The Revolt of 'Mother' Study Guide

The Revolt of 'Mother' by Mary Eleanor Wilkins Freeman

BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

First published in 1890 in *Harper's Bazaar,* "The Revolt of 'Mother'" then appeared the following year, with only a few textual changes, in Mary E. Wilkins Freeman's second short story collection, *A New England Nun and Other Stories.*

Freeman is best known for her local color stories that portrayed rural life in small New Eng-land towns at the end of the nineteenth century, which was a time of great change. While her use of these elements contributes to her effective picture of the village community, in "The Revolt of 'Mother'" her emphasis lies more with the oppression and rebellion of women, a theme that she deals with in other stories written during the same period, notably "A New England Nun." In portraying a main character insistent on receiving fair treatment from her husband, both for herself and her family, Free-man conveys women's lack of power. At the same time, she puts forth one way to get around such inequality. Freeman also demonstrates other features of the New England village in the late nineteenth century, such as the lessening of importance of the once all-powerful minister and a closely knit community that is fascinated by the transgressive actions of others. All of these characteristics found in "The Revolt of 'Mother'" further an understanding of New England and the United States' history.

Author Biography

Mary E. Wilkins was born on October 31, 1852, in the small town of Randolph, Massachusetts, and moved with her family to Brattleboro, Vermont, when she was fifteen. After the deaths of both her parents, she returned to Randolph and lived the rest of her life there. To help support her family, Free-man taught at a girls' school and published poetry and stories, primarily in children's magazines, in the 1870s. In 1882, she won a cash prize for her first story for adults, and became a full-time writer. She set many of her stories in small New England towns like Randolph and Brattleboro, and wrote knowledgeably about the lives of the people who remained in these Eastern villages while much of the nation's vigorous youth were in the forefront of Western expansion. In 1891, Freeman published her second story collection, *A New England Nun and Other Stories.* This collection included "The Revolt of 'Mother'"

Freeman wrote novels, plays, and poetry as well as short fiction, but found that only short story sales to magazines guaranteed her an income. She was self-supporting and helped to support various family members for most of her life on her proceeds from her published stories.

She married Dr. Charles Freeman in 1902. Both she and her husband developed addictions to drugs and alcohol that interfered with their lives, and her husband eventually died in a mental hospital. Her fiction from this period was never as popular or critically acclaimed as her early short stories from the 1880s anbd 1890s. Commentators generally agree that is was on the strength of these early works that the American Academy of Letters awarded Freeman the Howells Medal for distinction in fiction in 1925. The following year she was one of the first four American women — along with Edith Wharton— to be elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Freeman died on March 15, 1930.

Plot Summary

As the story opens Sarah Penn asks her husband why men are digging in a nearby field. Adoniram Penn tries to avoid answering. Sarah compels her husband to reveal that the men are digging a cellar for a new barn on the very spot where Adoniram had promised to build a new house for the family.

Sarah goes back into her house, which is much smaller than the barn that already stands on the property. She learns from her son, Sam, that Adoniram is building the new, larger barn to house more livestock which he plans to buy. As they wash and dry dishes, her engaged daughter, Nanny, says that it's "too bad" that her father is building a new barn when the family needs a decent house. Sarah tells Nanny that the ways of "men-folks" differ greatly from those of women and are beyond understanding. When Nanny goes on to wish for a parlor in which to entertain guests, her mother insists that there is nothing wrong with receiving visitors in a nice clean kitchen, and reminds her daughter that many people live in worse circumstances.

Sarah confronts her husband with her belief that their house is inadequate. She reminds Adoniram that when they were married, forty years earlier, he promised her a fine new house on the very site where the new barn is under construction. And despite her defense of her "nice clean kitchen," she echoes Nanny's wish for a parlor for the upcoming wedding. Adoniram refuses to discuss the matter with her, and Sarah declares that it is because he cannot speak without acknowledging that she is in the right.

Later, as Nanny sits in the kitchen sewing, she tells her mother she will be ashamed and embarrassed to have the wedding in their small, shabby kitchen. Her mother tries to console her with the thought that she may be able to put up new wallpa-per by then. Nanny, half-jokingly and half-angrily, suggests that they hold the wedding in the new barn. Sarah Penn receives the comment thoughtfully.

Throughout the spring, the barn steadily goes up. The week before Adoniram plans to move the livestock into it, he leaves home for three or four days to look into the purchase of a new horse. All that morning, Sarah is preoccupied— her eyes are doubtful and her forehead is puckered. She talks to herself, working out some problem, and then suddenly announces that her husband's absense from home just then "look like a providence," that is, a beneficent act of God.

When men deliver a load of hay ordered for the new barn, Sarah instructs them to put it in the old barn instead. After the midday meal, Sarah has her children pack up their belongings as she loads the contents of the kitchen into a basket. She oversees the move of all the furniture, the stove, and their belongings of the house, across the field, and into the new barn. She hangs quilts in front of the box stalls to make bedrooms, and the harness room, "with its chimney and shelves," becomes "the kitchen of her dreams."

News of the unusual move spreads through town. Neighbors speculate that Sarah Penn is either mad or "lawless and rebellious." The minister pays an ineffectual visit: she insists to him that the doings in her household are between herself, the Lord and her husband. On the day that Adoniram is due home, many of the townspeople gather on the road to witness his homecoming. Adoniram goes first to the house, then the shed—which now houses one of the new cows that the old barn cannot accomodate. He leads his horse to the new barn. And when he opens the doors, he finds his family inside.

Adoniram is very surprised. Sarah takes him aside and tells him calmly that the family has come to live in the barn. She says he must put in some windows and partitions and buy some new furniture. Adoniram seems to be in shock, barely responding as his wife helps him take off his jacket and urges him to wash up for dinner while their son leads the new horse to the old barn. After dinner, Sarah finds Adoniram crying. He promises to make any improvements to the barn that Sarah has asked for. He tells her that he had no idea she was so set on a new house.

Introduction

Introduction Summary

Direct Quote: "*The Revolt of Mother*, Freeman's best-known story, is unusual among her fiction in that the female protagonist defies social convention (but not her own concept of what is morally right) to meet her own deep-felt need. However, it is also typical of Freeman's work, which often provides closely observed portraits of a woman's experiences and emotions in relation to her husband and her children."

Introduction Analysis

This introduction gives the readers an anticipation of what is to come in the story. We know that there will be a female character (Mother) that will go against social convention and dive into the relationships that she has with other members of her family, and how her defiance will affect each of them. This is the story of a woman who defies social acceptability by going against her husband's will, yet ultimately bringing him full circle to appreciate her point of view. This is rare for the mid 1800s, the time in which the story is set. The story plays out as follows.

Section 1

Section 1 Summary

The tale opened with Mother (Sarah Penn) watching men dig in her family's field and asking Father (Adoniram Penn) what they are digging for. He does not want to tell her, growling, "I wish you'd go into the house, mother, an' 'tend to your own affairs." She said she would not go in until he told her what the men were digging in the field for. Rather than give her an answer, Father began saddling his horse and not acknowledging her further. She stood there and refused to leave until he gave her an answer. Finally, he told her that they were digging a cellar for a new barn. Upon hearing this statement, she gets very mad at him, since he is building the barn where they were supposed to build their new house. He left without saying another word to her. She stared after him, as he rode away on the horse, and then glanced from the magnificent site of the new barn to her tiny shack of a home.

Mother goes back into the house at this point, and her daughter (Nanny Penn) asks her what the men are digging for, as she has been watching them work out of one of the windows of the house as well. When her mother tells her they were digging a cellar for another barn, she cannot believe it. Sarah asks her son (Sammy Penn), who was standing in the kitchen combing his hair, if he was aware that his father was building a new barn. At first, the boy ignores his mother, but after being scolded, admits that he was aware of the project. He states that he had been aware of it for about three months.

Nanny does not understand why her father has to build another barn, since the house they live in is in such poor shape. They have a barn that was in fine shape for the livestock, again in much better condition than their home. At this point, Sarah asks the boy if Father was planning to purchase more cows. Again, he ignores her, and after another verbal scolding, admitted that his father was, indeed, planning to buy more cows. Mother is furious, and as a way to let out her anger, says to her daughter, "You ain't found out yet we're women-folks. . . One of these days you'll find it out, an' then you'll know that we know only what men-folks think we do, so far as any use of it goes an' how we'd ought to reckon men-folks. . .an' not complain of what they do any more than we do of the weather." Nanny Penn takes this statement to heart, and says that she supposes it would be acceptable for her fiancé to come and see her in their present house, that others may not have as good a home as them. Mother then calms down and say that, she has not complained, and that they need to be happy that they have a good father and as good of a home as they have.

