**MY MOTHER’S GAME**

**Summary**

The story is about a young girl who wishes to keep the memory of her mother alive. She wishes to create a bond with her grandmother and continue living a life filled with optimism despite the heavy loss that she and her grandmother have had. She wishes to bring her grandmother out of her grief and receives the support of other elders to do so. Neelu wishes to take up hockey in her new school, but her classmates have been playing basketball for a period of time and are comfortable in the game. Neelu takes up game on her own, convinces her teacher to teach it to her and then enthuses by leading by example. She plays the game and seems to enjoy it very much. This arouses the interests of the others in her class and soon she has a team of players. Her grandmother who is disapproving at first comes around and cleans her skirt and feeds her as she would have probably fed and cleaned her own daughter’s skirt. Rajini *Mausi* is delighted and grateful when she sees her niece and her mother happy in each other’s company.

**Understanding the Text**

1. **Complete these sentences in your own words:**
2. Neelu told her Physical Education teacher that she wanted to **play hockey.**
3. Sharma Ma’am explained to Neelu that a hockey team was made up of **sixteen players.**
4. The hockey player can move the ball only with the **flat end** of the stick.
5. The first person to play hockey with Neelu was **Sneha.**
6. There were fifteen girls playing hockey by the **end of the week.**
7. Rajni Mausi was grateful for the difference hockey made in the lives of and **Neelu and Aaji.**
8. **Answer these questions:**
9. **Why did Neelu decide to start playing hockey?**

**Ans**: Neelu’s mother’s younger sister Rajni once happened to mention that Neelu’s mother loved hockey. Neelu immediately began planning to train herself in hockey. Hockey had never interested her otherwise, but the fact that her mother had loved the game was good enough for her.

1. **What did Neelu learn about hockey from Sharma ma’am?**

**Ans**: Sharma ma’am told Neelu that the game of hockey is played by two teams. Each team has eleven players. These eleven occupy various positions on the field and are known by those names. There are five forwards, three halfbacks, two fullbacks, and one goalkeeper. In addition, there are five substitutes. The game has two halves, each lasting thirty-five minutes. At half time the teams change their goals and defend the opposite direction. A player is allowed to move the ball towards the goal, but using only the flat side of the stick. A player usually passes the ball to his teammates or dribbles it—pushes it here and there—so that the other team doesn’t get it. And when the player gets close to the goal, within striking distance, she can try to score a goal.

1. **How did Sneha start playing hockey with Neelu?**

**Ans**: Sharma ma’am had explained how hockey was played, so on the day after the explanation Neelu collected a hockey stick from the storeroom at the end of the field and walked towards the goalpost. She spent all her time practising her strokes and wishing there was someone with whom she could share her triumph when her classmate, Sneha walked up to her. Sneha tried playing the game and soon found that it was a lot of fun. So she decided to stop playing basketball and began to play hockey with Neelu.

1. **What was Aaji’s reaction when Neelu told her that her team had scored seventy-five goals?**

**Ans**: Instead of talking about Neelu’s dirty skirt, or skinned knees, or setting off on one of her obscure errands, Aaji actually said, ‘Really? You must be hungry then!’ and bustled away to cook-up something for Neelu.

1. **What made Rajni Mausi think gratefully about hockey?**

**Ans**: Rajni mausi felt grateful for the difference that hockey had made in the lives of the two people who mattered so very much to her.

1. **Answer these questions with reference to the context:**
2. **‘See you on the field,’ she said.**
3. **Who said this to whom?**
4. **What were they going to do on the field?**
5. **Why were only two of them going to the field?**

**Ans**:

1. Sharma Ma’am said this to Neelu.
2. Sharma Ma’am was going to teach Neelu how to play jockey.
3. The other girls were not interested in playing hockey. They wanted to play basketball.
4. **‘That skirt will have to be soaked overnight.’**
5. **Who said this and what was used to soak it?**
6. **Whose skirt was it?**
7. **What had happened to it and how had it happened?**

**Ans**:

1. Aaji said this and used hot water to soak it in.
2. It was Neelu’s skirt.
3. It had become dirty because Neelu had played hockey that day.
4. **‘That is a foul!’**
5. **Who said this to whom?**
6. **Was it necessary to say this to the listener?**
7. **How did the listener react?**

**Ans**:

1. Neelu said this to Sneha.
2. No, it was not necessary as only the two of them were playing and Sneha did not know much about the game.
3. She was happy to learn the rule and abided by it.