

The chrysanthemums

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Chrysanthemums 1 What is symbolism? “ In writing, symbolism is the use of a word, a phrase, or a which represents a deeper meaning than the words themselves. This kind of extension of meaning can transform the written word into a very powerful instrument” (Willis, par. 1).

1. 2 What symbols are used by the author to express Elisa's personality?

The chrysanthemums symbolize Elisa's inner self, her soft and delicate character, her femininity and sexuality. Elisa's clothing changes was used to describe her muted, masculine persona which becomes more feminine after the visit from the “ wagon” guy. The Salinas Valley is a symbol of Elisa's emotional life which is claustrophobic and unhappy.

2. 1 What did the " speck of dirt" Elisa found along the way tell her about her moments with the " wagon" guy?

The “ speck of dirt” that was left on the road by the “ wagon” guy meant that Elisa still remained unappreciated. The “ wagon” guy gave her hope but later she realizes that she was just fooled into giving herself away to someone whom she thought showed some interest in her.

2. 2 How did you arrive at this generalization?

I arrived at this generalization because we saw the transformation in Elisa right after she met the “ wagon” guy. She changed her manner of dressing into a more feminine one. Elisa began to feel intellectually and physically stimulated. So when she saw the “ speck of dirt” on the road, it devastated her.

3. 1 Why did she cry like an old woman?

She cried because she felt rejected. Like the chrysanthemum, she felt that she had no use just like old people who sometimes feel that they are useless in society. She felt that like an old woman, she has outlived her prime and

usefulness and is left with nothing to do but spend to her days waiting for their death.

3. 2 How does an old woman cry?

Old women do not cry out loud. They usually cry with just their tears falling down without any sound.

3. 3 Why do you think they cry this way?

They cry that way because they do not want anybody to see them crying. They do not want to be seen as someone who is lonely and who feels useless.

4. 1 What does the entire selection tell the readers about women?

The story tells us about the nature of women harboring suppressed feelings from the inside while appearing different on the outside. Elisa, as symbolized by the chrysanthemums also tell us about the role of women in society.

4. 2 Why do you say so?

Women are often seen as the “weaker” sex but actually women are sometimes more intelligent and capable of doing things than men perceive them to be. Women are also seen as the one responsible for the propagation and the rearing of children as symbolized by Elisa’s planting and caring for her chrysanthemums.

Work Cited

Willis, Bill. Symbolism. 1996. Web. 13 May 2011. <http://www.worsleyschool.net/socialarts/symbolism/page.html>