Old Entanglements: Spectral Spouses in Edith Wharton’s “The Other Two” and “Pomegranate Seed”

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Examining Wharton’s short fiction, one attends to the complex and nuanced representations of marriage. In many ways, these representations focus on how the conventions of marriage hold female characters to standards of behavior that are not applied to male characters. In her short story “The Other Two,” (1904) the twice-divorced Alice Haskett Varick Waythorn comes to be the object of judgment, if not of scorn, because “society has not yet adapted itself to the consequences of divorce, and that till that adaptation takes place every woman who uses the freedom the law accords her must be her own social justification” (434). Alice’s third husband determines whether or not she will be accepted in society. And while her adaptability and unflappability are precisely what he finds attractive, these qualities also serve as the criteria for his judgment of her. Waythorn’s chuckle at the story’s conclusion, when all Alice’s spouses—both current and former—gather to be served, seems to suggest a new social order in which a woman’s ability to shed her past is directly related to her new husband’s ability to “discount it.”

Such “discounting,” while certainly laden with markers of both male privilege and condescension, appears not to be the issue at stake for the new marriage depicted in “Pomegranate Seed.” In this 1931 short story, Mrs. Kenneth Ashby’s spectral power seems to control the outcome of her husband’s second marriage. The source of that power lies in the regular letters, sent to and read by her husband only. Her will is done beyond the grave, and the letters appear to trigger the husband’s departure. While Charlotte has consented to live in her husband’s home replete with his late wife’s furnishings, Kenneth cannot “discount” his first wife’s original claim. With the myth of Persephone as a framing device, the story seems to act out two simultaneous impulses: first, Elsie’s hold suggests that Kenneth cannot shed his past and enter a new relationship—and the
reader’s attention is repeatedly drawn to the shrine-like appearance of his home. Secondly, the invocation of Persephone suggests that the institution of marriage will be loosened, and that Kenneth will be wedded to both women. So, when both stories—“The Other Two” and “Pomegranate Seed”—are read together, the very definition of marriage is called into question.

The Ties that Bind

As Mary Papke argues in *Verging on the Abyss*, “The Other Two” fits within the context of Wharton’s “early stories [that] point to the concept of marriage as business, men as dealers in the property of women, as well as the conventional belief that a man’s status is reflected by the appearance and manner of his wife and material possessions” (116). Such an approach deftly contextualizes the short story in the early Wharton canon echoing Thorstein Veblen’s examination of women as commodities in *Theory of the Leisure Class*. Veblen said that the “practice of seizing women from the enemy as trophies gave rise to a form of ownership-marriage, resulting in a household with a male head” (19). The wife became a trophy of male competition, and her very existence showed that she was an object of exchange, whose worth was determined by the market. In “The Other Two,” Alice is a twice-divorced mother of a twelve-year-old daughter whose value derives from Waythorn’s ability—“in the Wall Street phrase” (434)—to discount these liabilities. Or so he initially believes. Alice’s value also comes into play through Waythorn’s ability to construct her as part of his own narrative: in the story’s opening paragraphs he symbolically connects a thoroughly modern New York divorcée with the Madonna and child. As he waits for Alice, who is checking on her sick daughter, he muses that, for him, Alice’s “affection for the child had perhaps been her decisive charm” (433). This prompts him to picture her “bending over the child’s bed” and to think “how soothing her presence must be in illness: her very step would prognosticate recovery” (433). Whether Alice actually performs these duties is not known because we have access only to Waythorn’s fantasy, which initially places Alice in a maternal context. Juxtaposed to this scene, however, is one that foregrounds the characteristic Waythorn both prizes and loathes in Alice: her elasticity, or more precisely, her ability to move away from a distressing circumstance, or perhaps even from one marriage to the other without complications or visible marks of injury. Waythorn reasons that “when she had done all she could for Lily, [Alice] would not be ashamed to come down and enjoy a good dinner” (435). We never gain access to Alice’s ideas about motherhood because Waythorn controls the narrative gaze.

