



Veda As A Helix In Preeti Shenoy's "*The Rule Breakers*"

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ABSTRACT

Society is such a strong word which could make and break a life and the norms that they laid upon on the people to follow is incredible, not everyone obeys these norms but not everyone denies it too, still there are some people living for the sake of this society and not for them. That is what literally brought here by Shenoy, she brings out Veda, a 20-yr old girl who was forced to be in an uninterested marriage life to get a good name among the society and she does it without any word against though she had a dream career to be achieved. And in that unhappy marriage she had realized how hard it is for her to cope up in an alien environment, and later when she got an opportunity to find her true identity, she just went through it and found her ways. She became more independent and stronger than ever.

KEYWORDS: resilience, turmoil, introspection, self-discovery, emotional journey.

Preeti Shenoy is an acknowledged writer who has contributed much to the literature as her works deal with the characters in such a way that it immensely reflects life and its reality, characters involved here could experience a massive hit in life but they manage to raise again stronger in her novels. The best that could be taken is her approach on dealing these things in a psychoanalytic way, that is immersing deep into how the mindset of the women or other characters fluctuates and changes when they face each and every hardship. Shenoy emphasises on women especially; she reads out the minds of the people who were suppressed and subjugated. Preeti has written several best-selling novels that have garnered critical acclaim and a dedicated readership.

Preethi Shenoy is indeed an acknowledged writer known for her insightful approach to storytelling and her ability to capture the essence of life and its challenges in her novels. She skilfully portrays characters that face significant setbacks but manage to emerge stronger and resilient through their experiences.

One of the notable aspects of Preeti Shenoy's writing is her psychoanalytic approach. She delves deep into the mindset of her characters, particularly women, and explores how they navigate the fluctuating emotions and thought processes when confronted with hardships. By examining the inner workings of her characters' minds, she sheds light on the complexity of human emotions and the psychological impact of various life situations.

Moreover, Shenoy's works often shed light on the experiences of individuals who have been suppressed or subjugated in society. As Partha Sarathy Mandal rightly said, "A society is a group of people related to each other through continuous and uninterrupted relations. It is also a group of like-minded people largely governed." Through her writing, she gives voice to these individuals, providing a platform to express their thoughts, desires, and struggles. This emphasis on marginalized voices contributes to the diversity and inclusivity of her storytelling.

Preeti Shenoy's novels have resonated with readers, and her books have achieved significant commercial success, becoming best-sellers. Her ability to create relatable characters, explore deep emotional journeys, and tackle societal issues has garnered critical acclaim and garnered her a dedicated readership.

Overall, Preeti Shenoy's writing style and thematic focus make her novels compelling and thought-provoking, as she presents stories that reflect life's realities and the resilience of the human spirit.

The story *The Rule Breakers*, set in the 90s, revolves around a middle-class Indian woman named Veda who had dreams, aspirations, and a determination to fight for that. Veda, being the eldest of her four siblings, hails from a small hilly town in India. She is known for her soft-spoken nature and her inclination to follow rules. Despite the limitations imposed on her by societal expectations, Veda nurtures a strong ambition to complete her college studies, leave her hometown, and become a professor in Delhi. She yearns for independence and strives to excel academically, consistently aiming to be the top student in her class.

However, her aspirations are abruptly disrupted when her father, driven by the desire to find her a good family, compels her to uproot her life and move from Joshimath to Pune, a city in India. At the age of 20, Veda finds herself in an arranged marriage to a man named Bhuwan with whom she has had minimal communication. This significant life event triggers a series of internal questioning within her, prompting her to re-evaluate her decisions, society's expectations, and her place in the modern world.

Veda's innocence and sense of familial duty prevents her from openly defying her father's wishes, leading her to reluctantly agree to the arranged marriage. However, as she navigates this new phase of her life, she begins to question the circumstances surrounding her and the limitations placed upon her. This introspection sets the stage for her journey of self-discovery, as she grapples with her own desires and the expectations society imposes upon her. The story thus presents a compelling exploration of Veda's inner turmoil, as she starts to challenge the norms and expectations that confine her, paving the way for personal growth, empowerment, and the pursuit of her own dreams.

In this second part of the story, the focus shifts to Veda's life after her marriage and her struggles in fitting into her new environment. She joins a college in Pune, but despite her efforts, she finds it difficult to integrate with her peers. The situation worsens when her mother-in-law begins exerting control over her actions, denying her the respect she believes she deserves.

