



THE VILLAGE
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
"We Nurture Dreams"

The portrait of a lady

Question 1. Who is the lady mentioned in the title of the lesson 'Portrait of a lady'?

Question 2. Who wrote the lesson The portrait of a lady?

Question 3. What was the author's breakfast before going to village school?

Question 4. What would the author's grandmother feed the dogs?

Question 5. How long did the author stay abroad?

Question 6. What were the names of the girls?

Question 7. What impression did the author give of his grandfather?

Question 8. Why did the author think his grandmother was never young and pretty?

Question 9. Mention how the sparrows expressed their sorrow when the author's grandmother died.

Question 10. How did the author's grandmother's routine change in the city?

Question 11. Mention Three reasons why the author's grandmother was disturbed when he started attending the city school.

Question 12. Mention how the author's grandmother used to feed the birds every day.

Question 13. Mention the odd way the author's grandmother behaved just before she died.

Question 14. Describe how the author's grandmother reacted when he went to study abroad.

Question 15. What has not changed over the years? Does this suggest something to you?

Question 16. Describe the photograph.

Question 17. How did the author describe his grandmother?

Question 18. Describe the days when the author lived with his grandmother in the village.

Question 19. Describe the changing relationship between the author and his grandmother. Did their feelings for each other change?

Question 20. The author's grandmother was a religious person. What are the different ways in which we come to know this?

Question 22. Explain how the title 'The Portrait of a Lady' suits the writing.

Question 23. Would you agree that the author's grandmother was a person strong in character? If yes, give instances that show this.

Question 24. Explain the poem 'A Photograph'.

Question 25. The three stanzas depict three different phases. What are

Solutions

Question 1. Who is the lady mentioned in the title of the lesson 'Portrait of a lady'?

Answer 1: The grandmother of the author.

Question 2. Who wrote the lesson The portrait of a lady?

Answer 2: Kushwanth Singh

Question 3. What was the author's breakfast before going to village school?

Answer 3: The author's breakfast was leftover chapati with butter and sugar.

Question 4. What would the author's grandmother feed the dogs?

Answer 4: The author's grandmother would feed stale chapati to the dogs.

Question 5. How long did the author stay abroad?

Answer 5: The author stays for five years in a foreign country.

Question 6. What were the names of the girls?

Answer 6: The names of the girls were Betty and Dolly.

Question 7. What impression did the author give of his grandfather?

Answer 7: The author described his grandfather with the help of a portrait that hung in the drawing room. His grandfather wore a turban and loose-fitting clothes in the portrait. He had a beard that covered most of his chest, and according to the author, he looked at least a hundred years old. The author also stated that he looked like someone who could never have a wife or children. His grandfather's portrait also confused the author about whether his grandmother had ever been young and pretty.

Question 8. Why did the author think his grandmother was never young and pretty?

Answer 8: The author stated that he always had difficulty believing that his grandmother had been young and pretty. It is mainly because he always saw his grandmother as old. He also saw the portrait of his grandfather. He didn't believe his grandfather could be a person who had

a wife and kids. So, he thought his grandmother had always been old and never had a husband or children.

Question 9. Mention how the sparrows expressed their sorrow when the author's grandmother died.

Answer 9: The author's grandmother built a close relationship with the sparrows after she moved to the city. She used to feed the sparrows every day. After her death, she was laid on the floor and covered with a red shroud. When the author and family members came to carry her body, they witnessed thousands of sparrows on the veranda and in her room. They sat quietly on the floor. The author's mother went inside to bring some bread for the birds. But they didn't eat the bread crumbs and started to fly away after her body was carried out of the room.

Question 10. How did the author's grandmother's routine change in the city?

Answer 10: The author's grandmother's routine changed after she came to live in the city with the author's family. She had the same room as the author, but he was admitted to a city school. So, she could not take him to school. She couldn't help the author in his studies because he studied science and other modern subjects in school. She got confined at home and engaged herself with spinning wheels and praying. She started to feed the sparrows like she used to feed the dogs in her village. Only half an hour, when she was with the sparrows, was her best time of the day.

Question 11. Mention Three reasons why the author's grandmother was disturbed when he started attending the city school.

Answer 11: Their friendship faded when the author and his grandmother moved to the city. He used to go to school by motor bus, and his grandmother could not take him there. The author used to study English and western science in school. It made her unhappy because she didn't believe in this study and could not help the author in lessons. The third factor that bothered her the most was the music lessons that the author received in his schools. The lessons were different and not meant for folk songs. It upset her, and she rarely spoke to the author after this.

Question 12. Mention how the author's grandmother used to feed the birds every day.

