

CLASS – 10

ENGLISH

First Flight

CH-7 : Madam Rides the Bus

Part – 2

A Courageous Step

KOMAL JETWANI



OVERVIEW

1. A World Beyond the Door

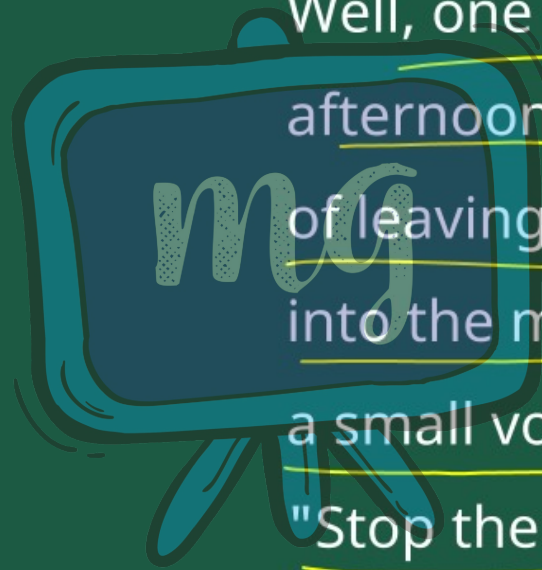
2. A Courageous Step

3. The Magic of Discovery

4. The Return to Home

II

Well, one fine spring day the afternoon bus was just on the point of leaving the village and turning into the main highway when a small a small voice was heard shouting: "Stop the bus! Stop the bus!" And a tiny hand was raised commandingly.



The bus slowed down to a crawl, and the conductor, sticking his head out the door, said, "Hurry then! Tell whoever it is to come quickly."
"It's me," shouted Valli. "I'm the one who has to get on."

Crawl : to move slowly with your body close to ground
Sticking out : noticeable

By now the bus had come to a stop,
and the conductor said, "Oh, really!
You don't say so!"

"Yes, I simply have to go to town,"
said Valli, still standing outside the
bus, "and here's my money." She
showed him some coins.

"Okay, okay, but first you must get
on the bus," said the conductor, and
he stretched out a hand to help her
up.

"Never mind," she said, "I can get on by myself. You don't have to help me."

The conductor was a **jolly** sort, fond of joking. "Oh, please don't be angry with me, my fine madam," he said.

"Here, have a seat right up there in front. Everybody move aside please make way for - madam."

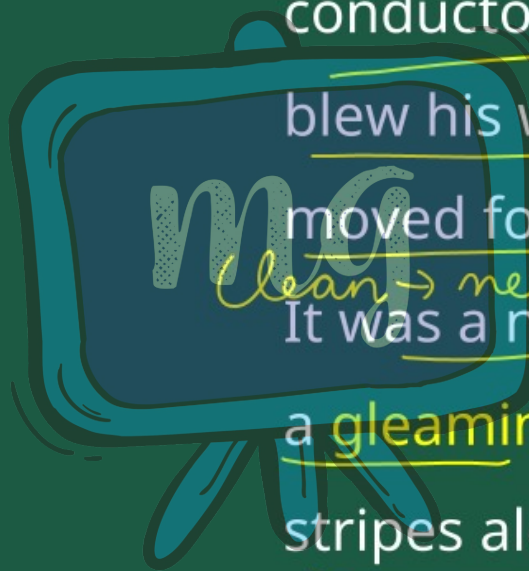
Jolly : Jolly / funny

It was the slack time of day, and there were only six or seven passengers on the bus. They were all looking at Valli and laughing with the conductor. Valli was overcome with shyness. Avoiding everyone's eyes, she walked quickly to an empty seat and sat down.

