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LITERATURE

The Portrait of a Lady

PROSE

—Khushwant Singh



The Portrait of a Lady by Khushwant Singh is a story about the relationship of the author with his grandmother over the years. The grandmother was an old woman with a wrinkled face. The author had seen his grandfather's portrait only. In his childhood days, the author used to live with his grandmother when his parents went to live in the city. He had penned down her grandmother's daily activities and how she evolved as a character as time passed by.

Topic Notes

-  Characters in Brief
-  Chapter in Detail
-  Significant Morals
-  Dictionary





Characters in Brief

Narrator– Khushwant Singh, the narrator in the story 'The Portrait of a Lady' was a sensitive and observant person. He cherished the memories of his association with his grandmother. He has beautifully described the details of many episodes from his past life that were related to his grandmother.

Grandmother– She was a wrinkled elderly lady not much older. She was overweight and bent. Since she always wore a white saree and had silver hair, the narrator compared her to a "winter landscape in the highlands." Her face was soothing and nice.



Chapter in Detail

The Appearance of the Grandmother

The chapter, 'The Portrait of a Lady' is the story of the author and his grandmother. The author had always seen his grandmother as old and wrinkled for the last twenty years. She was short, fat and slightly bent. She appeared to be so old to the author that he could not imagine her being young and pretty, but had always found her beautiful.

The author had seen his grandfather's portrait hung above the mantelpiece in the drawing-room. He seemed to be a hundred years old man with a turban and a long white beard covering his chest. He didn't look like a man who could have a wife and children, but someone who could have lots of grandchildren.

The author had always seen his grandmother moving around the house in spotless white with one hand resting on her waist balancing her stoop and the other hand counting the beads of her rosary. She had silver locks which were scattered untidily over her pale face and her lips constantly moved while chanting prayers which no one could hear. The author compared her to the beautiful winter landscape in the mountain.



Character's Mood

→ Nostalgic

Example 1. Extract Based:

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

She had always been short and fat and slightly bent. Her face was a criss-cross of wrinkles running from everywhere to everywhere. No, we were certain she had always been as we had known her. Old, so terribly old that she could not have grown older, and had stayed at the same age for twenty years. She could never have been pretty; but she was always beautiful.

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.

- (A) Select the word that **WILL NOT** complete the sentence appropriately. The description of the grandmother face a "criss-cross of wrinkles running from everywhere to everywhere" creates a vivid imagery of
- (a) vulnerability (b) sensitivity
(c) frailty (d) mortality
- (B) Beads of rosary are helping her
- (a) to note down her prayers
(b) to remember her prayers
(c) to attain peace
(d) to say her prayers
- (C) Why is the grandmother being compared to the winter landscape in the mountains ?
- (D) Why did the author say that his grandmother was never pretty but always beautiful ?
- (E) Fill in the blank with an appropriate answer.
The tone of the author in the given extract is

Ans. (A) (b) sensitivity

Explanation: The grandmother was very old and her description creates an image of a vulnerable and frail person who is mortal as she is aging. However, she is not sensitive as she hobbled around in house doing her chores. Hence, (b) is the correct answer.

(B) (d) to say her prayers

Explanation: She is holding her rosary beads. Rosary beads refer to the chain of beads attached to the cross worn around one's neck. It implies that the woman is a Catholic Christian. The beads of rosary are helping her to say her prayers. Hence, (d) is correct.

(C) The grandmother is compared to the winter landscape in the mountains because she had a divine beauty. She looked like an expanse of pure white serenity. The stretch of snow over the mountains looks equally white and peaceful. So, her silvery locks and white dress made her look like the winter landscape in the mountains.

- (D) The author said that his grandmother was never pretty but always beautiful because he did not find her pretty in terms of physical beauty but it was her divine beauty that made her beautiful and serene.
- (E) nostalgic

Explanation: The tone of the author is nostalgic because he remembered his grandmother who was no longer with him. He remembered how she used to look and walk and how she was too old and never pretty but always beautiful.

Childhood Phase in Village

In his childhood days, the author and his grandmother used to live together as his parents had left him with his grandmother when they went to live in the city. She used to wake him up and get him ready for school. She used to say her morning prayers while she bathed and dressed him in the hope that he would also grasp them by heart. Then, she would pack his wooden slate which she had already washed and plastered with yellow chalk, a tiny earthen ink-pot, and a red pen in a bundle. After a breakfast of stale chappatis with a little butter and sugar spread on it, they used to go to school.

