

When Adversity Knocks

Mary was a young girl in a beautiful, tiny but a super warm house. She used to get annoyed with everything. She had a negative attitude towards life. Once, when she felt that life was unbearable, she asked her father what to do. She told him that if she was able to manage and solve one problem, another one followed quickly.

Her father consoled her and took her to the kitchen. He asked Mary to take a potato, an egg and two spoons of tea leaves. Mary was surprised, and asked her father, “Do you want me to cook?”

“No,” her father said. He then took three vessels and poured one cup of water in each vessel. The vessels were placed on the stove. Once the water started to boil, he dropped the potato in a vessel, egg in the second one and the tea leaves in the third one.

“Why are you doing all these things?” Mary asked, really annoyed with her father.

“Just wait fifteen minutes,” said her father.

The impatient daughter managed to wait for around 15 minutes. Father removed the potato from the pot and placed in a plate. He did the same with the eggs. He filtered the tea decoction using a cup. Now, he placed the two plates, one with the potato and the other with the egg, and the cup of tea in front of Mary.

He asked Mary, “What do you see?”

“Potato, egg and a cup of tea,” said Mary.

“No, you are wrong,” said her father. “Look at it closely and answer me.” Mary replied the same. “Now touch it and answer me.”

The potato was cooked and was soft, the egg was boiled hard, and the tea carried a nice aroma.

Mary couldn't find the correct answer. Her father said, “The potato was so hard and strong before it was boiled; now it has turned soft and smooth. Also, the egg was delicate but after boiling it became hard. Sip the tea. It is delicious!”

Mary asked, “What does it mean father? I don't understand!”

“Each object responded differently to water. Each object was put under the same kind of circumstances, faced similar adversities, but reacted differently. The potato, when put in boiling water, became very weak. The soft egg became very hard when we put it in boiling water. And the tea leaves are unique. It changed the water itself, giving it a unique flavour and aroma! It gave something new.” Mary understood that we can create something new and unique even when we experience adversities.

So, what are you? A potato, an egg, or a tea leaf?

"When Adversity Knocks" | Reading Assessment

I. Reading Comprehension Activity

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. What role do the three cooking pots (with potatoes, eggs, and coffee beans) play in the story? How do they symbolize different responses to hardship?
2. How does the protagonist respond to adversity? What does this reveal about their character?
3. What message does the story convey about resilience and personal growth?
4. If you were in the protagonist's position, which of the three elements (potato, egg, or coffee bean) do you think you would resemble? Why?

II. Discussion-Based Vocabulary Activity

Discuss the meaning of the following words in relation to the story:

1. **Obstacles** – What kinds of obstacles did the protagonist face?
2. **Overcome** – How did the story illustrate different ways to overcome challenges?
3. **Mindset** – Why is mindset important when dealing with adversity?
4. **Change** – What changes occurred in the story, and what lessons were learned?