

# Candelo college essay



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Lying is a concept that has the disastrous potential to cause destruction but also has the ability to protect. In 'Candelo', more often than not it is not lying that creates havoc for the characters but the withholding of the truth. It is arguable that both are as bad as each other.

The consequences of this issue affects the way the characters in Candelo live and it is evident that they struggle to move on with their lives because of a past never dealt with. The book investigates many themes such as death and relationships but ultimately they all revolve around the themes of deceit and lies. Everyone in the book has to deal with the problems caused by lies. All the characters underestimate the capacity of lies and the consequences for many of them are quite tragic whilst for others a lie proves to be a saviour.

Trust, truth and guilt are all awkward relations to lies. Candelo chooses to form its basis on the message that these three themes protrude. Every person in the book is somehow unfortunately negatively related to these themes. Ursula, the main character and narrator, breaks her trust with everyone, including her mother and brother, boyfriend and friends. She hides things from her family and cheats on the one she professes to love. The dire consequences of this are the disintegration of her family, loss of respect from those close to her and an empty life.

She later confronts her past and faces the harsh reality of what she has done and in doing so states, "What was wrong with me?" and "how could I fall in love and stay in love?" (Candelo, p. 105). Bernard, Ursula's father, is the obvious liar in the text as he blatantly hurts those he loves by deserting

them and brazenly lies to the police. The life changing consequences of this are the lasting problems it caused his son, Simon and his estrangement from his family and a lack of faith in himself. In this case, however, lying did have the ability to protect as Bernard's consummate lies to the police prevented Simon from being imprisoned.

Simon's life is destroyed by a tremendous guilt based on the lies of his past. His life is empty, boring and almost lifeless as a consequence of his actions at Candelo. Through these three characters we can see the potential lies have to destroy lives. Throughout the text we are also led to believe that lies have the ability to protect but more often than not this leads to further and more serious problems. The consequence of lying in the novel affected the way characters were able to, or not able to form proper relationships. The family relationship in the book between Ursula, Simon and their mother Vi was not healthy.

Lies laid a frail foundation in which nothing positive or honest could eventuate from it. It had been destroyed through deceit and the hiding of the truth from each other. Vi was sick and frail and needed the support of her children. The secretive and untruthful nature of their relationship created an alienation within the family. A balanced relationship that resulted from lies, was between Bernard and Ursula. His desertion cause Ursula to realise how much she felt for her father but at the same time Ursula hated her father for what he had done to the family.

Bernard also allowed Ursula to live a noncommittal life resulting in a failure to form a career and any sort of confidence in her own ability. This

eventuated in bringing them closer together but at the same time further apart, all as a consequence of lies to others and ones self. A character, yet to be mentioned, Mitchell played a major role in the plot of the book and explored a sensual relationship with Ursula despite the fact she would deny it to herself. She is unable to escape what happened in the past between her and Mitchell because she refused to accept their relationship and denied that it even happened. They shared a friendship and trust yet she seemed embarrassed by this.

The agonising result of this was Ursula was not able to move on from the past and continued to form meaningless relationships as her father had done after leaving Vi. She was taught the incorrect lesson to walk away when thing became too hard instead of fighting for what you wanted. Her relationships with Marco and Anton were destroyed by painful deceit and deception. The psychological consequences of this for her are guilt and a failure to form a proper relationship.

In the book Ursula describes her improper relationships with her friends by saying, " I have a lot of friends...But there are few to whom I am close. " (Candelo, p. 105).

We can see that Ursula is almost forced to live a life of deception because of previous lies told to herself and to others, holding her back from establishing a guiltless future. Two deaths become very contentious issues in the text and are the reason for many of the lies proclaimed. The inability of the characters to deal with a life built on a lie sums up their immoral, second-rate lives and unites everyone on common ground. There are two deaths in

the novel, the first one was that of Evie, the young sister of Simon and Ursula. Her death forces characters to lie and has consequences for them that will haunt them for the rest of their lives. From the outcome of the incident Simon fails to confess to his involvement in his sister's death, preferring to throw the blame onto Mitchell.

The momentous aftermath of this is Mitchell probably committed suicide because of the decisions made on that day. Simon also struggles with an everlasting guilt, and a lack of personal development. The events at Candelo destroyed the relationships between Simon and his family. His mother described what was keeping them apart as, "...

he gap between what he once was and what he has become". (Candelo, P. 10) Ursula lied to herself as a result of the death of her sister. She lied to herself about her relationship with Mitchell and the sequence of events prior to the car crash. She failed to accept she had had a relationship with an innocent bystander.

This lie prevented her from forming any positive relationships in the future and it isn't until she accepts what happened that she was able to move on because presently she was stuck in her past, restraining her every thought. The second death in the book, that of Mitchell, gave some of the characters a chance to revisit the past and correct their lives to a large degree. An event as big as Mitchell's death seems the only possible avenue to bring out the truth and the apparent turning point where they accept what they had done and realise there was absolutely nothing they could do about it. The ultimate consequence of lying about the first death was in fact the second

death, that of Mitchell, and Simon could well be at fault for both. The issues and themes raised in Candelo have enabled us to see that the concept of lying has the capacity to cause desolation, misery, lack of trust, empty lives and the ability to imperil others.

On the other hand it can also have the ability to harbour and protect. Despite the fact lies played a major role in the text, the abstaining from the truth arguably played an equal part. There were many consequences as a result of deceit, evident in all of the characters and these consequences incapacitated their ability to move on from Candelo and establish fruitful lives with meaningful relationships.