



# Collegedunia NCERT Solutions

*Memories of Childhood Class 12 English Handwritten Notes: notebook-style revision pages for the paired autobiographical extracts by Zitkala-Sa and Bama (2026-27)*

## Chapter 6: Memories of Childhood

### About this Chapter

**Memories of Childhood** is a Vistas chapter that pairs two autobiographical extracts by women from marginalised communities — *The Cutting of My Long Hair* by Zitkala-Sa (Native American) and *We Too are Human Beings* by Bama (Tamil Dalit). These handwritten-style notes follow the rhythm of a student's last-week revision notebook: one focused topic per page, marked-up keywords, frame boxes around the two closing thesis lines, and a compact quote bank.

**Topics covered:** Authors and sources • Part I quick facts • Carlisle dining-room scene • The hair warning • The resistance • Part II quick facts • The bazaar walk • The parcel scene • Annan's explanation • Annan's programme • Comparative reading • Theme stack • Quote bank • CBSE pointers

#### Quick Formula Sheet

##### One-liner.

Two girls, two continents, the same structural cruelty — a forced haircut at Carlisle and a parcel carried by its string in a Tamil village.

##### Closing lines.

“One of many little animals driven by a herder.” (Zitkala-Sa)  
“We too are human beings.” (Bama)

Also see for this chapter: [NCERT Solutions](#) · [Notes](#)

### Notebook Page 1 – Quick Facts

- **Chapter form:** paired autobiographical extracts (two parts).
- **Part I author:** *Zitkala-Sa* (pen-name in Lakota: “Red Bird”) = Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, Native American writer (1876–1938).
- **Part I source:** *The School Days of an Indian Girl*, published serially in *The Atlantic Monthly*, 1900.
- **Part I setting:** the Carlisle Indian Boarding School, Pennsylvania, USA (Zitkala-Sa's first day,

late 1880s).

- **Part II author:** *Bama* = pen-name of a Tamil Dalit writer from a Roman Catholic family (b. 1958).
- **Part II source:** *Karukku* (1992) — Bama’s autobiography. “*Karukku*” = Palmyra leaves (serrated like double-edged swords); the embedded word *karu* = embryo, seed, freshness, newness.
- **Part II setting:** a Tamil village (third-class Bama, walking home from school).

## Notebook Page 2 – Part I: “The Cutting of My Long Hair”

### 🔍 Opening line

“The first day in the land of apples was a bitter-cold one; for the snow still covered the ground, and the trees were bare.”

- **Land of apples** = Pennsylvania (Carlisle).
- **First sensory assault:** a large bell rings for breakfast — “its loud metallic voice crashing through the belfry overhead”.
- **Clatter of shoes on bare floors + voices murmuring an unknown tongue** = a “bedlam” she is “securely tied” inside.
- **Paleface woman with white hair** leads the Indian girls into the dining room.
- Indian girls wear *stiff shoes* and *closely clinging dresses*; the small girls wear *sleeved aprons* and *shingled hair*.
- Zitkala-Sa is still in her *soft moccasins* and feels her *blanket has been stripped from her shoulders* — “I felt like sinking to the floor”.
- *Three young braves* from her own party have entered through the boys’ opposite door; she spies them in the rear ranks.

## Notebook Page 3 – The Dining-Room Drill

The eating routine is governed by three bells. Zitkala-Sa gets it wrong each time — the chapter’s earliest exhibit of forced cultural retraining.

### 🔍 Three-bell sequence

**Bell 1** (small tap) → each pupil draws a chair from under the table.

**Bell 2** (sounded) → everyone sits.

**Bell 3** (third tap, after the man’s mutterings) → everyone picks up knife and fork and eats.

- She sits at Bell 1 — the only one seated — has to “crawl back” into her chair at Bell 2.
- She looks for the man speaking; everyone else hangs their head over their plate.
- A *paleface woman* catches her eyes across the “long chain of tables”; she immediately drops her gaze.
- At Bell 3 she does not eat. She **cries instead**, “afraid to venture anything more”.

### Useful aside

“Eating by formula” is Zitkala-Sa’s own phrase. Use it — it captures the chapter’s central diagnosis of assimilation in a single noun phrase.

## Notebook Page 4 – The Hair Warning

- Late in the morning her friend *Judewin* — who knows “a few words of English” — delivers the warning: the paleface woman is going to cut their long, heavy hair.
- **The cultural code Zitkala-Sa was raised in:**
  - Only *unskilled warriors captured by the enemy* had their hair shingled.
  - Among her people, *short hair* was worn by **mourners**.
  - *Shingled hair* was the mark of **cowards**.
- Judewin counsels surrender: “We have to submit, because they are strong.”
- Zitkala-Sa rebels: “**No, I will not submit! I will struggle first!**”

### ♥ Why the hair matters

The hair is not a fashion item. It is the public marker of a warrior identity. Cutting it converts the child from a member of her community into a “coward” by her own people’s code — the school’s whole assimilation programme is compressed into one pair of scissors.

