

"desiree's baby" and 'vendetta' essay sample



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“ Desiree’s Baby” and ‘ Vendetta’ Essay Sample

“ Desiree’s Baby”, written by Kate Chopin, is about racial prejudice in the late nineteenth century in Creole society. It also examines the gender inequality in Creole society. For instance the man was the head of the family and was not argued with.

‘ Vendetta’ is by Guy de Maupassant. ‘ Vendetta’ is also set in the late nineteenth century. This story examines the Corsican “ blood feud”. In this case an old lady’s son is killed so she takes revenge for his murder.

Both of the stories are based around leading female characters. Also both are told by an omniscient narrator.

Both societies support their status quo.

The French are very religious and in ‘ Vendetta’ Madam Saverini has the full backing of the church. “ She was in ecstasy of devotion”

In ‘ Desiree’s Baby’ nobody will stand up for her or her baby as they are thought to be from black descent and the society was incredibly racist.

“ Vendetta” is set in Corsica which is an island just off the coast of Italy but belongs to France. We learn at the beginning of the story that Corsica is a nasty, dreary place to be. “...harassed by relentless winds....” We learn very little about Madam Saverini except that she is a widow.

A blood feud is something that was perfectly legal in Corsica until the 1950’s. Basically a blood feud is revenge by death if a member of your family was killed. For instance if you were a Corsican and a member of your family was

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killed then it would be your job to kill the person that killed the member of your family. The other family would then come after you and so on.

Sometimes this scaled into Clan vs. Clan war in which most members of the families would be killed. This was an accepted form of justice

Desiree's Baby is set in Louisiana, which is where Creole society is based. A Creole is a white person descended from the French settlers of Louisiana and the Gulf States and has kept their culture and language. We learn that where Desiree was brought up was a beautiful place and L'Abri was a morbid place, dark place.

In Creole society in the late nineteenth century, if you were black then you were a slave and if you were white then you were a boss. If you were male then you were the household master and if you were female then you were a thing that came with a business arrangement and could be used and abused. In Creole society most men had a mistress as marriage was like a business arrangement and not for love.

Both Kate Chopin and Guy de Maupassant are of French descent. Guy de Maupassant was born in Normandy, France in 1850 and died in a mental institute in 1893. Kate Chopin was a member of the Creole society that she wrote so much about. She was born in St Louis, Missouri, America in 1850 and died of a cerebral hemorrhage in 1904. She was heavily influenced by Guy de Maupassant's writings throughout her own career.

Maupassant was a writer involved in the Naturalist movement. The Naturalists were a group of writers led by Emile Zola. These writers reflected real life in texts. The aim for these authors was to write about real-life

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characters and situations without passing judgment so that the reader can make up their own mind about what is happening. We can see that he has shown this in ' Vendetta' by taking an objective tone. We do not get his personal opinion about the morality of murder and revenge.

Guy de Maupassant did not want the reader to be emotionally involved in the story and did not want to pass judgment. He did this by writing with an objective calm, often portraying characters as unhappy victims of their greed, desire or vanity but without sermonizing.

Kate Chopin on the other hand wants the reader to get emotionally involved with the issues she presents. We can see that she does this with the theme of racism by making the reader feel bad about the fact that Desiree is rejected from the house and commits suicide because it is thought that she has black ancestry. She also illustrates that sexism was hugely evident in the nineteenth century.