

Class 11th | English



Hornbill

Chapter 1

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Part-2

Summary:-

- Author remembers his grandparents - talks about Grandma.
- Author's childhood with his grandma.
- Author at school - in rural.
- The turning point → Relation of author & grandma. — grandma disturbed (new school)
- Broken bond - author goes abroad for higher studies
- Grandma celebrates author's return - falls sick
- Grandma dies - mourning of sparrows.

Themes :-

#→ Bond between grandparents and grandchildren
↓
Author and grandmother. ✓

→ According to the different phases -

- Author's childhood → innocence, love, unbreakable bond.
- City life → unfamiliarity, separation

Setting :-

- Initially set in rural part of India.
- Later the setting shifts to a city environment.

Character & Sketch:-

Author / K.S

- Narrator
- Observant (details provided by him)
- Sensitive towards Grandma.
-

3M

Grandmother

- Old woman
- Appearance (white saree, white hair, rosary in one hand, wrinkled face, short)
- Deeply religious
- Kind hearted - Fed dogs & birds
- Traditional mindset.

5M

QUESTIONS

1. 'the thought was almost revolting' ✓

ANS. The thought that the author's grandmother was once young and pretty raises a doubt in the author's mind. He finds it too hard to believe, as he had always seen her in the same old and wrinkled physical condition.

QUESTIONS

2. 'an expanse of pure white serenity' ✓

ANS. It refers to the calm, peaceful and serene character and conduct of the author's grandmother. She is compared to the peaceful winter landscape in the mountains. She was always attired in spotless white clothes and had silver hair. She, thus, presented a picture of pure white serenity.

QUESTIONS

3. 'a turning-point' ✓

ANS. It refers to the point where the author's relationship with his grandmother changes drastically after they move to the city-house.

The grandmother is unable to accompany the author to school as he travels by motor bus. Neither is she able to help him in his lessons.

Although they share the same room, a sort of distancing occurred in the relationship.

QUESTIONS

4. 'accepted her seclusion with resignation' //

ANS. This shows the author's grandmother's passive submission to her secluded life after she gradually loses touch with her grandson. When the author was given a room of his own, the common link of friendship between the two was snapped. However, the grandmother accepted her fate without complaint. She rarely talked to anyone in the house and was busy spinning the wheel and reciting her prayers. Even when she relaxed, it was to feed the sparrows.

//

QUESTIONS

5. 'a veritable bedlam of chirpings' ✓✓

ANS. It refers to the noise, confusion and chaos caused by the chirping of the sparrows that scattered and perched around the author's grandmother. The grandmother sat in the verandah and broke the bread into little bits and threw it to the sparrows. Hundreds of sparrows collected around her and created a noise by their continuous chirping.

QUESTIONS

6. 'frivolous rebukes' ✓

ANS. It refers to the casual and light-hearted rebukes of the grandmother to the sparrows. That day she realised that she would die and so was having some fun with the sparrows by scolding them for small mistakes. The grandmother had developed a special bond with the sparrows. The sparrows came in huge numbers and the grandmother fed them with little bits of bread. Sometimes, she also used to scold them. The sparrows perched on her legs, shoulders and even sat on her head but she smiled and never shooed them away.

QUESTIONS

7. 'the sagging skins of the dilapidated drum'

ANS. It points to the shabby and deteriorated condition of the drum. The grandmother celebrated the homecoming of the author by collecting the women of the neighbourhood and getting an old drum. For several hours, she beat the worn out drum and sang the songs related to the homecoming of warriors.

QUESTIONS

8. Mention the three phases of the author's relationship with his grandmother before he left the country to study abroad.

ANS. The first phase of the author's relationship with his grandmother was when the author's parents went to live in the city and left him with his grandmother.

She took utmost care of him right from waking him up in the morning to getting him ready for school.

They were always together and enjoyed an easy companionship.

QUESTIONS

ANS. The second phase was when the author's parents asked them to come to the city. This was the time when the author's relationship with his grandmother changed. The author went to an English school. She could no longer accompany him nor could she help him in his studies. She continued getting him ready for school and asking him about his studies, as they shared the same room. However, she rarely talked to him after learning that he was learning music at school. Slowly, the friendship between them weakened.

QUESTIONS

ANS. The third phase came when the common link of their friendship, the room they shared, snapped when the author moved to the University and was given a room of his own. His grandmother accepted her seclusion with resignation.

QUESTIONS

9. Mention three reasons why the author's grandmother was disturbed when he started going to the city school.

ANS. The author's grandmother was disturbed when he started going to the city school because

- (i) She could not go with him to leave him at school as he went in the school bus. This broke her connection with the author and disturbed her.
- (ii) In the English school, she could not help him with his lessons in English and Science because she neither knew English nor Science. Thus, she had no faith in what was being taught there as a result of which she was disturbed.
- (iii) She was unhappy that there was no teaching about God and scriptures in the school. Instead, music was being taught which, to her, had indecent associations. This disturbed her the most.

