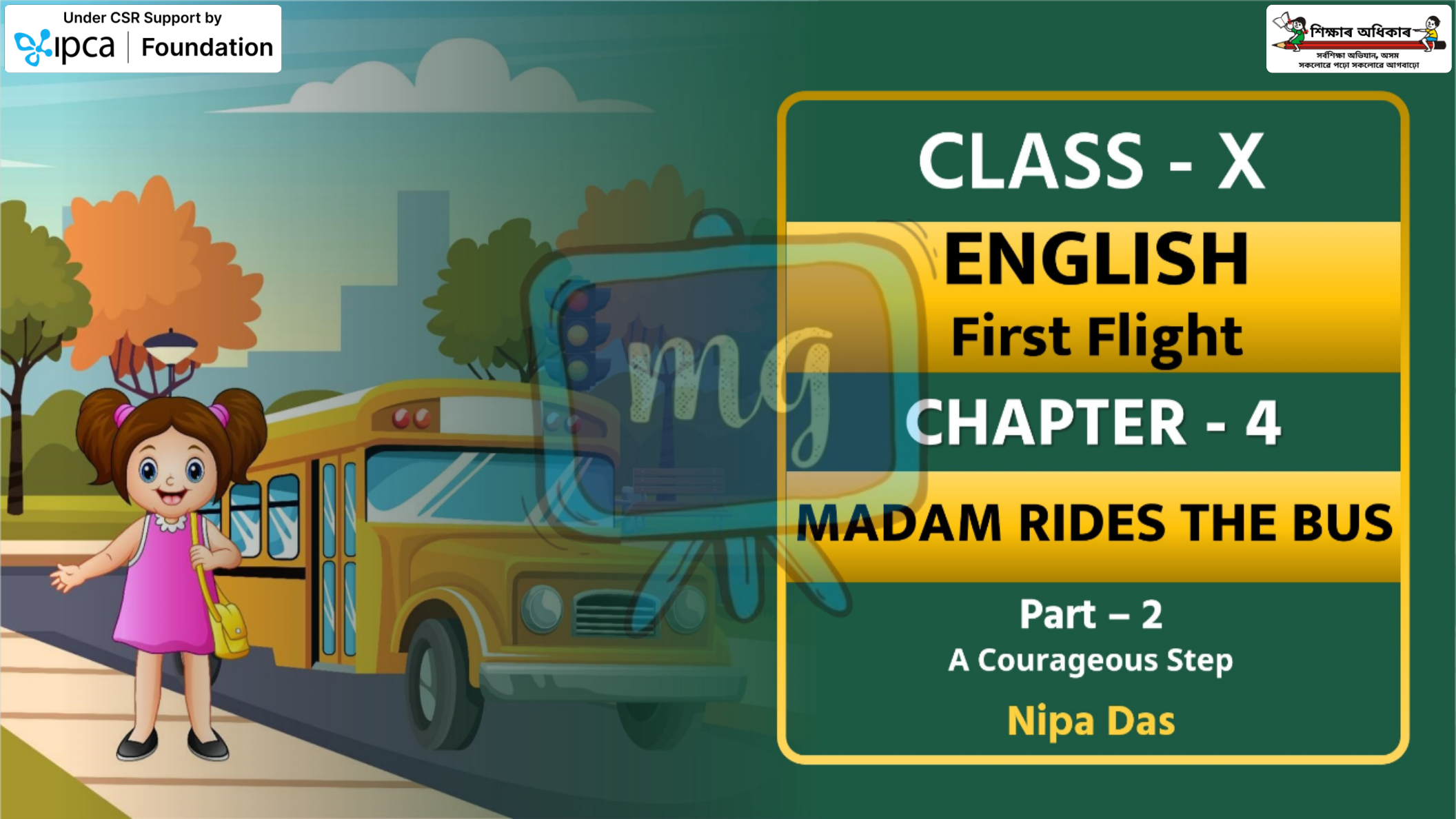
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CLASS - X

ENGLISH

First Flight

CHAPTER - 4

MADAM RIDES THE BUS

Part – 2

A Courageous Step

Nipa Das

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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.

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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	:	চুচৰি যোৱা
Sticking out	:	উলিয়াই দিয়া

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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.

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"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 : আনন্দত থকা

