

I- DRAMA

Chapter - 1 : The Tempest

— William Shakespeare

Plot Summary

The Tempest contains one main plot and three sub-plots, all of which have been woven into the main plot.

The main plot has the story of Prospero's revenge on his enemies by using his magic powers. Prospero has been deprived of his dukedom by his brother, Antonio, with the support of Alonso, the King of Naples. Along with his young daughter, Miranda, he has been left at the mercy of the violent sea, but by the grace of God, he lands safely on an uninhabited island. He uses supernatural powers for taking revenge on his enemies. Prospero believes that the best revenge is forgiveness. But the evil-doers must not be forgiven too easily. They must be made to realise their guilt and they must be repentant. Through the agency of Ariel, Prospero succeeds in awakening the conscience of Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian. The play ends with a scene of repentance and reconciliation.

There is a sub-plot of conspiracy of Antonio and Sebastian to murder Alonso. Finding Alonso and other members of the group asleep, Antonio instigates Sebastian to murder his brother, Alonso. Sebastian agreed to this suggestion. The plot is ruined by Ariel. Just when these two are about to strike their possible victims, Ariel awakens the unsuspecting Gonzalo and Alonso. The sub-plot emphasizes the villainy of Sebastian and Antonio making Prospero's forgiveness nobler for these two. The sub-plot serves as an example of parallelism. Just like Antonio betrayed his brother Prospero, similarly Sebastian was betraying his brother, Alonso.

There is another comic sub-plot comprising of Caliban's intrigue against Prospero. In spite of Prospero's efforts to civilize Caliban, the latter remains a beast. This monster tries to play mischief with Miranda. He curses Prospero. When he meets the drunken Stephano and Trinculo, he hatches a plan to murder Prospero. The plot is upset by Ariel and all of these conspirators are chased away by Prospero's spirits appearing in the form of dogs and hounds. Caliban's intrigue is not closely connected with the main plot. This sub-plot provides a comic relief to the play and relaxes the tension of the viewer caused by the conspiracy of Antonio and Sebastian against Alonso.

The third sub-plot is of love between Ferdinand and Miranda. This sub-plot is directly interconnected with the main plot. Miranda, the daughter of Prospero and Ferdinand, the son of Prospero's enemy, Alonso fall in love with each other. Their love symbolises reconciliation, which is the main theme of the play. The union of Ferdinand and Miranda not only sets the seal of forgiveness upon Antonio and Alonso by Prospero but also binds Prospero and Alonso into a closer tie. Besides being an inseparable part of the main plot, this sub-plot also provides a romantic angle to the play.

Major Characters

PROSPERO

Prospero is the protagonist of the play. He is the prime agent, who manipulates the whole action of the play. He holds great control and influence over the other characters of the play. He is the one who brings the play to a cheerful ending.

At the outset of the play, he is shown to be a duke in exile who had ignored the affairs of the state in order to study philosophy and magic. His own brother abandons him and his little daughter on a small boat in the violent seas. It is his good fortune that the boat takes him to a deserted island.

He acts as a tyrant when he deals with Caliban and at times, even with his favourite spirit, Ariel. From this perspective, he is not a likeable person. He is a person of high prejudice. However, he is an affectionate father and dearly loves his daughter, Miranda.

He uses his magical powers to bring Ferdinand and Miranda closer. He feels happy when his plan to bring them together in love succeeds. When he realizes that the future of his daughter is secure, he is willing to retire to Milan.

Prospero thinks that he has tried to do well to others. He grants liberty to Ariel and makes a huge effort to civilize Caliban. He puts Ariel under his command and gets everything done through him.

Prospero has all reasons to take revenge upon his enemies. However, he chooses the path of forgiveness. He resolves to forgive his enemies if they are repentant of their past evil deeds.

Prospero is wise and extremely resourceful because he has magical powers. His wisdom makes him tolerant and charitable at the end of the play. However, he is unable to reconcile completely with his brother. He treats him with studied contempt and neglect. In retrospect, his pardon is just verbal, and there is great anger inside him for his enemies under the garb of forgiveness.

On one side, he is a terrible sorcerer full of rage, and on the other side, he is a noble, kind and generous brother. He forgives all his enemies and does that in an abstract and impersonal manner. The best quality he has is that he does not act against his own noble deeds.

MIRANDA

Miranda is the daughter of Prospero. She is young and beautiful. Ferdinand considers her to be a goddess when he sees her for the first time.

