Name of Student

Name of Professor

Name of Class

Day Month Year

**Short Stories**

A Handful of Dates is a scintillating short story written by Tayeb Salih. Several themes as connection, greed, conflict and selfishness are reflected in the short story. Narrated in the first person, the story revolves around Saleh who desires to seek and establish connections. The narrator spends a significant amount of time with his grandfather. A critical aspect is a strong connection the narrator establishes with his grandfather in the stat of the story. However, as the story proceeds and events occur, the narrator is urged to cultivate a sense of defiance for the grandfather. The inspection of the story reveals that the narrator's feelings towards the grandfather change after observing the harsh treatment he subjects to Masood. Primarily, the grandfather is reflected as a greedy person who exploits Masood as an instrument to generate profit rather than deeming him as a neighbor or a human being.

To begin with, the second paragraph of the short story illustrates the love and affinity the narrator has for the grandfather. The theme of connection is mentioned here. The essential purpose of his life is to grow up with the grandfather and absorb the traits of his personality and character(*Center for Civic Reflection - Community, Leadership, Dialog*). Nevertheless, the thoughts of the narrator shift after having a conversation with the grandfather related to the neighbor, Masood. The narrator observes that his grandfather defies Masood. When the grandfather says that Masood is an indolent man who married many wives, the narrator becomes confused. Later on, the narrator observes the greed and hate of his grandfather in a practical manner.

Furthermore, the grandfather of the narrator is essentially controlling Masood and cherishes the ignorance of Masood. Masood married several wives who appeared radical and ignorant to the grandfather. Primarily, the whole village refrains from paying attention to Masood, especially at the instance of harvesting dates. The grandfather possessed real power. For instance, Masood was shunned by the grandfather and was persistently bashed. The narrator observed that Masood struggled to pay the debt of his grandfather and thus was looked down upon by the whole village. Masood possesses some part of the land but the vicious treatment of the grandfather is likely to make him lose and offer the land to him.

A critical appraisal of the story stipulates that the age of the narrator makes it challenging for him to establish a firm opinion. He discerns to differentiate between right and wrong beliefs. However, the end of the story nourishes sentiments of resentment in him towards the grandfather. This is the primary theme of the short story. The narrator reflects the theme of sympathy and connection despite the young age. He aspires to assist Masood because of the discrimination made by his grandfather. The ninth paragraph of the second paragraph initiates the phase where the narrator advances to affirm his belief of defiance. The grandfather exaggerates he will buy the whole land before Masood dies. Here, the narrator nurtures an inner conflict upon observing the greedy nature of the grandfather. It is worthy to mention that the boy read Quran and followed the teachings. Since the grandfather was also a Muslim, he refrained from adhering to the teachings in true letter and spirits.

In addition, the conversation and occurrence at harvest cause the boy to sympathize with Masood. It appears the narrator is growing by perceiving and discerning between justice and injustice. The grandfather, unlike the narrator, prefers not to pay attention to the impact of his acts on the grandson. The narrator is developing the beliefs and values but the grandfather remains oblivious of the adverse consequences of his greed on him. Rather than inculcating righteous values in the narrator, the grandfather is more concerned to accelerate the means to generate wealth. As the story concludes, the connection of the narrator is changed and established with Masood. It is the most significant element of the story where the narrator proceeds to shun his grandfather and breaks the protracted connection of affinity and love. He is deemed as a greedy person. The major purpose of the grandfather is taking control of the surroundings under the influence of greed(*Making a Film Version of Tayeb Salih’s ‘A Handful of Dates’ – ArabLit*).

Besides, the story harvests a wide range of themes as deliberated above. From the first paragraph until the last, the narrator witnesses events which keep him in a confused state of mind. However, the blatant treatment of the grandfather makes the narrator think of the way a mature person does. The grandfather hands him dates which the narrator throws away to demonstrate rejection and resentment. The short story can be observed with diverse perspectives as per the school of thoughts(*» A Handful of Dates- Sudanese Film*). Critics may recommend that the grandfather is independent to exercise his will and do what he desires. Meanwhile, Masood is also not confined to act upon the views and perceptions of others.

To conclude, the short story presents an account of the narrator who advances to despise the grandfather whom he adored before. The greed and harsh treatment of the grandfather with Masood contribute towards the disengagement of the narrator's connection. The discussed events and themes comprehensively illustrate the instances that cause the narrator to sympathies Masood. Masood is, irrefutably, free to live the life he aspires. The grandfather exploits the virtues of Masood in the presence of other people and makes him deprived of his right. The bottom line is that the short story speaks volumes about the connections and conflicts established by the narrator at a young age.

Works Cited

*» A Handful of Dates- Sudanese Film*. https://atlascorps.org/a-handful-of-dates-sudanese-film/. Accessed 23 Feb. 2019.

*Center for Civic Reflection - Community, Leadership, Dialog*. http://civicreflection.org/resources/library/browse/a-handful-of-dates. Accessed 23 Feb. 2019.

*Making a Film Version of Tayeb Salih’s ‘A Handful of Dates’ – ArabLit*. https://arablit.org/2014/06/08/making-a-film-version-of-tayeb-salihs-a-handful-of-dates/. Accessed 23 Feb. 2019.