

A Devoted Son

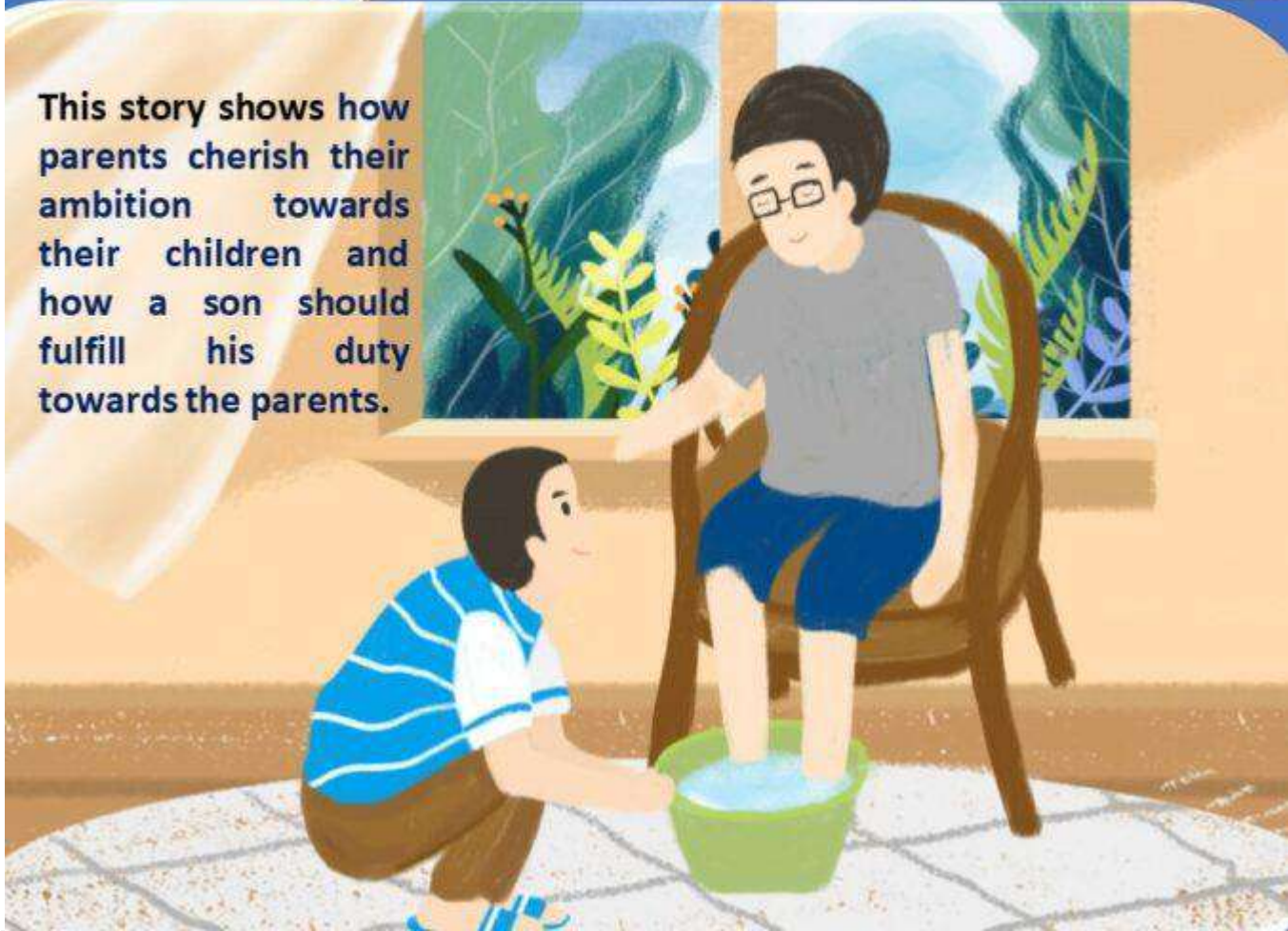
-By Anita Desai

About Writer:

