

The views on a short  
story may day eve  
essay sample



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May Day Eve is a short story written by Filipino National Artist Nick Joaquin. Written after World War II. It became one of Joaquin's "signature stories" that became a classic in Philippine Literature in English. Nicomedes Márquez Joaquin, a Filipino writer, historian and journalist, best known for his short stories and novels in the English language. Born in Paco Manila, son of a colonel under General Emilio Aguinaldo in the 1896 Revolution, and a teacher in English and Spanish. He worked as a proofreader in the library section of the pre-world war II tribune. After he won a nationwide essay competition to honor La Naval de Manila, the University of Sto. Tomas awarded him an honorary associate in arts and a scholarship to Dominican monastery in Hong Kong. Joaquin joined the Philippine Free Press under the pen name Quijano de Manila. Living a life wholly devoted to the craft of conjuring a world through words, he was the writer's write. In the passion with which he embraced his country's manifold being, he was his people's writer as well.

#### POINT OF VIEW

The point of view of the story May Day Eve is a Third Person Omniscient. It is a method of storytelling in which the narrator knows the thoughts and feelings of all the characters in the story. In this point of view, the writer is able to bring to life an entire world of characters and give them significant depth and meaning. When writing in third person omniscient, the author will move from character to character, allowing the events to be interpreted by several different voices, but always maintaining an omniscient - or godlike - distance.

## PLOT

## THEME

May day eve by Nick Joaquin utilized the theme of MAGIC REALISM. Magic Realism is a genre of narrative fiction and more broadly art that, while encompassing a range of subtly different concepts, expresses a primarily realistic view of the real world while also adding or revealing magical elements. Often refers to fiction and literature in particular with magic or supernatural presented in an otherwise real-world or mundane setting. This is what happens when a highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something too strange to believe.

The story has a little blend of horror and fiction because it is encircled with the superstitious belief of fortune telling in front of a mirror. Let the mirror decide their luck in picking their future spouse. It also involves rituals, incantation and magic believing that devils and witches will appear in the mirror if everything in the ritual goes wrong.

## CHARACTERS

ANASTASIA “ You may learn in a mirror if you are not afraid.”

- an obedient old woman accused for being a witch and the one who has these superstitious beliefs in the magic of a mirror.

AGUEDA “ Let her prophesy, Let her prophesy! Whom will I marry, old Gypsy? Come, tell me.”

- a pretty young hardheaded woman who is so curious in trying things even though it will cause a trouble for her, so eager to know and find her husband in the future.

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DOÑA AGUEDA “ I opened my eyes and there in the mirror, smiling at me over my left shoulder, was the face of the devil.”

- a hard, bitter, vengeful old lady with a gray hair serve as an evidence and the witness of her struggle, emotional sentiments, resentment and the unhappiness she felt as she grew older.

BADOY MONTIYA “ Charms like yours have no need for a candle, fair one.”

- a vain revengeful good looking man that will do everything just to get what he wanted, instantly fell in love with Agueda.

DON BADOY MONTIYA “ She bewitched me and tortured me. She ate my heart and drank my blood.”

- an emotional and full of sentiments old man who repents for what he has done to his wife.

DOÑA AGUEDA’S DAUGHTER “ The devil, Mama?”

- persistent daughter who wants to know the life history of her mother.

VOLTAIRE “ Was it of the scare that Grandma died?”

- a young boy who also wants to try the incantation in order for him to see also his wife in the future. The boy who will possibly repeat the mistake made by his grandparents.

## SETTING

The famous short story May Day Eve derived its title from one of the month in calendar. The story happened in the evening of May whereas a lot of people were gathered and celebrating. This famous story was set in Intramuros Manila wrote after the World War II, from the period of 1847 to 1890 Spanish Colonial Era.

## CLIMAX

“ MIRROR! MIRROR, SHOW TO ME HIM WHOSE WOMAN I WILL BE.”

The moment when Agueda went down in their Sala to know her prophesy, brought a candle and chant the incantation in front of the antique mirror hanging on the wall. Close her eyes and waited until the face of the person she will going to marry appeared, but instead see the elegant devil who has curly hair and a scar on his cheek - a scar of sin and a scar of honor. It was may, it was summer and he was young, young and deliriously in love in his witch, a witch who was born beautiful and enchanting yet bewitched, tortured, ate his heart and drank his blood, a dark and a fatal creature.

