

The relationship between dr iannis and his daughter pelagia



Dr Iannis and Pelagia have a basic father/daughter relationship that is strengthened by the fact that their home is occupied by foreign soldiers. It is often the effects of war that bring members of families closer together.

Another indication of their closeness is the absence of a mother figure this would have strengthened the bond between father and child, as they must divide the role of 'mother' amongst the two of them.

We can see that Pelagia plays the part of mother by tending to her father's needs as well as the house work, this is shown in the quotation " Pelagia, who had been carefully spooning the coffee grounds out of that morning's cups so that they could be used again. " Where as Dr Iannis takes the parental role of mother, in that he warns Pelagia about seeing the captain and indicates that he was once " a young man too" The roles of parent and child are clearly understood by both characters as Pelagia obeys her father's wishes without question.

However Dr Iannis does not let the fact that Pelagia is his daughter get in the way that she may not be as innocent as she appears. It appears that the pair are open in their relationship because Dr Iannis gets straight to the point by saying " you have fallen in love with the captain" He does not approach the subject delicately he merely acknowledges the situation, this lets the reader know the father and daughter can be open with each other. There is a line from the first chapter that is very significant " observed the doctor, enjoying her discomfort" It is almost describing a situation between a brother and sister.

Dr Iannis realises how to 'wind-up' Pelagia and in the process enjoys the fact that he does so. The doctor is light-hearted and observant of his daughter's ways, he knows how to increase his teasing in order to anger her, "That's my daughter". However he also knows how to calm her down with a simple gesture. This shows great understanding of her character and the way Pelagia retorts her father's taunting by saying "I am going to hit you, really I am" shows that there is an underlying friendship upon which the relationship is built.

She recognises her father's characteristics as "shy and wheedling the next, lofty" and realises his intentions to vex her. Although the relationship is a loving one, Dr Iannis is still a medical man and uses medical terms to 'diagnose' Pelagia's love for the captain. Pelagia realised that because he could covert her inner most feelings in to symptoms that he had the power to shatter the magic of her romance. "Pelagia suspected the imminent collapse of a thousand pretty dreams" Dr Iannis recognises when he takes his taunting of his daughter too far and tries to rectify the damage by squeezing her hand or making a gesture.

This shows that he must be in tune with his daughter's feelings to recognise when he has overstepped his mark and must have learnt over the years how to cure the bad feeling between the two. Dr Iannis doesn't just play the role of father in this chapter. He also accepts gladly the role of friend and councillor. He offers Pelagia worldly advice and compassion, he uses his own experiences to empathise with her situation and show how he understands.

The name of this specific chapter is 'Dr Iannis counsels his daughter' which is a big indication of the role of Dr Iannis in this chapter.

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At the time in which the story is set many Greek families were protective of their daughters, especially from foreign men. What is amazing about the relationship is that it transcends traditional family values. Dr Iannis recognises that his daughter's happiness is much more important than any tradition. He does not forbid the relationship, neither does he encourage his daughter, he tells her to " pray for the liberation of the island. " Suggesting that she waits until the war is over before she develops or announces her relationship. This is a very significant part of the chapter.

It shows that Dr Iannis trusts his daughter. He believes that she will do the right thing. This scene also portrays the love between the two. Dr Iannis knows that the affair would be scandalous, that it goes against Greek tradition and will ultimately bring shame on the family but at the same time, he understands his daughter's need for love, he trusts her to use her judgement wisely and he loves her enough to risk everything for her happiness. Dr Iannis counsels his daughter is a very appropriate title as it is exactly what the father does, he does not forbid, instruct or reprimand.

He counsels his daughter and allows her to make the decisions for herself. The writer is very effective in illustrating the relationship. The writer uses language, short phrases and character movements as tools to define their closeness and understanding for each other. An example of this is given at the end chapter 47 (the chapter I have studied) " Her father..... had judged that a pert response signifies an undiminished daughter" The next chapter I have studied in close detail is chapter 67.

Here the writer depicts the relationship in a very effective way. In this chapter Pelagia cries for her father's death. The writer uses the knowledge we have gained from the previous studied chapter and builds upon it. From the last chapter we assumed that the pair had benefited from the loss of the mother in that it strengthened their relationship. Here the writer tells us that we were correct by saying " And my grieving father gathered in his love and gave it to me only" So we know that Pelagia had benefited from the love lost when her mother died.

We also derived from the last chapter that Dr Iannis did not always follow the Greek tradition when it came to his daughter, here we are told he " made me unpalatable, manly meals" It was also not in the Greek tradition to encourage girls to over-indulge. It appears Dr Iannis was wise enough to ignore the stereotypical roles of the Greeks and instead focus on his daughter's wishes and needs. We find out in this emotional chapter that Dr Iannis and Pelagia had various functions in each other's lives.

Firstly Dr Iannis was her doting father, " he worked for me, he let me be a child" This is a gift given from parents to children the gift of childhood. However in the next sentence we learn that Pelagia is more to Dr Iannis than just a daughter she is also his world. He whispers in her ear " If it wasn't for you" indicating that he lives for her and nothing else. She, as a child found comfort in this. In a way father and daughter have both played the part of child. They depend on each other, need each other and find reassurance in the fact that they have each other.

The pair also acts as teacher and student, as we are told that they used to pick out poems to read to each other and then criticise them. This shows that Dr Iannis took the time to educate his daughter personally, which deepens the relationship. They do not only have a personal relationship but also a type of professional one. This chapter deals a lot with Pelagia's loss. She has not just lost a father but now it appears Dr Iannis was also a mother and a brother figure as well.

We know that there was a sort of sibling bond also present in the relationship, " Lets fight now.. and he would tickle me" It appears that Dr Iannis was all the family Pelagia had so by losing her father she is losing all family connections. She has lost her mentor in both life and schooling. Finally by losing Dr Iannis she has inevitably lost the love of her life. The end sentence of this chapter is perhaps the most moving of the story; " He was the only man I've loved who loved me to the end, and never bruised my heart, and never for a single moment failed me. "

The love she is talking about is greater than any love, it has no sexual connotations and it is greater than the love of a family. Because Dr Iannis had so many duties in his daughter's life, his love for Pelagia transcended any other because it was comprised of all different kinds of love. The first studied chapter focused in on Dr Iannis, his feelings and thoughts. The second chapter is written in first person narrative and shows Pelagia's most intimate thoughts and feelings. This is noteworthy as we are shown both of the characters thoughts on the relationship.

In conclusion the relationship shown in these two chapters is comprised of almost unimaginable trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's traits. The relationship of Dr Iannis and his daughter Pelagia was so important because it became the centre of the two character's lives. They looked to each other for guidance, understanding and help. There was a balance of power and neither one felt more superior to the other. Their relationship was strengthened by truth, selflessness and their need for support from another person.