

A Cup of Tea – Katherine Mansfield

Katherine Mansfield (1888 – 1923), best known for her mastery of the short story form, was born in Wellington, New Zealand as Katherine Mansfield Beauchamp. She's recognized for revolutionizing the modern English short story. She enjoyed a comfortable childhood as part of a well-to-do family. A serious student of the cello, she first expected that music would be her career. Still, she found the colonial Edwardian atmosphere stifling and was inspired by rebels like Oscar Wilde.

The 1920 collection *Bliss and Other Stories* (1920) followed by *The Garden Party and Other Stories* (1922) sealed her reputation as a master of the short story form. *The Dove's Nest and Other Stories* (1923) and *Something Childish* (1924) were published after Mansfield's untimely death.

Modernist Short story Writer:

She is one the best representatives of modernist short story writing. Virginia Woolf herself admitted to Mansfield that she was jealous of her writing



Somewhere in a city in Paris, there was an average looking rich girl named Rosemary.



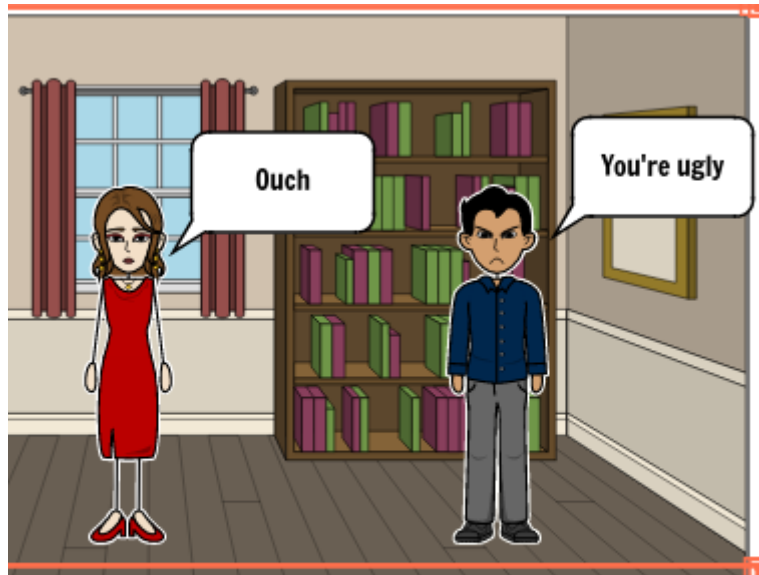
Rosemary went to her favorite shop on Curzon Street because she's rich and does whatever she wants.



Rosemary finds a poor girl after shopping and helps her out to make her seem like a good person.



Rosemary takes her home, and takes care of her, but still looks down on her for being poor.



Philip did not like the poor girl being there, so he made Rosemary insecure so she could kick her out.



Rosemary kicks her out due to her own insecurities and selfishness, but still gives her some money to help her.

A Cup of Tea by Katherine Mansfield

"A Cup of Tea" is a short story written by Katherine Mansfield that tells us how people show generosity to people whom they consider inferior to them. Rosemary Fell was very rich. Though she was not very pretty, she made up for it as she lived in extreme style and fashion. One cold night, after coming out of a shop of fancy antiques, she came across a girl by the name of Miss Smith. The poor girl wanted the price of a cup of tea from Rosemary. She thought of doing something generous. She asked the girl to take tea with her at home. She did not believe Rosemary and even suspected that Rosemary might hand her over to the police. But at last Rosemary took her to home. She wanted to show that those nice things that happened in novels and fairy tales about godmothers and generous rich people did really happen in real life also. She felt the unity in all of all women too and she thought it was a duty of a woman to help another woman. The girl was very nervous, but Rosemary was all encouragement, even helped her to take off her clothes. She asked her servant to bring some brandy and tea. The poor girl was too hungry and going to faint if she did not take tea.

Rosemary enquired about the girl and show her generosity on the poor creature. She was going to begin her enquiry when her husband, Phillip, came in. He asked his wife to come in library after knew about Miss Smith and asked her about Miss Smith. Rosemary told him all about her. Phillip, a practical man, knew that it was not practical. He told his wife that husband knew more about life. He replied that it was not possible because Miss Smith was very pretty. The wise husband's arrow hit the right point. She was jealous of the poor girl whom her husband found so pretty. Rosemary went away to her writing room. She took out three pounds. She gave the girl the money and sent her away. Rosemary dress up well and came to her husband. She told him that Miss Smith would not stay for dinner and that she gave her some money. Suddenly she asked him whether he liked her. She asked him to kiss her and asked him whether she could buy the antique box that she had seen in the shop. At last she asked him if she was pretty. Rosemary was jealous and she wanted to be reassured that her husband loved her still.

Katherine Mansfield was a prominent modernist short fiction writer, and this short story is written in the modernist mode, without a set structure, and with many shifts in the narrative. The story is told through the feminine voice and describes both physical and spiritual feminine delicacy. Main themes of this short story are feminism, materialism and class consciousness. If we analyze this story with feministic perspective then we find many feministic features in this story.