

## UNCONSCIENTIOUS PARENTHOOD IN FLANNERY O'CONNOR'S THE LAME SHALL ENTER FIRST

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### Abstract:

*This paper tries to explore the issue of unconscientious parenthood and its effects thru brief tales The Lamé Shall input Firstr. In each the stories the kids die at the quit that is an outcome of their mother and father's indiligent parenting. in the Lamé Shall input First, Sheppard is a unmarried discern of Norton, a narcissist, fails to offer proper affection, care and steering to his son as a father. within the River, the unnamed dad and mom of a boy Harry Ashfield, are aware of leave him off in care of a babysitter to have time for their events. Norton dies by way of deliberately leaping from window to attain heavens to attain his lifeless mom who turned into no longer feeling sufficient love from his father. alternatively, Harry jumps into river believing he might be taken by way of God, as he feels he is alienated through his own mother and father.*

**Key words:** Parenthood, Narcissism, Death, Alienation.

### Introduction

Flannery O'Connor's story "The Lamé Shall enter First" is instructed from the point of view of Sheppard, who's not able to empathize with the grief of his son, Norton, over the death of his mother a yr ago. as a substitute, Sheppard insists that supporting others is the maximum critical appropriate in existence. further, Sheppard does now not agree with in God or heaven, espousing a rational view of life that does not offer Norton the means to recognize the demise of his mom and the emptiness it created in his lifestyles. It takes Rufus Johnson, a fourteen-year-vintage baby who completely believes in good and evil and especially in the power of satan, to enable Sheppard to recognize the affection and interest his son needs. however, Sheppard learns this handiest after Norton kills himself in an try and reach his mom, whom he imagines he sees on the moon whilst he seems at it via a telescope. through each satire and irony, O'Connor suggests that science cannot replace ethical notion and that ethical questioning starts offeveloped with genuine love and compassion as opposed to a fake feel of "doing top." moreover, evil, represented by Rufus, turns into an tool of properly, but simplest with tragic effects. Atheism more than Rufus is the real antagonist inside the story, for Sheppard's loss of belief in God and compassion undermines his attempts to perform a false, self-absorbed know-how of proper.

Sheppard has little sympathy for his ten-year-antique son, Norton, who in his view lacks brains, interest, and, most significantly, empathy for others. as an alternative, Sheppard prefers the fourteen-12 months-vintage miscreant Rufus Johnson, whom he were trying to assist at the reformatory. Sheppard thinks that Rufus is exceptional and wishes best a hazard to make something of himself. In reality, Sheppard gives Rufus a key to his house to illustrate

his agree with, for Rufus's grandfather, a non secular zealot, beats him. while Sheppard pressures his son through asking him how he would like to stay as terrible Rufus has, Norton "lamely" says that he "doesn't recognise." the child misses his lifeless mom too much to consider the welfare of others, however his father thinks his son has been unhappy plenty too long. An atheist and rationalist, Sheppard has instructed Norton his mom truly is "gone" now that she is dead, an concept that only intensifies the child's grief.

although Norton answers his father's questions "lamely," Rufus in reality is lame, marked with the aid of a clubfoot, which Sheppard believes is the crux of his horrific conduct and attitude towards lifestyles. he's sure that if he demanding situations Rufus's thoughts and offers him a first rate shoe for his deformed foot, the child will mend his ways. Rufus, then again, flaunts his foot and brags he's evil because "satan has [him] in his electricity." sooner or later Rufus does come to Sheppard's house, to begin with terrifying Norton. Sheppard's intention is to "save" Rufus, and he's willing to sacrifice his son to Rufus to do this. Even after Sheppard puts a telescope up within the attic for Rufus to peer some thing greater in life and purchases an orthotic shoe for him, the boy simplest scoffs at his could-be benefactor, telling Norton his father is a idiot who thinks he is "Jesus Christ."

