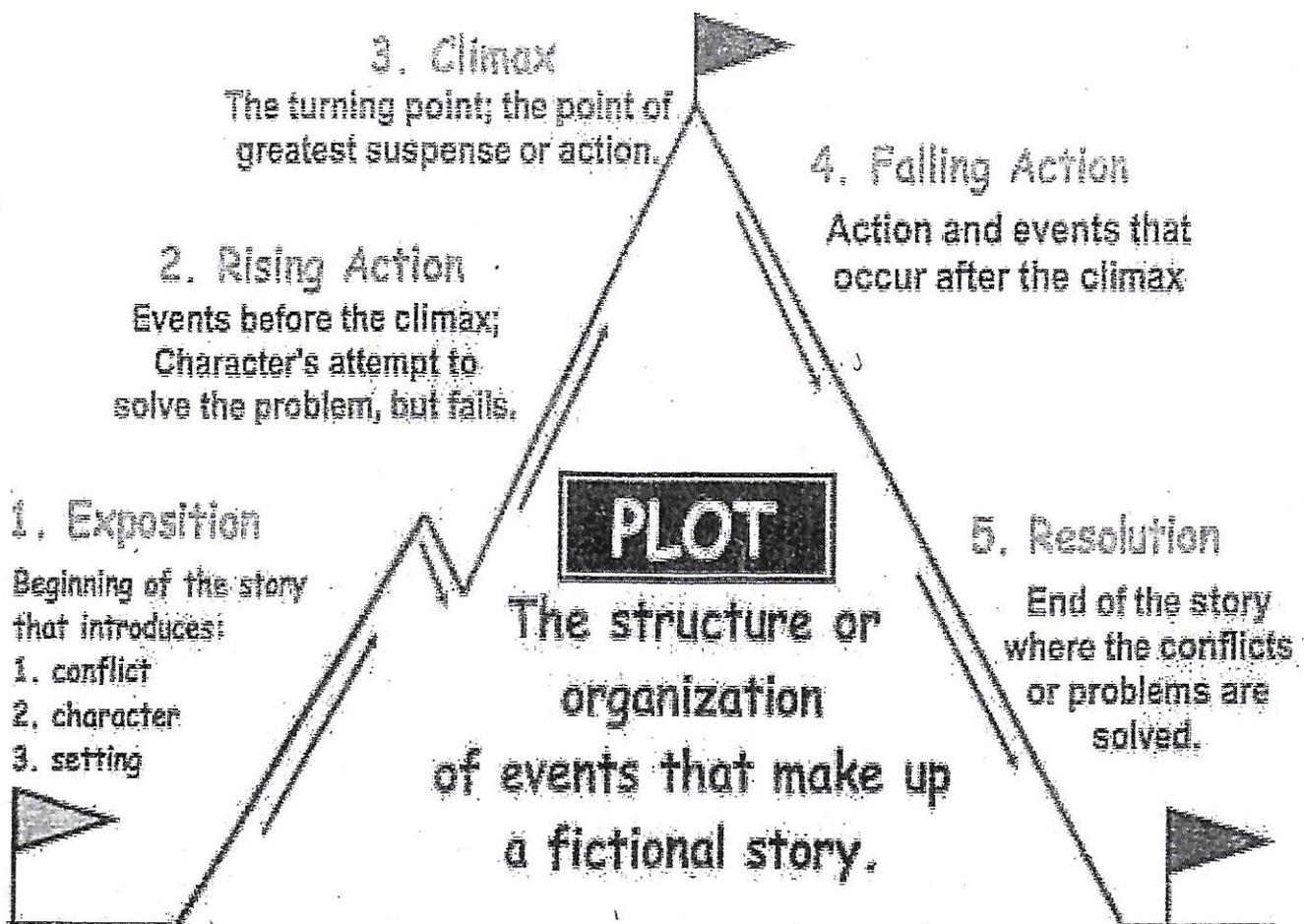


## ELEMENTS OF LITERATURE

1. **CHARACTER:** a person, sometimes animal, who takes part in the action of the short story or other roles in a story.
2. **SETTING:** the time and place in which it happens. Using descriptions of scenery, buildings, seasons, landscapes, etc.
3. **PLOT:** a series of events and character actions that relate to a central conflict.
4. **CONFLICT:** a struggle between two people or things that must be overcome. It is usually a conflict of the main character and other characters.
5. **THEME:** central idea or belief.
6. **MOOD OR ATMOSPHERE:** The mood of a piece of literature is defined as the emotion or feeling that readers get from reading the words on a page. So if you've ever read something that's made you feel tense, scared, or even happy.
7. **CHARACTERISATION:** This is how a writer uses various ways to show what a character is like.



## CRIPPLE NO MORE

Manik Reddy

I hated them all! Dad, Ma, my brothers and sisters and the whole damn country! They were always laughing, always happy and they were the best family a person would have. But there was a difference: I was a cripple, wobbly on my knee and one of my legs was thinner than the other. I had to use a crutch to walk. I couldn't run and play tag with my brothers for I always stumbled when I tried to run. Whenever they played games on the lawn I had to sit on the steps and watch from there, jealously trying to imagine that I was one of them. When it came to Diwali, which is like Christmas to any Christian child, they always got the best gifts; cricket bats, tennis racquets, footballs. I always received things like chess sets and Ludos. Although I had received more than six or so chess sets over the years I still wouldn't know the Bishop from the Queen. Anyway who was going to play with me; they all liked outdoor sports.

My third year in high school was boring and humiliating. I was the centre of every girl's fun and ridicule. They tried imitating my wobbly type of walking; which I presume was funny for them but every laugh and giggle was like a dagger through my heart. I ignored them and tried to put it aside but in the loneliness of my bedroom walls I always brought the tension out by crying.

Maybe they meant the best for me but I hated each smile bestowed on me. I could see through every person or I thought I could until I met Niami, a pretty Fijian girl.

