

4

The Attic

Satyajit Ray

Prose

It is natural for human beings to make mistakes. When we realise our mistakes, we should try to rectify them. If you get a chance to rectify your mistake or pay back for it..... what would you do and how would you correct it?

Aditya and I were returning from the site of our new factory at Deodarganj. We were driving along National Highway 40. We had reached a point where the road **bifurcated**. If we drove ten kilometres along the road that branched off to the right, we would reach Bramhapur. I asked Aditya whether he was interested in revisiting the place of his birth, which he had left after he had passed the matriculation examination from the local school to continue his studies in Calcutta.



‘When I left our ancestral house, twenty-nine years ago, the house was almost two hundred years old,’ recollected Aditya. ‘I doubt if even the school building, which may have undergone many changes, will be recognisable any more. Trying to **revive** old childhood memories may prove disappointing!’

But he said he wished to visit the tea shop of Nagen Uncle, if it still existed, and have a cup of tea there.

So we took the turning to the right and decided to drive to Bramhapur, of which Aditya’s ancestors were once the zamindars.

- When did Aditya leave the local school?
- Why did Aditya think that the school would not be recognisable?

Aditya’s father had left the ancestral home and moved to Kolkata, where he had set up his own business. After his death, Aditya was looking after it, and I was his friend and business partner.

It was the month of Magha, that is January – February by the English calendar – the middle of winter. By my watch, it was 3:30 in the afternoon. The sun was **soothing**. On either side of the road were paddy fields, as far as the eye could see. Harvest was over and there had been a good crop that year.

After about ten minutes, we came to the local school. Beyond the iron gates were the playing field and the two-storeyed