

The story of the stone

Literature



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09 February Analysis of a Scene from the Story of the Stone “ The Story of the Stone,” also known as “ The Dream of the Red Chambers,” is a novel written by the greatest novelist of China, Cao XueQuin (1715-1763), and a classic work of literature. The story consists of a wide range of mythology, poetry, folk culture and drama and illustrates the manners, traditions and habits of the contemporary Chinese society. It comprises 5 volumes and in Volume 1 titled “ The Golden Days,” the author describes the teenage life of the protagonist Bao-yu, Dai-yu and Bao-chai. The 15th chapter includes a main scene, where the young Dai-yu enters the Rong-Guo House for the first time, is impressive and can be considered as one of the most significant scenes in the novel.

The author portrays Daiyu as a beautiful, kindhearted and talented girl with skills in writing and poetry, who has lost her mother and due to difficulties in her family comes to live with Grandmother Jia. Once she enters the room of Grandmother Jia, she introduces the girl to the others. The author describes everyone from Daiyu’s point of view, which enables the readers to clearly understand how Daiyu, a girl from a simple background, perceives the rich outlook of the Rong-Guo House. This scene also offers the audience a clear perspective of some of the important characters such as Xifeng Wang and Baoyu Jia. The main purpose of the scene is to illustrate the characteristic traits of Daiyu and to show how a simple girl from a village views the splendor of rich people in the society.

The author depicts Xifeng Wang in this scene as an impolite and carefree woman, in contrast to the demure females of the contemporary society. This provides the audience a clear understanding of the authoritative nature of the rich people during that time and shows how they look down upon the

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ordinary people. The author illustrates her indifference through the dialog, “ She had scarcely finished speaking when someone could be heard talking and laughing in a very loud voice in the inner courtyard behind them” (Cao 90). She is not yet here, but everyone already hear her. From this scene, it transpires that Wang is chipper as a boy. But she has a high status in this house, and is a favorite of Grandmother Jia, as can be evidenced from the statement “ Everyone else around here seems to go about with bated breath” (Cao 91).

Similarly, Cao uses a whole long paragraph to describe Wang’s dress, which offers the audience a clear understanding of the attire of upper class women during that time and also illustrates how the rich make their statement.

Later, when the merciless and selfish Wang designs a trap for Jia Rui who dies, the readers are able to understand the scheming, ruthless nature. This works as a foreshadowing of her characters and the readers become able to know her due to how she was portrayed in this scene. Similarly, this is the scene where Baoyu, the main character, is introduced. Besides, the author also provides the readers a detailed understanding of his character.

Previously, Daiyu has thought of him as an obstreperous and stubborn person because her mother described him so. However, in this scene she gets to know him through firsthand experience and thus develops the affinity for him. Thus, this scene is of overall significance to the novel as it offers insight to the readers about some of the important characters.

Works Cited

Cao, XueQin. “ The Story of the Stone” 5 Vols. Trans. David Hawks. London: Penguin Books, 1973. Print.