

# Treading grapes by martha bennett stiles

Literature



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Treading Grapes ‘ Treading Grapes’ is a brilliant short story written by Martha Bennett Stiles. It should be noted that Martha Bennett Stiles’s “ Treading Grapes” examines the official and unofficial uses of public and private spaces in order to illuminate some of the problems of poverty. This paper aims to support the chosen thesis by providing examples from the short story “ Treading Grapes”.

The author has allowed readers to closely read about the lives of poor people. This has been done by illuminating lives of poor people who make use of public and private places officially and unofficially. Bennett has portrayed the story of a single mother namely Rebecca Fuerte who sold cigarettes and wax matches in different public places to make both ends meet (Stiles). It is mainly because she could not afford a place for selling cigarettes. Lack of legally owned place has resulted very negligible income for the protagonist due to which she cannot even feed her son. In this manner, the author has projected that Rebecca is concerned about his son’s future which is predictably poor. Herein, the author makes it evident that because of lack of space, it is complicated for poor people to earn living. Despite her inability to officially use public spaces, the protagonist continues to sell cigarettes by consuming different public places without any license because she had no other option (Stiles).

Furthermore, authors stated that legal space license is not just the only problem that poor people might face. There are a number of other problems as well such as other vendors who torture sellers like protagonist of the story to move away from public places. The reason behind such an action is because it harms vendor’s position in the market (Stiles).

Another consequence of poverty due to lack of official public space

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ownership is that one has to travel one place to another. A person who is poor and unable to get an official space would never ever be able to settle down in life. The author of the short story has also mentioned that Rebecca moved to several places along with her son in order to get a place where she could sell cigarettes and earn money. She visits place to place both public and private. Since she belonged to a poor class of the society therefore, she has been projected to least worry about the official and unofficial use of space. The article also tells that in a city it is difficult to find a place to do business on the street for those who cannot afford to make their living. This is reflected as author noted, “ The Guadalajaran is at his usual place under the emperor’s statue. That place was hers, before this vile-smelling one arrived of her one morning-seated himself,” (Stiles 36).

As highlighted in the thesis, she had to work hard in order to make both ends meet. She had to travel from one place to another in order to earn money as she remarked to her friend Margarita, who is also her neighbor, “ I have to find a new a new workplace” (Stiles). As she went to different places she had to keep her son along (Stiles).

The author has marked that poor people remain in search of a place where they could find more buyers of cigarettes and wax matches. Consequently, children of such families undertake a bad impression. This is similar in the case of protagonist of the story. As stated in the story, “ Fernando sits passively on the grass where she can see him” (Stiles 37). According to the article, Rebecca finally finds a new place and has a place where she could sell. The authors have provided a solution for the problems by adding such an ending to the short story. It notes in the story as, “ Now she stands everyday beside the huge stone god that guards this museum’s entrance”

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(Stiles 37).

#### Works Cited

Stiles, Martha Bennett. " Treading Grapes." *The Missouri Review* 11. 2 (1988): 36-44. Print.