



STEPPING STONE
SCHOOL (HIGH)

CLASS : IX

Subject: English
Topic: Short Story 5

Date: 29/05/20
Time Limit: 30 mins

Worksheet No. : 13

[Copy the question and answers neatly and correctly on a sheet of paper date wise. Keep the pages ready in a file to be submitted on the opening day.]

1. Who was Mr Oliver? What was his usual leisure activity?

Mr Oliver was an Anglo-Indian teacher, who was teaching in a school, located three miles away from Shimla. He would usually walk down to the Shimla Bazar and would return after dark by taking a shortcut through the pine forest.

2. What was called 'Eton of the East'? Why?

The all-boys school in Shimla, in which Mr Oliver was a teacher has been called 'Eaton of the East.'

Eton college is one of the most reputable and expensive English boarding school for boys in Eton, Berkshire, near Windsor(UK). Mr Olivier's school was called 'Eton of the East' because the school had been run on English public school lines and the boys, were mostly from wealthy Indian families.

3. What kind of weather was there on the night when Oliver was returning to his school? How does it add to the setting of the story?

According to the spirit of the story, the author has created an eerie atmosphere in the story. It was night time and a strong wind was blowing, the pine trees were making mysterious sounds, indicating that something evil was likely to happen.

The batteries of Oliver's torch were running down, creating an atmosphere of fear and suspense.

4. What did Oliver encounter while coming back to school one night? What did he do after that?

While walking back to school one night, he encountered a boy sitting alone on a rock whose head was hung down and whose face was held in his own hands.

After seeing the boy, Oliver stopped near the boy and asked him what he was doing there and why he was crying.

5. Why do you think the boy was called a miscreant? In what condition was he found by Oliver?

A miscreant is a person who has done some mischief. Boys were not supposed to be out after dark. Thus the boy sitting alone on the rock in the night forced the author to call him a miscreant.

6. How did Mr Oliver express his concern for the boy? How did the boy react to it?

Mr Oliver asked him what he was doing there and why he was crying. The boy did not respond and continued to sob. Oliver again enquired what was troubling him and asked him to look up.

7. How can you explain the boy's 'strange, soundless weeping'?

The boy's strange, boundless weeping that Oliver heard could be explained on the basis that Oliver was a lonely man caught in psychological fears who was imagining frightening and scary things. Thus all Oliver encountered was 'soundless weeping' and 'faceless' faces.

8. What strange revelation took place when the boy finally looked up at Oliver?

When the boy finally looked up at Oliver, it was revealed that the boy had no face. It was without eyes, ears, nose or mouth. It was just a round head with a school cap on it.

9. Explain the sentence:

“ He returned and scrambled down the path, running blindly through the trees.”

The 'faceless' boy terrified Oliver so much so that he immediately turned and in panic ran blindly through the forest to call for help.

10. The story ends with a thrilling climax. Do you agree? Why?

Oliver ran away from the faceless boy and called for help. He saw a lantern swinging in the middle of the path. What followed next was a thrilling climax as Oliver while running stumbled up to a watchman only to find that he too was faceless, with no features or even eyebrows. The climax is reached when the wind blew out the lamp, leaving the readers to imagine what might have happened to Oliver.

11. Comment on the appropriateness of the title.

The title *A Face in the Dark* is suitable as it describes a strange experience of Mr Oliver, the protagonist of the story. Oliver, on his way back at night, meets a boy in an isolated place sitting on a rock. A close look at the boy horrifies him as he has no face-no eyes, ears, nose or mouth. When he runs horrified by the strange experience, he meets the watchman who is also without a face. Thus, the boy and the watchman, who appeared to be having a face in the dark, did not have a face when seen in light.

It may also mean that a face in the dark is always blurred. On a metaphorical level, it signifies that we find every single person to be just the same when we don't really have a closer look at them.