

Stephen Spender
My parents kept me from children . . .
More challenging questions!

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1. "My parents kept me from children who were rough and who threw words like stones and who wore torn clothes. Their thighs showed through rags."
 - Why should the poet's parents have despised the fact that these children wore "torn clothes"? (4)
 - The poet mentions specifically that, as a result of their rags, the children's thighs showed. Why does he specifically speak of their thighs and not, say, their tummies? (4)
 - What does one learn of the social status of the poet's parents and the children whom they appear to despise? (4)
 - Does the poet agree with his parent's attitudes? Explain. (4)

2. "They ran in the street
And climbed cliffs and stripped by the country streams."
 - The parents would have despised these children because they "stripped by the country streams". At the same time, however, the poet himself appears to have envied them. Be able to explain their differing points of view. (6)
 - What did the parents find wrong about running in the street, climbing cliffs and splashing in country streams? (4)

3. "They were lithe, they sprang out behind hedges
Like dogs to bark at our world."
 - What is meant by "lithe"? (2)
 - What is the implication of the words, "they sprang out behind hedges | Like dogs to bark at our world"? (4)
 - Why are the children compared to dogs? What figure of speech is this? (3)
 - What is the difference between what the poet calls "our world" and the world of the children? (4)

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