

J.M.Coetzee's 'Disgrace'

Disgrace is the best-known work of John Maxwell Coetzee published in 1999. It got him a second-man booker prize. He got his first booker prize for life and times of Michael .K. in 1983. He was also awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 2003.

Disgrace is set in post-apartheid, South Africa.

Discussing the main characters,

David Lurie: David Lurie is a South African professor of English who loses everything: his reputation, his job, his peace of mind, his dreams of artistic success, and finally even his ability to protect his daughter. He is 52 years old. He is twice-divorced and dissatisfied with his job as a 'communications' lecturer, teaching a class in romantic literature at a technical university in Cape Town in post-apartheid South Africa.

Soraya: Soraya is a prostitute whom David Lurie meets every Thursday afternoon.

Rosalind: Lurie's second wife.

Melanie Isaacs: She is one of Lurie's students whom he seduces. Lucy: She is David Lurie's daughter. Petrus: He is Lucy's assistant and co-proprietor. He introduces himself as Lucy's 'dogman' and 'gardener'.

Bev Shaw: She is a friend of Lucy. She runs an animal refuge center, where Lucy sometimes helps her.

Katy: A bulldog bitch, like Katy, Lurie finds himself abandoned by the world.

Pollux: He is a kinsman of Petrus and was one of the attackers who raped Lucy.

Desiree: She is Melanie's school-going sister.

This novel tells the story of David Lurie, a twice-divorced 52-year-old professor of communication and romantic poetry at Cape technical university college in Cape Town South Africa. Lurie believes that he has created a comfortable life for himself he lives within his financial and emotional means though his position at University has been reduced. He weekly visits a prostitute Soraya satisfying his sexual needs. He considered himself happy but Lurie seduces one of his juniors Melanie Isaacs. This leaves him in an utter disgrace. Lurie pursues his relationship with young Melanie. When Melanie and her father complained against him. Lurie is brought in front of the academic committee and the investigation was done. Lurie admits the

guilt but refuses to apologize and express his remorse over the affair. He was threatened by Melanie's boyfriend, Lurie is forced to resign from the institute. Lurie goes to his daughter's place (Lucy). There he struggles to rekindle his relationship with Lucy and to understand changing relations. Within days after his arrival, 3 black strangers appear at their house asking to make a phone call. Lurie and his daughter are violently attacked. Lurie is brutally beaten and badly burnt the house is ransacked, Lurie's car is stolen, Lucy is gang-raped. This leaves both of them shaken. After a period of withdrawal into terrible silence, Lucy rejects her father's advice to bring charges against the rapist and one of those is identified. Due to the increasing estrangement with his daughter, Lurie decides to return to Cape Town. On his way back to Cape Town Lurie visits Melanie at their modest middle-class home. Melanie's school-going sister directs him to his father's office since Mr. Isaac is not at home. Melanie is in Cape Town where she studies. He controls his emotions however he feels that the urge to reach into the relationship was arising. Finally, he meets Mr. Isaac in his office and expresses his regrets for his creep actions. Mr. Isaac invites him to dinner at his home in a gesture of apology. Mr. Isaac tells him that he has to work for his salvation. So after meeting Isaac Lurie reaches his home in Cape Town. He discovers that his home has also been vandalized so he decides to live with his daughter who is pregnant. David comes back to Eastern Cape and finds out that Lucy is pregnant, and it is likely that the boy, whose name is known as Pollux, is the father. Pollux is the brother-in-law of Lucy's neighbor as well as her dog keeper, Petrus. What is surprising is that Lucy decides to keep the baby. It is no more shocking than the fact that Lucy is going to marry Petrus for the reason of protection and self-safety. The novel ends with David's return to work in the clinic with Bev. His work, as it is used to, is putting animals to sleep. He takes his favorite dog and gives it up to Bev to be put to sleep.