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A Rose for Emily

**Personal Reflection on the Story**

Miss Emily Grierson is the lead character of the story who depicts certain unusual behavior of a woman that is quite different from other members of society. She is a typical lady of her own type that demonstrates a particular character that might be considered as touchy, resistant, superstitious, rigid, abnormal, dangerous, and somewhat weird. Such a character cannot adjust in a society, which might be the reason that she has isolated herself from all people of the community. People can only see her through the window while she strolls by or when some authorized person has to go inside for some special reason or discussion. Miss Grierson’s character is remarkable in the way that it delivers a complete portrayal of a lady, belonging to an old era, who cannot adjust with the ways of the new generation. Her story is strange, and her actions are questionable. Certain deeds of her, provoke contempt in the reader’s mind. At times, the reader takes pity on her. Her story has elements of horror as well as those of a psychopath. The story is a tragedy as Ms. Grierson’s story reveals her life incidents, her loneliness, and her madness. The writer of the story, William Faulkner, has crafted the character of Ms. Grierson by incorporating different dark shades, absurd meanings, and pitiable aspects in it, which all make-up its strangeness to the full degree.

The story comprises five parts, each describing certain incidents in Ms. Grierson’s life, disclosing the secrets of her personality (Bausch). The story revolves around the scene of her death, starting and ending by this incident. This indicates that tragedy might be the theme in the writer’s mind. He seems to highlight her death as the most significant incident in Ms. Grierson’s life. This theme is probably dominating in the story as the protagonist lives alone, throughout her life, confined in her monumental house. Living alone, is itself, the worst tragedy in a person’s life. Further, Ms. Grierson is abandoned by her beloved whom she wants to be with. She has inherited the absurd and abnormal traits from her family. Her belongings only increase the weirdness inside her. She has absorbed the common mentality of the age she lived in. The grandeur of her family is no more; she lives almost a miserable life in the house, with nobody outside the house who is like her in their view of life. Despite being a piece of craze and curiosity for all the residents of her town, she is a complete tragedy in her very existence.

People of her town also demonstrate a much unusual attitude towards her. No one is willing to accept her as insane or criminal. Everyone tries to find some justification or positive aspect in her ways of life. Even the mayor of her town, Col. Sartoris, gave her much relaxation in her taxation formalities. The next generation authoritative officials, also, could not take any considerable action against her, and she remained successful in the end in avoiding tax payments. People would not dare interfere in her life, rather they tend to support her resilience towards changing trends. Her father does not make any effort to eliminate the adversity of her life. Her cousins come and go, and she remains bound by the house, as always. She seems not to be supported by anyone of the people she knows so that she can think of changing the way she is.

**Comparison of above Reflection with General Criticism**

Critics of the story have identified various themes in the story. They have tried to come up with different explanations of the character, incidents, and symbolism. An important criticism made by Bei-bei Ye describes the reasons behind the tragic fate of Ms. Grierson. The critic describes her tragedy by dividing the reasons behind it into two types. First is the environmental factor, which indicate that the tragedy in her life is due to the circumstances she faces (Ye). The second factor contributing to her tragedy involves herself, as she depicts particular psychopathic attitude and behavior at times. Answering these questions, the research provides evidence if Ms. Grierson is guilty or not. According to this research on the story, the aim is not only to provide the chronological tragic incidents occurring in Ms. Grierson’s life. The background of the writer is as important as other factors needed to write the analysis. William Faulkner has focused on the South, in most of his works. He wants to highlight the prevailing corruption and decline in the region. The author of the critique admires Faulkner’s artistic charm and agrees with his view that the story is an inevitable tragedy. Faulkner has gone beyond the limit of his character to explain the tragedy of the human being. Among the environmental factors causing Ms. Grierson’s tragedy are the cultural and historical factors. She and her father are the last descendants of their family that had glorious past with Southern aristocracy. She inherited the particular way of thinking from her family, and the hesitation of avoidance to face the reality and mix up with other people. Ms. Grierson’s affiliation with her father was another cause of her stereotype. Her father was a strong advocate of their old traditions. Ms. Grierson’s bondage with her father made the distortions in her personality. One of the environmental causes of Ms. Grierson’s tragedy were the people around her, in town. Their curiosity, picky eyes, and over-concern towards her life and activities made her bound to her house and avoid social gatherings. People did not allow her to live a normal life. Among the personal factors contributing to her tragedy, her failure of love cannot be ignored. Homer is the love of her life whom she wants to marry, but he is not convinced of getting married. Disappointed by his rejection and waiting for him for considerable time, she ultimately decides to kill him and keep him in his house so that he cannot leave her anymore. She has confined herself in the house she inherited from her father. She lives in a place that is practically disconnected from the society. Living alone has impaired Ms. Grierson’s mind and perception. She cannot think normally. She thinks it to be fair to poison her beloved and keep him in one of the bedrooms in her house, lying in bed and left to be rotten with time. Finally, her mind or personality is the main reason of all the tragedy she faces. She is rigid, stubborn, and resilient. People have almost forgotten her existence in their community until they find a smell from her house, which makes a connection once again between the people and Ms. Grierson.

Other critics have associated themes of cruelty, psychopathy, and betrayal with this story. The rose has been the symbol of love or tragedy, and in case of Ms. Grierson, the rose perfectly symbolizes her tragedy (Gale). People who come at her funeral were different in their intentions. Some arrive at the place to see what is inside the house, out of curiosity. Others come there in reverence of the old lady. One thing is common in all, that is, everyone has a special thinking about the lady who is dead.

References

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