



(1908-1953)

The Small Key
by: Paz M. Latorena



Author's Background

- In year 1927, she was invited by Ms. Paz Marquez Benitez to write a column for the Philippines Herald Magazine.
- She wrote a poem under the pseudonym, Mina Lys.
- Member of UP writers club and contributed her short story 'A Christmas Tale.'
- In year 1927 her short story entitled The Small Key won 3rd price in Jose Garcia Villa's Roll of Honor for the year's best short stories.
- She became the literary editor of the Varsitarian and published her poems, "Insight" and "My Last Song," under her pseudonym Mina Lys.
- In 1934, her doctoral dissertation, "Philippine Literature in English: Old Voices and New," received the highest rating of sobresaliente.

Settings

- **FARM**
- **HOUSE**



Characters

- **PEDRO-** Husband of Soledad, also known as Indo
- **SOLEDAD-** Wife of Pedro Buhay, also known as Choleng
- **TIA MARIA-** Housemaid of Pedro and Soledad
- **DR. SANTOS-** Doctor of Soledad

Symbolism

Small Rusty Key

- Represents the romantic past of Pedro Buhay from his late wife.



Large Shiny Key

- Represents Soledad as she was the present and has a power to burn the clothes of her husband first wife.

Trunk

- Symbolizes on how Pedro tries to keep the memories of her late wife.



Summary

The story talks about Soledad, a woman in her mid-twenties who is married to a man named Pedro Buhay (Indo), they lived in a hut within a prosperous farm away from neighbors.

Soledad has been bother by the small key that Pedro Buhay carefully keeps. Until a chance came where Soledad (Choleng), was able to use the key to open the small trunk of her husband- a trunk that contains the clothes of Pedro's late wife who passed away years ago.

Soledad was affected of what she saw she was threatened that those clothes will affect their relationship so ended up burning the clothes. Later on, Pedro discovered what his wife did but at the end he forgave his wife because he loves her. Even if the truth is he feels bitterness for what she did

Conflict

Man vs. Himself

Soledad saw the small trunk and had come to hate it with unreasoning violence, the things that were causing her so much unnecessary anguish, and pain that threatens her to destroy all the most beautiful things between her and her husband.

Soledad wandered in and out of the rooms in effort to seek escape from her own thoughts and to fight down an overpowering impulse.

When Pedro saw the burnt clothes at the backyard and found out that the trunk was empty. He was trying not to get angry to her wife even if he feels bitterness and resentment for what Soledad did.

Climax

- **Center of the Climax:**

Pedro saw the burnt clothes at their backyard and cautiously entered their room to look for the small trunk but it was empty. He can't believe that Soledad burnt the clothes of her late wife.

- **Interpretation:**

Pedro feels anger, bitterness and resentment towards her wife action but he remain calm and choose to forgive Soledad.



Theme

The story shows that there is no perfect relationship and it's a matter of how the couple will handle a certain misunderstanding, it appears in the reality of married life wherein sometimes the couple face crises. The author prescribes that trust, love and forgiveness is the solution to every relationship problems.

Author's Style

- The author use Third Person's Point of View.
- The author used objects to symbolize the characters in the story.
- The author writing style makes her reader's to imagine the story based on their perception.

Guide Questions:

1. What did the author use in conveying the roles, emotions and attitudes of the characters?
2. What does the trunk, big and small key symbolizes?
3. What is the theme of the small key?
4. What does the Small Key intend to portray in Filipino Attitude?
5. What is the connection of the story to the image of women in Filipino culture?