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THE SHORT STORY

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Short Story

What is a short story?

The short story is a narrative form similar to the novel but shorter than it. In this respect certain differences can be drawn between these two narrative forms; the novel, and the short story. A short story is an elevated art. Condensation is said to be the main feature of the short story. It is the art of the modern age because:

It can be read at a single sitting.

It challenges the mind of the reader because it forces him to explore its meaning through understanding the symbols and the condensed language. The short story is written in a language closer to poetry, and thus it entangles the mind of the reader to understand it, and feels the enjoyment of reading the plot presents in it.

Differences between the Novel and the Short Story

The novel	The short story
A long narrative form; more than 15000 words	A short narrative form; less than 15000 words
A large number of characters	A limited number of characters
Detailed description is used	Condensed style is used
Setting is vast and detailed	Setting is limited
Action is extended	Action is limited
It covers a long span of time	It tackles a short instance of time
It deals with complex ideas	It treats a simple thought
It reveals the action through description	It suggests the action
It appeared in the 18 th century	It appeared in the 19 th century
It is not necessarily symbolic	It employs symbols

The Five Key Elements of a Short Story:

A Short Story has about fifteen different elements, but the following five elements make up the most important parts of the Short Story.

1- **Character:** This element comprises of the personalities and other sentient beings that perform the actions of the story. The Character is widely agreed to be the most important factor to a good short story.

2- **Setting:** This serves as the contextual portion of the story, providing the reader of the short story's background. The Setting provides the reader the basis for interpreting the other elements of the story.

3- **Plot:** The flow of the entire short story. The plot, in its most basic meaning, is the story itself. The Plot orders the actions that the characters of the short story will perform.

4- **Conflict:** This element is what makes the story exciting. The Conflict is the struggle of the short story between the protagonists and antagonists, as well as other characters in the story.

5- **Theme:** The overall message (or the content of the story) that the short story implies. The Theme, while it may not directly affect the story's appreciative quality, typically provides the reader a pre-conceived idea of what the story is all about.

In order for a short story to be readable and appreciated, the five key elements have to work with each other in a synchronized way.

The Structure of Short Story:

- 1- **Exposition:** the introduction of setting, situation and main characters.
- 2- **Complication:** the event that introduces the conflict
- 3- **Rising action crisis:** the decisive moment for the protagonist and his commitment to a course of action.
- 4- **Climax:** the point of highest interest in terms of the conflict and the point with the most action.
- 5- **Resolution:** the point when the conflict is resolved. Because of their length, short stories may or may not follow this pattern. For example, modern short stories only occasionally have an exposition, more typically beginning in the middle of the action. However, the endings of many short stories are open and may or may not have a moral or practical lesson.

Origin of the Short Story

Story telling is as old as literature. A good example of well-known short stories can be found in *The Arabian Nights*. However, the art of the short story first appeared in the west in The United States of America.

Edgar Allan Poe (1809 - 1849) was the first American writer who composed very famous and successful short stories.

Then the art of the short story moved to England, and famous British writers practiced the art. English short story writers like: Oscar Wilde (1854 - 1900), and Catherine Mansfield(1888 - 1923) became famous worldwriters in this art.