

talk
to
me!

LET'S TALK EMPOWERMENT. LET'S TALK ENGLISH

First Flight



1. Watch and listen to the story

Click on the link below to watch a video of the story being read. Note the pronunciations of the words and read along using the subtitles.

[\(88\) The Hundred Dress I - YouTube](#)

2. Summary

This is the story of the bullying of a girl called Wanda Petronski, a Polish immigrant in America. Her last name was different from other names, and it was difficult to pronounce. The other students in her class were probably all mainstream American, so she stood out as being different.

Wanda was poor and came to school wearing the same faded blue dress everyday. She was self-conscious about her shoes that were always caked with mud because she walked a long way to school from a poor suburb which was muddy. She always sat in the last row so that her dirty shoes would not be noticed. She was very quiet, shy, had no friends, came to school alone, and went back home alone. Since she was poor, quiet, and alone, she was targeted by bullies.

Her classmates, Peggy and Maddie waited for Wanda before school hours, just to tease her. Peggy would ask her the same question repeatedly, "Wanda," she'd say, giving one of her friends a nudge, "tell us how many dresses did you say you had hanging up in your closet?"

“A hundred,” Wanda would say. And she would describe them in detail. Peggy and Maddie laughed heartlessly because it was clear that Wanda had only the one blue dress that she wore everyday. Wanda felt embarrassed and humiliated.

Maddie was poor too, and wished that Peggy would not ridicule Wanda. But she did not have the courage to say so; she feared that Peggy might get upset and start ridiculing her instead. Also she wanted to remain friends with Peggy because she was the most popular girl in school.

Once, the school had a drawing competition. The significance of the ‘hundred dresses’ was revealed when all the students’ artwork was displayed. Everybody expected Peggy to win. However, Wanda had submitted one hundred drawings of dresses; each one was exquisite and different. That day, she truly had a hundred dresses and all lined up! And she was declared the winner.

Maddie and Peggy saw that Wanda’s descriptions of her dresses matched her drawings. Peggy was honest enough to admit that Wanda was a better artist than she was.

3. Let’s understand bullying

When someone hurts, harms or humiliates a person over and over again, that is bullying. A bully looks for ways to get power and control over another person, to make that person feel bad, and to make the bully look more powerful. Bullying can include making threats, making fun of someone, spreading rumours, excluding someone from a group and sending mean messages through text, email or social media. Anyone can be the victim of bullying—people bully other people for different reasons. Bullying can hurt both physically and emotionally. If you have been bullied, don’t blame yourself. It’s not your fault. You are awesome!

If you, or anyone you know, is being bullied, talk to a parent, teacher or another trusted adult, and keep speaking up until you get help.

Here is an excellent video on bullying. Do watch it!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAj2kTQyEGw>

4. Vocabulary

1. **Possessions** – things that you own
All his **possessions** were packed in a suitcase and sent to his mother.
2. **Enduring** – lasting for a long time
Comic books have an **enduring** attraction for children.
3. **Sensitive** – understanding what other people need and being helpful and kind to them
He was a **sensitive** father, who was concerned about his little girl's needs.
4. **Judged** – formed, gave, or had an opinion or decided about something or someone, especially after thinking carefully
They **judged** him by his outward appearance and did not realise how intelligent he was.
5. **Community** – the people living in a particular area or people who are considered as a unit because of their common interests, social group, or nationality
There is a large Indian **community** settled in Silicon Valley in the USA.
6. **Encyclopedia** – a book or a set of books containing many articles arranged in alphabetical order that deal either with the whole of human knowledge or with a particular part of it
I read about the Zoroastrian religion in the **encyclopedia**.
7. **Immigrants** – people who have come into a foreign country to live there permanently
The **immigrants** are living in a camp set up near the stadium.
8. **Migrated** – moved from one place to a new place to live, usually for certain seasons
Labourers from Bihar **migrated** to Punjab to work on farms during the harvesting season.
9. **Identified** – to recognize or be able to say who or what somebody/ something is
In court, the witness **identified** the accused as the murderer.

