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English

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Diseased, Abusive Love

## 1 Thematic Statement

When physical desire becomes the only motivator in a relationship, the relationship becomes one-sided, with one individual forcing the other to fulfill their physical needs. Given that the forcing can be by any means seen fit, this lends itself to physical and emotional violence.

## 2 Quotes

- “I would have kidnapped her and locked her up, and only I would have had the key.” (36)
- “[T]he young man she had never seen before kissed Rosa on the lips, the neck, the breasts, and between the legs.” (39)
- “He was whistling. She continued to weep. Before dropping her off at her hut, the patron kissed her on the lips.” (57)
- “Not a girl passed from puberty to adulthood that he did not subject to the woods, the riverbank, or the wrought-iron bed.” (63)

- “Trueba continued polishing his reputation as a rake, sowing the entire region with his bastard offspring, reaping hatred” (63)
- “Barrabas became unstuck from his beloved, leaving her to die in the courtyard” (78)
- “Esteban swore that sooner or later she would come to love him as he needed to be loved, even if it meant he had to resort to extreme measures.” (96)
- “[I]t was impossible to spice them up with the salt of evil or the pepper of submission.” (129)
- “Clara came to fear him far more than she had when he was [healthy]” (164)
- “It was the first time she had seen her father’s temper turned against her mother.” (170)
- “One day, Clara had a bolt installed on her bedroom door and after that she never let me in her bed again, except when I forced myself on her” (179)
- “I tried rape again, just to see if it would get a rise out of her.” (181)
- “When he saw her, Esteban vented his rage on Clara.” (200)
- “He lost control and struck her in the face, knocking her against the wall.” (200)
- “A year after I took my vows, she became a widow and began to come to church and stare at me with languid eyes.” (227)
- “The walls of Jean de Satigny’s studio were covered with distressing erotic scenes that revealed her husband’s hidden character.” (260)
- “Senator Trueba’s relationship with his family only worsened with time.” (275)

- “He wanted to hurt her, destroy her, but he also wanted to continue smelling her” (286)
- “Jaime and Nicolas lost what little interest they had in the family and showed no compassion for their father” (297)
- “[I]n a flash the unchanged bride dissolved like a spell, disintegrating into a fine gray powder.” (305)
- “As soon as he was free again, he returned to Blanca, thinner, guiltier, and with deeper rings under his eyes” (311)
- “[W]ilting flowers in their hands and not a single tear for the solitary body they were laying to rest.” (313)
- “Garcia’s tongue tried to pry open her lips while his hand pressed against her jaw until he forced it open.” (327)
- “[H]e never let a day go by without seeing Alba, alternating unbridled violence with the pretense that he was a good friend.” (411)
- (413, §2)

### Best Examples

1. “[I]n a flash the unchanged bride dissolved like a spell, disintegrating into a fine gray powder.” (305)
2. “He wanted to hurt her, destroy her, but he also wanted to continue smelling her” (286)

3. “[H]e never let a day go by without seeing Alba, alternating unbridled violence with the pretense that he was a good friend.” (411)
4. (413, §2)
5. “He was whistling. She continued to weep. Before dropping her off at her hut, the patron kissed her on the lips.” (57)
6. “[T]he young man she had never seen before kissed Rosa on the lips, the neck, the breasts, and between the legs.” (39)
7. “One day, Clara had a bolt installed on her bedroom door and after that she never let me in her bed again, except when I forced myself on her” (179)
8. “Trueba continued polishing his reputation as a rake, sowing the entire region with his bastard offspring, reaping hatred” (63)
9. “Barrabas became unstuck from his beloved, leaving her to die in the courtyard” (78)
10. “A year after I took my vows, she became a widow and began to come to church and stare at me with languid eyes.” (227)

### 3 Paragraph

In the novel *The House of the Spirits*, written by Isabel Allende and translated by Magda Bogin, Allende's contrast of characters' emotions and actions suggests that as a relationship begins to revolve around physical desire, the relationship becomes increasingly violent, both emotionally and physically. This is especially apparent with Esteban Garcia's relationship with Alba, where he would "[alternate] unbridled violence with the pretense that he was a good friend" (411). Evidently, the contrast arises from the alternation of "unbridled violence" and the "pretense that [Esteban Garcia] was a good friend". However, this is one half; noting that during this time "[Garcia] never let a day go by without seeing Alba" (411)—raping her daily—this contrast becomes more pronounced. Given that Alba and Garcia's relationship is purely physical—that is, not romantic—Allende's juxtaposition of Garcia's violent and friendly demeanors emphasizes the violence of his and Alba's relationship. Similar to Garcia and Alba, Esteban Trueba and Pancha Garcia's relationship was purely physical as well; before raping Pancha, Esteban decides "that he would have to find a woman" (56) to fulfill his physical desire. Allende's imagery of the rape describes "[Esteban] [attacking] [Pancha] savagely...with unnecessary brutality" (57). Note that only two of the three requirements defined above are met: physical relationship and violence. The key, contrast, is presented immediately after the image of Pancha's rape, where "[Esteban] [is] whistling" while "[Pancha] [continues] to weep" (57). This juxtaposition by Allende reinforces the idea that a purely physical relationship is inherently a violent one. However, Allende does not always directly present this idea. Rosa and Esteban's relationship at first seems to be nonviolent, though it is important to note that violence is not necessarily limited to physical forms; emotional violence—teasing, isolation, and others—is just as potent. Considering this, it would be fair to

say that Rosa and Esteban's relationship was violent, as Esteban "lost two years dreaming of Rosa, working for Rosa, writing to Rosa, [and] wanting Rosa" (35), only for her to die, and for all his work to effectively be for naught. The fact that Rosa, in his eyes, "slipped through [his] hands" (34), punctuates the emotional violence of his and Rosa's relationship. Esteban's physical desire for Rosa is obvious; he notes that "[Rosa] was so beautiful...all [he] noticed was her face" (22). All of this is summed by Allende when Esteban unearths Rosa's coffin to take to the mausoleum, and as a result of his kiss Rosa's corpse "[disintegrates] into a fine gray powder" (305). Suddenly, Rosa is no longer a beautiful mermaid, but a decaying skeleton; more importantly, the Rosa the Beautiful that Esteban wants is now forever out of his reach, serving as the culmination of all of the teasing desire that Esteban experiences. In essence, Allende's use of contrast between characters' emotions and actions reveals the connection between physical desires and violence, a "skin-deep" marker for skin-deep emotions.