

Greasy lake by t. coraghessan boyle

Literature



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In the beginning, Boyle romanticizes the “ bad” or “ dangerous” persona that the narrator and his friends aspire to have as their own, or feel is their own.

There is a tendency even now, I feel, to make the bad appear good and attractive, whereby young men want to be rebels or bad. Boyle captures this attitude right at the start of his narrative, stating that it was a time “ when it was good to be bad”. The narrator of the story goes on to list quite a few of the “ bad” qualities that his friends have, and which he admires, and which make him think that they are “ two dangerous characters”.

Most often such dangerous characters do not have any inkling of what real danger is, and their image is often based on stories they themselves tell, or on feats that are really not “ dangerous” but merely irresponsible. In the story, for example, the two friends of the narrator are “ bad” because not only can they hold their own at a party, but can also roll joints in extremely difficult circumstances. It seems that this is often the truth of life; if you put yourself out to be as someone, more often than not, people will believe you without any evidence, and soon you will start believing it too, that is until you are faced with an event that challenges your claim.

When something comes along that actually challenges the claims that you make, it is only then that the truth is known. Only when you are faced with the task of proving yourself to be who you claim to be can you actually prove the same. I completely agree with Boyle on this, because in my opinion, very few people turn out to be who they say they are when it comes to putting their claims into action. When they are forced to scatter, with the narrator finding himself in Greasy Lake right next to a body, it is only then they realize that they are not “ dangerous” at all. They are just boys who try to act dangerous so that the others around them would respect and admire

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them.

In conclusion, through this story, Boyle lays bare the human insecurities and the falsehoods that most of us carry with us or on us to create a self-image of ourselves that does not allow these insecurities to come out, though, as he also points out, it is only through time and trial that one can truly find out if his self-image is true or not.