

## **AN ASTROLOGER'S DAY**

1:What was the professional equipment of the astrologer?

**ans:** The professional equipment of the astrologer consisted of a dozen cowrie shells, a square piece of cloth with obscure mystic charts on it, notebook and a bundle of Palmyra writing.

2. Describe the appearance of the astrologer.

**Ans:** The Astrologer's forehead was resplendent with secret ash and vermillion. His eyes sparkled with sharp abnormal gleam. People took it for a prophetic light. He had painted forehead and the dark whiskers. He wound a saffron-coloured turban around his head. This colour scheme attracted people.

3. Secret past of the Astrologer.

**Ans:** The night the astrologer met Guru Nayak, he told his wife about his past. He lived in a village 100 km from there. He was from a farmer's family. One day in a drunken brawl he stabbed Guru Nayak and pushed him into a well. He thought he was dead and ran away from his native place to avoid arrest.

4. What did the astrologer tell Guru Nayak about his past and future?

**Ans:** The astrologer called the stranger Guru Nayak and told him that he was once stabbed and pushed into a well. His murderer was now dead. He was crushed under a lorry. So there was no need to search for him. It was better for him to go home and never to return. He could make fortunes in the north. Guru Nayak was happy to hear this.

Q1. What was the astrologer's professional equipment?

**Ans.** The astrologer knew nothing of his profession. But he had all the professional equipment with him. His articles included a dozen cowrie shells, a square piece of cloth with a strange chart on it, a notebook and some other little things.

Q2. How did he give his face the look of an astrologer?

**Ans.** The astrologer's knew nothing of his profession. But he gave himself the look of a perfect astrologer. His forehead was marked with sacred ash and vermilion. He wore a saffron coloured turban round his head.

Q3. Where did he sit every day?

**Ans.** The astrologer would sit under a tree on a public road. It was a busy road. A crowd of people always kept moving up and down, from morning till night.

Q4. Who were the other professionals on the road where the astrologer carried on his business?

Ans. The astrologer carried on his business under a tree on a public road. Besides him, the other professionals on that road were- medicine-seller, magicians, sellers of stolen goods, a seller of cheap cloth and a vendor of fried groundnut.

Q5. What were the different names given by the vendor of fried groundnuts to his groundnuts?

Ans. Every day the vendor would give his groundnuts fancy names to attract the customers. He would call it 'Bombay ice-cream' one day. The next day he would call it 'Delhi almond'. On the third day, he would call it 'Rajas delicacy' and so on.

Q6. What was the source of light used by the astrologer during the evening hours?

Ans. The astrologer had no light arrangement of his own. There was a groundnut vendor sitting near him. The groundnut vendor had a light above the heap of his groundnut. The astrologer would do his work by this light. Besides this, the lights from the nearby shops also helped him.

Q7. How does Narayan describe the astrologer's knowledge of astronomy?

Ans. The astrologer had no knowledge of astrology or astronomy. He knew as little of it as his customers. He did his job through guesswork and through common understanding of human psychology. First he would let a customer speak for at least ten minutes. It gave him enough stuff for the answer.

Q8. What would the astrologer have done if he had continued to live in his old village?

Ans. The astrologer had to leave his village due to some reason. But if he had continued to live there, he would have carried on the work of his forefathers- tilling the land, living, marrying and ripening in his cornfield and ancestral home.

Q9. How could the astrologer 'guess' his 'clients' problems?

Ans. The astrologer did not know anything of the stars or astrology. It was only a matter of practice and guesswork for him. He would always say things which pleased his customers. First, he would let a customer speak for at least ten minutes. It gave him enough stuff for the answer.

Q10. What was the challenge thrown by the client to the astrologer?

Ans. The client said to the astrologer that he had to ask questions and that he was ready to pay the price he wanted. But he challenged the astrologer that if he was found bluffing, he would have to return his money with interest.

Q11. How could the astrologer rightly guess the past of the client?

Ans. The astrologer already knew that stranger. He was the same man, Guru Nayak, whom the astrologer had stabbed a few years ago in his village. He had pushed the man into a well and left him for dead. That was why he could rightly guess the past of the stranger.

