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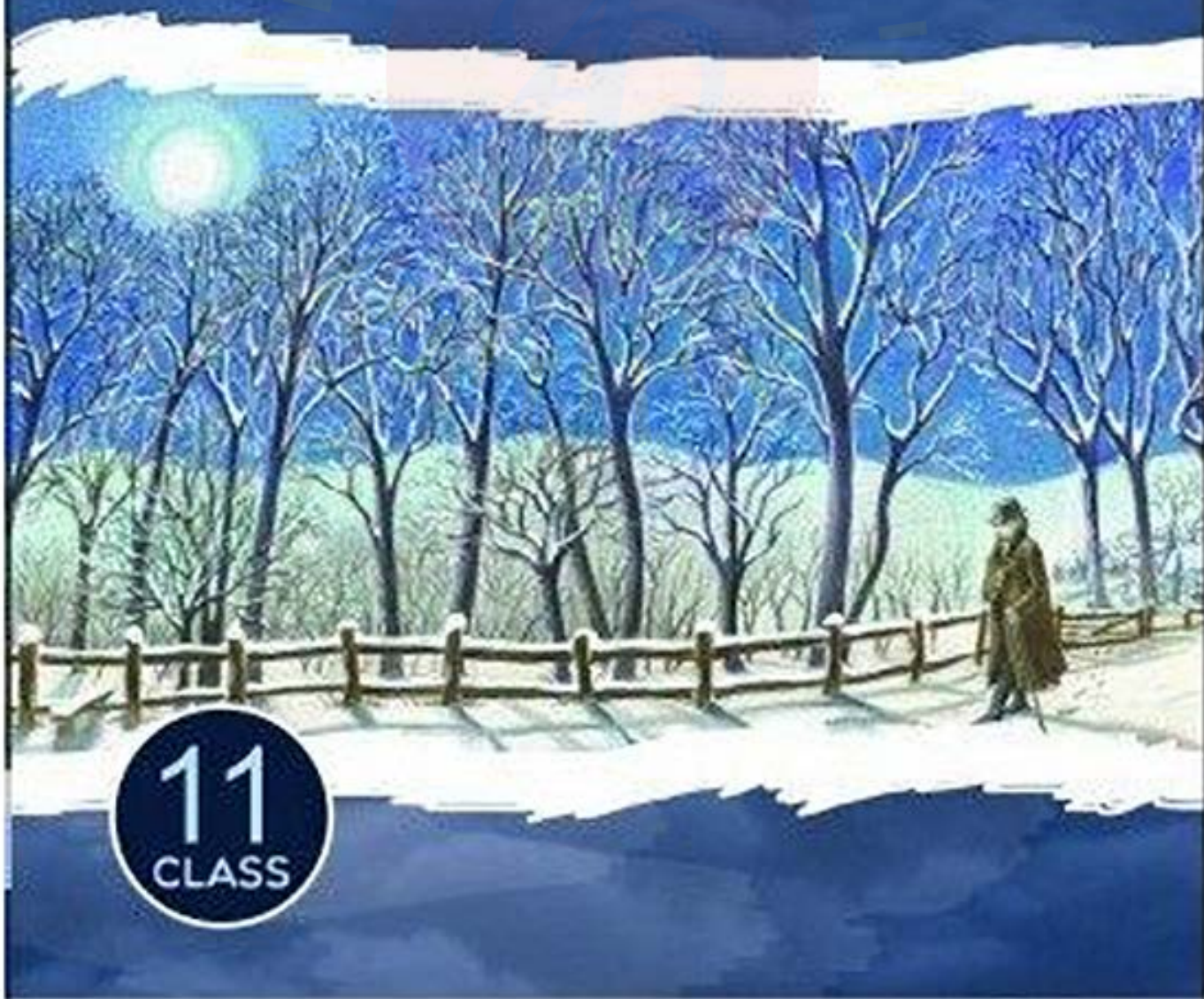
Success in your own hand series



Self-Help to I.S.C.

ECHOES

A COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES



11
CLASS

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Echoes

Structure and plot of Short story

A short story is a short work of fiction. Fiction, as you know, is prose writing about imagined events and characters. Prose writing differs from poetry in that it does not depend on verses, meters or rhymes for its organization and presentation.

American literature contains some of the world's best examples of the short story. Readers around the world enjoy the finely crafted stories of American writers such as O. Henry, Stephen Crane, Jack London, Mark Twain and Edgar Allen Poe.

What makes these authors such remarkable short story writers? They are true masters at combining the five key elements that go into every great short story: **character, setting, conflict, plot** and **theme**.

Character

A character is a person, or sometimes even an animal, who takes part in the action of a short story or other literary work.

Setting

The setting of a short story is the time and place in which it happens. Authors often use descriptions of landscape, scenery, buildings, seasons or weather to provide a strong sense of setting.

Plot

A plot is a series of events and character actions that relate to the central conflict.

Conflict

The conflict is a struggle between two people or things in a short story. The main character is usually on one side of the central conflict.

On the other side, the main character may struggle against another important character, against the forces of

nature, against society, or even against something inside himself or herself (feelings, emotions, illness).

Theme

The theme is the central idea or belief in a short story.

The Short Story

This plot diagram shows how the main events in a short story are organized into a plot.



The Five Elements of Plot Structure

1. Exposition : The Beginning

Every story must have a beginning. The start, or exposition, is where the characters and setting are established. During this part of the novel, the conflict or main problem is also introduced.

2. Rising Action : Introduction of the Problem or Conflict

After the characters and main problem have been established, the main problem or conflict is dealt with by some kind of action. In this part of the story, the main character is in crisis. This is the place for tension and excitement. The complication can arise through a character's conflict with society, nature, fate, or a number of themes. In this part of the story the main character is aware a conflict has arisen and takes some kind of step to battle this crisis.

3. Climax : The High Point

The climax is the high point of the story. It is the main event or danger that the character faces. This is the darkest moment, the worst challenge the character must oppose. At this point it looks as if the character will fail, and will never get what he/she wants. The turning point may be either physical

or emotional. In a romance, the girl may turn the hopeful lover down, in an action story, the character may be surrounded by enemies with no chance of escape.

4. **Falling Action** : Winding Down

Following the climax, the story begins to slowly wind down. Falling action, one of the two final story elements, shows the result of the actions or decisions the character has made. This eventually leads to the final part of the novel, the crisis resolution.

5. **Resolution** : The End

The resolution, also often called denouement, which is French for “to untie” or “unraveling”, is the conclusion of the story. Here, the conflicts are resolved, all loose ends are tied up, and the story concludes with either a happy or sad ending.

CHAPTER 1

SALVATORE

W. Somerset Maugham

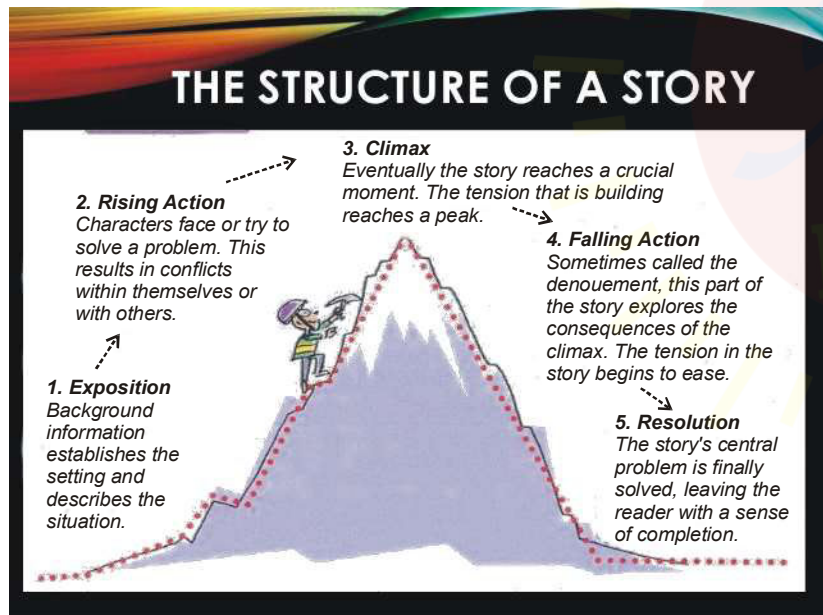
Story

I wonder if I can do it.

I knew Salvatore first when he was a boy of fifteen with a pleasant face, a laughing mouth and care-free eyes. He used to spend the morning lying about the beach with next to nothing on and his brown body was as thin as a rail. He was full of grace. He was in and out of the sea all the time swimming with the clumsy, effortless stroke common to the fisher boat.

