



## 17. B. C. GRETTEL

17b- Garrison Keillor

*17c-Bruno Bettelheim and Jack Zipes*

### **SUMMARY AND CENTRAL IDEA**

Gretel by Garrison Keillor is an interpreted story "Hansel and Gretel" from the perspective of a female. The interpreter is Gretel who denies cowardice in the original story. She claims the depiction is distorted one. Gretel says that there was an understanding between her and her brother to sell their story to Grimm brothers. They had signed a contract paper with an agreement to share fifty-fifty of the profit. But unexpectedly, Gretel found the story published the other day totally different order. The story depicts her as coward and her brother as a brave person. She claims the brother was, in reality, a coward not vice versa. It was her brother who wept time and again. And she had to carry him. The portrayal of her father and mother is also distorted. Father was not so kind hearted; he was a drunkard; he liked to watch bull fight. Mother was not cruel in any sense jog the word. Gretel describes their parents leaving them in the forest as a natural phenomenon of the time. Parents used to leave the children in forest hoping that they will be better cared in forest by frog, raven or saints. She claims that she was not worried when she in the forest, as she had known the reality. At last, she repents for killing the witch, for the witch was not after her, she had wanted to kill Hansel.

### **IMPORTANCE QUESTIONS:**

1. What type of character do you think is Gretel? / Draw the character of Gretel.
2. Discuss "Gretel" as the feminist interpretation of the fairy tale, "Hansel and Gretel".



## **SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS**

### **26. 2075 SET B Q. NO. 2**

How does Gretel stand as modern feminist woman? [3]

- Yes. The statement she has made in the essay is really feminist. Like the modern feminist, Gretel arouses a sense of gender consciousness. She is sensitive while writing about females and their counterparts. She explores the female identity. Like the modern feminists, she appears to be reactive. The way Virginia Woolf seeks female identity by reacting against male domination and Silvia Plath boycotts all males, Keillor's Gretel condemns her father and brother. She is upset with the stereotypical concept of making females weak and fragile. She even makes herself superior, which modern feminists do. Many of the modern feminists try to be strong by making their counterparts are weak. They present males as betrayers, dominators and cheaters. Gretel does so in the essay. She proves Hansel a betrayer and father as dominator. She reveals how her father controls her mother's freedom and takes all properties himself. Thus, Gretel of Keillor's "Gretel" represents all those modern feminists who explore their identity by blaming the males.

### **27. 2073 SUPP Q. NO. 27**

What type of character is Gretel? Describe her character in your own words [3]

- In this modern adaptation of "Hansel and Gretel", Gretel", Garrison Keillor presents Gretel as a modern militant feminist, thus makes her the speaker in the essay. While talking about her character, she appears to be gender conscious. Gretel is seen pre-occupied with her feminist ideology. Gretel becomes a bold figure representing the women who react against male dominated society. She seems prejudiced towards the males. Perhaps, this is the reason why she begins to admire the witch. Similarly, Gretel is seen as revolutionary and reactive. She collects such small details that make us think about what she speaks. In this sense, Gretel is really a persuasive character. Gretel doesn't display any of the female docility, rather stands alone. She seems to be a political and female activist. But Gretel, despite this all, doesn't get support and sympathy from the readers. She is so negative that she couldn't know when she appears to admire the witch. But we admire the way she collects data and information to justify her statement.

## **28. 2072 SUPP Q. NO. 26**

Why does Gretel condemn her father and brother? [3]

- While making a female statement, Gretel blames her brother, Hansel and father. She gives her reasons. Hansel, she says, betrays her by not giving her part of the profit. Hansel and Gretel have a negotiation on the sale of the book. But Hansel and his lawyer, she blames, have put her under a spell by rewriting the contract and book. Again, Gretel blames him as lazy and weak. She says he lies down, whimpers and can't walk. He is not a hero and knight, but a little creature whom she has to carry on her back. Similarly, Gretel blames her father too. She portrays him as drunkard and quarrelsome. He doesn't give her mother freedom. She has to ask for permission to send her children to their rooms. Gretel also blames him by saying that he favors the forest idea and that he is a liar. Gretel says her father lives in luxury in a house with Hansel whereas she has a small condominium to live in. Her father has kicked her mother out without giving the part of property. In this way, she blames both the father and her brother.

