



The Post Office (Bengali: Dak Ghar) is a 1912 play by Rabindranath Tagore. It concerns Amal, a child confined to his adoptive uncle's home by an incurable disease. W. Andrew Robinson and Krishna Dutta note that the play "continues to occupy a special place in [Tagore's] reputation, both within Bengal and in the wider world." [1] It was written in four days. [2]

Characters

Madhav Dutt
Amal, his adopted nephew
Gaffer (In disguise of a Fakir, Act 2)
Sudha, a little flower-gatherer
Troop of boys
Doctor
Dairyman
Watchman
Village Headman, a bully
King's Herald
Royal Physician
Boys

Setting:- Contemporary rural Bengal

Amal stands in Madhav's courtyard and talks to passers-by, and asks in particular about the places they go. The construction of a new post office nearby prompts the imaginative Amal to fantasize about receiving a letter from the King or being his postman. The village headman mocks Amal, and pretends the illiterate child has received a letter from the king promising that his royal physician will come to attend him. The physician really does come, with a herald to announce the imminent arrival of the king; Amal, however, dies as Sudha comes to bring him flowers.

1.Character of Amal

Answer: In the allegorical play The Post Office by R.N. Tagore, Amal is described as an orphan boy adopted by Madhab. That boy is suffering from a serious disease. The village doctor advises him not to go out in the sun and air as it may be harmful to him. So, he is kept confined in the room, but his imagination leads him to transcend the four walls of the room to the world of fiction. He always sits beside the window and converses with passer-by and longs to go with them to unfold the world. To Amal, world's everything has its special value and every human who may have not so much wealth, is important. The imagination of Amal describes the Dairy man's village and his profession so magnificently that it surprises the Dairyman. Being very little and getting assurance from Watchman, Amal becomes anxious to receive letter from the King.

In act' II, Amal's physical condition becomes more deplorable. The Headman Mocks him giving him a blank letter. But ultimately the news from King Arrives and Royal physician comes to Amal, but Amal dies.

But the whole story has very deep inner meaning. Amal is an angelic being, highly creative through his imagination. Allegorically every soul seeks freedom. Here this freedom can be interpreted as the freedom of soul from human body into The Almighty. So, Amal is the soul longing for eternity.

2.How did the Headman behave with Amal?

In the play the post office by R. N. Tagore, Headman is a character full of self-pride. He always makes others frightened. Everyone likes to be out of his sight. He also is very bad to a child like Amal. He underestimates Amal as Amal is waiting for the King's letter. Headman mocks Amal saying that king will surely send a letter to Amal as Amal is very close to the King. The imaginary words about the King from little child's mouth make the Headman very angry. He says to himself that Amal's uncle Madhav may have gone too far and so he always deals in King and rich people. He thinks that Madhav has got the audacity very much. The Headman wants to give a hard lesson to both Amal and Madhab. He at last threatens to complaint to the king so that the the letter from king arrives indeed.

3."Tell him, Sudha has not forgotten him"—who said this and to whom? Explain the context.

Answer: This remark was made by Sudha, the daughter of a flower collector. Sudha said this for the people who were present in the room of Madhav at the very end of the play.

Sudha once came to Amal's house because she wanted to give him flowers. At the time according to Kings physician Amal had fallen asleep. This remark allegorically meant that Amal

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had fallen into internal sleep i.e. death. Then Sudha put her flower which she bought, into Amal's hand and told the physician to tell Amal that she had not forgotten Amal. It might be interpreted in this way that 'Sudha' always remained with man before and after his death. To Amal Sudha signified the taste of freedom.

Q.4.

What was the significance of the blank letter given to Amal by the Headman?

Answer: In the Act -II of the play The Post Office by Rabindranath Tagore, Amal was waiting for King's letter when he was on the bed getting very ill. Then the Headman entered the room and handed over a blank Piece of paper to Amal saying that King had sent the letter. Amal did not understand this mockery and tried to read the letter. But he found nothing on the paper. He thought that it was due to his illness and asked the Headman to read the letter for him. Headman ridiculed Amal saying that King would arrive very soon and King would prefer to eat puffed rice in Amal's house. But within short time the mockery of the Headman became true and the King's herald and physician arrived Amal's house. So, it was clear that there may be a possibility even in a blank paper.

Q.5.

Significance of all characters in the play The Post Office.

Answer: Each and every character plays an important role in the play The Post Office and every character has different significance and inner meaning. The most important character Amal signifies a soul waiting for deliverance. Another character watchman symbolises time. That time is powerful and everything in this universe is under the clutch of time. It is clearly stated by him: My gong sounds to tell people; time waits for none but goes on forever. Thus, behind each and every apparent simplicity in dialogue, there remain different serious and deep meanings. Sudha who gathers flower symbolizes grace and sweetness. Madhav stands for a country common man of prosperity. The physician symbolises bookish knowledge that prevents man to achieve wisdom and true knowledge. Even the wicked village Headman plays an important role in this play. He stands for an authority full of pride with no legal power. Amal alone is an angelic creature apparently passive but highly creative through his imaginative perception. The play is a series of dialogue but its dialogue vibrates with meaning.

