



The Looking Glass

Anton Chekhov , Charles River Editors (Editor)

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Author: Anton Chekhov

(1860-1904)

Title: The Looking-glass

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Big Idea: Modern Fiction

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The Looking Glass Details

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From Reader Review The Looking Glass for online ebook

Tim says

This was an interesting short story

Avery says

Personal Response: I liked The Looking Glass because it showed how in the 1800's, kids and some adults had a hard time keeping up with common illnesses. The story also showed how hard it would be to lose everything one would worked so hard for.

Plot Summary: The story was told in third person, omniscient narrative, and the whole story was based on the form of a dream. Nellie and the doctor appeared selfish-hardly caring about anyone but themselves. Nellie was not worried about her husband as much as she was worried about what her life would be without him. She kept nudging the doctor on about her husband and kids, how sick they all were. The doctor told Nellie that he had become ill from helping other people. Nellie finally was able to convince the doctor to come to her farm where the doctor could treat her family. The doctor fell ill, and all of her family members, including the doctor, were unable to overcome the illness. When everything went sour, Nellie picked up a looking glass and peered through it. She awoke as if everything was a dream and everything was back to normal. This taught Nellie to be more caring for her family and to not make things worse.

Character Analysis: Nellie in the beginning of the story, was so worried about how bad her life would be without her family, but at the end, it was all a relief. The whole thing was an illusion.

The Doctor was very stubborn about helping more patients because he grew ill himself. He overcame his fear and helped anyway, putting his life on the line for others.

Setting: The story was published in 1885 and the writing persuaded that it took place during that time. It mostly takes place on a farm where the main character lives. This is important to the plot because there was no cure for common illnesses.

Recommendation: The story is an appearance versus reality theme and takes place in the late 1800's. Knowing more about the 1800's will give the reader a better understanding. The book is about a 7th grade reading level, but has a learning curve for 8th graders or older. Because of the easier reading level and strong statue for history, I would recommend this to a 10th grader.

X?yal? says

What can the fear of losing your beloved one make you do?

Viji (Bookish endeavors) says

A girl looking through a looking glass. Her adolescent mind and it's stupid thoughts. Her heart is full of dreams and hopes for future. She thinks about it so much that she feels like she is living in the future. She faces the agonies of life and finally feels exhausted. That's when she notices that she was looking at that glass and is greatly relieved. May be it means that one wouldn't want to grow up if one already knew the agonies they are going to face. I liked this story so much. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

Rhys says

The story regards the ever-present threat of mortality, the inevitable end to what is often taken for granted, with themes for a struggle of survival. The protagonist implores her doctor for help, whom has also succumbed to disease, rendered incapable. The sense of urgency and survival remains yet elegant and clean. It had a strong sense of realism, something entirely believable to have occurred in the period of writing. It feels more as if you're being told the genuine story of a friend who lost their partner, than anything purely fictional. The use of proper English when conversational makes adds an allusion to a time and a place; with characters of a particular social class. There are quality coherent descriptions of details to a bigger picture making the understanding of the narrative quite comprehensible.

“And all the previous life with her husband seemed to her a stupid prelude to this.”

Themes are frequently about "smelling the roses" along the path, and how endings are inevitable and can often draw more attention and even mask the remainder of the narrative's journey.

??????? says

??? ? ??? ????? ??????????...

Silverin says

The Looking Glass juxtaposes the dreams of a young naive girl with the harsh realities of life. The story is set on new year's eve, a time when you look both forwards and backwards, at beginnings and endings. The girl, Nellie, is the sheltered daughter of a landlord and general, and therefore, oblivious to the harsh realities of life, she dreams "day and night" of marriage as if that were everything, kind of like young adolescent girls these days dream day and night of getting a handsome boyfriend: "It was he, the destined one, the object of long dreams and hopes. The destined one was for Nellie everything, the significance of life, personal happiness, career, fate."

She falls into a trance like state then, while staring into a looking-glass, and dreams of her future, the difficulties and suffering that may lie ahead of her. In the end she wakes up and says "I must have fallen asleep," relieved and ignorant of the dream's warning. I feel that Chekhov means to say that life doesn't always turn out the way we expected. **Living in the now and dreaming and fantasizing about the future is what we usually do, but we must also realistically consider our future,** look ahead and try to prepare or brace ourselves for the ups and downs that lie may in the coming years.

Read this short story here.

Esraa says

the story of a young girl , whose life is about marriage.
represents how young girls are thinking too much about getting married and children

Justine says

1.5 Stars out of 5 Stars

Not that I disliked it, I just didn't enjoy it.

Joana Cardoso says

Utterly interesting tale of future foreseeing in a dream like state. The begging of the tale sounded very close to the start of a horror story and that was incredibly alluring, however it involves to the tale of a single moment in a woman's future, a moment that despite very dark could have had more to it, still it proves the resilience of a woman facing the dreadful fear of illness and possibly dead that lays upon her future husband.

