

About love summary essay



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ABOUT LOVE (Anton Chekhov Summary: In “ About Love” we read the dynamics of romantic love which tries to show that ‘ love’ as such is not bound by marital relations.

Anton Chkhov presents accounts of love affairs expressing his personal experience which makes him feel that love is just a hindrance and a source of dissatisfaction and irritation. The story begins in a country house where Alyohin, the narrator was having breakfast with his guests Burkin and Ivan Ivanych. Meanwhile, Nikanor the cook came to ask what to prepare for dinner. Then Alyohin revealed the love affair of Nikanor and Pelageya, one of his servants.

According to him, Pelageya loved Nikanor very much. She did not want to marry him, but was ready to live with him just so.

The cook was deeply religious and therefore he was ready to live with her if she married him. Alyohin has been living a farmer’s life at Sofyino since he graduated from the University. As a graduate, he was not fit for rough work but his father had spent a lot of money on his education by mortgaging the estate. So he had to work hard until he paid off the debt. Although he was a landowner, he would work with his men and women like a peasant.

He also tried to maintain his civilized life by reading books and by drinking coffee and liqueurs after lunch and dinner.

Later in summer he would be so tired that he could not go to upstairs to his bed. He would sleep anywhere and began to eat in the servant’s kitchen. He

had been elected honorary magistrate many years before. And sometimes he had to go to town to take part in court sessions.

Then he would lead a luxurious life and meet educated persons. He made friends in the town. One of the friends was Luganovich, who unexpectedly invited him to dinner.

In his house he met Anna Alekseyevna, Luganov's wife.

Her first baby was born just six months before. She was a young, beautiful, kind, intelligent, fascinating woman. When he was near her, he felt as if he had been familiar with her long ago in his childhood. Her husband was good-natured and simple-minded.

He could not express his personal opinion on the decision of the court even at dinner and in private conversation. Both the husband and the wife entertained the guest. Their active participation made him think that they lived in peace and harmony. Alyohin spent the whole summer at Sofyino.

Her memory remained in his mind all those months.

He felt as if her shadow was lying lightly in his soul. In the late autumn, Alyohin attended a charity show in the town and he saw Anna there. She looked wonderfully beautiful with her lovely and caressing eyes and she gave him the same feeling of nearness. She said that he looked dull and old, and that she expected that he would come to the theatre.

The next day he lunched with the Luganoviches. After that he would visit the family every time he went to the town. He went into their house as though he were one of the family.

She would welcome him and ask why he hadn't seen them for so long. Her gaze, her beautiful hand, her simple dress, her hairstyle, her voice, her gait would make him feel new, extraordinary and very important.

They would talk for hours. If she was not in the home, he would wait for her. When she came home from the market, he would take all her parcels from her as a boy. Alyohin was unhappy.

He wondered why Anna had married Luganovich, not him. Luganovich was not energetic, but old and obedient. Whenever he went to the town, he would find that she was expecting him.

They would talk for a long time, but they never told that they loved each other.

They tried to conceal it. He loved her deeply, but had no strength to fight against it. He supposed that his gentle love could ruin the life of her husband, her children and it was not a good thing. If he had married her, she would not have been happier in his country house.

They might not have loved each other afterwards. Anna also might have thought like this. She might not make him happy because she was not young enough for him and not labourous to start a new life. So she would ask her husband to find a suitable girl for Alyohin.

He would come to the Luganoviches' and he was warmly welcomed there.

He would go to the theatre with her. In the hall they would sit side by side, and he felt that she was his own. But when they came out, they would go separately as strangers. Anna's behavior had been changed recently. She would frequently go to her mother and sister. She began to be moody.

She felt that her life was unsatisfactory and ruined. At such times she did not care to see her husband and her children. She was being treated for nervous tiredness. She would disagree with Alyohin and wanted to tease him knowingly.

Luganovich was transferred to the western provinces and Anna had to go to Crimea for her treatment.

A lot of people had come to the railway station to see Anna off. She had said goodbye to her husband and her children. But she had almost forgotten her basket. Alyohin ran into her compartment with it and then he had to say goodbye. When their eyes met together, their spiritual strength left them. He took her in his arms.

She pressed her face to his breast, and tears flowed from her eyes. Kissing her face, he said that he loved her. Now he realized that the thing that stopped them from loving each other was unimportant.

He understood that one should reason about love from the higher level, and that one should not think of happiness or unhappiness, sin or virtue. He kissed her for the last time, pressed her hand and separated from her for ever.

The train was already moving. He went into another empty compartment. Until he reached the next station, he sat crying. Then he walked home to Sofyino.

The rain stopped and the sun came out. Burkin and Ivan enjoyed the scene outside. At the same time they were sorry for Alyohin. He could make his life happier by doing something else instead working on the farm.