10. **Ethnicity** – the fact of being from a particular race of people
Salil is an American citizen of Indian **ethnicity**.
11. **Notable** – remarkable, worthy of notice or attention
The Museum is displaying the **notable** sculptures of the Harappan age.
12. **Discriminated** – to treat one person or group worse than others; to see or make a difference between two people or things
She felt she was **discriminated** against because she was from another state.
13. **Absence** – the fact of not being where you are usually expected to be
Her mother's illness has resulted in her repeated **absence** from school.
14. **Scuffling of feet** – noisy, dragging movements of feet on the ground
The boys stood outside the class room **scuffling their feet**.
15. **On the contrary** – to think or feel the opposite of what has just happened or been said
I thought you said that she was not very intelligent. **On the contrary**, I think she is very smart.
16. **Crooked** – not forming a straight line, or having many bends; dishonest
His front teeth were **crooked** and so his mother took him to a dentist to get them straightened.
Ravi is a very **crooked** politician; he should never have been elected.
17. **Caked** – covered with a thick layer of something
I cleaned my shoes on the mat as they were **caked** with mud.
18. **Track in a whole lot of mud** – walk in bringing a lot of mud on your shoes / feet
The children will come back after playing in the rain outside and **track in a whole lot of mud**.
19. **Popular** – liked, enjoyed, or supported by many people
Sholay was a very **popular** movie in the 70's.

20. **Didn't hang right** – didn't fit properly
The coat he picked up at the sale **didn't hang right** on him.
21. **Surrounded** – being enclosed or encircled by something
Snow-capped mountains **surrounded** the city.
22. **Hopscotch** – a game in which children hop into and over squares marked on the ground
Children quickly drew the lines and squares and began their game of **hopscotch**.
23. **Worn** – damaged because of continuous use
The beggar's clothes were dirty and **worn**.
24. **Courteous** – polite, respectful considerate
The **courteous** young girl ran to help the elderly lady cross the road.
25. **Nudge** – a gentle push
A **nudge** from the teacher encourages weak students to work harder.
I gave him a gentle **nudge** to remind him it was time for the next class.
26. **Exclaimed** – said or shouted something suddenly because of surprise, fear, pleasure, etc.
She **exclaimed** in delight on hearing that she had been selected for the job.
27. **Incredulously** – showing unwillingness to believe
I stared **incredulously** at the spectators as they threw bottles at the players.
28. **Velvet** – a cloth usually made from silk or cotton with a thick soft surface
She looked lovely in the red **velvet** dress.
29. **Stolidly** – not showing any feeling
The police detective listened **stolidly** to the stories of the crime.
30. **Shrieks** – shouts, high pitched sounds
Her **shrieks** could be heard even in the next classroom.
31. **Peals of laughter** – a long sound of laughter
The clown's performance drew **peals of laughter** from the audience.

32. **Obviously** – in a way that is easy to understand or see
Obviously the hospital cannot function without nurses.
33. **Exaggerated** – to make something seem larger, better, or worse than it really is
She **exaggerated** the attack to make it sound really dramatic and dangerous.
34. **Inseparable** – that cannot be separated
Reena and Renu were **inseparable** friends and no one could come between them.
35. **Hitching** – pulling up, jerking, raising
We will be **hitching** the flag up on the pole early in the morning.
His pants are so loose; he is always **hitching** them up.
36. **Bullies** – those who use their strength and power to frighten weaker people
Bullies may seem strong and threatening, but actually they are cowardly.
37. **Mistreated** – treated a person or animal badly, cruelly, or unfairly
They have **mistreated** their pet dog and should be severely punished.
38. **Bothering** – troubling, disturbing, worrying
It has been **bothering** me that the train will be late again.
39. **Hand me down** – old clothes handed down by someone else
He hated wearing his brother's **hand me downs** all the time.
40. **Mocking** – here, false, meant to make fun
Seema is mean because she is always **mocking** other girls about their weaknesses.
41. **Embarrassed** – ashamed
I was **embarrassed** to go to the school party in my old dress.
42. **Invented** – to design and/or create something that has never been made before
The telephone was **invented** by Alexander Graham Bell.

43. **Teasing** – laughing at someone or saying unkind things about them, either because you are joking or because you want to upset that person, can be a part of bullying
Her elder brother is constantly **teasing** her and making her cry.
44. **Absent-mindedly** – without paying attention to what you are doing or what is happening near you, because you are thinking about other things
She **absent-mindedly** left her bag in the taxi.
45. **Had the nerve** – had the courage or confidence necessary to do something difficult, unpleasant, or rude
I wish I **had the nerve** to speak to the Principal and tell her that I am being bullied.
46. **Courage** – the ability to control your fear in a dangerous or difficult situation
It takes a lot of **courage** to face your enemy.
47. **Paused** – stopped something for a short period before starting again
All construction work was **paused** during the COVID -19 lockdown.
48. **Shuddered** – shivered, trembled specially with fear
She **shuddered** at the thought of failing in the exams.
49. **Target** – a result that you try to achieve, a person, a place or a thing that you try to hit when shooting or attacking; here a person deliberately chosen for attack.
The **target** practice for the rifle shooting will begin in the morning.
Civilians should never be the **target** in a war.
50. **Disguise** – conceal one's identity; to give a new appearance to a person or thing to hide its true form
He tried to **disguise** himself to gain entry into the show for adults.
51. **Trimmings** – materials used to decorate the edge of something; extra things you add to something to improve its appearance
The satin **trimmings** on the velvet dress looked very pretty.
52. **Of her own accord** – if you do something of your own accord you do something without being asked to do it
She offered to help me solve the Maths problem **of her own accord**.

