

Chapter 1 : Katherine Mansfield - Wikipedia

"Her First Ball," written by Katherine Mansfield, was first published on November 28, in the Weekly Westminster Gazette and later incorporated into The Garden Party and Other Stories. "Her First Ball" is the only story to significantly feature characters from another story within the collection.

Early life[edit] Mansfield was born Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp in into a socially prominent family in Wellington , New Zealand. Her grandfather was Arthur Beauchamp , who briefly represented the Picton electorate in Parliament. Her father, Harold Beauchamp became the chairman of the Bank of New Zealand and was knighted in She had two older sisters, a younger sister and a younger brother, born in Here Mansfield spent the happiest years of her childhood, and she used some of her memories of this time as an inspiration for the short story " Prelude ". Mansfield recommenced playing the cello, an occupation that she believed she would take up professionally, [7] but she also began contributing to the college newspaper with such dedication that she eventually became its editor. For example, she did not actively support the suffragette movement in the UK women in New Zealand had gained the right to vote in After finishing her schooling in England, she returned to New Zealand, and only then began in earnest to write short stories. She had several works published in the Native Companion Australia , her first paid writing work, and by this time she had her heart set on becoming a professional writer. She continued to have male lovers, and attempted to repress her feelings at certain times. In June she wrote: This is unclean I know but true. She wrote about Maata in several short stories. Maata married in but it is claimed that she sent money to Mansfield in London. Mansfield also professed her adoration for her in her journals. She published only one story and one poem during her first 15 months there. She hastily entered into a marriage with George Bowden, a singing teacher 11 years older than she; [10] they were married on 2 March, but she left him the same evening, before the marriage could be consummated. Mansfield miscarried after attempting to lift a suitcase on top of a cupboard. It is not known whether her mother knew of this miscarriage when she left shortly after arriving in Germany, but she cut Mansfield out of her will. In particular, she was introduced to the works of Anton Chekhov. She returned to London in January She then published more than a dozen articles in A. Mansfield responded with " The Woman at the Store ", a tale of murder and mental illness. Mansfield wrote only one story during her time thereâ€™" Something Childish But Very Natural "â€™before Murry was recalled to London to declare bankruptcy. She began to take refuge in nostalgic reminiscences of their childhood in New Zealand. By the remembered stream my brother stands Waiting for me with berries in his hands Sister, take and eat. Woolf and her husband, Leonard , who had recently set up the Hogarth Press , approached her for a story, and Mansfield presented " Prelude ", which she had begun writing in as "The Aloe". The story depicts a New Zealand family moving house. For part of spring and summer , she joined her close friend the American painter Anne Estelle Rice at Looe in Cornwall , in the hope of recovering. There, Rice painted a famous portrait of her dressed in red, a vibrant colour Mansfield liked and suggested herself. I painted her in my way as she painted me in hers: Her health continued to deteriorate and she had her first lung haemorrhage in March. During the winter of â€™19 she and Baker stayed in a villa in San Remo , Italy. Their relationship came under strain during this period; after she wrote to Murry to express her feelings of depression, he stayed over Christmas. Mansfield followed her first collection of short stories, Bliss , with another collection, The Garden Party , published in Last years and death[edit] Mansfield spent her last years seeking increasingly unorthodox cures for her tuberculosis. In February , she consulted the Russian physician Ivan Manoukhin, whose "revolutionary" treatment, which consisted of bombarding her spleen with X-rays , caused Mansfield to develop heat flashes and numbness in her legs. The following high schools in New Zealand have a house named after Mansfield: She has also been honoured at Karori Normal School in Wellington , which has a stone monument dedicated to her with a plaque commemorating her work and her time at the school, and at Samuel Marsden Collegiate School previously Fitzherbert Terrace School with a painting, and an award in her name. There is a Park dedicated to her in Thorndon. A street in Menton , France, where she lived and wrote, is named after her. In , a television biopic titled Bliss was made of her early beginnings as a writer in New Zealand; she was played by

Kate Elliott.

