

# Enduring love essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Although the histrionic, and complicated relationship shared between Joe and Jed is extremely compelling throughout 'Enduring Love', I find that there are other qualities in the novel that are of greater inducement. McEwan introduces many baleful subjects such as trauma, death, obsession, guilt, mental illness and the line between reality and fantasy, and pushes his characters to experiment with each one in a particularly menacing way to explore the dark entities behind the celebrated idea of love. It is with these ideas that McEwan manages to embellish the foundations required in order to produce a good love story.

Readers of 'Enduring Love' may enjoy the darker, more sinister side of the novel, particularly as it delves into a - for the majority - unrelatable world of guns, gangsters and gluttony. In chapter one, we are greeted with the main incident that causes the on-going conflict for the rest of the novel; McEwan does this in order to achieve a chronological narration, and engage the reader through its drama almost immediately. The ballooning accident is depicted in an electrifying and sudden manner.

Short sentences prove effective throughout the chapter, "The beginning is simple to mark." and "I got there before them. as they increase the pace of the narrative, and continue to contribute to the thriller genre of the chapter. However, through the excitement, McEwan manipulates the concept of time and shifts to numerous scenes before arriving to the final conclusion of the chapter; John Logan falling to his death, "I've never seen such a terrible thing as that falling man." By creating these shifts in time between collecting Clarissa at the airport, tranquillity on the field, and the race

towards the falling balloon, McEwan continues to engage the reader in the story line, and maintain a harsh suspense.

Although the actual event of the balloon accident is only one chapter, the aftermath of the episode - mainly John Logan's demise - is seen to haunt the remaining characters throughout the novel, and act as a catalyst for the main story plot line: " Worst of all, the memory of the balloon accident is back with her... " The cat and mouse chase between Joe and Jed, and investigations that are to follow dominates all areas of the plot, and subsequently Joe and Clarissa's relationship, absorbing the reader in its intricacies and driving the reader to investigate the possible eventualities, and truth in the novel's conclusion.

Joe and Jed's relationship can however appear frustrating rather than compelling at times. During the duration of the novel, Joe eventually acknowledges that Jed has a mental illness, but offers no help or discussion with Jed about this, and instead chooses to irrationally unpick and analyse Jed: " Studying Parry with reference to a syndrome I could tolerate, even relish... " This leaves the reader with a bitter animosity towards the characters, which in turn prevents them from connecting with either Joe or Jed, despite them acting as their own protagonists in the story/letter they share with us.

Their repetitive and continuously inconclusive relationship can also appear predictable, eventually making the reader lose interest in their ' game'. Similarly, the habitual science versus religion stereotypes juxtapose one another so the reader is forced to predict that Joe and Jed will be forever

incompatible, thus making them lust for a resolution or conclusion quicker. On the contrary, when Jed says “ you love me Joe... ” McEwan invites us to explore themes of love and obsession; what makes love different to infatuation?

The bizarre , homo-erotic intimacy between the two characters is obscure, but rarely addressed in novels, which provokes curiosity and apprehension in the reader. Their relationship is completely unanticipated by the reader: “ What did he mean when he said he felt it too? ” And despite being shown the strength of Clarissa and Joe’s relationship, we are more anxious to read on about the evolution of their supposed ‘ love affair’, and how Clarissa and Joe’s relation will endure through the difficult times ahead: “ Knowing what I know now... As the story line develops, similarities between Joe and Jed begin to form.

In the chapter where we read from Clarissa’s perception, she says Joe has a “ wild look about him” In a previous chapter, Joe says about Jed “ he was watching my face with a kind of hunger. ” Both quotes are related to vivid animal descriptions. Whilst the reader is aware of Jed’s apparent mental instability, they begin to become aware that the middle class, science genius they trusted up until this point, is flawed.

This makes them question the reliability of the narration from Joe, thus threatening the reputation of the whole novel as it suggests that Joe may be equally as insane as Jed. These similarities also provoke the advancement that Joe may be partially responsible for Jed’s obsession after all; he may

have been conveying signals on an unconscious level to Jed. These are all potential ideas that the readers are willing to explore.

The underlying combative and psychotic nature of Joe and Jed's love story is compelling as readers realise the story will inevitably have a mournful ending which either one of the characters meeting their demise, arousing a climatic tension throughout the novel. However, through their story line are many interesting and intricate sub-plots which prove to compel the reader and serve to contest the belief that Joe and Jed's relationship is the most compelling aspect of Enduring Love.