

Short Stories - 5.

Pappachi's Moth

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

Q. 1 Comment on the relationship shared by Mammachi and Pappachi.

Answer:

Pappachi was 17 years elder than Mammachi. He was a retired ex-government officer and he always feels ignominy of his retirement which in turn converts to his jealousy towards his wife Mammachi. Pappachi was a kind of person who does not feel happy when her wife gets appreciated. It was either a violin class in Vienna or pickle making, Pappachi always feels jealous of her. From Pappachi's side, the relationship between them was disrespectful and full of cruelty; being an arrogant person he always likes to see him at the top, he beats his wife badly and does not talk to her. From Mammachi's side, she loved to his husband as she was attached to him in emotions and that's why she was used to being beaten.

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

Answer:

Mammachi was a woman who was always disrespected and discouraged by her arrogant husband. He never gave her encouragement in her work and always felt jealous of her talent and if she receives appreciation or attention he then too feels jealous. This jealousy was most probably because he was not getting attention and appreciation in the discovery of moth that he wished to name after him. On the same line, his wife was getting fame for her pickle as people were appreciating the taste and she was getting orders quickly and in handsome quantity. With getting appreciation she got motivated and was independently kept running her



pickle business without her husband consent in such difficult situations as she ever gave up and hence proved as a resilient woman.

Q. 3 Why does John Ipe consider retirement to be dishonour?

Answer:

Benaan John Ipe, Pappachi, got retired from the post of Joint Director, Entomology. He was a man who was at high designation and he was proud to be a high ranking government officer. But now he was retired and he was finding difficulties as he was used to living a life which adds on something to his personality and that is his job, but now he was a man who has no work to do and that's why he can't cope up with the ignominy of retirement. He was having a huge age difference with her wife and thinking that till now she is working and I am of no use. These situations made him feel jealous of her wife Mammachi as she was getting attention from others. His retirement always makes him feel like he is an old man and useless now. His arrogance getting into pieces which is unbearable for him and that's why John Ipe consider retirement to be dishonour.

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

Answer:

John Ipe was disgust with the world because he was not getting fame and name which he wished to be. Being an entomologist he found a species of moth but it was not given his name and this made him disgusting with the world. He was already a hot-headed person who could not see anyone else to do something better and get attention but her wife was getting that which made him feel disgusting. This jealousy, in turn, made him beat his wife Mammachi, just to overcome his frustration.

TALKING ABOUT THE TEXT



Q. 1 Discuss in pairs Chacko's firmness in dealing with the irrational behavior of his father.

Answer:

Pappachi used to beat Mammachi with brass vases every night in frustration and this was not new he does this from the very beginning. When Chacko came home for a summer vacation from Oxford. He had grown to be a big man. A week after he arrived, he found Pappachi beating Mammachi. Chacko strode into the room, caught Pappachi's vase from his hand and twisted Pappachi's hand around his back. Chacko roared with a strong voice that he doesn't want this incident to happen again. From that point of time, his father never touched Mammachi again and even never talked to her till he lived. The firmness of son stopped violence in the home and it was a right action taken by son. Today every other woman is badly beaten by her husband and like Mammachi they don't even protest. But it's a duty of kid to save her mother from violence and that is what Chacko did firmly.

Q. 2 Discuss in pairs. The contrast between the outward elegance of a person and his private behavior.

Answer:

Pappachi, was an ex-government officer in the high-ranking post, a Director, Entomology. A well-educated and socially dignified personality who is always well dressed wore three-piece suits and golden watch pocket. In an accumulated sense, he was a sensible, qualified and respectful person in his outside life or professional life. But the reality was something else which proved under the shelter which is his personal life. In his personal life, he was a person who comes under the category of those men who are useless and bit less than an animal because he uplifted violence which is not a sign of a qualified and high ranking officer. He was a jealous person who could not see others prospering like he did with her wife; she was talented but he



never showed consent in her pickle business as well as violin classes because in both case she was getting appreciated. He was a man who was not having a right be respected by others but no one knows about his personal life. Outside he was qualified and high class officer but inside he was down the class person who does not respect women.

Q. 3 Discuss in pairs. Approval from the outside world and approval within the family.

Answer:

- i) In outside world, Pappachi was a dignified personality but in the family he was down personality as his karmas reflect his place.
- ii) For people outside Pappachi was a respectful person but for his family, he was a person who does not deserve respect.
- iii) Approval of outside world was that he was a great personality who worked as an ex-government high ranking officer, director as entomologist but inside whom or within family he was looser.
- iv) For outside world, his contribution may be enough to recognize him but inside the home, there was nothing that can add on to contribution as he always contributed his jealousy and violence to her wife.

Hence, Pappachi was a person who doesn't deserve love and respect.

APPRECIATION

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

Answer:

Arundhati Roy raised a crucial issue putting a light on male and female discrimination in society we live in. She directly hit her subtle suggestions on what actually women are facing in the society and hoe men exploit them. She tried to describe the current scenario, our society puts more emphasis on male giving less privilege to females. Like in a



story Pappachi can't see Mammachi working and getting success and appreciation because he thinks that he is only eligible for it and likes him many other men think same; this thinking had come from our society only. Men violent women but they are asked to shut their mouth and accept as it is. With this Roy was trying to raise a social issue with the help of story and suggested every woman raise voice for her right.

Q. 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:

Author of the story Pappachi's Mother, Arundhati Roy, designed a beautiful plot in a few pages with giving a serious message to everyone. She put her words in flowery pattern describing everything with a strong message in a brief. She described a life of a husband and his wife. She tried to show the difference between a man and a woman, she put a picture of a man as a cruel one who exploits her wife and that was Pappachi, John Ipe on the other side a woman who was Mammachi being exploited by her husband she still coping with that situation and never stopped loving her husband. Her husband feels jealous when she gets appreciated from her pickle business and from violin classes. This shows that men dominant them and women accept as it is in our society. Roy ends up giving a message that Pappachi even not got that fame and was hardly doing great than her wife but her wife got fame and names both doing such small things because she was a pure soul. She still loves her husband. Roy given a message that a woman is to be respected because she deserves that.

Q. 3 Identify instances of ironical comment in the story.

Answer:

It was ironical that being so much exploited and brutally being beaten by Pappachi, Mammachi loved him when he was alive and even after he



was dead as she cried badly on his death. This was an irony which shows that love won against violence. Mammachi was a great woman but she was not great to herself as she accepted violence. She always got a feel of jealousy and anger from her husband but still, she loved him.

LANGUAGE WORK

Q. 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	B
Ornithologist	Study of the skin
Gerontologist	Study of cells
Ergonomist	Study of birds
Dermatologist	Study of old age
Cytologist	Study of the design of equipment

Answer:

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

1. A citation:
2. An epitaph:



3. A glossary:
4. An abstract:

Answer:

- A citation: it is also called a quote which is taken from a book or any written document, the citation is a word or a line taken from reference.
- An epitaph: A written phrase or a form of words in memory of someone after his or her death on a stone.
- A glossary: Different terms used in any book by an author, these terms are listed at the end of the book with their meanings to help out reader is called glossary.
- An abstract: A short piece of written material like a summary before plotting any document which describes the main idea of the document.
- A postscript: The extra note written at the end of any page or message describing things in more detail is called postscript.

