

An ounce of cure by alice munro



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An Ounce of Cure The short story ‘ An Ounce of Cure’ by Alice Munro explores the changes in the life of a teenage girl and the outcomes she faces for her decisions. Teenage is the period in one’s life which is susceptible to a number of vulnerabilities psychologically and emotionally. The author chooses an archetype of the same and shows how she becomes heart broken and mentally destroyed and finally takes a decision which messes up her life. Yet as this period progresses one needs to learn from the mistakes. Munro in her story “ An Ounce of Cure” portrays the adolescent love in the life of a teenage girl to address the coming of age faced in these crucial years of one’s life. The author expresses the intensity of immaturity within the character in her own words which says “ I know I did not wash my face that night – to keep the imprint of those kisses intact” (Munro 17). The girl is unable to control her emotions and is in love with a young man called Martin Collingwood. Sadly this affair leaves her heart broken and depressed. This is evident in the changes in her appearance; she was turning pale for which her mother had to provide iron pills. Being a mature adult her mother was not much bothered to her that Martin has left her because she never felt that it was “ so much for the better. I never saw a boy so stuck on himself” (Munro 17). Obviously the girl is unable to assess people and judged the boy by the sensations he aroused in her through his kisses and presence. After their separation she visits places where she can possibly locate him and is always eager to mention his name during conversations. The narrator herself admits to this as she says, “ Remember all the stupid, sad, half-ashamed things... that people in love always do” (Munro 17). This is especially true with adolescent love. The narrator desperately tries to escape the sadness by taking alcohol at Berryman’s house where she baby-sits. The readers would

also come to know that the girl comes from a relatively conservative family where her parents did not drink. She decided to take alcohol for the first time to get rid of her sadness but the impact was unexpected. She filled her glass with whisky without any water and fell sick as a result. The Berryman's family discovers the incident when they return and brings her back home. She is left to explain to her parents the reasons behind her actions. After this humiliating scene she becomes responsible and learns from her mistake. Some of the common teenage traits like daydreaming and careless behavior are observed here. Even Martin falls in love with another girl quite easily which shows how the teenage boy seeks pleasure for himself without being sensitive to other's emotions. The coming of age in the story is addressed through the reckless behavior of the young girl at her neighbor's which finally brings her back to sense and she understand the importance of life apart from being able to assess the immaturity of her actions as she grows up. Munro, Alice, " An Ounce of Cure"