Section 1 Analysis

The first part of this story sets the stage for how a traditional family of the mid 1800s is supposed to classify itself. The men are supposed to be in charge, and the women are to be subordinates. Anything that deviates from this norm is looked at as wrong. . .as

defiant behavior. Just the fact that Mother will not leave Father until she has an answer gives us insight as to where this story may lead. We know that Mother has a strong personality, and more than likely will stand up to Father if the need arises. We also see that Sammy Penn is following in his Father's footsteps, acting as if he is not required to answer the women when asked any questions, regardless of whether his mother is speaking to him.

With the quote from Mother, we sense the sarcasm in her tone that she does not agree with the social conventions of the time, that women are not to complain of anything the men do, regardless of the impact. The daughter then relinquishes a bit of her anger over the new barn by stating that it would be acceptable for her fiancé to come and visit her in the shack of a house they live in. In addition, Mother says that they need to be happy with what they have. This is also typical of the time. The women were mad, but then upon further thought, recanted their feelings and went back to the accepted views of society. We have gained foresight, however, into what is possible with Mother's feelings, and it leaves us wondering what she may be brought to do.

Section 2

Section 2 Summary

Mother worked all day, cleaning the house and baking pies, deep in thought. Nanny was working on some embroidery for her wedding in the fall. Sarah was baking Father's favorite pies: mincemeat pies. Quote: "However deep a resentment she might be forced to hold against her husband, she would never fail in sedulous attention to his wants. As she worked on his favorite dishes, she kept looking out the windows at the men digging the cellar of the new barn. . .where Father had promised her forty years ago that their new house would be built."

The family ate when Father returned from his work. They ate without talking much, and promptly got up and went back to work. Sammy went to school, before his father could instruct him to do chores. Nanny left for the store to get some additional thread for her embroidery.

When both of the children had gone, Mother called to Father and asked to speak to him for a minute. After some bantering, and Mother finally demanding that Father come over, he came to listen to what Mother had to say. She wanted to know why he was building another barn, thinking they did not need one. She asked him if he was planning to purchase more cows. He refused to answer. When would not answer, she went on with her talk to him. She stated that she had never complained about the condition of their home-no carpet, old wallpaper, virtually no storage in the kitchen, and only one room. She understands that he has made such a good living, but cannot comprehend why he has still not built a nice home for his family. She said they needed a better home for Nanny to receive visitors in, a nice home for their daughter to be married in. She reminded him that he promised her forty years ago, when they were married, that they would build a new house in the field before their first married year was over. Yet he continued to build new sheds for cows instead. Quote: "You're lodgin' your dumb beasts better than you are your own flesh an' blood. I want to know if you think it's right." He refused to acknowledge that there was anything wrong with what he was doing. Sarah was irate. He would only acknowledge her with silence, making her angrier. He left and went back to work. She then promptly rolled out some cotton and began cutting out shirts for her husband, all the while listening to the men working in the field.

Nanny arrived home with her embroidery, and sat down to begin working on her projects again. She told her mother that she did not see how they were going to be able to hold her wedding in their home and that she would be ashamed to have guests see the conditions in which they were living. She said that maybe they could have the wedding in the new barn. Mrs. Penn had looked startled at the statement.

Adoniram left the yard with his horse and carriage. Mother watched him leave, and continued watching the men working in the field.

Section 2 Analysis

As we see in this section of the story, Mother works to please Father, regardless of her anger towards him. It is her mission in life to please him with whatever means possible including providing him with favorite meals, clean clothing, clean home, etc. This is in sharp contrast to many of today's families, where the brunt of the workload is carried 50/50, and if the man of the house angers the woman, he may well find himself without any meals at all, much less his favorite meals. It is also possible in today's society that the woman of the house may choose to leave the laundry and household chores alone. You will find Sarah's type of behavior in very few homes of today's society.

We again see Sarah's persistence in wanting answers from Adoniram. Women were supposed to take what their husband has said and go forward, leaving it alone, not looking for another answer. Mother, however, was not afraid to stand up to Father by asserting her own opinion. She was not afraid to let him know how angry she was with him, either, which is definitely not common for the time, let alone common to write about in text. After she is finished asserting her opinion, she goes back to the house and begins making new shirts for her husband. This is so ironic once again, that she is completing a chore that is in servitude to him, directly after asserting her anger toward his actions.

When Nanny arrives home, she brings up her wedding, states that she would not want her guests to come to their shack. . .and just in conversation says how it would be nice if they could have the wedding in the beautiful new barn. This sets Sarah's mind to work. The reader is now left to wonder what Sarah's plan is. . .if she could actually have the courage to take over the new barn as her own.

Section 3

Section 3 Summary

One day, Father said to Sammy that he thought it was odd how Mother felt about the new barn. The barn was finished shortly, and Father had planned to move his cows into the barn, but had to go out of town unexpectedly. He needed to go to see Hiram, Mrs. Penn's brother, to pick up a horse that Hiram had been keeping an eye on for him. When it is time for Adoniram to leave, Mother laid out clean clothes for him, along with getting his razor and shaving supplies ready. When he was cleaned up, she buttoned his collar for him, and set him along with a packed lunch. When he left, he said that if the cows arrived while he was gone, Sammy could put them into the new barn. He almost seemed to be apologetic, but was obviously fighting it. Mother told him to be careful and bid him farewell. She and Nanny watched him leave.

Mother seemed stressed as she worked, thinking constantly. She said to Nanny, "Unsolicited opportunities are the guideposts of the Lord to the new roads of life." As she repeated this, she made up her mind what she was going to do.

Section 3 Analysis

In this section, we see a slight giving in Father, in that he was almost apologetic when he instructed Sammy to put the cows into the new barn, rather than the old barn. Father seems to be struggling with the conventions of the time, as well, in regards to how he is supposed to behave. He is supposed to have complete control over his family, and not let them assert their opinions in any other than his own. However, he was fighting against seeing his wife's side of the situation as well.

When Father is gone, and Mother states "Unsolicited opportunities are the guideposts of the Lord to the new roads of life," we know that Mother is going to make a drastic move. We also realize that all previous parts of this story have been leading up to this one movement.

Section 4

Section 4 Summary

At 11 o'clock that morning, the hay cart came to the new barn to unload. Mrs. Penn ran out and instructed the men to put it into the old barn. She went back into the house and started packing up plates, cups and saucers, as Nanny and Sammy stared at each other in amazement. Nanny asked her Mother what she was planning on doing, and started shaking as she asked. Her mother replied that she would see soon enough. She then told Nanny to go upstairs to pack her things up, and asked Sammy to help take down the bed in the bedroom. "During the next few hours a feat was performed by this simple, pious New England mother which was equal in its way to Wolfe's storming of the Heights of Abraham."

Nanny and Sammy did what their mother instructed them to do, without questioning a thing. At 5 o'clock in the evening, the little house was empty, and the new barn was home. At 6 o'clock, the harness room had been converted into a kitchen, there was a kettle boiling for tea and the table was set for supper. By the next day, the Penn's hired help had spread it all over the little village that Adoniram Penn's wife had moved into the new barn. The men of the town were discussing it in the store, and the women were going to each other's houses talking it over. Some people thought she had lost her mind. On Friday, the minister paid her a visit to see if she was of sound mind. After letting him stand in her doorway talking (she did not invite him in), she told him that there was no use trying to talk her out of this. She had prayed to the Lord over it, and this was her answer. There was nothing the minister could say to argue with that statement. He added some confused remarks about feeling sorry that he had bothered her, and left awkwardly. The minister was astonished that he could recite the Bible in ways no one else could, but was helpless to deal with Sarah Penn. What he wondered now was how Adoniram Penn would deal with this new situation. The cows arrived and they were put in the old barn.

Section 4 Analysis

Put very simply, Mother did something that was unheard of in this time. She went expressly against her husband's will, revolting against him, and asserting her wishes. With the help of her children, she made a better life for them in the course of one afternoon. This not only took a great deal of courage to pull this feat off, but a great deal of confidence that her husband would ultimately see it her way, and not take drastic measures to punish her. As this climactic act is taking place, the reader wants to cheer for her bravery and perseverance in carrying this task out. With the town convinced that she has lost her mind, and the preacher powerless to change it, we are left to await the return of Adoniram Penn.

