

Anney as a mother: a role dismally played

[Experience](#), [Happiness](#)



Bastard out of Carolina is a novel written by Dorothy Allison; it is a poignant story which speaks about love, family, pain, suffering—and the ultimate price of happiness. In this story, it is seen that the pursuit of happiness sometimes may result in the pain of other individuals: particularly the protagonist's pain—which is indirectly inflicted by her own mother.

The story is told by a girl named Bone (whose real name is Ruth Anne), and she tells the reader about her life, and the suffering which she had to endure at as very young and tender age.

The story opens with a description of Bone's birth, her mother's coma, and the fact that Bone is an illegitimate child (Millard 155). Bone's life, of course, was interrelated with the lives of her mother, Anney, and her mother's lover, Glen. Bone would have never been who she was if it were not for her mother and mother's lover. However, given the viewpoints of her own mother, Bone's experiences were inevitable. One of the relevant passages in the story which tells the reader an important fact that pertains to the recurring theme of the story is the following: “ There was only one way to fight off the pity and hatefulness.

Mama learned to laugh with them, before they could laugh at her, and to do it so well no one could be sure what she really thought or felt. She got a reputation for an easy smile and a sharp tongue, and using one to balance the other, she seemed friendly but distant” (Allison 10). Analysis of the Passage Relevance of Passage to the Story Although the story indeed, seems to be about the life of the narrator, if one does a careful analysis, it could be seen that the story primarily focuses on the narrator's relationship with her mother.

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Bone's life, in a sense, is largely affected by her relationship to her mother. As seen in the previous passage, Anney was not exactly a woman who has found happiness. She longs for happiness, yes, and this passage shows that Anney's search for happiness amidst the “pity and hatefulness” (Allison 10) has cost her more than she would ever bargain for. This passage is particularly relevant in understanding the story, since this passage shows how Anney's search for happiness as an individual has ultimately led to the misery of her own daughter, Bone.

The story is a heart-wrenching one, and if one would try to analyze the details of the story, the story is heart-wrenching, not merely because Bone was physically and sexually abused by her stepfather, but also because her mother was a woman who was not able to protect her from such events because of she was a woman who preferred to turn away from problems rather than face them head-on. It is also seen in the story that since Anney was not of much help to her daughter, Bone chose not to disclose to her the horrors which she experienced in the hands of her stepfather.

In this particular line, Bone says that “I lived in a world of shame. I hid my bruises as if they were evidence of crimes I had committed. I didn't tell Mama. I couldn't tell Mama” (Allison 113). How horrible must it be, if one cannot be able to seek help from one's own mother. Bone was not able to do so, since her mother tends to pretend that everything will turn out fine, and that they must merely laugh about their troubles before someone else laughs at them. It is, of course, necessary to state that one must not take the word laugh literally.

It could mean that one must not be fazed by one's troubles, and continue to search for happiness. However, in this case, turning a blind eye in Bone's troubles did not help her at all; Anney merely made things worse for her own daughter by not asserting that Glen should treat her humanely. In the end of the story, much to the annoyance of the reader, Anney chose to be with Bone's abusive stepfather, rather than be with Bone, who is her child (Linkon 275). This ending only proves that Anney was a woman who preferred to find her own happiness, rather than the happiness of her own child.

It cannot be argued that the reader would feel a certain animosity towards her character, for how can she love the man who has continuously hurt her child? Style and Presentation of Text If one is to read the aforementioned passage carefully, it will be seen that the author is using symbolism to send her message to the reader. As discussed in the penultimate paragraph of the previous section, Anney's way of dealing with troubles has an effect on Bone's life.

It is not enough to say that Anney laughed at her troubles before anyone could laugh before her—what she did was that she turned her back against these problems and refused to address them appropriately. In fact, when Bone was brought to the hospital for having broken her coccyx when Glen beat her, Anney was desperately trying to shield the fact that Bone was beaten up by anyone (Allison 113). Therefore, given this information, it could be said that when Bone stated that Anney was a woman who preferred to “learned to laugh with them, before they could laugh at her” (Allison 10), Bone actually meant something deeper.

This description of Anney in the aforementioned passage is a symbolism, and must not be taken literally; it was a mere symbolism of the fact that Anney was actually a woman who preferred to convince herself that nothing was wrong, and that, perhaps by believing that nothing is wrong, then nothing would eventually be wrong. Since Anney is trying find her own happiness, she tries to escape reality, and eventually is forced to continuously hurt her child in the process. Summary

The aforementioned passage is significant to the novel, for it tells the reader that the life of the narrator may have been different if only her mother chose to fight for her—instead of trying to shield the truth from prying eyes and claiming that nothing is wrong with their family. While it is relevant to state that Anney had loved Bone in the best way that she could, Anney, nevertheless, was not as willing to give up the man she supposedly loves. Anney knows how to fight back and protect her children, but she was not able to do so fully, for she refused to fully accept that some things cannot be laughed at.

There are a lot of ways a mother could have shown her love for her child, but in many ways, the way she showed her loved in the novel was one of the most eccentric ways that could hurt one's child. In the end, she eventually realized that she had to let go of one of them, and she did let go—of her own child. However, her decision was too late, for the damage was done, and Bone would forever havememorieswhere her own mother refused to see the light for her. Overall, the chosen passage was a good symbolism and it provides the reader with thoughtful insight regarding Bone's mother and how she has affected her life.

It may not be obvious at first, but the passage is able to convey something metaphorical which is vital in understanding the life of Bone, a girl who longed for her mother to finally wake up from her trance and realize that it was time to move on instead of insisting that the family they had was real.

Works Cited Allison, Dorothy. *Bastard out of Carolina*. New York: Penguin Books USA, Inc. , 1992. Print. Linkon, Sherry Lee. *Teaching Working Class*. Boston: The University of Massachussetts Press, 1999. Print. Millard, Kenneth. *Coming of Age in Contemporary American Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd. , 2007. Print.