



QUESTION BANK – THE HUNDRED DRESSES PART I & II (2020-21)

Class: X

Sub: ENGLISH

Q. How did the children respond to Wanda's paintings?

Children suddenly clapped. Even the boys were glad to have a chance to stamp on the floor and they put their fingers in their mouths and whistled. Peggy and Maddie also appreciated her drawings.

Q. In what way was Wanda different from the other children?

Wanda was an immigrant. She did not talk much. She was very serene and laughed rarely. She was a talented, patient and skilled girl. She used to wear a dull and faded dress.

Q. Where did Wanda sit in the classroom and why?

Wanda felt it comfortable to sit at the back of the class where the noisy rough boys, who got low marks, sat. She did so as she was not well dressed and her feet were dirty.

Q. What was unusual about the dress of Wanda?

Wanda always wore a faded blue dress that didn't fit her well. It was neat but it was wrinkled all over and required a good ironing. She always wore the same dress. It didn't look right.

Q. What shows that Peggy was not really cruel?

Peggy was not really cruel. She protected small children from bullies. Not only this, she cried for hours if she saw an animal being mistreated. But in Wanda's bullying she never felt that.

Q. Why was Maddie sure Peggy would win the dress designing contest?

Peggy drew designs better than anyone else in the class and could copy a picture of film star's head with such precision in a magazine. Moreover, Wanda's skills in drawing and designing had not been revealed yet. Maddie thought that Peggy would win the girls medal.

Q. What kind of a girl was Peggy?

Peggy was the most popular and pretty looking girl. She was a hypocrite as she could be kind at one time and make fun of someone at another time. She made fun of Wanda. But at the same time, she protected children from bullies, cried when animals were ill-treated.

Q. How did Wanda win the drawing competition? Did anyone expect her victory?

Wanda won the drawing competition as she had drawn hundred dresses all different, colourful and exquisite. All of them deserved a prize though nobody expected her victory because in routine, she used to wear the same wrinkled blue faded dress.

Q. Why did Maddie feel guilty of herself?

Maddie felt guilty of herself because she always supported Peggy for fun. She never prevented Peggy from making fun of Wanda. Later, she was remorseful to see the beautiful dresses gifted by Wanda.

Q. Why did Wanda's house remind Maddie of Wanda's blue dress?

Maddie was reminded of Wanda's blue dress after looking at her house because the house and the sparse little yard looked shabby but it was clean like Wanda's blue dress. The dress Wanda wore was always clean but not ironed yet simple and humble.

Q. How can you say that Maddie was different from Peggy?

Maddie belonged to a poor family. She always wore old clothes. She also felt sympathy for Wanda. Maddie did not like Peggy when she made fun of Wanda. She decided not to mock Wanda at one time.

Q. Though Peggy and Maddie made fun of Wanda, she gifted them her special drawings. In the light of this statement write a character sketch of Wanda Petronski.

Wanda Petronski was a Polish girl at an American School. Her name sounded unfamiliar to the other students who made fun of her name. They also teased her by asking her about her hundred dresses which she claimed she had but wore the same faded blue dress every day, she never felt embarrassed. She was cool headed and tolerant. Others called her a liar but she knew that she was truthful as she did have a hundred dresses but only the drawings not the real ones.

Wanda had gifted two of her special drawings to Peggy and Maddie with their faces on the respective drawings. This showed that she liked them in spite of their teasing her. Gifting those drawings to them was also her way of making them realise their mistake. She was a large-hearted, understanding, forgiving, talented and intelligent girl.

Q. What was the effect of the letter of Wanda's father on Miss Mason? How did Maddie react to it?

In his letter, Wanda's father had informed Miss Mason that Wanda would not come to the school any more. They were moving to a big city. In that city, nobody would consider her name funny and laugh at her. There was a deep silence in the class when Miss Mason read the letter. Whatever happened was due to thoughtlessness. It was also unfortunate and sad. She didn't like that other students had hurt the feelings of Wanda just because she had a name which happened to be a long, unfamiliar one. She wanted everyone to think about it. On the other hand, Maddie had a sick feeling. She wanted to regret on her behaviour. She thought that she never wanted to hurt Wanda in this way. It was true that she had never made fun of Wanda herself. But at the same time, she had not objected Peggy's asking Wanda about her dresses. She felt that she was a coward.

