

Trim and notions

Literature



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Throughout time people have developed an awareness of their surroundings and how to act around their acquaintances in order to feel accepted and not ostracized. In “ Trim & Notions”, an excerpt from a compilation of short stories written by Rebecca Meacham, the main character Samantha struggles with an imbroglio of being pregnant with no father in the picture to assist her. Samantha struggles with the thought that everyone she cares about will judge her for being “ sort of a scandal.

An important lesson that can be learned from this story is that allowing one’s self to be ruled by shame and embarrassment can blind a person from seeing the true support and elation that others are willing to share with him or her. Samantha has difficulty finding peace with her less than ideal pregnancy during the story. She worries that the pregnancy is a mistake, that people will judge her for being a single parent, and that her mother and sister will be disappointed in her.

Compared to her sister, Samantha has always been the organized and meticulous child, which is where her need for approval and assurance stems from. She is an organized person who prides herself on how long she can go without making a mistake, and in her mind, this baby boy is a mistake. Samantha’s sister Anne tries to explain to Sam that her baby is not something to be ashamed of and that “ it’s not some black mark on your record. It’s a baby! ” Her sister is referring to Samantha’s desire for perfection in life and explains how her baby is not like a bad grade on a report card nor a crime committed.

The people that Samantha surrounds herself with are supportive and caring and see nothing negative about her pregnancy or the absence of the father.

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Instead of enjoying her pregnancy, Samantha is hiding it from the world the best she can. She even goes as far as attempting to hide her baby bump from a man whom she finds attractive. Samantha hiding her pregnancy upsets and confuses both her sister and mother. They are not upset with Samantha for getting pregnant, but rather waiting six months to tell them and being worried that she has ruined her family's "good name. Samantha, like most people, wants to make her parents proud.

She wishes to be like her mother, whose "real skill lies in fashioning charm from disaster" and like her father, when he was alive, "a starch and polish kind of a guy." At the end of the story, Samantha allows herself to lose control over some of the aspects in her life by agreeing to let her sister and John finish the nursery. Samantha can't imagine how the nursery will look or how it will come together, but she says "that's another thing you learn to live with.

Samantha slowly learns that she cannot control everything in her life, including the reactions to her pregnancy from her family and those she surrounds herself with. Samantha is the kind of person who wishes to please everyone, but in the process forgets to do what is best for herself and her unborn child. Another problem that is faced by both Samantha and her sister Anne, is finding a "leading man" that their family will be proud of. The father of Samantha's baby is commonly referred to as "the director" in the text, because he directed a play at school that Samantha helped with.

He is also referred to as "the director", because in theatrical productions the director controls the dramatic aspects of a work, just as he does in Samantha's life. "The director" is responsible for Samantha's pregnancy, as

well as the drama he created when leaving Samantha and his baby to fend for themselves. Samantha fears that those around her will judge her for being impregnated by a foreigner who skipped town. Instead, most everyone seems happy for her. Anne calls the director a “pretentious jerk” and Samantha’s mother says “he was too quiet, anyway.

Faded right into the wallpaper. Although “the director” proves to be a flake, Samantha finds another man that may prove to be a suitable father candidate for Samantha’s baby. Samantha meets Stefan when she least expects it, and although she attempts to hide her pregnancy from him, he notices. Stefan is concerned about Samantha and her baby’s wellbeing. Samantha says “it figures I’d get more action when I’m knocked up than any other time.” Samantha is the type of girl who believes in a traditional family, but throughout the story she slowly accepts that less ideal life situations are tolerable.

Samantha is not the only person in her family who has trouble finding a suitable leading man in her life. Her sister Anne is less than lucky when it comes to selecting an appropriate man. Anne has called Samantha numerous times saying “I’ve found the one.” However, the ones that Anne refers to are “the one who never brushed his teeth, or the one who could sleep only on satin sheets, or the one who received secret messages in songs by Michael Jackson.” These are usually the types of guys Anne ends up with until she meets John, her fiance in the story; a male who is suitable husband material.

Always thinking that she would be the sister to find the perfect husband first, Samantha finds Anne’s relationship a little bit sickening. When Anne and

John are dancing, Samantha says “ much more of this and my belly button won’t be the only thing to pop. ” Samantha’s apprehensive attitude toward her sister’s relationship is just jealousy, due to her sister settling down before she has the opportunity to. The male problems that Anne and Samantha face stem from a lack of a male role model in their young lives, due to their father’s death. In conclusion, Samantha is her own worst enemy in this story.

She is constantly worrying about the views of those around her and trying to be in control of every aspect of her life. Everyone is noticeably supportive and excited about Sam’s pregnancy; even her French crush Stefan. Although “ the director” leaves Samantha, his words to her never quite leave her. “ The director” says, “ why do you always care so much what other people think? ” “ The director” attempts to show Samantha that the most important thing in life is not what others think about you. By the end of the story, Samantha realizes this and decides to let go of some control and “ waits for the show to begin. ”