

Unit 5A

Explanation:

The Storeyed House is a novel by Waman Govind Hoval. The novel was translated into English by M.D. Hatknagalekar. This story is divided into two parts, part 1 and part 2. The Storeyed House is a product of Dalit Literature. The term 'Dalit Literature' was used for the first time in 1958 in the first Dalit conference of Maharashtra Dalit Sahitya Sangha. Bildungsroman, picaresque, reality and liveliness are trademarks of Dalit writings. Alienation, quest for identity, struggle for existence and resentment against age-old establishment are the major subjects in dalit texts.

The Storeyed House is one such story which tells us about the prevalent caste system. The story revolves around Bayaji, an old man who is considered to be an untouchable as he is a Mahar.

The Storeyed House – I starts with Bayaji travelling back to his home-town after his retirement from his Bombay office where he had worked for the past thirty-five years and as worked hard by lifting heavy loads.

Bayaji, a Mahar by caste which was considered to be an untouchable happens to meet the rascal of the village Bhujaba Patil.

Bhujaba Patil was greeted by Bayaji but Bhujaba instantly became furious as he expected Bayaji to be more humble while greeting him. Bhujaba reminds Bayaji that mere greetings will not turn Bayaji into a Brahmin. At this point it can be observed that in a society where caste- discrimination is so prevalent that the elders are neglected too. Their age and experience is not considered but their caste. Bhujaba being much younger to Bayaji, talks to him in a quite disrespectful manner.

As the conversation between Bhujaba and Bayaji continues, Bhujaba enquires Bayaji about his service and post-retirement plans and as he comes to know that Bayaji has collected his fund , he gets curious and wants to know the amount. As soon as he gets to know about the amount, his behaviour towards Bayaji changes.

He talks to Bayaji in a mock sympathy as if he is worried about Bayaji carrying a heavy load on his head. As Bayaji was the

proud owner of two and a half thousand rupees in cash, so it made no difference whether he was an untouchable or a Buddhist. Only being able to make profit and gain money mattered to the greedy Bhujaba.

Bayaji reached his house, his family members, his mother, wife, sons, daughters, son-in-laws, daughter-in-laws and grand children were overjoyed. They greeted him lovingly and were secretly waiting to know what Bayaji had brought for them from his lifetime earnings.

Bayaji's family was doing well. He had eight children in all, six sons and two daughters. The daughters had been married off and had given birth to children. The elder son looked after the fields, the next two sons were in government service, the one after them was a school teacher and the sixth one was still studying.

The next day Bayaji opened the wooden box that he had carried while coming back to his village. Bayaji took out only some pots and pans, nails and photographs. Bayaji's daughters were disappointed, but then he explained that clothes and jewelleries would wear out one day. So, he wanted to have something that will last longer.

When insisted by his son, Bayaji revealed the plan of building a storeyed house for his large family so that they can all stay together happily. All were happy with his plan. The plan was finalised and the foundation of the storeyed house was laid on the auspicious New Year Day.