

"anne meets her class" by miss reed essay sample

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**ASSIGN
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“ Anne Meets Her Class” by Miss Reed Essay Sample

The text under review is entitled “ Anne Meets Her Class” by Miss Reed. This abstract can obviously be referred to belle-lettres (fiction) style. Its genre may be defined as a school story (a fiction genre centering on school life). Thus, the story raises eternal issues of upbringing and deals with up-to-date problems of human relationships, namely, relations of pupils and teachers and teachers’ interactions, which are the theme of the story. The main idea can be expressed in the following way: “ Teachers (adults) impose their system of relationships on pupils (children), trying to make them ‘ convenient’ and sometimes intentionally suppressing their natural freedom”. The central character is Anne Lacey, who has come for her first lesson in the primary school class. As a result, she gets involved into the complicated rapport established at school.

At first she seems to be alien to that environment and feels so (she feels helpless and is ignored by children), but at the end of the story she firmly establishes her position as a teacher and starts to be recognized as a teacher by her pupils (children listen to her eagerly). The author engages indirect methods of characterization and manages to create a convincing image of a young inexperienced teacher by engaging the following linguistic means: verbally (semantic characteristics of words) – feeling helpless; metaphorical epithet – gave a watery smile; periphrasis – responded Anne in a voice which bore no resemblance to her own. Anne is used to relying on other people’s opinions: She remembered with sudden relief some advice given her at college in just such a situation. She feels as if she were a pupil

and is ready to behave like one: With a nervous start Anne hastened forward to the door, but was waved back by a movement of her headmistress's hand.

Pupils frighten Anne. She considers them as her enemy, which is proved by the duel of glances at the beginning of the story and her " advances into action" (a military term) at the end of the story. The only possible solution of this collision for Anne is to suppress children and win a victory over them.

This situation reveals the actual situation at schools. Anne Lacey's antagonist is Miss Enderby, a headmistress. Unlike Anne, who lacks confidence, Miss Enderby perceives herself as a master of that place, which is proved by a metaphorical comparison (" sailed majestically"); by her behavior (" motioned to the children to take their seats" and " waved back by a movement of her headmistress's hand", " rewarded by a smile"); speech characterization (she tends to give orders and instructions not expected to be disobeyed, even her requests and suggestions sound imperative and peremptory: " began Miss Enderby firmly", " suggested in an imperative tone"). Miss Enderby produces an impression of a false and double-faced creature.

Her artificial enthusiasm while introducing a new teacher (you are very, very lucky this term to have Miss Lacey for your new teacher), discrepancy between the form (overly polite) and content (authoritative and strict) of her speech, expectations of pupils' servility (« Is no one going to remember his manners?») and prejudice against pupils (« If I were you, I should keep an eye on that boy») do not let her enjoy the reader's sympathy. Her relations with pupils are laid bare when she leaves the classroom: children are afraid

of her (there came a sigh of relief after her departure) and as a result of it willing to please her (they rush to open the door). Her caricature image is an embodiment of a school teacher who won't have any contradictions and who is sure of their correctness. The negative attitude is promoted by the unintentional consonance of occlusives: « Broken home — brother in Borstal — and some rather dreadful habits!» Pupils play a very important role in the story, being a focal character preoccupying the reader's interest and attention.

At first they are a uniform, obedient and conformist mass (" chorused the class obediently", " came the polite chorus", " A dozen or more children made a rush to open the door", " the forty-six tongues which had so far kept unnaturally silent began to wag cheerfully"), at the end of the story a riotous, uncontrollable and noisy crowd (" the noise grew in volume", " amidst growing chaos", " an outburst of natural high spirits"). At the same time, the author clearly expresses her attitude towards both types of behavior. The first one is unnatural, conditioned by their fear of Miss Enderby, who suppresses every human emotion in them and even an ability to understand her. The second type of behavior is believed to be natural not tied or limited by any fears or regulations.

