

House of sand and fog movie analysis essay sample



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The movie House of sand and Fog, starred by Jennifer Connelly and Ben Kingsley is based on an earlier book written by Andre Dubus II. It begins by a conflict between Kathy Nicolo and Behrani Massoud. The two are involve in a feud over who between them is the actual owner of a house. The house is on the shores of San Francisco, California. County authorities evict Kathy and Massoud acquires the house through a public auction. Kathy fails to honor to her tax obligations. She had also ignored earlier warnings from the authorities about her impeding eviction from the house. Kathy is recovering from alcohol addiction. Massoud Amir is an Iranian national, a former air force officer trying to rebuild his family of a wife, his only son and daughters after leaving his country.

Massoud believes that acquiring the house is part of the major steps towards realizing his present objectives of reclaiming the social position he held in Iran. Conflict and struggle dominates the movie. The two warring sides are trying to save what they treasure most in the circumstances not their fault. This paper is about how the themes of conflict and struggle are intertwining in the individual lives of the characters and the effects it has on their relationships. The viewer will realize in the end that the pursuit of self-worth and everyday struggle for family and self makes people culpable to conflict.

Kathy should not have ignored the mails from the county officials that urged her to pay taxes. Perhaps, this could have saved her the predicament. She is coping with the loss of her husband. Moreover, she is recovering from drug addiction, which is another potential threat to her life and dignity. Leaving the house to the Iranian lets her feel disappointed in her life. This is evident when she is seen driving past the house and hates the sight of the foreigner

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and his furniture. This prompts her to attack the workers renovating the house until she injures her foot.

Surprisingly, Massoud's wife and son treat her foot with no reservation. The fight confirms her ill feelings about the possession of the house by the Iranian and she believes she does not deserve that. She sees this as her moral failure to protect the treasure left to her by her late father. Kathy vows to get the house back to herself and her brother who lives far away.

Kathy's defender Frances Fisher, through the public domain, argues that Massoud should accept the sale of the house to Kathy at the price he bought it. However, this seems elusive since Massoud is apparently broke from losing his first job. To prove his pride before his daughter and son, and to keep his wife home, he had to keep the house. Perhaps, this could be due to the memories his entire family has about the good life they had in Iran. Nederer, Massoud's wife confirms her nostalgia when she says,

“ Do you remember our bungalow on the Caspian? How I ordered the trees cut down on the west side so we may view the sea? What is the matter with you Behrani?”

Massoud replies,

“ I today bought for us another bungalow. I purchased this home for a price no one would believe. It is worth two, may be three times that.” (Dubus, 2004).

Massoud fakes a life way above what he can actually afford just to please his family. He hopes to sell the house latter at a profit. The two parties are in a <https://assignbuster.com/house-of-sand-and-fog-movie-analysis-essay-sample/>

conflict they are not part of its cause. Kathy has alleged defaulting of tax remittances is mistakenly imposed on her while Massoud lawfully purchases the house through a legal auction. The two are indeed victims of the erroneous actions of the county authorities.

Lester Burdon, a deputy sheriff comes in as a third party. He is one of the officers who oversee Kathy's eviction.

The sheriff is touched by her anguish while secretly admiring her irresistible beauty. Now, this is about to cause conflict once again in Mr. Burdon's family because he plans to leave the family for Kathy. The two move in together in a cottage in the woods. The sheriff uses his powers as a county officer to fight for Kathy. He advises Kathy to sue the county since it erroneously placed her house on auction. She hires an attorney charged to ensure that she buys back the house at the price Massoud bought.

Mr. Burdon uses his position to intimidate Massoud. At this point Massoud proves to be strong-willed than him. He stands firm to prove that he acquired the house legally and the deputy sheriff has no right even within his powers to frustrate him. He threatens Massoud by saying he would have him deported if he does not sell the house to Kathy. Somebody watching would probably think Massoud is the sheriff and Mr. Burdon is the victim of his immorality.

The struggle continues for Kathy because her association with the sheriff would turn out to be bad luck than she expected. The two families are embroiled in a conflict that none of them intended. At one point, Kathy is taken back to her old house where she is humiliated by the sarcastic actions

of Massoud who tells her, “ There is a guest in the house.” He refers to Shoreh Aghdashloo, his wife. This reveals the threat she poses to the Bheraini family in their pursuit to secure a fortune in a country whose cultures they look down upon. However, she later treats Kathy with hospitality even though she never understood anything Kathy said.

Two pieces of evidence reveal the two themes of conflict and struggle are a result of each other. Firstly, the two struggling families are not aware that the unfolding events are due to a mistake from the county officials. As they struggle to get the best for themselves, they clash. Secondly, the two sides do not really hate each other at all.

When Kathy attempts to commit suicide just outside her old house, Massoud saves her and takes her in. On getting into the house, she tries to commit suicide again by taking an overdose of pills and Massoud’s wife saves her by forcing her to vomit through an induction. These two pieces of evidence convinces viewers that indeed that Kathy and Massoud are victims of a struggle they both have little control over. Furthermore, they are both on the right side of the law yet the sheriffs on different instances of the same case treat them.

Relationships are ruined as everyone seeks to get the best for themselves. Lester’s struggle to prove his love to Kathy turns sour. He gets into a fight with Massoud outside the county offices after the later agrees to sell the house to the county at the price he purchased it. Massoud’s son becomes a victim of police misinterpretation when they find him pointing a gun at Lester as he holds his father, Massoud. He would later die of gun injuries after they shoot him. In grief, Massoud regrets having lost his son. He kills his wife and <https://assignbuster.com/house-of-sand-and-fog-movie-analysis-essay-sample/>

commits suicide. The entire family is destroyed and Kathy does not have the house eventually. She feels guilty and acknowledges that the house was not legally hers when she says, “no, this is not my house” when asked by a police officer. Kate finds the couples not yet dead. She tries to save them but her resuscitation efforts fail since it is too late.

The viewer will realize in the end that the pursuit of self-worth and everyday struggle for family and self makes people culpable to conflict. Struggles to achieve certain goals in life can lead to direct and indirect conflicts between people. Sometimes, the warring parties may not even be aware of their innocence but they may act guilty due to the circumstances they have been placed in. Just as in the movie ‘House of Sand and Fog’, the two parties were both innocent but they received the worst treatment by the authorities. Kathy erroneously was evicted while Massoud lawfully bought the house through a public auction. This teaches us the lesson of sticking to our morals and learning not to ignore the little things that can devastate our entire life.

References

- Dubus, A. (2004). House of sand and fog. London: Vintage.

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