

Analysis of Rappaccini's Daughter

Let us read the analysis of the famous short love story, "Rappaccini's Daughter" by Nathaniel Hawthorne. It follows the love life of a young couple, Giovanni and Beatrice, the daughter of Rappaccini who is very poisonous.

Analysis of Giovanni in Rappaccini's Daughter

- Giovanni Guasconti is the story's protagonist. He is a young man who moves from Southern Italy to Padua in order to pursue his studies.
- He is shown to be a very handsome man and is not wealthy. He is only able to afford a rundown room and stays next to Rappaccini's garden. When he finds out that Rappaccini's garden is filled with the most exotic poisonous plants, he is intrigued by it.
- Giovanni also sees that Beatrice kills plants and insects with just her touch and breath because she is poisonous herself. He also finds out that where she touched him in his hands, purple welts have formed. Instead of choosing to analyse the truth, Giovanni sets aside what he sees and fantasizes about the beautiful yet deadly Beatrice. He is also enraptured by Rappaccini's daughter, the beautiful and innocent Beatrice. Giovanni goes on to develop an intense and maddening love for Beatrice.
- Giovanni discovers that Beatrice is a very simple, kind and innocent girl who has never seen the world. Giovanni is shown to be honourable when even after a number of meetings, she refuses to let him touch her and he does not try to force himself on her.
- Upon Giovanni finding out that Beatrice, similar to the beautiful plants and flowers in the garden, is poisonous, he makes an inference that she is evil. However this is an incorrect inference as this is only based on the physical effect that she has on animals and insects around her which she truly has no control over. He fails to accurately discern Beatrice's true nature which is filled with innocence and purity.
- Giovanni finds out that he has become poisonous when he finds out that the flowers wilt in his hands and those insects which smell his breath die immediately. He becomes cruel and lashes out on Beatrice and accuses her of transferring her poison to him intentionally. This shows that he only cares for himself and not for her love. He does not believe for one moment that she is an innocent victim of her father's evil deed.
- Giovanni gives her an antidote for the poison which was given to him by his mentor Baglioni. However it ends up killing her instead. The interpretation of this is that Giovanni does not love her for who she is but only if she is exactly who he wants her to be. He yells at her saying that she is poisonous when in fact he is the one with a poisoned mind and soul for trying to change someone to suit themselves instead of accepting her for who she really is.
- Giovanni's betrayal of his lover Beatrice ultimately leads him to be the cause of her demise. This demonstrates to the reader that mankind's preoccupation science and the need to cause change which causes people to misunderstand the truth and become part of a great self inflicted falsehood.

Analysis of Beatrice in Rappaccini's Daughter

- Beatrice is the daughter of Rappaccini and is one of the protagonists of the story. She plays the role of the love interest of the protagonist Giovanni.
- She is the source of the story's controversy and the entire tale is around her and her physical nature as well as her innocence.
- Rappaccini is a great scientist and does not draw the boundary when it comes to expand the knowledge of science. He raises his daughter in his garden of poisonous plants and flowers. Beatrice becomes immune to the effects of the flowers and the plants which are highly toxic to anyone. As a cruel side effect, she becomes poisonous to any living thing. Insects which come near her die, flowers in her hand wilt and even when she touches her one love Giovanni, he is bruised and is left with welts in his hand.
- However, despite the toxic nature of her physical body, Beatrice is shown to be the epitome of moral virtue
- The Beatrice is also an allusion to Dante's Divine Comedy in which Dante's deceased love interest is called Beatrice. There she acts as his guide through Heaven.
- Beatrice is kind and loving and always crossing herself even when creatures like the lizard and fly pass away because of her.
- She is so kind and overflowing with love for every living being and creature that she encounters. Her love also extends to the poisonous flowers in her father's garden.
- Upon meeting Giovanni, she trusts him completely and opens her heart to him without fear, She asks him endless questions about the outside world, which she is forbidden to visit due to her toxicity.
- She displays wonder and love and trust in Giovanni. This goes on to reveal to the reader that innocence and good can exist even in a body that is corrupt.
- When Giovanni confronts her, she is heartbroken at his mistrust, revealing to the reader as well as Giovanni that she never meant him ill.
- She also shows selfless love and trust when she drinks the potion that Giovanni gives her. Since Beatrice is poison herself, she starts to die because of the potency of the medicine.
- In her final moments, Beatrice tells her father that she would rather have been loved and be part of mankind than protected from it by her poisonous body. Nathaniel Hawthorne tries to communicate a warning to the reader that one must not use science to try and go against nature by trying to cheat it.
- Also Beatrice displays her innocence and her broken trust in Giovanni when she asks him in the end as to whether Giovanni did not have more poison in his nature than she.

