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**Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen  
&  
The Guide by R. K. Narayan**

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## PRIDE AND PREJUDICE BY JANE AUSTEN

### About the author:

Jane Austen was born in the year of American Revolution 1775 on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December to Reverend George Austen and Cassandra Leigh Austen. She was their seventh child. It is said that Jane Austen was widely read and know most of the 18<sup>th</sup> century writers – men and women. She began writing very early in life, during the spare time that she could gather away from helping in kitchen, doing embroidery, singing and sketching, the usual occupations of young women of those days. She wrote solely for pleasure and revised her works to make them as perfect as possible. Though she was not so popular in her own time, it would not be wrong to say that she is one of the most popular writers of all time in English literature. Her works include Pride and Prejudice, sense and sensibility, Mansfield Pank, Emma, North anger Abbey, Persuasion and a fragment the Watsons. She died in 1817.

Jane Austen lived during a time when England was born by wars – war between England and her colonies in America, Napoleonic wars with France, rebellion in Ireland etc., Even the society in England was fast changing. But, Auston’s novels are seemingly unaffected by all these developments. She chase to write on things which she know well – the country of the upper middle class and its concouns like love, courtship, marriage, etc., which are of Universal significance . In her own words her canvas was “two inches of ivory” But she painted it neatly and precisely with memorable situations and characters.

### A Brief Summary of the Pride and Prejudice:

The story of the Pride and Prejudice revolves round a middle class family of The Bennets – Mr. Bennet the husband, Mrs. Bennet the wife and their marriageable daughters – Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Catherine an Lydia. The Bennets live in a village of Longburn in Hertfordshire. As Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Bennet have no son his estate is entailed [on his death] to his cousin Mr.

Collins a foolish pompous rector of Hunsford who is under the patronage of Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Thus with little fortune to push her daughters in the world, Mrs. Bennet is always looking forward eagerly for prospective sons-in-law with a large fortune and who are ready to marry her daughters with little means.

One day Charles Bingley a rich bachelor with a fortune of 4 thousand a year comes to settle in Netherfield Park near Longbourn along with his two sisters and his rich friend Fitzwilliam Darcy of Pemberly, nephew of Lady Catherine. Mrs Bennet is all eagerness to meet him and hopes that he would fall in love with Jane. Soon, she and her daughters meet Bingley at a ball. While Bingley is at once attracted to Jane, Mr. Darcy who is somewhat vain and highbrow curtly refuses to dance with Elizabeth saying that she is not beautiful enough to tempt him. Soon, Bingley and Jane are in love. But sisters of Bingley and even Darcy feel that the possible marriage between Bingley and Jane is not suitable due to her Cheapside relatives as well as due to improprieties shown by Mrs Bennet and her younger daughters. Caroline Bingley, Bingley's sister, hopes by this and if Bingley marries Darcy's sister, it would brighten her prospects of marrying Darcy.

Darcy's proud behavior and also Wickham's [ a handsome young officer and son of Darcy's father's steward] account of Darcy's ungentlemanly behaviour towards him make Elizabeth not like Darcy as Darcy himself is gradually attracted towards her. Meanwhile the foolish Mr. Collins proposes to Elizabeth and is rejected. He promptly turns his attention to Charlotte Lucas, the eldest daughter of the Lucases, who live near Longbourn. Charlotte marries Collins.

Being invited by Charlotte, Elizabeth goes to live with her for a few weeks. There she meets Mr. Darcy once again who is visiting his aunt Lady Catherine. Now strongly attracted to her, in spite of himself, Darcy proposes to her. But Elizabeth who has already learnt from Colonel Fitzwilliam, Darcy's cousin about his role in separating Jane and Bingley and also from the

accounts of Wickham rejects him outrightly and gives him reasons for it. Extremely hurt by the rejection Darcy writes a letter to her answering to the charges she has leveled against him. He accepts his role in separating Bingley and Jane and says he has been forced to do so due to the improprieties shown by her family. As for Wickham he tells her of his diabolic nature and how he tried to elope with Darcy's sister Georgiana for her money.

Elizabeth returns to Longbourn to go on a trip with Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner, her uncle and aunt. She visits Pemberly, Darcy's place in Derbyshire. There they are all cordially welcomed by Darcy and his sister. Elizabeth is much surprised by the change that has come over in Darcy's manners. Meanwhile Elizabeth gets the news that her youngest sister Lydia is eloped with Wickham and they could not be traced and also that with no money there is little chance of Wickham marrying Lydia.

Darcy takes upon himself the task of tracing Lydia and Wickham and sees to it that their marriage is brought about. Bingley comes back to Netherfield Park and his attachment to Jane is renewed and he gets engaged to her. Darcy too proposes to Elizabeth which she accepts even though Lady Catherine tries her best to stop it. The novel ends with the double marriage – Bingley marrying Jane and Darcy marrying Elizabeth.

### **Justification of the title:**

It is often said that Jane Austen first gave the title **“First Impressions”** to her novel and then changed it into **“Pride and Prejudice”** after a lot of thinking.

Elizabeth and Darcy, who are the protagonists of the novel, go by their first impressions of people especially of each other. But the title **“First Impressions”** is limited in its implication. Darcy is blinded by his own superior status. He fails to understand the worth of Elizabeth in their first meeting and snubs her “not handsome enough to tempt me”. As a result,

Elizabeth's first impression of Darcy is that of a proud and conceited man. It also makes her to take whatever Wickham says about him without questioning. This also leads to the complication of the plot. Thus, the importance of the first impressions of Elizabeth and Darcy in the novel cannot be denied. But at the same time, it does not bring out the true significance of the novel. The failings which Austen exposes with irony and the way the complications of the plot are resolved are not indicated by this title. On the other hand the title "**Pride and Prejudice**" indicates to not only the failings of the protagonists but also to several other characters who show apart from foolishness and meanness, varieties of pride and prejudice.

1. Why is the title Pride and Prejudice a much better title than first impressions?

Darcy is conscious of his own high social rank. In his pride in high social status he is prejudiced against the people of lower status like that of the Bennets and people belonging to trade like the Gardiners. This is evident in the way he behaves in various balls in Hertfordshire. Indeed, it is his prejudice against socially inferior Bennets with no connections that makes him separate his friend Bingley and the eldest of the Bennet sisters, Jane. Yet he is drawn to the intelligent sparkling eyes of Elizabeth. He gradually finds himself in love with Elizabeth which his better judgement and his pride in his superior status desperately try to check. In his first proposal of marriage to Elizabeth he concentrates more on the damage it will cause to his status than his love of Elizabeth. The curt rejection of Elizabeth accusing him of ungentlemanly behavior sets him on the path of reformation and change

1. Why does Darcy separate Bingley and Jane?

Elizabeth on the other hand prides herself on her ability to understand people and her perception. Yet when she receives a snub from Darcy in the Meryton Ball she is hurt. She fails to judge him dispassionately and becomes prejudiced against Darcy. Her growing dislike of Darcy is fed by Wickham's account that Darcy has cheated him of his living. She believes whatever Wickham says unquestioned thus, committing yet another blunder of prejudice, a prejudice for Wickham. Her hatred for Darcy increases when she comes to know from Colonel Fitzwilliam that Darcy has been instrumental in separating Jane and Bingley, so very angrily rejects him.

1. Why is Elizabeth prejudiced against Darcy?

Elizabeth's curt rejection and her accusation of 'ungentlemanly behavior' forces Darcy to reevaluate himself. He realizes that though he has been taught good principles but left to follow it in pride and conceit. Even though Elizabeth's accusations are formed on mistaken premises, his behavior to her and to several people at Hertfordshire is unpardonable and deserves the reproof. He struggles hard to make acquaintance with those people who he initially had rejected as unworthy of his attention – the Gardiners. On the other hand, the letter he writes to Elizabeth giving explanations forces her to reevaluate her pride in her discerning capabilities. "How despicably have I acted.....I, who have prided myself on my discernment!- I, who have valued myself on my abilities!". She also realizes that she has been utterly prejudiced

in her behavior. “Pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted prepossession and ignorance”. Thus, it is not proper to say that while Darcy’s failing is Pride and Elizabeth’s Prejudice. They in fact overlap.

As it has been noted earlier, it is not Darcy and Elizabeth alone who suffer from pride and prejudice. Miss Bingley and Lady Catherine De Borough, for instance, too suffer from the prejudice springing out of their birth and status and try in their own way to stop the love and marriage of Elizabeth and Darcy.

So, the title “**Pride and Prejudice**” indicates to the psychological tension between the protagonists. It initiates the complication of the plot. When the protagonists learn about their failings and overcome them it leads to the denouement of the novel. Thus the title is most aptly chosen than the title “First Impressions”.

#### **Theme of Marriage:**

The theme of marriage with all its variety and complications is central to the novel “**Pride and Prejudice**”. The novel begins with an ironical statement that “It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of fortune must be in want of a wife” and ends with not one but two marriages that of Jane and Bingley and Elizabeth and Darcy. Marriage is not a simple conclusion of a love story in the novel. It is a major social concern of the times. Marriage is not only an important decision of a girl’s life, it is her only source of security in case she doesn’t have enough money of her own. It was a serious preoccupation of many mothers of the middle classes like Mrs. Bennet to see their daughter well settled in marriage. It was also a means to intermixing of the social classes in a society where the old aristocracy and new middle class are gradually getting merged. In the novel, the theme of marriage is explored through the relationships of Elizabeth and Darcy, Jane and Bingley, Charlotte and Mr. Collins, Lydia and Wickham and Mr and Mrs Bennet.



Why is the theme of marriage so important in Jane Austen's novels?

The novel begins with the families in the neighborhood of Longbourn with daughters in marriageable age getting into an active competition with one another to get a rich son-in-law. It is a dream of every mother to see her daughters married into wealthy houses as it is of Mrs. Bennet. In this business of match making, money and status play an important role. Settlement and provisions are talked of along with desirability of a young man and young woman. Even Elizabeth who is not taken in by riches and wealth talks of 'imprudent' marriage if it done with no considerations to the couples' economic status. So though she is attracted to Wickham, she never contemplates marrying him for he has no money just like her but it would be wrong to say that Austen tries to project commercial view of marriage.

Jane Austen presents a variety of incompatibility(unsuitability) in marriage. The Bennets are an incompatible couple. Though sensible, Mr Bennet captivated by youth and beauty has married a woman of weak understanding and illiberal mind. The result is there is no real affection and respect in the marriage. Mr. Bennet in disappointment, has turned cynical and has withdrawn not only from the society but from his responsibilities of the family which is a great disadvantage to her daughters. Charlotte – Collins' marriage is another instance of incompatible marriage. Charlotte has married a man of mean understanding and foolishness. Because marriage is the only option left to Charlotte to have a secure future. But happiness is as much missing in it as it is in the Bennets'. Another marriage which receives disapproval of Austen is that of Lydia and Wickham. Lydia is too silly and young to understand the requirements of marriage. Impulsive, she thinks only of the momentary pleasures in eloping with Wickham. Wickham, on the other hand, see marriage as means to cross the class boundaries and as a means to make money. Using his charm and attractive personality he tries to entice

Georgiana Darcy in which he fails. His next victim appears to be Miss King who he begins to woo as soon as she is left money by her grandfather. He elopes with Lydia not marry but satisfy his sensual pleasures. He is forced to marry Lydia finally to give respectability, to their relationship.

Name the incompatible couples in the novel?

Jane Austen also places her critical eye on individuals like Mrs Bennet and Lady Catherine De Borough who are blind to the moral significance of a marriage. Mrs. Bennet is not worried about whether the single man is good and honest. For her it is enough if he is wealthy. She is not worried about the circumstances in which Lydia's marriage takes place. She doesn't feel ashamed at all that Lydia has eloped but feels shame that she is not married from their parish. Lady Catherine shows another sort of blindness springing from her pride of her status and ignores love as the basis of marriage. Both come together ironically in their inadequate understanding of marriage.

