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«The family is a mutual burden-bearing and a school of sacrifice», – Nikolay Berdyaev once said.

Kathleen Thompson Norris knew it like no other, as was able to achieve such a greatness with her works that have become an important part of the family genre in fiction. The authoress was one of the most widely read and highest paid female writers in the United States from 1911 to 1959. She described family relationships and the sense of family life, and she herself became an important figure in the struggle for women's rights and a symbol of motherhood. In her short story «Bridging the Years», Kathleen Thompson, through the prism of one of her characters, Anne Warriner, comprehends the family concept and moral values, such as the marriage significance and the importance of motherhood.

The first thing needs to be said is that the book's title is its soul. Therefore, I assumed the responsibility for defining the author's intention in the title as a symbol of time required to build a family, its subsequent reinforcing and branching.

The major subjects of «Bridging the Years» are the complexities of family life, family values, the role of a housewife and mother, a midlife crisis, comprehension of one's own desires and the essence of life and rethinking priorities in life with age. Against the background of other problems, one of the eternal issues «What is the point of life?» is comprehended. Although in this case, it is possible to concretize the question in this way: «What is the meaning of the housewife's and mother's roles?»

The author's idea lies in the understanding that to preserve the family, all its members should work in a team, supporting each other's individual aims and aspirations. As Mother Teresa said: «To create a family, it is enough to love. And to preserve it, you need to learn to tolerate and forgive».

The plot of the story is focused around a woman named Anne Warriner that demonstrates by her example the stages of forming a family hearth. She is compared with each of the characters and her relationship with each family member is considered. In terms of composition, the story is divided into three

parts: the introduction, the main part, which includes insert episodes, and the denouement.

The action takes place in winter at the Warriner Cottage on the Jackson Street which is, as it was said «a hopelessly unfashionable part of the city now».

The tone of the narration at the beginning of the story is melancholic and sad. We are plunged into a gloomy atmosphere, which is interrupted for a while by Anne's words about the upcoming improvement in the weather, giving us and the characters a ray of hope. Anne is waiting for changes; she is mired in a state of ambiguity verging on depression, so she needs this kind of change more than ever before. Anne pays attention to the clouds scattering over the city, to the clearing sky, and the houses cease to seem boring to her, but they are still cold and dead. It can be treated as a symbol of her condition's improvement, but not the final relief from depression. Besides, the location nearby the Devil's Island, Alcatraz, does not contribute to improving her situation. The place darkens the picture and gives an approximate understanding of what the characters face on a daily basis.

The internal conflict in the work consists of conflicting Anne Warriner's psychological beliefs, desires, impulses and feelings. She is torn between the desire to get freedom and the mother's duty, between routine and colourful life, between standing out from others, but at the same time being an ordinary family. External conflicts are the misfortunes and difficulties faced by the Warriners.

The character system is quite simple. The major character of the story is Anne. The minor characters influencing the plot are James, Charles Rideout, the children of the family, Diego and Virginia. Episodic character is Helma and Charles Rideout Junior. There are also off-stage characters, the most notable of which is Rose Rideout. There are no negative characters in the story, but on the contrary, all the characters are tactful and caring. For this reason, they seem to be in some way ideal and cause a sense of the unnaturalness.

It is important to begin the characterization of the images with the main family, the Warriners. They are the personification of a strong, united family, within which mutual respect, support and sound relationships reign. Despite all the difficulties, every member of the family (except for the youngest due to age) contributes to the maintenance of the family. For example, when Anne became ill, she tries to hide her condition from James to avoid troubling him even more. These actions prove her care and sacrifice. Jim, in turn supports his wife in every possible way.

«Jim, cut to the heart to have to add anything to her care just now, touched her with a thousand little tendernesses; a joke over the burned pudding, a little name she had not heard since honeymoon days, a hundred barefoot expeditions about the bedroom in the dark...»

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that at the beginning they are not devoid of lightness, immediacy and impulsivity. Their inexperience, dreaminess and careless enthusiasm lead to the choosing of the wrong place to set up their own home. This describes them as very young people who may have just flown the nest (*«Anne had never kept house before, she had no eyes for obsolete plumbing, uneven floors, for the dark cellar sacred to cats and rubbish»*).

However, it cannot be argued that these qualities make them unhappy. They are dreamers and enthusiasts who love to discuss the future interior of their dream home (*«Anne would sigh happily, after one of these outbursts. She and Jim chattered rapturously of French windows...»*).

