The Bridges Of Madison County Essay, Research Paper

THE BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY

AND ETHAN FROME COMPARISON

The novel s The Bridges of Madison County and Ethan Frome were very exceptional stories. Each novel focused on a hidden love that could not be known to others because of the terrible fate it would case. I thought that the stories mimic Robert Frost s poem the Road Not Taken , except that both Francesca and Ethan Frome take the road that everyone else took. They did not take the road less traveled because they felt that letting the world know they were together would ruin everyone s lives. These two people cared more about others and what they thought of them, and then they did themselves. If they would have taken the road less traveled and run away together then the stories would have not been so interesting. Francesca and Ethan do the good human thing by not being with the one they love and remain with whom they married first. The novels are that of anticipation and consequences of passion. Which path should they follow? Should they follow their hearts or not?

The settings in the Bridges of Madison County were beautiful and calm the whole time. There was no change in the surroundings that would make you feel like something bad would happen. The story has an emotional tension at some points and then a relaxing in love feeling at other times. In Ethan Frome the setting is cold and lifeless. The atmosphere is so dark and gloomy. Whenever Ethan finds his true love it seems as though the atmosphere gets a little brighter in Ethan s eyes, because he is happy now.

Understanding the thoughts and feelings of both Francesca and Ethan are very interesting. As you watch Francesca, before she commits to the affair, you understand her tension, her indecision. Ethan Frome was the same way; he watched his every move around Mattie and tried to hide his feelings until he could no more. Each time you can see the characters react to each other they see to be testing each other, moving closer and backing away, until finally they come together. In the case of Francesca and Robert you can feel this by the words they speak to each other, in the movie Francesca says And in that moment, everything I knew to be true about myself up until then was gone. I was acting like another woman, yet I was more myself than ever before. She knew she wanted him because being with him made her feel wonderful. Robert s feelings are not like a man would feel, well not a normal man. Most men are not so vibrant and emotional with their feelings as Robert is. The feelings he has are those that a woman would want her man to feel. The things he says makes him irresistible to Francesca because she has never had a man tell her things like he does or makes her feel like the only woman in the world. He tells her This kind of certainty comes but once in a lifetime. That line would make any woman drool for that kind of love. In Ethan Frome, Ethan wants Mattie for himself because she brings out the youth in him. He finds that he has a lot more emotions than he thought he had. I think that Robert Kincaid was more emotional and exciting that Ethan Frome. Robert expressed himself with such wonderful lines and Ethan wasn t so winning with the lines he spoke. We knew that Ethan was in love with Mattie, but he acted like the real man because he hid most of what he felt, and that is how men really do act. Men do not express completely what they feel for the fear of rejection and humiliation.

The victims in the store I would have to say would have to have been Francesca and Ethan. Francesca married her husband to come to America. She loved him very much, but not the way two people are supposed to love each other. To me Francesca was the maid to her husband. There was really no emotional bond between the two and there was always awkwardness around them. She was put into a situation that she could not get out of because she was married and even though she was not happy she remained married to her husband because of her children. In Ethan s case I feel he was the victim because he married Ethan marries the woman who nurses his mother before her death, Zeena, his wife, keeps him from realizing his full potential and where and what he is to be in life. He is with Zeena for the fear of being alone and Zeena is with Ethan for the same reason. Francesca and Ethan are both victims because they found true love, but could not follow their hearts because they cared about what others thought about them, then what they really wanted in order to be happy.

At the ending of the story in The Bridges of Madison County, Robert Kincaid and Francesca part and write a few times, but then stop because of the fear of her family finding out about her love. The two of them remain in love forever and at the end when Francesca s husband dies she tries to contact Robert, but can t seem to find him. She then thinks that he might have dies, so she stop contact. Two years later she receives a letter and a will from Robert. Comes to find out that he was not dead when she tried to find him. If only she could have found him and they could have had one more night together. I can t imagine how it felt for them to not ever see each other again; it must have been so heartbreaking. The ending of Ethan Frome was a tragedy. Ethan and Mattie go sledding together and try to commit suicide by running into a tree, because they knew they could not be together otherwise. Well the suicide attempt did not work; it just left them with long-term injuries. The injuries were crippling and left Zeena to take care of them both.

My feelings on the outcome would have been different because I love happy endings. In the Bridges of Madison County, Francesca and Robert would have left together and stayed with each other. It is so hard to see two soul mates ripped away from each other. If only they could have been together it would have been so great! They would have to live with a piece of their heart missing. Without your true love you are never complete, no matter how hard you will try, you will always wonder what they are doing and what your life would be like with them. I know Francesca had a family that she needed to take care of, but she always sacrificed her happiness for everyone else s, which was not fair to her. In Ethan Frome s case, I think that him and Mattie should have gone west together. They had no money, but love will see you through that. Trying to commit suicide was not smart on their part! They could have gone west and started a whole new life together as one. By running into the tree it only made the situation worse, they were stuck with Zeena and the town for the rest of their lives.

Society would have viewed Francesca s part as a wise decision, but those who have ever felt the love she did then those people would have wanted her to be with the man she really loved. Like someone once said to me Everything that happens in life has a reason! This is so true because the path we our on will have good times and bad times. We might come to a bump in the road, but we must be strong and walk over that bump. Sometimes things that happen in life are not what you wanted to happen, but we must accept fate because we cannot change what will happen. In the story of Ethan Frome I think society would have seen his attempt to commit suicide in order to be with Mattie was not a good choice. If he had wanted to be with her, they should have gone west together. There was other ways around trying to commit suicide. The penalty they had to pay for trying to kill themselves was a life-long injury and being trapped in a place they didn t want to be.

I really enjoyed both these stories because each had its own way of acting upon love. Even though I thought the endings were not good, I still feel like they should have been that way in order to captivate the audience. I am the Cinderella story type person where everything ends with a happy ending. I know that cannot always happen, but its fun to want it be. When life throws you lemons, make lemonade! If life kicks dirt on you, just wipe it off and keep going. In time, good things will come to those who wait!