

## PORTION FOR GRADE 10-SHORT STORIES

- 1.THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL
2. THE BLUE BEAD
- 3.MY GREATEST OLYMPIC PRIZE
- 4.ALL SUMMER IN A DAY.

### 1.THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

1. Comment on the setting of the story “The Little Match Girl”.

The story “The Little Match Girl” is set against the backdrop of a New Year’s Eve. It is a chilly winter night, the last night of the year when a poor girl, failed in her attempt to sell the match sticks, sits on the ground, sees the things of her dreams as visions in the light of her match sticks and finally freezes to death. The place is unnamed though. The year is also not mentioned. Even the protagonist of the story, the poor little girl goes unnamed. This is probably a deliberate attempt from the author to make the story universal in its appeal.

The cold winter night represents the desolate and wretched state of the little match girl. The New Year’s Eve is indicative of the new beginning of the girl’s life after death.

2. What is the significance of the visions of the little match girl in the story with the same name?

The first vision is that of a stove with a fire burning in it. This vision symbolises the little match girl’s want for a safe and complete form of shelter and in a sense “home”.The next vision is of a animated roast goose walking toward her. This symbolises her desire to have her basic necessities fulfilled with at least some amount of luxury in her life.The third vision is of a Christmas tree. The tree is related to Christian holiday which symbolises the girl’s want for a loving family and generally love.The last vision is of her grandmother. The vision embodies the girl’s last desire : to be reunited with her grandmother and release from her current reality of pain, poverty, misery, jealousy. It also softens the death of the little match girl.

3. Why does the girl have “rosy cheeks” and “smiling lips”?

When people found the poor little girl frozen to death in the morning, the girl’s expression was as if she was smiling. Her rosy cheeks and smiling lips indicate to the eternal happiness she found in the company of her dear old grandmother.

Though people of society at large could only see her as dead, they had no eyes to see that it

was the beginning of a whole new life for the girl. They didn't know what joy she had felt in that moment of her spiritual journey. It is the inconsistency between appearance and reality, between the physical and spiritual existence.

4. Describe the little match girl's hallucinations and their significance.

In the short story "The Little Match Girl", Hans Christian Andersen explores the theme of human wishes and aspiration through the transportation into the realm of dreams and hallucinations. Such momentary journey into the dream world is far away from the little girl's ordinary life full of hardships.

Unsuccessful in selling her match sticks, the poor little girl was sure to be beaten by her father. So, she decided not to go home and sat down on the ground on a corner created by two houses. While sitting there she lit a match to warm herself. To her surprise, she saw a great iron stove with bright brass knob in the bright flame of the match. The stove vanished when the flame went out.

The girl lit three more matches one after another and saw the visions of a roasted goose on the table, a beautiful Christmas tree and her grandmother who loved her most.

By then the girl realized that she would lose the vision of her grandmother when the match would go out. But she wanted her grandmother to stay there so much that she quickly lit all the rest of the matches to make sure the light stayed on. In the bright light of the matches her granny looked more beautiful than ever before. She took her in her arms and flew high up the sky to the God.

Here, Andersen has used dream interpretation as a modernist literary technique of studying the psychological states of human character. The delicious roasted goose, the huge Christmas tree, and her heavenly union with her grandmother which the girl envisioned are merely what she wishes to have.

Her visions are symbolic of her underlying hope. But alas! In this pitiless society she got none. It has indeed artistically set in motion the plot till the denouement – the girl's untimely death.

The fairy-tale motif is another perfect device that helps the writer's attempt at translating into reality the innermost craving of the girl's union with the soul of her dear departed grandmother. A beautiful fusion of hardcore reality of sheer poverty and the imaginative wish fulfilment is given a new dimension within the stipulated periphery of short story. The entire story is an ironic critique to the cruelty of society at large where the little girl is denied of her basic human rights. Herein lies the significance of hallucinations in the story.

