

Chateau
bougainvillaea is a
compelling short story
written by h.e. bates



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

'Chateau Bougainvillaea' is a compelling short story written by H. E. Bates. The story displays a character who is forced into a dilemma and her reaction to this dilemma deepens the readers understanding of the story as a whole.

The story follows a young women named Louise Bowen who undergo's a sense of dissatisfaction with her life following her engagement with Arthur Keller, this dissatisfaction puts Louise into the dilemma of what the future holds for their relationship. The theme of the story highlights Louise's dilemma as to what the future holds with Arthur, Louise's reaction deepens my reaction to the text. The main theme of the story is the growing sense of discontentment the central character Louise feels because of her relationship with her husband, Arthur. Whilst holidaying in France, the couple assumed that they be strengthening their relationship through the celebration of their engagement. However, the realisation of Arthur's predictability created a growing sense of discontentment within Louise and instead of strengthen the couple's relationship the holiday actually weakened it. Louise had just recently resigned from her job as a teacher because she hoped this would provide her self-satisfaction however it actually provided her with doubt.

The doubt was raised because Louise realises that Arthur's predictability cannot provide her with satisfaction but it would provide Louise with everything she hated about being in a classroom, Arthur would imprison her . The holiday in Northern France weakened Louise's perspective of marriage with Arthur and a period self-examination began:" And hearing it, she knew suddenly that the future was already a thing of the past." Due to the discontentment Louise feels towards life with Arthur, she realises that there

is no future with Arthur. Louise realises that a future with Arthur is bleak because Arthur will force her to be like him and become predictable.

I think that Bates' use of the theme of discontent is effective because as the plot unfolds, Louise's discontent also grows. The characterisation of Louise Bowen and her reaction to the dilemma she is faced with deepens my understanding of the text. Louise as a person is very creative and she could be compared to a bougainvillaea, the flower is indigenous to France and due to its delicateness it can be crushed by its outer leaves. This is symbolic of Louise because her creativity could be crushed by Arthur's predictability. After leaving her stable job as a teacher Louise hoped she could dedicated her life to Arthur: " In England she was a school teacher, and there had been times when she felt that the pale green walls of the classroom had imprisoned her and that marriage, as it always did, would mean escape.

" Initially Louise thought married life with Arthur would be exciting and spontaneous and would provide her with the freedom and the chance to show her creativity. In the classroom Louise was restricted by rules which made her unable to show her creative side and marriage " would mean escape". Louise felt that the " pale green walls" and " imprisoned her". However as Louise began to realise Arthur's flaws, the discontent within her grows and like in her classroom she starts to feels trapped because the predictable nature of her fiancé was empty of creativity and excitement.

I think that the author use of characterisation of Louise is effective because it highlights the dilemma she is in- the growing sense of discontent. Bates' characterisation of Arthur Keller highlights the reason for Louise's dilemma

and her reaction to Arthur's flaws deepens my understanding of the text. The only major flaw in the character of Arthur is his predictability. However despite this flaw Arthur is oblivious to the fact that it exists and is the source of Louise's growing discontent, the more Arthur reveals his predictable ways, the more discontent Louise gets. The author gives the reader an insight to the predictable nature of Arthur at the restaurant: "left-handedness" In this incident Arthur finds the setting of the knives to be humorous, this clearly shows the predictability of Arthur because he is laughing at such a meaningless object thus causing Louise much frustration.

Daily Arthur would repeat a phrase e. g. "all right? Happy?" much to the irritation of his partner. Arthur's occupation is symbolic to his predictable ways. Arthur earns his living as a draper's assistant and his job relates to his beliefs because every metre of cloth has a value and so should everything in life. Furthermore, as part of his occupation all Arthur does is measure cloths – he does this on a daily basis, this could possibly be the explanation towards Arthur's predictability.

The author uses setting to emphasise the dilemma Louise is faced with regarding her future with Arthur. Bates uses setting to highlight the different aspects of Louise's emotional state. The author uses references to high temperatures to illustrate Louise's growing discontent: "...fierce heat..." "...small restless flames..." In addition to the growing discontentment of Louise, the author "dry" to illustrate heat but this times uses it to highlight the lack of contentment. Bates emphasises Louise's isolation by the description of mainland as an "island" and mentions how the "tide was fully out" and thus

providing no protection from the sun and the lack of protection is emphasised through the use of “brittled heather”.

Bates again shows his ability as a writer by his illustration of the monotonous nature of the afternoons in France. Due to the “emptiness of the day” Louise realises how unhappy she is with Arthur and their relationship cannot continue. I think that the author use of setting is effective because it it creates doubt in Louise’s mind that this doubt put her into a dilemma. In conclusion, ‘Chateau Bougainvillaea’ is a story where a character faces a dilemma and her reaction to this dilemma deepens the readers understanding of the text as a whole.

Our understanding of the novel is deepened through the authors use of theme of discontent, characterisation of Louise and Arthur and the use of setting.