Anita Desai's original name is Anita Mazumdar is an Indian novelist, short story writer, and writer of children's books. She has completed his B. A. from the University of Delhi, and Desai began to publish her stories and novels. Her famous novels Fire on the Mountain (1977), Clear Light of the Day (1980), In Custody (1984), umgartner's Bombay (1988), Journey to Ithaca(1995), Feasting, Feasting (1999), and ZigzagWay (2004) received mixed responses from the readers. She received Shahitya Academy Award for her novel Fire on the Mountain. Her novel In Custody was adapted into a film in 1993. She published several volumes of short stories including Games at Twilight and Other Stories (1978), and Diamond Dust; and Other Stories (2000). Two of her Children's Books The Village and the Sea (1982)and The Artist of Disappearance (2011) became popular among Indian children. **A Devoted Son is extracted from her collection of stories, The Complete Short Stories.**

A Devoted Son - By Anita

This story shows how parents cherish their ambition towards their children and how a son should fulfill his duty towards the parents.



Character: A Devoted Son

Characters	Roles
Rakesh	The main character of the story/Son of Varma
Veena	Wife of Rakesh
Varma	Father of Rakesh
Varma's Wife	Mother of Rakesh

Characters	Roles
Rakesh's Children	They are unnamed children who play with their grandfather. Varma convinced them to bring sweets for him.
Bhatai	He is an old man who is living in front of Varma's door.

Short Summary

The story 'A Devoted Son' was written by Anita Desai whose original name is **Anita Mazumdar**. She is an Indian novelist, short story writer, and writer of children's books who also received "**The** Shahitya Academy Award" for her novel. 'A Devoted Son' is extracted from her collection of stories, The Complete Short Stories. 'A Devoted Son' is a realistic story set in a middle-class Indian family in an Indian village. The story shows how parents cherish their ambition toward their children and how a son should fulfill his duty towards the parents. This story also shows that the old man and children have similar personalities. Both cry or became sad when they don't get the things they actually want.

Rakesh who was from poor background holds a good rank in the medical field. His parents were very happy because the fruits of their sacrifice had arrived, golden and glorious. Rakesh went to the USA for higher study i.e. MD. He got a career opportunity in the most prestigious of all hospitals and won many prizes from his American colleagues. He sent these prizes to his family from the USA which brought glowing to his family's faces.

After some time, he went to the nation to serve his parents and the nation. He married a girl who was selected by his mother. She (a girl) is plump, uneducated, old-fashioned, even temper, charming, cooperative, and good-natured. She doesn't make Rakesh leave

home and set up independently, like any other girl. They got a baby (son).

Rakesh worked in the city hospital for many years. He was also promoted to director of the city hospital after working for a long time. After some time, he opened his own clinic. He took his parents in his luxurious car and went to where the clinic was built. His parent saw the large signboard over the door on which his name was printed in letters of red, with a row of degrees and qualifications. Now, he was not only the best doctor in town but also the richest doctor in town. His parents were happy and felt proud of their son, after seeing his success.

Now, his father has grown into an old man and retired from his job as a kerosene dealer. He takes proper care of his parents. His mother also died after some time with a sigh that sounded positively happy. It is only because he pays proper attention and takes care of her to the last illness and also sat pressing her feet even at the last moment.

After retiring from his job and having lost his wife, Varma fell ill with mysterious diseases. His son also wasn't able to cure that disease. All day, Varma sat on the bed. Rakesh takes care of his father in such a condition. He did all the things that help to get relief from disease. He provides Varma, with a proper diet. Only a frugal (simple and plain and costing little) food – dry bread, boiled lentils, boiled vegetables, and, if there were a bit of chicken or fish, that was boiled too. But, Varma didn't like these. Varma want to eat fried, oily, and sweets foods.

