LOVE AND RACE CAUGHT IN THE PUBLIC EYES

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What makes you black and how people treat you because you are black? Is it that one drop of blood or is it your background and upbringing that make people considered you black? Imagine being an outcast or different because of the color of your skin. Or walking down the street and getting treated like lower classman only fit to be a servant. Because of that one characteristic you would still get looked down upon no matter what other abilities or qualities you have to offer. Just because you have that one drop of blood that the world thinks of you as being nothing, worthless or not even human. Not worthy or deserving of true love.

Heidi Ardizzone and Early Lewis used existing records for research to write this article which was written back during the time when racism, class prejudice and gender discrimination were prevalent. It covered an interracial love story that ended in a bitter and humiliating trial in the public eyes. They questioned what happened to love when it existed between black and white. Is marriage the bond or strength that helps fight against racism and classes?

In 1921, Alice Jones was a domestic servant who came from New Rochelle. Her family had immigrated to the United States in 1891 from England. Most of her family members were part of the working class. Both of her parents were servants but her dad did manage to own a fleet of taxicabs and some small properties. Alice also had sisters who were domestic servants as were their spouses. Her mother, Elizabeth, who was white, once argued that there is a difference between being black and having colored blood during the trial.

Leonard “Kip” Rhinelander came from a completely different world than Alice. He was from New York’s oldest and wealthiest families. He could have gone to a fine school and follow his family’s footsteps but he chose to elope with Alice Jones. Their relationship began in 1921 and it carried on for three years despite his father’s efforts to keep them apart by sending Leonard away hoping that he would let go of his infatuation for Alice but their love still grew as each letters were exchanged. Trying to keep quiet from being discovered and exposed to the public, the two got married in a civil ceremony. Not too long someone eventually discovered the couple’s marriage. They became the talk of very New York finest clubs. They talked about Leonard and his colored wife. It was on the newspaper that Leonard Rhinelander married the daughter of a working class and her color was not yet clearly identified. At first Leonard stood by his wife then he filed for an annulment stating that it was fraud and deceit. He claimed he never knew his wife was not a white woman and that she misrepresented herself. Alice’s physical appearance, how she was dressed, and her skin were examined to prove whether or not Leonard knew that Alice was a lady of color.

Alice won the case. The annulment was denied and the marriage upheld. According to the terms of the settlement, Kip paid Alice a lump sum of $32,500 and $3600 per year for life. In return, Alice forfeited all claims to the Rhinelander estate and agreed not to use the Rhinelander name, nor to lecture or write publicly about her story, pledges which she honored for the rest of her life. The name carved on her gravestone: "Alice J. Rhinelander."

Kip appealed several times but the verdict held. He disappeared from public view, although rumors suggested that they had reunited. In 1930, Kip resurfaced in [Nevada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nevada), a single man. There he won a divorce, but it was valid only in the state of Nevada. The two signed a separation agreement in [New York](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York) at a later date.

In conclusion to this essay and my opinion, I don’t think the government or society should get involved in other’s personal life. Color or race does not make a person bad or good. The goodness in a person depends on that person’s character, surrounding, or how she/he is brought up. Of course in the world, life is not perfect and is not how we want it to be but we should try not to let others influence or have a say about who we should love or not love. I believe that if two people truly love each they can with stand anything that this life has in plan for them. They would not let a third party stand between them.