

At the 'Cadian Ball – Analysis and Summary PDF

Theme and moral of "At the 'Cadian Ball"

The moral of the story "At the 'Cadian Ball" written by Kate Chopin is that "love can exist only between equals". Note that this is a very old story and the world has changed since. One of the main themes in "At the 'Cadian Ball" is forbidden love because Calixta and Alcee love each other or are attracted to each other, but they cannot be together because Alcee is from the wealthy upper class while Calixta is from a much lower working class.

Another theme discussed in the story is the clear contrast and distinction between love and lust. While Alcee feels lust towards Calixta, Bobint feels true love towards her. Alcee feels love towards Clarisse while Clarisse loves him but understands that only when she realises that she would lose him soon.

Summary of At the 'Cadian Ball

The famous love story by Kate Chopin "At the 'Cadian Ball" follows the love lives of two young couples, the men Bobint and Alcee, and two young women, Calixta and Clarisse. The story takes place in Louisiana during the late 19th century and at that time social structures were very rigid. Alcee and Clarisse come from wealthy families while Bobint and Calixta are from the lower classes.

Bobint is a hard working Acadian farmer. He is in love with a Calixta who is an incredibly beautiful young woman from his own community. Bobint is a true gentleman and he knows that his affections are not reciprocated by Calixta. Because Alcee, the handsome young and wealthy Creole planter, will attend the ball, Bobint is worried that Calixta would fall for him and decides to go as well.

Alcee lives on a huge plantation with his mother, Madame Laballire, and her beautiful goddaughter, Clarisse. Alcee is a hardworking man and is not known for his love of guests or people. A few days prior, he proposed his love to Clarisse. This scandalizes Clarisse and she rejects him.

A powerful cyclone unfortunately destroys Alcee's entire rice crop and that becomes the talk of town. Alcee decides to attend the ball since he is desperate to relieve his frustrations.

At the ball, Alcee's presence causes a stir as he is a rich and wealthy plantation owner. Many of the men admire Alcee for showing his face after losing his crops to the cyclone. Women admire him for his good looks, charm and wealth.

Alcee and Calixta begin to flirt while Bobint searches for Calixta. Alcee notices Bobint desperately searching and asks Calixta if she will marry Bobint. She does not commit to an answer.

Suddenly a servant interrupts and informs Alcee of a visitor. Alcee gets angry and dismisses the servant. He then continues to flirt with Calixta. Suddenly Clarisse appears which startles Alcee. She asks him to come home saying that something has gone wrong. He readily heads home with Clarisse

He promptly forgets Calixta and leaves her. Bobint finds Calixta on the gallery and she is dejected. He offers to walk her home, and she agrees with indifference. She half heartedly tells Bobint that she is willing to marry him. Bobint is delighted beyond his wildest dreams.

Meanwhile Alcee and Clarisse are on their way home. She finally admits that she loves him. Alcee is delighted and forgets all about Calixta and the recent cyclone.

Analysis of At the 'Cadian Ball

Let us read the analysis of the famous short love story, "At the 'Cadian Ball" by Kate Chopin. It follows the love lives of two young couples, the men Bobint and Alcee, and two young women, Calixta and Clarisse.

The love story takes place in Louisiana during the late 19th century and at that time social structures were very rigid and the distinction between different classes of people were very much impressed on the people of America. Alcee and Clarisse come from wealthy families while Bobint and Calixta are from the lower classes.

Setting of the 'Cadian Ball

- The love story takes place in a French American community since many of the dialogues are spoken in French.
- Bobint is a farmer who farms for cane. This indicates that the story takes place in the American South. He is a lumbering and clumsy man and everyone laughs at him. Alcee is a wealthy plantation owner who is very handsome and everyone admires him.
- In the start of the story it is shown that Bobint is fixated and in love with Calixta. He desperately wants to marry her but she has spurned his advances. He is a true gentleman and does not pursue her. He chooses not to go to the 'Cadian ball as he does not want to incontinence her.
- Alcee is in love with Clarisse and proposes to her but is spurned by her. He immediately seeks to find love elsewhere and goes to the ball to flirt with Calixta although he knows that he won't marry her as she is from a much lower class.

Analysis of Calixta from the 'Cadian Ball

- Calixta has a reputation of sleeping with a man a year ago out of wedlock and that is a very harsh reputation to have in the 19th century American south.
- Her behaviour is considered improper for a lady and many women shun and spurn her. All the men woo her as she is a thing of great beauty.
- The American south is a very conservative society and the prevalent culture expect manners and culture in women which require restraint.

- Calixta has a reputation for definite lack of verbal restraint as well as perceived lack of physical restraint and thus is quite far from the cultural ideals appropriate for 1800s.
- Despite Calixta's impropriety, Bobint loves her for who she is while she does not like him as he is not exciting and charismatic as Alcee is.

Analysis of Bobint from the 'Cadian Ball

- The story describes Bobint to be a farmer to be dull looking, not charismatic, and clumsy. He is openly laughed at which shows that he has a negative reputation and does not have anger issues as people would not laugh so openly at an angry man.
- He is also described to be a good natured, kind and a loyal man. Calixta however does not consider this and only goes on and compares him to "Madame Tina's cow in the bog" which is an insult.
- An analysis of Bobint from the perspective of his feelings for Calixta presents a different quality about him. He is shown to be deeply in love with Calixta. When he is spurned by her, he shows character by not wanting to go to the ball so as not to embarrass her. This shows a high degree of morals and also honour which men lacked in the 1800s as it was a deeply patriarchal society.
- He also shows a sense of responsibility he has to protect Calixta from her own poor choices of judgement and also to her wellbeing when he decides to go to the ball because the notorious lover Alcee was coming to the ball. His desire to protect her from Alcee also goes on to demonstrate that his love for Calixta was not just mere attraction.
- He searches for her throughout the ball and believes in his love for her but does not show any outward displays of affection without her agreeing to it.
- When she agrees to the marriage grudgingly, he is truly elated and does not notice her frustration or her lack of interest which signifies that he is a simpleton.

Inherent classism

- From the outset of the story, classism is shown to be prevalent and widely accepted in the society and women and men must marry within their own classes.
- Alcee is shown to be interested in Calixta and the feeling is also mutual. However the story takes place in Louisiana during the late 19th century and at that time social structures were very rigid. Alcee and Clarisse come from wealthy families while Bobint and Calixta are from the lower classes.
- Thus Alcee and Calixta can never be together since they are both from different classes of people. Love rarely jumps between classes and this is not shown to be the case in this story.
- They are both shown to have had an affair in the past which shows that they may have actually had feelings for each other at some point but both of them are completely aware and accept that they cannot be together.

- The classism and rigid social structures are shown more clearly when Alcee goes on to ask Calixta when she will agree to the proposal of Bobint even when they are flirting with each other since they both are aware that marriage was the accepted and logical choice for the two even if she does not love him.