Scrambling up the jagged rocks on his hard feet, for except on Sundays never wore shoes, he would throw himself into the deep water with a scream of delight. His father was a fisherman who owned his own little vineyard and Salvatore acted as nursemaid to his two younger brothers. He shouted to them to come inshore when they ventured out too far and made them dress when it was time to climb the hot, vineclad hill for the frugal midday meal.

But boys in those Southern parts grow apace and in a little while he was madly in love with a pretty girl who lived on the Grande Marina. She had eyes like forest pools and held herself like a daughter of the Caesars. They were affianced, but they could not marry till Salvatore had done his military service, and when he left the island which he had never left in his life before, to become a sailor in the navy of King Victor Emmanuel, he wept like a child. It was hard for one who had never been less free than the birds to be at the beck and call of others, it was harder still to live in a battleship with strangers instead of in a little white cottage among the vines; and when he was ashore, to walk in noisy, friendless cities with streets so crowded that he was frightened to cross them, when he had been used to silent paths and the mountains



and the sea. I suppose it had never struck him that Ischia, which he looked at every evening (it was like a fairy island in the sunset) to see what the weather would be like next day, or Vesuvius, pearly in the dawn, had anything to do with him at all; but when he ceased to have them before his eyes he realized in some dim fashion that they were as much part of him as his hands and his feet. He was dreadfully homesick. But it was hardest of all to be parted from the girl he loved with all his passionate young heart. He wrote to her (in his childlike handwriting) long, ill-spelt letters in which he told her how constantly he thought of her and how much he longed to be back. He was sent here and there, to Spezzia, to Venice, to Ban and finally to China. Here he fell ill of some mysterious ailment that kept him in hospital for months. He bore it with the mute and uncomprehending patience of a dog. When he learnt that it was a form of rheumatism that made him unfit for further service his heart exulted, for he could go home; and he did not bother, in fact he scarcely listened, when the doctors told him that he would never again be quite well. What did he care when he was going back to the little island he loved so well and the girl who was waiting for him?

When he got into the rowing-boat that met the steamer from Naples and was rowed ashore he saw his father and mother standing on the jetty and his two brothers, big boys now, and he waved to them. His eyes searched among the crowd that waited there, for the girl. He could not see her. There was a great deal of kissing when he jumped up the steps and they all, emotional creatures, cried a little when they exchanged their greetings. He asked where the girl was. His mother told him that she did not know; they had not seen her for two or three weeks; so in the evening when the moon was shining over the placid sea and the lights of Naples twinkled in the distance he walked down to the Grande Marina to her house. She was sitting on the doorstep with her mother. He was a little shy because he had not seen her for so long. He asked her if she had not received the letter that he had written to her to say that he was coming home. Yes, they had received a letter, and they had been told by another of the island boys

that he was ill. Yes, that was why he was back; was it not a piece of luck? Oh, but they had heard that he would never be quite well again. The doctor talked a lot of nonsense, but he knew very well that now he was home again he would recover. They were silent for a little, and then the mother nudged the girl. She did not try to soften the blow. She told him straight out, with the blunt directness of her race that she could not marry a man who would never be strong enough to work like a man. They had made up their minds, her mother and father and she, and her father would never give consent.

When Salvatore went home he found that they all knew. The girl's father had been to tell them what they had decided, but they had lacked the courage to tell him themselves. He wept on his mother's bosom. He was terribly unhappy, but he did not blame the girl. A fisherman's life is hard and it needs strength and endurance. He knew very well that a girl could not afford to marry a man who might not be able to support her. His smile was very sad and his eyes had the look of a dog that has been beaten, but he did not complain, and he never said a hard word of the girl he had loved so well.

Then, a few months later, when he had settled down to the common round, working in his father's vineyard and fishing, his mother told him that there was a young woman in the village who was willing to marry him. Her name was Assunta.

"She's as ugly as the devil," he said.

She was older than he, twenty-four or twenty-five, and she had been engaged to a man who, while doing his military service, had been killed in Africa. She had a little money of her own and if Salvatore married her she could buy him a boat of his own and they could take a vineyard that by happy chance happened at that moment to be without a tenant. His mother told him that Assunta had seen him at the festa and had fallen in love with him. Salvatore smiled his sweet smile and said he would think about it. On the following Sunday, dressed in the stiff black clothes in which he looked so much less well than in the ragged shirt and trousers of every day, he went up to High Mass at the parish church and placed

himself so that he could have a good look at the young woman. When he came down again he told his mother that he was willing.

Well, they were married and they settled down in a tiny white-washed house in the middle of a handsome vineyard. Salvatore was now a great, big husky fellow, tall and broad, but still with that ingenuous smile and those trusting, kindly eyes that he had as a boy. He had the most beautiful manners I have ever seen in my life. Assunta was a grim-visaged female, with decided features, and she looked old for her years. But she had a good heart and she was no fool. I used to be amused by the little smile of devotion that she gave her husband when he was being very masculine and masterful; she never ceased to be touched by his gentle sweetness. But she could not bear the girl who had thrown him over, and notwithstanding Salvatore's smiling expostulations she had nothing but harsh words for her. Presently children were born to them.

It was a hard enough life. All through the fishing season towards evening he set out in his boat with one of his brothers for the fishing grounds. It was a long pull of six or seven miles, and he spent the night catching the profitable cuttlefish. Then there was the long row back again in order to sell the catch in time for it to go on the early boat to Naples. At other times he was working in his vineyard from dawn till the heat drove him to rest and then again, when it was a trifle cooler, till dusk. Often his rheumatism prevented him from doing anything at all and then he would lie about the beach, smoking cigarettes, with a pleasant word for everyone notwithstanding the pain that racked his limbs. The foreigners who came down to bathe and saw him there said that these Italian fishermen were lazy devils.

Sometimes he used to bring his children down to give them a bath. They were both boys and at this time the elder was three and the younger less than two. They sprawled about at the water's edge stark naked and Salvatore standing on a rock would dip them in the water. The elder one bore

it with stoicism, but the baby screamed lustily. Salvatore had enormous hands, like legs of mutton, coarse and hard from constant toil, but when he bathed his children, holding them so tenderly, drying them with delicate care; upon my word they were like flowers. He would seat the naked baby on the palm of his hand and hold him up, laughing a little at his smallness, and his laugh was like the laughter of an angel. His eyes then were as candid as his child's.

I started by saying that I wondered if I could do it and now I must tell you what it is that I have tried to do. I wanted to see whether I could hold your attention for a few pages while I drew for you the portrait of a man, just an ordinary fisherman who possessed nothing in the world except a quality which is the rarest, the most precious and the loveliest that anyone can have. Heaven only knows why he should so strangely and unexpectedly have possessed it. All I know is that it shone in him with a radiance that, if it had not been unconscious and so humble, would have been to the common run of men hardly bearable. And in case you have not guessed what the quality was, I will tell you. Goodness, just goodness.

Somerset Maugham (1874-1965)

"Salvatore", 1936

Glossary

1. clumsy- awkward.
2. jagged- with rough, pointed often sharp edges.
3. scream- cry.
4. affianced- engaged to be married.
5. pearly- like a pearl.
6. ceased- stopped.
7. dreadfully- very badly.
8. mysterious- strange.
9. ailment- illness.
10. mute- silent.

11. patience- ability to stay calm and accept a delay or something annoying.
12. rheumatism- a disease that makes joints stiff.
13. exulted- felt very happy.
14. scarcely- hardly.
15. jetty- a platform built out into the sea.

About the Author

W. Somerset Maugham, in full William Somerset Maugham (born Jan. 25, 1874, Paris, France—died Dec. 16, 1965, Nice), English novelist, playwright, and short-story writer whose work is characterized by a clear unadorned style, cosmopolitan settings, and a shrewd understanding of human nature.

Maugham was orphaned at the age of 10; he was brought up by an uncle and educated at King's School, Canterbury. After a year at Heidelberg, he entered St. Thomas' medical school, London, and qualified as a doctor in 1897. He drew upon his experiences as an obstetrician in his first novel, *Liza of Lambeth* (1897), and its success, though small, encouraged him to abandon medicine. He traveled in Spain and Italy and in 1908 achieved a theatrical triumph—four plays running in London at once—that brought him financial security. During World War I he worked as a secret agent. After the war he resumed his interrupted travels and, in 1928, bought a villa on Cape Ferrat in the south of France, which became his permanent home.

His reputation as a novelist rests primarily on four books: *Of Human Bondage* (1915), a semi-autobiographical account of a young medical student's painful progress toward maturity; *The Moon and Sixpence* (1919), an account of an unconventional artist, suggested by the life of Paul Gauguin; *Cakes and Ale* (1930), the story of a famous novelist, which is thought to contain caricatures of Thomas Hardy and Hugh Walpole; and *The Razor's Edge* (1944), the story of a young American war veteran's quest for a satisfying way of life.