First of all, it must be said that Anne is a caring mother of two children and a loving wife. She treats the surrounding reality with enthusiasm and comprehension, looks at the world with hope. She is a positive person who tries to find something good everywhere (*Anne said, thankfully, half aloud, «tomorrow will be fair! »*). The writer characterizes her as a child in the body of an adult (*«...had raced like child to the agent...»*, *«Anne said, with her ready tenderness, and a little gasp like a child's»*).

However, she also sometimes falls into despondency and malaise conditions. Family duties do not give her the desired full-fledged freedom. She expresses a desire for changes, but does not make active attempts to do something. It seems that she was not completely ready for family life.

It is well known that motherhood is a new step in a woman's life, a new level, a new era, a chance to rethink yourself. Especially if the birth of a child coincides with a midlife crisis. Anne dreams of an ideal family, of a house that she can show off to the neighbours (*«Oh, Jim, we'll have a place people will talk about! »*). At first, everything goes according to her expectations, but the birth of the first child, and after the second changes the circumstances and herself. She can no longer keep the image of a successful housewife.

«Anne gallantly went on with her little informal luncheons and dinners, but she had to apologize for an untrained maid now, and interrupt these festivities with flying visits to the crib in the big bedroom that opened out of the dining-room... But with Virginia's coming, life grew very practical for Anne, very different from what it had been in her vague hopes and plans of years ago».

It is no great surprise that the consequence of all these factors and experiences is a midlife crisis. Anne is afraid of unrealizable dreams, rethinking family values and priorities, and is asked a number of questions: *«What did she accomplish, after all? What mark did her busy days leave upon her life? »* Despite her anxiety and depression, she has to think about her children's future. Her whole life is built around children, and often it brings her pleasure, she loses track of time watching her children for hours. Every minute spent with the children makes her look to the future with hope, not with fear.

Time flows at a rate of knots. The house no longer seems as attractive as before, and the couple are considering moving (*«What if we do have to endure a dining-room with red paper and black woodwork, Jim,» she would say, «and have near-Tiffany shades and a hall two feet square?»*). It turns out that Jim is more determined person than Anne is. As they begin to notice the cottage shortcomings, and they have thoughts about moving, it is he who said that soon they would look at some apartment, while Anne was doubtful. She did not know exactly what she wanted (*«But if Jim agreed, – «we'll have a look at some of them on Sunday,» Anne would hesitate»*).

Actually, the man is an example of a faithful and loving man who dotes on his wife and children. He adores Anne, considers her peerless. (*«And whatever Jim thought himself, he was quite sincere in saying that he believed Anne to be peerless among her kind»*).

The writer describes the first child, James Junior, using epithets, as «little enchanting» boy, «nick-named Diego», «who fitted so perfectly into the picture, with his checked gingham, and his mop of yellow hair». He is so childishly innocent, trusting (*«Diego cheerfully extended little arms»*) and forthright, says what he sees and what he wants to say. Like a child, he is impatient to share his impressions with others.

«'This is my shoe,' said Diego, frankly exhibiting a worn specimen, 'and Baby has shoes, too, blue ones. And Baby cried in the night when the mirror fell down, didn't she, mother? »

Kathleen Norris also does not skimp on stylistic devices for Virginia, the second child with blue eyes and «silky hair». She calls her «the most radiant, laughing baby that ever brought her joyous little presence into any home anywhere». Kathleen describes her as «fretful and sleepy».

What is remarkable is the surname of another participant of the picture, Rideout. It seems to hint at their relocation. Charles Senior is a man who, with his one external charm, made a strong impression on Anne at the first meeting and instantly caused trust. The woman did not hesitate to accept him, despite the unexpected visit.

«She had a reassuring and instant impression that it was a very fine – even a magnificent – old man, who was standing in the twilight of the little hall».

Kathleen Norris describes his as a decent old man with *«a fast-silvering mouthache, and keen, kind eyes as blue as Virginia's... Anne found herself already deciding that she liked this man»*. In addition, the writer makes a logical stress on the verb «liked» to emphasize exactly the feeling of Miss Warner.

The news the man used to live in this house before the Warriners is causing Anne's excitement. Her benevolence, friendliness makes it seem that she has a

lack of communication. She is pleased to discuss the home with someone and learn its history. «*Well, but fancy!*» said Anne, her face radiant, «*just as we did!*»

It turns out that Mr. Rideout is a widower who is extremely hard going through the death of his wife. He talks about her in the present tense, so the reader does not immediately realize that she is no longer in this world. Here is what he says about it:

«*...the heart does not learn things as quickly as the mind, Mrs. Warriner*».

As for his wife, Mrs. Rideout, she resembles Anne, just as energetic and enthusiastic. Charles Sr. recalls her in these words: «*... my wife always sees the cheerful side of things first*».

