

Poetry Worksheet

Read the poem below and then answer the following questions.

Guilty or Not Guilty

She stood at the bar of justice,
A creature wan and wild,
In form too small for a woman,
In features too old for a child;
For a look so worn and pathetic
Was stamped on her pale young face,
It seemed long years of suffering
Must have left that silent trace.

"Your name?" said the judge, as he eyed her
With kindly look yet keen,—
"Is Mary McGuire, if you please, sir."
And your age?"—"I am turned fifteen."
"Well, Mary," and then from a paper
He slowly and gravely read,
"You are charged here—I'm sorry to say it—
With stealing three loaves of bread.

"You look not like an offender,
And I hope that you can show
The charge to be false. Now, tell me,
Are you guilty of this, or no?"
A passionate burst of weeping
Was at first her sole reply.
But she dried her eyes in a moment,
And looked in the judge's eye.

"I will tell you just how it was, sir:
My father and mother are dead,
And my little brothers and sisters
Were hungry and asked me for bread.
At first I earned it for them
By working hard all day,
But somehow, times were bad, sir,
And the work all fell away.

"I could get no more employment.
The weather was bitter cold,
The young ones cried and shivered—
(Little Johnny's but four years old)—
So what was I to do, sir?
I am guilty, but do not condemn.
I took—oh, was it stealing?—
The bread to give to them."

Every man in the court-room—
Gray-beard and thoughtless youth—
Knew, as he looked upon her,
That the prisoner spake the truth;
Out from their pockets came kerchiefs,
Out from their eyes sprung tears,
And out from their old faded wallets
Treasures hoarded for years.

The judge's face was a study,
The strangest you ever saw,
As he cleared his throat and murmured
Something about the law;
For one so learned in such matters,
So wise in dealing with men,
He seemed, on a simple question,
Sorely puzzled, just then.

But no one blamed him or wondered,
When at last these words he heard,
"The sentence of this young prisoner
Is, for the present, deferred."
And no one blamed him or wondered
When he went to her and smiled
And tenderly led from the court-room,
Himself, the "guilty" child.

Questions:

A. **Visualization.** Draw a visual representation of the poem.



B. **Literal questions.**

1. What is the name of the person standing at the bar?
2. How old is Mary McGuire?
3. What is Mary charged with?
4. How does the judge describe Mary's appearance?
5. Why did Mary feel the need to steal bread?
6. Who are Mary's family members mentioned in the text?
7. Who is deceased in Mary's family?
8. What is the rhyming scheme for the poem?
9. How many stanzas is in this poem?
10. What does the following mean?
 - a. A creature wan and wild –
 - b. The sentence of this young prisoner is, for the present, deferred."

Word Puzzle:

1. Which of the following words does not fit in with the rest?
Justice offender employment guilty
2. Which of the following words mean the same as HOARDED as it is used in the passage?
Consumed Treasured Loaded Saved

3. Which of the following means the same as “*The charge to be false*” ?
- The accusation can be true.
 - The allegation may not be true.
 - There is an intent to tell lies.
 - It is false to accuse someone.

Building Sentences

Read the poem again and then write out these sentences and complete them by picking the best words from those given in capital letters.

- Mary Mc Guire was _____ with stealing three loaves of bread.
 found
 charged
 welcomed
 helped
- The judge did not believe she looked like _____.
 a child
 an adult
 an offender
 a parent
- Mary _____ that she stole the loaves of bread to feed her hungry _____.
 recalled
 confessed
 warned
 denied
 babies
 pets
 siblings
 parents
- The judge could not _____ Mary to prison.
 punish
 sentence
 call
 commit

Discussion:

Do you agree the judge did the correct thing? Why do you say that? Use the poem for quotes to support your answer.

What do you think the judge would do for Mary?