



## THE DEPICTION OF LOVE IN THE STORY “LIVVIE” BY EUDORA WELTY

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**Abstract:** *The article explores the literary work of Eudora Welty, a famous writer of the 20 th century. The paper focuses on her short story “Livvie”, which shows how women were treated in that period. E. Welty presents the female character through simple but deep psychological and emotional descriptions. In this article we will discuss about the difficulties women faced, their patience, and how their emotions changed over time, that is to say, to recognize inner desires and possibility of a different life. I try to depict the theme of emotional and personal awakening in E. Welty’s short story “Livvie”.*

**Keywords:** *Personal growth, control and autonomy, isolation, seasonal symbolism, Empowerment through love, gender roles*

## ИЗОБРАЖЕНИЕ ЛЮБВИ В РАССКАЗЕ “ЛИВВИ” ЭУДОРЫ УЭЛТИ

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**Аннотация:** *В статье рассматривается литературное творчество Эудоры Уэлти — известной писательницы XX века. Основное внимание уделено её рассказу “Ливви”, в котором показано положение женщин в тот период. Э. Уэлти изображает женский персонаж через простые, но глубокие психологические и эмоциональные описания. В данной статье обсуждаются трудности, с которыми сталкивались женщины, их терпение, а также эмоциональные изменения, происходящие с ними со временем, то есть осознание своих внутренних желаний и возможности другой жизни. Автор стремится отразить тему эмоционального и личностного пробуждения в рассказе Э. Уэлти “Ливви”.*

**Ключевые слова:** *личностный рост, контроль и автономия, изоляция, символизм времён года, освобождение через любовь,*





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Eudora Welty was born in Jackson, Mississippi, on April 13, 1909, the daughter of Christian Webb Welty (1879–1931) and Mary Chestina (Andrews) Welty (1883–1966).<sup>48</sup> She grew up with younger brothers Edward Jefferson and Walter Andrews. Welty's first short story, "Death of a Traveling Salesman", was published in 1936. Her work attracted the attention of author Katherine Anne Porter, who became a mentor to her and wrote the foreword to Welty's first collection of short stories, *A Curtain of Green*, in 1941. She eventually published over forty short stories, five novels, three works of non-fiction, and one children's book. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, *The Optimist's Daughter* (1972) is believed by some to be Welty's best novel.

Eudora Welty's short story "Livvie" made its debut in 1942 in *The Atlantic Monthly*. It was subsequently featured in her 1943 collection "The Wide Net and Other Stories".<sup>49</sup> A. Leslie Kaplansky has provided insightful commentary on Eudora Welty's short story "Livvie" is almost like a fairy tale in its use of simple, universal devices. The beautiful young bride, miserly old man who imprisons her, the strange caller who brings temptation, and the handsome youth who rescues the heroine are all familiar, timeless characters."<sup>50</sup> Devlin, Albert J emphasizes this statement: "E. Welty broadens the references of her story to include elements of myth and religion. Young Cash, emerging from the deep forest dressed in a bright green coat and green-plumed hat, could be the Green Man of folklore, a symbol of springtime regeneration and fertility. In contrasting youth with age and old with new, Welty subtly employs biblical references". Old Solomon thinks rather than feels but falls short of his Old Testament namesake in wisdom. Youthful Cash, redolent of spring, tells Livvie that he is "ready for Easter," the reference ostensibly being to his new finery but suggesting new life rising to vanquish death. The vague, dreamy impressionism of "Livvie," which relies on image and action rather than dialogue to tell the story.<sup>51</sup>

In *Livvie*, Eudora Welty masterfully unravels the theme of love not as a singular, idealized sentiment, but as a layered and evolving emotional force that may both suppress and liberate. Through rich symbolism, regional atmosphere, and deep psychological insight, Welty paints a portrait of a woman awakening from emotional dormancy into the light of selfhood and choice. At the heart of the narrative lies a juxtaposition between two men, Solomon, Livvie's aged husband, and Cash, a young man who enters her world with the vibrancy of spring. Solomon's love is cloaked in protectiveness, but it is ultimately a guise for possession. His affection manifests in confinement; he secludes

<sup>48</sup> [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eudora\\_Welty](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eudora_Welty).

<sup>49</sup> [https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1942/11/livvie-is-back/657330/?utm\\_source](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1942/11/livvie-is-back/657330/?utm_source)

<sup>50</sup> Kaplansky, Leslie A. "Cinematic Rhythms in the Short Fiction of Eudora Welty." *Studies in Short Fiction* 33 (Fall, 1996): 579-589

<sup>51</sup> Devlin, Albert J. *Eudora Welty's Chronicle: A Story of Mississippi Life*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1983.







