

And Sarah Laughed: An Unique Drama

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Sarah is the main character of the story "And Sarah Laughed", written by Joanne Greenberg. There is deep relation between the writer Greenberg and her creation of this story. She is a member of National Association for the Deaf and has taught sign language. The connection between deaf society and her story is able to create a realistic image Sarah as a depressed and lonely women psychology. Throughout the whole story, she shows her various characteristics: she is neat and clean, she is emotional, and she is devoted. On the other side she can best be characterized as a mixture of jealousy and depression and she is strong with ultimately a person who is willing to change. Sarah is loving and caring woman. Before the birth of her first child, she already had fixed up all the essential items for her coming baby. "They had already laid away what the baby would need" (267). Various types' characterization has been made in a same single woman. The story "And Sarah Laughed" is successful to present a unique way of characterization. This is a story of a jealous, emotional, faithful and devoted woman.

Shakespeare said that jealousy without women is just like snake without poison. Sarah appears jealous after Janice enters. Janice teaches sign language to talk among family members. Now Sarah feels that she is alone and Janice has taken her place. This is all selfishness and jealous between two women. Sarah used to be the only woman in the family, but Janice's entry becomes a great issue. "Janice kept asking to help and Sarah kept saying there was not time to teach her" (271). She does not want Janice to get love from her family. She is afraid of being along. When a woman's beloved man starts to show affection towards her antagonist, this will accelerate her envy toward the antagonist. Mathew teaches Janice about his orchard but Sarah feels he is taking care of her, more than necessity. And there is no other issue here than her hidden jealousy towards Janice. But when she slaps her young boys hands during their sign communication, her jealousy towards can be seen transparent.

She is depressed. After her marriage she was in real silence. So during her pregnancy she was very excited about her baby to whom she could

talk. "She found herself talking to the baby inside her, telling it the things she would have told Matthew, the idle daily things" (267). But when she discovered Abel's deafness in Mama's house, she cried bitterly and uncontrollably. All her dreams changed into dire nightmares. Each time she was pregnant she was looking for someone to talk with, but she found that "They too were silent" (268). She is very depressed because of her children deafness. But she still hopes to talk with her daughter-in-law. But all of sudden she discovers Janice is also abnormal. She is also deaf. For her entire life, she has been waiting for someone to talk with her. "Sarah put out her hand dumbly and it was taken and the girl's eyes shone" (269). Now, her last hope is in ruins. She realizes that her boys are wild and when she sees her children using sign language she says that "waving their hands around like monkeys in a zoo" (271), and she grieves over their sounds. Her depression makes her think of Mathew as an "animal" (271). She cries in different parts of the story. "Then Sarah would decide to make coleslaw and sit with the chopping bowl in her lap, smashing the chopper against the wood with vindictive joy that she could hear the

sound" (271). Because of her depression, she angry; and she tries to break out of her anger.

"In Greenberg's 'And Sarah Laughed', the major character's life within the solitude of a farm setting influences her to reach out for a new form of communication. Objects also enter directly into fictional action and character. In such kinds of story the setting is also important factor to capture the readers mind easily. Her the characters may be either helped or hurt by their surroundings, and they may fight about possessions and goals. Further, as characters speak with each other, they reveal the degree to which they share the customs and ideas of their times" (253).

She is strong. She has a great capacity for strength, as shown in her acceptance of her husband's deafness and her courageous ability to communicate with him through his reading her lips. In nature, most women want their husbands to be normal. She has strength and confidence, which made her accept Mathew. Her birth of a deaf child really increased her strength - "A madhouse of bells, horns, creaming sirens and gone right past them and he had not cried, he had not looked, he had not turned" (268) -

when she realized Abel's congenital deafness, she cried bitterly and uncontrollably. Even for an ordinary woman, her child plays a substantial role, but Sarah was bold and she was able to combat her son's deafness. And during each pregnancy, she waited to talk with her child.

This story gives some idea about a jealous woman. Here, Sarah became jealous knowing Luita and Sam had talked very private matter. "Sarah lay in bed and in the dark" (270) and "She wondered if each other's body" (271).

The summary of drama begins here.

[SARAH was looking out from the window repeatedly. She is waiting for her son and new daughter-in-law. The room is totally furnished and a wall clock is hanging in the main room]

SARAH. [Pointing the clock] Why are they taking long time? It is not far, is it?

[In one corner Mathew is sitting doing something but not talking and responding to Sarah]

MATHEW. [Nodding his head and waves his hand. Some sound of moving comes to Sarah ears]

SARAH. [Running towards the door] Who is this?

[Sarah saw nothing, and comes back to the window again. [Talking with herself]

SARAH. She must be beautiful, yes..... She must be beautiful. I will be so happy because she will be my only one friend to talk and to have some chat.

[She started to think something; she puts her head in the bar of window and sits in the chair]

MATHEW. [Comes near to her and looks watch from her hand, as if he is also waiting for them] Am, Ammmmm.....