Maugham's plays, mainly Edwardian social comedies, soon became dated, but his short stories have increased in popularity. Many portray the conflict of Europeans in alien surroundings that provoke strong emotions, and Maugham's skill in handling plot is distinguished by economy and suspense. In *The Summing Up* (1938) and *A Writer's Notebook* (1949) Maugham explains his philosophy of life as a resigned atheism and a certain skepticism about the extent of man's innate goodness and intelligence; it is this that gives his work its astringent cynicism.

About the story

In a short story by Somerset Maugham, entitled 'Salvatore,' the author writes about a simple fisherman who lives on the Italian island of Ischia. Maugham begins by saying, "I wonder if I can do it."

Salvatore lived a life of constant disappointments; he had to spend a wretched time in the king's navy, ever longing for the island home he loved so. He fell ill to chronic rheumatism in China and was invalided out of the navy. Arriving home his sweetheart tells him she cannot marry him, as his family thinks him in too humble circumstances and she herself will not marry a man who would never be strong enough to work like a man. Though his life is shot through with misfortune, he never complains; he never blames anybody for anything.

In young manhood Maugham describes him as "a fellow ... still with that ingenuous smile and those trusting, kindly eyes that he had as a boy. He had the most beautiful manners I have ever seen in my life." Salvatore was just an "ordinary fisherman, who possessed nothing in the world except a quality that is the rarest, the most precious and the loveliest that anyone can have. Goodness, just goodness."

Summary

This is the story of a man named Salvatore. He is the son of fisherman, who spent every morning lying on the beach

when he was a boy. Then he fell in love with a pretty girl from Grande Marina. Unfortunately, he got ill during his military service and doctor said that he would never be quite well. The parents of the girl, with whom Salvatore was in love, forbade him from marrying their daughter. But sometimes bad things happen to make a person stronger. After that Salvatore got married with Asaunta ; unexpectedly, he possesses everything he couldn't dream before. His children were born. He tries to work hard despite his disease. In the end of the story, he is happy with his children and his simple life in the fishing village.

Plot

Maugham's skill in handling plot has been compared by critics in the manner of Guy de Maupassant.

The story opens with the life of a young boy of fifteen with a laughing mouth and carefree eyes whose time is spent swimming in the sea and lazing on the beach. The boy falls in love with a beautiful girl but has to join the army and travels around . The climax is reached in the story when he gets afflicted with rheumatism in China and is discharged from the army. He is happy because now he can be reunited with his beloved. But in an unexpected twist his girlfriend deserts him and he marries Asaunta. In the conclusion he continues living his simple life with the pain buried in his heart.

Characters

Salvatore is the major character in the short story by Somerset Maugham. Salvatore is the son of fisherman, who spent every morning lying on the beach when he was a boy. Then he fell in love with a pretty girl from Grande Marina. Unfortunately, he got ill during his military service and doctor said that he would never be quite well. The parents of the girl, with whom Salvatore was in love, forbade him from marrying their daughter. But sometimes bad things happen to make a person stronger. After that Salvatore got married with Asaunta;

unexpectedly, he possesses everything he couldn't dream before. His children were born. He tries to work hard despite his disease. In the end of the story, he is happy with his children and his simple life in the fishing village.

Salvatore is **static** character because he doesn't change in the story. He is a really sensitive guy. He is hard working because he continues to work even after he gets ill. He is kind. The first quality, Salvatore has is sensitivity. Somerset Maugham indicates that Salvatore 'wept on his mother's bosom.' It happened when the girl's parents forbade Salvatore from marrying their daughter. He is a strong man but he can't hold in his feelings. His mother shows understanding. That's why he cries on her bosom. Another time that clearly shows his sensitivity, is when he was in military service. When he leaves his home and Salvatore understands that he won't see his native land for a long time, he starts to cry. The author writes, 'He wept like a child.' He cries because he leaves his home, his beloved and his parents. Sensitivity is not a bad quality. It can deeply touch readers and make them feel Salvatore's worries.

Secondly, Salvatore is a really **hard working** person. In the beginning of the story, he helps his father to look after his younger brothers. However, his diligence can be clearly seen at the end of the story after his marriage with Assunta. Despite his disease, which he got during military service, he continues to work hard. As the narrator says 'He was working in his vineyard from dawn till the heat drove him to rest and then again.' In addition, he fishes all season with one of his brothers. Eventhough, it was difficult for Salvatore and

'Often his rheumatism prevented him from doing anything.' He was really hard working. The doctors told him that he would never be quite well again. And he tries to prove everybody that it was mistake. This quality inspires appreciation for his diligence and dedication. Whatever happens in people's life, it makes them stronger. Salvatore is an example.

Salvatore is a **kind** person. In the climax of the story, his beloved's parents prohibit the marriage of their

daughter to Salvatore, even though, they love each other. Salvatore makes an unpredictable decision. He lets her go. The narrator says 'girl could not afford to marry a man who might not be able to support her.' He understands that he has a serious problem with his health and he doesn't want to burden the girl's life. Salvatore makes the only right decision in relation to his love. Similarly, the author says 'He had the most beautiful manners.' It shows that Salvatore is really kind, and his actions, especially, in relation to his ex-bride strongly confirm this statement. He had a lot of troubles in his life but he didn't change and narrator says that Salvatore has 'kindly eyes that he had as a boy'.

He is sensitive, hard working and kind. He is the character, who can hold the attention of the reader during the whole story because of these qualities. Salvatore is static because he was kind, hard working and sensitive at the beginning of the story and he doesn't change at the end. He has a really hard destiny but he goes through all difficulties. He didn't have anything when he broke up with his love and married a girl, who was ugly and older than him. But at the end he got everything; a good wife, children, property.

Salvatore is a good father and husband. He takes care of his wife Assaunta and appreciates her good heart.

Assaunta, Salvatore's wife was 'a grim-visaged woman' who looked older than her years. She was introduced to Salvatore by his mother and was four or five years older to him. Salvatore says about her, 'she is ugly as the devil.' She had been engaged to be married to a man who died in Africa while on military service.

Assaunta proves to be a mature and materialistic woman. She has a little money of her own and so tries to win herself Salvatore by telling his mother that if he marries her she would buy him a boat of his own. Salvatore agrees to marry her and their marriage proves to be a happy and compatible one. They have two children and live happily and Assaunta with the passage of time becomes a woman with decided features.

Theme

The subject matter – story about a usual fisherman's son who returned from military service and found out that his girl refused from his love. He started a new life without her, but the loss hurt him and stayed in his heart forever.

In this story the author voices dissatisfaction with the fact that for most people the things spoken about oneself are more important than a man himself. That causes lots of difficulties and misunderstandings. This is the problem the author arises by his work. And we can easily draw the message of Maugham who hints that the beauty of a man is defined not by his inner characteristics, but by his inner world. This item consistently helps us to formulate the controlling idea of the novel – more than often mankind forgets about morals and inner world of every person and that is much higher than one's outer features, or in other words – the only valuable quality is much more than many unimportant and unnecessary ones.

Setting

The setting of the story is on a small island. It is a seaside village in southern Italy called Ischia. It is appropriate because the story deals with the simple life of a fisherman's son. Salvatore's father besides being a fisherman owns a small vineyard. The fisherman daily go six to seven miles into the sea to catch fish and then sell it in Naples. It is a hard but simple life.

Style

The style of the author can be described as more bookish than colloquial, as many words applied by Maugham prove that: affianced, to long, ailment, consent, etc. Although the colloquialisms are also present in the story, such as 'dreadfully homesick', etc. The descriptions follow a two verb pattern like 'he was in and out of the sea,' and 'he would seat the

naked baby,' etc. This style helps to describe the static nature of Salvatore and his qualities in the story.

The story follows the pattern of the third person narrative. It is a simple story devoid of much action. Maugham does manage to arouse curiosity by the statement, 'I wonder if I can do it.' The entire story is from the author's point of view and is a descriptive biography of the fisherman's son Salvatore. The author infact does not give explanation for Salvatore's change of mind and his subsequent marriage with Assaunta. This results in confusion in the reader's mind .

The story events follow a chronological order. The story begins when Salvatore is a boy. Then he fell in love with a pretty girl from Grande Marina. He had to leave the island for his military service. Unfortunately, he got ill during his military service and the doctor said that he would never be quite well. The parents of the girl, with whom Salvatore was in love, forbade him from marrying their daughter. After that Salvatore got married with Asaunta, had children and lived happily . Thus all the events are narrated in a linear manner with no diversions.