53. **Uncomfortable** – not feeling comfortable or pleasant
Rahul had eaten so much that he was feeling **uncomfortable**.
54. **Scarcely** – only just; almost not
Gopi could **scarcely** believe it when the teacher told him that he had failed in the exam.
55. **Brilliant** – extremely bright, shining
On a clear night the stars are very **brilliant**.
56. **Pretended** – behave so as to make it appear that something is true, when in fact it is not; not real
She **pretended** to be happy but her eyes were sad.
He **pretended** the necklace he gifted her was made of gold.
57. **Admiration** – the feeling of respecting and approving of someone or something
I am full of **admiration** for the work that you do among the slum dwellers.
58. **Contest** – a competition to do better than other people, usually in which prizes are given
I am going to take part in the dance **contest** in my school.
59. **Consisted** – made up of something or formed of various specific things
The crowd at the concert **consisted** of college students and young office workers.
60. **Designing** – making or drawing plans for something, for example clothes or buildings
She has completed a course in fashion **designing**.
61. **Motorboats** – a small fast boat that is powered by an engine
There were many **motorboats** racing around on the lake.
62. **Probably** – something that is very likely
Her mother **probably** did not notice what she was wearing.

63. **Announce** – to make something known or tell people about something officially
The Principal will **announce** the winner of the Best Student Prize during assembly today.
64. **Drizzling** – a very light rain
It was **drizzling** when I left the office, but it soon turned into a downpour.
65. **Naturally** – as you would expect; in a normal way
Naturally, we want to see our school team win the championship.
When you go to meet the Principal, relax and behave **naturally**.
66. **Railroad tracks** – railway lines
There are lots of slums along the **railroad tracks**.
67. **Taking chances** – possibility that something negative will happen
I am not **taking any chances**; I will deliver the medicine myself to make sure it reaches on time.
68. **Eagerly** – in a way that shows that you want to do or have something very much, especially something interesting or enjoyable
I was waiting **eagerly** at the door to welcome the guests into our home.
69. **Gasped** – to take a sudden loud breath with your mouth open; to have difficulty breathing
Many new participants **gasped** for breath during the marathon.
She **gasped** in surprise when she opened her gift.
70. **Ledge** – a narrow shelf
The cat was trapped on the narrow **ledge** and could not jump down.
71. **Windowsill** – the narrow shelf at the bottom of a window, either inside or outside
On a rainy day I love to sit on the **windowsill** and watch the rain.
72. **Dazzling** – very bright; extremely attractive or exciting
A **dazzling** white light was shining out of the window.
She accepted the prize with a **dazzling** smile.

73. **Lavish** – very grand
The **lavish** wedding celebrations lasted for a week.
74. **Wrapping paper** – paper that is used to cover presents and other objects.
The presents that are covered in red **wrapping paper** are for Sunil.
75. **Whistled** – made a high sound by forcing air through a small hole or passage, especially through the lips, or through a special device held to the lips
The crowd **whistled** and clapped to show its appreciation.
76. **Murmured** – spoke or said something very quietly
Rita was so scared that she **murmured** a reply quickly and ran away.
77. **Assembled** – came together in a single place or brought parts together in a single group
A huge crowd had **assembled** outside Amitabh Bacchan's house to see him when he came home from hospital.
78. **Outboard motor** – a motor with a propeller, designed to be attached to the back of a small boat
The **outboard motor** boat made a lot of noise, and scared all the water birds away.
79. **Sketches** – simple, quickly made drawings that do not have many details
The art students sat outside on the verandah and made **sketches** of the beautiful landscape.
80. **Submitted** – gave or offered something for a decision to be made by others
The applications for the job have to be **submitted** to the receptionist at the front desk.
81. **Opinion** – a thought or belief about something or someone
In my **opinion** this is the best film that has been made this year.
82. **Worthy** – deserving respect, admiration, or support
He donates half his salary every month to a **worthy** cause.

