

DISAPPOINTMENT: HOUSE OF CARDS

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Abstract

House of cards by Sudha Murthy is a poignant reflection on how ambition, greed, and materialism can erode the foundation of a marriage. The novel critiques patriarchal control and financial secrecy, ultimately emphasizing that a family life built on status and wealth is fragile and unsustainable

Core, theme & Reflection:

The corrosive nature of Greed: The novel tells the story of Mridula, a bright, independent village girl who marries Sanjay. An idealistic but impoverished doctor. As Sanjay's career flourished and he ascends the social ladder, he becomes consumed by material success and corruption. His descent illustrates how wealth can compromise moral values.

Patriarchy and Financial Betrayal: Sanjay secretly manipulates his earnings to support his greedy mother and sister without his wife's knowledge. This financial deceit deeply hurts Mridula. The narrative critiques traditional patriarchal structures where women are kept in the dark about financial matters and are expected to silently endure subordination.

The collapse of a "House of Cards": Because their marriage was ultimately built on ego, material instability and hidden truths rather than genuine equality and honesty, it crumbles. The dissolution of their marriage shows that a relationship without mutual trust and shared humanitarian values collapses just like a house of cards.

Self-Respect and Empowerment: Faced with a toxic and emotionally draining environment, Mridula bravely chooses her integrity over a comfortable life. She leaves Sanjay, symbolizing a woman's quest for identity, dignity and independence. Her resilience forces Sanjay to confront the emptiness of his ambition and the true cost of his choices.

Real-World Relevance: Through straight forward prose, Sudha Murthy draws upon real-life observations to present a moral critique of modern utilitarianism. The book serves as a timeless cautionary tale about prioritizing love, trust and ethical boundaries over economic achievements.

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INTRODUCTION

It highlights through quotes regarding the values of personal freedom over financial status, the importance of maintaining relationships, and the complex relationships between money, happiness and idealism.

Here Sudha Murthy in Novel "House of Cards" described a girl named Mridula, who has timeless goodness, rooted in simplicity, compassion, and high ethical values. Hailing from a village, she brings warmth and authenticity to her life in Bangalore, remaining grounded and resisting the corrupting influence of materialism and greed that consumes her husband, Sanjay.

Key aspects of Protagonist (Mridula's) Goodness influences include:

Simple Living: She is an energetic, kind-hearted woman who enjoys life's simple pleasures, cooking and reading rather than striving for luxurious status.

Ethical Core: Unlike her husband, who becomes obsessed with money, Mridula values relationships and integrity over material success.

Empathy and Warmth: she is warm and helpful, keeping her caring nature intact even when her surroundings become increasingly artificial and greedy.

Inner surroundings: when faced with her husband's corruption and changing personality. She shows resilience and self-respect, deciding to take a stand for her values.

Mridula's character highlights the importance of maintaining one's core values in a rapid changing, competitive, and materialistic world.

KEY WORDS

The fall of Idealism

In Sudha Murthy's novel House of Cards, the fall of idealism" centers on the protagonist's husband, Sanjay, a doctor who abandons his altruistic principals to chase wealth and social status. Driven by ambition and the corrupting pressures of city life, his pursuit of material success ultimately shelters their marriage and leaves him isolated. international journal of professional studies.

The theme of the fall of idealism is explored through several core elements in the novel

The shift from Service to Greed: initially Sanjay is an idealistic, impoverished doctor who believes in treating patients with compassion rather than viewing medicines as a business. However, disillusioned by systemic corruption and tempted by affluence, he quits his secure government job to open a private practice, eventually engaging in corrupt and highly commercialized practices.

The Metaphor of the title

The title house of cards represents the fragility of Sanjay's success. Just as a house of cards looks impressive but structurally unsound and collapses at the often eclipse fundamental human decency, the slightest disruption, Sanjay's life-built on deceit, ego and material accumulation rather than moral integrity – inevitably falls apart.

The clash of values

While Sanjay falls for the allure of “liquid modernity” and easy money, his wife Mridula remains steadfast in her grounded, ethical values. The more successful Sanjay becomes, the more egocentric and controlling he turns. He forces Mridula into a life pretense, pushing her to compromise her authenticity for his reputation.

SECOND CHANCE**Plot Progression**

The struggle: Mridula supports Sanjay through financial hardships, mortgages her jewelry to fund his clinic, and acts as a clerk and administrator while he builds his practice.

The Shift: Once Sanjay leaves his government job and enters private practice, he achieves massive success. However this newfound affluence leads to greed, corruption, and a materialistic shift in his personality.

The Collapse: Obvious to Sanjay's unethical dealings for a long time, Mridula eventually discovers the truth, Feeling alienated by his hypocrisy, she leaves him to reclaim her self-respect and built an independent life.

Resolution: Facing the reality of his ruined home, Sanjay recognizes his wife's sacrifices and the cost of his unchecked ambition, leading him to win her back.

KEY THEMES**Materialism Vs Values**

Murthy uses the metaphor of a “house of cards” to warn that building a life purely on ambition and money rather than morality.

Feminism and Equality

The book is dedicated “to all the Mridulas who suffer silently respect in marriage. Re”, criticizing patriarchal dominance while highlighting the importance of mutual respect in marriage.