She is sympathetic in nature. Having seen the shipwreck, she feels bad for the suffering of those who had been stranded. The cries of the passengers knock against her heart. Her pity is aroused upon seeing Ferdinand labouring under the burden of drudgery imposed upon him by Prospero. She pleads with her father on behalf of Ferdinand.

She is free from hypocrisy and deceit. She is not affected by the sophisticated civilization and her innocence does not allow her to conceal anything. She frankly declares her love for Ferdinand with no attempt at false modesty.

Her smile comforts her father. When she learns from her father that she is a princess by birth, she does not regret at having lost the royal life. Quite surprisingly, she asks her father if there might be a blessing in their adversity.

She falls in love with Ferdinand at the first sight. She is gladly willing to share Ferdinand's heavy work of carrying logs just to keep him company. Although she is highly devoted to her father, yet she is not prejudiced against Ferdinand by Prospero's distaste for him.

ALONSO

Alonso is a villainous character in the play. However, he is not as wicked as Antonio and Sebastian.

He is the King of Naples and is an imperial personality. He had sinned in the past in his plot with Antonio against Prospero. However, he is struck with deep remorse as against Antonio and Sebastian, who remain unrepentant till the end.

Alonso dearly loves his only son, Ferdinand. When he thinks his son to have perished in the shipwreck, he cannot be consoled. He wanders about in the island in the only hope of finding him. However, he cannot find his son.

Upon finding his son alive later, his happiness knows no bounds. His depression over the marriage of his daughter, Claribel, with King of Tunis, and his irreparable grief over the expected loss of his son showcase his humane side. He is filled with remorse for his misdeeds of the past and atones before Prospero.

FERDINAND

Ferdinand is the son of Alonso, the King of Naples. He is the most charming character of the play. He appreciates the purity, innocence and beauty of Miranda. He is polite and respectful to Prospero in spite of the harsh treatment imposed by the latter. He is a perfect match for a girl like Miranda.

He is deeply in love with Miranda. He falls in love with her at the first sight. He treats a glimpse of Miranda as a compensation for all the harsh treatment and drudgery imposed by Prospero on him.

He is the hero of the romantic sub-plot of the play. He leaves a positive impression on the viewers from the beginning itself. During the shipwreck, he shows courage and presence of mind. He braves the fury of the sea waves. Later, he undergoes the hardships imposed by Prospero and proves himself to be a courageous and fearless young man. He acquires Miranda by worthily passing all the tests to be devised by Prospero.

He is a young man of spirit and decision. He boldly declares his love for Miranda in the presence of his father. His nobility overshadows the generosity of Prospero in many respects.

Ferdinand is deeply attached to his father and dearly loves him. He reciprocates the love of Alonso towards him. He aggrieves over the supposed loss of his father.

ARIEL

Ariel is a lovable and a pleasant character. He has a distinct role in the play. He successfully completes all the tasks assigned to him by Prospero in the play. He is primarily the spirit of air but is comfortable working in the sea and with fire as well.

He is an admirable character. As an agent of Prospero, he manipulates several events and forces most of the characters according to his own way. He represents the principle of goodness. As the spirit of air, he possesses all the qualities of air. He is light, swift and fast in his movements. He loves freedom.

At times, he is mischievous and plays tricks on other characters. He indulges in mischief to torment the evil-doers. He derives pleasure in playing tricks on Alonso, Stephano and Trinculo. He also gets pleasure in tormenting Caliban.

He acts under the command of Prospero. However, sometimes, he acts on his own also. He leads Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano into a muddy pool in order to upset their plot against Prospero. The best quality that he possesses is the feeling of pity. He feels pity for the sufferings of the enemies of Prospero. He remains invisible. He can penetrate anywhere and everywhere like air and fire.

CALIBAN

Caliban is the spirit of earth. He is a deformed creature. He is born as an illegitimate son of a witch, Sycorax. He is a savage beast working as a slave under the command of Prospero. He hates Prospero and curses him but has no choice other than

to follow his commands. His attempt to outrage the modesty of innocent Miranda creates hatred and disgust in the minds of the readers.

He is a cunning conspirator and lays out a detailed plan with Trinculo and Stephano to kill Prospero on the first chance he gets. He is more active, efficient and eager than his companions.

Despite his vices, he has a natural liking for poetry. He loves the beauty and music of nature. He arouses the sympathy of the readers due to his oppressed and enslaved condition. He, like Ariel, constantly yearns for freedom.

