

Something's got to be done about this, thought Edward. He strode back to the house, up the stairs, into Dicky's room. The little boy was lying in bed. In the half light his dark head, with the square fringe, showed plain against the pale yellow. He was lying quite still, and even now he wasn't crying. Edward shut the door and leaned against it. What he wanted to do was to kneel down by Dicky's bed and cry himself and beg to be forgiven. But, of course, one can't do that sort of thing. He felt awkward, and his heart was wrong.

"Not asleep yet, Dicky?" he asked lightly.

"No, Daddy."

Edward came over and sat on his boy's bed, and Dicky looked at him through his long lashes.

"Nothing the matter, little chap, is there?" said Edward, half whispering.

"No-o Daddy," came from Dicky.

Edward put out his hand and carefully took his son's little paw.

"You – you mustn't think any more of what happened just now, little man," he said huskily. "See? That's all over now. That's forgotten. That's never going to happen again. See?"

"Yes, Daddy."

"So the thing to do now is buck up, little chap," said Edward, "and to smile." And he tried himself an extraordinary trembling apology for a smile. "To forget all about it – to – eh? Little man... old boy..."

Dicky lay as before. This was terrible. Dicky's father sprang up and went over to the window. It was nearly dark in the garden. The servant girl had run out, and she was snatching, twitching some white clothes off the bushes and piling them over her arm. But in the boundless sky the evening star shone, and a big gum tree, black against the pale glow, moved its long leaves softly. All this he saw, while he felt in his trousers pocket for his money. Bringing it out, he chose a new sixpence and went back to Dicky.

"Here you are, little chap. Buy yourself something," said Edward softly, laying a sixpence on Dicky's pillow.

But could even that – could even a whole sixpence – blot out what had been?

1. Write what each of the **characters** is like. Write if they are **dynamic** or **static**.
2. How do you know? What method does the author use?
3. What is the author's **tone** towards each of the characters?
4. Each character plays a part in the story. What did each character do, and what was his/her **motivation**?
5. What is the **conflict** in the story, and what is the **climax**?
6. What is the **moral** of the story?

Writing Workshop

Write a short story in which a character has both a real motivation and a supposed motivation for his actions.