Waythorn admires his wife although “he knew what was said about her; for, popular as she was, there had always been a faint undercurrent of detraction” (434). Alice “had a way of surmounting obstacles without seeming to be aware of them, and Waythorn looked back with wonder at the trivialities over which he had worn his nerves thin” (435). This approach contains the seeds of its own contradiction. It also underscores the extent to which Alice’s “value” depends on external appraisal. In other words, stories about her previous marriages are fodder for gossip and diminish her value in view of any future marriage, thus undermining the very source of her material existence. Waythorn’s assessment of Alice’s elasticity, then, not only oversimplifies the ties that still bind her to her previous husbands, it also suggests that her value is important only if it enlarges his property holdings. Still, when Alice emerges from Lily’s room, “though she had put on
her most engaging teagown she had neglected to assume the smile that went with it” (435). Her expression runs counter to the narrative he constructs, which prompts him to do a number of things that will diminish the value of his new possession.

5 Rather than consider that a divorce provides women with severed ties in name only, Waythorn regards the tethers that still bind Alice to Haskett and Varick as an albatross around his neck, or more precisely, as his personal ghost story. The reader learns that Waythorn “always refused to recognize unpleasant contingencies till he found himself confronted with them, and then he saw them followed by a spectral train of consequences. His next days were thus haunted” (447). While not strictly a ghost story, it is curious that in “The Other Two,” Waythorn’s response to Alice’s previous marriages is evoked in terms of the ghostly. Alice’s previous unions haunt Waythorn rather than Alice, and allow him to imagine himself as the duped party. Wharton critiques Waythorn’s assumptions and conclusions, and his later conversations with Alice become instruments for these “ghosts,” and in particular Haskett, to exert new power over her.

6 The haunted marital past is the focus of Waythorn’s concern in “The Other Two,” and the same—even more intense—feelings are depicted in “Pomegranate Seed.” This story uses the ghost story and Elsie’s seemingly powerful hold over Kenneth as an attempt to expose as unnatural the limitations imposed by conventional marriage. Wharton accomplishes this by representing the male character as the one who is trapped by his past. Using Wharton and Codman’s The Decoration of Houses (1897), I will argue that the décor of the Ashby home—and Charlotte’s adjustment to it—serves as a metaphor for the perpetuation of the past in the present and the manner in which the rules and conventions of the past remain unquestioned. In many ways, Charlotte’s “challenges” have less to do with the letters and more to do with the home itself—preserved in the manner that Elsie Ashby desired—thus preventing Charlotte from imagining a new beginning. This symbolic tie to the past plays itself out in Charlotte’s desire to solve the mystery of the author of the letters and her husband’s disappearance, and suggests the extent to which she believes problems can be identified and transcended by the application of time-tested rules. By depicting a male victim, Wharton gains greater freedom to delineate the confining nature of the conventions of marriage.

7 Wharton’s first mention of the impact of the ghostly over the living is to be found in The Decoration of Houses. In a discussion of room decoration, the authors say that “it must never be forgotten that everyone is unconsciously tyrannized over by the wants of others—the wants of dead and gone predecessors, who have an inconvenient way of thrusting their different habits and tastes across the current of later existences” (18). In “Pomegranate Seed” this problem reveals itself on two levels: first, with the preservation of the home’s out-of-date decorative style, which stands in marked contrast to the city’s modern architecture, and second, with Charlotte’s perception that the letters themselves are missives from the late Elsie Ashby that bind Kenneth to the past and prevent him from embracing the present with her. The story appears to follow the advice about front entrances offered in The Decoration of Houses: “while the main purpose of a door is to admit, its secondary purpose is to exclude.” Codman and Wharton go on to say that “the hall or vestibule from the street should clearly proclaim itself an effectual barrier. It should be strong enough to give a sense of security” (103). At first, the Ashby home conforms to these recommendations because it stands between Charlotte and the city:

She turned her back on it standing for a moment in the old-fashioned, marble-flagged vestibule. […] the sash curtains drawn across the panes of the inner door
softened the light within to a warm blur through which no details showed. [...] this veiled sanctuary she called home always stirred her profoundly. (678)

8 The decoration of the entrance harks back to an earlier decade, and its emphasis on exclusion sets the stage for Charlotte’s outsider status in the Ashby home: “since the death of Kenneth’s first wife, neither the furniture nor hangings had been changed” (678). Charlotte’s friends tell her that Elsie’s ghost will continue to preside over the home and Kenneth’s heart: “he’ll never let you move an armchair or change the place of a lamp. [...] and whatever you venture to do, he’ll mentally compare with what Elsie would have done in your place” (682).