His simplicity becomes apparent when he is taken in by the bravado of Stephano. But when Stephano and Trinculo get attracted by mere trumpery and become indifferent to the plan of murdering Prospero, his admiration for Stephano turns into disgust.

He realises his mistake in taking the drunkard as a God and worshipping him. He considers it better to serve Prospero than to serve Stephano.

ANTONIO

Antonio is the brother of Prospero. He is a crafty and a sneering person. He is arrogant as well as rude. He is hardly nervous when the ship on which he is travelling, is in danger of being wrecked. He abuses the boatswain when the latter addresses him in a discourteous manner.

Antonio is the main villain of the play. He is ambitious and conspires against his brother, Prospero, the Duke of Milan. In order to seize his dukedom, he joins hands with Alonso, the King of Naples and gets Prospero expelled from the dukedom. He casts him adrift with his three-year old daughter, Miranda in a broken-down boat. He thinks that the boat will upturn and Prospero will perish along with his daughter.

After committing this crime, he attempts another crime. He plots against Alonso, who supported him to oust Prospero. He prompts Sebastian, brother of Alonso, to kill the latter and become the King of Naples. He is a sinner, a deceiver and a traitor. His conscience appears to be dead. Even when maddened by Ariel, his conscience is not pricked. On the other hand, he is full of hatred and resentment. Instead of feeling repentance, he draws his sword to slaughter.

He is a hardened criminal. He is full of ingratitude, treachery and breach of trust. Even after being pardoned by Prospero, he does not feel redeemed. He does not speak of repentance or shows any of it.

He is devoid of feelings. He is not moved by Alonso's grief at the supposed death of his son. When Gonzalo tries to console Alonso, Antonio taunts at him and makes fun of him. He is the villain without any conscience.

Minor Characters

GONZALO

Gonzalo was a Lord in the court of Alonso. He has a sympathetic nature and is loyal towards Alonso. Amidst the danger of being shipwrecked, he feels hopeful stating the boatswain has no drowning marks on him and the boatswain will die on land by hanging.

The sympathetic side of Gonzalo is revealed in the manner in which he tries to help Prospero at the time of his banishment. He supplies not only ample provisions on the boat but also a number of books which Prospero valued above his dukedom. He is too talkative and is capable of drawing anyone in long conversation.

SEBASTIAN

Sebastian is Alonso's brother. He conspires with Antonio to kill Alonso and become the King of Naples himself.

When Gonzalo tries to console Alonso, when the latter was aggrieved over the supposed death of his son, he further intensifies Alonso's grief by putting the blame of every misfortune on Alonso himself.

Just like Antonio, he has no feeling of repentance over what he has done.

STEPHANO

Stephano is an attendant at the court of Alonso. He is always drunk. He worships the bottle and creates absurd situations. He walks through the island of magic with his bottle.

The encounter of Caliban with Stephano and Trinculo provides a comic relief to the viewers. The song sung by the drunken Stephano is highly amusing. When Stephano sees Caliban, he thinks that he is seeing a creature with four legs. However, it is two legs each of Caliban and Trinculo. When the three of them get fully drunk and move towards Prospero's cell to murder him, Ariel deceives them by his music. They are led to a stinking pot where Stephano loses his bottle full of wine and creates a hilarious situation.

He agrees to be a part of Caliban's conspiracy to murder Prospero, but soon walks out of it. This shows that he has a casual attitude towards the plan of Caliban and is not a criminal at heart.

TRINCULO

Trinculo is a continuous drunken entertainer. He is the servant of Alonso and is brought ashore after the shipwreck. He is a dull fool and is incapable of providing any real action. However, he provides a comic relief to the viewers.

When he meets Caliban, he immediately dislikes him and his smashed insults. Still, he becomes a part of the Caliban's conspiracy to murder Prospero and takes over the island. However, Trinculo proves to be completely ineffective in this murder plot.

ADRIAN AND FRANCISCO

Adrian and Francisco are noblemen in the court of Alonso and his companions when the ship is wrecked. When Alonso is aggrieved over the supposed death of his son, Adrian tries to console him. Francisco also tries to be helpful to Alonso. The pair of Adrian and Francisco is cynically taunted by the pair of Sebastian and Antonio.

BOATSWAIN

The boatswain appears only in the first and the last scenes of the play. He angers the noblemen with his foul manners and words as well as rude remarks. However, he is competent and resourceful when the ship is facing the danger of being wrecked. He demands practical help rather than succumb to crying and praying.