It is with these incompatible marriages in the background that Jane Austen presents the marriages of Elizabeth and Darcy, Jane and Bingley. It is also significant that Elizabeth becomes aware of all these issues of incompatibility as she is gradually drawn towards Darcy. No doubt that difference in wealth and status are put forward by Darcy as reason for separating Jane and Bingley, Darcy himself learns to overcome these limitations as he gains in self knowledge and sees the worth of Elizabeth. Elizabeth though at one time thinks "It is something to be the mistress of Pemberly" is not drawn by the wealth or status of Darcy but the change that comes over him as a person and begins to respect him. Once they overcome their pride and prejudice and other personal limitations they learn to love,

respect and trust each other. Their marriage as well as the marriage of Jane and Bingley which stand the test of time and pressures of the society are ideal marriages.

Name the ideal marriages in the novel.

### **Theme of love and Courtship**

**Pride and Prejudice** contains of the most cherished love stories in English literature – the love and courtship of Elizabeth and Darcy. Like all good and interesting love stories it faces many obstacles before it achieves fulfillment in marriage. Status and wealth form one of the obstacles. Darcy belongs to the upper class gentry with a large estate and ten thousand pound income per annum. Though Elizabeth's father is a gentleman her mother is not. Further she has an uncle who is a tradesman and another uncle who is an attorney. Further the Bennet's estate is entailed to a distant cousin Mr. Collins. This forms one of objections of Darcy's to Bingley's marriage to Jane in the beginning. Mrs. Bennet's stupidity, want of manners and absolute lack of sense is also one of the causes which keep Darcy away from Elizabeth. But the main obstacle in the fulfillment of their love remains the lovers' own personalities. Blinded by the pride he has in his higher status Darcy calls Elizabeth not handsome enough to tempt him in the ball given at Meryton. Hurt by the comment, Elizabeth fails to understand the gentleman within the proud exterior of Darcy. Her vanity makes her prejudiced against him just as Darcy is drawn to the beautiful expression of her beautiful eyes. With the arrival of Wickham on the scene the gap between Darcy and Elizabeth only seem to increase as prejudiced Elizabeth believes as true all the falsehood spread by Wickham. Bingley leaving Nether field suddenly not to return

makes Elizabeth suspect that Darcy has been responsible for it. It only turns her prejudice into hatred just as Darcy becomes overpowered by the charms of Elizabeth and proposes to her when he meets her in Kent. But Darcy has not learnt yet to overpower his own pride and prejudice. He in his proposal of marriage dwells more on how he is defying his family pride and situation to marry Elizabeth than his love for her. Elizabeth rejects his love and accuses him of separating Jane and Bingley and cheating Wickham. She emphatically declares to him nothing in the world would ever tempt her to marry him because his behaviour has been very ungentlemanly. This comes as a surprise to Darcy who never has thought that Elizabeth could reject him. Thus begins the change in him, He writes a strongly worded letter to her describing the circumstances which made him separate Jane and Bingley and also the truth about Wickham. His letter dwelling on the stupidity and want of decency in the behaviour of her mother and younger sisters makes Elizabeth also think. Their love and courtship gets a boost when Elizabeth sees Darcy unexpectedly in Pemberly where she has gone on a tour along with her uncle and aunt. She sees a lot of change in his behaviour. He is more polite and gentle in his behaviour and sees that he is still interested in her. Her respect and esteem for him increases as she hears the house keeper's praise of him.

What brings change in Darcy's attitude?

Just when everything seem to go well Lydia's elopement with Wickham comes as a shock and forces Elizabeth to realize that it may be the end of their relationship. The real turning point in Elizabeth's emotions comes when she comes to know that it is Darcy who is responsible for forcing Wickham to marry Lydia. So when Lady Catherine de Borough comes to warn and threaten Elizabeth, she refuses to promise her that she won't marry

Darcy. Darcy takes as a cue and proposes to her to be accepted by her. Thus the protagonists have to go beyond personal prejudices to achieve fruitful love.

A love story which is similar to the love of Elizabeth and Darcy though less interesting is that of Jane and Bingley. They too face the same societal restrictions but they do not face troubles due to their own personalities as it happens with Elizabeth and Darcy, as they are of similar temperament. Lydia and Wickham prove a contrast to Elizabeth and Darcy in the love affair. They are drawn to each other not by love, respect and trust but by their own passionate natures and indulge themselves in it for sometime till the love loses its charm. Charlotte Lucas on the other hand knowingly accepts love and courtship of Mr. Collins even though she doesn't love him because marriage is the only future security she can have.

Jane Austen by making Elizabeth and Darcy overcome social forces of hierarchy, status and wealth views love as something independent of them and as something which one can capture only if one outgrows restricting feelings like pride and prejudice. Further, by making Elizabeth choose the love which she gradually gained for Darcy rather than her love at first sight for Wickham, Austen seems to approve love based on understanding, respect and trust to be a better one than the more romantic love at first sight.

Name the different types of love one notices in the novel.

### **Irony in Pride and Prejudice:**

Irony is the contrast between the appearance and reality or what appears outwardly and what actually is. It is a subtle method used by writers to tell the reality to the readers and also suggest to them their judgement of various

characters and direct their attention to issues raised in their works. There is such a variety of irony in the novel **Pride and Prejudice** that it becomes the main quality of Jane Austen's style for the novel. The novel is steeped in irony of situation, characters, narration and theme.

**a) Irony of Situation:** Irony of situation emerges in the novel when the characters do a particular action thinking something but it turns out to be completely different when they finish it. Darcy rather proudly declares in the beginning of their acquaintance that Elizabeth is not handsome enough to tempt him. The irony is that he not only falls in love with her but goes on to marry her. He removes Bingley from Netherfield citing the imprudence of marriage with Bennets who have neither money nor connections only to fall in love with Elizabeth and to propose to her no sooner than he separates Bingley and Jane. Darcy proposes to Elizabeth when she hates him the most. When Mr Collins proposes to Elizabeth declares emphatically that she not the type of person to reject the first time and accept the second time but she does exactly the same with Darcy. The departure of the militia Elizabeth hopes will put end to Lydia's flirtations but she ends up eloping with Wickham. Elizabeth thinks that Lydia-Wickham episode and Lady Catherine's intrusion will be obstacles to her union with Darcy but they turn out to be the instruments in bringing them together.

**b) Irony of Character:** Irony of character is of much more important in the novel affecting both major and minor characters. Elizabeth prides in her ability to read people's personalities. But it is so ironical that she is blinded by her own prejudices and pride in her ability that she judges wrongly not only Darcy but Wickham. Wickham looks very gentlemanly but turns out to be a big crook given to profligacy, dishonesty and indecency. Darcy when he prides in his gentleman background is in fact being very ungentlemanly. Bingley sisters look down upon the Bennets for their vulgarity and low connections. They turn out to be vulgar instead and the wealth on which they pride themselves so much has indeed come from trade.

Jane Austen uses irony in characterization to shake the major characters like Elizabeth and Darcy out of their self-deception and to bring them self-knowledge as well as knowledge of others. Irony is on other hand used to expose the hypocrisy and pretensions of Lady Catherine De Borough and Miss Bingely. It is used to expose stupidity and want of sense in Mrs Bennet and the younger Bennet sisters.

**c) Irony in Narration:** The first line of the novel sets of the ironic tone of the narration. Though most of the time, the novel presents the point of view of Elizabeth, the novel achieves objectivity with the ironic tone of the narrator. The first line of the novel is an excellent example of verbal irony: “It is a truth universally acknowledge that a single man in possession of good fortune must be in want of a wife”. As the novel progresses it becomes very clear to us that it is indeed a single woman who is search of a rich husband. The entire novel revolves around how many a mother and young woman go about this. The novel is full of such instances. The narrator comments about Mr. Bennet “To his wife he was very little otherwise indebted than as her ignorance and folly had contributed to his amusement”; or another one on Wickham “Mr. Wickham was so perfectly satisfied with this conversation that he never again distressed himself or provoked his dear sister Elizabeth.” This subtle verbal irony is reflected in Mr. Bennet’s speeches too. When he calls Wickham a pleasant fellow and best of his sons-in-law.

Which character in the novel speaks ironically?

**d) Irony in Theme:** Pride and Prejudice seem to be two separate entities in the title but as the novel progresses one becomes aware that in case of Darcy and Elizabeth prejudice and pride go together. Pride leads to prejudice and prejudice brings in pride. But Elizabeth and Darcy are not without their

virtues too. For, it is his pride of being a gentleman that leads Darcy to change. When Elizabeth is steeped in prejudice she recognizes the prejudice of Darcy.

Thus irony, on the whole, becomes the soul of *Pride and Prejudice* working in its themes, characterization and narrative technique. It becomes the novelist's means of presenting her moral vision i.e. what according to her is desirable in love, marriage, social behaviour and value system. As Jane Austen does not use irony with bitterness and cynicism but uses it in a good humoured way laughing at the follies and foibles of characters it is often considered comic irony.

Through what does Austen present her moral vision?

### **Pride and Prejudice as a 'Novel of Manners'**

The eighteenth century society especially the society of landed gentry which Jane Austen uses in her novel is a conventional society following very strict codes of conduct and etiquette of good manners. Jane Austen knew this narrow world very closely as she herself lived on the borders of it. She knew its positive as well as negative points. In the novel **Pride and Prejudice**, she deals with the manners of such a society criticizing some, justifying some others and laughing away at some more. That is why her novels have acquired the subtitle of Novel of Manners or Comedy of Manners.

What type of a society does Austen present in the novel ?

The society which the novel depicts expects certain set manners from every one. Introduction to the new acquaintance is one of them. Mrs Bennet



is horrified to know that if Mr. Bennet doesn't make the acquaintance of Bingley, the women of the family cannot make his acquaintance so urges to go Mr. Bennet and meet Mr. Bingley. Darcy too points it as one of the reasons for not dancing with many women in the ball. While the more liberal minded Elizabeth (so Austen) seem to think it is even more ill-mannered not to dance with them and keep them waiting than to wait for proper introduction. Balls are seen as the means for the two sexes to meet, love to develop and courtship to flourish. The way the younger Bennets cry for it make them not only look silly but hateful.

The life that one sees in the novel is the life of wealth, a life of quiet and enjoyment, a life without severe struggles or dangers and tragedies. The highlights of such a life was to go for morning visits, weddings, balls and shopping and going on travels. It is the life where marriage is the chief incident and settlement in a marriage or settlements and entailments are the most interesting things that people can talk about. All incidents are directed at bringing up a wedding between suitable couples. Nearly all the families in Hertfordshire have marriageable daughters and there is an active competition among families to catch a rich son in law. They scheme endlessly to outwit each other to secure the rich husband. Darcy to herself.

What seems to be the most important event of society in Austen?

The marriages are expected to happen within the social circle and any attempt to cross the boundary is criticized and checked. Darcy himself objects in the beginning to the relationship of Bingley and Jane for she has low connections. Lady Catherine de Bourough objects to Darcy and Elizabeth's supposed marriage on the same grounds. Wickham, the son of the steward of Mr. Darcy too tries to cross the boundaries but through wrongful means. Colonel Fitzwilliam too is aware of the fact that he has to choose a girl of rich

fortune to keep with the convention wherever his heart may as he is a second son.

Austen does not approve of this attitude as she makes Elizabeth say that if being a steward's son is the only sin of Wickham she knows it from himself. Miss Bingley who is a snob and Lady Catherine who is very class conscious are exposed to ridicule in the novel. Yet, she does not decry it as all the marriages that happen whether they are prudent or imprudent happen within the circle. Further marriage is seen as the only future security for women of less money. Though Elizabeth is shocked at Charlotte's decision to marry for money she too comes to realize that for a twenty eight year old plain looking Charlotte her marriage to Mr Collins may be good enough.

Does Austen approve of Charlotte's marriage to Collins? Why?

