



NCERT Solutions for 10th Class English Literature: Chapter 2-The Story of My Life by Helen Keller Previous Q&A



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NCERT 10th English Literature Chapter 2, class 10 English Literature
Chapter 2 solutions

The Story of My Life – Helen Keller

Very Long Questions Based on theme and Plot Involving Interpretation and Inference (150-200 words & 10 marks each)

Question 1

What were the qualities that attracted everyone towards Helen before she fell victim to her mysterious illness ? Give your views. (Board Term-I 2014, Set PRE2N18)

Answer:

Value Points:

- bright and happy child
- eager, self-asserting disposition
- as the first baby, she came, she saw, she conquered
- imitated everything others did-actions and words
- attracted everyone's attention (CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014)

Detailed Answer:

Helen was a very bright and happy child. She attracted everyone's attention towards her with her mischiefs.

In her childhood, she was an eager and self-asserting child. She imitated everyone and learnt walking as well as talking at an early age. She was the first baby in her family so she received the love and affection of her family members to the maximum. Helen herself wrote 'I came, I saw, I conquered' as the first baby in the family

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does. She started walking when she was a year old. Her mother had just taken her out of the bath-tub and was holding her in her lap when she started walking towards the leaves that danced in the sunlight. Even her naming ceremony was a big event. She was not to be lightly named being the first baby in the family. She initiated every one and learnt talking at an early age. Everyone got attracted towards her due to these qualities.

Question 2.

Why did Helen call her pony 'Black Beauty' ?(Board 2014, Set QUD9VQW)

Answer:

Value Points:

- had a black glossy coat and a white star on his forehead
- had read the book of the same name
- her pony resembled his name sake. (CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014)

Detailed Answer:

Helen had her pony at Fern Quarry. She called him Black Beauty as she had read the book in which there was a black horse. Helen's horse resembled his name-sake. He had a black glossy coat and a white star on his forehead. Helen spent many of her happiest hours on Black Beauty's back. Sometimes, her teacher Miss Sullivan would let go of the horses' rein and the pony used to stop at his sweet will to eat grass or nibble the leaves of the trees. Helen loved her pony very much.

Question 3

Helen Keller says, "Happy days did not last long." Why does she say this ? What had happened to her ?

Answer:

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Value Points:

- acute congestion of the stomach and brain
- doctors thought she would not live
- fever was over, but she was blind and deaf for life
- light became dimmer by the day
- she got used to the silence and darkness (CBSE Marking Scheme, 2013)

Detailed Answer:

Helen was an eager and assertive child during her childhood. The beginning of her life was simple and much like every other little life. She received all the privileges as the first baby in the family does. She was having a wonderful time as a baby but 'happy days did not last long'. In the month of February, she fell ill. The doctors called it 'acute congestion of the stomach and brain'. They thought she would not live. However, one day the fever left her as suddenly and mysteriously as it had come. Everyone rejoiced on her being well. After getting well, she could feel her eyes turning dry and hot. Gradually, the light became dimmer by the day. It was like a nightmare as she turned blind and deaf for life. Not even the doctors realised that she would never see or hear again. It was terrible but with the passage of time she got used to the silence and darkness that surrounded her and forgot that life had, at some stage, been different and wonderful.

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Question 4

Describe Helen's relationship with her sister Mildred. (Board Term-12013, Set 5007)

Answer.

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Value Points:

- Mildred Keller – Helen's younger sister
- Initial jealousy, later became close to her
- While at Fern Quarry – went to gather persimmons with her.
- Got lost in woods
- Mildred alert – observed trestle-short cut home.
- Suddenly saw train – Luckily they climbed down in time (CBSE Marking Scheme, 2013)

Detailed Answer:

Helen had a younger sister called Mildred. Before her birth, Helen was the darling daughter of her parents. But with the arrival of Mildred, she had ceased to be so. With the result she started treating Mildred as an intruder. The thought of Mildred receiving more love from her mother filled Helen with jealousy. Mildred took her place in her mother's lap and took all the care and time of her mother which was not acceptable to Helen. Her jealousy reached its height when Helen saw Mildred sleeping peacefully in her doll's cradle. She got angry and showed her anger by overturning the cradle. It was only her mother's timely intervention that saved her from falling. With the passage of time, this jealousy turned into an affectionate relationship. The signs of bonding could be seen very clearly. Mildred could not understand her sign language yet an understanding and love grew between both of them. The affection grew into their hearts and they went hand in hand wherever they went.

