

# Should wizard hit mommy



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SHOULD WIZARD HIT MOMMY MORAL ISSUE John Updike's story 'Should Wizard Hit Mommy' raises a very pertinent and a profound issue. Should parents have the prerogative to always decide what is best for their children? And are children supposed to listen to and obey their parents unquestioningly? Roger Skunk, though an obedient child, is a sad and a depressed one. His awful smell keeps others away and he has no friends. When the Wizard fulfils his wish and Roger Skunk gets the rose smell, he is thrilled.

All the other creatures love the smell and play with Roger Skunk. However Roger Skunk's mother is not happy. She wants her son to get back his original smell. Roger Skunk accepts his mother's dictate and slowly the other creatures get used to his smell. Jack, who brings this twist in the story, does so to expose Jo to the harsh realities of life. But Jo insists that Wizard should hit mommy, for making the Wizard give Roger Skunk back his bad smell. Jack is adamant in his refusal to change the ending of the story.

He maintains that mothers are always right and that they know best. John Updike thus raises a very relevant question. Are parents always justified in enforcing their views upon their children in an attempt to teach their children what is right and what is wrong. Parents have experience and knowledge on their side whereas children view everything with their heart and want all to be happy and joyous. Parents need to guide their kids but they should also have the patience to respect and consider their children's viewpoint. MIDDLE POSITION

JOHN UPDIKE in his story 'Should Wizard Hit Mommy' portrays Jack as a new age father and a husband. In departure from the past, Jack does try to

contribute his bit in helping his wife and look after the kids. It is Jack's duty to put their four year old daughter to sleep in the evenings by telling her a story. Jack has been doing so for all these years. But now as Jo is growing older this chore has become an ordeal for Jack. Jo no longer falls asleep easily. She is an inquisitive child who has her queries and doubts about everything.

Jack has little patience for her questions. Jack who is desperately trying to put Jo to sleep also needs to help his wife. His wife, Clare, who is pregnant, is painting the woodwork downstairs. Jack needs to help Clare as she should not be moving heavy furniture. Jack fails miserably on both the fronts. He is neither able to put Jo to sleep nor is he able to help his wife. Jack feels totally miserable and helpless. The monotony and drudgery of married life disturbs and disheartens him.

He feels trapped in the cage of matrimony with so many duties and demands, which he is unable to meet and fulfil. Jack tries to be hands on father and a helpful husband. Yet the traces of chauvinism and superiority are clearly visible. He does not like being contradicted by his daughter. He wants women hanging on to his words and not question him. Thus Jack does seem to be caught in a difficult middle position. He is angry and absolutely frustrated at his inability to do the right thing.