

# An analysis of the classic, summer solstice



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“ Summer Solstice”, also known as Tatarin, is a short story that has garnered much attention since its publish date in 1972. It was made into a feature film in 2001, and has been studied in many college classes. Read an analysis of the story here.

### “ Summer Solstice” Analysis

“ Summer Solstice” is a short story that has received recognition both critical and praising. Written by Nick Joaquin, the story takes place in 1850s Philippines during the festival days of St. John. There is a pro-woman feel to the story, which has garnered a lot of debate and attention considering the setting is in a time where women must be submissive. In this analysis, learn about the setting, the themes and symbolism that this short and interesting story incarnates. Summary

The Tatarin, or otherwise known as the Tadtarin, was a three day festival that celebrated a ritual of fertility. This was done only by women. Many men frowned upon the extravagant dances and plays surrounding the ritual. “ Summer Solstice” is set during the three days of the St. John’s festival. Lupeng, a Filipino woman who feels closed to her womanhood, is married to Paeng, who is no doubt loyal to her. They have three small boys and live a somewhat wealthy life as they have a carriage driver named Entoy and a maid and cook named Amada.

Guido is a cousin of Paeng’s who comes back to the Philippines after studying in Europe. The story starts when the family is enjoying the days of the St. John’s festival until Guido makes suggestive comments to Lupeng, and even bending down to kiss her feet. This makes her leave abruptly and

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have a discussion with her husband the coming night. English Lesson Plan Ideas

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Lupeng secretly found herself intrigued by the attention of Guido; she felt that he was correct in saying that women should be ravished and men should adore them. This causes her to participate in the last night of the festival, which is the Tatarin ritual. Paeng goes with her and tries to drag her back once the dancing begun, but she runs from him to the women. He tries to take her back but the women in the crowds beat him out, leaving him helpless. As the two return home, Paeng says he must whip his wife because he loves her and feels that she needs to be put in her place. To this, she shouts and says she wants to be adored, not respected and orders him to kiss her feet. Setting and Conflicts

Setting - Since the story takes place in the 1850s, women were repressed and felt shut in. Lupeng may seem to be happy in her routine life, but she also feels angry. You can notice this when she states to the children " Hush, hush I implore you! Now look: your father has a headache, and so have I. So be quiet this instant — or no one goes to Grandfather." It indeed sounds like she feels as though she has a duty that she must carry on but she gets annoyed at her family because of her subdued state of womanhood.

Although she tries act horrified when Guido tells of her woman should be adored rather than beneath their husbands, she contemplates and realizes she wants to be the leader of the pack.

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External and Internal Conflicts - The stereotypes of masculinity and feminine traits run rampant in the story. Women are supposed to look after their husbands and children while the husbands work and wait for their supper. Not only is this seen in the story but in daily life as well, which makes the story shocking to readers since it is about women wanting to be free. Lupeng shatters the concept of the suppressed woman when she gains control of her husband, who kisses her feet at the end of story. This makes it seem as though the internal conflict was that women are the ones who want to be the rulers of men, as seen in the Tatarin festival. Themes and Symbolism

Main Theme: St. John's and Tatarin Festivals - The St. John's festival is about men and their fertility, which seems quite vulgar to Lupeng and makes her start to realize how she wishes women could be seen in the same way. The Tatarin festival is the exact opposite, showing women as leaders of fertility since they carry children. This festival is the last trigger to make Lupeng feel as though she is stronger than a man and deserves adoration.

### Symbolism

Amada - When Lupeng rushes to find her cook, Amada, she sees her in a compromising position on the bed which makes Lupeng blush and feel restrained about her own sexuality. This is the first trigger for Lupeng before she announces she wants admiration.

Guido's Speech - When Paeng's cousin Guido returns from Europe, he tells Lupeng of his travels. He also says " I remember that you are a woman, yes. A beautiful woman. And why not? Did you turn into some dreadful monster when you married? Did you stop being a woman? Did you stop being

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beautiful? Then why should my eyes not tell you what you are — just because you are married?” This makes Lupeng lash out and call it simple comedy but it is also the second set off before she feels liberated. She takes his words to heart as well as when he lowers himself to kiss her feet in appreciation.

After reading this analysis of “ Summer Solstice” by Nick Joaquin, you should now understand the controversy, the symbols and the themes and symbols in the story. What did you think of it?