[Somebody knocks the door. Sarah becomes very happy]

SARAH. [Being excited] They are here! Who is there? [She looks corner of her room door.] Abel! Abel! [She comes to open the main door]

SARAH. Honey, I was waiting for you for long time? Why did you take such long time?

ABEL. [He tries to introduce the new wife by using his sign language]. Ammm, MMMM.

SARAH. [She pretends that she know the relation, even she does not understand his son's sign language.] Well! [Waves her head]

[Sarah, Abel, Janice, enters to the sitting room]

SARAH. [Looking at Abel and Janice activities] My god! What a unlucky to me!

[The whole environment becomes cold and silent. Sarah becomes dark and her eyes become red, tears falls from her eyes]

JANICE. [Waves her hand and use her sign language to Abel] Am, Am MM... Ahm ..

SARAH. [Being very poor] I am alone again, what is my fault, why god gave me this punishment, why my wishes never come true, I must be lonely...

[Mathew, Abel, Janice, started to talk with each other moving hand and making various alphabet using their finger]

SARAH. Oh! Oh! My god! I really need somebody to talk and to share my opinion to others; in this way I will be killing myself being lonely. What a disaster all my families are deaf; nobody can share my ideas and understands my feelings.

[Tomorrow Morning, the day is fine and sunshine, school children is playing around the grass field in front of Sarah house. In side the house, Janice and

Abel starts to talk in their sign language, her husband (Mathew) sometimes smiles and sometimes becomes quite]

SARAH. [Collecting clothes from her bed puts into the closet, she is wearing a clean cloths and using cosmetic, pick up her hand bag comes in front of Mathew and pinch by finger] What you doing here?

MATHEW. Nods his head and tries to say something.

SARAH. I am going out, did you hear me? I am going out?

MATHEW. [Looks her dress and smiles]

SARAH. [Try to use her hand pointing outside the main gate] I Am going out, do you understand?

MATHEW. [Agrees to her and smiles and raise his hand to say good bye] Mmm, mm,..

SARAH. [Goes out and looks back to the house]

NEIGHBOUR. [Raising hand, in loud voice] Where you going Sara?

SARAH. [Coming closer to the neighbor in slow and low voice] I am going to special place?

NEIGHBOUR. [With wide open eyes] Where? And Why?

SARAH. [Smiling and looking down with low voice] I am going to learn sign language so that I can communicate to all of my family.

[Both says nothing and Sarah walks in the grassy field to get short-cut road, and she laughs.]

In the drama "And Sarah Laughed" the script is unique, because most of the actor are deaf and cannot speak and the dialogue. Therefore the dialogue is very limited. In this drama's script some of sounds are trying to explain the player's feelings as much as possible. Only the dialogue between Sarah and Neighbor is appropriately constructed to explain whole drama. "Mathew is sitting doing something but not talking and responding to Sarah" (starting description) reflects the "foreshadowing" the later happenings of the story. Lack of disputes between character, lacks of physical conflicts between each other; is a good style of presentation of a psychological drama.

The scene is divided into two parts, inside the house and the outside of the house. The scene inside the house happens in first day and the outside scene comes in the next day perhaps the story is started and ended within one and half days. The drama using symbolic language

is, of course, difficult to construct and challenge to meet viewer's attentions. Thus, the story is constructed basically in the silent psychological environment. This kinds of structure also helps to generate short monologue type of conversation, especially Sarah speaks herself. This is very appropriate style to show the psychological drama using player's mute action.

At the end of the story, her adjustment to deafness shows her as a woman willing to change herself with respect to the environment. She realizes that her family's happiness requires her assent to sign language and her involvement with it. They are talking, sharing emotions with each other. "It suddenly occurred to her that if Mathew made one of those signs with his hands and she could learn that sign, she could put her hands against his in the darkness, and read the meaning, that if she learned those signs she could hear him" (272). Finally, she learns that her desire for communication has been fulfilled by the power of her reconciliation. She adjusts herself in the family. She realized her family desire to communicate among themselves. "I want to talk to you she said I want to talk to know what you think"

(273). This is also her greatest dedication towards her family. Which can make possible of exchanging one others' feelings within her family. For twenty-five years she begged for communication and now she can talk with her family by using sign language. This is the same woman who slapped her boys when they used sign, but time changes; and now she wants to use signing as her medium of communication. Her power of adjusting to deafness is highly praised by her family and they teach her sign language. From right this moment, she can even talk about her feelings, which had been her passion for the entire life.

The sequence of the story is somewhat peculiar. Such kind of jealous and devoted woman decided to change herself and able to maintain her family with good communication to share each other idea and feelings. At the beginning of the story, Sarah gets frustrated, and regret makes her lonely in her own family. But her reconciliation with her family's deafness helps her to accept the challenge of change, and this characteristic redeems her negative characteristics, resulting in a new life of meaningful communication.