They also thought of Anna's sorrowful face. Question Answers 1.

Tell about the love between Pelageya and Nikanor. Ans: Pelageya is a beautiful girl. She is servant of the narrator. Nikanor is a cook. There is a violent love affair between them. She wants to live with him just so.

But Nikanor is a religious man so he wants to marry her. Sometimes he drinks and swears at her and even beats her. Whenever he drinks, she hides upstairs and sobs. They express their sensual love. 2. Sketch the character of Alyohin.

Ans: Alyohin is a citizen of Russia. He lives at Sofyino. He is a farmer.

He does farming though he has graduated from a university.

He is not fit for farming but his father has spent a lot of money on his education by mortgaging his land so he has to work hard until he pays off the debt. He isn't married yet. In the past, he fell in love with a girl at university. He held the girl in his arms many times but her intention was bad so he did not marry her. He also fell in love with Anna Alexeyevna but he

thought about her family life and did not live together forever. Now he is eager to express his love experience.

He is frank, open hearted, thoughtful and honest and ordinary man. . What is love? Why should the love, in each case, be individualized? Ans: Love can not be defined in a statement. Because everything else that has been written or said about love is not a solution.

Love is unanswered. It is a great mystery. Love, in each case, should be individualized because the experience of love that would fit in one case does not apply to a dozen of others. For some people, it is a happiness but for the others it is a hindrance and source of dissatisfaction and irritation. Therefore, love should be explained separately. 4.

How and where did Alyohin meet Anna Alexeyevna?

Ans: Many years ago Alyohin had been elected an honorary justice of the peace. Usually he had to go to town to take part in the sessions of the circuit court. There he would lead a luxurious life and meet educated persons. Among them Luganovich was one who unexpectedly invited him to dinner to his house. When he went to his house, he got opportunity to meet Anna Alexeyevna, Lugnovich's wife.

5. How does an account of the occasion and of the setting in which the narrative occurs affect our understanding of Alyohin? Ans: When Alyohin told his love story in the country, there was grey sky and it was raining.

They could see the trees drenched with rain through the windows. In such weather, people could not go outside but tell and listen to stories. When

Alyohin told his story to Burkin and Ivan, the rain stopped and the sun came out.

The weather was fine. They could see the garden, river, etc. which showed that they were free for their work. The rainy weather shows Alyohin's compulsion to stay inside the restaurant and to tell the stories. The stopping of the rain and shining of the sun shows his freedom.

So the setting of the narrative affects our understanding of Alyohin. 6.

Why didn't Nikanor want to love with beautiful Pelageya "just so"? Ans: The beautiful Pelageya was in love with the cook, Nikanor. He used to drink and swear at her and even beat her.

so she did not want to marry him but was ready to live with him "just so".

But Nikanor was very religious and his religious beliefs did not allow him to live "just so". 7. What kinds of love experiences are suggested by Alyohin in "About Love"? Ans: in "About Love" three kinds of love experiences are suggested by Alyohin.

The first is the violent love affair between two servants Nikanor and Pelageya.

Their love is sensual. They express their desires frankly. The second is the love between Alyohin and a girl at university.

At that time the girl wanted much money from him. The third love is the quiet and unexpressed love between them. They belong to socially civilized

class. They control their desires. They hide their feelings. Their love is spiritual but not sensual.

Their love is of higher feelings. Their love is of high level. 8. When does love become hindrance and source of dissatisfaction? Ans: Love is a great mystery. The definition of love is not clear.

What is love is unanswered.

The explanation of love that would fit in one case does not apply to a dozen of others. But if we apply reason and think of right and wrong, advantages and disadvantages in the matter of love, it becomes hindrance and a source of dissatisfaction and irritation. 9. Why did Alyohin and Anna try to conceal their love though it had become deep between them? Ans: Though the love between them had become deep, they tried to conceal it because they both thought that they had not enough strength to fight against it. Alyohin thought his gentle love could break the life of her husband and children.

If he had married her she might not have been happier in his country house. She also thought of her husband, children and mother who loved her son-in-law like a son. It seemed to her that she was not young and energetic enough for him to begin a new married life. 10. What was the cause of Anna's sickness? What was the result of it? Ans: the cause of Anna's sickness was her psychological depression and nervousness to the rumor of her love with Alyohin among the people. That rumor stroke on her morality.

As a result of it, she changed her behavior. She would frequently go to her mother and sister.

She began to be moody. She felt that her life was unsatisfactory and ruined.

At such times she did not care to see her husband and children. 11. Why do you think Chekhov chose to write about an ordinary man instead of a hero or scholar or actor? Ans: "About Love" is a love story written by a Russian writer Anton Chekhov. In this story Chekhov tries to show that "Love" as such is not bound by marital relations. The writer chose to write about an ordinary man in this story because he wanted to show the difference between the life of ordinary man and the celebrated man.

