

The day the world
almost came to an
end essay sample



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The Stories ' The Day the World Almost Came to an End' and ' The Man Of The House' are stories about childhood experiences. With the aid of close reference to the text, compare and contrast: (a) The experiences of the major characters;

(b) The kinds of persons these characters are;

(c) One major social theme that each author appears to react to in the story;

' The Day the World Almost Came to an End' is a poem by Pearl Crayton. It's about a twelve year old girl, who thought the world was coming to an end after one Friday evening her cousin Rena runs to tell that she better get some religion quick because the world was going to end on Saturday. She begins to believe Rena and so starts to worry, knowing herself to be a bona fide sinner. She soon started to really become scared and reacts rather frantically even after getting council from her very loved and respect father, who tells her not to worry but that the world can at end minute. She doesn't react very well to this news. In the night, after hearing a noise, runs out in her night gown screaming thinking that this is the time the world is going to end. Her dad catches her in his arms on his way home from work. He tells her that it's just an old airplane that made the sound so the world isn't coming to an end. The author, Pearl Crayton, was born on a cotton plantation in Louisiana in 1932. Therefore, the airplane that the narrator heard could have been linked by the author, to a plane being tested before the Second World War. ' The Man Of The House' is a story written by Frank O'Connor and is set in Ireland.

It reveals childhood details concerning the author's early life in County Cork. The title speaks for itself but it hides the detail of this " Man" being a ten year old boy. One morning after coming down to see his mother very sick, he decides to stay home from school and take care of her. So, he gets the fire started, gets her toast and tea. He even goes to get her some whiskey and a lemon after Miss Minnie tells him to. This is all due to the absence of a father figure to be the real man of the house. He takes on the role very well, till in the end when after being conned by a little girl, drinks off all of his mother's medicine. He soon goes to the cathedral for forgiveness and prays to the Virgin Mary for his mother to get better. By doing this, it takes away from the " Man" stance that the boy has taken and brings the reader back to the reality that this " Man" is still very much a ten year old boy who, though highly mentally mature, will make childish mistakes. These two short stories are very contrasting in their mood, era and setting, writing style, experiences, themes, personalities of each narrator.

These two experiences are very much different. Both protagonists are children, one a girl and the other a boy. In the ' The Day the World Almost Came to an End' the young girl finds herself in a negative position, due to her lack of religion, where she believes a myth from her cousin that the world will end on Saturday. The prose then turns into a huge biblical reflection of the rapture, but it is also an exaggeration considering the fact that it wasn't true, the world wasn't coming to an end when the sun whips the moon in the eclipse. The young girl's fears are only relieved with the help of her father whom she loves and whose opinion she respects. On the other hand, in ' The Man Of The House' the situation at hand is graver.

The protagonist takes on a more serious stance to his mother's illness. So, as said, the two experiences are contrasting in that in one, the author uses exaggeration as the main technique which off springs some amount of humor into the piece at the immaturity of the child. An example of this humor is the story Rena tells her about the sun whipping the moon during the eclipse which would signify the end of the world. The other that is ' The Man Of the House' is again graver. The author takes a more serious outlook on a very serious situation unlike in ' The Day The World Almost Came To An End' the child reacts very irrationally to a very idealistic event in the Christian world, that is, the day of the rapture. She doesn't do something about the situation at hand except run screaming in her night gown at night instead of ' getting some religion' like what Miss Daya told her to do. In ' The Man Of The House' the young boy does something about the fact that his mother may be sick with pneumonia.

In contrast, he also listening to the knowledge of someone older than him, Miss Minnie Ryan, when she advises him to get his mother some whiskey mixed with lemon, though scared on reaching the public house, determined to cure his mom, he overcomes his fear and gets the whisky. Unlike the other speaker in ' The Day The World Almost Came To An End' who just embraces her fear and does absolutely nothing about it. Lastly, what is also contrasting are their ages. Though they are both children in the same age range, one would think that because the girl in ' The Day The World Almost Came to An End' is two years older than the other narrator that she would have the tinniest bit more sense than he, but this is in the end seen as futile since she acts like a mad woman in the end running out of her house in the

night gown just because she heard a sound. The experiences of these two speakers are contrasting, but so are the kind of persons these speakers are. The ten year old boy in 'The Man Of the House' is more mentally mature than the girl in 'The Day the World Almost Came to An End.'

The boy, as the title suggests, takes on the responsibilities of a man instead of the ten year old boy that he is. At his age it is not expected that he would on top of taking care of his mother to the extent at which he does but he also shows a great amount of respect and love for his mother and truly value the role she plays in his life as what is probably, a single mom scenario. The little girl, from the start of the story you can see that she acts her age unlike the little boy. She is seen from the get go, playing in the mud, like the average twelve year old does, and acting rather whimsically to the shocking news she hears from her younger cousin and even to what Miss Daya told her. The ten year old reacts more conventionally to his conflict and takes on the duties of a man rather than a boy, and even when she does make the boyish mistake of drinking all the medicine, like a true man, he tells his mother the truth ready for any repercussion that she will bestow unto him and more over his mother's son and so shows her respect older figure by telling her the truth even though she was sick and would probably not react the way she usually does to disobedience as the.

So, though behaving like a man, by doing this, it shows that he knows that he is still a boy. The girl doesn't take on an adult's point of view; neither does she acts like it and therefore takes absolutely no responsibility for her actions. She's aware that she is truly a sinner and yet she does nothing

about the fact that faces the consequences of eternal fire in Hell, something <https://assignbuster.com/the-day-the-world-almost-came-to-an-end-essay-sample/>

that she knows very well about considering the fact that she goes to church and her pastor mentions it very frequently. Unlike the boy, who really didn't know how to cure his mother of her illness and therefore takes advice from both his neighbor and the doctor. So, despite his ignorance he still makes an attempt to make the situation better. There are two major themes common to each of these short stories. They are, Love and Family Relationship and Religion. Religion refers to 'the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, esp. a personal God or gods.' These two things link these two short stories together.

Though one theme may seem more dominant than the other, the both play a very important role in the plot of the stories in the long run. In 'The Day the World Almost Came to an End' religion is the ruling theme, however in the end, it's the theme of Love And Family Relationship that resolves the conflict. Her love for her father and her father's love for his child is this family relationship. Her father is the only one that is able to console her in her time of ludicrous distress. In 'The Man of The House' this is switched around. Love And Family Relationship is the ruling theme. It is the theme which is introduced and plays out as the major aspect of the short story. However, it is when the little boy goes to the cathedral to pray for his mom and prays again to the Virgin Mary for forgiveness of his sins that the conflict is resolved. One can also say that the authors were making a mockery of religion.

'The Day The World Almost Came To An End' is a huge over exaggeration of a child's experience, which as said, leads to humor. With religion playing such a dominant role in this piece, it is fair to say that the author was making <https://assignbuster.com/the-day-the-world-almost-came-to-an-end-essay-sample/>

a mockery of the faith, turning it into something that many may laugh about. In both these pieces the author uses a child to elaborate on the themes mentioned. Though similar in this sense, 'The Day the World Almost came to an End' is Caribbean and it shows the level of immaturity of children. 'The Man Of The House' on the other hand shows the level of independence that some children possess. Both are a play on Religion tied into the Love and Family Relationship of a father, in 'The Day the World Almost Came to an End' and a mother in, 'The Man Of The House.'