

9th Standard English

Reach for the Top Summary

Part I. Santosh Yadav

Santosh's family background and birth Santosh Yadav has twice climbed Mount Everest. She is the only woman in the world to do so. She was born in a society where the birth of a son was regarded as a blessing. Daughter was not welcome. A "holy man" blessed Santosh's mother thinking that she wanted a son. But Santosh's grandmother Haryana as the sixth child. She is a sister to five brothers.

Non-traditional Santosh

She was named 'Santosh' meaning contentment. Santosh began living life on her own terms. Other girls wore traditional Indian dresses. But she wore shorts. She said that she was determined to choose a correct path. Others were to change themselves, not she.

Santosh's great desire for education

Santosh's parents were rich landowners. They could send her for education to nearby Delhi, the Capital. But they sent her to the village school. Santosh decided to fight the system. When she turned sixteen, she refused to marry. Most of the girls in her village used to get married at that age. She warned her parents that she would never marry if she did not get a proper education.

Santosh in a Delhi school

So she got admission in a school in Delhi. Her parents refused to pay her fees. But she told them that she would work part time to earn money. They agreed to pay for her education.

Goes to college in Jaipur

Santosh passed the high school. She went to Jaipur to join Maharani College. She got a room in Kasturba Hostel. It faced the Aravalli Hills. She used to see the villagers going up the hill and disappearing.

Takes to climbing

One day she decided to check herself why the climbers disappeared. She went there. She found nobody except a few climbers. They encouraged her to take to climbing. Then there was no looking back.

Joins Institute of Mountaineering

Santosh saved money. She enrolled herself in a course at Uttarkashi's Nehru Institute of Mountaineering. She went there directly from Jaipur. She wrote a letter to her father from there. In it she apologised for taking admission in Uttarkashi.

A remarkable climber

There Santosh went on an expedition every year. She developed a remarkable resistance to cold and the altitude. She had an iron will, physical endurance and mental toughness. Her efforts started bearing fruits.

Conquers Mount Everest

In 1988 she had asked the Aravalli Moun-taineers if she could join them. 1992 became the year of her grand success. She conquered Mt. Everest when she was barely twenty years old. She thus became the youngest woman in the world to achieve it. She proved equally helpful to the fellow-climbers.

The other side of Santosh as a climber

During the 1992 Everest mission, Santosh Yadav provided special care to a climber. He lay dying at the South Col. She could not save him. But she managed to save another climber, Mohan Singh. He would have died if Santosh had not shared her oxygen with him.

Conquers Everest the second time

Within twelve months, Santosh was invited by Indo-Nepalese Women's Expedition. She became its member. She then conquered the Everest a second time. She set a record as the only woman to have climbed the Everest twice.

Honoured by the Govt.

The Indian Government recognised her achievement. She was honoured with the Padmashri. It is one of the nation's top honours.

Indescribable moments at the top

Santosh described her feelings when she was on the top of the world . She said that it took her some time for that moment to be understood. She unfurled the Indiem tricolour. She can't describe that moment. She saw the Indian flag flying on the top of the world. It was a spiritual moment for her. She felt proud

lift to be an Indian. Santosh acted as an environmentalist also. She brought down 500 kilograms of rubbish from the Himalayas.

Part II. Maria Sharapova

Maria Sharapova's number one position in world tennis

There is something at odds with Maria Sharapova with her smile and dress. This lifted her on 22 August 2005 to the world number one position in women's tennis. She is a Siberian teenager. It took her four years to achieve the top position.

Maria's trip to US .

Maria's climb upwards started nine years before. She was not yet 10 when she was sent to train in America. That trip to Florida with her father Yuri put her on the line to success and stardom. But it meant a separation also of two years from her mother Yelena. Yelena had to live in Siberia due to visa restrictions.

Maria's stay and training in the US

Maria recalls that she felt lonely in the US. She missed her mother greatly. Her father also couldn't see her mother. He earned only as much as to keep her tennis-training going. She was young. She used to tidy up the room and clean it. The seniors would make her do so.

Maria's toughness

This made her determined and mentally tough. She also learnt how to take care of herself. She never thought of quitting. She knew what she wanted. This toughness is still there in her.

Maria becomes number one

She bagged the ladies' single crown at Wimbledon in 2004. She became world's number one in 2005.

Her mantra for success

Maria has journeyed from Siberia to the top of women's tennis. It has touched the hearts of tennis fans. She looks straight and answers clearly. These tell that her sacrifices were worth it. She says that she works hard at what she does. This is her mantra for success.

Maria on her Russian roots

Maria speaks with an American accent. She shows her pride to be a Russian. She says that her blood is Russian. However, the US is a big part of her life. She will play the Olympics for Russia if they wanted her to play.

Sharapova's hobbies

Sharapova's hobbies are fashion, singing and dancing. She loves reading the novels of Arthur Conan Doyle. She is fond of evening gowns. She loves pancakes with chocolate spread and orange drinks.

Sharapova's thoughts on tennis etc.

Sharapova can't be put in a category. She has talent, a desire to succeed and readiness to sacrifice. These qualities have lifted her to the top of the world. She finds money as motivation. Tennis is a business and a sport. But the most important thing is to become number one in the world. This dream has kept her going.