Q.6.

Who was Gaffer? Why was Madhav afraid of Gaffer? Who was Amal? What was the relation between Amal and Madhav?

Answer: Gaffer was a wonderer and he was acquainted with Madhav.

Gaffer was a man who always tempted children to go outside by telling them different stories. Madhav's adopted boy Amal was suffering from chronicle diseases and doctor told him

not to go out of the room. So, when Gaffer arrived Madhav's house, Madhav was getting afraid that he might be tempted to go outside.

In the play *The Post Office*, writer Rabindranath Tagore had presented an orphan boy named Amal. He was a distant relation of Madhav's wife as village connection.

Q.7.

Who was the Dairyman? How was his village according to Amal?

Answer: In the play *The Post Office* by R. N. Tagore, Dairyman was a curd-seller who sells curd wondering from one village to another village.

That dairyman lived in a village that was situated beside Shamli river at the foot of the Panchmura hills. According to Amal, Dairyman's village was under some old big trees by the side of the red road by the Shamli river. Cattle always grazed on the slope of the hills. The village women wearing red sarees came and filled their earthen pitchers with water from the river and carried them on their heads when they returned home. Thus, Amal magnificently gave an imaginary description of Dairyman's village that proved completely real.

Q.8.

How did Sudha became friend with Amal?

Answer: In the play *The Post Office* by Rabindranath Tagore Amal was an orphan boy adopted by Madhav. We are told that Amal was suffering from an incurable disease and village doctor had told him not to be out of the room. So, he sat beside a window by the road and gossiped with passerby. Once he called a girl named Sudha. She was going to pick flowers for a mother who would make garland to sell. Then Amal became very delighted and wished to go with her. He told her that he would pick the best flower from the top of the tree for her. But Sudha did not able to stay there for long because then she would get no flowers. Amal requested her to give him a flower when she would return and he would pay for it when he would be a grown up. At last she agreed and promised him before leaving to give him a flower that she kept at the very end of the play.

Q.9.

Role/ importance of the character Watchman. / "But surely your time will come the moment you strike the gong!"—Explain.

Answer: In Rabindranath Tagore's play *The Post office*, all the characters are symbolically represented. Though all the characters are seen very simple, they convey deeper meaning. The character Watchman is not exceptional. Watchmen is introduced when Amal calls him during his patrolling. His duty is to ring his bell when time comes. Here symbolically Watchman represents the 'Time'. That time will spare nothing and it is the most powerful thing in this universe. According to Watchman, time waits for none but goes on forever. And everyone has to follow

that destination where time goes. Thus, behind the apparent simplicity, dialogues, there are deeper and profound meaning continues to flicker.

Q.10.

"But friend, I know something too of the game of keeping them indoor."—Who said this and to whom? Bring out the context.

Answer: In Rabindranath Tagore's play The Post Office Gaffer said this to Madhav.

Madhav adopted a boy named Amal. Amal was suffering from a chronicle disease and he was advised not to be out of the room by the village doctor. Once, Gaffer visited Madhab's house. Madhav became very afraid of him because he used to tempt children to go outside. When Madhav expressed his concern, Gaffer told that quoted line and informed Madhav that he also knew the method to keep children indoor.

Q.11.

Describe the ending of the play The Post Office by R.N. Tagore / Description of Last Scene of the play The Post Office by R.N. Tagore .

Answer: At the very end of the play The Post Office, Amal dies. The death is described as the eternal sleep. Through this death, Amal's soul gains eternal freedom. The lamp in the room is blown out. It signifies the death. Only the light of the star is allowed to enter the room. The light of oil lamp is different from the light of the stars. Light of stars may light the soul of a man whereas the lamp's light can light the physical body. At last Sudha, the daughter of flower collector comes to Amal's house because she wanted to give him flowers. At that time, according to Kings physician Amal has fallen asleep. This remark allegorically means that Amal had fallen into internal sleep i.e. death. Then Sudha puts her flower which she brought, into Amal's hand and tells the physician to tell Amal that she has not forgotten Amal. It may be interpreted in this way that 'Sudha' always remains with man before and after his death. To Amal, Sudha signifies the taste of freedom.

Q.12

How does Amal describe Postman?

Answer: Amal is a boy full of creative imagination. He suffers from an incurable illness and so the village doctor has told him not to go out of the room. So, sitting by the window, inside his room, he meets so many passers-by. Once, he meets the watchman who informs him about the king's postman who carries letter all day. Amal's mind always wants freedom. So immediate he wants to be a postman. In his inner eyes, he can remember as if he had seen long ago that the King's postman is continuously coming down the hills with a lantern in his left hand and a bag of letters on right shoulder. He also can remember that so many days and so many nights the

postman has been coming down uninterruptedly. Along the zigzag dusted path by the river at the place where the mountain falls mingles the ground, he is coming and coming. He comes and comes through the narrow path running in between the maize field beside the river – beyond is the sugarcane field with bunds alongside—through them he is unendingly coming—he comes alone; inside the field crickets are chirping, only a Kadakhocha (bird) is wagging its tail.

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