QUESTIONS

10. Mention three ways in which the author's grandmother spent her days after he grew up.

ANS. The three ways in which the author's grandmother spent her days after he grew up are

- (i) She now spent most of her time at her spinning wheel, spinning thread
- (ii) While spinning, she continued reciting her prayers, rarely leaving her spinning to talk to anyone.
- (iii) During the afternoons, she relaxed for a while to feed the sparrows. While she sat in the verandah breaking the bread into little bits, hundreds of little birds collected round her. It used to be the happiest half-hour of the day for her.

QUESTIONS

11. Mention the odd way in which the author's grandmother behaved just before she died.

ANS. Just before the day the grandmother died, a change came over her. She did not pray. She rather collected the women of the neighbourhood, took an old drum and started singing. Next morning, she was taken ill due to overstraining. The doctor said it was a mild fever and will go away, but the grandmother thought differently. She told everyone that her end was near and she would spend the last few living moments in prayer and would not waste her time in talking to anyone. She lay peacefully in bed praying and before anyone could suspect, her lips stopped moving. She passed away peacefully.

QUESTIONS

12. Mention the way in which the sparrows expressed their sorrow when the author's grandmother died. ✓

ANS. In the evening, when the author and his family members went to grandmother's room to take her for the last rites, they saw thousands of sparrows sitting scattered on the floor near her. They were silent. There was no chirping. The author's mother offered them some bread but the sparrows took no notice. After the grandmother's body was taken away, the sparrows flew away quietly. Thus, the sparrows mourned her death and paid a silent tribute to the grandmother in a unique manner.

QUESTIONS

13. She hobbled about the house in spotless white with one hand resting on her waist to balance her stoop and the other telling the beads of her rosary. Her silver locks were scattered untidily over her pale, puckered face, and her lips constantly moved in inaudible prayer. Yes, she was beautiful. She was like the winter landscape in the mountains, an expanse of pure white serenity breathing peace and contentment.

extract

QUESTIONS

(i) Select the option that completes the given sentence appropriately.

The author uses the words 'silver locks' to refer to _____.

(a) Her eyes

(b) Pimples

(c) Smile

(d) Her hair

QUESTIONS

(ii) Select the suitable word from the extract to complete the following analogy.

Enormous : Immense :: Limped : Lame

huge

Small
Slow

QUESTIONS

(iii) Select the correct option to fill in the blank.

The grandmother appeared like the winter landscape in the mountains because _____.

- (a) She always wore white dress
- (b) She had a divine beauty
- (c) She has silver locks
- (d) She was young once

QUESTIONS

(iv) Based on the above extract, choose the statement that is TRUE for the grandmother.

- (a) She wore dark-coloured clothes ☒
- (b) She had well-maintained hair ☒
- (c) Her prayers were not audible ☒
- (d) She balanced her stoop with ~~both~~ her hands
 one — ☐

QUESTIONS

(v) Why did the author live with his grandmother?

— Village

ANS. The author lived with his grandmother because his parents left him with her when they went to live in the city.

QUESTIONS

(vi) Complete the sentence with an appropriate explanation, as per the extract,

To show that his grandmother was beautiful, the writer has compared her to _____.

QUESTIONS

14. My parents left me with her when they went to live in the city and we were constantly together. She used to wake me up in the morning and get me ready for school. She said her morning prayer in a monotonous sing-song while she bathed and dressed me in the hope that I would listen and get to know it by heart; I listened because I loved her voice but never bothered to learn it.

village

$$\frac{8+}{10}$$

QUESTIONS

(i) Here, the phrase 'get to know by heart' means

(a) Appreciate

(b) Rely

(c) Memorise

(d) Revise



QUESTIONS

(ii) The author listened to her prayers because

- (a) He loved her voice ✓
- (b) She wanted him to listen properly
- (c) He wanted to learn it
- (d) She forced him to do so

QUESTIONS

(iii) What kind of relationship did the author and his grandmother have?

(a) They didn't bother about each other.

(b) They were good friends. ✓

(c) They never showed their emotions towards each other.

(d) Can't say

QUESTIONS

(iv) What did the author's grandmother do after bathing and dressing him?

ANS. The author's grandmother fetched his clean wooden slate, a tiny ink-pot and a red pen to give to him after bathing and dressing him.

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QUESTIONS

(v) What did the author have in his breakfast?

ANS. The author had thick, stale chapatti with butter and sugar for his breakfast before going to school.

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