If I Were In Charge of the World

By: Judith Viorst

If I were in charge of the world
I’d cancel oatmeal,
Monday mornings,
Allergy shots, and also
Sara Steinberg

If I were in charge of the world
There’d be brighter night lights,
Healthier hamsters, and
Basketball baskets forty eight inches lower.

If I were in charge of the world
You wouldn’t have lonely,
You wouldn’t have clean,
You wouldn’t have bedtimes,
Or “Don’t punch your sister.”
You wouldn’t even have sisters.

If I were in charge of the world
A chocolate sundae with whipped cream and nuts
would be a vegetable
All 007 movies would be G
And a person who sometimes forgot to brush,
And sometimes forgot to flush,
Would still be allowed to be
In charge of the world.
“If I Were in Charge...” Questions

1. How is this poem organized?

2. How does the repetition of the line “If I were in charge of the world” contribute to the meaning of the poem?

3. At what age might this poem be directed to? Cite specific lines from the poem that would lead you to that conclusion.

4. What would be the author’s purpose in writing this poem?

5. What two lines in this poem rhyme?

Group Assignment:
As a group complete an poem if you were in charge of the world. It must be written exactly as Viorst’s poem, but include your ideas. Every stanza must begin “If I were in charge of the world”. This can be a large perspective-as in the entire world-or more personally focused-as in your life, community, or school. Each person in the group is responsible for the ideas and information within the poem.