



Exploring Grandparent-Granddaughter Bonds as the living link of historical consciousness in Sudha Murty's *The Magic of the Lost Earrings*.

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Sudha Murty is widely known for her contribution to literature and society. Her literary works have been adapted into digital formats including a Netflix series. Her philanthropic work includes building many libraries and donating 1.5 crore books. Her *The Magic of the Lost Earrings* blends a simple mystery with rich cultural history and glorifies family bonds and heritage. She plays a crucial role in instilling reading habits among children. Through Infosys Foundation, she created digital libraries for children to help bridge the knowledge gap between remote and rural areas. She always has an immense hope in the youth who has the power and potential to bring about the positive changes in the society. Even though there has been a decline in the reading habits, there is still hope for the young generation as the habit of gathering knowledge is continuing. (The Economic Times)

In *The Magic of the Lost Earrings*, Noonie, the young protagonist, is determined to find the rightful owner of the lost earrings, leading the quest from Ujjain to London. The search brings forth the sensitive issues of India's partition, immigration, and above all the need for integrity in the modern era. Throughout the journey, Noonie and her grandparents are helped by various people they meet as they track the origin of the lost earrings which are linked to the partition of India. Their pursuit highlights the relationship between the grandparents and the granddaughter along with the historical implications, repercussions, and adverse impact of Partition.

Sudha Murty gives a strong message to the young readers to make use of modern technology in the right way. In *The Magic of the Lost Earrings*, she depicted Noonie, a fifteen-year-old girl, planning the trip together with her grandparents, making use of the latest apps for online bookings, payments, and maps. She was nowhere seen misusing the technology and wasting her time. Her grandparents felt proud that their granddaughter was growing up quickly – confident, independent and tech-savvy. "Encouragement of special ability, creativity, and achievement in children, and avoiding ridicule or unnecessary criticism will help young children's enthusiasm to be creative and to be achievers and builders of home and society" (Vishala, 66)

There is mutual learning between the grandparents and the granddaughter. Just as society needs both tradition and new technological advances, their relationship flourishes through mutual exchange. Just like parents, the love of the grandparents is also unconditional. The grandparents help Noonie stay close to their roots by inculcating the values and traditions of the family and the country. As a history teacher, the grandmother provides her excellent chances to learn about the history and cultural heritage of many places

in India. She teaches Nooni to be thankful for the blessings and encourages her to develop a gratitude mindset which in turn promotes a positive outlook on life. She learns to cherish and value the little things in life from her grandparents. They act as conduits for historical knowledge and cultural wisdom. Aijji, the grandmother, teaches Nooni traditional roots and values, and she helps her grandma to be conversant with modern tools and skills. The grandmother is willing to use new technology and various forms of social media to connect with her granddaughter and other people demonstrating that love and mutual understanding can bridge any generational divide.

Ajja said, “Nooni, you ‘ve helped us discover a lost temple, a lost family story and now lost earrings!”. ‘Ajja” said Nooni with a smile, “It’s all because of Ajji. She encouraged me to care about history and keep asking questions until I find answers. (Murty, *The Magic of the Lost Earrings*, 158)

The similar situation is found in “How I Taught My Grandmother to Read”, in which Sudha, a twelve-year-old, taught her illiterate grandmother to read and write. The grandmother asked Sudha to come to the puja room and bent down and touched her feet. Sudha was surprised and taken aback.

I am touching the feet of a teacher, not my granddaughter, a teacher who taught me so well, with so much affection that I can read any novel confidently in such a short period. Now I am independent. It is my duty to respect a teacher. Is it not written in our scriptures that a teacher should be respected, irrespective of gender and age? (Murty, *How I Taught My Grandmother*, 10)

The relationship between grandmother and granddaughter represents a perfect blend of continuity and change, proving that new technology may evolve, but the core values remain vital. Children and adults who report a close relationship with their grandparents are less likely to exhibit symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other emotional and behavioural problems. The relationship provides granddaughters with a vital link to their family history, heritage, and values. Granddaughters maintain particularly close relationships with their maternal grandmothers, who are often perceived as emotionally closer and active in their lives compared to paternal grandparents.

India's diverse landscape and food offered them a unique and soul satisfying experience. Wherever they went, they enjoyed the traditional recipes and authentic local food. Ajja shared about the rich culinary tradition of Sindhis in Indore. In Ujjain, they visited the Shipra River, where the Kumbh Mela is held once every twelve years. They went to Harmandir Sahib, the golden temple. In Wagah, a village on the India-Pakistan border, they watched the parade conducted by Border Security Force on the Indian side, the Pakistan Rangers on the Pakistan side. In Amritsar, they visited the Partition Museum, the first of its kind in the world.

