

Chapter-II
HUSBAND-WIFE RELATIONSHIP

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Husband-wife relationship is one of the most dedicated relationships, in which couples act as one and it shows true relationship developed by proper understanding. Love, adoration, intimacy, closeness, comfort, repose, confidentiality, compassion, etc. are some salient features of husband-wife relationship. There are various types of husband and wife like supportive, faithless, adulterate, possessive, embryonic, wicked, surpassing, spineless, talentless, malicious, abandoned, jettisons, scorned, bashing, explosive, argumentative, domineering, compulsive, passive, etc. They have to be perfect, and to be a perfect couple it is not essential to marry a right partner but to be a right partner. For good husband-wife relationship, patience, kindness, humility, sacrifice, empathy, love, understanding, forgiveness, and hard work are required. It must be strong, positive and healthy. It can be imperfect, unhappy, toxic and abusive. So it is a duty of a couple to maintain it properly for a successful married life. *Wicked Women* explores such various husband-wife relationships.

The story 'A Question of Timing' presents a story about a couple who love each other so much that they feel unhappy without each other. Paul is a consultant architect who has married Phillipa before six years. She is Paul's second wife. When she meets Paul, she has been working for the Avon Philharmonic for eight years. She has held on the languid orchestra which becomes famous. One year after their marriage, they have first child. Paul moves on to the Board of Entier Enterprise. She delivers a second child and to look after their children, she leaves her job. The Recession of the early nineties results in fall of his enterprise and he

incurs lot of debts. So financial problems start and even though she has to look after two little children, she joins her previous job again because both of them need money. Then she gets Boondock Boys Christmas tour of Australia and New Zealand. Now, he becomes a house husband. Thus, they have to live away from each other because of financial problems. Even, they have to celebrate Christmas alone. Phillipa misses her house and children. The novelist narrates her situation: 9

People here seemed to be happy doing outdoor things, but outdoor things made Phillipa feel desolate and awkward. She missed her house, her home, her children, Paul. She missed the winter. (222)

She thinks that her tour is a nightmare as she does not have a good time there. She wants to talk with Paul about so many things but it will go on too long and words cost money. 'She is homesick and jet-lagged and wants to cry'. She wants to celebrate Christmas with her family but she cannot do so. She leaves her children with Paul and goes on her duties. She reflects,

Distance made for remoteness, not closeness. Absence, combined with distance, was not the continuation of presence by other means, as she had affectionately and consolingly assured her husband only ten days earlier—it was a kind of blinking out of existence, and all you could do was hope it was a temporary situation. (222)

She misses her family so much that she calls Paul in the middle of the night. She just wants to see everything okay and wants to know whether he also misses her as she. This shows their codependent relationship.

Their feelings about each other justify that they do not live without each other so in this way, they are happy couple.

Similarly, Edward and his wife, who is a protagonist of the story 'Valediction', is a happy couple. They live at Grazeot and have three children: Hetty, Lettice and Guy. Edward and his wife believe in the 'no pain no gain' philosophy. Their children are self-absorbed children so they dislike them. Their children also discard them as they are busy in their own life. The oldest son, Guy, though he is not exactly gay, people assume him so. He marries 'the most extraordinary beautiful transsexual, Staria and both run an Interior Design Firm in Brigham. Lettice has a job as an Entertainment Officer. Hetty, the youngest daughter is a professor of Economics at King's; she marries Rory and has children. Except Hetty, the other two are happy in their lives. When Hetty quarrels with Rory, she comes at Grazeot and after a lot of telephonic communication, they reunite.

Edward's house at Grazeot is too old and far from city, so Edward and his wife want to sell it and buy a small cottage on the seafront at Hastings on the south-east coast. They show their house to people but still nobody shows interest in buying it. So at last Al, Guy's American friend who has lived two years with them when he is twelve, shows interest in buying it. Now he is a businessman and lives in San Francisco. He has interest in Grazeot as he has spent his childhood there. But Edward and his wife change their decision of selling the house. He feels,

We would rattle around in Grazeot till the end of our days, till we rattled around to death, till they carried us out feet first. Let the kids deal with the problem of what to do with a

changing world, since it was beyond us. That was what we'd had them for. (174)

It is clear that they can live with each other without their children so they do not want their children to take care of them. They are codependent and love each other but Edward once falls in love with one of the Lettice's girlfriends. It hurts his wife but that girl rejects him and they reunite. Thus Edward and his wife have good understanding between them and so neglect each other's mistakes. They enjoy their married life so they can discard their children from their life.

In the story 'End of the Line', Elaine Desmond, like the Edward's wife of the previous story, is hurt by sudden entry of Weena Dodds, a new age journalist, in her husband's life. Defoe Desmond is a nuclear scientist as well as Elaine's husband. They have two children: Peter and Daphne who hate their parents as they are going to sell their house without consulting them. Weena wants an interview with Defoe for his Red Mercury and its implications for the future of the world. She is 'touchy-feely type' as well as a homosexual girl. She is so greedy that she has no healthy relationship with her mother. Her mother has driven her 'men away' so she hates her. She does not afford to live anywhere on her salary and needs someone to take her in. So she traps anyone for it but her mother does not like it. Now Weena starts interfering between Defoe and Elaine. Defoe also gets attracted towards her and when Elaine comes to know about it she fears so much that she calls her daughter to solve this problem. Weena flatters him as he is 'a brilliant populariser even a Gaian [can] understand him', he is also 'very romantic for a scientist' and starts backbiting about Elaine in this way:

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“I was not a world-class scientist,” Defoe said. “With or without my marriage.”

“I don’t believe that,” she said. “You get a kind of aura off some people. I get it from you. Charisma.”

“In the eight weeks since the programme ended,” said Defoe, “I fear mine has somewhat faded. But it’s good of you to mention it.”

“Your wife shouldn’t have humiliated you like that,” said Weena.

“Like what?”

“Showing you up like that in front of those people,” said Weena, “about the bathroom suite. As if you didn’t know your own house. But some men just like bitches. Or else they get so they don’t notice.” (21)

Defoe loses his job as the world lost interest in the nuclear threat. So he is frustrated. Weena’s sudden appearance makes him happy and lot of problems come in Defoe and Elaine’s marital life. He is totally involved in Weena. As Weena is drifting into their life, they start quarrelling. He takes Weena’s side and starts torturing Elaine and has a suspicion that Daphne is Saunders’s and not his daughter. He suspects that Saunders is her Australian lover which she declines. As Elaine does not like Weena any longer; they quarrel,

“You want to pull me down,” said Defoe. “You think finally you’ve got me to yourself and defeated me and I can’t get away. Well, you’re wrong.”

“Defoe, I think nothing of the kind.” Elaine stood up to face him. . . . “I have waited many years for us to be together, that’s true enough. What is the matter with you?”

“You are the matter with me,” said Defoe. “You make me doubt myself. You always have. You stand there like a ghost. You drew me away from the power source of the universe: you doomed me to mediocrity. You are right, all I ever did was interview people. Oh, you have a low opinion of me!” (45-46)

Elaine admits that she has married Defoe for his money or ability to buy back her ancestral ‘Drewlove House’. For self-esteem she always takes money from his wallet, but she loves him. So she does not bear her husband’s adultery and wants Daphne help her, but everything falls apart. Now she decides to leave him.