Chapter 2 : calendrierdelascience.comh Literature Guide: Three: 'Her First Ball' by Katherine Mansfield

Exactly when the ball began Leila would have found it hard to say. Perhaps her first real partner was the cab. It did not matter that she shared the cab with the Sheridan girls and

Perhaps her first real partner was the cab. It did not matter that she shared the cab with the Sheridan girls and their brother. But, my child, how too weirdâ€”" cried the Sheridan girls. Oh dear, how hard it was to be indifferent like the others! She tried not to smile too much; she tried not to care. But every single thing was so new and exciting. She would remember for ever. It even gave her a pang to see her cousin Laurie throw away the wisps of tissue paper he pulled from the fastenings of his new gloves. They were at the drill hall already; there were cabs in front of them and cabs behind. The road was bright on either side with moving fan-like lights, and on the pavement gay couples seemed to float through the air; little satin shoes chased each other like birds. Two benches on either side were stacked high with wraps. And everybody was pressing forward trying to get at the little dressing-table and mirror at the far end. When the door opened again and there came a burst of tuning from the drill hall, it leaped almost to the ceiling. Dark girls, fair girls were patting their hair, tying ribbons again, tucking handkerchiefs down the fronts of their bodices, smoothing marble-white gloves. And because they were all laughing it seemed to Leila that they were all lovely. Then, "Pass them along, pass them along! Darling little pink-and-silver programmes, with pink pencils and fluffy tassels. She wanted to ask someone, "Am I meant to have one too? Two, Two in a Canoe. Dancing had not begun yet, but the band had stopped tuning, and the noise was so great it seemed that when it did begin to play it would never be heard. And the rush of longing she had had to be sitting on the veranda of their forsaken up-country home, listening to the baby owls crying "More pork" in the moonlight, was changed to a rush of joy so sweet that it was hard to bear alone. She clutched her fan, and, gazing at the gleaming, golden floor, the azaleas, the lanterns, the stage at one end with its red carpet and gilt chairs and the band in a corner, she thought breathlessly, "How heavenly; how simply heavenly! Be nice to her. Strange voices answered, "Of course, my dear. They were looking towards the men. What were they waiting for? There they stood, smoothing their gloves, patting their glossy hair and smiling among themselves. Then, quite suddenly, as if they had only just made up their minds that that was what they had to do, the men came gliding over the parquet. There was a joyful flutter among the girls. A tall, fair man flew up to Meg, seized her programme, scribbled something; Meg passed him on to Leila. There came a dark man wearing an eyeglass, then cousin Laurie with a friend, and Laura with a little freckled fellow whose tie was crooked. Then quite an old manâ€”fat, with a big bald patch on his headâ€”took her programme and murmured, "Let me see, let me see! It seemed to give him so much trouble that Leila was ashamed. But instead of replying the fat man wrote something, glanced at her again. Leila had learned to dance at boarding school. Every Saturday afternoon the boarders were hurried off to a little corrugated iron mission hall where Miss Eccles of London held her "select" classes. Leila said it again. And there was a tiny pause before the voice echoed, "Oh, quite! He steered so beautifully. The azaleas were separate flowers no longer; they were pink and white flags streaming by. Leila wondered whether she ought to ask him if he would like to stop. Her partner gave a little gasping laugh. It was such a relief to be able to tell somebody. Leila tucked her pink satin feet under and fanned herself, while she blissfully watched the other couples passing and disappearing through the swing doors. Laura passed and gave her the faintest little wink; it made Leila wonder for a moment whether she was quite grown up after all. Certainly her partner did not say very much. He coughed, tucked his handkerchief away, pulled down his waistcoat, took a minute thread off his sleeve. Did one always begin with the floor? Perhaps it was a little strange that her partners were not more interested. For it was thrilling. She was only at the beginning of everything. It seemed to her that she had never known what the night was like before. Up till now it had been dark, silent, beautiful very oftenâ€”oh yesâ€”but mournful somehow. And now it would never be like that againâ€”it had opened dazzling bright. And they went through the swing doors, down the passage, to the supper-room. Her cheeks burned, she was fearfully thirsty. How sweet the ices looked on little glass plates and how cold the frosted spoon was, iced too! And when they came back to the hall there was the fat man waiting for her by the door. It gave her quite a shock again to see how