Alyohin, the narrator or the hero of this story lives ordinary life. He works hard in farm though he is graduate. He is moneyless but he does not borrow money from his friends because he has his own morality. The writer tries to show us that ordinary men are afraid of their morality but higher class or lower class people neglect their morality.

Therefore, Alyohin hides his love. He thinks that if he expresses it, it may be harmful to him and to Anna both. 12. Sketch the character of Alyohin.

Ans: Alyohin is the narrator of the story "About Love" written by Anton Chekhov.

He is a bachelor. He lives in a village in Russia. He has got friends named Burkin and Ivan.

He is very frank and practical man. Love to Alyohin is strange and interesting. As an unmarried man he takes interest in love. He sees the love between Pelageya and Nikanor closely. He gets experience from them. To Alyohin love is a hindrance and source of dissatisfaction.

He is a son of a farmer in Sofyino. He has passed bachelor's degree and is elected as an honorary Justice of Peace. Time and again he visits the town to take part in court sessions.

There he meets Luganovich and makes him an intimate friend.

He also meets his wife Anna who has a six months old baby. She is wonderfully beautiful with her lovely and emotional eyes. He falls in love with her. But their love is unexpressed. He goes to her house and she welcomes him.

They become familiar, begin to visit cinema, etc. So that the society watches them taking love. As an educated man Alyohin sometimes becomes aware of his and her life, thinks about future and realizes that marriage will be destructive to both of them. Anyway he falls in love with her and their love is spiritual and true.

When he was in university, he also fell in love with a girl who cunningly finished his money. Her love was only for money.

Alyohin has experiences of three types of love. Alyohin is a middle class man. He is moral. He knows the middle class morality. He sacrifices everything for his morality.

So he decides not to destroy Anna's life and family. He is not cunning and wicked man. He is frank, free, sincere and emotional man guided by his own reason. He even goes to the rail station to say good bye to Anna.

He is a kind and helpful man. He is also a man of foresight. 13. How did Alyohin define love?

Ans: Alyohin defined love as a mysterious thing beyond all types of social limitations in About Love. Alyohin presented three love is possible between too much unmatchable persons having totally different life ideologies. Love story between Alyohin himself and Anna also justified love as a mysterious thing.

Alyohin was a graduate and an unmarried person. Anna was a married woman and mother of two children. They loved each other but they didn't know that they loved each other. They only knew that they loved the other. Love between two distinctly different persons like Alyohin and Anna was also possible.

So, love is defined as a mysterious flexible thing which is not limited within social, age, caste, religious and class factors. Anton tries to justify the meaning and definition of love through Alyohin as an unlimited and unrestricted thing in the world which crosses every type of boundaries. 14. In the story "About Love" there are mainly two stories of love.

The first is a love affair between two servants and the other is Alyohin's own love story. How does Anton Chekhov show the contrast between the two stories? Ans: In the story "About Love" Anton Chekhov shows the contrast between the two love stories.

The first is the love between the two servants Pelageya and Nikanor. Pelageya loves Nikanor but she does not want to marry him.

She wants to love with him just so. But Nikanor asks her to marry. He does not like to live with her being husband and wife before marriage because his religion does not permit him to live with her just so. The writer shows the second love between Alyohin, the narrator of this story and Anna, the wife of Luganovich. When Alyohin is elected Honorary Justice, he goes out the town and meets Luganovich.

Luganovich invites him for dinner.

There he sees his wife Anna and is attracted by her. Anna and Alyohin both fall in love but they do not express their love. They are afraid of immorality thinking that the love may be harmful. As a result, Anna has a mental sickness and she has to go to Crimea for treatment. At last they accept and express their love to each other and say good-bye.

They separate for ever. There are many differences between these two love stories. The first one is the love between the two servants but the second one is between the two landowners and educated persons.

The two servants, Pelagey and Nikanor, express their violent love affair directly but Alyohin and Anna hide their love. The servants fight each other but Alyohin and Anna do not. They behave politely.

Their love is spiritual, true and higher kind whereas the servants are passionate and mean. The servants cannot control their love but Alyohin and Anna can control. The servants do not think about the result of love in future but Alyohin and Anna think deeply about the result of their love in

future. On this way Xheknov shows the contrast between two love stories: one is expressed love and the other is unexpressed love.

Questions to Practise a. Describe the love between Pelageya and Nikanor.

b. Why didn't Nikanor want to love with beautiful Pelageya "just so"? c. How does Alyohin define love? d. Why should the love, in each case, be individualized? e. When does love become hindrance and source of dissatisfaction? f.

How and where did Alyohin meet Anna Alexeyevna? g. Why did Alyohin and Anna try to conceal their love though it had become deep between them? h. What was the cause of Anna's sickness? What was the result of it? i. Sketch the character of Alyohin.