Section 5

Section 5 Summary

On Saturday evening, when Adoniram was expected to return home, there was a crowd of men hanging out on the read near the new barn. Father's favorite dinner was on the table. Sarah was all cleaned up in a clean calico, and Nanny was a bundle of nervous tremors. Sammy and Nanny were proud of their mother for standing up to their father, even though they were anxious to see how he would react.

When Adoniram was coming down the road, the children peered out the window, while Sarah went on with her work. Father went to go into the old house, but he came out of the shed and stood there, looking very confused. He was saying something, but no one could hear what it was. As he brought the horse toward the new barn, Nanny and Sammy came to their mother, and waited for the barn doors to open. Nanny stood behind her mother, but Sammy stood in front of them both. Adoniram stared at them and wanted to know why they were there, and not up at the house. Sammy told him that they were going to live there now. He was trying to be so brave. Adoniram looked at Sarah, and he was pale. He wanted to know what all of this meant. She took him into the harness room/kitchen and explained to him that they had just as much of a right to live there as the cows and horses did, that the house was not in any condition for them to live in any more. He could not believe it. She pointedly told him to get cleaned up, and then they could have dinner.

Sammy took the horse to the old barn. The old man was speechless. He could not even take his coat off. Sarah combed his hair for him, and served him dinner. They all gathered around for dinner, but Adoniram just stared at his plate. Sarah asked him to say a blessing, and he mumbled his best. He kept stopping during his meal, and staring at Sarah. He went outside the new barn and sat down with his head in his hands after dinner. Sarah went out to him after everything was cleaned up. It was a beautiful night.

When she noticed that he was crying, she asked him to stop. He said he would do anything to the barn that she wanted. . .anything she wanted. She began crying herself. He had no idea she was so adamant in her feelings. As you can see, it worked out fine.

Section 5 Analysis

When Adoniram Penn returns home, the reader is as anxious to see what transpires, as Nanny and Sammy are nervous. We see the evolution of Sammy into manhood, as he defends what his mother has done. . .we have seen the complete transformation of this boy to a man. . .from the beginning of the story, where he didn't even acknowledge that his mother was talking to him, to completely defending her, and actually speaking for her to his father.

They very factually explained to Father that they were going to live there now, and that there was plenty of room for the horses and the cows in the old barn. Even though Adoniram could not speak, we know that he is coming down around himself. He cannot grasp the situation. After dinner, when Mother goes outside to check on him, and sees he is crying, she knows it will be all right. Deep down, he just wanted to please her. Moreover, he ultimately respected her for standing up to him and asserting herself. We are left with the feeling that they will have a much stronger relationship now, with the doors of communication open, and many of the social conventional barriers down. Again, we want to cheer for Sarah and the feat she has accomplished, not only in her living conditions, but in the condition of her family's spirit as well.

Characters

Father

See Adoniram Penn

Minister Hersey

Minister Hersey visits Sarah Penn after she has moved her family into the new barn. The narrative recounts little of what he actually says, but he is presented as an unimaginative and ineffectual man who does not know how to address this determined woman.

Mother

See Sarah Penn

Adoniram Penn

At the start of the story, Adoniram Penn is presented as an uncommunicative man who is used to having his way. He expects his wife and family to accept his decisions. When his wife finally speaks up on behalf of herself and her family in their need for a new house, Adoniram maintains his silence, declining to address her concerns and instead talks of the work he must do that day. But by the end of the story it is revealed that Adoniram is not so much uncommunicative as unable to hear and understand the needs of his wife. When he finally realizes to what lengths Sarah will go to in order to obtain a new house, he agrees to convert the new barn with windows and internal walls to suit the family's needs for a more expansive dwelling.

Nanny Penn

Nanny Penn is the engaged daughter of Adoniram and Sarah. She is described as "large" and "soft," not strong, and her mother worries about her ability to maintain her own household after her marriage. The mild-mannered, slow-moving Nanny shows one flash of impatience: she complains to her mother about her father building a new barn when his family does not have a decent house. Nanny makes the humorous remark that she might celebrate her wedding in the new barn, and it is evidently this that gives her mother the idea to move the household into that structure.

Sammy Penn

Sammy is the son of Adoniram and Sarah. He is fairly inarticulate, like his father. Sammy helps his father on the farm while attending school. Sammy has known about the new barn for several months before Sarah finds out about it, and it is he who gives his mother the news that Adoniram is buying more cows.

Sarah Penn

Sarah Penn is a strong-willed, patient, and hard-working woman. She has been married to Adoniram Penn for forty years and has had four children, two of whom survived and are living with their parents. When they were first married, her husband identified the location on their property where he promised to build her a new house; at the start of the story, she learns that workmen are breaking ground there for a new barn instead. She speaks forcefully to her husband of the forty years in which she has lived and worked uncomplainingly in the tiny, inadequate house while he has added to his farm's outbuildings, but he does not respond. Although Sarah will not allow their engaged daughter Nanny to complain about the shortcoming of their "box of a house," she argues on Nanny's behalf when she tells Adoniram that the young woman deserves an attractive setting in which to court and marry. Sarah remains composed and even-tempered after her husband refuses to discuss building a new house instead of a barn. When her husband is called away on business just as the new barn in completed and before the feed and livestock are delivered, she sees it as a "providential" sign and moves her entire household's contents into the magnificent new structure, commenting that it will only need a few windows and internal partitions to make it perfect.

Themes

Gender Roles

One of the most important themes in "The Revolt of 'Mother'" is the distinction and reversal of traditional gender roles. Sarah's initial acceptance of Adoniram's building of the barn, despite his 40-year-old promise of building her a house on that spot, shows the prevalent belief that her duty is to follow her husband. Though Sarah does express her feelings to her husband, when he refuses to speak about the matter, she lets the subject drop, and the barn goes up. Adoniram's refusal to truly listen to Sarah's concerns throughout the story are clearly shown in his last words: "Why, mother, I hadn't no idee you was so set on't as all this comes to." Throughout the story, Sarah has tried to explain her feelings but, Adoniram is not accustomed to listening to his wife.

One of Sarah's most important roles, in addition to cooking her husband's favorite meals and sewing shirts for him, is teaching Nanny these sex roles, and thus reinforcing them. When Nanny questions why her father would refuse to build his family a better house, Sarah explains that the ways of men are incomprehensible. When Nanny claims that her fiance would never act in a manner like her father, Sarah asserts that indeed he will one day. Sarah also defends Adoniram, pointing out that many other people do not live as well as the Penn family. In his instance, Sarah is fulfilling what she believes to be an important duty: engendering complete respect for the head of the household among her children.

Adoniram, for the great majority of the story, is as firmly entrenched in his role as his wife is in hers. He makes decisions for the family without consulting Sarah, even those that adversely affect her. For instance, he arranges for the purchase of more cows without letting her know, although this will mean more work for her.

The reaction of the townspeople to Sarah's move into the barn further reinforces the importance of gender roles in the community. The hired man who first sees the transformation openly gapes and spreads the news to the rest of the village before the next morning. The neighbors talk about Sarah's action, even speculating that she is insane or somehow breaking the law.

God and Religion

Calvinist religious beliefs, including a strong belief in the will of God, play an important role in "The Revolt of 'Mother.'" Sarah equates the actions of men with Providence because it is so difficult to predict or understand either. Early in the story, she explains this to Nanny, wanting her daughter to have this knowledge before she marries and experiences it firsthand. She also says that it does no more good to complain about men's actions than to complain about the weather.

More importantly, Sarah's deeply religious nature actually encourages her move into the new barn. Because Providence is God's way of guiding Christians, Sarah can profit from circumstances. In fact, she must be alert to signs indicating what the Lord expects of her and be ready to do His will. The letter that removed Adoniram from the house can been seen " as a "guide-post" from God that He means for her to follow. She uses her strong belief as rebuttal to Minister Hersey, explaining that she made her radical decision with the help of prayer, and that her household concerns are strictly between her, the Lord, and her husband. Ironically, the man who is supposed to be God's representative on Earth is unable to understand her sincere spirituality. His concerns are more temporal-"he wondered more how Adoniram Penn would deal with his wife than how the Lord would."

