

Analysis of the lady's maid by katherine mansfield essay



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Analysis of The Lady's Maid by Katherine MansfieldName: The Lady's Maid" by Katherine Mansfield (1888 to 1923-New Zealand) was first published in 1920. The story is told in the first person by Ellen but at the same time meant to be told to " madam. " She has worked as a lady's maid for the same family for many years. This story expresses regret that this lady had wasted her life on her lady instead of having a real life. The writer Katherine has achieved this through various narrative conventions such as issues, different themes, characterisation. The story is a dramatic monologue.

She is portrayed very garrulously. In a dramatic monologue, the reader overhears somebody speaking aloud to another person. The monologist has a particular reason for telling a particular story to a particular audience, and his or her speech, as in real life, is spontaneous and unrehearsed. Once she fell in love with a man named Harry who owned a flower shop. When Harry asked her to marry him Ellen was thrilled but as the wedding day got closer she chose to stay with " My lady" after all. This could show that she was afraid of new commitments even though her attitude toward marriage was very down-to earth.

Ellen's inner rebellion is quite strongly portrayed. Whenever she's tried to do something for her own choice she's been punished or stifled: her hand burned for cutting her own hair; kept from riding the donkeys since she was in uniform. She's quite unhappy as her freedom is awfully restricted and her life seems to be vulnerable. A good example of Ellen's naivety is when The Lady drops her handkerchief and began to stoop to pick it up herself - a thing she never did. Ellen interrogated and prevented her from doing so.

She is still very loyal to her Lady even when she knows she's about to get married. The Lady is still the focal point of her life. Ellen seems to think that My Lady never thinks of herself (page 3, bottom). This could be the truth but according to the story about the donkeys My Lady doesn't necessarily think of Ellen so much either. Ellen doesn't seem to realize this - maybe because she's naive, maybe because she just wants someone to care about her. Mansfield depicts in this short work how the master-servant relationship can shape the attitudes of both parties.