Reaction To “Kubuku Rides Again” Essay, Research Paper

My Reaction to ?Kubuku Rides Again (This is it)?

?Kubuku Rides Again? was written by Larry Brown in 1988. This intense story portrays a powerful theme of alcoholism and how damaging it can become. In fact, alcoholism is very destructive because in most cases the user is unaware of the negative affects and their own dependency that the highly addictive drug has caused. I loved reading this story because I could relate to it. I compared the destructive theme of alcoholism, and the dependency that is caused, to an abusive relationship I suffered through in my past. The relationship I survived through was just like an addictive drug. It caused so many mental and physical scars that I blindly accepted because the horrifying fact was that I viewed only the outside of the picture and was ignorant my own suffering and dependency. I lived every day of my life in complete denial, just as the main character, Angel, did. Like my parents in my past, Angel?s husband, Alan, did everything he could to try and help her. He tried to believe her every time she lied and promised she would stop drinking. The cold and hard lesson that I had to learn, just as Angel learned at the end of the story, is that eventually empty promises run out.

Brown?s story had such an upsetting impact on my reaction. This work brought back painful memories and new realizations. Reading about Angel?s hardships was just like reading about myself. I knew that when Angel promised that she would stop drinking she really meant it. It is sad to say that an addict truly believes this with all of their heart with this tiny little lingering voice in the back of their head saying, ?after one more…? The beginning of the story is written so that the readers do not yet know of the brutality Angel and her family had suffered. Alan comes home to find that his wife, whom he loves dearly and is trying with all of his own character and self-worth to save, has been drinking wine. Angel drunkenly insists that she has only started her first glass of wine when in all actuality she has had five. I feel that Brown was clever to write this as nonchalant as it was stated since it symbolizes the way Angel feels about drinking this much. It is no big deal at all to her, where as some people drink one or two glasses of wine and are already drunk. Angel claims that it is ?just wine? which is a humorously sad attempt to benefit her case, and belittle it in hopes of subduing Alan into her own blind reasoning. Chaos begins when Alan discovers that nearly half of the bottle has been emptied. After pulling myself through a series of violent physical abuse and corrupting mental diminishing, I swore that I would never again see the man that I blindly loved for who I wanted him so desperately to be. With my family?s support I eventually did stop seeing him. Unfortunately, he still placed a sturdy ownership over my heart and won his way back into my life. Feeling so ashamed, I could not bring myself to tell my family. Instead I insisted, just as Angel did, that he had no control over me. The funny thing about it is that the whole time Alan is trying to get through to his wife and help her, Angel is only thinking about how she can sneak the bottle of wine into her possession without her husband knowing. When my family was trying to help me and show me the hard reality of the path I chose to walk in life, I was only thinking about where I could say I would be going in order to sneak a way possible for me to be able to see my abusive boyfriend.

A very unfortunate part of this story that some seem to overlook is the issues that Angel?s eight year-old son, Randy, faces. Although Brown does refer to him as a ?little boy?, Randy knows more about what is going on than his mother would like to admit. It is very sad that Randy should have to suffer the hurt of having an alcoholic mother who loves her alcohol seemingly more than him. To the point where she is ready to drop to her knees in Alan?s mercy for the remaining contents of the bottle he has a hold of. Not only does Randy have to deal with not having a meal for dinner because his mother is too drunk to remember to make something, but he also has to deal with seeing his mother and father yelling over a bottle of wine. What notions does this store inside the child?s head for future reference??

The battle over the remaining wine turns bloody as Alan?s hand is sliced open when the bottle breaks and shatters. Instead of showing fret and concern for the blood her husband has just shed because of his pure love for her, Angel runs into the living room to gobble up the sacred two inches of wine that she had absentmindedly left vulnerable at the bottom of her glass. Brown ends the scene with a foreshadow of the events to come and end of the story. Angel, free of care, thinks that it ?ought to be enough but ain?t. Ain?t never enough.?

The story shifts into a flashback of Angel?s. The scene described is of Angel and her friends out having a drink. Angel seriously plans to attend her son?s little league game later that evening. Somewhere inside her subconscious mind, she knows she will not be present at that game. Not while she is sitting drinking ?One Fifty-One and Coke?!! One Fifty-One is a rum that is in fact one of the most strong, and highest proof, alcohol available for sale in a bar or liquor store. Not to mention Angel is drinking double shots. This is close to three ounces of liquid that is seventy-five percent alcohol by volume in each ounce. I am explaining this to emphasize what an out of control alcoholic Angel was, and how I can compare this to my own relationship because the person who I was with was just as bad and deadly as the One Fifty-One proof alcohol. It is a shockingly crazy amount of alcohol that Angel was drinking. Angel never does make it to see her son?s little league game. Her son?s emotional disappointment is still not enough to make Angel get help. Instead she takes a drive figuring she can sober up with two bottles of peach schnapps and a few beers. She ends up passing out in her car, and is then involved in a terrible car accident after she decides it is alright for her to drive. Angel swears the road moved or a ?tree jump out in font of her?. After spending time in the hospital, Angel still does not realize the terror and depth of her addiction.

