

3. A Devoted Son

Characters

Rakesh: He is the son of Varma who is a well behaved and dutiful son. He is a brilliant student who becomes a doctor and has an opportunity to continue his practice and education in the USA. He is the son of a kerosene vendor Varma. In his father's old age, he supervises every bit of food his father eats and medicates him for every little complaint.

Veena: She is a simple and fat Indian girl married to Rakesh by the wish of his mother who is very loyal and dutiful by nature. She follows Rakesh's orders regarding his father's diet.

Varma: He works as an oil seller at Depo and he is the father of Rakesh who hardly educates his son and has pride over his son's achievement. But later he finds his son as a tyrant as he cuts his foodstuffs.

Bhatia: He is an old neighbour of Rakesh and a friend of Varma who participates in Rakesh's family conversation and activities. He lives next door and often joins Varma to sit outside and complain about the hardships that the two of them are facing.

Varma's wife: She is an unnamed lady who dies later, which leads to his unhappiness, and made him sick.

Rakesh's children: They are unnamed children who pass time and play with grandfather as well. Varma is briefly able to convince one of them to sneak him extra food.

Summary

The story 'A Devoted Son' is written by a well-known Indian writer Anita Desai. She has written many stories and novels. Almost every story she writes is about everyday Indian life and individuals.

It is a short story. In this short story she has shown the bond of father and son. In this story she has portrayed the contemporary Indian situation of urban life. The story centres around Dr. Rakesh.

Rakesh is from a poor Indian village. His father Varma, is a kerosene vendor. Mr. Varma dreams of having an educated son. Rakesh is the first member of the family who gets education. He completes his medical course with top marks, the highest in the country. There is the celebration in the family because of Rakesh's success. They inform all who are in their reach.

Mr. Verma informs his neighbours that Rakesh will get a chance to go to America for his further course. His neighbours come there. They respect and wish all the best to him. Mr. Varma becomes proud to have such popular and successful son. Rakesh spends some years in America to finish his degree. He completes it with ease. He also gets job offers at prestigious US hospitals. He receives many awards too. He sends them back to India. He is also kept in touch with his family until he comes back to India.

Rakesh loves America and is admired by his colleagues for his aptitude. He loves his family more. He always plans on returning home. As soon as he has enough experience and money, he returns home with the intention of working in his hometown. His parents aren't happy with his life choices. They don't understand why he wants to come home and leave all those reputations behind. His father becomes very sad because he chooses a village girl to marry. The village girl isn't educated. Those activities create conflict in the family. Rakesh doesn't pay attention to the suggestions of his parents. He refuses to listen to his parents, and he marries the village girl. After that he starts to work at the city hospital, which is totally different from the hospitals where he used to work in. Any way he is interested to work in India and wants to make a difference in his town.

After a short period of time he uplifts his position as the director of the hospital which creates joy to his entire family. Rakesh doesn't

seem to have changed. He always has the sense who he is and how he is. After having his own son, his life becomes complete.

But there is a very bad happening to him. His mother dies for whom Rakesh tries to make happy and proud. Mr. Varma's heart is broken, after the death of his mother. He does not want to lose his father any time soon, so he applies his medical expertise. Rakesh doesn't have much time to pay for his father because he has his own family and his job also makes him busy. Rakesh bans sweets to his father, Mr. Varma, to look after his stomach. But his father is interested to eat them. So, he tries to get them through Rakesh's son. He worries that his father might make his grandson less honourable than Rakesh. That activity frustrates Rakesh. There is a kind of misunderstanding between father and son. Rakesh wants his son to have a positive relationship with Varma, just like he does. Varma tells Rakesh and his wife that he dislikes them, but he still keeps an eye out for Varma. Rakesh finally lets Varma leave, knowing that he has done everything he can for Varma.