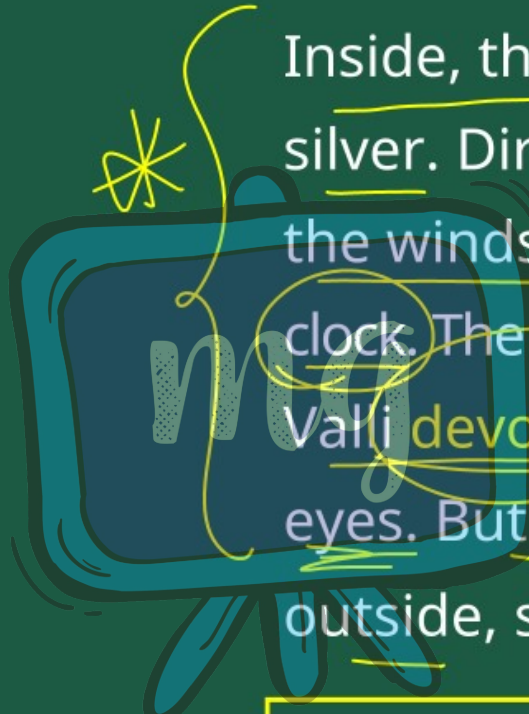
Slack time : less productive time
Shyness : self-conscious/ hesitant

"May we start now, madam?" the conductor asked, smiling. Then he blew his whistle twice, and the bus moved forward with a roar.

It was a new bus, its outside painted a gleaming white with some green stripes along the sides.



Gleaming : shining

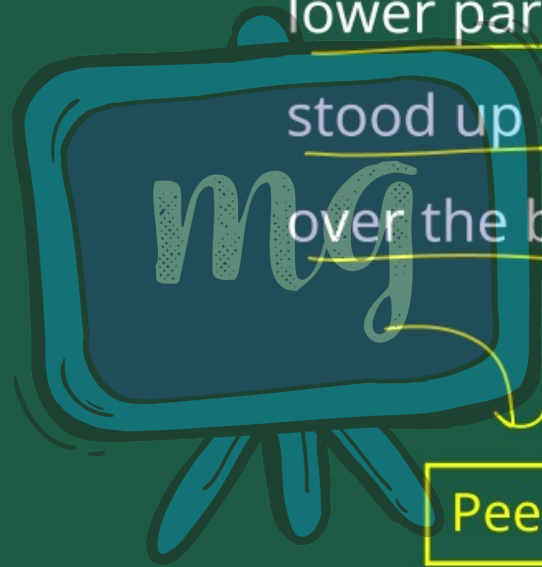


Inside, the overhead bars shone like silver. Directly in front of Valli, above the windshield, there was a beautiful clock. The seats were soft and **luxurious**. Valli **devoured** everything with her eyes. But when she started to look outside, she found her view cut off

Luxurious : very expensive and comfortable

Devoured : to eat something quickly

by a canvas blind that covered the
lower part of her window. So she
stood up on the seat and **peered**
over the blind.



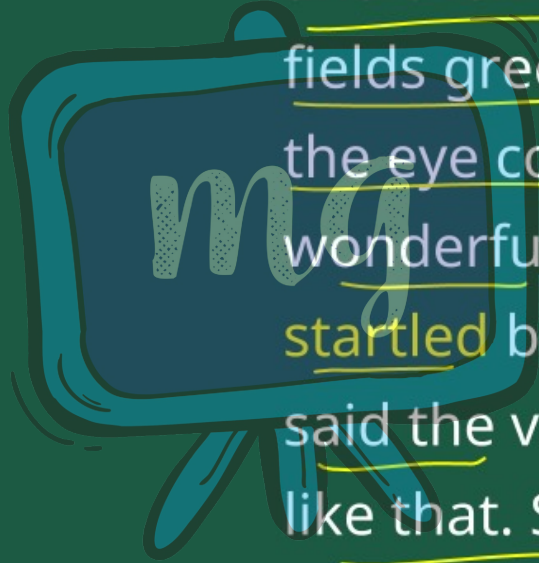
Peered : to see carefully

The bus was now going along the bank of a **canal**. The road was very narrow. On one side there was the canal and beyond it, palm trees, grassland, distant mountains, and the blue, blue sky.



Canal : A deep cut through land made for irrigation/ships

On the other side was a deep ditch and then acres and acres of green fields green, green, green, as far as the eye could see. Oh, it was all so wonderful! Suddenly she was startled by a voice. "Listen, child," said the voice, "you shouldn't stand like that. Sit down."



Ditch : pit
Startled : surprise

Sitting down, she looked to see who had spoken. It was an elderly man who had honestly been **concerned** for her, but she was **annoyed** by his attention.

"There's nobody here who's a child," she said **haughtily**.

<u>Concerned</u>	: worried
<u>Annoyed</u>	: angry
<u>Attention</u>	: focus
<u>Haughtily</u>	: proudly

"I've paid my thirty paise like
everyone else."

