

Revision Notes

CHAPTER – 5

Mother's Day

Mother's Day, a play by J. B. Priestley, portrays the status of a mother in a household. Priestley humorously explores the story when Mrs. Pearson, in her forties, stands up for her rights and how her family reacts at this. Mrs. Pearson is very fond of her family and works day and night to support her family members in the best possible manner. However, she is upset at the way she is being treated. She is exploited and intimidated by her family members.. All day long she stays at home doing all the work. In the evening when the children and her husband return she occupies herself in meeting their demands. She wants to maintain peace in her household yet she craves for their attention and a little respect. She went to her neighbour Mrs. Fitzgerald, a fortune teller and a magician who is an assertive woman and opposite to Mrs Pearson in nature. Mrs. Pearson is a meek and timid woman to a fault. on the other hand, older and heavy, Mrs. Fitzgerald persuades her that she should raise her voice against the injustice done to her and comes up with a plan.. She proposed that they could exchange bodies and then with Pearson's body, she would teach a lesson to Pearson's family that Mrs. Pearson could not do herself for she was too humble and nice to do that.

Though reluctant, Mrs. Pearson agreed to the idea and the two exchanged their bodies. Mrs. Pearson was still not sure and asked Mrs. Fitzgerald if she could get her body back. However, determined Fitzgerald tells Pearson not to worry and that she would handle the matter carefully. She left for Pearson's home with Mrs. Pearson's body. She entered the home and knew what she was to do to teach Pearsons' a lesson so they would not bother Mrs. Pearson in future unnecessarily. Mrs. Pearson (Mrs. Fitzgerald's soul) smoked a cigarette and was confident than ever. A few moments later, her daughter, Doris Pearson, entered the house and asked her mother to iron her yellow shirt. Mrs. Pearson treats her harshly. In the mean while her son Cyril came and asked her to prepare tea for him. Finally Mr. George Pearson came and was shocked to see Mrs. Pearson smoking and drinking. They all were shocked at her strange attitude as she reacts very strongly.

Then enters mother with a bottle of stout and a glass half filled with it. The children began to laugh and the mother chided them and asked them to behave like grown-ups. Doris then



asked her mother the reason of her such behaviour and if they had done something wrong. Then Mrs. Pearson told them that it was actually the children's and her husband's behaviour that had disturbed her. They always came and went without bothering about her. They demanded duties from her and she did her best to keep everyone happy and still no body was bothered about her. She remarks that while the three of them do a job of forty hours a week with two days as weekend, she goes on working seven days round the clock. She proclaimed that she would do some work on Saturday and Sunday only if she is thanked for everything.

The wife continues to rebuke the husband telling him why he goes to club when he is a joke among all there. He is stunned and demands the truth from his son. Cyril got upset at his mother yet told his father that it was the truth.

Then enters Mrs.Fitzgerald (actually Mrs.Pearson). Mrs. Pearson (actually Mrs.Fitzgerald) told her that she was just putting everyone at place and that the things were alright. Mrs. Pearson (Mrs.Fitzgerald in body) requested to have her body then and Mrs. Pearson (Mrs. Fitzgerald in body) on a condition that Pearson would not go soft with her family again. They got back their original bodies and Mrs.Fitzgerald left. The mother and the children and husband smiled at each other and it was decided that they all will have the dinner together and play a game of rummy.

Thus the play resolves the issue of a mother's respect in her family.Finally the family members of Mrs. Pearson are set right due to the efforts of Mrs.Fitzrald and realize that women are always taken for granted and they don't get what they deserve.The play also raises an important and serious question-Are mothers the beasts of burden? They always dance to the tunes of their families.There are some rights over which only men have their monopoly and women have no access to them.They are only a neglected lot.Millions of women have to lead such a miserable life which Mrs. Pearson is forced to lead.

Now the time has come that we have to wake up.Giving a tribute to women Mahatma Gandhi said' God could not be everywhere so he made mothers'.So we should give due respect to our mothers and mothers,too,should change the dominating behaviour of their family members. Certainly there is no scope of showing any disagreement with the resolution of the issues as mentioned above.

