

# Father to Son

Question 1.

Does the poem talk of an exclusively personal experience or is it fairly universal?

Answer:

The complaint and anger of a father against his headstrong son is common in every home and land. The poem doesn't talk of an individual father's personal experience. In every home the head tries to rule while the youngsters usually revolt. The conflict goes on and on. You may call it a generation gap, a want of understanding between the old and the young.

Question 2.

How is the father's helplessness brought out in the poem ?

Answer:

The poem brings out the helplessness of a father. His relationship with his son has turned sour. They live in the same house. He has built and brought up the child according to his own plan. But the son has got a mind to think freely and act differently. The father can't throw him out, can't break off with him completely. He longs for a compromise but gets no response.

Question 3.

Identify the phrases and lines that indicate distance between father and son.

Answer:

I do not understand this child

I know nothing of him.

We speak like strangers. What he loves I cannot share.

Silence surrounds us.

Question 4.

Does the poem have a consistent rhyme scheme ?

Answer:

Yes. The rhyme scheme is consistently a bba b a.

Question 5

What is the father's complaint ?

Answer:

The father complains that his son doesn't heed his advice, and lives life on his own terms. They have become strangers, though they live under the same roof . Father feels helpless.

Question 6

Does the father want to mend the fences and make peace with his son ? What does he long for ?

Answer:

Father is more tense than the son. He cannot make out where he failed in the upbringing of his son. He wants the son to carry forward the family traditions rather than revolt and live life on his own terms. He is willing to forgive and forget for peace in the family.

Question 7

Can you suggest a solution to the clash between father and son ?

Answer:

Yes, the only solution to this problem is better understanding and the spirit of give and take. Youngsters are born rebels. They break rules and laws in a fighting mood. The father wants to impose his will and authority on the children that leads to conflict. Both should mend their ways.

Question 8

Do you notice a change in the father's tone in the last stanza ?

Answer:

Yes, the father's tone in the last stanza is one of reconciliation or compromise. He admits that their relationship is too close and delicate to be broken. He regrets his anger. He is ready to put out his hand of friendship and to forgive.

#### Question 9

Bring out the underlying message of the poem Father to Son. Write a short note on the central idea of the Elizabeth Jennings poem.

Answer:

The poem Father to Son discusses not a personal experience or problem. It is universal. All the elders scold the youngsters for being disobedient and obstinate. They don't try to understand the needs of the children. Their hardened attitude creates disaffection in the young minds. Though living for years together in the same house, father and son become strangers. Conflict will make both of them unhappy. They had better come to terms in a spirit of give and take.