Rufus begrudgingly enjoys the comforts of Sheppard's residence and in the beginning shows a few interest in the telescope, however while Sheppard enthusiastically tells him he could go to the moon whilst he grows up, Rufus name callings on the idea. "when I die, I'm going to hell," he proudly asserts. Having absorbed his grandfather's zealotry, he believes in harsh biblical variations of proper and evil, and he condemns Sheppard for his refutation of those. Norton, in the meantime, is inquisitive about the ideas of heaven and hell due to the fact those are locations in which his mother might be, and any vicinity seems better than "no place," which is what his father insists on. even though he is probably as evil as he insists, Rufus also believes in Jesus and goodness, and these standards intrigue Norton.

in the Lame Shall input First with the aid of Flannery O'Connor we have the topic of selfishness, religion and connection. Taken from her the whole thing That Rises need to Converge collection the tale is narrated inside the 1/3 character and tells the story of a man known as Sheppard and his efforts to try to redeem a younger juvenile delinquent known as Rufus Johnson. there is a hint on irony in O'Connor calling the main protagonist Sheppard as the name would endorse at the least symbolically, a person who is guiding others. it's far after the reader reads the tale that they realize Sheppard is not able to manual others (Rufus or Norton). The story is divided into components and in the first section O'Connor begins with Sheppard sitting in his kitchen having breakfast along with his ten year old son Norton. He tells Norton that he has seen Rufus searching for meals in a trash can, but Norton stays unaffected via this and keeps to eat his cake. This annoys Sheppard due to the fact he feels that Norton has been given the whole lot unlike Rufus who has not anything. It also seems that Sheppard considers Norton to be egocentric having by no means needed to proportion anything with every other man or woman.

Sheppard's belief that he has given the whole thing to Norton is important due to the fact it's far at the same time as they're inside the kitchen we comprehend that Norton's mother has been dead for a yr. though he's only ten, Sheppard believes that Norton should have moved on from his mother's loss of life by way of now. He tells Norton that 'in case you stop considering yourself and think what you can do for anyone else, you then'll stop lacking your mom.' that is crucial because it highlights to the reader that in essence Sheppard isn't giving his own son the aid that he wishes. Norton desires his father's assist and steerage, especially after dropping his mother but Sheppard is ignorant of this. ironically Sheppard wants to assist Rufus however can't see that his very own son needs his help. O'Connor may be the use of irony to indicate that it's miles Sheppard who is being egocentric, by no longer focusing on Norton, as opposed to Norton being the egocentric one.

Sheppard met Rufus at the nearby teenagers penal complex wherein he works at weekends. The maximum putting element approximately their first assembly is that Sheppard compares his office to being like a confessional box, in spite of having never been in one. once more this is crucial as O'Connor may be suggesting the lack of non secular religion that Sheppard has. Sheppard also compares himself (or rather his job) as being much like the job of a clergyman. once more what's striking approximately this is that it highlights to the reader that Sheppard has a very excessive notion in his personal significance (ego). This concept of ego is similarly established on the cease of the first segment of the story while Rufus tells Norton that his father 'He thinks he's Jesus Christ.'

inside the 2d phase of the story Rufus movements in with Sheppard and very early at the reader realises that Sheppard is focusing his interest on Rufus instead of on Norton. He buys Rufus a telescope and sets it up for him within the attic. it is while Rufus is playing with the telescope that O'Connor again brings inside the idea of religion. Sheppard tells Rufus and Norton that they might each be astronauts after they develop up and that they may turn out to be going to the moon. however Rufus tells him 'I ain't going to the moon and get there alive' and 'when I die I'm going to hell.' Unperturbed Sheppard answers Rufus with the aid of telling him 'It's as a minimum viable to get to the moon. we can see it. We realize it's there. no one has given any dependable evidence there's a hell.' This annoys Rufus and he tells Sheppard that 'The Bible has deliver the proof and if you die and move there you burn all the time.'

This engagement between Rufus and Sheppard is important for two motives. first off because it highlights to the reader that Rufus has as a minimum a few form of religion or belief. it's also vital as it is through Rufus speaking about Hell that Norton asks his father if his mom is in hell. Sheppard tells his son she's not, but the reader learns that Sheppard has by no means instructed his son that his mother is in heaven either 'he couldn't permit himself to bring him up on a lie.' To Sheppard neither heaven nor hell exists and he tells Norton that 'She doesn't exist. That's all I must provide you with, the fact.' again O'Connor can be suggesting the dearth of religious religion inside Sheppard.