Style

In medias res

"The Revolt of 'Mother'" begins *in medias res,* literally "in the midst of things." In this case it is a conversation between a long-married couple. This conversation hearkens back in time forty years, to the day that Adoniram and Sarah married and he promised her a new house. The reader is quickly apprised of the present situation— the fact that there has been no house but that workers are breaking ground for a new barn— and that the Penns now have an engaged daughter who wants a more impressive dwelling for her wedding.

"The Revolt of 'Mother'" was originally written as piece of magazine fiction, and the technique of *in media res* effectively draws the reader quickly into the story. The provocative title also serves to entice readers immediately. They are forewarned of an unexpected "revolt" that will seem at odds with the behavior of the characters at the beginning of the story.

Point of View and Narration

"The Revolt of 'Mother'" is narrated in the third person omniscient point of view, which allows the narrator to present the thoughts or feelings of any or all of the characters. Most of the story, however, concerns Sarah Penn and her inner struggle to do what she believes is right. The narrator rarely chooses to directly relate what a character sees or feels. Instead, most of the story is told through a detached, objective point of view, which provides more information to the reader. This technique is used to full advantage to present a full picture of Sarah's life— her relationship with her husband, her desire to help her daughter, the lives and concerns of her fellow villagers, and the social mores of the late nineteenth-century New England community.

The detached narrator exerts a strong authority in relating the story, and the objective tone influences the reader to accept the opinions of this authorial voice. For instance, to show the eloquence of the arguments for a new house that Sarah presents to Adoniram, the narrator refers to her as "a Webster," referring to the renowned, influential public speaker Daniel Webster. Because the narrator has proven to be knowledgeable about other things, the reader is more likely to believe the narrator's analysis. The narrator also rarely delves into the characters' interior thoughts, so when such thoughts are actually expressed, like Adoniram's perception of his wife as "immovable" or the children's feelings of being "overawed," the reader is likely to notice these characterizations.

Setting

"The Revolt of 'Mother'" is set in a New England farming village. This location is meaningful because it is far from the city and the reforms and modernizations that take place there. It also has a great significance in the story because Sarah's con-flict is dual; it exists between herself and her husband and between herself and the townspeople. The townspeople represent the societal norm, and when Sarah moves her household into the barn, her fellow villagers are astounded. They find the spirit of rebellion that Sarah embodies to be so unsettling that some speculate about her very sanity. Others think her a "lawless and rebellious," although just what law she is trangressing is uncertain even to the minister, who calls on her formally to address her unorthodox action. Thus, the New England village takes on an important role as both a location and a state of mind.

Symbolism

While "The Revolt of 'Mother'" derives most of its power from the events that take place and from the strength of Sarah's personality, it does rely on the use of several symbols. The barn is important to Adoniram's self-perception; it show he is a successful farmer. The new barn represents Adoniram's ability to make money, and Adoniram's decision to build a new barn while refusing to build a better home for his family shows his interest in earning and acquiring money for its own sake, not for the comforts it can buy.

The use of symbols also reinforces the gender roles of the characters. For instance, Adoniram's control over household matters manifests itself in the opening paragraphs of the story. While Sarah is pressing him about the construction, he harnesses his mare by roughly putting a collar around her neck and slapping the saddle on her back. He uses the living beings around him, and he does not use them gently. Although she has no reason to believe that she will ever get the new house long promised to her, Sarah does not react with hostility. She continues to sew, cook, and clean with the same scrupulous attention to detail that has characterized all of her actions for the forty years she has lived in the cramped, graceless house. Her tidiness and precision, even to the savory meals that appear promptly on her kitchen table every mealtime, will carry over when she sets up housekeeping in the spacious barn.

Historical Context

The New England Town

Freeman grew up in a small New England town at a time when the region was undergoing what many social and cultural historians have viewed as an enervating change. Many of the area's vigorous youth, including a large percentage of men, had abandoned the settled communities of the East to pursue the country's westward expansion. The Civil War had also decimated the population of young men. The New England of Freeman's experience seemed overwhelmingly peopled by single women and old men. New England townspeople were similar racially and culturally, church-based, and strongly agricultural. Women usually did not work in the fields, but instead took on responsibility for the many tasks required to run a farm, such as making basic foodstuffs and clothing. The town itself was frequently made up of several villages along with the countryside in between, all of which were under the same government.

New England towns typically presented a close-knit community, which led to a pervasive interest in the affairs of one's neighbors as well as a concern for what others might think. Such a situation could make it extremely difficult for a person who chose to flaunt or break the accepted rules of the community. But while the gossip of neighbors often traveled quickly through the village, there was also a certain amount of respect for those who defied gossip to be true to themselves.

Calvinism

A secular government, made up of all voting citizens, and a group of pastors and deacons, chosen by the congregation, ruled over the religious, intellectual, and political life. As such, the churches had a strong influence on the development of the values of each child who lived in the town. Many of the New England churches followed Calvinism, a particularly austere version of Christianity that teaches, among other things, that humans are filled with sin. Many New Englanders grew up under the direction of this patriarchal, strict religion.

The descendants of the Puritans who had first settled New England maintained a stubborn religious faith. Their belief that they were probably among God's chosen people helped them to persevere in circumstances— like farming the hilly, rocky New England soil— that might cause others to give up. They believed that their own human will, when it coincided with God's, made them invincible.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Calvinism's hold on the community had begun to wane. In many communities, including Freeman's hometown of Randolph, liberal pastors preached a watered-down version of the original Calvinist message. Yet even the more moderate churches condemned such activities as dancing, insisted upon the key importance of the Ten Commandments, and placed emphasis on denial. Many pastors

continued to preach old-time religion, steeped in doggedness and a capacity for suffering, handed down from their Puritan forefathers.

Change Comes to New England

By the late 1800s, the world familiar to New Englanders was radically changing. Economic depression came on the heels of the Civil War. Like Randolph, many small mill towns that carried out production of crafts in small factories and even sheds had become filled with deserted factories instead. Many men from these towns found that their small farms or craft work could not compete in the national farm industry or factory systems, and they left their small towns for cities or the West.

The homogeneity of the New England town also became diluted as new immigrants arrived in the United States. They brought with them new customs and outlooks to this region of the country that had been so similar for centuries. In some ways, this threatened the security of many New Englanders, who shared dialects, ancestors, and histories.

The Roles of Women and Women Writers

Women in the nineteenth century were often unskilled and uneducated. Single woman often had difficulties supporting themselves, as few occupations were open to them. But after the Civil War, women found it increasingly difficult to wed. This was caused not only by the departure of men from the New England towns, but the death and destruction brought on by the war. When husbands left the towns to earn a better living, many families lived in poverty. Many women ended up raising their children alone. A new female consciousness, one that maintained that the woman's sphere was not merely the home, began emerging in the late 1880s, however.

The roles of women with regards to their writing also began to rapidly change during the late nineteenth-century period. Freeman and her contemporaries were part of the so-called second generation of women writers. The first generation, including novelists such as Catharine Sedgwick and Augusta Evans, dominated the literary market in the United States from around 1820 through 1870. These works of these writers fell in the category of sentimental or domestic writings and generally ended with either the marriage or death of the heroine.

Freeman, however, was a part of a new school of writing known as realism. Freeman and her contemporaries wrote much of their work in reaction to this earlier romantic wok. These writers wanted the plots of stories read by women to more accurately reflect the lives of real women. They often questioned the institution of marriage as satisfying or fulfilling and presented the single life as viable and sometimes even preferable.

One element of this new realistic style was termed "local color" and used to describe realistic fiction concentrating on regional detail, authentic characterization, and the correct use of indigenous dialect. This term was used for the first time in a review

appearing in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1864. Soon, competing magazines also began to embrace realistic and local color stories, thus providing many new outlets for the short fiction of young writers interested, as was Freeman, in writing about what they knew best: their particular locale and its unique inhabitants.

Critical Overview

"The Revolt of 'Mother'" first appeared in *Harper's Bazaar* in 1890, and the following year was published with very little changes in Freeman's second short story collection, *A New England Nun and Other Stories.* A reviewer in *The Critic* in 1891 wrote about this collection, "Here are twenty-four stories so complete in form, so exquisite in texture, so fine that to single out any one, such as "The New England Nun," "Calla Lilies and Hannah," or "The Revolt of 'Mother'" for special praise means simply that there are times when the author has surpassed the even beauty of her literary style."

Reviewers have lauded the story subsequently. Charles Miner Thompson saw it as a comic tale, writing in the *Atlantic Monthly* that it was "the most distinctly humorous of [Freeman's] stories." Other reviewers looked at the story in a more serious light. In her 1903 essay concerning Freeman's art, Julia R. Tutwiler wrote, that "The Revolt of 'Mother'" "has the qualities of the classic."