Kels says

One particular attribute that I look for in classic novels/stories is a sense of timelessness, an ability to transcend generations and still remain poignant and relevant. The Looking Glass has that, but admittedly, it took me a while to figure out why and how.

Actually, my first impression was that the storyline was outmoded and thereby rendered the main character and her woes unrelatable to me. Perhaps I just read this way too fast, and that was all that I absorbed initially. You see, on the surface, I considered the year this was written, 1855, and understood the compulsion and importance of a woman seeking/desiring/obsessing over marriage. I'm also keenly aware that the burdens and challenges of raising a family during that era were vastly different and formidable in comparison to now. But being cognizant of those things had no effect on how I identified with the character, or sympathize with her concerns, and it wasn't until I really forced myself to think analytically about the significance and underlying meaning of Nellie's vision that her story was able to really reach me.

What then struck me is how Nellie's daydreams mirrored her subconscious anxiousness and fear of the future and unknown. That uncertainty of what lies in store for her and what obstacles and challenges she may come to face created such a bleak state of hopelessness and helplessness that darkened her expectations and joy of being married. Her visions of marital bliss quickly transformed into something grim and unpropitious, and I could feel her apprehension and concern start to consume and eat away at her. But here's the thing, Nellie is worrying about events that have not yet happened and may not even come to pass at all. She's fantasizing about a future that isn't set in stone and thinking of all the things that can possibly go wrong with it.

And how can anyone not relate to that?

I think it's safe to assume that we've all been there before, and will likely be there again... soon. That fear of uncertainty and the unknown is human nature, it's hardwired into our psyche, and sometimes we can let that trepidation get to us and allow it to cripple us from enjoying the magnificence and splendor of the present moment. We permit it to guide our footsteps onto safer and more prudent paths, and completely miss out on opportunities that involve bigger and objectionable risks.

But we forget: There are no guarantees in this life!

Every day, of every second, of every moment is a risk. Our lives are founded on them, and despite what some people may believe, I'm convinced we only have one. *This one wild and precious life.* So don't allow that fear to overshadow how beautiful risk taking can be. You do it every day after all. You take risks when you go for a walk, or when you go on that blind date that you adamantly told your friend not to set up. Or maybe it's when you quit your job and decide you're finally going to start that company you've always been dreaming of building. Getting married = risk. Having kids = ~~bigger~~ risk. Obviously, some risks are weightier than others (disclaimer: please don't quit your day job because of this review), but sometimes so can the outcomes of taking those risks. Occasionally they're more than worth it, even when things don't pan out exactly as you plan.

It brings to mind one of my favorite quotes: *"What you spend years building, someone might destroy overnight. Build it anyway."* And this rings true for so many other applications as well. In the case of Nellie's story: You can love someone, only to lose them. Love them anyway.

This short story spoke to me in an oblique and unexpected way. Despite Nellie's story ending on such a downcast and dreary note, I'm reminded that her vision only depicts the ugly and unappealing events that *may* *keyword* lie ahead in her distant future, but it forgets to illustrate the resplendent beauty and felicity that also might be in store for her as well.

I guess what I'm trying to convey on what I got from this short story is this: Don't let your fears dictate your future, live wild and free and fully, and always take the risks that are worth it.

P.S. If it's important to you, it's worth it.

P.P.S. Seriously, don't quit your day job because of this review. I don't want to be the cause of anyone's financial woes and/or homelessness.

Ritu says

A girl, who dreams about marriage day and night, has a vision of her future through the looking glass.

The story read like a disillusionment. The trials to come in a marriage and in a life. No mention of happiness or contentment after the first couple of lines.

Months and years flew by against the grey background.

The grey background. That's what this one is about.

Bronislava Sencakova says

["I must have fallen asleep," she thought with a sigh of relief. (hide spoiler)]

Rachel Jackson says

I'm not quite sure that I understood "The Looking Glass," or at least why it would be worth writing about, but Anton Chekov's story was entertaining at the very least. It's the story of a "young and pretty girl, dreaming day and night of being married," who looks into her mirror and imagines her life as a wife. She sees her husband ill with typhus and runs to the doctor, himself sick and delirious with the disease, and begs him to come treat her husband. He can't, and she bemoans her fate with both her doctor and husband ill.

But we know the whole time she has to wake up, and wake up she does, realizing she's been dozing off again, daydreaming about her future. She only expresses herself with "a sigh of relief," and the whole thing is forgotten. It seems a bit strange to leave the story there, without irony or a twist of fate or anything, but the story itself was kind of entertaining. And it also shows that our brains can fantasize or daydream about the weirdest things sometimes.

K. Anna Hardy says

I have arranged my thoughts on this short story into a haiku:

"Such a somber mind,
Spoiling the future's romance
By looking too far."