Weena’s friend Hetty calls and tells Elaine the truth that Weena is after Defoe and she wants to drive Elaine out; ‘suck him dry, spit him out as a husk’. Weena has not got commission to write Defoe’s biography. She wants a man and a home. She has a miscarriage so the editor changes his mind. She betrays Bob also, and Hetty advises Elaine that now she should not leave her husband as she will do the same with him also. This is overheard by Defoe and he fires Weena out of house. Later on she goes to office and comes to know that she has lost her job. She comes to her apartment and finds that her mother has locked her house and has kept her suitcase out. She goes Hettie’s apartment but no one is there; then she moves to Bob’s house but Hetty is with him. Weena cannot go to the Bob’s wife, her best friend, as she is not speaking with her. At last, she reckons that everybody has driven her away. In this way, Elaine and

Defoe reunite. It is clear that because of Weena they lead unhappy life as Defoe also betrays Elaine; but at last they understand each other, and maintain their marital relationship.

In the story 'Run and Ask Daddy If He Has Any More Money', David also maintains his happy married life. David is a professor, in his early forties. He has some reddish hair and very red beard. His wife MillyFrood has a gift shop. As it is holiday and Easter is upon so he is helping his wife as there is 'nothing better to do'. They have two children: Sherry and Baf, in their teenage years. Milly is a good woman but Weldon states—

The truth was that he'd taken no real pleasure since in Milly's straight hair and earnest face. He could see Milly was good, but what a man wanted was something more than honest worth. Sometimes he felt guilty because others called his wife Frilly Mood, ironically, but then he'd tell himself she'd always been like that. Not his doing. (65)

David is a nice man, trustful and loving but she is 'really unfriendly, serious, rather expressionless' but he loves her. When David is helping her at shop then suddenly he hears 'recognised' voice which refers back to seven years. It is Bettina's voice. Though David has family, he has an extra-marital affair with Bettina. She is going to marry and wants to break-up her love relation with him because she has to think about her future. She says to David,

"You are a married man and I'm going to be married too. The ceremony is next week. I wanted to tell you earlier but didn't like to, because I didn't want to upset you. You are the only man I'll ever really love but I have to think of my

future. We have to be realistic. You could never support two homes in any comfort and I'm just not cut out for employment. I'm not that kind of person." (65)

It hurts David but it is necessary. This shows that she is keen and realistic. Later on she marries a person but he is a miser by nature. We can see that at the shop Bettina's husband flickers through the Easter Cards which is 'the cheapest things' sold in the shop. This shows he is a money saver while Bettina is interested in purchasing costly things. They have a daughter. Actually the daughter who has red coloured hair is from David's not her husband's, which shows that David betrays Milly who is loyal to him. Thus Bettina and her husband have no healthy relationship. There is also a communication gap between them. They do not directly talk with each other and so through their little girl, they communicate their message. At the shop, when Bettina wants to buy something, she tells her daughter and then the daughter to Daddy:

"Daddy" said the little piping voice: . . . "Mummy says do you have any more money?" (68)

The shop is crowded. It includes David, Milly, and lot of customers. Everything stops and silence falls upon the shop for his answer. It is honest question as well as asked publicly so Daddy answers publicly:

"Tell your mother . . . the answer is no. My money's all gone and your mother has spent it."(68)

From above dialogue, it is clear that even though they are in public; they hesitate to talk with each other which show their unhappy relationship. We can see that they are not economically sound. Weldon states that, 'If a woman has no money left, perhaps she'll turn back to love?' But Bettina is so firm that she does not want to expose her past relations with him to

Milly. She just smiles at David and Milly, and compliments them saying that “she just loves the shop” and follows her husband and daughter.

Milly, by seeing the red haired Bettina’s daughter, expresses her desire to have a ‘last chance for a baby’ and David wonders. David does not believe in marriage but he has married her:

Another baby. David had not really wanted children in the first place: he had not wanted to get married. He would tell . . . about it when he lamented the everyday ordinariness of his life. The college, the kids, the shops, the bills, and never anything happening. But a man’s seed bursts from him here and there, unwittingly, and a good man settles down to his responsibility, sometimes with a good heart, sometimes not.
(67)

This shows that David is not so happy with Milly and he just marries her not to spoil their relations. Though he is married he has an affair and has a daughter which shows that he is adulterous husband of a loyal wife. He is a professor ‘a pillar of society’ and ‘professors can’t muck about’ but it is all in past not at present. So he does not want that his present will not be spoiled by past. He keeps distance himself from them because he thinks that if Bettina recognizes him, everything will fall apart. The daughter has red hair as well as David has red hair and beard so Daddy will doubt his child’s paternity. This shows that he tries to maintain his family life. He does not want to harm his family and Bettina’s too. So when Bettina has gone from shop, he is relaxed. Bettina, also, by hiding their relation, tries to preserve their married life.

In this way David betrays his wife who is loyal to him. She is unaware of her husband's affair with Bettina, so they have happy marital relationship.

Similarly, in the story, 'In the Great War' the husband has an extra marital affair which results in a suicide of his wife as well as his girlfriend. The girlfriend also kills her daughter while committing suicide. Betrayal plays dominant role in shattering four lives in which three are dead. This story has a setting at the times of the Great War. Here Y is a woman artist and X is her husband. Ellen, X's girlfriend is a poet who is talkative and proud. Ellen boasts that 'she can take any man from any woman'. She is so wicked that she shatters X and Y's marital life. Weldon writes,

Ellen waited and worked and pounced, and stole a baby girl from Y's husband, or that was how Y saw it. Stole his sperm to bring into the world a new being, who had no business here. (70)

This shows that Ellen does it intentionally and has told Y that X loves her and she is pregnant by him. X loves both and unable to judge his real partner. As X also admits that he loves Ellen, Y cannot bear her husband's infidelity. Though X is married, he has an extra marital affair. When Ellen is going to have a baby, it hurts Y so she commits suicide. X betrays her but does not blame himself and just feels sorry for it. Weldon states that 'In the Great War, men simply didn't (71).' He is cold and blames Ellen and her child for it. This shows that he declines his responsibility and is indifferent husband and lover:

Y reached out from the grave and stabbed Ellen in the back and dragged her down, and X made no attempt to stop Y, or

save Ellen, which he could have, well enough, by smiling, for giving, sopping up the harm Y did by her own dreadful act of self-destruction. He was the hook; he could have let Ellen off it. But no. (71)

X is so cold that because of him, Y as well as Ellen commit suicide. Before suicide Ellen kills her daughter, Orchis by an overdose of pills. Now there is a lot of gossiping whether it is their death or murder. Why does Ellen do it? It's because of the problem of Orchis's survival which makes a mother to kill her own child as 'the child who's left must live out the life sentence imposed by the mother' and on the other hand, there are 'few children truly survive the suicide of mothers'. In this way X's infidelity results the death of Y who is loyal to him and Ellen also commits suicide by killing her six year old daughter.

