

Hindsight through sasha's life

Business



Most stories are told in chronological order. It starts in the beginning of someone's conflict and works its way to the resolution, showing how the character changed along the way. Jennifer Egan writes Sasha's life in reverse chronological order. She starts with Sasha at age thirty five after the climax of her problems and works backwards, showing the difficulties she overcame at a young age. Then, the last reveal of Sasha's life is her as a mother.

She writes Sasha's life in this interesting way to demonstrate how Sasha overcame the difficult habit of being a kleptomaniac. It seems as if her life is full of mistakes and bad decisions, but the way it is revealed emphasizes her accomplishments. Jennifer Egan shows that only through hindsight can Sasha see the successes in her life, in spite of her failures. Egan ends Sasha's story with her as a mother of two kids, married to her college boyfriend. She spends the whole book moving backwards in Sasha's life until the very end, where she jumps twenty years forward.

She has turned her life around; overcoming her kleptomania and settling down with a family and a successful job. Egan portrays Sasha as a failure through the whole book, until the end where she is an accomplished mother and wife. At the very end, Sasha can look back on her life similar to how the Egan writes it, and see how her bad experiences shaped her success. She has become a role model to her kids, especially her daughter. Alison says "She looks like someone I want to know, or maybe even be" (Egan 213), when looking at the picture of her mom in a book, which Sasha would not talk about.

Egan ends Sasha's life at her highest point to emphasize that she turned her life around, instead of continuing the reverse chronology from the rest of the story. At the other end of the story, Egan begins with Sasha at age 35, working for Bennie. Her problems are moderately bad; a broke kleptomaniac seeing a therapist, Coz, for her problem. Egan starts with this part of her life to show her as an ordinary person, struggling with problems just like everyone else. In her visits with Coz, it seems as if she is getting her life together, attempting to make a change.

“ She and Coz had talked at length about why she kept the stolen objects separate from the rest of the her life: because using them would imply greed or self-interest; because leaving them untouched made it seem as if she might one day give them back; because piling them in a heap kept their power from leaking away”(18). Sasha's self-destructive behavior appears like her lowest point however, Egan later reveals how difficult her childhood was, and how this was an improvement from her past. Egan writes Sasha as a character that readers feel bad for and while the story is depicted in reverse chronology, the sympathy towards her increases because of the struggles she keeps enduring appear to become worse and worse. The next portion of Sasha's life that was revealed was her college days. Sasha appears to be improving her life, since Rob said she had not stolen anything in two years.

““ That wasn't me, in Naples,' she told you, looking out at the crowded bar. ' I don't know who it was. I feel sorry for her'” (156). Egan leads the reader to believe that Sasha's life will not get any worse, but then Egan reveals Sasha's dark past that she had in Naples as a teenager. Sasha's shoplifting started as a teenager and escalated with age. Her kleptomania started back

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in Naples when she found more enjoyment from stealing than the other girls did.

“ But it was different for Sasha- it made her whole body glow...The other girls were nervous, competitive, and Sasha struggled to show only that much” (156). Egan keeps revealing more negative aspects of Sasha’s life to invoke sympathy and to show in reverse order she improves her life. Jennifer Egan writes Sasha’s life in reverse chronological order to show that only through hindsight, she can see her successes instead of a life full of failures. Her story is revealed in this order to show that the worst parts of her life were early on. Instead of showing how she overcame them as it would be in a normal chronological story, Egan shows how the problems developed overtime. With each chapter, Sasha’s life grew worse as she went backwards in her past.

The story starts with her in therapy for her kleptomania, then she is in college fixing her mistakes from her past. Next, her experiences in Naples are told and lastly her years as a mother are revealed. It goes from her lowest point to her highest point. Egan does this to emphasize how bad her life was before and show the strength it took to turn it around. Hindsight is understanding a situation or event only after it occurred or developed.

Sasha learned to appreciate herself, looking back on her life. The way it is written in reverse chronology shows her struggles and accentuates how bad her life really was, proving her a strong character. Egan created a powerful character in Sasha by telling her life through hindsight.