9 Several salient points emerge from the juxtaposition of The Decoration of Houses and the story’s opening pages: Victorian decorative conventions are presented as a respite from the modern era’s jarring sensibilities. Both texts confirm the realities that reveal themselves to Charlotte, but a closer examination raises questions about the character’s assumptions, exposing them, and her, to critique by the reader. For while the vestibule may offer shelter to the home’s inhabitants, Wharton and Codman also argue that “the vestibule should form a natural and easy transition from the plain architecture of the street to the privacy of the interior” (104). In the short story, there is no such easy transition, suggesting the extent to which Charlotte is not simply ensnared in decorative preferences of the past, but also in the restrictive social mores of the Victorian era. While Charlotte imagines that it is the “soulless roar of New York, its devouring blaze of lights, the oppression of congested traffic, congested homes, lives and minds” (678) that threaten her existence—if not her sanity—the real danger lies in her belief that her home functions as a haven protecting her from the chaos outside: “in the very heart of the hurricane she had found her tiny islet—or thought she had” (678). And for her friends who initially counsel against marriage to a widower, “none of these forebodings had come true” (682).

10 And yet “Pomegranate Seed” is a ghost story with the second Mrs. Ashby presumably haunted by a past that terrorizes her in the present and threatens her future. While Charlotte may not believe her friends’ cautionary comments, she crafts her own ghost story, one that seemingly threatens her marital happiness. Crucial to Charlotte’s tale of a deceased wife who haunts her former husband’s new marriage is that she must possess some degree of narrative reliability. However, the evidence of Kenneth’s unfaithfulness consists only of stolen glances, hasty assumptions, and problematic interpretations of non-verbal behavior, all of which are parodied and reveal more about Charlotte’s inability to imagine a more modern conception of marriage than it does about Elsie’s demands on Kenneth. Charlotte sees Kenneth’s disappearance at the end of the story as irrefutable evidence that her suppositions are correct. The husband’s loss of agency and the Persephone myth paradoxically allow the story to suggest the possibility of an alternate form of marriage in which multiple partners coexist.

Unraveling Old Entanglements

11 For readers of “The Other Two,” it is important to see that Waythorn comes to envision the ties that bind Alice to her previous husbands not only in terms of ownership and diminished value—and thus threats to his status—but also as a source of sexual anxiety. At the beginning of section two, for instance, Waythorn sees Haskett’s impending arrival at the house as a violation of his domain: “as his door closed behind him he reflected that
before he opened it again it would have admitted another man who had as much right to enter it as himself, and the thought filled him with physical repugnance” (437). In his discussion of this scene, Kiran-Raw suggests that “Waythorn and Haskett’s rivalry over Alice turns into an intensely personal relationship with a homosexual undercurrent” (40). Consequently, he interprets Waythorn’s disgust as an example of same-sex erotic panic. I would contend instead that Waythorn’s disgust derives from the realization that male power and privilege imply access to his home. In this particular case, Haskett’s legal right to see Lily grants him entry into Waythorn’s life as well as into Alice’s. Haskett’s presence illustrates that other men have claims to Alice that might be exercised at any time, thus vitiating Waythorn’s authority and even his manhood. However, in a later scene, where Alice confuses her second husband’s habits with those of her third husband and adds cognac to Waythorn’s coffee, Waythorn’s authority is criticized and distanced. What is striking about the scene is not so much that Waythorn has previously observed that Varick prefers cognac with his coffee and understands whom Alice has in mind, but that the error occurs as Waythorn gloats about his appropriation of Alice:

As the thought of Haskett receded, Waythorn felt himself yielding again to the joy of possessorship. They were his, those white hands with their flitting motions, his the light haze of hair, the lips and eyes . . . .
She set down the coffee pot, and reaching for the decanter of cognac, measured off a liqueur glass and poured it into his cup. (440)

Alice’s error reminds Waythorn that she has served other men and his needs are not unique.

