

The Father, by Hugh Garner

1. Who is the protagonist of the story and what is his goal? Does he fulfill his goal? Why or why not?
2. The “flashback” in this story provides some insight into the source of conflict between father and son. (a) What attitudes and events led to their drifting apart? (b) How accurate is the father in thinking that “he seemed to know less about the boy than anyone?”
3. Why does the son run away from his father? Is he justified in this action?
4. (a) Do you feel that father and son will ever be reconciled? (b) Discuss using evidence from the story. (c) Do you think that the father would do anything differently if he had a chance to relive the evening?
5. Is John Purcell a sympathetic character? Why or why not? Explain.
6. Does John Purcell conform to your mental image of what a father should be like? Why or why not? Explain.