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Question 5

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‘The best and most beautiful things in the world can’t be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.’ Justify the famous quote of Helen Keller.

Answer:

This quote is very relevant and truly signifies the life of Helen Keller herself. This quote holds true for everything that we experience in life. It is the feeling towards what we experience in life that is more important than what we actually see or touch.

Hellen Keller had lost her sight and hearing at a very tender age to an illness. She did not give up on life.

With all the adversities surrounding her, she still fought back with the courage and the love of the people who surrounded her and supported her throughout. It is these feelings of love, courage, hope, satisfaction, happiness, desire, pain, ambition, etc., which makes a person what they are. In fact, Hellen learns the beauty of love not by seeing or touching but by feeling it. Her life itself stands testimony to this statement ‘The best and most beautiful , things in the world can’t be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.’

Question 6

“Helen had a great strength and courage which helped her come out of her dark and silent world.” Justify.

Answer:

Helen was a great woman who lost her sight and hearing when she was a child. The beautiful bright world became dark and dull. It took her some time to realize that she was different from others as she felt that others did not communicate like her. There was movement of their lips when they communicated. At first she became impatient. She threw tantrums at times

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but gradually realized that there was another way to come out of the dark and silent world. It was to be done with the help of her feelings of the heart and touch. Miss Anne Sullivan, her teacher, helped her a lot in adjusting to the new dark world.

She taught her everything-right from words to sentences. Miss Sullivan, sometimes, had to face problems while teaching the abstract nouns like 'love' but with her patience, she handled Helen and made her learn such words. Once Helen had gone swimming when she was at Brewster. She was enjoying the feel of water when suddenly her foot struck against a rock and she felt herself drowning. All her efforts to save herself went in vain. But somehow, the water threw her back on the shore and she was saved. She took some time to recover and then again went to sit on a big rock and feel the ocean water. This incident didn't deter her. In another instance, she had almost jumped down a big tree when there was heavy rain and she got terrified. She took some time to gather her courage and she climbed another tree. Thus, we can say that she had a great strength and courage which helped her come out of her dark and silent world.

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Question 7

What type of relationship did Miss Anne Sullivan and Helen share ? ,

Answer:

After the illness which left Helen deaf and blind, her parents went to meet Dr. Chisholm, an eye, ear, nose, throat

specialist in Baltimore. He put them in touch with Alexander Graham Bell who worked with deaf children.

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Bell advised them to contact Perkins Institute for the Blind. This institution sent Miss Anne Sullivan as Helen's instructor. The eventful day, on which Miss Sullivan was to arrive, Helen felt that something unusual was going to happen. She had no idea that the future had a surprise for her. Miss Sullivan arrived and filled Helen's life with brightness. Both of them shared a wonderful relationship. Miss Sullivan was like a mother to her. She taught her the spellings of words by writing them on her hand like doll. Later she taught her abstract words like love, water, think etc. Once she improved her vocabulary, Miss Sullivan taught Helen how to use the words in sentences, thus gradually increasing her knowledge. She accompanied Helen everywhere and Helen also looked towards her whenever she wanted to know about something, their relationship lasted for 49 years and eventually Miss Sullivan became a companion to Helen from a mere governess.

Question 8.

Helen had a great love for animals and birds. Elucidate with the help of examples.

Answer:

Helen was a great lover of nature. She was surprised at what mother earth had in store for everyone. Birds and animals were always a source of interest for her. She used to hunt for guinea-fowl's eggs in the long grass when she was a child but never allowed her friend Martha to carry the eggs home, for the fear that she might break them. In another incident, she was gifted little Tim, a canary as a Christmas gift by Tuscumbia School children.

Miss Sullivan taught her how to take care of her new pet. She prepared his bath, made his cage clean and sweet, filled his cups with fresh seed and water from the well house and hung a spray of duckweed in his swing. She used to feed him candied cherries out of her hand but felt very sad when the bird fell prey to a cat after its cage was left on a window sill. During her stay at Brewster, Miss Sullivan attracted her attention towards a great

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horseshoe crab. She felt it and thought it strange that he carried his house on his back. Suddenly, she wanted to have him as her pet. She seized him by the tail with both hands and carried him home. His body was very heavy but somehow she dragged him and with the help of Miss Sullivan, put him in a trough near the well to keep him secure. But the next morning she found him missing. At first she felt disappointed but later felt happy that perhaps he had returned to the sea to which he belonged.

