

A sorrowful woman essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving. ”

– Albert Einstein. In Gayle Godwin’s short story “ A Sorrowful Woman ” The husband’s life can easily be related to the sayings of Sir Albert Einstein.

Throughout the entire story the husband marvelously balances the ridiculous demands of his wife, all the housework that includes cooking, cleaning, paying bills, the needs of his three year old child, all while working a regular 9 to 5 job. Most ordinary husbands wouldn’t put up with these baring tasks, but the husband in “ A Sorrowful Woman” does.

We can see the great qualities of the husband flourish threw each and every scene in the story, but a daunting question arises in the story. How could such a great guy make so many wrong decisions when it came to taking care of his wife, evidently causing her to commit suicide? Also can we find the husbands actions to show signs of greed? Starting with wrong decision number 1. The wife is already afraid of the child from the incident of him scratching her by accident causing her to bleed.

The husband remained calm and calls their usual babysitter they employed to take care of the child until he arrives home. A couple nights later after supper the wife, knowing that the husband was watching, hits the child, and collapses to the floor crying and the child weeps away and hides. The husband, blinded by his affection for her quickly attends to the wife, and not to his crying son who just was wrongfully hit. The wife is clearly trying to seek the husband’s attention and it does.

What does this say about the husband? The husband’s reaction shows that he cares more about his wife then his three year old. In a way the husband

has just neglected his child, where as any other parent would have scolded their wife for hitting the child, and go comfort him. Though the husband can't attend both his wife and the child at the same time, he suggests having a girl take care of the child and the housework, and he could take care of his wife. We can argue that the husband shows some greed in this scene.

In the article Defining Greed is An Indulgence of Its Own, the author: Oliver Mark Hartwich with a masters in Business Administration and a Ph. D. in Law talks about how greed is the blame for our economic problems in the world. He then defines greed, as “ a selfish and excessive desire for more of something, than is needed. ” The husband's greed is the love for his wife. His excessive love for his wife blinded him of what she has done, and he didn't get mad. Another wrong decision the husband makes is when he continuously gives the wife the draughts.

In the narration of the story it said, “ Now the sleeping draught was a nightly thing, she did not have to ask”. The draught was made every night and a small glass as well as a big one was placed beside her bed. What the husband is doing right there is something called enabling an addict. Dr. Elizabeth Hartney with a PhD in psychology defines enabling as “ the process by which family members, such as partners, parent and children, “ enable” an addicted person to continue in their addiction, by failing to set appropriate boundaries, failing to recognize the problem”.

The husband fails to realize that he is creating an alcoholic and that he is very much encouraging her to drink it every night. Lisa Hann in Are You Enabling an Addict? What you need to do to stop! Says that “ Just like its

hard for an addict to admit they're addicted, its hard for an enabler to admit they're enabling". The husband thinks he's helping his wife relieve pain, stress, and help her sleep, but he is just making the wife's problem worse. In this we can see greed be expressed when he continuously tries to satisfy his wife.

He is always giving her the space she needs, and also giving her drinks, which she now craves. The husband also says " I want to be big enough to contain whatever you must do" implying that he wants to give her his all, which correlates to the definition of greed as " a selfish and excessive desire for more". The last problem that I want to discuss is when the wife tells the husband that she is unable to see him or the boy anymore, and locks herself in the white room all day. The husband agrees with her demands and now they would have to write her notes and slip them under the door for her to read.

Why does the husband allow this to happen? Clearly there is something wrong with his wife, yet he doesn't reject her and not take her to the hospital where she can get professional help. The husband's greed for the acceptance of his wife is going too far. Not only is the husband not able to interact with his wife, but the child can't even see his own mother. He plays along by writing her notes every night for her to read, but how would this effect his childhood to come. The mother is neglecting her child, and this could do a lot of harm.

In the Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders, child neglect often occurs " when a parent or other primary caretaker chooses not to fulfill their obligations to

care for, provide for, or adequately supervise and monitor the activities of their child”, and that “ Consequences of neglect are generally cumulative, and often negatively affect the child’s development”. The husband is there for the child’s needs, but the child knowing that his mother doesn’t want to see him could have a huge impact in his childhood. Could you say that the husband’s greed caused this situation to happen to his child?

I very much say yes. His greed to please his wife and give her everything has caused her to become unstable and decide to isolate herself from her family. The husband’s home remedies don’t work out and one day when he comes home to see the house clean and food on the table, believing that his wife is back to normal, only to find out that she has taken her life in the room she isolated herself in. The husband’s wrong decision-making and his greed of craving love from his wife, has resulted in her abandoning her family by committing suicide.

The husband may now be able to realize the severity of his actions and second-guess himself. The husband in my mind is still a great and generous guy, but his unknowing greed has caused him to make poor decisions evidently leading to the fatal result at the end of the story. My two initial questions of how could such a great guy make so many wrong decisions, and could the husband’s actions show signs of greed, were analyzed and explained. The rest is for you to decide on whether you think that the husband’s greed misguided his decision making, leading to the death of his wife.