

# The man in the case, gooseberries and the darling essay sample

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



Alienation is the isolation or separation from a group or an activity in which one should be involved. In Chekhov stories of “ Man in the Case”, “ The Darling” and “ Gooseberries” the characters separated themselves from the outside world in order to achieve a peace with their inner self. Even though they all alienated themselves they all did it differently because they all had different situations in their lives that cause them to change. Each character had an undercover meaning for their alienation because they were affected by society’s expectations. However their inner motives were influenced by ambition or affiliation. By separating themselves they unconsciously found their identity in life. For each character their relationships with others and goals in life played an important role in their isolation. In “ Man in the Case”, the author uses both figurative and literal shells to show Belikov’s burdens in life.

The case protects every aspect of his life, from his actions to his thoughts, which provides him a sense of tranquility. He creates a case of his own filled of rules and discipline to provide him with structure and escape from reality. “ Any sort of violation, deviation, departure from the rules threw him into dejection...” (Chekhov 300) The author use of dictation showed Belikov’s torment by his fear of the outside world. If he did not feel protected he felt that his life was unstable. Ironically he thought the cases might help him fit in into society but in reality it just separated him more. He was always trying to protect himself and constantly afraid that “ something might come of it” (302) meaning something terrible could happen if he didn’t follow his rules.

“ Belikov’s bedroom was small, like a box, and had a canopy over it. Lying down to sleep, he would cover his head with a blanket” (302) Even in his room where one is supposed to feel safe and rested, Belikov felt frightened and anxious. He would cover himself with blankets because he was frightened that something could happen to him. Instead of facing his fears and learning to live with the difficulties and imperfections of society, he began to isolate himself because others did not act the same way he did or shared his way of thinking. All the orders, cases and restriction part of Belikov’s life affected him socially because even though he wanted to be fit in society that will was not stronger than his will of staying protected from people.

He desperately wanted to stay protected from public’s actions and his own decision that could potentially harm him. For example, when he was about to get married he did not change his overprotective lifestyle: He put Varenka’s picture on his desk and kept coming to me and talking about Varenka, about family life, about marriage being a serious step... but he didn’t change his way of life in the least. Even the opposite, the decision to marry affected him somehow morbidly; he lost weight, grew pale, and seemed to withdraw further into his cases (305) He was influenced by society to get married but he was not convinced that it was the right step for him because making such a life changing choice could interfere with his way of life and he was not ready for a commitment. Just the thought of what people would think about him terrified him.

According to Belikov, people should know him by his successful lifestyle and that should be enough to fit into society. The author uses the tragedy of being the laughingstock of the town, which is the last thing that Belikov wanted to emphasize the failure of his way of life. " Now, lying in his coffin, his expression was meek, pleasant, even cheerful, as if he were glad that he had finally been put in case he would never had to leave" (309) After vanishing out of the world that threatened him greatly, Belikov was able to rest in peace in a case that would never be opened therefore he will always be protected and nothing could come of it. " She forever loved someone, and could not live without it" (334).

In the " The Darling", Olenka necessity to be in love is more important than her own identity because her life revolves around the other person since she loves and desires the feeling of having someone there with her. " Whatever her husband thought, she thought too. If he thought the room was hot or business was slow, she thought the same" (337). She had no identity for herself because all of her opinions, values, and thoughts were only present when she was in a relationship. Her opinions changed from husband to husband because she thought and acted depending on what they believed. All of Olenka's beliefs revolved around her husband's opinion and lifestyle. If she was not with someone she was a walking dead, isolating herself from everyone because she couldn't live without love. " She has no longer any opinion.

She saw objects around her and was aware of all that went on around her, but she was unable to form an opinion about anything and did not know

what to talk about" (340) When her husbands passed away it was as if her life had gone with them too because she had nothing to live for anymore, "She ate and drink as if against her will" (340). The author exaggerates Olenka's misery to emphasize how her life became an obligation instead of a desire. She was disheartened and felt pity for herself because she felt as an "Orphan" (338); she did not know what do to since she was by herself therefore having no life. Olenka not only separated herself from society when she did not have a relationship but also created an inner conflict with herself because it cause her to be depressed since she didn't have no one there to absorb their personality.

This inner conflict isolated her from the public because she is not able to contribute any ideas into society since she has none. A man's quest for self-actualization can take over his actions and convert him into an undesirable person. In "Gooseberries", Nikolai's desire was to own his own estate and all he could think of was how he was going to achieve it: My bother Nikolai, sitting in his office, dreamed of how he would eat his own shchi, the savory smell of which would fill the whole yard, eat on the green grass, sleep in the sun, gazing at the field and woods... he liked to read newspapers, too, but only the advertisement about sales of so many acres of field and meadow, with country house, a river and a garden, a mill and mill pond.. He was unable to imagine a single country place, a single poetic corner that was without gooseberries. (314-315)

He was determined to bring to life his objective no matter what because that was all he ever wanted. The author uses Nikolai desire to plant gooseberries

to symbolize his ultimate achievement. Having a goal in life and having the determination to complete it became an obsession for him. He would do anything in order to achieve his goal. “ He married an ugly widow for whom he felt nothing, only because she had a little bit money” (315). A decision involving another person to get what he wanted was what started to change him into an isolated person because he lost regards of other people’s emotions. Once Nikolai accomplished his dream, his entire character changed into an imposing individual.

“ While in the government office, was afraid to have his own views even for himself personally, now uttered nothing but truths, and in the tone of government minister” (317). Now Nikolai thought of himself superior to people because he had a property and achieve his ambition. He thought of himself better than anyone because he was now upper class. He felt in control of people and knew how to handle them to get what he wanted as a result this creates a separation between him and others. The isolation of the characters in Chekhov stories differed in their inner motives of why they decided to be apart from others. From protection purposes to the idea of love, along with fulfillment caused all of the characters to isolate themselves from society. Their actions affected their lives and set them apart from anyone else by making them who they were.