

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

*“If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.”  
(W. Shakespeare)*

Sometimes love is about ignoring the canyon between the two, isn't it? From time immemorial it is called “blind love”. Beloved choose to overlook each others' imperfections, so that their happiness is not disturbed. Basically, this is the very subject of the story “Love Is Blind and Deaf” written by a contemporary American writer Jonathan Safran Foer.

### **Structure of the text**

The story “Love Is Blind and Deaf” is based on a Biblical plot about the first human beings Adam and Eve. The exposition of the story starts with the description of physical defects of Adam and Eve. Following the exposition is the rising action, in which the major conflict takes place as Adam and Eve eat apples and get rid of their blindness and deafness. The usage of the parallelism “*Adam saw spots; Eve heard pulses. He ...; she ...*” there emphasizes the drama of the situation and makes the impression of a gradual and prolonged action. The repeated word “*cured*” and the words “*blindness*” and “*deafness*” in the same paragraph belong to one semantic field – that of “health and illnesses”. In this text, however, Adam and Eve are cured not only of their deafness and blindness, but also “*of their marital felicity*”. The usage of these words is warranted by the author's intention to compare love with physical illness. It also makes the reader think that happiness in marriage is very closely connected with the ability to overlook the partner's imperfections. The usage of anaphora (“then”) in the sentence “*First they fought passively, then they despaired privately, then ...*” makes the reader feel that the situation is getting serious gradually and something important is about to happen. The climax of the story is the moment when the main characters cannot stand each other anymore and go to “*the opposite sides of the garden*” and scream about each other's faults. The scene of their approaching each other again refers to the falling action. Finally, we come to the resolution when Adam and Eve put up with each other's weaknesses.

### **Character sketches of Adam and Eve**

The author's intention to show the main characters' imperfections is carried out with the help of various stylistic devices. At the very beginning of the text the words “*splotchy birthmark*”, “*rotated incisor*” and “*gnawed remnants of her fingernails*” describing Eve and “*narcissistic*”, “*impervious*” and “*unwonderfully childlike*” describing Adam appear to have negative connotation.

Both Adam and Eve are three-dimensional characters. They undergo some transition and take a turn for the better, putting up with each others' faults and accepting each other the way they are. Though, at the end of the narrative Adam and Eve are together again, their perception of love changes.

It is noteworthy that the linguostylistic characteristics of the protagonists might be partially revealed by just a few words of their inner and uttered represented speech. In the climax of the story Adam and Eve “*holler at each other from the opposite sides of the garden*”. Eve reproaches Adam for him being “*stupid and wicked*” and Adam reproaches Eve for her being “*ugly*”.

### ***Title, setting and point of view***

The first thing the reader notices is the title of the story. A clichéd expression actually summarizes and reflects the main theme of the whole narrative, which is love. Literally, being blind means being unable to see and being deaf means being unable to hear. Thus, the title conveys the idea that the two, who are deeply in love with each other, are not able to notice the partner's weak points.

At the very beginning of the narrative one comes across the words "*lived together happily for a few days*". It is the phrase "*lived happily ever after*" which can be often observed in works of fiction and is applied to characters in a loving relationship. By means of the defeated expectancy effect the author arouses the reader's interest to what will happen next.

One can notice that the protagonists' characteristics correlate with the setting of the narrative. The nature is represented as something pure and innocent, for the reader comes across many words that belong to the semantic field of nature ("*the new plants were green*", "*breezes begin*", "*green nature*", "*newly named animals*" etc.). Both Adam and Eve and their love are as innocent as the pristine nature and they seem to be the part of nature itself.

The reader can easily notice intertextual relations between the story and the Bible, the actions of the narrative seem to happen in the Garden of Eden. Such intertextual elements as apples (that cause changes in the main characters' life), fig leaves, the description of nature, their conceiving Cain make the reader come to this conclusion.

Due the usage of the words "*paintings*", "*books*", "*dance*", "*music*", we learn that the story is set not at the same time as the biblical story, but either nowadays or it continues up to nowadays. The usage of such word as "*film*" points out to the fact that the events take place in the 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century. ("*None of the paintings, none of the books, no film or ...*"). All these words make the reader think that the problem is eternal and it is not tied up with a certain era.

The story is told from the point of view of the third person omniscient narrator. The narrator remains outside the plot, merely observing, which permits him to maintain an analytical stance. The author can move between characters, compare and contrast their feelings, show each character's reaction to the dramatic events which take place throughout the story without favouring any of their viewpoints.

**To conclude**, the story is quite short but still rich in various stylistic devices. It catches one's eye by the well-known names and a thought-provoking message. Without a doubt, the theme of love is eternal and Jonathan Safran Foer has succeeded to elaborate upon it amazingly in his story "Love Is Blind And Deaf".