
Chapter – 3

Ranga's Marriage

Ranga's Marriage, by Masti Venkatesh Iyengar, is a story about a boy who returns to his village after receiving education in English medium from Bangalore. The boy is the son of the accountant of the village. They live in the village Hoshali in Mysore. The boy when returns, the whole village floods over him to see if there is any change in his personality. However, to their dismay, he still has the same eyes and mouth and everything else. He did the traditional namaskar and all dispersed.

The story is a first person narrative and a major portion of the story is in flash back. The speaker directly addresses the reader. The narrator is a neighbour of the protagonist. He introduces the story with a difference by first giving a detailed description of their village Hoshali. He praises the mangoes from his village. He asks the reader if he/she has ever heard of the village. He replies to the question himself, for the village was not located in any of the maps for the English babus and the ones in our country forgot to put it there. Then he introduces Ranga, the protagonist, in a time ten years ago. Ranga had gone to Bangalore for studies and returned home after six months. It was the time when English was a language not popular and a few people used it. All used to converse in Kannada.

All the villagers arrived at Ranga's place and began scrutinising him. To their dismay, he was still the same old Ranga and they left disappointed. However, the narrator stayed back and shared a few jokes with the boy and then left. Later in the afternoon, Ranga arrived at the narrator's home with a few oranges. The narrator judged the boy and felt it appropriate to marry such a well educated and humble boy. However, Ranga had no plans to settle as a married man. He put his views on marriage in front of the narrator that he wanted to get married to a girl who is mature and someone Rangappa could admire.

Ranga left after the discussion and the narrator decided then that he would get the boy married. Determined, he began considering Rama Rao's niece Ratna as a suitable bride for Ranga. She was from a big town and knew how to play veena and harmonium. He came up with a plan. He asked Rama Rao's wife to send Ratna to his place to fetch some buttermilk. So she came on Friday wearing a grand saree. He requested Ratna to sing and sent for Ranga. Ranga reached the narrator's place and stopped outside the room as he did not want to disrupt the singing but was curious to see her face so peeped in. Ratna noticed the stranger and stopped abruptly. Ranga came in and the girl left.

Curiously he inquired about the girl and narrator cleverly played at his words. He told Ranga that the girl was married off a year ago and noticed the disappointment flaring Ranga's face. He was infatuated to the girl. The narrator was happy as his plan was working. As his next step, the next day the narrator took Ranga to an astrologer who he had already tutored what to say. It was the meeting with the astrologer when the narrator's name is disclosed. Shyama, he was. The astrologer pretended to read the natal chart of Rangappa and declared that the boy was in love with a girl who had a name of something found in the ocean. Shyama said it could be Ratna, Rama Rao's niece. Ranga's smile was not hidden from Shyama. But the girl was married!

The narrator took the boy to Rama Rao's home and asked him to wait outside. When he came outside he confirmed that the girl was not married, that there had been some confusion. After all, the narrator had to come up with something. Even Ranga then admitted that he had been attracted to the girl. Later a conversation between the astrologer and the narrator is described how the astrologer says that though the narrator had given him clues, he could have found it all out by himself through astrology.

The story moves forward ten years, or to say, returns to the present. Rangappa came one day to the narrator, inviting him at his son Shyama's third birthday. Obviously, Ratna and Ranga had been married. And now they have a three years old son whom Ranga named after the narrator.