

## **LITTLE BANDAGED DAYS BY KYRA WILDER: A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE SACRIFICES OF A MOTHER**

**Amandeep Kaur**

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Shahzada Nand College, Amritsar

### **ABSTRACT**

*This study aims to explore the problems faced by a mother while bringing up her children as well as various sacrifices done by a mother for her children. It spotlights the hard and tough life of a mother, who isolates herself from all the world, making her children her only world and how a mother's mental and physical health gets affected by sleeplessness, loneliness, overburden of work and lack of proper rest. We can see the same condition in Kyra Wilder's, Little Bandaged Days, in which a mother moves to Geneva with her husband and their two little children. Her husband remains absent from home because of his job and she remains alone with her children. Her world revolves around taking care of her children, keeping them happy, fed and comfortable. But isolation, 24 hours duty of looking after her children and sleeplessness tell upon her health.*

**KEY WORDS:** Geneva, Isolation, Kyra Wilder, Little Bandaged Days.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Woman plays different roles: She is a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother etc. In every role, she is beautiful and she plays every role very well. But the most important role that is often extolled and praised, is of a mother. In almost all the religious books, woman as a mother is presented as an adorable; love and affection given by a mother is pure and unconditional. Let us first of all put a glance at Christian's holy book, *The Bible*. It says, as a mother comforts her child, so I will be comforted. (Isaiah 66:13). Here it is great evidence that care, love, affection and comfort given by a mother to her children is superb and par-excellence. She can lie down on a wet place but puts her children on dry one. For a mother, convenience of her child is of paramount importance.

She is a source of great comfort for her offspring. Let us now take into account what Islam says about importance of mother. The great prophet Muhammad gives mother an exalted status by saying, “Jannat lies beneath her feet” (Sunan an-Nasai 3104). It is considered to be the one of the greatest services to serve one's mother. It gives a very high and honorable place to mother. The great prophet Muhammad had said that the heaven lies under the feet of one's mother. Because mother plays a very significant role in nurturing her children, preparing them to lead a healthy and wealthy life.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **FIRST SACRIFICE**

The very first sacrifice that Erika makes is that all her ties with the outside world are snapped. She lives in lonely and dark place with her children. When her children sleep, she switches off the lights and maintains perfect silence. She does not consider her own likes and dislikes . Her only aim is not to disturb her children. Her mother urges her to switch on the lights. Her mother says; “Turn on a light . Ofor goodnesssake” . (Wilder, 2020, P.3).

She does not talk to anyone except her mother; but even while talking with mother due to poor network and low voice they cannot communicate properly. We come to know that just because children are sleeping she cannot express herself freely. What she says is described in the following lines; “I wiggled my fingers at the screen in a goodbye sort of way and mouthed. I LOVE YOU, slow, like I was shouting it” . (Wilder, 2020, P.4)

### **SECOND SACRIFICE**

A Mother when nurtures her children does not get time to look after her own self, because looking after the children takes almost all of her time ; Even though she does not like this. Following lines show this, “I was unhappy with the way I was dressed, with my uncombed hair, my lips, barnacled with dead skin, were like tide pools.” (Wilder, 2020, P.27). She also likes and wants to dress herself beautifully but she suppresses her desires to take care of her offspring. This pining for stylish and lovely suits gets clear in these lines. “M had a whole new set of European suits for the office, Italian or English may be fitted. Half-lined and light for summer. He looked really good. He had new sunglasses with little round lenses and tortoiseshell frames

that he took on and off when we walked into apartments and out of them. His new leather loafers were so soft inside that I had actually gasped when I slipped them on, once, at the hotel, while he was asleep. I had actually gasped”. (Wilder, 2020, P.8). These lines are extremely moving and an apt evidence of Erika's suppressed desires.

### **THIRD SACRIFICE**

Mostly it is seen that mothers have to leave their jobs to bring up their children. They put their own career at the stake for their little ones. Career, is significant for every human being but mostly girls have to suppress their ambition of becoming successful in career. Same is the case with the heroine of the novel *Little Bandaged Days*. Erika had to leave her job after birth of her children which is painful for her. She expresses her feelings in these lines: “I didn't have a job, not anymore. Afterwards, after E was born, after I quit, well, it was if I had woken up on a very quiet Island. An Island where it was always afternoon and I was alone, alone with E. We could have made a raft, rowed somewhere. I could have, but where would we have gone?” (Wilder, 2020, P.44)

### **24 HOURS DUTY**

Erika has to perform her duty for 24 hours means she has to work at a stretch. She works hard during day time, she has to do all the household chores, take children out for playing and at night, she carries her younger baby in her arms and walks in circles. As she puts it in these lines: “She walked and walked and walked and talked to. So mostly that's what we did, at night, walk in circles. Living room, entryway, kitchen, living room”. (Wilder, 2020, P.11).

