
Chapter – 5

Mother's Day

Mother's Day, a play by J. B. Priestley, portraying the status of a mother in a household. Priestley humorously explores the story when Mrs. Pearson, in her forties, stands up for her rights and how her family reacts at this. Mrs. Pearson is very fond of her family and works day and night to support her family member in the best possible manner. However, she is upset at the way she is being treated. Nobody cares for her or asks about her. All day long she stays at home doing all the work. In the evening when the kids and her husband return she gave threw herself in meeting their demands. She did not want any dislikeable thing to happen in her household yet she craved for their attention and a little respect. She went to her neighbour Mrs. Fitzgerald, a fortune teller and a magician. Older and heavy, Mrs. Fitzgerald comes with a plan. She proposed that they could exchange bodies and then with Pearson's body, she would teach a lesson to Pearson's family that Mrs. Pearson could not herself for she was too humble and nice to do that.

Though reluctant, Mrs. Pearson agreed to the idea and the two exchanged their bodies. Mrs. Pearson was still not sure and asked Mrs. Fitzgerald if she could get her body back. However, determined Fitzgerald tells Pearson to not worry and that she would handle the matter carefully. She left for Pearson's home with Mrs. Pearson's body. She entered the home and knew what she was to do to teach Pearsons' a lesson so they would not bother Mrs. Pearson in future unnecessarily. Mrs. Pearson (Mrs. Fitzgerald's soul) smoked a cigarette and was confident than ever. A few moments later, her daughter, Doris Pearson, entered the house and started demanding tea and her dress. Mrs. Pearson was sure to make her realise that she was Doris' mother and not a servant. She was stunned to see her mother smoking and that she had not prepared tea for her and that her dress was not ready as well. Doris told her mother that she was to go out with her beau Charles Spencer on which the mother remarked if she could not find someone better. This broke Doris and she left weeping.

Then came the son, Cyril Pearson, who is amused at his mother's strange behaviour. They get into an argument. The children could not baffle the situation. When the mother left to fetch the stout, the children discussed their mother's behaviour. Doris felt that it might have been that mother got her head hit. Then enters mother with a bottle of stout and a glass half filled with it. The children began to laugh and the mother chided them and asked them to behave like grown-ups. Doris then asked her mother for her such behaviour and if they had done something wrong. Then Mrs. Pearson tells them that it is actually the children's and her husband's behaviour that has disturbed her. They always come and go without bothering about her. They demand duties from her and she does her best to keep everyone happy and still no body is bothered about her. She remarks that while the three of them do a job of forty hours a week with two days as weekend, she goes on working seven days round the clock. She proclaimed that she would do some work on Saturday and Sunday only if she is thanked for everything.

When the mother scolded Doris and Cyril duly, entered George Pearson and is annoyed at her wife sipping stout. He told her that he would have supper at the club and that he did not want tea. The wife told him that there was no tea. He got annoyed and the wife then said that when he did not want tea then why was he fighting for it. Mr. Pearson is flabbergasted at such conduct of his wife. The wife continues to rebuke the husband telling him that why he goes to club when he

is a joke among all there. He is stunned and demanded the truth from his son. Cyril got upset at his mother yet told the father that it was the truth.

Then enters Mrs. Fitzgerald (actually Mrs. Pearson). Mrs. Pearson (actually Mrs. Fitzgerald) told her that she was just putting everyone at place and that the things were alright. Mrs. Pearson (Mrs. Fitzgerald in body) requested to have her body then and Mrs. Pearson (Mrs. Fitzgerald in body) on a condition that Pearson would not go soft on her family again. They got into their original bodies and Mrs. Fitzgerald left. The mother and the children and husband smiled at each other and it was decided that they all will have the dinner together and play a game of rummy.