Like Ellen, Milena who is a girlfriend of the narrator in the story 'Wasted Lives' also commits suicide. This story revolves around a narrator whose name is not mentioned, works for a U.S. Film Company from their London office. His wife Joanna does not live with him. He is 'so conditioned and has old, pre-feminist ways of thinking' so she as a 'civilized woman' is unable to live with him. She does not need him and has left him. He says,

I am generally accepted as a pleasant and kindly enough person. My family loves me, even my wife Joanna, though she and I live apart and no longer sexually connected. She doesn't have to love me. (90)

But he loves her. They have children. Though he lives apart, he wants to maintain his family ties. He is emotionally attached with Milena, an archivist at the City Film Institute and a divorcee. Both Milena and the

narrator have frustrated married lives so they come together. The narrator is fond of her but does not love her. He hates her teeth so he wants that she should not smile. Her English is weak, particularly; her speech is difficult to understand. One day he meets her after three months at the famous processional Bridge because she is going to make a decision about her future. When they meet, he finds her changed as the city is changed within three months and so she does. She talks about her previous life, her son and divorce. Now she is pregnant and wants to marry him. She wants him to get divorce from his wife as she does not need him and his children are grown up. But he says 'I have no way of knowing this baby is mine, if baby is there be'. She does not bear it and jumps into the river, and commits suicide. She realizes that he has a doubt about the child's parenthood and so refuses to accept the child. According to him,

Sex seemed the natural expression of such emotions, such events. And perhaps that was why I never quite trusted her, never quiet loved her, found it so easy to forget her when she wasn't under my nose- I despised her because it was she who approached me, not I her. (96)

This shows that he is hypocritical and betrays his wife as well as his girlfriend. When Milena commits suicide, he is just amazed and does not wait to see her and goes to the airport because he wants to maintain his family life. Thus he is wicked. He says,

My children would not accept a new family: Joanna would have been made thoroughly miserable. To do good to one is to do bad to another. But you don't need to hear my excuses. They are the same that everyone makes to themselves when

faced with the misery of others, and though they would like to do the right thing, simply fail to do so, but look after themselves instead. (101)

It is clear that he maintains his relation with Milena just for his need and when he finds it problematic, he leaves her and gives up his responsibility. This shows he is an unfaithful husband as well as a lover.

Like the narrator, Basil is also patriarchal and domineering husband. Basil, from the story 'Through a Dustbin, Darkly', is a reputed painter. Serena is Basil's first wife who is more talented painter than Basil. Serena is a good loyal wife on the other hand he is a liar. He is domineering and patriarchal by nature. He likes a woman to be a woman: simple and sweet and fertile; up to her elbows in soap suds (185). He has an extra marital affair with Ruthy Franklin. When Serena has found him upstairs in the studio on the brass bed with Ruthy, she becomes crazy. She does not bear his betrayal. Basil has changed his house's locks and she lives in the alley at the back of the house for a week. She shouts and screams and sells herself to a passer-by. She takes overdose of heroin and commits suicide. This shows that Basil's betrayal causes her death. He is domineering so he plays tricks. His friends also take Basil's side because they get what they want so they flatter him by calling him 'Poor Basil'. Ruthy is so attached to him that when Serena sees both of them in the studio and becomes crazy, he wants to get rid of Serena so he throws her out and changes locks. When she bangs the door in the rain, he does not respond. Later on she commits suicide. So in this way Basil and Serena have unfruitful married life.

After Serena's death he involves in Philly. They live together from September, when she is pregnant. That time she gets some information

about Serena from Basil's friends but Basil purposefully interrupts that conversation and hides it from Philly. As for Basil, Philly is 'just another item of changing human scenery' and so he keeps her 'in the dark'. He marries Philly because Philly's mother has left her eleven thousand pounds. He marries her on Twelfth Night when she is eight months pregnant. According to Basil, Twelfth Night would be the right kind of day: a special day which she wouldn't forget when it comes to anniversaries. He deliberately does it because it is Serena's birthday. For Basil, 'Philly [is] the new blank canvas on which Basil [can] imprint his taste, his knowledge, his guidance (180).'

Philly is caring wife and Basil is careless as he never cares about home which has left by his grandmother. As Philly is pregnant, she cares a lot about her baby. Their house is dark and damp; there is no electricity as well as gas because of unpaid bills. It shows that Basil is economically bankrupt. 'Basil [does not] like spending money on the house. She [uses] her own money and was happy too. He [is] pleased with what she [does].' He encourages her by flattering her that it is your home and have it the way you want it. Philly wants to make the house look better and for this she spends her own money and later on only four thousand pounds is left with her. Basil ignores his duties and she does not like to argue with him because 'she gets upset and never wins'. According to his friends, if somebody does anything which Basil dislikes, he can be ruthless. It shows that he is whimsical and domineering. Their house is dark and damp and it is because of trees, so Philly's father wants to cut it for proper light and cheerful atmosphere. He likes trees so he forbids and discourages her father from visiting thereafter on the grounds that he makes Philly gloomy. He does it purposefully. He does not like her relation with her father because he wants her money and her father

always thinks of her welfare. Her father has not invited to the wedding. He asks her whether she will hand back the eleven thousand pounds from her mother for his safe-keeping. He wants to invest it for her advantage. So Basil has understandably taken offence and Philly feels her loyalties for her husband and not for her father.

Thus he wants to grab her money. But Philly, likes a traditional wife, gets flattered by Basil's appreciation. He tells her that she has a proper domestic ambition and she is the right wife for him. Philly spends her money on 'organising, fixing, changing, cheering' the house because she wants 'home' and as there is no one seems to mind it so she has to attend to such matters.

Once, Ruthy Franklyn, an old friend of Basil, comes herself in for tea. She comes to collect an early painting of Basil for a show as she owns a small gallery. While she is talking with Philly, she mentions Serena and purposefully informs Philly about Serena. While talking with Philly, she laughs in such a way that it shows she has planned to make Philly feel 'bulky, stupid, and slow'. Philly is unknown about Serena and Basil's first marriage. She is shocked by Ruthy's behaviour. From her, Philly comes to know that Ruthy meets Basil from time to time but Ruthy never forgets to tell Philly that he wants Philly and her baby. She laughs again and again which hurts Philly. She picks 'nude' paintings, an early work of Basil, which is kept facing to the wall for years. Ruthy says that because of Serena's curse, his paintings are not sold. Ruthy is jealous because Philly is pregnant. When Ruthy goes away, Philly calls him as he has said in Edinburgh to paint a mural on a town hall wall but she comes to know that there is no guest checked in under that name. Here Philly realizes that he has deceived her. Now she also realizes the truth which is 'as for the first wife, so for her successors'. In anger, she sets fire to his

studio particularly 'the brass bed' because she wants there should not be any successors to the bed. Weldon remarks,

'... generations' worth, as women after woman had tried to erase the gritty, salty patches of grief and anger that past and future met to create. (187)

In this way, Basil is hypocritical husband who marries Serena and Philly and betrays them by having an affair with Ruthy and purposefully leaves them when his needs are over. So he is wicked, possessive and unfaithful husband though his wives are loyal to him.

Like Basil, Edwin from the story 'Love Amongst the Artists' is a domineering husband. Edwin is a novelist as well as a career oriented person who is always busy in his work. He has married Lucy fourteen years ago and has two children: Bessie and Bertie. Lucy is an artist. Lucy states that Edwin is 'poor stuffy and has no ear to understand other things of life'.