Remaining Grounded

The story heavily emphasizes the necessity of staying true to oneself and one's roots, even after achieving success.

The Rejection of Materialism

The emotional and moral vacuum created by Sanjay's greed eventually destroys the emotional foundation of their marriage. The “fall” proves that a life built purely on status is empty. Finding a deception and lack of gratitude unbearable, Mridula decides to walk out and seek her own self-identity

RESEARCH REVIEW International journal of Multidisciplinary: The narrative serves as a stark critique of modern Indian society, where measurable metrics like wealth and prestige often eclipse fundamental human decency, ethics and emotional bonds. The storyline and readers reactions to these moral dilemmas can be explored further on Goodreads.

SANJAY (MRIDULA'S HUSBAND) NEGATIVITY IN LIFE

Sanjay had seen the selfishness, jealousy and negative undercurrents in large families and the false portrayal of a well-bonded family to society. It was better people lived separately and kept cordial relationships with their siblings and parents, rather than staying in a joint family and fighting every day, he thought.

This article also tries to portray the different value systems a person follows in life and how we as parents tend to pass these values to our children. Both Mridula and Sanjay learnt different values from their parents. For instance, this is what Sanjay recalled.

He remembered what Amma had said, “child, don't express your deepest feelings to anyone unless you are sure about the consequences. You should never share your weakness without thinking it through. Otherwise people will take advantage of it.”

But Appa had said just the opposite : “Every person is an island. You need a bridge to connect two islands. The bridge is called a relationship. In life, real affection comes not through hiding but through expressing your true feelings.”

THE STRINGS OF LOVE

The "String of Love" in Sudha Murty's novel "House of Cards" refers to the dedicate, binding thread of unconditional love, trust and shared morals. The concept weaves through the story in a few specific ways:

The Marriage Foundation: Protagonist Mridula marries Sanjay, a brilliant but impoverished doctor, out of pure affection and shared values, initially, this string of love and mutual support is strong, anchoring them through financial and professional struggles.

Materialism Tearing the string: As Sanjay's medical practice becomes hugely successful, he grows materialistic and corrupt, manipulating Mridula's trust to hide his financial dealings with his greedy family. The influx of greed frays the bond proving that an emotional connection built on values is easily broken if money corrupts the heart.

The decision to walk away: The string snaps when Mridula discovers his deceit and walks out of the marriage. Her choice reflects that self-respect and truth must supersede/replaced blind love.

The Redemptive Ending: The metaphorical thread is ultimately repaired on more honest terms when Sanjay humbles himself, acknowledges his mistakes, and goes to Mridula's village to win her back.

MRIDULA'S DEPRESSION AND DEJECTION

Mridula's emotional devastation is central to the plot. She battles severe depression and mental anguish after discovering her husband's moral corruption and infidelity, ultimately, she chooses to prioritize her mental well-being over her marriage, walking away to reclaim her independence, the sadness Mridula experiences stems from several heartbreaking factors in the novel: betrayal of trust: Mridula, an honest, rural-bred schoolteacher from Karnataka, is devastated when she discovers Sanjay has hidden assets, accepted bribes, and engaged in deceit to build his wealthy medical practice in Bangalore, loss of shared values: Sanjay becomes selfish and arrogant, throwing away the ethical principles they once shared when they were struggling, he ridicules her hard-earned income and takes her sacrifices for granted a toxic environment: the affluent, materialistic lifestyle and lack of mutual respect push her into deep despair. Her son Sishir also internalizes his father's practical arrogance. Further isolating and hurting Mridula. Her path to healing seeking help: overwhelmed by the emotional toll, her anguish spirals into clinical depression at the pleading of a former student, she visits a psychiatrist and eventually undergoes therapy to understand the root cause of her unhappiness. Taking a stand: realizing she cannot live in such an oppressive atmosphere without losing her confidence and joy, she leaves Sanjay, quits her life in Bangalore, and moves back to her roots in her native village of Aladahalli.

DESTINY: WITH REGARD TO "HOUSE OF CARDS"

"Destiny" is defined as something a person must forcefully create, seize, and aggressively defend rather than a preordained path. The story's narrative treats ambition and manipulation as the tools necessary to forge one's own fate in the face of ruthless political realities.

Throughout the novel, Francis Underwood operates on the belief that relying on fate is a sign of weakness or laziness. He famously challenges the concept of passive destiny, asserting that an individual must carve out their own path to power.

Manifest Destiny: Frank and Claire treat their political ascent as an inevitable outcome of their own making, often manipulating elections, media, and people to achieve the presidency.

Defending the Throne: After attaining ultimate power, maintaining it becomes an ongoing battle. Frank's famous motto and driving force is that one must defend their destiny against those who seek to tear down their fragile empire. [1, 2, 3, 4]

Metaphorical Destiny: In a broader sense, "house of cards" itself is an idiom that reflects the ultimate fate of the characters. It symbolizes a structure built on inherently shaky, fragile, and corrupt foundations that is destined to collapse. The novel questions whether a destiny built entirely on betrayal and deceit can ever truly hold up against the weight of time and consequence.

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