While Waythorn initially sees Haskett as an invading force, his approach to Varick differs, particularly as Varick and Waythorn “had the same social habits, spoke the same language, understood the same allusions” (444). Custody rights introduce Haskett into the Waythorn home, but chance—connected to speculation on Wall Street—accounts for Varick’s entry. Using what would now be termed insider trading information, Varick earns $100,000 from a stock “tip” and needs assistance investing the money. Because Varick cannot work with his usual broker, who is convalescing, he must seek out Waythorn’s expertise. Waythorn agrees to assist Varick because while “he did not care a farthing for the success of Varick’s venture, the honor of the office was to be considered, and he could hardly refuse to oblige his partner” (441). His meetings with Varick become opportunities for Waythorn to revise his narrative of Alice and to conclude that she has used her marriages as attempts at social-climbing. He arrives at this conclusion after hearing a chance comment made by Varick that confirms rumors Waythorn had already heard but presumably discounted, “that a lack of funds had been one of the determining causes of the Varick separation” (441). Waythorn then traces Alice’s trajectory: “he could fancy how pretty Alice must have looked, in a dress adroitly constructed from the hints of a New York fashion-paper, and how she must have looked down on the other women, chafing at her life, and secretly feeling that she belonged in a bigger place” (444). Alice’s desire to please becomes the instrument of her upward mobility. Interestingly, her twelve-year-old daughter is also described as “too anxious to please” and she “does not always tell the truth” (446). Her behavior appears to be inherited from her mother, thus once again legitimizing early rumors about Alice.

While Alice’s accommodation to each succeeding husband elicits Waythorn’s condemnation, he serves as the instrument that provides the means to make that accommodation possible. Even though Waythorn laments his hauntings by these
“ghosts,” the actual spectral horror comes to be visited upon Alice—who if she is to insure her present marital happiness—must adjust to Waythorn’s demands. It is at this point in the text that the use of business language with respect to Waythorn’s marriage intensifies. In order to better rationalize Haskett’s regular presence in his home, Waythorn “had to accept him as a lien on the property” (448). The language here foregrounds Alice as a damaged commodity, encumbered by obligation and in debt to a previous owner. Waythorn appears to “buy” Alice at a loss, which turns into an attempt to re-establish his prowess by absorbing a financially risky purchase. Waythorn “compared himself to a member of a syndicate. He held so many shares in his wife’s personality and his predecessors were his partners in business” (449). So, not only is Alice used property, but Haskett and Varick are entitled to the dividends she might still yield.

While Alice’s former husbands trigger Waythorn’s anxiety, their presence elicits curiosity on the New York social scene. As the narrator notes, “some experimental spirits could not resist the diversion of throwing Varick and his former wife together, and there were those who thought he found a zest in the propinquity” (449). Propinquity, of course, suggests kinship as well as proximity and legitimizes Waythorn’s constant interactions with Haskett and Varick, easing Waythorn’s resistance as he too, “had drifted into a dulling propinquity with Haskett and Varick and he took refuge in the cheap revenge of satirising the situation” (450). The kinship and proximity with the former husbands allow Waythorn to re-imagine Alice’s worth on the basis of her sexual experience: “he knew exactly to what training she owed her skill. He even tried to trace the source of his obligations […] Varick’s liberal construction of the marriage bond had taught her to value the conjugal virtues; so he was directly indebted to his predecessors for the devotion which made his life easy if not inspiring” (450). The debt Waythorn values is one that presumably brings him pleasure as Alice has learned these “wifely arts.” As Papke argues, “Waythorn is continually and disconcertingly thrust into the company of the other two husbands. At first, he mentally belittles his wife for too openly appearing as used goods […]. At the conclusion, however, Waythorn has managed to rationalize a means of profit-making from his partner’s work” (116-117). This re-assessment symbolically allows Waythorn to revisit earlier manifestations of his anxiety: his “sudden exclamation” (440) when Alice adds cognac to his coffee and his jealousy about the pearl necklace Varick had given her and which “at Waythorn’s insistence had been returned before her marriage” (443). Clearly, his acceptance of Alice’s former husbands is due to the passage of time, which “dulled the irony of the situation” (450).

