

# Kate mccaffrey's novel "destroying avalon" essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Bullying](#)



## **Kate McCaffrey's novel " Destroying Avalon" Essay Sample**

Kate McCaffrey's novel, *Destroying Avalon* is the terrible and touching tale of a teenage girl, pushed from her comfortable life in the country, into the malicious circle of bullying, stereotyping and hidden secrets that make up her new school in the city. McCaffrey portrays a series of issues through the eyes of Avalon her main character, these include cyber bullying, stereotyping, the effect of dysfunctional families on children and sexuality. All these issues are very relevant in this day and age, some, such as cyber bullying, are new issues that we still have a lot to learn about. *Destroying Avalon* portrays all these issues in a very convincing and reliable way.

The main issue of *Destroying Avalon* is cyber bullying. Although there is a lot of physical and verbal bullying throughout the book, Avalon suffers most from the relentless and cruel cyber bullying she is subject too. From day one every chat line or blog page was filled with words of hate for Avalon. Whilst hiding behind their computer screens the bullies cowardly call Avalon a whore, slag, skank, slut or any awful name they like. " I sat in front of my computer screen horrified. I felt assaulted. My eye's burned. Why were they doing this to me?" Avalon was shocked she could hardly take it. McCaffrey put across the emotions a teenage girl would go through after this shock very well, the sick feeling in the pit of Avalon's stomach, her need to read more and her desperation to keep it all secret from her parents. Cyber bullying is a very new issue that everyone has still to learn a lot about, but *Destroying Avalon* ventures deep into this issue and effectively shows cyber bullying as the serious issue it has become for teenagers today.

Stereotyping is another very important issue addressed in the novel. In a school that is such a vicious social hierarchy it is inevitable for any one person not to be stereotyped, and grouped accordingly. Anyone who try's defy this system is simply labelled a weirdo and left to suffer. Avalon's friend Marshall was stereotyped as a gay as soon as he set foot in high school. People couldn't handle his feministic ways, extroverted personality and caring nature so they labelled him and then preceded to bully him for the label they'd given him. " They think I'm queer but I've never touched a guy, or looked at any of them funny. So how can they call me a poof?" Even Avalon one of Marshall's closest friends had stereotyped him as gay the moments she met him. We all make the mistake of judging people by first impressions and labelling them without thought. But through McCaffrey's characters we can see the awful effect stereotyping has on people and learn to become more aware of how easily we can stereotype people ourselves.

Many different types of families are shown in Destroying Avalon, Avalon's loving, caring family, Marshall's broken but managing family and Sukey's dysfunctional, drinking family. These different home lives all have different effects on children, some good and some bad. The worst portrayed in the book was Sukey's dysfunctional family. You soon learnt, from little clues picked up from different characters, that Sukey had a tough time at home with a mother whom drunk heavily and both verbally and physically abused her. Sukey suppressed a lot of anger by keeping quiet and remaining the thin, shy, un-popular girl and let it out through the computer where, in the

cyber world, she could be strong and mean just like the popular girl she secretly longed to be.

“ I've been a bully for a long time. I guess it started with mum. She always screamed at me and hit me if I didn't do what she wanted, but whilst safely behind my computer screen I could be the strong bully too. I could be just like them.” Due to the abuse Sukey suffered from her mother, having never been taught other ways than to use force to get what she wanted, Sukey became a bully herself. As well as this Sukey grew up with the heavy burden of suppressed rage, and all due to the awful treatment and lack of love she had got at home. The effect of dysfunctional families on children is a very important issue that must not be over looked but, as you can see in Destroying Avalon, is hard to control when children spend much of their time at home behind locked doors.

Destroying Avalon gives many examples of peer pressure the most prominent of which McCaffrey shows through her character Alice.

Throughout the book readers are lead to believe that Alice, ' the main school bitch', is responsible for the awful cyber bullying campaign against Avalon, but in the end Avalon discovers this presumption to be false. It turns out Alice only sent one text message and an e-mail, and she felt awful and cowardice doing even this. She continued to bully Alice at school because she felt pressured by everyone to do it, she was after all, the queen bee of the popular bitches. She didn't want her gang to ditch her, in fact it was this fear of being ditched that made Alice send the first text and e-mail, she was so afraid that Avalon would replace her.

“ You were so pretty and confident and smart, I thought you’d be more popular than me, and I couldn’t deal with that.” It turned out Alice was just another girl trying so hard to keep her role of popular girl that she was pressured into doing things she didn’t feel comfortable doing. I doubt that there is a teenager in the world who hasn’t suffered from peer pressure. Destroying Avalon gives readers the opportunity to learn from the characters’ mistakes, and hopefully be able to deal with situations involving peer pressure with a fuller knowledge of the issue in the future.

Destroying Avalon neatly wraps up many relevant issues that are all portrayed through McCaffrey’s transfixing plot line and relatable characters. As readers journey with Avalon through her ups and downs, her realisations and regrets they are given a realistic insight into the troubles of a bullied teen. In the end Alice learns to overcome her problems and deal with the things that have gone wrong for her and finally get her life back on track.