Pierre is a music composer. When his concert fails, he becomes penniless, and Edwin, as an act of kindness, offers him a work to teach a piano for his children. Edwin is so domineering that when he is writing the last chapter of his novel he orders that the piano must be played only between two and four o'clock in the afternoon. Bessie cannot play the piano so it hurts other members of family too. He is engaged in his work so much that he never understands his wife's feelings. Even he cannot notice his wife's love affair with Pierre, which creates a great change in her behaviour. Edwin treats his wife as a child and does not allow her to live her life as per her choice. Due to restrictions on playing the piano, now Lucy and Pierre get a lot of time to talk with each other and, in

effect, she becomes a victim of Pierre's tricks and falls in love with him. Weldon narrates,

In the morning, thus freed from practice, Lucy and Pierre had walked in the woods, and talked about music, and presently love, and then more than talked, and Pierre had explained to Lucy how unhappy she was, and how her way of life stifled her, and how he could not be a great artist without her. (110)

Pierre takes an advantage of this situation and he flatters her. Now, they are emotionally attached. He makes her realize that she is Edwin's 'an unpaid whore' and Edwin keeps her in 'a man's prison for a woman'. Edwin loves Lucy particularly for her folly. She is his not only 'child bride' but also 'pretty wife'. He is short tempered so he has scolded her, chided her, and makes her foolish from the day he has met her and never ever joked about anything. Pierre is a hypocrite and wants to grab her wealth so he satisfies Lucy's hunger of love which Edwin fails to. She gives importance to love rather than her present life. Weldon remarks,

She did not understand money: it seemed necessary for all kinds of things she had thought just happened—such as being warm, or welcomed, or treated with politeness by porters, and gendarmes, shopkeepers and landladies. But money did not buy love, or freedom, or truth, or hope, or any of the important things in life. (107)

Now love is more important than cozy life, so Lucy elopes with Pierre. He takes her at a place which is unknown to her. He is greedy and wants all things which she brings with her such as, the sapphire, the rubies and the gold. Lucy does not know his plan and so she is totally

unknown about the danger which she is going to face later. Though she has left her home, she misses her family as well as the Christmas celebrations. On that day she misses all the things like her brother, who spends Christmas with them. She wonders what is going on now at her home. She feels awkward that her children wake on this Christmas morning to a house which lacks mother. She feels sorry but Pierre encourages her to forget that. He has already flattered her and she does not understand that Pierre is plotting something. He assures her that they are going to France. But suddenly he hits her in her head and when she comes to senses, she finds that she is at an inn somewhere in the South of France. She feels as if she has lost her memory.

In this way Edwin is a domineering husband, who is unable to handle his responsibility, and is always busy in his work. It results in Lucy's elopement with Pierre as well as her betrayal towards her family but, in the end, she also gets betrayed by Pierre whom she relies on.

The same situation is created in 'Baked Alaska'. Here a protagonist tells Miss. Jacob, her therapist, about her personal life and from their discussion we come to know about her life story. Protagonist is a celebrity. She has won the Secretary of the Year Award and becomes Miss PA of the year. She talks about her married life, her affair and so on. She has married Roland who is politically serious. He is involved in the peace movement and is so busy loving peace that he has no time to love her. She thinks that he has married her to despise her frivolity and wants divorce. She runs around with other men as she is now an addict to extra-marital love. She wants to be attractive so she uses a lot of cosmetics and visits parlour regularly. She feels that 'beauty supports to get one woman to meet her lover'.

The narrator has been putting off calling ex-home all days and has an affair with Anton, a Director of Oil Company. He is the kind of man who must woo and never wins. She doubts that he attaches her because he wants a space in his head to make a wounded part good and chilliness warm. He likes her, particularly to listen to the small words that indicate love, concern, possession and permanence. She has an illegal relationship with him. Though he is married, she accepts him because she says 'all proper men are married, all proper women too'.

Now the narrator is parted from Anton seven days ago. She describes her affair as 'terrible, painful affair, the little short lived memory hap-hazard affair'. For Anton, she is optional, but she takes it seriously because it [is] her escape route from death. She considers her affair as her mistake. She states that her affair is like a penetrative fear. She is the victim who invites attack. It is her doing. She adds,

I have lied and cheated and lost over a trivial affair of the heart—because my heart was involved and Anton's was not, and that is the nub of the humiliation I now feel—and what can any of this matter? "I cannot feel." Anton said to me, "about you the way you clearly feel about me. I'm sorry but there it is. I did not mean to hurt you."(279)

She feels herself as a monkey whose living brain is supped off by Anton. When he finds it is 'really not good' for his fancy, he dislikes her.

In this way she tells her story to Miss. Jacobs and she has confidence that still Roland waits for her and she will go home to calm him down. It is clear that because of Roland's involvement in peace movement she is involved in extra-marital affairs, and to satisfy her hunger of love she becomes victim of Anton's false love. Thus Roland is

indifferent husband and so she betrays him as well as gets betrayed by Anton.

Bernard from the story 'Red on Black' is a journalist and columnist who is clever, moody, and talented. He has statistics of society at his fingertips. His wife Maria is silent as well as kind and very understanding and forgiving. Maurice is a son of Maria and Bernard. He is a mature child. Bernard's father has died and Maria wants to attend the funeral. She states that it is her last respect to Bernard's father. She comes to her mother as her own car is damaged. But her mother is busy in playing cards and not interested in what has happened with Maria.

Bernard has divorced Maria and still he lives in the half part of the same house. They live there because both of them cannot afford separate houses and they have to look after Maurice also. Bernard always blames Maria for the way she brings Maurice up. He always finds faults with her and on the other hand praises himself on his forbearance and self-control. He feels that his wife is so aggravated him that she looks with him, frigid, and neurotic. He is obliged to have a girlfriend after a girlfriend just to stay sane. According to Bernard, Maria is a hopeless mother and an absent minded and over emotional person so he cannot leave Maria unprotected in the world because of the damage she may do to Maurice. Both of them love Maurice. At the funeral when Maurice smokes a cigarette, she wants that Bernard should not come and catch Maurice. So they live in such a home in which Maurice can go upstairs to see his father whenever he wants. She has no proper possession of her son so she suffers from it, and lives beneath Bernard's house.

Bernard does not understand why she has taken a divorce from him. Instead she should have adjusted herself to her husband's needs for

sexual variety. He even wonders why she has no lovers herself to ease the emotional burden from his shoulders. He complains that she is possessive and hopelessly jealous. She is rigid in her outlook so he thinks that she needs therapy rather than divorce. Though they are divorced, she is emotionally attached to him. She takes his mails, looks after his cat and when his girlfriends have lost their keys of his house then Maria gives them the keys. Now Maria wants to attend funeral of Bernard's father but thinks that she is not entitled to the official mourning because of the divorce. She has disinherited from grief. He refuses to give her a lift to attend the funeral and instead takes Maurice and Angela, his girlfriend who is pregnant. He is going to marry her but Maria does not like him to remarry. At last he decides to live with Angela and not with Maria and Maurice. This shows Maria is a compromising wife and does not want to become an obstacle in Bernard's life. She also thinks that Maurice should also accept Angela.

Maria never hates Bernard as she has known him since their college days. Her mother has never liked Bernard as well as her decision to marry him. Her mother has no good relations with Bernard so she always taunts Maria. She suffers a lot because Bernard hates Maria. He is so whimsical type of husband that once he grabs her on stairs and kisses her and tells her to come up after Maurice goes to sleep. He also tells her that he is free on Saturday and advices her not to make it habit. He finds a problem in her and once says that divorced women over forty rarely re-marry. If she says that she does not want to re-marry nor has interest in men then he raises his eyebrows. He behaves with her rudely. He tells his girlfriends about Maria such things because of which they look at her curiously. When she gives parties to her friends, he comes and hogs conversation as well as laughs at her cooking.

It is clear that he is a very wicked as well as crooked minded and domineering husband who betrays Maria who is loyal to him.

