

# The weed by amrita pritam

Literature



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This paper illustrates that the story unfolds through the point of view of an unnamed narrator, obviously a city-bred and educated female. The main theme of the story is the vulnerability of women who fall prey to the lure of men, symbolized through the metaphorical weed, and how males exploit the females for carnal pleasure and then discard them. Right from the first line of the story, the author hints at the way women are treated in rural India by her reference to the “ new bride of the old servant,” which connotes to the fact that older men in the country practice polygamy and that they can have younger wives. The author also suggests that under the patriarchal system that exists in the country, any father can give away his daughter to any man without the consent of the girl. Pritam presents the girl as a “ delight to both ear and eye” and owning a body that redeems her “ dark complexion”. In contrast, the author portrays her husband, Prabhati, as “ old, short and loose-jawed,” which indicates that the society disregards the traits of a woman and by belonging to the stronger sex, men are automatically qualified to claim any woman. Unfortunately, Angoori is not the single female, who meets with a similar fate in the rural Indian society and it appears that many suffer at men’s hands in the same way. She relates the story of her friend, who absconds with her paramour, who later deserts her, to the narrator. The author tries to emphasize the issue of male exploitation of the females by referring to various aspects of the rural Indian culture, which is her major theme for the story. She uses the metaphor of the “ weed” to underline the fact that males use some or other material elements to win over the female hearts. In the case of Angoori’s friend, the weed comes in the form of sweets and betel leaf and in the protagonist’s case, it takes the form of sweetened tea. The men in all cases exploit the women

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and after enjoying the carnal pleasure desert them. The exploitation of women in the rural Indian culture, thus, is a theme that is recurrently emphasized in the story. Pritam also deploys the literary device of imagery and irony profusely in the story to underline the theme of exploitation of females by males in the rural Indian culture. The author's deft use of imagery to attain this purpose becomes evident from the episode where she equates Angoori's body to "rightly kneaded dough, a baker's pride" and describes her "rippling muscles impregnated with the metallic resilience of a coiled spring". By using such imagery, the author provides the readers with a vivid picture of a youthful and energetic female. On the other hand, Pritam talks about her husband as a loose-jawed old man, a stark contrast to the resilient and beautiful Angoori, for whom a husband is one whose feet a girl begins to adore when she is five or six. By dwelling on the protagonist's beliefs such as this, the author wants to emphasize that women in rural India tend to acquiesce to men and they find contentment in it.