The novel also focuses on the etiquette of a gentleman. Characters are endorsed by the author on the gentlemanly behaviour. More than one character is praised as gentleman-like by the author. Bingley does not belong to the landed gentry but rich enough to be one but his manners are all very gentlemanly. The Gardiners belong to the trading community but by their thought, speech and behaviour they prove themselves to be gentleman like. Darcy in his self deception thinks that he is not only a gentleman by birth but also in his behaviour. He gets a rude jolt when Elizabeth rejects him on his ungentlemanly behaviour. Though angry in the beginning he learns to see himself and correct himself and proves himself as a gentleman. Lady Catherine De Borough belongs to the noble class but has none of the refinement in her thought, speech or action. She mistakes being authoritative and imposing to be noble qualities. The Gardiners on the other hand even

though belong the so called inferior trading class show more refinement of thought and spirit which even Darcy is forced to acknowledge.

Who are praised in the novel for being 'gentlemanly'?

Jane Austen has claimed that she has taken up only two inches ivory for her art referring to the smallness of her canvas. Yet within this two inches of ivory, the novel of comedy of manners, Jane Austen does raise some perennial issues – the dichotomy of appearance and reality, self deception, self knowledge etc. It has to be said that these issues are discussed, elaborated and fictionally presented through the themes which often form the part of the comedy of manners like love, marriage and status. So her novel ultimately turns out to have universal relevance and significance.

#### **Character of Elizabeth Bennet:**

One of the most well known female characters in English Literature, Elizabeth Bennet is the protagonist of Jane Austen's **Pride and Prejudice**. The novel revolves round Elizabeth and her initial hatred of Darcy and how it changes into respect and love for him.

The second daughter of Mr and Mrs Bennet, she is her father's most favourite and mother's least favourite. She is lovely and beautiful. But her attractiveness does not depend merely on her physical charms but on extraordinary liveliness of her mind. She is intelligent, sensible and quick witted. In a novel full of excellent dialogue, she converses very well. She has a pair of beautiful and very expressive eyes symbolically referring to her critical mind and perception. She has the self assurance that comes with the critical mind. Her intelligence, her lively wit, her perception allow her to rise

above the nonsensical and petty minded behaviour of most of her family and the society around.

In her wit and repartee, Elizabeth is like her father but she is not happy just by making fun of the follies of others like her father. She likes to act and when found herself lacking she changes herself. She is always lively and does not brood over a problem for long and returns to her lively spirits once again. Her love and affection for her sister Jane is exemplary and admirable. Her prejudice against Darcy gets fixed into hatred as she suspects him to be instrumental in separating Jane and Bingley.

Who does Elizabeth resemble in her attitude?

Elizabeth is usually right about people. Her opinion that Ms Bingley is a snob and a false person proves right. She quickly identifies (from the letter of Mr Collins) that he is a pompous fool. She is also quick to recognize that Lady Catherine is a tyrant and the only virtue that she has is her wealth and so nothing to be afraid of. But at times she falls prey to pride in her own perceptiveness and brilliance and commits blunders. So, when a proud Mr Darcy snubs her in the Meryton ball her vanity is hurt, so she becomes prejudiced against Mr. Darcy which increases with time. The result is she fails to recognize the hypocrisy and lies of sweet tongued villain Wickham who tells her how Darcy has cheated her out of her only source of income. It adds to already existing prejudice against Darcy. The prejudice turns into hatred when she suspects Darcy has separated her beloved sister Jane and Mr Bingley.

In judging who does Elizabeth go wrong?

In her hurt pride and strong prejudice Elizabeth doesn't hesitate to curtly reject Darcy's proposal to marry. But Darcy's letter explaining his behaviour to Wickham and his justification in separating Jane and Bingley forces her to acknowledge to herself her own failings – her own vanity, her prejudice. She also reassess her family as well as Darcy and Wickham and leaves behind her self deception. This shows that she is capable of making amends. Her visit to Pemberley marks a change in her relationship with Darcy. She learns to see the brighter aspects of Darcy's character as a good master and good brother. When she perceives that Darcy has changed and trying his best to be better behaved, she has a change of heart too. Lydia's elopement makes her realize how much she likes him when she has lost him for ever. But ironically it brings them together as Darcy forces Wickham to marry Lydia. She in all perceptiveness realizes their marriage would be a happy and complementary one both of them benefiting from it. She thinks his knowledge of the world and experience can enlarge hers while her own liveliness can teach him politeness and more lively manners. So she has no hesitation to agree to marry Darcy when he proposes to her the second time.

#### **Character of Darcy:**

Fitzwilliam Darcy in the novel **Pride and Prejudice** is the male counter part of Elizabeth. He comes from a wealthy, well established family of landed gentry. He owns a great estate of Pemberley. He enters the novel as a friend of Bingley but gradually sidelines him to take the centre position in the novel.

He exhibits both good and bad qualities of his class. He is snobbish, arrogant and authoritative. At the same time he is very sure of himself and

honest. In fact he has a very strict notion of gentlemanly behaviour which rules his life.

Intelligent and forthright, he too like Elizabeth tends to judge people hastily and harshly. His high birth and wealth make him very proud and conscious of his social status. In his vanity he states that Elizabeth is not handsome enough to tempt him to dance, beginning their relationship on a wrong note. Yet he becomes aware of her charms, her liveliness and her intelligence. Yet in his self deception he thinks it proper to separate Jane and Bingley citing her low connections and stupid mother and sisters. But he himself is unable to resist Elizabeth's charms. He proposes to her in a very proud manner telling more about the lowness of her connections and how big a sacrifice it is for him to marry her than his love for her. He is full of self assurance and confidence that Elizabeth would certainly agree to marry him. So, he receives a rude jolt when she rejects him calling his behaviour to Jane, to Wickham and to herself as "ungentlemanly"

Why does Darcy suffer a rude jolt when Elizabeth refuses to marry him?

This unexpected rejection stirs him his 'nobility'. He gradually realizes how arrogant and assuming he has been. He later reflects later on, "I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit.... I was spoiled by my parents who though good themselves ....allowed, encouraged almost taught me to be selfish and overbearing....to think meanly of all the rest of the world..." (282). It builds a sense of humility which brings additional shine to other noble qualities like generosity. He continues his love and devotion to Elizabeth. When Lydia elopes with Wickham he takes the responsibility for it because his pride has stopped him from speaking openly about Wickham's true nature. He also wishes to relieve some pain for

Elizabeth. He goes and meets the very people he hates to even mention earlier – Wickham and Mrs Younge and brings about Lydia's marriage and thus saving the Bennet family from absolute disgrace. He does it secretly too. In his awareness of his limitations he becomes sympathetic to the follies of others. He willingly marries into a family of silly daughters, an embarrassing mother, low connections and Wickham for a brother in law. Thus Darcy proves himself worthy of Elizabeth just as by shedding her pride and prejudice Elizabeth proves worthy of Darcy.

The novel though told in third person omniscient narration, narrates most of the incidents from the point of view of Elizabeth. So, Darcy appears not so sympathetic figure in the beginning but as Elizabeth's perception of him changes, the novel too presents him in sympathetic and noble light.

### **Character of Mr. Bennet**

Mr. Bennet is the head of the Bennet household. He is the husband of Mrs. Bennet and father of Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty and Lydia. Though intelligent, captivated by beauty and youth he has married Mrs. Bennet a woman of weak understanding and illiberal mind. He is driven to exasperation by the ridiculous wife and silly and difficult younger daughters. Soon after his marriage he finds that respect, esteem and trust have disappeared from his marriage so is his sense of domestic happiness. He is also disappointed not to have a son who would prevent the entailing of the property after his death to a distant cousin. He reacts to this by withdrawing from his family and assuming a detached attitude. In a novel in which people are seen actively visiting neighbours and going on trips Mr Bennet is rarely seen outside his library. His physical retreat from the world signifies his emotional retreat from his family. Though intelligent and morally upright he is satisfied with laughing at the silliness of his wife and younger daughters. Instead of correcting the foolishness of his wife and wild nature of his younger daughters, he wishes to be left alone in his library as if whatever they do outside of it is not his concern. He shuts his eyes to the problems rather than solving them.

Which is Mr. Bennet's emotional retreat?

Initially his intelligence, dry wit, and sarcastic humour in the face of his wife's foolish hysteria and wildness of his younger daughters make him a sympathetic figure. But as the novel progresses the reader loses some of the respect for him. Elizabeth warns him about the wildness of Lydia and warns him of possible disgrace to the family because of her. But he fails to judge it properly and laughs off the fears of Elizabeth of possible family disgrace. He looks for his peace rather than the reputation of the family. At the moment of deepest crisis in the family too he appears ineffectual. When Lydia elopes with Wickham it is Mr. Gardiner and Darcy who take the active lead in the matter. Mr. Bennet after his initial anger at Lydia's shameless behaviour is content to be lazy again. Even Elizabeth his favourite daughter cannot but think about his ineffectiveness as a father and his improper behaviour towards his wife when he exposes his wife to the contempt and ridicule of her children. But it has to be said that from his experience he surely warns Elizabeth not to marry without respect for her spouse for it would be a life long misery. It is only when she assures her being in really love with Darcy and that she respects him and esteems him that he agrees to give his consent to their marriage.

### **Character of Mr. Bingley**

Charles Bingley is one of the important characters in the novel **Pride and Prejudice** apart from the two protagonists Elizabeth and Darcy. The novel begins with his arrival to the neighbourhood of Longbourn. Bingley is a perfectly amiable rich young man with an annual income of five thousand



pounds. He has attractive personality and polished manners. He likes to enjoy life and has gusto for good things in life. In that he is a striking contrast to his best friend Mr. Darcy. Unlike Darcy who hates to meet people who are not acquainted with him, Bingley enjoys social life especially the balls where young men and women meet. He is a great dancer too dancing with all the women present at the ball whether hosted by him or by others. Because of his amiable manners he becomes an instant favourite with people. Jane too feels the same when she tells Elizabeth “He is just what a young man ought to be ... sensible, good humoured, lively and I never saw such happy manners! – so much ease, with such perfect good breeding.”

He is very patient too. When everyone else sneer at the stupidity of Mrs Bennet, Bingley puts up with it in good humour.

As hoped and expected by Mrs Bennet, he falls in love with the beautiful Jane. Unlike Darcy or his sisters who are much more socially conscious, Bingley does not see the low connections of Bennets would affect the chances of Jane or Elizabeth. When Jane falls ill during her visit to them at Netherfield, he is only one who is really concerned about her health. But Bingley is extremely modest when it comes to thinking of his own capabilities. So he depends too much on Darcy’s opinion even in the matters of love and marriage. He allows his friend to decide for him what is right for him. As Darcy once comments he is weak willed too and can be easily influenced. So when Darcy fears that Bingley is in love with Jane he feels it necessary to break their relationship. Bingley gets carried away by the argument of Darcy that a connection with the Bennets is most imprudent and that Jane does not love him at all. He goes away to London. But it has to be said that he does not entertain any other relationship especially with Miss Darcy as hoped by her sisters. It shows that he genuinely loves Jane and only her so called indifference has made him go away.

Why does Bingley go away from Netherfield?

Bingley comes back to Netherfield with the consent of his friend and resumes his relationship with Jane. It goes to his credit that to exonerate himself he does not betray his friend Darcy's interference in their affair to Jane. He is very much like Jane. He sees all the positive points in people and their circumstances while Darcy comments and find faults with everything. Like Jane he very patiently puts up with nonsense with good humour. The love of Jane and Bingley is ideal love though not as fiery and interesting as Elizabeth's and Darcy's.

Though it is with Bingley that the action of the novel begins, after that he does not initiate much action but becomes part of the plans of others. He proves an interesting contrast to Darcy. They are temperamentally poles apart. The simple, straight forward docile Bingley becomes foil to the complex and authoritative Darcy. He also becomes a contrast to Wickham. Both he and Wickham are very well mannered, while Wickham's charms are false, Bingley's are genuine and heartfelt.