It was a dull day and occasional tropical showers washed the streets of Ba for short periods. My father had dropped me at the bus terminal to get my school bus to Lautoka about twenty miles away. There were many high schools in Ba but the one that I went to happened to appeal to my

father-as it happened to be one of the best in Fiji. As I walked towards the bus shelter a sudden downpour of rain came pelting down.

I attempted to run but before I could reach the terminal I slipped and fell on the tar-sealed road. Nobody but Niami dared move from under the shelter. This strange Fijian girl ran out into the rain to help me get up.

Our friendship began that day. She happened to be heading for a school in Lautoka also and so for the first time I had a friend to sit beside me in the school bus. I had never realised before that a Fijian could show so much friendship towards an Indian who was in a sense an invader. For some strange reason I began to trust this wild, beautiful and friendly girl. I had never trusted anybody who tried to show any friendliness because I always seemed to misunderstand friendship for pity.

Somehow the warmth from Niami began to get to me as we travelled some twenty miles every day. Gradually our relationship began to get intimate.

Though I enjoyed her company I was worried. Hadn't she noticed? Should I warn her that I was a cripple? The evil in me said, 'No! Don't tell her! You'll lose a friend!' my worried conscience said, 'Tell her! Tell her before you get found out!' Hell! The evil won the battle temporarily. I refrained from saying anything though I felt sort of guilty whenever I was with her.

One day towards the end of school Niami asked me to spend Christmas at her home. I was shocked! It was the first time someone was actually inviting me home. Then I felt it was time to tell her.

'Do you know....?' I asked her.

'Know what?'

'That... that....!' I gestured awkwardly towards my leg. She didn't seem to comprehend.

'Do you know that I am crippled?' I blurted out, red-faced, dreading the apparent outcome.

'Yes, I knew that,' she said unmoved.

'Doesn't .... doesn't it make any difference?' I asked surprised at this attitude from her. 'No! Of course not silly! You are the same old Rajesh and I love you!!'

I couldn't believe my ear. All I did was stutter. It was all so unbelievable. Somehow in between my hysterical ~ stuttering I managed to acknowledge her love and accept her invitation.

