

Good example of essay on marked for greatness

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



I have chosen to examine four short stories whose characters are people with physical markings or mental disorders. People who have these traits are unusual and regarded as odd by "normal" people. Usually, they develop some mental powers and become able to achieve much more than people who have neither physical nor mental problems. Maybe these "marked" people achieve success because they believe in themselves, whereas, "normal", healthy people tend to be paradoxically more self-conscious which hold them back. However, they are always there to judge the challenged ones. The stories that were particularly interesting to me are: Roman Fever by Edith Wharton, The Yellow Wallpaper by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Cathedral by Raymond Carver and The Story of an Hour by Kate Chopin. Three of these were written by female writers. That may be a coincidence or I feel that women have more empathy for others, especially for the disabled. These stories were written at the end of the 19th century and one at the beginning of the 20th century and the story by Raymond Carver was written at the end of the 20th century. In those times, women were probably more thoughtful, sensitive and sensible than most men.

The first story that touched me was Roman Fever by Edith Wharton. In this story, which was published in Liberty in 1934 we can see two older women who are with their daughters in Rome. They have been friends for decades and still don't know essential things about each other. We discover one crucial fact about Mrs. Ansley's daughter. Mrs. Slade admits to always having been jealous of Mrs. Ansley, especially because of her daughter Barbara. Mrs. Slade's daughter Jenny is much more beautiful and kind, but Barbara has an "edge" and is very dynamic. Therefore, Barbara is, according to Mrs.

Slade, more attractive to men than her daughter. Both of their husbands are dead. Throughout the story, we find out that Mrs. Slade wanted to trick Mrs. Ansley when they were still girls into thinking that Mr. Slade wished to meet her at the Colosseum. She wrote a letter of invitation to Mrs. Ansley and signed as Mr. Slade. Mrs. Ansley wasn't supposed to actually meet Mr. Slade. She was supposed to catch a cold waiting for him. However, she responded to that letter and therefore he came. Mrs. Ansley became ill after that night because she already had throat problems and it was very cold during night at the Colosseum. In the end Mrs. Slade triumphantly said: " After all, I had everything; I had him for twenty-five years. And you had nothing but that one letter that he didn't write" (Wharton). Mrs. Ansley replied: " I had Barbara" (Wharton). From this story we can learn that being jealous triggers negative things to happen, even when people think that doing harm to others, whom they envy, will bring them joy. In this case, envy brought more envy to the person who initiated the situation. There is a balance in the world which makes things right. If one person wants to do wrong to another person, then they will be punished as well. There is a proverb: " They that sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind". On the other hand Mrs. Ansley, who had a physical flaw (health problem with her throat) and married a man who was in the eyes of Mrs. Slade weak, had a daughter with an extremely successful person, an " alpha male", Mrs. Slade's husband. No one knew that except for Mrs. Ansley. She had her flaws, both mental (she was dishonest) and physical (her immunity) but in the end, instead of being prey, she turned out to be the predator.

The second story, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, written in 1892, is about a woman

with a mental disorder. It is actually autobiographical. Charlotte Perkins Gilman admitted that she wrote the story in order to help other people deal with neurasthenia. Some physicians criticized her work, whereas others praised her for helping them alter their treatments in order to improve the healing process of their patients. It is about a young woman who loves to write and engage in intellectual activities, but because of her nervous condition her husband, who is a physician, makes her rest all the time. Because of that, she becomes even more depressed and melancholic and almost becomes schizophrenic. However, she finds her way to liberate herself from the pressure of her family. She metaphorically goes insane, but in reality she recuperates herself. Her will for freedom saves her life in spite of wrong treatment of her husband and his sister. She is a heroine for all the people with mental illnesses because of her strong will that sets her free. Being oppressed, she becomes aware that she will lose herself unless she stand for her rights.

The third story, Cathedral, which was written in 1983 by Raymond Carver, is about a husband who feels awkward about a blind friend of his wife's coming for a visit. He has prejudice about blind people and even the things he believes to know about them turn out to be wrong. The blind friend is a man who lives a life of a normal person. People around him think that his disability affects his imagination as well. However, he is more imaginative than many healthy people. He teaches his friend's husband how to draw a cathedral, which the husband was not even able to describe with words. " His fingers rode my fingers as my hand went over the paper. It was like nothing else in my life up to now" thought Robert, the husband (Carver). This blind

man is the example of how people who cannot see can express themselves visually anyway. They are the proof that human mind and spirit know no physical obstacles.

The last story that fascinated me was *The Story of an Hour* written by Kate Chopin in 1894. It is about a young woman who is told that her husband died in a traffic accident. She has a heart trouble so her sister and her husband's friend find a delicate way to tell her about the death. Her reaction is ambiguous. She feels that she loved her husband sometimes, but mostly that she didn't. She suddenly feels free and happy. Her life has a purpose again. She is overwhelmed with joy. Suddenly she finds out that her husband is alive and dies. "When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease - of joy that kills" (Chopin). This woman is the example of female need for emancipation. After hearing about her husband's alleged death she feels free and happy. She decides to live for herself. Her heart problem helped her overcome the loss of her husband at once, but his coming back killed her. I don't think that it was joy that killed her, but the excitement which she couldn't bear. Her extraordinary will made her look on the bright side of the accident, but she couldn't bear the shock that there was no accident.

In all of these stories there are people with problems, physical or mental. However, they all live their lives more fully than healthy people. This topic shows us that people with markings are usually the people who have the strongest will and who can overcome anything. It is because they believe in themselves. They know they have nothing to lose and that they constantly

need to prove themselves and thus they go those extra miles and turn out to be winners.

Works Cited

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Gilman Perkins, Charlotte. *The Yellow Wallpaper*. United States: *The New England Magazine*, 1892. Print.

Carver, Raymond. *Cathedral*. United States: Knopf, 1983. Print.