The author's grandmother used to carry stale chappatis for the dogs. She used to visit the temple which was adjoining the school where she had a routine of reading scriptures. The author along with other children sat in rows on either side of the verandah singing the alphabet and the prayer in chorus. After the prayers, they used to come back home together with stray dogs roaming around them growling and fighting with each other for chapattis.



Character's Mood

→ Happy

Turning Point in Their Relationship

There was a turning point in their relationship when the author's parents called them to live in the city. Though they shared the room, his grandmother no longer accompanied him to his school, as the author started going to an English school on a motor bus. There were no longer stray dogs who roamed around them and she took to feeding sparrows in the courtyard of their city house. However, she continued to wake him up and get him ready for school.

She used to ask him about his day and what he learned, but she was unable to understand English words and western science. It made her unhappy. She didn't approve of the syllabus taught in the school as she thought that they did not teach him about God and the scriptures. She didn't want him to learn music because she thought it to be meant for prostitutes and beggars and not for gentlefolk. She rarely talked to him after that.



Character's Mood

→ Disappointed

When the Author Went to University

As time passed, the author grew older and soon went to university. He was given a room of his own. The common link of friendship between them was also snapped. Now, his grandmother stopped talking to everyone and spent her whole day sitting by her spinning wheel and reciting prayers. However, she loved feeding the sparrows in the verandah; breaking the bread into little bits and feeding the birds was her daily routine.

When the Author Left for Abroad

Soon, the author decided to go to abroad for further studies. He was sure that his grandmother would be upset, but on the contrary, she was not even sentimental. She came to the railway station to bid him farewell continuously reciting her prayers, her fingers busy moving the beads of the rosary. She kissed his forehead leaving the author to cherish the imprint.

After long five years, when the author returned home, he saw her not a day older. While she clasped him in her arms the author could hear her reciting her prayers. Even on his arrival, she was much happier with the sparrows whom she fed longer than before.



Character's Mood

→ Happy

Last Hours of Her Life

In the evening, she didn't recite her prayers but instead, she collected all the women of the neighbourhood, got a drum and started singing the homecoming of warriors. They had to stop her to avoid exertion. The next morning, she was ill with a mild fever. The doctor said that there was nothing to worry but she knew that her end was near. She didn't want to waste time talking to anyone but spent her last hours reciting her prayers.

Sparrows Paid Their Silent Tribute

She died peacefully. As a part of the tradition, the family lifted her from the bed, laid her on the ground and wrapped her body with a red cloth. Thousands of sparrows sat scattered on the floor. His mother brought some pieces of bread and threw those to them. But they didn't eat any. Perhaps, they were mourning at the death of his grandmother who had fed them for so many years.



Character's Mood

→ Mourning



Significant Morals

- (1) There should be a great and firm belief in God.
- (2) We should not forget that Godliness brings happiness in the family.
- (3) We should always feed the animals and birds and love them.
- (4) If we love and care for animals and birds, in return, they also love us and show their feelings.



Dictionary

words	meanings	synonyms	antonyms
<i>Absurd</i>	ridiculous	illogical	logical
<i>Monotonous</i>	unchanging	boring	dynamic
<i>Snapped</i>	broken suddenly and with a sharp cracking sound	break	fixed
<i>Dilapidated</i>	old and broken	damaged	intact
<i>Expanse</i>	an uninterrupted space or area; a wide extent of anything	widespread	enclosed
<i>Hobbled</i>	walked with difficulty	stumble	walk
<i>Pucker</i>	wrinkled face	wrinkled	smooth
<i>Seclusion</i>	the state of being secluded; retirement; solitude	isolation	together
<i>Inaudible</i>	which cannot be heard	unhearable	audible
<i>Bedlam</i>	confusion	chaos	harmony
<i>Stale</i>	not fresh	stagnant	fresh
<i>Stoop</i>	bend body due to old age	bend	stand
<i>Serenity</i>	calm and peaceful	composure	agitation
<i>Lewd</i>	indecent	bawdy	moral
<i>Pallor</i>	pale colour of the face	colourlessness	colourful
<i>Scattered</i>	lying here and there	dispersed	collected
<i>Crude</i>	made in a simple manner	coarse	polished

