

Windrush worksheet - KS3

Barrel Child

Read the short story 'Barrel Child' written by Kelsia Kellman and produced by the Barbados Museum & Historical Society in August 2019 (pages 10-21 of this booklet) and complete the 3 activities



Activity 1:

Text comprehension

Read again the 2 sections of the story very carefully and answer the questions below

SECTION 1 - Khadijah's story

1. How old is Khadijah?

2. Why is Khadijah's grandmother so upset with her? What did Khadijah do?

3. Write 3 words to describe how Khadijah is feeling

4. Write 3 words to describe how Khadijah's grandmother is feeling

5. Why is the doll so important to Khadijah's grandmother?

Activity 1:

Text comprehension

6. What is Khadijah's grandmother's name?

7. Where do Khadijah and her grandmother live? In England or in Barbados?

8. What does the doll look like?

9. In which room does Khadijah hide?

Activity 1:

Text comprehension

SECTION 2 - Annette's story (Barbados 1959)

1. Annette has 3 dolls. Can you describe them?

Doll 1

Doll 2

Doll 3

2. Annette is playing with her dolls imagining that they are 'grown-up' friends meeting for tea and having a chat. Who are the 4 women in the little scene Annette is playing?

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-
-
-

3. Who is Annette playing the part of in her game?

Activity 1:

Text comprehension

4. What is the reason why her mother is not going to take her to England from Annette's point of view?

5. What is Annette's plan to change her mother's mind?

6. Did Annette's plan work? How do we know?

7. What does her grandmother Elizabeth tell Annette to make her feel better?

8. Write 3 words to describe how Annette is feeling

Activity 1:

Text comprehension

9. Write 3 words to describe how Annette's grandmother is feeling

10. Write 3 words to describe how Annette's mother is feeling

11. The story is entitled 'Barrel Child': do you know what 'barrel child' means?

12. Who is the 'barrel child' in the story?

Activity 2:

Role play

Choose your favourite scene, follow the instructions below and act it out.

The 'Barrel Child' story can be divided into 3 scenes.

Scene 1: where Khadijah breaks her grandmother's doll

Number of actors: 2

- Character 1: Khadijah
(this character will need a doll)
- Character 2: Khadijah's grandmother
(this character will need a chair)

Scene 2: where Annette plays with her dolls

Number of actors: 1 (Annette plays all the parts using her 3 dolls)

- Character 1: Annette playing herself
(Annette will need: 3 dolls, 4 chairs, little tea cups)
- Character 2: Annette playing Annette's mother, Miss Annette
- Character 3: Miss Maisie (played by Annette and her blond doll)
- Character 4: Auntie Linda (played by Annette and her golliwog doll)
- Character 5: Elizabeth (played by Annette and her dark haired doll)

Scene 3: where Annette talks to her grandmother

Number of actors: 2

- Character 1: Annette
- Character 2: Elizabeth, Annette's grandmother

1. Choose one of the scenes
2. Assign the characters to yourself and another member of your family (in scene 2 you will not need anyone else).
3. Gather any objects your characters need for the scene.
4. Create your script (use the instructions and template in the next page)
5. Think about what the characters you are playing are thinking and feeling.
6. Act out the scene!

Activity 2: Role play

Find and highlight in the text of the story all the words each character speaks in your scene. If you want, you can use the template below to write all the lines and create your script (print out as many copies as you need). For example, the first 2 lines in scene 1 are:

Line 1: character: Grandmother _____
"Khadijah, put that back before you break it!"

Line 2: character: Khadijah _____
"No!"

Script template

Line # : character:.....

Line # : character:.....

Line # : character:.....

Line # : character:.....

Line # : character:.....

Line # : character:.....

Activity 3: Storytelling

Choose one of the titles below and use your imagination to continue Khadijah's or Annette's story.

Title 1: What happens next in Khadijah's story?

Think about what Khadijah may be thinking and feeling. What might the 2 characters in the story say? What do you think will happen to the doll?

