

Chapter-IV
OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

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Other Relationships

This chapter explores other family relationships. The husband-wife relations, and parent-children relations have been discussed in the earlier chapters but a family is made up of so many other relations, and these other family relations consist of grandparent-grandchildren relations, sibling relations, in-laws relations, etc.

Grandparents play dominant part in child development. They love grandchildren as parents love their children. They support them and stay always around to help them. They teach various things to their grandchildren such as family values, culture, history, rules and try to inculcate in these as well as stick to them. They try to keep them out of trouble. As they are aged, they spend their most of the time with grandchildren. They play important role in developing them.

In the story 'Knock Knock', Harry's relation with Rosemary and Bill are explored. Harry's father betrays his mother so his mother and he stay with his grandparents who love them. Harry is 'a quiet, usually self-effacing child; blond, bronzed and handsome' so his grandparents love him a lot. He is eight years old and suffers a lot from his parental problems. They care for Harry a lot and concern about his future. Weldon states,

Bill remarked that he was an unusually good child. Jessica said yes, but she'd had him checked out with a therapist, who'd said no problem, except he might be overly mature for his age. Rosemary observed that Hollywood must be a dreadful place to rear a child: either vulgar wealth in Bel Air

or shoot-outs in McDonald's and therapists everywhere. Bill said any child was best reared in green fields in a gentle climate; Jessica should get a cottage in the village near them. (252-53)

Jessica, Harry's mother, does not forget Harry. At last when Harry talks harshly, it touches all but Rosemary and Bill are afraid because they have 'undying and unflinching love' for him. It is clear that Harry loves his 'doting grandparents' as well as grandparents also care Harry so much that they accept Jessica's decision to return home for Harry's sake. This shows that they have healthy relations between them.

In the story, 'A Good Sound Marriage', Carrie has a great attachment for her grandmother, Christabel. When Carrie is eleven years old, Christabel dies. Carrie loves her grandmother so much that she wants to attend her funeral but Kate, Carrie's mother, does not allow her. Now Carrie, at twenty-six, is five months pregnant. It is her first child and nobody is there to talk about pregnancy so she weeps a lot. Christabel is so affectionate with Carrie that she comes in her dream and says,

But you—you cried so long and hard, you forced me out of my grave to rise and speak to you myself. Dead as I am, I reckon I'm still kinder and more responsible than your mother ever is alive. (190)

She tries to stop Carrie crying because it is bad for the baby and her too. She is Carrie's well-wisher and wants that Carrie should lead a happy married life. She says,

"I predict for you a good strong marriage in which there will never be peace—for who wants peace?—but much gratification: this is only the first of your children. It will be the

kind of marriage that attracts both saboteurs and hangers-on.
See that as the sign of its strength. (193)

Christabel thinks Carrie must not cry because of pregnancy as well as having upsetting relations with Clive, her husband. She consoles Carrie saying that be 'always careful not to let husband know about our crying because in good sound marriage it is better to keep things private'. She tells Carrie that she will adjust with her life and for this she gives her own example, how she adjusts with David, Carrie's grandfather. But Carrie does not get it but decides to take divorce from Clive so Christabel replies,

"You're not listening to what I'm saying," . . . "I suppose you will have to start from the beginning and work it all out for yourself, like everyone else. I'm wasting my time. I am your future as well as your past, and available for inspection, but try telling any young woman that. They would far rather weep, and shriek, and squirm in the present." (196)

This shows that she cares for Carrie a lot and their affection brings her to Carrie for consoling.

Similarly, the protagonist of the story 'Valediction' loves her grandson, Ira. The protagonist and her husband, Edward, have a good relationship with Ira as they admire Ira. When Hetty, Edward's youngest daughter, quarrels with her husband, Rory and comes at her parent's home at Graze-cot, the protagonist inculcates some good habits into her grandson, Ira, who is ten years old. Edward does not like Ira's name which means 'rage' in Latin because Ira is 'precocious lad as well as 'a natural collector'. He collects CD's which are very expensive. So, Edward does not like to call him Ira. They love him as he is very

intelligent. As Ira's grandparents have desire to buy a cottage on the seafront at Hastings on the South-East coast, he advises that the south-east is tilting into the sea and North-West is rising so it is madness to go to south-east because the tide will be rising inside their house. In this way, he is a mature boy and has healthy relations with his grandparents.

