

“The Jilting of Granny Weatherall”

into a tiny point in the center of her brain, it flickered and winked like an eye, quietly it fluttered and dwindled. Granny lay curled down within herself, amazed and watchful, staring at the point of light that was herself; her body was now only a deeper mass of shadow in an endless darkness and this darkness would curl around the light and swallow it up. God, give a sign!

For the second time there was no sign. Again no bridegroom and the priest in the house. She could not remember any other sorrow because this grief wiped them all away. Oh, no, there's nothing more cruel than this—I'll never forgive it. She stretched herself with a deep breath and blew out the light.

Reading Check

1. In whose house has Granny been living?
2. Why does Granny think of the box of letters in the attic?
3. Which of her memories is most painful to her?
4. Why is she concerned about the Forty Acres?

For Study and Discussion

Analyzing and Interpreting the Story

- 1a. What connotations does the name “Weatherall” have in the context of the story? b. How is it a suitable name for the main character, Granny? c. Cite examples to show that life has not been “too much for her.”
- 2a. Identify the following characters and tell whether they are related primarily to Granny’s “present” or to her “past”: Cornelia, John, Doctor Harry, George, Father Connolly. b. What roles do these characters play in Granny’s life and her thoughts? c. What is the significance of Granny’s seeing Hapsy again? d. Where is Hapsy?
3. “She had spent so much time preparing for death there was no need for bringing it up again.” Explain how, in light of the end of the story, this sentence is not true.
- 4a. Why is the jilting so important to Granny? b. How is the jilting related to the last paragraph of the story?
5. In the story figurative language is often used to convey Granny’s state of mind. For example, to Granny “Doctor Harry floated like a balloon around the foot of the bed.” Find three other examples of figurative language used to convey a state of mind.

Literary Elements

Plot: Order of Events and Stream of Consciousness

A writer may tell a story in strict chronological order or may order the events in some other way, perhaps by using **flashback**. In “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall,” the order of events may at first seem confusing. There is a constant shifting from the present to the past. What happens in the story’s present—Granny’s dealings with Cornelia, Doctor Harry, and Father Connolly—is told in chronological order. Past events are told in the order in which Granny thinks of them. Such an order is called **stream of consciousness**, the flow of thoughts and feelings within a character. This order at first seems confusing, a jumble of feelings, associations, and memories. Its ultimate effect, however, is to bring readers as close to a character as the written word makes possible. As readers follow Granny’s confused, fading memories, they come to understand