The conductor chimed in. "Oh, sir,
but this is a very grown-up madam.

Do you think a mere girl could pay
her own fare and travel to the city all
alone?"

Chimed in : to speak in between
Mere : only

Valli shot an angry glance at the conductor and said, "I am not a madam. Please remember that. And you've not yet given me my ticket." "I'll remember," the conductor said, mimicking her tone. Everyone laughed, and gradually Valli too joined in the laughter.

Mimicking : To copy

The conductor punched a ticket and
handed it to her. "Just sit back and
make yourself comfortable. Why
should you stand when you've paid
for a seat?"



"Because I want to," she answered,
standing up again.

"But if you stand on the seat, you
may fall and hurt yourself when the
bus makes a sharp turn or hits a
bump. That's why we want you to sit
down, child."

"I'm not a child, I tell you," she said
irritably. "I'm eight years old."

Irritably : To become angry easily

"Of course, of course. How stupid of me! Eight years my!" - The bus stopped, some new passengers got on, and the conductor got busy for a time. Afraid of losing her seat, Valli finally sat down.

An elderly woman came and sat beside her. "Are you all alone, dear?" she asked Valli as the bus started again.

Valli found the woman **absolutely repulsive** - such big holes she had in her ear lobes, and such ugly earrings in them!

And she could smell the betel nut the woman was chewing and see

Absolutely : completely

Repulsive : strong feeling of disgust

the betel juice that was threatening
to spill over her lips at any moment.

Ugh! - who could be sociable with
such a person? "Yes, I'm travelling
alone," she answered curtly. "And
I've got a ticket too." *proud*

Sociable : friendly

Curtly : rudely

"Yes, she's on her way to town,"
said the conductor. "With a thirty-
paise ticket."

"Oh, why don't you mind your own
business," said Valli. But she laughed
all the same, and the conductor
laughed too.

But the old woman went on with
her drivel.

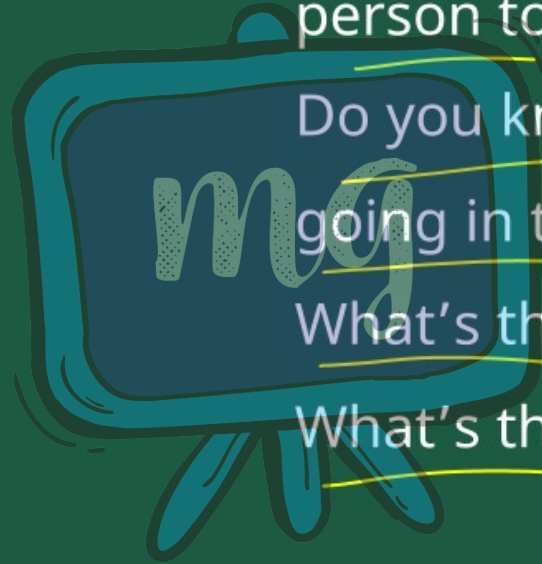
Drivel : talk nonsense

"Is it proper for such a young
person to travel alone?"

Do you know exactly where you're
going in town?

What's the street?

What's the house number?"