Q. Give the character sketch of Maddie.

Maddie was the classmate of Peggy and Wanda. She was Peggy's inseparable friend. Both were always seen together. She used to wear hand-me-down clothes, mostly of Peggy with little innovation. She did not like Peggy's making fun of Wanda. She felt uncomfortable, perhaps it reminded her of her own poverty. She was not courageous. Once she wrote a note to Peggy asking her to stop teasing Wanda but tore it. She was afraid that Peggy and other girls would make her the next target. She had a very high opinion about Peggy. She thought that Peggy could never do anything wrong and that she would win the art contest. Maddie was sensitive and emotional. Many nights before sleeping she would give imaginary speeches defending Wanda when others teased her. Even she was determined not to tease anybody else and make them unhappy. She didn't mind losing Peggy's friendship in doing so.

Summary:

The Hundred Dresses is a story based in the true experiences of the author about a girl who is teased by her classmates because she is different. Wanda Petronski, a girl who comes from the poor part of town, is the only student in her class with a 'funny' Polish name. She is always quiet and she always wears the same faded blue dress to school every day, although she claims she has a hundred dresses at home "all lined up in her closet."

The story is told from the perspective of one of Wanda's classmates, Maddie, who is the best friend of the main player in the daily taunting and teasing. After Wanda is absent for a few days, her classmates learn that her family has moved away to the big city where they will not be

mistreated for being different. Maddie begins to wonder about the girl she and her friends used to constantly tease, and realizes that she knows very little about her. She begins to wonder why they started teasing her in the first place and is overcome with guilt for making fun of her simply because she is poor and has a funny name and is different from them.

Maddie knows that she should have stood up to her friends and defended Wanda. She feels guilty for not speaking up, for standing by and allowing her friends to tease Wanda.

Maddie and her friends later discover that Wanda is a very talented artist, and that her drawing of one hundred beautiful dresses has won the school's art contest. The girls realize that they misjudged Wanda, and feel incredibly guilty for never believing her stories of her "one hundred dresses." In the end, the girls write a letter to Wanda, hoping to make amends, and they are pleasantly surprised by her willingness to forgive.

The Hundred Dresses Themes

1. Reconciliation

To assuage her guilt for having stood by while Peggy teased Wanda, Maddie seeks to reconcile with Wanda. Her desire to restore friendly relations sends Maddie into Boggins Heights, and eventually to write Wanda a letter. However, these efforts only temporarily silence Maddie's guilt. Without a face-to-face reconciliation, Maddie will never know whether Wanda truly forgives her. The reconciliation Maddie craves is deferred until the book's final chapter, when Maddie recognizes her own features in the drawing Wanda gave her. In lieu of a face-to-face reconciliation, Maddie receives information that allows her to believe that Wanda had liked Maddie all along.

2. Bullying

Though the author does not use the word, the book's most prominent theme is bullying. Though Peggy is naïve in her child's perspective, the "hundred dress game" she instigates with Wanda is mean-spirited at heart. Because Wanda remains stoic and doesn't react to the schoolyard taunts by crying, Peggy and other girls can tell themselves that their actions are not cruel. In this way, the book captures the nuanced and insidious nature of bullying: from a certain perspective, it is just a game; from another, it is cruelty.

3. Equality

Equality becomes increasingly relevant as the story progresses and Wanda rises from her lower status to a more equal social standing within the classroom.

4. Social Isolation

Starting with the image of Wanda's empty desk at the back corner of the classroom, and ending with the recollected image of Wanda standing alone against the ivy-covered wall, the theme of social isolation pervades *The Hundred Dresses*. The hundred dresses "game" that Peggy "plays" with Wanda is tacitly designed to keep Wanda at a distance from the group of popular girls, with whom Wanda would like to be friends.

