

A Soul of No Importance and Her Resurgence: Stephen King's Outrageous Carrie White

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Abstract

This paper deals with analysis of the eponymous character of Carrie, one of the best characters crafted by Stephen King. Despite the success of the novel, Carrie received and still received negative remarks for the portrayal of the lead in a misogynistic manner and usage of gender-biased language. Whereas King magnifies only the position of a young girl; the deft handling of supernatural elements (telekinesis) in Carrie gives wings to her liberation thus keeping an end to her powerlessness despite possessing such an unearthly enormous power.

Keywords: Horror, power, blood, revenge.

Introduction

Many people are bullied as teenagers or, a minimum, feel like outsiders. They are too fat or too ugly or too dumb. Or maybe they just aren't popular enough to feel comfortable inside their own skin. With the power to destroy their tormentors, would they do it? (Gresh Lois. H 2007)

Popular horror fiction writer Stephen Edwin King has created remarkable characters in his horror canon. The enormous popularity of his novels are due to the characters either who embellish their stand amongst all the odds of being the undefeatable odd like Carrie White, Danny Torrance, Gage Creed, Annie Wilkes of the novels *Carrie*, *The Shining*, *Pet Sematary* and *Misery* respectively. These novels have been regarded as the most sought books among avid horror readers of America and worldwide. Despite various criticisms faced by Stephen King for being the most successful and bestselling horror fiction writer who probably may not retain any literary values in his numerous works, there is a certainty of gaping expertise in the sculpture of his terrific characters.

What makes these characters very special? Almost all the characters are known for their soft subtle nature and in the case of Gage Creed who is a mere toddler at the phase of blabbering few words followed by constant requests from his parents could possibly know the hidden secrets of Jud Crandall and the entire locality after resurrection. How could Wendigo, the evil

spirit predispose the entire cannibalistic psyche inside an infant? Possessing the unimaginable telepathic abilities, how could Danny be able to resist the power of thriving forces of The Overlook.? These child characters are not affected with any identity crisis as they are very young and had no chance of exposure in any school. They are not at the position of victimized anti-hero rather served their position directly to the plot with no haunting histories.

On the other side both Carrie White and Annie Wilkes tend to have a horrific past. There are so many similarities in terms of appearance between these ladies where one is entering into womanhood and the other is a grown up - being pale, petite, fat and totally alienated attire over their face. They seem docile, soft and favorable when approached but their dark side is greatly ineffable. Though Carrie's action can be justified with the circumstances in which she grew as a teen-ager, Annie Wilkes can never be dismissed from her gruesome actions with no purpose, no motive. Her psychopathic tendency has no reason justified in the novel. She is blatantly killing people since eleven and very clever enough to not to leave any traceable clue for the gruesome murders which she has accomplished. She is not retaining any supernatural power like Carrie or Danny. She is powerless by means of her designation as an earthly human and by means of her gender. She can never be questioned of her terror. There can be some assumptions with which she can be frustrated with. Annie wants to control her favorite author and she does it so effectively. There is no onset of any guilt or revenge in her like Carrie.

Carrie is the first and the most appalling among all the creations ever chiseled by King. She can control anything by her mind (telekinesis) the moment she intends to do it. *Telekinesis* is the ability to move objects or to cause changes in objects by force of mind (42). The climax of Carrie gives a reverberating culmination among readers which is far powerful than any other horror novels of King. Her real "bloodsport" is the ultimate execution of her latent powers by which she blasted the Spring Ball conducted in her school, cut down electric wires which electrocuted her classmates who are standing on dripping water flushed by fire extinguishers, blast opened all the fire hydrants so that no one could rescue from the fire 'accident' at school, stopped her own mother's heart from functioning, thrashed both Chris and Bille to crash their accelerated car over gas station. There is a serious rationale for all the devastation accomplished by Carrie.

It is not Carrie's telekinetic powers that make her special but she is the most discriminated character of all. Right from a small child like Tommy Erbter (who is just five years old looks into Carrie's meekness and ridicules her with foul language), till her own school mates, Carrie is not spared by anyone from humiliation. She is out rightly treated as an epitome of trash and obviously there is no single soul who could rescue or to stand as a support for her except Miss. Desjardin and later Susan Snell. Carrie faces the most highly embarrassing situation in her life: menstruating in public and the saddest part is not knowing what menstruation is.

