

TENDER HEART HIGH SCHOOL, SEC-33B, CHD.

CLASS : IX

SUBJECT : ENGLISH LITERATURE

A DOCTOR'S JOURNAL ENTRY FOR AUGUST 6, 1945.

[Poem - 4]

Summary of the Poem :

The poem, 'A Doctor's Journal Entry For August 6, 1945', is narrated by a doctor, as told in the title of the poem itself. He narrates everything from his perspective. In the course of the poem, he is speaking with his wife, giving her some hope and assurance, and sometimes instructing her. But the doctor's wife does not say anything in the entire poem. So the poem may be called a dramatic monologue.

The poem is written in free verse pattern, with no rhyme and no particular meter followed. Even the poem is not divided into stanzas. It is a continuous narration of the happenings, of what the narrator came across and what he thought or felt. It is in the form of journal entry for the particular date. Irony, images, symbolism are used in the poem.

Explanation IN Detail

The poem begins on a fine morning with a calm and serene note. The doctor says that it was dawn (morning) and he was half-clothed as he had just got up from bed and was stretching his arms and legs to remove the sleepy feeling. He was gazing outside at the gleam and the shadow of the leaves. Suddenly he saw two strong flashes of light, and the stone lantern in his room lit up by itself. The doctor wondered whether the flashes were magnesium flares seen during a war.

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In the next moment, the doctor discovered that the roof and the walls of his house were collapsed and the debris were scattered all over. Dust occupied the whole place. The doctor strangely found out that his half-pants and undershirt disappeared from his body. They were all burnt in the flashes.

The doctor then tells us how he was wounded on his cheek and thigh and that he was bleeding in the right side. He removed a piece of glass that had entered into his body. He was trying to figure out the reason of the disturbance/destruction all around. Then the doctor came to his senses and got worried about the whereabouts of his wife Yecko-San. He was dumbstruck on looking at her as she looked pale, frightened and had blood stains on her body and she came out holding her elbow.

The doctor gave encouragement to his wife that they would be fine. He seemed an optimistic, caring and comforting man while motivating Yecko-San. His indomitable spirit gives encouragement to the reader even in the face of difficulty. Yecko-San looked pale, frightened and had blood stains on her body, and she came out holding her elbow so the doctor advises her that they both should get out of the house quickly and even they do the same. Here we get surprised at the doctor's mental strength and presence of mind.

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While getting out of the house, they stumbled over something on their way. Then he realised that it was the head of a man who was crushed to death under a gate and begged for mercy. The doctor's apology for stumbling over the head of a man indicates his generous nature.

'A Doctor's Journal Entry for August 6, 1945' describes in detail the devastation caused by war. Then the couple saw a house before them that 'tilted, swayed, toppled and crashed'. Fire erupted in the dust and was spreading fast by the wind. They then realised that they should go to the hospital and get the desired aid. The doctor also wanted to help his staff but then he realised that how could he help his staff when he himself was injured.

His legs could not take it any more and he sat down on the ground. He felt very thirsty but he could not find any water to drink. He was panting but he gained some strength bit by bit and finally he got up and walked towards the hospital. The doctor also emphasises the horrific side of loss when he highlights the fact that he wasn't ashamed of his naked state then, this horrible thought had disturbed him a bit only. Then a soldier gave him a towel. But the Doctor's legs were so badly injured that he could not walk any more and requested his wife to go ahead alone. Yeeko-san was reluctant to move alone but they had no choice in such a distressed condition.

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So finally she went ahead alone and the Doctor felt 'a dreadful loneliness' which indicates his love and concern for Yeko-san.

Then the Doctor reports that his agile mind was running at such a high speed that he would have done everything but his body could not cope up with such fatal injuries. He saw shadow-like appearances of people, some looked like ghosts and others like some scarecrows but everybody was silent and dumb. Some of the survivors were walking with their arms hanging loosely from their body.

It took some time for the doctor to understand what had happened. He was talking about the burns and the pain of the people. People who could, joined the parade to the hospital, were walking naked as if it was a naked parade. The doctor saw in his way a woman with a child, both naked. He wondered whether they had come back right from the bath.

Then he turned his eyes from her.

The doctor realised that something strange has happened that had burnt down people's clothes, only when he saw another naked man on the way. He also came across an old woman who was lying on the ground, with her face distorted in pain. But she was making no sound.

Silence prevailed all around and it was the common thing to all of the men and women present there.

The doctor could hear neither a word, nor a cry of pain. They are all shocked to silence.

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This always symbolizes that the powerful always dominates over the weak. The stronger suppresses the weaker and makes him keep silence.

Thus the poet Vikram Seth gives us a remarkable picture of what it felt like to be the victims of the bomb explosions. And this dreadful picture makes us aware of the destruction that war causes. So, we should maintain peace and avoid wars for the welfare of the humanity. He wants the present generation to negotiate and avoid wars as they cause loss of innocent people's ^{life} and property.

Homework

Kindly do extract 1 & 2 in your literature note book and submit your copy on Thursday.