Question 9.

How did Helen learn subjects like Geography, History and Science ?

Answer:

Helen had a different way of learning subjects like Geography, History, etc. She went with Miss Sullivan to an old tumble-down lumber wharf on the Tennessee River which was used during the Civil War to land soldiers.

She built dams of pebbles, made islands and lakes, dug river-beds all for fun, never realising that she was learning a lesson. She listened to Miss Sullivan's descriptions of burning mountains, buried cities, moving rivers of ice, etc. She made raised maps on clay so that she could feel the mountain ridges and valley and follow the course of river with her fingers.

She learnt Arithmetic by stringing beads in groups and by arranging kindergarten straws, she learned to add and subtract. She did not have much patience to arrange more than five or six groups at a time.

She studied Zoology and Botany also in a leisurely manner. She listened carefully to the description of terrible beasts which tramped the forests and died in the swamps of an unknown age.

The growth of a plant itself taught her a lesson in science. She bought a lily and set it in a sunny window. Very soon she noticed the signs of opening in the pointed buds. This process was reluctant in the beginning but later on

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used to go on rapidly-in order and systematically. There was always one bud larger and more beautiful than the rest which pushed her outer covering with more pomp. In a way she learned from life itself.

Very Long Questions Based on Characterization(150 – 200 words & 10 marks each)

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Question 1.

Helen was very close to nature. She could understand nature through touch and smell. Discuss the role of nature in Helen's life. (Board 2014)

Answer:

Value Points:

- Father developed her interest in nature – furthered by Miss Sullivan
- Miss Sullivan taught her out doors mostly – in the lap of nature
- The climbing incident – scare – learnt of her benevolence and dangerous side of nature,
- Swimming in the ocean – scared – but didn't prevent her from going into water again.
- Found her way around by the fragrance of plants and trees.
- Studied Botany, Zoology, Geography, History through nature. (CBSE Marking Scheme, 2014)

Detailed Answer:

Helen's father was very affectionate towards her, It was he who developed her interest in nature. He used to take her out in the gardens where he read stories to her. Her house was covered with vines, climbing roses and

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honeysuckles and it was the favourite haunt of honeybees and humming birds. Helen considered it as the paradise of her childhood. Miss Sullivan also played an important role in Helen's love towards nature. She always taught her outdoor in the lap of nature. She learnt all the subjects like zoology, botany, geography, etc. outdoors. Miss Sullivan took her to rivers, built dams of pebbles, dug river-beds to teach her. She learnt the growth of a plant by actually feeling its growth day-by-day in order and systematically. Once Miss Sullivan took her outdoors. While returning back, she was caught in a storm. She was terrified as Miss Sullivan had gone home to bring food. At that moment, she realized that nature could be benevolent as well as dangerous. Despite her disability, she learnt swimming. She had a bad experience in the ocean as well but that did not deter her from learning to swim. Her experiences with nature made her come out as a woman who could move ahead on the path of life with full confidence.

Question 2.

Write a character sketch of Anne Sullivan. (NCT 2014) (Board Term-I 2013, Set 101)

Answer:

Miss Anne Sullivan was Helen's instructor as well as a teacher. She was sent by the Perkins Institution in Boston to teach Helen. They found her competent enough to begin Helen's education and Anne arrived at Helen's place in March.

After her arrival, Helen's life changed. Apart from being a guide and instructor she was like a mother to Helen. She accompanied her wherever she went.

Miss Sullivan had great patience. Sometimes Helen used to throw tantrums but Miss Sullivan always handled her very well. She taught her to communicate by writing the spellings of the words on her hand with her

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fingers. Helen learnt this art and was able to communicate with others in an effective way when she learnt to write sentences also.

Miss Sullivan was a perfect teacher who enjoyed spending her time with Helen. She taught her subjects like Arithmetic, History, Geography, Zoology, Botany, etc., through a playful method. Helen never realised that she was being educated during the process of learning. She enjoyed all the lessons with Miss Sullivan.