5. Class Difference

Several details about Wanda's life signal that she and her family belong to a lower social class than most of the students in Room 13: She has a Polish surname, she wears the same dress every day, her father's English is undeveloped, she lives in Boggins Heights, and she has difficulty reading aloud in class.

6. Poverty

The theme of poverty underlies much of the conflict in *The Hundred Dresses*. Poverty determines that Wanda and her family live far from school, and the mud Wanda accumulates on her shoes during the long walk subsequently relegates her to the back of the classroom, where she sits with students whom the teacher and front-row students presume to be unintelligent.

Wanda's poverty also means she wears the same dress to school every day, which brands her as a social outcast. Maddie's own poverty stops her from defending Wanda, because Maddie fears she herself will become a target of abuse if people found out that Maddie wears Peggy's old dresses. Ultimately, Wanda's kind heart and drawing skills prove to the class that her poverty does not indicate that she is any less worthy of praise and acceptance.

DETAILED SUMMARY-

Wanda Petronski is the new girl in Room 13. Peggy is the most popular girl in the class and Maddie is her best friend. Wanda lives in a poor neighborhood with her father and brother. Wanda is not readily accepted into the groups of friends and she doesn't seem to really know how to fit in. She wears the same faded blue dress to school every day. It doesn't fit well but it's always clean.

Meanwhile, the lessons go on. Wanda sits in a corner of Room 13 where most of the noisy boys sit. Most of the students in that corner don't get good grades and there is usually mud on the floor, tracked in by the students who walk to school from the country.

Wanda Petronski, in the hope of fitting in with the other girls of her class, claims to have one hundred dresses at home, though she wears the same faded dress to school every day. Several of the girls begin to tease Wanda about her claim until Wanda turns in a hundred drawings of beautiful dresses. Maddie, one of the girls in the class, feels guilty because she never stood up for Wanda and that guilt is multiplied when she learns Wanda has moved away because of how she was treated.

Maddie doesn't laugh and she knows she should step up and say something to stop the teasing. But Maddie is poor herself and she's afraid that the other girls will make fun of her if she says anything. She doesn't object and the teasing goes on for days. Sometimes the girls tease Wanda on the school yard. Sometimes Peggy waits for Wanda at the corner of Olive Street and begins the teasing before they even reach the school.

One day, Miss Mason announces that it's time for the annual drawing contest. The girls are to draw a dress and the boys are to draw a motorboat. One boy and one girl will be chosen as winner of the contest. When it's time to turn in the drawings, the children are amazed to find that Wanda has turned in 100 drawings. Each is a beautiful dress and it's obvious this is the 100 dresses she claimed were lined up in her closet at home. Everyone agrees that she is a talented artist and it's no surprise when she wins the prize.

But Wanda isn't at school to collect her prize or to receive her congratulations. She has been absent for a couple of days by this time. Miss Mason reads a letter from Wanda's father, Jan Petronski, who says he is tired of his children being teased. He says people have made fun of them, including their name, and that he's moving them to a larger city where he hopes their name won't stand out so much. Miss Mason says she can't imagine that any of the students in her class teased Wanda.

Maddie and Peggy feel guilty that they played a role in making Wanda's life so miserable that her family moved. They go into the neighborhood where Wanda lived but find the house is already vacant. They write Wanda a letter, intending to apologize, but they wind up just writing a friendly letter. At the Christmas party, Miss Mason reads a letter from Wanda. She says she wants to give a specific drawing to Maddie and another to Peggy. Maddie later realizes that the girls wearing the dresses resemble Maddie and Peggy.

Peggy accepts the drawing and the letter as signs that everything is alright with Wanda and she moves on. Maddie, however, continues to deal with the guilt that she didn't speak up for someone who became so unhappy that the family moved to escape the situation.

Question 1: What did Mr Petronski's letter say?

Mr Petronski's letter was to inform the principal and Miss Mason that Wanda would not come to school as she was fed up of being bullied in the school. They were going to shift to a bigger place where nobody would make fun of their last name.

