

Shamengwa – college essay



There was an old man, named Shamengwa who had wing-like curled arm and lived in a place, boarding reservation settlement. He was known as butterfly-Shamengwa for the very shape of his twisted up wing-like arm. Handsome was he with charming physique of medium height. He had quality of being elegant, and having good taste. Shamengwa daughter, Geraldine lived in the bush and used to pay visit to her father almost every week. Shamengwa was proud of his thick long white hair and got it perfectly trimmed and styled and styled by his daughter who frequented her visit to her father for this purpose.

He was very particular to meet his day-to-day life. Ojibwa was their spoken language and the way, followed by them for upgrading their life such as plucking stray hair, brushing each tooth, making precise part in the hair and wearing bluejeans was Owehzee, thus showing the government that they were invincible. Shamengwa was a self-made man of indomitable character. With twisted arm, having easy and quick movement ability and strength, he played the fiddle, explanation of sound of which became troublesome.

The musical tone characterized deep appeal of pathos and sufferings of daily life and sometimes wild joy, jigs and reels, reminding the people of their worst memories. Geraldine, a dedicated, willing and determined woman, having six-year-old-baby, earned degree in education which admits of great admiration, considering her staying in the adverse condition in the reservation settlement. She used to drive her father to musical contest where he had good performance, bringing him so many awards and prizes which he kept with utmost care, not to take down at all, even at his grand-child's fervent insistence.

Shamengwa had extreme enthusiasm about his violin. He treated instrument with great respect and also personified them, the sound of which seemed to him asking for food, water, shelter and love. One day when Geraldine came to her father to trim hair and found him lying on the floor with good hand bound behind his back, ankles tied, she was not at all surprised to see the lock of the cupboard smashed and the violin vanished. The tribal judge was informed of this incident by the tribal police who visited the spot and was fed with the superfluous and misleading information, containing distortion of useful truth.

But the people were suspecting Corwin to be the possible culprit eventhough no direct evidence was forthcoming. Corwin was infamous for his clever manipulation and some anti-social works. Some people were trying to protect him considering his young age. With the passage of time, Corwin began to say sober and show his best manners, and when questioned, he replied that he was no so low to cheat an old man's fiddle. The people of the community were eagerly waiting for the old man's come back. Somebody was in doubt about how much he valued his play.

He had painful sense of sadness for Shamengwa's irreparable loss and longed for sitting together with him to feel deep sorrow following the absence of his music. He also aspired for buying better instrument in the event of the stolen violin being not traced. He, however, assured Shamengwa of keeping their eyes on the lost violin. Shamengwa's white eyes turned red with anger and narrated that he was hit from behind and fell on the ground, his cheekbone being broken. From unusual slow movement

and posture of Shamengwa, it became apparent to him of his passive participation in the conversation.

He seemed conspicuous by his some abnormalities - like loss of mental alertness, disorder in dressing, and beard unshaved, sour breath. A cup of hot, strong and sugared tea, brought by Geraldine, removed his inertia to some extent. He instantly brought the chance of sharing his idea with Shamengwa for buying new fiddle and the same was disapproved of. His appeal Geraldine evoked her annoyance. They all sat in silence. He was obstinate and was reluctant to go even though it seemed Shamengwa was trying to avoid him. He wanted to hear Shamengwa music again.

Geraldine requested his father to listen to him. Shemberg bent his head over his hands in the posture of praying. He felt optimistic to hear something from him. Shamengwa narrated that his mother lost a baby when he was four-years-old and this loss forced his mother to go to church. His father had great interest in playing fiddle but after baby's death he had to put the fiddle down. His mother turned strict out of grief with his older sister and him. She forbade taking wine and playing music. They had to keep quiet because their noise will hurt his mother.

His mother's sorrow knew no bound. She spent most of the time in Church. In the absence of everyone, Shamengwa took the fiddle of his father. Shamengwa's father studied and brought along with violin as a noble instrument, which he played less than adequately. If the truth had told he had done better not to improve his talent on Ojibwa. Yet as he died young

and left the violin to his altar boy, his father. He should say nothing against. He should instead be grateful for the joys, his violin afforded his family.

He should be happy in the hours that are father spent turning and playing in the devotion that his brother eagerly gave on it. Yet as things ended so hard between brother and himself because of the instrument, he finds himself imagining that they never knew the violin, that he had never played its music or understood its voice. For when his father died he left the fiddle to both his brother Edwin and himself, with the stipulation that they were unable to decide who should have it, then they were to race for it as true sons of the great waters by paddling their canoes.

When his brother and he heard this declaration read, they said nothing. There was nothing to say as much as it were true that they loved each other, they both wasted that violin. Each of them had given years of practice, each of them had whispered into its hollow sorrows and taken held its joys. Loss of violin is a great shock to Shamengwa, which no other violin can replace. Because this lost violin carried with it a vast background of his predecessors and their joys, sorrows, pains and sentiments.

It is very difficult to comprehend the language of the violin and whoever has insight can realize the language. It also gave divine joy and encompassed emotion of life. Nothing can console Shamengwa but this violin. In what can mark the violation in the story, Shamengwa, there appears to exist social disorder, mirroring the day-to-day life of the tribal people, worst of which manifested itself in the inhuman torture of stalwart and self-made person

like Shamengwa whose old, dearest violin, carrying ample unforgettable memories of his predecessors remain untraced forever.

Following the violin, having been lost, Shamengwa also lost his existence, never to return. Violin centres round the story. This is an embodiment of human emotion, their joys and sorrows. This violin can be personified, not in terms of a particular person but entire human beings whose deep feelings are voiced in varied tunes and languages. The tangible thing like violin may remain vanished from Shamengwa, but the eternal message of the world, latent in it, cannot but revive and voice human emotion and sentiment.