



Celebration of the 150th Birth Date of Rabindranath Tagore
Bengali Writer and Nobel Literature Prize Winner in 1913

The New Dolls

Suggested Grades: Grade 5 to Grade 8



MATERIALS / TEXT

TAGORE SHORT STORY

Lipika pages 97 to 102

The New Dolls

This master craftsman made dolls. These dolls were only for girls of king's household.

Each year a dolls' fair was held in the palace courtyard. All the other doll-makers there paid their chief respect to this craftsman.

When his age was almost at four score, a new doll-maker came to the fair. This was Kishanlal, a young man with a new approach to the craft.

The doll he made was partly formed and partly not; some parts were coloured and some were left plain; it seemed they were not and never would be finished pieces.

A group of young modernists said, "This man has shown courage."

A group of old traditionalists answered, "Call that courage? It's nothing but impertinence."

But new times bring new demands. The modern princesses announce, "We want these dolls."

The old-time stalwarts say, "Ugh!"

And the obstinacy of the young increases.

Now there are no crowds round the old man's stall. His basket of dolls sits like people waiting on the *ghat* for ferry-boat, gazing at the other bank.

A year, two years go by, No one even remembers the old man's name. Kishanlal has become the leader of the palace doll-market.

2

The old man's heart was broken. He had not enough to live on. Finally his daughter approached him, "Come to my house."

His son-in-law said, "Make yourself at home, take things easy, and keep the cattle out of the vegetable field."



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The old man's daughter is busy with housework round the clock. His son-in-law makes small clay lamps and takes them to the town by the boat-load.

The old man doesn't understand that a new time is upon him equally he fails to realize that his grand-daughter had reached the age of sixteen

There he sits under a tree and guards the field, dozing off from time to time. His grand-daughter come and puts her arms around his neck; he is happy to the core of his heart, "What do you want, my little love?" he asks.

The grand-daughter replies, "Make a doll for me, I want to play with it."

The old man says, "My dear why should you like a doll of mine?"

The grand-daughter says, "Who can make dolls better than you, tell me that?"

The old man says, "Why, Kishanlal can."

The grand-daughter says, "I don't believe it! Kishanlal can't be that clever!"

Over and over they fight their duel of words – the same point again and again.

Then the old man took all his equipment out of his bag and donned his large round spectacles.

He said to his grand-daughter, "But my little one, the crows will eat the maize."

She said, "Grandfather, I'll scare off the crows."

The time flows by. From a distance comes the sound of an ox drawing round a well-handle. The grand-daughter scares off the crows; the old man sits on and on making his dolls.

3

There is no one the old man is more afraid of than his daughter. She is a real household disciplinarian – everyone in the family is on the look-out.

Today the old man is making dolls single-mindedly, unaware of his daughter coming up behind him, furiously swinging her arms.

As she reached him she shouted and he took off his spectacles and gazed around like a child who doesn't understand.

"Let the milking go hang!" exclaimed the daughter. "Here you are with Subhadra wasting her time! She's a big girl – should she be playing with dolls at her age?"

"Why should Subhadra play with them?" said the old man hurriedly. "I will sell them in the palace. When my little one finds a bridegroom, on that day a chain of gold coins shall hang about her neck. I want to save up money for that."

The daughter said irritably, "Who will buy these dolls at the palace?"

The old man hung his head and sat there in silence.

Subhadra shook her head and said, "I'll see about Grandfather's dolls not selling at the palace."



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Two days later Subhadra brought a gold piece to her mother and said, "Take it, it's from the sale of my grandfather's dolls."

Mother said, "Where did you get that?"

The daughter said, "I went to the palace and sold them."

Laughing, the old man said, "All the same my love, your grandfather's eyes are not so good now and his hand trembles."

Mother was pleased, "If we get sixteen gold coins like this then Subhadra will have her necklace."

The old man said, "No need to worry about that!"

Subhadra ran to put her arms round his neck and said, "Grandfather dear, no need to worry about my groom either!"

The old man began to laugh and wiped away a tear.

5

It seems the old man's youth has come back to him. Under the tree he sits making dolls while Subhadra scares off the crows and in the distance the ox draws the well-handle with a clanking sound.

One after another sixteen gold coins are strung together the necklace at last is complete. Mother said, "Now there's only the groom to be found."

Subhadra whispered in the old man's ear, "Grandfather dear, that's been taken care of!"

Grandfather said, "Tell me my love where did you find him?"

Subhadra said, "When I went to the palace the guard at the entrance said, 'what do you want?' I said, 'I want to sell dolls to the princesses.' He said, 'These dolls like that aren't wanted,' and he dismissed me. A man there saw my tears and said, 'Please give me the dolls, I'll change their looks a little, and they'll sell for sure.' If you are pleased with that man, Grandfather, I shall place my garland about his neck."

The old man asked, "Where is he?"

The grand-daughter said, "Outside, over there under the *piyal*-tree."

The groom came into the room and the old man said, "Kishanlal!"

Kishanlal to the dust of the old man's feet and said, "Yes, I am Kishanlal."

The old man clasped him to his breast and said, "Young man, first you snatched away the dolls of my hands, now you are taking the doll of my heart."

The grand-daughter flung her arms round the old man's neck and whispered, "Grandfather, he's won you as well!"



