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Class-XII

English

Vistas

Chapter-6



Zitkala-Sa



Bama

Memories of Childhood

Part - 2

Neha Rajvanshi

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captured : बंदी बनाना
mourners: विलाप करने वाले
rebelled: विद्रोह / विरोध करना

Our mothers had taught us that only unskilled warriors who were captured had their hair shingled by the enemy. Among our people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards!

We discussed our fate some moments, and when Judewin said, "We have to submit, because they are strong," I rebelled.

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squeaking : शोर करने वाले

"No, I will not submit! I will struggle first!" I answered.

I watched my chance, and when no one noticed, I disappeared. I crept up the stairs as quietly as I could in my squeaking shoes, — my moccasins had been exchanged for shoes. Along the hall I passed, without knowing whither I was going.

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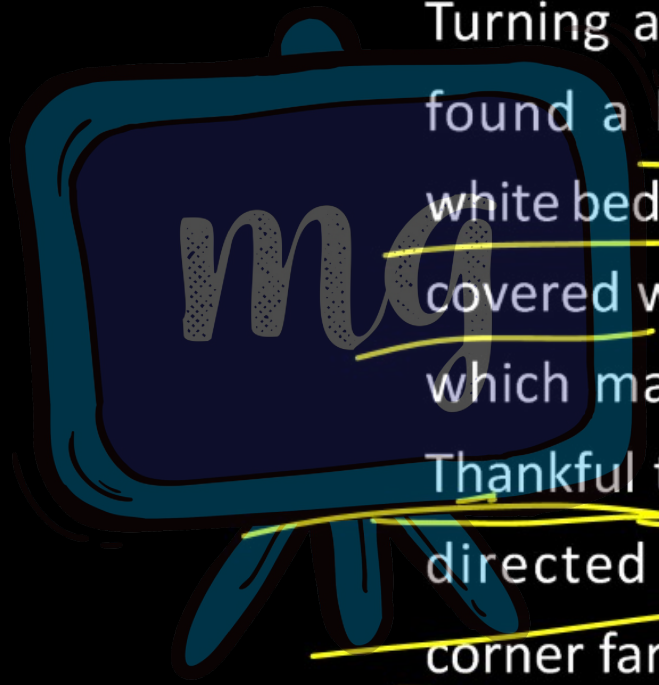

Turning aside to an open door, I found a large room with three white beds in it. The windows were covered with dark green curtains, which made the room very dim. Thankful that no one was there, I directed my steps toward the corner farthest from the door.

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huddled : इकट्ठा होना

shuddering : कांपना

On my hands and knees I crawled under the bed, and huddled myself in the dark corner. From my hiding place I peered out, shuddering with fear whenever I heard footsteps near by. Though in the hall loud voices were calling my name, and I knew that even Judewin was searching for me, I did not open my mouth to answer.

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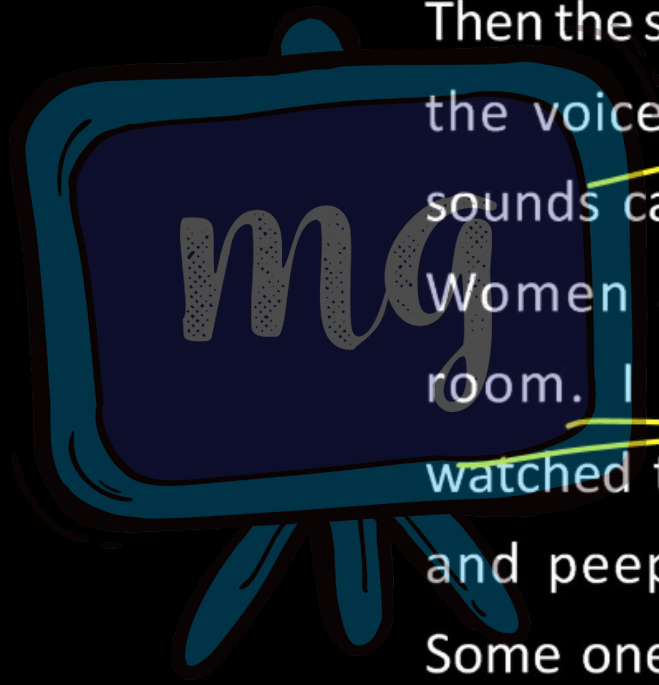

Then the steps were quickened and the voices became excited. The sounds came nearer and nearer. Women and girls entered the room. I held my breath and watched them open closet doors and peep behind large trunks. Some one threw up the curtains, and the room was filled with sudden light.

