

The ballad of the sad café

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The Ballad of the Sad Café was a sordid love triangle between three characters. Miss Amelia cared for Cousin Lymon. Cousin Lymon was infatuated with Marvin, and Marvin loved Miss Amelia. It was a complicated relationship that left the protagonist devastated at the end. The protagonist of the story was Miss Amelia. Miss Amelia was a peculiar woman. She was outspoken, ruthless, prosperous and always in pursuit of suing someone in the county. However, the characteristic where not common for a woman during this time period. Women were supposed to be silent and lead by men. Miss Amelia was married to the antagonist of the story, Marvin Macy. In my opinion, Marvin was a survivalist. He was a product of a dysfunctional family. Marvin's parents felt children were a burden and punished them for their mere presence. As soon as the mill closed, Marvin's parents abandoned their children like they were not their very own. Marvin and his brother lived with a foster mom, but the devil had already consumed his soul. "The heart of such a child can fester and swell until it is a misery within the body" (28)

Marvin was handsome, but being good was not his demeanor. He kept the county in an uproar because of the trouble that followed him. Suddenly, he noticed Miss Amelia. As the old saying goes, the heart wants what the heart wants. Marvin fell hard for Miss Amelia, but her love was cold like a Christmas night. Marvin tried to buy her love with gifts, but she sold the items on the front counter. She swindled him for ten acres of timberland and the final straw was the constant blows she had inflicted upon him. One lesson Marvin learned was that the one who is supposed to love you unconditionally will batter you mentality and physically. After ten days of

torture, Marvin left. The ten days Marvin was married was a symbol for each acre he gave to Miss Amelia.

As Miss Amelia was settling into her life, a strange outsider arrived. Cousin Lymon was an emotional drifter with a deformation claiming to be a long lost relative. Miss Amelia, either charmed or sympathizing his pitiful appearance, allowed him to move in with her. As days turned into months and years, Miss Amelia's house became a home. The store grew into a cafe and people throughout the county were entertained at the establishment. Eventually Miss Amelia developed a love for Cousin Lymon. He filled something empty inside her soul. It was ironic Marvin Macy cherished Amelia, and she rejected him. However, Miss Amelia adored Cousin Lymon, but he was mesmerized by a new stranger, Marvin. Marvin returned back for vengeance. As soon as Cousin Lymon laid eyes on Marvin, he followed him around like a sick puppy. Every chance Marvin got, he manipulated Cousin Lymon. However, Cousin Lymon was too foolish to realize it. Suddenly, all the tension came to a head. They decided it was time to settle all of these old feelings. On Groundhog Day, Miss Amelia and Marvin had a fight. “ Hundreds of blows had been exchanged and they were still a deadlock.” (66) Miss Amelia was about to overpower Marvin when suddenly Cousin Lymon intervened to help him. Next, Cousin Lymon and Marvin ransacked Miss Amelia's house and robbed the store. Someone always loses in a love triangle. Cousin Lymon and Marvin left town to continue their Bonnie and Clyde attitude throughout the area. Finally, they were caught and were placed in a chain gang. They were unable to roam around free terrorizing the community. Miss Amelia was in her own prison. Sitting alone in her dilapidated house waiting... Waiting for someone

that was never meant to be. The town of Cheehaw was deteriorating also. The roads were now empty, and nothing moved.

“ The Ballad of the Sad Cafe has a multitude of themes. The first one I will address is love. Each character had love for a person, but the other person did not give love in return. For instance, Marvin loved Miss Amelia and was willing to give her everything, so she could show him love in return. Instead she took everything from him including his manhood. Miss Amelia loved Cousin Lymon. She shows this by making her house a home for him. She cooked, provided shelter, clothes, and business, but it still was not enough for Cousin Lymon. Cousin Lymon cared for Marvin. He followed Marvin around, and Marvin misused Cousin Lymon. Love can blossom to develop oneself or it could tear you down. The account of Miss Amelia, Cousin Lymon, and Marvin Macy demonstrated that nobody would have a happy ending. The theme loneliness was addressed in the novel as well. Marvin Macy was lonely as a child. He was one of seven unwanted children whose parents could hardly be called parents. (28) As a husband, Marvin was lonely. Miss Amelia never was interested in a marriage with Marvin. A groom was in a sorry fix when he was unable to bring his well-loved bride to bed with him, and the whole town knew it. (31) Miss Amelia was lonely after Cousin Lymon betrayed her, and ran away with Marvin. Cousin Lymon was a drifter and was lonely at the beginning of the novel. He arrived to Miss. Amelia to fulfill something that was missing in his life. A onesided love will always result in loneliness.

The three characters were broken individuals. Miss Amelia appeared to be a strong woman, but she was broken once Cousin Lymon left. She was stuck in the past waiting for his return. Marvin Macy was broken as a child. He was missing the love of his parents. This broken relationship taught him to distrust and misuse people. Marvin was not ready for a relationship because he was not healed from the baggage he carried as a child. However, he tried to move on which was a mistake. Marvin decided to give his heart to Miss Amelia, but she devastated his soul. He lost his faith in mankind. Cousin Lymon was broken physically and emotionally. He was in search of family and love. He felt being with family would rebuild him. Miss Amelia, Marvin Macy, and Cousin Lymon all had toxic relationships. They were incomplete people and were trying to find someone to complete them. This was a tremendous burden to place on someone to make you happy. Miss Amelia and Marvin should have never been married. She did not love him, so what was her motive? Was she trying to replace a male figure in the house after her dad died? Each character took advantage of each other. And at the end, they were trapped in their personal penitentiary. They reaped what they sow. It would had been better if they never met and instead seek out what they were missing in their lives.