
The choice of a person can change the life of him – a Study on Tishaa's Novel *Pink or Black*

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Abstract

Pink or Black is about a teenage gang, and the protagonist of this novel, Tiana, changes herself for the cause of society, and then she makes various decisions, and the choices that she makes for herself are extraordinary. She is a teenage girl who has control over herself though she slips off in between the novel; she comes out as an example to her friends at the novel's end. We can see Tiana as a unique character in the play as she tries to figure out her own self-identity and completes her mission at the novel's end. The formation of a Gang is also highlighted as we would have experienced in our childhood. Tiana, being a teenage girl, undergoes many incidents throughout the novel, but she does not give up; instead, she shows her true nature, and at the end of the book, everyone loves the character of Tiana. The way she carries and decides for herself is admirable amidst her age. The author has brought into light the odd teenage years when we don't have any idea of what we wanted, and it takes us into a memory lane of hysterical, funny, and oddly moving moments.

Keywords: Hysterical, Extraordinary, Oddly Moving Moments, Mission

Introduction

The author Tishaa at the age of sixteen, published her novel *Pink or Black*, and this book is based on her own school experiences at the Lawrence School; then, she went on to study filmmaking at the New York Film Academy in Los Angeles. She was assistant director for the blockbuster Bollywood film, *Bodyguard* and continues to work in the film industry.

The author portrays Tiana, the protagonist, as a pleased individual as Tiana has now got what she wanted in her life. The author opens the novel by making the protagonist sit on her bed and stare at the window as she recollects her past. The book proceeds with the story of Tiana being a teenage girl four months before she had the power of choice between truth and lies, right and wrong, between losing and finding it. To understand this, we need to know about Tiana's past. And we can see how she takes each decision in her life though false statements were made.

Four Months later, she metamorphosed, i.e., changed in nature, and came across a gang named cool crowd. This cool crowd had specific rules that were at fashion, i.e., whatever they wore became a fashion, and if everyone followed them, they would never disturb them, but if they neglected them, they would ill-treat their classmates. Tiana was one among them who suffered a lot among the cool crowd. Tiana always wanted to be one among the cool crowd, but the gang neglected her. It was not that Tiana liked their friendship, but it was to safeguard her from the team.

Then Tiana decided to go to Boarding School, but at the previous school, her classmates used to give false information about the school, like the boarding school would be like living in jail, the food would be awful, and she could not even have her bed. Then Tiana understood where the classmates got a false idea, and she decided on all the false statements the classmates gave. The other classmates were even more afraid of Boarding school because their parents usually threatened their kids to send to boarding school if they were not listening to them. Tiana thanked her parents, and she spoke to her parents at that age and joined the boarding school.

Well, you can't blame them... that is exactly the kind of picture that is painted into the average kid's mind-nightmarish, cut off from the joys of life and imprisonment! Tiana understood where their fear stemmed from. They were scared of boarding schools because parents usually threatened to send their kids to one if they didn't behave properly. Tiana's case was different. Thanks to the long and frank talks that she had had with her parents, she knew what she was in for and that going to a boarding school would be nothing less than an adventure.¹

Tiana had a taste in admiring nature, and the school was located at Hill view High; it was a colonial-style stone building that was 150 years old. Students lived in dormitories that had fireplaces. The school's founder was a British military officer who died during the revolt of 1857. Tiana was new to that school, and she had no new idea about the school as her life was ruled by the sounds of bells, whistles, and the voices of orders, and there were a lot of rules and regulations that were to be followed. It was difficult for Tiana to adapt to that situation, but she slowly adjusted to that environment and started to love it.

Within a month, Tiana found groups and gangs sprouting like mushrooms around her. They formed a fantastic team, and Tiana could not mingle with them, and she had an argument with the club, and the whole class was against Tiana. Everyone started to ignore Tiana, and someone shook her cupboard, and things like oil and shampoo spilled on her clothes and all the necessary things she had. Tiana cried a lot as the cool gang made much fun of her. Tiana was also named for stealing though she did not make any mistake. Tiana was good at class, but when she went to her room, she ran inside the bathroom and never came out, as her classmates would make fun of her. Tiana reached high school, and

¹ Tisha, Pink or Black, Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd, 11th edition, 2011, Pg. No. 2

everything changed; it was all about who you were going around, how many guys were surrounding you, what you were wearing, and which party you were going to, and Tiana was one among them.

There is a change of behavior in Tiana as she wants to safeguard herself from her classmates.

Tiana was ashamed as the cool gang accepted her, and she also got attention from the boys. Tiana was very careful about what she is talking. Tiana stopped giving opinions as others hated her opinion as it was straightforward, and now she started to provide false statements, which was enjoyed by others. Here we can see that Tiana changes herself in order to safeguard herself, this is the decision she takes for her own self.

Tiana was in grade nine then; her English Teacher asked the class to speak about themselves for two minutes. Tiana realized she was having a big problem as she could not tell about herself. She tried to recall her likes and dislikes, and the teacher tried to hint at Tiana, but she could not remember what she liked. Tiana identified her friend's likes and dislikes, but she failed to recall herself. Tiana was standing in front of the class as she could not remember herself; the Bell buzzer helped her. Tiana was ashamed about this and she wanted to trace her own identity.

