Mother 2 Essay, Research Paper

Freeman s Mother

“The revolt of Mother” is an interesting short story by Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, who lived, in the late nineteenth century. This short story presents important aspects of Freeman life. Throughout this story she express the miserable life that her mother was having with her father and what she did to claim for her rights; also, what changes her father did toward her mother.

Freeman’s mother had a miserable life with her husband. It may be interesting to know that Freeman’s father, Warren Wilkins, gave up his plan of building the house Eleanor, Freeman’s mother, had hoped for. Instead, the family moved in 1877 into the home in which Eleanor was to serve as hired housekeeper. Freeman’s mother was thus deprived of the very things which made a woman proud, her own kitchen, furniture, family china; and she had lost the one place in which it was acceptable for her to be powerful: her home (Biography to Remember). As a result, Freeman grew up without accepting the critical condition of her own mother. This is one of the reasons that in “The revolt of Mother” she puts mother in quotes to tell us that it was just a title, not a person. “Father”, who symbolize her own father, is presented as an unaffectionate father and husband who saw her wife “as immovable to him as one of the rocks in his pasture-land, bound to the earth with generations of blackberry vines (244).” This quote reflects the idea that “father” saw mother as simply an object, like a horse, plow, or grain of wheat; in general, to him, she was as much a part of the farm as any of these objects. She was not his dear wife whom he adored and loved. “Mother” was the person who fed him and kept the house tidy. In the opening of the story, “Father” refuses to tell mother what he is building. He tells her to “tend to her own affairs” (244), so right at the beginning we see that this woman is not allowed to have an opinion about economic affairs. As the story progresses we find out that Mother’s son has been teach to perform in the same way as her husband. “Mother” has to ask him more than once about the barn. The son knew for three months that his father was building a barn, yet “Mother” was not informed. Freeman’s mother lived forty years keeping silence about her feeling and discrimination.

Towards the end of the story, Freeman expresses what should her mother do to claim for her rights. She describes “Mother” as taking enough courage to break the chain of slavery. For forty years she had served her husband without complaint, but now she had to stand up and fight for her right, liberty, and position. She was convinced of what was her right and with no doubts at all she started to move everything to the new barn. Before the next morning the man who milked the cows “spread the story of Adoniram Penn’s wife moving into the new barn all over the little village” (252). However, the revolt of “Mother” was full of courage and boldness, and she did not pay attention to the comments of her neighborhood. When Mr. Hersey, the minister of the church, comes to the new home she stands up and talks about her rights to dictate what happens in her own house. She says: “I’ve thought it all over an’ over, an’ I believe I’m doing’ what’s right. I’ve made it the subject of prayer, an’ it’s betwixt me an’ the Lord an’ Adoniram. There ain’t no call for nobody else to worry about it (252). Freeman saw this action as a small step toward gender equality in her house.

At the end of the story, when “Father” returns and discovers what “Mother” has done, he reacts in a way, which shocks “Mother” and all of the townspeople. Instead of angry words coming out of his mouth, shameful tears were shed from his eyes. He cried because he was ashamed of his treatment towards his wife. He remembered forty years using his wife as a slave, and an object. “Father” demonstrated with his tears that man has feeling and emotions. Also, it is never too late to repair the past and have a new beginning. He hadn’t realized until then how badly his wife needed was to be heard and “Father” promised to do anything for his wife.

Freeman’s mother spent forty years living with a man that considered her like a part of a farm, as any of his horses, or a grain of wheat. However, after she had been abused for so long, she gained the courage to fight for her rights as a woman. Her message was simple and plain: women of that difficult time could do whatever they set their minds to do. This revolt of Mother was a small step toward gender equality in our society.

Work Cited

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