### **Character of Jane Bennet**

Jane Bennet is the eldest daughter of the Bennet family. She is very beautiful and is considered a reputed beauty of Hertfordshire. She is equally beautiful at heart for she is blessed with a kind heart and unassuming manners. She is twenty two at the beginning of the novel so her mother is quite anxious to get her married away. Like Elizabeth she too is gifted with intelligent and foresight but not given to so much of lively manners nor wit and repartee in her speech as Elizabeth is. She is an excellent dancer and is often the centre of attraction of many balls that are given in the novel. She is endowed with

patience and forbearance of an angel. Almost every one in the novel likes her. Her mother dotes on her beauty, her father has high opinion of her judgement and good sense. Elizabeth adores her so much that she thinks no one could be sweeter than Jane. Mr. Bingley falls prey to her charms in their first meeting itself. Even the snobbish Mrs Hurst and Miss Bingley who are highbrow and fastidious consider her a sweet girl. Darcy cannot but recognize her merits.

Jane loves Bingley sincerely. It is her first love. As she has never been in love before she feels the emotion quite strongly. Further, she is the type of the girl who feels more than she talks about it. So, Darcy who thinks himself to be a great observer of people thinks she does not respond to the love of Bingley. Elizabeth who knows her sister well understands how much love Jane has for Bingley though she doesn't talk about it. Bingley's sudden removal to London and his decision not to return to Herfordshire leave her very sad. Though she tries every effort to control herself, she is sad. But her regard for Bingley remains undiminished. She has unflinching faith in human capacity for virtue. So she can never have prejudice or grudge against anyone. Even when Elizabeth tries to convince the meanness of Miss Bingley, Jane refuses to agree with her. It is this quality which makes her a contrast to Elizabeth. Her faith in the nobility of human nature so strong that she never tries to find fault with others and thinks the best of everyone. When everyone including Elizabeth has openly criticized Darcy for his haughtiness and pride, she alone thinks well of him. The same thing is repeated when Elizabeth reveals about the villainy of Wickham to Darcy. She thinks it as a misrepresentation of interested people. She is very optimistic so that she alone can hope for better things from Lydia and Wickham when they elope. She is very dutiful. She takes the responsibility of the entire family when Lydia elopes with Wickham. She acts with a lot of forbearance whenever her mother throws tantrums for one thing or the other and never complains. She has a capacity to suffering silently and never complains about Bingley using her ill.

Jane is very sweet, docile and self effacing as to appear colourless and uninteresting but she fills the novel with a sweetness and optimism. Just as

Bingley proves a foil to Darcy, Jane proves a foil to Elizabeth. Her love for Bingley is presented as the ideal one where both of them are of one mind, heart and soul.

Who appears as a contrast to Jane in the novel?

### **Character of Mr Collins**

Mr Collins is a distant cousin of Mr Bennet. He is the beneficiary of the entailment which makes him the owner of Longburn estate after the death of Mr Bennet. He is the rector of Hunsford Parsonage. He is stupid, pompous and conceited. The very letter he writes to Mr Bennet requesting him to allow a visit at to Longbourn is a symbol of his stupidity, pomposity and conceit. As the author informs he has been brought up an uneducated narrow minded dominant father whose influence even the university education could not wipe out. Added to it he got into a profession quite easily and has easy money with him at a quite early an age. All this have added to his limitations from the birth. So he turns out to be an odd mixture of pride and servility, self importance and humility. His patronage by Lady Catherine encourages all these qualities in him.

Mr. Collins is very class-conscious not of his class but of the superiority of Lady Catherine. He is quite happy enough to be associated with such a great lady as her. He glories in the reflected importance. He is so servile that he would bow even to the carriage which takes Lady Catherine or her daughter. He spends the entire day walking among the trees to ascertain the Lady's nephews have come and bow to them. That Lady Catherine is his patron, he projects as an advantage of marrying him. Talking to a great lady and making up her card party are projected as the greatest and enviable pleasures that he would offer in marriage to his fiancée.

Mr Collins' proposals of marriage to Elizabeth is one of the funniest episodes in the novel. He comes with the hope of marrying one of the Bennet sisters. As soon as he sees Jane he decides that he would marry her without ever thinking whether she would like to marry him or not. When he comes to know that Jane is to be engaged he shifts his attention immediately to Elizabeth. When she refuses, he thinks it to be her modesty refuses to believe her. When he realizes it, he doesn't even take a day to woo Charlotte and propose to her. When Elizabeth visits Hunsford it becomes his sole purpose to show off what she has lost by refusing him. When he comes to know of Lydia's elopement he writes a letter to Mr. Bennet, congratulating himself that he has narrowly escaped disgrace.

Mr Collins is unbearable in his civilities. Darcy frowns on him and others laugh behind his back. But it is only the vulgar Mrs Philips who finds his civilities extraordinary. As a rector, all his time goes away in praising his patron. His Christian charity is such that he advises Mr Bennet to throw off Lydia from his affection once and for all. The language he uses either in speech or in writing absolutely reflects the man – full of pompous, high sounding usages and clichés. As a character he turns out to be one of the most comic. He also plays important enough role in the novel especially in the progress of the plot. Because it is Elizabeth's visit to the Parsonage that brings her and Darcy face to face once again which leads to Darcy's second proposal.

Mr. Collins is under the patronage of \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Collins first wanted to marry \_\_\_\_\_

### **Mr. Wickham**

When Wickham enters the novel he comes as a very handsome young man with very pleasing manners who is an absolute contrast to the proud

arrogant Darcy. Elizabeth likes him very much and becomes his immediate attention. They fall in to conversation very easily and from his conversation she comes to know of the grave wrongs done by Darcy who Wickham claims has cheated him out of his money and position. Like Elizabeth we too are taken in by what Wickham says. But gradually the readers' opinion is shifted to see the other side of Wickham when Elizabeth rejects Darcy's love citing his ungentlemanly behaviour to Wickham and her sister. The letter that Darcy writes to Elizabeth to explain his behaviour brings out the truth of Wickham.

Mr. Wickham is the son of the steward of late Mr. Darcy. His father was a very kind and nice man who worked very honestly for several years for Pemberley estate. He is of the same age of Darcy. He was his childhood playmate. Late Mr. Darcy liked Wickham very much and was his god father. He supported him in his school and university too. Late Mr Darcy wanted Wickham to join the church and so made the provision for him in his will in addition to giving him a legacy of one thousand pounds. But Wickham grew up to be a wild, lazy young man given to pleasures of life. When the senior Mr. Darcy died followed by the death of his own father, Wickham expressed a desire not to join church but to study law. Though Darcy has known the real character of Wickham, he has compensated him generously for giving up the church position in addition to the thousand pound legacy. Wickham soon spends all the money away and comes back to Darcy to request to join the church again. Darcy knowing fully well Wickham's character refuses to oblige. As a revenge Wickham plans to elope with Georgiana. His aim is to take away her ten thousand pound legacy as well as to take revenge on Darcy through her. Darcy finds about it and takes his sister away. Wickham then finds a post in –militia with the help of some friends comes to Meryton.

Elizabeth herself then realizes how hypocritical and slanderous Wickham has been. She remembers that he dare not speak about Darcy to others till he stayed in the Nether field but as soon as he has left he has spoken ill of Darcy to every one. She also realizes that Wickham has shifted his attention to Miss King very soon after she has got a legacy of ten thousand

pounds and when Miss leaves Meryton he is once again back to show attention to Elizabeth. He gives a proof of his diabolic nature when he elopes with Lydia even though he doesn't want to marry her. He claims that it is Lydia's own problem and wishes not to marry her till he is suitably compensated. Wickham's shameless nature gets revealed when he comes to Longburn after his marriage. He behaves as if nothing has happened and shows no sign of repentance which shocks even Jane who never thinks ill of anyone.

He comes as a contrast to Darcy and as a rival too in the beginning. As Elizabeth comments if he has all the appearance of being good while Darcy is good in reality. The mistake she commits believing in Wickham makes Elizabeth finally realize and overcome her limitations and also learn to respect esteem and trust Darcy. It is Wickham's elopement that brings Elizabeth and Darcy together finally.

What is Wickham's father?

Why does Wickham want to take revenge on Darcy?

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## THE GUIDE

**About the Author :** **The Guide** is an award winning novel written by R.K. Narayan. Do you know who he is ? Let us know.

R. K. Narayan is one of the three leading figures of early Indian literature in English , the other two are Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. He along with the other two is credited with giving Indian Literature in English international status. **Swami and His Friends, the English Teacher, the Financial Expert, the Guide, the Man-eater of Malgudi, the Vendor of sweets** are some of his famous novels. He has several short story collections too like **Malgudi Days, An Astrologer's Day and other stories, A Horse and Two goats** etc. His novel **the Guide** was adapted to film as **Guide** a Hindi movie directed by Vijay Anand. Narayan was not happy with the way the film was made.

The setting for most of his novels including **the Guide** is the fictional town of Malgudi. It was first introduced in **Swami and his Friends** and with every novel Malgudi evolved with the changing landscape of India. The writing style of Narayan is simple and has an element of humour in it. Narayan usually focuses on ordinary people reminding the reader of someone he knows.

Narayan received many honours and awards which include AC Benson Medal from the Royal Society of Literature, the Padma Vibhushan India's Second highest Civilian Award. He was also nominated to the Rajya Sabha.



## CHAPTER - I

Raju is sitting in an ancient temple on the banks of the river. A villager comes and sits with him. Raju comes to know that he is Velan from Mangala, a village across the river. The villager informs that he is returning from his daughter's home. As the villager looks up respectfully to him, Raju remembers the day when he came out of the jail. From this memory we come to know that Raju has been to a jail. He has served two years of imprisonment. The narration comes back to the present and Velan tells him of his problem. Raju asks him tell about it. It is his old habit to give advice to people. It is also indicated that it is reason for the troubles in his life.

1. Who does Raju meet at the ancient temple ?

2. How many years did Raju spend in the jail ?

Once again the narration goes back to the past. Here Narayan brings forward the first person narration of Raju which he tells near the end of the novel his life's story to Velan. But Narayan places it side by side with the third person narration so that we can estimate Raju of the past and of the present and see the change that comes over him in proper perspective.

Raju's first person narration informs Velan and the readers of an orthodox dancer Rosie and her husband Marco. Raju feels his troubles started with Rosie. He also informs of his railway connections and that he was a tourist guide. He then describes his childhood.

1. Who is responsible for his problems according to Raju ?

Raju's father was a shop keeper. He had a small hut shop in the outskirts of Malgudi where he would sell peppermint, fruit, tobacco, betel leaf, parched gram etc. His customers were often peasants and drivers of bullock carts. Raju's day began with the cock's crowing when his father would wake him up. After bath he would pray to God and drink a tumblerful of hot milk. Then his father would teach him Tamil alphabet by writing two letters on each side of the slate which Raju had to write over it. Raju would write over them till they were disfigured. He would learn arithmetic which he hated very much. He felt relief when some customer came to the father's shop and father left him to take care of the shop. He would then play all day under the tamarind tree in front of their house. Raju enjoyed the trips which he made along with his father to the town to buy things for the shop.

1. What was Raju's father?

2. Raju's childhood was \_\_\_\_\_ happy/  
troubled/disturbed.

The narration once again comes back to present and to Velan. Velan tells that his step sister has been causing trouble for him. She had run away from home when her marriage had fixed. She has been brought home but she does not speak with anyone. Raju using his common sense is able to guess much of the story of Velan which makes Velan revere Raju.

Raju very grandly tells Velan to bring his sister to him the next day. When Velan brings her. Raju is in control of the situation and starts telling them the story of Devaka but does not remember its ending. This leads him

once again to think of his childhood when his mother used to tell him stories while they waited for his father to come for dinner.

