

Close reading

Literature



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Task Close Reading Assignment The introduces this passage by mentioning the weather “ The weather was warm”. This warm weather causes the woman in this passage to wear warm light clothes. This is shown by the words “ all she had on was a white muslin shift” (Jianren 59). The woman is in distress as she removes and throws down her garments. The audience is later able to find out that the reason she panicked was because there was a squirrel under her garments. The author describes this event by writing “ She was so shaken that she stripped off both garments and flung them to the ground, at which point the squirrel finally scampered away and took refuge under a chair”. There is another character in the passage, a man, who assists the woman when she panics with the squirrel attack. The story is told from his perspective as he describes the weather, the woman’s garment, and the squirrel dilemma. Nevertheless, the passage is generally about a man that is infatuated and attracted to a woman.

The passage slowly grows from a description of the weather to the description of the woman. This might mean that the author’s intention is not about the weather; the weather is used as an excuse to describe the clothes the woman has on. The author gives a detailed description of the woman’s garment “ and under a well-worn gown of grey-green silk all she had on was a white muslin shift” (Jianren 59). The audience may expect a description of the surroundings after the description of the weather. However, the author quickly shifts to the main focus, and in this case, it is the woman. Therefore, the beginning of the passage gives an idea of what is contained in the rest of the words. This is true since the rest of the passage focusses on the woman. There are many things described in the passage, but they all revolve around the woman.

The first thing is the weather; in the first sentence there is the description of the weather that leads us to the garments the woman is wearing. The second thing is the panic that leads the next event to be the removing of her garments. There are the lines “ In her panic, she undid both garments, revealing the pink breast-band underneath” (Jianren 59). It gives the reader the expectation of something romantic is about to happen. However, by this point, the audience has no idea that there is a man and the woman in the woman. “ I shot out a hand to grab it,” is a line that bears a lot of meaning. Earlier on, there is the description of a squirrel that has caused the woman to panic. This is another excuse in the paragraph that is used to describe the woman, and by now there is the idea that the man is attracted to the woman. There is also the curious line “ There below her nipple crouched the squirrel” (Jianren 59). At this point, the author has described the warm weather that makes the woman wear light clothes, and those clothes have been taken off in panic. In addition, there is now the description of her nipples where a squirrel is positioned under. Therefore, the passage describes a woman who is gradually moving into a tempting position with the man in the room.

There are many ambiguous words, similes, irony, and figurative language used in the passage. The main focus is the woman, but the author periodically shifts to other things around her. These things include the warm weather and the squirrel that is under her garment. Ambiguous words used in the paragraph are “ I shot out my hand to grab it” (Jianren 59). This can be interpreted in many ways that include: the man was reaching out to grab either the squirrel or the woman. This is not clear since the readers already have the idea that the man is attracted to the man. Therefore, it is possible

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that these words have more than one meaning. An example of a simile used in the passage is “... Her swelling breasts, like flowers in bud...” is a detailed description in lady in the midst of the panic. An example of a figurative language in the passage is shown in the words “ All this while, Aren had had eyes only for the squirrel” (Jianren 60). She was half naked in front of a man, but she was concentrating on the squirrel.

The passage titled Sea of Regret by Wu Jianren is an interesting one filled with very descriptive words, but it has focused on the way the man finds the woman attractive. The warm weather and squirrel are supporting the intentions of the man. On the other hand the woman is not interested; she is in panic after the squirrel scare. Words used in the passage are very detailed making the audience know the type of weather and the dressing of the woman. In addition, there is also a description of the woman’s body, skin, and undergarments. Imagery is also effectively used to describe the female attire before and after she removes it. The author successfully gives the audience a clear picture of the events in the paragraph.

Works Cited

Jianren, Wu. *The Sea of Regret: Two Turn-of-the-Century Chinese Romantic Novels*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1995. Print.