

# A journey by colm toibin

People



"A Journey" by Colm Toibin Changes is a part of every normal human life, but sometimes it doesn't change in a direction we like. When it happens that life doesn't work out the way we hope, it's a natural thing that we start looking back on our past. In wonder of the things we did wrong, but also just to remember a time that felt brighter and happier. A Journey by Colm Tobin is a story that deals with a reflection about the past, and how it has affected the present. In A Journey the reflection happens in flashbacks, that the story's main character Mary is getting on her journey from a hospital to her home.

On this hospital she has picked her son who has suffered and still suffers from a deep depression. On the same time has her husband, named Seamus, just had another stroke, and is very ill. "Now Seamus was lying upstairs in that same house. The whole right side of his body was paralyzed. That scene Mary could picture more sharply than 60 anything. Even when she read the newspaper to him, Seamus did not seem interested." Much interests isn't she getting from her depressed son as well, he doesn't want to sit with her in the front seat in the car and does specifically ask her to not ask any question during their journey.

Mary is therefore a lonely woman, who has to deal with a troubled present alone. A naturally reaction is to seek comfort in a brighter time in her past. She think a lot about happy memories with Seamus, her father and her son. At the same time it's clear that she is looking back to find some kind of explanation of her misery at the same time. She can't really find these explanations though, because she is afraid of facing what have caused the changes that have been in her life.

That we see in this quote about her son's doctor: " He did not seem ready to answer any direct questions so Mary had asked none". That is what she is trying to convince herself, but the truth is probably that she is afraid of the answers he might give her. A Journey is a story about life, and how we handle the change of directions we sometimes have to make on that journey. Therefore are changes a major theme. Mary has a hard time facing the problems that the changes means, and seek comfort in the comforting past. The changes Mary has a hard time ealing with is involving hisfamily, and what she can do with them and how she has to be. That makes family-relation, by my opinion, to another important theme in the story. The way she is reflecting about changes, which she does implicit without she admits it, is through flashbacks. The story starts up in a flashback and they are well used all the way to the end. The using of flashbacks gives an improved knowledge about the head characters. In A Journey it is used to give us readers an insight in Mary and her family's past, and therefore gives a hint of how the situation became how it did.

They have a clear contrast to the present in where the story takes place, and it creates a situation where the reader feels a sense of understanding as though he/she knows the past tense and the change and development of the different characters represented in the story. Concretely is the flashback a tool to illustrate Mary's almost desperate attempt to maintain things how it were, before it all changed. That's why there's a lot of flashback to memories with her father before he died, her husband before he got sick and her son before his mood got dark and depressed.

It's also a tool to tell us about the background for her relationship with her son, be telling us why she has such a hard time connecting with him, and understand how he feels. " It was, she knew, an illness, but it did not seem like one. It seemed to her like something David would not give up, a special dark gift he had been offered. Something which comforted him and which he had accepted. " The flashbacks are used to tell us about all what's behind immediate plot. The title of the short story refers to more than its literal journey from the hospital to home.

It refers to the development with Mary's way of dealing with things. In the very short journey from hospital to the house I'll interpret that Mary develops, because she through the flashbacks sense the changes and by that she becomes more focused on the present and the time to come. This statement is supported by a quotation from the end of the story. " It was time, she thought, to let the grey appear". Literally, she talks about stop coloring her hair blond. Figuratively, it means that she needs to face the problems and let nature do its work. She can't hide the reality from herself anymore.