## **2. THE BLUE BEAD**

**1. What was the difference between the Gujar woman and Sibia?**

A beautiful contrast is well perceived between the Gujar woman and Sibia. The Gujar woman is mainly portrayed as a woman utterly helpless and passive when the crocodile attacked her. Not even the least daring and brave she was about to succumb to the crocodile had Sibia not appeared like a savior and hastened to relief her from the clutch of the crocodile. In spite of being a member of the same community the Gujar woman was not brave enough like Sibia. Sibia appears in the story as a girl of hardihood, indomitable courage and will. She well understands her existential struggle. Even though she is a little girl, she is found fearless throughout the story. Her feeling for others makes her unsung hero of the story. Soldier-like tenacity of the girl is really extraordinary. She appears out and out hard-working and adventurous girl of the Gujar community. She is the specimen of intractable will power, in sharp contrast to the Gujar woman.

**2. What function does the crocodile serve in the story the blue bead?**

Everyday Sibia has to cross the Indian River which is full of crocodiles. The grown Gujar woman is attacked by the crocodile and the twelve year old Sibia kills the crocodile and saves the woman. The blue bead symbolizes that even the little things can make Sibia happy.

**3. Why did the crocodile raise his eyes and nostrils out of water?**

The crocodile raised his eyes to get a clear sight of the area around the stepping stones and raised his nostrils to breath easily, this enabled him to lay motionless and concealed, in ambush, for prolonged duration

**4. What is a mugger crocodile give its three characteristic features?**

The mugger crocodile is considered a medium-sized crocodilian, but has the broadest snout among living crocodilians. It has a powerful tail and webbed feet. Its visual, hearing and smelling senses are acute. Mugger hatchlings are pale olive with black spots.

**5. What is the theme of the blue bead?**

The theme of the blue bead is "good things come from bad situations, what goes around comes around". For example when Sibia saved the woman from the crocodile, she found a nice blue bead that made her happy.

**6. How the Blue Bead is a tale of triumph of human courage?**

"The Blue Bead" by Brandon Ishmael is a story of a girl who encounters a crocodile as she is on the quest to search for something precious. The story is definitely a triumph of the human courage, as the girl strongly confronts the crocodile and wins over it.

7. What was the heroic act that Sibia did? What did she think about her heroic act?

Answer: Sibia saved a Gujar woman's life. This was an amazing act of heroism because she put her life in danger to save another's. After she did this heroic act, she didn't think of it as a big deal and was modest about it and also very humble.

8. Where does the blue bead take place?

The setting of the story took place somewhere in India, where deep in a wild forest lied a great Indian river. The story took place during the day time when the sun shone brightly.

### **3. MY GREATEST OLYMPIC PRIZE**

1. What was Owens not too worried about and why?

Jesse Owens was not worried about the Aryan superiority theory. Jesse had trained, sweated and disciplined himself in the six years. He was sure that he would take one or two of those gold medals home. Everyone even expected him to win an year before he had set the world record of 26 feet 8-1/4 inches.

2. What is considered as the greatest Olympic prize by Jesse Owens? Why?

In his autobiographical account "My Greatest Olympic Prize", Jesse Owens confesses that the German athlete Luz Long's friendship was the greatest Olympic prize to him.

Though Jesse won four gold medals in the Berlin Olympics 1936, Luz Long was the man who encouraged Jesse when he was undergoing frustration and mental agony. Luz helped him qualify for the finals by giving him valuable tips. They shared their thoughts and became good friends. And what was most striking, Luz Long showed genuine happiness when Jesse won the gold medal. Luz Long was an epitome of the true sportsmanship and true friendship. That is why Jesse felt that Luz's friendship was the greatest Olympic prize he had won.

3. What was the Nazis' Aryan-superiority theory?

Adolf Hitler, the Chancellor of Germany and the leader of the Nazi party was of the opinion that the Aryan race was superior in the racial hierarchy. Germans and north European people

belonged to this class. So, they always expressed their hatred towards other races, especially the black African Americans. According to the Nazi ideology no man from other races could defeat the Aryans in any way, be it war, sports or intellectual capacity.

**4. Who is Luz Long? What does Jesse say about him?**

Luz Long was a German athlete who was there to compete against Jesse Owens in the Board Jump event in 1936 Berlin Olympics. Adolf Hitler hoped to win the jump with Luz and kept him under wraps.