In her work, Kathleen Norris has added some symbols as special images capable of reflecting her secret intentions in the best way. For instance, the symbol of the rapid change of the season is characterized by a shift in the step of life, a transition to a new stage, or, conversely, as in the text, where all the seasons merge for Anne, and fly by unnoticed. This shows the transience of time as well as possible. On the other hand, it can be considered as a stage of deep immersion in the routine. The symbol is also seen in the birth of a child. This is the birth of a new love, the beginning of a new life path in the world. And it is worth mentioning, the symbol of the house, which drew a thread between two families, making their destinies intersect.

Means of speech. This text is a combination of third-person narration and the characters' direct speech. The style is high, artistic, the author deliberately makes each person's speech individual (Diego, Helma and Charles), which is emphasized by the transmission of the sound component of the conversation («*Ef aye sprad dese hare, dey be dray en no tayme?*» (Helma) or «*It hurt her teef,*» (Diego)).

Kathleen Norris used stylistic devices and expressive means to completely create an artistic image, to portray the environment and characters. The lines are dynamic, filled with a considerable number of verbs, antonyms, words in a figurative meaning. The characters speak in such a way that words convey not only thoughts, but also personalities, habits and their uniqueness. For instance, Charles' speech is polite in a polite way, like the hero himself. It exudes great-restrained strength, courtesy, friendliness, respect for people, faith in herself and others («*Perhaps this is a bad hour to disturb these little people?*», «*God bless you both!*»). So Anne's affectionate and loving attitude towards her husband and children is reflected in her address to them (*Jimmy, Diego, Jinny, sweetheart, Jim, Jimski, dearest, baby*), and little Diego sweetly calls his father «*Daddy*». In the story, there are elements accentuating the author's assessment and emotionality: exclamation mark, ellipsis, speech interruption. Most of the exclamation constructions and rhetorical questions are used in Anne's speech, but also outside

of dialogues («*And what did she accomplish, after all?*», «*What mark did her busy days leave upon her life?*»).

Kathleen Norris makes logical stresses on certain words, indicating their higher importance and significance in comparison with others: «*And aren't you glad, Jim, that we aren't doing exactly what everyone else does, that you and I, who are a little different, Jim, are going to keep a little different?*»

Epithets are the most common stylistic device used in the text. They are found in the description of landscapes (steely-blue), places (a hopelessly unfashionable part of the city, swarming streets, picturesque foreign colonies), characters (dignified neighbors), actions (bread-and-milky kisses, hungry hearts, breathless voice, peerless woman), sensations and experiences.

Hyperbole, for example, emphasises the insipidity of the Warriners' environment and the family's exclusivity: «*they're just what everyone else has*», «*we aren't doing exactly what everyone else does*». In addition, this trope conveys in the best way the complicated condition of Mrs. Warriner («*find herself beaten and exhausted every night*», «*depression that had been hanging over her all day*», «*It's nothing, dearest! Only I'm so miserable all the time!*», «*she had never been tired before; she had never felt, as she felt now*»), is used in Charles' remarks in order to demonstrate that nothing lasts forever («*thank God for it, you young people! It never comes back!*»), shows his difficult feelings regarding his wife's condition («*He never left her, and he's not been eating*»), and also provides us with an understanding of his relationship to the family – his wife and children («*I shall never forget those little girls tumbling about in the cut grass*»).

Similes are not widely used in the story, but it does not negate their accuracy, sharpness («*they had raced like children to the argent*», «*It's going to be like a home from the very start*», «*she made it as quaint and charming as her dreams*», «*a little gasp like a child's*»). All expressive means and stylistic devices expose the author's plentiful individual speech and the imagery of the characters.

It is very clear from these observations that the writer, by expressive means and stylistic devices, very unobtrusively and carefully provides his assessment regarding family relations. It is self-evident that it takes a lot of time to build a steady family, but not everyone realizes how much effort it may take. Therefore, we learn from the text that love, mutual support and mutual respect are the three pillars on which this small community remains.

In addition, Ann's internal torments reveal one important idea: the older people get, the more important children and grandchildren are to them. They allow focusing on their youth, and not on your own aging. The awareness that if a person continues to live aimlessly with age, then one will begin to turn to the past more and more often, make one move forward in search of one's own "I" and goals in life.

The Rideouts and the Warriners have a lot in common, so it is not surprising that Ann and James saw in the old couple a reflection of themselves, only 30 years older. They saw the future that could wait for them, and it touched their hearts. However, it did not frustrate them, as they realized that everyone in life would receive a piece of happiness.

«'Don't let it make you blue, - he had his happiness, you know, - he has his children left!' Anne tightened her arms about his neck. 'I am crying a little for sorrow, Jim, dearest!' she sobbed, burying her face in his shoulder. 'But I believe it is mostly - mostly for joy and gratitude, Jim!'"»

