

Main points

- 'The Rocking-horse Winner' is written by D.H. Lawrence.
- The story introduces us to Hester, a beautiful woman who dreams of living a luxurious lifestyle which she cannot afford.
- She lives in a modest house with her husband and her three children, two girls and a boy.
- Although she and her husband never mention their financial woes, the children sense that their house and everything inside of it whisper about the need for more money.
- Hester attempts to make money at various jobs, but she isn't very successful at any of them.
- One day Hester's son Paul asks her what makes some people lucky. She tells him that people with luck are the ones who make lots of money.
- Paul's father is unlucky because no matter how hard he tries, he can't make enough money. This makes Paul determined to prove that he is lucky to his mother.
- Paul discovers that when he rides his rocking horse long enough, he is somehow able to know who the winning racehorse will be.
- Using this knowledge, he asks Bassett, the family gardener, to help him place bets and hold onto his winnings.
- Eventually, Uncle Oscar discovers Paul's gambling scheme and joins in as a partner too.
- Paul arranges to have a lawyer, send his mother five thousand pounds with the money he won, which she promptly spends on all kinds of luxuries.
- Meanwhile, unaware of her son's gambling habit, Hester grows concerned about Paul's health.
- She plans to send Paul to the seaside to recover, but Paul convinces her to let him stay until the Derby race.
- One evening while out at a party, Hester is overcome with anxiety over Paul. When she returns home, she discovers that he is still riding his rocking horse.
- Paul collapses with a brain fever, but not before he utters the name of the Derby winner, and the horse was Malabar.
- With this information, Uncle Oscar and Bassett go ahead and place their bets in the Derby race.
- The anticipated horse, Malabar won the race and Paul got eighty thousand pounds as his share in the Derby race.
- On hearing this news he tells his mother that he is lucky, Paul dies later that night.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. **The author of the story 'The Rocking-horse Winner' is _____ .**
 - a. Kamala Das
 - b. Mulk Raj Anand
 - c. D.H.Lawrence
 - d. Anton Chekhov
2. **The story, 'The Rocking-horse Winner' starts with _____.**
 - a. Paul
 - b. a beautiful woman
 - c. Oscar
 - d. Bassett
3. **How many children did the beautiful woman have?**
 - a. One
 - b. Two
 - c. Three
 - d. Four
4. **The beautiful woman could not love her children because _____.**
 - a. They were ugly
 - b. They did not like her.
 - c. She felt that they had been thrust upon her.
 - d. They were her step children.
5. **What was always kept up inspite of shortage of money in the family ?**
 - a. Education
 - b. Food
 - c. Social work
 - d. Living style
6. **The beautiful woman had _____ boy and _____ little girls.**
 - a. One, two
 - b. Two, one
 - c. Two, two
 - d. One, three
7. **How was the Father?**
 - a. The father was lazy and did not work.

- b. Basset's father
c. Paul's mother's brother
d. Paul's father's friend
- 29. Which is not one of the children's toys?**
a. Doll b. Soldier
c. Rocking-horse d. Puppy
- 30. How did Paul's family feel about themselves in comparison to their neighbours?**
a. Uncertain b. Superior
c. Inferior d. Equal
- 31. What was Paul's mother unable to feel for her children?**
a. Appreciation b. Love
c. Hate d. Respect
- 32. What do the children hear whispered in the house?**
a. There must be more money.
b. We must live in style.
c. Gambling is evil.
d. Something is wrong.
- 33. What is peculiar about the feeling the children get from the whispering of the house?**
a. They know it is imaginary
b. No one says it aloud.
c. It seems to come from their mother
d. It seems to be evil.
- 34. What does Paul ask his mother about which prompts their discussion on luck?**
a. Why does Uncle Oscar gamble so much?
b. Why they do not have their own car?
c. Why does his rocking-horse whisper to him?
d. Why did she marry his father?
- 35. What reason does Paul's mother give for her being unlucky?**
a. She had an unlucky child.
b. She married an unlucky husband.
c. She is not rich
d. She had been cursed.
- 36. How does Paul's mother speak to Paul when they speak of luck?**
a. Uncertainly b. Tenderly
c. Bitterly d. Motherly
- 37. What frightens Paul's sisters?**
a. Their mother's lack of love
- b. His riding the rocking-horse
c. Their family's poverty.
d. Gambling of their uncle.
- 38. What does Paul go searching for?**
a. His mother's love b. Money
c. Success d. Luck
- 39. How is Paul's mother described at the beginning of the lesson?**
a. Beautiful b. Bitter
c. Strange d. Content
- 40. Who finds out Paul's ability to pick the winner of the race?**
a. Uncle Oscar b. Bassett
c. Hester d. Paul's father