old he was; he ought to have been on the stage with the fathers and mothers. And when Leila compared him with her other partners he looked shabby. His waistcoat was creased, there was a button off his glove, his coat looked as if it was dusty with French chalk. But he said not a word about the floor. Twelve years before she was born! Leila looked at his bald head, and she felt quite sorry for him. Leila gave a light little laugh, but she did not feel like laughing. Was itâ€”could it all be true? It sounded terribly true. Was this first ball only the beginning of her last ball, after all? At that the music seemed to change; it sounded sad, sad; it rose upon a great sigh. Oh, how quickly things changed! The fat man led her to the door. But deep inside her a little girl threw her pinafore over her head and sobbed. Why had he spoiled it all? Again the couples paraded. The swing doors opened and shut. Now new music was given out by the bandmaster. She wanted to be home, or sitting on the veranda listening to those baby owls. But presently a soft, melting, ravishing tune began, and a young man with curly hair bowed before her. She would have to dance, out of politeness, until she could find Meg. Very stiffly she walked into the middle; very haughtily she put her hand on his sleeve. But in one minute, in one turn, her feet glided, glided. The lights, the azaleas, the dresses, the pink faces, the velvet chairs, all became one beautiful flying wheel. And when her next partner bumped her into the fat man and he said, "Pardon," she smiled at him more radiantly than ever.

Chapter 3 : Her First Ball Summary - calendrierdelascience.com

"Her First Ball." by Katherine Mansfield () From: *The Garden Party, and Other Stories* by Katherine Mansfield. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, pp.

Get Full Essay Get access to this section to get all help you need with your essay and educational issues. Leila Her first ball is based primarily on Leila, who is the protagonist of the story. In this story, we do not particularly know her appearance, but can form an image of her through the description of her personality. Leila is youth and idealism personified. She is simple; she tries to act mature in the story because she feels indifferent amongst her cousins and it is uncomfortable for her. Mansfield has also mentioned that Leila is only 18 years old: Twelve years before she was born! Her exhilaration, zeal and zest is shown though the fact that she is noticing very minute details. The short story starts off with Leila not being able to keep track. She starts to act very thrilled and euphoric. Later, Leila as a character shows emotional growth. Her belief of happiness and her excited behavior is impacted. She is struck by reality in her idealistic paradise. She realizes that all this is temporary and that one day she too will become old. But Leila chooses to ignore that. She is growing up. Her innocence is slowly leaving her. This is the character that works against the protagonist, Leila. The name itself is the description of the character. He is a symbol of the cruelty of realism " he allows Leila to realize the fact and truth that one day we will all lose to nature and coming of age " it is inevitable. He is also shown as a boring personality, as he has been dancing monotonously for thirty years. Laura, Laurie, Jose and Meg. They are to some extent important as they are the ones who provide Leila with this opportunity of her first ball. Leila thinks positively of them for they are fairly caring: These cousins signify a unique relationship of siblings and thus make Leila feel like she is lacking something very important by being an only child. The Old man and Leila; characters with opposing ideals dancing together. What does the story reveal to us about human condition? Support your answer with solid proof from the text. Later in the story, an old man ruins her joy by striking her with the harsh realities of life. I believe that this story is very relatable, especially for a teenage girl like me. It always does happen that the excitement is too much to bear when one is going to attain a new experience. As Leila starts day dreaming and cannot keep track of time; same happens with us when we are so close to the thing we have been longing for such a long time: We are demoralized by very little things " and things do not go as planned. And when finally all is well, the bliss truly is overwhelming! When things are happy and going perfectly well, we forget all our worries and enjoy our time. We forget the problems of life. But it is also true that when that event is over, we have to come back down to earth from paradise, back to real life. The same happens with Leila, when the old man that represents reality talks to her about her youth that is only temporary. No, this is not twilight. It is also true, at least for women, that life can be very miserable when our impressionable moods are influenced. Oh, how quickly things changed! It is as if the world is alive and conspiring against us. When Leila was sad, even the tune she enjoyed so much before became sad. Katherine Mansfield has also talentedly described the human condition when we really want to cry and be left alone, but the situation forces us otherwise; we become sort of restless, go to a corner and our inner voice is awakened. But deep inside her a little girl threw her pinafore over her head and sobbed. Mansfield has also touched upon human condition by the ending that she chose for the story. She has given us all a hidden message: More essays like this:

Chapter 4 : Her First Ball by Milka Nabi on Prezi

"Her First Ball" is a short story by Katherine Mansfield. It was first published in The Sphere on 28 November , and later reprinted in The Garden Party and Other Stories.

