

The rental heart: story analysis

Business



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the short story "The Rental Heart" by Skirts Logan the protagonist deals with heartbreaks in a different way than we would see in our current world. The story "The Rental Heart" is about a binge dating person.

The story is told by a first person narrator who also is the main character of the story. The story unfolds anachronistically. It starts briefly in the present, but leaps back in time in a major flashback of the narrator's life, before it again briefly returns to the present where it ends. The protagonist of the story is very anonymous.

We never learn about the main character's name, looks, or even the gender.

This anonymity appeals to a wider audience, making it easier for the reader to identify with the main character. At first we get the impression that the narrator is a boy, since we learn about "him" meeting a girl called Grace. Grace is described as small compared to "him": "her pierced little mouth, her stickier boots, her hands as small as Goosebumps writing numbers on my palm" (page 1, line 1-2). Later we learn that the protagonist's first love was a boy named Jacob.

This shows that we have a bisexual protagonist, but it could also indicate that the main character is a girl.

We know that when the protagonist meets Jacob "she" is in her teens: "our love was going to last forever, which at our age meant six months" (page 1, line 24-25). This supports the claim that the protagonist is a girl, since it would be unusual for a guy to know that he is homosexual already in his teens. To further support the claim that the main character is a girl, is the

fact that the author of the story is in a lesbian relationship, and that she has stated that the story reflects her personal love life.

Throughout the story we hear about 7 different relationships. The first relationship is scribed with true passion and emotion. This means that when it ends it leaves the protagonist completely heartbroken: “ I felt my heart shatter like a shotgun pellet, shards lodging in my gut” (page 1, line 30-31).

A year later the narrator meets a new lover called Anna, but she is still hurt from the previous relationship and is therefore afraid to give in and start a relationship with Anna. The fear of being hurt again is weighing the narrator down. Anna shows the protagonist the heart rental place.

In this place the protagonist is able to rent a mechanical heart. This mechanical heart will then protect your real heart from being broken. When you are hurt you can simply return the mechanical heart and therefore avoid the sorrow the protagonist felt after Jacob leaving.

This means that she is now able to love Anna without the fear. This would usually cause a great amount of feeling betrayed, let down, and hurt, but instead the protagonist simply returns the heart and goes out for dinner like nothing happened. Without the fear of being hurt she is now able to binge date.

Every time the narrator meets a new lover she can simply rent a new heart and when the allegations are over she can return the heart and avoid the sorrow. She is using the rental heart so much that the guy who works at the rental heart place greets her by her name, she is getting a bulk discount and

is even invited to the guys Christmas party. Eventually the binge dating gets so much out of hand that the main character starts to see the guy from the heart rental place in her dreams. We know that when the protagonist was left by her first love she tried to drink her sorrow away: “ I had to drink every night to wash the shards out.

I had to. ” (Page 1, line 31-32). The rented hearts could therefore symbolize use of drugs to avoid being hurt. This could explain why the protagonist starts binge dating, almost like an addiction. When it says: “ I hadn’t rented in years” (page 1, line 4). It could be understood as a former addict saying: “ I hadn’t taken drugs in years”.

The rental hearts could also symbolize superficial and shallow emotions where the real heart could symbolize true passion and emotion. This means that you are not able to fully love someone with a rental heart, you can only truly love with your own heart.

The real heart could also symbolize vulnerability. When you love with your real heart you are very vulnerable and completely trust the person you love. In the end of the story the protagonist learns that her rental heart is defective which means that she actually loves Grace with her real heart.

This means that the protagonist truly loves and trusts Grace. The fact you can rent a heart is an obvious science fiction element since this would not be possible in our current world. It is hard to say whether the story takes place in the future or in a parallel world since we do not hear a lot about the society or the genealogy.

The only thing we hear about the technology is that the hearts are produced to be smaller and smaller throughout the years. In the society in which the story takes place it seems like an ordinary thing to rent a heart.

The protagonist simply shows her rented heart at the airport and is then waved through. Usually in science fiction there is an element of social criticism. In this short story the social criticism is towards the technology. The story is basically saying that we need to make sure that technology should not replace our feelings and emotions.

The social criticism is also towards society and people's social anxiety.

The story wants to show that we need to face our emotions. As the author states about the story on her website: " I have learned that hearts do not shatter after all. There is no need to return them; the one you have will do just fine. " She is basically saying that we will experience both great and horrible events in our life but that is life and we cannot hide behind technology to avoid feeling hurt. We need to take the bad with the good and in the end we will do just fine.