Answer 12: The author's grandmother had the habit of feeding the dogs while living in the village. When she moved to the city, she could not feed

the dogs and started to feed the sparrows. In the afternoon, she used to break the bread into little crumbs and spread it for the birds on the veranda. There used to be hundreds of birds, some sitting on her feet, shoulders and even on her head. That half an hour used to be her best time of the day.

Question 13. Mention the odd way the author's grandmother behaved just before she died.

Answer 13: The author's grandmother behaved differently one evening. She did not pray and gathered some women from the neighbourhood. She collected a drum and sang homecoming warriors' songs for several hours. Lastly, the author and his family had to request that she stop. The next morning, she got a fever. Though the doctor said this was a mild fever, she said that her time was near. She kept counting the beads and chanting prayers until she breathed her last.

Question 14. Describe how the author's grandmother reacted when he went to study abroad.

Answer 14: The author stated that he left for a foreign country for five years to study there. He was aware that it irritated his grandmother. But she came to leave him at the railway station. She showed no emotion or sadness and engaged in prayer. Her mind was lost in prayer, and she kept counting the beads and silently kissing his forehead. In this way, she bid the author goodbye when he left the country.

Question 15. What has not changed over the years? Does this suggest something to you?

Answer 15: According to the poem, the sea has not changed over the years. It suggests the flow of time and how people's lives change. The sea in the photograph remains unchanged to this day. But the people in it are not the same. They have grown with time and even died because man is not immortal. Thus, it describes how humans are put on earth for a very short period of time, while the seas, forests, rivers, and other features remain almost the same.

Question 16. Describe the photograph.

Answer 16: The photograph is of the poet's mother, along with her two cousins. Her mother was twelve or thirteen years old in that photograph. It shows that the three of them went on a beach vacation. They were standing on the beach, where sea water was washing their feet. The wind

played with their hair as they smiled sweetly towards their uncle, who was clicking the photo.

Question 17. How did the author describe his grandmother?

Answer 17: The author, Khushwant Singh, had a deep relationship with his grandmother. He spent his childhood with her. He described her grandmother as an older woman like everyone else's his grandmother. He spent his childhood with her. He described her grandmother as an older woman like everyone else's. He stated that he had known her for as long as he could remember and couldn't believe she was once so beautiful and young. But he described her as a beautiful woman. He mentioned she was fat, short, and slightly bent. She used to wear white clothes and roam in the house. She used to support her stoop with one hand and count the beads of the rosary with the other. Besides counting, she used to chant a prayer. The author described numerous wrinkles crossing her face and her hair being grey. The silver locks were scattered on her pale face. He compared her to the peaceful, white landscape of a winter mountain. Thus, he described his grandmother and her peaceful beauty.

Question 18. Describe the days when the author lived with his grandmother in the village.

Answer 18: The author described his childhood friendship with his grandmother. He stated that in his childhood, his parents lived in the city, leaving him with his grandmother. So, he spent his early childhood days with his grandmother and attended the village school run by the priest of the village temple. He remembered his grandmother would wake him up, give him breakfast and get him dressed while singing religious songs. Then he would have his breakfast, which was leftover chapati with sugar and butter. After having breakfast, he would go to school with his grandmother. He would chant the alphabet with other students in chorus, and his grandmother would stay inside the temple reading the scriptures. They would leave home after school when the village dogs met them at the temple door. His grandmother used to carry several chapatis with her, and she would tear the bread to feed the dogs. Thus, the author remembered his colourful childhood days with her grandmother in their village.

Question 19. Describe the changing relationship between the author and his grandmother. Did their feelings for each other change?

Answer 19: The author had a good friendship with his grandmother. He used to live with her during his childhood. She used to bathe him, dress him, and take him to school. While he was studying, she used to stay inside a temple, reading transcripts. After school, they used to return home while feeding the village dogs. Thus, they had a close relationship. But with time, it changed. They moved to the city to live with the author's parents. The author was admitted to a city school, where he used to travel by bus. As a result, his grandmother was unable to accompany him and remained at home. She was frustrated because she couldn't assist him in his lessons and because the author was receiving western education. They shared the same room, but their conversation got quiet. When the author entered university, she got another room and accepted her seclusion. Following that, he went abroad for studies, causing a schism in their relationship. Though they got farther apart over time, their feelings for each other did not change. He still loved her the same way he did before. His grandmother believed she appeared herself in prayer and reduced conversation with him, and that she had the same love and blessings for him.

Question 20. The author's grandmother was a religious person. What are the different ways in which we come to know this?

