

How does elizabeth gaskell create an effective ghost story?

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Elizabeth Gaskell wrote this short story in 1852. It is based on revenge within a wealthy family. It is a ghost story where death plays a significant part. The choice of story teller really makes this 19th century story work. The nurse who tells this story in first person perspective tells us how her early life comes to a halt when picked out to look after Miss Rosamond the cousin of a lord. The tone of this story is very natural, honest, genuine and believable and adds certain freshness. At the start it is a very slow build up.

She relates to the reader by expressing her fears truly, she's an outsider the same as the reader and we know this because she has no relation to this family. She also makes it very realistic and with no resistance. The impact of the setting is effective as the house is in the middle of nowhere, isolated and lonely. There are some safe areas in the house e. g. the kitchen, drawing room, nursery where there's a sense of warmth but all together overwhelming because of the size of the house.

The writer describes the sounds and sights of this place and compares to where she used to live. There were oak trees "white and peeled with age" from this extract you can tell this place is very old and adds effectiveness to this description. "Branches dragged the wall" from this we realise this house isn't looked after appropriately and in windy weather the characters would hear scraping against the wall which adds a sensation of mystery in the story. The east wing adds creepiness as no-one is allowed in there.

It's like a taboo and no-one knows what the room even looks like. "Except the east wing which was never opened" which suggests that someone keeps it locked to try to hide or forget about something. The way tension is built up

through out the story adds to the feeling of unease. The organ begins this disturbing atmosphere when the weather isn't good " someone " plays on the old organ but when Hester goes to look it's broken. This adds apprehension. Rosamond's mother dying very early in the story adds tension and suspense from the start.

You are anxious to know is going to happen to Rosamond as she is so young. The writer adds thought to our minds while questioned with this. Tense and edgy is what we feel when the characters in the story only tell us a small part of the whole story and keeps the reader in need of more. When Dorothy reveals " If I show you, you must never let on" to Hester she firstly learns about Miss Graces' sister having her portrait turned to face the wall.

Automatically the reader is wondering why this family has done such a thing.

The use made of the ghosts in the story makes you have all different kinds of perspectives towards them. The ghost of the old Lord Furnivall very sinfully pounds of the organ on nights with severe weather conditions. " He played more and more stormily and sadly on the great organ" This suggests that the playing of the organ grew stronger and louder as the weather got more unpleasant as they grew quickly into winter. When Hester confronted the staff about these incidents they all alleged that they hadn't heard it or held the wind responsible.

The danger the phantom child brought was far worse than the old Lords. " I could not choose but to go" Rosamond explained to Hester which says that the Phantom child has a power of Rosamond to make her pursue her to her

mother up at the fells, where she would meet her death, but not only do they have a power over Rosamond they also have a power over Miss Furnivall. " Miss Furnivall shivered and shook so much" this makes the reader think why she is doing this and why she is so worried and scared.

The ghosts are trying to achieve revenge on the family by killing Rosamond as the old Lord and Miss Furnivall killed them. Also before the ghosts come the atmosphere would change dramatically. " It grew dusk indoors" from this we can tell that the ghosts have immense power to turn the inside of the house dark while outside it is light and this is another fact of when the ghosts come the environment changes The use made of the family history is explaining the background this family has come from.

The family history captures the mystery as the still don't give you the story intact just little tasters to keep the reader interested and always wanting more. You find out why the ghosts are there after everything is told to Hester and are there because when alive were thrown out of the manor when Lord Furnivall found out that Miss Maude the elder sister of the two had a child and was married to a musician that Lord Furnivall invited to his house every year but for musical purposes only, also he thought no man was good enough for his daughters which made him more angry.

The building up throughout the story gives this story great potential and promise to have a superior impact at the end. For example the violence in this story in one way is especially exciting and open. Its exciting by making us the reader anxious of the intensity Elizabeth Gaskell goes to to put the

message across. She is very open because she initially doesn't make it known to Hester that there is a chilling secret to this household and all of a sudden it comes out as if she can't keep it back any longer but all the way through she gives clues about it. Dorothy's colour changed once or twice" This tells us that Dorothy knew everything that had happened but either couldn't say or didn't want to bring back such bad memories. The images in this story are very obvious and the writer has described them unmistakably throughout the story which gives the reader a clear picture in their minds. One example from the book is "the vast heath-place which gave out no heat" This description makes the reader realise that this was not real but just a re-enactment of something which took place a long time ago.

Ending on a moral gives the reader an opportunity to think about things they have done in the past and involves them so then they relate to the book, and that gives the book an exceptionally good end. The moral "What is done in youth can never be undone in age" concludes this 19th century story splendidly. Miss Furnivall mutters these words on her death bed which intensifies the whole story even though the climatic part is over and all together adds great effect. Ghost stories aren't my favourite genre but I still appreciate them greatly!