The main question, automatically, involves the last couple sentences. What does this ending mean? Opinions run the gamut from very positive upbeat readings usually the majority to rather grim ones often difficult to articulate. The way to sort this through is to break it down. Identify the point of view. This is odder than it seems. What is the term for this technique? More important than identifying the correct term and getting your four points on that junior high school English test is to see the purpose of these kinds of "personifications. So personification serves characterization, but what can be further said about the character Leila? Take, for example, the following: It even gave her a pang to see her cousin Laurie throw away the wisps of tissue paper he pulled from the fastenings of his new gloves. She would like to have kept those wisps as a keepsake, as a remembrance" This begins to answer the first question about point of view. Obviously Leila is naive, and Mansfield wants to create different levels of awareness between Leila and us -- something not very easy with first-person narration where we are apt to experience things with the narrator, not view the events from a more privileged perspective. The more crucial interpretive questions emerge from the material we encounter after the above aspects of the story are established. Is he being malicious, facetious, or just mindlessly thinking out loud? Did he target Leila? Whatever the case, his bitter assessment of the life and the dance archetypally a metaphor for life already has a deflating effect on Leila. But how are we to take the ending? We leave her dancing again and not even recognizing the man. But what has changed between the earlier pages and the last sentences? The final perspective here involves just that: What has changed is that whereas earlier Leila had noticed every aspect of the experience in animated detail, now "all became one beautiful flying wheel" , a blur, one might say. And not recognizing the fat man seems slightly grim, no? Leila has gone from hyperconsciousness, however dorky, to semi-consciousness, never preferable. Works Consulted Kobler, J. A Study of the Short Fiction. Fictions of the Female Self:

Chapter 5 : What is a summary of "Her First Ball" by Katherine Mansfield? | eNotes

In Her First Ball by Katherine Mansfield we have the theme of experience, youth, independence, reliance and gender. Taken from her The Garden Party and Other Stories collection the story is narrated in the third person by an unnamed narrator and from the beginning of the story Mansfield appears to be exploring the theme of experience (or rather the lack of it).

There she came under the influence of the Modernists like DH Lawrence and Virginia Woolf, both of whom she knew intimately. But she was less than happy there and at the end of two years she went back to London, this time, permanently. She lived a very unconventional life, getting into relationships and marriages and out of them very quickly. She contracted tuberculosis in her early thirties and succumbed to the illness when she was She looks at everything with a mixture of wonder and excitement. Nothing escapes her eye, including the wisps of tissue paper that her brother removes from his new gloves. She is at the ball with her cousins, the Sheridan girls who are experienced at this kind of thing. Balls were the highlight of the season and girls spent all the time planning for it. The balls were occasions when young women found future partners, so they were important dates in the social calendar. Leila creates a fairyland where young women and men remain young and charming forever. When the story ends, we find Leila swept away to another dance by another personable man. But this is not the Leila who arrived here couple of hours ago. As the evening wears on, she grows up till she reaches the stage where she is ready to ignore the worldly wisdom of the fat man. Woven into this theme is the theme of the impermanence of youth. Running alongside is the political theme dealing gender issues like lack of empowerment for women who are expected to just look lovely and kissable all the time. Leila treats this as a great tragedy and wonders whether the old man says this just to upset her. Plot The plot is razor thin. There are echoes of the Cinderella story here. A young girl arrives at her first ball waiting to be rushed off her feet by personable young men. She is captivated by the wonderful images that she sees around her: Leila is at the threshold of life. Just when she begins to forget her diffidence and enjoy herself, comes the old man with his visions of middle age and drabness. For a while, Leila longs for familiar sights and sensations of her home in the country and wants the safety they signify, but that is momentary. Soon she succumbs to the attractions of youth. Filled with feverish excitement she can barely wait for the action to begin. The excitement is tempered by a touch of apprehension and diffidence. She is acutely aware of what is happening around and eagerly takes it all in. Sensations and images go fleeting by and snippets of conversation reach her ears. To be charming and be charmed is what everyone wants. His role is to inject a touch of realism into Leila and remove the rose tinted spectacles through which she views life. Analysis How the insulation around the lives of the upper middle class shuts out the harsh realities of life, then and now, is shown here by Katherine Mansfield. All thoughts to the contrary were resolutely shut out. Symbolism The ball here is a symbol of decisive change in the central character; this is true of Leila as it was of Cinderella. He arrives at the critical moment and holds a mirror up to her of what awaits her: When young Leila arrives at the ball, she is just an enthusiastic observer taking in large gulps of all that is happening around her. Soon she becomes an enthusiastic participant. Life becomes a fast moving stream of images with no time to pause. Literary devices used with examples Katherine Mansfield frequently uses figurative language that gives a poetic feel to the story. See how Leila talks about her ride in the cab: The shoes that peep out from the long dresses are referred to thus:

