The Moving Finger

*Plot summary*

The story is about Mr. Grancy’s second – and happy – marriage. The majority of the story takes place after this woman’s death. This woman that is essential to the man’s life. However, she does not cease to be important after her death and instead takes on a further level of importance after her death. A portrait of her is made by Claydon – a painter, friend of Grancy. This portrait becomes very important to Grancy who falls in love with it. He orders Claydon to re-paint it several times, so that the painting ages with him. This is much to the distain of Claydon who believes that Grancy is destroying her beauty. After Grancy dies the portrait falls into the hands of Claydon who restores it to the original.

*Themes*

Death/Re-birth?–

* Mrs. Grancy’s physical death.
* Her possible re-birth in the form of a painting.

Myth/Mystery –

* The mysterious life that the painting takes on.
* The power of the portrait & how it controls Grancy.

Youth/Aging –

* How Grancy feels that he cannot age without his wife. Therefore he causes the painting to be aged so that he feels more secure about his own aging.

Role of women –

* The recurring theme of outer versus inner beauty in the story.
* Whether women are seen as objects, muses, or in fact the very glue that holds men together.

Love –

* Emotional love – Grancy
* Physical Love – Claydon

*Tone*

The tone of the piece can be described as mysterious, and yet romantic. The portrait’s eerie qualities and the changes that this brings about to other elements of the story can be described as leading the reader to feel that they are reading a ghost story. However, the fact that Grancy is so in love with his dead wife suggests a great deal of romanticism in the story.

*Characters*

**Mr Grancy:**

He is clearly a very romantic man who cares deeply about his wife. He sees her as the part that completes him. He is lost without her and seems almost incapable of aging without her presence. He is also highly-respected and liked within his social group.

**Mrs. Grancy:**

She dies early in the story; however, she still has a major influence on the development of the stories plot and its development. Even as a portrait she can be seen to be a type of puppeteer causing Grancy to act the way that he does and even die at the end of the story.

**Claydon**:

He is in love with Mrs. Grancy also. However, his love could be argued to be physical as oppose to Grancy’s clearly more emotional love. He is also clearly in love with the portrait more than what it represents.

**Narrator:**

He is a friend of Grancy’s who appears to take a neutral standing on the events. His main goal is to (generally) unbiasedly convey the nature of the events to the audience.