

"the little cloud" conflict essay sample



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The protagonist, Little Chandler, of James Joyce’s short story “ The Little Cloud” is a weak, timid man. Chandler is unable to express his feeling through either reading or writing poems and his mind is always thinking of “ his friend’s success”. These factors lead to an internal conflict he experiences within himself. The internal conflict of Little Chandler is revealed in the narrator’s comments, Chandler’s comparison with his friend, what he thought of his life, and even his marriage.

At the beginning of the story, the narrator describes him as a little melancholy man who always feels depressed when he realizes his life is stuck in a pattern. However, he can’t and won’t change it because he is accustomed to it; for example, he ordered the same drinks again and again. He is always living under fear; the fear that is he will never do as well as his friend, Gallaher. The sentences, “ You could do nothing in Dublin” and “ he would never be popular: he saw that” were engraved in his mind. His thoughts become excuse for his lack of motivation. He is always afraid and so he doesn’t want to take risk to change his life.

The other obvious part is when he meets Gallaher in the bar. The narrator uses Gallaher as a foil, because he is totally different from Little Chandler. Gallaher is described as a brilliant and famous journalist, who has traveled a lot. Gallaher boasted many things excited and wonderful which Little Chandler is jealous about. The way Gallaher enjoyed his life is a contrast for him who is a “ pious chap”. He asserts about his manhood of marriage because this is the only thing Gallaher didn’t get. However, Gallaher

response " see if I played my card properly" easily disappointed him.

Through out the conversation, " his friend word does not please him". He is envious after comparing his small, dull, boring life with Gallaher wonderful, passion and adventure life.

The other evident part is about his poem and his marriage. Chandler knows he is timid; he is unable to express his feeling through poems or even read to his wife as " shyness had always held him back". His poetic nature is always filled with dark and hopelessness. Also, when he looked into picture of his wife's eye, he found there is no passion. And he thought of his own life, as " could he not escape from his little house". " Tears of remorse" implied he knew " he was a prisoner of life", he wanted to change but he can't even through his entire life.

Little Chandler character, his timidity and melancholy build up his internal conflict. While he is envies about his friend " successful", he can never be able to have the life he dreams of. It is because he is bashful and meek. Just as in the poetry, he couldn't put his thought on poems. He would like to change but he couldn't overcome his weakness, plus he doesn't have the desire to action. This is the internal conflict deep inside his mind.