

10th Standard - English

Madam Rides the Bus Summary

I

About Valliammai

There was a girl named Valliammai. She was called Valli for short. She was eight years old. She wanted to know many things. She would stand in the front door way of her house. She would see what was happening outside. She had no playmates.

Valli's wish to ride the bus

Watching the things gave Valli many unusual experiences. There ran a bus between her village and the nearest town. Valli got great joy in seeing new sets of passengers. So day after day she watched the bus. She soon developed a wish to ride on that bus.

Valli's thought about the ride

Valli's wish to ride the bus became stronger and stronger. She thought that if a friend described her riding in the bus she would downplay her. She would speak English word "Proud! Proud!" though she did not know the meaning.

Valli's knowledge about the ride

Valli listened to the talks of the persons who travelled in the bus. This way, she learnt about small details of the journey. She now knew that the town was six miles away. The fare was thirty paise one way. The time of the ride was forty-five minutes. She also knew how she would return. Thus she planned before starting the ride.

Valli in the bus

One fine spring day Valli rode in the bus in the afternoon. The conductor was jolly and fond of joking. He understood that Valli spoke with pride. He offered Valli a front seat calling others to make way for 'madam'. There were only six or seven passengers in the bus. They were looking at Valli. They were laughing with the conductor. Valli felt it insulting.

Valli studies everything inside and outside

Valli studied everything in the bus. It had soft and comfortable seats. It had a beautiful clock above the wind screen. She looked outside. But she had to stand up on the seat because of the curtain. The bus was going along the bank of a canal. She saw palm trees, mountains and the blue sky. On the other side there were green fields.

What happens inside the bus

Suddenly an elderly person asked Valli not to stand up calling her 'child'. Valli got angry. She replied proudly that she was not a 'child'. She had paid full price (fare) like others. The conductor was humorous. He told the elderly person that Valli was a grown-up 'madam'. Valli looked at the conductor angrily. She told him that she was not a 'madam'. And he had not yet given her the ticket. The conductor gave her a ticket.

The conductor's advice to Valli

The conductor told Valli to sit comfortably. She should not stand. But Valli said she wanted to. He told her that she would fall and hurt on sharp turns. He called Valli "child". At this Valli said that she was not a "child". She told that she was eight years old.

Valli and an elderly woman

At the next stand an elderly woman came and sat beside Valli. The woman asked Valli if she was alone. Valli looked at the woman. She had ugly earrings. She had betel nut in her mouth. Betel juice was likely to come out of her mouth. At this Valli replied that she was alone and had got a ticket. The conductor added the same thing. Valli asked him why he didn't mind his own business. She then laughed with the conductor.

How Valli snubs the woman

The woman told Valli that it was not proper for her to travel alone. She asked Valli about her house. Valli replied that she needn't bother about her. She turned her face towards the window.

II

How Valli had planned for the ride

Valli had saved sixty paise for the bus journey with sacrifices.

She had resisted the desire to buy toys, balloons etc. She had also killed her desire to ride in a merry-go-round. She had planned her first journey for long. She had stood at the front of her house to plan about it.

Movement of the bus

The bus now rode across a bare landscape. Trees came running towards them. They rushed when the bus moved. Sometime the bus seemed to strike the oncoming vehicle. But both passed by safely.

A cow before the bus

Suddenly a cow with raised tail came in front of the bus. The bus slowed to a crawl. The driver sounded the horn again and again. But the cow continued running before the bus. Valli clapped her hands with joy. She laughed and laughed. The conductor told her to save some laughter for the next day.

Bus reaches the city

The bus passed by the side of a railway crossing. Then it came to a thoroughfare. There were big and bright shops. There were huge crowds of people. Valli gaped at everything. At last the bus reached the town. The conductor asked Valli to get down. But she told that she was going back on the same bus. She gave the coins for the ticket to the conductor.

Talk between the conductor and Valli

The conductor asked Valli what the matter was. Valli told him that it was nothing. She felt like having a bus ride. The conductor asked if she won't have a look at the sights. Valli replied that she was afraid of that. He asked her if she wasn't afraid to come in the bus.

Conversation continues

The conductor asked Valli to have a cold drink. Valli told that she had not enough money. She asked for the ticket. The conductor offered her the drink from his own side. But Valli refused to accept the offer. The conductor asked Valli if her mother won't look for her. Valli replied thjit no one would. They waited for the return journey.

IV

Dead cow on the way

The bus started again. There were the same wonderful sights. Valli was not bored. But suddenly she saw a young cow lying dead by the roadside. It had been struck by some fast-moving vehicle.

Valli's reaction

Valli asked the conductor if that dead cow wasn't the same they had seen earlier. The conductor nodded. Valli got sad. The cow had looked earlier lovable and beautiful. But now it looked horrible in its death.

End of the journey

The bus moved. The memory of the dead cow haunted Valli. She no longer wanted to see outside. She sat glued to the seat as a sad person. The bus reached the village. Valli told the conductor to see again. The conductor smiled. He told Valli to come and join them whenever she felt like riding the bus. She must bring the fare with her. Valli laughed and alighted. But the death of the cow had changed Valli.

Valli reaches home

Valli reached home. She found her aunt living in the South Street talking with her mother. 'She was a real chatterbox. She asked Valli where she had gone. Valli didn't reply. She just smiled. Valli heard her mother saying that no one can know about everything. So many things happen. Valli replied in positive.

Valli's reaction to her mother's and aunt's conversation

Valli's aunt reacted. She called Valli a chit of a girl. She took interest in things that didn't concern her. She behaved as if she were a grown lady. Valli smiled to herself. She didn't want them to understand her smile. There was not much chance of that either.