**FRITZ**

**-SATYAJIT RAY**

**Q.1.With reference to the story, ‘Fritz’ describe the difference between the Bundi of Jayanto’s**

**childhood and the present times.**

**Ans.** The story ‘Fritz’ is set in the British Era, in a small historic town of Bundi in Rajasthan. Bundi with its old charm invokes the right amount of curiosity, supernatural and the mood of horror.

Fritz is a recount of the narrator, Shankar, where he goes with his friend Jayanto, the protagonist of the story, to explore Bundi. Jayanto had vivid memories of his childhood. He had returned to Bundi after thirty one years. At the circuit house, Jayanto appeared lost in some thought and said that faint memories of his first visit to Bundi were rushing into his mind. The sojourn to Bundi had not quite faded from his mind. He vividly recollected the tall rooms and the ventilators tethered to strings.

Jayanto wanted to relive those memories and experience the emotions that came along with it. Jayanto found nothing changed in Bundi of today than the one he had visited as a child. He had expected Bundi to change and be taken up by modernization. In reality, it seemed nothing had changed in Bundi except the intrusion of electric poles in the city. The city was just the way he had left. The streets were cobbled with houses jutting out from the first floor. The carvings on the houses and the wooden doors were a reminder of the old Rajputana that existed in the older times.

Jayanto reminisces about the large rooms and the over-sized chairs of the circuit house. It had the same look, the same furniture - He used to sit cross- legged on those big chairs. Now, everything seemed to have shrunk in size.

Jayanto found that time had come to a standstill as he went back in his memory to relive his childhood days. Bundi had changed only in his imagination but on his visit, he realized Bundi was still the same.

**Q.2.Why was Jayanto absent-minded during the trip to Bundi? How did the author try to assuage Jayanto’s mind on the night of the incident ?**

**Ans.** The story ‘Fritz’ explores two friends, Jayanto and Shankar visiting Bundi on a short vacation. Jayanto had spent a significant part of his early life in Bundi and was keen to relive his old memories.

During this period, he was gifted a Swiss doll named Fritz by his uncle. He had developed an enduring relationship with a doll. The two bonded very well and Jayanto treated Fritz like a real human being in flesh and blood and an endearing charm. The relationship ended tragically when Fritz was brutally shredded by a pack of stray dogs. Fritz was buried, but the memory clung to Jayanto’s heart. The visit to Bundi rekindled those old emotions leaving him engulfed with reminiscences of Fritz. This was the reason why Jayanto looked so absent-minded.

Jayanto was woken up one night by the rumblings of some nocturnal creatures which had created a sense of fear in his mind. Later, he told Shankar that Fritz had come into their room. He tried to calm his friend’s nerves by reassuring him that nothing untoward had happened and there was little to lose one’s sleep on. The author looked around the room himself to see if indeed any creature had made its way in, and there was none. The author judged Jayanto’s anguish about the nocturnal visitor as tenuous and irrational fear. Even he toyed with the idea of giving his perplexed friend some tranquilizer to enable him to regain his composure.

Despite all these reassurances, Jayanto was sure of the presence of Fritz around him and thus finally the author relented by suggesting that they dig him up under the deodar tree to do away with the fears once and for all.

**Q.3.How does the story Fritz come to a bone-chilling end?**

**Ans.** One day Jayanto startled his friend with a revelation that Fritz had come into their room the previous night. There were little marks on his quilt that were his footprints. His friend Shankar was annoyed at Jayanto’s irrational fear. To calm his troubled mind, Shankar hit upon an idea that could dispel the fear of the ‘dead and destroy Fritz from his friend’s mind. He felt exhuming Fritz’s remains from his grave would rove to his troubled friend that the doll had simply vanished into the oblivion and would probably ‘find rusted and corroded remains of his metal buckle.’

The idea of exhuming Fritz appealed Jayanto. After not much digging, the gardner hit upon the object that they were keenly looking for. What the gardener retrieved from the soil was a ‘twelve-inch-long, pure white, perfect little human skeleton.’ The spade slipped from the gardener’s hand. Jayanto’s eyes were seen bulging. He was pointing at the hole in the ground with a finger that was visibly trembling. Shankar gaped at the ground and was horrified.

However, the human skeleton does not give a concrete idea to deduce what Fritz was. This open- endedness filled with infinite possibilities makes the ending of the story Fritz highly unusual. The discovery of a tiny human skeleton from the grave of a supple- bodied doll was horrifying and grisly.

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