MASTER OF SHIP AND MARINERS

The Master of the Ship and the Mariners only appear in first scene of the first Act. When the ship is facing the danger of being wrecked, the Master tries to hearten the sailors and gets them to sail the boat through the storm. However, one of the spells cast by Ariel makes them lose their heart and abandon the ship. They are safely whisked away and take the party back to Italy at the end of the play.

IRIS, CERES, JUNO, NYMPHS AND REAPERS

All these figures appear in act IV of the play at the time of engagement masque for Miranda and Ferdinand. Iris, Ceres and Juno are Goddesses from Roman mythology – Iris is the Goddess of rainbow, Ceres is the Goddess of agriculture and Juno is the Queen of the Gods. All these parts are performed by spirits, while the part of Ceres is played by Ariel.



Act-Wise Summary

ACT-IV—SCENE-I : SUMMARY

Prospero, being satisfied with Ferdinand, who has well stood the test, formally engages his daughter to him. Prospero, warns him to be careful to preserve the sanctity of love until they are married. Ferdinand promises to comply. Prospero then calls in Ariel and asks him to summon spirits to perform a masque for Ferdinand and Miranda. Soon, three spirits appear in the shapes of mythological figures of Iris (Juno's messenger and Goddess of Rainbow), Juno (Queen of the Gods) and Ceres (Goddess of Agriculture). This trio performs a masque celebrating the engagement of the lovers. First, Iris enters and asks Ceres to appear at Juno's wish, to celebrate a contract of true love. Ceres appears and then Juno enters. Juno and Ceres together bless the couple, with Juno wishing them honour and riches and Ceres wishing them natural prosperity and abundance. Ferdinand is awed by the spectacle and says that he would like to live on the island forever with Prospero as his father and Miranda as his wife. Juno and Ceres send Iris to fetch some nymphs and reapers to perform a country dance. Just as this dance begins, however, Prospero startles suddenly and then sends the spirits away. Prospero had forgotten about Caliban's plot against him and suddenly remembers that the hour has nearly come for Caliban and other conspirators to make attempt on Prospero's life.

Prospero shows signs of anger that alarms Ferdinand and Miranda. However, Prospero assures the couple that his anxiety is mainly due to his age. He says that a walk will soothe him. Prospero makes a short speech about the masque, saying that the actors, who performed the various roles in this masque, were all spirits who have now melted into thin air. Prospero further says that in course of time, this whole world including the grand buildings, temples, palaces, and the great globe itself would melt away in the same manner, leaving not a trace behind. Then, Prospero says that for human beings such stuff can be only seen in dreams and their little life is rounded with a sleep. Prospero tells Ferdinand that he wants to be alone to calm himself. Ferdinand and Miranda leave Prospero to himself.

Prospero now summons Ariel who seems to have made a mistake by not reminding Prospero of Caliban's plot before the beginning of the masque. Prospero now asks Ariel to tell him again what the three conspirators are upto. Ariel tells him of the drunken men's scheme to steal Prospero's books and kill him. Ariel reports that he used his music to lead these men through rough and prickly paths and then into a filthy pond. Prospero thanks his trustworthy spirit and the two set up a trap for the three potential assassins.

On a clothes line in Prospero's cell, Prospero and Ariel hang an array of fine apparel for the men to attempt to steal, after which they render themselves. Caliban, Trinculo and Stephano enter wet from the filthy pond. The fine clothing immediately distracts Stephano and Trinculo. They want to steal it. They pay no heed to the protests of Caliban who wants to stick to the plan and kill Prospero. They altogether ignore him. Soon after they touch the clothing, there is a noise of hunters. A pack of spirits in the shapes of hounds, set on by Ariel and Prospero, drive out the thieves.

ACT-V—SCENE-I : SUMMARY

The last scene of the play opens with Ariel telling Prospero that Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio are remorseful and desperate. Gonzalo is worried and grief-stricken at his King's pain. Prospero reassures Ariel that he will be compassionate in dealing with his enemies and asks Ariel to bring the group to him. While he is waiting for the King and his party to appear, Prospero ponders over what he has accomplished with magic and at the end promises that he will now give up his magic, bury his magic staff and throw away his magic books in the sea.

Immediately after this, Ariel enters with the royal party who appear to be in a trance and places them within the magic circle that Prospero had earlier drawn. With a few enchanted words, the spell is removed. Prospero, clothed in the garments of Duke of Milan – his rightful position – appears before them. In a gesture of reconciliation, Prospero embraces Alonso, who is filled with remorse and immediately gives Prospero his dukedom. He also embraces Gonzalo and then Prospero turns to Sebastian and Antonio. Prospero tells them that he will not charge them as traitors. Antonio is forgiven and required to renounce his claims on Prospero's dukedom.

