



Introduction

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Chapter 9: Madam Rides The Bus

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Chapter 9: Madam Rides The Bus

Summary

1. 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.

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2. 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.

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3. 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.

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4. 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.

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5. 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.

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6. 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.

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Conclusion

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.

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