

Chapter - 20 Chandalika

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Question 1.

How does Prakriti's mother react when she hears of Prakriti's encounter with the monk?

Answer:

Prakriti's mother reacts with great astonishment when she learns of her encounter with Ananda, the Buddhist monk. She fears that Prakriti's talking to the monk might not be taken well as she is born in the lowest of untouchable caste, chandalika.

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Question 1.

Will Prakriti resign herself to her lot?

Answer:

Yes, Prakriti will resign herself to her lot.

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Question 1.

Will the spell work? What will happen when Ananda is made to come?

Answer:

The spell doesn't work over the monk. When Ananda comes home he sees the house setting wasn't appropriate for a monk he is filled with shame and with his inward prayers calls out to Buddha who frees Ananda from the spell laid by the untouchable girl named Parkriti who fell in love with the Monk.

Thinking About The Play

Question 1.

Why does something so ordinary and commonplace as giving water to a wayfarer become so significant to Prakriti?

Answer:

The wayfarer in the play is the most revered disciple of Buddha. His name is Ananda. Prakriti compares the water with enormous ocean of humanity with which Ananda treats her as a Human being. All her life Prakriti has been told that she is a chandalika, a low untouchable caste, whereas the monk makes no such distinction between himself and Prakriti and seeks water from her.

Question 2.

Why is the girl named Prakriti in the play? What are the images in the play that relate to this theme?

Answer:

The play is centred around the role of Prakriti. Prakriti is playing the part of a chandalika, a low caste untouchable who is moved by the humanity of Ananda the monk. Prakriti depicts the natural desire of a woman who is awed by the humane virtues.

Question 3.

How does the churning of emotions bring about self-realisation in Prakriti even if at the cost of her mother's life?

Answer:

Prakriti was initially moved by the humanity of the monk and begged her mother to cast a spell on him. The spell was meant to distract or disillusion the monk and draw him towards Prakriti in a lustful manner. Since the monk was a devout of lord Buddha, casting the spell meant that Prakriti's mother was committing a sin upon a follower of God and hence her life was drawing to an end. Towards the end of the spell, Ananda the monk was completely overpowered and had now transformed into a wicked image of humanity. This transition of the monk disturbed Prakriti and changed her emotional state of mind. However, the change came in too late for Prakriti's realisation and her mother died.

Question 4.

How does the mirror reflect the turmoil experienced by the monk as a result of the working of the spell?

Answer:

The mirror was given to Prakriti by her mother for her to look into it and find out the where the monk had reached as a result of the spells. Apart from the location, the author portrays the mirror as an indicator of personal happiness, devoutness and humanity within a person. As the mother's spell grew stronger, Ananda the monk was losing his spirituality and was succumbing to the evils of lust. The mirror was able to describe this change of personality of the monk throughout the narration of the play. Towards the end, the once radiant and inspiring aura of the devout Buddhist monk is transformed into an uncharismatic and deceitful human depicted by a defeated personality.

Question 5.

What is the role of the mother in Prakriti's self-realisation? What are her hopes and fears for her daughter?

Answer:

Prakriti's mother was aware of the consequence of casting the evil spell on the monk. She knew that the spell would change the once humane monk into an earthly being with no conscience or truthfulness. Moreover, the powerful spell she cast upon the monk would take a toll on her life as well. However, she cedes to Prakriti's deep ingrained desire to possess the monk and decides to cast the spell upon the monk. Later, Prakriti realises that her desire to lustfully possess the monk has led to the death of her mother as well as the once devout monk being reduced to a common earthly being.

Question 6.

'Acceptance of one's fate is easy. Questioning the imbalance of the human social order is tumultuous.' Discuss with reference to the play.

Answer:

The play is centred on the attractiveness of human values. The human values have innate righteousness and beauty for the devout of Lord Buddha. They see no discrimination on the basis of the social order. However, humans have created the social order to justify the evil virtues of hate, power, envy etc. which are inconsiderable for the devout. Hence for someone to go against these orders will be an uphill task, an arduous journey filled with difficulties and hardships. To follow the beaten path is ease and that is the suggestion given to Prakriti by her mother at the onset of the narration. Prakriti chooses to go against the social order and in doing so she put to risk the life of her mother and the devoutness of Ananda the monk.

Appreciation

Question 1.

How does the dramatic technique suit the theme of the play?

Answer:

The play is set on the backdrop of Prakriti's lust for the kind hearted and humane monk, Ananda. She forces her mother to draw him towards her by using her magical powers. The dramatic technique of using trickery to overpower righteousness is met with a tragic end in the play. Blindly driven by her lust for the monk, Prakriti risks the life of her mother and the devoutness of Ananda the monk.

Question 2.

By focusing attention on the consciousness of an outcast girl, the play sensitises the viewer/reader to the injustice of distinctions based on the accidents of human birth. Discuss how individual conflict is highlighted against the backdrop of social reality.

Answer:

The instance when Prakriti is moved by the monk's humane values is when she is left thinking of the act of kindness in the backdrop of the social insult and insulation that she has lived with all her life. That moment had a strong influential effect on the desires of Prakriti. So much so that she was insulated of the wrath she might have to face in from the society. So strong was her desire of the monk that she was ready to take on the entire world including putting her mother's life in danger.

Question 3.

'I will enthrone you on the summit of all my dishonour, and build your royal seat of my shame, my fear and my joy'. Pick out more such examples of the interplay of opposites from the text. What does this device succeed in conveying?

Answer:

"I started up trembling and bowed before his feet, without touching them."

The interplay brings out Prakriti's feelings for the monk. She is aware that her desire of possessing the monk will not be welcomed by society and that she will be shunned and dishonoured. Yet despite the shame and discomfort she stands to face, she is prepared to keep the monk in high regard in her heart and mind.

Question 4.

'Shadow, mist, storm' on the one hand, 'flames, fire,' on the other. Comment on the effect of these and similar images of contrast on the viewer/reader.

Answer:

The author brings the effect of opposites in parlance yet destructive in action to the story of Prakriti, her mother and Ananda the monk in the narrative. The powerful effect of these phrases is relevant to the similar nature of the social order which discriminates equal

human beings by virtue of their house of birth. The play makes many such mentions of opposite and contradictory narratives. When we read such instances, we are moved by the powerful connotation of these words individually. However, the comparative appears less distant as opposed to individual dissimilarities.