Alonso continues to mourn the loss of his son. At this, Prospero declares that he too has lost his daughter. But, he means that he has lost her in marriage. He then pulls back a curtain to reveal Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess. Ferdinand explains to his father that he is engaged to Miranda and that this event occurred while he thought his father was dead. Alonso quickly welcomes Miranda and says he will be a second father to his son's love. At the sight of the couple, Gonzalo begins to cry and thanks God for having worked such a miracle.

Ariel enters with the Master of the boat and the boatswain. They say that the ship lays in the harbor safely but fails to explain how any of this occurred. Alonso is also puzzled but Prospero tells him not to trouble his mind with such matters.

After this, Ariel leads in Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo. They are still drunk. Prospero explains that these men plotted to murder him. Caliban repents and promises to seek grace. These three conspirators started becoming sober and are sent to decorate the cell of Prospero. Prospero invites his guests to spend the night in his cell where he will tell him some adventures of his past twelve years of being on this island. Ariel's last duty to Prospero is to provide calm seas when they sail the next morning.



II - ECHOES : A COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES

Chapter - 1 : The Singing Lesson

— Katherine Mansfield

Summary

'The Singing Lesson' is one of the short-stories from the collection *"The Garden Party and Other Stories"* (1922) by Katherine Mansfield. The story opens with the protagonist, Miss Meadows making her way to the music hall of the school. The very first line of the short-story tells us about the emotional state of Miss Meadows, who was filled **'with despair-cold, sharp despair'**.

Dressed in her usual academic attire, she headed to take up the first singing lesson of the day. Girls, of all ages passed her in the hall in their happy, jovial self, but Miss Meadows was immune to their happiness for her fiancé, Basil, had called off the wedding for unknown reasons. For Miss Meadows, a simple singing teacher in an all-girls' school life had suddenly turned cruel to her.

Walking down the hallway, she exchanged strange pleasantries with the Science Mistress whom she hated, more so for her sweetness that day. On reaching the class, she marched onto the stage looking down at the row of students before her, who were from the fourth, fifth and sixth forms. Unusual for her behavior, she gave two sharp taps with her baton for silence which irritated her students. She knew what they would be thinking of her, but nonetheless it didn't matter to her that day. In her mind, she thought of the letter which her fiancé had written to her. In the letter, Basil had mentioned how strongly he felt about their marriage being a mistake. He wrote

that the fault was in him for he was not a 'marrying man', hence Miss Meadows need not feel guilty about the matter. She noticed in the letter how he had written 'disgust' initially and had later crossed it out and written 'regret' instead.

Drowned in her thoughts, Miss Meadows walked to the piano where Mary Beazley, her favourite pupil, was waiting to play the accompaniments. Mary tried to engage Miss Meadows in conversation and greeted her with a beautiful yellow chrysanthemum, which had become more of a ritual between the two. But Miss Meadows completely ignored Mary's gesture, leaving her in tears, and announced for 'Page fourteen, A Lament'.

Fighting back her tears, Mary began to play. Addressing the class, Miss Meadows instructed them to sing without any expression and the result was indeed tragic. Miss Meadows led her students through the dreadful dirge all the while thinking of Basil. Each note played was a sigh, a sob and a crown of awful mournfulness. All throughout the session, Miss Meadows kept wondering the reason for Basil to write such a letter and trying to figure out as to what had prompted him to do so. Recalling their last conversation in the letter, Miss Meadows remembered how Basil had mentioned about buying a hat stand. Wondering, how could he have changed his mind so quickly, left her perplexed.

Once the song ended, Miss Meadows instructed the girls to use their imagination to find the meaning behind the words of the song and this time, to sing with expression. She sounded stoned and it happened to frighten the youngest student in the class. Once again, her thoughts began to flow with the flow of the song, as if setting its tone. Her inner turmoil began and she started contemplating the consequences of the wedding being called off. She concluded that in such circumstances, she would have to leave her job to avoid any disgrace and embarrassment. Initially too, people had expressed their surprise at her engagement with Basil for he was five years younger than her.