### **EFFECTS OF LONELINESS AND SLEEPLESSNESS ON A MOTHER**

Because of living alone, without any communication with anyone, her feelings remain unexpressed. She longs to make friends with a woman named Nell, who like Erik brings her children to the park for play. These lines very clearly describe her yearning to have a friend with whom she can share her feelings. “She was going to say something to me and after all this time we were going to be friends, we were going to help each other easily. Can you? I'd say, reaching for something, and she would be able to reach it and hand it to me”. (Wilder, 2020, P.124-125). This loneliness results into very serious consequences.

## MEMORY LOSS

Since Erika has the fear that if she sleeps, her children can fall off from the bed. They can go to bathroom or kitchen. "I had been told terrible stories of mothers who allowed their selves to fall asleep in this way, with their babies drifting helplessly towards the cushions. If we slept, we mothers, we slept cheek to cheek with disaster. That close, with terror touching us singing to us in our dreams". (Wilder, 2020, P.50). Because of the tension of her children, she does not enjoy sound sleep which affects her brain badly. Once she falls asleep, her daughter takes out her make up box and spoils all the things. These incidents affect her sleep. Children sleep late and for less time and that also leads to sleeplessness and it further results in various health problems. "I wasn't sleeping, I really wasn't not much not enough E got up early. B stayed up late In between the nights stretched, the hours drifting farther and farther from each other, like planets pushing outwards, always more and more alone inside the expanding dark. M was back sometimes and sleeping but he felt always away far away when he didn't come home I called my mother from the quest room and I'd gaze at the screen and not be able to make any sense of what she was saying. Go to sleep, she'd say, you look awful". (Wilder, 2020, P.36).

## MEMORY LOSS

Lack of proper sleep and tension of children result in that Erika cannot remember things. She Buys tickets which are useless for her but could not even remember when she had bought them. She could not remember when her husband went and where did he go? Following lines show this, "London. Berlin. Rome. I couldn't keep up really I had trouble remembering when he was gone, and when he wasn't gone but was at the office. Really, I had trouble telling the difference". (Wilder, 2020, P.20).

Memory loss results in hallucination. Erika feels and see things and persons even when they are not really there. As she puts in these lines: "I was in the Entry way now. behind me. M? I said M? Is that you? The doorknob rattled and I felt how cold it was suddenly in the apartment, too cold for the summer when the nights should have been long and cheerful and we should never be alone. The whispering started now from the other side of the door and I thought, yes, now, I should open it. M? I said, But I couldn't reach out, couldn't left my fingers to the lock". (Wilder, 2020, P.226).

### **ABNORMAL BEHAVIOUR**

In the starting of the novel, when she shows baked goods to her mother to impress her, we realize that something is wrong with the woman. Erika does unusual things like hoarding rotten things such as: bleaching the flat and scratching the knives against sharpening stove and afterwards test it.

### **NO HOLIDAYS NO BREAKS**

Almost in every job there is a break for having meal. Every work is for some hours and after work there is a break. But for a mother, there is no free time for taking meal and rest. Mothers have to work for 24 hours and 365 days. Following lines explain this aptly. “But we were fine here, I told him. Besides, I told him, there wasn't such a thing as holidays for mothers, or holidays from mothering for that matter. So why pretend we could go somewhere”. (Wilder, 2020, P.45). Thus 24 hour job affects the mothers badly. Following lines are very moving. “As if I were dead heal. As if I were dead and still trying to get the kids ready to go to the park, slicing cold cucumbers with my so-sharp knives”. (Wilder, 2020, P.235).

### **CONCLUSION**

Thus the study brought out the hardships confronted by a mother in the upbringing of her offspring. She sacrifices her comforts, her career, her sleep and what not for the sake of her children. There is an urgent and vital requirement to share the burden of a mother. Her husband can partake her responsibility. Both can look after the children alternatively so that mother can be saved from adverse effects of excessive burden.

### **REFERENCES**

Musnad Ahmad. (3104). Sunan Nasai. Hadith:Vol.3.pg 429.

Retrieved 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2022 from <https://hadithanswers.com/jannah-lies-beneath-the-feet-of-your-mother/>

*The Common English Bible*. (2011) Christian Resources Development Corporation: USA  
Retrieved 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2022 from <http://www.crosswalk.com/special-coverage/mothers->

day/what-does-isaiah-6613-mean-by-as-a-mother-comforts-her-child-so-will-i-comfort-  
you.html

Wilder, K. (2020) *Little Bangaged Days*. Picador.