

MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD

I. THE CUTTING OF MY LONG HAIR

Q1. How was Zitkala-sa feeling in the place to which she was brought?

Answer. Zitkala-sa was little disappointed to go in the school on the first day. She did not like the new surroundings as she did not know the English culture and life style. She felt that had lost her freedom and the love and care of her mother.

Q2. What did Judewin tell Zitkala-sa? How did she react to it?

Answer. Judewin was the only friend of Zitkala-sa in the Indian school. She informed her that the mistress was planning to cut off her long hair. But she decided to protest against it. . She was told by her mother that hair of captured prisoner's were cut off by enemies and in their society, short hair were worn by the mourners and cowards.

Q3. Why was Zitkala-sa resisting/objecting the cutting of her hair?

Answer. Judewin tol Zitakal-sa that the mistress was planning to cut off her long beautiful hair. But the Girl did surrender tamely and decided to resist it. She had learnt from her mother that hair of captured prisoner's was cut off by enemies and it was the symbol of cowardice. In their society, short hair was worn by the mourners and cowards.

Q4. What were the indignities that the new girl were subjected to at Carlise India School?

Answer. Girls, who belong to marginalized sector, were scrutinized thoroughly by the English mistress. They were made to tight fitting clothes and stiff shoes. No girl was allowed to keep long hair and if any had, their hairs were cut down by the mistress. They had not right to protest against such unjust decisions.

Q5. When did Zitkala-sa lose her spirit? How did Zitkala-sa try to save her hair?

Answer. Zitkala-sa protested against it and hide herself in a dark room. She was searched out by the mistress and other students. She resisted by kicking her legs and scratching wildly. But she was dragged out and tied to a chair. The mistress took the scissor and cut off her long beautiful hair. Thus she lost her spirit.

Q6. How did Zitkala-sa feel when her long hair was cut off?

Answer. Zitkala-sa did not want to sacrifice her long beautiful hair. In her culture, Short and shingles hair was the symbol of cowardice and mourner. She resisted against the cutting of hair and hide herself in a small room. But the poor girl was dragged out and her the cruel mistress cut off her hair. She was tossed in and air like a puppet. She called for her mother but no one came to hear her plight. She was feeling humiliated and defeated.

Q7. How had Zitkala-sa subjected to extreme indignities?

Answer. Zitkala-Sa was a Native American Indian girl. She and her people were subjected to/ had to suffer atrocities and prejudice by the white settlers. They were treated as herds of animals. The girl also received the inhuman torture at Carlisle Indian School. She became the laughing stock for other students as she did not know the eating manners of the English people. The mistress had planned to cut off her long beautiful hair. But the girl was not ready for it. She had been told by the mother that in their culture shingled hair were worn by cowards and mourners. Her only friend Judewin suggested her to submit/surrender before mistress but she decided to protest against the cutting of her hair. She hide herself under a bed in a dark room of the school. But the mistress and the students started to hunt/search her everywhere. Finally the girl was dragged out of the room and tied to a chair. She resisted by scratching and kicking but all in vain. She cried out for help but nobody listen her plight. The cruel lady trimmed/cut off her beautiful long hair. They showed no concern for her feelings.

II. WE TOO ARE HUMAN BEINGS

Q1. What were the entertaining sights caused Bama delay/late in reaching home?

Answer. Bama was returning home from the school. She was fascinated to see all the oddities and novelties going on the road (fun and games along the road). She saw the performance of monkey and snake charmer. A man was paddling his bicycle to win a prize. She also saw the beautiful Maariyatta Temple, a statue of Gandhi Ji and many stalls along the road. She went through the local bazaar and saw the coffee clubs and a puppet show.

Q2. Why did Bama feel like shrieking with laughter at the sight of the elderly man?

Answer. Bama saw an elderly man of her caste carrying a small packet. He reached before the young landlord, bowed before him and extended the parcel in his hand. It all looked

funny to Bama as the old man did not touch the parcel and held it with the string only. She shrieked with laughter to see this funny episode.

Q3. Why was Annan not amused when Bama told him the story of the elderly man?

Or

Why does Bama feel that the landlord has lost all human feelings?

Answer. Bama told the funny story of the old man and the young landlord to her brother Annan. He explained that the scene was not funny as/because the old man belonged to an untouchable lower caste. If he touched the parcel, the content would be/become polluted. The incident left a deep impact in her mind. Bama felt enraged/angry to think about the young landlord. She thought that he had lost all his human feeling as he had no regard for an old man.

Q4. Why did the landlord's man ask Annan where he lived?

Answer. One day Annan was returning to his village from a nearby village. Suddenly landlord's man came to him and asked his name and street name where he lived. In fact the name of the street would tell his religion and caste of the boy.

Q5. What reasons did Annan give Bama regarding honour and dignity?

Answer. Bama told her brother Annan the funny incident of the old man. He explained that the scene was not funny as/because the old man belonged to an untouchable lower caste. If he touched the parcel, the content would be/become polluted. The incident left a deep impact in her mind. Annan motivated the girl to study hard as it was the key to earn dignity and honour for their people.

Q6. What was Bama's initial reaction to the incident on the street? How did she react to it differently later on?

Answer. Bama was a Tamil Dalit writer of India. In her autobiography, She criticizes the prejudice and humiliation that people of her community had to face by the upper caste people.

She remembers the bitter experience of her childhood. One day while/when she was returning from the school, she saw a humorous episode. An elderly man of her caste was carrying a small packet by the string but did not touch it (packet). He went straight to a young man, bowed before him and extended/handed/gave him the parcel. The man opened the parcel and enjoyed the vadias inside. She shrieked with laughter to see this funny episode. She told the incident to her brother Annan. He explained that the scene was not funny as/because the old man belonged to an untouchable lower caste. He had no rights and dignity in society. If he touched the parcel, the content would be become polluted. The incident left a deep impact in the young mind. She resolved to study hard to earn equal rights and dignity for her people. She made education her tool to fight against such evils.

Q7. The resistance of Zitkala-Sa to the cutting of her long hair and Bama's determination to study are sparks which can ignite a change. Discuss.

Answer. The 'Memories of childhood' shows the suffering and struggle of two different girls Bama and Zitkala-sa. They belonged to different countries but they had to suffer/face the same social discrimination by the dominating/upper class. They were considered untouchable and incompetent/incapable. They could not enjoy their freedom and had not rights of equality. Society had no consideration for their plight. Zitkala-sa's beautiful hair was cut off by the cruel mistress while Bama saw the humiliation of her community. At that time women were at the lowest ladder of society. But they did not surrender before these social evils and established/proved their identity. Zitkala-sa protested against the cutting of her long beautiful hair while Bama resolved to study hard. They made education their tool to fight these social evils and win equality and honour for their community. They achieved great success and proved their worth. They made every difficulty the steps of success. In their struggle we can learn the true lesson of life. They have inspired millions of other people who are fighting against such evils. They paved/made way for the future women to live a life of dignity.