

d) *What is the way of life on Venus?*

There are only trees and no other life on the planet. The humans who have migrated live in an underground township.

e) *Where is the scene? Who are the people there?*

The scene is the classroom of elementary school children. The children are of the parents who came from earth to start a civilization on Venus.

2. *Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:*

"It's stopping, it's stopping!"

"Yes, yes!"

Margot stood apart from them, from these children who could never remember a time when there wasn't rain and rain and rain. They were all nine years old, and if there had been a day, seven years ago, when the sun came out for an hour and showed its face to the stunned world, they could not recall.

Sometimes, at night, she heard them stir, in remembrance, and she knew they were dreaming and remembering gold or a yellow crayon or a coin large enough to buy the world with. She knew they thought they remembered a warmth, like a blushing in the face, in the body, in the arms and legs and trembling hands. (Pages 108-109)

a) *"It's stopping, it's stopping!" What does it mean? Who says this?*

It means that there is sign that the rain is stopping. The children say this among themselves.

b) *Who is Margot? Why does she stay apart? Who are 'them' in the third sentence of the extract?*

Margot is a nine-year old girl who came to Venus from Ohio five years ago. She is unable to mix and interact well with the other children who are all born on Venus. 'Them' stands for all nine-year old children other than Margot who are born on Venus.

c) *What is the difference between Margot and the other children? Why does the author say, "when the sun came out for an hour and showed its face to the stunned world, they could not recall"?*

Margot lived on earth for four years where she saw sun every day before coming to Venus. Other children are born on Venus and they have no experience of the life on earth. The author says so because prior to this the sun came out seven years ago, so the children are not be able to recall now as they were only two years old then.

d) *What does Margot say about the dream of the children? What does it signify? What does it reveal of their stay at Venus?*

Margot says that children were dreaming of gold or yellow coloured crayon or a coin big enough to buy the world. It means that they would like to draw a picture of the sun with the crayons to see how it looks like. It is a child's innocent way of thinking to buy

the world along with the sun with a big enough coin. Children know that we can buy anything with money. The extract says 'she heard them stir' which means they stay together in a room or nearby. It reveals that they had a communal living.

e) *What is the 'warmness, like a flushing in the face' that Margot speaks of?*

Margot speaks about the dream of children. In their dream they thought of sun's warmth coming like a blushing in the face. The children's thoughts are so preoccupied with the sun which was to appear soon after seven long years.

3. *Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:*

All day yesterday they had read in class about the sun. About how like a lemon it was, and how hot. And they had written small stories or essays or poems about it: I think the sun is a flower; That blooms for just one hour.

That was Margot's poem, read in a quiet voice in the still classroom while the rain was falling outside.

"Aw, you didn't write that!" protested one of the boys.

"I did," said Margot, "I did."

"William!" said the teacher.

But that was yesterday. Now the rain was slackening, and the children were crushed in the great thick windows.

"Where's teacher?"

"She'll be back."

"She'd better hurry; we'll miss it!"

They turned on themselves, like a feverish wheel, all tumbling spokes. Margot stood alone. She was a very frail girl who looked as if she had been lost in the rain for years and the rain had washed out the blue from her eyes and the red from her mouth and the yellow from her hair.

(Page 109)

a) *What were the children doing the previous day? Why?*

The children were reading and discussing about the sun yesterday because the sun was supposed to appear the next day after seven long years.

b) *What were the activities that the children did about the sun in the class?*

The children read books, wrote stories, poems and essays on sun.

c) *Who was the boy who protested? What was his protest and why? What did the teacher do and what did it mean?*

William was the boy who protested. His protest was that Margot did not write the poem because he was jealous of her. The teacher called out to William which meant that she disapproved him and it was a warning to him to stop the protest.

- d) *Where are the children now? What are they waiting for? What does the comment on the teacher reveal to you?*

The children are now standing behind the glass windows and eagerly looking out. They are waiting for the rain to stop and the sun to appear in the sky. The teacher was absent on such an important occasion. It reveals that the teacher's involvement was limited in the children's affairs.

- e) *What does "They turned on themselves, like a feverish wheel, all tumbling spokes" tell you about the children? How effective the usage is?*

It means that they are so excited and as a result they are automatically moving like a wheel. This is an effective simile. Children are the spoke of the wheel and they are moving in a feverish spirit as they wait for the sun to appear.

4. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

He gave her a shove. But she did not move; rather she let herself be moved only by him and nothing else. They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city. If they tagged her and ran, she stood blinking after them and did not follow. When the class sang songs about happiness and life and games her lips barely moved. Only when they sang about the sun and the summer did her lips move as she watched the drenched windows. And then, of course, the biggest crime of all was that she had come here only five years ago from Earth, and she remembered the sun and the way the sun was and the sky was when she was four in Ohio. And they, they had been on Venus all their lives, and they had been only two years old when last the sun came out and had long since forgotten the color and heat of it and the way it really was. But Margot remembered. (Page 110)

- a) *Who are the two people involved in the first sentence of the extract? Why does one of them push the other?*

The two people are Margot and William. William pushes Margot because she did not answer to his question, but remained silent.

