

# ENGLISH

## CHAPTER 9: MADAM RIDES THE BUS



# MADAM RIDES THE BUS

~Summary~

**-by Vallikkannan**

## Valliammai and Her Pastime

Valliammai was a girl, who was known as Valli in short. She was eight years old. She wanted to know about new things. She had no one to play with her of her own age. So her favourite pastime was to stand in front of the door of her house. This always gave her new experiences. The bus that travelled from her street to the town fascinated her the most. Looking at the new passengers every time the bus gave an unending joy to Valli.

## Valli Wants to Travel in the Bus

Everyday when Valli watched the bus, she wanted to travel in it. This wish became stronger day-by-day until it became a desire. She used to stare at the people while they got up and down the bus. If one of her friends went on a bus ride and described her about the bus journey, she became jealous of her and would shout.

## Valli Discovers Details About the Bus Journey

For many days and months, Valli listened to the talks of her neighbours and people who went on the bus journey. She even asked them some questions since they were regular travellers. This way she was able to get even the minute details about the bus journey. The fare was 30 paise for one way and the trip to the town took 45 minutes. She kept on planning and calculating the things for a long time.

## Valli Takes the Bus

Valli took the bus on a spring afternoon. There were only six to seven passengers in the bus. The bus was new with soft and luxurious seats. The conductor was a jolly sort of a person and asked Valli to get seated right up there in front. He addressed Valli as madam'. She started looking outside the bus and was attracted by the outside view. She could see the canal, the palm trees, grassland, distant mountains and the blue sky. A cow running towards the bus made her laugh and clap. The cow was not moving aside despite continuous honking by the driver.

## Valli Reaches the Town

The bus reached the town after some time. Valli was seeing the bright shops and big crowd. She stayed in the bus while the other passengers got down. The conductor asked her to get down but she told him that she would go back in the same bus. She refused his offer of giving her a cold drink as a treat.

## The Return Journey

Valli saw the same wonderful sights on the return journey. She wasn't bored and greeted everything with the same excitement she'd felt the first time. Suddenly, she saw a young cow lying dead by the road side. It was the same cow that was running towards the bus when she was going to town. She was filled with sadness on seeing her. The bus moved on but the thoughts of the dead cow haunted Valli. She no longer looked outside the window. When the bus reached her village at three forty, she ran straight for home. Her mother did not get to know of her secret journey.

### Conclusion of Madam Rides the Bus

The chapter – Madam Rides the Bus explained the desire of a young girl to take a bus ride from her village to the nearest town. However, on her trip an unfortunate incident taught her the meaning of life and death.

## NCERT SOLUTION

### Questions (Page No. 119,122,125)

#### (ORAL COMPREHENSION CHECK)

Question. 1 What was Valli's favourite pastime?

Answer: Valli's favourite pastime was to stand in the front doorway of her house and watch what was happening in the street outside.

Question. 2 What was a source of unending joy for Valli? What was her strongest desire?

Answer: A source of unending joy for Valli was the sight of the bus that travelled between her village and the nearest town, filled with a new set of passengers each time it passed through her street. Her strongest desire was to ride on that bus.

Question. 3 What did Valli find out about the bus journey? How did she find out these details?

Answer: Valli found out that the town was six miles from her village. The fare was thirty paise one way. The trip to the town took forty-five minutes. On reaching the town, if she stayed in her seat and paid another thirty paise, she could return home on the same bus. She found out these details by listening carefully to the conversations between her neighbours and the people who regularly used the bus. She also gained information by asking them a few questions.

Question. 4 What do you think Valli was planning to do?

Answer: Valli was planning to travel on that bus.

Question. 5 Why does the conductor call Valli 'madam'?

Answer: When the conductor stretched out his hand to help her get on the bus, Valli said commandingly that she could get on by herself, and that she did not require his help. She did not act like a child, but as a grown-up girl and therefore, the conductor called her 'madam'.