In 1917 Freeman expressed in an essay that appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post* her own criticism of "The Revolt of 'Mother'," stating that it "was an evil day I wrote that tale." Freeman condemned her own story primarily on the basis that "all fiction ought to be true"; "The Revolt of 'Mother'" was not only false, Freeman wrote, but she asserted that the actions taken by Sarah Penn were "impossible." No New England farm wife, Freeman maintained, would have acted as Sarah Penn does in the story, and she regretted deviating from what she believed to be the truth about human nature for the sake of a piece of fiction. But that same year, when the *Independent* reprinted the story, Frederick Houk Law emphasized the literary appeal and pointed out some of these very truthful qualities of "The Revolt of 'Mother'" in his introduction: "The plot is simple but powerful; the atmospheric effects are given with the least possible amounts of description; the characters stand out sharply, vividly, presented without sentimentality or over-emphasis; the conversation is quick and pointed; the appeal is universal— felt wherever selfishness and inconsiderateness exist."

Scholarly critics have generally assessed Free-man narrowly as a local-color writer. In 1915, the influential scholar Fred Lewis Pattee summed up Freeman as standing for "short stories of the grim and bare New England social system." By the time of Freeman's death, many of her accomplishments had been forgotten; *Publishers Weekly,* for instance, reported erroneously that her first book was a novel instead of a collection of short stories. Freeman came to be seen as a reporter of the society in which she lived, rather than a writer who creates a convincing world filled with individual characters.

"The Revolt of 'Mother'" never completely disappeared from the view of the American public since its first publication, but for a time after Free-man's death in 1930, less attention was paid to it and Freeman's other work. The first biography about Freeman, written by Edward Foster in 1956, helped to create a new interest in Freeman's work. By the mid-1960s, a critical reassessment of Freeman's work began, much of it from a feminist perspective. Feminist critics tend to see certain of her female characters,

particularly Sarah Penn, as heroic rebels. Some find in this story a woman's struggle to redefine a system of language that has not allowed her to speak, and they see Sarah Penn as a sort of premodern feminist heroine whose experiences raise issues important to all women.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Korb has a master's degree in English literature and creative writing and has written for a wide variety of educational publishers. In the following essay, she discusses the Freeman's reversal of gender roles in "The Revolt of 'Mother.'"

Freeman's short story "The Revolt of 'Mother'" reached such fame that it is reported that Theodore Roosevelt, who at the time was the governor of New York, recommended that mothers read it "for its strong moral lesson." Freeman herself hardly approved of the attention the story drew; in 1917, more than 25 years after its original publication, she made a public statement in the *Saturday Evening Post* about what was and still remains one of her most widely read stories: "It was an evil day I wrote that tale." She went on to explain, "In the first place all fiction ought to be true, and 'The Revolt of "Mother"' is not in the least true . . . . There never was in New England a woman like Mother. If there had been she most certainly would not have moved into the palatial barn. . . . She simply would have lacked the nerve. She would also have lacked the imagination."

Such statements, and those made in the rest of Freeman's essay, have puzzled critics for years, especially those readers who see in Freeman a sort of model of a prefeminist, a woman who chose a career before she chose marriage, a woman who was able to support herself financially. However, the debates and hypotheses put forth on Freeman's reasonings for writing this essay have led to numerous and valuable interpretations of both the story itself and Freeman's other work. For in her writings, Freeman consistently explores what it meant to be a New England woman of the late nineteenth century, paying particular attention to the internal struggles of woman torn between duty and justice; often Freeman's women actively rebel against the limits of their patriarchal society.

In "The Revolt of 'Mother,'" Freeman presents Sarah Penn, a New England farm woman, one long accustomed to obeying her husband and who accepts the capricious nature of men. Sarah reaches her limit when her husband Adoniram builds a new, spacious barn on the very spot where he had for decades promised to build her a new house. Taking advantage of Adoniram's fortuitous absence, and realizing he will never honor his promise, Sarah decides to move her household into the barn, an action that shocks her husband, the neighbors, and the village minister. Freeman's statements about her story are particularly of interest because, while her words deny the truth of Sarah's actions, Free-man herself had enough imagination to create the story of this extreme rebellion.

Freeman grew up in an environment where such actions were rare, if not as she claims impossible, but New England villagers did indeed maintain a strong streak of individualism. As Perry D. Westbrook points out, one of the values people of this region held was that of self-reliance. He further points to an area of conflict: "[i]f one is not independent in thought and action, the community frowns; if one's independence leads to a flaunting of other established values, the community disapproves." These dual attributes are clearly apparent in Sarah Penn's character, whose independence is

evident before she takes her life-altering action of moving her home into the barn. She teaches her daughter Nanny that "we'd ought to reckon men-folks in with Providence, an' not complain of what they do any more than we do of the weather" but then proceeds to "talk plain" to Adoniram about the inadequacies of their home.

Interestingly, many early critics and readers found "The Revolt of 'Mother"' a comic folk tale, particularly because of its magnification of Sarah's revolt, the portrait Freeman draws of the provincialism of the village, and Adoniram's sudden and unexpected reversal at the end of the story. But many later critics, particularly women, claim that these earlier and primarily masculine readers wanted to label the story as "comic fantasy" in order to deny a frightening picture— that of a woman who defies gender roles. Indeed, Sarah's revolt against the will of her husband and the will of her entire town and region touches on very serious issues of female identity and the relationship between the sexes.

At the start of the story, it is clear that Adoniram and Sarah closely adhere to their gender roles. Adoniram has complete charge of the farm and any business dealings, while Sarah's domain is the home. Though the home life was deemed as less significant than the world outside of the home — the world of business and commerce, which belonged to men— the narrator clearly invests a greater meaning to Sarah's work, proclaiming her to "a masterly keeper of her box of a house" and likening her to "an artist so perfect that he has apparently no art." Sarah's revolt itself, while shocking to the community, is undertaken in her role as the keeper of the family and the home. One of her primary reasons for usurping Adoniram's barn stems from her concern for her daughter's health. As Sarah tells Adoniram, because of the smallness of the house, "Nanny she can't live with us after she's married. She'll have to go somewheres else to live away from us. . . . She wa'n't ever strong . . . 'an she ain't fit to keep house an' do everything herself. She'll be all worn out inside of a year." And only after spending the morning watching Nanny, "pale and thin with her steady sewing," does Sarah make up her mind definitively.

In convincing Adoniram to allow the Penn family to keep the new barn as their new house instead, Sarah must learn and make known a new way of communication. Throughout the course of the story, Adoniram steadfastly holds on to his silence as a way of avoiding responsibility for his family. That he has used this tactic for their entire marriage is quite clear, for his speech, which is "almost inarticulate as a growl," had become for Sarah "her most native tongue." Yet, when she speaks with Adoniram about building the family a house instead of a new barn, she has no recourse because Adoniram refuses to utter any words on the subject, even such noncommunicative ones. After maintaining that will say nothing about the subject, he further confirms his feelings by "shut[ting] his mouth tight."

Faced with such obstinance, Sarah has no choice but to develop a new language. Instead of relying on words, Sarah creates a system of signs and uses actions to speak for her. By placing all the family's "little household goods into the new barn," Sarah gives the barn all the value of a home. Her action also indicates to her husband, in such a strong fashion that he can no longer ignore her feelings, that the "Home" is more

important than the "Barn." Because of her ability to see in the barn a new home— the box-stalls as bedrooms, the harness-room as a kitchen— Sarah has finally found a way to make Adoniram share her vision. He understands the redesignation, for "after supper he went out, and sat down on the step of the smaller door at the right of the barn, through which he had meant his Jerseys to pass in stately file, but which Sarah designed for her front house door, and he leaned his head on his hands." By Sarah's imposition of a new reality on the barn, she forces Adoniram to at long last understand what she wants, and he stammers his acquiescence: "I'll — put up the— partitions, an'— everything you— want, mother."

