

Nameless, yet
familiar



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Gail Godwin in her “ A Sorrowful Woman” dives deep into the philosophy of the routine today. That being said, Godwin addresses particular methods in her story in order to attract the reader’s imagination and critique in order for the latter to reflect upon the matter. A story of a strained wife, an ignorant child, and a chivalrous husband are being described by Godwin. Although, as far as the essay goes, the characters remain unnamed, for the routine that applies to the innumerable does not need to be labeled.

To begin with, one may notice that the essay hints the weekdays and weekends randomly, or so it would seem, however, there is a deeper thought sought for by the author. The majority of the world’s population and the overall tendency of the humanity’s philosophy came to establish the dates, years, and days of the week in order to ‘ straddle’ the chaos and shape it into a particular order. As this weekly order applies to the most of the humanity’s activities, it does so respectively to the concepts of the family and home. After having read the first page of the story, it becomes apparent that the events are being described on Friday. The said day ultimately applies to the culmination of the weekdays’ accumulation of emotions. Regardless of the ways, one may name it or the schedule by which one abides, Friday is the day when the vast majority of the population becomes tired. In terms of family, the wife and (or) mother, in particular, is the person who is the most tired and sick of everything (Godwin), chores, work, attending to children, etc. Obviously, one may appeal that there is no generalization and the events should be examined case by case, however, if the billions of cases were analyzed in such a manner, the results would still boil down to a common pattern. Every mother/wife gets exhausted and

irritated from all the work and fuss she has come to endure during the week. As a result, there is no point in naming her since ‘ every mother/wife’ does not need an identification in this matter.

On the other hand, there is a child, “ a tender golden three” (Godwin para. 1). Any common child would say “ It’s all right, Mommy” (Godwin para. 3) when its mother started crying over something. Every average mother would say “ Go away” (Godwin para. 6) if her child would hurt her physically in some way during another infant’s game. With this in mind, the expected joy and happiness of having a child, unfortunately, tend to reduce themselves to exhaustion, stress, instability, and psychological disorder, especially regarding mothers. All the children come to experience the world and do not understand their misdoings or other drawbacks objectively due to their level of experience and development. Nevertheless, all these factors prove to be stressful to child’s parents and result in inflicting damages to the family relationships in some aspects. Hence, Godwin does not name a child because all the children are considerably similar in their early years.

Now the husband is also not named for respective reasons, although, after having got acquainted with the story one may distinguish his patience, maturity, devotion, and love for his family, and characterize his as one of the most virtuous husband’s on the planet. Unfortunately, husbands usually do not prove to exert themselves to such courtesies as the one depicted in the story does. Consequently, the husband from the story in question may be described as the perfect one and that such a husband would prove the most supporting to his family. With this in mind, any wife/mother would wish for such an understanding and helping husband in her daily family routine.

Especially, since the winter commonly proves to be one of the most depressive periods, which affects the psyche and overall physical well being, any mother would approve of such a husband to aid her in her family activities. The husband's image in question managed to substitute for the mother in chores, raising the child and taking care of any family issues that require being addressed (Godwin). All things considered, the perfect husband in this story does not need a name for he is filled with virtues and the name would only strain his image and would imply that any such husband would have to be branded by an identical one.

Indeed, the events described in the story will seem rather familiar to any person who reads it to a certain extent, nonetheless, Godwin provides an exaggerated version of the daily grind and explores the extents and boiling points that may occur in a family. Subsequently, the story is exaggerated due to the scenes where the mother says she thinks she can not see her child anymore, or when she resorts to sleeping draught on a daily basis due to self-imposed and amplified stress (Godwin). The events of family chores often tend to transform into a snowball effect in any family, which proves detrimental to the corresponding relationships and results in an inadequate behavior of the family members. Therefore, the all-so-familiar stories and characters do not allude labels since any person may reflect upon them in more than one way.

Given that, the concept of names is a complex one with regards to the ways that a human mind ticks. Accordingly, people perceive each other and remember other people by knowing their names, and, thus, maintaining images and feeling towards particular persons only by invoking the

mentioned names. Names often prove to individualize behaviors and experiences, which are, frankly, common to any other person. Given these points, if the wife, husband, and child were named, then the readers would forge images of these complex emotions and deeds, and assign them to the particular names, which would further partially ruin the universality it maintained before.

In the light of the above, it should be mentioned that there is more than meets the eye with reference to “A Story of a Sorrowful Woman” and the complex issues that Godwin masterfully touches upon. These images of the family members may be applied to any person in more than one ways, who, in the vast majority of cases, comes to experience all of the three roles in being a child, a father or a mother in certain aspects, regardless of the gender. Hence, the absence of the names provides the readers to sink into the three images’ behavior and psychology deeper and reflect upon them with a possible positive conclusion, which has a high probability of emerging, after figuratively experiencing the possible vice versa consequences.