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One of the characteristics of literary works in English is the authors' fondness for writing vivid psychological stories that do not let the reader out of their captivity even after reading. Those stories that are with an impeccable moral lesson at the end for the readers. Kathleen Norris's 'Bridging the years' is a masterpiece which can be counted among such works. The very title of the short story speaks for itself; it is devoted to an amazing power that can unite the innermost human thing in each of us with other people around. The invisible bond, the understanding, the feeling, the life.

The story written by the author is nothing more than the electric tension of lost people who are trying to find each other, and most importantly themselves. The characters of the story look like real people. For example, they have financial problems. In addition, it is psychologically difficult for them to manage themselves in moments of despair, so that in the reader's view the interrelations are easily correlated and blended. Events unfold in the late afternoon, around four o'clock in the evening. A young mother named Anne Warriner looks out the window of her house with two children. They stand near the windowsill: a mother, an older boy Diego, and a younger daughter Jinny. On the ground floor, their maid prepares for the breadwinner's coming from work. This is their Daddy, a beloved husband Jimmy. The mother talks with her son about the winter weather, it is wet and cloudy. Therefore, they spend the rest of the day without walking. However, tomorrow they will definitely be able to spend a couple of hours in the fresh air. In fact, Anne is glad to get out of her routine. She secretly dreams of going out into the cool air, walking through the streets of the city and being alone, without her children, without their unbuttoning small coats, and their evening baths. She

wants to be alone for at least twenty minutes. Don't misunderstand her, she loves spending time with cute little things. Sometimes she spends whole days with them without noticing it. Moreover, she also likes to choose a steak for her husband as it should be for a woman of her social status. And once upon a time, before the birth of children, she adored this house. But things have changed. Today she is plunged into despair.

From the very first lines, the murky atmosphere is conveyed with the help of a large number of epithets such as *'a steep sky-line above the hills'*, *'fast-encroaching new buildings'*, *'the old-fashioned brick wall'*, *'the ivy twinkle'*, *'the back porch steps'*.

But events change dramatically, as does the tinge of the work, when the servant announces the arrival of a certain Mr Rideout. It is also worth noting that the dialogue develops. Although earlier in the work the mother had responded to the child's remarks, the reader learns more information about the heroine's life through her memories with intentional imitations of the author for a real speech in such cases as *'And aren't you glad, Jim, that we aren't doing exactly what every one else does, that you and I, who are a little different, Jim, are going to keep a little different?'*, *'What if we do have to endure a dining-room with red paper and black woodwork, Jim'*. But after the appearance of a stranger and the beginning of a conversation with him, not only Anne but the whole house comes to life again. The reason for this hidden in the talks about the past with the former owner of the house. So the reader is immersed in the tragic love story of a man who bought this house several decades ago for his beloved wife Rose. Within these walls they raised their children, spent the best moments of their lives and were engaged in gardening together. The man seems overly cozy and suitable for this place, thereby the boy with *'a mop of yellow hair'* plays near his knees, and the younger girl gives a shy smile. In turn, Anne enjoys the conversation, because she sees herself in the guest's story – a once beloved bride who was ready to pull all of herself into this building.

Notwithstanding, the subtle line between generations lays in the fact that, Mr Rideout deliberately had chosen the building, while the current owners *'after an ecstatic, swift inspection of it, had raced like children to the agent, to crowd into his willing hand a deposit on the first month's rent'*.

Nevertheless, I consider it necessary to tell a few words not only about the plot, but also about how this story is built. The reader can guess about the place, time and social environment only from small fragments of information inside the stories of the narrator.

First of all, the novelist's storytelling of the events that are taking place. In this category of verbal expression of the author's idea, the reader is informed about the location of the house, weather conditions, and a little about the acting characters. It is noteworthy that from the very first lines before the eyes of the

person who opened the book, a background of knowledge is required. Let me back up my words with the following quotation from the original text: *'a steep sky-line above the hills of old San Francisco'* and *'the crests out toward Alcatraz'*. The accuracy of the geographical location is intertwined with the author's allusion with the help of the binary opposition 'Paradise :: Prison' at the semantic level. In my humble opinion, this is what is the framework for the first part of the work, when a person of modern America is limited by the imposed psychological state frames.