Continue Khadijah's story starting with the sentence below.

... After telling her childhood story to Khadijah, her grandmother opens her eyes to look at her grand daughter and ...



Title 1: What happens next in Annette's story?

We know that Annette's mother did go to England without her. Imagine what might have happened the day she left: how was Annette feeling? What did her mother say and do? What did Annette's grandmother think and do? Then continue Annette's story starting with the sentence below.

... The next morning Annette wakes up excited and hopeful about her plan. She hears voices coming from the kitchen and ...



The story



Barrel Child

by Kelsia Kellman



Chapter 1

“Khadijah, put that back before you break it!” Came the shrill cry as the body of a four year old turned the corner into view clutching a porcelain doll in her arms. At the cry Khadijah stilled for a moment staring wide eyed at the frightful form of her grandmother; who stood in the middle of the small living room her hands akimbo and face set up in anger. Even her normally lifeless grey hair which was usually pulled into a severe bun on the top of her head seemed to crackle in her anger and spring to life, standing upright as it escaped the bun they had been pulled into.

Peering up at her, Khadijah pushed the doll behind her tiny body trying to hide it from the stern gaze of her grandmother. She let her eyes grow wide as tears started forming, glimmering in the corner of her eyes threatening to fall. Her bottom lip jutted out and started quivering in an image of sadness. Yet, this seemed to only anger her grandmother more; as her face turned stormier and her anger seemed to explode off of her skin. Khadijah sank into herself unwillingly cowering before her.

“No!” She cried defiantly.

Her voice wavering slightly as her grandmother’s glare increased tenfold. If she had been scary before she was monstrous now! Khadijah wilted against the rage that seemed to flood the room. Her grip on the doll loosened slightly as her confidence crumbled. Real tears started to form in her eyes, the wetness weighing down her eyelashes and she let go of the doll to bring one hand to her face to wipe them away. The doll slipped further out of her grasp and her grandmother jumped forward trying to grab it.



But Khadijah stumbled backwards her grip on the doll tightening. Her eyes darting back and forth between her grandmother’s face and her outstretched hands. Her brow furrowed and her mouth twisted as she stubbornly pursed her lips. Her eyes set in a determined glare as she turned hugging the doll close to her body, sliding it to her front and fleeing down the hall and out of the room.

“Khadijah!” Her grandmother cried.

The cry crept down the hall after her clawing at the edges of her blue cotton dress, twisting and turning as she did as she searched for somewhere to hide. It even clawed at the door of the bedroom she had escaped into. Khadijah sat; crouched in the dark corner of the bedroom with the doll pulled

tightly to her chest at first before she shimmied under the bed. Big brown eyes staring fearfully but determinedly at the door as she waited, listening for the thunderous footsteps of her grandmother.

They came like thunder; shattering the still silence and vibrating through the wooden floors. Her breaths shortened and shallowed, coming out as noiseless little puffs of smoke. And her heart skittered under her chest. She could feel the vibrations tugging at the hem of her dress, dragging her from her hiding space as the footsteps drew nearer. She squeezed her eyes shut as she pushed the doll painfully into her chest.

The footsteps fell silent and a moment passed. Khadijah dared to open her eyes; peering into the silent darkness for a moment, a giggle slipped passed her lips. She had won! At this a blinding mischievous grin stretched across her face as she hugged the doll in her arms; burying her face in the itchy blonde hair and cool porcelain of its neck. She crawled out from under the bed, her back to the door as she lifted the doll away from her body she held it high in the air, staring at with a keen eye; taking in the springy curls of blonde hair, the pale blue eyes and the white lacy frock dress that covered the clear porcelain body. She tilted it to the left and then to the right watching with determined interest as the curls swayed in time with the movement.

