

**Chapter - 25**  
**Once Upon a Time**  
**Worksheet**

Q1) How do you relate with the title of the poem?

Q2) Read the lines and answer the following questions.

“ But now they only laugh with their teeth,  
While their ice-block-cold eyes...”

- Who are ‘they’ in the first line?
- Explain the phrase “ice-block-cold eyes”.

Q3) Read the lines and answer the following questions.

Once upon a time, son,  
they used to laugh with their hearts  
and laugh with their eyes:  
but now they only laugh with their teeth,  
while their ice-block-cold eyes  
search behind my shadow.

- What does the poet convey through the oft-repeated phrase, ‘once upon a time?’
- Whom is the poet talking to?
- What does the poet mean by “laugh with their hearts” and “laugh with their teeth?”
- What do you understand by ‘laughing with teeth?’

Q4) Read the lines and answer the following questions.

’Feel at home!’ ‘Come again’:  
They say, and when I come  
Again and feel  
At home, once, twice,  
There will be no thrice-  
For then I find doors shut on me.

- Why do people invite repeatedly?
- Why is there no ‘third time’ for the poet to feel at his host’s home?

Q5) Read the lines and answer the following questions.

But believe me, son.

I want to be what I used to be

when I was like you. I want

to unlearn all these muting things.

Most of all, I want to relearn

how to laugh, for my laugh in the mirror

shows only my teeth like a snake's bare fangs!

- What is the poet asking his son to teach him?
- The poet wants to unlearn those muting things which are artificial and mechanical in nature. These are the artificial behavioural patterns of modern man. Explain in reference to the poem.

Q6) What frightens the poet when he sees his smile in the mirror? How do people laugh now a days? What is the difference of people's laugh in the past and in the present day?

Q7) 'Once upon a time' has connotations of what? Give any 2 examples.

Q8) In the poem what does 'Good riddance' mean?

Q9) The father asks his son to show him the way to be simple, honest, natural and innocent. He wants his son to help him to find his old self, because his son is a child and children are completely natural. Imagine you are the father in the poem, and write a diary entry guiding your child towards a simple and truthful future.

Q10) "As children we are innocent, loving and honest about our feelings. But as time passes, many social and cultural factors and experiences change our personality and behaviour. These experiences often take away some of our honesty and innocence." Do you have any such experiences? Write your experience in about 100-150 words.