

Tale tell heart and goose girl

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Jack Mitchell Mr. Glen Smith English1302 Oct 10, 2012 Compare/Contrast Essay Assignment #2 The unnamed narrator in Edgar Allan Poe's "A Tell-Tale Heart" and the chambermaid in the Grimm Brothers "The Goose Girl" both possess strikingly similar characteristics. Both show aggression and use violence to get what they want but are very careful of how they go about it and covering it up. In Poe's story, the unnamed narrator kills an elderly man that he is caring for because the old man has a foul looking eye that is covered with a white film.

This is what is slowly driving him insane but afterwards he ingeniously decides to hide the body in case someone heard the noise of the old man's body. This is so he does not get arrested for his murder and when the police do stop they believe his story and do not suspect anything, until he gives them a reason. The chambermaid on the other hand forcefully and violently makes the princess, who she knows won't stand up for herself, switch places with her simply because she wants to live the life of the princess.

She also makes the princess swear to secrecy so she never has to worry about her true identity being unveiled. Later, she cleverly kills the princess's talking horse, which was the only witness to what happened between the chambermaid and the real princess's. In Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" the unnamed narrator is caring for an elderly man who isn't capable of taking care of himself. The elderly man has a bad eye that has a silky film over the top of it. The narrator becomes sickened and essentially afraid of the eye.

He decides that the only way he can get rid of these feelings is to kill the old man thus getting rid of the eye forever. Originally, he is hesitant to actually go through with his plan, but he knows it is the only way to end his torture. "

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I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever” (303). He waits until the time is right when the eye is open to kill him “ I did for seven long nights every night just at midnight, but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the work” (303).

He feels he must kill the man with the evil eye open because “ for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his Evil Eye” (303). Once he finally kills the man, he decides to hide the body incase someone heard the noise or the beating of the man’s heart, which is now driving him even more insane. However, when he was finished cleaning up someone rang his doorbell and when he opened it, “ There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police” (305). The narrator gave the police a very believable story and they were satisfied.

He was almost scott free, but then he starts to hear the thumping of the mans heart and starts going crazy. Convinced the police heard the noise too he ripped up the planks revealing the body of the elderly man. In the Grimm Brothers “ The Goose Girl”, the chambermaid of the princess so desperately wants to the live the lavish care free life of the princess she decides to test her fate by taking action. This is when her violent behavior is seen for the first time, when she decides to forcefully and violently begin to curse at the princess to dress up as a chambermaid so she can take the princess’s place.

She also made the princess to swear to never tell anyone what happened. “ Then with many harsh words, the chambermaid ordered the princess to take off her own royal clothing and put on the chambermaid's shabby clothes. And in the end the princess had to swear under the open heaven that she would not say one word of this to anyone...”(406) When she finally arrives at

the castle and marries the king, she asks him for a favor. “ Send for the knacker, and have the head of the horse which I rode here cut off. ” (408) This is her way of making sure that there are no loose ends and that there is no one or thing that can reveal her true identity.

However, she does not know the horse can still talk after its' been beheaded. This small overlooked detail is the root cause to her downfall. The Narrator is portrayed as an insane man who starts to lose control of whatever sanity he has left once he comes into contact with the elderly mans grotesque eye that he thinks is evil. Even though he is portrayed as crazy, in reality he has not lost his mind completely, in he fact that he actually watches the man, investigates the room, and checks the eye to see if it is open “ every night just at midnight”(303). He did this for seven nights, hich clearly shows that he has not completely lost his grip on reality. By waiting for the perfect chance to strike shows patience, mentally and physically. Another sign the narrator was not totally insane was that he had a face-to-face conversation with three police officers. In the end, “ The officers were satisfied” and believed his alibi. There is no way a person said to have lost his mind completely could have fooled three trained police officers. On the other hand, the chambermaid in “ The Goose Girl” is seen as a cunning, tough character throughout the story.

However, towards the end of the story her true colors begin to shine. By her sending out the knacker to “ have the head of the horse which I rode here cut off, for it angered me on the way. ”(306). This shows that she has started to worry and stress over her secret getting out. By her having everything and everyone who could tell her secret around her taken away is the first sign of

weakness from her. It is a sign of weakness because she is doing everything possible to save herself and only herself.

Lastly, the reason why both the chambermaid and the narrator both got caught and failed to get away was due to them. The narrator was home free until he started to panic, thinking the guards could hear what he was hearing he finally lost it “ dissemble no more! I admit the deed! —tear up the planks! here, here! —It is the beating of his hideous heart! ” (306). The chambermaid had it done what she had set out to do. However, if she would have stopped and trusted the promise the princess gave her from the beginning she would have been fine.

She instead decided to take things into her own hands and had the talking horse beheaded. Finally, the reader can see that both of the characters used every means necessary to get what they wanted which included violence to get what they want but are also very careful of how they go about it and covering it up.

Work Cited Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. “ The Goose-Girl. ” *Kinder-und Hausmarchen*. 7th ed. D. L. Ashilman, trans. Berlin: n. p. , 1857. Print Poe, Edgar Allan. “ The Tell-Tale Heart. ” *The complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*. New York: Random House, 1975. Print.