It was perhaps the largest migration in human history, with nearly twenty million affected. The museum captured the trauma, grief, and resilience of millions affected by the Partition of 1947. Photographs, letters, recordings, and artefacts brought the experience of Sindhi and Punjabi families to life. It reminded visitors that behind every political decision were countless personal tragedies. (Murty, *The Magic of the Lost Earrings*, 34)

Nooni’s efforts to find out the real owner of the earrings are great, amazing and praiseworthy. Nooni found a small red velvet purse inside the outer pocket of her bag. There was a pair of shiny gold earrings inside the pouch. “The design was intricate- each shaped like a peacock with green emeralds studded across its feathers and a tiny ruby for the year”. (Murty, *The Magic of the Lost Earrings*, 17). In the pouch there was a piece of pink paper, and something was written on that paper. Nooni and her grandmother understood that it was a gift of a grandmother to her granddaughter. They felt sorry for the lady who lost her earrings. The pouch had the address of a jewellery shop in Amritsar. During the vacation, they visited the shop, and the jeweller directed them to a lady, Daman Kaur who sold a similar pair many decades ago. On meeting

Daman in Amritsar, they learnt that the owner of the earrings was Simran who might be living with her sister Bharathi in London.

Nooni and her cultural troupe performed a Kuchipudi dance programme in Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in London, as part of Vasanth Utsava: A Celebration of Spring. They showcased India's rich heritage. With the help of Dr. Nandhakumar, the director of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, they met Bharathi and Simran. Simran narrated the story of partition. Her family resided in Sultanpur village. She belonged to the Singh family, and her friend Zainab was from the Being family. Their families lived like friends. There was a talk among the elders about the partition. "India will be divided, they 'd say, Muslims on one side, Hindus on the other". (Murty, *The Magic of the Lost Earrings*, 127). One day her family was forced to leave the village. They became refugees in their own land overnight. Her mother was pregnant at that time. Her sister was born in India, and her mother named her Bharathi. Their family was scattered across different places. They took new jobs for survival.

Simran explained how she missed her earrings. Simran with her caretaker Sheela came to India to meet her childhood friends and relatives in Delhi, Amritsar and Bangalore. While they were returning to London, she opened her purse to tip the porter at the Bangalore airport. At that time, the pouch with the earrings fell and she handed it to Sheela to keep safely in her backpack. Sheela wrongly put it in Nooni's bag. (Murty, *The Magic of the Lost Earrings*, 115). On receiving the lost earrings from Nooni, Simran thanked her immensely and gifted her another pair of gold rings. Ajji proudly said, "Our ancestors taught us, "Small minds create division, but those with large hearts see the whole world as one family - Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam". And through this journey, you've truly lived that belief ". (Murty, *The Magic of the Lost Earrings*, 160)

The protagonist, Nooni, is inspired by Sudha Murty's granddaughter Anoushka Sunak. In an exclusive conversation with *Times Now Digital*, she revealed how the idea of the book directly came from her granddaughter. She requested her grandmother, who always writes about India, to write about London. Nooni with her grandparents visited The Victoria and Albert Museum, The Tower of London, Hyde Park, Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament, and The Madame Tussauds Wax Museum. The museum features life-sized statues of famous people from around the world. Wax sculptures of Indian celebrities found a place there. They admired the replicas of Narendra Modi, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Shah Rukh Khan, Madhuri Dixit, Amitabh Bacchan, Lata Mangeshkar, Sachin Tendulkar and M.S. Dhoni. (Murty, *The Magic of the Lost Earrings*, 153)

Sudha Murty's impulse to explore the painful chapter of history was rooted in a desire to explain it to her granddaughter. She consciously addresses the sensitive topic to help the young readers realise that it was a mistake that must never be repeated. Speaking at the 19th edition of the Jaipur Literature Festival, Sudha Murty referred to the family history of her son in law, former British Prime Minister, whose family was uprooted twice first during Partition later in Africa. Sunak's grandparents were from the regions that are now in Pakistan and were forced to leave everything behind during Partition. After rebuilding their lives in Nairobi, they were uprooted again and eventually migrated to London. (Deccan Herald) She wanted the youngsters to understand the effort and sacrifice of the ancestors which lies behind the stability people enjoy today.

Sudha Murty's simple and interesting narrative techniques make her stories accessible to a wider range of people. In *The Magic of the Lost Earrings*, the complex historical events like Partition are explained in a way that the young readers can understand and connect with the story immediately. Her simple style helps the readers grasp the intensive core ideas better, making the experience more memorable. She uses a 'gentle, travel-infused narrative' to teach history and values like empathy, honesty, and responsibility without being overtly instructional.

The Magic of the Lost Earrings is Sudha Murty's fiftieth book. Her main motive of writing this book is to make the young people understand the significance of history, especially the partition of India. She wants children to be inspired by Nooni's compassion, dedication and courage to help others. The author strongly believes that the young minds must be instilled with courage, resilience, and love for the country and fellow citizens. These qualities should be considered higher than medals and accolades as they are the enduring strengths that hold our shared humanity together.

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