The story then continues to present time where Angel and Alan are home with their son one rainy night. Angel waits for Alan to fall asleep in order to sneak out of the house so that she would be able to buy beer at a local gas station. She makes her way out into the truck and begins to leave just as Alan appears out from inside of their house. Half-naked, Alan stands besides window of the truck in the pouring rain and begs his wife to return home. Alan gave up trying to stop Angel from drinking. She proved that she would not allow her habit to let her free. If Angel must continue drinking, then Alan only wants her to be at home where she is safe. Angel promises that she will return home. Alan becomes an enabler in Angel?s life. This is the difference between Angel?s story and mine. Angel never freed herself of her obsession because eventually the people around her enabled her to continue The end of the story is very symbolic. It ends with Angel looking at the rain falling on Randy?s bicycle and the grill outside. This is a small view of what Angel is missing in her life. Drinking alcohol is more important than her son?s childhood and his changes. It is more important to her than her family. This part touched me very deeply because for a long time I believed that my relationship with my boyfriend was more important than my family. I was missing out on the best things in life. Family is such an important value that some people overlook. Angel?s addiction to alcohol helped to steal her from her family. Since she loved drinking so much, she does not realize the pain she is causing her loved ones. There comes a time when all of the promises people break comes back to them. As Angel backs up out of the driveway, she notices the yellow porch light that Alan always leaves on for her. She feels loved and cared about because this light is a symbol for Alan?s concern and love for her. He leaves the light on because he believes that Angel will return home eventually. The last quote of the story had the most meaning. This part hit me the hardest. ?The light was always on. That what she thinking when it go out.?

This story had a very intense meaning behind it. I enjoyed reading it very much because it helped remind me of how much time we waste and how we let important things slip right passed us. The main theme of the story is of how alcohol can tear a family apart and how denial can blind a person. A smaller theme of the story is about family. This reminded me of a short poem I once read. It was written by Ellen C. Leslie and is attached to this essay. Although the poem is not about alcoholism, I believe it to be a good reference to the story. It is about the importance of family. It symbolizes how we let the day distract us and how we let the smaller, beautiful things in life fall away. Concentrating on our own troubles and our own responsibilities has seemingly become the sole importance in every day life. We forget to realize how important it is to truly stop and smell the flowers. We lose sight of how precious life is and how we should use tenderness and love to help put aside our cares and worries. We forget to take a minute out of the day for the sake of more important things, such as family. (Come to think of it, we tend to pour our concentration more into our own problems and ourselves than into our own family… an unwise investment indeed, don’t you think?) Angel will never be able to get back the pieces of her son?s childhood that she missed because she is uncontrollably absorbed in her alcoholism.

?The Meaning of Family?

by Ellen C. Leslie

I ran into a stranger as he passed by,

“Oh excuse me please” was my reply.

He said, “Please excuse me too;

I wasn’t watching for you.”

We were very polite, this stranger and I.

We went on our way and we said good-bye.

But at home a different story is told,

How we treat our loved ones, young and old.

Later that day, cooking the evening meal,

My son stood beside me very still.

When I turned, I nearly knocked him down.

“Move out of the way,” I said with a frown.

He walked away, his little heart broken.

I didn’t realize how harshly I’d spoken.

While I lay awake in bed,

God’s still small voice came to me and said,

“While dealing with a stranger, common courtesy you use,

but the children you love, you seem to abuse.

Go and look on the kitchen floor,

You’ll find some flowers there by the door.

Those are the flowers he brought for you.

He picked them himself: pink, yellow and blue.

He stood very quietly not to spoil the surprise,

and you never saw the tears that filled his little eyes.”

By this time, I felt very small,

And now my tears began to fall.

I quietly went and knelt by his bed;

“Wake up, little one, wake up,” I said.

“Are these the flowers you picked for me?”

He smiled, “I found ‘em, out by the tree.

I picked ‘em because they’re pretty like you.

I knew you’d like ‘em, especially the blue.”

I said, “Son, I’m very sorry for the way I acted today;

I shouldn’t have yelled at you that way.”

He said, “Oh, Mom, that’s okay.

I love you anyway.”

I said, “Son, I love you too,

and I do like the flowers, especially the blue.”