Critical Appreciation

Somerset Maugham, in the story entitled Salvatore writes about a simple fisherman who lived on the Italian island of Ischia. Maugham begins by saying, 'I wonder if I can do it.' He goes on in just a few pages to recount the life Salvatore had. It was one with constant disappointments; he had to spend a wretched time in the king's navy, ever longing for the island home he loved so. He fell ill to chronic rheumatism in China and was invalided out of the navy. Arriving home his sweetheart tells him she cannot marry him, as his family thinks him in too humble circumstances and she herself will not marry a man who would never be strong enough to work like a man. Though his life is shot through with misfortune, he never complains; he never blames anybody for anything.

In young manhood Maugham describes him as 'a fellow ... still with that ingenuous smile and those trusting, kindly

eyes that he had as a boy. He had the most beautiful manners I have ever seen in my life.' Maugham concludes by saying 'I started by saying that I wondered if I can do it and now I must tell you what it is I have tried to do. I wanted to see if I could hold your attention for a few pages while I drew for you the portrait of a man, just an ordinary fisherman, who possessed nothing in the world except a quality that is the rarest, the most precious and the loveliest that anyone can have. Heaven only knows why he should have so strangely possessed it. All I know is that it shone in him with a radiance that, if it had not been so unconscious and so humble, would have been to the common run of men hardly bearable. And in case you have not guessed what the quality was, I will tell you. Goodness, just goodness.'

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The author has two main characters in the story- Salvatore and Asaunta, his wife. The characterisation is simple and Salvatore is described as ‘a fellow ... still with that ingenuous smile and those trusting, kindly eyes that he had as a boy. He had the most beautiful manners I have ever seen in my life.’ Salvatore is **static** character because he doesn’t change in the story. He is a really sensitive guy. He is hard working because he continues to work even after he gets ill. He is kind.

Comprehension

Passage 1

I wonder if I can do it.

I knew Salvatore first when he was a boy of fifteen with a pleasant face, a laughing mouth and care-free eyes. He used to spend the morning lying about the beach with next to nothing on and his brown body was as thin as a rail. He was full of grace. He was in and out of the sea all the time swimming with the clumsy, effortless stroke common to the fisher boat.

Scrambling up the jagged rocks on his hard feet, for except on Sundays never wore shoes, he would throw himself into the deep water with a scream of delight. His father was a fisherman who owned his own little vineyard and Salvatore acted as nursemaid to his two younger brothers. He shouted to them to come inshore when they ventured out too far and made them dress when it was time to climb the hot, vineclad hill for the frugal midday meal.

Read the passage given above and answer the questions that follow.

1. Explain with reference to context the given lines.

Ans. This passage is an excerpt from the story ‘Salvatore’ by Somerset Maugham - British novelist, playwright, short-story writer, highest paid author in the world in the 1930s. It is the love story of a couple never going to be together. Salvatore is a fisherman’s son who returned from military service and

found out that his girl had refused his love. He started a new life without her, but the loss hurt him and stayed in his heart forever. The author voices dissatisfaction with the fact that for most people the things spoken about oneself are more important than a man himself. That causes lots of difficulties and misunderstandings. This is the problem the highlights through his work.

In the given passage we are introduced to Salvatore, a boy of fifteen years of age. The author gives a glimpse of his carefree life. He spent his days swimming in the sea and caring for his younger siblings. His life was simple. His father was a fisherman. They were not rich and lived frugally.

2. Describe Salvatore.

Ans. Salvatore is described in the passage as a boy of fifteen with a pleasant face, a laughing mouth and care-free eyes. He used to spend the morning lying about on the beach with next to nothing on and his brown body was thin and lean. He was full of a natural grace and loved swimming spending most of his time swimming in and out of the sea, with the clumsy, effortless strokes. He rarely wore shoes and scrambling up the jagged rocks barefoot had hardened the soles of his feet. Salvatore acted as nursemaid to his two younger brothers, keeping them safe in the water and then dressing them when it was time to climb the hot, vineclad hill for the frugal midday meal.

3. Quote the word that shows that Salvatore’s family was not rich.

Ans. The family was not rich as their meals were simple and the word that shows this is ‘frugal.’

4. What was the profession of Salvatore’s father?

Ans. Salvatore’s father was a fisherman and owned a little vineyard.

Passage 2

He was dreadfully homesick. But it was hardest of all to be parted from the girl he loved with all his passionate young heart. He wrote to her (in his childlike handwriting) long, ill-

spelt letters in which he told her how constantly he thought of her and how much he longed to be back. He was sent here and there, to Spezzia, to Venice, to Ban and finally to China. Here he fell ill of some mysterious ailment that kept him in hospital for months. He bore it with the mute and uncomprehending patience of a dog. When he learnt that it was a form of rheumatism that made him unfit for further service his heart exulted, for he could go home; and he did not bother, in fact he scarcely listened, when the doctors told him that he would never again be quite well.

What did he care when he was going back to the little island he loved so well and the girl who was waiting for him?

Read the passage given above and answer the questions that follow.

1. Explain with reference to context the given lines.

Ans. This passage is an excerpt from the story 'Salvatore' by Somerset Maugham - British novelist, playwright, short-story writer, highest paid author in the world in the 1930s. It is the love story of a couple never going to be together. Salvatore is a fisherman's son who returned from military service and found out that his girl had refused his love. He started a new life without her, but the loss hurt him and stayed in his heart forever. The author voices dissatisfaction with the fact that for most people the things spoken about oneself are more important than a man himself. That causes lots of difficulties and misunderstandings. This is the problem he highlights through his work.

While serving in the military Salvatore missed his home very much. But he missed being with his girlfriend the most. So he wrote to her expressing his love and telling her how much he missed her. He was posted to various places around the world and while in China he fell ill and was diagnosed with a kind of rheumatism due to which he could not serve in the army. This delighted Salvatore as now he could be reunited with his beloved.

2. Why was Salvatore homesick?

Ans. Salvatore was homesick because he missed his island home and most of all he wanted to be with the girl he loved.

3. Why was he discharged from the army?

Ans. Salvatore was discharged from the army because while in China he was afflicted with a type of rheumatism which made him unfit to ever work properly.

4. Did his dismissal from the army sadden Salvatore?

Ans. No, Salvatore did not feel sad at being dismissed as at last he could be united with his beloved.

Passage 3

I started by saying that I wondered if I could do it and now I must tell you what it is that I have tried to do. I wanted to see whether I could hold your attention for a few pages while I drew for you the portrait of a man, just an ordinary fisherman who possessed nothing in the world except a quality which is the rarest, the most precious and the loveliest that anyone can have. Heaven only knows why he should so strangely and unexpectedly have possessed it. All I know is that it shone in him with a radiance that, if it had not been unconscious and so humble, would have been to the common run of men hardly bearable. And in case you have not guessed what the quality was, I will tell you. Goodness, just goodness.

Read the passage given above and answer the questions that follow.

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and misunderstandings. This is the problem the highlights through his work.

The author in these lines explains the quality that set Salvatore apart from other man. He says that Salvatore possessed a quality which is very rare- the quality of a good heart, the quality of kindness.

2. What according to the author is the rarest quality?

Ans. The author says that Salvatore possessed the rarest quality of pure goodness.

Assignment

(Long Answer Question)

1. Show how the story of Salvatore shows that sometimes whatever happens it happens for the best.

Ans. Whatever happens in people's life, it makes them stronger. Salvatore is an example. Salvatore is a kind person. In the climax of the story, his beloved's parents prohibit the marriage of their daughter to Salvatore, even though, they love each other. Salvatore makes an unpredictable decision. He lets her go. The narrator says 'girl could not afford to marry a man who might not be able to support her.' He understands that he has a serious problem with his health and he doesn't want to burden the girl's life. Salvatore makes the only right decision in relation to his love. Similarly, the author says 'He had the most beautiful manners.' It shows that Salvatore is really kind, and his actions, especially, in relation to his ex-bride strongly confirm this statement. He had a lot of troubles in his life but he didn't change and narrator says that Salvatore has 'kindly eyes that he had as a boy'. He is sensitive, hard working and kind. He is the character, who can hold the attention of the reader during the whole story because of these qualities. Salvatore is static because he was kind, hard working and sensitive at the beginning of the story and he doesn't change at the end. He has a really hard destiny but he goes through all difficulties. He didn't have anything when he broke up with his love and married a girl,

who was ugly and older than him. But at the end he got everything; a good wife, children, property.

2. The road to high good character is paved with acts of goodness. Justify with reference to the story.

Ans. Somerset Maugham, in the story entitled Salvatore writes about a simple fisherman who lived on the Italian island of Ischia. Maugham begins by saying, 'I wonder if I can do it.' He goes on in just a few pages to recount the life Salvatore had. It was one with constant disappointments; he had to spend a wretched time in the king's navy, ever longing for the island home he loved so. He fell ill to chronic rheumatism in China and was invalided out of the navy. Arriving home his sweetheart tells him she cannot marry him, as his family thinks him in too humble circumstances and she herself will not marry a man who would never be strong enough to work like a man. Though his life is shot through with misfortune, he never complains; he never blames anybody for anything.

