The Storm And The Rocking Horse Winner Essay, Research Paper

As a general rule, children love fairy tales. We grow up being read Grimm’s or watching Disney remakes of classics. Parents love telling children fairy tales not only because they have an opportunity to spend time with their sons and daughters, but also because fairy tales, like fables, always contain a lesson or moral within them. Although both Kate Chopin’s “The Storm,” and D.H. Lawrence’s “The Rocking Horse Winner” have some of the qualities of a child’s fairy tale, only one of the stories has a moral tone, while the other has a very amoral one.

The beginning of “The Rocking Horse Winner” gives the reader a sense of fantasy. It starts off with “There was a woman who was beautiful, who started with all the advantages, yet she had no luck.” Already the reader has a sense of timelessness, of an extraordinary, illusory reality. Lawrence continues on with this feeling when the narrator tells us of this beautiful woman and her feelings towards her children. “Only she herself knew that at the center of her heart was a hard little place that could not feel love, no, not for anybody.” The narrator goes on to tell us the tale of a woman, unable to love her own children, who is obsessed with money. The house the family lived in was always filled with a whisper, “There must be more money!” This whisper is what leads to Paul becoming obsessed with money and luck like his mother. The dream-like tone that fills the story continues with the idea of the rocking horse helping Paul to find the winners of the races. In the end Paul dies, searching for the winner of the Derby through the night on his rocking horse. The moral of this story is a warning against being obsessed with money and luck, for the pursuit of these two things may kill you in the end.

“The Storm” begins with a much darker tone. It is set during a furious thunderstorm, a scene that foretells of dangerous happenings within the story. The passion of this storm is mirrored by the passion within Calixta and Alcee. While Calixta’s child and husband are out in the storm, Calixta is having sex with a married man who she had previously been involved with. Instead of worrying about her family, she enjoys an extremely passionate interlude with another man. When the storm subsides, Alcee leaves her and her family comes home. It is obvious that this time with Alcee has affected Calixta because when her family returns Bobinot notes that she is acting differently. Unfortunately, this fairy tale has a mixed ending. Calixta and Alcee are never found out. There will be no punishment for their betrayal. The story ends with the line, “So the storm passed, and everyone was happy.” This tale seems to tell us that betrayal of vows makes everyone happy. It is an amoral and even immoral message.

Both “The Storm” and “The Rocking-Horse Winner” are literarily sophisticated stories, yet they have some of the qualities of a child’s fairy tale. They each contain very different lessons, one moral and the other amoral.