Chapter 6 : Mansfield, "Her First Ball"

"Her First Ball" by Katherine Mansfield is a short story that highlights the feelings and emotions of a young lady as she attends her first ball. Leila is in awe of everything about the dance.

Taken from her *The Garden Party and Other Stories* collection the story is narrated in the third person by an unnamed narrator and from the beginning of the story Mansfield appears to be exploring the theme of experience or rather the lack of it. While Leila is sitting in the cab the reader discovers that she has never been to a ball before. She is unsure of whether she is to take a programme or not. Mansfield also appears to be exploring gender roles in the story. Through the introduction of the older man and what he tells Leila, Mansfield may be suggesting that at the time of writing there were perceptions about what the role of the female may have been. It appears that the older man is suggesting to Leila that as she gets older, no longer will she be dancing at balls rather she will become a chaperone. It is also interesting that the older man, despite his age, continues to dance. If anything this appears to be somewhat hypocritical which may be the point that Mansfield is trying to make. Again at the time of writing Mansfield may have been suggesting the lack of equality that existed between men and women. It is also possible that Mansfield is highlighting the heavy reliance and lack of independence that existed for women at the time the story was written. Throughout the story Leila is reliant on being asked to dance. There appears to be a set rule at the ball in whereby it is up to the male to ask the female to dance, which would place an emphasis on the roles that each gender played again at the time of writing. There is also some symbolism in the story which is worth noting. Mansfield appears to be using bright colours to symbolise youth. By using bright colours, particularly pink, which is a warm colour, Mansfield may also be placing an emphasis on the excitement that Leila and the other girls at the ball feel. Mansfield also appears to be using darker colours to symbolise or highlight the idea of experience. The chaperones, who would be older than the girls at the ball, are described as being darkly dressed. The older man also tells Leila that in time as she gets older and more experienced she will be, like the chaperones, standing on stage dressed in black velvet and holding a black bony fan. Mansfield also appears to be using imagery waltzing lamp-posts at the beginning of the story to highlight to the reader the excitement that Leila feels about attending her first ball. The ending of the story is also interesting as it is ambiguous. It is possible that Leila, through her youth and inexperience remains excited about her first ball, regardless of what the older man has said to her. It is also possible, as some critics might argue, that Mansfield may be suggesting that Leila lacks the maturity to fully understand the world around her. Cite Post McManus, Dermot. *The Sitting Bee*, 20 Dec.

Chapter 7 : Analysis of "Her First Ball" by Katherine Mansfield by Jethro Ssengonzi on Prezi

A young girl, about 18 years of age called Leila is the protagonist of the story. The story expresses the Excitement and Anxiety of Leila, who is extremely self conscious at the prospect of attending her first formal ball.

