

IMPORTANT ROLES OF CAPTAIN AND RITA IN R.K. NARAYAN'S A TIGER FOR MALGUDI

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Abstract

In his remarkable work *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983), R.K. Narayan portrays the important roles of Captain and Rita and displays men and situations as they truly are. The Grand Malgudi Circus is owned by Captain. Rita is his wife's name. Captain is a man of his word. He possesses a unique capacity to do a variety of works. He pays great attention to elephants, horses, and other animals. He is concerned about their health and well-being. He delegated several tasks to his Circus employees. In addition, Captain is responsible for tasks such as checking finances and making payments to all employees. Rita, on the other hand, is the Circus's leader of the trapeze crew. Rita is responsible for household chores. But, her pointed replies to her husband make him somewhat uncomfortable. When Captain boasts of good condition of animals, she says that only animals seem to fit in his company. In fact, Captain shows affection on Rita and the children. Regarding Rita, although she appears as a nagger, she is devoted to her husband; she looks after the children well. At the end of his life, Captain worries about Rita and her life. Indeed, Rita is unable to bear the pangs of separation. When she sees the dead body of Captain, she is without a word or tear. She immediately commits suicide. Thus, although they do not reveal their feelings to one another, Captain is the dutiful husband and Rita is the dedicated wife. In reality, it is not easy to describe or explain the relationships, especially within the family. However, the roles of Captain and Rita in the novel are significant and important.

Keywords: A tiger for Malgudi, Captain, Rita, roles, dutiful, dedicated.

Introduction

Husband and wife accept each other and create a lovely whole out of their differences. To create a genuine relationship, they must work together and be willing to face the challenges that come along the way. If they are to succeed, they must practise patience and constraint, forbearance and charity, and remain vigilant at all times. Captain is a fascinating character in R.K. Narayan's twelfth novel, *A Tiger for Malgudi*. His life partner is Rita. They play important parts in the story. Captain is the proprietor of the magnificent Malgudi Circus. He has a strong physique. He's dressed to impress, with slacks, a bush shirt, and a sun hat. During breakfast one day, he boasts to his wife that all of the animals in the Circus are in good condition. Rita claims that the animals are better cared for than his family. Captain observes that she says something harsh to make herself pleased. In terms of their children's education, Captain claims that he has sent them to a school that she has requested. Rita responds sharply that he would have urged the youngsters to tame the lions otherwise. Captain is perplexed as to why she speaks in a retaliatory manner. But, just as the captain is about to leave, Rita hands him a cup of coffee. He drinks coffee and then moves on. Captain and Rita have similar conversations with one another on various occasions. Overall, it can be claimed that Captain considers her opinions on critical issues and that Rita appreciates his thoughts. On this matter, an ascetic says to Master:

“Human relationships cannot be defined in black-and-white terms. There can be no such thing as unrelenting hatred or love. Those who are deeply attached may purposefully exhibit a hard exterior to each other, which is one way of enjoying the marital condition. Some spouses in this society express their deepest love only by nagging, and some husbands adore playing the victim. You must not forget that everyone, deliberately or unknowingly, is always playing a part. But God, who sees everything, must be aware of their thoughts and the secret ecstasies of friendship that even that Captain and his wife are experiencing. Don't make the mistake of assuming they weren't adequately matched based just on overheard talk. (69 R.K. Narayan)”

It is very useful to know, in detail, about Captain, the husband, about Rita, his wife and about their significant roles in the novel.

About Captain and his role in the novel (*A Tiger for Malgudi*).

Captain

In R.K. Narayan's *A Tiger for Malgudi*, Captain is an intriguing figure. He is not a captain in the army or a football team. He introduces himself as Captain. His Circus is descended from O'Brien's Grand Irish Circus. O'Brien launches a new business and sells the circus and his goodwill to Captain. Captain wants to be better, so he approached Dadhaji, the owner of Dadhaji Grand Circus. Dadhaji expresses his viewpoint on animals, stating that any creature may be educated if the proper method is used. Captain learns about animals, training, and business practises from him. When Dadhaji reaches an advanced age, he appoints Captain as his business partner. After Dadhaji's death, Captain inherits the Circus and all of its assets. He shifts his Circus to Malgudi and names it —Grand Malgudi Circusl.Soon Malgudi becomes famous for the circus.Captain is regarded as the wonder man, who has changed the appearance of the town.

Captain's Routine

Captain gets up at five o'clock every morning. He is prompt and consistent in his Circus work. He travels to observe the animals with his CEO, Anand. Captain observes the health of all creatures and forms a judgement about their health based on their attitude. He then returns to his office. He sits at his desk, taking careful notes. If the cages or the surrounding area are not clean, he advises penalties for the responsible assistants. He promotes his circus shows everywhere. Every day, there are three shows: midday, evening, and night.