Her emotions reflected upon the speed of the music's flow. Beckoning with baton, the music sped up. The older girls were red in face while the younger ones began to cry. Miss Meadows was only physically present in the class, for in her mind, she was miles away begging Basil to love her or allow her to love him, for she felt that perhaps her love would be enough for both of them. All these pleas were useless. She had to disappear to save herself from any embarrassment. On this thought, the song ended and the voices of her students faded. Just at the moment a student entered the class, informing Miss Meadows about the headmistress's wish to see her.

Miss Meadows instructed the girls to be soft in their conversations while she was away and she walked to the headmistress, Miss Wyatt's office. There, she was handed a telegram which read like;

"Pay no attention to the letter, must have been made, bought hat-stand to-day-Basil."

Miss Meadows was surprised and couldn't take her eyes off the telegram. Concerned Miss Wyatt enquired if all was good, to which Miss Meadows blushed and responded in affirmation. Miss Wyatt reminded Miss Meadows that only serious news of utmost emergency were allowed in school and that for a good news, it should wait until school hours.

Happy once again and flying on the wings of hope, love and joy, Miss Meadows hurried back to the class and asked the girls to refer to the song on page number thirty-two, **"We come here today ... to congratulate."** She picked up the beautiful yellow chrysanthemum to hide her smile and with overlaid joy, she sang along with the girls, at the top of her voice which was high above all the other voices and reflected depth and was full of expression.

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Chapter - 2 : The Sound Machine

— Roald Dahl

Summary

The Sound Machine by Roald Dahl is a short, sharp and frightening story that throws light on the darker and selfish side of human nature. People exploit plants and flowers for their selfish uses and seem to ignore the 'emotions' within these living things.

Klausner, the protagonist, was a man who was obsessed with sound. He had a theory that there existed numerous sounds in the world that were inaudible to human ears as these sounds were of high frequencies. Hence, he invented a machine designed to receive high frequency sounds and translate them for the human ears to hear them.

On a summer evening when Klausner was working on this machine, Dr. Scott came to have a look and was curious to enquire about his invention. The invention, to specify, was a three-foot long black box which resembled a small coffin that contained a complex electronic mechanism. Dr. Scott did not seem convinced with Klausner's theory.

Klausner took his machine outdoors to test it. Initially, all he heard through the connected earphones was a mere humming noise. Though soon, he perceived a shriek each time his neighbor Mrs. Slanders cut the stem of a rose in her garden. These, to him, sounded like painful moans and cries of the roses that were being cut.

He, further decided to test the machine through another experiment. The next day, he took an axe and swung it into a large beech tree. Immediately, he heard an unsettling noise, similar to a scream. It was unlike any other sound that he had ever heard before. Klausner,

hence, rushed back to the house and call his doctor. He experienced a sudden urge to share this news and experience with someone and the doctor was his saviour. Dr. Scott agreed to come over and listen to the sounds.

The moment Klausner smacked the tree with the axe, a large branch came down crashing and smashed the sound machine to pieces, barely missing the two men. He asked Dr. Scott about the sound that he might have heard, but the physician was uncertain for he was attempting to save himself from any injury.

Klausner insisted that the cuts in the tree should be painted with iodine as an attempt to heal it.

He also commanded Dr. Scott to check on the tree the next day, and then they left the place, hand-in-hand.



Chapter - 3 : B. Wordsworth

— V.S. Naipaul

Summary

The short-story '**B Wordsworth**' by Naipaul unfolds various events at its core through the eyes of an unnamed young boy, who is the narrator of the story. This boy lived in Miguel Street. As a child, he had observed beggars coming to his home and crying for money, food and many other things. One day, a small man named B. Wordsworth approached the boy to see the bees in his yards.

Initially, the boy is quizzical and enquires details about this strange man. It is at this point that the readers begin to learn B. Wordsworth's poetic and a possibly fantastic view on life. He told the young boy that 'B' in his name stood for 'Black' and that he had a brother named 'White Wordsworth' with whom he shared a heart. 'B' told the boy that he was one of the greatest poets of all time, yet he had never sold a poem. In fact, he even tried to sell a poem based on mothers to the boy's mother for four cents, but was shoved off. When 'B' leaves the boy's place, interestingly he wishes to see him again, hence giving a hint that the relationship between the boy and 'B' will continue to grow.

Soon enough, the young boy happened to spot 'B' on the Miguel street, just a week later. As their relationship continues, 'B' and the boy spend their time together, walking, talking, meandering around the seaboard, living as poets and life explorers. One day 'B' shared a story with the boy; a story of two poets, a boy and a girl and the death of the girl and the unborn baby poet that she carried.

