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Reading with Insight

1. What impressions of Shahid do you gather from the piece?

Answer.

Author Amitav Ghosh's biography of Shahid reveals that the poet was a complex individual. Even the dreadful disease of cancer couldn't break him down. He was a fighter who never gave up in the face of adversity. While in the hospital, he refused to use the wheelchair and preferred to walk on "his own feet." He was also an exceptional teacher. Shahid had a deep appreciation for good poetry, music, and food. He was a fine poet himself and enjoyed the company of other poets and writers. His wit and sense of humor were also one of a kind. He was a non-religious man. The political situation and violence in Kashmir affected him so much that the central theme of his poem became – 'Kashmir'. He was a truly gifted individual.

2. How do Shahid and the writer react to the knowledge that Shahid is going to die?

Answer.

Shahid was initially tense but quickly revealed his feelings and asked Amitav Ghosh to write about him after his death. The writer was taken aback and didn't know how to react to the situation. Later, he said the standard words, "Nothing will happen to you. You'll be fine."

3. Look up the dictionary for the meaning of the word 'diaspora'. What do you understand of the Indian diaspora from this piece?

Answer.

The term 'diaspora' refers to 'people who come from a specific nation, or whose ancestors came from it, but now live in various parts of the world.'

According to this article, Shahid, his brother, and two sisters were living in the United States of America. Not only them, but many Indians today move abroad for a variety of reasons such as education, employment, or some other reason. They run into each other now and then. The Indian diaspora is larger than that of any other country. In this piece, we see that despite having migrated abroad, Shahid spends every summer in Srinagar, indicating that though people settle elsewhere, the love for their country never dies, and they never forget their motherland.