Q12. What did the astrologer tell his wife?

Ans. He told his wife that a great load was gone from him. All these years, he had thought that he had the blood of a man on his hands. And it was for this reason that he had run away from his village.

'He is alive!' he said.

What details does the astrologer give the stranger about his past?

→ The astrologer gives the stranger various shocking details about the past events of his life, tells the stranger various things precisely because he has a chance to see his face. The astrologer recognizes him when a stranger lights his cigar. Aside from the trick, Guru Nayak cannot recognize an astrologer. The astrologer tells him about his past event and says that he was attacked by a stranger with a knife on his chest. He even gives him his name and address. He informs him of the culprit's death four months ago. After all, the astrologer very tactfully advises him to move to his hometown immediately to ensure the safety of his life.

Why does he advise the stranger to go home immediately?

→ The astrologer is a very smart person. In the past, he was even suspected of criminal offences. A stranger he met during the day was a criminal named Guru Nayak. When an astrologer recognizes someone as Guru Nayak, he tries to get rid of mental stress. The astrologer himself tried to kill Guru Nayak. When he saw Guru Nayak in Margudi, he trembled. When he knows the intention of Guru Nayak, he tries to move him back to the north. He didn't want to see Guru Nayak again. He wanted to live a life without fear in Malgudi. He told him about the possible dangers in the life of strangers and suggested going home immediately.

How does the astrologer's appearance help him attract customers? How does he help the customers satisfy their needs?

→ The astrologer here in this story is an intelligent person, he always prepares well before starting a business, decorating his business by placing various astrological tools like cowrie shells, mystical astrological charts, Palmyra scriptures, etc. on his square piece of cloth. He wears holy ash and vermilion on his forehead and a saffron-coloured turban on his head. His eyes are constantly searching for his customers. He dresses like an astrologer. His looks help him introduce himself as a professional astrologer. Because of his attractive appearance, most of the clients believe in him and visit him to hear his predictions and he helps his clients by making assumptions about their past, present and future life, relationships, marriage, money, problems, etc. He listens to the problems of his customers for ten minutes, in less than five minutes he gets many clues asks them questions, thanks to his many years of practice and

experience. He always tries to make matching assumptions and helps his customers to satisfy their needs.

b. How do you characterise the astrologer's attitude toward the stranger?

→ Here the astrological activities of the astrologer offer him the necessary salary for the smooth functioning of a family. He starts his business at noon and works hard with his shrewd mind to make money. His presentation is very much appreciated. When he sees a stranger standing in front of him, he sees him as his potential customer. During closing time, he invites him instead of moving to his house. This shows his greedy attitude. The way he bargains with the stranger has proved his money-minded concept. He tries his best to convince the stranger for the purpose of money. He doesn't know about astrology but he tries his best to satisfy the stranger through his assumptions for the sake of money only. Also, his acts of convincing the stranger show his fake attitude. He advises the stranger to move to his hometown immediately which shows his shrewdness and hypocrisies in his attitude.

c. What details does the astrologer give the stranger about his past?

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d. Why does he advise the stranger to go home immediately?

→ The astrologer is a very smart person. In the past, he was even suspected of criminal offences. A stranger he met during the day was a criminal named Guru Nayak. When an astrologer recognizes someone as Guru Nayak, he tries to get rid of mental stress. The astrologer himself tried to kill Guru Nayak. When he saw Guru Nayak in Margudi, he trembled. When he knows the intention of Guru Nayak, he tries to move him back to the north. He didn't want to see Guru Nayak again. He wanted to live a life without fear in Malgudi. He told him about the possible dangers in the life of strangers and suggested going home immediately.

e. What is your reaction to the conversation between the astrologer and his wife?

→ I am very happy that this astrologer got rid of his guilt and fear and made some money that day. I am surprised that these people lead a simple lifestyle. The coins collected by an astrologer in one day are enough to keep them alive until the next day.