Secondly, the disclosure of history inevitably entails the deployment of another conflict, which is expressed in an inadequate perception of self-worth. This category of narrative is inextricably linked to the mental state in which the character shows their life to the reader. For example, Anne, being a bride, happily tells Jimmy that she is glad to feel that their couple is completely different and unlike the typical residents of this district. But as soon as maternity leave is delayed and she picks up depression, her narration style changes drastically. She no longer has time for toilets and meetings with acquaintances. Also the previously beautiful garden annoys her because of the children's traces. The woman remembers the past with nostalgia and sees flaws in the present. Nevertheless, as soon as the children grow up and her husband plans a promotion at work *'Anne was beginning to take an interest in the theatre again'*. This problem raises a rather important poser even for modern society about how to keep a balance of a positive attitude to life in dark times.

Finally, the third feature is the timing frame of the work. In the narrative category, it is worth noting that time is represented non-linearly in the novel. In order to dig my words into the ground of logical analysis of the story, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the narrative of the present (so to speak, Anne's little children and a problematic house) is abruptly interrupted by nostalgia of the past (as a carefree youth) and also abruptly by dreams of the future (Jimmy will definitely be promoted at work and next year they will buy the new apartments).

It is noteworthy that the author gives only the most important information with the help of the narration in the 3rd person singular. Moreover, each of the characters adopts the narrative line from their own point of view. Thus, it is possible to trace the creation of a reader's virtual picture of the world by the following scheme: Author (impersonal) › Diego (the youngest generation) › Anne (the middle generation) › Maid (the middle generation) › Mr Rideout (the eldest generation) › Jim (the middle generation) › Maid (the middle generation) › Charles Rideout (the middle generation). In this way, the idea of the continuity of generations, stated in the title of the work, is realized.

Characters are not divided into positive or negative, therefore this gives the reader the opportunity to independently reflect in those moments where it is appropriate. Moreover, they are constantly in motion and advance the plot as they are involved, for example, *'Anne struggled bravely to hide her mental and physical discomfort from Jim'*, *'Diego manfully departed kitchenward with the*

empty bowls, *'Anne, very much at a loss, got up, and carrying Jinny, and followed by the barefoot Diego, went to the door'*, *'Jinny, deliciously drowsy, gave the stranger a slow yet approving smile, from the safety of Anne's arms'*, *'I used to pass it, walking to the office'*, *'the two other men came down the stairs'* etc. This short novel, with its characters, resembles the works of the 17th century English writer and Baptist preacher, John Bunyan, where ordinary people (in the representation of one believer) are faced with a philosophy of life that they had never known before. Parallels in the search for happiness, memories of the past and finding spiritual peace in the present are related by the emotional narration of these two works from different epochs.

It is important to highlight the author's usage of a number of devices while making out the linguistic construction of the work such as metaphor *'homesick pioneer wives and mothers'*, *'Don't let it make you blue'*, *'hungry hearts'*, *'mop of yellow hair'*, *'the lines about his fine mouth'*, *'the terror and triumph of the night'*, repetition *'so many, many hours'*, *'a very, very lovely little home'*, *'Do you know <...> do you know'*, *'It was quite a move! Quite a move!'* 'detachment *'We had an old woman taking care of her, --no trained nurses in those days!--and she was sitting here by this fireplace, with the tiny girl in her lap'*, *'This house came around the Horn from Philadelphia, as a matter of fact, and'*, hyperbole *'the dearest little house in the world'*, *'a hundred barefoot expeditions about the bedroom in the dark'*, simile *'kind eyes as blue as Virginia's'*, *'the heart does not learn things as quickly as the mind'*, alliteration *'Dear old Dad'*. Still, in my opinion, euphemism has a special charm here. It is as a word or descriptive expression that is neutral in meaning. I note that in my opinion this was used by the author intentionally to develop conflict situations of the previously designated binary opposition, self-esteem and life line. I suggest paying attention in detail to *'my mother left us, last night'* instead of died, *'she had no eyes for obsolete plumbing'* instead of unintelligent, *'the little indefinable mood of depression'* instead of inaccurate psychological condition, *'five or six years of pretty hard sailing then'* instead of severe financial hardship. Notwithstanding, all these devices help make the text attractive for reading while the reader's imagination assimilates stylistic and lexical literary devices.

In conclusion, I would like to express my respect for the author and the work in general, because the story really interested me from the first minutes of reading. I believe that the topic of the connection between generations through the philosophical paradigm is important at any time. *'Bridging the years'* is valuable because it gives a new spectrum of emotions and food for thought after reading. I highly appreciate the organizers' desire to give the participants a perfect opportunity to express ideas.

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The story “Bridging the Years” belongs to the pen of the renowned American writer of the 20th century Kathleen Norris. Despite the fact that the work is quite short, the author managed to reveal in it the most important topic for every person – *the topic of true love* – which does not lose its relevance even decades later.