Unable to recollect the story, he covers it up by saying very grandly tells that the story has to wait. Velan is not troubled by it for he is of the stuff disciples are made of and so is not bothered by an incomplete story.

1. Why is Raju not able to complete the story?
  2. Why is Velan not troubled by it?
- 

We see Raju's intelligence and his ability to deal with people in this chapter. We also notice that Raju feels like an actor performing a role. Raju begins to act like a great man which Velan has mistaken him for. We also see Raju gaining confidence in his own acting.

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## CHAPTER - II

The chapter two begins with the Raju's past – his childhood. A railway track was being built near their house. Raju lost some of his freedom under the tamarind tree because trucks were parked there and a mound of red earth was raised there. Raju began playing on the mound. One day a boy grazing cows came near the mound Raju did not like this and asked him to go away. The boy refused and Raju used bad words against him which he learnt from the workers on the track. The boy went and reported to Raju's father. He became angry and forcibly joined him in a school.

1. Why is Raju sent to school?

Raju's school was known as pyol school because the classes were held on the pyol of the house of teacher's house in Kabir lane. The teacher was an old man who gathered a score of young boys taught them with a cane in his hand. All classes were held at the same time and at the same place. The teacher was very abusive man. He seemed to be irritated by the very presence of the children. The children too irritated him endlessly making him shout at them. He demanded a fee of one rupee per month from them. In addition to it he would also demanded other articles like jaggery, rice and vegetables from the children. But on such occasions he would talk softly to them so that children would go home and pester the parents to get whatever he asked for. Yet Raju realizes that he fared well under his teacher for he got admission into the first Standard in the Board High School.

1. What is the effect of the construction of railway in Raju's life?

The narration once again comes back to the present. Velan brings the news that his step sister has agreed to marry her cousin and Velan has fixed the marriage day. Velan believes all this as the work of Raju. Raju fears that he may be oversmart so tries to be silent. Raju avoids going to the girl's marriage for he wants to avoid crowd. But the entire marriage party comes to him to have darshan as the man who changed the girl – her saviour. Gradually the circle around Raju begins to get widen. Raju feels uncomfortable. So that once day when the villagers come to see him he hides himself under a huge hibiscus plant. From the conversation he overhears he realizes that the villagers are taking him to be a great man who can go to the Himalayas whenever he wishes for. They also think that several happy incidents have taken place because of him. They leave food for Raju. He is forced to realize that it is here he gets food for doing nothing and unasked for. So, he realizes that he has no alternative but play the role given by Velan to be the spiritual guide for the villagers. He sits waiting for them eagerly to do the role given to him. Ironically they don't turn up. He notices a boy across the river and gives him a banana to tell the villagers that he is back.

1. Why doesn't Raju go to Velan's sister's marriage?
  
2. What does Raju realize?

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### CHAPTER - III

The narration goes back to Raju's past once again. It begins with the arrival of train to Malgudi. Raju took part in its inauguration with all the wonder of a child. Raju's family became prosperous because of this new development. His father bought a horse and jutka. The mother did not like the idea. Ultimately his father had to sell the horse and jutka for he no longer bear the nagging of his wife. Raju's father got a shop at the railway station. It was a much superior shop than the hut shop. It had shelves in it and it was made of cement. Even when Raju's father transferred all his articles from the hut shop only a quarter of the new shop was filled. The station master advised Raju's father to fill up the rest of the shop with bananas and fruits articles which travelers ask for rather than rice and lentils. As Raju's father took over the new shop, the only desirable event for Raju was that he left school. For, he was to take care of the hut shop. But even this arrangement did not last long. When for the old customers came to the hut shop they did not like Raju there nor could they find themselves at ease in the new shop. So, Raju took over the new shop while his father came back to his hut shop.

1. What is the financial effect of starting the railway on Raju's family?
2. How did Raju's life change after the railway shop started?

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## CHAPTER - IV

The narration comes back to the present. The boy who has taken the banana from Raju announces Raju's arrival to the villagers. So, men, women and children come in large numbers. Raju tries to behave in manner of the politician pinching the cheeks of the babies and asking about the studies of the young ones. He finds that the boys don't go to school but graze the cows. Without thinking he advises them they should study and orders that they should send their school teacher to him. The next day the teacher arrives, Raju at first does not remember what he has said then remembers and becomes argumentative and offers the temple as a place of study. The next day a dozen children come to study along with their master in the temple. When the teacher finishes teaching, Raju very grandly speaks to the children about godliness, cleanliness, on Ramayana and what not. Raju is hypnotized by his own voice and thinks he is growing in stature.

Raju as he tells his story to Velan realizes that though he had not gone to school for a very long time he was not a dud. As he sat in the shop he was equipping himself with a lot of information. When Raju's father died, he changed the way the shop was run. Some school boys left their books with Raju. He stocked old magazines and books to be used as a wrap for the article bought in his shop. He allowed people to talk. Whenever he was free he would read those magazines and books. Raju feels that he has learnt much from the crap.

1. How did Raju learn much even though he did not finish school or college?

The children who have listened to Raju go home and describe the wonders that Raju has told them so that the next day even the parents turn up along with the children. As the children study, the adults want Raju to give a

discourse. Raju feels bored so after sometime he tells them that everything has to wait for the proper hour. Till then they have to think on what they have spoken from the morning. This confuses the villagers and Raju thinks that the essence of sainthood lies in one's ability to utter mystifying statements. But Raju prepares better for the next assembly which shows that Raju improvises well. He begins chanting holy song and asks the villagers to sing with him. So that the evening assembly grows into a big thing where all the villagers participate in one way or the other. Raju too in his attempt at improvising of the role he is playing, thinks it better for him to grow a beard to suit his spiritual status. He now chants holy verse, gives discourses on philosophy, prescribes medicines. He has no private life as he longs to sleep and eat like a normal man.

1. What aspect of Raju do we see in this chapter ?

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## CHAPTER - V

This chapter once again takes us back to the past of Raju. Narayan very skillfully puts side by side different stages of Raju's life so that when we see Raju trying to be a spiritual guru we also see how he was as a shop keeper and tourist Guide. Raju gradually came to be called as Railway Raju. Raju describes how gradually he changed from a shop keeper to a tourist guide in this chapter. He would utter a piece of falsehood not because he wants to say lie but to please. In the beginning he gave information about the places. Gradually he took them to Gaffur the taxi driver to be taken to the place. When someone wanted him to accompany he would go with them. So he gradually became a full blown tourist guide while the porter's son took care of the shop on his behalf. His mother did not like this arrangement at all. Raju was not accurate about the time and date of the historical place. It mainly depended on the person who he showed the place. This shows Raju has no qualms.

1. As a guide what is Raju's attitude to a historical place?

Raju then goes on to describe his role as tourist guide. He would know as a water diviner knew whether a train brought a customer or not. He classified all his customers into several categories something like passionate photographers or routine ones who ask routine questions. Raju would not answer them immediately. He would first verify what time the customer has with him then he would answer. He had to avoid customers giving cheques. When a tourist arrived Raju would verify if he carried his own luggage or engaged a porter; walked to the hotel or engaged a jutka; whether he took a good room or just any other room to stay. Whatever the customers demanded he would do it without his personal preferences. He would not take refreshment from the customer till he knew him better. He would know about

the time available with the tourists and accordingly showed him the places. He learnt the trade as he earned and earned as he learnt. The only person who Raju was afraid of was the one who would act as his examiner. For his services Raju asked for a minimum of 10 rupees and took a commission from Gaffur the taxi driver, the manager at the hotel. He never allowed his personal preferences to come in the way. So people want to see the catching of an elephant he would arrange for it. He refers to Rosie as the girl who wanted to see a king cobra.

Then Raju goes on to describe his meeting Rosie and the events that followed which changed his life completely.

1. Which type of customer was Raju afraid of?
  
2. Who wanted to see a king cobra?

Rosie came as a surprise because her husband who Raju calls Marco did not tell about till the day she arrived. Raju found her very attractive. So to impress her he changed his way of dressing too. When her husband was busy looking at the carved episodes from the Ramayana in the Iswara temple, Raju took her to see the King Cobra. When she saw the snake she swayed first her hand and then her body to its rhythm. Raju knew her to be a great dancer. He began to think only about her even as his mother warned him that she might be a snake woman.

1. Who warns Raju about Rosie?

As he went to take Marco he thought only of Rosie. But he went to the Room no.28 at the hotel only Marco turned up disappointing Raju. He realized that Rosie and Marco had a fight. Marco wanted to see the cave paintings on the Memphi hills. On the suggestion of Marco, Raju went to the room and he

cleverly mixed request to come with them and his praise of her beauty and dance. They all went to the Peak House of the Mempi Hills. Joseph was the caretaker of the house. Marcoc Raju realized was tough and unpredictable with money but he would pay for all expenses if vouchers were produced for them.

1. How is Marco with money?

The Peak House was on the top of a cliff in the Mempi Hills from which they can see the valley. It was a beautiful place. Rosie liked it very much and whatever she liked seemed to irritate Marco. Raju was more and more attracted to Rosie as they spend the night together watching the game though the glass wall of the Peak House. There seemed to be constant tension between Marco and Rosie for the next day Marco was angry with Roise. He and Raju left Rosie alone at the Peak House went to the caves. Marco is completely engrossed in the caves and Raju felt bored by it and on the pretext of meeting Gaffur, Raju came back to the Peak House. Raju used this opportunity express his love but cleverly sandwiched it between his praise of her dancing and art. Then Rosie told him that she came him from a Devadasi family and to get respectability she had married Marco after seeing an advertisement in the paper. Rosie also indirectly told him that she was disappointed with the marriage. Raju took the opportunity to come closer to Rosie. When Marco was busy he brought Rosie back to Malgudi and showed her the various places in the town. Roise was too grateful to him for that and Raju used this opportunity to start an affair with Rosie.

1. How does Raju express his love for Rosie?

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## CHAPTER - VI

Once again the narration comes back to the present. Raju is now spiritual mentor of the villagers. He doesn't even remember the days or dates or the years. His beard now touches his chest. And the villagers call him Swami. At the end of one year there are no rains. Velan and other villagers are very worried about it. Raju manages for sometime by some soothing remarks. Raju is affected by the shrinking of gifts and how the people are not listening to his discourses. They come with complaints about dead cattle which Raju cleverly presents as cattle dying of a poisonous bite. But one day a fight breaks out between the shopkeeper and the villagers. In the fight a hay stack is set on fire. Raju only thinks that he should find a new place for the police may come here. In the morning Velan's brother, a semi moron brings the news that Velan has been injured in the fight. So when Raju tells him that they should not fight and if they fight he will not eat. Velan's brother does not understand it fully. He goes and reports it to the village elders who ask him why he has gone to Swami, he fumbles and says Swami will not eat unless it rains. The villagers are awe struck by it and come to see Raju just at the time Raju is eagerly waiting to prepare and eat bonda. Raju does not understand first why they have come in so large numbers and why they are showing so much respect and why they haven't brought him anything to eat. When Raju makes a request of food to Velan then Velan explains what his brother has told him of the fast. Raju is now caught in his own trap for he had told them that a good soul by fasting can bring rains. Then Raju sends away Velan for the night to think of the possibilities before them. He can run away but he may be caught. More than it he feels their devotion and is filled with gratitude. So as a last resort Raju tells his life story to Velan.

