Mediterranean Foreshadowing Essay, Research Paper

The Jukebox Queen of Malta describes Rocco Raven?s experiences during his eight months at Malta. One day, while walking through the mangled streets of the tiny Mediterranean island, Rocco notices a beautiful woman glancing back at him. He follows her into a house on Windmill Street. When the two finally come face to face in a barren room at the top of a staircase, they fall onto a mattress in a fervid embrace. After acting upon their passions, the woman leaves without even revealing her name. The lust Rocco feels for this unnamed lady eventually grows into genuine love, but what will happen when Rocco receives orders to leave the island? Will he forget about the woman? Will he return to Malta and live happily ever after with her? Thanks to subtle clues left by Nicholas Rinaldi, it is possible to anticipate the fate of the lovers.

There are several couples on Malta in situations similar to that of Rocco and Melita, his blue-eyed beauty. Looking at their actions and their corresponding fates, it is possible to predict Rocco and Melita?s downfall. Count von Kreisen and Julietta board a submarine off of Malta together. The two, who Fingerly describes as ?inseparable? (282), later write from Alexandria to say that they are alive and well. Aida, however, does not have a similar experience with her relationship. Her husband, a British sailor, often cannot be home with Aida. During one of his missions aboard the destroyer Zulu, he is killed. Even Christina has trouble with her love life. Her boyfriend is also frequently gone, causing her to be constantly depressed. She tells Melita that she is not sure if her relationship will last much longer. This pattern continues throughout the novel showing that those couples that stay close to each other fair well, while those that spend long periods of time apart typically suffer a great misfortune. When Rocco is sent off of the island and away from Melita, it is obvious that something drastic will happen.

Several other signs indicate that Rocco and Melita will not grow old together. Even before meeting Melita, Rocco has had a hard time with relationships. His previous girlfriend now dates his best friend, and he barely talks to his father. Shortly into his new relationship, Rocco ponders his future. ?Soon, he imagined, he?d be pulled out of Malta and reattached to his unit, taken out as abruptly as he?d been sent in? (136). Melita has a cat named after the famous poet Byron. The poet had a passionate affair with a woman while visiting Malta, but he soon lost interest and left her. Would Rocco?s experience on Malta parallel that of Byron, or would the bad luck that Nigg believed the American carried lead to a worse catastrophe? Nardu Camilleri, during a moment of clarity, expresses his view on love. He says, ?Love is an immolation. That is why, in all the stories, the lovers die? (315). What he means is that in love, the two individuals? souls die and are reborn as one. However, the statement, taken literally, is foreshadowing for Melita?s death. She will soon be carried in the back of a hearse much like the one she frequently drives.

Several times in the novel, while looking at his girlfriend, Rocco has illusions. These visions foreshadow Melita?s death. One such vision occurs after Melita returns from her visit with Christina. He is contemplating marrying her when she starts floating through walls. He follows, but he cannot catch her. From this it is evident that when the time for marriage comes, Melita will be little more than a ghost. Another vision occurs after Rocco?s bombing run. Arriving home, he attempts to soothe his girlfriend by telling her that he loves her. She responds saying, ?Tell me about the future. Tell me how wonderful everything is going to be after the war? (302). As the conversation continues, Rocco notices that Melita is shrinking. She continues shrinking until he can no longer see her. Like the ghost apparition, this hints that when the war ends, Melita will be out of Rocco?s life. Melita?s form of death is also foreshadowed by an illusion. He is following her into the house on Windmill Street when he notices that ?she was suddenly on fire, her body a long tongue of flame? (48). He freezes, thinking for a minute that a shell had struck. He does not realize that in several months, she really would be hit by a bomb.

Throughout The Jukebox Queen of Malta there are numerous indications that the novel will not have a fairy tale ending. These hints occur as early as Melita?s first encounter with Rocco. That Sunday in April, the two met, had a passionate affair, and let their lives take them their separate ways. When Rocco came back to the house the next day, she was not there. This parallels their entire relationship. Just months after meeting each other, Rocco is transferred out of Malta. Before leaving he listens to Melita?s prophetic statement, ?Why should there be a happy ending? I like them, yes, but in life, tell me, where are they? (357). Rocco returns to the island at the end of the war only to find Melita dead.