
Chapter - 8 Memories of Childhood

By Zitkala-Sa And Bama

Gist of The Lesson –

Part - I

The first part deals with the account of Simmons, An American Indian, who fought against the prejudices of the society against American Indians. She describes her experiences on her first day at the Carlisle Indian School. The customs and rules of the place were strange and new to her. She was forced to wear clothes that were considered undignified in her culture at breakfast, she was embarrassed as she did not know the routine of the place.

When she comes to know that they were planning to cut her hair, she protests by hiding under the bed, even though she knew it was futile. In her culture, it was the cowards whose hair was shingled. She felt like an animal driven by a herder.

PART - II

The second part is an excerpt from the autobiography 'Karukku' by Bama – a Tamil Dalit. She was in her third grade when she becomes aware of the indignities that the lower caste people face. She happens to see an elderly person from her community abase himself in front of a higher caste person as he was not supposed to touch the food that he was ordered to fetch for the landlord. Later, her brother explains to her that the incident was not at all funny as she initially thought, but very pathetic. The people from the lower caste were treated as untouchables. She was deeply saddened and decided to study hard to overcome discrimination.