Question 2: Is Miss Mason angry with the class or is he unhappy and upset?

Miss Mason seems to be unhappy and upset rather than angry because she had never expected such a behaviour from the students. She wants everyone to think about it and asks them not to look down anyone in the class.

Question 3: How does Maddie feel after listening to the note from Wanda's father?

Maddie feels sorry and ashamed for the behaviour although she herself did not make fun of Wanda. She never tried to stop Peggy and remained a silent spectator. She feels as a coward.

Question 4: What does Maddie want to do?

Maddie wants to amend her behaviour towards Wanda. She wants to meet her to apologize. She decides to find Wanda at her house at Boggins Heights. She also wants to convey that all was meant in good humour and people really love her.

Question 5: What excuses does Peggy think of giving in justification of her behaviour? Why?

Peggy tries to defend herself by saying that her behaviour towards Wanda inspired her to explore her drawing skill as she sketched a hundred dresses and made her win the drawing contest.

Question 6: What are Maddie 's thoughts as they go to Boggins Heights?

Maddie was feeling ashamed and apologetic for being a silent spectator while Peggy humiliated Wanda. She was feeling upset and distraught for Wanda and herself. She was also repenting for not preventing Peggy from behaving badly with Wanda.

Question 7: Why does Wanda's house remind Maddie of Wanda's blue dress?

Wanda's house was sparse, old and faded but neat and clean like her blue dress that she wore every day to school. Thus, Maddie was reminded of the same old blue dress.

Question 8: What does Maddie think hard about? What important decision does she come to?

Maddie thinks about not to be mute spectator anymore that she had been in case of Wanda. She promises herself about not letting any injustice happen to anyone even if she would have to lose a friend in this.

Question 9: What did the girls write in the letter?

Maddie and Peggy wrote a friendly letter to Wanda. They wanted to apologize for their behaviour but they ended up asking her whether she liked her new school and teacher. They informed her about her sketches winning the drawing competition. They praised her drawing skill and also told how much other students liked her art. The letter was just a usual letter one may write to a good friend.

Question 10: Did Maddie and Peggy get a reply? Who was more anxious for a reply? How do you know?

No, they didn't get a reply from Wanda. Maddie was more anxious for a reply than Peggy because she was very upset and feeling sad for Wanda. She had assumed that Wanda was deeply hurt so she was not replying, and blamed herself for everything. Maddie used to have sleepless nights and saw frightful dreams about Wanda.

Question 11: How did the girls know that Wanda liked them even though they had teased her?

Both Maddie and Peggy realized that Wanda liked them although they had teased her because she had gifted them her two beautiful dresses – a green one with red trimmings to Peggy and the blue one to Maddie. She had even drawn their faces in the painting of the dresses they got.

Question 12: Why do you think Wanda's family moved to a different city? Do you think life there was going to be different for their family?

Wanda's family moved to a different city due to the racist and insulting behaviour of students towards Wanda and her brother. They were teased by other students for their funny name and blue dress. Life there in a different city was going to be different because people there did not have such a narrow mind and would not tease them because of their name or status.

Question 13: Maddie thought her silence was as bad as Peggy's teasing. Was she right?

Yes, Maddie thought that her silence was as bad as Peggy's teasing because it is often said that turning a blind eye to a crime is worse than committing a crime. So, by being silent, she indirectly encouraged Peggy to do so.

Question 14: Peggy says, "I never thought she had sense to know we were making fun of her anyway. I thought she was too dumb. And gee, look how she can draw!" What led Peggy to believe that Wanda was dumb? Did she change her opinion later?

Wanda never replied to Peggy's misbehavior and pranks that she faced every day. So, her neutral face and unusual behaviour led Peggy to think that Wanda was dumb. Wanda even described the hundred dresses though she wore the same old faded blue dress every day. But

later Peggy changed her opinion after having a look on Wanda's sketches and her gesture of gifting her a beautiful drawing from her collection.

Question 15: What important decision did Maddie make? Why did she have to think hard to do so?