When Maria is fifteen, Maria's mother has eloped with Victor, a rich man, and left Maria with her father. She is fond of money and because of financial problem she elopes with Victor. She spends money carefully and her former husband 'spends everything there to be spend, as soon as possible, and always absently, and [seems] surprised when he [has] done it (235)'. She wants to become a mercenary after Victor's money. So Maria and her father hate her. When Maria's mother comes to attend Maria's marriage, Maria throws her out because she thinks her mother should not spoil her marriage. When she goes, Maria's father becomes happy. As she has done dreadful thing with her father, he takes consolation of Eleanor, whom he marries later. Maria's mother is hurt by the incident happened at Maria's marriage so she is angry with Maria. Maria's mother accuses Maria saying that she has left her husband because of Eleanor. Maria's mother does not help in Maria's marriage as she has nothing to do with it. Maria never forgives her mother for abandoning her as well as her mother never forgives her because Maria insults her on the wedding, and for this reason her mother never speaks with her. Maria has to go to her mother but her mother never comes to her. Maria's mother dislikes Bernard because he is poor so she is against the marriage. Maria is very attached with Eleanor so Maria's mother hates her.

Maria works full-time and Eleanor helps her a lot. She also helps Maria in her marriage. Maria has never asked her father for money as it is her habit to ask Eleanor. Eleanor is a graphic designer who works freelance. She works long hours, perforce because Maria's father has given up his job and they are dependent on her earning. She is a

superwoman. She provides money to Maria, Maurice and Bernard as he is getting a Ph. D. This shows Eleanor's kind heartedness. She is sacrificial as well as a super wife. Unfortunately she develops breast cancer and dies. Maria's father lives on the money which he gets from her life insurance. When Maria asks her father, at the time of her divorce, for the loan of money to buy a house, he says that he does not want to interfere between husband and wife. He also thinks that lending money to Maria is not a good idea. As she has never asked him money before, now he refuses her to lend money.

Now Maria wants to attend the funeral of Bernard's father. Bernard brings Angela with him which hurts Maria so there is a quarrel between Bernard, Maria and Angela. He tells Angela to leave the place. Maria is still childish so her mother comes there because she wants to support Maria. Maurice also takes his mother's side, but Bernard decides to live with Angela and finally leaves Maria's house.

Thus, this story has three couples: Maria's father and mother, Bernard and Maria, and Eleanor and Maria's father. Maria's father and mother, Bernard and Maria have unhappy relations because of their partner's adulterous relations. Maria and Bernard have shattered lives because of lack of understanding between them. Eleanor and Maria's father enjoy a happy married life but Eleanor dies early. Maria lets her husband to live with Angela and her baby. This shows Maria is a sacrificial wife while Bernard is an unfaithful husband. Eleanor is also a devoted wife while Maria's mother is greedy and faithless but Maria's father is a pacifist.

'Pains' is a story of the most contemporary women of 1972. Paula and Deakey have married seven years ago. They are living in an odd part

of London. She is eight and half months pregnant. On that day there is a meeting of the local Women's Liberation Group at their house. This meeting is regarded as 'domestic treachery', in which 'female complaints are made public'. Now, she has upsetting days so she rests in her bedroom. As it is a full moon, 'the moon rises' and all the members come in their house. She is not feeling well so Deakey attends that meeting. As the central heating is repaired and the service engineer has carelessly removed a pipe so there is a hole in the floor so Paula can hear what is going on in the room below. She has not sealed that hole in the bedroom floor because she suspects that Deakey and Audrey, her neighbour, have sexual relationship and she wants an evidence of it. Audrey is an adulterous, hypocritical woman who has married to an adulterous husband who is now away on business with his PA.

Deakey and Paula is a happy couple and they have common qualities as Weldon remarks,

Paula and Deakey like everything together, think everything together, change their views together, spray pests together, feel together, are together. We believe this, they say: we do that, we have found out the other. In and out of each other's apron pockets for a full seven years. (210)

Deakey cares her, helps her. They are so pleasant couple that anyone likes them. He helps Paula in a household work, likes to make coffee, and warms up extra special dinners in the oven so others think how it is nice to have a husband like Deakey.

As usual, all members come. Audrey does not belong to the group but she comes there and everyone is shocked. As Audrey does not belong to the group and still attends the meeting so Paula's doubt grows and she

thinks that something has been plotted. It is because when Paula comes hurriedly early from the clinic, she has seen Audrey smiling at her from the window and Deakey is smoking last year's Christmas present, a herbal cigarette, and she thinks this fog is just to remove the scent of betrayal. She quarrels with him as he has love relationships with Audrey but he declines them.

Paula is not feeling well because of pregnancy and Audrey's presence hurts her a lot so she sits down, falls off the bed and lies where she falls. Her delivery pains grow. All members talk about labour pains and their experience, and Audrey also take part in their discussion. When the meeting ends, all members go but Deakey stops Audrey. Paula overhears that Deakey and Audrey are discussing something. Audrey is afraid as Paula is upstairs but Deakey says that Paula is not in a position to say anything and she sleeps upstairs. Paula worries about what is going on the downstairs:

Do they kiss, do they copulate? Does Deakey tie Audrey's centre even tighter to her cosy fate, wrapping his 200 proglottides around her? Paula scarcely cares. (220)

Meanwhile Paula is so busy in listening to their discussion that she is unaware of her pains and, meanwhile, delivers a boy.

It is clear that Deakey is hypocritical. He keeps Paula in dark and has a secret love affair with his neighbour, Audrey. He flirts with her and, at last, Paula comes to know about it. Thus, Deakey is a faithless husband and Paula is a sacrificial wife. He betrays her though she is loyal to him, and leaves her in pains.

Like Deakey, Aaron also betrays his wife Joanna, in the story 'Knock-Knock'. Aaron is an ambitious young big-shot Hollywood

producer. Aaron and Jessica have a eight years old son, Harry. Aaron has a secret love affair with Maggie Ives, a rising star. The story of the scandal in such that Aaron goes for holiday with Jessica and Harry to spend the summer. At the airport he gets a phone call that his film is brought forward as its budget gets tripled. So he stays there and Jessica and Harry go. After two weeks, in an international show-biz magazine Aaron and Maggie's story is published with pictures. 'Aaron Scheffer intimately [entwined] behind a palm tree on a restaurant balcony' with Maggie so Jessica comes with Harry at Cotswolds, her parent's house. Now there is a discussion about whether Jessica should go home to her faithless husband in Hollywood or stay with her loving parents in the Cotswolds: 'The Question of to forgive or not forgive'. Jessica's neighbour and best friend Kate also calls her and informs that Maggie and Aaron are seen from months together and that's why Maggie gets a role in his film so Jessica hurts a lot.

Aaron is also distressed because there is a lot of gossiping on spouse infidelity. As a newspaper publishes it, some reporters also trouble them. Aaron, to keep the studio quiet, wants Jessica return soon. He calls her and makes her believe that it is a plot as he has enemies and convinces her to come back. Later on Aaron confesses,

Maggie and I lunched. We drank. We shouldn't have. She asked me back to her place. I went. I shouldn't have. We succumbed. We shouldn't have. We were both upset. I was missing you. I felt you'd put your parents before me. Afterwards we both regretted it. I took her to a restaurant so there'd be no embarrassment, so we could get back to being friends, colleagues, nothing more than that." (251)

Aaron wants to prove that he is honest with her and it happens because Maggie's boyfriend spies on her. He convinces Jessica to come home but she refuses as she is mean and angry. She wants to punish him as he has lied her. He says that he is coming to meet her at Heathrow. Now, Jessica has to decide whether to return or not.