"The Revolt of 'Mother'" succeeds so well because of Freeman's ability to show such real truths about the lives of women from her time period. But it also succeeds narratively because Freeman never sacrifices the structural features of a good short story. She effectively uses symbolism in Adoniram's promise of a new house, which dates back 40 years— Freeman's Bible-literate readers would easily recognize 40 years as the length of time in the Bible is consistently related to periods of tribulation and sacrifice, followed by deliverance. Many of the characters' names derive from the Bible as well, and the Biblical Sarah bore a child at the age of 90, an act of physical transgression that metaphorically equals Sarah Penn's transgression of the laws that govern her society. Another name that stands out in the story is that of George Eastman, Nanny's fiance, who never appears but whose full name is mentioned, rather awkwardly, twice. At the time Freeman was writing "The Revolt of 'Mother'" another George Eastman, the inventor of the Kodak camera, headed a company worth one million dollars. Through the fictional Eastman's marriage to Nanny, whose frailty makes her unfit for the harsh farm life, Freeman shows the turn that Americans were making towards urbanity and materialism. On a different note, Joseph R. McElrath, Jr., points out Freeman's artistry in piling crisis upon crisis yet still managing to manufacture a believable but unexpected happy ending. He calls Freeman' conclusion "one of the most complicated trick-endings in all of nineteenth-century American short fiction."

Freeman was recognized by contemporary readers as a writer of brilliant short stories of New England village life. Such a widespread perception, along with the support of such influential literary figures as William Dean Howells, who defended the supposed "sameness" of her writings, helped lead to the labeling of Freeman as a writer of "local color" — a term that describes realistic fiction concentrating on regional details, true-to-life characters, and the correct us of dialect. These elements are certainly present in "The Revolt of 'Mother'," from the ineffectiveness of the minister, who "was competent to grasp the Pilgrim Fathers and all historical innovators" but who could not comprehend Sarah because he knew of no precedent for such behavior, to the narrator's keen observation that "[A]ny deviation from the ordinary course of life in quiet town was enough to stop all progress in it," to the almost constant use of regional speech. But to categorize it simply as a "local-color" story does it a large injustice.

Freeman's writings have graver implications than merely as chronicles of the centuries-old New England way of life that was coming to an end. In "The Revolt of 'Mother'" she actually, and by her own admission, writes about what is not a feasible action for the time in which she lives. Much can be made of Sarah's act of rebellion, whether or not it

is possible or impossible: if it is possible that a woman of Sarah's position would do what was worse than disagreeing with her husband— openly defying him— then Freeman has presented a feasible option, perhaps even a secret desire, to women living in a strictly patriarchal society; if it is not possible than any New England woman would take such an action, then Freeman has written a prefeminist text, one that could give impetus to and support such future actions on the part of real women. It is no wonder that this story of a woman who forces her reluctant husband to recognize what is just and decent was embraced by many Americans as a serious tract on women's rights. No matter what claims Freeman herself might make about it, the truth and poignancy of her words has lasted throughout the twentieth century.

Source: Rena Korb, "One Woman's Independence," for *Short Stories for Students,* Gale, 1998.

Critical Essay #2

In the following essay, McElrath praises the construction of "The Revolt of 'Mother'" for the author's deft handling of plot, suspense, and climax. He also states that the character of Sarah Penn is a classic liberated woman over whom there is "no need to quibble [with] feminists' characteristic distortions and general hobby-horse riding."

Mary E. Wilkins Freeman's "The Revolt of Mother" is a short story which is now receiving a good deal of attention because of its relevance to the history of American feminism. The mother in revolt is one of those tough-minded, self-aware, and determined females that began to appear at the close of the nineteenth century when the so-called "New Woman" was assuming clear definition. And there's no need to quibble over feminists' characteristic distortions and general hobby-horse riding: Sarah Penn *is* the real thing, a female who successfully revolts against and liberates herself from a familial situation of pernicious male dominance. There is, however, a more important reason for modern readers to focus upon this particular Freeman tale. It is one of her best. Artistically, it transcends the many, many similar pieces that Freeman produced for the American magazine and book reading public of the 1880s and '90s.

It should be stressed here that "The Revolt of Mother" is magazine fiction, first published in *Harper's Monthly* (1890) and then reprinted (with few, and no truly significant, textual alterations) in *A New England Nun* (1891). The reason for this emphasis is that in a collection of Freeman's stories— and this applies to all of them— the quality of individual stories is frequently overlooked or blurred as one finishes a tale and then quickly moves on to the next. In the collections there is a quality of sameness which cannot be denied. Freeman worked with regional types, and by the time one finishes a collection of ten tales he usually knows all he wants to, thank you, about the New England spinster, the New England widow, the New England old folks, and the New England schoolmistress. Freeman's contemporaneous popularity and claim to attention in literary history cannot be fully understood until one forces himself to read her works as they first appeared. Freeman initially drew attention to herself as the author of individual tales which were published in individual issues of magazines. They were originally designed to be read in this manner, and they appear at their best when considered thus.

Magazine fiction, of then and now, must create certain immediate effects upon its reader which are not so sternly required in book publications. The cash investment in a book— versus the usually forgotten cost of a magazine subscription— insures a degree of patience on the part of the book reader. The magazine reader, on the other hand, may pick up an issue to pass a few idle moments, unmindful of his cash investment of several months previous. He is a bit more fickle, more easily distracted; if he is to be engaged the writer must stimulate his interest within the first few sentences — and thus the snappy-opener gimmicks now commonly associated with "pulp fiction." Once initial interest is stimulated, the magazine story-teller must continue to manipulate his readership so as to counter the distractions of the family parlor which vie with the writer's own demand upon the reader. Moreover, it does not hurt if the writer provides an

unexpected "kick" or "twist" at the conclusion of the story, so as to leave the reader in a state of delighted surprise. (There's always that subsequent issue in which the writer will want to round-up his audience once again.)

Poe cannily understood the situation earlier in the century. In tales such as "The Pit and the Pendulum" and "The Tell-Tale Heart" he began in the most sensational fashion and structured from that with a series of crescendo effects. Freeman employs the same technique in "The Revolt of Mother": she abruptly seduces the reader into her fictional world and deliberately arranges her tensely emotional material in a series of crises, each of which seems to momentarily function as a climactic conclusion. With a rapid pace she seems to resolve the central conflict of the story, only to renew the same conflict. Then she quickly moves to another apparent resolution, whereupon that "resolution" complicates matters further. When the actual conclusion finally does occur — providing the most surprising and unexpectedly emotional resolution of all— the sympathetic reader who delights in complication piled upon complication receives a rich reward: a happy ending totally unanticipated by the crisis-ridden and foreboding events that led up to it. If masterful artistry involves the writer's ability to manipulate the reader's mind and emotions to the point of self-forgetfulness and total immersion in the workings of a tale, "The Revolt of Mother" is a masterwork. At the least, it is a classic example of the artful use of anticlimax as a deliberate narrative device.

Forewarned of a revolt because of the title, the reader begins the story with the expectation of a crisis which will soon develop. If one thought through his expectations before actually commencing the tale, he would hazard the guess that Freeman will fashion her materials toward the mid-story crisis/climax typical to the narrative structure of the conventional short story. Freeman, however, seems to second-guess her readership, aiming at the provision of a unique reading event for an experienced and possibly jaded magazine audience. Without even the "exposition of background data" one expects to find attending the introduction of the principal characters, Freeman immediately proceeds to dramatize the story's emotional conflict and to build toward the first (apparent) resolution.

"The Revolt" begins *in media res,* with the two main characters assuming definition through their actions and the imagery assigned by Freeman to them:

"Father!"

"What is it?"

"What are them men diggin' over there in the field for?"

There was a sudden dropping and enlarging of the lower part of the old man's face, as if some heavy weight had settled therein; he shut his mouth tight, and went on harnessing the great bay mare. He hustled the collar on to her neck with a jerk.

"Father!"

The old man slapped the saddle upon the mare's back.

Freeman's technique looks forward to the similar exposition of character through the silent and controlled violence of Ab Snopes in "Barn Burning." Father — Adoniram Penn — is thus introduced as the unsavory villain of the piece, a defiant man who will have his way and who will brook no opposition to his plans. He finally replies, roughly telling Mother to go into the house and mind her own affairs. "He ran his words together, and his speech was almost as inarticulate as a growl."

The sensationality of the opening is enhanced when the reader is allowed a view of the personality questioning Adoniram. It seems as though the sparks will fly, for she does not immediately go into the house; and Freeman provides the first indication of the fiercely independent person with whom Adoniram has to deal. Mother appears the "meek housewife"; but "her eyes, fixed upon the old man, looked as if the meekness had been the result of her own will, never the will of another." As we glance again at her, we are made to see someone who looks "as immovable . . . as one of the rocks in [Adoniram's] pastureland, bound to the earth with generations of blackberry vines." At this point, Adoniram is compelled by her presence of character to reveal to Mother that he is building a barn.