Maddie decided to go to Wanda's house with Peggy to apologize and amend for all that had happened her. Wanda had left her house with her family. She felt bad because she thought of herself as a coward who did not stop Peggy to insult Wanda. So, she decided to raise voice against injustice and bullying. She was firm on not being a mute spectator anymore.

Question 16: Why did you think Wanda give Maddie and Peggy the drawings of the dresses? Why are they surprised?

When Maddie and Peggy wrote a letter to Wanda, she might have understood their feelings behind their letter and during the dresses fame, she had observed both of them. So, she requested Miss Mason to give two of her drawings to them and taught them a lesson of life.

Maddie and Peggy were surprised as Wanda gifted them the drawings with their faces.

Question 17: Do you think Wanda really thought the girls were teasing her? Why or why not?

Wanda was aware of the misbehaviour of the girls who teased her everyday but she remained calm. To keep them mum, she fabricated a story of having a hundred dresses and sixty pairs of matching shoes in her closet. She taught them a lesson of life by the drawings of the hundred beautiful dresses she claimed to have.

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and choose the correct option.

Question 1: While the class was circling the room, the monitor from the principal's office brought Miss Mason a note. Miss Mason read it several times and studies it thoughtfully for a while. Then she clapped her hands. "Attention, class. Everyone back to their seat." When the shuffling of feet has stopped and the room was still and quiet, Miss Mason said, "I have a letter from Wanda's father that I want to read to you." Miss Mason stood there a moment and the silence in the room grew tense and expectant. The teacher adjusted her glasses slowly and deliberately.

i) What was in the note that Miss Mason got from the principal's office?

- a) Monetary prize for Wanda
- b) A letter from Wanda's father
- c) Wanda's confession of lying
- d) Expression of sorry from Peggy

ii) What did Miss Mason do before reading the note?

- a) Warned the class to be silent
- b) Had a glass of water
- c) Kept the book on the table
- d) Adjusted her glasses slowly and deliberately

iii) Who wrote the note to Miss Mason?

- a) Wanda's father
- b) Wanda herself
- c) Peggy
- d) The principal

iv) What does the word 'deliberately' used in the extract mean?

- a) Mistakenly
- b) Politely
- c) Knowingly
- d) Clearly

Answer: i) b) A letter from Wanda's father

- ii) d) Adjusted her glasses slowly and deliberately
- iii) a) Wanda's father
- iv) c) Knowingly

Question 2: A deep silence met the reading of this letter. Miss Mason took off her glasses, blew on them and wiped them on her soft white handkerchief. Then she put them on again and looked at the class. When she spoke, her voice was very low. "I am sure that none of the boys and girls in Room Thirteen would purposely and deliberately hurt anyone's feelings because this or her name happened to be a long, unfamiliar one. I prefer to think that what was said as said in thoughtlessness. I know that all of you feel the way I do, that this is a very unfortunate thing to have happened – unfortunate and sad, both. And I want you all to think about it."

i) How did Miss Mason feel when she finished reading the letter of Wanda's father?

- a) Low in voice and at heart
- b) Confident
- c) Proud
- d) Frightened

ii) What did Miss Mason say to the class?

- a) that you deserve punishment
- b) that you should introspect and think twice before uttering something from your mouth
- c) That you should be awarded
- d) That I do not want to see your face

iii) What was the reaction of Miss Mason after reading the letter?

- a) Happy and relieved
- b) Stressed and angry
- c) Unhappy and disappointed
- d) Confident and victorious

iv) Find out the word in the extract which means 'inappropriate'.

- a) Silence
- b) Purposely
- c) Unfamiliar
- d) Unfortunate

Answer: i) a) Low in voice and at heart

ii) b) that you should introspect and think twice before uttering something from your mouth

iii) c) Unhappy and disappointed

iv) d) Unfortunate

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1: Why did Wanda's father Mr. Petronski write a letter to the principal and Miss Mason?

Answer: Mr. Petronski, Wanda's father, wrote a letter to the principal and Miss Mason to tell them the truth behind Wanda's absence from the school. He wrote that he was upset to know that his daughter was bullied in the school by some of her classmates because of her strange name and poverty.