The story tells about one day in the life of a young woman named Anne Warriner, who lives with her husband and children in a small house in San Francisco. The family is going through a tough time, and on the day when the woman thinks about her fate, she is visited by a guest – Mr. Charles Rideout, who lived in that house many years ago. After meeting him, Ann’s mood and attitude to life change.

As is usually the case in a short story, all the characters in the work are flat; the reader does not know much about each of them. The author explicitly describes appearance details of only some of the characters, with no mention of their personality traits. The reader knows what Mr. Rideout and his son look like, can roughly imagine the Warriner children (Diego’s “*mop of yellow hair*” and Virginia’s blue eyes), but knows almost nothing about Anne and her husband James. Moreover, the writer gave the characters very common names – I think the author wanted to show that the Warriners are a most ordinary family, and any young family can face up with the problems that they have. The Warriners’ maid, Helma, is depicted indirectly: judging by her speech, the reader may assume that she is a foreigner (“*Ef aye sprad dese hare, dey be dray en no tayme?*”).

The focus of the work is the internal conflict of the main character. Anne, a mother of two little children, has to spend a lot of time at home. She feels depressed, her habitual actions seem “*aimless*” to her. “*Same and eventless, the months went by*” – she lives a monotonous life, which is not “*near her dreams*”. Poor health, financial difficulties and her husband’s problems at work have a bad effect on Anne’s physical and mental state.

There are many detailed descriptions in the text, and this makes it more vivid. Long sentences with parallel constructions and a large number of homogeneous parts of the sentence prevail. This syntactic organization of the text slows down the rhythm of the narration and creates a romantic and at the same time sad atmosphere, helps the reader to understand the feelings of the main character.

The exposition of the story (*“The rain had stopped; and after long days of downpour...”*) does not insert any background information and setting details; it is dynamic.

The narration is conveyed by the third-person limited narrator, who does not participate in the action as a character, but follows the protagonist’s perspective within the story – it creates an effect of objectivity and reliability. In the story the author used the past grammatical tense to establish the prior completion of the plot; at the same time, the narration is not consistent. In the story “Bridging the Years” the plot and the fable do not coincide; throughout the description of the day in life of Anne Warriner, the author introduces retrospective scenes, the protagonist’s thoughts about bygone times, and then her guest’s memories of his own happy past.

The text has a compositional peculiarity – it clearly shows two parallel stories – the completed story of the Rideout family and in many moments repeating it the fate of the Warriner family. It is noteworthy that even the sons of both the Rideouts and the Warriners are named after their fathers.

There are symbolic meanings in the text. So, the house symbolizes warmth, care, support, love, reliability (*“the whole little household was like a ship that shortens sail, and makes all snug against a storm”*). Storm stands for all the hardships and problems that the family faces. The title of the work – “Bridging the Years” – is also multiple-valued. On the one hand, it means the connection between young people of different generations, the Rideouts and the Warriners, and the “bridge” between them is the house. On the other hand, it is a connection between the present and the past of both families.

The narration is done in plain language but abounds in different stylistic devices. In her work the author used epithets (*“hungry hearts”*, *“absurd little stairway”*), a rhetorical question (*“And what did she accomplish, after all?”*), metaphors (*“staring out into the early dusk”*, *“hard sailing”*), parenthesis (*“a very fine – even a magnificent – old man”*), simile (*“She danced about this house as if it were another toy”*), personification (*“hands had found each other”*, *“the heart does not learn things”*).

After meeting Mr. Rideout, Anne experiences a sense of joy and gratitude; she does not feel depressed, as it was at the beginning of the work. The life story of the elderly man inspires the main character; Mr. Rideout convinces Anne of the power of love – he himself loves his wife so much that even after her death he does not talk about her using the past tense (*“my wife always sees ...”*).

The change in the protagonist’s state is noticeable even in her speech. For example, at the beginning of the story, her house seemed uncomfortable for her (*“The cottage was no longer quite comfortable”*), then at the end she says *“We think it is the dearest little house in the world”*. So we can conclude that Anne Warriner is a dynamic character.

The story “Bridging the Years” has an open ending; the author does not directly state how it ends. However, the reader can assume that the day of acquaintance of the Warriner family with Mr. Rideout will be fateful for the former; their life will change, because their attitude towards it will change. In this case, the first sentence (“*The rain had stopped; and after long days of downpour, there seemed at last to be a definite change*”) and the first remark of Anne (“*I believe the storm is really over! ... tomorrow will be fair!*”) acquire a new meaning, foreshadows the implied outcome; and *rain* symbolically denotes the hardships of life.