## **29. 2071 PARTIAL SET A Q. NO. 12 A**

Sketch the character of Gretel in Keillor's version of the story? [3]

- Please refer to **2073 SUPP Q. NO. 2F**

## **30. 2066 (PARTIAL) Q. NO. 12 B**

How was Garrison Keillor's Gretel? Sketch the character of Gretel in short. [3]

- Please refer to **2073 SUPP Q. NO. 2F**

## **31. 2061 Q. NO. 10 E**

Do you think Gretel represents modern feminist woman? Give your opinion briefly.

- Please refer to **2075 SET B Q. NO. 2C**

## **32. 2058 Q. NO. 3 A**

Why does Gretel blame her father and brother? [3]

- Please refer to **2072 SUPP Q. NO. 2B**

## **17. C. HANSEL AND GRETEL**

*-Bruno Bettelheim and Jack Zipes*

## **LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

## **1. 2070 SET D Q. NO 13 B**

Compare and contrast the Hansel and Gretel by Bruno Bettelheim and Jack Zipes. [10]

- Bruno Bettelheim in his adoption "Hansel and Gretel", presents the psychological analysis of the story whereas Jack Zipes' is Marxist interpretation. Bettelheim expresses a strange reality of life that poverty and deprivation make human beings selfish and less sensitive to others' sufferings. But Jack Zipes imparts another part of reality by creating the classes. The witch of the story for him represents the entire feudal system which always subjugates the working class of the people. In the story the children represent the proletariat, the working class. Bettelheim interprets gingerbread house as the mother since the house consists of food which children feed the way they nurse mother's milk. But he thinks this is the destructive part of reality. To be greedy is to invite danger. The children's greed left them in danger. The writer tells us that when the children grow up, they must learn to live separately from their parents. Hansel and Gretel are left in the forest in order to give them a chance to learn to live independently. However, they have come back as they have not been able enough to live apart

from their parents. The children have again been left in the forest for the second time and they've tried to solve the problem by concentrating on fools only. As they've acted like hungry animals rather than human beings, they have been the captive of witches. The house and the old witch being the source of food are symbolized as mother. This story gives us the message that greed leads to destruction. Hansel and Gretel manage to get rid of the witch when they start thinking and behaving like human beings. The white duck that helps Hansel and Gretel get home carrying across the water stretch is the symbol of a new beginning. The fact that the duck can carry only one child at one time shows that children must learn to live independently without any support from their brothers and sisters. The bird which led them to the gingerbread house is a symbol of peace. When Hansel and Gretel return home, they have grown up and start helping their father. The help they render is symbolized by the jewels. The family is considered rich and happy not because of the wealth but because Hansel and Gretel have learnt to think and act like mature people. On the other hand, the interpretation "Hansel and Gretel" written by Jack tells us about the nature of conflict between the poor and rich group of people. The woodcutter and his family represent the poor class people who are forced to commit deeds because of their poverty. The witch represents the aristocratic class of people and also symbolizes the entire feudal system. She also symbolizes the brutality of the aristocracy which is responsible for the fate of the working class. The killing of the witch is a symbolic realization of the hatred felt by the poor people because of the oppression and exploitation on them by the aristocratic people. The writer depicts the class conflict and exposes the prejudice and injustice of feudal ideology. To put it in short, though both the texts are adaptations, they make the use of different theoretical tools. Bettelheim borrows the ideas of psychoanalysis to interpret the original story of Grimm Brothers whereas Jack Zipes concentrates on Marxism. In this sense both of the interpretations have different claims to make. Jack Zipes brings two different classes of the people together to show the class conflict. Marxists are always conscious of class and society. Bettelheim on the other brings forth human impulses and desires in his analysis. Zippy's point is that there are people like woodcutters who can't feed their children despite their hard work. And there are also people like witches who accumulate wealth by exploiting the working class. But the oppressed ones don't remain silent. They unite together, as do the children, to overpower the oppressors. This class conflict between the ruling class and the ruled one goes on unless the latter gets victory. But Bettelheim points out another part of the reality. He thinks the mother's body is the source of food, thus the house of the story stands for mother's body. Talking about desire, he says that it invites danger. It is human desire that makes us greedy. But when the rational (ego) controls our desire we are less likely to suffer a fate as the children can't do. The writer talks about the perfect balance between our eye and superego.