In young manhood Maugham describes him as 'a fellow ... still with that ingenuous smile and those trusting, kindly eyes that he had as a boy. He had the most beautiful manners I have ever seen in my life.' Maugham concludes by saying 'I started by saying that I wondered if I can do it and now I must tell you what it is I have tried to do. I wanted to see if I could hold your attention for a few pages while I drew for you the portrait of a man, just an ordinary fisherman, who possessed nothing in the world except a quality that is the rarest, the most precious and the loveliest that anyone can have. Heaven only knows why he should have so strangely possessed it. All I know is that it shone in him with a radiance that, if it had not been so unconscious and so humble, would have been to the common run of men hardly bearable. And in case you have not guessed what the quality was, I will tell you. Goodness, just goodness.'

When the parents of Salvatore's beloved prohibit the marriage of their daughter to Salvatore, even though, they love each other, Salvatore makes an unpredictable decision. He lets her go. The narrator says 'girl could not afford to

marry a man who might not be able to support her.’ He understands that he has a serious problem with his health and he doesn’t want to burden the girl’s life. Salvatore makes the only right decision in relation to his love. Similarly, the author says ‘He had the most beautiful manners.’ It shows that Salvatore is really kind, and his actions, especially, in relation to his ex-bride strongly confirm this statement. He had a lot of troubles in his life but he didn’t change and narrator says that Salvatore has ‘kindly eyes that he had as a boy’. He is sensitive, hard working and kind.

Even when he marries Assaunta, a girl who is not beautiful and older than him he remains kind and sensitive and works hard to give her a comfortable life. Although he has the pain of unrequited love in his heart he never shows it to his wife and is a good husband to her. Even with his children he is a kind and loving father who in spite of his illness works hard to provide for them. His eyes as the author says, ‘were as candid as his child’s.’

CHAPTER 2

FRITZ

Satyajit Ray

Story

After having stared at Jayanto for a whole minute, I could not help asking him, ‘Are you well? You seem to be in low spirits today.’

Jayanto quickly lost his slightly preoccupied air, gave me a boyish smile and said, ‘No. On the contrary. I am feeling a lot better. This place is truly wonderful.’

‘You’ve been here before. Didn’t you know how good it was?’

‘I had nearly forgotten,’ Jayanto sighed. ‘Now some of my memories are coming back slowly. The bungalow certainly appears unchanged. I can even recognize some of the old furniture, such as these cane chairs and tables.’

The bearer came in with tea and biscuits on a tray. I poured.

‘When did you come here last?’

‘Thirty-one years ago. I was six then.’

We were sitting in the garden of the circuit house in Bundi. We had arrived only that morning. Jayanto and I were old friends. We had gone to the same school and college. He now worked in the editorial division of a newspaper and I taught in a school. Although we had different kinds of jobs, it had not made any difference to our friendship. We had been planning a trip to Rajasthan for quite some time. The main difficulty lay in both of us being able to get away together. That had, at last, been made possible.

Most people go to Jaipur, Udaipur or Chittor when they go to Rajasthan; but Jayanto kept talking about going to Bundi. I had no objection for, having read Tagore’s poem ‘The Fort of Bundi’, I was certainly familiar with the name of the place

and felt a pleasurable excitement at the prospect of actually seeing the fort. Not many people came to Bundi. But that did not mean that there was not much to see there. It could be that, from the point of view of a historian, Udaipur, Jodhpur and Chittor had a lot more to offer; but simply as a beautiful place, Bundi was perfect.

However, Jayanto's insistence on Bundi did puzzle me somewhat. I learnt the reason on the train when we were coming down. Jayanto's father, Animesh Das Gupta, had worked in the Archaeological Department. His work sometimes took him to historical places, and Jayanto had as a child come to Bundi. He had always wanted to return after growing up, just to see how much the modern Bundi compared to the image he had in his mind.

The circuit house was really rather splendid. Built during the time of the British, it must have been at least a hundred years old. It was a single-storeyed building with a sloping tiled roof. The rooms had high ceilings and the skylights had long, dangling ropes which could be pulled to open and shut them. The veranda faced the east. Right opposite it was a huge garden with a large number of roses in full bloom. Behind these were a lot of trees which obviously housed a vast section of local birds. Parrots could be seen everywhere; and peacocks could be heard, but only outside the compound.

We had already been on a sightseeing tour of the town. The famous fort of Bundi was placed amidst the hills. We had seen it from a distance that day but decided to go back to take a closer look. The only reminders of modern times were the electric poles. Otherwise it seemed as though we were back in old Rajputana. The streets were cobbled, the houses had balconies jutting out from the first floor. The carvings done on these and the wooden doors bore evidence of the work of master craftsmen. It was difficult to believe we were living in the age of machines.

I noticed Jayanto had turned rather quiet after arriving in Bundi. Perhaps some of his memories had returned. It is easy enough to feel a little depressed when visiting a place one

may have seen as a child. Besides, Jayanto was certainly more emotional than most people. Everyone knew that.

He put his cup down on the table and said, "You know, Shankar, it is really quite strange. The first time I came here I used to sit cross-legged on these chairs. It seemed as though I was sitting on a throne. Now the chairs seem both small in size and very ordinary. The drawing-room here used to seem absolutely enormous. If I hadn't returned, those memories would have remained stuck in my mind for ever."

I said, "Yes, that's perfectly natural. As a child, one is small in size, so everything else seems large. One grows bigger with age, but the size of all the other things remains the same, doesn't it?"

We went for a stroll in the garden after tea. Jayanto suddenly stopped walking and said, "Deodar."

I stared at him.

"A deodar tree. It ought to be here somewhere," he said and began striding towards the far end of the compound. Why did he suddenly think of a deodar tree?

A few seconds later I heard his voice exclaiming jubilantly, "Yes, it's here! Exactly where it was before!"

"Of course it's where it was before," I said. "Would a tree go roaming about?"

Jayanto shook his head impatiently. "No, that is not what I meant.

All I meant was that the tree is where I thought it might be."

"But why did you suddenly think of a tree?"

Jayanto stared at the trunk of the tree, frowning. Then he shook his head slowly and said, "I can't remember that now. Something had brought me near the tree. I had done something here. A European . . ."

"European?"

"No, I can't recall anything at all. Memory is a strange business . . ."

They had a good cook in the circuit house. Later in the evening, while we sat at the oval dining table having dinner, Jayanto said, 'The cook they had in those days was called Dilawar. He had a scar on his left cheek and his eyes were always red. But he was an excellent cook.'

Jayanto's memories began returning one by one soon after dinner when we went back to the drawing-room. He could recall where his father used to sit and smoke a cheroot, where his mother used to knit, and what magazines lay on the table.

And, slowly, in bits and pieces, he recalled the whole business about his doll.

It was not the usual kind of doll little girls play with. One of Jayanto's uncles had brought for him from Switzerland a twelve- it and, on its head, it wore a Swiss cap with a little yellow feather sticking out from it. Its clothes, especially in their little details, were perfect—belt, buttons, pockets, collars, socks. There were even little buckles on the shoes.

His uncle had returned from Europe shortly before Jayanto left for Bundi with his parents. The little old man had been bought in a village in Switzerland. The man who sold him had jokingly said to Jayanto's uncle, 'He's called Fritz. You must call him by this name. He won't respond to any other.'

Jayanto said, 'I had a lot of toys when I was small. My parents gave me practically everything I wanted, perhaps because I was their only child. But once I had Fritz, I forgot all my other toys. I played only with him. A time came when I began to spend hours just talking to him. Our conversation had to be one-sided, of course, but Fritz had such a funny smile on his lips and such a look in his eyes, that it seemed to me as though he could understand every word. Sometimes I wondered if he would actually converse with me if I could speak to him in German. Now it seems like a childish fantasy, but at that time the whole thing was very real to me. My parents did warn me not to overdo things, but I listened to no one. I had not yet been put in a school, so I had all the time

in the world for Fritz.'

Jayanto fell silent. I looked at my watch and realized it was 9.30 p.m. It was very quiet outside. We were sitting in the drawing-room of the circuit house. An oil lamp burnt in the room.

I asked, 'What happened to the doll?'

Jayanto was still deep in thought. His answer to my question came so late that, by that time, I had started to think that he had not heard me at all.

'I had brought it to Bundi. It was destroyed here.'

'Destroyed? How?'

Jayanto sighed.

'We were sitting out on the lawn having tea. I had kept the doll by my side on the grass. I was not really old enough to have tea, but I insisted and, in the process, the cup tilted and some of the hot tea fell on my pants. I ran inside to change and came back to find that Fritz had disappeared. I looked around and found quite soon that a couple of stray dogs were having a nice tug-of-war with Fritz. Although he didn't actually come apart, his face was battered beyond recognition and his clothes were torn. In other words, Fritz did not exist for me any more. He was dead.'

