

At hiruarama by penelope fitzgerald essay sample

[Life](#)



Discuss the effects of the hardships Mr. Tanner and his family face.

Ans. The story is of immigrants - settled in New Zealand. It is a picture of rural life in here the simplest of things - things we take for granted become a dilemma. The confession of Mr. Tanner who came here, as an apprentice is the kind of statement immigrants make after a while " she probably reckons I'm made" - where raw hands move to other countries and people back home assume " they're made" or have become successful after while. It is a story of people who cannot read or write and have to cope with life in a " remote country place" where there " " aren't any churches and schools, and it was considerably cheaper." It is life in the outback where the greatest possession is a " standpipe" which gave constant hot water from an underground well. It is a life of loneliness and not much conversation because of the " northerly wind" which prevented people from hearing each other, besides being a poor country; there wasn't much to talk about. The nearest neighbor was nine or ten miles away - who came to visiting once a year and the thread of conversation continued from where he had left off then.

Life in these town ships was visible at the small dispensaries where people came in large numbers for refills and the only facility they had was the wooden benches on the verandas. There was one doctor for everything. The only means of communication were the homing pigeons - that also those that flew in one direction. When Mr. Tanner's was going to have a baby the predicament of informing the doctor was solved by borrowing two of those pigeons from the Maori boy. Interestingly because there was no system of education these birds had been trained to fly only in one direction.

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Therefore, they could only fly in that one direction. The silence of the outback is clear when Kitty can hear the screeching and rattling of Brinkman's old buggy. But his visit is a perfect example of life in the countryside where his own problems are more important than the "outside world's commotion." The fact that he pulled his first grey hairs that morning than the fact that his neighbor who is in labour will not be cooking his dinner for him.

He even remembers what he had on his last visit. Living in the outback made him forget how ordinary things were done or said. As always the doctor arrived after the baby was born as the father had assisted in its birth and in his ignorance and haste had thrown the twin in the wastebasket. Thus the neighbor who had come to hear a woman's voice hears the first sounds of the baby girl. It's a man's world all along as there are no women mentioned. Even for the birth of the child there are no midwives. Tanner could not tell the doctor his wife was going to have a baby but asked about the mortality rate in childbirth. He wondered what he's say to his wife when she told him of the big news. He asked his sister for a book to help him out at such a time and the book that arrived was more on religious matters. The concept of beauty did not exist and the Blue Chequers were the prettiest things about the place. And the irony is that the daughter they nearly threw away was the one who became a success. Thus the story of Hiruharama ends with the Brinkman still waiting for dinner.