

The curtain blown by the breeze essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Dame Muriel Spark was an award-winning Scottish novelist. She spent several years in Central Africa, returning to Britain during World War II. Until 1957 she published only poetry and criticism, including studies of Mary Shelley and the Bront sisters. Her fiction uses satire and wit to present serious themes, often questions about good and evil. *Memento Mori* (1959) is her most widely praised novel; the best-known is *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961; film, 1969). Her later novels, often more sinister in tone, include *The Abbess of Crewe* (1974), *A Far Cry from Kensington* (1988), and *Reality and Dreams* (1996).

The story "The Curtain Blown by the Breeze" describes the problem of the colonial time. When her husband is imprisoned for the murder described in the opening paragraph, Mrs Van der Merwe discovers she is rich. Her new-found wealth allows her to throw off her Dutch Reform shackles and remake herself as an independent lady of leisure. The story of this transformation is told from the point of view of an unnamed English nurse, who moved to The Colony (South Africa) to follow her doctor brother Richard to a tropical disease clinic.

The narrator is one of a circle of nurses who encourage Sonia's wildest flights of fancy, egging her on from week to week: 'She was our creature, our folly, our lark. We had lavished our imagination upon her eager mind and had ourselves designed the long voile "afternoon" dresses, and had ourselves put it to her that she must have a path leading down to the river and a punt on the little river and a pink parasol to go with the punt.' While Sonia is a figure of fun for the nurses, the local men react differently.

Both the narrator's brother and her fiancée Frank fall under Sonia's spell. ' We nurses were astonished that the men were so dazzled... There was something in the air of the place that affected the men, even those newly out from England, with an overturn of discrimination. ' Spark's Fort Beit, is a blighted place ' where there was never a breath of breeze except in the season of storms and where the curtains in the windows never moved in the breeze unless a storm was to follow. ' The reader faces up with the problem of the lack of freedom.

It is hard to imagine for us what it means when you even can't go for a walk. Also in the story is showed the problem of women in the men's society. They can't even sit next a man, talk to them without misunderstanding that they are flirting. If we compare that time with ours we will not be able to argue that we have no freedom nowadays. The author expressed and showed the cruelty of that time in colors, using a lot of different epithets and comparisons. Speaking about me I'm glad that I haven't lived on that time and in that country.