

"the first seven years", by bernard malamud essay sample

[Life](#), [Love](#)



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The First Seven Years, by Bernard Malamud reveals a saddening story about a father who's obsession with materialism robbed him of real duty to his daughter. The theme of humanism versus materialism was extremely strong in this story and was a showed the reader how important the first of the too really was. The First Seven years depicted the story of a shoemaker named Feld's desperate attempt to give his daughter Miriam what he thought was a better life and did not attempt to try and find out she really needed. The story shows him believing that materialism is the equivalent of happiness only to find in the end of that he is wrong.

In the story Max acts as a representation of materialism because in Feld eyes Max can bring “ things” into Miriam's life. Feld's assistant Sobel represents humanism because of his willingness to wait as long as he has to for true love although his wait does lead him into a lucrative future but instead the opposite. His character is special because he uses love, the most human emotion as the only “ thing” that he has to gain. As the story develops the reader discovers that Miriam is very different from her father in that she does not with a materialistic life which is where the fathers misunderstanding is uncovered. Throughout the story the father thinks that she would want Max and the “ things’ he can offer her. This blinds him the Sobel, the man that can bring his daughter exactly what he wants.

The title of the story, The First Seven Years is the final proof of the humanism of Sobel. The seven years is the amount of time that he is willing

to wait to pursue the love that he has for Miriam. Those seven years are filled with very little except the future with the one he loves. Max does not bring those feeling to Miriam and in the end of the story the father finally realizes that. He finally realizes the limits of materialism and the importance of true love.