

The old women



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Old Woman ??? The Old Woman??? is about a woman called Molly who has left England and has immigrated to Canada to live with her husband.

They had known each other for few months when they married in England. Soon after marriage her husband has left her to come to Canada. For her, it has been three years of waiting and loneliness while her husband has been busy with his beloved power-house. A house close to a noisy waterfall, several miles away from the nearest town, taciturn people with French-Canadian culture are numerous problems that she has to deal with.

The author, Joyce Marshall, has pointed loneliness as one of the most important issues that can hurt an immigrant in a new country. The story starts in the station at Montreal. Molly has found that her husband is changed. ??? It was more than the absence of uniform. His face seemed so still, and there was something about his mouth???" a sort of slackness.

And at times she would turn and find him looking at her, his eyes absorbed and watchful??? (Marshall 34). The word ??? still???, ??? slackness??? and ??? watchful??? shows that he is not interested to see his wife. Molly feels that her husband doesn't have enough attention to her.

Despite the sad condition, she tries to tell herself that her husband would be closer to her when they get home. It's a romantic morning when they leave the train. ??? It was grey dawn faintly disturbed with pink when they left the train??? (Marshall 34). After a long journey over the snow they arrive home. Molly is tired and she needs a quiet and friendly environment but the sound of the waterfall is annoying her. This inconvenience situation and lack of attention from her husband is increasing her fear of loneliness.

It reminds her last three years, three years of waiting and loneliness. She has left England to escape the loneliness. She deserves it. She doesn't have family or relative and she is far from her friends, this fact is increasing her dependency on her husband. He doesn't help her to settle into new life. Another issue that Molly is experiencing is environmental loneliness. Not only her husband doesn't spend time with her but also she doesn't know any neighbour.

As Marshal writes: "There were no neighbours within miles, no telephone calls or visits from milkman or baker" only one of Toddy's sweepers coming in once a fortnight with supplies and mail from Missawani (P 37.) If it was a crowded and friendlier neighborhood or if she knew some people around her, there would be fewer issues. Coldness, grey and cloudy sky, lack of sun, taciturn people are parameters that are helping loneliness to take over Molly's life. When I first came to Canada, I was living in Richmond Hill which is a quiet area. I can remember how lonely I felt. I felt there's no one in my life that I can share my feelings with. I came to the conclusion that I'm unacceptable and unlovable.

But actually that wasn't because of me, it was society which made me feel that way. Molly in "The Old Woman" has the same feeling. She came from a European-style country where people are friendlier and warmer. It must be so hard for her to leave in a house so far from any neighborhood.

Immigration is a long and complex process and relocation to another country is not easy. A different culture and a different life-style will increase the issues that an immigrant is experiencing in the new country. Without any

doubt, loneliness is one the most important problems that will affect a newcomer's life. The Old Woman has demonstrated that how a woman can be hurt by her husband if he doesn't show compassion and understanding for her situation as an immigrant in the new country.