

ALIKE OR NOT ALIKE!

Fickleness of Wordly possessions and and Human Fame

Intent of the story

- ✓ *To stress the passing nature of human success and glory*
- ✓ *Let us not place we our hearts in possessions and wealth*
- ✓ *Death is the greatest leveler..*

The Story

It was the most elegant, stately and posh burial ground. It. was a very well guarded corner reserved only for VIPs and the wealthy and of the world.

One day, a group of tourists visited the graveyard. They moved from tomb to tomb. In awe and admiration they read the carvings on the magnificent marble slabs.

"Here lie the mortal remains of Chellappa Kumarappa Nayyar an outstanding sportsman and cricketer, who captained three M.C.C. teams against England and won great laurels for the Indian Cricket. **Gone! But he lives in the hearts of all his fans.**"

"In cherished memory of Meena Sundari, shining star of the silver screen, darling of millions. **Your golden voice, your sparkling smile, your scintillating performances are inscribed in our hearts for ever.**"

All of a sudden, a pompous funeral procession with a crowd of dignitaries, army officers and politicians and celebrities entered the cemetery.

Before the ornate and costly coffin could be lowered into the earth, His Excellency General Tramontana, Chief of the Army Staff gave a brief eulogy of his departed comrade:

"Friends, it is time to say goodbye to our beloved companion Major General Anil Gosal, General Officer Commander North Western Command. He was a great soldier, a valiant fighter, a gentleman to his finger tips. That he scaled the heights of glory is no surprise to us, knowing his sterling qualities of mind and heart and his consummate skill in military strategies, logistics and leadership. My dear friend and comrade, in the name of our nation, I tell him; "Good-bye"!

After his valedictory speech, General Trarnontana, gave his departed comrade the military salute and then the coffin was lowered into the earth to the sound of the National Anthem.

Perched on the trees overlooking those beautiful graves, a few squirrels were intently looking and listening to all that was being said and done.

About dusk, when everybody had left the cemetery, and all was quiet, one could hear the squirrels chatting among themselves. "Have you heard what that man full of stars, medals and crosses said this afternoon? The chap they buried here today cannot be like the rest of men"

A rash young young squirrel interrupted their talk and said: "I want to see this great man, a man our nation is proud of! Come on! Come along with me! Let's go and see! Prompted by curiosity a few squirrels followed him. Patiently, they dug a tunnel leading to the dead man's tomb. They were eager to see that "great man"!

When they finally managed to bore a tiny hole into the grave, all of a sudden, they met with a very strange and ugly-looking creature, a grave worm. He squealed at them: "Stop it! Why do you disturb our peace? Allow us to do our job! What are you trying to do here?"

"The little mischievous squirrel said: "Well, we want to see the Honorable Major General Anil Gosal buried over here. He was a very powerful, greatly admired and highly successful man! He must look very different from the rest of men!"

The ugly little creature laughed and laughed. His body contorted wickedly and with a spiteful grimace he shrieked: "Powerful? Admired!? Highly successful!? Poo! Tut! Nonsense! Once he came here, he began stinking like the rest of men! To be honest to you, all human flesh smells alike, it tastes the same! Be gone now! Get away from here! This is no a place for you!

Questions for reflection and discussion.

1. What is the value of worldly honors, pomp, success, prestige and popularity? What can you compare them to?
2. All said and done, at the end of life what does really count before God?
3. Are men basically equal or different? Why?
4. If some people in life look different and better than others, what and who made them look so?
5. Actually, who is the greatest before God? Why?
6. Explain the words of Jesus: "Man's true life is not made up of the things he owns, no matter how rich he may be" (Lk 12:15).
7. Can you draw some other lessons from this story for our life? Which?

Explain the following Statements.

- All men are alike before God.
- All "human and worldly" greatness is like smoke. It's passes off.
- All of us are made from dust, and into dust we shall return.
- Worldly successes end in the grave.
- Death is the great leveler.

- True success in life is not to be counted by what we had, or what we achieved, but by how well we lived
- Don't count your years, make your years count.
- The Bible tells us Vanity of vanities and all vanity .Man is like grass. It grows today. It withers away tomorrow.