

A SENSE OF LOVE FELT BETWEEN A WHITE AND A MUGHAL IN RUSKIN BOND'S *A FLIGHT OF PIGEONS*

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ABSTRACT

Based on true events, *A Flight of Pigeons* was a poignant story, rich in conversations and told with simplicity and deep humanity. The story was told by Bond's father and it was about a girl, she witnessed the massacre of the congregation in a small church in northern India. Bond's father was born in Shahjahanpur and probably he heard the tale from his soldier father (Bond's Grandfather). The name of the girl was Ruth Labadoor or possibly Lemaistre or someone else, but Ruth's story was true. Her survival was an old record and account of the mutiny of 1857.

KEYWORDS: Flight of Pigeons, Story, Poignant Story

INTRODUCTION

The story is retelling by the writer to bring out the common humanity of most of the people involved in times of communal strife, inter religious or racial hatred, religious intolerance threaten the lives and livelihood of innocent, law-abiding people.

At the church, Ruth and her father were experienced the threat of death but Ruth escaped from the place, her father was assassinated by sepoys. The family ruined because of his death and they were under the care of their trusted companion, Lala Ramjimal. The family consisted of eight in numbers were in the little room. Once they lived in a sophisticated cantonment but now they were sheltered in the mud hut. The mutiny broke out, they were shut up in the hut all day, expecting at any moment, to be discovered and killed. They suffered a lot and even they had no food. Then later, Ramjimal shifted the family to his house and he offered food, but they were not able to eat. Ruth's mother wept for the death of her husband.

After one month, it was the last day in Lala's house, the refuges discussed about their future prospects. The fugitive *Firangis* were caught by Javed Khan with a naked sword in his hand. Ruskin Bond was a lover of nature, and it was expressed in this fiction while he described the beauty of Ruth from the words of Javed Khan. Ruskin Bond compared Ruth to a soft and sweet flower that showed the silky skin of her. At the first sight on seeing Ruth, Javed Khan fell in love with her. He exclaimed the beauty of Ruth that:

“The very first time I saw her, I was struck by her beauty. She shone like Zohra, the morning star. Looking at her now, I realize the truth of the saying that a flower never looks so beautiful as when it is on its parent stem”
(AFP – 46).

Javed Khan was already married a girl named Khan-Begum but his passion of lust grew in the form of Ruth. The helpless Khan-Begum said, “The greater fool you, Javed, for depriving the child of her father, and breaking the flower from its stem before it had bloomed!” (AFP – 46).

Javed was firm in his determined mind of marrying Ruth but her mother Mariam was not accepted the proposal of the great soldier because her relations would not recognize the marriage. Javed persuaded Mariam for marrying her daughter but the revolt was going deeply so that he was not able to concentrate on it. Both Mariam and Ruth were considered as guests in the palace of Javed Khan.

There was not any problem raised to Ruth and Mariam when they were in the hands of Javed Khan because Mariam was so patient and she did not think about the past yet looked forward to the future with hope. It was confirmed that Delhi will be handed over to the Firangis and Javed Khan planned to ride across the border of Nepal. The British soldiers surrounded the walls of Delhi and a messenger told Mariam that her brother was safe at Bharatpur.

When the British Army came over to rule Shajahanpur but Mariam wanted to move Bharatpur in order to live a peaceful life with her brother. Ruth could not forget the assassination of her father and the swordsmen in the place of Javed Khan. She did not like Javed Khan because they were their enemy but she liked his gentleness. A gentleman was one who did not disturb others. Once the family was the prisoners in the palace of Javed, even he did not touch Ruth’s body in fact Javed wanted to marry her. It showed the nobility of Javed Khan and the quality was admired by Ruth.

In this Fiction, Ruskin Bond described the sufferings of Whites in our land and we can analyze it in multifaceted themes. Cultural transaction in India, Quest for Self-Identity, the problems of Whites in Colonized Country, Sense of Love and it can be justified in so many ways. In this research article, the researcher wanted to express the untold feelings of love affair between a White girl Ruth and a gallant Mughal Javed Khan. Though both of them were enemies, Javed Khan was falling in love at the very first sight, he wanted to give up his own land to take hold of Ruth’s hand but Mariam did not allow him. He had the power to acquire sexual hunger from Ruth but he did not behave like a normal human being. He proposed his feelings to marry Ruth but Mariam put an obstacle that it was not accepted by her brother and her relations.

CONCLUSIONS

At the end, Ruth thought about the gigantic Javed Khan, in fact he was stupid and he looked handsome to her. If Javed Khan was with her, the fiction might be ended up with the happy union of the two cultures from two countries. But Ruskin Bond concluded the novel that Javed escaped to Nepal and created an atmosphere of untold love.

REFERENCES

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