

Mcteague

Business



In *McTeague*, a novel by Frank Norris, greed is the major theme and it is reflected throughout the whole book. Several characters show greed through their behavior and reactions. Some aren't greedy until they are affected by certain stimuli, while other characters aren't greedy at all.

Marcus stands out for being one of the greediest and most avaricious characters in the novel. His actions are based on the willingness to get money, which becomes an obsession for him. Since Trina gets the five thousand dollars, his behavior changes considerably. Marcus is jealous of his own friend McTeague, because of believing he is the one who deserves the money. His reaction to the money has consequences on his relationship with the rest of the characters, as well as on his own future. His greed is closely related to selfishness, as he only thinks of himself and forgets the thoughts and desires of the people around him.

Greed makes him indifferent to the people who once had been his friends. Everything seems to be fine until McTeague decides to marry Trina, which makes Marcus mad. However, it is not only the marriage that causes him to be jealous- he is also jealous because of the five thousand dollars Trina had won in the lottery. Marcus thinks he deserves to have the money and the girl, but he is wrong, and does not deserve any of these things. McTeague had been the one who married Trina, and in consequence, the one who deserves the money. Marcus's jealousy does not come from the loss of Trina, but of the idea that if he kept Trina, he would be wealthy.

"If I had my rights", cried Marcus, bitterly, "I'd have part of that money. It's my due it's only justice." The dentist still kept silence. "If it hadn't been for

me,” Marcus continued, addressing himself directly to McTeague, “ you wouldn’t have had a cent of it no, not a cent. Where’s my share, I’d like to know? Where do I come in? No, I ain’t in it any more. I’ve been played for a sucker, an’ now that you’ve got all you can out of me, now that you’ve done me out of my girl and out of my money, you give me the go-by.

Why, where would you have been to-day if it hadn’t been for me?” Marcus shouted in a sudden exasperation, “ You’d been plugging teeth at two bits an hour. Ain’t you got any gratitude? Ain’t you got any sense of decency?”

(McTeague) From this moment, Marcus’s behavior towards McTeague changes completely; he mistreats him and he is sarcastic. Marcus’s reaction to the money is very strong and leads to several conflicts throughout the book. The winning of the lottery is just the beginning of the end of their friendship. In the book, there is a violent scene between McTeague and Marcus when they are at Frenna’s saloon.

Surprisingly, and to the amazement of the people at the bar, there is an argument between both men. Marcus shows McTeague a knife, with the intention of attack. This conflict damages their friendship in an irreparable way. Problems continue, with other vicious encounters as time passes by. The picnic is the last straw and the event that breaks their friendship forever. It appears to go smoothly until Marcus and McTeague decide to play games and end up fighting in a wrestling match.

Marcus’s pride is hurt, and he wants revenge. The inoffensive wrestling match causes a real fight between the two men who had once been best friends. Marcus, under the power of anger and hatred, bites McTeague’s ear,

which begins to bleed. McTeague, as a reaction, attacks Marcus back and breaks his arm. Marcus's hatred towards McTeague and his avarice lead to another dramatic event.

Thanks to his position as a politician, he lets the authority know that McTeague does not have a dentistry diploma or any other kind of certification. McTeague receives a letter telling him he has to stop practising dentistry. Marcus's greedy and jealousies are the reasons of the end of McTeague's dentistry career and to the start of a miserable life. McTeague went out, closing the door. Trina stood for a moment looking intently at the bricks at her feet. Then she returned to the table, and sat down again before the notice, and, resting her head in both her fists, read it yet another time.

Suddenly the conviction seized upon her that it was all true. McTeague would be obliged to stop work, no matter how good a dentist he was. But why had the authorities at the City Hall waited this long before serving the notice? All at once Trina snapped her fingers, with a quick flash of intelligence. " It's Marcus that's done it," she cried. (McTeague) Marcus does not only show indifference towards McTeague, but he also causes him harm as a way of vengeance.

Marcus's concerns are only related to the money, his only focus and the pull that gives him life. He wants to get the money, because he thinks it is his right. At the end of the book, Marcus becomes a bounty hunter as he hears that the law is trying to find McTeague because of Trina's murder. He knew McTeague, Trina was his cousin and he thought the money was his, so he

decides to join the sheriff in charge. After leaving the group and the sheriff, he goes on his own to look for McTeague, moved by the thirst of gold.

Marcus and McTeague, in the middle of Death Valley, putting their lives in danger, do not care about what might happen to them. They are only concerned about the sack of money. "What did you do with that money, with those five thousand dollars?" "It's on the mule," answered McTeague, sullenly. Marcus grunted, and cast a glance at the mule, which was standing some distance away, snorting nervously, and from time to time flattening his long ears. "Is that it there on the horn of the saddle, there in that canvas sack?" Marcus demanded.

"Yes, that's it." A gleam of satisfaction came into Marcus's eyes, and under his breath he muttered: "Got it at last." (McTeague) Money becomes more important than personal relationships, and he gives more relevance to the money than to the fact that McTeague killed Trina, his own cousin. He does not ask McTeague about the reasons he had to kill Trina. Instead of having concern for his cousin, he asks McTeague about the money.

They fight over the sack that contains the five thousand dollars and McTeague kills Marcus. Marcus finally handcuffs himself to McTeague, trapping him in his own cage. As McTeague rose to his feet, he felt a pull at his right wrist; something held it fast. Looking down, he saw that Marcus in that last struggle had found strength to handcuff their wrists together. Marcus was dead now; McTeague was locked to the body.

All about him, vast interminable, stretched the measureless leagues of Death Valley. (McTeague) It was not the money, but his reaction to the money that
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causes Marcus to lose his friendship and ties with McTeague. It is also his reaction to the money that leads to his death at the desert. A man with wisdom would have never put his life in danger and go into the desert just because of money. Marcus had not even taken water with him, which would have given him a lesser chance to die in the desert.

Money is not guaranteed to bring happiness; it can also bring sadness, danger and death. Marcus is an example of that, a reflection of how people's reaction to money can have strong and atrocious consequences.