

Read the short story. Then answer each question.

The Story of Wise Woman

You may have read how Thomas Smith first farmed rice in South Carolina. After his death, a wise young woman lived in South Carolina. She showed the people how to farm another plant. Her name was Eliza Lucas.

The father of Miss Lucas did not live in South Carolina. He was governor of one of the islands of the West Indies. Miss Lucas was fond of trying new things. She often got seeds from her father which she planted in South Carolina.

Her father sent her some seeds of the indigo plant. She planted some of these in March, but a frost came. The indigo plant cannot tolerate frost, and her plants all died.

Miss Lucas did not give up. She planted some more seeds in April. These grew very well until a cut-worm found them. The worm wished to try new things too. So he ate the indigo plants.

Miss Lucas was one of the people who tried and tried again. She had lost her indigo plants twice. Once more she planted some of the seeds. This time the plants grew very well.

Miss Lucas wrote to her father about it. He sent her a man who knew how to get the indigo out of the plant.



The man tried not to show Miss Lucas how to make the indigo. He did not want the people in South Carolina to learn how to make it. He was afraid his own people would not get so much money for their indigo if other people made it as well.

So he would not explain how it was done. He spoiled the indigo on purpose.

However, Miss Lucas watched him closely. She figured out how the indigo could be made. Some of her father's land in South Carolina was now planted with the indigo plants.

Then Miss Lucas was married. She became Mrs. Pinckney. Her father gave her all the indigo growing on his land in South Carolina. It was all saved for seed. Some of the seed Mrs. Pinckney gave to her friends. Some of it her husband sowed. It all grew and was made into that blue dye that we call indigo. When it is used in washing clothes, it is called bluing.

In a few years, more than a million pounds of indigo were made in South Carolina every year. Many people got rich from indigo, and it was all because Miss Lucas did not give up.



Questions:

1. Why did the indigo plants die the first time?

2. How did Miss Lucas help the people of South Carolina?

3. How would you describe Miss Lucas?

4. Why do you think Miss Lucas was successful?

Answers:

1. Why did the indigo plants die the first time?
The indigo plants died from the frost the first time.
2. How did Miss Lucas help the people of South Carolina?
She helped the people by teaching them how to grow indigo plants and extract indigo from those plants for sale.
3. How would you describe Miss Lucas?
(Answers will vary): persistent, never giving up possible answers.
4. Why do you think Miss Lucas was successful?
Miss Lucas was successful because she did not give up when things did not go her way.