

# Literature review on the happy family

[Life](#), [Love](#)



“ The Happy Family” is a sarcastic little tale written by Hans Christian Andersen. The most important theme of the story is the ignorant and narrow-minded nature of human beings. The story features two snails that believed they were the most outstanding creatures in the whole world and that the entire forest of burdocks was built for them. They wanted to get into the “ manor house to be boiled and served on a silver plate” because they thought it was a very special and honorable thing to have that happen to them. However, what the two snails believed about themselves and the world around them was wrong. The truth was that the white snails were traditionally to be made into “ fricassee” in wealthy families, and people originally planted these burdock leaves for the white snails. Yet, the custom of eating snails disappeared long ago, and the two snails were the last survivors of their kind. The burdock leaves were left there because they grew all around and were too hard to get rid of. Therefore, it is clear that the two snails were wrong in their belief and was not even aware of their ignorance. Despite all this, the two snails had never been outside and have no curiosity of knowing about the world outside. They thought where they were living was the best place in the whole world. They are similar to the great Chinese proverb “ the frog in a well” in the sense that they lack understanding and vision.

The other side theme evident in the story is love. The two white snails lived harmoniously in the garden and had no major quarrels among themselves and with the others in the garden (ants, frogs and the earth worm), which enabled them to enjoy the peace. It is a message to the human race that through peace and love, we would live peacefully and in harmony. The

benefit for the snails of living in peace is clear, as it is through living in peace that the snails could inquire from their friends, the ants, of a spouse for their son.

The story's themes are developed through the two main characters, the mother snail and the father snail of the white race. However, Propp-R's model cannot be used to analyze the structure of this story, because the story itself is not a magic tale. The protagonists did not start from a position of disadvantage and ended up with a great fortune. Instead the whole story started and ended peacefully without ups and downs. In this case, Propp-R's model cannot be applied for structure analysis.

The story "The Happy Family" is short, and its structure is fairly simple. The author used various techniques to develop the story's themes. Symbolism has been employed in the story, as the two snails were used to symbolize the kind of human nature that lacks insight and knowledge in real life. In the story, the two snails believed they were superior to all other creatures in the world and had no interest in knowing about what was really going on outside their immediate environment. They even thought that being cooked and served on a silver dish was a wonderful thing, due to the fact that it was something that happened to them. If it happened to them, the great snails, then logic tells them that being boiled must be glorious. The author clearly was not only referring to snails, but human beings, who often behave just like this. The story is very effective in raising many questions in the back of a reader's mind towards thinking about how ignorant and lack of understanding people can be. Therefore, we can say that Andersen

represents the major theme of this short story with the use of symbolism. The message that the reader can glean from the story is to always be open to learning more about the world around them. We must never be complacent and imagine that we know all that we need to know. The two snails should have never assumed that they were the most outstanding creatures in the world and had the notion to be cooked in the manor house. They clearly did not know that if they were to achieve this, they would die a painful death and end up being eaten by the humans. The two snails in the story are similar to the frog in the great Chinese proverb “ the Frog in the Well,” in the sense that the frog in a well does not know the great sea. Therefore, it is important to be knowledgeable about things around the world.

We cannot just live in our own bubble and ignore the people and events that make up the rest of the world. At the same time, this does not mean that one should blindly seek knowledge for its own sake, nor should they not be appreciative of what they have. Therefore, to bring such awareness to the readers, the author tells a story of two snails to mock the ignorance and narrow-mindedness of human beings. With this story, Andersen seeks to teach the reader about humility and curiosity in a way that delights and entertains the average consumer of his works, while still providing an important lesson to be ingrained in young minds.