'And then?' Jayanto's story intrigued me.

'What could possibly happen after that? I arranged his funeral, that's all.'

'Meaning?'

'I buried him under that deodar tree. I had wanted to make a coffin. Fritz was, after all, a European. But I could find nothing, not even a little box. So, in the end, I buried him just like that.'

At last, the mystery of the deodar tree was solved.

We went to bed at around ten. Our room was a large one and our beds had been neatly made. Not being used to doing a lot of walking, I was feeling rather tired after the day's activities. Besides, the bed was very comfortable. I fell

asleep barely ten minutes after hitting the pillow.

A slight noise woke me a little later. I turned on my side and found Jayanto sitting up on his bed. The table lamp by his bed was switched on and, in its light, it was easy to see the look of anxiety on his face.

I asked, 'What is it? Are you not feeling well?'

Instead of answering my question, Jayanto asked me one himself. 'Do you think this circuit house has got small animals? I mean, things like cats or mice?'

'I shouldn't be surprised if it does. Why?'

'Something walked over my chest. That's what woke me.'

'Rats and mice usually come in through drains. But I've never known them to climb on the bed.'

'This is the second time I've woken up, actually. The first time I had heard a shuffling noise near the window.'

'Oh, if it was near the window, it is more likely to be a cat.'

'Yes, but . . .'

Jayanto still sounded doubtful. I said, 'Didn't you see anything after you switched the light on?'

'Nothing. But then, I didn't switch it on immediately after opening my eyes. To tell you the truth, I felt rather scared at first. But when I did switch it on, there was nothing to be seen.'

'That means whatever came in must still be in the room.'

'Well . . . since both the doors are bolted from inside . . .'

I rose quickly and searched under the bed, behind our suitcases and everywhere else in the room. I could not find anything. The door to the bathroom was closed. I opened it and was about to start another search when Jayanto called out to me softly, 'Shankar!'

I came back to the room. Jayanto was staring hard at the cover of his quilt. Upon seeing me, he pulled a portion of it near the lamp and said, 'Look at this!'

I bent over the cloth and saw tiny, brown circular marks on it. I said, 'Well, these could have been made by a cat.'

Jayanto did not say anything. It was obvious that something had deeply disturbed him. But it was two-thirty in the morning. I simply following day.

So, after murmuring a few soothing words—such as, don't worry, I am here with you and who knows, those marks may have been on your quilt already when you went to bed—I switched off the light once more and lay down. I had no doubt that Jayanto had only had a bad dream. All those memories of his childhood had upset him, obviously, and that was what had led to his dreaming of a cat walking on his chest.

I slept soundly for the rest of the night. If there were further disturbances, Jayanto did not tell me about them. But I could see in the morning that he had not slept well.

'Tonight I must give him one of the tranquillizers I brought with me,' I thought.

We finished our breakfast by nine, as we had planned, and left for the fort. A car had already been arranged. It was almost nine-thirty by the time we reached.

Some of Jayanto's old forgotten memories began coming back again, though—fortunately—they had nothing to do with his doll. In fact, his youthful exuberance made me think he had forgotten all about it.

'There—there's that elephant on top of the gate!' he exclaimed.

'And the turrets! And here is the bed made of silver and the throne. Look at that picture on the wall—I saw it the last time!'

But within an hour, his enthusiasm began to wane. I was so engrossed myself that I did not notice it at first. But, while walking through a hall and looking at the chandeliers hanging from the ceiling, I suddenly realized Jayanto was no longer walking by my side. Where was he?

We had a guide with us. 'Babu has gone out on the terrace,' he told me.

I came out of the hall and found Jayanto standing absent-mindedly near a wall on the other side of the terrace. He did not seem to notice my presence even when I went and stood beside him. He started when I called him by his name.

'What on earth is the matter with you?' I asked. 'Why are you standing here looking morose even in a beautiful place like this? I can't stand it.'

Jayanto simply said, 'Have you finished seeing everything? If so, let's . . .'

Had I been alone, I would definitely have spent a little more time at the fort. But one look at Jayanto made me decide in favour of returning to the circuit house.

A road through the hills took us back to town. Jayanto and I were both sitting in the back of the car. I offered him a cigarette, but he and, immediately afterwards, began biting his nails. Jayanto was quiet by nature. This odd restlessness in him worried me.

After about ten minutes, I could not take it any more. 'It might help if you told me about your problem,' I said. Jayanto shook his head.

'It's no use telling you, for you're not going to believe me.'

'OK, even if I don't believe you, I can at least discuss the matter with you, can't I?'

'Fritz came into our room last night. Those little marks on my quilt were his footprints.'

There was very little I could do at this except catch hold of him by the shoulders and shake him. How could I talk sensibly to someone whose mind was obsessed with such an absurd idea?

'You didn't see anything, did you?' I said finally.

'No. But I could distinctly feel that whatever was walking on my chest had two feet, not four.'

As we got out of the car at the circuit house, I decided that Jayanto must be given a nerve tonic or some such thing. A tranquillizer might not be good enough. I could not allow a thirty-seven-year-old man to be so upset by a simple memory from his childhood.

I said to Jayanto upon reaching our room, 'It's nearly twelve o'clock. Should we not be thinking of having a bath?'

'You go first,' said Jayanto and flung himself on the bed. An idea came to my mind in the bath. Perhaps this was the only way to bring Jayanto back to normalcy.

If a doll had been buried somewhere thirty years ago and if one knew the exact spot, it might be possible to dig the ground there. No doubt most of it would have been destroyed, but it was likely that we'd find just a few things, especially if they were made of metal, such as the buckle of a belt or brass buttons on a jacket. If Jayanto could actually be shown that that was all that was left of his precious doll, he might be able to rid himself of his weird notions; otherwise, he would have strange dreams every night and talk of Fritz walking on his chest. If this kind of thing was allowed to continue he might go totally mad.

Jayanto seemed to like my idea at first. But, after a little while, he said, 'Who will do the digging? Where will you find a spade?'

I laughed, 'Since there is a garden, there is bound to be a gardener. And that would mean there's a spade. If we offered him a little tip, I have no doubt that he would have no objection to digging up a bit of the ground near the trunk of a tree at the far end of the lawn.'

Jayanto did not accept the idea immediately, nor did I say chapatis with meat curry, although I knew he was quite fond of his food.

After lunch we went and sat in the cane chairs on the veranda that overlooked the garden. There appeared to be no one else in the circuit house. There was something eerie about the silence that afternoon. All we could hear was the

noise made by a few monkeys sitting on the gulmohar tree across the cobbled path.

Around 3 p.m., we saw a man come into the garden, carrying a watering can. He was an old man. His hair, moustaches and sideburns all were white.

‘Will you ask him or should I?’

At this question from Jayanto, I raised a reassuring hand and went straight to the gardener. After I had spoken to him, he looked at me rather suspiciously. Clearly, no one had ever made such a request. ‘Why, babu?’ he asked. I laid a friendly hand on his shoulder and said, ‘Don’t worry about the reason. I’ll give you five rupees. Please do as you’re told.’

He relented, going so far as to give me a salute accompanied by a broad grin.

I beckoned to Jayanto, who was still sitting on the veranda. He rose and began walking towards me. As he came closer, I saw the pallor on his face.

I did hope we would find at least some part of the doll.

The gardener, in the meantime, had fetched a spade. The three of us made our way to the deodar tree.

Jayanto pointed at the ground about a yard from the trunk of the tree and said, ‘Here.’

‘Are you sure?’ I asked him.

Jayanto nodded silently.

‘How much did you dig?’

‘At least eight inches.’

The gardener started digging. The man had a sense of humour. As he lifted his spade, he asked if there was hidden treasure under the ground and, if so, whether we would be prepared to share it with him. I had to laugh at this, but Jayanto’s face did not register even the slightest trace of amusement. It was the month of October and not at all warm in Bundi. Yet the collar of his shirt was soaked in sweat. He was staring at the ground unblinkingly. The gardener continued to dig. Why was there no sign of the doll?

The raucous cry of a peacock made me turn my head for a moment and, in that instant, Jayanto made a strange sound. I quickly looked at him. His eyes were bulging. He raised his right hand and pointed at the hole in the ground with a finger that was visibly trembling.

Then he asked in a voice turned hoarse with fear, ‘What . . . what is that?’

The spade slipped from the gardener’s hand. I, too, gaped at the ground, open-mouthed in horror, amazement and disbelief.

There lay at our feet, covered in dust, lying flat on its back, a twelve-inch-long, pure white, perfect little human skeleton.

