

Sula by toni morrison

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It all began in and around the year 1919. Sula Peace, the daughter of Rekus who died when she was 3 years old and Hannah, was a young and lonely girl of wild dreams. Sula was born in the same year as Nel, 1910. Sula was a heavy brown color and had large eyes with a birthmark that resembled a stemmed rose to some and many varied things to others.

Nel Wright, the daughter of Helene and Wiley, was an unimaginative girl living in a very strict and manipulated life. Nel was lighter in color than Sula and could have passed for white if she had been a few shades lighter. A trip to visit her dying great-grandmother in the south had a profound effect on Nel's life. In many ways the trip made her realize her selfness and look at things around her in a different light, eventually sowing the seeds that initiated the friendship between herself and Sula.

The two girls met each other at Garfield Primary School after knowing each other at a distance for over five years. Nel's mother had told her that she could not interact with Sula because of Sula's mother's sooty ways. The intense and sudden friendship between them which was to last many years was originally cultivated by Nel. The period in history and the mentality of the people in their immediate surroundings played an impressive part in the formulation of the friendship between Sula and Nel.

When they first met at school, it was as if they were always destined to be friends. Each one complimented the other and it was as if they were two halves of one whole. Like many things in life, they each secretly enjoyed the immediate surroundings of the other. As much as Nel regarded the neatness

of her house with dread, Sula felt the house to be comfortable and relished the neatness.

On the same token, Sula disliked the disarray and lack of privacy in her house, but Nel found it to be a welcome change and a taste of real life. Sula and Nel found friendship in each other, because they were both lonely people. When they were young girls, they would go to Edna Finch's Mellow House together to purchase ice cream.

The ice cream representing the end of one's life, the real treat was on getting there. They looked forward to the looks and sly comments of the boys as they made their way to the ice cream parlor, and as most girls do, exhibited an air of indifference while secretly relishing in the attention they received.

It was an accident, but like most secrets between friends, it only made the bonds that bind them even stronger. The accidental death of Chicken Little at the hands of Sula had a profound effect on the friendship. Sula had not meant to kill Chicken and Nel knew this, and therefore made the unspoken pact of silence with her.

The incident only exemplified the bonds that made two disparate people appear as one. While Sula delved in anguish and Nel in logical thought, they both failed to grieve or feel sorry for the deed that had been committed. Sula was tougher than Nel in a physical way, but what Nel lacked in physical prowess she made up with sensible cool-headed thinking.

When Sula realized that Chicken was drowning her immediate reaction was not to try to save him, but to check her surroundings to glean if anyone had seen what had transpired. The callousness of that act and the fact that even though Nel acted calm about the situation, she did not try to save him also, further demonstrates the effect that each one had on the other.

Sula was a mean in many ways because she believed no one loved her except for Nel. When she overheard her mother say that she liked her, but did not love her it struck a part of her psyche that she was not able to comprehend even though she could feel the hurt and the pain. When her mother committed suicide by self-emolition the emotions that she felt, like the incident with Chicken Little, had nothing to do with grief or loss, but with the experiencing of the event that was transpiring.

In all honesty, she may not have loved her mother and she may even have hated her for saying that she did not like her, but at the same time a child, who she was at the time, looks at things in quite a different manner than adults. Not much is known about them after Sula's mother's death, but it appears that their friendship remained strong up to and including the marriage of Nel to Jude Greene.

Like best friends, Sula took charge of the wedding arrangements for Nel. She made sure that all was in order and that no matter what happened later on that Nel would enjoy her special day. Although Nel was not bothered about getting married to anyone at that time, the motherly instinct and the need to care for someone in need made her a willing participant.

Again, one can clearly see that Nel and Sula are each one side of the same coin. Sula cared for no one but herself while Nel placed the feelings of others before those pertaining to her. This is also quite evident when Sula returns from college and speaks to Eva, her grandmother, and tells her that she did not want to make anyone else but herself. Sula did not care about having children because it would take away from herself.

When Sula slept with Jude, it was a blow to Nel as if Sula had stuck a knife in her back. She could not understand how her best friend would treat her in such a manner and betray her to such an extent. Friendship is based on trust and if you cannot trust your best friends, then whom can you trust. This new feeling left Nel in a state of flux and bewilderment, since she felt love for Jude and for Sula, but the love for Sula was also coupled with the fact that she liked her.

The incident of finding Sula with her husband caused a great rift in the friendship, a rift that Nel felt she could not cross and that Sula felt should not exist. Sula, like always was not sorry for what she had done and in her incapacity to express regret she was unable to deal with the situation. Nel felt that the one person who she felt not only understood her but also loved her unconditionally and would not do anything to hurt her had betrayed her. Since emotional things did not affect Sula, she did not see any reason why Nel should be affected either.

She looked upon the incident with Jude as one of life's experiences. Jude left Nel and went to live with Sula but because Sula really did not love him and only wanted to experience the situation, the relationship did not last very

long. This left Nel alone with three children to provide care for and because she had so much love to share and could not share it with Nel nor Jude she showered it on her kids.

Many years after the incident with Sula and Jude that Nel finally decided to re-acquaint herself with Sula. Not primarily because Sula was sick and dying, but because she needed to know and understand for herself why Sula betrayed her in such a manner. Armed with the information that Sula was sick and may be in need of assistance since no one else in the neighborhood was willing to help her, she visited Sula for the last time.

Nevertheless, Sula had not changed, she still considered herself to be above reproach for whatever deeds she committed. Nel finally understood her friend for who she really was and realized that even though she did not like some of her way, she liked the good parts of her enough to forgive the bad. She is finally able to not only cross the chasm that was created in their friendship by Sula's betrayal but she realized how much she really loved her as a friend, albeit a little too late since Sula was already dead.

All in all Sula was a mean self-centered person whose only emotional outlet was in the person of her best friend Nel. They compliment each other in many ways and paint a myriad picture of what true friendship is all about. In friendship, one has to take the good with the bad, and the thick with the thin, and Sula and Nel were the best of friends in that respect.