

Visit of charity by eudora welty. marian character analysis

Literature



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In Eudora Welty's "A Visit of Charity," the main character, fourteen year old Marian, visits two old ladies at the Old Ladies' Home, because she is a Campfire girl trying to earn charity points. Even though this act should be one that is generous, and caring, Marian is very selfish and cruel to the old women. In the story, Marian is an immature girl who acts as if she is dumb in a way. She is not performing a thoughtful act as she should be; she is only thinking of herself.

At the start of the narrative, the first thing Marian says is "I'm a campfire girl...I have to pay a visit to SOME old lady" (Welty 1). She quickly introduces herself in the story as being egotistical. It is understandable that she does not want to spend time with old women, especially as a young girl, but her attitude is rude and disrespectful. She makes it very obvious that she does not want to be there by making the statement of how she has to visit "some" old lady. Marian comes off as not wanting to be at the elderly home, and she hints about how she cannot wait to leave.

Marian acts very strange throughout the story. She is asked several simple questions, but she cannot answer them. She gets flustered extremely easily. Marian was finally taken down the hall by the nurse. the nurse pointed at the rooms and said, "There are two in each room" (Welty 1). Marian replies back by asking "Two what?" (Welty 1). It is very small example, but it is very obvious that the nurse is talking about the old women. What else would she be talking about? Marian seems to be slightly naive. This side of her is different from how she first appears. At the beginning, she is arrogant and conceited, but once she meets the old women her immaturity is shown.

Once Marian meets the old women, her immaturity begins to be seen more clearly. The women ask Marian what her name is, but she cannot remember it. Marian responds, " I'm a campfire girl" (Welty 2). This simple question was too difficult for her to answer. She seems to be too nervous to think clearly. Marian is very scared of the old women, which is clear, but she is fourteen years old and should not be afraid of two small, elderly women. One of the old women goes on to ask what Marian does at school. She replies, " I do not know..." (Welty 3). Again, Marian is acting childish and forgetful by answering questions so stupidly.

Marian's selfishness is shown again when one of the women notices the flowers that Marian brought for them. She was about to tell the women why she brought them, but decided to keep it to herself. "...if Campfire Girls delivered flowers to the Old ladies' Home the visit would count one extra point, and if they took a bible with them on the bus and read it to the old ladies, it counted double" (Welty 3). Marian did not bring a plant on her visit out of the kindness of her heart, but only so she could receive more points towards her score. Marian is not acting her age or being appropriate.

The old women in the story are seen by Marian as old witches by comparing their hands to claws, " Marian jumped up and moved toward the door. For the second time, the claw almost touched her hair, but it was not quick enough" (Welty 5). The girl has such fear of these women, when all they are doing is bickering and talking to her. Most of this fear is in her head. She responds negatively to all the things the women do to her. I am sure the women are trying to be funny and see how she responds to their humor, but

Marian is over reacting. The lady asked Marian to come towards her so she could tell her something, but the girl was extremely frightened. "Marian was trembling, and her heart nearly stopped beating altogether for a moment" (Welty 4). She is scared to death of these women which is very strange for what age she is. Marian is obviously not accustomed to spending time with the elderly. This says something about her life outside of what she is experiencing in the Old Ladies' Home. She, like other children, would never think about coming to this area, because it is not relevant to them, especially at their age. This shows Marian, again, in a negative light. She obviously does not care about these women, and only is there for personal gain.

Towards the end of the story, Marian finally "escapes" this "torturous" home. She leaves the elderly women without even saying goodbye, and she runs down the corridor to the exit. Marian is very melodramatic. She was not with the women for very long, but she makes it seem as she was trapped there forever. When she finally made it out of the Old Ladies' Home, she is backed to her snooty self. Marian calls after the bus to stop for her, she gets onto it and eats an apple, like this whole visit had never happened.

"A Visit of Charity" was not about a visit of charity. Marian's visit was far from charitable. Her only reason for visiting the Old Ladies' Home was so she could gain more points for her total score. The overall story portrays Marian as a naive and selfish girl, who is overly dramatic when it came to the old women. She was so frightened of them that she compared them to old witches. This story shows two sides of Marian; defiant and sassy, and naive and childish.