Although in the plot a large role is given to the place of action – the house that united people – this story is not about the *house*, but about *home*; family, hope, faith in a bright future and great love for their spouses and children – these are the things that help people cope with all adversity. The key idea of the work is contained in the words of Mr. Rideout: “*The days when you shoulder your troubles cheerfully together, – they come to their end! And they are ... they are very wonderful to look back to! ... No man and wife, who do what we did, who live modestly, and work hard, and love each other and their children, can fail. That’s one of the blessed things of life.*”

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In the days of our youth, it seems that we know everything and we have the whole world at our feet. As we get older, we realize that it’s not true. We’re not great experts on the universe. We are not omniscient gods who are aware of every corner of the world we have created. Then comes the moment when we are waiting for something to happen. A familiar guest from the future will point out our mistakes and give us advice if we are on the right path or not. The main character of Kathleen Norris's novel *Bridging the Years*, Anne Warriner, had a great opportunity of all possibilities. She met a man from the past. And not just met, but he came to her. What can an aged gentleman teach a young woman like Anne Warriner? How can the past be connected to the future?

The story is about a young woman Anna Warriner and her family living in an old-fashioned house in twentieth-century San Francisco. Anna and her husband James (or as she often calls him Jim) are raising two children. Anna begins to think about moving to a spacious apartment. She loves her little outdated house, but the future and the comfort of her children are much more meaningful to Anna. They are the reasons of her worries. She is ready to sacrifice her dreams

and habits for them. One day an elderly man, Charles Rideout, visits them. He is the former owner of Anna's house. M. Rideout tells about his family life in this house and shares all his mournful and cheerful memories with Mrs Warriner. History of M. Rideout makes a strong impression on the hostess of the house.

The theme of the story is the connection of two generations, and at that, the connection between juvenile dreamers without any life experience and double-doyed pragmatists.

The main characters are Anna Warren and Charles Rideout. On the one hand, their images are opposed, but on the other, they complement each other and create a unique and common symbol of the story. Anna Warriner is the incarnation of a youthful dream. She is married and has two young children. Her day is always full of worries and household routines. Marriage and motherhood impose a certain status and responsibilities on a woman. As a rule, married women refuse their plans and aspirations and forget them as if they have never existed. However, our heroine is completely different. She lives her dreams all her life. At first she dreamed of a small house with nasturtiums on the landing of the absurd little stairway. Then she dreams of a spacious modern apartment. She chooses wallpaper for future housing in her head, although she already hates the place: «*What if we do have to endure a dining-room with red paper and black woodwork, Jim,*» she would say, «*and have near-Tiffany shades and a hall two feet square?*». She utilizes the word "endure" in her speech. It gives the impression that she is being forced to buy a new apartment and decide where the furniture's to stand. The author conveys Anna's inner annoyance by using the epithets (*horribly commonplace*), comparison of large apartments with enemies (*the big apartments all about, hither regarded as enemies*) and hyperbole (*she would mourn*), as if Anna is burying and saying goodbye to her past life, her principles and herself because of obtaining a new house. The main heroine is disgusted by only the idea of separating herself from the dream and living the reality as many adults live. Anna does not want to grow up, face and solve current problems.

What is the contrary of a dream? This is reality and pragmatism, and Anna is far from the second one. She doesn't notice either *obsolete plumbing, uneven floors or the dark cellar*. Even buying a house was a spontaneous decision. The author emphasizes that a young couple is a bit immature and inexperienced. K. T. Norris uses the epithets (*swift, useless*) and comparison (*like children to the agent*). They indeed behave like kids who saw a new toy and immediately wanted it. Neither James nor Anna thought of the disadvantages of the house. It was only after a while that they realized his flaws. It is remarkably that the author points out the charm of the house in terms of the level of Anna's dreams (*Anne made it quite as quaint and charming as her dreams*). It was not James' dream, but hers, and, fortunately or unfortunately, her dream came true.

Anna dreams of new apartment and comfort for her children, but she has done nothing to achieve this goal. At the end of a conversation with her husband

about a new home, she exclaims: *It would be so comfortable!*". Here we see the irony in Anna's words. A young woman enumerates the advantages of a new accommodation. A more spacious flat would be a real help for the Warriner family, but she utilizes the word "comfortable!" in a negative sense. For her, it would be so cute and convenient to the point that it would be disgusting. It is the same idea of rejection of all good and useful for family life. In addition, this scene is contrasted with the scene of the first purchase of the house. In her speech, Anna uses the epithets "*different*", "*to keep a little different*", "*unusual*", "*peerless*". As we noticed earlier, Anna doesn't like the idea of having a large apartment. It does not fit into either her worldview or the concept of a happy family life. So, comfort and practicality are not part of the value system of the main character. Anna is not a practical person.