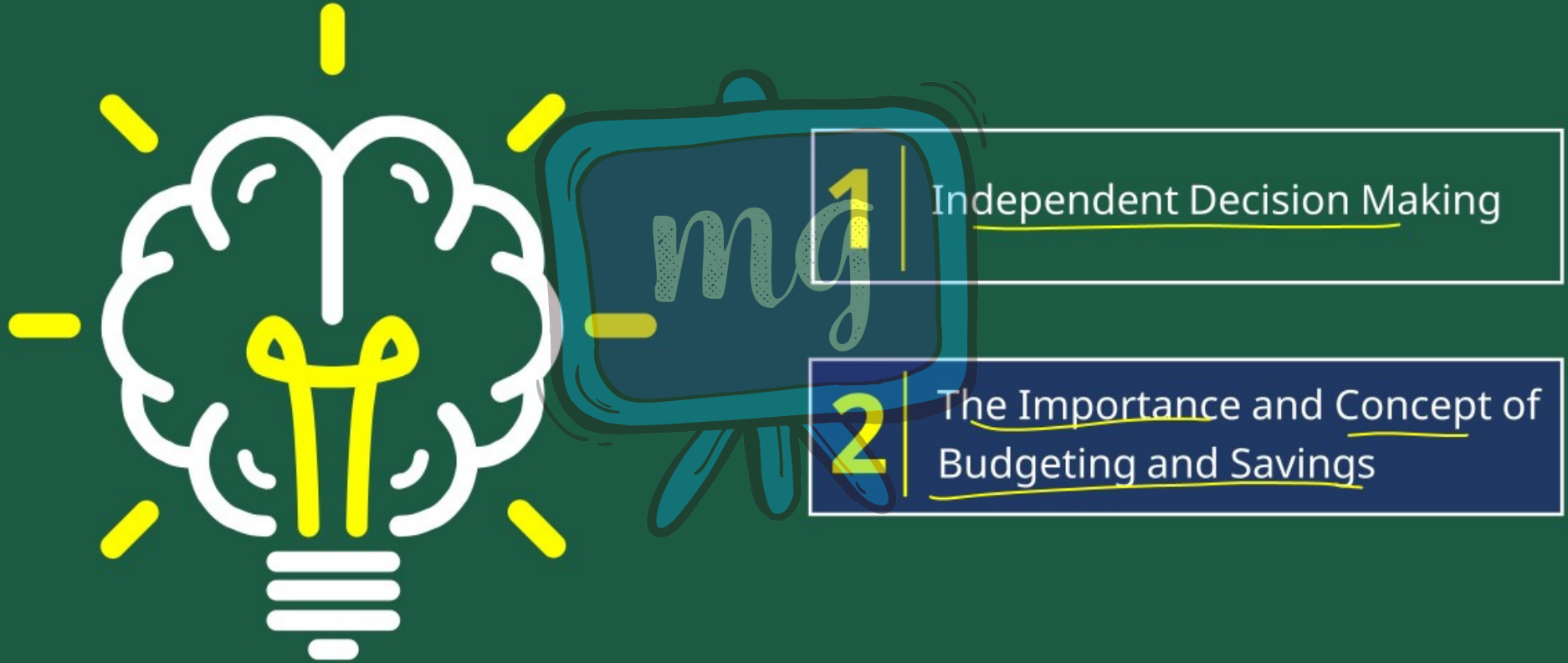


"You needn't **bother** about me. I
can take care of myself," Valli said,
turning her face towards the window
and staring out.



Bother : worry

LEARNING OUTCOMES



ASSESSMENT



1

What was the conductor's initial reaction to Valli wanting to board the bus?

A

He was angry.

B

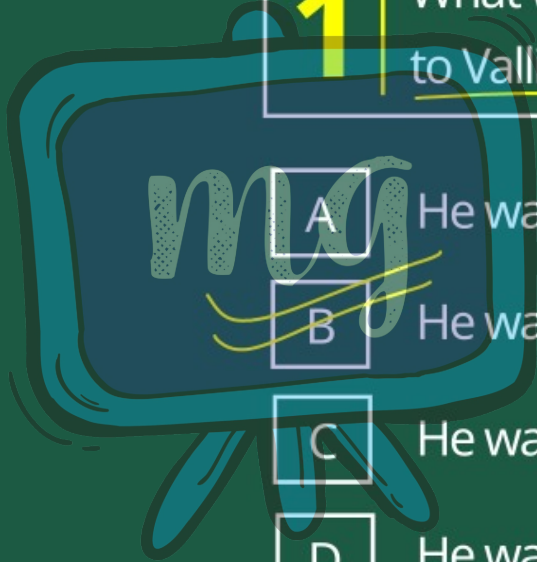
He was surprised.

C

He was indifferent.

D

He was irritated.



ASSESSMENT



2

Why couldn't Valli see the scenery properly?

A

The bus was too fast.

B

The canvas blind covered the lower part of the window.

C

The passengers were blocking her view.

D

It was too dark outside.

ASSESSMENT



3

What does the phrase "devoured everything with her eyes" suggest about Valli?

- A She was hungry.
- B She was scared.
- C She was curious and observant.
- D She was bored.

ASSESSMENT



4

What can we infer about Valli's personality from her interaction with the old woman?

- A She is friendly and outgoing.
- B She is impatient and reserved.
- C She is disrespectful and rude.
- D She is polite and respectful.