

Hemingway

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

At first I would like to speak about the author. Hemingway was born and raised in Oak Park, Illinois. After leaving high school he worked for a few months as a reporter, before leaving for the Italian front to become an ambulance driver during World War I. He was seriously wounded and returned home within the year. In 1922 Hemingway married Hadley Richardson, the first of his four wives, and the couple moved to Paris. After divorcing Hadley Richardson in 1927 Hemingway married Pauline Pfeiffer.

Martha Gellhorn became his third wife in 1940, and Mary Welsh became his fourth in 1945. He had three sons: Jack, Patrick and Gregory Hemingway. He travelled a lot and used his experience in his works. It is important to note that Ernest Hemingway played a major role in defining twentieth century American literature. And regarding the short story "A Canary for One" is the story of three people on a journey across Europe. The setting is a compartment of the train. A married couple shares a compartment with a woman who will be visiting her daughter.

She is taking the daughter a canary. They are all Americans living in Europe and have a conversation. The main character of the story is the American lady. She is a middle-aged woman. The author doesn't even mention her name as it's unnecessary. In the whole story there are no names at all. What we know of her - she is a bit deaf and has a daughter. No mentions her husband. So we may guess for the time being she has no husband at all, or his existence is so unimportant for her. This is the first sign of her loneliness.

The older woman initiates and then dominates the conversation. What concerns her daughter, it's well-known that she was madly in love with a Swiss fellow, but it turned out they parted. No explanations, just a fact. The

American lady kept on saying that American men make the best husbands. It is possible that the mother didn't let her daughter marry her Swiss boyfriend, as he belonged to the "wrong" nationality, not the American. So she took the canary for her daughter as a present, not because the girl likes canaries but 'cause her mother "always loved birds".

The story focuses on the American lady and her daughter's frustrated romance. She is insensitive, person who had succeeded in breaking off her daughter's engagement to a Swiss engineer of good family. The girl reacted badly; she would not eat or sleep after her mother took her away from her love. There is also the idea that the American lady buys all her clothes from abroad. And foreign fineries are okay, but foreign peoples are not? She talks a great deal, especially as contrasted to her fellow travelers, the husband and wife, also American, who are going to separate.

The ideas and behavior of the American lady's contrast so sharply with the opinion of the narrator of the story, the young husband. He listens the conversation of the American lady and his wife. He speaks only 2 times: to make a joke that the lady does not hear and when he mentioned the wreck. As regards the theme of the story I think it's family relationships. The American lady doesn't understand her daughter's desire to marry the foreigner. And bad relationships between the husband and wife, who are going to separate. The narration is done in the first person.

The narrator is husband. But we recognized it in the middle of the story. I think it's a character story, so it has open plot structure. 'Cause we can only suggest what will happen with the characters. As for the problem of this story is the marriage. Can an American woman find a successful marriage to

a European man? But there is no answer in the story. In my opinion there are two types of conflict: man against man and the conflict between one set of values against another set of values. The first is mother against her daughter's choice.

And the second one is difference in set of values of the American lady and a married couple. Speaking of the literary techniques... There are dialogues and narration in the short story. It has a straight line narrative presentation. It has flashback, when the American lady speaks about her daughter's failed romance, foreshadowing, it's the American lady's presentiment about the wreck, and , of course, a surprise ending, when we recognized that the American couple is going to separate. I think it's an irony of the whole tale. There is an exposition in the story: the description of the setting at the beginning.

The complications are the description of the travel, chatting of the three passengers. The conversation about the marriage is the climax. And denouement is returning of a married couple to Paris to set up separate residences. Summing it up I can say that " A Canary for One" is not a great Hemingway story but it's good enough. The irony with the breaking their marriage off is done this short story remembered. I think it was uncomfortable for this American couple to endure the conversation, knowing that they were going to Paris to separate... But I think it's rather funny...