

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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THE SYMBOL OF SACRIFICE IN A.J.CRONIN'S  
'VIGIL IN THE NIGHT'

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates A.J.Cronin's moralistic touch of medical pathos in all his novels. He dealt with the themes of sacrifice for the siblings. Down the years in medical history, advances have been highlighted in his works. The story aims at pointing out the theme of love towards work, duty and self responsibility. It brings out how the heroin Anne Lee in the story *Vigil in the Night* live only for her sibling Lucy Lee's comfort. The story is viewed from the narrator's point of view where it ends up with the piece of hope which would always help us to progress with a bold heart in the upcoming future. The author throughout the story portrays Anne's sacrificing nature in every step she takes.

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INTRODUCTION

Archibald Joseph Cronin was a renowned novelist, short story writer, doctor. His supreme novel "The Citadel" reveals his insight touches of a doctor. His medical ethics are brought to light which inspired the outcome of the National Health Service. He had a very powerful skill of writing. Most of Cronin's short story heroes portray a very valuable concept in bringing out justice for a lay man. His novels have a common theme of Christian boys and girls facing hardships to survive and finally get along to achieve through justice. Cronin is best known for the telecast of most of his stories. The story 'Vigil in the Night' highlights how a devoted nurse cares for the sick children and on top of that the showers of love she poured on her sister Lucy Lee.

Concept of sacrifice as Cronin's theme

In the analysis of the characters portrayed in most of the Cronin's novels and short stories have same similarities. The characters themselves are in the path of justice and show the sacrificial light not for their lives but only for their sibling's happiness. In common life, everyday people face a number of hardships and get trapped in the web of difficulties. Cronin's stories give a cling of hope to hold on which can be achieved through noble and genuine ways.

**Anne Lee- a dedicated nurse**

The short story *Vigil in the Night* communicates more about Cronin's concept of heroine purely sacrifices the whole life only for the sake of her siblings comfort. Siblings Anne Lee and Lucy Lee are nurses in an isolation ward for Children's diseases. According to the plot if Anne Lee 's middle name is Job it would be rather appropriate as she is found clobbered with one crisis after another and is also compelled to take the blame for the sin of others. Dr. Cronin draws a dramatic picture of Anne Lee as a dutiful nurse and her nursing history depicts more about her good nursing career and the sterile techniques followed by her for the needy. Anne pictured herself as a second mother to every patient and so with her sister Lucy Lee. She was committed in every step she took.

**Anne Lee – a dutiful sister**

Anne gave a vivacious parental care for Lucy though Lucy was only eighteen months younger. It was depicted in every thought of hers. Anne had a much greater ambition for her and Lucy. Anne's plan was to wait for Lucy to finish her certificate the following month so they would set out together for a bigger hospital. Contrast, Lucy was not fit for Anne's affection. Lucy had always had a negative remark about her sister. She felt Anne older, fussy and bossy. When Lucy was convicted of killing a child, Anne without a second thought plunged the blame on her.

**The Trivial Incident**

The duty of the two sisters in the hospital was to look after the sick children admitted in the Isolation ward. As per the rules of the hospital duty has to be promptly taken on time. But Lucy was late by ten minutes. It was Anne who was waiting patiently to pass the duty to her sister. When Lucy entered, Anne instructed her sister to watch over the tube; avoid getting blocked. But Lucy felt extremely superfluous. It was then the premature death took place. Lucy was completely panic stricken with her hot cup of tea. Anne immediately rushed in to help the poor child but all her efforts went futile. When the furious chief doctors enquired on the mishap that happened, pity Anne took the sole culpability on her.

**CONCLUSION**

The height of sacrifice that Anne could render her sister was thunderstruck. It cost her medical career. Yet Lucy's manner towards her sister was impervious and insolent. Thus, every step Anne Lee proceeded with, has a touch of selfless love and sacrifice for her sister Lucy Lee.

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