

# The Ecstasy of Rita Joe

by George Ryga  
July - 24 - 1932

George Ryga :-

He was a Canadian playwright, actor, and novelist. - His son He was born on July - 24 - 1932. His notable works are

1. The Ecstasy of Rita Joe
2. Grass and wild
3. Strawberries
4. Captives of the faceless
5. Drummer
6. Sunrise on Sarah
7. Hungry Hills.

Neighbours → Sandy Collins  
↳ lost her daughter, Melba

Characters :-

1. Rita Joe → Protagonist
2. David Joe → Rita's Father
3. Jaimie Paul → Rita's Friend
4. Magistrate → Judge
5. Father Andrew → Church Priest.
6. Miss. Donohue → Rita's School teacher
7. Mr. Homer → a white social activist
8. Policeman.
9. Eileene Joe → Sister of Rita Joe.

\* It is Two act-play and it has published in 1970. ✓

Theme :- The theme of the Ecstasy of Rita Joe is the destruction of a native girl by the white city culture.

Themes :-

1. Canadian Judicial System.
2. Christian Idea of God/Bible
3. Flash back of Past (Rita).
4. Women Condition.
5. Police entrapped, (Rita, Jaimie)

Rita Joe was earlier in the reservations but comes to the city from in search of fortune and works in a tyre company. One night as she was returning from work some white policemen called her and gave her 5 dollars and booked her under prostitution and produced her in the Magistrate's court. Here many fake cases like prostitution, theft, vagrancy, assault, shop lifting are charged on her.

On looking at Rita the Magistrate remembers seeing a 4 year old little girl running barefooted in the road in Cariboo and asks her if it was her daughter. Then he asks her to find witness for her and produce them in the court within 8 hours.

First comes her school Board clerk, who says that the Department of education had given many offers to the Indians but Rita Joe has never responded. But in reality none of these letters were delivered to the Indians. Then comes her teacher Miss Donohue who says that Rita recollects that her white teacher used to call her "A bitch" in heat."

Even the policemen and other witness speak against Rita so the Magistrate sentences her for 30 days. Rita Joe is a lover of freedom but now she is a jail bird. While all this happens in the court Rita Joe's mind recollects her. Past where she spent her early days happily with her sister Eileen Joe, her father David Joe and her lover Joimile Paal.

Eileen Joe also had come to the city with a hope of making good fortune because she was good in stitching but since the white did not support her she had to return to the Reservation. Her father David Joe loved Rita. Once they neighbours Sandy Collins who had lost their daughter Millie had asked David to sell Rita to them for 1000 dollars but he had refused. Rita also recollected memories of her mother who has passed away while she is in prison. Father Andrew comes to meet the prisoners. He offers her a packet of cigarettes. He advises her to leave the city and return to the reservation. Rita tells him that her uncle Dan Joe had told her that they all lived a very happy and peaceful life before the white settlers came. The white settlers took away their land and freedom and gave them the Bible. Father Andrews gets angry and leaves the prison. Mr. Homer, a white social activist, runs a charity for the Red Indians and provides food and clothing to them but what he never realised is that they actually need is job and respect.

After thirty <sup>30</sup> days Rita is released but Jaimie is sent to jail for 30 days, Rita Joe is ~~sent~~ released but Jaimie is sent ~~for~~ to Jail for attacking Mr Homer.

David comes and calls Rita back to the Reservations but Rita says that she will wait for Jaimie and come with ~~Rita~~ him after his release. Jaimie gets released and while he and Rita are together three murders come and try to seduce Rita. Jaimie ~~with~~ defending Rita gets mortally beaten up. Then they gang rape Rita and kill her. David comes carrying Jaimie's dead body and places next to Rita's body. Then - he sings an ancient funeral song Eileene chants a prayer and the play ends with 'No. No! No more!'