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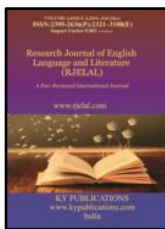


INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA
2395-2636 (Print);2321-3108 (online)

A STUDY OF THE CHARACTER OF ROSIE IN R.K. NARAYAN'S NOVEL "THE GUIDE"

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ABSTRACT

Rosie is one of the main characters of the novel "The Guide" by R.K. Narayan. He portrays the character Rosie as a typical Indian woman who loves her husband despite his apathetic attitude towards her and also being grateful to him for marrying a woman who belongs to a family of dancers dedicated to temples. She is also appreciative of the fact that he gave her freedom and financial security. The name "Rosie" suggests that she is modern but on the contrary she is just the orthodox dancer who wears sarees of bright hues and braids her hair with flowers. Rosie is a passionate Classical dancer who is not only committed to her art but also has significant knowledge of Indian Classical dance. She is highly educated and holds a Masters degree in Economics. Rosie is also portrayed as a faithful wife who loves her husband and is ready to win him back by assuring him that she would give up her passion for dance when she confesses to Marco about her relationship with Raju. There is a total dissimilarity of interests between husband and wife, but she never allows them to hinder their relationship. Rosie also shows deep commitment to her relationship with Raju and tries to support him during his difficult times. She also has tremendous tolerance power and optimism which ultimately enables her to achieve her dreams.

Key words: Art, Passion, Commitment, relationship, Classical dance

INTRODUCTION

R. K. Narayan is among the best known and most widely read Indian novelists in English. He typically portrays the peculiarities of human relationships and the ironies of Indian daily life, in which modern urban existence clashes with ancient tradition. R.K. Narayan is a traditional teller of tales, a creator of realist fiction which is often gentle, humorous and warm. He is also the creator of the fictional town of Malgudi where almost all of his writings are set.

His first novel, *Swami and Friends* is an episodic narrative recounting the adventures of a group of school boys. His other novels include, *The English Teacher* (1945), *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), *The Guide* (1958), *The Man-Eater*

of Malgudi (1961), *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967), and *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983). Narayan also wrote a number of short stories; which include *Lawley Road* (1956), *A Horse and Two Goats and Other Stories* (1970), *Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories* (1985), and *The Grandmother's Tale* (1993).

R.K. Narayan's novel "The Guide" won him the National Prize of the Indian Literary Academy, the country's highest literary honor. The novel begins as a comic look at the life of a rogue, but evolves into something quite different. It describes the transformation of the protagonist Raju from a tour guide to a spiritual guide and then one of the greatest holy men of India.

Rosie is one of the finest characters created by R.K.Narayan in the novel *The Guide*. She is an

embodiment of beauty, grace, modesty and above all a good human being. She is portrayed as an orthodox Indian woman clad in sarees, traditional, yet with a touch of modernity. She is a talented classical dancer who belongs to Devadasi family, dedicated to the temples as dancers. She also has another identity as an educated woman with a Masters degree in Economics which is quite commendable. Rosie is also presented as a simple woman, a girl next door who is lively, cheerful and loves the company of people. Simple things like eating in a crowded place, watching a movie give her immense pleasure and she cherishes these trivial things.

Rosie marries Marco who is an archeologist by profession and is completely dedicated to his work. He is portrayed as a typical husband who is completely apathetic, unemotional and unaffectionate towards his wife. He also seems to be more interested in the sculptures on the walls and stones in caves than his wife who is more lively, realistic and an embodiment of the art of dance. But Rosie on the other hand is a loving and devoted wife who ensures that her husband is given enough care, support and love. She takes pride in doing little things for her husband like serving food and taking care of his needs. She also appreciates the fact that he gives her freedom, financial security and also Social status and constantly expresses her gratitude to Marco for marrying her despite knowing her background.

Marco never accepts Rosie's talent as a dancer and completely ignores her keen desire to continue her career in dance and insults her terribly by commenting "An acrobat on a trapeze goes on doing the same thing all his life; well your dance is like that". You repeat your tricks all your life. He calls Rosie's dancing skills as street acrobatics and compares it to a monkey's performance. She knows well that Marco completely disapproves of her passion for dance, but she still remains unperturbed and displays tremendous attitude of subservience. Her emotional attachment and sense of duty towards Marco is clearly depicted when she carries her husband's book so dearly and sticks a picture of his on the mirror.

Rosie's tremendous tolerance power and optimistic attitude is appreciable when her husband comes to know of his wife's affair with Raju, when she describes that he became very upset and didn't talk to her and completely ignored her presence. "I followed him, day after day, like a dog- waiting on his grace". She follows him up and down the Peak House to the caves continuously for thirty days but all her efforts fail to win him back when he doesn't forgive her. The final blow comes when at the time of departure for Madras at the Malgudi Railway Station, Marco leaves her saying that he has only one ticket for himself. Rosie is also tolerant with Raju's mother and loves to help her with the daily chores though she doesn't take to her kindly in the beginning. She suffers all the insults but never complains and tries to take things in her stride.

Rosie is totally dedicated to her art and ensures that she does a thorough research by reading ancient works such as Bharat Muni's Natya Shastra and even employs a Pundit to interpret the old Sanskrit verses. She also looks for ideas in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata which shows her keen observation and thirst to learn the nuances of art. She is modest and her commitment to the Indian Classical dance is impeccable. Rosie also firmly believes that the art of dance not only paves way to achieve spiritual sanctity but also helps in gaining an identity. Even after reaching peak of success, Rosie remains modest because of her profound love for dance.

Rosie is aware of Raju's crafty nature, but is committed to her relationship and offers support when she comes to know of his forgery. Though Rosie is disillusioned with Raju because of his fraudulent acts, she is determined to pull Raju out of his predicament by trying all means and even manages to perform without help and earn money to pay the lawyer's fee. She is also grateful to Raju for providing a platform to showcase her talent and giving her the required break to reach the skies.

Conclusion

Rosie's character undergoes a slow but steady transformation from a traditional Indian woman to an assertive individual who tries to carve a niche for herself. Though Rosie is shadowed by two important people in her life, she moves from

strength to strength with her sheer commitment and self confidence to prove that her unrelenting passion has enabled her to pursue her dreams.

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