

CHAPTER - 5

"THE TOILET" BY GCINA MHLOPE

- **The narrator, a young South African girl, resists traditional career paths like nursing or teaching, despite her mother's wishes, because she wants to pursue acting and writing.** തന്റെ അമ്മയുടെ ആഗ്രഹപ്രകാരം നഴ്സിംഗ് അല്ലെങ്കിൽ ടീച്ചിംഗ് പോലുള്ള ജോലികൾ തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കുന്നതിന് പകരം, അഭിനയത്തിലും എഴുത്തിലും താല്പര്യമുള്ളതിനാൽ വ്യത്യസ്തമായ എന്തെങ്കിലും ചെയ്യാൻ കഥാകാരി ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നു.
- **Staying with her sister in Johannesburg, the narrator is locked in a room during weekdays to avoid being seen by the white "Madam" her sister works for.** ജോഹന്നാസ്ബർഗിൽ തന്റെ സഹോദരിയ്ക്കൊപ്പം താമസിക്കുമ്പോൾ, സഹോദരി ജോലി ചെയ്യുന്ന വീട്ടിലെ വെള്ളക്കാരിയായ മാഡം കാണാതിരിക്കാൻ പ്രവൃത്തിദിവസങ്ങളിൽ കഥാകാരിയെ മുറിക്കുള്ളിൽ പൂട്ടിയിടുന്നു.
- **To pass the time before work and to escape the cold, the narrator finds a public toilet in a park which becomes her private space for reading and daydreaming.** ജോലിക്ക് പോകുന്നതിന് മുൻപുള്ള സമയം ചിലവഴിക്കാനും തണുപ്പിൽ നിന്ന് രക്ഷപ്പെടാനും വേണ്ടി കഥാകാരി പാർക്കിലെ ഒരു പൊതുശൗചാലയം കണ്ടെത്തുന്നു; ഇത് വായനയ്ക്കും സ്വപ്നങ്ങൾ കാണുന്നതിനുമുള്ള അവളുടെ സ്വകാര്യ ഇടമായി മാറുന്നു.
- **Encouraged by her memories of a supportive English teacher, the narrator buys a notebook and begins writing poems and stories while sitting in the toilet.** തന്റെ ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് അധ്യാപകന്റെ പ്രോത്സാഹനത്തെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള ഓർമ്മകളിൽ നിന്ന് പ്രചോദനം ഉൾക്കൊണ്ട്, കഥാകാരി ഒരു നോട്ട്ബുക്ക് വാങ്ങുകയും ശൗചാലയത്തിൽ ഇരുന്നുകൊണ്ട് കവിതകളും കഥകളും എഴുതാൻ തുടങ്ങുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.
- **One evening, while waiting secretly for her sister, the narrator is confronted by the Madam's barking dogs, leaving her paralyzed with fear until the Madam intervenes.** ഒരു വൈകുന്നേരം രഹസ്യമായി തന്റെ സഹോദരിയെ കാത്തിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ, മാഡത്തിന്റെ വളർത്തുമൃഗങ്ങൾ കഥാകാരിയെ വളയുന്നു; മാഡം ഇടപെടുന്നത് വരെ അവൾ ഭയത്താൽ തരിച്ചുപോയി.
- **One morning, the narrator finds the toilet door locked, making her realize it was never truly hers; however, she remains undeterred and continues to write on a nearby bench.** ഒരു ദിവസം രാവിലെ ശൗചാലയത്തിന്റെ വാതിൽ പൂട്ടിക്കിടക്കുന്നത് കണ്ടപ്പോൾ, അത്

ഒരിക്കലും തന്നേതല്ലെന്ന് അവൾ തിരിച്ചറിയുന്നു; എങ്കിലും തളരാതെ അടുത്തുള്ള ബെഞ്ചിലിരുന്ന് അവൾ തന്റെ എഴുത്ത് തുടരുന്നു.

Vision: കാഴ്ചപ്പാട്	Publishing: പ്രസിദ്ധീകരണം
Courage: ധൈര്യം	Delayed: വൈകിപ്പിക്കുക
Perseverance: സ്ഥിരോത്സാഹം	Disturbing: ശല്യം ചെയ്യുക
Selfless: സ്വാർത്ഥതയില്ലാത്ത	Secret: രഹസ്യം
Dedication: അർപ്പണബോധം	Realised: തിരിച്ചറിഞ്ഞു
Inequality: അസമത്വം	Pounded: വേഗത്തിൽ ഇടിക്കുക (ഹൃദയം)
Isolation: ഒറ്റപ്പെടൽ	Threateningly: ഭീഷണമായ രീതിയിൽ
Memoir: ഓർമ്മക്കുറിപ്പ്	Growling: മുരളുക
Respectable: മാന്യമായ	Pleaded: അപേക്ഷിച്ചു
Acquired: നേടിയെടുത്ത	Message: സന്ദേശം
Bored: വിരസത തോന്നുക	Premises: വളപ്പ് / പരിസരം
Lonely: ഏകാന്തമായ	Briefed: ചുരുക്കത്തിൽ വിവരിച്ചു
Alternative: ബദൽ മാർഗ്ഗം	Hesitantly: മടിയോടെ
Temporary: താൽക്കാലികമായ	Mumbled: പിറുപിറുത്തു
Boutique: വസ്ത്ര വ്യാപാര കേന്ദ്രം	Apologies: മാപ്പപേക്ഷ
Sneak: രഹസ്യമായി കടക്കുക	Munched: ചവച്ചുരച്ച് തിന്നുക
Shelter: അഭയം	Useless: പ്രയോജനമില്ലാത്ത
Privacy: സ്വകാര്യത	Supervisor: മേൽനോട്ടം വഹിക്കുന്നയാൾ
Daydreaming: പകൽക്കിനാവ് കാണൽ	Annoyed: അലോസരപ്പെടുത്തുക
Concentrate: ശ്രദ്ധ കേന്ദ്രീകരിക്കുക	Disgusting: അറപ്പുളവാക്കുന്ന

