

It Won't Stay Light Forever

Discussion Questions

The Hundred-Dollar Tip

Louie, a friendly and talkative cab driver, is hired to take a wealthy old man on a weekly outing. Mr. Winston is an apparent stroke victim: he has limited mobility and cannot speak. As weeks go by Louie begins to imagine what Mr. Winston might say to him if he could talk; Louis feels great encouragement from him, and one day he tells Mr. Winston something he has never told anyone.

- How did you feel about the characters in the story?
- Did anyone change as the story progressed?
- Was the conclusion of the story satisfying to you?

Pressing Hard Enough

Gabriela, a young woman who had high hopes for education and a career left school to help her family. She works doing housecleaning. She wonders if opportunities are now closed to her, as if her current life is now "baked in." Then a customer's disrespect pushes her beyond her limits.

- What did you think of Gabriela's decision?
- What do you see happening in Gabriela's life?

Empty Gesture

A mother and her young son, driving to the grandmother's deathbed, are shadowed and harassed by two men in a tow-truck. The boy fears that he may have accidentally gotten their attention and aroused their spite.

- How did your feelings develop as the story progressed?
- Should the mother have done anything differently than she did?

A Message from Todd

A cable company supervisor hires Jesse, a recent veteran of conflict in the Mid-East who claims to know the supervisor's estranged son who is still in the war zone. When Jesse makes religious preaching to customers his main activity while supposedly installing cable, it takes the supervisor some time to catch on.

- What is your opinion about Jesse's story?
- Your thoughts on the father-son relationship?

Boy in the Wall

Longing for a real family life, a teenager, abused by his step-father and unprotected by his alcoholic mother, hides in an attic downshaft in the home of the school nurse who has always treated him kindly and respectfully.

- What will happen to Jeremy?
- Did you agree or disagree with how the characters managed their situations?

The Walk Will Do Them Good

A father feels no connection to the man his daughter brings home; resents his motorcycle, and the fact that his daughter says he writes poetry.

- Was this story funny?

The Mysterious Survival of Lawrence Tubb

Class members at a 25th reunion are amazed to find that the one person who might have been deeply scarred by tragedy, seems to be doing the best of all of them.

- Why did Tubby arrange the reunion?
- How do you feel about the characters?

Finish Man

Imagining an old classmate has arranged to have her front doors replaced because of an interest in him, a carpenter takes comical revenge when he realizes he has fooled himself.

- How did you feel when Bobby started crying – was that believable?

How Do You Know?

A mentally disabled young man, worried about a child crying in the street, tries to comfort her.

- What will happen next for the young man in the story?
- How do you feel about the reactions of the people who get involved?

The Business with the Garbage

A woman who dresses and acts more elegantly than her neighbors moves into a neighborhood. They soon reject her. When someone begins sending letters asking the neighborhood to give cash bonuses to the garbage collectors, the neighbors blame her.

- How would you explain the reactions of the neighbors when the woman first moved in to the neighborhood?
- Do you think the woman was responsible? If so, was she really concerned about the garbage collectors?

Honest Work

An unkempt man, "Longfellow," asks an office worker walking by to help push his car. When the office worker agrees, the demands keep increasing.

- Would you have any advice for the man who was helping Longfellow?
- When would you have said "enough?"

The History of Psychiatric Nursing

A woman who lives in a mental institution is about to meet the new staff psychiatrist. She plans to give the new doctor some explosive background information.

- Was the main character telling the truth? When or when not?
- If she is lying, what is her motivation?

Tales of Destruction

A man has an alcohol problem that he denies. He takes his son and the son's friend on a car trip to New York City.

- Does the father in this story believe the things he says?
- Did he care when his son threw the thermos bottle?

Jake's American Dream

Jake, discouraged by being passed over in favor of the boss' relatives, decides to go in business for himself, in competition with his old boss.

- Did you think that Jake's business would be a success?
- What is the significance of the B-1 Bomber?

Free Advice

A businessman gave two kinds of free advice. One kind annoyed his partner, and the other kind made them several million dollars.

- What did you think of the ethics of the main character at the end of the story?
- Did you agree or disagree with how the characters managed their situations?

Condolences

A policeman agonizes over the death of his old friend's daughter. On the evening of the funeral day, he encounters the bereaved mother and her daughter's two toddlers.

- How did you feel about the policeman's inability to express his thoughts to the bereaved mother, even though they had been friends since they were kids?

The Blessing

An old man races to catch a little boy heading across a busy highway.

- Did you think the story would end in tragedy?

Turnaround Time

Two men from totally different worlds meet in a restaurant. Despite good intentions, they keep misunderstanding each other.

- Could either the restaurant owner or the customer have gotten the misunderstandings between them straightened out? If so, how?
- Did you agree or disagree with how the characters managed their situations?

Harris Steps to the Line

For some reason, Harris has fallen in his driveway, but he still wants to shoot a free throw. As people converge to help him, he is thinking about a time when he son missed an important free throw, and what he would say to his son if he had the chance now.

- What is happening to Harris?
- Is he coming to a good resolution of his regrets about his son?