## CONFLICT

When the two main characters, Agueda and Badoy decided to marry each other with their different agendas. Badoy for the reason of believing that he was deeply in love with her while Agueda for thinking that it was the right thing to do, she was obliged to follow the fate she saw in the mirror and she was forced too because of the superiority of her husband. However, the marriage of the two turns like hell. Doña Agueda because of her frustration, ambition and expectation she was now trapped in the marriage she didn't like and when Don Badoy saw that behind her pretty face was a dark and fatal creature, he now realizes that they are not truly in love with each other, they lose their mutual passion, instead share a bitter, full of hatred and loveless marriage ended up of calling each other the devil and the witch.

## RESOLUTION (DENOUEMENT)

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The resolution in the story is the ending itself, in the end Don Badoy remembered all the things they shared together. Remembering how Agueda had sobbed piteously and how had sung aloud in the dark room and was surprised that he was fell inlove with her in an instant. He realizes that she was already dead and had perished, in the end they were at peace at last, her tired and broken body was now free at last from the brutal pranks of the earth, from the trap of a May night, and nothing was left of the young girl who had flamed so vividly in a mirror one wild May Day Eve. The old man sobbing so bitterly at the window, regret comes in him in the end when he realized what he had lost. However, he loved her in the end. The realization may have come too late. It is a pity that he had to regret the life he had with Agueda as she did with him. Yet the May Day Eve can be seen as blessing for them both because they loved each other even though they failed to realized and expressed it until their last breath.

#### MORAL LESSON

Don't rush into things, just wait and appreciate it when the right times and the right moment comes. Believe in the quotation of, the more you wait for something, the more you appreciate it when you have it. Life is full of regrets, for we always realize and appreciate what we have when its gone. We must not put our lives in the conviction of fortune tellers and superstitious beliefs because our fate depends on how we choose things to happen and how we value them in our life, so that we will not end up in a hard situation we are not supposed to be in.

#### SUMMARY

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It was May Day Evening in the late 1840's where in everyone was celebrating for they were young bucks newly arrived from Europe. The ball had been in their honor and no mood to sleep yet. While from up the street came the Clackety-clack of the watchman's boots on the cobble and the clang-clang of his lantern against his knee, and the mighty roll of his great voice booming through the night, " GUARDIA SERNO-O-O! A LAS DOCE HAN DADO-O-O. "

It was May Day Evening almost Midnight yet there was a girl named Agueda who was in front of the antique mirror in their Sala incanting an old superstitious belief of finding her husband with the use of a mirror. She never failed of doing so because the person who will be her husband appeared in her left shoulder smiling at her. They married but instead of happiness it was turned out to be like hell that was full of sadness and hatred for each other. Doña Agueda ended up telling to her daughter that instead of seeing a husband, what she saw was the devil. Regretting all the decision she made that May Day Midnight.

On the contrary when Badoy saw Agueda he fell inlove with her in an instant not knowing that behind that fresh young face like a pure white mask, the most beautiful creature and was enchanting he saw in the mirror hiding a dark and fatal creature he'd ever met. Don Badoy ended up telling to his Grandson that he himself saw the witch in the mirror. Don Badoy remembered how their marriage end up like that, regretting all the bad things he made throughout their life. The bowed old man sobbing so bitterly at the window; the tears streaming down his cheeks and the wind in his hair and one hand pressed to his mouth. While from up the street came the Clackety-clack of the watchman's boots on the cobble and the clang-clang of

his lantern against his knee, and the mighty roll of his great voice booming through the night, “ GUARDIA SERNO-O-O! A LAS DOCE HAN DADO-O-O. “

## REACTION

The story is set under the assumption of superstition as well as fate. They believed that for they saw each other in the mirror that fated night, they should get married. We can say that they chose to see the worst, they chose to see their marriage as a cursed and not a gift yet in the end it can be seen that they were both in love with each other. When I read\* the story I have having a hard time to fathom it at first because of the fast twisting of events, at first you will not fully comprehend what is the story all about or what is the author trying to imply to tell to his readers, but when you read it many times you will realize that May Day Eve is a very interesting story, beyond that it shows us a lot of traits, beliefs and social issues.

The short story, May Day Eve, by Nick Joaquin carefully and brilliantly depicted the status Filipino women had during in the past. In this still seemingly patriarchal world, we are somehow forced to believe that men are superior and that women are just subordinate to men. This ideology was even more highlighted in the past, where women were totally deprived of the necessary rights that men had always enjoyed. In the story, the vital issue of marriage, wherein women are forced to marry men, was particularly portrayed. Women had lost the capacity to decide and fulfill their own desires, making their lives almost meaningless. Agueda in the story had died miserably because her life was molded into something she didn't wish. She was forced to marry Don Badoy Montiya because the latter had a

tremendous desire for her. Her whole life was spent grieving for the situation she can't escape. In the story we can say that Agueda has this disgust in the dominance of men over them. On the other hand, Badoy in the story was depicted as a representative of a men abusive of their superior status.