Question 2: What do you think about Wanda's action of not coming to school anymore?

Answer: Peggy and Maddie with other girls in the school teased Wanda because of her name and the hundred dresses which she boasted to have at home. But, she never replied angrily or fought with them. Instead of that she preferred to keep herself silent and calm. Due to insult she faced, she decided not to come to school anymore.

Question 3: How did Peggy and Maddie try to amend for their behaviour towards Wanda?

Answer: Peggy and Maddie decided to change their behaviour after Wanda's incident. Peggy had tried to justify her behaviour towards Wanda that it was not her dress for which she teased her but she indirectly encouraged her for those beautiful drawings. And, that made her the winner of the drawing competition. While Maddie decided not to be a silent spectator and promised herself that she would try to protect if anyone would be mocked down.

Question 4: How did Peggy and Maddie know that Wanda had received their letter?

Answer: Peggy and Maddie got to know that Wanda had finally received their letter in which they had apologized for their behaviour to her because Wanda had sent a letter to Miss Mason after a few months. In the letter, she requested her to gift her drawings to both of them which she had drawn in the drawing contest.

Question 5: Why was there no reply to the letter written to Wanda by the girls?

Answer: Peggy and Maddie wrote a friendly letter to Wanda as their apology for their behaviour after a visit to her home in Boggins Heights. But they did not receive any reply from her. It was either because of her anger towards them or because they wrote the address of her old house in Boggins Heights as they had no idea about her new address of school. So, both of them got bad feelings for their behaviour towards her.

Question 6: Why did Maddie have sleepless nights?

Answer: Maddie had sleepless nights because she was very upset about what all had happened and could not amend her behaviour towards Wanda. Though she had not teased her but remained a mute spectator and never opposed Peggy and other girls to do the same. She felt ashamed that she would never be able to express her gratitude to Wanda.

Question 7: What impression do you form of Wanda Petronski on the basis of reading the lesson “The Hundred Dresses”?

Or,

What kind of girl was Wanda Petronski?

Answer: Wanda Petronski is very kind and simple-hearted; she never behaves badly with anyone. She is very talented and has a good hand at drawing. She also wins the drawing contest and thus shows her creative side.

She is forgiving and generous as she forgives Peggy and Maddie by gifting them two of her drawings. So, it can be said that she is a mature, sensible and loving girl who cares about everyone.

Long Questions and Answers

Question 1: How can you say that Maddie is an emotional girl? Compare and contrast Maddie and Peggy.

Answer: By a close reading of the lesson, it can be said that Maddie is an emotional girl. Being a close friend of Peggy, she remains by her side when Peggy teases Wanda but she feels bad for her. She decides to write a note to Peggy to stop teasing Wanda but tears it as she doesn't want to be the next target of fun. In the end, she decided to stand against anyone who teases others, even if she has to lose her friend, which shows her emotional attribute.

As compared to Maddie, Peggy is an arrogant girl. She teases Wanda by asking her about dresses, but she is not cruel as she helps children from bullies and cried when she sees an animal being hurt. But she tries to make fun of Wanda every time and defends herself. So, both the girls have different personalities and attributes which can be directed by their actions.

Question 2: ‘The Hundred Dresses-II’ gives out a moral lesson of what a man should be like as Wanda displays herself in the given situation. Wanda by her behavior towards Peggy and Maddie shows her exalted character as is seen in her letter. How far would you agree with her and justify such a behavior in all persons as essential? Write a paragraph on such an aspect.

Answer: Wanda Petronski's letter highlights her greatness which gives us a view of her nature as a simple, loving, caring and friendly human being. She gifts her drawings to Peggy and Maddie though they tease her a lot. It shows how great she is as it requires a lot of courage and patience to do so. An ordinary person cannot do that and would definitely hate them but Wanda shows polite and peaceful traits (quality) of her character.

In our society, it is very difficult to find such a character but such traits are a must to be a good human being. By answering in a polite and friendly manner, Wanda displays to be a humble person.