1. Prepare a character sketch of the narrator based on the story "The Toilet."

The Narrator (Gcina Mhlope)

The narrator of the story "The Toilet" is a young South African girl who possesses immense perseverance and a clear vision for her future. Unlike many of her peers who chose traditional "respectable" professions like nursing or teaching, she followed her heart toward acting and writing.

Her life in Johannesburg was marked by struggle and isolation. She lived secretly in her sister's back room, often locked inside to avoid being seen by the "Madam". Despite these hardships, she remained optimistic. She turned a public toilet in a park into her private place for reading and writing. She represents the triumph of the human spirit over social inequality and personal hardship.

1. On the day the narrator was confronted by the Madam's dogs, she felt terrified and humiliated. Prepare the likely **diary entry** for that day.

24 October , 1986

Monday

What a horrifying day it has been! My heart is still pounding. I was just sitting outside my sister's room wait for her, when those two dogs cornered me. I was paralyzed with fear; their teeth looked so long and threatening. I thought they would tear me to pieces. The worst part was the humiliation when the Madam saw me. My sister was so angry with me later. I just wanted to howl like a dog and cry. I wish I had a place of my own where I didn't have to hide like a criminal. Writing is the only thing that keeps me going. I hope tomorrow is better.

2. Prepare a conversation between the narrator and her sister Irene after the incident with the dogs.

Irene: (Angrily) What on earth were you doing outside ?

Narrator: I was waiting for you, Irene. The dogs caught me and I couldn't move.

Irene: You know you should have waited so we could walk in together!

Narrator: I thought I wouldn't be noticed if I just sat quietly .

Irene: Now the Madam has seen you. What am I supposed to say to them if they see you again?

Narrator: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to cause trouble.

Irene: Just be more careful. If they find out you're living here, I could lose my job.

Narrator: Sorry sister, I will be careful from now on.

3. "The public toilet turned out to be a temple of creativity for the narrator." Substantiate this statement with a write-up.

The Sanctuary in a Toilet

In Gcina Mhlope's beautiful memoir "The Toilet," a public toilet is transformed from a place of necessity into a sanctuary of creativity. Burdened by the weight of social inequality and forced to live in secrecy, the narrator finds the "wonderfully close" walls of the toilet to be the only space that fits her alone.

The toilet gave her the privacy she needed to read, daydream, and think. She even bought a notebook to write poems and stories while sitting there. It became a special place where her creativity grew.

Even when the toilet was eventually locked, the narrator's spirit remained unbroken. She sat on a nearby bench and continued to write her story anyway. This highlights that her "dream to success" did not depend on the location, but on her perseverance and vision.

4. Suppose you wish to express your appreciation for her perseverance and congratulate Gcina Mhlope on her achievements like being one of BBC's 100 Women. Draft a suitable **Letter** to be sent to the author.

AB villa
XY Street
Stockholm -07

10 December 1909

Gcina Mhlope
XY Cottage
AB Street
Johannesburg-01

Subject: Congratulations on your inspiring journey and achievements

Dear Ms. Mhlope,

I am writing this email to express my deep admiration for your work, especially your memoir "The Toilet". Your story about using a public toilet as a private space to read and write touched my heart.

It is truly inspiring to see how you turned your personal struggles into a successful career as a writer. Your perseverance in the face of social inequality and isolation is a great lesson for students like us.

Congratulations on being listed as one of BBC's 100 Women and for all your honorary doctorates. Thank you for motivating us to follow our dreams.

Warm regards,

Yours faithfully,

John

(Sd/-)

5. Your school's Literary Club is interviewing Gcina Mhlope. Prepare six simple questions to ask her about her life and success.

Interview with Gcina Mhlope

- Why did you choose to become a writer instead of a nurse or a teacher?
 - How did you feel when you were locked in your sister's room all day?
 - Why did you pick a public toilet as your place to read and write?
 - Was it difficult to write in the toilet during the cold winter?
 - How did you react when the Madam's dogs found you?
 - What is your advice for students who have big dreams but face many problems?
6. You have read Gcina Mhlope's memoir "The Toilet" and are inspired by her success. Draft an email to the author congratulating her on her achievements and for being selected as one of the BBC's 100 Women.

From: kiran@gmail.com

To : Mhlope@gmail.com

Subject: Congratulations on your great success!

Dear Ms. Mhlope,

I am a student from Kerala, and I just read your story "The Toilet". Your life journey is very inspiring to me.

I was moved to read how you used a public toilet as a private space to follow your dreams of writing. Even though you faced many struggles and loneliness in Johannesburg, you never gave up.

Congratulations on being named one of the BBC's 100 Women and for receiving many honorary doctorates. Your birthday being celebrated as National Storytelling Day is a wonderful achievement. Thank you for teaching us the power of perseverance.

With love and respect,

Kiran

Class IX Studen