Captain: A strict follower of Dadhaji's injunctions

Captain obeys Dadhaji's orders precisely and sincerely. When Captain goes to view the animals, he remembers Dadhaji's instructions: "You must watch the condition of every animal and anticipate how long it will last, and get an immediate replacement if one dies.Keep an eye on the sources, if you are not to face embarrassment in public.The show never halts because of one animal. (36)"

On another occasion, Captain remembers another injunction of Dadhaji: —If you hear the word 'tiger', don't leave. Stay back and find out. (38).Once Captain hears the word 'tiger'.He stays for a while and comes to know that the word —tiger, is spoken by the villagers.The villagers approach him for protection from the tiger.He agrees to come to their rescue.He catches the tiger and protects the villagers. Captain endears himself to the villagers by speaking to them in Tamil.They show affection on him.He elicits from the villagers, the information about the tiger.He invites them to his Circus.After a time, he captures the tiger and takes it to his Circus.

The important Roles of Captain and Rita

The following examples show Captain and Rita's important roles in the narrative. They also reveal both happy and negative surprises in their life.

(i) There is an issue that precipitates domestic crisis. Captain intends to introduce a new element to the circus presentation. Rita, on the other hand, refuses to change. Then Captain wants to replace Rita with Lyla. That night, there is a lot of shouting in their home-tent. Rita threatens to resign from her role on the show. She claims he considers beating and bullying the animals to be remarkable performances. Instead of discussing theories, she asks him to perform the act of swinging. Their discourse continues in this manner for some time. Rita eventually does the new performance reluctantly in order to keep Lyla at bay. The trapeze team's performance was a huge success.

(ii) Another example. Captain had a crucial conversation with his wife, Rita. He values her input and ideas on critical subjects. He rests for two weeks after the Jubilee before travelling to Trichy, the next camp. This is the time for Captain to relax at home and converse with his wife. He discusses the film project with her: "The fundamental concern is whether Raja should be lent for film work at all" (79). She inquires about the character of Raja (a tiger) in the film. Captain says he'll find out soon. She inquires whether they are capable of dealing with Raja. The captain responds that they cannot. She doesn't understand why Captain could be dissatisfied with the job of lions. Captain and Rita stop talking at this point because they have time to think about it. Rita eventually accepts the film concept.

(iii) The most significant example. In general, Rita anticipates an introduction about herself at the start of her programme. Captain, on the other hand, never presents her to the audience. This causes her to mutter from time to time. Captain claims that she leads a fantastic squad, that her girls are well-known, and that she needs no introduction. Captain also thinks it's strange to boost one's wife. Rita inquires whether his wit and eloquence are limited to the animals. Captain responds that animals, not she, require introduction. While their chat continues in this manner, he wonders if something is amiss with their horoscopes. Rita instantly remarks that his and the tiger's horoscopes appear to be more compatible. Captain advises her not to talk in that style. He opines that someday she will regret. He says that she does not understand his need for a calm mind in his work. Rita sharply replies that he is speaking in such a way that she does not need a calm mind in her job. Rita says that he thinks only of himself and his tiger. In spite of such heated

exchanges, Captain, at the end, worries about his wife, about her life without him and about her future. Rita, on her part, when she comes to know about his death, commits suicide.

(She) stood there staring at the body, not saying anything or crying... She then returned to the circus tent, climbed to the top where the swings were champed, took one out, took a full swing up and down, and let go of her grasp when the swing met the ceiling...(69) The tiger, Raja, who possesses the soul of an enlightened human being, opines thus on Rita and Captain: She enjoyed being argumentative, that's all.

They were an odd couple, dedicated to each other but not expressing their sentiments verbally. (68-69)

Rita: Who is she? What is she?

Rita is the wife of Captain. She is the head of the trapeze team in the —Grand Malgudi Circus. She takes care of her husband and the boys. She rings the bell for breakfast, when Captain completes his work at the table in the morning. She expresses her deep concern for the education of the boys. She gives valuable suggestions, when Captain asks her advice in the matter of lending the tiger, Raja for the film work.

Conclusion

The prominent roles of Captain and Rita in R.K. Narayan's *A Tiger for Malgudi* demonstrate that the manwoman relationship, in general, is difficult to describe. Captain, the husband in the tale, may appear careless about his family concerns.

However, as a responsible husband, he works hard and shows concern for his family's well-being. Rita may appear to be irritably speaking to her spouse. But, as a loyal life partner, she looks after her husband and children. One cannot possibly know the secrets and joys of the husband and wife. As a result, one should not conclude that the husband and wife are not properly suited.

References

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