In The Lake Of The Woods Essay, Research Paper

In the Lake of the Woods

In the Lake of the Woods is afictional mystery written by Tim O’Brien. Through the book we learn that ourlovers, husbands, and wives have qualities beyond what our eyes can see. JohnWade and Kathy are in a marriage so obscure that their secrets lead to anemotional downfall. After John Wade loss in his Senatorial Campaign, hisfeeling towards Kathy take on a whole different outlook. His compulsive and obsessivebehavior causes Kathy to distance herself from him. His war experience andemotional trauma are a major cause for his strange behavior. We remainpondering about Kathy’s mysterious disappearance, which becomes fatal for her.Possible scenarios are presented in eight chapters marked “Hypothesis”, thesechapters add a mysterious twist which can change our train of thought to“maybe” or “perhaps” this is the truth.

Kathy’s odd disappearance ishaunting the reader all the way throughout the novel. Her husband’s unstableemotional being is somewhat a key to the mystery. We examine his inner thoughtsand simultaneous occurrences, but we are still left guessing. There are varioussituations that lead to multiple possibilities of Kathy’s disappearance. Did Johneat Kathy? Did she take the boat and vanish, or did John murder her, and hideher in the Lake of the Woods? These are all possible hypotheses that will belooked into and taken apart to find out what really happened to Kathy.

He wanted to swim through her bloodand climb up and down her spine and drink from her ovaries and press his gumsagainst the firm red muscle of her heart. He wanted to suture their livestogether.” This quote can portray Johns disturbed mind set, we see that he isconsumed with rage and it appears he wants to indulge in his wives body. Johnis very expressive with parts of her body that he wanted to be at one with,which leads me to believe that he possibly could have eaten Kathy. It is to ourknowledge that John was afraid of losing Kathy. His fear of loss led him ontothe path of spying on her. At first he felt guilt for his doing, yet he gotsatisfaction in it. “A quick powerful rush. He knew things he shouldn’t know.”John is lost without Kathy, “he said she was his compass”. John compared hislove with Kathy as two snakes. “Like were swallowing each other up, except in agood way.” His love for Kathy was so strong, and he couldn’t imagine his lifewithout her, which pushed him to the limit. Eating her. “Just like those weirdosnakes, one plus one equals zero!”

When Kathy and John first gotmarried they enjoyed each other’s company “they had fun shopping together,picking out cheap furniture, and old rugs.” Kathy was John’s first priority; heseemed more relaxed and content in her eye. That was until politics took a rolein their life. “Kathy despised it all. Every \*censored\*ty minute. The political wifeyroutine. She used to get the shakes out in public.” He is the link to herdisappearance. His Vietnam secrets and betrayals pushed Kathy towards the edge.“Kathy got pretty scared sometimes. The detective act. The stuff you’d yell inyour sleep. It gave her the heebie-jeebies.” When Kathy thought about hisspying games, and how politics seemed to be more important then her, it givesthe reader the impression he is no longer a loving man in her eyes. He didn’teven realize that she got the shakes out in public when all he really had to dowas look, but instead he chose to look the other way. We are always readingabout his love for Kathy and how he wanted to be at on with her, but when youreally look into it, he knew nothing about her. Coming from a women’s point ofview. Kathy was lacking the love and comfort she was longing for, and in returnshe felt the need to vanish.

We are told that Kathy hasdisappeared before, during a party or after a movie, but not for this long.Kathy’s disappearance stunned everyone around her; especially John who was bothemotionally and physically attached to her. From a young age, John has beenvery interested in magic and it has carried through into his adult-hood, italso earned him the name “Sorcerer” by his Vietnam buddies. John would put on ashow for friends around him, but Kathy was not amused at all. She warned John“Be careful with the tricks. One of these days you’ll make me disappear.” Wasthere a hidden message that Kathy was giving to John? It was probably so, sinceKathy has disappeared once again, but only this time she’s not coming back.

Throughout the novel the narrator isgoing into Johns different thoughts. We are given bits of information thatcould lead us to believe John possibly murdered Kathy. We are given different hypotheses that point us in thedirection of her murder. “Kath, Kath,” he must’ve said, and maybe other things,and then dispatched her to the bottom.” When the Sheriff asked John questionssuch as what time did she leave, and when did you last see her? A statement ispassed; “Wade tried to keep his eyes level. He felt like an actor.” Why shouldhe be feeling like an actor if he is not guilty of anything? John has manysecrets one being the whereabouts of Kathy. He probably knew information onKathy, but he kept it a secret.

All in all, In the Lake of theWoods takes the reader on an emotional roller coaster ride. The threehypotheses listed above are all possible explanations to Kathy’s disappearance.Did John at Kathy? Did she take the boat and vanish, or did John murder her andhide her in the Lake of the Woods? A very poignant statement is made by thenarrator and he is very accurate when he says “One way or another, it seems, weall perform vanishing tricks, effacing history, locking up our lives andslipping day by day into the graying shadows. Our whereabouts are uncertain.All secrets lead to the dark, and beyond the dark there is only maybe.” Thetruth is though, Kathy has disappeared and she’s never coming back.