

# Ma parker and miss brill essay sample



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The two stories, ' Ma Parker' and ' Miss Brill' have some very distinct similarities. Both stories create the image of two misfits living a very lonely and unfulfilled life. Miss Brill was never married, even her name creates a picture of loneliness, and gives the reader the impression that she doesn't even think of herself as a real person since she doesn't use her first name. Her not being married means that she has no one to care for her and even because she is a teacher we would think of her as having friends but she has none.

She is so lonely that she spends her Sunday's talking to her fur ermine and visiting the public gardens where again, she has no friends and no one to talk to. Ma Parker is a widow and has no children or husband left to care for her. Her husband died of consumption and some of her children died at a very young age, and ' then young Maudie went wrong and took her sister Alice with her; the two boys emigrated, and young Jim went to India with the army, and Ethel married a good for-nothing little waiter who died of ulcers'.

Yet Again she was left with no one in her life that would care for her. Both characters keep their emotions locked up inside them and are in denial. Miss Brill denies that she doesn't have any friends and goes to the public gardens every Sunday to try and prove to herself that she was part of a performance along with everyone else at the gardens so she left ' home at just the same time each week- so as not to be late for the performance'. She pretends that doing this makes a difference to the people there and that they would miss her if she wasn't a part of it. On her way home she usually bought a slice of honey-cake at the baker. It was her Sunday treat'.

She enjoyed her weekly ritual, but she knows that she doesn't have very much of a life, because ' she had a shy queer feeling at telling her English pupils how she spent her Sunday afternoons'. She pushes away reality, even though she knows that she is not wanted or needed. People around she ' why does she come here at all-who wants her? ', but she still pretends that ' no doubt somebody would have noticed if she hadn't been there; she was part of the performance after all'.

She daydreamed of saying ' I have been an actress for a long time'. She thought of her being in the public gardens as being ' on stage' and thought that this made her an actress. Ma Parker never expressed grief when her husband or children died. ' She'd borne it up till now, she'd kept herself to herself, and never had she been seen to cry. ' She didn't cry or get upset when her husband or died. In the story the author says, ' it must be rather nice to be married to a baker!... but Ma Parker didn't look too sure'. This gives the reader the impression that she didn't love her husband.

When her grandson was born, he began to love and care for her and ' he was gran's boy from the first', but Lennie, wasn't a healthy child so he too died quite young and left Ma Parker with ' nothing'. Ma Parker and Miss Brill both lost something in their youth. Ma Parker never had a complete childhood. She left her family, in Stratford, at the age of sixteen to work as a maid in London. All contact with her family was cut off because ' the cook used to snatch away her letters from home before she'd read them, and throw them in the range.

Her receiving letters indicates to the reader that she may have had some education since we know she could read letters but obviously her education was not the best because ‘ Shakespeare ... she’d never heard his name’ even though she was brought up in the town of Stratford. We also know that she wasn’t properly educated because she works as a maid and if she had been educated she might have a more acceptable job. Miss Brill, who still young has no one she can talk to, and no friends to have fun with. She goes to the public gardens every Sunday and listens into people’s conversations and when ‘ they did not speak.

This was disappointing, for Miss Brill always looked forward to their conversation. ‘ She enjoyed ‘ sitting in other people’s lives just for a minute while they talked around her’. She would notice unusual things like ‘ if the conductor was wearing a new coat. ‘ She got pleasure when people got turned down. ‘ He shook his head... and, even while she was talking and laughing... he... walked on. The ermine toque was alone’. Miss Brill ‘ smiled more brightly than ever’. This shows the reader the extent of her loneliness. The style of writing that Katherine Mansfield decided to use to show Miss Brill’s and Ma Parker’s emotions is similar.

In the story about Ma Parker she described Ma Parker’s emotions using the weather and she wrote ‘ The sad looking sky, ... the clouds looked worn and ... frayed at the edges with holes in them’. Describing the sky in this way gives the reader the impression that Ma Parker leads a very miserable and discontented life. In the story ‘ Miss Brill’, Katherine Mansfield describes Miss Brill’s feelings in a similar way, ‘ The blue sky powdered with gold and great

spots of light like white wine’ this bright description tells the reader that Miss Brill is pretending to feel happy.