

# The chrysanthemums by john steinbeck

Literature



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The Chrysanthemums 2. Elisa works inside a wire fence that protects her flowers from animals. However, the fence is also a symbol. It stands for a symbolic fence around herself. She is protected from others and she is also ‘protected’ from life. Elisa does not allow any stranger to come “ into the yard” unless she totally trusts the person (Steinbeck, 1938, p. 4). At the same time, Elisa has to live inside the fence as the society assigns the role of a wife and a mother to her. She has to make the house perfect for her husband. She only leaves her garden when she goes to town with her husband.

4. The salesman pretends that he is interested in the flowers just to get the job and receive money from Elisa. He sees how she cares about her flowers and tries to show his interest. His attempt is successful as Elisa is willing to talk to the man and she also gives him some money. She becomes very friendly and even lively. It is clear that the flowers are her entire life. She is glad that somebody is interested in her life.

6. The flowers are central to the story. They can be seen as a symbolic representation of Elisa or her life. The flowers are beautiful but they are not free as they can be within their flowerbeds only. Likewise, Elisa, a beautiful and capable woman, is restricted to her household. Elisa may dream of leaving the house that is her cage. The flowers’ trip is an attempt to escape from the cage. However, the author shows that there is no escape for Elisa as she will be used and thrown away just like the poor flowers.

#### Reference List

Steinbeck, J. (1938). The chrysanthemums. Retrieved from <http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1220828.files/The%20Chysanthemums-Steinbeck.pdf>  
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