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Introduction

The story "The Adventure" is a science fiction narrative that explores an alternate history experienced by Professor Gangadhar Pant Gaitonde. Although he finds himself in Pune, the historical facts he encounters do not align with known history. To understand this discrepancy, he travels to Bombay to consult history books. There, he discovers that the East India Company is still ruling, contrary to the known fact that it was dissolved after the events of 1857. Further investigation reveals that the Battle of Panipat had a different outcome in this alternate world—the Marathas won instead of losing.

Key Elements

- **Genre:** Science Fiction
- **Setting:** Pune and Bombay in an alternate historical timeline
- **Plot Premise:** Alternate history where the Marathas won the Battle of Panipat

Textual Evidence

"He decides to go to Bombay and consult history books. Bombay is not what he expected to find it. East India Company is still ruling there."

Practice Set

Level 1 – Easy

- What genre does "The Adventure" belong to?
- Where does Professor Gaitonde travel to find answers?

Level 2 – Moderate

- Explain the significance of the Battle of Panipat in the story.
- Why is the East India Company still ruling in the alternate history?

Level 3 – Challenging

- Discuss how the concept of alternate history is used to challenge known historical facts in the story.

Answer Key

- **Level 1:** The story belongs to the science fiction genre. Professor Gaitonde travels to Bombay to consult history books.
- **Level 2:** The Battle of Panipat is significant because its outcome changes the course of history; the Marathas won instead of losing. The East India Company remains in power because the historical events unfolded differently.
- **Level 3:** The story uses alternate history to question the fixed nature of historical facts by presenting a world where the Marathas won the Battle of Panipat, thereby altering the entire historical timeline.

Quick Reference

- Science fiction story exploring alternate history
- Professor Gaitonde experiences a different historical timeline
- Battle of Panipat outcome changed

Glossary

- **Science Fiction:** A genre dealing with imaginative and futuristic concepts.
- **Alternate History:** A genre where historical events occur differently from reality.
- **Battle of Panipat:** A significant historical battle in Indian history.

Summary

Professor Pant goes to Deshpande

Professor Gangadhar Pant visits his physicist friend Rajendra Deshpande to explain the strange experiences he has been having. He narrates the events that led him to question known history.

A Surprising Landmark

While traveling from Pune to Bombay by the Jijamata Express, Professor Pant meets Mr. Khan, who is headed to Peshawar. Upon arriving in Bombay, he is surprised to see a building marked as the headquarters of the East India Company, which contradicts his knowledge that the company was dissolved after 1857.

Battle of Panipat

Walking through the city, Professor Pant visits the Town Hall library to consult history books. He reads an account of the Battle of Panipat where the Marathas won and Abdali was defeated, a version of history he had never encountered before.

A New Account

This new historical account suggests that India was never subjected to slavery and that the British retained Bombay only for commercial reasons, with the lease expiring in 2001.

Bhaushebanchi Bakhar

Seeking more details on the Maratha victory, Professor Pant reads a book called Bhaushebanchi Bakhar until the library closes.

The Public Meeting

Later, at Azad Maidan, he attends a public meeting where the presidential chair is unoccupied. He attempts to occupy the chair and speak about its importance, but the crowd reacts violently.

The Violence

The crowd attacks him, and he disappears from their sight.

Regains Consciousness

Professor Pant regains consciousness and shares his experience with Rajendra, showing a page from Bhaushebanchi Bakhar as proof.

Catastrophic Theory

Rajendra explains the experience using the catastrophic theory of science, applying it to the Battle of Panipat. The death of Vishwasrao was the turning point, leading to the army's defeat. However, in the new account, Vishwasrao survives, changing history.

The New History

The Bhaushebanchi Bakhar describes a history where Vishwasrao won, altering the entire historical narrative.

The Explanation

Rajendra explains that reality is not limited to what is observed. Physics shows that particles like electrons can exist in multiple states or locations simultaneously. Similarly, Professor Pant's mind transitioned between two worlds—one with known history and one with alternate history.

Two Worlds

Professor Pant experienced two worlds due to this transition. At the moment he was hit by a truck, he was thinking about the alternate outcome of the Battle of Panipat, which allowed his consciousness to shift to that world before returning to his own.

Key Elements

- **Characters:** Professor Gangadhar Pant Gaitonde, Rajendra Deshpande, Mr. Khan
- **Setting:** Pune and Bombay in an alternate historical timeline
- **Themes:** Alternate history, reality and perception, science and history
- **Literary Devices:** Science fiction elements, symbolism of the public meeting and chair, use of historical texts

Textual Evidence

"He was surprised to see the writing on the building. It indicated that it was the headquarters of the East India Company."

"Rajendra said that Gangadhar Pant's mind had suffered such a transition—from one world to another and back again."

Practice Set

Level 1 – Easy

- Who is Rajendra Deshpande?
- What did Professor Pant find surprising in Bombay?

Level 2 – Moderate

- Explain the significance of the Bhausahabanchi Bakhar in the story.
- What is the catastrophic theory as explained by Rajendra?

Level 3 – Challenging

- Analyze how the story uses scientific concepts to explain alternate realities.
- Discuss the symbolism of the public meeting and the presidential chair incident.

Answer Key

- **Level 1:** Rajendra Deshpande is a physicist and friend of Professor Pant. Professor Pant was surprised to see the East India Company still ruling in Bombay.
- **Level 2:** Bhausahabanchi Bakhar is a historical book that provides an alternate account of the Battle of Panipat where the Marathas won. The catastrophic theory explains that small changes in events can lead to drastically different outcomes, applied here to history.
- **Level 3:** The story uses the concept of quantum physics and multiple realities to explain how Professor Pant experiences two different historical timelines. The public meeting and chair symbolize authority and the struggle for power in the alternate world.

Quick Reference

- Professor Pant's journey to understand alternate history
- Use of historical texts to reveal new accounts
- Scientific explanation of alternate realities

Glossary

- **Catastrophic Theory:** A scientific theory explaining sudden changes in systems due to small causes.
- **Bhaushebanchi Bakhar:** A historical Marathi text used in the story.
- **Alternate Reality:** A different version of reality where events have different outcomes.

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