

“My Oedipus Complex”

10<sup>th</sup> Honors/Gifted Literature

By Frank O’Conner

Write on your own paper.

After reading the story, answer the following questions in complete, meaningful, intelligent sentences. Use your own paper.

### Reviewing the text

1. Larry describes the war, ironically, as the most peaceful part of his life. Outline the details of Larry’s peaceful morning ritual during the war. How does his life change when his father comes home?

### First thoughts

2. Which of Larry’s opinions or misunderstandings did you find most comical? Share your favorite passages with other readers.

### Shaping Interpretations

3. At one point in the story, Larry realizes that he and his father are conducting “a series of skirmishes against one another, he trying to steal my time with Mother and I his.” What details justify Larry’s conclusion that his father is really jealous of him?
4. What event finally resolves the **conflict** between Larry and his father?
5. What is the **dramatic irony** in Larry’s remarks about the cost of a baby? Find and explain one additional example of dramatic irony in Larry’s comments about sharing his mother with his father.
6. At the end of the story, how can you tell that Larry’s Oedipal stage is over? But what new problem has arisen in the household?
7. The plot of a **comedy** often involves a young person who is in love, who has to fight people who block his (or her) love, and who ultimately triumphs. How does O’Connor use this typical comic plot?
8. How would you state the **theme** of this story?

### Extending the Text

Working in groups of four, write a poem about the story using the text as your source. Write a poem that expresses the feelings and images (such as Larry’s cold feet conversing) that stand out in the story. Intersperse these images with reflections, feelings, and questions. The poem should be in first person (Larry’s point of view); the goal is to express the narrator’s experiences in another format.