Reporters are crowded there so her family waits night to fall, and then they slip away to the hotel. Aaron also goes to England because he wants to get rid of reporters. Jessica and Harry are not feeling well at Cotswolds as there is no air-conditioner. At Cotswolds there is a lot of discussion. Bill thinks it is gentle climate for Harry so Jessica gets a cottage in the village and Aaron will look after her financing. Harry suffers a lot because of this incident. Everyone thinks that he is too small to bear it, but he is so over mature for his age that he plays important part to reunite his parents. He knows the whole thing in which 'father, lying but loving vs. doting grandparents? Broken home vs. green fields and no air-conditioning?' (253).

Harry talks with such emotions that everyone is worried. He thinks if he dies, they will immediately forget him as he is not important to them. He bows his head beneath the shower of protest and goes back into the garden. His grandparents as well as Jessica get shocked by his words so Jessica decides not to leave as well as divorce Aaron. She does it for the sake of Harry so her parents also agree with it. When she leaves them and goes to meet Aaron, Harry laughs a lot. He has done it because the waiter tells him to do so.

In this way Aaron purposefully sends his son and wife out of station. He betrays her though she is a loving wife. Later on she comes to know about all things and, in the end, Harry plays a dominant role in

reuniting them. So Aaron is shown as a hypocritical husband as well as a faithless husband.

Like Aaron, Clive also betrays Carrie in the story 'A Good Sound Marriage'. Clive is forty years old and alcoholic. His first wife, Audrey, has died and has two children: Chrissie and Harry. Later on Clive marries Carrie who is twenty-six years old. She works in BBC'S Costume Design Department. She is pregnant. They are living in the old house which is thirty miles from London with Audrey's children. The children hate her as well as trouble her. Carrie is not feeling well and these two 'monsters' make her play monopoly and fetch the cokes because she is nearest the kitchen. Carrie and Clive want to sell their house to raise money and shift to another place but nobody buys it so Chrissie and Harry rejoice because it is their mother's house, not Carrie's. Carrie thinks about her childcare because baby-sitters turn out to be murderers and Clive says that his children will do the baby sitting but it seems a joke as she knows that these kids really hate her.

One day Carrie is not feeling well. Clive tells her that he is going to a party. She has nothing to wear because her waist is gone but he has to go because he has some work, not pleasure. He has told her that he will come before midnight but now it is two o'clock. Actually he is a liar and deceives her and goes to a party. He is with his best friend, Andrea. As Andrea calls Carrie and tells her that Clive is asked her to tell Carrie that he is on his way home. He drinks a lot and Andrea does not want him to drive and takes a taxi. Carrie is unknown to Andrea so she introduces herself and tells that she is Clive's best friend and now a divorcee. This shows how he betrays Carrie, a faithful wife.

Carrie's mother, Kate has divorced and remarried so she is dead to Carrie. They scarcely talk. Carrie cries a lot because her mother throws up her hands in horror and just leaves her alone to get on with her husband and her pregnancy. She is five months pregnant. She is the first of her friends to have a baby so nobody is there to talk about pregnancy. She weeps and sleeps. She sees an apparition of her grandmother, Christabel, whom she loves most. Christabel convinces her to stop crying and try to carry her upsetting married life. It is bad for the baby and it is pointless as there is no grown up around to hear her and make things better. She tries to make it 'a good sound marriage'. She wants Carrie to keep something private because 'to share grief is to double grief, not halve it'. She rises from grave because Carrie's weeping forces her to do so and she is still kinder and more responsible than Kate who is alive. First Carrie has a doubt about her but later recognizes that she is really her grandmother.

Carrie explains her condition as well as her unhappy married life as her husband Clive, who is fourteen years elder to her, is a drunkard and widower and his children who hate her. Christabel tries to convince her that every marriage is same so it is our duty to adjust with it as she, herself, has adjusted:

"Look at it like this," said the phantom, "nothing is ever perfect. The dangerous thing for a woman is to wait too long, so she ends with nothing. Time flows the wrong way, starts as a slow and mighty river, then it begins to race along, over shallows, narrower, faster; suddenly it disappears, dives underground and it's gone and if you don't look out you're alone. No baby is ever perfectly timed, no man exactly right. If man and baby offer themselves, do, but what you don't do.

So you held your nose and jumped, Carrie, and good for you.
You'll learn to swim. (193)

Christabel adds that in a good strong marriage there will never be peace but much gratification. She forces Carrie to be firm in her second marriage and make it strong so others will accept her.

In between Andrea calls Carrie and tells her that Clive is with her. Carrie gets shocked and thinks about what he is doing there at Andrea's house. She feels the baby weight her down and she gets pain. She thinks that she will divorce him and leave him before he gets home as he does not love her and her step children also hate her. She regrets her decision of marrying Clive. Her grandmother's apparition also disappears because Christabel wastes her time as Carrie is still not ready to adjust with things as they are. This shows that Carrie has unhappy married life. Her husband is liar as well as faithless to Carrie, who is truthful and loyal to him. So at last Carrie decides to divorce him because of his adultery.

Similarly Gosling from the story 'Leda and Swan' is also a faithless husband. He is an engineer. He has upsetting relations with his first wife as she misbehaves with him. As Weldon states that Gosling [is] a Sunday father; he [takes] his little daughter Nadine swimming while, he [complains], his ex-wife [entertains] her lover (113). Eileen is a swimmer and Gosling meets her in a London park at the edge of a swimming pool. Once they collide underwater and from then they get attached. She is attracted towards him and feels herself awkward and unattractive. She is worried about her epileptic brother whose existence spoils everything and she feels that because of her brother no one will accept her. Eileen and Gosling love swimming. Eileen flatters him that if he tries, he will be a champion. She does it to win him because her mother has once told her

that anyone can win a man by flattering him. Eileen does not tell Gosling the thing that swimming meant to her a lot. She does not want to love what he only likes. Later on they marry and she stays at home. Her name is Eileen but he calls her Leda. She looks after her stepdaughter, Nadine and then her own daughter Europa. Later on she joins a swimming club and wins races.

Gosling is egoistic and domineering type of husband. He gets jealous of Leda's career as a swimmer. He is fond of finding faults in her. He does not like her curiousness so she does whatever he likes. She has an intense relationship with water and he just swims. Once they swim for jokey race and he wins but she has not tried to win instead she wants to win his favours. He always admires himself and ignores her achievements. Weldon narrates this situation,

Leda told Gosling about her victories when he returned from abroad and he raised an eyebrow. "Swimming is something to enjoy," he said, "it shouldn't be something competitive," and she was obliged to agree. He told her about the ocean rollers of Florida and the surfing there, so they thought about these natural wonders instead of victories at the local swimming club. (115)

Leda starts training in earnest and her time startles the trainer at the local swimming club. She talks with him, so when he returns from New Zealand, he taunts her on her crawl-stroke so she swims breast-stroke and soon excels in it. Then he admires his back-stroke which is Leda's weakest. He is egoistic and just wants to suppress her. Later on, she swims for the country team and wins more cups which begin to line the wall. He refers them as 'Leda's ego-trip' which embarrasses her so she

puts the cups into the spare room cupboard. He loves to surf and the thrashing water which she hates. She wants to conquer the water, cleave it and she does not like to wait for waves or the messy rough and tumble of water in their wake. So he taunts her that she has to abandon herself to the sea and she is wasting her time in swimming pools. In this way he is always jealous of her success.

