

Cousin kate by christina rossetti and the seduction



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

"Cousin Kate" is about a humble cottage maiden who was lured and seduced into having sex with the lord of the manor; "He lured me to his palace home woe me for joy." He used her for sex, and treated her like she was something he owned, "His plaything and his love. He wore me like a silken knot, he changed me like a glove." The lord went on to lure the cottage maiden's cousin Kate, as she was more beautiful. He eventually married her because she was a virgin. Everyone in the village thinks the cottage maiden is dirty, unclean, and made to be an outcast whereas her cousin Kate leads a good life.

The cottage maiden feels triumphant because her cousin Kate is infertile, but the cottage maiden has a son by the lord. "Cousin Kate" has forty-eight lines. It has five paragraphs; the first has sixteen lines and the next four all consist of eight. The language of "Cousin Kate" is short and straight to the point, "So now I moan, an unclean thing." Sentences like, "I was cottage maiden." are very short and to the point. The mood of "Cousin Kate" is one of deep sadness, "Woe's me for joy thereof" and self-pity.

This is because the narrator is used then swapped for her better-looking cousin Kate. Then her local community discards the narrator when she needed the most support. "The Seduction" is about a normal sixteen-year-old girl that goes to parties and has a good time; then her life abruptly goes wrong. She meets a rogue that just wants to get her drunk, he takes her to the place where he bunks off school and gets high on paint thinner. She was so drunk she couldn't even control herself properly, "Her head rolled forward."

He had planned not to be as drunk so he could take advantage of her; he made the first move, “ He swiftly contrived to kiss her. ” She just giggled and didn’t see what he was doing. Three months later she discovered she was pregnant, she sobbed in her room and ripped all of her magazines in anger and fear. She had now realised how he had used her, “ Cheated by the promise of it all. ” She feels like that one event has taken away her childhood, “ For where, now, was the summer of her sixteenth year. ” Her innocence had gone and she knows she has missed out on having a boyfriend.

She feels it would be better to be addicted to drugs or anorexic than pregnant, “ Better to be smoking scented drugs, Better to starve yourself, like a sick, precocious child than to walk through town with a belly huge and ripe. ” “ And better, now, to turn away, move away, than to have the neighbours whisper that ‘ you always looked the type’. ” She thinks it would be better to just fade away than to be teased and called hurtful names. The structure of “ The Seduction” has sixty-four lines, It consists of 16 paragraphs all of four lines, “ was the summer of her sixteenth year. I think the writer Eileen McAuley has done this to emphasise the girl’s age.

These poems have many things in common. For example they are both about young ladies that have a baby out of marriage with someone they don’t love; both the fathers don’t want anything to do with their child. Also both the authors were women. The women both feel used by the men they slept with; “ Call me an outcast thing. ” From “ Cousin Kate” and “ Than to have the neighbours whisper that ‘ you always looked the type’. ” Also they

were both treated badly by people that don't know the whole story. The poems are also both different in many ways.

The young lady in "Cousin Kate" lived in the 19th Century, was in her early twenties, she was frowned upon because she had a child out of wedlock, "My fair-haired son, My shame." Also she had sex out of her own sober free will and was not intoxicated or influenced by anything. While the girl in "The Seduction" lived in the later part of the eighties, she was only sixteen; people frowned her upon because she has had a teenage pregnancy not because she wasn't wedded. As well the girl in "The Seduction" was under the influence of alcohol, she didn't have sex out of her own will.

The mood of "Cousin Kate" is firstly sad and bitter, "So now I moan, an unclean thing that might have been a dove." Then it changes at the of the poem to a triumphant mood, "My fair-hared son, my shame, my pride." She is made an outcast because she has a son out of matrimony, but is proud of her son and loves him. As well her cousin Kate cannot have children so she has an advantage over her. The mood of "The Seduction" is agonizing and bitter all the way through the poem and even more so at the closing stages, "She sobbed in the cool, locked darkness of her room. It is exceedingly depressing and gloomy.

Christina Rossetti uses words such as 'lured' to describe the lord's sly and devious character. She uses oxymorons to describe the situation that the narrator is in, "A shameless shameful life." And, "My shame, my pride." I find these words effective because they are very illustrative words, "An unclean thing who might have been a dove." Which construct a strong

representation of the poem in my mind. This poem makes me feel sorry for the cottage maiden, because the sly lord tricked her.

The language that is used in "The Seduction" creates a bleak picture of the night's events. The poet uses phrases like, "Green as a sceptic wound." And, "Muttered 'little slag'." These phrases create the impression of a horrible and regretful event, which will echo in the girl's mind for the rest of her life. The words and phrases used make me feel sad and make me think about how cruel people can be to each other, "He handed her the vodka, and she knocked it back like water, she giggled, drunk and nervous, and he muttered 'little slag'." regardless of what might happen to the person.

This poem makes me feel deeply sad for the girl and her unfortunate situation, I can relate to her quite well because we are the same age and I have seen some people in similar situations. I prefer "Cousin Kate" Christina Rossetti's poem because it is nowhere near as grim or bitter as Eileen McAuley's poem "The Seduction". I also prefer "Cousin Kate" to "The Seduction" because it becomes more cheerful at the end, and doesn't leave you depressed and disheartened like "The Seduction" does, "And better, now, to turn away, move away, fade away, than to have the neighbours whisper 'you always looked the type'."

These are the last lines of "The Seduction" they make me feel sad and leave me with bitter thoughts carved inside my mind. I think that the attitude to teenage pregnancy has always been a sore subject and always frowned upon by society, but overall it hasn't changed but has become more lenient over time, because the narrator in "Cousin Kate" was socially discarded for

having a child out of wedlock while she was in her early twenties. “ The neighbours whisper ‘ you always looked the type’. ” A hundred years later in a more relaxed society the girl in “ The Seduction” was treated the same, pushed away when she was at her time of need.