Besides, the concept of being like everyone else is weird to her. It ruins Mrs. Warriner. Anna herself admits that routine devours her. Hence her depression and apathy. She gets tired of household chores more than in her student years. The image of the past Anna and the present Anna is based on the antithesis. The author constantly opposes two periods of Anna's life – before and after her marriage: *a little dynamo of energy - beaten and exhausted, crowded with interests and enterprises - left her no time for unnecessary prettiness, she had never been tired before - fall asleep at the dinner table for sheer weariness*. Describing an ordinary woman's day, the author uses epithets (*usual, familiar, same, eventless*). So, Anna's life has turned into an endless routine that destroys her.

Mrs. Warriner's juvenile spirit is especially noticeable during her walking with the children. She is lively, she is open to nature and ready to fall into it. The author conveys it by using a metaphor (*caught the refreshing ocean breeze full in her face at the corner*). The walls of the house are like being imprisoned in a tower for her. The author makes an allusion: *She would have been glad to get out into the cool winter afternoon, herself, after a long, quiet day in the warm house*. An ordinary person wants to return home as soon as possible after a hard working day, but Anna Warriner is eager to escape from the captivity of home and household duties. The epithets before the noun *house* create an atmosphere of comfort, but this comfort is not important to the main character.

Moreover, we can say that the present Warriner house is the personification of the inner world of a young woman. It is different from many other houses in that area. Huge skyscrapers rise next to the unremarkable Warriner family home. The author employs two techniques – antithesis and epithets. K.Norris describes new buildings in San Francisco *as fast-encroaching new buildings, modern apartment houses*, while Anna's house and nearby French and Spanish houses are *unfashionable, old*.

We see in the text that such new houses were very common among other families. There were a lot of similar housing in San Francisco in the 20th century, but the Warriner family house is a symbol of their invariability and that they have

not changed internally and their principles. The house seems to reassure Anna: "Yes, you have stayed loyal and true to yourself, you have remained the way you were at the very beginning."

Nevertheless, it is worth to mention the image of James in history. James is a secondary character and his role is more of a supporting one. His image is a little bit opposed to the image of Anna. James fit into the daily routine better. He retained his easy character, we see this in the dialogue with M. Rideout. However, he is not puzzled by thoughts about what he dreamed about and where he is now. He takes every day as a matter of course. He works and now the best entertainment for him is playing bridge. In addition, he agrees with his wife during the discussion about the new house: "*we'll have a look at some of them on Sunday,*". So, James did not retain his youthful dreaminess and uniqueness. He became more mature and moved to a new social status.

As we mentioned earlier, the image of Charles Rideout is opposed to the heroine of Anna Warriner. M. Rideout is a symbol of practicality and conversion into the adult world. The history of his family is similar to the history of the Warren family. A couple in love bought a house where they hoped to find happiness and fulfill their dreams. However, Mr. Rideout is pragmatic. He doesn't live in dreams. He realized that his family needed a new home, and they moved. There it a litota in the text: *It was quite a move! Quite a move!*. Moving always means something great, but for Mr. Rideout it was of little value in terms of his beliefs and ideals. Also in the text there are some lines about the death of one of Mr. Rideout's children. Perhaps it is a symbol of the rejection of the new world.

However, a person cannot live without dreams, no matter how we try to fence ourselves off. In the end, M. Rideout returns here, realizing how happy he was in this house. He describes in detail some of the precious memories of his previous life in the Warriner house. Meanwhile, when he needs to describe life in a newfangled house, he shrugs it off and dismisses the details. Do, on the example of Mr. Rideout we can see that as we grow up, we lose our dreams, but gain invaluable experience.

The story is told from the 3rd person. Due to the narrator, we find out what Anna really feels. He shows her development as the heroine of the novel. We can learn what she was before and what she has become now. She shows us her inner conflict, although Anna tries to look happy for everyone. At the same time, the tone of the story is quite lighthearted, calm and mature. The author does not judge the younger generation for their dreams, inexperience and foolishness, but looks like a woman with gained experience. We can even say that she is an observer of history.

Dreaming means to consciously create images of the future. In childhood and youth, all people often dream. The older we get, the more everyday routine and responsibilities displace dreams. What is Everest climbing or skydiving? We

have neither the time, nor the strength, nor the means to do this. And it is quietly dangerous. There is a fine line hidden between the concepts "living only dreams" and "living according to the diary". Anna Warriner is the personification of the first type, Charles Rideout is an example of the second one. You need to be able to find the golden string. Anna has a chance to catch this golden thread, like each of us. The author leaves the finale open in order to give her heroine a choice to achieve something more, not to let her drown in an ocean of empty fantasies, but to preserve the ability to high aims and goals.