

"The Two Wrongs of an Alcoholic Case"

In his writings, F. Scott Fitzgerald sometimes blends many similar character traits among the main characters. So it goes with "Two Wrongs," and "An Alcoholic Case." Perhaps it may seem an unlikely choice for a comparison/contrast, however I believe these stories are very much correlated. From the way that Fitzgerald typecasts, "alcoholic artists" as the main characters, to the similarities in the reactions and emotions of the supporting characters, both of which are females. With this also are the cases of the men having changes of hearts and trying to achieve a sense of nobility and character. These are just some of the similarities in Fitzgerald's stories.

These two stories share common thread in that the two main characters are artists, one theatrical producer and one cartoonist, both possessing alcohol problems. In "Two Wrongs," Bill McChesney is a successful theatrical producer living in New York, who in three years has produced nine shows of which, one was a flop. Bill is a man who has it all and knows it. He is a man who takes his profession seriously in the way that it produces many social advantages and opportunities.

In the other story we have an out of work cartoonist who also has an alcoholic problem. His is a condition that is so bad it requires him to have a nurse. This is an obvious and maybe at first glance, the only similarity between the two stories. In Fitzgerald's stories, fictional problems are often the result of alcoholism. There are, however more similarities than that.

Gamble, 2

There are also similarities in the supporting characters. Emmy Pinkard in "Two Wrongs," is Bill McChesney's wife who is struggling in her pursuit of a career as a ballet dancer. At the same time she must be supportive of the ups and downs and moving around of her husband's career, in essence, putting her career on hold. She is a woman who will stick by her husband in some rough times. It could be coincidental perhaps, but the nurse in "An Alcoholic Case" is the same type of person except on a professional business level. The nurse is assigned, by mistake, to an alcoholic case. She struggles with the case and is offered a chance to drop it. She makes the decision to stay, being loyal to the patient and to her code of helping others. Besides, she has since a complex relationship, complex meaning difficult yet satisfying. In both a similar yet different way, Emmy Pinkard sticks with her husband, putting the career she hasn't even been able to start yet on hold. In contrast with "An Alcoholic Case," given the opportunity to stick with him or move to her ambitions and goals as a ballet dancer, she takes the latter. She, while they are supposed to meet again, leaves her husband to fulfill her needs and wants.

A third similarity in these two stories is the attempt by the male characters to show nobility and character as an apologetic method. The cartoonist begins his relationship with the nurse on, shall we say, a sour note. He is a "recovering" alcoholic who is very difficult to work with. Bill McChesney essentially carries his wife around with him, while perhaps unconsciously, putting her career on hold. These characteristics of the two men do not exactly paint pretty pictures. Therefore, it is necessary for them to redeem themselves.

Gamble, 3

Upon acquiring the knowledge of his condition, Bill McChesney must move away for the winter, just when Emmy's career is taking off. As an act of nobility, although it seems later that it may have been half-heartedly, Bill tells his

wife that she should stay and continue her dancing in New York. After hours of conversation, she agrees to stay, sending him off alone. Bill, in striving for nobility has achieved it, but regrettably at the same time has lost his loving wife, possibly forever.

The cartoonist has come across and shown characteristics of a disgusting, horny drunk. He must now sober up, and show some redeeming quality for the nurse who has had a change of heart and decided to give him another chance. His solution reveals senility, yet it appears almost charming for the nurse. He invites her to an imaginary dinner party as well as drawing her cartoons. She is captured by the spirit of this man. His attempts were successful in every way, with the exception of one cigarette burn.

There is a reason I picked these two stories, and as well a reason that the title of this paper is "The Two Wrongs of an Alcoholic Case." The two wrongs of an alcoholic case are that the alcoholic is hurting himself as well as those close to him. The two artists' careers were brought down by alcoholism. There was also the matter of being power hungry in Bill's case, which may have in the end, caused him to lose his wife. It's ironic really, that what starts out as a nice relaxing sedative can ruin relationships, careers, and even lives.