He was strict towards his father in the case of diet. Rakesh didn't give too much food to his father, only a miserable diet on which Varma found himself slipping, weakening, and soon becoming a genuinely sick man. A type of misunderstanding and misinterpretation grew in his mind that his son Rakesh didn't care

for him, did not pay attention to him, and also did not accept the things he was speaking. So he hated his son.

He gave him different types of pills- pills to regulate his bowel movements, pills to bring down his blood pressure, pills to deal with his arthritis, and, eventually, pills to keep his heart beating. Pills became a part of his diet. He wants to die rather than eat pills. He cries in genuine pain.

One day when Rakesh went to his father after coming from the clinic like a devoted son. He gave Varma a new tonic to make him feel better. But Varma wish to die. He didn't want to take more medicine. The bottle of tonic suddenly fell down and closed his eyes and pointed his chin at the ceiling and died.

Main Summary

This story starts with looking at the news of getting success in the medical field by himself(Rakesh). He first went to his father and bowed down to touch his feet as a devoted son and told him this good news. His father was very happy after listening to it. All their neighbors and relatives come to congratulate his parents by saying "Mubarak, Varmaji, your son has brought you glory, ". They bring different types of gifts, and flowers to congratulate him but some of the neighbors also expressed their jealous feeling toward him.

Rakesh's father is not a big tycoon, he is a kerosene dealer. Rakesh was the first son in his family to receive an education. His father sacrificed much in order to send him to school and then medical college and at last, the fruits of their sacrifice had arrived, golden and glorious.

Rakesh went to the USA for higher study (MD) on a scholarship. But his father didn't know the difference between the USA and America. Here, the author makes fun with the words 'America' and

'the USA'. He got a career opportunity in the most prestigious of all hospitals and won many prizes from his American colleagues. He sent these prizes to his family from the USA which bring a glowing to his family's face. After some time, Rakesh came to his home, in a poor village again. Rakesh's first thing when he entered the house was to slip out of the embraces of his sisters and brothers and bow down and touch his father's feet as a devoted son. He left the USA permanently and came with the aim to serve the nation and his family.

His mother was quite surprised because Rakesh did not bring a foreign wife like other many Indian boys. His mother already selects a girl for Rakesh without his argument. She(a girl) is plump, uneducated, old-fashioned, even temper, charming, cooperative, and good-natured. A girl selected by his mother doesn't make Rakesh leave home and set up independently, like any other girl. Rakesh married her and got their first baby a son.

Rakesh worked in the city hospital for many years. He was also promoted to director of the city hospital after working for a long time. After some time, he opened his own clinic. He took his parents in his luxurious car and went to where the clinic was built. His parent saw the large signboard over the door on which his name was printed in letters of red, with a row of degrees and qualifications. Now, he is not only the best doctor in town but also the richest doctor in town. So his parents were happy and felt proud of their son, after seeing his success.

Now, his father has grown into an old man and retired from his job as a kerosene dealer. He takes proper care of his parents. His mother also died after some time with a sigh that sounded positively happy. It is only because he pays proper attention and takes care of her to the last illness and also sat pressing her feet even at the last moment.

After retiring from his job and having lost his wife, Varma fell ill with mysterious diseases. His son also wasn't able to cure those diseases. All day, Verma sat on the bed. Once there was a birthday party for his younger son and the celebrations had to be suddenly hushed(stopped), after listening to his father in serious condition. Rakesh takes care of his father in such a condition.

In the morning, he brought tea for him(Varma) not in the china cup from which the rest of the family drank, but in the old man's favorite brass tumbler, and sat at the edge of his bed, comfortable and relaxed and also read out morning news to his father. His father made no response apart from spitting. In the evening after returning from the clinic, Rakesh calls his father (an old man) to come out from the room and take the evening air in the garden. He set a nice place on the open verandah for his father. On a summer night, he settles a bed on the lawn for his father under the star for a whole night.

