
The Dark Of The Mind

A common theme surrounding the characters of *The Cask of Amontillado*, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, and *The Story of an Hour* is distress and resentment. Emotions run wild through the characters in the stories, giving us a glimpse into the minds of a killer, a woman struggling with her sanity, and the internal struggle of a woman longing to be free but struggling with the loss of her main identity when her husband is suddenly taken.

Revenge. A strong emotion that leads down a dark road is in *The Cask of Amontillado* by Edgar Allan Poe. Montresor vows to be avenged of the insult that Fortunato has forced upon him. "I must not only punish but punish with impunity." (179). This resentment of Fortunato builds to a crescendo when the plan is set in motion to orchestrate the demise of Fortunato. Through his cunning plan, Montresor would lead him to the catacombs, where his fate would be sealed. (182) The premeditation of his crime and how it is to be carried out, shows just how deep his resentment resonates inside him. Feeding off Fortunato's drunkenness and his trustfulness in his "friend" as well as Fortunato's infinity for fine wine, he is a willing participant in what is unbeknownst to him Montresor's final act of revenge. (179) While chained to the wall Fortunato calls out to Montresor in a last attempt to reach for any hope of mercy in his friend as the wall is being constructed to entomb him. "For the love of God, Montresor!"(183). A powerful cry that did touch a part of Montresor but was not stronger than his need for revenge or the resentfulness of Fortunato's insults toward him.

"He does not believe I am sick!" (526) Our first glimpse at the resentment is portrayed in *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. It is a different kind of resentment. The kind born out of the actions of the people closest to her. No one believed there was something wrong. Not her husband. Not her physicians. Not her family. It was a depressed mind locked in a room alone with her own thoughts. Thoughts that did not start with the extreme psychosis that she suffered in the end of the story; But thoughts that started with the simple yellow wallpaper that she despised. At first the wallpaper is just an annoyance with its flamboyant patterns and repellent and revolting color.(528) As time goes on, however, and her mind starts slipping into her psychosis, it becomes almost a living thing. The patterns start to move, "I can see a strange, provoking, formless sort of figure, that seems to skulk about that silly and conspicuous front design."(530) Her husband, John, seems oblivious to the severity of her psychosis. In fact, he thinks that she is becoming better.(532) Not realizing that it is in fact progressing. She becomes almost possessive of the wallpaper. "No one touches this paper but me,--not alive!"(536) The hint of resentment that started by simply not being believed leads to the decline of her mind. The struggle to get better was overcome by the force of struggle in her thoughts. What at first seemed to be depression had escalated to full-blown madness.

The Story of an Hour by Kate Chopin does not have a strong theme of resentment as the other stories contain. In this story distress is more pronounced. Mrs. Mallard is not a resentful or vengeful woman. Instead, she is beset with emotion as she learns her husband has been in an accident." She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms."(524) This gives a glimpse into the grief and despair that she is experiencing. As her emotions of grief begin to subside, the inner struggle begins to unfold. And yet she had loved him-more often had she not(525) seems to be a part of the justification she is trying to give herself, but the feeling of

excitement in the face of her freedom overcomes her. “Free! Body and soul free!”(525) Yet the contradiction of her emotions show when she knows she will weep again when she sees his hands folded in death.(525) As her excitement grows and her grief is set aside, she is able to pull herself up and put her emotions by the wayside and happily resigns herself to be a free woman. The strong emotions that have been coursing through her sadly will lead to her downfall. As she finally opened the door to her room where her sister had thought her in despair when in truth it had been happy, she came face to face with the very person she had mourned for the loss of but rejoiced in freedom from. When the doctors came, they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills.(525) This would have been true but for the happiness, she had felt at the thought of living for herself.

Resentment and distress echo through each of these stories. Revenge, psychosis, and sadness run rampant. Montresor leads us through his lust for revenge against insult. The woman in *The Yellow Wallpaper* shows the effect of being locked away with an unstable mind. Mrs. Mallard shows the very real effect of emotions as she fights with grieving for her husband yet can't contain her excitement of being free from the bind of marriage. These stories show how devastating these emotions can be to the human mind.?

Works Cited

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