1. What troubles the villagers at the end of on year?
  
2. Who gives the news to the villagers that Raju won't eat?
  
3. Why does Raju tell his life story to Velan?

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## CHAPTER - VII

The narration once again shifts to the past. Marco treated Raju as a member of the family. When Marco was busy with his research, Raju went around with Rosie and his intimacy with her increasing. Gaffur warned Raju but Raju would not listen. To keep company of Rosie Raju began to leave other guiding offers that he got. The porter son even took his place as Guide her as in the case of the shop. Raju's troubles were increasing as he did not understand the guilt that Rosie suffered from as she cheated on her husband. Rosie now and then would go to her husband at the Peak House and return to Raju for Marco would not pay attention to her at all. So to attract attention of Rosie Raju once again took to praising her dancing and she danced a composition before him. They became intimate Raju then realized that she was indeed a very great dancer. She planned that she would make her husband agree to her plans of dancing. She tried to humour her husband but when Raju went there they were not at the Peak House. They had gone to the caves. When they returned Marco dismissed Raju from service. Rosie asked him to go away. Raju got angry but had no choice but to leave. He thought Rosie was a woman of duplicity. When he came back, he could not attend to anything – to himself, to his work or to his shop. A month passed by in this manner. One day Rosie came to Raju all alone with her suitcase. She then told that Marco became angry with her when she told him that she would like to dance. He called dancing street acrobatics and money tricks. The she had blurted out in anger that even Raju liked her dancing. This made Marco suspicious and on Marco's constant questioning Rosie told him about her intimacy with Raju. Rosie apologized to Marco repeatedly. But Marco did not pay any attention to her and on the day he left Malgudi he just bought one ticket and left Rosie to fend for herself on the railway platform. Rosie had no other way but come to Raju. Raju supported Rosie and gave her shelter in his house. He tried his best to save her from his mother's prying questions. With his support Rosie started practicing dance once again. Meanwhile Raju was thrown out of the shop on

the platform for non-payment of dues. Raju had a big quarrel with the porter and his son.

1. Who takes over Raju's job as guide?
2. What does Raju do to keep the attention of Rosie to himself?
3. How does Marco come to know about Raju- Rosie affair?

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## CHAPTER - VIII

Sait the creditor of Raju came to ask for the repayment of the debt. Raju's credit with him had gone to 8000 rupees. Raju instead of answering the creditor's enquires laughed uncontrollably. Offended the creditor dragged him to the court. With the help of Gaffur the taxi driver, he engaged a lawyer known as adjournment lawyer to present his case.

One day out of the blue Raju's Uncle, a land owner and a rough man turned up. As soon as he came he threatened Rosie and ordered her to get out. Rosie was very frightened. Raju stood by her side and would not allow them to send her away. So the mother left the house to live with her brother. So, Raju and Rosie for all practical purposes began to live like husband and wife. Rosie kept the house and practiced every day. She became ready to give a concert. As a first step, they chose a name for Rosie which would suit her – Nalini. Raju worked with gusto to get her programmes just as he did with other jobs. He got her a programme in Albert Mission boys' annual social. Raju even brought the members of the committee to see Nalini's performance at home. They were very surprised. So Rosie's rise as Nalini began.

1. Why is Sait offended?
2. What new name do they choose for Rosie?
3. What was Rosie's first programme?

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## CHAPTER - IX

This chapter narrates how Rosie /Nalini became famous. Raju at that time thought he was responsible for Nalini's fame. But later on Raju realized that neither he nor Marco could have suppressed her permanently.

Raju also thought that he possessed Nalini, that she should dance when he asked her to or where he asked her to. Because of Nalini, Raju too became famous. Raju thought his house at railway station was too small for his new status so allowed it to be taken by suit. He took a two storied house with a large compound and lawn, garden and garage at New Extension. He employed several staff and servants. He developed friends with the rich and the influential of the town. Moreover, he didn't like her to be happy with anyone but himself. Gradually he started to think that he was performing and would say that he was performing. Nalini was not happy with this. She cherished the garland that she got at the concert than the money she earned. Raju was more interested in making money.

1. What was Nalini interested in ?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What was Raju interested in ?

\_\_\_\_\_

In all this Raju forget about Marco's existence till one day Raju got Marco's book as a complementary copy for his help in his research. Raju hid the book not wanting to show it to Nalini. Nalini saw the review of the book in Illustrated Weekly and was very excited about it. Meanwhile a letter came from Marco's lawyer asking for Nalini's signature in a form to release jewellery in a joint account. Raju forged Nalini's signature and waited for anxiously for the parcel. Instead of the parcel, Raju was arrested while Nalini

was performing at Kalipet. Nalini was shocked but did not break down. She thought that Raju was all the while doing something wrong.

1. Why was Raju arrested?

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## CHAPTER - X

Raju had to spend a few days in jail among common criminals. Nalini then came to know that their finances are in shambles because Raju had spent all the money in maintaining the status. Nalini became very angry with Raju and told him not to trouble her further. But she would do everything to bring him out of jail. She engaged a Madras based lawyer for 10, 000 rupees. Nalini had to continue with her engagements to get money for the lawyer. Raju became jealous of her self confidence and self reliance. In spite of the efforts of the lawyer, Raju is charged with cheating and was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment.

Raju turned out to be a model prisoner too. No one came to see him in the prison except Mani his secretary. He informed Raju that Nalini left for Madras and did not go to her husband. Raju enjoyed his stay in the prison especially the vegetables he grows behind the Superintendent's office. Nalini meanwhile Raju came to know had become an international dancer.

1. How is Raju as a prisoner?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Who comes to see him in the prison?

\_\_\_\_\_

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## CHAPTER - XI

Once again to the present and to the third person narration. Raju finishes his life's story and waits eagerly for Velan's judgement. He expects Velan to shout at him and become angry. But Velan thumps his chest and promises to keep the matter a secret. Raju is cornered. He is now forced to fast. On the first day he manages to swallow stale rice hidden in the inner sanctum. On the second he doesn't find anything to eat. He at first thinks that Velan is responsible for all his troubles. But when he looks at the tired and exhausted Velan who is trying his best to give every comfort to him, he thinks of giving fasting a try. He thinks for the first time in his life about others. He thinks if his fasting would make trees sprout and flowers to bloom he would certainly do it. This resolution helps him to keep focused. Ironically when Raju loses interest in himself and begins to do things for others, the world begins to pay attention to him. A report in the newspaper brings public and government attention. Huge crowds gather to see him. An American journalist James Malone turns up to interview the swami. The government doctors find his health deteriorating.

On the eleventh day, swami gets up to go to the river at 5.30. a.m. He is too weak and mutters his prayer at the river. He looks at Velan and says that it is raining in the hills and collapses.

R.K. Narayan doesn't tell whether it rains or not. Nor he tells whether Raju dies or not. Because for him what is more important is the fact that Raju who has been self centred and selfish all along, for the first time in his life is not thinking about himself but others and does it without any self interest in it.

1. What does Raju expect Velan to do after listening to him?

2. Does Raju fast throughout or does he cheat?

3. How does Raju endure fasting?

4. Why doesn't Narayan tell whether Raju lives/ dies or it rains or not?

Let us now study various characters in the novel:

### **The Character of Raju**

Raju is the protagonist of the award winning novel of R.K. Narayan **The Guide**. He is the son of a shop keeper. His father has a shop first outside the Malgudi railway station and then on the platform of the station. The novel tells how Raju moves from one role to another in his life performing at various times of his life the roles of a shop keeper, a guide, lover of Rosie, impresario, convict living in jail and finally as a spiritual guide to the villagers of Mangala. It also presents the transformation that takes place in Raju. Raju's life story is told in alternating third person and first person narrations so that the reader can understand better the character of Raju.

1. How many roles does Raju play in his life? What are they?

Raju has a quick silver personality. He is friendly and amiable. He attracts people with his talking and can talk people out of dark moods. Though he left schooling very early to help his father in taking care of the shop, Raju acquires lot of information for he has quick observation and power of assimilation as he meets a variety of people.

Raju does nothing on his own but moves from one role to another as they come to him. It is as if things happen to him rather than he doing

anything. But once he is cast in a particular role it is in his nature to perform it very well and enjoy. He also learns very quickly it and improvises when necessary. it is repeated in his life. He leaves school not on his own but unnoticed when his father gets a new shop on the railway platform. First he sits in the hut shop the he gradually moves to the new shop. His father's death makes him close the hut shop. As a shop keeper he tries improvement. He uses wrapping paper when he gives articles for customers. He then begins to sell old books and magazines to the students. Causal enquiries about the tourist places in Malgudi from the travelers gradually changes him into a tourist guide. As a tourist guide he behaves according to the nature of the customers. He doesn't mind telling lies about the date and period of some place. He can arrange even the catching of elephants for the sake of his clients. He does not think of his personal likes and dislikes.

1. What improvements does he try as a shopkeeper?

2. What changes him into a tourist guide?

Raju falls in love with Rosie one his clients. He uses her husband's neglect to go near her. He praises her dancing and takes her out which her husband doesn't do. When Marco comes to know of it he leaves Rosie at the railway station and goes away. Rosie comes to Raju and they start living together. When he loses the shop in the railway station and his career as a guide comes to an end. Raju moves into the role of manager of Rosie arranging her concerts. He learns all the jargon of the dancers and impresses people. Soon Rosie with the new name Nalini becomes a famous dancer. Raju as usual drifts into the role of impresario very well. He forges her signature to keep her away from Marco. He is arrested and sent to jail. It is the only act he

does on his own. In the jail too he proves a model prisoner talking glibly to the fellow prisoners and gaining the confidence of the jailor. Once out of the jail he is mistaken for a swami by the villager Velan. From the time he realizes that there is no other place for him to go he begins to play the role of swami with much enthusiasm making improvisations like growing a beard and long hair, doing bhajan or prescribing medicine for people.

1. What does Raju become when Rosie becomes a dancer?
2. What does Raju do when he comes to know he has no place to go?

In all these activities Raju is selfish and self centred and doesn't care for how it affects other people. He doesn't think of the pain he causes his mother when he drifts into the affair. When Raju forgets that he is playing a part, he gets into trouble as it happens with him with Rosie. When he loves Rosie and supports her when her husband has left her, he doesn't understand her properly and comes to think her as his possession. She becomes his means to money, power and status in life. He makes her dance all the time so that she starts to think that she is a performing monkey. So he doesn't hesitate to forge her signature.

1. Why isn't Nalini happy while she is dancing?

The pattern is repeated when he is mistaken for a swami. He thinks only of the food he gets from the villagers and doesn't care really about them. When the villagers show respect to him he starts to think that he deserves it as he is great. With no real concern for the villagers he tells them that a fast by a great soul brings rainfall. When the villagers quarrel he only thinks that the

police may come and he may be recognized. But he is forced to fast by Velan. Even then he thinks of an escape. As an attempt to escape the ordeal of fasting he tells Velan his life story without leaving a single detail. He expects Velan to get up and shout at him. But Velan simply thumps his chest and declares that the secret will be with him till his death and calls Raju a Swami.

Velan's faith in him brings about a change in Raju. But Raju's change doesn't come suddenly. While he is narrating the story, there is a change in him for he breaks down all duplicity and pretensions and tells his story as truthfully as he can. Raju's mask finally becomes the man. For he for the first time in his life begins to think not about himself but others the villagers, trees and flowers. That's why it is not important in the novel to know whether it rains in the end or not, or even whether Raju dies or not.

1. What was Raju's mask?

### **The Character of Rosie**

Rosie is one of the very complex woman characters of R.K. Narayan's novels. She is very beautiful in the traditional sense. Though she is called Rosie she doesn't wear skirt or things modern. She comes from a Devadasi family and is very passionate about her dancing. She is also an M.A. in economics. She has married Marco seeing an advertisement in the newspaper.. Her character in the novel is presented through the point of view of Raju.

Rosie's marriage to Marco appears a mismatch from the beginning. Perceptive Raju realizes that her husband does not take any interest in her or her dancing. She entertains very simple desires like going to a movie or doing shopping getting love and affection from her husband which her workaholic husband immersed in his own archeological studies ignores. Raju very rightly points out that Marco has married to have someone to take care of his every



day affairs. But Rosie who is dreamer herself needs someone to take care. There seems to be physical as well as emotional distance between Rosie and Marco so that they seem to quarrel every night.

1. Why are Rosie and Marco a mismatch?

Though Rosie has married leaving her dancing to gain respectability which her caste doesn't have, dancing is life for her. Dance rules Rosie's life just as talking and affording guidance controls Raju's.