Gosling betrays Leda. When he goes on foreign trips, he is unfaithful to her. He stays in hotels with swimming pools and lot of girls who does not swim but splashes water and admires him. He admits it to Leda that he does not love them just like them and also clears that they must be honest with each other. He gets jealous of her races, so when she practices for English Olympic team, she hides it from him. She makes her usual excuses and goes for practice. On the evening of the final Olympic selection, a young woman comes at her home when she is about to go out. That woman comes for him and enquires about him, which hurts Leda. Though she is selected in the England team, she is unhappy. Weldon narrates this incident,

Pains in the muscle alleviated pain in the heart: concentration on the matter in hand lessened the bite of jealousy. There was no pleasure in the victory, the record, the selection, the smiles of those who'd trained her, believed in her, and now saw their faith justified. All Leda felt after the race, as she smiled and chatted, and accepted adulation modestly and graciously, was the return of pain. (119)

When she returns, she smells of someone's scent in the bedroom. She knows he loves her 'in spite of everything; in spite of her annoying habit of winning, coming first, competing'. When she asks him about it, he

answers that, 'She [is] only here, because you [aren't]. You [are] swimming (119). This shows that he betrays his wife who is loyal to him and confesses it. It hurts Leda a lot as he is doing it crookedly.

Now Gosling hardly swims. Weldon remarks that as 'if Leda [has] stolen his birthright. He, who [shall] have been a water baby, [shall] have gamboled for ever on the water's edge, [is] now forced by Leda onto dry, arid land (119)'. She becomes very popular as she is a nation's hope so photographers take her pictures. Gosling orders that she can allow them to photograph but 'clothed' as she hardly has the figure for it.

Gosling tries to dominate her and wants to control her. On the night of the European Championships her mother calls Leda as Leda's brother is dying but she participates in the competition, comes first and then goes but when she reaches there, he has already died. When she weeps, her husband calls her hypocritical. Leda loves her brother as she loves Gosling but she frightens by his epileptic fits. Gosling blames her for giving importance to a race rather than seeing her brother alive for the last time. She replies that she does not want to win but he makes her win. Weldon remarks that Gosling does not understand her and so (the) more she cries at night the faster she swims at day 'eyes tightly closed against water out, or water in (121)'.

Leda becomes famous but he gets jealous of her fame. Leda is now going to participate in Olympics and he begins to distress her by calling her 'Olympic swimmer' and tries to give importance to his daughter's development and emotionally blackmails her. Once he criticizes her saying, 'You never have had a child (122).' She cries a lot. He tortures her by saying that Naiad will cry and her tears will fill the pool which is enough to swim her. He also compels Europa, their daughter to go to a

boarding school as he wants that Europa will be 'out of the glare of publicity'. He has a doubt about children's development. He feels that she is suffering from an epileptic and swims fast because of fits. He has fear that Europa will suffer from epileptic as Europa has high temperature and the doctor suggests to sponge her down not wrap her. Though the doctor declines, he insists that Europa is suffering from epilepsy. Europa's fever rises at one hundred and six degrees. Leda takes her to hospital and Europa feels well. Now Leda does not return to Gosling but goes to Moscow with her mother and Europa to show how she wins a gold medal. Gosling calls her and tells her lie that he has taken an overdose of sleeping pills. But she replies, "Die then." He does not want her to participate in Olympics. He wants to stop her from Olympics as he has been doing it since some days:

"This is unendurable," he said, and slept on his side of the bed, not touching. When she put down an ashtray or a vase of flowers he would move it at once to a different place, as if to signify she did not exist. He would sprinkle condiments lavishly upon the food she cooked, as if to change its nature; or would push away the plate entirely, and say he was not hungry, and go out and come back with fish and chips, and eat them silently. Gosling was increasingly silent. When she went out training, he did not raise his head: nor did he when she returned. (123)

In this way he does everything just to stop her from participating in Olympics. He does not want her to participate and win. It is because he does not ready to admit Leda is superior to him and so he behaves like that. He leaves swimming as he knows that he cannot overtake her talent.

Gosling is domineering husband who gets jealous of his wife's career. Though she is a devoted wife, he is adulterous and betrays her. He wants to stop her development as well as career. So he is wicked husband and always creates obstacles in her career.

In the story 'Tale of Timothy Bagshott', Jim Bagshott is a 'property developer, swindler, charmer'. His wife Audrey betrays him as she has run off with the chauffeur. Jim is a rich man who is a millionaire but now he has been imprisoned for fraud. Timothy is a son of Jim and Audrey who now lives with his aunt Annie, Jim's sister. They are living in a council flat on the twenty first floor of his father's crappy flat. Audrey works as a barmaid at the local pub, the Bagshott Arms. When she reads the news of Jim Bagshott's disgrace, arrest and imprisonment, she comes to see him at the prison. She sits opposite to Jim, but he is not pleased to see her. She asks about it to Jim but he answers that she has come there for money. But she denies it so he quarrels with her because she abandons Timothy. She appreciates that a man in prison can still get his hands on money. Audrey has betrayed him as well as left Jim and Timothy. Thus, they have upsetting relations.

In the story 'Santa Clause's New Clothes', Philip Andrew is an engineer, 'nuts and bolts man'. His wife Audrey is a traditional wife. They have four children: Henry, Petula, Penny and Martin. Angie is Henry's wife, and Sal and Sue are their children. Chris, a boyfriend of Petula, is an artist. Audrey and Philip have unhappy relations. Weldon writes about them—

Audrey had always stayed home; she was a traditional wife. Her very existence could only be parasitical not just on her husband's maleness and income but on his mind. Audrey

had docked her husband's spirituality as she tried to dock his sexuality, by owning it, withholding it, confining it. Not her fault, probably, but there it was. No wonder poor Philip had heart pains. (265)

Philip has suffered from enigmatic heart pains and gets treatment from Dr. Hetty. Then he realizes that he has to think about himself. While treating himself he falls in love with Dr. Hetty. They get emotionally attached with each other. Weldon narrates, 'The initial touch, her fingers stroking his cheek, [has] merely, confirmed a love, a connection, already in existence (264).

Dr. Hetty has married Mr. Geainger for her parent's sake which upsets their life. They are troubled as well as stressed so they desire for the 'tranquility of continuity'. She is an orthodox doctor. Once, a patient is died due to her and she realizes that medical practices are dangerous. Later on she meets Swami Avakandra and does a six months residential course, Avakandrist and meets Philip. Later they get married.

Audrey gets shocked by Philip's affairs at the age of fifty seven. He totally falls in love with her and Audrey becomes 'insanely negative, so angry, so bitter, so antagonistic to the point of insanity (264)'. She lives with Philip about twenty six years. She does not bear it and goes to her parents in Edinburgh. Philip is fond of Audrey and loves his children so he does not want to hurt them. So he can only hope, in the end his wife and family will understand him. They quarrel—

"But this marriage has been dead for years," said Philip to Audrey. "Why are you being like this? What are you objecting to? Surely it's better to be open about these things?"

“I didn’t think it was dead,” said Audrey, “and neither did you until you started going to see that bitch. How much does she charge you for the privilege of breaking up your marriage, your family, your life?”

“She’s trying to save my life,” said Philip. “You wouldn’t understand. She believes in me, she listens to what I’m saying. She’s patient, she’s kind, sweet, gentle, never in a hurry.”

“You pay her to be those things,” wept Audrey. “I’m just your wife. What chance do I have?” (264)

As Audrey loves Philip most so she does not see that her husband is engaged with other woman. She quarrels for her married life, her family. She wants to assert her identity in her family.