OBJECTIVE Type Questions

[1 mark]

Multiple Choice Questions

1. The character of the grandmother presented in the story is:

- (a) caring (b) weak
(c) selfless (d) loving

Ans. (a) caring

Explanation: Khushwant Singh's grandmother was a very old lady. She was short, fat and slightly bent. Her face was wrinkled. She had white hair. She was very affectionate. She

was closely involved in bringing up the author. The two lived in the village. She was a caring grandmother. She would wake him early in the morning and get him ready for school. She served him breakfast and took him to school. She waited for him in the temple. She prayed while he studied and returned with him.

She was kind and benevolent. She used to feed dogs in the village. In the city she took to feeding the sparrows. She was a deeply religious lady. Her lips were always moving in a silent prayer. She was always telling the

beads of her rosary. She went to the temple and read the scriptures. On the whole she was a nice, kind, affectionate and religious lady. Hence, (a) is correct.

2. The sparrows express their grief at the death of grandmother by:

- (a) Coming and sitting silently in the verandah.
- (b) Refusing bread crumbs.
- (c) Following the last rites of grandmother.
- (d) Slowly chirping.

Ans. (a) *Coming and sitting silently in the verandah.*

Explanation: The day the author's grandmother died, thousands of sparrows sat scattered around her dead body. They sat there in utter silence mourning the death of the grandmother. They took no notice of the bread crumbs thrown at them and flew away silently after the body was carried for the final rites. Hence, (a) is correct.

3. Which of the following was the turning point in the friendship of the author and his grandmother ?

- (a) When the author went to the university.
- (b) When the author's parents called for them.
- (c) When the author went to abroad.
- (d) When the author got the separate room.

Ans. (b) *When the author's parents called for them.*

Explanation: When the author's parents called for them and they moved to the city, the friendship between the author and his grandmother started to decline gradually. So, this was the turning point in their friendship. Hence, (b) is correct.

4. From which of the following the central idea of the chapter can be described?

- (a) Animal lovers are generous and emotional souls.
- (b) Never stop loving animals because they love you and bring joy.
- (c) There is nothing bad about loving animals.
- (d) Growing up with animals will develop a love for them.

Ans. (b) *Never stop loving animals because they love you and bring joy*

Explanation: The grandmother had the best half an hour while feeding the birds, this showed that feeding birds brought her joy. Also, when she died, the birds came and paid their regards in their way, this proved that the birds also loved the grandmother. Hence, (b) is correct.

5. Which of the following facts was uncommon for grandmother regarding the English School?

- (a) Music lessons were given to the students.
- (b) There was no teaching about God and scriptures.
- (c) Western science was taught to the students.
- (d) Girls were taught dance lessons.

Ans. (a) *Music lessons were given to the students.*

Explanation: The lessons taught in the city school were in English and the topics such as little things of Western science, law of gravity etc., were all beyond grandmother's comprehension. She could not help her grandson with his lessons so, she was unhappy. She had no faith in the things that were taught in the English school and was distressed that there was no teaching about God and scriptures. She was very unhappy when she came to know that music lessons were taught in her grandson's school. She always associated music with harlots and beggars and not with gentlefolk. Hence, (a) is correct.

Extract Based Questions

6. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

My grandmother and I were good friends. 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.

(A) The phrase "get to know by heart" suggests:

- (a) to memorise
- (b) to read
- (c) to write wholeheartedly
- (d) none of these

(B) Fill in the blank with an appropriate answer.

The sensory detail present in the given extract is

(C) Pick out one evidence from the extract that helps one infer that the author and his grandmother were good friends.

Ans. (A) (a) *to memorise*

Explanation: The phrase "get to know by heart" suggests to memorise the morning prayers. If you know something such as a

poem by heart, you have learned it so well that you can remember it without having to read it.

- (B) the morning prayers sung by the grandmother.

Explanation: The author's grandmother used to say her prayers aloud as she got him ready to go to school. This adds to the sensory details of sound.

- (C) The author and his grandmother shared a relationship which was very strong. The author had a lot of respect and admiration for his grandmother and her love for the author was limitless. She used to wake him up daily and get him ready for school and he enjoyed listening to her voice while singing. This closeness strengthened their bond of friendship.

7. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

All over the verandah and in her room right up to where she lay dead and stiff wrapped in the red shroud, thousands of sparrows sat scattered on the floor. There was no chirruping. We felt sorry for the birds and my mother fetched some bread for them. She broke it into little crumbs, the way my grandmother used to, and threw it to them. The sparrows took no notice of the bread.

SHORT ANSWER Type Questions (SA)

[2 marks]

Answer the following questions in about 40 - 50 words:

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

Ans. The three phases of the author's relationship with his grandmother before he left the country to study abroad were:

The first phase was the period of the author's childhood where he used to live in a village with his grandmother.

The second phase was the time when the author and his grandmother moved to the city to live with his parents.

The third phase was when the author went to the university to study.

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

- (A) Fill in the blank with an appropriate answer.

The author was feeling in the given extract.

- (B) Why did the sparrows take no notice of the bread ?

- (C) The phrase "took no notice" used in the given extract means:

- (a) didn't worry.
(b) it did not matter.
(c) didn't pay any attention.
(d) none of these.

Ans. (A) sad

Explanation: The author felt sad as his grandmother whom he loved and appreciated dearly had died. He also felt bad for the birds who had come to meet his grandmother for the last time.

- (B) The sparrows took no notice of the bread because they were sad on seeing the grandmother lay lifeless on the floor. The sparrows scattered around the grandmother. They did not chirp, it seemed as if they were giving their silent regards to her.

- (C) (c) didn't pay any attention

Explanation: The sparrows took no notice of the bread. This means that they didn't pay attention to the bread crumbs. Hence, (c) is correct.

Ans. The three reasons why the author's grandmother was disturbed when he started going to the city school were-

Firstly, she disliked western science and learning.

Secondly, she hated the idea of not teaching about God and the scriptures in school.

Thirdly, she did not approve music being taught in schools as she thought it to be a monopoly of prostitutes and beggars.

- 10. The author's grandmother behaved in an odd way just before she died. Elaborate.**

Ans. The grandmother told the family members that her end was near. She didn't pray in the evening, she was not going to waste anymore time talking to them. She laid peacefully in bed praying and telling her beads.

- 11. Mention the way in which the sparrow's expressed their sorrow when the author's grandmother died.**

Ans. When the author's grandmother died thousands of sparrows expressed their grief by sitting scattered in the verandah. There was no chirruping. The author's mother threw some pieces of bread but they did not eat them. When the family members carried grandmother's corpse the sparrows flew away quietly.

12. The author's grandmother was a religious person. Explain.

Ans. The author's grandmother was a very religious lady. She was always busy in telling the beads of a rosary. Her lips always moved in an inaudible prayer. She used to get up early in the morning for her morning prayers. Everyday she went along with the author to his school and while the author studied she used to sit in a temple and read scriptures. She was annoyed when she came to know that there were no religious teachings at the city school. Before dying, she stopped talking to her family members and turned to prayers and telling the beads.

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

Ans. The author and his grandmother lived as intimate friends in the village. A turning point came into their relationship when they came to the city to live with the author's parents. The author's grandmother was confined to the house as she could not accompany the author to the school in the city. It was an English school so she could not even help him in his studies. Moreover, she was annoyed by the education provided in school as there was no teaching of God and scriptures. Thus, she reconciled herself to spinning and feeding the sparrows. When the author grew up, he went to the university and then he moved abroad. No, their feelings for each other did not change though distances grew between them.

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

Ans. Yes, the author's grandmother was a person strong in character. She had her own thoughts of education in school. She considered the teachings of God and the scriptures to be more fruitful than science and music. When she was confined to the house in the city, she took to wheel-spinning and feeding the sparrows. She appeared composed when the author went to study abroad. And when the author returned home, she celebrated his homecoming by singing for several hours. Moreover, during the last few hours of her life, she stopped talking to

everyone, and took to reciting her prayers and telling her beads.

15. The author had used a poetic device while describing his grandmother's beauty. What was it? Explain.

Ans. The author used simile while describing his grandmother's beauty. He compared her divine beauty to that of the winter landscape in the mountains. He compared how her silver locks and white dress made her look like an expanse of pure white serenity.