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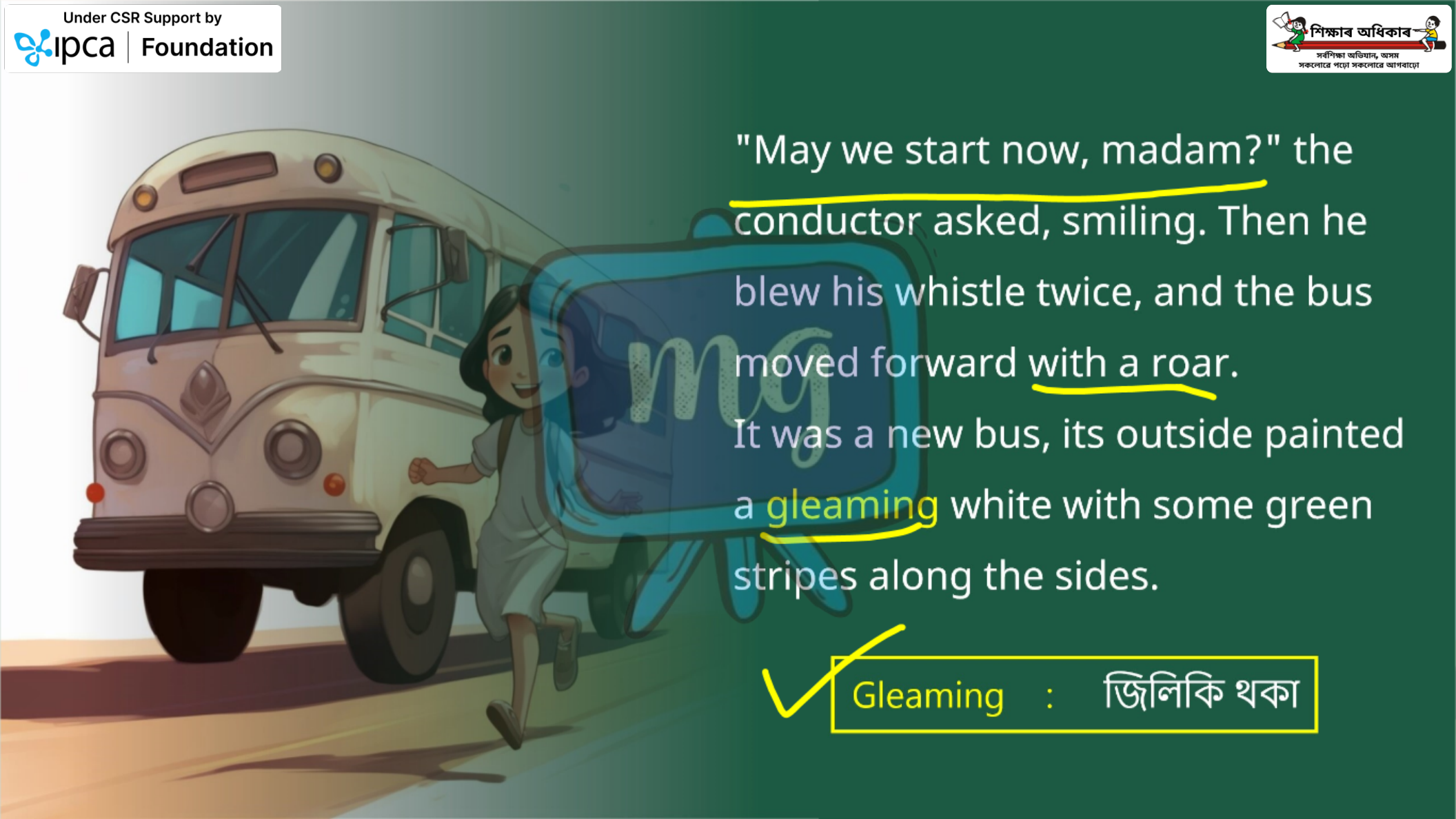
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It was the slack time of day, and there were only six or seven passengers on the bus. They were all looking at Valli and laughing with the conductor. Valli was overcome with shyness. Avoiding everyone's eyes, she walked quickly to an empty seat and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

Slack time	:	ব্যস্ততাহীন সময়
Shyness	:	লাজ

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"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 : জিলিকি থকা

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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 : আৰামদায়ক
Devoured : দ্ৰুত গতিৰে চোৱা

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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 : ভালদৰে চোৱা

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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 : খাল

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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	: পথৰ কাষৰ খাৰৈ
Startled	: আচৰিত হৈ পৰিল

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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.

Concerned	:	উদ্বিগ্ন
Annoyed	:	অসন্তুষ্ট
Attention	:	মনোযোগ দিয়া
Haughtily	:	অহংকাৰেৰে

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"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	:	কথাৰ মাজত মাত দিয়া
Mere	:	মাত্ৰ

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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 : আচৰণৰ অনুকৰণ কৰা

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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?"



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"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 : বিৰক্ত হোৱা

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"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.

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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: সম্পূৰ্ণ
Repulsive : অপ্ৰীতিকৰ

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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."

Sociable : সামাজিক

Curtly : ৰুক্ষভাৱে

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"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 : অসাৰ কথা

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

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

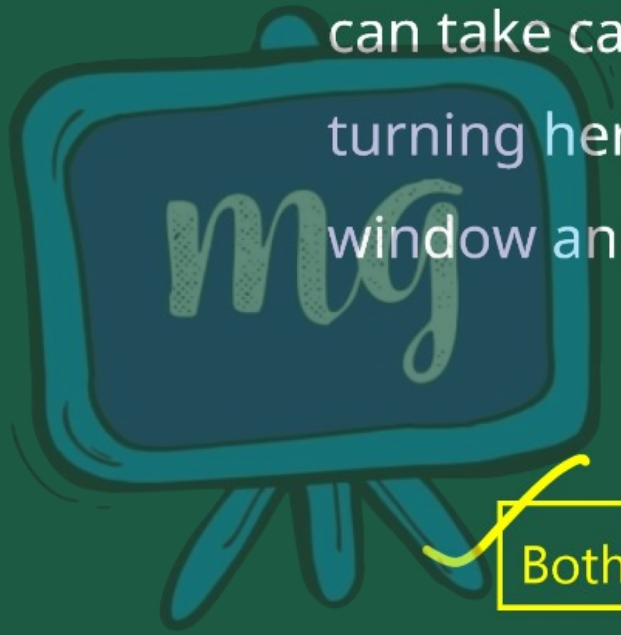
What's the street?

What's the house number?"

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



Bother : চিন্তা কৰা

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ASSESSMENT

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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 amused.

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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.

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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.