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dragged out: खींचकर बाहर निकालना

resisted : विरोध करना

What caused them to stoop and look under the bed I do not know. I remember being dragged out, though I resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. Inspite of myself, I was carried downstairs and tied fast in a chair.

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indignities: अपमान

I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities.

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anguish : दर्द / अपमान

People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a wooden puppet. And now my long hair was shingled like a coward's! In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me.

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Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder.

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We Too are Human Being

untouchability: अछुत
humiliated : शर्मिंदगी

When I was studying in the third class, I hadn't yet heard people speak openly of untouchability. But I had already seen, felt, experienced and been humiliated by what it is.

I was walking home from school one day, an old bag hanging from my shoulder.

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dawdle along: इधर-उधर घुमना

oddities : अजीब

It was actually possible to walk the distance in ten minutes. But usually it would take me thirty minutes at the very least to reach home. It would take me from half an hour to an hour to dawdle along, watching all the fun and games that were going on, all the entertaining novelties and oddities is the streets, the shops and the bazaar.

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spur : प्रोत्साहित करना





The performing monkey; the snake which the snakecharmer kept in its box and displayed from time to time; the cyclist who had not got off his bike for three days, and who kept pedalling as hard as he could from break of day; the rupee notes that were pinned on to his shirt to spur him on; the spinning wheels;

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demonstrating : प्रदर्शन करना

the Maariyaata temple, the huge bell hanging there; the pongal offerings being cooked in front of the temple; the dried fish stall by the statue of Gandhi; the sweet stall, the stall selling fried snacks, and all the other shops next to each other; the street light always demonstrating how it could change from blue to violet;

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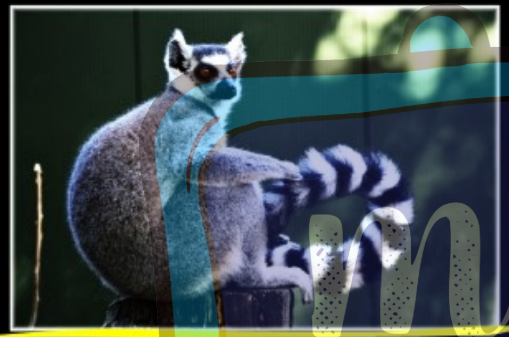

the narikkuravan huntergypsy with his wild lemur in cages, selling needles, clay beads and instruments for cleaning out the ears — Oh, I could go on and on. Each thing would pull me to a stand-still and not allow me to go any further.

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harangue : भाषण

At times, people from various political parties would arrive, put up a stage and harangue us through their mikes.

Then there might be a street play, or a puppet show, or a "no magic, no miracle" stunt performance. All these would happen from time to time.

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But almost certainly there would be some entertainment or other going on. Even otherwise, there were the coffee clubs in the bazaar: the way each waiter cooled the coffee, lifting a tumbler high up and pouring its contents into a tumbler held in his other hand.

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tether : पकड़ लेना

Or the way some people sat in front of the shops chopping up onion, their eyes turned elsewhere so that they would not smart. Or the almond tree growing there and its fruit which was occasionally blown down by the wind. All these sights taken together would tether my legs and stop me from going home.

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savoury : नमकीन / मिर्च वाली

And then, according to the season, there would be mango, cucumber, sugar-cane, sweet-potato, palm-shoots, gram, palm-syrup and palm-fruit, guavas and jack-fruit. Every day I would see people selling sweet and savoury fried snacks, payasam, halva, boiled tamarind seeds and iced lollies.

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proceedings: प्रक्रिया



Gazing at all this, one day, I came to my street, my bag slung over my shoulder. At the opposite corner, though, a threshing floor had been set up, and the landlord watched the proceedings, seated on a piece of sacking spread over a stone ledge.