All this was very gratifying for the old man. The only thing that did not so gratify him was that his son even undertook to supervise his father's diet. One day, an old man was really sick, and he order his daughter-in-law to make him a dish of soojiehalwa. He ate this dish with a saucerful of cream. At the same time, his son Rakesh arrived. Rakesh warns his father no more to eat such types of oily fried foods and sweets in a cracked voice. This harms your health.

The old man became weak and feeble day by day. He didn't believe that oily fried foods and sweets harm his health. The old man told his son; Rakesh that oily fried foods and sweets like sooji halwa didn't harm him. But Rakesh did not pay any attention to his father's voice and went to his clinic with a medical shelf. A type of misunderstanding and misinterpretation grew in his mind that his son Rakesh didn't care for him, did not pay attention to him, and also did not accept the things he was speaking. So he hated his son.

Varma remembers his past time when his wife gave him spicy and fried food and also sweets. But now, his son gave him only a frugal (simple and plain and costing little) food – dry bread, boiled lentils, boiled vegetables, and, if there were a bit of chicken or fish, that was boiled too.

Once, Varma called his grandchildren and gave them fifty Paisa for buying sweets for him. Varma said to his grandson you go down to the shop and buy thirty Paisa for jalebis (Sweets) and rest spend on yourself. When Rakesh knows all these things. He shouted at his father and said, “Now papa, are you trying to turn my little son into a liar?”. He also said to Varma, “ the sweets of the bazaar were unhygienic. It causes cholera, typhoid, gastroenteritis. I daily see these types of cases in my clinic. I don’t want to see my family at such risks?”

Varma saw old Bhatai who was living next to his door. He saw that old Bhatai bathe in the tiled bathroom indoors and insist on carrying out his brass mug and towel in all seasons. Bhatai got all those things that Varma expects, but he didn’t get them from his son.

One day, Varma and Bhatai talked about their ills with each other. On the conversation, Bhatai told Varma that you have at least a doctor (child) who takes care of her. Varma cried after listening to it, he express his all pain in front of Bhatai. He said, his son not even gave him enough food to eat. My son weighs the foods, not more than two hundred grams of cereal a day. When I asked for fried, spicy, and oily food, he shouted at me with a cracked voice. I have brought him up, and given him an education which made him a great doctor but this is the way he treated me.

Rakesh didn’t give too much food to his father, only a miserable diet on which Varma found himself slipping, weakening, and soon becoming a genuinely sick man. Only provide him different types of pills- pills to regulate his bowel movements, pills to bring down

his blood pressure, pills to deal with his arthritis, and, eventually, pills to keep his heart beating. Pills became a part of his diet. From time to time, Rakesh brought his father for a stomach pump and enema, which left him frightened and helpless. Varma hated all these things but when Varma complained about it, Rakesh would simply open another bottle of pills and force him to take one.

Varma did not like to eat only medicines. He wants to die. He cries in genuine pain. The quantities of vitamins and tonics gave him a kind of strength to live like a dead man only. It was as though he were straining at a rope, trying to break it, and it would not break, it was still strong.

One day when Rakesh went to his father after coming from the clinic. He gave Varma a new tonic to make him feel better. But Varma wish to die. He didn't want to take more medicine. The bottle of tonic was suddenly fallen down and closed his eyes and pointed his chin at the ceiling and died.

Moral of the Story

'A Devoted Son' is a realistic story set in a middle-class Indian family in an Indian village. The story shows how parents cherish their ambition toward their children and how a son should fulfill his duty towards the parents. This story also shows that children and old are similar in personality. Both cry for something they want if they don't find it. The story '**A Devoted Son**' also tells us that children must fulfill the dreams of parents as they sacrifice their life for their children. Parents work hard to fulfill their children's needs. Last and not least this story shows the relationship between children and parents (Love, affection, respect, caring, etc.).