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Class 10 English (Novel) Notes

THE STORY OF MY LIFE



Key Notes and Important Questions with Answers

THE STORY OF MY LIFE

(I to XIV) (Novel)

Key Points :

THE STORY OF MY LIFE is a very touching autobiography of Helen Keller. It is a great source of inspiration for people with any disability or who suffer from any kind of discriminations.

- ** Helen was born on June 27, 1880 in Tuscumbia, a little town of northern Alabama U.S.A. as the first baby of Mr. Arthur H. Keller & Mrs. Catherine Adam.
- ** When she is merely 19-month-old she falls seriously ill. The mysterious disease deprives her of the gifts to see & hear permanently. ** In spite of being both deaf & blind, she enjoys her childhood amid the captivating beauty of nature in the surroundings of her small house Ivy Green.
- ** Child Helen is very passionate about expressing herself. She develops the language of sign on her own to communicate with her mother,
- ** In her childhood she is very naughty and mischievous. She enjoys indulging in pranks. Once she locks her mother in pantry for three hours.
- ** She gets the playful company of her cook's daughter Martha Washington & old dog, Belle. She dominates Martha..
- ** Sometimes when she finds herself unable to convey her message, she gets very hyper & starts throwing her tantrums at her playmate & family members.
- ** When she is 5-year-old, the family moves to a large house. The house offers enough space for Helen to connect to nature

abundantly. ** She has a very pretty doll called Nancy. She is very possessive about Nancy.

*** Destiny takes turn. Her mother reads Dicken's American Notes through which she comes to know about Laura Bridgman, who was educated in spite of being blind and deaf. This forces the parents to think in that direction.

** When Helen is 6-year-old, her father hears about a noted oculist in Baltimore who had successfully treated some serious cases. Helen's parents decide to take her to the oculist. In Baltimore Dr. Chisholm is unable to do anything. But he guides them to see Dr. Alexander Graham Bell of Washington. They go there.

** Dr. Bell advised Helen's father to contact Mr. Anagnos, director of Perkins Institute in Boston. Her parents share their purpose to him. After some days, they get positive reply from Anagnos that a special teacher to teach Helen has been found. The teacher is none other than Miss Sullivan.

** March 3, 1887 is considered as one of the most important days of Helen's life because Miss Sullivan comes as an angel in life. **Now with the arrival Miss Sullivan, Helen begins her voyage of new life in the ocean of hopes, joys & possibilities. She begins to feel learn & enjoy new things & new words. In the company of her teacher she is introduced to different things like fields, trees, rivers & different flora & fauna. Now Helen learns to read through various illustrations by virtue of her teacher's loving touch.

*** The first Christmas after the arrival of Sullivan is celebrated with great fun.

** Another important moment comes when she visits Boston in May 1888 with her teacher & mother. In Boston she makes friends, learns history & enjoys boat rides. She spends summer vacation at Brewster, on Cape Cod with Mrs. Hopkins. There. She experiences the feel of ocean.

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- ** The next autumn she spends on a mountain. There ,once Helen, her sister Mildred and Miss Sullivan lose their way in the forest but somehow come out safely.
 - ** Then she visits a snow covered village in New England. There the experience is hilarious.
 - ** In the spring of 1890. Her urge to speak takes her to Mrs. Lamson. She narrates a story of a blind & deaf Norwegian girl, who could learn to speak, to Helen. This prompted her to join Miss Fuller's school .She gets 11 lessons from her.
 - ** Miss Sullivan's tireless effort & Hellen's determination do miracle .Now she is able to talk to all.
 - ** But sometimes Time has darker side also. In 1892, Helen faces a new unexpected trouble. She writes a book The Frost King. She sends this to Mr. Anagnos who gets it published.
 - ** Now it is discovered that the story is similar to the story a book The Frost fairies by Miss Margrate T. Canby. She is accused of plagiarism.
 - ** She feels very humiliated & disappointed . She loses he trust of Mr. Anagnos.
 - ** It takes a lot of time & counseling of Miss Sullivan to lor.:lg her out of the gloom of The Frost King.

VOCABULARY:

1. Autobiography-- A self written life story;
2. Voyage-- Journey
3. Oculist ; A doctor of eyes
4. Hilarious ; - extremely funny
5. Plagiarism—A criminal act of copying other & claiming it as own.

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1. From The Story of My Life, write a character sketch of Martha Washington in Helen's life.

Martha was the child of Helen's cook. She was Helen's constant companion Martha understood her signs and she seldom had any difficulty in understanding what Helen was trying to communicate. Martha generally submitted to Helen's tyranny. She spent a great deal of time with Helen in the kitchen kneading dough, cake bowls and feeding the hens and turkeys. Martha plays with Helen, bakes with her in the kitchen, indulges her, understands her signs and allows her to dominate their games. Martha has a great love for mischief. She once while playing games cut off one of Helen's curls. She would have cut them all but the timely interference by Helen's mother saved her. Annie Sullivan's arrival marks the beginning of Helen's journey into language and communication.

Martha understands Helen very well and hardly needs any help from others. This shows that Martha had good insight in Helen's character. Though Martha was quite young, she was quite patient with her friends particularly with Helen despite her short temperament.

Helen's parent helped her achieve greatness in her life. They come out as a role model for all parents. Explain the statement in view of your reading of "The Story of My Life".