She was so focused on the doll in her hands that she had not heard the door to the bedroom swing open nor the footsteps of her grandmother as she entered silently behind her. She saw it out of the corner of her eye, the edge of her grandmother's favourite flower print dress as she stepped into the room; standing behind her. It happened faster than she could blink! She watched as her grandmother swelled almost twice her size, her lips puckered with a high whistling sound escaping as she readied herself to shout.

“KHADIJAH!”

It was louder than anything she'd ever heard. Not even the radio, she believed, could get that loud. The yell vibrated so loudly through the room that the windows rattled and floorboards shook. And her fingers grew weak as her heart jumped in her chest and as the silence settled the only sound left

was shattering of porcelain on the ground. She had dropped it. In her fright the doll had slid from her fingers and head first fell to the floor of the bedroom. Breaking as the fragile head hit the floor and pieces of porcelain flew across the room even cutting her skin. Tears sprung into her eyes and her bottom lip wobbled and the anger that had swollen her grandmother leaked out of her.



With a gentle huff she gathered her up in her arms muttering under breathe, “this is what happens when you can’t hear! What am I going to do with you, child?” Burying her face in her neck, Khadijah began to cry. She wept loudly as her grandmother ambled out the bedroom, down the hall and into the kitchen. There she placed her on a chair as she searched the kitchen drawers for a cotton ball, alcohol and a bandage to remove the porcelain and dress her wound.

“Oh, stop crying, nuh.” Her grandmother muttered softly, “if you weren’t so hard ears this wouldn’t of happened. Lord! Had that for how many years? For you to come and break it with you fast self.” She

sighed heavily as she placed the cotton ball on the table, “I remember when my mother gave that to me...”

Chapter 2

“Your mummy gave that to you? From where?” Khadijah asked, watery brown eyes peering down at her grandmother as she pulled the bandaid tight across her skin.

“Yes, she got it from England,” Her grandmother replied as she rose from the floor to sit in the chair opposite her. “and it was very special.”

“How?” Khadijah asked curiously, her cries decreasing.

“Because, it was the one she gave me for my birthday. I couldn’t go to England with her, so she got this for me.” Her grandmother stated solemnly.

“Why not?” Khadijah asked as she sniffled, chewing her bottom lip, “why couldn’t you go with her? Were you bad?”

“No,” her grandmother chuckled a small smile stretching across her lips, “I wasn’t bad...I...I just couldn’t go; you see.”

Khadijah frowned. That seemed wrong. Her mummy never went anywhere without her. Not even when she went to visit grownup places with her grownup friends, she always brought her along. Even if she had to be really quiet and act all grownup, she never left her behind. At least, not if she wasn’t naughty.

Her grandmother sighed once more. Before stating, “I am sure that if she could my mother would have taken me with her. But she couldn’t. It wasn’t a time where I could always go with my mother everywhere she went. So, I had to stay home with my grandmother when she went to England to work.”

Her grandmother close her eyes briefly, as the image of her childhood came to mind. She remembered this very house, the back room hadn't been built yet; and where the tv and radio sat, used to be where pieces of needlework, the few delicate ornaments that belonged to her mother and grandmother and dolls that she had had sat. And there were less chairs with a small circular table in the middle of the room that she used to arrange her dolls around whenever she played with them. Oh, yes! She remembered; almost as though it was just yesterday...

Barbados, 1959

It was three o'clock, which meant that it was tea time and Annette bustled into the front house. Dragging a chair across the wooden floor to the mantle, she climbed onto it and stood on her tippy toes; as she reached forward and gently slid her dolls from their perch. Clutching them to her chest she wiggled off the chair and sat them down at the table before her. The golliwog, with its black skin and large red lips and twists on her left, and her two pretty porcelain dolls, the blonde with soft princess curls, blue eyes and the white lacy dress in front of her and the dark-haired one with straight hair, the green eyes and the teal lacy dress on her right.

Dragging the chair back to its place, Annette rejoined her tea party setting out the delicate teacups and saucers before each of her playmates. Then she sat in the last chair, fluffing out her dress over the seat as she made herself comfortable. Clapping her hands together she stated, "Good afternoon, Miss Maisie. I'm so happy that you could make it!"