Fritz

Satyajit Ray

Glossary

1. preoccupied air- absent-mindedness due to being lost in thoughts.
2. familiar- known.
3. puzzle- confuse.
4. Archaeological Department- a department devoted to the study of cultures by examining the remains of old buildings etc.
5. splendid- excellent.
6. dangling- hanging.
7. obviously- clearly.
8. cobbled- paved with small, smooth stones.
9. evidence- proof.
10. craftsmen- skilled persons.
11. depressed- hopeless.
12. stroll- leisure walk.
13. striding- walking with long steps.
14. jubilantly- with great happiness.
15. sticking out- coming out.

16. Fritz- the name of the doll, meaning something inactive but alive.
17. overdo- use too much of something.
18. destroyed- ruined.
19. stray dogs- dogs of inferior breed, which move.
20. tug –of-war— a sporting event in which two teams pull at opposite ends of the rope.
21. battered- badly damaged.
22. anxiety- worry.
23. tranquilizer- drug to relax the muscles and reduce anxiety.
24. turrets- small towers.
25. exuberance- excitement.
26. wane- decline.
27. terrace- a flat area on the roof or outside a house where you can sit and enjoy.
28. morose- sad, sorrowful.
29. veiled- hidden.
30. obsessed- overpowered.
31. absurd- foolish.
32. weird notions- strange ideas.
33. grin- wide smile.
34. fetched- went and brought.
35. trace- sign.
36. instant- moment.
37. horror- terror.
38. amazement- surprise.
39. skeleton- structure of bones that support our body.

About the Author

Satyajit Ray was born in Calcutta on May 2, 1921. His father, Late *Sukumar Ray* was an eminent poet and writer in the history of Bengali literature. Satyajit Ray was an Indian

Bengali filmmaker, widely regarded as one of the greatest filmmakers of the 20th century. Ray was born in the city of Calcutta into a Bengali family prominent in the world of arts and literature. In 1940, after receiving his degree in science and economics from Calcutta University, he attended Tagore's Viswa-Bharati University. His first movie *Pather Panchali* (1955) won several International Awards and set Ray as a world-class director. He died on April twenty-third, 1992.

Starting his career as a commercial artist, Ray was drawn into *independent filmmaking* after meeting French filmmaker *Jean Renoir*.

Ray directed 36 films, including feature films, documentaries and *shorts*. He was also a fiction writer, publisher, illustrator, calligrapher, music composer, graphic designer and film critic. He authored several short stories and novels, primarily aimed at children and adolescents. *Feluda*, the sleuth, and *Professor Shonku*, the scientist in his science fiction stories, are popular fictional characters created by him. He was awarded an honorary degree by *Oxford University*.

Ray's first film, *Pather Panchali* (1955), won eleven international prizes, including the inaugural Best Human Document award at the *1956 Cannes Film Festival*. Ray did the *scripting*, casting, *scoring*, and editing, and designed his own credit titles and publicity material. Ray received many *major awards* in his career, including 32 Indian *National Film Awards*, a number of additional awards at international film festivals and award ceremonies, and an *Academy Honorary Award* in 1992. The Government of India honored him with the *Bharat Ratna*, its highest civilian award, in 1992.

About the Story

Atmosphere, emotion and plot blend in the story Fritz harmoniously together to create a feeling of 'creepiness' that builds steadily throughout the story. This isn't your usual 'ghost story.'

A man had a doll in his childhood who became his best friend. He spent hours talking to his doll. The doll would obviously not respond but the conversations became the centre of his childhood nevertheless. Several years later, the man returns to his childhood home and village. Memories come flooding back to him along with some strange happenings at night. In his story *Fritz*, a man returns to the circuit house in a town in Rajasthan which he had visited as a child, and is suddenly reminded of a Swiss doll that his uncle had gifted him, which he had buried in a corner of the lawn after a dog had torn it apart. That night, Fritz comes back to life, eager to play with his long-lost friend.

Horror through inanimate objects is the staple diet of many writers, Ray being one of them.

Summary

Fritz refers to something malfunctioning or broken. In the story *Fritz by Satyajit Ray*, two friends, Shankar and Jayanto visit a man a town named Bundi in Rajasthan after a gap of thirty one years. There is a deodhar tree and Jayanto exclaims, **‘Yes it is here! Exactly where it was before!’** and suddenly Jayanto is reminded of a Swiss doll named Fritz, of about twelve inches in length, that his uncle had gifted him, which he had buried in a corner of the lawn after a dog had torn it apart. As a child Jayanto had played only with his doll and would talk to him for hours. His parents even warned him not to play only with that doll. That night, Fritz comes back to life, eager to play with his long-lost friend. After Jayanto had told the story of his childhood both friends fell asleep. But suddenly Jayanto woke up complaining that something had walked over the cover of the quilt above his chest. He also says that this was the second time he had woken up. The first time a shuffling sound near the window woke him up. Shankar the narrator of the story tells him that it could have been a cat. The author here introduces an element of mystery and suspense. Shankar dismisses it as he thinks his friend has had a hallucination but Jayanto asserts that he

was sure it was Fritz who had walked over his chest. They find some marks on the cover of the quilt. This heightens the mystery. To put the idea of Fritz coming as a ghost to visit them in the night to rest Shankar decides that the ground under the tree must be dug up to check if the doll was still buried there. When the earth under the deodhar tree where the doll Fritz was buried thirty one years before is dug up, a human skeleton of the same size as Fritz is uncovered. The question which haunts the reader is that was the doll really a non- active ghost (a fritz). The mystery remains in our heads.

Plot

The plot of the story moves backwards and forwards in a sequenced manner. The story opens with Shankar, the narrator visiting Bundi in Rajasthan with his friend Jayanto. Jayanto is the main protagonist of the story. Jayanto had spent his childhood in Bundi and was presently visiting it after a gap of thirty-one years.

The visit back to Bundi revives memories for Jayanto. The huge deodhar tree in the circuit house where Jayanto and Shankar are staying takes Jayanto down memory lane. He is able to remember his attachment to a swiss doll. He remembers how he buried the doll which was a twelve- inch long figure of an old man named Fritz. He had buried the doll after stray dogs had torn it apart and ruined it.

After the story has been recounted by Jayanto in the past to his friend Shankar, the story comes back to the present only to move forward once again in time. After Jayanto has told the story of his childhood both friends fall asleep. But suddenly Jayanto wakes up complaining that something has walked over the cover of the quilt above his chest. The author here introduces an element of mystery and suspense. Shankar dismisses it as he thinks his friend has had a hallucination but Jayanto asserts that he was sure it was Fritz who had walked over his chest. They find some marks on the cover of the quilt. This heightens the mystery. When the earth under the deodhar tree where the doll Fritz was buried thirty one years

before is dug up, a human skeleton of the same size as Fritz is uncovered. The question which haunts the reader is that was the doll really a non- active ghost(a fritz). The mystery remains in our heads.

Character

Jayanto

Jayanto is the main protagonist of the story. He along with his friend, Shankar, who is the narrator of the story, visit a town named Bundi in Rajasthan. Jayanto is visiting the town after thirty-one years and is haunted by the **memories** of his childhood spent in Bundi. He remembers the deodhar tree in the corner of the circuit house where they are staying. He remembers burying his doll named Fritz in the earth under the tree. Stray dogs had torn the doll apart and ruined it.

Jayanto used to spend all his time playing with and talking to the doll and his parents had often told him not to devote so much time playing only with his doll. But Jayanto loved his doll and could not bear to leave it. His **passion** was to talk to the doll and play with it. He was a **sensitive** child and when the dogs tore and destroyed his doll he buried it as if it was a human being. And even after thirty-one years he remembered his precious doll.

Jayanto had a **powerful memory** and remembered the details well. When he saw the deodhar tree he exclaimed, '**Yes it is here! Exactly where it was before!**' He clearly remembered burying his favourite doll, Fritz, in the earth. When at night he feels that something has crawled over the cover of his quilt above his chest he is sure it is not a creature with four legs but with two. He is **diffident** about digging the earth to check whether the doll is still buried there.

Theme

The story 'Fritz' by Satyajit Ray is in the genre of a mystery story. Ray has adroitly used an inanimate object to create horror.

In his story *Fritz*, a man returns to the circuit house in a town in Rajasthan which he had visited as a child, and is suddenly reminded of a Swiss doll that his uncle had gifted him, which he had buried in a corner of the lawn after a dog had torn it apart. That night, Fritz comes back to life, eager to play with his long-lost friend. When the earth under the deodhar tree where the doll Fritz was buried thirty one years before is dug up, a human skeleton of the same size as Fritz is uncovered. The question which haunts the reader is that was the doll really a non- active ghost(a fritz). The mystery remains in our heads. Atmosphere, Emotion and Plot blend harmoniously together to create a feeling of 'creepiness' that builds steadily throughout the story. Ray displays a self-imposed restraint that keeps him away from explicit gore. He has used situational horror alone. Ray never believed in frightening the senses – he always chose to frighten the mind instead and this style is evident in his story Fritz. The protagonists are unassuming men finding themselves in an extraordinary situation. Ray creates realistic characters and the atmosphere in the story makes you wonder whether the supernatural actually exists or not. He plays upon the natural curiosity we humans have about the supernatural.

