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**Auszug aus:**


*"Fly the friendly skies" von Sunita Jain*

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<b>Titel:</b>	<b>Sunita Jain – <i>Fly the friendly skies</i></b>
<b>Bestellnummer:</b>	<b>36511</b>
<b>Kurzvorstellung:</b>	Englischsprachige Interpretation der Kurzgeschichte. Durch Eingehen auf den Werdegang der Autorin, sowie Erklärungen zu den Hintergründen des indischen Alltags wird dem Schüler/der Schülerin nicht nur ein umfassendes Verständnis der Geschichte möglich, sondern es werden zugleich interaktive Informationswege bezüglich der indischen Gesellschaft aufgezeigt.
<b>Inhaltsübersicht:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• background information on the author</li><li>• helpful facts about India</li><li>• plot</li><li>• interpretation</li><li>• narrative point of view</li><li>• information on further reading</li></ul> <p>(Ohne Primärtext!)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internet: <a href="http://www.School-Scout.de">http://www.School-Scout.de</a> E-Mail: <a href="mailto:info@School-Scout.de">info@School-Scout.de</a></li></ul>

At this point of the story he spots the shop with Indian carpets: “Mirzapurs, Kashmirs, and Agras.” (p.4, l.5). All of a sudden, he is approached by a white American woman, who is very excited about the carpets (“Aren’t they beautiful!”, p.4, l.6) and continues asking Arjun how long it would take to make a carpet like the one from Kashmir. This is very embarrassing for him since he just “had learned how little he knew about India, and how much he had taken for granted” (p.4, ll.17-18) in his home country, which he is even more desperately missing now. In addition, he is disgusted by the new culture he is confronted with. As “[t]he thought of sandwiches with milk for dinner revolted him” ( p.3, ll.21-22), he is also taken aback by the elderly lady telling him how much “she had wanted to go to India” (p.4, l.25) when she was in high school. Even before talking to her, Arjun was “unbearably scared” (p.2, l.10) by all the new impressions. But his “home-sickness had made him reckless.” (p.5, l.11).

So he continues talking to the woman he just met when she asks him: “Have you had your supper?” (p.5, ll.14-15). “Not yet.” (p.5, l.16), he shortly responds and tries to “disengage himself” (p.5, l.16) as he probably notices his problem that moment: Arjun is not simply suffering from home-sickness but from a *cultural shock*.

A *cultural shock* can be described as feelings of disorientation, uncertainty and confusion of an individual when having to deal with a new social environment. It is often combined by a dislike for certain aspects of the new culture. Besides, the person in a foreign country is desperately missing his or her home.

Revealing his desire to talk about *home*, Arjun spots a “tall, dark Indian” (p.5, l.16) on the other side of the street and lies to the woman: “Excuse me, Mam, there’s a friend I want to say hello to...” (p.5, ll.17-18). The climax of his thoughts is reached when he deeply feels like talking to a stranger “about *home* over a cup of tea!” (p.5, l.23). In India, having tea does not simply mark a drink, but is considered a ceremony. Due to the British colonisation of India there is a special *tea time* each day. In addition, people have tea in order to sit back and relax or to meet with friends and family members to talk about life. Therefore, having tea is rather a collective ritual. An Indian would not have tea just by himself.

Being confident that the stranger is aware of this, our protagonist is eager to talk to him. Arjun approaches him to say hello. When the man looks at him, simply asking “Yes?” (p.5, l.25), the protagonist begins to stammer: “Are you from India?” (p.6, l.1) as an introduction. At that point the protagonist feels very foolish which his dialogue partner does not notice. When he finally replies positively, Arjun tells him he also is from India which makes the stranger starring at him and simply replying “So?” (p.6, l.5).

When the man notices Arjun being shocked by his carelessness he gives in, kindly explaining to him: “You did not travel ten thousand miles to know another Indian, nor did I. Good night.” (p.6, ll. 8-9).

Even though, this is not the official ending to the story but it feels as if it was the ending to the conversation between Arjun and the stranger. Furthermore, it puts an end to Arjun’s hopes to get emotional satisfaction from the conversation with the Indian stranger.

Consequently, the protagonist is left with his own considerations:

- On the one hand, there is the “excitement with which he had left India” (p.2, l.1) and his plans for a better life in the United States, possibly fulfilling the American Dream.
- On the other hand, Arjun is ashamed that he actually does not know a lot about India and his roots and has been very arrogant to his brother about leaving to New York: “A small place stinks and stagnates...” (p.2, ll.20-21).
- Additionally, he feels as if there were many things about India, “he had taken for granted” (p.4, l.18), like his education: “I got used to the IIT hostel life in Delhi.” (p.3, l.11).
- Eventually he notices that the stranger he has been talking to in New York was not being cocky, but right.

**The final sentence** also serves as the name of the short story: “Fly the friendly skies”. It has been taken from the slogan of United Airlines:

*“Fly the friendly skies – of United Airlines!”*

As a customer of United Airlines, many people from Asia, like Arjun, are looking forward to a better world as they get into the plane. This can be explained by the belief and dreams many Indians relate to America. To a lot of them the American Dream is the one thing in their lives they wish to achieve. To realise that dream they sacrifice everything to leave for the West and are mostly not aware of the problems they are to face there.

Arjun probably did not think about how rough it would be for him to deal with a situation in which he is confronted with new things. That’s why he has probably not even considered a cultural shock.

Not only is “Fly the friendly skies” a metaphor of migration, it also stands for the globalisation of our world and the emergences that will come along with it. From a retrospective, neutral point of view, there is one solution to the problems of Arjun: the act of *assimilation*. This will involve more than simply trying American food for Arjun. He would also have to learn how to deal with Americans and, if there is an offer for dinner, as from the white lady, he should at least consider it before simply rejecting the invitation.

The reader does also have to understand how much the protagonist is committed to his beliefs and his religion. He seems to be a devotee of Jainism as he “chastise[s] himself” (p.3, l.9), craves for vegetarian food (“...panir, ...potatoes,...pillao”, p.3, l. 18&20), and is disgusted by “milk” (p.3, l.22).

Apparently, small steps need to be made in approaching his new environment. But as *Arjuna* from the Indian mythology is known to be a fighter, one can be sure that the author’s intention is to have Arjun succeed in his plans to assimilate to American habits.



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