while Rufus loses interest inside the telescope, Sheppard believes that by way of buying him a new shoe (Rufus has a clubfoot) he will change Rufus for the higher. however when they go to the shop to attempt on the brand new shoe, Rufus tells the clerk that he doesn't want it, no matter it becoming him and helping him along with his strolling. The shoe is critical symbolism and may be seen as both representing a new way of life for Rufus (which he is in the long run rejecting) or it could be seen as Rufus being at ease with his vintage shoe (or the manner he's residing his existence). upset that Rufus has now not typical the brand new shoe, Sheppard becomes even greater dissatisfied with him while he discovers that Rufus is chargeable for the vandalism of a number of the houses inside the neighbourhood and he starts to want that Rufus could just go away. Sheppard's longing for Rufus to depart is likewise tremendous because it indicates that Sheppard now not feels he is able to make a reference to Rufus.

there's some other essential incident whilst Sheppard returns domestic to locate Rufus and Norton studying a bible. when they take a seat right down to have dinner Sheppard tells Rufus that 'That e-book is something in an effort to conceal behind. It's for cowards, individuals who are afraid to face on their very own toes and determine things out for themselves.' Sheppard's response to the lads reading the bible is vital as it once more highlights his loss of faith. He tells Rufus that 'You don't believe it. You're too intelligent.' once more Rufus is angered by Sheppard and he replies 'You don't know nothing about me. although I didn't consider it, it might nevertheless be true.' To show that he believes what the Bible says Rufus rips out one of the pages and begins to devour it.

whilst the police carry Rufus lower back to Sheppard's residence for the second time the reader also gets a more in-depth examine how Rufus thinks. regardless of knowing that he goes to the jail once more, Rufus tells the police and the reporter that he'd alternatively cross returned there than live with Sheppard. He also accuses Sheppard of getting made suggestions to him and having informed him 'there wasn't no hell.' when Sheppard pleads with him to inform the truth we additionally study that in place of looking at his clubfoot as a incapacity, Rufus appears upon it as an asset 'I lie and thief because I'm true at it! The lame shall input first!' Rufus believes that despite the fact that he steals due to the fact he's lame he'll get to heaven, not like Sheppard who Rufus is suggesting has no faith

### **About Author**

Flannery O'Connor, in complete Mary Flannery O'Connor, (born March 25, 1925, Savannah, Georgia, U.S.—died August 3, 1964, Milledgeville, Georgia), American novelist and short-tale author whose works, usually set in the rural American South and often treating of alienation, situation the connection between the individual and God. O'Connor grew up in a distinguished Roman Catholic circle of relatives in her native Georgia. She lived in Savannah till her early life, however the worsening of her father's lupus erythematosus forced the family to relocate in 1938 to the house in rural Milledgeville in which her mother were raised. After graduating from Georgia state university for ladies (now Georgia university &

state college) in 1945, she studied creative writing at the university of Iowa Writers' Workshop. Her first published work, a brief tale, appeared in the mag accent in 1946. Her first novel, sensible Blood (1952; movie 1979), explores, in O'Connor's own phrases, the "religious consciousness without a religion." smart Blood includes a sequence of close to-independent chapters—lots of which originated in formerly published quick testimonies—that inform the story of Hazel Motes, a preacher's grandson who returns from army provider to his homeland after dropping his faith after which relocates to any other metropolis, this one populated by a gruesome forged of itinerant loners, false prophets, and displaced people at the make. His lonely tragicomic search for redemption, which incorporates his founding of the Church with out Christ, becomes increasingly violent and phantasmagorical. clever Blood combines the eager ear for commonplace speech, the caustic non secular creativeness, and the flair for the absurd that had been to characterize O'Connor's next paintings. With the booklet of similarly quick tales, first gathered in an excellent man Is tough to discover, and different testimonies (1955), she came to be regarded as a grasp of the shape. the gathering's eponymous tale became possibly her quality-regarded work. In it O'Connor created an surprising agent of salvation inside the character of an escaped convict known as The Misfit, who kills a quarreling own family on excursion within the Deep South.

### Conclusion

The finishing of the tale is likewise sizable as it's miles on the stop of the tale that Sheppard realises that his tries to save Rufus were no longer a selfless act but rather it changed into an attempt to 'feed his vision of himself.' it's far upon this focus that Sheppard comes to a decision that he needs to connect with Norton, in preference to with Rufus. however while Sheppard is going to the attic to spend some time with Norton, he discovers Norton's frame placing from a beam. Norton's demise is also vast as it would seem that he has killed himself in an try and be closer to or join again with his mother. it is also possible that O'Connor is suggesting on the give up of the story that Sheppard has been blinded by selfishness, his very own. as opposed to specializing in the coolest inside his own son, he targeted, for his personal gain and ego on Rufus.

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