If Waythorn has adjusted, what is the meaning of his laughter at the end of the story, after each of Alice’s husbands has presented himself before her in the library? While the text provides no final explanation for Waythorn’s reaction, the laugh might be used as a commentary on his original aversion, recognizing that “he had fancied that a woman can shed her past like a man. But now he saw that Alice was bound to hers both by the circumstances which forced her into continued relation with it, and by the traces it had left on her nature” (449). And while he condemns Alice for these complicated and intertwined ties, they reassert themselves as that which had initially drawn him to her in the first place, thus re-establishing her worth insofar as they make her a rare commodity. She becomes a rare object, in other words, whose scarcity is the source of an increase in her value. However, the terms according to which value is determined are established by men, and it is men who do the dealing.
If humor reassures Waythorn that his fears are unfounded, no such enlightenment occurs for Charlotte in “Pomegranate Seed.” Nowhere is Charlotte’s insistence on the accuracy and truth of her assumptions more powerful than in the second section, where the arrival of the eighth grey letter prompts her to realize that “she knew she would have no peace till she found out what was written on that sheet” (684). Rather than open the letter, she leaves it for her husband to open while she hides in his library so she can “see what happened between him and the letter when they thought themselves unobserved” (685). By anthropomorphizing the letter, Charlotte falls back on a ready-made script of the betrayed wife, thus justifying her detective and prosecutorial techniques. With her husband’s arrival, the text continues its critique of Charlotte’s actions and her seeming inability to accurately determine what her husband does, and includes statements such as “he must have re-read [the letter] a dozen times—or so it seemed to the woman breathlessly watching him,” or with Kenneth’s back to Charlotte “he raised the letter still closer to his eyes, as though he had not fully deciphered it. Then he lowered his head, and she saw his lips touch the sheet,” and finally once face-to-face with each other, “Charlotte noticed how quickly he had regained his self-control; his profession had trained him to rapid mastery of face and voice” (686). These descriptions cast doubt on Charlotte’s actions and the conclusions she draws from them, ironically undermining the story she crafts and her ability to write, narrate, and interpret it.

Charlotte’s inability to interpret evidence and context intensifies during her ensuing conversation with Kenneth, which occurs in the late Mrs. Ashby’s drawing room. While Charlotte demands prompt answers to her questions, Kenneth insists that she embrace ambiguity, meeting her queries with responses like “not now—not yet” (695), which only fuel Charlotte’s “passionate need to feel herself the sovereign even of his past” (683) and compels her to insist on their leaving all persons, places, and things familiar. Rather than draw Kenneth closer to her, Charlotte’s ultimatum drives him away. That the drawing-room is the setting reinforces two points: Charlotte’s proprietary grip on Kenneth is from another era and produces suffocation and the room symbolically suggests that Kenneth is still husband to both wives.

Charlotte’s delusions about her own power persist in the fourth section; everything in this section underscores the extent to which Charlotte either imagines acts occurring that “prove” Kenneth’s love and faithful devotion to her only, or she receives second-hand information about Kenneth and their future. Charlotte unwittingly lays the groundwork for Kenneth’s Persephone-like departure—focusing not on his return to her at some future point in time, but emphasizing, instead, the extent to which Kenneth is permanently lost to her. Central to Charlotte’s difficulties at the end of the short story is the extent to which the letters and the reversal of the Persephone myth call attention to her fundamental inability to live with ambiguity. In other words, what the letters and the myth share is the recognition that language and relationships are not fixed entities but are constructions where meaning is constantly negotiated. Charlotte’s binary thought process is what also links her to her mother-in-law whose “astringent bluntness of speech responded to the forthright and simple in Charlotte’s own nature” (692). This bond solidifies early in the relationship when the elder Mrs. Ashby notices the removal of Elsie’s portrait, which leads her to praise Charlotte and reminds her not to put it back. “Two’s company,” she says (692). At the same time, both women oversimplify Elsie in their assumption that the removal of her portrait somehow negates her presence. Their joint fear of Elsie’s unseen power serves as a metaphor for their discomfort with the
liminal in general: “how safe and familiar it all looked; and out there, somewhere in
the uncertainty and mystery of the night, lurked the answer to the two women’s conjectures,
like an indistinguishable figure prowling on the threshold” (702). It is ironic, then, that
Charlotte arrives at the conclusion that the handwriting in the letter is Elsie’s at the very
moment when the elder “Mrs. Ashby looked up, her eyes […] lifted to the blank wall
behind her son’s writing table” (707) where Elsie’s portrait once hung. Charlotte uses the
blank wall—or Elsie’s absence—to confirm her presence. This is also the case when she
tries to read the ninth grey letter: Charlotte attempts to read what is not there and in
doing so imposes her fears on the page, which then serves as evidence that Elsie has
summoned Kenneth to her side, leaving Charlotte alone with her mother-in-law to
contemplate her defeat.