- b) *Who are 'they' in "They edged away from her, they would not look at her"? What does it tell about their relation?*

They are the children other than Margot. It tells that they hate her and they don't like to mix with her.

- c) *Why is Margot different from the other children? Why did the children not like Margot?*

She remembers the sun. She moved there five years earlier from Ohio. She didn't like the rain as the other children did. They did not like her because she did not play any games with them.

- d) *Mention any two of their complaints about Margot?*
 When the children played the tag game (touch and go) she would not follow them to join in the game. When class sang songs she did not sing enthusiastically.
- e) *What was her biggest crime? Was it a crime? What does it reveal to you? Justify your answer.*

Her biggest crime was that she came from earth five years ago and she remembers the sun. No, it was not a crime. It reveals that they were jealous of her as they never had an opportunity to be on earth. So they all ganged up against her.

5. *Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:*

"It's like a penny," she said once, eyes closed.

"No it's not!" the children cried.

"It's like a fire," she said, "in the stove."

"You're lying, you don't remember!" cried the children.

But she remembered and stood quietly apart from all of them and watched the patterning windows. And once, a month ago, she had refused to shower in the school shower rooms, had clutched her hands to her ears and over her head, screaming the water mustn't touch her head. So after that, dimly, dimly; she sensed it, she was different and they knew her difference and kept away. There was talk that her father and mother were taking her back to Earth next year; it seemed vital to her that they do so, though it would mean the loss of thousands of dollars to her family. And so, the children hated her for all these reasons of big and little consequence.

(Page 110-111)

- a) *What is like a penny? Who said this? What was the discussion?*
 The sun looks like a penny, round in shape like a penny. Margot said this. They were discussing about the sun.
- b) *Why did Margot refuse to shower in the school shower rooms?*
 Margot refused to shower because she was scared of water falling on her head. The whole day and night she hears the sound of water drops falling on the ground. So she imagines the water drops have the same high sound and effect when it falls on her head. Therefore, she became scared and refused to shower.
- c) *Why was Margot different from other children?*
 Margot was different from other children because she was born on earth and came to Venus only five years ago. She found it difficult to adjust to the conditions on Venus. She is very pale because she misses sun rays. She is an immigrant and that makes it difficult for her to adjust.

d) *Is there anything to suggest that the school where Margot studies, they live together in school?*

Yes, there are clues that suggest that the children live together in school. In the above extract it is mentioned "she had refused to shower in the school shower rooms". Earlier in the story it is mentioned that at night she heard her classmates stir and she knew they were dreaming. These factors suggest that the children live together in school.

e) *Why do Margot's parents think of sending her to earth?*

Margot's parents think of sending her to earth because she fails to get adjusted with the Venus even after five years. She has failed to get used to the children in school, she misses the sun, her face is so pale and she is fed up of the incessant rainfall and the sound it produces.

6. *Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:*

"Nothing!" he cried. "It was all a joke, wasn't it?" He turned to the other children.

"Nothing's happening today: Is it?"

They all blinked at him and then, understanding, laughed and shook their heads.

"Nothing, nothing!"

"Oh, but," Margot whispered, her eyes helpless. "But this is the day, the scientists predict, they say, they know, the sun..."

"All a joke!" said the boy, and seized her roughly. "Hey, everyone, let's put her in a closet before teacher comes!"

"No," said Margot, falling back.

They surged about her, caught her up and bore her, protesting, and then pleading, and then crying, back into a tunnel, a room, a closet, where they slammed and locked the door. They stood looking at the door and saw it tremble from her beating and throwing herself against it. They heard her muffled cries. Then, smiling, they turned and went out and back down the tunnel, just as the teacher arrived. (Pages 111-112)

a) *"Nothing's happening today: Is it?" Who said this? What? Who are 'they'? Why did they blink?*

William said that sun is not appearing that day, therefore, they need not wait for that. They are the children other than Margot. They blinked in agreement with William to bluff Margot that sun will not appear that day.

b) *What was Margot trying to say?*

Margot was trying to say that the scientists have predicted that the sun would appear that day and she was keen to see the sun.

c) *What did the children say and do? Why? What does it show?*

The children said that before the teacher came they would lock Margot up in a room because they wanted to deny her the rare opportunity to see the sun. It shows that they are jealous of her and they find an opportunity to punish her to satisfy their ego. All of them joined against Margot.

d) *How did Margot react? What is your feeling towards Margot at this moment?*

Initially Margot protested, then she pleaded not to lock her up. When they pushed her into a small room in the tunnel, she started crying helplessly. I feel sad and feel pity for her. At the same time I am annoyed at their behaviour towards her.

e) *What did they do after locking the room?*

They waited outside the room for a while. They could feel that Margot was knocking at the door and heard her cries. Slowly the sound died down. The children went away happily.