Raju uses this dissatisfaction that Rosie has with her husband to become intimate with her. He takes her around for cinema and shopping, praises her dancing even though he doesn't understand anything at all. Once she is in affair with Raju she feels guilty of neglecting her husband and cheating on him. She tries to be extra caring about her husband. With Raju's support she thinks of starting her career as a dancer which her husband rubbishes as monkey tricks. This enrages her to tell how everyone thinks very highly of her dancing which makes Marco question her and know about her infidelity. When Marco shuns her, Rosie realizes the enormity of her sin and goes after him like a dog pleading him to pardon her. Marco leaves her in the railway station returns to Madras. She has no choice but to come to Raju. Once with Raju she is not at all worried about the taunts, threats and insinuations of others as long as she is dancing.

Finally when Raju's finances go down her dancing becomes the main source of their income. She changes her name to Nalini. Soon she becomes a great dancer. Raju becomes her manager. Once a great dancer she is not very happy as expected by Raju. While Raju gloats in the money and status that they have achieved she thinks more and more of the days they spent in the hut house. The only thing that gives pleasure is the garland that she receives at the end of a recital. Her emotional bonding with Raju breaks down just as it did

with Marco because Raju too like Marco fails to see her individual and person with likes and dislikes but as money making machine. Raju's betrayal though comes as shock but doesn't break her down. For the help Raju has done her, she pawns every piece of her jewellery to save him but once he is convicted and sent to jail she leaves him. As Raju realizes Rosie/ Nalini continues to dance without the support of Raju and even becomes an international dancer.

1. Why isn't Rosie/ Nalini happy even when she is famous?

Rosie appears to be a woman of immense potentialities but who doesn't realize them till towards the end. She is also torn between her urge to dance and her gratitude to Marco for marrying in spite of her caste. It is her sense of gratitude to Raju for helping her to dance once again that keeps her silent even though dissatisfied with Raju's attitude once she has become famous. R. K. Narayan presents Rosie character in a very positive light without judging her and her act – infidelity to her husband in the normal orthodox light.

### **The Character of Marco**

Marco is the only character in the novel who is seen completely through the eyes of Raju. We even don't know his original name. Raju nicknames him as Marco Polo, Marco for short because he is dressed like a man who is about to undertake an expedition with thick coloured glasses, thick jacket, and a helmet and a rain coat. Raju doesn't like the man from the beginning. Marco and Rosie do not get along well together and Raju who is infatuated with Rosie can not sympathise with Marco.

1. Is Marco his real name?

Marco is normally curt and speaks very less(taciturn). With regard to money, Raju in the beginning does not understand the attitude of Marco. He declares indifference sometimes but suddenly he becomes miserly. Raju later on realizes that Marco is only very meticulous in his ways. If one gives him a voucher for payments he gives even his entire fortune. Further he is very meticulous in what ever he does. That is why in spite of the fact that Raju has taken his wife Marco, thanks him in his book for the help he has done. Marco complaining against Raju for forgery too comes under this category. For after winning the case he is neither interested in Rosie nor the jewelry that he saved from Raju.

Marco is very passionate about his work his research and does not care about anything else. “Dead and decaying things seemed to loosen his tongue and fire his imagination rather than things that lived and moved...” He doesn’t even pay attention to his wife and fails to realize that the wife has her set of likes and dislikes. He needs assistance in all practical affairs like getting food, finding shelter or buying a railway ticket etc. Raju rightly thinks that Marco married because he wanted someone to take care of his practical affairs. But he made a wrong choice in that he married a girl who herself lived in a dream world and wanted some one to take care of her.

1. Why do you think Marco and Rosie are incompatible?

That Marco and Rosie are incompatible is evident from the beginning. Whatever she likes he dislikes it. Marco and Rosie seem to be at cross purposes at all times. They seem to quarrel every day and on every issue. Marco in spite of his very modern outlook in marrying a girl from Devadasi family seems to be conservative enough to despise her dancing. He thinks that her dancing is nothing but street acrobatics and she a performing monkey. Marco has a very conservative attitude to the role of wife and fails to recognize that as a woman Rosie too has her needs – her need to be loved and her own desire to dance. These too drive Rosie into the arms of Raju.

Marco could be heartless too for once he came to know of the affair between Raju and Rosie he not only stops speaking to Rosie but leaves her to fend for herself in Malgudi railway station.

### **Character of Velan**

Velan, though a minor character himself, is very important to the development of the plot of the novel and in the life of Raju. Velan is a typical villager simple innocent and easily taken in by appearances. He mistakes Raju who is sitting in the ancient shrine to be a swami.

He appears to be a typical talkative villager who discusses all his problems with the strangers. He also seems to be typical in his trust of the swamis and their wisdom. He is a man of values. He is a responsible brother though the sister is a step sister who is refusing to listen to his advice he is truly worried about her. He also takes care of a halfwit step brother. In spite of all the problems he has in his life he has a very positive out look.

Circumstances as well as Raju's habit of involving himself in the lives of others make Velan believe that Raju is a swami. He tells Raju about his sister who is refusing to marry the boy who has chosen. Raju who has seen the world enough can guess what must have happened and completes Velan's story before he does. This makes Velan believe that Raju to be a great man. He brings his sister to him to be advised but Raju is tired of all this only can express mystifying thoughts which Velan and his sister take as wisdom.

Velan's sister changes her mind and marries the man chosen by her brother and declares that Raju is her saviour. This fixes sainthood on Raju. Raju soon realizes that he cannot escape the enforced sainthood because that is the best option available before him where food comes unasked. So he accepts the forced sainthood eagerly. He develops upon the idea of sainthood and begins to play the role very effectively till one year rains fail and put Raju in trouble. A quarrel starts between two groups in the village which makes Raju worry that police may come. When Velan's halfwit brother comes Raju warns him that he won't eat if the villagers quarrel. But the half wit brother messes up everything and tells the villagers that the swami won't eat if it doesn't rain. The villagers come praising Raju when he is expecting them to bring food. Raju to escape the fasting decides to tell Velan his life story with out leaving out a single detail and without changing facts. He expects Velan to get angry at him and throw him out of the village. But instead Velan thumps his chest and declares that he has been honoured by such a confession and that it would remain a secret. Though this trust that Velan shows in him irritates Raju in the beginning, it changes him later when he sees that Velan too fasting. He decides not to think of food and fast for the sake of rains.

1. How do you see Velan? Is he a stupid person or a man of very deep understanding?

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Critics are divided over the character of Velan. For some he is a man of innate understanding who can see the change that has come over Raju. For some he is a typical credulous villager who is cheated by appearances. Whatever it is, he becomes a catalyst bringing about a change in Raju.

### **Narrative Technique in the Guide**

R. K. Narayan uses a unique narrative technique. It is a combination of First person narration and Third person narration. The first person narration is told by Raju himself while the third person narration is done by the authorial voice.

The novel begins with the third person narration telling the reader the recent present of Raju. Raju is sitting in an ancient Temple when he meets Velan who mistakes him to a swami. This leads to various incidents where the villagers of Mangala give Raju the status of their spiritual guide. Raju in the beginning hesitates to be a Swami then accepts it. Because he is getting food unasked. Days pass by in this manner. One year rains fail. This leads to a lot of tension among villagers. One day a quarrel breaks out between two groups of villagers. Raju fearing that the police would come tells Velan's brother that he won't eat if they quarrel. Velan's brother mistakenly informs that Swami won't eat because it doesn't rain. Raju is forced to fast. To escape it he tells about his past to Velan.

The story of Raju's past becomes the first person narration. It tells how Raju spent his childhood happily; how he gradually left school and became a shopkeeper; and how he drifted to become a tourist guide. He also tells Velan in a very honest way how he was attracted to Rosie, Marco's wife. Raju used her husband's neglect to his advantage. He also praised her dancing to start an affair with her. Marco came to know of it and left Rosie. Rosie came to Raju and he helped her to become a great dancer. When money and fame flowed he became possessive of her and forged her signature. Marco complained and Raju is sent to jail.

When Raju tells this to Velan, he takes it as a great favour done to him. So, Raju is forced to fast. Raju is touched by the respect shown to him and begins to fast honestly. For the first time he begins to think beyond his selfish interests.

What makes this narration interesting is Narayan breaks the chronology and intersperses the third person narration with the first person narration even though it comes quite late in the chronology. So, Raju's childhood is put along side Raju's first days as swami; Raju's role of shopkeeper and guide are presented along when Raju's attempts at improvising his role of swami. When Raju starts believing in his greatness as swami the novelist presents Raju-Rosie relationship. Thus the narrative becomes a braided narrative of third and first persons. This braided narrative helps Narayan to compare and contrast Raju's past and present and present the character of Raju and also convey the change that comes over him. The first person narration itself becoming a means of change because Raju narrates very honestly. As Narayan is interested in the change that comes over Raju he leaves the novel open ended and does not tell whether Raju dies or lives or whether it rains or not.

Thus, the narrative technique is very well suited to the purposes of the novel.

1. Name two interesting features of the narrative technique used in the novel?

### **Justification of the Title of the Novel The Guide**

The Title of R. K. Narayan's novel **The Guide** appears very direct and simple on the surface. But it is full of irony and is very complex. The title appears simple because it refers to the profession of Raju the protagonist.

Raju was a tourist guide. He took pride in being a tourist guide. Though he did not deliberately become a tourist guide he gradually drifted into becoming a guide. Once he became a guide, he improvised to make maximum impression on his customers. He would not hesitate to tell lies to

suit the customers' background. He would try to create a sense of wonder in his customers by his talk so that travelers come asking for Raju the Guide. Further, he guide them to a hotel and a taxi.

But the title also refers to Raju's habit of affording guidance to people which Raju later on realizes has been the strating point of all his troubles. Raju thinks that he has guided Rosie to become a great dancer. It is only when self knowledge comes to him that he realizes that he has not made Rosie's career. She has become a great dancer because she has the potential in her.

In prison too one notices the guide in Raju. He can speak to very hardcore criminals in dark mood and make them happy.

But the full ironic use of the word "guide" can be seen when a convict like Raju is mistake to be a swami by Velan. The reverential looks of Velan makes Raju feel that he has become a great man. Gradually Raju becomes the spiritual guide to the villagers of Mangala. He would give them medicines. He would settle their disputes. He comes to believe that he has greatness. He begins to lecture to them on various topics and would not even care to remember them. Once to divert the mind of the villagers from the rains, he tells them that if a good soul fasts for rains, they will certainly come. The villagers due to a mistake by Velan's brother believe begin to believe Raju himself is that good soul who is going to fast for their sake. Raju is forced to see his own puny self and confess his story to Velan. The faith Velan shows in him makes Raju selfless for the first time in life and fast honestly. Thus Raju turns out to be Villager's real guide.

Thus the title is full of meaning and suggestion.

### **Humour and Irony in The Guide**

R. K. Narayan is known for his comic vision. He is often compared with Jane Austen in the way he brings about subtle humour in his novels. The novel **The Guide** is full of humorous incidents. The novel begins with one. Raju who is just out prison is mistaken for a swami by a villager so much that



Raju touch his chin to see whether a beard grew up suddenly there. When he realizes that he has no other place to go, he waits for the people to come but they don't making him worried and also creating a lot humour too. Another instance is when Raju is expecting to get materials to prepare bonda the villagers think he is fasting. Raju finds Rosie alone in the peak house makes advances to her and she calls him a brother.

In the novel one can not separate humour from irony. Irony springs from the difference between what is often thought and what actually is. The major device which brings in this difference in the novel is the braided narrative of Third person and First person. While Raju shows off himself as swami, the braided narrative brings in the past of Raju shows him as a dishonest fellow. As Raju narrates his life story to Velan he laughs at his own foolishness of the past. This ability to laugh at himself makes readers sympathetic towards Raju. For instance, when Raju's uncle comes to visit them, Raju is terrified to see him. But he behaves boldly and acts like a teacher to Rosie while she is dancing.

