

Arjun as a dynamic character in tusk and stone



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the novel *Tusk and Stone*, by Malcolm Bosse, Arjun is the dynamic character. A dynamic character is one who learns a lesson or changes behavior as a result of story events. When he is first introduced, Arjun is living with his family members – his father, mother, sister, and uncle – but tragically, by the end of the novel, he has become a Kshatriya stone carver in Kashi, without a family. The events that instigate Arjun's transformation include the loss of his family and the kidnapping of his younger sister Gauri, his becoming a legendary warrior, and ultimately his being captured and sold into slavery.

Fourteen-year-old Arjun is a Brahman, joyously living with his family in the beginning of the novel. When Arjun is preparing for his journey to Kashi with his guardian uncle and Gauri, his father reminds him to take good care of his sister. After riding in a caravan for a long time, Gauri is suddenly kidnapped and his uncle is murdered by the dacoits. Poor Arjun is then left to strive alone. He witnessed as “ the dacoits formed a column with Gauri and the women in the middle of it, along with a small herd of goats” (31). He was concerned about Gauri and what the dacoits are going to do with her, since Arjun's father left him in charge. Following this event and from then onward, Arjun knew that he would always have to be on the lookout for Gauri so could prevent being guilt-stricken or ashamed of himself.

The second event that brings about change in Arjun's character is him becoming a legendary warrior. In the battle, the Chalukyan army included fifty elephants which were the finest in the Deccan; the formation was carefully planned out so that the soldiers could ensure their victory in all circumstances. In the beginning, all the soldiers bloodthirstily fought against

each other. Then, the elephants were left to fight on their own and terminate the ferocious battle. That night and the following morning, Arjun received several praises and congrats for his gaja and victory in the battle. Since Arjun knew that he was a legendary warrior, he hoped that by utilizing his military success and spreading the story of him and his sister, he would be able to find Gauri.

Getting captured and sold into slavery is the third event that transforms Arjun. Without his great gaja, Gandia, Arjun did not have any reason to be a part of the Chalukyan army, since he no longer owned an elephant. Instead of being exiled, thanks to his gaja's heroic act, " he was hobbled like a wild elephant, then sent to a fenced-in encampment, where fifty or more slaves ate and slept inside lean-tos made of banana roofs" (193). Due to his elephant's death, Arjun, once a legendary warrior, dropped to the slave caste of the social system and was devoid of a status.

Arjun dramatically changed throughout the novel, initially by losing his beloved family and then, his sister, Gauri, getting kidnapped, becoming a legendary warrior, and ultimately getting captured and sold into slavery once again. Arjun becoming a mahout at a very young age impacted Rama, a static character, because he felt triumphant for having accomplished something meaningful during his life at the elephant corps by being Arjun's master. Arjun also impacted Vasu, another static character, by becoming a legendary warrior and provoking him to place revenge on Arjun for defeating him in the battle. Vasu repeatedly warned Arjun about his surprise attack: " Remember my promise! When you least expect it!" (130).

These changes had both positive and negative effects on Arjun himself as well as the minor characters in the novel, all of which contribute to his dynamic character and his personal evolution over time.