
Chapter - 6
‘On the Face of It’

By Susan Hill

Gist of the lesson -

The play depicts beautifully yet grimly the sad world of the physically impaired. It is not the actual pain or inconvenience caused by a physical impairment that trouble a disabled man but the attitude of the people around him. Two physically impaired people, Mr. Lamb with a tin leg and Derry with a burnt face, strike a band of friendship.

Derry is described as a young boy shy, withdrawn and defiant. People tell him inspiring stories to console him, no one will ever kiss him except his mother that too on the other side of his face. Mentions about a woman telling that only a mother can love such a face. Mr. Lamb revives the almost dead feelings of Derry towards life. He motivates him to think positively about life, changes his mind set about people and things. How a man locked himself as he was scared-a picture fell off the wall and got killed. Everything appears to be the same but is different- Ex. of bees.

And weeds The gate of the garden is always open. Derry is inspired and promises to come back. Derry’s mother stops him but he is adamant saying if he does not go now it would be never. When he comes back he sees lamb lying on the ground. It is ironical that when he searches a new foothold to live happily, he finds Mr. Lamb dead. In this way the play depicts the heart rendering life of physically disabled people with their loneliness, aloofness and alienation. But at the same time it is almost a true account of the people who don’t let a person live happily.
