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Summary of Father – Prafulla Roy

The story is set against the background of the Partition-era riots in Bangladesh/East Bengal and focuses on an old man, Shekharnath, who suffers deep emotional trauma after losing his family. During communal violence, his wife Hemlata is killed and his young daughter Khuku is abducted, leaving him with lifelong guilt and grief.

Years later, after living as a displaced refugee in Calcutta and struggling with memories of the past, Shekharnath unexpectedly meets his long-lost daughter after about thirty years. She is alive, married to a Muslim man who saved her, and has her own family.

At first, the father refuses to see her because of his rigid ideas about family honour and purity, and also because of the guilt he feels for not protecting her earlier.

Eventually, he realizes the value of love and family over old prejudices and accepts his daughter emotionally, leading to reconciliation and hope for reunion.

Major Themes

1. Trauma and loss after Partition

The story portrays the psychological suffering of refugees who lost home, identity, and loved ones during communal violence.

2. Displacement and loss of identity

The father, once respected in his homeland, becomes insignificant and rootless in refugee life, showing how political events destroy ordinary lives.

3. Guilt and repentance

Shekharnath's refusal to leave earlier leads to tragedy, and his inner guilt shapes his harsh behaviour toward his daughter until he finally repents.

4. Tradition vs humanity

Old beliefs about honour, purity, and religion initially prevent acceptance of his daughter's marriage to a Muslim, but human love ultimately wins.

5. Family love and reconciliation

The ending highlights forgiveness, emotional healing, and reunion of family bonds after decades of separation.