16. It was hard for the author to believe that his grandmother was once young and pretty. Discuss.

Ans. The author had always seen his grandmother as an old woman with a wrinkled face for the last twenty years of his life. He felt that she could age no further. Thus, it was hard for him to believe that his grandmother was once young and pretty.

17. The grandmother had a divine beauty. How does the author describe it?

Ans. The author describes his grandmother as always wearing spotless white. Her silver locks were scattered untidily over her pale, puckered face, and her lips constantly moved in inaudible prayer. The author describes her as 'like the winter landscape in the mountains, an expanse of pure white serenity breathing peace and contentment'.

18. The grandmother was a kind-hearted woman. Give examples.

Ans. The grandmother was a kind-hearted woman. She would carry several stale chapattis with her for the village dogs and would feed them on her way back to school. In the city, when she could no longer go out of the house, she took to feeding sparrows that came and perched on her legs, shoulders and head.

19. Mention the turning point in the friendship between the author and his grandmother.

Ans. The turning point in the friendship between the author and his grandmother came when they shifted to the city. They spent less time with each other as now his grandmother was not able to accompany him to the school. She did not understand English, so she was not able to help him in his studies. Moreover, she did not approve of the modern learning methods. Thus, it came to be a turning point in their relationship.

20. What was the happiest moment of the day for the author's grandmother?

Ans. The happiest moment of the day for the author's grandmother was in the afternoon when she relaxed for a while to feed the sparrows. While, she sat in the verandah breaking the bread into little bits, hundreds of sparrows came and sat on her legs, shoulders, and on her head but she never shooed them away.

21. Describe the author's grandfather as he looked in his portrait.

Ans. The portrait of the author's grandfather hung above the mantelpiece in his drawing room. He wore a big turban and loose-fitting clothes. His long, white beard covered the best part of his chest and he looked at least a hundred years old. He looked as if he could only have lots of grandchildren.

22. How did the grandmother prepare the author for going to school?

Ans. The author's grandmother woke him every morning, bathed and dressed him. She would fetch a wooden slate, ready washed and plastered with yellow chalk, a tiny earthen ink-pot and a red pen, tie them in a bundle and hand it to him. After a breakfast of thick, stale chapatti with a little butter and sugar spread on it, they went to school. While the author sat on the verandah learning the alphabets and morning prayer, the grandmother sat inside the temple reading scriptures.

23. When people are good and pious, even nature mourns their death. Justify.

Ans. When the author's grandmother died, not only the family but thousands of sparrows also mourned her death. The sparrows sat around the dead body quietly. The author's mother threw bread crumbs but the sparrows took no

notice of them. Perhaps they were mourning the death of the author's grandmother who had fed them for so many years.

24. What did the author think to be the last physical contact with his grandmother? Was it really so?

Ans. The author received a moist kiss on his forehead from his grandmother when he was going abroad. He thought this was his last physical contact with her because she was so old that she might not be alive when he would come back. But she gave him a hug when he came back from abroad.

25. What was Khushwant Singh's and his grandmother's routine in the village?

Ans. The grandmother used to wake Khushwant Singh up in the morning, bathe him, dress him, and accompany him to school. While he studied, she sat in the temple and read scriptures. On return, she fed stale chapattis to the village dogs. She used to prepare his wooden slate by plastering it lightly with yellow chalk.

26. The grandmother was not pretty but beautiful. Elaborate. [Delhi Gov. QB 2022]

Ans. The grandmother was short, old, fat and slightly bent. For the last twenty years she looked the same and to the author she seemed too old to age further. It was difficult for him to imagine that she could have been young and pretty. But to him, she was beautiful in a pristine and peaceful way. He remembered her telling the beads of her rosary, untiringly.

He described how her silver locks lay scattered untidily over her pale, puckered face, and her lips constantly moved in an inaudible prayer. She was like the winter landscape in the mountains, serene and content.

LONG ANSWER Type Questions (LA)

[5 marks]

Answer the following questions in about 120 – 150 words:

27. "Religion was the dominant feature of her life." Comment on this statement in regard to Khushwant Singh's grandmother as projected in 'The Portrait of a Lady'.

Ans. The first introduction of the grandmother made by the author depicts her telling the beads of her rosary with her lips muttering an inaudible prayer.