Answer 21: The author, Khushwant Singh, described his grandmother and their relationship in his writing 'The Portrait of a Lady. In the writing, we can see that his grandmother was a religious person. In the beginning, he described how his grandmother used to count the rosary beads in one hand and always chant the mantra. In his childhood, she used to sing religious songs while dressing him up for school so that he could understand the meaning of the songs. While the author was studying at the village school, she used to stay inside a temple and read religious scripts. She engaged in religious activities when she moved to the city with the author's family. She used to chant prayers. While she used to feed the dogs in the village, she used to feed the sparrows in the city. When the author started to go to a city school, she did not accept the education he was getting there gladly. She was offended that the school taught science and other modern-day knowledge instead of God and the scriptures. She was acting strangely even before her last day. She gathered her neighbours and sang the songs of homecoming warriors. On her last day, she said that her time was near, and she kept chanting prayers before her last breath. Thus, the author described his grandmother as a religious person.

Question 22. Explain how the title 'The Portrait of a Lady' suits the writing.

Answer 22: 'The Portrait of a Lady' by Khushwant Singh is a remembrance of his grandmother. Here a portrait is mentioned, but it was the portrait of the author's grandfather. In writing, we find no mention of a picture or photograph of the author's grandmother. But the writing itself has become a portrait of her. The author didn't describe her grandmother as a specific person; rather, he stated that she was like everyone else's grandmother. His relationship with her was also a common one between grandparents and grandchildren. But, the simplicity of it touches the reader's heart. The details of his memories with his grandmother and her personality vividly depict a caring grandparent. We can know about her personality from the writing. Thus, her picture gets embodied before our eyes due to the author's description. He didn't mention her name but represented a woman who strongly adhered to her faith and views. Thus, the lady we study in the story becomes more than a relative of the author. Instead, we learn about a strong older woman who was kind, religious and loved her family. So, the title 'The Portrait of a Lady' perfectly suits the writing.

Question 23. Would you agree that the author's grandmother was a person strong in character? If yes, give instances that show this.

Answer 23: Author Khushwant Singh wrote 'The Portrait of a Lady' to remember his grandmother. The writing showed that the author's grandmother was religious and had a very strong character. She was kind and devoted to the idea of God. Throughout the passage, some instances prove that his grandmother had a very strong personality. Her religious beliefs strongly suggest that she had great faith in God, as do her views towards life. She used to count the beads of her rosary and chant prayers all day. She took care of the author when his parents settled in a city. She used to bathe him, dress him, feed him, and accompany him to the village school. When he was studying in school, she used to stay in a temple and read transcripts. While returning, she used to feed the dogs. Later, she moved to the city with the author's parents and didn't change her thoughts and beliefs. She clearly showed that she didn't like modern education, which created a distance between her and the author. Even when the author went to university, she got a separate room and accepted her seclusion. On the last day of her life, she kept chanting prayers before she breathed her last. Her courage and patience to accept death truly show how strong a person she was.

Question 24. Explain the poem 'A Photograph'.

Answer 24: The poem 'A Photograph' by Shirley Toulson is about a photograph of her mother. It shows her mother and two cousins smiling at the camera. Her mother was barely twelve or thirteen years old in the photo when she went to the beach with her cousins Betty and Dolly. They were standing on the beach while the sea water washed their feet. The air was playing with their hair, and their uncle clicked the photo while they were holding hands. Though the sea has remained the same, their lives have changed with time. After two or three decades, the poet's mother remembered the day. She smiled, seeing the photo, and exclaimed over how they were dressed. But in the next stanza, we know that it was a memory of the poet because her mother is no more. She watches the photo and remembers how her mother used to remember her seeing it in the past. Thus, the image evokes her mother's memory, just like it evoked her mother's memory of her past.

Question 25. The three stanzas depict three different phases. What are they?

Answer 25: The poem 'A Photograph' by Shirley Toulson is about remembering loved ones. The three stanzas depict three time periods. The first stanza starts with a photograph of the poet's mother with her two cousins. They went on a beach vacation and took photos there. They were standing on the beach when the ocean water washed their feet, and they were posing with sweet smiles when their uncle was clicking the photo. It represents a happy time when her mother enjoyed the day with her family. She was barely a teenager back then.

The next stanza shows how her mother remembered her past. She smiled while seeing the photo and remembering how they had been dressed for the beach. Her past also made her sad because those days were gone. This presents a period several decades after that photograph was taken.

The third stanza represents the present time, when the poet's mother is dead. She remembers seeing the photo. All she can hear is silence because the person who used to smile when seeing the photo is gone. So, the poem ends with the present scenario, with the poet remembering her mother seeing an old photograph of her childhood days.