It is Adoniram who then retreats, although he does not change his mind about the barn. He temporarily defuses the situation by his withdrawal; and Freeman then turns to the Mother, explaining through dialogue that Adoniram has conspired to build the barn without her consent and against her known desires. By the time son Sammy reveals to Mother that Father also intends to buy four more cows, the first "act" of the story with its crisis/climax is complete. A stiff-necked Adoniram and equally willful Mother have completed their initial confrontation, and Adoniram has won the contest. Mother does silently return to her kitchen, where we soon discover that she is in no way as sinister as her husband seems and that, while she is strong-willed, she is clearly a sympathetically conceived victim of her husband's obstinate nature.

This constitutes the first resolution of conflict in "The Revolt of Mother," and hence the usefulness of a dramatic term such as "act" in explaining the short story. The first section of the story functions as a one-act play: a conflict was introduced; it moved toward a muted but real climax; and the conflict was resolved by the withdrawal of Adoniram and the capitulation of Mother.

But, the story, and the conflict, as it turns out, have only begun. The second act opens with Mother, saying "nothing more," entering her pantry. As Adoniram expressed his emotionality by roughly handling the mare, Mother likewise employs the means at hand: "a clatter of dishes" is heard. She attempts to resign herself to the situation in dutiful, housewifely fashion. But as she begins washing dishes with her daughter Nanny, the attempt seems to be failing. Her behavior bristles with suppressed rage. Mother "plunged her hands vigorously into the water" as Nanny identifies the cause of the conflict initiated in act one: "'don't you think it's too bad father's going to build that barn, much as we need a decent house to live in?'" That this is the root of resentment is

confirmed by Mother who then "scrubbed a dish fiercely." Her anger is finally articulated: "'You ain't found out yet we're women-folks, Nanny Penn'."

Nanny goes on to lament the fact that her impending wedding will take place in their ill-decorated "box of a house." She is not exaggerating about the house. We may recall that in act one we were off-handedly told something about their dwelling. The details now assume a larger significance: "The house, standing at right angles with the great barn and a long reach of sheds and outbuildings, was infinitesimal compared to them. It was scarcely as commodious for people as the little boxes under the barn eaves were for doves." Nanny is upset; Mother is upset. But then Mother goes on to display the nobility of character which makes her such a positively fashioned heroine in the eyes of the reader and which, by way of contrast, makes Adoniram seem an even blacker villain. For forty years Adoniram has promised a decent house but has built only the structures he felt he needed for his business. Mother has just passed through the most recent and greatest betrayal of that promise. Yet she has strength of character enough not to exact revenge by turning Nanny against her father. She attempts to appreciate the finer points of her situation, reminding Nanny that "a good many girls don't have as good a place as this." Then she notes what a blessing it is that Adoniram built a cooking shed for them so that they would not have to bake in the house during hot weather.

A few hours later, with both of the children out of the way, a second crisis is initiated by Mother. She calls Adoniram from his work, sits him down, reminds him that she has never complained before, and begins to complain at length about his placing barns and cows above familial obligations. She delivers a brilliantly passionate monologue, clearly vindicating her claim that she and her children have been wronged. "Mrs. Penn's face was burning; her mild eyes gleamed. She had pleaded her little cause like a Webster," hearing in response only Adoniram's blunt reply, "'I ain't got nothin' to say'." That resolves the crisis. Adoniram shuffles out; Mother goes to the bedroom, and later comes back to the kitchen with reddened eyes. Renewed conflict —crisis— resolution.

A third act begins with Nanny returning to the kitchen miffed, sarcastically suggesting that her wedding might better be held in the new barn which will undoubtedly be nicer than the house. Nanny notes her mother's peculiar expression when she completes this pettish suggestion. It will become clear to the reader several hundred words later that this constitutes actual "crisis" moment of the narrative structure (determining the outcome of the tale): it is here that Mother decides to make the barn their new home should the opportunity afford itself. At present, though, Freeman withholds this information and runs the risk of maintaining reader interest with a peculiar kind of suspense. The question that comes to mind at this point is, where can the story possibly be going? In view of the many paragraphs remaining, *something* is certainly about to happen. But it is simply unthinkable, given the information Freeman has fed the reader, that Adoniram will change his mind.

The story leaps ahead through the spring months during which the barn is being constructed, and Freeman relates that Mother no longer speaks of the matter. We are duped into thinking that Mother has, indeed, resigned herself to the egotism of her husband— that the conflict of acts one and two has been truly resolved. Freeman now

elaborates upon Adoniram's villainy, once again confirming the belief that Mother's situation is a hopeless one. While he claims he cannot afford to build the promised house and is insensitive to Nanny's having to be married in an old "box," he makes plans to go to Vermont to buy "jest the kind of a horse," he has long wanted. As he departs on the buying-trip, a hiss is the audience response that has been engineered by Freeman.

A maxim occurs to Mother after Adoniram's departure: "'Unsolicited opportunities are the guideposts of the Lord to the new roads of life.'" To Mother, the opportunity "looks like providence." She forthwith gives directions to the help: move all of the household belongings to the barn. The event is a grandly liberating and heroic one, even if it does seem destined to produce an unhappy outcome. "During the next few hours a feat was performed by this simple, pious New England mother which was equal in its way to Wolfe's storming of the Heights of Abraham," Freeman tells us. But, we should recall that General Wolfe was mortally wounded during that conflict.

Most of the fourth act is given to the rising action leading to the true "climax" of the narrative structure and its rapidly executed denouement and conclusion. What *will* Adoniram do when he returns? We know only the most negative things about his character: he has seemed violent; he has acted in the most egotistical and pig-headed ways; he has been curt with Mother beyond the point of simple rudeness; and he expects no one to cross him, least of all Mother. We are free to imagine only dire consequences.

Reader interest is heightened through more suspense. The local characters begin ruminating over the probable outcome of this revolt; they loiter about the neighborhood on the day of Adoniram's return to see what will happen. We know that Mother is not going to back down. When the local minister comes to reason with her, she is shelling peas "as if they were bullets," and when she looks at him there is in her eyes "the spirit that her meek front had covered for a lifetime." Suspense is further increased when Sammy excitedly announces Adoniram's arrival and Nanny finds "a hysterical sob in her throat." The reader is thus prepared for a stormy conclusion, possibly of blood and thunder.

What the reader does not except after all that has occurred is a comic reversal. But Freeman does end this tale of impending tragedy with a startling turn to a tragicomic resolution. And the truly amazing thing is that she turns the tables on the reader as convincingly as she does. Adoniram shows none of the anger that seemed to be so great a part of his nature at the story's beginning. Adoniram shows no anger at all. Rather, he is totally bewildered, able only to say "'Why, mother!'" again and again as he tries to grasp the change that has taken place. What are the cows doing in the house, and why is the house in the new barn? Mother leads him to the supper table and they eat in silence. Afterward, Mother touches his shoulder, breaking into his state of distraction, and he begins— weeping. He totally capitulates, promising to finish the new barn as a house. There is no resentment. Instead there is the first show of his love for Mother in the whole tale: "'Why, mother,' he said, hoarsely, 'I hadn't no idee you was so set on't as all this comes to'." He is telling the truth, oddly enough. Freeman had

withheld the fact that Adoniram's could be, and was, a sensitive and loving nature—albeit an extraordinarily dense one. It is one of the most complicated trick-endings in all of nineteenth-century American short fiction. Freeman did all that she could to suppress suspicion that such an ending could be even remotely possible. Her mastery is especially made manifest when we think back over the story and note how she developed the scenes to obscure positive personality traits in Adoniram which were actually there all the time.

It should therefore appear as no mystery that William Dean Howells celebrated Freeman's technique and vision of life. When Howells reviewed *Main Travelled Roads,* he chided Hamlin Garland for his preoccupation with the grimmer, darker aspects of life. Howells suggested that in every field there were roses as well as thistles and that a truly representative picture of American life should note the beautiful as well as the ugly. The reassuring testimony to the admixture of good and evil in human nature with which Freeman startles the reader at the conclusion of "The Revolt" is vintage Howellsian realism at its enduring best. "The Revolt" is also, to speak more plainly, literary gimmickry at its best. It is so well executed that, while some readers may resent the withholding of *the* fact about Adoniram that changes everything, the rest of us can enjoy the notion that love can sometimes conquer all, in 1890 and even in the 1980s.