Luz was a tall man and very friendly. Though he was schooled in the Nazi youth movement, he didn't believe much in Hitler's Aryan-supremacy theory. Rather he supported Jesse a big way in winning the gold medals in the Berlin Olympics and became his life-long friend. Luz Long was an embodiment of the sportsman spirit that the Olympics demands. He was genuinely happy when Jesse won the gold medal defeating him. He didn't even mind shaking Jesse's hand hard ignoring the stare of Hitler from a few yards distance. Jesse Owens felt that the 24-carat friendship he felt for Luz Long was his greatest Olympic prize.

**5. Briefly state how Luz and Owens performed in the finals?**

In the board jump finals, Luz Long broke his own past record with a peak performance. In doing so, Long pushed Jesse for another peak performance. Owen went on to set the Olympic record of 26 feet 5-5/16 inches. The moment Jesse landed from his final lap, Luz was standing at his side, congratulating him. While Jesse won the gold medal, Luz won the silver.

**6. What do you mean by "hot under collar" and "Der Fuhrer"?**

In Jesse Owen's autobiographical writing "My Greatest Olympic Prize", the expression "hot under collar" means 'angry' and 'Der Fuhrer' means 'leader', referring to Adolf Hitler.

The author says that he was angry when he came to know about Hitler's trickery to win the Board Jump event and determined to show the leader and his race who was superior and who was not.

**7. How does Luz Long's wish for Owens reflect the theme of Owens' autobiographical account?**

Jesse Owens' autobiographical writing 'My Greatest Olympic Prize' celebrates the themes of true friendship and true sportsmanship. It is an account of his friendship with Luz Long, his German rival in the board jump event in Berlin Olympics 1936. When Jesse was struggling to qualify for the finals making fouls in the trial jumps, Luz Long came forward to encourage him and helped him qualify with valuable tips. From that moment they became close friends. Luz Long even wanted Jesse to try his best to win the gold medal. He was happy to risk his own

chance of victory to see his friend happy. How often do we see a rival wishing his counterpart to do his best, even if it means his own defeat? Moreover, there was the racial rivalry. So, quite evidently, this friendly attitude of Luz Long reflects the themes of the story — true friendship and sportsman spirit.

#### **4. .ALL SUMMER IN A DAY.**

1. How does Ray Bradbury develop the mood in "All Summer in a Day"?

Ray Bradbury develops the mood of "All Summer in a Day" by using specific imagery of rain and sadness, word choice that reinforces hopelessness, and conflict between the schoolchildren. The motif of rain makes the story feel more stagnant and depressive as well. Lyrical and poetic language heightens the contrast between the sad reality of the children's daily lives and the joy of the sun.

2. Where did Margot live before she came to the planet?

Margot, a thin & pale girl, used to live in Ohio (Earth) until she was five hence she still remembers the details and misses the sun badly. She's always quite depressed for the same reason.

3. What do the children remember about the Sun?

The sun had been out before once when the kids were just two years old so they don't remember anything except a warmth like a blush on the face and something similar to a study lamp's light. In other words, they literally don't remember anything about it.

4. How was Margot feeling about the arrival of sun that day?

Margot was most excited to see the sun once again, to feel its warmth. She was standing near the window, waiting for the sun when a few boys taunt her saying it was all a joke and the sun's never coming out while some others lock her in a cupboard when the teacher wasn't present there.

5. Describe the children's enjoyment of Sun.

The rain finally stops and the sun comes out in all its glory. The kids run out into the lawn and enjoy the warmth of the sun but no one remembers Margot. After some time a kid screams as a big raindrop falls on her skin. They all look up at the sky and see that it's raining again. They stand there for a moment, disappointed but at the same time happy with the experience, and return back to their classroom.

6. How does the story end?

As they enter the hallway after the rains pour once again , one of the students reminds that they have forgotten to unlock Margot. They all feel bad for what they have done and anxiously they go to unlock her. Behind the doors, no noise was to be heard, they slowly open the door and Margot emerges. The story ends at this point.

7.How do the characters of the children change?

The characters or the children, except Margot, are portrayed at first in a negative light when they try to mess around with Margot but it was due to their resentment towards her, which is quite natural. But in the end they realize their mistake and also realize how painful it must have been for her to abandon the warmth of the sun and live on the Venus.