

Mary's Revenge and Self-realization in *Mary Postgate*

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In all Rudyard Kipling's works, Mary, the heroine in *Mary Postgate*, is one of the cruelest characters. She refuses to help an airman who she thought to be a German and let him die. Her inhumanity comes from her deep hatred toward the enemy, namely Germany and German soldiers, which arouse from the loss of her beloved son-like figure, Wynn, who joined the Flying Corps only to die during a training flight. Judging from the fact that her cold-blooded reaction to the dying airman is the central issue of the story, *Mary Postgate* can be considered a revenge story. However, the subtleties of the story, Mary's characterization in particular, preclude *Mary Postgate* from being categorized a mere revenge story.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the elements in *Mary Postgate* which expand the boundaries of the revenge theme. In fact a close examination of Mary's drastic change from an ideal companion to a ruthless murderer and her exultation during the torture will open up a new dimension to the story: Taking advantage of the revenge, Mary achieves a long-desired self-realization.