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Livvie from the outer world, preserving her youth like a fragile object rather than honoring it as a living essence. The house they inhabit, remote and shadowed by mortality, becomes a physical extension of this emotional stagnation. Livvie exists within its walls like a bird in a gilded cage, guarded, but not free. As Mambrol aptly observes: "Solomon's love represents dominance, not affection," revealing how protection, when rooted in control, becomes a form of emotional imprisonment".<sup>52</sup> Welty subtly intertwines natural imagery with internal transformation. The seasonal setting spring, symbolic of rebirth and new beginnings mirrors Livvie's emotional resurgence. The arrival of Cash, whose very name evokes vitality and value, signals the promise of renewal. He does not impose himself upon Livvie, nor does he seek to own her. Instead, his presence reminds her of the life beyond silence and servitude. As Mambrol notes: "Cash symbolizes the possibility of real, passionate love," one that is not anchored in tradition or obligation but in mutual recognition and personal will".<sup>53</sup>

The motif of the red dress reappears like a heartbeat throughout the story a silent but vivid emblem of Livvie's dormant desires. No longer just an article of clothing, the dress symbolizes her reclaiming of feminine identity, agency, and sensuality. "The red dress is a powerful symbol of feminine identity and readiness for love". Through this vibrant image, Welty subtly asserts that Livvie's path toward emotional freedom is not loud or revolutionary, but deeply felt and irrevocably personal.

Welty's narrative style amplifies this quiet revolution. Her prose, steeped in the cadence of the American South, flows with lyrical simplicity, yet brims with psychological complexity. As Appel notes, "Welty fuses the lyricism of Southern landscapes with the emotional landscape of her characters."<sup>54</sup> The rural setting is not mere backdrop it is an emotional canvas where silence speaks, and light, shadow, and color bear meaning. The oppressive hush of Livvie's home reflects her soul's stillness, just as the soft awakening of spring echoes her inner stirrings of change.

Ruth Vande Kieft highlights how "Welty's prose is distinguished by its precision and subtle irony, which render ordinary events symbolic"<sup>55</sup> In Livvie, the simplest gestures a walk outdoors, a glimpse of color, a stranger's smile become loaded with emotional consequence. Livvie's transformation is not charted through grand declarations, but through Welty's refined use of implication and pause. As McHaney notes, "Welty's style resists excess; instead, she builds meaning through silence, pause, and implication".<sup>56</sup> This technique deepens the emotional texture of the story, allowing the reader to feel

<sup>52</sup> Mambrol, N. (2021, August 3). Analysis of Eudora Welty's "Livvie". Literary Theory and Criticism. <https://literariness.org/2021/08/03/analysis-of-eudora-welty-s-livvie>

<sup>53</sup> . The same source

<sup>54</sup> Appel, A. (1994). *A Season of Dreams: The Fiction of Eudora Welty*. University Press.

<sup>55</sup> Vande Kieft, R. (1987). *Eudora Welty*. Twayne Publishers.

<sup>56</sup> McHaney, P. A. (2007). *A Writer's Eye: Collected Reviews and Essays*. University Press of Mississippi.





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Livvie's transition rather than merely observe it. Through the lens of feminist interpretation, Livvie becomes more than a tale of emotional growth; it is a story of reclamation. Livvie's eventual openness to Cash is not simply romantic it is symbolic of her readiness to reclaim emotional sovereignty.

**Conclusion:** In my view, Eudora Welty's short story "Livvie" explores the complex and sometimes contradictory nature of love. The narrative shows that love can be both a source of control and a path to personal freedom. At the beginning of the story, Livvie lives under the dominance of Solomon, whose controlling form of love limits her choices and suppresses her individuality. This kind of relationship reflects the traditional roles expected of women in society, where love is often tied to obedience and sacrifice. However, as the story progresses, the appearance of Cash brings with it the possibility of a different kind of love one that is based on mutual respect, emotional support, and independence. His presence awakens something inside Livvie, allowing her to recognize her own desires and consider a new life beyond her current limitations. Welty uses rich imagery and symbolic elements, such as the changing seasons, to reflect Livvie's emotional and psychological transformation.

Summary, the story suggests that love, when it respects personal freedom and individuality, can lead to inner growth and renewal. It is this empowering form of love that Welty presents as truly transformative, when it respects personal freedom and individuality, can lead to inner growth and renewal. It is this empowering form of love that Welty presents as truly transformative.

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