B. also tells the boy about a poem. This poem, he exclaimed, wasn't any ordinary poem like something that he had earlier tried to sell for four cents. Rather he claims that it was '**... the greatest poem in the world.**' Sharing the details, he said that he had been working on the poem for five years, till date; one line a month at one time. He shared the previous month's line with the boy which read as; "**The Past is deep.**" The line enamored the young boy so much that he hung onto the hope for more.

But, no more lines come from 'B' although the boy was optimistic for B. as well as his poetry, yet B. himself wasn't an enthusiastic person. The story begins to trickle to its end, just as the boy witnessed 'B' nearing him. B had shrunk in shape. The two have one last meeting wherein they express their emotions with tears rolling down their cheeks. B. made the boy promise to never visit him again. To soothe the boy, B. narrates him a funny story which wasn't so funny after all. B. tells the boy that he had lied everything about the girl poet and the baby. He said that the story of him writing the greatest poem was a farce too.

With this revelation, B. sends the boy home. With a heavy heart, the boy left with a great memory of a great poet' that he believed B. to be. About a year later, the boy walked along Alberto street but could find no sign of B.'s house. He realized that B.'s house had been pulled down and had been replaced by a big, two-storied building. All the trees surrounding B.'s house had been cut down and there was wreck and concrete everywhere. Everything belonging to B. or anything that spoke of B.'s association had been erased, as though B. Wordsworth never existed.



III - REVERIE : A COLLECTION OF POEMS

Chapter - 1 : Dover Beach

— Matthew Arnold

Historical Background

In the poem 'Dover Beach', Matthew Arnold writes about the effect science has had on religion. Not long before the publication of this poem, **Charles Darwin** had published his work '**On the Origin of Species**', in which he had documented his studies on evolution. Arnold's poem is read as a record of the clash between science and religion.

The poem is a kind of seismological record of the shock waves in traditional religion brought about by the New Science in the mid-nineteenth century. The geology of Charles Lyell and others was forcing the Europeans and Americans to rethink how life began on the planet. Lyell's discoveries of fossils dating back more than one million years were making it increasingly difficult to accept the traditional notion in the book of Genesis that the world is the work of a creator, a mere six or seven thousand years ago.

Summary

The Naturalistic description of the Dover Beach: It is the night hour of the day and the sea is calm and quiet, filled with water at high-tide. The moon shines brightly upon then arrow English channel. Staring at the French coast at a far off distance, the poet sees the light gleaming on it. Later, as the light goes off, he concentrates on the English shore instead. The famous cliffs of Dover stand tall with their large wavering reflections in the quiet sea. The poet asks his lady to come to the window to enjoy the sunset night-air coming from where the sea meets the moonlit land of France.

He asks her to listen to the continuous and the irritating sound of the pebbles drawn by the waves. The waves are drawing the stones backwards to the sea and then again throw them back onto high shore on their return journey.

The sound of the waves begins, stops and then begins again. This trembling rhythm continues slowly. But now, it brings the eternal note of sadness. The monotonous rhythm of the waves makes the poet depressed, hence changing the tone of the poem from cheerful to melancholy.

The 'eternal note' of human misery: Continuing with the thought of 'eternal' human miseries and sadness, the poet is reminded of the ancient Greek playwright; Sophocles, who had also heard the sounds of the Aegean Sea and then written tragedies on human misery. The images of human suffering surfaced like muddy water flowing in and out.

Similar to this, the poet has also found the feeling of sadness on hearing a similar sound beside the Northern Sea, located far away from Sophocles, Aegean Sea, hence emphasizing upon the universality of human grief and misery.

Fading away of 'Faith' from society: Herein, the poet laments the lack of faith in the modern society, comparing faith with the receding tides. Human faith, that exists in the religion and in the fellow beings, once covered the earth like the sea water. It was at its fullest as the tide is now. Faith covered the earth like the folds of a bright girdle folding well. It was the time when faith made everything easy, solved numerous problems, helped in uniting people and brought meaning to life.

However, the poet regrets that those days are now a thing of past. Faith is fading away from the society just like the waves from the shore. The poet, now, only hears the sorrowful roar of the retreating tides. It leaves behind the chill night-wind whistling over the desolate beach with dull edges of the cliffs and raw pebbles. The poet has, thus created a fearful picture of the underlying nakedness of the colourful modern world.