All that day and the following days my happiness knew no bounds. My family was surprised at my change of spirit though they never said anything. For the first time since childhood I began smiling. I no longer scolded my little sister when she came around pestering me. She even played a game of Ludo with me once and one night my brothers and sisters included me in a game of monopoly with them, even my mother joined in. I began to wonder if it was my attitude that had kept my family away from me.

My father was even more surprised when I told him that I had been invited to a friend's place for Christmas. He seemed to be pleased but when I told him that my friend was Fijian his smile faded quickly and he became sour. However, he finally had to give in knowing well my stubborn nature.

So a week before Christmas I bundled up my clothes, and my most treasured possession, my harmonica or mouth organ as some call it, and my crutch and took a bus to Bolevuto. After about an hour or travelling on a metal road

to the interior the bus rumbled to a stop at the end of the road.

She was there waiting for me on a saddle-less horse. Niemi was all smiles as I limped towards her. She jumped off the horse and taking my small case from me she helped me get onto the horse. Then she got on behind me. She gave me the reins and told me the directions. I yanked the reins to one side and clicked my tongue to get the horse going. I knew she wanted me to feel that I was hero-but I also knew that the horse was probably the laziest or slowest old nag she could get hold of.

The next few days in the village were the happiest days of my miserable life. In the Fijian people I found things that had never been in my own people: I fell in love with a whole village. Though I slept on the floor with torn and tattered mosquito nets hanging over us, the love from the people, especially from Niemi, gave me a new hope in life.

One evening Niemi and I walked to the village fire where some men and women were gathered around. The men were strumming old guitars and ukuleles and they were accompanied by the singing women. The music was the sweetest I had heard. It put the Western rock music and the Eastern songs aside. I looked at Niemi, who was smiling at me and put my hand down to my gurkha' trousers pocket pulling out my harmonica. My playing was applauded before I really started. I sat down on a crate and played along with the sweet soothing Fijian song while Niemi stood behind me leaning on my back with her hands over my shoulders.

For the first time a happy tune came out of my harmonica. I paused when a young boy brought a bowl of yaqona which is traditional Fijian drink and it is taken as an insult when one refuses to drink it.

'Bula viniaka!' The song ended with a loud cheering and clapping. After another round of yaqona, to my surprise I was called upon to sing an Indian song. Niemi was the first one to clap for that. Finally I sang a made-up song singing one line in Indian and again in Fijian. It went something like this:

'You are my people,

I am your son

Oh sweet Niemi

I am in love'

By the time I finished the song more people had gathered around. They applauded my song loudly apparently pleased at my knowledge of their language. While I was singing I noticed a Fijian boy about my own age whisper something in Niemi's ear who in turn had said something with a look of annoyance. The boy looked furious and with one look at me he marched off. I had a strange feeling that I had an enemy in this friendly place.

The next day Niemi and I went picnicking around the river that was just near the village. I sat on the bank watching her in the water. She had little clothes on and her figure intrigued me. After a little while she got bored and came and sat beside me. We talked for a while and I was putting a wild flower into her fuzzy hair when I noticed a face peeking at us from behind a bush.

It was then that we were attacked by five Fijian youths. Two of them held Niemi at bay while the other three beat me up.

'Bloody cripple!'

'You want Niemi! Ha! Ha!'

'Damn kai-india!'

'Niemi's mine, buddy!'

I got kicked in the stomach, face and everywhere as I sprawled on the ground. Niemi was screaming all the time and before I became unconscious I felt something hit my bad leg and a torrent of pain seared through me.

When I woke up in hospital I saw Dad, Ma, Niemi and her father around my bed looking at me anxiously. There were tears in Ma's eye and Niemi was crying hysterically. I looked down at myself and I realised painfully before I lapsed back into darkness that I didn't have my bad leg anymore.