Setting

The story of 'Fritz' is set in a small town named Bundi in Rajasthan. The action takes place mainly in an old circuit house with large windows. The time is the present day but the story moves backwards and forwards in time. The story creates suspense and mystery and the idea whether ghosts and the supernatural are real or unreal is left unexplained. But the story is deliberately set in a remote area of Rajasthan as there the supernatural is more believable. Ray. The mystery remains in our heads. Atmosphere, Emotion and Plot blend harmoniously together to create a feeling of 'creepiness' that builds steadily throughout the story.

Style

Satyajit Ray, is a master storyteller. He demonstrate a remarkable humanism, elaborate observation and subtle handling of characters and situations. His writing is controlled, precise, meticulous, and yet, evokes deep emotional response. His story depicts a fine sensitivity without using melodrama or dramatic excesses.

The language in the story Fritz is pretty easy. The narration of the story is captivating and holds the readers interest. In literary circles, Satyajit Ray is considered to be a writer of stories primarily targeted at children and adolescents. But as with all good literature for children anywhere in the world, his books can be enjoyed by children and adults alike. Ray never treated his young readers as either less intelligent or less receptive than adults. He always liked to believe that children have a significantly more fertile imagination than older readers, and hence, contrary to popular perception, they are far more welcoming of chills and thrills than their older counterparts.

Nothing exemplifies this better than the way Ray writes his horror story, Fritz. Not once did he stop short of creating the most brutal shock, the ultimate horror. And yet, keeping his young readers in mind, there is a self-imposed restraint that keeps him away from explicit gore. He has used situational horror alone. Ray never believed in frightening the senses – he always chose to frighten the mind instead and this style is evident in his story Fritz. The protagonists are unassuming men finding themselves in an extraordinary situation. Ray creates realistic characters and the atmosphere in the story makes you feel as if you are a part of the narration.

Critical appreciation

Horror through inanimate objects is the staple diet of many writers, Ray being one of them. In his story *Fritz*, a man returns to the circuit house in a town in Rajasthan which he had visited as a child, and is suddenly reminded of a Swiss

doll that his uncle had gifted him, which he had buried in a corner of the lawn after a dog had torn it apart. That night, Fritz comes back to life, eager to play with his long-lost friend. When the earth under the deodhar tree where the doll Fritz was buried thirty one years before is dug up, a human skeleton of the same size as Fritz is uncovered. The question which haunts the reader is that was the doll really a non- active ghost(a fritz). The mystery remains in our heads. Atmosphere, Emotion and Plot blend harmoniously together to create a feeling of ‘creepiness’ that builds steadily throughout the story. This isn’t your usual ‘ghost.’

The protagonists are unassuming men finding themselves in extraordinary situation. The story is written in the first person. Ray creates realistic characters and the atmosphere in the story makes you feel as if you are a part of the narration.

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Assignment

(Long Answer Question)

1. Show how Satyajit creates horror out of inanimate objects in his story Fritz?

Ans. Horror through inanimate objects is the staple diet of many writers, Ray being one of them. Two friends, Shankar and Jayanto visit a man a town named Bundi in Rajasthan after a gap of thirty one years. There is a deodhar tree and Jayanto exclaims, 'Yes it is here! Exactly where it was before!' and suddenly Jayanto is reminded of a Swiss doll named Fritz, of about twelve inches in length, that his uncle had gifted him, which he had buried in a corner of the lawn after a dog had torn it apart. As a child Jayanto had played only with his doll and would talk to him for hours. His parents even warned him not to play only with that doll. That night, Fritz comes back to life, eager to play with his long-lost friend. After Jayanto had told the story of his childhood both friends fell asleep. But suddenly Jayanto woke up complaining that something had walked over the cover of the quilt above his chest. He also says that this was the second time he had woken up. The first time a shuffling sound near the window woke him up. Shankar the narrator of the story tells him that it could have been a cat. The author here introduces an element of mystery and suspense. Shankar dismisses it as he thinks his friend has had a hallucination but Jayanto asserts that he was sure it was Fritz who had walked over his chest. They find some marks on the cover of the quilt. This heightens the mystery. To put the idea of Fritz coming as a ghost to visit them in the night to rest Shankar decides that the ground under the tree must be dug up to check if the doll was still buried there. When the earth under the deodhar tree where the doll Fritz was buried thirty one years before is dug up, a human skeleton of the same size as Fritz is uncovered. The question which haunts the reader is that was the doll really a non-active ghost (a Fritz). The mystery remains in our heads.

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person. Ray creates realistic characters. Satyajit Ray, is a master storyteller. He demonstrates a remarkable humanism, elaborate observation and subtle handling of characters and situations. His writing is controlled, precise, meticulous, and yet, evokes deep emotional response. His story depicts a fine sensitivity without using melodrama or dramatic excesses. Atmosphere, Emotion and Plot blend harmoniously together to create a feeling of 'creepiness' that builds steadily throughout the story. This isn't your usual 'ghost story.'

2. What is a ghost' story ? How is 'Fritz' an unusual ghost story? Discuss and illustrate.

Ans. A ghost story is often a scary or horror story. It has an evil spirit in the form of a ghost meant to frighten us. In some ghost stories the figure of the ghost is comical. In *The Canterville Ghost*, the ghost is so powerless and helpless that it becomes a laughing stock even for children. The atmosphere in a ghost story is such as to evoke creepiness. There is no explanation of any supernatural happening. The setting is often the writer's or reader's own day.

'Fritz' by Satyajit Ray is a ghost story which is somewhat unusual. There is no doubt that it has most of the elements of a usual ghost story. It is set in contemporary times, and at a place which is remote and lonely. The small, sleepy town of Bundi in Rajasthan forms a suitable background. The circuit house where the main incidents take place is a big, lonesome place. The ancient fort of Bundi only adds to the mystery about the place. The circuit house where the protagonist, Jayanto, and his friend Shankar, the narrator, stay during their visit is at least a hundred years old. The whole setting has an old-world charm. The rooms here have high ceilings and the skylights have long dangling ropes which can be pulled to open and shut them. One can see parrots, peacocks and several other local birds around.

In this mysterious setting Jayanto revives memories of his childhood which lead to some strange happenings at night, he remembers a deodar tree which used to be in the garden when he was here at the age of six, after a gap of thirty-one years. The discovery of the tree reminds him of his Swiss doll — a

twelve-inch-long old man named Fritz. He recalls his one-sided conversations with Fritz for hours together. Then he recalls the day when Fritz was torn apart and disfigured by stray dogs. He clearly remembers his burying the doll under the deodar tree.

The old memories lead to weird and eerie incidents at night. The narrator, Shankar, finds Jayanto fully awake and scared. Jayanto tells him that something has crept over his chest. He suspects some cat or rat might have climbed up his bed. Later, he declares that it was Fritz who came into the room, and that the little marks on the quilt were his footprints. Several questions crop up in our mind : How could a doll move about ? If the doll were inactive, whose marks could be there on the cover of the quilt?

Jayanto's obsession with the idea of Fritz moving about on his chest is both horrifying and ludicrous. It is here that for the first time we confront the fact of an unusual 'ghost'. Normally, the ghost is a figure of flesh and blood, or at least is very active. The ghost in the form of a non-living, inactive doll is simply unimaginable. Some oblique hints of its being an entity other than a lifeless doll are provided by Jayanto himself:

Fritz had such a funny smile on his lips and such a look in his eyes, that it seemed to me as though he could understand every word. Sometimes I wondered, if he would actually converse with me if I could speak to him in German.

The man who sold Fritz to Jayanto's uncle in Switzerland made a statement in jest, which acquires sinister meaning in retrospect at the end of the story. 'He's called Fritz. You must call him by this name. He won't respond to any other.'

The reality of the doll comes to light only when the ground underneath the deodar tree is dug on the suggestion of the narrator. How could a battered doll turn into a human skeleton ? The 'twelve-inch-long, pure white, perfect little human skeleton' in place of a doll of the same size defies all rational explanations. Those who have faith in the reality of the supernatural would at once declare that the doll Fritz was a ghost. But those

who have no such faith would find nothing to explain the reality of Fritz.

Thus, 'Fritz' with an unusual 'ghost' is basically a supernatural story. The writer has been able to create a feeling of 'creepiness' by blending atmosphere, emotion and plot harmoniously together. The unusual, inactive ghost in the story makes it a pleasant aesthetic experience.



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