7. *Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:*

The children put their hands to their ears. They stood apart. The door slid back and the smell of the silent, waiting world came in to them.

The sun came out.

It was the color of flaming bronze and it was very large. And the sky around it was a blazing blue tile color. And the jungle burned with sunlight as the children, released from their spell, rushed out, yelling, into the springtime.

"Now, don't go too far," called the teacher after them. "You've only two hours, you know. You wouldn't want to get caught out!"

But they were running and turning their faces up to the sky and feeling the sun on their cheeks like a warm iron; they were taking off their jackets and letting the sun burn their arms.

"Oh, it's better than the sunlamps, isn't it?"

"Much, much better!"

They stopped running and stood in the great jungle that covered Venus, that grew and never stopped growing, tumultuously, even as you watched it. It was a nest of octopi, clustering up great arms of flesh-like weed, wavering, flowering this brief spring. It was the color of rubber and ash, this jungle, from the many years without sun. It was the color of stones and white cheeses and ink, and it was the color of the moon. (Pages 112-113)

a) *Why did the children put their hands to their ears? How was it outside?*

They are used to loud sound of raindrops falling on the ground. The door was about to open, and as they were used to the loud sound they automatically put their hands to their ears. The rain stopped and there was perfect silence outside.

b) What did the children see when they came out?

When they came out they saw the sun shining in the sky bronze in colour; the background of the sun looked like a blue tile. The jungle around was shining brightly in the sun.

c) *How did they experience the sun after the teacher's warning?*

They were running around keeping their face upwards to feel the sun on their face and cheeks. They took off their jackets to make their arms bare to feel the sun rays. They felt that the sun was better than the sun lamps they use inside the tunnel.

d) *What season was it there at that time? What did the children see there?*

It was spring time there. The children saw plants flowering in the brief spring season.

e) *What was the colour of the jungle? Why was it so?*

The jungle was of the colour of ash and rubber, moon, stones, white cheese and ink. It was so because it was without sun for many years.

8. *Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:*

... they put their hands up to that yellowness and that amazing blueness and they breathed of the fresh, fresh air and listened and listened to the silence which suspended them in a blessed sea of no sound and no motion. They looked at everything and savoured everything. Then, wildly, like animals escaped from their caves, they ran and ran in shouting circles. They ran for an hour and did not stop running.

And then- In the midst of their running one of the girls wailed.

Everyone stopped.

The girl, standing in the open, held out her hand.

"Oh, look, look," she said, trembling.

They came slowly to look at her opened palm.

(Pages 113-114)

a) *What is the 'yellowness' and 'blueness' mentioned in the extract?*

It refers to the yellow colour of the sun and the blue colour of the sky. As this was the first time rain and cloud stopped, children saw these colours in the sky for the first time.

b) *Why and how did they listen to the silence?*

The rain was the cause of a loud ongoing sound that they have heard for many years. As the rain stopped, they tried to listen to the silence. The author uses the word 'listened' twice to make the reader understand how valuable silence is for them. They made an effort to feel it and enjoy it as they were not used to.

c) *Why does the author use the term 'savoured everything'? How did the children enjoy their outing?*

The word 'savour' suggests the sense of taste and smell. The children looked at things around; then they took things in hand and tasted some and smelled others. They used their senses to the maximum to get the best out of the time in the open when the sun was out. The children ran around the field in groups without stopping and enjoyed. The writer uses a simile and words like – 'like animals escaped from their caves', 'wildly' 'did not stop running' – to make their experience very effective.

d) *Why did the girl wail? What was in her palm? What did the children do soon after?*

The girl wailed because the sun was fading and it was going to rain. There was a big single raindrop. Soon it began to rain and the children ran inside. There was thunder and lightning and the sky darkened.

e) *How has the author conveyed the delight, the thrill, the wonder of the children?*

As the sun comes up, the children are dazzled by the sight. The sun is larger than what they had imagined. Its flaming bronze colour with a blazing blue sky in the background surprises them. They are spellbound by the sunlit jungle. But soon the spell is broken. They are now yelling, shouting, turning their faces towards the sun to feel its warmth on their cheeks. Then they take off their jackets and experience the touch of the sun on their skin. Then they lie laughing on the jungle mattress and run among the trees. They slip and fall and push and chase each other all the time looking towards the sun and feeling its warmth.

9. *Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:*

Then one of them gave a little cry.