The contents are a compilation of lecture notes taken while studying as a student at the Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rwp, Pakistan. The contents of the blog are meant as a guide for those studying relative material, therefore it is advised against copying, quoting or referring to the blog in official reports, documents and assignments. Plagiarism is a serious crime in the academic world. Moneeza Rafiq Saturday, 2 February Three: She chose to pursue her life as a writer in London with the help of small allowance from her father. Mansfield wrote 88 stories of which 26 were unfinished. Many of her stories hold a lasting place in twentieth-century fiction because of her influential innovations in form. Her First Ball Exactly when the ball began Leila would have found it hard to say. Perhaps her first real partner was the cab. It did not matter that she shared the cab with the Sheridan girls and their brother. But, my child, how too weirdâ€” cried the Sheridan girls. Oh dear, how hard it was to be indifferent like the others! She tried not to smile too much; she tried not to care. But every single thing was so new and exciting. She would remember for ever. It even gave her a pang to see her cousin Laurie throw away the wisps of tissue paper he pulled from the fastenings of his new gloves. She would like to have kept those wisps as a keepsake, as a remembrance. They were at the drill hall already; there were cabs in front of them and cabs behind. The road was bright on either side with moving fan-like lights, and on the pavement gay couples seemed to float through the air; little satin shoes chased each other like birds. Two benches on either side were stacked high with wraps. Two old women in white aprons ran up and down tossing fresh armfuls. And everybody was pressing forward trying to get at the little dressing-table and mirror at the far end. When the door opened again and there came a burst of tuning from the drill hall, it leaped almost to the ceiling. Dark girls, fair girls were patting their hair, tying ribbons again, tucking handkerchiefs down the fronts of their bodices, smoothing marble-white gloves. And because they were all laughing it seemed to Leila that they were all lovely. Then, "Pass them along, pass them along! Darling little pink-and-silver programmes, with pink pencils and fluffy tassels. She wanted to ask someone, "Am I meant to have one too? Two, Two in a Canoe. Dancing had not begun yet, but the band had stopped tuning, and the noise was so great it seemed that when it did begin to play it would never be heard. And the rush of longing she had had to be sitting on the veranda of their forsaken up-country home, listening to the baby owls crying "More pork" in the moonlight, was changed to a rush of joy so sweet that it was hard to bear alone. She clutched her fan, and, gazing at the gleaming, golden floor, the azaleas, the lanterns, the stage at one end with its red carpet and gilt chairs and the band in a corner, she thought breathlessly, "How heavenly; how simply heavenly! Be nice to her. Strange faces smiled at Leilaâ€”sweetly, vaguely. Strange voices answered, "Of course, my dear. They were looking towards the men. What were they waiting for? There they stood, smoothing their gloves, patting their glossy hair and smiling among themselves. Then, quite suddenly, as if they had only just made up their minds that that was what they had to do, the men came gliding over the parquet. There was a joyful flutter among the girls. A tall, fair man flew up to Meg, seized her programme, scribbled something; Meg passed him on to Leila. There came a dark man wearing an eyeglass, then cousin Laurie with a friend, and Laura with a little freckled fellow whose tie was crooked. Then quite an old manâ€”fat, with a big bald patch on his headâ€”took her programme and murmured, "Let me see, let me see! It seemed to give him so much trouble that Leila was ashamed. But instead of replying the fat man wrote something, glanced at her again. He was tossed away on a great wave of music that came flying over the gleaming floor, breaking the groups up into couples, scattering them, sending them spinning. Leila had learned to dance at boarding school. Every Saturday afternoon the boarders were hurried off to a little corrugated iron mission hall where Miss Eccles of London held her "select" classes. Leila said it again. And there was a tiny pause before the voice echoed, "Oh, quite! He steered so beautifully. That was the great difference between dancing with girls and men, Leila decided. The azaleas were separate flowers no longer; they were pink and white flags streaming by. Leila wondered whether she ought to ask him if he would like to stop. Her partner

