

Character of Serang

Hasan is the serang of the ship Ranaganji. He looks like a squat, ugly, native seaman with short legs and disproportionate head. He is from the Punjab. He has been working in the ship for forty years and he has been in Ranaganji for fifteen years. He has no place of his own on the shore. He has no family, friends or relatives. He has never married. He is a Muslim. He has no money or property. He is not at all interested in such things and so he never cares to accumulate such savings. He is very sincere in his duty. He never expects any reward for his work. Courage, self control and faith are his assets. He helps the doctor by assisting him in watching the patients and caring them. He is ready to serve them even though it is a contagious disease. He prays for the patients. His heart feels deeply for them. He cries for them also. He is very truthful and dutiful. When the patients die, their bodies are thrown into the sea only after his prayer. He has no frenzy like feeling for his own religion but he advocates communal harmony through his character. The incidents in the story reveals the sympathetic as well as empathetic feelings of Hasan. The ending of the story – ‘the animals were all outside’ hints at the character of serang who is presented here as an illustration for a man with a good heart, thought and deed.