Tiana, tell us something about your likes and dislikes. What are your hobbies? Try. It can't be that difficult,' said her teacher with a hint of irritation. Thinking hard, she tried to concentrate on her hobbles. She liked to listen to music. No, that is what Bella (one of her friends) wanted. She enjoyed eating pizzas but only because her best friend Leila liked to do so. She thought of several things, but after every thought, she realized that she only wanted to do that because one or the other of her friends liked to do the same. The need to fit in had made her change so much that she no longer knew herself. She did not want to get overshadowed by the people around her. She had forgotten how to draw a line between truth and lies, reality and make-believe, so she decided to find " her original thoughts and opinions about everything ... answers to the straightforward questions of her life.²

Tiana had a close friend Leila, and Tiana's friends always wanted to date boys, but Tiana refused to do so. Tiana wanted to come out of her problem as she was determined to know about herself. She started to prepare a list, and she truly wanted to know her likes and dislikes. She made a mental list like my favorite movie, my favorite food, my most embarrassing moment, my thoughts about friends, my famous actor, my favorite color, my favorite quote, my greatest wish, And am I happy with my life? All these things were her mission to find out her real likes about her at this young age. We, too, had crossed this age, but we were not particular about our preferences and were not in-depth in our self-identity.

Then Leila says that her dad and mom are coming to take her to Paris, Tiana has a

² Ibid Pg. No. 6-7

wish to go to Paris, and she wants to take a photo in Eiffel Tower. Tiana was now happy as she found her favorite place. Then in her gang, Tiana learns that she has an Ice-princes nickname. Tiana was furious at her friends; she did not want her friends to hide anything from her. Tiana now agrees with her friends and says that she tries to fit in with the gang as her nature of Tiana was straightforward, but because of the team, she had to change herself, and Tiana agrees that she has lost her identity.

Everyone had an angry face on Tiana but soon everyone pleaded with Tiana. Then they moved to the Electric it was unlike a club. Its color was thrilling blue and white; DJ was playing the music. Everyone here orders a drink but Tiana orders a coke. Then they started to talk about their favorite movies. Now Tiana began to think, Leila helped Tiana to answer the question, and Tiana said that she likes Romantic Comedies; then they asked about her favorite actor. Tiana replied to Audrey Hepburn for her elegance, grace, and style. Then the question, what is your favorite movie Tiana recollects and she says a movie with Paris, a magazine, fashionable clothes and she said her favorite movie was "The Devil Wears Prada".

Romantic comedies, yes, I like them,' replied Tiana truthfully.

I like Audrey Hepburn for her elegance, grace, and style. Also, she was beautiful, especially her eyes," said Tiana³

A movie with Paris, a chic magazine and lots of beautiful clothes. Of course! She knew which one was her favorite movie right then.

The Devil Wears Prada,' said Tiana excitedly.⁴

Tiana then walks up from her home, and her brother Sid walks her up. Tiana loves talking to her mother and they both have a conversation. Tiana misses Leila a lot, and Tiana steps out of the door, and every friend apologizes to Tiana for behaving so rudely. Now the gang left for the hotel; they had a lot of fun and returned to school the next day. They had to undergo a lot as they were continuously making mistakes. Then the gang was hungry and wanted to eat at that time; a question arrived for Tiana: What is your favorite food? Everyone was looking at Tiana, and they guessed it was Italian food, but Tiana said Indian Food, and she said that she likes rajma chawal, which gave her heart-warming memories of that delicious smell. As the novel proceeds, we can see that Tiana is getting attention as she shows her true nature and makes the right decision to find out her true nature for her likes and dislikes.

The gang gets ready for the Queen's Ball, and everyone is very particular about what dress they will wear and how they will look for the ball. But Tiana was not so special about the dress. Friends always posed questions to Tiana as how do I look? Am I looking fat? Now Tiana thinks to give an honest and truthful answer; she says:

To the extra thin ones-'No, you are not looking fat, but you look like a twig. To the fat ones-I am sorry, but you look fat'. 'No, it does not look

³ Ibid Pg. No. 27

⁴ Ibid Pg. No. 28

*vulgar' 'I don't like that color. It does not suit you at all.'*⁵

All their friends of Tiana showed a horrible face at Tiana, and she started to give genuine comments about her friends. Now Tiana feels happy as she had offered her true nature to her friends, and she says that she cannot bubble all her life, and Leila says stop being honest as the statement Honesty is the best policy.

Everyone went to Queen Hill and returned to the dormitory the next day. Tiana and Leila sat together at the last bench. Tiana got up from her seat, lost her balance, and fell. Leila controls her laughter, and everyone laughs at Tiana; Tiana here feels an embracing moment for her in her life. Then she changes her clothes and cries about what she feels. Then she realizes that she is crying for a silly reason. Then the next day, Tiana noticed her classmates and friends as they were all of Brand consciousness.

Their watches had to be Mont Blanc or Rolex, perfumes had to be PacoRabanne, jeans had to be Calvin Klein, boxers had to be Tommy Hilfiger, and bathroom slippers had to be Nike or Adidas! Bathroom slippers!

