

Femme Fatales

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According to thefreedictionary.com, a femme fatale is a woman of great seductive charm who leads a man into trouble or comprising events. This same definition applies to the poem "La Belle Dame Sans Merci." The poem by John Keats, a man describes a lady who is so lovely but eventually leads him to troubling events. Through the theory of femme fatales, and "[La Belle Dame Sans Merci](#)" (The beautiful lady with no pity) the poem portrays the woman as evil through the dangers of her appearance, personality, romance, and power. The poem shows that [love](#) is not what it appears to be and leads the eager, gullible knight to compromising situations.

The narrator meets a pale broken hearted knight loitering in the forest. The pale knight describes a beautiful woman as "faery's child" (15) with "wild eyes" (16) to the narrator. The woman is beautiful but she is cruel. She does everything in her power to get the pale knight to fall in love with her. First, she uses her beauty and charm to seduce the knight by saying she loves him. Then she invites him to her "elfin grot" (small cave) (29). There she makes him fall asleep and he has nightmares of pale kings and queens shouting "La Belle Dame Sans Merci." The knight wakes to find himself on a cold hillside all alone and no beautiful woman to be found.

The Woman with no pity uses her appearance to lure the knight in to her ways. This strategy is common practice for a seductress or an enchantress. For example, the popular girl in high school who would flirt with the smart guys just to get them to help her with her homework or other things she needed. The seductress in the poem flirts with the knight to bring him back to her “elfin grot” (small cave) to use him for pleasure (29). The enchantress ...

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...e” as another deluded lover dooms himself” (137). His interpretation of her gestures (flirting with him) is what leads him to his fate. He is left on the hillside with a broken heart because he was gullible and eager for the woman to love him. He should not have rushed into believing that he was in love with the woman when actually, he barely knew her. Love is not rushed; however, it is learned over time.

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