should be allowed to choose their own happiness.

6. Long Answer Question (5 Marks)

How does the story highlight the difference between a child's and an adult's perspective?

The story highlights the difference between the viewpoints of Jo and her father Jack. Jo represents a child's perspective that values fairness, happiness, and justice. She believes Roger Skunk should keep the pleasant smell of roses because it makes him happy and helps him make friends.

On the other hand, Jack represents the adult viewpoint. He supports the decision of Roger's mother, believing that parents have the authority to decide what is best for their children. He also believes that Roger should accept his natural identity.

Thus, the story shows how children often think emotionally and idealistically, while adults tend to think practically and value discipline and authority.

Key Themes

1. Child Psychology

Jo's reaction shows how children strongly believe in **fairness and happiness**.

2. Parent-Child Relationship

The story explores the tension between **parental authority and children's independence**.

3. Moral Perspective

Children and adults often view moral issues differently.

4. Identity and Acceptance

Roger's mother wants him to accept his **true identity as a skunk**.

Conclusion

The chapter highlights the **conflict between a child's imaginative world and an adult's practical understanding of life**.

Jo wants a **happy and just ending**, while Jack prefers an ending that reflects **real-life values and parental authority**.

Thus, the story presents a **thought-provoking discussion about morality, authority, and childhood innocence**.