Veda's heart is repeatedly broken as she allows herself to be subjected to the expectations and demands of her mother-in-law. She longs for acceptance and support from her husband but finds herself lacking in both. The pressure and responsibilities of marriage take a toll on her, leading to her failure in the final year exams.

Through Veda's experiences, the author portrays the intense internal struggle faced by a woman who is naturally inclined to follow societal rules but also harbours dreams and aspirations. Prachi Joshi says "I had dreams, ambitions and passions, But I Forgot, I am just a woman, meant to live for others, But for once treat me like a human", this is mostly the voice of every women.

Veda desires to escape her situation, but her passive nature holds her back, preventing her from taking decisive action. This highlights the reality of Indian society, where women often bear the burden of upholding family honour and reputation, even at the cost of their own happiness and fulfilment in life.

Veda's decision to join a non-profit organization called Sankalp, which provides free education to underprivileged students, showcases her newfound sense of self-worth and the development of her self-confidence. Through this organization, she becomes exposed to the harsh realities of poverty in India and the stark socioeconomic disparities that exist within the country. The author, Shenoy, skilfully portrays the lives of the impoverished population, shedding light on the stark divide that exists and highlighting the importance of such initiatives.

As Veda becomes more involved in helping and teaching these underprivileged children, she discovers her true passion and purpose. Her experiences with the children, many of whom have endured domestic abuse from a young age, deepen her understanding of the role of women in society and inspire her to make a difference.

The story takes an unexpected turn when Veda's feelings towards her college friend intensify, leading to an emotional turmoil within her. This development adds complexity to her journey and further contributes to her growth and self-discovery.

In parallel, Veda finds motivation and inspiration from her sister Vidhya, who stands up for herself against the societal pressure of early marriage at the age of 18. Vidhya's act of defiance and the impactful letters she sends to Veda leave a lasting impression, emphasizing the strength and resilience of women in challenging societal norms. The combination of Veda's experiences with Sankalp, her emotional journey, and the influence of her sister's actions sets the stage for an awe-inspiring and transformative journey that lies ahead in the story.

The comparison of Veda's transformation to that of a phoenix is a powerful metaphor to describe her journey in this section of the story. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, Veda sheds her old timid self and emerges as a strong, independent woman who is determined to chase her dreams and create her own destiny.

The new Veda refuses to be defined by societal norms or controlled by men. She breaks free from the constraints placed upon her and no longer relies on anyone for her happiness or fulfilment. She challenges her father's patriarchal beliefs by being honest with him and pushes her husband to develop strength and assertiveness. Veda says, "Clutter is negative energy. We hold on to it, and it is bad because

it does not allow new things to come into our lives. Only if we let go of the old, can we make place for the new.”

However, this path of self-discovery and empowerment is not without its challenges. Veda experiences intense emotional turmoil as she undergoes a complete transformation, questioning and changing her fundamental beliefs. She realizes the importance of respecting elders and society, but she also understands that protecting her own identity and that of those around her is of utmost significance. As Veda become the woman who would speak for her as Preethi Shenoy rightly quoted, “speak your mind. Have the courage to go for what you want and stand up for it.”

In this last section of the story, Veda becomes an inspiring role model, not only for the characters within the book but also for readers like yourself. Her journey of choosing her own identity serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of self-discovery, self-empowerment, and staying true to oneself. Veda's story encourages and inspires others to embrace their own identities and pursue their dreams, just as she did.

It's wonderful to hear that the book addresses multiple aspects and problems of Indian society, providing a comprehensive exploration of its culture, customs, and traditions. The author's ability to weave these aspects into a compelling story is commendable, allowing readers to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and challenges faced by individuals within Indian society. “You are remembered for the rules you break.” for that Veda will be remembered forever.

By depicting the association of a woman's worth with the family's respect, shedding light on the lack of understanding regarding homosexuality, and addressing the mental health struggles of children growing up in poverty and domestic abuse, the author tackles important and relevant issues. This multi-dimensional approach allows readers to engage with a range of societal concerns, fostering empathy and understanding.

CONCLUSION:

We appreciate the depth and intricacy of the characters, showcasing the author's skill in creating relatable and compelling individuals. While you mention that the editing could have been improved, the book's ability to deal into various aspects of Indian society and the authenticity of the characters still resonated with you.

Overall, it seems that the book provides a thought-provoking and immersive experience for readers, shedding light on important social issues while maintaining an engaging narrative. It offers a valuable exploration of India's culture and customs, making it relevant for both those familiar with the country and those seeking to gain a deeper understanding of its intricacies.

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