Irony and humour in the novel is not just added flavour in the novel. It forms an integral part of the theme and characterization. It helps Narayan to create a sympathetic character out of a rogue. This becomes clear when we compare Raju the rogue and Marco the honest man. Raju's character is presented with humour and irony through first and third person narrations. Marco though a good man fails to get any sympathy from the reader for he is presented from the unsympathetic eyes of Raju without any humor or irony.

1. Name one instance of irony in the novel?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How does irony help in bringing out the character of Raju?

### **Raju's childhood**

Raju is the son of a small shop keeper who has a hut shop outside Malgudi catering to needs of the travelers. Raju's day begins at day break when his father would wake him up. After taking the bath and doing puja his father takes upon himself the task of teaching Raju the Tamil alphabet and arithmetic. Raju doesn't like it at all. His entire attention is on playing outside. An early customer puts an end to his education. Raju promises his mother that he would not bother her if she allows him to go and play under his favourite tamarind tree. He spends the day under the tree playing imaginary games with pigs and piglets. Sometimes in the afternoons he would sit in the shop as his father takes his meal. He would also enjoy very much his visits to the town along with his father to buy provisions for their shop. Things change for Raju when the railways start constructing railway track near their home. He loses some of the freedom which he enjoyed under the tamarind tree for the trucks begin to pile up the red earth under the tree. But Raju enjoys this for he gets a chance to climb up the mound and play there. He begins to collect bit and pieces of various articles there like nuts and bolts and treasure them in his mother's trunk. But one day a boy grazing his cows comes near the tamarind tree. Raju does not like this at all and tells him to go away. The boy doesn't. Raju pounces on him and uses the bad language which he has learnt from the railway workers. The boy instead of beating him runs to Raju's father and complains that Raju is using bad language. Raju's father becomes enraged and orders that Raju will have to go to school from the next day. Raju hates to leave the place which he loved most and go to a place which he hates most – the school. Raju's father joins him in the Pyol school and not Albert Mission School for he thinks that in the Mission school they are converting students into Christians and abuse Hindu gods. He also believes that those students who have to go to school have become great people.

Raju though likes going to school in the beginning begins to dislike it soon. His teacher is an old man who lived in Kabir lane and he gathered some students of different ages to teach them on the porch of his house. All the

classes are held at once. The teacher is a very abusive man calling his students donkeys and tracing their genealogies. The students would shout and play with paper in the gutter that flows under the pyol. For his teaching he would take one rupee a month and some articles in kind. In spite of all the purposeless of this schooling, Raju realizes that he has learnt much in the school as he is able to get admission into the Board High School.

When the Railway station in Malgudi and the tracks are ready Raju's father gets a shop in the railway platform. Raju is made to sit in the hut shop to sell articles which the wayfarers want while his father takes care of the new shop. Soon the wayfarers who are old friends of Raju's father find it difficult to talk to Raju as he is not interested in their talk of rains and crops. So they move to the new shop but find it difficult to be at home there. So Raju is made to take care of the new shop in the railway station as the two full trains come to Malgudi. As result of these developments Raju's schooling is stopped unobtrusively which is to his liking.

Raju's childhood appears quite normal enough for a boy of a small town. Yet it certainly indicates to certain important aspect of his character and personality – that he drifts from role to role without taking an initiative on his own. But once some thing happens to him he uses the opportunity very well and flourishes in it. This aspect is repeatedly seen in his life later on.

### **Raju as shopkeeper**

Raju's father is a shopkeeper. So from a young age he starts taking care of the shop when his father has gone home for eating and sleeping but without understanding the complexities of selling. When his father gets a license to shop when the railway station is built, he happily leaves his school to sit in the hut shop while his father takes care of the new shop. But he is bored by his father's old friends and their talk of cultivation and litigation. Soon the father comes back to look after the old shop and Raju takes care of the new shop in the railway station.

When his father dies suddenly one day Raju winds up the old hut shop and concentrates on the new shop. Raju develops new lines of business in the shop. As most of his customers are tourists and students who come to study in Albert Mission College, Raju begins to stock old magazines, newspaper and books in the place of coconuts and gram that his father stocked. Raju quickly learns the job. He learns to bargain hard and show indifference while buying and solicitude while selling. He also starts the new policy of wrapping the article that is being bought by the customer. As he waits for the customers he reads through the stuff and learns much from the scrap. He is not satisfied by simply catering to the needs of the tourists by selling them fruit and food items. He also helps them about information about various places in and around Malgudi. Gradually he asks the porter's son to take care of the shop and conduct tourists to various spots. Thus unobtrusively Raju the shop keeper gradually turns into Raju the Guide.

Raju's role as shopkeeper helps the reader to understand a major trait in Raju – though he does not take an initiative yet he improvises very well.

### **Raju as Guide**

Like many activities in Raju's life, Raju becoming a guide is not out of his wish but due to circumstances. While he is taking care of the shop in the railway station he is approached by various tourists with various inquiries. He does not like to say no to anyone so starts making arrangements for stay and touring the place for the tourists first casually then seriously as business.

Raju soon learns the business very well. He would take up the side of the tourist while bargaining with taxi driver Gaffur and if the customer objects about Gaffur's taxi he would take up the case of Gaffur. Thus he balances between the both and gets commission from Gaffur for it. He also sees some tourists after their visit regret not bringing their mother wife or children and uses the idea to make the tourist swear coming back to spot again next year. He is good at speaking and uses this quality very well. He does not hesitate to tell lies to impress his customers not because he wants to cheat. He even

makes arrangements for the tourists to see catching of the elephants. He would go to any length to get satisfaction for his customers. But with the scholarly type of customer he would not take the risk. He allows him to do all the speaking.

Raju is good at his job that he can feel the arrival of a customer even as the train comes to the station. He would walk in the direction to receive him. Even before he takes the tourist out of the station he can judge the tourist in the way he handles his luggage and how he engages a taxi etc. Whether the customer is poor or rich it doesn't matter for him, he helps him all the same. For his help he charges minimum Rs. 10 per day. He finds the job challenging. It is as a guide that he meets Rosie which changes his life completely.

### **Raju as Swami or the Enforced Swamihood of Raju**

Raju is mistaken for a swami by a simple villager Velan because of the way he sits in the ancient temple near the village Mangala. Velan talks about his problem and Raju out of habit affords advice. Due to circumstances the problem of Velan is solved. Velan attributes it to Raju. Raju in the beginning does not want to be a swami. But he soon realizes that he has no place to go and nowhere he is going to get food unasked. So he has to accept the role provided to him. When he expects the villagers to come they don't. He bribes a boy with a banana to tell people that the swami is back. When the people turn up he does not know what to do so pinches the cheeks of little children and asks what are they studying as people in the towns do. He comes to know the boys don't go to school so orders the school teacher to be sent to him starts an evening school. From this time onwards he makes improvisations which he thinks will help his spiritual status like growing beard and hair. Raju does everything not with an aim to help the villagers but that he should remain there doing nothing and getting food. Raju begins to feel that the villagers show him respect because he deserves respect.

After a few years he finds that rains have not come that year. Villagers are more worried about the rains. The gifts that they are bringing are shrinking in size. They start asking questions. They also start quarrelling. Raju the selfish man thinks that he may have to choose another place for himself. The villagers quarrel among themselves and set fire to houses. Fearing that police may come, Raju tells Velan's brother that he will not eat until the people become calm and quiet. Velan's brother is a half wit. He does not understand what Raju says. In confusion and fear he goes tells the villagers that Swami does not want food because it has not rained.

The villagers are grateful to Raju and come to thank him for his nobility while Raju expects them to bring material for bonda. When they bring the subject Raju who has forgotten all about it does not understand it at first. Then Velan describes the ritual Raju has to do which Raju himself has told them a few days before. Raju tells Velan his life story to escape fasting. But Velan who is a faithful disciple takes it as a favour. Raju is forced to fast. On the first day he eats stale food. The second day onwards he has to fast. While fasting he sees Velan fasting along with him and suffering. Raju changes. He thinks if his fasting will bring rain, flowers to bloom and grass to grow he will give it a try. This is the first time in his life that Raju thinks beyond money and love and beyond himself. On the eleventh day he goes to pray in the river and tells Velan that it is raining in the hills and collapses. Thus the mask becomes the man. Enforced sainthood turns into actual sainthood.

### **Malgudi in the Guide**

Malgudi is an imaginary town created by R. K. Narayan for his novels. Most of his novels have Malgudi as their setting. It is like any typical south Indian town which is fast growing. The places in Malgudi are finely described by Narayan. So that even though it is an imaginary place it resembles any growing town. The Market Road which is very busy with shops and godowns (on one such godown lives Raju's adjournment lawyer); Kabir Lane which is narrow with an ever flowing gutter; Or the New Extension which has big

houses surrounded by beautiful garden for the newly rich like Raju once Nalini becomes famous; The ancient Iswara temple which is flocked by pilgrims and tourists alike make the town realistic. Malgudi is a growing town. When Raju was child their house was in the outskirts on the highway. The arrival of the railways brings a lot of change. By the time Raju grows up, their house is not in the outskirts of Malgudi but in the middle of a railway colony. The railways also bring the tourist crowds which throws many opportunities of employment. Raju first becomes a shop keeper then a tourist. Even Raju is surprised to know that there are many interesting places in and around Malgudi like the Peak house in the Memphi Hills and the caves on the Memphi hills. The town Malgudi thus becomes a symbol of both continuity and change. In **the Guide** the town of Malgudi does not play such an important role as it does elsewhere in Narayan fiction. Yet it is not mere setting. It is a place which includes in it the culture and tradition of the land.

### **The Villagers in the novel The Guide**

Though minor characters villagers like Velan play an important role in the novel. The villagers that we come across in the novel are the villagers of Mangala. Raju a convict just out of jail comes and sits in the ancient shrine. Velan who is passing that way happens to meet Raju. Taken in by the appearance and talk of Raju he thinks him to be a great man and thrusts Swamihood on Raju. Villagers like him appear stupid and gullible creatures. But there is another side to them too. That they are ready to share whatever they have with a complete stranger shows them humane. The way they all come together for the community services show their social consciousness. Finally it is the villagers faith in him that changes Raju from a self-centred fellow to a man who starts thinking about others.

### **Rosie – Marco relationship**

Marco is an archeologist. He is interested in broken down temples and caves with carvings. He is a rich man with no family. To marry he gives an advertisement in the newspaper for a good looking educated graduate girl. He

marries Rosie after checking her certificate and does not bother about her caste. Rosie comes from a devadasi family. But she is different in the sense that she is M.A. in economics. She is advised by her family that she should give up family tradition of dancing and marry Marco for it brings respectability.

But Rosie and Marco are mismatched couple. It becomes very clear from the very first. What Rosie likes Marco does not like and vice versa. Rosie is not at all interested in the archeological work done by Marco and Marco thinks that dancing is street acrobatics. Marco does not pay any attention to his wife once he is immersed in his job. Rosie on the other hand like many women wants to go to bazaar and roam. Much more than that she wants to be loved in which Marco fails. Marco does not even think Rosie to be an individual with her own set of likes and dislikes. He wants her to be some one else. Marco as Raju says has married not have a companion but to have some one who would take care of him. Marco's neglect throws Rosie into the arms of Raju. Raju praises her dancing and takes care of her to get close to her. Marco shows hard hearted behavoiur when he comes to know of Rosie and Raju affair and leaves her on the platform and goes away. Rosie ends up with Raju. Rosie becomes a famous dancer Nalini with the help of Raju. Raju realizes that Rosie has the potential which is unstoppable; even Marco could not have stopped her from becoming a great dancer. When Rosie Raju relationship sours, Rosie claims that she would go back to her husband but she goes her way though she is happy for Marco and his achievement.