

Chapter – 5 Pappachi's Moth

Understanding The Text

Q1. Comment on the relationship shared by Mammachi and Pappachi.

Answer. The relationship shared by Mammachi and Pappachi is like the one where there's no visible intimacy between the two but also they cannot live without each other. Having a difference of 17 years in age, both of them have grown into each other. Although there are pieces of evidence in the chapter that show the brutal ways in which Pappachi would treat Mammachi. Despite all these factors, Mammachi cried bitterly not because she loved him but because she was habitual of his presence. She was attached to him that she missed his presence in the way he used to supervise the pickle factory or simply in the way he used to sit all by himself. The beating was overlooked by all this.

Q2. How does Mammachi stand out as an independent and resilient woman in the text?

Answer. Mammachi stood out as an independent and resilient woman despite the fact that she was never supported by her husband, rather she was always downgraded by him. The husband was jealous of the talent of his wife and did not want her to be self-dependent. The reason behind this was that he did not get the desired attention for the discovery of the moth and thus the lack of recognition haunted him. Despite no support from her husband, Mammachi continued with the work with pickles as that kept her busy throughout the year. Thus by keeping herself busy with what she liked, Mammachi stood out as an independent woman.

Q3. Why does John Ipe consider retirement to be a dishonour?

Answer. John Ipe considered retirement to be a dishonour because he had retired from an honourable post. After retirement, he was reduced to nothing, just a normal person who was once a very high ranking officer. He missed the respect that he enjoyed. At the same time, he was also affected by the fact that he has retired but his wife was still young as she was 17 years younger to him. Thus the negligence that was struck to him suddenly was the reason that he considered retirement to be a dishonour.

Q4. What was the underlying reason for John Ipe's disgust with the world?

Answer. The underlying reason for John Ipe's disgust with the world was that he did not get the desired name for his discovery. This is with respect to the moth, that was discovered and not named after him. This took the cost of his pride and at the same time when his wife was getting credit for this work, he felt even more disgusted. So he started removing that frustration by beating his wife who bore everything without saying a single word.

Talking About The Text

Q1. Chacko's firmness in dealing with the irrational behaviour of his father.

Answer. Chacko, the son of the retired man, was an individual with a strong body. He was back home from his study at Oxford. One day he saw his father beating his mother and found that behaviour very irrational. He stopped his father from hitting her just by forcefully holding his hand. The way in which he dealt with his father was very firm as the act done by his father was completely wrong as he was just using power against the silent mother. That was the only way to stop him that a more assertive figure made an action to stop the same, which was clearly done by Chacko. The father's ego was broken to pieces when the son used the muscular power over him as he never faced anything like this.

Q2. The contrast between the outward elegance of a person and his private behaviour.

Answer. This statement is completely true as compared to the behaviour of John Ipe. He was a high ranked officer always suited in three pieces having a very rational public image. But there was a completely different perspective on this story. John was a true gentleman in the eyes of the world but the reality was seen in his house. He was among the men who did not want to support their wives or were jealous of the achievements and name of their wives. Same was the case with John Ipe, he completely disapproved of his wife being renowned as a public figure and never supported her pickle factory or the violin classes. Thus this shows the contrast between the behaviour of an individual as to what he behaves privately as compared to in the general world.

Q3. Approval from the outside world and approval within the family.

Answer. Mammachi was an extremely talented woman but she lacked support from her husband. Her husband, John Ipe was a jealous man and he did not want to let her wife outshine the fame and be known to the world. The same reason was behind the fact that he called off her violin classes despite her being so talented. He didn't even support her for the pickle factory. Thus, here comes the part where approval from the outside world is considered more important than approval within the family as when you are not getting the desired motivation or support from the family, there's nothing wrong in making use of the external factors to outshine.

Appreciation

Q1. How does the author succeed in raising crucial social issues not through open criticism but through subtle suggestions?

Answer. The author succeeds in raising crucial social issues through subtle suggestions, this is very evidently proved in the story as the protagonist of the story represents male chauvinist society where women are never given a chance to prove themselves. Even having the potential isn't enough for women, what they require is a

place to establish themselves in society only then their potential shall be valued. Thus, the subtle suggestions that the story provides lie in the extracts that the external factors should be fair enough to make the women start a set up of their own even if they lack support from within the households.

Q2. Within a few pages, the author has packed the important events in the lives of John Ipe and his wife. Discuss how conciseness and economy of expression can achieve effective portrayal of entire lives.

Answer. The narration of the story is short and crisp yet the writer did not miss out on any evident fact of their lives. The complete story of the retired man has been narrated that how miserable he has become after his retirement and that the loss of fame of discovery of the moth has not given to him affected him so much that he did not want his wife to be famous. All this resulted in the poor lady suffering without any resilience.

Q3. Identify instances of ironic comment in the story.

Answer. The irony in the story is that the couple was not actually in love but they were so grown into the presence of each other that Mammanchi cried brutally on the death of her husband. Although he used to beat her with the brass vase yet she was so engrossed in his presence that she wept badly.