Both - patient, untiring, very dedicated, and committed, accepting

Father- most loving and caring, completely devoted to family, a great hunter, known for hospitality, a great story teller and very considerate father to a deaf and blind girl

Mother- epitome of love and care, put all efforts to provide the best education and facilities for Helen, encouraged by the story of Laura Brightman, a blind and deaf girl who was successfully educated,

sent her father to Dr. J. Julian an eye, ear and throat specialist in Baltimore, further sent to Dr. Graham Bell, managed to get Anne Sullivan as a tutor for her daughter,

Helen credits her mother as responsible for "all that was bright and good in my long night.

Mother stops Helen from tipping her baby sister.

Their sacrifices and untiring efforts remind other parents never to give up on their children.

Helen's education is an evidence and clear proof of her parents' immeasurable efforts for their child.

It also makes clear that at times it may all seem very frustrating and tiring but at last it is very rewarding.

- Q 1. Draw a pen portrait of Helen's father Mr. Arthur H. Keller according to the reading of Helen Keller's "Story of my Life"
- Q 2. 'Self-confidence is the key to success in life'. Describe Helen's character in the light of the above statement.
- Q 3. When her younger sister Mildred was born, Helen felt very upset and jealous. What could be the reasons for this? Explain your answer with the help of the text.
- Q 4. The writer had a very positive impact of Boston while visiting various places there. Explain why does she call it a "city of kind hearts"?

The Story of My Life

Key Points :

- * Helen spends next season under the sweet shelter of her family.
- * She is so badly affected by the Frost King episode that her confidence becomes low and she doubts even her own ideas.
- * But thanks to the soothing touch of Miss Sullivan's constant encouragement, Helen comes out of the pall of sadness.
- * Now she starts writing about her own life under the guidance of her teacher.
- * At 12, Helen writes for a magazine called "Youth's companion".
- * In 1893. she visits president Cleveland's inauguration, Niagara Falls and the world's fair. Each of them leaves a lasting impact on her.
- * At 13, she begins reading Braille and speaking French, English and little Latin. She also learns maths. In order to join college.
- * Helen joins the New York's Wright-Humason school for deaf for two years in 1894. The school facilitates her developing lip-reading along with arithmetic, geography, French and German.
- * Maths irritates her.
- * To join Radcliffe for higher studies, Helen goes to Cambridge school for preparation. Miss Sullivan also attends her as an interpreter.
- * In the first year she learns English history, literature, german, latin and arithmetic Principal Gilman teaches her english literature.
- * Though Helen has to face a lot of difficulties in the second year, Yet she perseveres.

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- * Gilman thinks Helen overworked against the opinion of Sullivan. As a consequence, Helen's mom withdraws her daughter from Cambridge school.
 - * Now a tutor that helps Helen a lot.
 - * She faces many difficulties in clearing her exam but with determination she succeeds.
 - * After her 19th birthday, she becomes the first blind-deaf student of Radcliff college.
 - * Here her imagination about college does not match with reality. she thinks that in college, solitude and imagination is left behind.
 - * She has to go through diverse hardships to go with rest of class.
 - * She struggles and tries to seek pleasure in her college life. She wants education to be enjoyable instead of burdensome.
 - * Sometimes Helen becomes nostalgic and talks about the ways she had enjoyed reading in the initial years of her childhood.
 - * She talks about all those great books and their authors that have stolen her heart and have added to her personality.
 - * She wistfully recounts her meeting with a number of great people like. Graham Bell, Mr. & Mrs. Hutton, Dr. Hale, Howells, Mark Twin, Richard Gilder and many genius people whose association have left everlasting imprints on her memory
 - * Books and reading are not the only source of pleasure for enthusiast Helen.
 - * She equally enjoys outdoor activities like swimming, sailing and canoeing. Besides these adventures, Helen finds herself very deeply connected to trees, plants and weather.
 - * She very strongly believes that every individual has the ability to understand the impressions and emotions experienced by

human beings. Any kind of disabilities cannot rub us to the thing that are treasured in our subconscious mind.

* This can be referred as the sixth sense which are hear, feel and think.

* Vocabulary....

1. Soothing-Becalming
2. Facilitate : To make something easier for Somebody
3. Pall : A thick or dark cloud of something
4. Persevere; To continue trying to do something in spite of difficulties.
5. Nostalgic Feelings about the past.

Q. The Story of my Life, details a journey of a deaf and dumb girl transforming into world renowned figure. Explain.

At an age of 19 month Helen suffered a disease of stomach and brain that left her completely deaf and blind. In her autobiography she reveals her helplessness. She struggled to mimic sounds and people around her. She craved for love and understanding attention of her parents but was unable to find any satisfaction or understand her own situations except that she was “different from other people”.

Short Answer Questions

- Q.1. How can you say that Helen has been a great inspiration for all?
- Q.2. 'Helen Keller began her second year at the Oilman School where she faced difficulties in Algebra and Geometry. What were these?
- Q.3. Write a character sketch of Mr. Keith who motivated and encouraged Helen to learn things.

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- Q.4. Helen Keller said she depended on books for pleasure, wisdom and knowledge—Mention what she said about books and how they affected her.

Long Answer Questions

- Q.1. How was Helen Struck by ill-luck at a very tender age.
- Q.2. Describe how Helen turned into an isolated and tormented child?
- Q.3. Helen indulged in 'innocent pranks'. Describe them?
- Q.4. Miss Sullivan's method of imparting education to Helen "Was Unique". Elaborate this statement.
- Q.5. How was 'ivy Green' Helen's childhood paradise ?
- Q.6. How did Helen experience her first conscious perception of an abstract idea?
- Q.7. How did the relentless efforts by the Kellers pave the way to reach Helen's mind?
- Q.8. What tragedy struck Helen when she was young?
- Q.9. How was the episode of the horseshoe crab a great lesson for Helen? Q.10. Why was Boston called "the city of Kind

