

## Mrs. Thurlow's Character

In H. E. Bates' *The Ox* we find **Mrs. Thurlow** is grounded by poverty and being ever immersed in toiling life, is often troubled by the harsh remarks of his husband and sons. She receives reproaches for her dullness in as much as she does not stir herself about emotions but money. Her necessity and the constant drudgery are set out to try her fortune to seek a better future for his two sons. Fatigued by the labours of the four square, she stooped to bovine spirit. Describing her toils the author indirectly deplors both her approach as well as the society's insipid outlook. Her way lacks the generous woman's heart, a motherly love, no less than the wandering beggars whose needs never meets all ends. So she comes home with a further throng of beggars behind her. Bate sees the scene and becomes desperate. He does not curse poverty, but in a few lines droops down the story of **Mrs. Thurlow** in dead silence with 'unsentimental pity'.

In absolute poverty, without proper food, decent clothing, and timely sleep, **Mrs. Thurlow** continues to serve his master with diligence. She knows no comfort. *The Ox* is a story of such a bereaved mother and lonely suffering. Hers is the story pathetic, sentimental and earns the pity of the reader for her relentless struggle- To survive her family particularly breeding of her children. Hers is the story of isolation from the mirth of life and to lead herself into the domain of suffering devoid of sentiment and any sort of feelings exercised by an ordinary woman.

This Thurlow's has a dwelling on a small hill- a secluded domain of unforeseen calamity. The house is raised by invisible stilts and has a wooden flight of steps to the front door. As the house is isolated and exposed in any position where wind strikes at it from all quarters. In front of the house there lay empty ploughed lands and has the color of wet steel. The country outside has its wide horizons has the beauty per excellence. But all this means nothing to **Mrs. Thurlow**. She is circling in the sphere of her houses hills empty barren front lands and the windy shakes. All this situations perfectly suits the psyche of Mrs. Thurlow. She is burdening her world with the circumference of hazards. Her gamut of thought, her liking and disliking so profusely and profoundly within the small circumference of living and sustenance of her family and her sons that she is, in real sense isolated, dejected, dilapidated, rejected and frustrated in a condition that is perfectly an objective correlative to the very setting of the house.

**Mrs. Thurlow** is having a drunkard husband and two infants to grow up. She is the sole earner at present to sustain a family of her. She is meticulously anxious to raise her income so as to provide her two sons a healthy future. Her two sons are aged minors. She likes to realize refined ambitions regarding them, making their way as assistants in shops, as clerks in offices and even if butlers. With bovine spirits Thurlow works though out the day in this aims. At half past seven in the morning accompanied by her rusty cycle Thurlow begins her day and six every evening she returns with grey bundles of washing, oilcans, sacks, cabbages, bundle of old newspapers, bounds of windblown wood and bags of chicken food. In the morning 6 – 9 am she works for the two retired

sister, from 9 – 12 for retired photographers from 12:30 – 3 for the popular firm and at last from 4 – 6 for the middle aged bachelor. This is her square and everyday she follows this four hours and thus earns her scrubbing and washing money. She has been doing this for a longer period of 15 years and all these earnings are kept in a brand bag hidden under a mattress in the back bed room. It is this money with which she wishes to actualize the dream regarding her sons that are entertaining in her heart for a long period. And with the impersonation of hoarding up she has lost her happiness, the zeal and the vitality and has to be turned into a beast of burden.

*The Ox* is a tragedy of middle class life, and the scene is laid in the suburb of somewhere. The subject of the plot is the love and drudgery represented through the character of **Mrs. Thurlow**, a self-willed optimist, reduced to poverty by her fate. Her long and odontolite account of a drudgery in which living is treated as an art or science provided with rules and conventional procedure. Failing so, you are crunched.