
"Pumpkin Head" story by Joyce Carol Oates

Pumpkin Head is a fictional story written by Joyce Carol Oates. Considerably, the story is all about a recent widow who has felt worthless and lonely due to the premature death of her husband. The story explains how the widow welcomed another man in her house for a drink, and this man ends up abusing the widow physically, but the widow does not seem to enjoy each and every bit of act. There are two main characters in this story. These are Hadley (the widow), and Anton Kruppev, the man who drops into Hadley's house with a white truck.

Hadley is a young widow, and she's attracted for mysterious reasons that relate to her childhood—to Anton, a young post-doc who works at the local Co-op. He has "dropped by", and she's not too upset to see him. It seems she might be ready to appear after a long period of mourning, but she is slightly repelled by Anton. The man is forceful, tough, and she doesn't have the strength to ask him to leave, although she does lie to him in a weakly manner. It turns out that he's had a bad time of it, and he's a bit cracked, like the pumpkin head he's wearing when she first sees him (it's a bizarre effort at a Halloween gift). When he goes further and tries to force himself on her, she resists, and eventually he leaves her. She should call the police, but she doesn't. She goes outside and calls to him, instead.

Ideally, Hadley is in a state of grief or mourning since she lost her husband, but the problem is that she is unable to accept the fact that she is a widow. Towards this end, Hadley seems lonely and confused, and this makes her wander all over the house until she invited Anton for a drink. Anton Kruppev, on the other hand, appears dressed on a Pumpkin on his head and this is shown by Oates as a Halloween gift to the widow. Anton is attracted to women, and that's why he is unable to control his emotions after getting drunk. The uniqueness of these characters that makes them good for imaginary stories is that Anton represents how men take advantage of death to target and try to harass widows physically. Hadley, on the other hand, shows the love that women have for their husbands, and they strive to remain faithful even after the death of their spouse.

In conclusion, "Pumpkin-Head" is agitated with grief, sudden loss, and also the isolated life of the widow. It is a fictional story which Joyce uses to describe themes such as grief, the life of widows, loneliness, death, and how widows overcome physical harassment. In my opinion what I got from the title and related themes is that stereotype foreigners like Anton to the extent that they are really not visible to us. That is a major theme here. How can Hadley empathize with Anton when she does not take him seriously? He is a man in a mask who represents a part of the globe that we think wants nothing more than to be like Americans.