Manik Reddy

# Cripple No More Note

## SETTING

1. Ba, Fiji: This is where Rajesh and his family live. It is also a place where nobody seems to care about the cripple people. This is also the place where Rajesh met Miami at the bus station as he travelled to school every day, some twenty miles away to Lautoka where his school was.

2. Balevuto, Fiji: A small village where Miami comes from. It is a place where music, laughter and a sense of culture and togetherness exist. It is this place where Rajesh learned and experienced a totally new way of life different from his own people. His few days in this village were the happiest days of his life. Balevuto was also a place where violence existed. For eg, the Fijian youths cold bloodedly attacked a cripple.

3. At school in Lautoka: This is where Rajesh was being ridiculed and humiliated every day. At school, girls made fun of him and imitated his wobbly type of walking. Everyday he had to go back home to the loneliness of his bedroom walls and cried. Until he met Miami, and everything changed. He was no longer lonely he had a friend to sit with and share his life with.

## THEME:

### 1. POWER OF LOVE

Love can change a person's life. For eg, in the beginning, Rajesh was full of hatred, sadness, jealousy and suspicion. He hated everybody even his own family. He also mistrusted every smile bestowed on him. However, when Rajesh fell in love with Miami, his character changed. He was no longer sad. For eg, "My happiness knew no bound". He became more loving and understanding about his family. He was no longer jealous and lonely, but became trusting and very friendly. Love is very powerful, it changed Rajesh's life from being miserable to a happy and loving person. "I fell in love with the whole village".

### 2. RACISM

I learn from this story that racism is a very ugly emotion because it leads to hatred, jealousy and even to kill. In the story, the Fijian youths were so prejudiced against Rajesh, they were jealous of his love for Miami, they hated him because he was an Indian. They attacked him in the most vicious way. They kicked his face, stomach and everywhere as he sprawled on the ground, they even hit his crippled leg. Racism is a very ugly emotion that can make you do a lot of bad things like these Fijian boys. This story teaches us not to become racists.

### 3. ALWAYS HAVE POSITIVE ATTITUDE ABOUT LIFE

Rajesh always possessed a negative attitude about life. He was quite opposite in thinking about his own family members as well as of other races. When he became friends with Miami, his attitude changed and then he felt he was a part of the community. He enjoyed life afterwards. This is a lesson for us, that when we take life negatively, we will live life negatively and so we become sad in life but if we always have a positive attitude about life, we will live a happy life and we will enjoy living it. Always be positive!

## CHARACTERS:

### BEFORE:

1. Full of hatred.

For eg, "I hated them all".

2. A miserable person

For eg, "Every laugh was like a dagger through my heart".

3. A jealous person always jealous of his brothers and sister

4. A very lonely person

For eg, "In the loneliness of my bedroom walls I always brought the tension out by crying".

5. A suspicious person. "I hated each smile bestowed on me"

6. A stubborn and disobedient person.. For eg, his father gave in knowing his stubborn nature.

### NIAMI

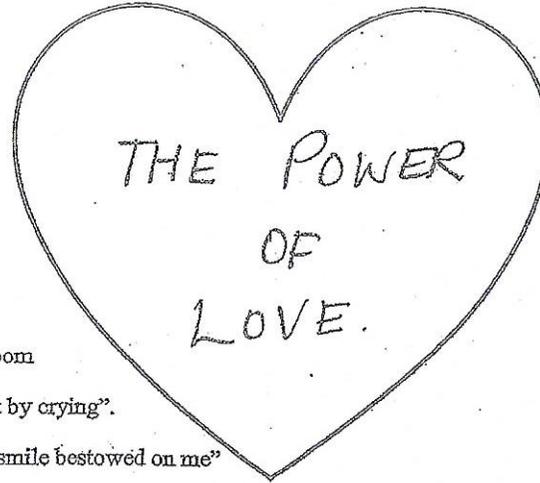
-She is very friendly as she befriended Rajesh.

-She is very helpful as she ran out in the rain and helped Rajesh up.

-She is a loving girl as she fell in love with a cripple and wanted to help him.

-She is a very encouraging girl as she wanted to make Rajesh felt like a hero.