The conclusion of the story begs the question: why is Kenneth’s departure framed in the
Persephone myth? And if his departure broadens the definition of marriage, why is this
act left undeveloped? Readers familiar with the myth, in which the maiden’s hunger for
forbidden fruit permanently binds her to the underworld for several months of the year,
will see how the myth changes in Wharton’s story: Wharton not only casts the figure as
male, but also represents the departure as a matter of choice. Because Charlotte
interprets events in terms of either/or, a binary thought process that the text as a whole
rejects, to represent Kenneth’s departure more fully would be counter-productive.
Instead, readers are literally left with his blank page in which they must negotiate the
terms of this new and more open marital union. This conforms with Wharton’s vision of
her ghost stories: “when I first began to write ghost stories, I was conscious of a common
medium between myself and my readers […] of their meeting me half way among the
primeval shadows, and filling in the gaps in my narrative with sensations and divinations
akin to my own” (Ghosts viii). In their analysis of her preface, Carol Singley and Susan
Elizabeth Sweeney emphasize that Wharton “literally represents the act of reading as
peering in an almost blank page, filling in gaps, absences, [and] ellipses[,] defin[ing]
reading as the production of meaning rather than the discovery of truth” (189). In many
ways, Charlotte’s inability to read the ninth letter “establishes it as a floating signifier,
which creates shifting relationships among the characters who attempt to appropriate it
and discover its meaning” (Singley and Sweeney 182). Charlotte’s ambiguity-induced
anxiety leads her to re-establish her rightful place as Kenneth’s wife by following her
mother-in-law’s advice to call the police. What is most telling in this final moment is the
call is not placed, and any enforcement of the “law” that Charlotte seeks never occurs.

From the juxtaposition of “The Other Two” and “Pomegranate Seed” emerges the gradual
embrace of ambiguity. As her characters negotiate and re-interpret the conventions of
marriage, Wharton helps readers to examine and question them. In Wharton’s later story,
however, this modern approach to marriage eludes Charlotte, and the reader is compelled to recognize her confinement within convention itself. Equally haunted by his
spouse’s past, Waythorn emerges far more successfully than Charlotte simply because he
understands that it is impossible to shed one’s past. The story’s final scene depicts Alice
in communion with three husbands—none of whom claim sole possession—who
content themselves with “shares” of Alice Hasket Varick Waythorn. In these texts and
others, Wharton anticipates the modern consequences of multiple marriages, revealing
that these unions—much like language itself—are predicated upon negotiation between
and among the participants.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


NOTES

1. For a discussion of Wharton’s appropriation of the Gothic for the purpose of parody, see Janet Beer and Avril Horner’s “‘This Isn’t Exactly a Ghost Story’: Edith Wharton and Parodic Gothic.” While the article does not address “Pomegranate Seed,” its invocation of Linda Hutcheon’s approach to parody is a salient point insofar as “parody can either be used at the expense of the original text’s ideology or it can hold ideology up as an ethical standard. From this point of view, parody acts as a consciousness-raising device, preventing the acceptance of the narrow, doctrinaire, dogmatic views of any particular ideological group” (280).

ABSTRACTS

Dans les nouvelles d’Edith Wharton, la conduite des personnages féminins est soumise à des critères qui ne s’appliquent pas aux personnages masculins. Dans « The Other Two » (1904), Alice Waythorn, qui a divorcé deux fois, est l’objet d’un certain mépris. C’est le troisième mari d’Alice...
qui a le pouvoir de décider si elle sera ou non acceptée par la société. Si la capacité d’adaptation de sa femme est précisément ce qu’il apprécie en elle, il n’en est pas moins vrai que c’est à lui que revient le pouvoir de porter un jugement sur elle. Le sourire de Waythorn à la fin de la nouvelle laisse deviner un nouvel ordre social dans lequel la possibilité pour une femme d’oublier son passé est directement liée à la capacité qu’a ou non son mari de l’ignorer. Dans « Pomegranate Seed » (1931), Mrs. Ashby exerce son pouvoir par-delà la mort en adressant à son mari des lettres qui déterminent l’issue du deuxième mariage de Mr. Ashby. La nouvelle laisse entendre que Kenneth Ashby a du mal à se libérer de son passé pour nouer une relation nouvelle et l’invocation de Perséphone semble indiquer qu’il sera, d’une certaine manière, marié à deux femmes en même temps. C’est la définition même du mariage qui est remise en question dans ces deux récits.

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