The poet without much hope from the new world: Here, the poet urges his ladylove to 'be true to one another' as the new world which appears to be so beautiful, does not evoke much hope in him. To him, this dreamy modern world is not really a source of joy, love, light, certainty, peace or a reliever of pain. Hence, this chaotic, artificial world does not induce much hope in him.

The poet compares the new modern world to a dark place wherein we are completely unaware of what we are doing. We are in a confused struggle as ignorant soldiers fight with each other in the darkness. Hence, the poet assesses the morally corrupted modern world, full of vanity.



Word Meanings

• **Fair**—bright • **Straits**—English channel • **Gleams**—shine brightly, especially with reflected light • **Cliffs**—steep rocks on the sea shore • **Glimmering**—shine faintly with a wavering light • **Tranquil bay**—quiet sea • **Moon-blanchd land**—moon-lit land • **Grating**—irritating • **Fling**—to throw • **Strand**—shore • **Tremulous**—trembling • **Cadence**—modulation or inflection of voice • **Sophocles**—the name of an ancient Greek playwright • **Aegean**—Aegean sea • **Turbid**—muddy water • **Distant**—far-of • **Furled**—folding • **Melancholy**—sad, sorrowful • **Retreating**—declining • **Breath (here)**—whistling of the night wind • **Drear**—dull • **Naked**—raw • **Shingles**—pebbles • **Land of dreams (here)**—dreamy modern world • **Certitude**—certainty • **Darkling plain**—a dark unknown place • **Armies**—soldiers

Chapter - 2 : We Are The Music Makers

— Arthur William Edgar O' Shaughnessy

Summary

The Various artists and their soul-searching: The poem begins with a straightforward appeal to the artists across different realms, calling them 'the music-makers' and 'dreamers of dreams.' Without mentioning any particular art-form, O' Shaughnessy ensures to give equal status to artists across the globe and across different segments. **The poem gives art an encompassing definition.**

Further, the poet discusses about the soul-searching aspect of the artists. How they wander alone by the sea-breakers and sit by the desolate streams. He focuses on the desolation of spirits of these artists, an ache in their hearts that actually shapes up their creativity which is worth such admiration. Speaking about the travails these artists go through, Arthur calls them 'world losers' and 'world forsakers.' This highlights the difficult life the artists lead to shape up their creation, mainly their sole-survival on their art. 'The pale moon' suggests the meager sustenance they manage to gain for themselves through their art.

Despite that, the artists remain isolated and aloof from the mainstream society, being the ultimate "movers and shakers". The poet believes that artists are rebellious for they are capable of stirring powerful emotions in the minds of the people. Through their art, they can bring a change in the world.

The creations of artists; the contribution to the world: The immortal songs created by the musicians or the poets are capable of building new cities and civilizations in people's minds. They inspire people to think and feel things that they otherwise don't pay heed to. Similarly, a writer is capable of shaping a glorious empire through his fabulous stories. The artists are responsible for taking an empire to its artistic heights.

An artist's fantasy motivates people to 'dream at pleasure.' Men are mortal but the works of art transcend the concept of time and space and create a lasting impact on the civilization. A person with a dream is fit to move forward and do productive things for the society. He can wear the crown of achievement. The artists influence people's mindset by giving them the freedom to bring about a revolution for betterment. They are almost equated with the leaders of tomorrow for the kind of effect their works leave on the minds and soul of people.

Applauding the Power of artists: The poet refers to the fact of artists being present in all the ages. In the past, the artists built the city of Nineveh that was abandoned in 612 BC. The poet tries to equate art with divinity as he alludes to the Biblical cities of Nineveh and Babel. The people of Babel were dedicated to build a tower as high as heaven. It is believed that Nineveh was created by artists out of distress, whereas, Babel was created out of joy. Both are symbolic of an artist's ability to destroy and create.

Artists are capable of reconstructing the old world into a new world by their prophecy. The dreams of the artists allow them to achieve immortality in the world. Dreams and aspirations of each age is replaced by new dreams and aspirations of another. Thus, the music-makers of this world are the most precious gift to mankind, who not only create art but also destroy it for a better tomorrow.

Word Meanings

- **Lone**—having no companions, alone, solitary or single
- **Desolate**—an uninhabited place, giving an impression of bleak emptiness
- **Gleams**—shine brightly, especially with reflected light
- **Ditties**—short and simple songs
- **Fabulous**—extraordinary
- **Trample**—tread on and crush
- **Sighing**—to let out one's breath audibly as from sorrow or weariness
- **Mirth**—gladness, amusement, happiness