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DRAMA, ORAL & VISUAL COMMUNICATION

Expectations

Grade 6

- recognize and interpret figurative language (e.g., a simile) in the speech of others
- use tone of voice and gestures to enhance the message and help convince or persuade listeners in conversations, discussions, or presentations;

Grade 7

- regularly incorporate new vocabulary into discussions and presentations;
- use analogies and comparisons to develop and clarify ideas;
- identify some of the ways in which non-verbal communication techniques (e.g., tone of voice and body language) can affect audiences, and use these techniques in their own speech to arouse and maintain interest, and convince and persuade their listeners;
- use eye contact, variations in pace, appropriate gestures, and such devices as the pause for effect” in presentations;

Grade 8

- identify subtle effects in the dialogue in films or dramas;



This story lends itself well to make a play. The text naturally invites us to make a parallel between the realities of different generations. Therefore it would be ideal to divide the group of participants into two. One group will interpret the text in its original form (Then Group) and the second group will transpose it into today's reality (Now Group).

THEN GROUP

Have students from Then Group use the text extract the dialogue for each of the main characters, have another part of group Then students imagine the text of secondary characters.

NOW GROUP

Have the students from the Now Group work in the same way, writing the text for the main and secondary characters; however this time they will transpose the story into current times.

CHARACTERS

Grand-father, Kishanlal, Subhadra (grand-daughter), daughter, son-in-law, princesses, other trades doll-makers, guard, and trades people.

SETTINGS: ART PROJECT

Study the natural settings of India (West Bengal) as well as those of the ancient palaces of Maharajas. If possible visit a museum or other educational facility, example an Indian cultural centre to further inspire the students. Create and design a background for each of the following setting:

- At the palace
- In the fields,
- At home (grand-father's and daughter's family)
- Son-in-laws workshop



MARKETABLE PRODUCTS

The Now Group could use digital as well as non digital products, example sports equipment brands, example why does Nike has



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- identify the characteristics of different types of speech (e.g., colloquial, formal) and use them appropriately;
- use tone of voice and body language to clarify meaning during conversations and presentations;
- adjust their delivery (e.g., pitch of voice, pace) to suit the size of different groups;



More success than CCM? Discuss the success of Apple (Ipod or Iphone) in the play.

VARIATION OR EXTENSION

Another option is to create a puppet play. This would allow students to put create puppets that are accurate according to the cultural setting and timeframe of each play, now and then.

TEXT COMPREHENSION STUDY & ANALYSIS

Expectations

Grade 6

- explain how the various elements in a story function in relation to each other;
- make judgments and draw conclusions about ideas in written materials on the basis of evidence;
- identify a writer’s perspective or character’s motivation;
- identify different forms of writing and describe their characteristics (e.g., historical novel, encyclopedia);

Grade 7

- explain how the various elements in a story function in relation



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| SECTION 1 | What is the grand-father’s livelihood?
What is the son-in-law’s livelihood? |
| Livelihood | In your opinion is there a similarity between the two means of livelihood? |
| Success in the market place | Identify signs that indicate that each craftsman, the grand-father, Kishanlal and the son-in-law have some degree success with their business and trade |
| Modernists & Traditionalists | Can you think of a success-story of product in today’s world, what signs are they that tell you that a product was successful in the market place? |
| SECTION 2 | Why and when did the daughter approach her father and invited him to live in her house? |
| Caring for the elderly | What happens to elderly people in your society when can no longer function independently? |



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to each other;
– make judgments and draw conclusions about ideas in written materials on the basis of evidence;
– identify various forms of writing and describe their key features (e.g., novels, short stories, poetry, plays, scripts, essays);
– identify some stylistic devices used in literary works (e.g., metaphor, simile, personification) and explain their use;
– use punctuation to help them understand written material (e.g., dashes);

Grade 8

– explain how the various elements in a story function in relation to each other;
– make judgments and draw conclusions about ideas in written materials on the basis of evidence;
– identify various forms of writing and describe their key features (e.g., novels, short stories, poetry, plays, scripts, essays);
– use punctuation to help them understand written material (e.g., dashes);
– identify some stylistic devices used in literary works (e.g., metaphor, simile, personification) and explain their use;



elderly

society when can no longer function independently?

Do you think that nowadays there are still frequently elderly parents living in their children’s homes?

What is your opinion about these differences and how they affect society?

Why do you think the grand-father is resisting at first to make dolls?

SECTION 3

Can you analyze the power relationship between the Grandfather, daughter and Subhadra?

Family Relationships

How do you see this as being similar or different about intergenerational relationship that you are aware off?

What impact has Subharda’s request of making dolls on her Grandfather?

What image do you thing the daughter has of the Grandfather, i.e. her father?

Describe what your own relationship is like to one of your grandparents or other elderly person of significance in your life?

SECTION 4

How does the fact that Subharda succeed in selling the dolls affect each of the three characters, the mother, Subharda and the Grandfather?

Realizing a promise / Succeeding with a project

Have you ever tried to make something for a purpose and succeeded with it (irregardless if it was for selling or not)? How did it made you feel when you succeeded?



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SECTION 5

What Indian pre-marriage traditions can you observe in this part of the story?

Marriage

Why does Kishanlal take of the dust of Grandfather's feet?

Conclusion

What is the conclusion and morality of the story; support your argument with parts of the text.