Question. 6 Why does Valli stand up on the seat? What does she see now?

Answer: Valli stood up on her seat because her view was cut off by a canvas blind that covered the lower part of her window. She stood up to look over the blind. She saw that the road was very narrow, on one side of which there was the canal and beyond it were palm trees, grassland, distant mountains, and the blue sky. On the other side, there was a deep ditch and many acres of green fields.

Question. 7 What does Valli tell the elderly man when he calls her a child?

Answer: When the elderly man called her a child, Valli told him that there was nobody on the bus who was a child. She had paid her fare of thirty paise like everyone else.

Question. 8 Why didn't Valli want to make friends with the elderly woman?

Answer: Valli did not want to make friends with the elderly woman because she found her absolutely repulsive. She saw that the woman had big holes in her ear lobes and very ugly earrings in them. She could smell the betel nut the woman was chewing, and could see the betel juice that was almost about to spill over her lips. That is why she did not want to be sociable with her.

Question. 9 How did Valli save up money for her first journey? Was it easy for her?

Answer: Valli had carefully saved whatever stray coins came her way, resisting every temptation to buy peppermints, toys, balloons, and the like. Finally, she had saved sixty paise.

No, it was not easy for her, especially at the village fair where she was tempted to ride the merry-go-round as she had the money. However, she suppressed her strong desire and saved the money for the bus ride.

Question. 10 What did Valli see on her way that made her laugh?

Answer: Valli saw a young cow, whose tail was high in the air, running right in front of the bus in the middle of the road. The bus slowed and the driver sounded his horn loudly. However, the more he honked, the more frightened the cow became and it kept running faster and faster, right in front of the bus. Valli found it so amusing that she had tears in her eyes. At last, the cow moved off the road.

Question. 11 Why didn't she get off the bus at the bus station?

Answer: She did not get off the bus at the bus station because she had to go back on that same bus. She took out another thirty paise from her pocket and handed the coins to the conductor. She just wanted to ride on the bus.

Question. 12 Why didn't Valli want to go to the stall and have a drink? What does this tell you about her?

Answer: Valli did not want to go to the stall and have a drink because she did not have any money for that. Even when the conductor offered her a cold drink free of charge, she refused firmly and said that she only wanted her ticket. This shows that Valli had a lot of self will and pride. Possibly, she did not want to take anything for free, particularly from a stranger.

## Questions (Page No. 127)

### (THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT)

Question 1: What was Valli's deepest desire? Find the words and phrases in the story that tell you this.

Answer: Valli's deepest desire was to take a ride on the bus that she saw everyday from her house. The words and phrases in the story that depict her desire are 'an overwhelming desire', 'source of unending joy', 'stare wistfully', and 'kindle in her longings, dreams and hopes'.

Question 2: How did Valli plan her bus ride? What did she find out about the bus, and how did she save up the fare?

Answer: Valli had been carefully listening since many days to the conversations between her neighbours and the people who regularly used the bus and asked a few discreet questions. She learnt from them that the town was six miles away from her village and the bus charged thirty paise as fare for the onward journey and it took forty-five minutes to complete one-way bus trip. She also made up her mind to stay in the bus and return in the same bus that would cost her sixty paise to and fro. She was determined not to get down from the bus to roam around the town as she didn't have enough money. Hence, she saved sixty paise meticulously and resisted all kinds of urges and temptation to buy peppermints, toys, etc. and even a ride on the merry-go-round at the village annual fair. It was Valli's secret adventurous bus trip that she had planned without her parents' knowledge.

Question 3: What kind of a person is Valli? To answer this question, pick out the following sentences from the text and fill in the blanks. The words you fill in are the clues to your answer.