Moreover, this footloose and natural behavior helps identify Anne's position in this world. She doesn't belong to pupils, but she doesn't belong to teachers either. Only when she starts shouting (i. e., acquires the same style of behavior which is based on intimidating pupils and suppressing their freedom), can they associate her with teachers. Only two pupils are

distinguished by the author: a freckled girl, favoured by Miss Enderby, and Arnold, disliked by her. The former is described with the help of biting satire, the latter is presented with a touch of humour. Consequently, several types of conflicts are exposed:

(1) substantial (social): teachers and pupils oppose each other, acting like conflicting parties or enemies at war (Anne advances into action, the headmistress warns her about the potentially dangerous element), (2) local (interpersonal): Miss Enderby and Arnold (she saw his pink face express his scorn of Miss Enderby); (3) psychological (personal): Anne tries to find her place in the world. These conflicts make it possible for the reader to consider social and ethical problems of upbringing, children's treatment, moral issues and cultural peculiarities of school communication. It is not by chance that space and time turn out to be very concentrated (the action in the story takes less than an hour and is taking place in the classroom). This helps depict the inherent conflict, demonstrate the system's perversion and expose the fact that the system itself adjusts people to its peculiarities. The space of the school is more or less coherent: apart from the classroom there is a teachers' room where the same laws of subjugation and principles of servility prevail. However, the reader learns about the place which is quite different from those mentioned above, that is Anne's college.

Yet that world instills an ideal notion of school in the would-be teachers making them absolutely unprepared for the harsh reality. So, the opposition of them exposes the range of problems pertaining to the system of education. The text may be divided into two major episodes: before Miss

Enderby's leaving and after her leaving. This division is marked by the primary lexical oppositions of words characterizing the children's behaviors: "unnatural" – "natural", "passive" – "active", "fearful" – "fearless", "unemotional" – "excited". The plot structure is closed, with Anne's introduction establishing an exposition; Miss Enderby's instructing Anne, her taking a leave, pupils' breaking free constituting a story. The growing tension is shown with the help of gradation describing the pupils' activity acquiring more and more disruptive character. When pupils' behavior turns into a complete chaos, Anne's despair reaches its peak and she rushes into actions, the climax takes place. It is achieved with the help of shortening the sentences to render the idea of a more animated disorder, the exclamations (To your desks! And quickly!) and the metaphor (Anne roared). Anne's bringing order back marks a denouement of the story.

The relaxation of the conflict is shown semantically: a pleasurable shock, her words obeyed, order had returned, refreshed, Anne's self-esteem crept back. The linguistic means employed by the author are mainly to create a humorous effect by: mirroring and reflecting each others' actions with the help of parallel constructions: The children fixed their eyes upon Anne. Anne gazed back, feeling helpless. (semantically related predicates and parallel constructions); Anne gave a watery smile. The children's faces were unmoved (emotional disbalance); emphasizing the contrast of the obedient behaviour (see above) in Miss Enderby's presence and the riotous activity after her leaving; morphological repetition contributing to the image of continuous activity: The little boy addressed, who had been crossing and uncrossing his eyes in an ugly manner for the enjoyment of his neighbours,

looked suitably crest-fallen; metonymy: forty-six tongues which had so far kept unnaturally silent began to wag cheerfully; play on words: Anne stood her ground;

high-flown lexis and inversion: Amidst growing chaos Anne remained silent; antithesis: Far too innocent and apple-cheeked to have such a record. Mostly the author relies on humor of actions, not words, like in the scene of the children's racing to the door: With a nervous start Anne hastened forward to the door, but was waved back by a movement of her headmistress's hand. A dozen or more children made a rush to open the door. A freckled girl with two skinny red plaits was the first to drag open the door. She was rewarded by a smile. The syntax of the story is not complicated, though one may observe the sentence length variance: they become shorter at times when Anne gets more nervous and longer when the description is introduced, which reflects the changes of Anne's mood. All in all, the story demonstrates an example of complete and thorough mastery of the author who manages to produce a true and believable picture of a school life with a few touches, reveal the social problems while entertaining the reader.