

Page No. 60

Understanding The Text**1. Comment on the relationship shared by Mammachi and Pappachi.****Answer:**

Mammachi and Pappachi had an age gap of 17 years. Pappachi was a retired high ranked officer and was jealous of the talents which Mammachi his wife possessed and the attention she got. Even if it was her violin classes in Vienna or pickle making, he was jealous of her. Apart from all the fights and friction they had in their relationship, Mammachi always stayed with him. She was more attached to him and was not exactly in love with him. She could not let go of him even if Pappachi beat her with brass vases. At his funeral, she cried very badly not because the man she loved had died but because he would not be around her. He was like an old shoe for her, which she was unable to let go of. She was very close to him, though she was beaten by him and was used to having him slouching around the pickle factory.

2. How does Mammachi stand out as an independent and resilient woman in the text?**Answer:**

The egocentric Entomologist husband of Mamachi always discouraged her. He was an unsupportive husband and was jealous of her talents and any kind of attention she got. It was mainly because of the anger which remained inside his heart for not getting the deserved fame of his moth discovery, which he wished to be named after him. Her pickle recipe was very famous and she was called by the Kottayam Bible Society to prepare some of her famous tender mango pickle and banana jam for an upcoming fair. It was sold instantly and she received many orders, which she could cope up with. Excited with the success, Mammachi decided to persist with the jams and pickles and was very busy the entire year. Later, she set up a pickle factory and was very successful.

3. Why does John Ipe consider retirement to be a dishonour?**Answer:**

Mammachi's husband, Benaan John Ipe, Pappachi, got his retirement from Joint Director, Entomology post. He was a very reputed man and was proud that he was a high ranked government officer. Upon retirement, he found it difficult to manage with the ignominy of retirement. Pappachi and Mammachi had an age difference of seventeen years which made him perceive that he was an old man when his wife was still young. He was a jealous husband and did not like the attention his wife was getting all of a sudden. Retirement was a constant reminder of his old age which pricked him very deeply. A man who was once so strong to beat his wife with a brass vase was now put to a stop by his son. He felt dejected and neglected. An imperial Entomologist had now changed to a withered aged man and this gave a jolt to his ego.

4. What was the underlying reason for John Ipe's disgust with the world?**Answer:**

John Ipe was very disgusted with the world. He did not get what he wished for. The moth discovered by Pappachi was not named after him and this made him feel jealous of the talents which his wife possessed. He was a retired government officer without any fame, while his wife who was about seventeen years younger was earning good out of her pickle factory. Pappachi was hurt by this and his

pride got wounded. He then started to beat his wife Mammachi regularly. From the fame which he never received, to his wife's success hurt him very badly and his anger got multiplied.

Talking About The Text

Discuss in pairs

1. Chacko's firmness in dealing with the irrational behaviour of his father.

Answer:

Pappachi used to beat his wife Mammachi using brass vases every night until his son Chacko came home from Oxford for a summer vacation. Chacko had grown into a strong and big man. It had been a week since he arrived and he found his father Pappachi beating Mammachi. Chacko walked into the room, held Pappachi's hand in which he had a vase and was beating his mother Mammachi and twisted it around his back. He screamed clearly and loud to Pappachi that he would not want this incident to happen again. This flabbergasted his father. He did not dare to touch Mammachi and never talked to her until he lived. The strong behaviour of the son stopped the physical violence which used to occur every day. It was a brave action taken by the young boy. Probably, men in our current society hit their wives without any reason just to prove their superiority. The boy made it clear to his father that he was not the only person with muscles in the house and put a stop to the violence.

2. The contrast between the outward elegance of a person and his private behaviour.

Answer:

Pappachi, John Ipe, was a retired high ranking government officer, a Junior Director, Entomology. He was a highly qualified and socially respected personality who always wore a golden pocket watch and three piece suits. The distorted reality which was locked inside his heart was that he was one among the men in our society who cannot bear to see their wives successful and prospering. He disliked her talent and did not approve her violin classes in Vienna and her pickle factory. This face of him was an ugly reality to his family. Pappachi used to beat Mammachi almost every day with a brass vase. Such behaviour of a man would be found disgusting by anybody as he appeared to be so respected in his exterior looks, while he was physically violent with his wife.