Source: Joseph R. McElrath, Jr., "The Artistry of Mary E. Wilkins Freeman's 'The Revolt'," in *Studies in Short Fiction,* Vol. 17, No. 3, Summer, 1980, pp. 255-61.

Critical Essay #3

In the following brief essay, Gallagher discusses the symbolism of names in Freeman's story.

"The Revolt of 'Mother'" is one of Mary E. Wilkins Freeman's most frequently anthologized stories, and, as an exemplary member of the local-color genre, its action is both poignant and culturally revealing. In this note I would like to call attention to a hitherto unnoticed aspect of Mrs. Free-man's art, that is, the way in which her names blend realistically with the story, while, at the same time, subtly enriching it.

The prominence of Biblical given names (Adoniram, Sarah, Samuel, Anna, Hiram, Rufus) in "The Revolt of 'Mother,'" particularly names from the Old Testament, reflects a common rural Puritan practice. In Adoniram and Sarah, however, we can also *uncover* what must be a conscious correspondence between the fictional and the Biblical characters. The Biblical Adoniram was the overseer for King Solomon who managed the tribute and organized an important levy during the building of the Temple (*I Kings,* IV, 6; V, 14). The husbandry evinced by his New England namesake is certainly a worthy reflection on his name. The Biblical Sarah bore a child at the age of ninety (*Genesis,* XVII). It is only a metaphorical step from this suspension of physical law to the rebellious moral feat of her namesake. Mrs. Penn, therefore, carries within her, implicitly and symbolically, the great action which she will perform in her old age. These meaningful Biblical associations also account for the specific use of forty years (reiterated nine times) as the period of Sarah's repression. In the Bible, this number is consistently related to trial, tribulation, and sacrifice, which is followed by deliverance (e.g., *Exodus,* XVI, 35; Judges XIII, 1).

Given the above correspondences, it is also possible to posit a specific reason for naming Nanny Penn's suitor "George Eastman." George does not actually appear as a character in the story; he is mentioned but three times in the dialogue. One wonders, then, why it was necessary to give the suitor a full name, and even more, why Sarah would twice use the full name, rather awkwardly, in referring to him. The reason lies in the contemporary significance "George Eastman" would have for Mrs. Freeman, and in the symbolic value this name would lend to the story.

At the time "The Revolt of 'Mother'" was being written a real George Eastman was making social history in the United States. Rising from a modest background, Eastman had his own substantial photography business by the time he was thirty years old in 1884. By 1888 the first low-priced *Kodak* camera was on the market, and by 1890 the Eastman Company was worth one million dollars. Obviously, then, the "George Eastman" of Mrs. Freeman's story is meant to represent the urban, business, and materialistic society toward which America was turning. For Mrs. Freeman, the marriage of the frail Nanny Penn, unfit for the harshness of farm life, with George Eastman indicated the new trend in American social life. Sarah Penn was no longer willing to endure in primitive simplicity, and the embarrassment envisioned in the forthcoming marriage of her daughter is a prime cause of her "revolt."

The subtle submergence of art to action in "The Revolt of 'Mother,'" exemplified here in the choice of names, renders this story a very effective member of the local-color genre. The reader does not sense the mediation of the author; the objectivity necessary to "capture" a particular geographical region is preserved. In the simple, and often overlooked, art of naming, however, one can detect the sure and conscious hand of the author.

Source: Edward J. Gallagher, "Freeman's 'The Revolt of "Mother"'," in *The Explicator,* Vol. XXVII, No. 7, March, 1969, item 48.

Topics for Further Study

Investigate the events that took place after 1890 that led women in the United States to win the right to vote. Who were key figures in the women's suffrage movement? Did the majority of American women agree with the causes of the suffragists?

Investigate what kinds of jobs were available for women in the late 1800s. Did women have equal educational opportunities that would allow them to get good jobs? Find out how women went about breaking down barriers that would not allow them to work and become educated in professions such as medicine and law.

What kinds of technological innovations were taking place in the 1800s that made it less profit-able for individuals to own and operate small farms? What happened to small farmers and small towns as this method of making a living became harder and less profitable?

Freeman repudiated the actions of her protagonist in "The Revolt of 'Mother'," saying that no New England farm wife would have done what Sarah Penn does in the story. How believable do you find Sarah's actions? Can you imagine something similar that a wife and mother might do today that would shock her husband and neighbors as much as Sarah's behavior?

Compare and Contrast

1880s: By the end of the 1880s, one-third of the population of the United States lived in towns. In the decade from 1880 to 1890, the number of U.S. cities of 45,000-75,000 increased from 23 to 39.

1990s: By the 1990s, the majority of Americans— over 75 percent— live in urban areas. More than half of Americans live in cities with populations of at least one million. In 1990, the 100 largest cities in the United States all have populations of greater than 170,000.

1880s: The United States has about 800 high schools in 1880 and 2,500 by 1890.

1990s: In the 1990s, the United States has more than 30,000 public and private high schools.

1890s: In 1890, Wyoming is the first government in the world and the only U.S. state to give women full suffrage. That year, two prominent women's suffrage organizations— the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association— joined to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

1990s: All women in the United States have the right to vote. Women in some countries still do not have this right. In 1984, Geraldine Ferraro was the first woman to run for the office of vice president on a major ticket.

1900: In the United States, only 21 percent of all women worked outside of the home.

1990s: In the mid-1990s, around 55 percent of all women in the United States worked outside of the home. Women make up almost half of total work force, but constitute only around 20 percent of those in medicine, business, and law.

What Do I Read Next?

Their Eyes Were Watching God (1937) by Zora Neale Hurston. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* tells the story of Janie, an independent-minded young black woman, and her life with the free-spirited Tea Cake. Hurston paints a vivid portrait of the small African American towns of the deep South.

The Scarlet Letter (1850) by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Hester Prynne lives in a repressive, Puritan town that has condemned her as an adulteress. Hawthorne dissects the hypocrisy behind the Puritan mindset and attempts to put forth an explanation for the New England way of thinking prevalent in the nineteenth century.

Pembroke (1894), by Mary E. Wilkins Freeman. In *Pembroke*, Freeman tells a story based on an incident that happened in her mother's family. The fathers of two people about to marry get into an argument. The young man is ordered from his fiancee's house, and her father orders the engagement broken. The young suitor is a portrait in New England obstinance as well as a character so steeped in the fatalism of his Calvinist faith that he can make no move to win back the woman he loves.

The Country of the Pointed Firs (1896), by Sarah Orne Jewett. This short story collection resonates with the author's understanding of the ways of life in a small New England community.

The Custom of the Country (1913), by Edith Wharton. In this novel, Wharton portrays the efforts undertaken by an aggressively ambitious young woman to reach the heights of New York and Paris society. Through ruthless determination and an ability to take actions that went

against the social mores of her time, Undine Spragg succeeds at achieving wealth and material comfort at the expense of almost everyone with whom she comes into contact.

Main-Travelled Roads (1891), by Hamlin Garland. This collection of short stories pessimistically and unsentimentally details the lives of Midwestern farmers and their wives. In portraying the daily lives and meager existences of these farm families, Garland also campaigns for a more humane economic system that, he believes, would make these lives more fruitful and loving.

"The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892), by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. In this story, an unnamed narrator has been confined to bed rest by her husband and doctor. The woman suffers depression after the birth of her baby, but the two men, believing her nervous disorder to be aggravated by thinking and writing, forbid her to do intellectual "work" of any kind. In the face of such inactivity, the woman plunges deep into mental derangement.

"A Jury of Her Peers" (1917), by Susan Glaspell. Minnie Foster Wright is suspected of murdering her husband. When neighbor women accompany their husbands— one of whom is the sheriff— to search the Wright house for evidence, they find indications

among common household objects that implicate her. As they discuss the details of the suspect's isolated, poverty-stricken life with a violent husband, they implicitly agree to withhold what they have discerned from their husbands— who have commented that the women would not recognize a clue if they stumbled across it anyway.

Further Study

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A detailed biography of Freeman and analysis of her major works.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Short Stories for Students (SSfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, SSfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of SSfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of SSfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in SSfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by SSfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

SSfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Short Stories for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SSfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SSfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Short Stories for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Short Stories for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from SSfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Short Stories for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from SSfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Short Stories for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of SSfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Short Stories for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of SSfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

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The editor of Short Stories for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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