

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**LO: To explore one of the main themes of the book**

**Context: The Firework Maker's Daughter by Philip Pullman**

**Activity: Activating prior knowledge answer summary**

- **Step 1** – think about **three** female characters in books or films that you already know. Make a list of them in your notebook.
- **Step 2** – think about the following questions about the female characters that you have thought of. *You can discuss these with an adult or sibling if that would help.* Make small notes answering the questions:
  - What were they like?
  - How did they act?
  - What did they do?
  - Were they important to the story?

### **Cinderella**

Cinderella is a very traditional role and she appears in a fairy tale. She stays at home doing the cooking, cleaning and washing. Then, the Prince comes along and she becomes a princess!

It is a very traditional, stereotypical role in the tasks that she does and with the idea that the man comes to 'rescue' her. She is presented as fragile and needing rescuing. She becomes a princess and is essentially now there to look beautiful!

### **Matilda (Roald Dahl)**

Matilda is different to the Cinderella role as she is quite rebellious. She doesn't let people tell her what to do and can be quite stubborn. She has lots of ideas and rejects the traditional role of someone coming to rescue her; she tries to work out how to do that herself!

### **Hermione (J.K. Rowling)**

Matilda reminded Ms. Johnson of Hermione from 'Harry Potter'. Hermione also rejects the stereotypical view of females and is not a traditional 'Cinderella' character. She is strong-willed, intelligent and brave. She doesn't let Harry and Ron tell her what to do and she takes part fully in the adventures within the books.

**Activity: Analysing the text summary of answers**

**Why does Lalchand say this is 'no place for a girl'?**

Traditional view of girls

Girls were viewed as being expected to stay at home; they should look after the house and the family. They were viewed as weak and being of more fragile character than men. Girls were seen as being physically weaker and not as mentally strong as men. Girls weren't sent to war. They were expected to stay at home which was a very important role but they were not given the choice.

Dangerous tasks were seen as being something that should be done by men. Girls were not considered brave enough.

View of what a Firework Maker should be like?

A Firework Maker is someone who has to be brave and adventurous as making fireworks is a dangerous task. They need to be inventive; Lalchand shows that being experimental and willing to take risks is needed.

**Answer to Why does Lalchand say this is 'no place for a girl'?**

Because firework making is dangerous and Lalchand thinks that girls should not take part in it.

Your answer may be different to the one above but the key part is that you note that Lalchand viewed Lila as needing to have the traditional qualities of girls rather than the qualities needed for a Firework Maker. He regrets not sending her to his sister where she would have had a role model for a traditional female role.

**Answer to Why does Lalchand want to find her (Lila) a husband?**

Because that was expected by society. Lila would then be looked after by her husband.

Your answer may be different to the one above but the key part is that you note that Lalchand thinks that something that needs to be done. It was thought that girls needed a husband and fathers were expected to find their daughter someone to marry. It is interesting to think about whether Lalchand will still think this by the end of the book – we'll find out!

**Answer to Why is Lila horrified?**

She was horrified because she wants to be a Firework Maker and has no interest in finding a husband.

We know from the text that we have already explored that all Lila wants is to become a Firework Maker and she has no interest in having a husband. Despite the traditional view of society at the time, Lila has grown up in an environment where this is not something that she has been introduced to.

**Answer to Who do think has the 'wrong idea' and Who do you think Philip Pullman thinks has the wrong idea?**

Many of you will have said that Lalchand has the wrong idea as we really engage with Lila as a character. She wants to follow her dreams and do something for herself. She is determined and it's hard not to like a character who is so determined. As well as this, we are used to the idea of girls not being told that they have to have a husband to be looked after and to not have a career so they look after the home – our societal values are different.

However, we must keep in mind that Lalchand was not being controlling or nasty in having this idea. It is what he was conditioned to think as part of the society that he was in.

As the story continues, it begins to become clear that Philip Pullman thinks that Lalchand has the wrong idea. Within the story, both Lalchand and Lila learn lessons that are valuable to them both.

We'll find this out as we read on together!

### **Return to the Key Question**

#### **How does Lila reject the stereotypical characteristics of a female?**

##### Visual chart response

Lila is brave, adventurous, determined and stubborn. Nobody tells her what to do and nothing will stop her from becoming a Firework Maker. Earlier in the text, she shows resilience when she burns her fingers. She is not afraid to get hurt and this demonstrates a strength of character that she has. As the book continues, she becomes even more brave and adventurous.

##### Answer to the key question

This is similar to the answer above but your answer needs to include some of these elements:

- Lila wants to be a Firework Maker;
- Lila does not want a husband;
- Lila is brave, determined, resilient and stubborn;
- Lila is a messy-looking girl; he does not conform to being beautiful and finding her worth in this;
- Lila rejects the societal demands of the context that she is living in;
- Lila is willing to not do what she is told by her father.