

Fur by Saki (H.H. Munro)

In *Fur* by Saki we have the theme of selfishness, appearance, friendship, bitterness, kindness and revenge. Taken from his *The Complete Short Stories* collection the story is narrated in the third person by an unnamed narrator and after reading the story the reader realises that Saki may be exploring the theme of selfishness. There is a sense that Suzanne is thinking only of herself when she is talking to Eleanor about her birthday. She knows that Bertram is a wealthy man and as such she is looking for an expensive present, a fur. The fact that Bertram is only a distant cousin is not important to Suzanne what matters to her is that she gets a fur. This is Suzanne's first and only priority. Something that becomes clearer to the reader when Eleanor and Suzanne decide to 'bump' into Bertram so that they can bring him into the fur department of Goliath and Mastodon's. At all stages of the story Suzanne thinks only of herself. A fact that disturbs Eleanor when Suzanne refuses to attend a bridge game in order that Eleanor can speak to Harry. If anything this is the spark which triggers Eleanor to seek revenge on Suzanne. Something she successfully manages to do when Bertram buys her the fur and Suzanne the fan.

What may also be important in the story is the fact that Suzanne is focused on appearance. She likes Bertram not because he might be a relative but because he is wealthy. Similarly the fact that Suzanne has a trip to Davos planned pushes her towards wanting to get a fur. So that she can fit in with the Russians in Davos who are wearing fur. It would seem to be a case that appearance is everything to Suzanne. She wants to be seen as something that she really isn't. Which may very well be how Eleanor thinks until she decides to get revenge on Suzanne. Though Eleanor likes Harry Suzanne does not wish to be involved in any way in Eleanor and Harry's courtship. She does not want to help Eleanor. Again she is acting selfishly thinking only of herself. Even though Eleanor is prepared to help her.

It is also interesting that Bertram is addressed by his surname rather than his first name when Suzanne is telling Eleanor about her present. It is as though Suzanne has become bitter having not received the present that she had wished for. If anything it is clear to the reader that Suzanne has been using Bertram for her own advantage. As too has Eleanor who wished to get the better of Suzanne and appears to have done so. It may also be a case that rather than being true friends both Suzanne and Eleanor have a superficial relationship. With both being only interested in what they can gain out of the friendship. Though it is noticeable that Eleanor prior to being rebuked by Suzanne does seem to genuinely want to help Suzanne. However Suzanne's inability to assist Eleanor with Harry may have meant that Eleanor decided to review her friendship with Eleanor. There is also a sense that Suzanne is jealous of Eleanor. After all it is Eleanor who has received the fur. This may be important as already the reader is aware of the importance of appearance to Suzanne. Now that Eleanor has the fur Suzanne may not necessarily feel as confident about herself.

It is also possible that Saki is placing a spot light on society at the time. How easily swayed young women like Suzanne and Eleanor can be by another person's wealth. Perhaps Saki is suggesting that some people look upon other people's good fortune as being a tool which they can use for their own advantage. Suzanne wanting the fur from Bertram being an

example. If anything an individual may act selfishly in order to gain something for themselves. With it being clear to the reader that Suzanne is being nice to Bertram simply because he is the person who can buy her what she wants. Rather than being satisfied with the fan and the kindness shown by Bertram. Suzanne is offended. She doesn't seem to realise that Bertram could have chosen not to buy her anything for her birthday. Instead he went out of his way to buy the present. Even if Suzanne does not like it. One thing is also clear to the reader at the end of the story. That being the friendship between Suzanne and Eleanor has been rocked. Suzanne through her selfishness both with Bertram and Eleanor has not only got a birthday present she doesn't want but she has also possibly lost a friend. Superficial or not. Which may be the point that Saki is making. It is possible that he is suggesting that it is better to be kind towards others and to help others than to think only of yourself. As Suzanne has done throughout the story.