In the story 'Wasted Lives' Milo lives with his grandmother. Milo's mother, Milena, wants Milo to get a religious education so Milo lives with his grandmother who is 'a good Catholic, in the Southern province'. Milo is now ten years old and has been living there since his childhood. Maria's mother in 'Red on Black' looks after her grandson, Maurice. As Bernard is doing a Ph. D., Maria's mother earns for everyone including Maurice. Thus, she loves her grandson a lot. The story 'Santa Clauses New Clothes' portrays love of granddaughters towards their grandmother but their hate for the step grandmother. Philip remarries Dr. Hetty so Audrey, Philip's former wife leaves her house and stays at her parental place. Sue and Sal, daughters of Henry and Angie, love their grandmother Audrey but they cannot accept Dr. Hetty, their step grandmother. They hate Dr. Hetty as she is occupying their grandmother's place. Sal expresses her anger in a conversation during Christmas celebration:

"Where is Granny?" asked Sal, who was four. "Why is that lady in Granny's chair?"

"Granny chose not to be here," said Philip, "and I'm sorry about that too. She was invited, of course."

"But she chose not to be civilized," said Hetty.

"Shall we pull a cracker, Sal?" asked Philip, quickly.

“No,” said Sal, pushing away her plate. “Crackers come between turkey and pudding, not now, stupid.” And neither Sal nor Sue, who was three and took her lead from Sal, ate a thing thereafter. (270)

The granddaughters are so angry that they abuse their grandfather as they miss their grandmother on Christmas. They are so excited for Christmas that they wish that ‘Grandpa and Granny come with Santa Claus for Christmas dinner’. Sal also wonders why Grandpa does not stop her. They want their Granny to come so they take Martin’s side. It is clear that grandchildren long for the grandmother too much so they try to throw off their step-grandmother from the family.

The relationship between siblings also plays important role in their development. They are brothers or sisters, and they can also act as friends. In healthy relationship they are closely connected with each other. They play various roles such as a friend, confidante, competitors and comrades-in-arms, etc. Unhealthy relations between siblings lead to problems while healthy relations help each other to grow fast and successfully. These relations are competitive in nature at childhood but once they are grown up it becomes the strongest relationship. Sibling relationships include brother-sister, brother-brother, and sister-sister relationships.

Peter and Daphne from the story ‘End of the Line’ look very similar. When they are young, one is often mistaken for the other. They enjoy it most. There is ten months gap between them as Daphne is younger than Peter. When their parents decide to sell their house, Daphne calls her brother, Peter. They feel that their parents are selfish. Though they are wicked children, they have similar feelings towards their parents

which show that they have the similar nature. They also talk about each other's family life—

“I called the office,” said Daphne accusingly, “and they said you were ill. Are you shirking again?”

“I've made enough money for them lately,” said Peter. “I'm taking a day off.”

“Was that your new young man?” asked Daphne. “If so, it sounded suspiciously like a girl. Can I meet him/her soon?”

It's a him,” said peter, “and I'd rather leave it for a while. I am not sufficiently convinced of your gender orientation to risk losing him to you.”

“Honestly,” said Daphne, “these days I am only interested in hers.” (28)

From above conversation it is clear that they talk openly about their personal lives which show that they have healthy relations with each other.

In 'Love Amongst the Artist', Joseph, Lucy's brother comes at Lucy's house on every Christmas Eve with gifts. This shows that he maintains healthy relations with them but Lucy makes fun of his gifts as she thinks the gifts are not proper— 'such as an impossible doll, an unworkable cannon, a scarf which she hates, and a pen which Edwin never uses'. This shows that though she makes fun of Joseph's gifts, he follows the custom and maintains relations. On that Christmas she elopes with Pierre, but misses Joseph. In this way they do not have good relations with each other.

