

"the chrysanthemum"



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The story, *The Chrysanthemums*, is a short story that revolves around a certain woman by the name Elisa. She has married a man called Henry. This man is a farmer who earns his living by selling his farm produce. Elisa's character is so dynamic and somehow unpredictable. She is a homemaker. Her life tends to be confined to a small area, her husband's homestead. She spends most of her time cultivating her husband's land.

The theme of this story is gender inequality. At the beginning of this story, we meet Elisa, who lives in the valley that is covered with a gray-flannel fog of winter. This description symbolizes confinement. This is the case since we can see Elisa confined in her homestead. She can not roam about like Henry or the man. When ever she leaves her home for dinner, she is in the company of Henry, her husband. We also see Henry taking Elisa for a movie after dinner. Elisa has no choice but to remain within the homestead in the valley. Her home was "surrounded with red geraniums". This symbolizes further confinement of Elisa. When in the garden, "She was kneeling on the ground looking up at him. Her breast swelled passionately (7)." This creates the perception that women are inferior to men. At the end of the story it was revealed that the man thre the chrysanthemums and kept the pots after he convinced Elisa that they were for his customer. This theme gives a lesson to not trust or be misled by the expression of strangers just because they treat you kindly.

This story has three prominent characters. Elisa, who is the protagonist, her husband Henry and the third character referred to as the man.

The author has developed the character traits of Elisa based on her activities and her outward appearance. Elisa, as seen in the story has an unusually complicated character trait. Her behavior keeps on changing with time, depending on whom she is socializing with. It is also clear in the story that the flowers that Elisa grows affect her mood and behavior significantly.

Elisa is hard working. She cut chrysanthemums stalk powerfully. She is also highly indecisive as seen from declining to offer the long bearded man a job. When the man shows his interest in her chrysanthemums, she gives him the souse pans to mend from which he earns fifty cents. Elisa is uncommonly generous. When the stranger shows interest in her flowers and tells her of a woman who had told him to find her such cuttings, she is fast to give him some.

Elisa is self-conscious. After the strange man leaves, she goes in to the house and takes a bath. She also looks at her self on the mirror to ensure she clean. Elisa is remarkably proficient at pretending. While in the car with her husband, as they go for dinner, she spots, a piece of chrysanthemums cutting which she had given to the stranger. This hurts her so much that she starts crying. She hides her tears from her husband since she does not want him to know.

Elisa is a dynamic character. Her behavior and emotions keep changing with different life situations. When the stranger came to her, and started talking to her, they seem to be friendly. Never the less, when this man asks for a job, she abruptly changes her mood and the look on her face also changes. " All right, then. Take a pot," he continued earnestly, " a bent pot, or a pot with

a hole. I can make it like new so you don't have to buy no new ones. That's a saving for you. No," she said shortly. " I tell you I have nothing like that for you to do". (5). She gets angry because the man does not seem to address her problem of loneliness, but focuses on his interests. In addition, when the man shows his interest in her flowers, she again changes unusually fast in to a jovial mood. This is because she spends most of her time working in the farm. Therefore, any one who does not appreciate her crop, he does not appreciate her too.