Reaching over she tilted the imaginary teapot over the cup, pretending to pour tea into the small teacup. "We, missed you," she said to the blonde doll as she did so, "Margaret said that you wouldn't be able to make it because of the baby". Glancing at the golliwog she leaned forward raising her hand to hide her lips and whispered, "I just think she's upset about what you said about her, last week."

As she sat back, Annette grinned. Not only had she remembered the whole talk her mummy had with her friends but she had remembered to speak, properly too! Just like a big person. And she had to because she was having a big person conversation with her big person friends. And she was sure that of her mummy saw her she would be so proud! Proud enough that she might even let her come along with her when she left to go to England. Instead of making her stay behind.

“Miss Annette,” asked the golliwog and Annette smiled at the doll.

“Have you heard about Caroline?” Annette frowned as she shook her head. Annette imagined the smile that had appeared on Aunty Linda’s face on the golliwog even the impatient scotching towards the end of her seat that Annette did whenever she really had to use the bathroom.

“Apparently,” her tongue felt heavy at using such a large word but she said it just as she had heard it, she even slowed down so that she could get the right pro-nun-ci-a-tion just like how her mummy taught her, “Caroline, gone up to England” her voice dropped to whisper, “she and that boy Andrew. Said she uncle send fuh she and now she got a big job. Does be sending back big barrels, stuff with things fuh she mudda!”

“Oh, really?” Annette questioned her voice high pitched in surprise as she imitated her mother.

“Yes! Like I got to get on one uh dem boats and leff from bout hey.” She mimicked her Aunt’s voice again, before frowning she didn’t understand how her mummy was friends with her Aunt. Aunty Linda barely spoke properly and mummy hated it when she didn’t.

“But, Miss Annette, didn’t I hear that you were planning to go?” Annette had shifted to look at dark-haired doll. And she nodded just as her mother had done.

“Yes, Caroline sent me a letter a month ago telling me how easy it is in England. The money she’s been able to make and that everyone is very welcoming.” Annette stated primly.

“Oh, really?” Margaret the golliwog stated in her aunt’s voice, “that’s not what I heard from Rose!” She imagined the golliwog leaning in dropping her voice to a whisper she stated, “Apparently” her Aunt

really liked that word, usually whenever she had a story to tell, “It’s been horrible! Her mother says every letter she gets from her, she always crying about something or the other! England got she good!”

“It still has to be better than down here.” Elizabeth, the dark-haired doll stated.

“Whether or not it is better I have to go! There is nothing here in Barbados, and if I can get a good job in England I will take it.” Annette snapped harshly.

“And what about Annette?” Miss Maisie asked, “will you take her with you?”

Here Annette’s voice wobbled, “no.” she said, “I can’t afford to take her.”

Chapter 3

There was a beat of silence before Annette cleared her throat. Raising the teacup to her lips she took a sip of the tea just like she saw her grandmother do it. Before placing the tea cup back on the saucer.

“And why not?” Miss Maisie, the blonde doll questioned and she was leaning forward just like her mummy’s other friend, looking at her from the corner of her eye, “she doesn’t need a passport to go.”

“Yes, but” and her voice dropped low just like her mummy’s, “there is so much I still have to think about. Like –” her voice trailed off as her mother’s did and Annette frowned again. Her mother had looked quickly at her before lowering her voice and her Aunt and her mother’s friend leant in closer to hear what she had to say.

“Miss Maisie?” Annette questioned softly after a moment, “why do you think mummy wants to leave me behind?”

The doll didn’t answer.

“Do you think that it’s because I’m not grownup enough?” Her eyes dropped to her lap and picked at the hem of her dress. “But I’m grownup aren’t it? I sleep in my own bed and I don’t cry when mummy leaves me at home to go to work. So, why can’t I go?”

