

Satyajit Ray's The Adventures of Feluda

The Golden Fortress

Study Material-I

About the writer:

Satyajit Ray was not only a great filmmaker and musical composer, he was also a prolific author of popular fiction. He was particularly interested in detective fiction, and he published 17 novels and 18 additional stories featuring his prudent private investigator Feluda, who served for Ray as his Sherlock Holmes. Over his career Ray only made three detective movies – ***The Zoo*** (*Chiriyakhana*, 1967), *The Golden Fortress* (*Sonar Kella*, 1974), and *Joi Baba Felunath: The Elephant God* (*Joi Baba Felunath*, 1979) – the latter two of which were based on his Feluda novels. Nevertheless, these three films were all hits with the public, particularly *The Golden Fortress* .

The story of *The Golden Fortress* concerns events surrounding a young boy's memories, or dreams, of a past life when he supposedly lived in a golden fortress. In particular the boy's vivid memories of seeing many jewels there inspire some criminals to kidnap him in hopes that he will lead them to a lost treasure. Ray has fashioned this tale as something of a family-oriented adventure, using typecast characters, comic elements, and some exotic backgrounds to liven up the proceedings.

The Adventures of Feluda:

- The Adventures of Feluda, the stories were written with a younger audience in mind.

- Ray wrote the first Feluda story *Feludar Goendagiri (Danger in Darjelling)* in 1965 while reviving an old family magazine, *Sandesh*, and because of its popularity, he wrote a total of thirty-four works in all.
- It features a private investigator Prodosh/Pradosh Mitter (the anglicized version of Mitra), known as Feluda .
- 'Feluda' comes from Pradosh's nickname 'Felu' and the suffix 'da' (short for 'dada') means an elder brother.
- He is around 27 years of age.
- The detective lives at 21, Rajani Sen Road,, Ballygunge, Kolkata, West Bengal.
- His height is 6 ft 2inches.
- His religion is Hindu.
- The Golden Fortress was one of the two Feluda-tales filmed by Satyajit Ray himself.
- The tales are narrated by Feluda's cousin -- fifteen years old Tapeshe (also called Topshe).
- From the sixth story, *Sonar Kella*, Feluda and Tapeshe are joined by a popular thriller writer Jatayu (Lalmohan Ganguly) who becomes Feluda's friend.

The Golden Fortress:

- The story begins with Sudhir Dhar, the father of an eight-year-old boy named Mukul approaching Feluda for help.
- Sudhir ran a book shop – Dhar & Co.
- Father informs Feluda that his son's life is in danger. He wants his help.

- It all started when Mukul's story about his being a *Jatismar*(A person who can recall events from a previous life) appeared in the newspaper a week before.
- His father reports that for the past two months, Mukul has been vividly describing a world that he had obviously never been to. He recalls among other things not only a Golden Fortress, but also a treasure hidden there.
- Mukul not only drew images on Rajasthan but also used to hum folk songs.
- Mukul's father took his drawings about past life which he has drawn and him to a parapsychologist, also his customer Dr. Hemanga Hajra who noticed that Mukul's drawings of fortresses looked like some of those in Rajasthan.
- Dr Hazra was also doing research on recalling a previous life.
- Hajra suggested that he would take Mukul to Rajasthan to see if he can recall and work out what all these visions mean.
- Unfortunately, a journalist was present for consultation there, and so Mukul's bizarre story, including his claim to remember his past-life home having many jewels stored there, was reported as a curiosity piece in the city newspaper.
- The newspaper article attracted the attention of the two villains of the story, Amiyanath Burman and Mandar Bose who decide to kidnap Mukul and see if he can lead them to the real treasure hidden somewhere.
- But they kidnap Neelu, a wrong kid who looked similar to Mukul and was Mukul's friend.
- Before drugging and turning loose their mistakenly held captive, they do manage to extract from him some important information – that Mukul had already left Calcutta with Dr. Hajra and headed for Jodhpur in Rajasthan.
- When Mukul's father learns about Neelu being abducted, he fears for his son's safety.

- Though Neelu came back, Sudhir was worried that if the abductors chase Mukul to Jodhpur and if his life was in danger.
- It's because of this he wanted to hire private detective Pradosh Mitra aka Feluda who is known for his bravery and has solved many cases.