

The analysis of the short story “Love is blind and deaf” by Jonathan Safran Foer

The story «Love Is Blind» was written by Jonathan Safran Foer in May 2015.

The plot of the story develops around two human beings, Adam and Eve. They live alone in Eden. In the beginning they are both impaired - Adam is blind and Eve is deaf, but they love each other because Adam doesn't see Eve's imperfect appearance and Eve doesn't hear how self-obsessed and narcissistic Adam is. But once they eat the forbidden fruit it cures their disabilities and they start to see each other as they really are which splits them apart at first slowly and unintentionally, then fast and pointedly. Not being able to stand such life anymore, they ask God to return them into their original state. Left without an answer they decide to do it themselves and with the help of fig leaves they return their imperfectness – Adam covers his eyes with fig leaves not to see Eve's imperfectness and Eve puts rolled fig leaves into her ears to not hear how narcissistic Adam is.

Exposition:

In the exposition we can see that Adam and Eve lived together happily for a few days because they didn't see the features of each other that would repel them: Eve's imperfectness and Adam's narcissism and childishness.

Stylistic devices:

The «blindness» of the characters is stressed by such epithets as:

"*Oblong, splotchy* birthmark across Eve's cheek"; "*gnawed remnants* of her fingernails" – these words are used to stress Eve's facial imperfectness that would repel Adam.

Adam's behavior is described in the text as: "*selectively impervious* and *unwonderfully childlike*".

Conflict:

The conflict revolves around eating apples. This action leads characters to the full recovery of their abilities. Adam starts to see and Eve starts to hear. At the same time it becomes a starting point for Adam and Eve's divide because Adam sees Eve's ugly birthmark on her face and Eve hears how childish and narcissistic Adam is.

Stylistic devices:

The process of the separation is represented in the text through the next stylistic devices:

"...and what happens after an *irresistible force meets an immovable object*" – this is a metaphor where «irresistible force» means the returning of Adam and Eve's abilities and «immovable object» means Adam and Eve themselves.

We can also see here a repetition: "...*Adam saw* spots; *Eve heard* pulses. *He saw* shapes; *she heard* tones" – this stylistic device shows the rising tension between the characters.

The conflict part ends with a rhetorical question that comes from both of the characters: "*What have I got myself into*" - this question implies that Adam and Eve are unsatisfied with what they see or hear.

Rising action:

Then the life of the characters after the recovery is described. Being able to see the weak sides of each other they cannot stand them and they slowly, then rapidly start to hate each other.

Stylistic devices:

This is represented in the antithesis: "first they fought *passively*, then *pointedly*..."

And the tension between both is reflected in the repetition: "...*then they* conceived Cain, *then they* hurled the early creations, *then they* argued about who owned the pieces of what had never belonged to anybody".

The tension is stressed by the direct speech:

"*You're ugly!*"

"*You're stupid and wicked.*" – they holler these words at each other from the opposite sides of the garden.

Climax:

The climax happens when there are no more powers or will left in Adam and Eve to continue fighting and they ask God to return them into their original state. But they receive no answer.

Stylistic devices:

The climax is represented in:

Epithets, repetition and direct speech: "...*the first bruises spread* across *the first knees*, as *the first humans* whispered *the first prayers: Diminish me until I can bear it.*" – Adam and Eve are so exhausted that they ask God to return them their incompleteness.

Also, another repetition shows how nothing else could bring them peace apart from the life of peace and love they used to live: "*None of* the paintings, *none of* the books, *no film* or dance or piece of music, *not even green* nature itself was capable of filling the sieve of aloneness".

Falling action:

Not hearing anything from God Adam and Eve decide to return their state back artificially. Adam puts fig leaves over his eyes not to see Eve's imperfect face and Eve stuffs her ears with rolls of fig leaves not to hear how imperfect in behavior and narcissistic Adam is. They struggle their new abilities to see/hear/feel more for the sake of bringing the love back. And it starts to gradually return.

Stylistic devices:

The struggle with new abilities and feelings is shown in the parallelism: "*It worked until it didn't... It was good until it wasn't*".

The return of love is represented by the metaphors and epithets in the line: "She squinted through a veil of fig leaves into her *fig-leaf phone*, *the only light in the room of the world*, and listened to herself listening to him *struggle to breath*".

Denouement:

In the denouement there is a scene where God tells an angel: «They're so close». Angel asks God why they are. And God answers that despite all they have been through, they still want to love each other and fight for it against all odds.

Stylistic devices:

Adam and Eve's will to love is reflected in God's words which are metaphors of Adam and Eve's struggle: "*It's a canyon of tiny distances*" – where "distances" are the new abilities of the characters. The peace and understanding of each other Adam and Eve reach for is represented in an antithesis: "...a sentence or a silence *here*, a closing or an opening of space *there...*" The metaphor in God's words: "They're always at the threshold" stresses that however hard it is to maintain love and peace, Adam and Eve try. And the last metaphor: "God said, turning the page of a *book without edges.*" shows that such stories as this one happen all the time and everywhere in the world.

The title of the story "Love is blind and deaf" implies that people whose love is true and pure will not notice each other's imperfectness and will love each other come hell or high water or just will accept this imperfectness and turn it into something beautiful that distinguishes their beloved from somebody else and makes them even more perfect.