

Chapter
Homesickness

1a. Why did the speaker get nervous on finding a toothbrush bristle on his tongue?

1. a. The speaker had asked his Nanny what causes an attack of appendicitis and she had said that if loose toothbrush bristles were swallowed, then they get stuck in the appendix and turn it rotten. That is why he would get nervous if he found a loose toothbrush bristle on his tongue.

1b. What can you understand about the speaker's attitude to his Nanny from this statement? Which other words in para 13 support your answer?

Ans b. From this statement it is clear that the speaker had great faith in his Nanny's wisdom. He believed whatever she told him.

The other words that show his attitude towards his Nanny are 'Nanny, who in my eyes was filled with more wisdom than Solomon...'

2a. Which room is being referred to?

ANS. a. The Matron's room in the speaker's school is being referred to here.

2b. Why was the speaker clutching his stomach on the right hand side?

ANSb. The speaker was pretending to have an attack of appendicitis. He had observed his sister, who had really had such an attack, and she had complained of pain in the lower right side of her tummy. That is why he was clutching his stomach on the right-hand side.

2c. Why was he staggering pathetically?

ANS c. The speaker was staggering pathetically because he was pretending to be in great pain. He was putting on an act of being very ill-so ill that he could not eat or walk properly.

3a. What was the clincher?

a. The clincher was the speaker's (false) report to the Matron that he had been sick all morning.

3b. What do you think the word clincher means here?

b. Here, the word 'clincher' means the final argument or statement that would decide the case. It is because the speaker said that he had been sick that the Matron finally began to believe him.

4. Why did Dr Dunbar say this to the Speaker? Do you think that after this incident he would face a similar situation differently? What would you do, if faced with a similar situation?

4. Dr Dunbar said this because he had understood that the speaker had lied and pretended to be sick in order to come back home. He knew that the speaker may be homesick again, or face other problems at school, but he had to be strong and face them bravely.