ANSWER KEY

1-c, 2-b, 3-c, 4-c, 5-d, 6-a, 7-d, 8-d, 9-a, 10-d, 11-c, 12-b, 13-a, 14-c, 15-b, 16-b, 17-a, 18-c, 19-b, 20-a, 21-b, 22-b, 23-d, 24-a, 25-c, 26-a, 27-a, 28-c, 29-b, 30-b, 31-b, 32-a, 33-b, 34-b, 35-b, 36-c, 37-b, 38-d, 39-a, 40-a

VERY SHORT QUESTIONS

- 1. When was the rocking-horse bought for the children?**
Ans. The rocking-horse was bought for the children at Christmas.
- 2. Where did the voice come from?**
Ans. The voice used to come from behind the shining rocking horse, behind the smart doll's house and from everywhere in the house.
- 3. Why would the children look into each other's eyes?**
Ans. The children would look into each others eyes to see if they had all heard the voice.
- 4. Why were the little girls uneasy?**
Ans. The little girls were uneasy because Paul would sit on his big rocking horse, charging madly into space.
- 5. How did Paul's mother spend the money which she received as a birthday present?**
Ans. Paul's mother, Hester bought new furnishings for the house and a tutor was hired for Paul.
- 6. Who is Miss Wilmot?**
Ans. Miss Wilmot is the nursery governess for the

children.

7. Why does she not want Miss Wilmot to go and look at Paul?

Ans. She does not want Miss Wilmot to go and look at Paul because she does not want her son's privacy to be intruded upon.

8. What was the haunted phrase and who heard it?

Ans. The unspoken phrase , "There must be more money! There must be more money!" haunted the house.The children could hear it all the time, though nobody said it aloud.

9. How the failure affected Paul's mother, Hester?

Ans. Hester tried a variety of things but was unable to get success. She racked her wits even more, and her failure left deep lines on her cheeks.

10. What was the birthday present of Paul to his mother?

Ans. The birthday present of Paul to his mother was thousand pounds for five successive years.

SHORT QUESTIONS

1. What were the gifts of Christmas?

Ans. On the occasion of Christmas, the house was full of expensive and splendid toys which filled the entire nursery. The gifts were a gleaming contemporary rocking-horse, smart doll house, a large pink doll who sat in her new pram, and an exceptionally stupid dog who replaced a teddy bear.

2. How uncle managed five thousand pounds without letting Paul's mother know about it?

Ans. Uncle promised Paul that he would handle it without his mother's knowledge, and he did it easily. Uncle deposited the five thousand pounds with the family lawyer, who was then to notify Paul's mother that a relative had placed five thousand pounds in his hands.

3. What made Paul frightened terribly?

Ans. The house was already haunted by the phrase, 'There must be more money!' that was heard by all the children. The voices in the house suddenly went like mad, it became like a chorus of frogs on a spring evening. The voices in the house were behind the spray of mimosa and almond-blossoms, and from under the piles of cushions, trilled and screamed in sort of ecstasy. This frightened Paul terribly.

