Name

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Date

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

In Ken Kesey’s novel One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest, the power struggle between the patients and the nurse is the power struggle, in which nurse wants to control the patients, while the patients want to defy the biased rules and punishments developed by the nurse.

The novel has been described by a patient named Chief Bromden, who pretended to be mute and dead, in order to avoid any kind of conflict, as well as being punished by the staff of the hospital. The main character of the novel is Randle McMurphy, who was transferred from the prison to the psychiatry hospital, as the authorities believed that he had psychiatry issues. He became the leader of the other patients, in order to fight with the nurse and stop her from giving unnecessary and painful punishments to the patients. Nurse Ratched is another important character who wants to establish her control on the patients.

The power struggle depicted in the novel is between the nurse and the patients. She wants to have total control over the patients and use the unethical tactics to attain her goal. The chief explains in the initial chapter of the novel that

“I been silent so long now it's gonna roar out of me like floodwaters, and you think the guy telling this is ranting and raving my God; you think this is too horrible to have really happened, this is too awful to be the truth! But, please. It's still hard for me to have a clear mind thinking on it. But it’s the truth even if it didn’t happen (Kesey, 7).”

Initially, he pretended to be mute and deaf; however, he unveils to the readers that he is not the one, he pretended to be, and he has a very important thing to share with the readers. The important thing is the power struggle going on in the hospital, in which everything was in the control of the nurse until McMurphy showed and challenged her attitude and tactics. He was not ready to accept her power and control, like the other patients and decided to fight with her. The duration of the struggle is few months, and its ultimate effect was the death of McMurphy, the suicide of two patients, while the majority of the patients transferred to other hospitals, and the nurse lost her control over the patients. The chief explained that “There's no doubt in my mind that McMurphy's won, but I'm not sure just what (Kesey, 17).” McMurphy did not die naturally; however, he was, and the chief suffocated him, in order to let him enjoy a peaceful death, as he had suffered a lot for the sake of other patients.

The competitors in the power struggle were a nurse and the patients. She used to give them unethical punishment by exposing them to electric shocks or not letting them get the medication, which caused them severe trauma and pain. The patients could not transfer the hospital without her permission. On the other hand, McMurphy who was the leader of the patients tried to fight for their rights. The power struggle ended when McMurphy attacked the nurse in front of all patients and hospital staff, which made her embarrassed, as well as showed to other patients that they can also defend their rights by attacking the other person (Jansson, 9).

The novel depicts the power struggle among the patients and the nurse, which is actually the struggle between the authoritative and powerless group. It shows that the people having authority, use the dirty means to stop the powerless form rising and taking a stand for their rights.

Works Cited

Jansson, Julia. "The Monster Behind the Smile: An Analysis of Nurse Ratched’s Character in Kesey's One flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, and Wasserman's One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest: A Play in Two Acts." (2015).

Kesey, Ken. "One flew over the cuckoo's nest." Penguin. (1962).