Analysis of Pietro Baglioni in Rappaccini's Daughter

- Pietro Baglioni is a famous professor in the university of Padua. He is an old friend of Giovanni's father and takes him as a medical student under his tutelage. Thus he is the reason for Giovanni coming to Padua.
- He is shown to have a strong dislike for Giacomo Rappaccini who is his professional rival. He does have great respect for his rival but does not like that Rappaccini does not draw any moral boundaries in his pursuit of science.
- When he discovers that his pupil, Giovanni has taken a love interest in Rappaccini's daughter Beatrice, he warns the young man strongly. He warns about Rappaccini and his interest in conducting experiments and that he would not be above conducting any experiments on humans for the sake of science. He requests Giovanni to be careful and to be on guard against any foul play. He is thus shown to be caring towards his friend's son and wants only what is best for him.
- Baglioni also displays his fondness for Giovanni by resolving to himself that he will use his medical knowledge to protect him from suffering.
- In the story, Baglioni is shown to be irritating from Giovanni's perspective and one who is interfering in his life. Giovanni prefers to daydream about Beatrice and does not like that Baglioni is only looking out for him.
- Baglioni goes to great lengths to learn about Giovanni's love interest, he learns that Rappaccini's daughter Beatrice is a poisonous woman because she has been exposed to poisonous plants her entire life.
- He also gives Giovanni a very potent antidote to cure her. This shows initially that Baglioni cares about Beatrice and Giovanni a lot. From a negative point of view, he is shown to be doing his best to undo the work of his rival Rappaccini.
- From Giovanni's window, the professor Baglioni watches Beatrice drink the antidote and die. He is not empathetic and shows his cruel side by rebuking Rappaccini with a mixture of horror and triumph for meddling with nature. He is cruel enough to suggest to a father in front of his dead child that the death of his daughter is a just reward.
- In conclusion an analysis of Baglioni shows that he is consumed by his jealousy over a professional rivalry. This in the end makes him commit an evil deed that kills Beatrice.
- In an allusion to Dante's Divine Comedy, the doctor's bad nature caused because of his professional rivalry outweighs all the good that he has done.

Analysis of Rappaccini

- Giacomo Rappaccini is a great scientist and the father of Beatrice. He has cultivated a garden filled with the most beautiful and exotic and poisonous plants and flowers.
- Though the garden is highly poisonous, he uses these plants to make many powerful medicines with which he cures people.

- Rappaccini only appears as a third person throughout the story and does not have a perspective as a protagonist should
- Rappaccini is described to be an extremely intelligent man one who does not draw any moral boundaries in his pursuit of science.
- Baglioni considers himself as a professional rival to Rappaccini and is shown to be jealous of his success. He says that while he is a great scientist, his great passion is unveiling the secrets of the world with sciences. He says that Rappaccini would not be above sacrificing anything, including human life, in pursuit of scientific knowledge.
- Rappaccini is shown to have great love for his daughter, Beatrice. He wants to protect her from the evils of the world and so he cultivates poison in her body so that she can protect herself against anyone.
- When he sees Giovanni visiting his daughter and that they are beginning to love each other, he makes a plan to make Giovanni's body poisonous as well so that he can live together with his daughter and procreate. This shows his twisted sense of science and love.
- His plan backfires when Giovanni accuses Beatrice of poisoning him and rebukes her, breaking her heart. Beatrice drinks the antidote to detoxify her body but it kills her as she is poison herself.