Both Helen and Miss Sullivan had a good time with each other throughout their lives.

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Question 3.

Write a character sketch of Mildred Keller. (Board Term-I 2013, Set 101)

Or

“Mildred was an alert and observant child.” Comment with reference to the train incident at Fern Quarry. (Board Term-I 2007, Set 5007)

Answer:

Value Points:

- Regarded her as an intruder initially.
- Jealous of her – she ceased to be mother’s only darling.
- Discovered Mildred sleeping in her doll’s cradle – overturned it – Luckily mother caught her in time.
- Later signs of bonding
- Couldn’t understand her not could she understand finger language.

Yet grew in understanding and love. (CBSE Marking Scheme, 2013)

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Detailed Answer:

Mildred Keller was Helen's younger sister. Before she was born Helen used to get all the attention of her parents but with Mildred's birth, things changed a bit and Helen became jealous of her but at later stages both of them

became very close to each other. Mildred was an alert and observant child. Once they were at fern Quarry. They went out to gather persimmons and got lost in woods. It started getting dark but they were unable to find their way back home. On the way, Mildred observed a trestle and realised that it was a short cut to their home. So, ' they all started walking on that path. Suddenly, she saw a train moving towards them. She alerted Helen and both of them were lucky enough to climb down in time. The train zoomed past time. It was only Mildred's alertness which averted something horrible.

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Question 4.

Draw up a character sketch of Martha Washington.(Board Term-12013, Set 8SRR)

Answer:

Value Points:

- Martha was the child of the cook
- She was a coloured girl and Helen's constant companion
- She could understand Helen's signs
- Helen dominated her
- Martha had a great love mischief. (CBSE Marking Scheme, 2013)

Detailed Answer:

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Martha Washington was the daughter of the cook who helped Helen Keller's mother. She was a coloured girl. Since both of them were of the same age group, they could always be seen together. In other words she was Helen's constant companion. Though she was a child, yet she could very well understand Helen's sign language whenever Helen went out to play, Martha was always by her side. But Helen always dominated her. Martha had a great love for mischief. She used to go egg-hunting for the guinea- fowl eggs in the long grass with Helen. Martha used to spend a lot of time with Helen in the kitchen kneading dough balls, helping make ice-cream, grinding coffee, quarrelling over the cake-bowl and not to forget, feeding the hens and turkeys that swarmed about the kitchen steps. The sheds for storing corn and stables were sources of interest to Martha. In fact she was a mischievous girl who submitted to Helen's mischiefs most of the time.

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Question 5.

Write a pen-portrait of Helen Keller.

Answer:

Helen Keller was a great woman who was born on June 27, 1880 in Tuscumbia, a little town of northern Alabama. When she was still a child, she fell ill and lost her sight as well as hearing. The world outside became dark and silent. Initially, she used to have fits of temper when she realized she was different from others but gradually adjusted herself in a positive way to the life which fate had chosen for her. Her teacher, Miss Anne Sullivan helped her a lot in this. Her relationship with Miss Sullivan was long-lasting and she never moved out without her. She taught Helen to communicate with others through words and later sentences.

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Helen had a great respect for physical bravery. She had a sportsman spirit and never felt defeated. She loved nature and wanted to be with the trees, animals, birds, flower, bushes, etc. Despite her physical disabilities, she learnt how to climb trees, swimming, etc. She enjoyed the snowfall at Boston.

Helen was a girl who liked the company of others. She never felt shy. She used to greet the guests when they visited her parents. She went to celebrate Christmas with Tuscumbia school children and exchanged gifts with them.

She loved fragrances. Whenever she was free, she used to go out into the orchards and gardens to enjoy the fragrances of persimmons, lilies, jasmines, ripe peaches, etc. Her description of her various experiences were very vivid and clear.

In short, we can say that Helen was an optimistic lady who never let her disabilities come in the path of her progressing life. Life to her was a teacher and she learnt many things from it.

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Chapterwise NCERT Solutions for Class 10 English Literature :

- The Story of My Life Summary By Helen Keller (Unabridged Edition)
- The Story of My Life By Helen Keller (Unabridged Edition)
- The Diary of a Young Girl Summary By Anne Frank
- The Diary of a Young Girl By Anne Frank

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