## Notebook Page 5 – The Resistance and the Cutting

- She watches her chance and *disappears*.
- Creeps upstairs in her *squeaking shoes* — her moccasins have been “exchanged for shoes”.
- Finds an open door to a *large room with three white beds and dark green curtains*.
- Crawls **under the bed** in the farthest corner, on hands and knees.
- Voices call her name in the hall; even Judewin is searching; she stays silent.
- Women and girls enter, open closet doors, peep behind large trunks; someone throws up the curtains and the room fills with sudden light.
- She is dragged out — kicks and scratches wildly — carried downstairs and *tied fast in a chair*.
- She feels the *cold blades of the scissors against her neck* and hears them *gnaw off one of her thick braids*. “Then I lost my spirit.”

### ✗ Watch Out

Don’t write that her hair was “cut” as a generic verb. The text’s verb is **gnaw** — the scissors gnaw off the braid. The choice of verb matters: it dehumanises both the blade and the moment.

## Notebook Page 6 – The Closing of Part I

- She moans for her mother. **No one comes to comfort her.**

- Catalogue of indignities since being taken from her mother: “People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a *wooden puppet*.”
- Final image: “Now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder.”

**Part I thesis line:**

“*One of many little animals driven by a herder.*”

## Notebook Page 7 – Part II: “We Too are Human Beings”

- **Year-group:** Bama is in the *third class* (around 8–9 years old).
- Opening admission: she had not yet heard the word “untouchability” spoken openly, but had already “seen, felt, experienced and been humiliated by what it is”.
- **The walk home:** 10 minutes by the clock; she takes *30 minutes to one hour*, dawdling.
- Why she dawdles: she stops at every “entertaining novelty and oddity” on the street.

## Notebook Page 8 – The Bazaar Catalogue

A 10-minute walk turns into an hour because the street is a gallery. Memorise the full list — the catalogue is the chapter’s most quoted descriptive passage.

- the *performing monkey*
- the *snake-charmer* and his snake in a box
- the *cyclist* who has not got off his bike for three days, rupee notes pinned on his shirt to spur him on
- the *spinning wheels*
- the *Maariyaata temple*, its huge bell, and the *pongal offerings* cooked in front of it
- the *dried-fish stall* by the *statue of Gandhi*
- the *sweet stall* and the *fried-snacks stall*
- the *street light* changing from blue to violet
- the *narikkuravan* hunter-gypsy with a wild lemur in cages, selling needles, clay beads and ear-cleaning instruments
- political parties putting up a stage and “haranguing” through mikes
- the occasional *street play*, *puppet show*, or “no magic, no miracle” stunt
- *coffee-club waiters* pouring coffee from tumbler to tumbler at arm’s length
- people *chopping onion* eyes turned away
- the *almond tree* dropping fruit in the wind
- seasonal fruit: *mango*, *cucumber*, *sugar-cane*, *sweet-potato*, *palm-shoots*, *gram*, *palm-syrup*, *palm-fruit*, *guavas*, *jack-fruit*
- daily sweets: *payasam*, *halva*, *boiled tamarind seeds*, *iced lollies*

### Useful aside

The catalogue is doing real narrative work. It establishes Bama as an observant child whose eye is trained for *detail* — so when she finally sees the parcel-by-the-string, the reader trusts her judgment of what is ordinary and what is not.

## Notebook Page 9 – The Threshing Floor and the Parcel

- Reaching her own street, Bama sees a *threshing floor* set up at the opposite corner.
- The *landlord* watches, seated on a piece of sacking spread over a *stone ledge*.
- “Our people” drive *cattle in pairs*, round and round, treading out the grain. The animals are *muzzled* so they cannot help themselves to the straw.
- An *elder of her street* comes from the direction of the bazaar carrying a small packet (a *vadai* or green-banana *bhajji*, wrapping paper stained with oil).
- He carries the packet **by its string**, without touching it. Bama nearly doubles up with laughter; she expects the package to come undone.
- He walks up to the landlord, *bows low*, and extends the packet, **cupping the hand that held the string with his other hand**.
- The landlord opens the parcel and *begins to eat the vadais*.

## Notebook Page 10 – Annan’s Explanation

### The reveal

Bama tells the story to her elder brother (*Annan*; in Tamil, “Annan” = elder brother), home from a *university* for the holidays.

**Annan was not amused.**

- Annan’s explanation: “*Everybody believed that they were upper caste and therefore must not touch us. If they did, they would be polluted. That’s why he had to carry the package by its string.*”
- Bama’s emotional arc: **laughter** → **sadness** → **anger**.
- Her articulated thought: “I felt so provoked and angry that I wanted to touch those wretched vadais myself straightaway.”

### **The question that crystallises Part II:**

“*Why should we have to fetch and carry for these people?*”

“*... But we too are human beings.*”

## Notebook Page 11 – The Irrigation-Tank Episode

A second, quieter caste-marking scene placed at the end of Part II — it shows that the caste system tags adults too, and uses geography (the street you live on) to fix you.

