

The Refugee

(K.A. Abbas)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR :-

Khawaja Ahmed Abbas (1914-87) was a distinguished Indian film director, novelist, screenwriter and journalist, born in Panipat Haryana. He was well-versed in Urdu, Hindi and English. He was honoured with the Padma Shree Award, in 1969. He is also known for his two volumes of Short Stories: Rice and other Stories

and

One Thousand Nights on a Bed of Stone.

The Refugee :-

A person who has been forced to leave his country or home due to a war or due to political, religious or social reasons.

CHARACTERS :-

- Maanji - protagonist (leading character)
- Maanji's husband
- Maanji's son
- Maanji's neighbours in Rawalpindi
- Author's mother "Ammam".

Brief Summary :-

- The partition of India 1947.
- The author narrates the events in the life of an old mother called Maanji during partition.
- She lived in Rawalpindi in a two storied house. She had steady income from many rented shops and harvest from her own land.
- She had a buffalo and so milk, curd and butter were available in surplus. Being a Sikh, she distributed butter milk to all her neighbourhood and won the affection of all her Muslim neighbours.
- She was affectionately called her Behanji or as Maanji or cherchi. Rawalpindi was the whole world for her.
- Her son worked in Bombay.
- News about partition spreading through Rawalpindi.
- The "Lungawallah incidents" which lead to Maanji leaving Rawalpindi.

- Maanji's life after partition of Bombay.

THEMES :-

- Communal riots :- Communal violence and religious hostility is the central theme of the story.
- Loyalty :- Maanji never wavers in her loyalty to her land and her neighbours, even when she faced a life threatening situation.
- Displacement :-
Maanji is uprooted from her homeland, from a peaceful life in Rawalpindi and find it difficult to settle in Bombay. Her life realistically depicts the life of a refugee.

Conclusion :-

K.A. Abbas has portrayed the scenarios of communal riots. Maanji never hated any of her muslim neighbours even when there was communal hostility between Hindus and Muslims.

She endured all of her sufferings in silence.

The old memories were very sweet to her and she wept on the past happy incidents.

Abbas portrays Maanji as an epitome of motherhood and good natured woman.

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