
Themes And Ideas In Mrs Midas By Carol Ann Duffy

"Mrs. Midas", the poem by Carol Ann Duffy was one of the various poems included in her 1999 collection named "The World's Wife". Within this collection, she uses different figures from history and myths while allowing the persona of the poems to be the wife of infamous or famous male figures. This allows a perspective entirely new and revealing about the women's place in that time period.

This poem is focused on the ancient myth which depicts of Midas, king of Phrygia, who wishes with greed and selfishness to have everything he touches turn to gold. This wish comes true, however soon he deeply regrets this wish because life becomes impossible since every piece of food he attempts to eat turns into gold. Midas eventually begs Dionysos to reverse this foolish spell and he does.

Carol Ann Duffy takes the myth out of this context and injects it into presumably, the 20th century. In "Mrs. Midas", the protagonist is mythical persona created by/inhabited by Carol Ann Duffy, however you can see that Mrs. Midas directly portrays the stereotypes of women in dysfunctional relationships which I believe is what Duffy wanted. It explores the sadness Mrs. Midas feels in regards to not being able to touch her husband. This restriction calls forth feelings of annoyance and disgust she barely contains regarding his extreme greediness. In the poem while still showing the very detrimental effect of this wish that it has on this couple, it reveals many things buried deep. In the poem "Mrs. Midas", the persona inhabited by Carol Ann Duffy by sharing her story through her view and deeply analyzing the inequality between Mr. Midas and herself with it, continued to support her final decision to leave him which resulted to her directly serving as a role model to those in emotionally abusive relationships. To most likely to mirror the present day stereotypes of stay at home wives like the myth presumably portrayed the stereotypes of them at that time, Mrs. Midas ends up being shown as very independent and feministic as result from her husband's foolish wish and serves as a good role model by leaving her selfish husband in the end.

Initially in the poem the voice of Duffy is injected into Mrs. Midas allowing for a breakdown of their marriage. She begins retelling the anticipated story, but from her point of view. This contrasting how in previous literature, females voices are often silenced, represented in a derogatory manner, or only heard by the men closest to them. In this poem it is crystal clear on how Mrs. Midas is in control and holds some power because she tells her version of the story with utter confidence. Throughout the poem, you begin to get the feeling through Duffy's humor and metaphors, that Mrs. Midas and Mr. Midas have differing views on wealth and on other things as well. Mrs. Midas' thoughts are not silenced in this text, but presented with some importance.

Exhibited in the very beginning of the poem, Mrs. Midas is not portraying traditional lady-like behavior because it states she had "poured a glass of wine." She is challenging society's deemed "feminine behavior". This action of not showing regret supports the idea that Mrs. Midas does not believe in the idea that women are not supposed to be drinkers which is the common thought of most traditional people. With the casually inserted quote, "It was late September. I'd just poured a glass of wine..", imbedded within the first lines of the poem show

that she is very calm and ready to relax. This ability to relax in the beginning seems like strength/power that she has. This allows Mrs. Midas to hold some power even if it seemed insignificant, it was actually a very defining power move. Alcohol throughout history has been drunk by largely males of wealth so this shows how she and who she represents are equal to men. Through Mrs. Midas, Duffy I believe wanted to highlight this inequality of how in most literary works the personality and humor of women are ignored because how they are seen as lower than men. In "Mrs. Midas", the protagonist is shown very relaxed and allows her views and personality to come forth which could be to reflect the present day or just to directly contrast past stereotypes of when this myth was created.

Although this woman may have a voice, it is still weaker than the males. By interpreting Duffy's use of gender roles as suggesting how in our society, women are most happy with a strong man by her side. We are first introduced to Mr. Midas when he was "snapping twig"; the snapping is very violent and perhaps that their marriage is very patriarchal and possibly violent. Mrs. Midas was so in love with her husband, but now is petrified of how if they were to kiss it would be "the kiss that would turn my lips to a work of art". Mr. Midas who was selfish and greedy for wealth, ended up also obtaining a stereotypical wife who is scared and does everything for him.

Having a child together is what many women look forward to and can represent a healthy marriage. Mrs. Midas can be seen as a symbol to many women who are not treated nicely by their husbands, but still wish for them to have a child together. Society has planted this thought in our minds that happiness comes with children. Carol Ann Duffy has made Mr. Midas seem evil and like a villain by introducing the dream she had where "I bore his child, its perfect ore limbs, its little tongue like a precious latch, its amber eyes holding their pupils like flies. My dream milk burned in my breasts. I woke to the streaming sun." Having a child is Mrs. Midas' wish and Mr. Midas rejected it and let greed to come before his lover's want. Even when he did this, his wife is still said to be doting on him even when she tried to kick him out. Duffy portrays Mrs. Midas or women as easily taken advantage of and selfless whereas in contrast lay negative connotations onto Mr. Midas or men as a whole as evil and advantageous.

Leaving the husband in the end was the right thing to do and Duffy purposefully made her do this to serve as a good role model to those ladies who are in unhealthy relationships. Mrs. Midas is a strong-willed woman who does not allow her spouse to ruin her life and hold her back, as she sequentially runs away and lives without him. It can be argued that Carol Ann Duffy's poem "Mrs. Midas" is a feminist poem that emphasizes the large gap between women in literature, and in real life face. It challenges some of the stereotypes women are known to exhibit. The character Mrs. Midas is portrayed as a very stereotypical 20th-century housewife that cooks and cleans, however Carol Ann Duffy allows for her personality and views on certain things to depict her as a strong-willed and intellectual woman. Using this alternate identity of "Mrs. Midas", Duffy brings light onto these inconsistencies can be made to show the strength and unsaid difficulties she has went through that went unmentioned in the myth.