The novel starts with the commencement of her first menses in the girl's restroom of her high school. She has zero knowledge about menstruation and merely assumes that she is bleeding to death. Not retaining any good friends around her she had no scope of learning or gossiping of what menses is. With fear of dying (as she doesn't understand the concept of

bleeding) Carrie faces one of the greatest traumatizing events in her life. She is immediately surrounded by her school girls who literally play merciless insults on Carrie appearing as a scapegoat.

How could one possibly ridicule in such a disgusting manner? These abusive comments are the initialization of Carrie's monstrous transformation towards the denouement. A small realization appears in Susan Snell who is trying to think why; she is "*sixteen? She was thinking. She must know what is happening, she-*" (7). She is feeling bad for what her best friend Chris Hargensen and her other mates are doing against Carrie. With help of Ms. Desjardin, Carrie is brought back to normalcy. Thus in the whole story except Susan Snell and Ms. Desjardin there is no availability of care and affection towards Carrie.

But where does the lack of knowledge go? Why Carrie was not acknowledged about the monthly period by her own MOTHER! Here is where the novel propels towards an intolerable destiny.

A child cannot cope with the idea of a mother that is both good and bad: a mother that on the one hand brings the child into the world, feeds it, tends to its many needs and on the other is angry, scolds the infant, indulges in sexual rivalry (often imaginary with the child) (1979).

Being raised by an extremist fanatic mother Margaret White, Carrie never enjoyed a normal peaceful childhood. Carrie is always muted with no vent for expression. The gothic elements in Carrie can be best sorted with the appearance of the girl and the house in which she stays in completely gloomy with too many portraits of Jesus Christ. She never wants Carrie to be sexually active because it is sin to be a woman. It is lustful and licentious for a woman to have breasts, she is not supposed to reveal her dirtypillows (her breasts); she should not laugh, on the whole she expects Carrie to be devoid of womanhood. There is nothing astonishing to wonder why she never taught Carrie about the coming of age because Margaret never wants Carrie to be sexually active. She wants to repress her by all means so that she may not commit the terrible sin of falling in love and deliver her offspring. This becomes the primary focus when she learns about Carrie's first period and takes an ugly turn when Carrie reacts with her telekinesis.

Let's pray to Jesus for our woman-weak, wicked, sinning souls.' (53)

'Devil's child. Satan spawn- ...Lust and licentiousness, the cravings of flesh...

Witch (96)... "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.

'I can see your dirty pillows. Everyone will...

We'll go down and burn it in the incinerator together, and then pray for forgiveness. We'll do penance. (118)

Thus it is very clear that Carrie's first and the most horrifying enemy is her own mother than her friends. If Carrie was allowed to have a normal lifestyle she could have not been an element of ridicule among her school mates. It is not Carrie but Margaret the real witch of her life. She is not a good mother at any point of time. She is suffering under the hands of her wicked mother who resembles a cruel stepmother in fairy tale stories. Margaret is the real witch who is trying to suppress her own daughter. Alex. E. Alexander says that "In Carrie, the fairy tale

stepmother finds her counterpart in Carrie White's own mother who wishes to repress her daughter's sexuality. The good mother on the other hand is Susan Snell". Susan is the only person to consider about Carrie's inexperience in menstruation. Susan is the one who wishes to help Carrie to come out of her dopiness by making her boy friend Tommy Ross to take up the Spring Ball with Carrie. In a way Sue tries to rue her sin standing for with Chris's enormity. Adding to the features of a good mother Sue's wish to see Carrie with her boyfriend Tom is something great in the act. A mother's ultimate wish is to see her daughter's conjugal life and expects to bear her progeny and carry the lineage of the family. Margaret contrastingly abuses Carrie for wearing the party dress as it is provoking. She hates Carrie's coming of age and she is ready to sacrifice her daughter preventing her entry into the phase of fertility.

Carrie is truly a revolutionary character sketched by King. There are ranging criticisms such as usage of gendered language, misogynistic and abusive terms towards his woman characters in his novels despite the fact that those woman characters are more strong, vital and more harsh under the context of a victimizer. Carrie can be regarded as the novel that gives the authority, the power to the female lead that is always under the state of powerlessness.

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