3. Approval from the outside world and approval within the family.

Answer:

Pappachi was jealous about Mammachi as she was a woman with exceptional talent. Pappachi called off the violin classes when her teacher remarked on her being so talented. Later when Pappachi retired, he did not give up his ego and disapproved of her successful pickle factory. Mammachi was well appreciated by the Kottayam Bible Society in Ayemenem though her husband did not encourage her. Pappachi, a male chauvinist, was very jealous of Mammachi's talents, as he was not an ideal husband in any case, while he had a responsible wife he never appreciated.

Appreciation

1. How does the author succeed in raising crucial social issues not through open criticism but through subtle suggestion?

Answer:

Roy suggestively explains the male chauvinistic society which we currently live in. For a male, how pride is important and for a female, however cruel her husband is and even if the love in their relationship has worn out, her need for him will never fade. In this society, a man beats his wife regardless of how qualified she is. Even if the male is a top notch government official from a modern background, he would not be able to tolerate the success of his wife. A man would always need his wife to be inferior to him. We probably have a mindset that a female cannot rise higher than her husband. Here, it is clearly shown in the story about how humans run after momentary pleasures. For a human being, recognition is undoubtedly important, the way Pappachi ruined his life and relations due to what he did not receive rather than accepting his fate. Men in our society crave for recognition and fame. In the search of what we cannot have, we often lose what we have.

2. Within a few pages the author has packed the important events in the lives of John Ipe and his wife. Discuss how conciseness and economy of expression can achieve effective portrayal of entire lives.

Answer:

A story can be narrated in two ways. One way is the elongated narration providing detail of each and every situation and emotion. The other way is the crisp and short one which keeps the story quite interesting by highlighting important emotions and events. Roy has narrated this story using the second style. The story has been kept short without missing any of the important points. The relationship between a husband and a wife has been explained by her with all the required details, though she did not explain about the sentiments for a long time. She elaborates the face of the society which we currently live in. Jean Genet was correct when he said that society resides on images and this is what Roy has highlighted in her story. As John lost his chance to gain recognition, he also perceived his loss of identity. The narrator is succinct when she explains the emotions and makes it a point that nothing worthless is portrayed. The narration of this story is simple and portrays the lives of characters effectively. The physical violence, the disturbance in the marriage, the emotional loss, the interference of the child and its effect on his father. All these are portrayed wisely without wasting any time or making the reader wait for a long time.

3. Identify instances of ironical comment in the story.

Answer:

In this story, it is ironic that even though Mammachi was beaten brutally by Pappachi, her love for him never faded. She cried very bitterly on her husband's death. Here, the fact is that Mammachi was not happy with Pappachi but was used to his scoldings and beatings.

Language Work

1. *Entomologist* and *lepidopterist* are mentioned in the text and you must have guessed the meanings of these words or found them out from the dictionary.

Now match the kinds of scientists given below with the work they do:

A
ornithologist
gerontologist
ergonomist
dermatologist
cytologist

B
study of the skin
study of cells
study of birds
study of old age
study of design of equipment

Answer:

A
ornithologist
gerontologist
ergonomist
dermatologist
cytologist

B
study of birds
study of old age
study of design of equipment
study of the skin
study of cells

2. A short report announcing the death of a person in a newspaper is called an 'obituary'. Where would you find the following

**a citation
an abstract**

**an epitaph
a postscript**

a glossary

Answer:

a citation - The lines or words which are extracted from a speech or a book are known as citations. It is similar to a quotation.

an epitaph - The lines which are written on his/her gravestone in their memory is known as an epitaph.

a glossary - The list of words or terms which are used in a book and are given at the end with their actual meanings is called glossary.

an abstract - A short piece of writing which possesses the main idea in a document is known as an abstract.

a postscript - An extra message which is written at the end of any message is called postscript.