gave a little gasping laugh. It was such a relief to be able to tell somebody. Leila tucked her pink satin feet under and fanned herself, while she blissfully watched the other couples passing and disappearing through the swing doors. Laura passed and gave her the faintest little wink; it made Leila wonder for a moment whether she was quite grown up after all. Certainly her partner did not say very much. He coughed, tucked his handkerchief away, pulled down his waistcoat, took a minute thread off his sleeve. Almost immediately the band started and her second partner seemed to spring from the ceiling. Did one always begin with the floor? Perhaps it was a little strange that her partners were not more interested. For it was thrilling. She was only at the beginning of everything. It seemed to her that she had never known what the night was like before. Up till now it had been dark, silent, beautiful very often—“oh yes”—but mournful somehow. And now it would never be like that again—it had opened dazzling bright. And they went through the swing doors, down the passage, to the supper-room. Her cheeks burned, she was fearfully thirsty. How sweet the ices looked on little glass plates and how cold the frosted spoon was, iced too! And when they came back to the hall there was the fat man waiting for her by the door. It gave her quite a shock again to see how old he was; he ought to have been on the stage with the fathers and mothers. And when Leila compared him with her other partners he looked shabby. His waistcoat was creased, there was a button off his glove, his coat looked as if it was dusty with French chalk. He scarcely troubled to clasp her, and they moved away so gently, it was more like walking than dancing. But he said not a word about the floor. Twelve years before she was born! Leila looked at his bald head, and she felt quite sorry for him. And your heart will ache, ache—the fat man squeezed her closer still, as if he really was sorry for that poor heart—“because no one wants to kiss you now. Leila gave a light little laugh, but she did not feel like laughing. Was it—could it all be true? It sounded terribly true. Was this first ball only the beginning of her last ball, after all? At that the music seemed to change; it sounded sad, sad; it rose upon a great sigh. Oh, how quickly things changed! The fat man led her to the door. But deep inside her a little girl threw her pinafore over her head and sobbed. Why had he spoiled it all? Again the couples paraded. The swing doors opened and shut. Now new music was given out by the bandmaster. She wanted to be home, or sitting on the veranda listening to those baby owls. When she looked through the dark windows at the stars they had long beams like wings. But presently a soft, melting, ravishing tune began, and a young man with curly hair bowed before her. She would have to dance, out of politeness, until she could find Meg. Very stiffly she walked into the middle; very haughtily she put her hand on his sleeve. But in one minute, in one turn, her feet glided, glided. The lights, the azaleas, the dresses, the pink faces, the velvet chairs, all became one beautiful flying wheel.

Chapter 8 : Her First Ball.

"Her First Ball" is another of Katherine Mansfield's charming short stories about common experiences. This narrative about a country cousin's first dance was written in as part of a.

Perhaps her first real partner was the cab. It did not matter that she shared the cab with the Sheridan girls and their brother. But, my child, how too weird--" cried the Sheridan girls. Oh dear, how hard it was to be indifferent like the others! She tried not to smile too much; she tried not to care. But every single thing was so new and exciting She would remember for ever. It even gave her a pang to see her cousin Laurie throw away the wisps of tissue paper he pulled from the fastenings of his new gloves. She would like to have kept those wisps as a keepsake, as a remembrance. They were at the drill hall already; there were cabs in front of them and cabs behind. The road was bright on either side with moving fan-like lights, and on the pavement gay couples seemed to float through the air; little satin shoes chased each other like birds. Two benches on either side were stacked high with wraps. Two old women in white aprons ran up and down tossing fresh armfuls. And everybody was pressing forward trying to get at the little dressing-table and mirror at the far end. When the door opened again and there came a burst of tuning from the drill hall, it leaped almost to the ceiling. Dark girls, fair girls were patting their hair, tying ribbons again, tucking handkerchiefs down the fronts of their bodices, smoothing marble-white gloves. And because they were all laughing it seemed to Leila that they were all lovely. Then, "Pass them along, pass them along! Darling little pink-and-silver programmes, with pink pencils and fluffy tassels. She wanted to ask some one, "Am I meant to have one too? Dancing had not begun yet, but the band had stopped tuning, and the noise was so great it seemed that when it did begin to play it would never be heard. And the rush of longing she had had to be sitting on the veranda of their forsaken up-country home, listening to the baby owls crying "More pork" in the moonlight, was changed to a rush of joy so sweet that it was hard to bear alone. She clutched her fan, and, gazing at the gleaming, golden floor, the azaleas, the lanterns, the stage at one end with its red carpet and gilt chairs and the band in a corner, she thought breathlessly, "How heavenly; how simply heavenly! Be nice to her. Strange faces smiled at Leila - sweetly, vaguely. Strange voices answered, "Of course, my dear. They were looking towards the men. What were they waiting for? There they stood, smoothing their gloves, patting their glossy hair and smiling among themselves. Then, quite suddenly, as if they had only just made up their minds that that was what they had to do, the men came gliding over the parquet. There was a joyful flutter among the girls. A tall, fair man flew up to Meg, seized her programme, scribbled something; Meg passed him on to Leila. There came a dark man wearing an eyeglass, then cousin Laurie with a friend, and Laura with a little freckled fellow whose tie was crooked. Then quite an old man - fat, with a big bald patch on his head - took her programme and murmured, "Let me see, let me see! It seemed to give him so much trouble that Leila was ashamed. But instead of replying the fat man wrote something, glanced at her again. He was tossed away on a great wave of music that came flying over the gleaming floor, breaking the groups up into couples, scattering them, sending them spinning Leila had learned to dance at boarding school. Every Saturday afternoon the boarders were hurried off to a little corrugated iron mission hall where Miss Eccles of London held her "select" classes. Leila said it again. And there was a tiny pause before the voice echoed, "Oh, quite! He steered so beautifully. That was the great difference between dancing with girls and men, Leila decided. The azaleas were separate flowers no longer; they were pink and white flags streaming by. Leila wondered whether she ought to ask him if he would like to stop. Her partner gave a little gasping laugh. It was such a relief to be able to tell somebody. Leila tucked her pink satin feet under and fanned herself, while she blissfully watched the other couples passing and disappearing through the swing doors. Laura passed and gave her the faintest little wink; it made Leila wonder for a moment whether she was quite grown up after all. Certainly her partner did not say very much. He coughed, tucked his handkerchief away, pulled down his waistcoat, took a minute thread off his sleeve. Almost immediately the band started and her second partner seemed to spring from the ceiling. Did one always begin with the floor? Perhaps it was a little strange that her partners were not more interested. For it was thrilling. She was only at the beginning of everything. It seemed to her that she had never known what the

