

Bird in the house

Life



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REVISED Vanessa: Distressed Female In Margaret Laurence's A Bird in the House By: Adeline Hartono #20336566 For: Professor Vardon Date: Monday November 14th, 2011 In Margaret Laurence's A Bird in the House, the female characters in the story are helpless and distressed. Each character struggles to reach their own personal freedoms and is constantly battling through the ups and downs of life. This issue brings about the essence of entrapment, which is apparent in the collection.

It can be further seen in regards to the female and main character, Vanessa Macleod. A Bird in the House tells a story about the life of Vanessa Macleod, the protagonist, and the rocky journey she endures throughout the process of growing up. Life is never easy for Vanessa, for she faces many challenges and tragedies throughout her childhood. In the collection, Vanessa possesses a unique quality in that she is able to find ways to deal and cope with the harsh events taking place in her life.

One way in which she illustrates this is through her many writings of creative stories. When she wrote and developed ideas, Vanessa escapes any feelings of entrapment and helplessness; however, one of the hardest things Vanessa has to endure is the numerous losses of her loved ones: firstly, the passing of her beloved Grandmother Connor, whom she adored and loved very much, and shortly, in months after her death, the passing of her father, Ewen Macleod. Out of the two, the greatest loss in which Vanessa continues to struggle through is her father's death.

Throughout her childhood, she has always wanted to be closer with her father, but with the profession in which he holds, a doctor, it is difficult for the both of them to ever have any time to spend together. She not only believes <https://assignbuster.com/bird-in-the-house/>

that her father is the best doctor there is in Manawaka, but also the best doctor in the whole of Manitoba. With this being said, her father frequently travels out of town for work. During one winter in Manawaka, Vanessa's father became very ill and had developed pneumonia.

Almost immediately, in days after, he unfortunately passed away due to being unable to recover from the illness. In the days following her father's death, Vanessa continues to fight back feelings of regret that she could have somehow been closer to her father and conversed with him more, " I took the letter and picture outside and burned them. That was all I could do for him. Now that we might have talked together, it was many years too late. Perhaps it would not have been possible anyway.

I did not know" (Laurence 107) Hence, Vanessa never got the closure she has wanted with her father and this prevents her from fully reaching happiness. Although Vanessa has suffered the tremendous loss of her father, the pain and struggle of her life did not end there. She continues to endure obstacles while growing up, as she faces the dominance of her Grandfather Connor. Throughout the novel, Grandfather Connor is shown as someone of a high power who wanted things to go his way.

He has a strong character and will, which gives him authority and as a result, overpowering almost all the members in Vanessa's family. In one of Vanessa's first creative stories, she realizes that her writing bears no relation to the life around her, but instead resembles her Grandfather Connor. She realizes that her Pillars of the Nation about pioneer life may well incorporate her Grandfather Connor, who is a real pioneer. She is troubled by the

connection of the hateful old man she feared and fought with being apart of her creative writing so much so that she decides to set it aside.

Only then does she see how similar she is to Grandfather Connor and how she will never be free of his control, “ I had not thought it would hurt me to see it in other hands, but it did. I wanted to tell them to trim their hedges, to repaint the window frames, to pay heed to repairs. I had feared and fought the old man, yet he proclaimed himself in my veins” (Laurence 191) Thus, Vanessa continues to be trapped in the dominance of her Grandfather, and continually feels distressed and helpless.

Ultimately, the theme of entrapment is evident in the book. One of the obvious ways in which readers see this idea clearly is in the character of Vanessa Macleod, the protagonist. The death of her father and the dominance of her Grandfather Connor prevent Vanessa from fully reaching happiness. As a result, she often struggles with feelings of regret and sorrow. All in all, the female characters in the book can be seen as distressed and helpless, for Vanessa was a perfect example of this.