**My big brother**

**Munshi Premchand**



**Introduction**

In Big Brother by Premchand we have the theme of innocence, pride, experience, education, sacrifice and connection. The story itself is narrated in the first person by an unnamed man who is recalling an incident when he was a young boy. It also becomes clear to the reader after reading the story that Premchand may be exploring the theme of innocence. The narrator is still afraid of his brother though not afraid enough to stop playing with his friends. If anything the narrator sees very little value in studying, unlike his brother who spends every waking hour either in school or studying. This may be important as the narrator is still too young to look upon his education as being significant. Rather for the narrator studying and school is a chore. Something he does but does not like doing. Another interesting thing about the story is the fact that the narrator’s brother speaks wise words to the narrator. It is as though he is speaking from experience. Which he is considering that he has failed so many times in school exams. The fact that the narrator’s brother also draws on his parents when lecturing the narrator might also be important. If anything the narrator’s brother is trying to teach the narrator a lesson about life.

You can be intelligent and still be inexperienced. You can pass exams as the narrator does but still know very little about life. Though the narrator is intelligent and doesn’t have to work very hard to pass his exams. The same is not true for his brother. The brother may have failed his exams but he still has a positive outlook on life. His priorities are in the right place. He is looking after his brother and is not or will not be embarrassed should the narrator pass him out in school. It is also ironic that when the narrator’s brother is lecturing the narrator it is as though both are in the classroom with the brother being the teacher. He has genuine concerns that the narrator will throw away the abilities he has by not studying even though the narrator is fortunate enough to be academically bright. Another incident in which irony is used is when the narrator’s brother first lectures the narrator. He goes on for a long time yet he wonders why he must write a four page essay on punctuality. When what needs to be said can be said in one line.

There is also no disputing that the narrator’s brother has a level-head and that his only concern is for the narrator. He is not jealous of the fact that that narrator is passing his exams while he himself is failing his. The narrator’s brother might be academically slower than his brother but he is much wiser than the narrator. He sees the importance of education and this may be the reason as to why he never gives up when he fails his exams. He knows the commitment and sacrifice that his parents have made while the narrator in reality is so innocent of life that he thinks only of himself. In fact that narrator has his lines rehearsed after passing his exams should his brother criticize him. If anything the narrator is full of his own self-importance or pride and does not understand that he is fortunate to be academically bright. It is as though the narrator lives his life from day to day while his brother on the other hand has a plan for the future even if it takes him time to reach his goal.

The end of the story is also interesting as there is a moment of realization for the narrator. This happens when the narrator’s brother catches his kite and flies it back to the hostel. For the first time in the story the reader senses that the narrator is making a connection not only with his brother but he is also understanding the advice he has been given. No longer does the narrator fear his brother or his lectures. He knows that his brother has his best interests at heart and does not want him to end up failing his exams like he does. Though the narrator’s brother never directly says it to the narrator there is a feeling that the narrator’s brother does not want the narrator to throw away his intelligence on games. Something which has previously proved difficult for the narrator. Though some critics might suggest that the narrator is abandoning his playing in favour of his education. This may not necessarily be the case. There is every chance that the narrator will find a balance in his life. Learning to play and study at the same time. He may have drawn up a timetable that proved worthless to him. However at the end he has his brother’s advice and experience.