

Fowering judas essay



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“ Flowering Judas”, a short novel, is also one of Katherine Anne Porter’s typical representatives among her literary achievement. The short story describes an American girl named Laura. She departs from Catholicism and goes to Mexico as an English teacher. When Laura is involved in an socialist revolutionary in Mexico, she meets Braggioni who is a boastful leader of Marxist revolutionaries in and around Mexico City. He frequently visits Laura at home, hoping to seduce her. Laura has found reasons for avoiding her own house until the latest possible moment, for Braggioni is there almost every night.

No matter how late she is, he will be sitting there with a surly, waiting expression, pulling at his kinky yellow hair in order to sing a song to Laura. However, Laura does not love him and resist tenaciously without appearing to resist. Symbolism in this short story is primarily presented in the main characters-Laura, Braggioni and Eugenio. Porter does not express the meaning of each characters directly. These details I talk about are important clues to the symbolic meanings. One of the central theme of this short novel is Laura’s betrayal.

Laura represents betrayal. She is the main character in “ Flowering Judas” as well as one of the most representative female characters. At the beginning of this story, Laura is a beautiful and naive girl. However, as the story developed, she becomes negative, cold and indifferent. Laura is out of step with the world. She betrays her religion, the revolutionary movement, her students and almost herself. Even though Laura occasionally sneaks into a Catholic church to pray, she still fails to embrace the church as an essential part of her life.

Laura eats the flower of a Judas tree at the urging of Eugenio, which also indicates that she becomes a betrayer. She teaches english to children and delivers messages, money, cigarettes and even narocotics to prisoners. Her students respect and love her, but she keeps herself apart from her students. In addition, Laura lacks enthusiasm and commitemtn in all of her activities. To a large extent, she feels strangeness about her surroundings. Nothing can gain her full attention. She bonds herself to anything or anyone. Laura is very attractive and several men would like to seduce her.

Additionally, she is appealing qualities besides beauty. For example, the revolutionists she visits trust her. Laura refuses to involve herself with and men who would like to court her. At the end of the story, Laura eats the flowers fo Judas tree in a dream, demonstrating her betrayal of her ideals and humanity in general. Braggioni is a skilled revolutionistof Marxist revolutionaries in Mexico City and also commits the sin of betrayal; therefore, he also represents betrayal. His father is an immigrant from Italy who married a Mexican Indian.

Even though he possesses some leadership qualities, Braggioni tries to maintain his positon of power through spying and intimidating revolutionists. He has a lot of negative characteristics. Porter gives a lot of images descriptions to him to reflect his personalities. Braggioni's appearances suggests his betrayal as well. As the story said, " His skin has been punctured in honorable warfare, but he is a skilled revolution"(Porter, 1692). He lives in unashamed luxury, such as eattng rich good wearing good clothes, and also indulges in other luxuries.

Braggioni is rich, not only in money, but in power that brings with it the blameless ownership of things. In addition, Braggioni rules his revolutionary compatriots with the sole authority of a king. To a large extent, the most significant thing he wants is to protect his own position and power. Braggioni also betrays his wife even though his wife is so devoted to him. He tries his best to court her, including singing, luring and playing guitar. Braggioni told Laura that “one woman is really good as another for me in the dark. I prefer them all”.

Porter also emphasizes that Braggioni is a lustful man and he only loves Laura's appearance. However, Laura still does not accept him. Eugenio's cowardice prompts him to make a decision to end his pain by killing himself and he represents a true Christ. He surrenders himself up to death by means of the narcotics brought by Laura, the Judas. This Christ-like behavior also suggests that Eugenio is a symbol of the true Christ. Eugenio is an imprisoned revolutionary whom Laura goes to visit and gives him narcotics. He killed himself by overdosing on narcotics.

In reality, Eugenio, as a follower of Braggioni, feels hopeless and unwilling to wait for Braggioni to set him free. He also realizes that he has lost the hope of winning Laura's love. Eugenio's death makes Laura have a sense of guilt because she believes that the drug she brings to Eugenio would let him feel comfortable. Eugenio cannot change his own situation and the whole socialist revolutionary; therefore, his cowardice makes him suicide.

Furthermore, Eugenio appears in Laura's dream at the end of the story and persuades her to eat the flower of a Judas tree, which indicates that Laura is a betrayer of her religion.

In the dream, Eugenio is closely connected to the Judas tree. He holds the warm bleeding flowers to Laura. When Laura eats the flowers greedily, he calls her “ Murder” and says that is his body and blood. Actually, Laura has become the murder in reality because Eugenio dies of overdoses of drugs that Laura brings to him. As a recolonist, Laura has killed her fellow. In the dream, Eugenio also wants to take Laura to a new country far away and asks her to hurry up. But Laura cannot brave the journey without Braggioni’s support.

Laura’s requirement symbolizes an acknowledgement of her need for love , and a sign of her continuing reluctance to admit it. The dream indicates to warn Laura that she would become a Judas in real life unless she mends her ways. When she awakens from the dream, she is afraid to go back to sleep. In conclusion, the core theme of “ Flowering Judas” is self-betrayal. Betrayal is also a central idea that Porter concerns in most of her literary works. In other words, people are supposed to maintain their own religious belief and love others to make themselves live happily.

Porter does not give a detail description to the main characters, but just reflect slightly the details such as conversation, clothing and behavior. These details are significant informations to portray the symbolic meanings. The main characters-Laura, Braggioni, and Eugenio represents betrayal from different perspectives. To a certain extent, the symbolism makes it difficult to comprehend the deep meaning even though it looks like a simple story. However, Porter highlights the symbolism-the most beautiful writing style of this story.