

# Free the fantasies that women have about love and life essay sample

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The main character in Sandra Cisneros' *Woman Hollering Creek* Cleofilas is a married Mexican woman who moves to Texas with her husband Juan Pedro. She is an inquisitive woman as is evidenced by her asking Trini the woman at the Laundromat why the creek behind her house is called La Grintona, something other people have not bothered to find out. She is also very aware of the current affairs as she notices the amount of violence against women that are being reported in the news. Cleofilas is also worried about what other people will think about her, especially when she thinks about leaving her husband and going back home. She is a brave woman because she has the courage to leave her abusive husband when the opportunity presents itself. She embodies the woman who is bound by many shackles in life as culture and the media's portrayal of love and marriage.

In Maile Meloy's *Ranch Girl*, the narrator is a young lady who talks about her childhood and youth. She is loyal, especially to her father as she had rather go home hungry to be with him than eat steak at Mr. Haskell's house. She is intelligent because she gets good grades in high school and yet makes herself fail so as to avoid going to a faraway college. She has no ambition because she does not want to pursue further education despite having the chance. She represents the struggles that women face when growing up and the difficulties they have when choosing their path due to cultural and societal pressures

These two women have lived different lives, in different parts of the America, but they both share the fantasies of what life should be like mainly created by the print and electronic media. Cleofilas dreams of passion, of finding her soul mate, 'the one' and she is ready to suffer from any kind of pain so

as get him and stay with him. She sees love as the ultimate thing that a woman can gain and it is, therefore, worthy of any suffering or hardship that she has to endure such as domestic abuse. The narrator in *Ranch Girl* also has dreams of 'the one', she imagines him to be a sweet guy who will marry her and with whom she will have brown children. This is why she fails her classes in high school so as to end up in the same college as Andy, the man who she thinks is the one for her, she will also do anything so as to get him and keep him.

Both women also try to achieve a certain standard of beauty that they believe is necessary. Cleophilas always tries to apply make-up and comb her hair like the girls in the movies. The narrator in *Ranch Girl* also compares herself to the girls from the east who are not 'really ranch girls' as she is. In both cases, the women end up feeling inadequate because they cannot achieve these standards of beauty which are based on fantasies. Cleophilas talks of Lucia Mendez and how she has bought hair dye so that she can look just like her, she resigns to her fate by saying "everything happens to women with names like jewels." *Ranch Girl* decided to make herself fail because she can never fit in with those Montana debutantes, her hair might be long and curly but they don't like it curly in Montana.

The future is bright and filled with happiness for both women, they dream of happily ever after, Cleophilas has dreams and fantasies of how beautiful her married life will be, as in the movies and novels. The narrator in *Ranch Girl* also dreams about how great her future will be when she gets to college, she hopes that she will get married to Andy because he is the one but also has a fall back plan in the form of other football team players. For both women, it

is yet another disappointment as Cleophilas marriage turns into a nightmare due to poverty and domestic abuse while, for the narrator, Andy dies and she remains unmarried because she just cannot find anyone like him, he was the one.

Both stories highlight the chauvinistic cultures that oppress women. For the case of Cleophilas, she had no say in her marriage; it was a transaction between Pedro and her father. In Ranch Girl, we see that Carla's father is very eager about her marriage since he stands to gain land from it. Virginity is demanded by the men in both stories if a woman is to be married yet the men still want to have sexual relations with these women before marriage. Education for women is not important in both of the cultures portrayed in these stories. The theme of marriage is also examined with the authors portraying how the reality of marriage is different from the fantasies that most women have when growing up. In contrast Cisneros' story explores the theme of domestic violence against women something that is not present in Ranch Girl. She also explores the problems that immigrants face such as language barriers, poverty and lack of employment.

Meloy uses second person narration as a stylistic device which enables the reader to connect emotionally with the characters while Cisneros uses third person narration which gives the reader a bird's eye view of the characters and what is going on in their lives. Both authors use dialogue, metaphors and vivid description so as to give the reader a clear view of what the characters are doing and enabling them to understand them better.

## **Works Cited**

Cisneros, Sandra. *Woman Hollering Creek*. New York; Random House. 1991.

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Meloy, Maile. *Half in Love: Stories (Ranch Girl)* Scribner. 2003. Print