4. What happened two nights before the Derby?

Ans. Paul's mother went to a huge party in town two nights before the Derby. One of her panic attacks was concerning her son, her firstborn, which grabbed her heart and made her unable to speak. She battled the sensation since she believed in commonsense. She left the dance and walked downstairs to contact her son on the phone.

5. Why is it better to be born lucky than rich?

Ans. According to Paul mother's, Hester, it is better to be born lucky than rich because if you are lucky, you have money. If you are rich, you may lose your money, but if you are lucky, you will always get more money. She was lucky before her marriage but she married her husband who was an unlucky man, so she also became unlucky.

LONG QUESTIONS

1. What was the reason for young Paul's restlessness at the beginning of the story? How did it find expression?

Ans. Paul is the central figure of the story. His mother always used to complain that they were poor. His mother told him that they were not lucky as they didn't have sufficient money to have a car and other luxuries of life that a family must have. Besides, Paul used to hear a whisper that they did not have money which later turned into screams. He also came to know that his mother was not so happy as she appeared to be. She didn't have good relations with his father because she always used to blame him that he was not a lucky man. So, he decided to prove himself a lucky boy.

2. Why do you think Paul's mother was not satisfied with the yearly birthday gift of 1,000 pounds for five year?

Ans. Paul's mother, Hester was never satisfied with what she had. When she came to know that she would get one thousand pound every year for five years on her birthday, she wanted the whole money at a time because she always used to think that she was unlucky as she had married an unlucky man. That's why she did not show any kind of enthusiasm for the birthday gift from Paul. Instead Paul started to hear more whispers about their being poor.

3. What was the reason for the anxiety of Paul's mother as he grew older?

Ans. When Paul grew older and reached the threshold of his teen age, he came to know about his mother's eagerness to have more money. He wanted to

bring happiness to his family by earning a lot of money. As he grew older, he became impatient also and started betting on racing horses. His mother realised that her son was indulging himself too much in gambling. So she asked Bassett and her husband to keep him away from horses. She had so much anxiety for him that she even left the party in the middle only to see him safe and sound. Thus, her anxiety grew as Paul grew older.

to make her mother happy by giving her more and more money but his mother was not satisfied. So he used to get clues from the rocking horse by riding it ferociously. He, ironically, dies when he was getting more and more success. If Paul had not died, the ending of the story might have been different. He might have got his mother's deep love and the ending of the story would have been happy.

4. Paul's final bet made the family rich but cost him his life. Explain.

Ans. There were many changes in Paul's physical as well as mental state. So he needed care and attention from his family. He always used to hear a whisper that there must be more money. He wanted to see his mother happy. So he tried to earn more and more money. Besides, he wanted to show himself to be lucky. He earned eighty thousand pounds by predicting about Malabar's victory. Malabar won but during this course, Paul lost his health and died very soon. Thus, he had to pay the cost of his life for being rich.

5. How has the author linked the symbol of the rocking-horse to Paul's triumphs at the races?

Ans. The rocking horse is a symbolic presentation by Lawrence. The horse is the symbol of victory. He has presented the importance of materialistic gain and money over love and affection. There is always a haunting sound in the house to have more and more money. Thus, the money and rocking horse have been interrelated. Paul wants to earn more money to win his mother's love. So he starts betting on horse race with Bassett. He gets some clues from the rocking horse about the horse to win in the race which he tells Bassett. Thus, he starts earning money. The boy is disheartened to know that his father is unlucky. That's why, when suddenly, one night his mother enters his room, he is still riding his horse ferociously and predicts that Malabar will win. The horse wins and the boy gives eighty thousand pounds to his mother but because of his ill health, he dies. Thus, the writer is successful in linking the rocking horse with Paul's triumphs.

6. The ending of the story is an instance of irony. Suppose Paul had not died at the end, how would you have reacted to the story?

Ans. Paul is the victim in the story who pathetically meets his end. His death leaves a deep effect on the readers. His death causes an emotional catharsis on the readers. Paul was predicting again and again and his predictions were always correct but simultaneously, he was losing his health. He wanted