*Initially, a handful of people were under the brand's spell. But these very few successfully sucked everyone into the brand cult. So much so that these guys started gifting expensive gadgets like PSPs and cell phones to each other for their birthdays! Come on, get real. And this trend sure seems like it's here to stay. It's not going anywhere. She didn't support it but could not do anything about it. She felt sorry for those who could not afford all these uselessly great things because they were getting huge complexes from those who could afford all this.*⁶

As Tiana sees all these, she thanks her parents for making their children happy. Tiana also thinks that Parents are doing so much to make them happy. Tiana tries to stop her friends from drinking, but they are not ready to listen. Tiana, at the same age, feels that at this age, teenage girls should be conscientious about the risk of damaging their brains. And she also says that they can divert their mind to reading books and solving puzzles. Days passed by, and they completed their schooling; these were fun days for Tiana.

Tiana was pleased as she was in her comfort zone and showed her true nature; she was also happy that she lived a controlled life and was a unique person. Then Tiana liked Karam a lot, and she felt uncomfortable with him. Tiana made up her mind not to be slipped like other friends.

Leila is moving to Paris, and Tiana throws and plans a farewell party. Tiana arranges lunch and a music system. The food was Italian, and the decorations were red. And everyone wore the red color dress as it was Leila's favorite. Party was over, and Leila thanked everyone and Tiana too. Tiana was not in a mood to celebrate her birthday two days after the

⁵ Ibid Pg. No. 55

⁶ Ibid Pg. No. 82

farewell. Here we can see that when Tiana was planning for farewell, Leila was planning a Birthday party for Tiana.

Leila helps Tiana figure out her favorite color, and Tiana is very particular about Pink or Black; then Tiana thinks wisely and says that her favorite color is pink and black. Tiana was pleased about the fantastic birthday with her friends. Finally, after months of soul searching, she feels that she understood herself. It gave her a great feeling.

Tiana did think about it. So she tried to do what Leila had asked, not to try so hard. She sat on her bed and thought about which one it would be. Pink or black? After five minutes, she knew which one was her favorite. It was not a color, but it was colored. She loved both colors equally. Why did she have to have only one favorite color? We could like as many things as we wanted to. Leila was right. We kept changing, and nothing was permanent. So, as long as she liked pink and black, it was all good. Who knows? Maybe her next favorite color would be orange! Everyone needed a change after some time. The trick is always to be truthful to yourself, which wonders for your confidence.

Leila, I know which one is my favorite color, cried out Tiana

"Which one?"

'It's not pink or black. It's pink and black,' said Tiana.

It was Tiana's birthday; Tiana was in a happy mood to celebrate her birthday. She wore a pink and black knee-length dress. Everyone at the party enjoyed it a lot, and they ordered drinks, but Tiana ordered cock. Then she sees Karam; she wishes to talk to him both have a conversation. Tiana makes two announcements: Leila was not going to Paris, and she fooled everyone, and everyone had an angry face on Leila. Then she announced that she loved Karam, and everyone congratulated them. Then Tiana too drank at her birthday party; they decided to leave. Rehan was also drunk and sitting in the driving seat; everyone got inside the car, but Tiana had control at that time, too, and she said no, it would not be saved as he too had drunk. Tiana hesitated to get inside the car. The rest of her friends moved, and they met in an accident. Tiana heard the news and prayed for her friends as all the people in the car were unconscious. She felt sad and now had to endure a painful period of waiting, hoping, and wishing. Then she moved to her bedroom and locked herself for 12 hours; she did not leave the room.

She desperately hoped and wished that never should she see something as horrible as this again. No one should ever have to see such a dreadful thing happen to the ones they care for. Yes, that was her greatest wish. Now she would have to go through a painful waiting period, hoping and wishing to see what would happen to the people she cared for.

The moment she reached home, she locked herself in her bedroom and

*didn't come out for the next twelve hours.*⁷.

The Police officers questioned Tiana, and now Tiana feels a thousand arrows of guilt pricking her heart. She knew that she did not try hard enough to stop her friends. Things would not have happened if she had tried to stop her friend. She went to the hospital to see her friends Celia and Leila were still unconscious, for Rehan's ribs had broken; Bella's right arm was fractured for Lilly and Aryan had minor cuts. Tiana here had escaped from the accident because of her right decision.

Conclusion

In Tiana's life, we can see that at each point in life, she made vast decisions and choices which were very proper and correct. At the novel's end, Leila says to Tiana that she had a good chance for herself and that the confidence to make decisions at a very young age was not so easy. Every step in her life was very confident. Tiana also had a focused mission in her life to find out her likes and dislikes of herself and had a controlled life. Tiana's life is an apt example of Decisions Oneself can change one life. Tiana also stands up bravely to give her genuine opinion and tells her friends that she cannot bubble hereafter. Tiana is happy and gains her identity, and her friends cherish her character at the novel's end.

References:

Tishaa .”*PINK OR BLACK ?*.”, August. 2008 by Rupa Publications

⁷ Ibid Pg. No. 134