Tears pricked her eyes and she harshly rubbed them away. I’m a big girl! And big girls didn’t cry like babies! But it wasn’t fair! She wanted to go with her mummy, and she had even done all the things she was supposed to just to show her mummy that she could go to England with her.

“I can keep you.” Elizabeth murmured in her grandmother’s voice, soft and sweet as it usually was.

“I don’t want you too.” Annette replied sullenly.

“It’s for the best dear. Besides you won’t like England. It’s cold and lonely and you won’t be able to play with your friends.” Annette wrinkled her nose just like the ladies in town with the really nice dresses with hair that looked like Miss Maisie.

“But I want to go with mummy!” She cried, “it’s not fair she’s leaving me behind!”

Her tongue clicked in a pale imitation of her grandmother whenever someone had annoyed her or done something she thought was foolish. “It’s for the best.” Elizabeth stated in her grandmother’s voice and it wasn’t as sweet and kindly as she remembered. Tears welled up in her eyes once again and this time she didn’t rub them away. She tried her hardest to ignore the lump that formed in her throat. She was a big girl; and big girls didn’t cry for silly reasons. So, she tried her hardest to swallow them back.

“I don’t like this game anymore.” Annette muttered softly, picking at the edges of her dress. And the dolls arranged around the table stared at her silently. And she wilted further into her misery. She reached forward and lifted the cup imagining throwing it against the ground and watching it shatter as her sadness seeped into anger. She was a good girl! She behaved, she spoke properly, even ate the nasty tasting vegetables her grandmother said were good for her and grownups always said that she was so

nice and polite. Even her Auntie Marcia said she wished that her cousin was as well-behaved as her. And yet, mummy wanted to leave her behind.

She puffed out her cheeks and her gaze slowly turned into a glare. She'd show her, she thought angrily, she'd show her mummy that she didn't need her. She'd show her that if she went to England Annette wouldn't miss her and then she'd feel so bad that she'd have to take her! Annette smiled to herself. Yes, she would do that, that way her mummy would have no choice but to take her when she left. A giggle slipped through her lips and she placed the teacup gently back onto the saucer.

"Annette, please be careful." Her grandmother called in her usual greeting whenever Annette took out the teacups and dolls to play with.

"Yes, please." Annette replied nodding.

Her grandmother glanced at her before patting her head gently, "Lord, chile uh know yuh upset; but trust me if she could tek yuh, she would. But things aine easy; and she trying she hardest tuh mek sure, yuh gine got everything yuh gune need. So don't be too upset with she, nuh?"

Annette nodded solemnly, as she stared at her grandmother her lips pulled down into a determined frown. Making the face her mother always did whenever she was having a serious grownup talk that was very important. Her grandmother nodded at her distantly as she patted her head once more. Leaning heavily on the back of the chair her grandmother stared at the tea party set out before her and smiled softly. Reaching down she patted Annette's head once more before saying, mostly to herself, "I know yuh don't un'stan wuh happening but when you older girl-chile you will un'stan and yuh gune be grateful, uh tell yuh."

Annette glared; as anger rose up and clenched in her tummy. She was not going to be grateful! She was not going to be grateful for her mummy leaving her behind, no matter what anybody said. Because if she couldn't go with her she wasn't going to be her mummy anymore, Annette decided, but she was going because she had a plan to make her mummy take her with her. After all, if she could show everybody that she wasn't a baby that needed taking care of then they couldn't leave her behind.

A visit to her grandmother's takes a sad turn when Khadijah breaks one of her treasured porcelain dolls. Leading her grandmother to reminisce on the distressing circumstance that resulted in her receiving it.



Kelsia Kellman is a 21 year-old budding historian and author; whose family was one of the many impacted by the mass migration during the period of the late 1940s to 1960s. She grew up hearing stories about “barrel children” from her mother, a barrel child, and the harsh conditions faced by the Windrush Generation from her great-uncle, a Windrush immigrant

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