

Sainthoods' Price

As you grow older it is inevitable that you will change in many ways. As a matter of fact it is impossible to survive without the ability to adapt to situations and surroundings. This ability is acquired as you age, learn and experience life. It is a part of growing up and society demands that you adapt and conform to their mores and customs. It is always difficult to veer from the path of uniformity which society leads. Many times you are able to slip by unnoticed with a minor variance from this path. However, when someone decides to blatantly blaze their own trail, often society makes their further growth and development a difficult task. As a result the community only tolerates acquiescence and conformity. Like the character Cristina in Nino Ricci's novel *Lives of the Saints*, it is only the most tenacious that can resist caving in to the pressure.

Often, this deviance can harm others, not just the dissident. Vittorio is continually badgered for the deeds his mother performed, and he is too innocent to realize that, her independence of spirit is the reason. As well, Cristina's father does not see past the cloud which has slowly been built up in Valle del Sole. The cloud which prevents most people from seeing how the failure to be an individual rules the town, and how anyone with the nerve to be unique is ostracized. Cristina's father's failure to understand this leads to the decline and eventually their total destruction of the family structure.

In many ways, the story of the character Cristina in the novel is similar to the story of Saint Christina. They both endure considerable suffering for standing up for their beliefs. In both cases they have whole villages opposing them, and neither of them give in, thus proving how strong they are. In the end, Santa Christina and Cristina end up leaving behind these villages for a better existence.

The villagers continuous attention to whatever Cristina does, prevents her from living her life as she would like. Cristina's only choice is to keep to herself and go about the tedious and repetitive housework she does day in and day out. This prevents any advance in her development and growth, she is left like a skipping record playing the same thing over and over, not making any progress in her life.

In Nino Ricci's novel *Lives of the Saints*, Cristina's surprising strength to resist society's demands is vital in showing how society can control people. In today's world one must realize this and learn to take it in stride. Everyone must grow and change, it is a fact of life and a necessity as much as sex is. Society should not be the only influence to the way an individual thinks or acts, because who really decides what is acceptable or not in "society's" eyes?

