

Frank Shabata, Blinded by Anger

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Passion can sometimes lead to crimes of passion, destroying lives and families in the aftermath.

In the book *O Pioneers!*, by Willa Cather, Frank Shabata was a handsome man who was in love with the beautiful and outgoing lady named Marie Tovesky. Marie's father didn't approve of their romance. He felt Frank had nothing to offer his only daughter.

Frank, a quick-tempered man, knew of Mr. Tovesky's dislike for him. Nevertheless, when Marie turned eighteen, she ran away with the handsome Frank, and they married. They went to live in the town where Marie had grown up.

Mr. Tovesky set Frank up with a farm. One of Marie's daily routines was to visit her neighbor, Alexandra Bergson, whose farm was behind theirs. Alexandra had known Marie since Marie was five.

Alexandra's younger brother Emil had also been good friends with Marie since childhood. He had been in love with Marie but had never had the courage to tell her. Similarly, Marie had been in love with Emil and had kept her affection a secret. She carried this secret with her even while she was married to Frank.

One day, after hiding his feelings for many years, Emil declared his love to Marie. Marie's response was one of happiness mixed with sadness. She shared the same feelings of love but was married to another man. She told him that their love was impossible.

After their declaration of love, Marie and Emil met unexpectedly in the orchard behind Marie's home, as Marie was on her way to visit Alexandra. At the same time, Frank was returning home from work and, seeing his house empty but Emil's horse outside, grabbed his gun. When he became aware that nobody was in

the house, he went looking for his wife, following the footpath - and found her and Emil, locked in an embrace. Frank, full of rage, shot Marie and Emil to death.

Frank was sent to jail for ten years for this crime.

Alexandra, meanwhile, mourned the loss of her brother and her good friend Marie. Three months after Emil's death, Alexandra decided to visit Frank in the state penitentiary. She felt that Frank was paying a heavy penalty when it was Marie and Emil who had been in the wrong.

I would have to agree with Alexandra's way of thinking. Even though Frank was a jealous and grouchy person, he had worked hard to maintain his family. He had also adored Marie. On the other hand, Marie was also to blame for her and Emil's death because she used to spend time talking to Emil, knowing that her husband would react negatively. Emil was guilty too because it was he who had approached Marie that day. Yet they didn't have to be disgraced in his own town and rejected by his neighbors.

Frank had been blinded by his anger. He was contrite. He hadn't meant to hurt his wife or Emil. Alexandra's visit to Frank in prison was a sign of understanding. She couldn't bring Emil back to life but she did have an opportunity to help someone and that person was Frank. She helped him by giving him strength and support. She wanted to let him know that she would be looking for ways to have his sentence reduced.

There are tragic similarities between the fictional lives in O! Pioneers and my life. My brother was killed by a friend of his four years ago. If I were to see the person who killed my brother, I think I would pardon him because I do not believe it is my place to judge others. In much the same way as Alexandra did, I help those who have lost a loved one. She and I both give love and understanding to others.

Human beings need to learn how to control their passions, or their passions may have fatal consequences. But when they fail to do this and regretfully wrong others, we need to look into our hearts to find a place for love and understanding.

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