83. **Unfortunately** – something is sad, disappointing, or has a bad effect
He worked very hard, but **unfortunately** he could not complete the exam on time.
84. **Exquisite** – extremely beautiful and well made
The **exquisite** sculpture will fetch a good price.
85. **Burst into applause** – suddenly and spontaneously clapped hands
At the end of the play, the audience **burst into applause**.
86. **Whispered** – spoke very quietly, using the breath, but not the voice, so that only the person very close could hear
She leaned over and **whispered** the answer in his ear.

5. Questions

I. Oral Comprehension Check

1. **Where in the classroom does Wanda sit and why?**
2. **Where does Wanda live? What kind of a place do you think it is?**
3. **When and why do Peggy and Maddie notice Wanda's absence?**
4. **What do you think "to have fun with her" means?**
5. **In what way was Wanda different from the other children?**
6. **Did Wanda have a hundred dresses? Why do you think she said she did?**
7. **Why is Maddie embarrassed by the questions Peggy asks Wanda? Is she also like Wanda, or is she different?**
8. **Why didn't Maddie ask Peggie to stop teasing Wanda? What was she afraid of?**
9. **Who did Maddie think would win the drawing contest? Why?**

10. Who won the drawing contest? What had the winner drawn?

II. Thinking about the Text

1. How is Wanda seen as different by the other girls? How do they treat her?
2. How does Wanda feel about the dresses game? Why does she say that she has a hundred dresses?
3. Why does Maddie stand by and not do anything? How is she different from Peggy? (Was Peggy's friendship important to Maddie? Why? Which lines in the text tell you this?)
4. What does Miss Mason think of Wanda's drawings? What do the children think of them? How do you know?

6. Grammar

Thinking about Language

I. Look at these sentences

- (a) She sat in the corner of the room where the rough boys *who did not make good marks* sat, the corner of the room *where there was most scuffling of feet*, ...
- (b) The time *when they thought about Wanda* was outside of school hours ... These italicised clauses help us to identify a set of boys, a place, and a time.

They are answers to the questions 'What kind of rough boys?' 'Which corner did she sit in?' And 'What particular time outside of school hours?' They are 'defining' or 'restrictive' relative clauses. (Compare them with the 'non-defining' relative clauses discussed in Unit 1.)

Combine the following to make sentences like those above.

1. This is the bus (what kind of bus?). *It goes to Agra.* (use *which* or *that*)
2. I would like to buy (a) shirt (which shirt?) (*The*) *shirt is in the shop window.* (use *which* or *that*)
3. You must break your fast at *a particular time* (when?). You see the moon in the sky. (use *when*)
4. Find a word (what kind of word?). *It begins with the letter Z.* (use *which* or *that*)
5. Now find a person (what kind of person). *His or her name begins with the Letter Z.* (use *whose*)
6. Then go to a place (what place?). *There are no people whose name begins with Z in that place.* (use *where*)

II. The Narrative Voice

This story is in the 'third person' that is, the narrator is not a participant in the story. But the narrator often seems to tell the story from the point of view of one of the characters in the story. For example, look at the italicised words in this sentence

Thank goodness, she did not live up on Boggins Heights or have a funny name.

Whose thoughts do the words 'Thank goodness' express? Maddie's, who is grateful that although she is poor, she is yet not as poor as Wanda, or as 'different'. (So she does not get teased; she is thankful about that.)

1. Here are two other sentences from the story. Can you say whose point of view the italicised words express?
 - (i) But on Wednesday, Peggy and Maddie, *who sat down front with other children who got good marks and who didn't track in a whole lot of mud*, did notice that Wanda wasn't there.

(ii) Wanda Petronski. *Most of the children in Room Thirteen didn't have names like that. They had names easy to say, like Thomas, Smith or Allen*

2. Can you find other such sentences in the story? You can do this after you read the second part of the story as well.

III. Look at this sentence. The italicised adverb expresses an opinion or point of view.

Obviously, the only dress Wanda had was the blue one she wore every day. (This was obvious to the speaker.)

Other such adverbs are *apparently, evidently, surprisingly, possibly, hopefully, incredibly, luckily*. Use these words appropriately in the blanks in the sentences below. (You may use a word more than once, and more than one word may be appropriate for a given blank.)

1. _____, he finished his work on time.
2. _____, it will not rain on the day of the match.
3. _____, he had been stealing money from his employer.
4. Television is _____ to blame for the increase in violence in society.
5. The children will _____ learn from their mistakes.
6. I can't _____ lend you that much money.
7. The thief had _____ been watching the house for many days.
8. The thief _____ escaped by bribing the jailor.
9. _____, no one had suggested this before.
10. The water was _____ hot.