

Balthazar's marvelous afternoon by ashley ranises

Literature



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The crowd cheered and compelled him to give them a treat. By pledging his watch, Balthazar feeds them and gets drunk himself. Balthazar dreams a marvelous afternoon in intoxication. He feels relieved from the annoying clutches of money-minded riches.

In essence, the story is an elegant presentation of the interaction between 'money' and no-money'. The author establishes the fact that a sort of mutual repulsion is the 'binding' force between the two. The description of the introduction of the characters is vivid. Delivery of dialogue, in no way, contradicts the characterization. Dr. Octavio Giraldo's entire life picture is brought at the outset itself. The terms such as happy life with 'invalid wife' and 'tired of the profession' portray it. Gabriel Marquez depicts the pathetic plight of rich people who could not even get angry without their doctors' advice while introducing Montiel. Captioning the story clearly delineates the shrewdness of the author. Leaving the story to come to a close at the point where Balthazar was left in an inebriated condition enjoying his dreams allows every reader to fix his own end to the story, thereby adhering to the caption. The reaction of Ursula, his wife, on Balthazar giving away his masterpiece of the cage as a gift to the boy and Balthazar's reciprocation to it, which are untold at the climax, are well understood by every reader. The author has cleverly established their relationship as unmarried and without children for four years. Her irritation towards Balthazar's neglect of his carpentry work gets subdued on seeing the completed piece of the cage, wherein the hero's interest in Art is given due regard. This once again proves the saying that everyman's skill stands on the recognition of his lady.

Though a two-week-long toiling in making a big bird case and its related contingencies are laid in a low tone, the hero, Balthazar's character and

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attitude have been precisely presented. Balthazar is unaware of the worth of his own creation, which the entire town lauded, just because he was conversant with cage making from his childhood. Accompanying his wife in fixing the price for the cage and his modality of price-fixing shows how far he is versed with trade. And while giving away his hard toiled piece as a gift to the boy, not even a tinge of money sense overpowers him. Only on coming out and meeting the people who considered, weighed, and measured all his work and art in terms of money, Balthazar faces the reality and resorts to inebriation as a temporary way out of society's evaluation of money and Art. And finally, Marquez expresses his dejection towards the society in which even the soft-natured women go unmindful of a 'dead body' by the wayside to attend their 5 o'clock Mass.

The author brings out the eternity of Art by underlining the transience of wealth by saying, " We have to do a lot before they die." Here the author's ideology is very similar to that of the great poet of Tamilnadu, in far south of India, Mr. Kannadassan, who proclaimed his eternity by saying, " under no circumstances I will die, for I am the Creator." However, the liveliness of Art is explained through the creation of a cage. This is not fully acknowledged by some people. Harriet. J. Bauman of Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute considers this elaboration of the cage making as something impractical and superfluous. By raising a doubt if the author asks any purpose behind the artwork, Harriet does not give enough weight to the art piece of cage work. But if one considers that Marquez had simply personified Art as a cage piece, things will be right. (Harriet J. Bauman, 1989)

Above all the story poses several questions to look into the story again and again in search of ideologies one after the other. A few questions provoked

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by the lines of the story lead to further questions and so on to land on the ideology which the author actually wished to convey.

What is the symbolic significance of the cage, which Balthazar makes?

What is the meaning of the cage having several stories, passageways, eating spaces, swings, etc? Does the author attempts to mean the values, ethics, and the way of life in the society Does he compare the life of people with that of a caged bird without freedom Are the strongest wire of the cage is the boundary for all our luxuries

the cage " is a flight of the imagination"

" it could sing by itself "

the cage is said to vibrate with " resonant chords"

What do these ideas and images point toward

Are these lines simply depicting the author's aesthetic sense Or do they emphasize any need for artistic imagination

Why does he want to " lie down with two women in the same bed "

Is that in any way related to the fact that he's not actually married to Ursula?

Does the author try to say that immoral aspirations bubble out only when inebriated?

By this what does he wish to banish Immoral aspirations or excessive drinking?

Many more questions emerge which when answered would form a complete

study work. This normally is a great triumph for an author and makes his work a magnum opus.