Philip loves the way Dr. Hetty explains and defines not only the world but also Philip to himself. She is open to fresh ideas. She does anything which he wants. She makes him happy so all opposition to her falls away. He becomes very happy as Weldon puts,

His chin had doubled compliantly and happily since Hetty had replaced Audrey. Now his body was heavier but his life was agitation-free. (261)

Dr. Hetty is a nice person as she behaves nicely with his children. Though she has vegetarian conviction, she works hard to prepare the turkey. She is generous and admires Audrey. She never hates Audrey and ready to welcome her but Audrey refuses it. Audrey hates her. Sudden appearance of Hetty shatters the family but Hetty brings family together. Audrey has failed in her attempt to take hold on the house and disrupts

the family because it is Hetty who recommends the lawyer to Philip. Hetty loses her dedication to the Avakandrist doctrine and she gets a training 'as a straight forward Jungian' at Philip's expenses. Philip does not want Hetty treating too much male clients. He is, thus, a wicked minded and selfish too.

One Christmas day, all family members gather on 'the Christmas table in harmony after the previous season's dispersal and disarray'. Everyone accepts Hetty except Martin, who is the apple of everyone's eye. Audrey wants Martin to spend Christmas with her in Edinburgh while Philip feels that Martin's elder brother and sisters should come for Christmas so that Martin would celebrate it in his house. He wants that 'the child should not be used in the parent's disputes'. Though Martin lives with Philip, Martin wants to celebrate Christmas with his mother because Audrey is alone in Edinburgh without him. He is so attached with his mother that he calls her frequently. He hates Hetty and assures his mother that he will not keep Hetty any longer in the family, and he wants to see her off. So he opposes Hetty and quarrels with her. He calls her 'Bitch, a selfish Bitch'. Actually he wants to create some problem for his new step mother. Hetty knows it well so she thinks that Martin should be pressurized to adjust a new set of interpersonal relationships at home. She is spiritual but not sentimental. She is trying to answer Martin's question, "What's civilized?" Hetty wants Martin should be civilized and accept reality. She wants him to become cool and think alone because 'aloneness quiets the unquiet spirit'. Hetty tries to console Martin by saying that she and Philip love him but Martin wants to hurt her because he is angry and feels jealous as she takes his mother's place in the home. Sal and Sue also hate Hetty and wonder why Grandpa is involved in Hetty. They always remain in the company of Martin. When Philip wants

to console them, Sal calls him 'Stupid'. So at last Martin leaves the table and 'runs weeping to his room into loneliness' and Sal and Sue give him company. Martin calls his mother and says proudly, 'I told them what she was. I saw her off. You can rely on me' (272).

In this way this story presents Philip and Audrey's frustrated marital life. He gets attached to Dr. Hetty and tries to maintain their new married life with Hetty. Dr. Hetty has married Mr. Grainger, her first husband, for parents' sake and so it results into separation. Philip, through his medical treatment, gets attached to Dr. Hetty. Hetty's soft personality wins the minds of all grown-up family members except Martin and the grand-daughters.

The story 'Not Even a Blood Relation' is about the Cowarth family. Hughie is Duke of Cowarth, and his wife, Beverley, is a fortune hunter from New Zealand. They have three daughters and long for a son. They are Cowarthians and want a male heir. They, on every occasion, decide their child name before birth as Edwin, Thomas and David but put their names as Edwina, Thomasina, Davida just adding 'a' to the names. They think it is their mother's doing, and so hate her but in reality it is their father who has done it.

Hughie and Beverley are unhappy. Hughie, being an Earl, has the title and property: Cowarth Court and the Titian. They have three daughters and want an inheritor so they yearn for a male heir for their property. The Cowarth have property which they have not yet sold. Cowarth Court comprises thirty one bedrooms, three dining halls, two ballrooms and three bathrooms. Beverley's elder brother has died in a hunting accident so younger one, John, will get all the property. They do not want to pass their property to John. Hughie says to Beverley,

“What option does an Earl without heirs have,” . . . “but eat, drink and be merry, and spend the lot! If you don’t like it, Beverley, you should have given me a son!” (77)

Weldon also adds—

In his apparently careless and scandalous contract with the National Trust, Hughie had ensured that if the girls got nothing, brother John would get nothing either, or only a title, and he had one of those already. Hughie made no will, although he’d had six months’ warning of death, leaving the tricky business of satisfying the girls entirely to Beverley. That too was his habit. (77)

Beverley is wicked and is not ready to give any share from the property to the daughters, and keeps ‘what was hers by legal right’. Meanwhile Hughie has cancer and dies. John also fails in his inevitable legal battle with the National Trust.

Three months after Hughie’s death, Beverley and her angry adult daughters come together. Edwina has an affair and drinks too much. Thomasina is now pregnant. Davida is a therapist and marries a psychiatrist. Edwina tells her mother that she is always selfish. Thomasina wants her mother sell the property and find somewhere a small and sensible place to live, and divide the money amongst them. Davida insists on to forget the past and to find a solution by themselves. But Beverley is not ready for that.

The girls and Beverley are very crooked minded. A year after Hughie’s death, Beverley calls her three daughters for tea and makes an announcement that she is going to sell the house as well as the Titian and

will move into other sheltered accommodation. Within a span of a year, there is a great change in Beverley.

Beverley betrays Hughie as well as her daughters. She is changed so much that she comes now out of her widow's dress and becomes a modern woman. She accompanies a short but good looking guy, Brian, who is around forty. From Beverley they come to know that he is her fiancé and they are getting married the next week, which shocks the girls. They wonder as well as get angry with their mother but are soon settled down into the new situation. Brian gives them a few thousand pounds to do favour to him. Later, Beverley calls the girls after a year and informs that she is going to have a baby. She has a boyfriend and now wants a baby, which surprises the girls.

Beverley wants a fourth child, 'fourth time lucky', a boy, and the medical birth technology has made it possible. With the help of Brian and the service of a very good Roman Gynecologist make it possible. Three years after Hughie's death, Beverley reveals that her new baby, Edwin, is Cowarth. He is Hughie's child and a heir. Hughie has his young and healthy sperm deep-frozen years back. Now John's claim to the title is outdated as well as the National Trust loses its gamble and its claim to the Cowarth estate as all belongs to Edwin now. Later on Beverley marries Brian and the girls also accept their little brother. Now the girls regret for being so thoroughly selfish and bad and become more polite to mother.

Thus, Hughie and Beverley crave a lot for an heir, and after three years of her husband's death she delivers a son. This shows that she is a wicked wife who preserves her husband's sperm. But after his death she betrays her husband by establishing relationship with Brian, her lover and whom she marries later on. The three angry girls behave unkindly with

their mother but at last, when Beverley reveals the truth, they all accept the things as it is and start living with their mother.

In this way *Wicked Women* portrays husband-wife relationships in which some are happy but majority are unhappy relationships. The most relations shatter because of the partner's adultery or betrayal. The relations are unhappy because they do not understand each other properly. There are communication gap, ego, hunger for love, money etc. which play important role in shattering relations. They are frustrated because one partner is unable to satisfy the other. The most relations shatter because of third person intervention in husband-wife relationship. According to Flora Alexander, Weldon's central focus is on personal relations between men and women. She looks beyond marriage and the family to include wider issues. So *Wicked Women* have major stories in which personal relations cause frustration as well as death.

As Judy Cooke states, while talking about *Wicked Women*, that like property, the institution of marriage has boomed and bust. The majority of husband-wife relationships in this collection are unhappy as there are lots of problems in their relations. Except two or three stories from the collection, other stories portray unhappy married lives. It is because; everybody gives importance to their personal wish and ignores their duties and other's interests. They fail to understand their partner's esteem which results into complications and affect their personal lives. Fay Weldon seems to have a low opinion of family life as there is hardly happy relationship to be seen in these pages.