

A fine balance by rohinton mistry essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The passage is taken from the book "A Fine Balance" written by Rohinton Mistry. The passage is written as a flashback. It starts with the introduction of the main characters Ishvar and Ashraf and how they are living presently. There is an introduction of all the members of the family before the author starts with the actual story. The main focus of the passage is the economic and financial conditions of Ashraf and his so called "family" which have now split.

The reason for the split is not directly mentioned but it is said that it was a "terrible night". Most of the passage is a dialogue between Ishvar and Ashraf which took place about a year ago. It is set in India as the word "paan" which is an Indian chew and "chachaji" which means uncle in Hindi are used. The passage starts with the reader getting to know about the split which took place at "Ashraf's insistence." The complete scene is set at Ashraf's house which has now been partitioned into two.

It can be deduced that there are two levels - the shop on the lower level and the room above it where they all lived as there are mentions of Omprakash "moving around upstairs" and Mumtaz (Ashraf's wife) and Ashraf ascending the stairs "to retire for the night". It is night time and Omprakash is going to sleep and Ashraf and Ishvar go to look at him. From that point onwards it moves into the past. The characters in the passage are very simple and easy to understand. Ashraf is a tailor and hence his house is very small and has only the basic necessities but he is happy and content with what he has.

When Ashraf says "We will share what there is here, I said it only as a joke. You think I would really send away my own children?" we come to know that

he is a very simple man who loves his family and wants them all to live together. He considers Ishvar and Omprakash, who are his nephews, as his own children and loves them as if they were his own. Ashraf is shown to be a man who is much older than Ishvar and who has seen the ups and downs of life - " I have lived my life - tasted its fruit, both sweet and bitter. " He is a man of age and experience.

Ishvar is much younger than Ashraf and even less experienced. When Mumtaz says, " But what if he goes back to the village, does something foolish", we can infer that Omprakash, the youngest in the family, is still immature and too young to be left on his own. Later even Ishvar says, " But wherever he goes, I would have to go. He is still too young, too many foolish ideas clogging his head. " Ashraf and Ishvar both care about Omprakash a lot and are anxious about his future. Ashraf makes a comment on how it is " unfair to Om" and how it would maybe be best for Omprakash to " try elsewhere. Ashraf is very realistic but Ishvar is over optimistic.

This is seen in the beginning of the passage when they are talking about the factory and the new shops they have opened. Ashraf really loves Ishvar and Omprakash as his children as when they are talking about going to the city he too gets excited with Ishvar and makes plans about the trip and dreams about the city as if he is going to go there - " Look at me, getting excited as if I was leaving with you. " There is no direct plot or theme in the passage.

The only thing we can infer about the place they are living in is the economic condition and how it is changing with the arrival of the new ready made clothes store in their town. The tone of the passage is also casual and self

explanatory. There is a lot of reference to time in the passage. The author jumps back and forth in time without giving it much significance. There are different references in the passage to this - " Since that terrible night six months ago..... " " A year had passed since the murders..... " " Before long, Ashraf's list of clients began to shrink"

There are many mentions of different time periods in the passage but none of them signify any event known to us or given in the passage. There are just references to it throughout. Even when Ashraf and Ishvar are making plans to go to the city, they are related to the future. Hence we can say that there is a balance between the past, the present and the future tenses in the same passage. The passage, on the whole, is simple and gives us a short insight into the lives of Ishvar, Ashraf, Mumtaz and Omprakash and other basic workers of that time. It even tells us about the economic and social conditions of their town and their surroundings.