Leda, from 'Leda and the Swan', is a devoted swimmer. When she practices for European Championships, her mother calls her and tells her that her brother is on death bed as her brother is suffering from epileptic fits which she is afraid of from her childhood. She completes her practice and goes to Bermuda to see him but unfortunately he dies. It hurts her because 'Leda had loved her brother, all the same, as she loved Gosling. Part of her, part of life'(121).

Gosling has also upsetting relations with Duckling, his younger brother. They are competitors. Once Gosling pushes Duckling under the bath water, but he gets help and is saved. Gosling hates him and calls him 'ugly Duckling'. It is because their mother loves Duckling more and has hopes from Duckling. So Gosling gets jealous of him and behaves rudely with him.

The story 'Not Even a Blood Relation' is about Hughie, Duke of Cowarth. His elder brother has died during hunting and the younger brother claims the title. Cowarth has a huge property, so both of them want it so they are competitors rather than brothers. After Hughie's death he wants the property from Hughie's wife Beverley. They have upsetting relationship because of their estate.

Healthy relations between three sisters are seen in the story 'Not Even a Blood Relation'. Here three sisters, Edwina, Thomasina, Davida, are wicked, unkind as well as greedy. All of them want their mother to sell the house and divide the money amongst them. From their overall behaviour, they appear having healthy relations amongst them.

Wicked Women portrays in-laws relationship also. The relation between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is portrayed in the story 'Leda and the Swan'. Leda has upsetting relations with Gosling's mother.

Gosling's mother wants that he should be a water baby, but now he could hardly swim. Leda becomes a popular swimmer and swims for National teams. Gosling is also a swimmer but has no future in swimming. It is as if Leda has stolen his birthright and for this Leda becomes an enemy of Gosling's mother. In this way Leda's career as a swimmer makes Gosling and his mother jealous so Leda has upsetting relations with her mother-in-law.

In the story 'Red on Black', Maria has healthy relations with her father-in-law. He has lived with them for four whole years. According to Maria he is gentle and nice. They have had 'really good times, some of the time when she is married to Bernard'. Bernard's father dies, as well as Maria and Bernard are divorced. She wants to pay her last respect to Bernard's father as she feels that she has made her father-in-law unhappy because of her spoiled marital relations. Weldon narrates,

What sort of "respect" was it that she thought she could pay? She had failed Bernard's father in this life, she had failed to keep him alive, let alone healthy; she couldn't even stay married to his son, a failure which had distressed the old man. (242)

Maria wants to attend his funeral which is at the Golden Green Crematorium. Now she is in a state of distress. She is not entitled to official mourning as she has been disinherited from grief by the divorce. She hates funeral but she wants to go there to pay her last respect. She wants that her mother should come along with her but she is not ready so she thinks to go with Bernard but he also refuses so she takes her car and goes alone to the funeral. When Bernard's father is alive, he has healthy

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relations with Maria so, for that affection, she wants to pay her last respect and she does so on her own.

In the story 'Santa Clause's New Clothes', when all family member gather for Christmas at their festive board, Sal and Sue behave rudely with their new grandmother, Dr. Hetty. Sal and Sue love their grandmother, Audrey so much that they do not accept their step-grandmother. When Sal calls stupid to her grandfather, Philip, for living with Dr. Hetty and abandoning Audrey, Angie, a mother of Sal and Sue, apologizes to them on behalf of her children. She tells that her children are very emotional about their grandparents and while saying so her voice falters. From her expression it is clear that she also does not like Dr. Hetty who takes the place of Audrey. It shows that Angie has healthy relationship with Audrey, her mother-in-law as well as she is very affectionate towards her mother-in-law.

In the story 'Knock Knock', Jessica is betrayed by Aaron and so lives with her parents. Now they think whether Jessica should go home to her faithless husband in Hollywood, or stay with her loving parents in the Cotswolds. In the discussion, Rosemary, Jessica's mother, clears that they both like Aaron, and adds that no one denies that he is ambitious. They like Aaron but as he has betrayed Jessica, they are angry upon him.

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