Reference to the context

a. Suspense is the feeling of anticipation you may have as you read. In this story, what details contributed to your feelings of suspense and surprise? Explain.

→ This story is a nice combination of suspense and surprise. The story begins with a description of the astrologer and his activities. When a stranger appears before the astrologer in the evening, the astrologer sees him as his potential client and bets for a satisfactory answer. The astrologer tells him various facts of his life during his prophecies, he tells exactly his past events, his name and address, and it is precisely these details that made me feel surprised. The stranger is too excited and satisfied, but I feel a kind of suspense. One question arises in my mind: "How did he answer accurately?" This particular suspense surprises when the astrologer tells his wife the details of his past after dinner. Here I find the answer to my feeling of suspense. The details of the astrologer's story solved the mystery of suspense and created surprises for me and all the readers.

b. Analyze the conflicts in "An Astrologer's Day." Explain how the conflicts are resolved and what they reveal about the characters involved in the story.

→ Conflicts arise in the story when a stranger appears as a client of the astrologer on the site to consult him, the astrologer packs up his things and is ready to call him one day. When the stranger smokes his cigar, he sees his face in the light of the game, and for some obscure reason, the astrologer feels uncomfortable and refuses the challenge, but is forced to say something to the stranger in order to please him. He is surprised when the astrologer tells him about his past life and agrees to stop looking for his enemy who would have been knocked down under a truck. The astrologer guarantees a safe life in the future.

c. "All right. I will speak. But will you give me a rupee if what I say is convincing? Otherwise I will not open my mouth, and you may do what you like."

i. Who is the speaker?

→ The speaker is the astrologer.

ii. Who is he speaking to?

→ He is speaking to Guru Nayak.

iii. What does the expression 'open my mouth' mean?

→ The expression "open your mouth" means conveying convincing information about the stranger.

d. Description helps readers visualize what is happening in a story. What details and techniques does the author use to describe the astrologer?

→ The author of this story uses various details and narrative techniques to describe the protagonist of the astrologer. From beginning to end, the author uses various details in his narrative to tell the story. He talked about the astrologer's past, his daily life, business and his smart calculations with customers, his business preparation, meetings with Guru Nayak and

conversations with his wife. The author introduced every detail of the astrologer and aroused curiosity and surprise with his narrative skills.

e. Irony is a contrast between appearances and reality. What is ironic about Guru Nayak's meeting with the astrologer?

→ The irony of the situation centers around the meeting of Guru Nayak with the astrologer. Here we find Guru Nayak, who asks the astrologer about the man who once stabbed him in the chest with a knife. He doesn't know that the culprit is the astrologer. Because of the darkness and the astrologer's new look, Guru Nayak cannot recognize him. The lifelong burden for the astrologer is the murder of Guru Nayak. He is quite surprised to find Guru Nayak alive. The information from the astrologer makes Guru Nayak feel satisfied. The astrologer's ruse is very ironic. Here the victim turns to the culprit to find the right solution. Finally, Guru Nayak feels good to hear the prophecies of the (guilty) astrologer. Here both characters finally feel good.

f. How does the astrologer's manner of dress suit his character?

→ The protagonist of the story is an astrologer. The first part of the story describes the dress and appearance that the astrologer wears when performing his duties. He is usually disguised as an astrologer and his forehead is lit with holy ash and vermilion. He wraps a saffron-coloured turban on his head, his dress and his appearance match his character and become a point of attraction. The astrologer easily fools his customers and has clever ways of getting the job done. He does a functional analysis of human problems.

a. The astrologer attracts many customers in the street who are pleased and astonished by what he tells them. What does this tell you about the people of the town walking in the street?

→ The main character here in this story is an astrologer. His astrology business depends on his astrological tools, his sense of dress, and his guesswork. The way he dresses suits his character. He is pretty smart in his astrology business. He dresses perfectly as an astrologer, his saffron turban and dress help him a lot in attracting his customers. He is delicately presented so that his customers will believe that his dress' savvy makes his customers consider him a wise astrologer.

**: Author of the short story 'An Astrologer's Day'**

**R K NARAYAN**