As the custodian of her grandchild in the village, she said her morning prayers while

being engaged in the task of bathing and dressing her grandson. While her grandson studied alphabets, the grandmother studied the scriptures.

She also disapproved of the education at the English school because of the absence of religious teachings.

In her last moments, she detached herself from her family and preferred making peace with God. Besides prayers, she was given to animal care, by feeding stray dogs at the temple door and sparrows in the city home. Thus, her religion stepped beyond ritual to one

of showing kindness to the tiniest creatures of God. Indeed, the grandmother was religious in body and spirit.

28. Character sketch is a quick rendering of a character. It depicts the key personality traits, behaviour, background and specific nature of a character. In the light of the above information, trace the character sketch of the grandmother as portrayed by Khushwant Singh in the lesson, 'The Portrait of a Lady'.

Ans. The author had a long and loving relationship with his grandmother. She was very affectionate to him. She took excellent care of him while he lived with her as a child in the village. The grandmother was a deeply religious woman. Prayer was of paramount importance to her. She spent most of her time reciting prayer. She was kind to animals too. In the village, she fed street dogs and in city, shifted to sparrows.

The grandmother was a woman of great strength of character. She never complained about the changes in city life rather she accepted her seclusion quietly. When her grandson left for studies, she did not show her emotion and kept remarkable self-control. In her last moments, she withdrew herself from the family and devoted herself to prayer.

29. The grandmother herself was not formally educated but was serious about the author's education. How does the text support this?

Ans. The grandmother took her grandson's education very seriously. When he was in her custody in the village, she prepared his wooden slate, accompanied him to school and helped him with his lessons. In the city, when he started learning English, science and music, which she did not approve of, she did not voice her disapproval or insist on village-like education but trusted that his father was doing the best for him. Nor did she protest when he was given an independent room or was sent to abroad for further studies.

30. Gradually, the author and the grandmother saw less of each other and their friendship was broken. Was the distance in the relationship deliberate or due to the demands of the situation?

Ans. The relationship between the grandmother and the author traced the graph of gradual change. Moving to the city and the change in the educational curriculum in an English-medium school led to her first orientation to her changed circumstances. The grandmother realized that her affection could no longer be a wholly possessive one.

As the author graduated to the university level, his lifestyle underwent changes and the grandmother realized that her role as an educator had ceased altogether. She, therefore, adopted the role of a loveable elder overseeing her grandson's progress and became comfortable in it. When he returned from abroad, the grandmother, was no longer concerned with his day-to-day achievements, but showed her elation by organizing a musical soiree, even overstraining herself in her excitement, leading to dire consequences.

31. Talk with your family members about elderly people who you have been intimately connected with and who are not there with you now. Write a short description of someone you liked a lot.

Ans. My Grandfather

I was extremely fond of my grandfather. I sometimes felt that he was more fond of my younger brother than of me. This did not stop me from spending as much time with him as I could. Much later, I came to know that he had been a freedom fighter. He had taken part in the freedom movement along with Gandhiji, Nehruji and others. He never spoke about the hardships of those days, but only of the songs they sang and the help they gave to one another. To my eight-year-old imagination, his accounts opened up pictures of a fascinating life. It was my grandmother who told me of his imprisonment and the 'lathi blows' he received. I rubbed his shoulders and arms hoping the chronic pain would ease. He died when I was twelve. Ever since, I have felt that a strong support from my life has gone.

32. Khushwant Singh's grandmother wrote a letter to her sister describing her life with her grandson in the village. Write this letter on her behalf.

Ans. 14, Park Avenue

Bangalore- 110009

12 September, 2002

Dear Parminder

May the Guru's blessings be with you and your family.

I am very happy these days as my grandson, Khushwant, has come to live with me. His parents have gone to the city. The boy will remain with me till they settle down. Khushwant is a serious and adorable child. He listens intently as I recite my prayers while getting him ready for school. I hope he learns them. I have become busy and my lonely life has acquired meaning. I prepare his wooden slate and take him to school. While he studies,

I remain in the temple and read the scriptures, talk to the priest. After school on our way to home, I feed chapattis to the dogs. Khushwant is delighted when the dogs follow us. I pray that you and your family remain well. With namaskar to your husband and love to your children.

Your sister

Satinder

- 33. Imagine that Khushwant Singh's grandmother writes a diary entry making comparison of the situation with education in the village and in the city school.**

Write this diary entry, as the grandmother, in about 120 words.

