

The search for male and female salvation and acceptance



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The Tin Flute by Gabriel Roy is a Canadian fiction set up in the early 1940's during the Second World War when Canada was going through the great depression. The book revolves around characters who strive to find romance, alleviate poverty and overcome ignorance amidst the recession. The most prominent characters are; Florentine Lacasse, Jean Lévesque, Rose-Anna Lacasse, Azarius Lacasse, Eugene Lacasse and Emmanuel Letourneau. These characters live seeking an escape from their current situations and approval from the society they live in. This inner conflict leads most of them to doing things that bring them closer to their goals. Both female and male characters encounter a social pressure that pushes them to some actions. Most of these expectations are beyond the reach of these characters due to situations like poverty. The essay provides an in depth analysis of the characters' pursuit of redemption, how they deal with social standards and how these societal expectations victimize them.

Florentine Lacasse's greatest desire is to become wealthy and eradicate the overwhelming poverty that her family suffers from. In search of wealth, she starts working in a five-ten store in Montreal where she meets Jean Lévesque who she gets attracted to. Despite Jean's ego, Florentine remains with him because he is employed and she likes him. Florentine liked the fact that he dressed better than the rest of the men who desired her. She becomes appealed by the city center and elegant streets especially after meeting Jean. Florentine falls in love with Jean and becomes pregnant. Jean refuses to marry her with reason that she will stop him from becoming rich. Since Florentine's mother cannot afford to host any more babies, her salvation becomes Emmanuel Letourneau. She marries him and ends up living a better

life because Emmanuel guarantees her a monthly cheque and a good apartment. Society expects her to get married and have children. She is victimized because she has to marry a man she does not love although she leads a better life afterwards.

Jean Lévesque is a young mechanist who also desires wealth and a splendid future. Jean enjoys exploring people to test the levels of his confidence and many at times he pities them for their poverty. When he meets Florentine, he flirts with her and after he convinces her to go on a date with him, he no longer shows interest in her. After dating Florentine, Jean realizes that she will hinder him from establishing himself by distracting him because he was falling in love with her. His salvation is the satisfaction of his ego and acquisition of wealth which he does by befriending Florentine and dumping her to his friend Emmanuel Letourneau. In Jean's quest to flaunting his skills, appealing to his inner self and attaining wealth, he loses Florentine who he liked. Although the society expects Jean to marry and have a family, he has a different end goal. Jean is not victimized because unlike other young people he is professionally employed and has enough to sustain a classy lifestyle.

Rose-Anna Lacasse is Florentine's mother and Azarius' wife. Her husband has no job which makes her the breadwinner of the family. The destitute life she lives with her family makes her lose her husband and children. Florentine gets married to seek a better life, Daniel dies of Leukemia, Eugene and Azarius join the military to guarantee Rose-Anna a monthly cheque. Because of her family's poverty, her salvation becomes prostitution in different hostels. Because she is a staunch catholic, she cannot use birth control methods and she ends up birthing twelve children. When giving birth to her

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last child, she is alone. All her live family members have left her in pursuit of money. As a mother, Rose-Anna is expected to care for her husband and children. The society victimizes her because she continues to produce more children despite the looming poverty levels. Her acts of prostitution are also discriminated against by other people. The public becomes blind to the fact that her family members are unemployed which leaves her as the sole breadwinner.

Azarius Lacasse is Florentine's father whose main occupation is carpentry. As a result of the great depression, he loses his job. Azarius is no longer able to sustain any job that comes his way. He becomes unable to provide for his family. His responsibility was to look for cheaper rental houses that his family would move into. Azarius decides to enlist himself to the army just like his son Eugene. He understands that it was a death risk but if it meant providing for his family, then so be it. He comes back home wearing military uniform. The military becomes a source of salvation for his unemployment. As a man, Azarius is expected to provide for his family which makes him an ideal man in the society. When he lost his job, he failed his duty of provision to his family hence he losing his identity as a man in the society. These expectations discriminate against Azarius making him resort to the military for salvation. His wife will receive monthly payments as he risks his life for his country.

Poverty, societal expectations and selfishness can make people lowe themselves to unimaginable levels. The need for money made Rose-Anna become a prostitute and it also resulted to the loss of her three children and husband. Selfishness caused the separation of Jean and Florentine despite <https://assignbuster.com/the-search-for-male-and-female-salvation-and-acceptance/>

the pregnancy she carried. Jean felt like Florentine would make him unsuccessful yet he wanted to acquire wealth. This action resulted to Florentine marrying Emmanuel for money and not love. Societal expectations made Azarius resort to following his son in the military. He wanted to ensure his family had enough so he took the risk. The military turned out to be Azarius' salvation. Eugene also joined the military to make sure his mother received monthly payment. The burden of self-sustenance pushes people to extensive limits. The resulting actions bear consequences that people have to live with for the rest of their lives. In a nutshell, the act of pleasing the society and self-reclamation always come at a cost.