night was like before. Up till now it had been dark, silent, beautiful very often - oh yes - but mournful somehow. And now it would never be like that again - it had opened dazzling bright. And they went through the swing doors, down the passage, to the supper room. Her cheeks burned, she was fearfully thirsty. How sweet the ices looked on little glass plates and how cold the frosted spoon was, iced too! And when they came back to the hall there was the fat man waiting for her by the door. It gave her quite a shock again to see how old he was; he ought to have been on the stage with the fathers and mothers. And when Leila compared him with her other partners he looked shabby. His waistcoat was creased, there was a button off his glove, his coat looked as if it was dusty with French chalk. He scarcely troubled to clasp her, and they moved away so gently, it was more like walking than dancing. But he said not a word about the floor. Twelve years before she was born! Leila looked at his bald head, and she felt quite sorry for him. And your heart will ache, ache" - the fat man squeezed her closer still, as if he really was sorry for that poor heart - "because no one wants to kiss you now. Leila gave a light little laugh, but she did not feel like laughing. Was it - could it all be true? It sounded terribly true. Was this first ball only the beginning of her last ball, after all? At that the music seemed to change; it sounded sad, sad; it rose upon a great sigh. Oh, how quickly things changed! The fat man led her to the door. But deep inside her a little girl threw her pinafore over her head and sobbed. Why had he spoiled it all? Again the couples paraded. The swing doors opened and shut. Now new music was given out by the bandmaster. She wanted to be home, or sitting on the veranda listening to those baby owls. When she looked through the dark windows at the stars, they had long beams like wings But presently a soft, melting, ravishing tune began, and a young man with curly hair bowed before her. She would have to dance, out of politeness, until she could find Meg. Very stiffly she walked into the middle; very haughtily she put her hand on his sleeve. But in one minute, in one turn, her feet glided, glided. The lights, the azaleas, the dresses, the pink faces, the velvet chairs, all became one beautiful flying wheel. And when her next partner bumped her into the fat man and he said, "Pardon," she smiled at him more radiantly than ever. Get started by clicking the "Add" button. Add Her First Ball to your own personal library.

Chapter 9 : Short Story Analysis: Her First Ball by Katherine Mansfield - The Sitting Bee

Notes Ideas Ideas Ideas Analyzing "Her First Ball" by Katherine Mansfield Plot Diagram Characters Leila- The main character in the story. She is a round character but also a static character.