

Symbolism by mary robison

Literature



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The hallmark of a good writer is—he/she succeeds in establishing a relationship that kindles curiosity in the first few sentences of the story. Mary Robison does precisely that to create a range of emotional and intellectual responses in the readers, through symbols. By using symbols the writer can evoke a wide array of feelings, and the reader is hooked. Symbols have a marked effect on the minds of a reader. Robison rolls out many symbolic expressions in the beginning of the story. The old couple in the evening of life—suffering from cancer—what more is required to draw instant sympathy of the readers? Allison carries with effort, the pumpkins out of her car. The symbolic meaning of the pumpkin is clear. The load of life is symbolic to the load of pumpkins, which she is struggling to carry. She is already down with the deadly disease of cancer. She is married to a man 43 years older to her. The narrator uses symbolism at its best for a worst situation, by stating that “ She found Clark in the twilight.”(p. 275)I consider the age gap as a symbol. Did Allison have some hidden agenda to marry a man more than twice her age? Clark’s relations did not take it kindly to this marriage. In the mail there was a letter, the content (addressed to Clark) which Allison read to her dismay, ““ You're an old fool. You're being cruelly deceived.” (p. 275) The aged Clark, with his terminally ill wife due to cancer, and with the grudging taunts from the relations to bear—he must be in a terrible state of mind. The pumpkins that he carved represent the pictures that must be floating on the curtain of his mind, and Mary Robison terms them expressive and artful. She writes, “ Their carved features were suited to the sizes and shapes of the pumpkins. Two looked ferocious and jagged. One registered surprise. The last was serene and beaming.”(p. 275)This expression reveals <https://assignbuster.com/symbolism-by-mary-robison/>

symbolically the varying moods of his mind. We also learn very early on that Allison is wearing “ a natural-hair wig”, a revelation and foreboding of things to come. Cancer patients lose their hair in the course of the treatment and turn almost bald. The wig is the symbol of feminine beauty which Allison wishes to preserve till she dies, and she wants her husband to remember her with the curly hair wig and not the bald one.

Allison knows that she is going to die. Clark also knows about the impending death of his wife, but realizes that that would happen sooner than expected. Yet, both are engaged in hectic activity of giving shape to the pumpkins. The intervening period before death is difficult to bear for both. Robison writes, “ By one in the morning they were finished. Clark, who had bent his long torso forward to work, moved back over to the glider and looked out sleepily at nothing.”(p. 275) ‘ Looked out sleepily at nothing’ is a symbol for the solitary life ahead of him, when Allison shall be no more!

When Allison lit each candle and fixed the pumpkin lids over the flame, Robinson makes a profound observation, “ They sat together a moment and looked at the orange faces.”(p. 275) They were perhaps sitting together for the last time in their lives, Allison knew that she was going to die, will not see the morning again, and yet she says, ““ We're exhausted. It's good night time," Allison said. " Don't blow out the candles. I'll put new in tomorrow.”(p. 275)---Her request not to blow out the candles with the promise to put the new in tomorrow is a challenge to death, symbolizing her hope to live! Clark doesn't know how to cope up with her dying moments. He wished to get drunk with her and that was to ambush the sorrow of her impending death.... that was not to be... He reaches out to the phone, perhaps to summon the doctor....

Works Cited:

Robison, Mary: Tell Me: 30 Stories; Counterpoint, 2002. (The story “ Yours” is at p. 275