

Ranga's Marriage

Reading with insight : Solutions of Questions on Page Number : 24

Q1 :

Comment on the influence of English - the language and the way of life - on Indian life as reflected in the story. What is the narrator's attitude to English?

Answer :

When the English came to our land, they did not bring the industrialisation alone. They carried with themselves their culture, their religion and their language to our home. We, who had been ruled by the Slaves and the Moguls for centuries were now about to face yet another foreign dominance, which was to leave an impact on us that was to live for ever in the future. The biggest of all influences was the language English. Even after so many years of independence, we Indians are not able to pull ourselves out of this inferiority complex. They ruled our nation once and now even after so many decades, they rule our minds. We consider those inferior who do not know the English language. It is nothing but a language after all, why feel so proud about it when it is not even ours. Yes it is a global language and it is good to know foreign languages, however we must treat a language as language only and not as a status symbol.

This falsehood has been reflected very well in the story. The narrator, Shyama, showed how when Ranga returns from Bangalore, after completing his studies, the way people anticipated his return and the excitement on knowing that Ranga now knew English, "a priceless commodity". They all wanted to see if there has been any change in Ranga after studying English in Bangalore. However, there was no change or little in Ranga's personality. He even did the traditional namaskar to Shyama by bowing down and touching his feet.

Q2 :

Astrologers' perceptions are based more on hearsay and conjecture than what they learn from the study of the stars. Comment with reference to the story.

Answer :

Some say that astrology is a science, others say it is a sham. It is true that all the calculations done in astrology are based on the movement of various celestial bodies in our solar system. However, there are claims that all that the astrologers predict is based on hearsay and is general to all. There have been claims that there are these rare astrologers who are known for their accurate predictions. There have been famous astrologers, like Linda Goodman, who have been known and appreciated for their astrological knowledge. Many people are staunch believers of this study. Late President Roosevelt, of United States of America, consulted astrologers to calculate the auspicious moment to swear in as President of USA.

In the story, Shyama went to the astrologer and told him what was on his head about a possible alliance between Ranga and Ratna. Later when he returned to the Shastri and asked him to predict what the planets told about Ranga, he told what he was actually told by Shyama and said that Ranga was contemplating marrying a girl whose name's initial is 'R', which was Ratna. Thus, it is difficult to say whether astrologers' predictions are based on mere hearsay or are actually what they learn from the movements of stars.

Q3 :

Indian society has moved a long way from the way the marriage is arranged in the story. Discuss.

Answer :

A model answer has been provided for students' reference.

It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.

It is true that the Indian society has evolved way beyond what has been portrayed in the story. The way Shyama arranged Ranga's marriage is not how it happens in the modern times. Children today do not want to stay dependent on their parents or elders to chose their life partners. They now want to take control of their lives. They take the lead and decide themselves who they want to spend their lives with. The society has opened up to love marriages. However, it should be noted that love marriages are not modern, this culture has existed since times immemorial. Many cases of love marriage can be traced back in the history. Shakuntala did love marriage (*gandharva vivah*), Sita and Draupadi chose their partners on their own (*swyamavar*). Hence, it is difficult to say whether arranged marriage is an old tradition or love marriage. Now that we have been independent for decades and have moved far ahead of Medieval and Modern India, it can be observed that the culture of arranged marriage is returning. Hence, we can be sure of at least one thing that these are trends that come and go and people follow what is in fashion.

Q4 :

What kind of a person do you think the narrator is?

Answer :

A model answer has been provided for students' reference.

It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.

Shyama, a person who is too attached to his soil and his village, is the narrator of Ranga's Marriage. When the story starts the reader expects something about a marriage happening. However, the narrator takes the reader on a tour of his village, Hosahalli, explaining the specialities about it. He does not believe in the English culture. He tells how 10 decades ago there was no such culture and how he thinks that the language has changed the atmosphere totally. How a distinction has descended between those who speak English and those who do not. Shyama is person who respects a person who believes in her/his culture; for example, when Ranga payed homage to him, he bowed down and touched Shyama's feet as a *namaskar*. This made Shyama happy that even after studying away from home Ranga had not forgotten his roots. Even though Ranga was an educated boy and was determined to get married to a girl who is mature enough, Shyama got him married to Ratna, who was much younger and not at all the kind of girl he would have married. This shows his beliefs in arrange marriage and also that he was a determined person who always got done what he had decided. He was a person who strongly believed in his tradition and culture.