### RAJESH



### AFTER:

1. He became loving.

For eg, he played with his sister and mom.

2. A happy person.

For eg, "My happiness knew no bounds".

3. He's no longer jealous of his brothers & sister

4. No longer lonely He always play with his family.

5. Trusting. "I began to trust this wild beautiful and friendly girl".

6. He became very friendly.

For eg, He played with everyone at home.

### FIJIAN YOUTHS

- They are racists as they attacked Rajesh because he's Indian.

- They are jealous that's why they attacked Rajesh.

- They are cruel as they viciously beat up a cripple until he got

### SETTING

1. *Ba, Fiji*: The place where the narrator (Rajesh) and his family live. It is a place where nobody seems to care about the crippled. It is also where Rajesh, in his third year at school, get on the bus to travel to school at Lautoka which is twenty miles away. It was a cruel world to Rajesh. However, it was also a place where someone good like Niami existed.
2. *Balevuto, Fiji*: A small village where Niami comes from. It is in this place where Rajesh learns and experiences a totally new way of life than from his own people. It's a place where music, laughter and a sense of culture and togetherness existed. But it was also a place where violence existed as well as (eg) Fijian youths beating up a cripple etc.
3. *In the hospital*: This is when Rajesh awakens and realizes that he did not have his bad leg anymore as it was cut off after his beating at Niami's village.

### CHARACTERS

#### 1. *Rajesh/Narrator*

- Our main character is a young crippled Indian (wobbly on his knee with one leg thinner than the other). We learn a few things about this character whereby at the beginning of the story we find out that he had a negative attitude towards his family as well as anyone who smiled or looked at him (i.e angry, stubborn, jealous, etc). He feels indifferent and left out just because he was crippled.
- He had no friend at all until he met Niami who led him to the realization that it might be him that had caused people not to show any friendliness towards him.
- Meeting Niami and her whole village taught him things he never knew. Laughter, singing was never in his agenda. But through Niami and her people, Rajesh learns to see things through new eyes.
- Towards the end of the story, 5 Fijian racist boys are beating him up. In the end, Rajesh lost his bad leg.

#### 2. *Niami*

- A young beautiful Fijian girl from the village of Balevuto.
- She is a non-racist young woman who showed love, care, concern and understanding towards Rajesh when nobody else would give him any attention. She did not mind Rajesh's being crippled. It is her who helped Rajesh see things differently by the depth of the attention and love she gives him and also by taking him to her village to let him see the real spirit of the Fijian people.

#### 3. *Group of Fijian Boys*

- A small group of wild and racist Fijian boys who beat up Rajesh towards the end of the story because of one boy's jealousy over Niami's love for Rajesh.

### THEME

#### 1. *Love conquers all.*

- When Rajesh slips on the road, Niami helped him up and from then on their love develops into a deep and meaningful relationship. It did not matter that Rajesh was crippled but love was there and that was what was important.
- It is Niami's love that made Rajesh realize how badly he has been by being stubborn and jealous towards his family and therefore leading to the change in Rajesh's attitude.
- Because they were in love, the matter of race did not matter when Niami invited Rajesh for Christmas.

#### 2. *Racial Prejudice is foolish*

- Niami cuts off all the race barriers between Fijian and Indians when she became friends with Rajesh.

#### 3. *Never give up hope*

- Rajesh making friends with Niami.

#### 4. *Always have positive attitude about life*

- Rajesh always possessed a negative attitude about life. He is quite opposite in thinking about his own family members as well as the other races. When he became friends with Niami his attitude changes and he then feels he is part of the community. He enjoys life afterwards.

#### 5. *Do not judge a book by its cover*

- Being crippled did not mean that Rajesh could not do anything else. His talents in singing and with the harmonica (or mouth organ) showed that he was capable of doing things just like normal people.

#### 6. *Nobody is perfect*

- Rajesh is crippled and because of that, some people may think of him as imperfect. But he can do things just like normal people do. He is talented but is hindered by the fact that he is crippled.