1. "Stop the bus! Stop the bus!" And a tiny hand was raised \_\_\_\_\_.
2. "Yes, I \_\_\_\_\_ go to town," said Valli, still standing outside the bus.
3. "There's nobody here \_\_\_\_\_," she said haughtily. "I've paid my thirty paise like everyone else."
4. "Never mind," she said, "I can \_\_\_\_\_." You don't have to help me. "I'm not a child, I tell you," she said, \_\_\_\_\_.
5. "You needn't bother about me. I \_\_\_\_\_," Valli said, turning her face toward the window and staring out.
6. Then she turned to the conductor and said, "Well, sir, I hope \_\_\_\_\_."

Answer:

Valli was a confident eight-year-old girl who believed that her age was not a limiting factor for her to travel alone in the bus to the town. She considered herself to be a grown up person and also acted like one.

1. "Stop the bus! Stop the bus!" And a tiny hand was raised commandingly.
2. "Yes, I simply have to go to town," said Valli, still standing outside the bus.
3. "There's nobody here who's a child," she said haughtily. "I've paid my thirty paise like everyone else."

4. "Never mind," she said, "I can get on by myself. You don't have to help me." "I'm not a child, I tell you," she said, irritably.
5. "You needn't bother about me. I can take care of myself," Valli said, turning her face toward the window and staring out.
6. Then she turned to the conductor and said, "Well, sir, I hope to see you again."

Question 4: Why does the conductor refer to Valli as 'madam'?

Answer: The conductor called Valli 'madam' as she behaved like a grown up woman and responded irritably on being referred to as a child. She was an eight-year-old girl and considered herself old enough to travel alone in the bus. Besides, she also refused his help when he extended his hand to help her get into the bus, she replied commandingly that she could manage getting into the bus on her own.

Question 5: Find the lines in the text which tell you that Valli was enjoying her ride on the bus.

Answer: Valli thoroughly enjoyed her bus ride to the town. The following lines from the text are a proof that exhibit her excitement:

- "Valli devoured everything with her eyes."
- "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. 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!"
- "Everyone laughed, and gradually Valli too joined in the laughter."
- "Suddenly Valli clapped her hands with glee. A young cow, tail high in the air, was running very fast, right in the middle of the road, right in front of the bus."
- "Somehow this was very funny to Valli. She laughed and laughed until there were tears in her eyes."
- "Valli wasn't bored in the slightest and greeted everything with the same excitement she'd felt the first time."

Question 6: Why does Valli refuse to look out of the window on her way back?

Answer: Valli refused to look out of the window on her way back to her village because she was upset on seeing the dead body of the cow that was running towards the bus while she was going to town. The poor animal was hit by some fast-moving vehicle on the road. She was overcome with sadness and extremely frightened to look outside the bus window as the memory of the cow was haunting her.

Question 7: What does Valli mean when she says, "I was just agreeing with what you said about things happening without our knowledge."

Answer: When Valli's mother casually mentioned that there are certain things that happen around them without their knowledge, Valli instantly agreed to her mother's words and said, "I was just agreeing with what you said about things happening without our knowledge." She was happy about her adventurous bus trip to the town which she had taken without the knowledge of her parents.

Question 8: The author describes the things that Valli sees from an eight-year-old's point of view. Can you find evidence from the text for this statement?

Answer: Yes, the author had described various things from an eight-year-old's point of view. Some of these include – 'she was fascinated by the bus' and 'watching the bus fill with a new set of people each time was a source of unending joy for her'. The author described the colour and look of the new bus as 'its outside painted a gleaming white with some green stripes along the sides. Inside, the overhead bars shone like silver.' Through this description, the author wanted to express how a child would be attracted towards the colour of the bus. 'The seats were soft and luxurious'. This description implies that the author wanted to show the excitement of a child to travel in the luxury of a bus for the first time. 'The blue sky' and 'acres and acres of green field', show the zeal and enthusiasm of a child. Further, when Valli sees the cow running in front of the bus, this fascinated her too whereas the sight of a dead cow brought tears in her eyes. The memory of the cow haunted her and she refused to look outside the window on her return journey. These were some of the lines which beautifully described the typical reactions and behaviour of an eight-year-old child in an ideal manner.