- Annan is walking home along the *banks of the irrigation tank* after borrowing books from the neighbouring village library.
- One of the *landlord's men* comes up behind him, suspicious because Annan looks unfamiliar.
- Sequence of questions: “*Who are you, appa, what’s your name?*” → “*Thambi, on which street do you live?*”
- The point of the second question: “*if he knew on which street we lived, he would know our caste too.*”

#### Useful aside

Tamil glosses you should know cold: *appa* = a casual respectful term for an older man; *thambi* = younger brother. The questioner is being polite on the surface and caste-screening underneath. This is the chapter’s clearest demonstration that caste discrimination works through ordinary politeness, not through obvious cruelty.

## Notebook Page 12 – Annan’s Programme

“Because we are born into this community, we are never given any honour or dignity or respect; we are stripped of all that. But if we **study** and make progress, we can throw away these indignities. So study with care, learn all you can. If you are always ahead in your lessons, people will come to you of their own accord and attach themselves to you. Work hard and learn.”

— *Annan to Bama*

- Bama studies hard, “with all my breath and being, in a frenzy almost”.
- Outcome: she **stands first in her class**.
- Consequence: “many people became my friends.”
- This is the chapter’s prescriptive arc: education as the lever out of inherited indignity.

## Notebook Page 13 – Comparative Reading

- **Same structure, different machinery.**
  - Zitkala-Sa: *forced assimilation* (the dominant culture wants to absorb the marginalised child).
  - Bama: *caste segregation* (the dominant culture wants to keep the marginalised child at a distance).
- **Same response in the child.** Both refuse to accept the rule as natural — Zitkala-Sa with her body (hiding, kicking, scratching); Bama with her mind (laughter, then anger, then study).
- **Same closing thesis.** Each part ends with the child’s own one-line judgment on the dominant order: “*one of many little animals*” (the verdict on assimilation) and “*we too are human beings*” (the verdict on segregation).

### ♥ Why two extracts, not one

The NCERT chapter is deliberately paired. A single account would risk reading as a one-culture problem. The pairing forces the structural reading — the cruelty is not specific to America or to India; it is the standard form that majorities use against minorities, with the same intimate point of attack (the body) and the same response in a clear-eyed child.

## Notebook Page 14 – Theme Stack

- **Discrimination.** Two forms (assimilation, segregation); one structural shape.
- **Cultural identity & the body.** The hair (Part I) and touch (Part II) are the points of attack.
- **Childhood as a political site.** Both narrators are children. The chapter argues that injustice is registered, named, and resisted early — not as adult theory but as childhood feeling.
- **Resistance.** Two modes: *embodied* (hide, kick, scratch) and *discursive* (laugh, then question, then study, then write).
- **Education as liberation.** Annan’s programme. Bama becomes a writer (Karukku); Zitkala-Sa becomes a writer in the Atlantic Monthly. The chapter is itself the evidence that the programme worked.

## Notebook Page 15 – Quote Bank

- “The first day in the land of apples. . .” — Zitkala-Sa, opening.
- “Eating by formula was not the hardest trial.” — Zitkala-Sa.
- “We have to submit, because they are strong.” — Judewin.
- “**No, I will not submit! I will struggle first!**” — Zitkala-Sa.
- “Short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards.” — Zitkala-Sa.
- “One of many little animals driven by a herder.” — Zitkala-Sa, closing of Part I.
- “I had already seen, felt, experienced and been humiliated by what it is.” — Bama on untouchability.
- “He came along, holding out the packet by its string, without touching it.” — Bama, the parcel image.
- “If they did, they would be polluted.” — Annan, explaining.
- “Why should we have to fetch and carry for these people?” — Bama.
- “**But we too are human beings.**” — Bama, closing of Part II.
- “Study with care, learn all you can.” — Annan’s programme.

## Notebook Page 16 – CBSE Board Pointers

- **Most-asked LA cluster:** the commonality of theme between Zitkala-Sa and Bama (RWI Q1) — a 2025 / 2022 favourite.
- **Second cluster:** whether injustice is noticed early in life (RWI Q2) — 2023.

- **Third cluster:** the *kind* of discrimination Zitkala-Sa faces, and the two responses compared (RWI Q3) — 2024, 2021.
- **Fourth cluster:** Bama’s autobiography *Karukku* — the meaning of the title, what the extract excerpts (1-mark MCQ + 3-mark SA) — 2022.
- **Recurrent MCQ items:** Land of apples = Pennsylvania; Judewin = friend who knows English; three young braves; paleface woman with white hair; three bells in the dining drill; “*Karukku*” = Palmyra leaves + freshness; Annan = elder brother; the parcel carried by its string; Bama stood first in her class.

## Notebook Page 17 – Common Mistakes

- **Don’t flatten** the two parts into “the same struggle in two places”. Name the two specific mechanisms (assimilation, segregation) every time.
- **Don’t rank** the two responses (body vs education). Both are legitimate; the chapter endorses both by placing them side by side.
- **Don’t forget Annan.** He is the named adult relay — the reason Bama’s anger becomes a programme rather than a passing mood.
- **Don’t lose the form.** These are *autobiographies*, not short stories. Mention the source works (*The School Days of an Indian Girl*, *Karukku*) in any long answer.
- **Don’t substitute “Indians” for “Native Americans”.** The textbook uses “American Indian” (the contemporary 1900 idiom). Spell “Zitkala-Sa” with the hyphen.

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