Ans. Friday, 16th May, 1998

5 p.m.

Dear Diary

Khushwant now goes to an English medium school in this city. I am not at all happy with the education he gets. In the city, there is no concern for God and spiritual matters. His education does not tell him anything about our scriptures or other religious matters. He is taught English. I cannot help him with his lessons, unfortunately, he has to manage by himself. The scientific names and principles are totally new to me.

The most objectionable are the lessons in music. Music is for the lowly; beggars and harlots to earn their livelihood. It is not for decent folk. However, I do not interfere. In the village school, he learned about religion and prayer. I think that was better.

Satinder.

- 34. Khushwant Singh's mother observed closely the behaviour of his grandmother when he returned home after studying abroad, Write an account of this on her behalf.**

Ans. This morning my son, Khushwant, returned from England after five years of studies. All of us were excited including Beeji, his grandmother. Unlike others, she kept her excitement under check. She insisted on going to the station to receive him. When he arrived, she hugged him silently, all the time saying her prayers.

In the evening, she took out an old drum and called the women of the neighbourhood. Together they sang for hours, celebrating the return of her grandson. I was anxious for Beeji and implored her to stop and not tire herself unduly. This was the only time she was not praying. The next day she was down with fever and exhaustion. We were anxious, because in spite of the doctor's reassurance, Beeji was sure her end had come.

She stopped talking to us and lay quietly on the bed telling the beads of her rosary. Her end came peacefully. We came to know only when her fingers stopped moving.

- 35. 'The Portrait of a Lady' partly dwells on the loneliness and insecurity of the old age and effort of the old to fit in. Driven by such thoughts while reading the lesson, you think about the life of many old men and women in India, who lead a lonesome existence in the end of their life. Write an article in 120-150 words on "Life of Old People".**

Ans.

Life of Old People

by Shrivanya

No one wants to become old, but everyone has to. While young, no one thinks of what life would be like in the old age. The old, on their part, await attention from the young for their small and big needs. Life is difficult for the old in all ways. Their physical strength is low and they easily fall victim to diseases. They seek their dependence on their children and grand children during this delicate period. The elderly have been raising their grandchildren since they were young. The youth should take care of their grandparents. However, the reality is quite different.

Their sons and daughters are busy with their lives. The old feel neglected and irrelevant.

However, various agencies, like the government NGOs and social organizations should provide the elderly with financial and physical support. Nowadays, the law demands that the young take care of their aged parents. This will make the old people's life less difficult and lonely.

- 36. What difference do you see between studies of village and city school?**

Ans. There is a lot of difference in the studies of both the places. In village, more emphasis is given on Hindi & Urdu and very basic or elementary education is there. They focus more on physical well being. In city, education system is entirely different from what is taught in village. There are subjects like English, Science, Social Science and Mathematics.

Not only this, they emphasize on music and extracurricular activities as well, which aids to the all round development of a student.

- 37. How did the grandmother raise her grandson being away from parents?**

Ans. Away from the parents, the grandmother did not leave any stone unturned in the upbringing of her grandson. She used to wake up Khushwant in the morning, prepare him for

school and escort him till there. She also used to bring him back from school. To connect him with religion, she sang prayers continuously. A person should be charitable and should do good deeds. The author's grandmother is the epitome of kindness, she used to feed the dogs in front of the narrator so that he also attain the same qualities. She was doing her best in the absence of her son and daughter-in-law in the upbringing of her grandson.

38. Elaborate on the bond of friendship between the author and his grandmother.

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Ans. When the author was still young, his parents left for the city leaving him to the care of his grandmother. They were good friends.

She woke him up each morning, bathed him, dressed him, plastered his wooden state, gave him breakfast and walked him to school. While he sat in the verandah learning, the grandmother sat inside the temple reading scriptures. When they settled in the city, they shared a common bedroom. When the author was going abroad, she went to the railway station to see him off but did not speak a word, only kissed his forehead. The author cherished this as their last physical contact as he was going away for five years. But his grandmother was there to receive him back. In the evening, she collected women from the neighbourhood and beat the drum and sang for hours of the homecoming of the warriors. For the first time she missed her prayers. But her enthusiasm made her ill and led to her death.

