

Reader response to  
they're made out of  
meat.



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Reader Resp" They're Made Out of Meat", written by Terry Bisson, is a breathtaking short story.

The level of fluidity achieved by this unique author is unbelievable given the facts of the plot. The narrative, which consists entirely of dialogue between two characters, was written with such an artistic approach that it made the text relatively unputdownable. During the entire story, the author brilliantly succeeds in masking the elusive reality of the storyline, which revolves around the themes of hypocrisy and rejection. As a result, the reader, who is likely unbeknownst of what is truly happening in the story, will ultimately feel an immense and unexpected shock in the final paragraphs of the narrative. A main theme in the story is carbon chauvinism. In other words, it is the reluctance of humans to accept the fact that extraterrestrial life may exist in other forms than it does on Earth. Life on Earth is largely carbon-based, which, in human theory, is the only kind of life possible in the Universe.

However, in the story, we learn that the two characters are sentient beings capable of traveling faster than light, which automatically makes them non-cellular, as carbon-based beings are physically incapable of travelling at light speed. The author takes a paradoxical and humorous approach to reveal this theme, as it is the two extraterrestrials who think that cellular life is ridicule and that meat cannot have the physical ability to contain intelligence and conscience. Another recurring theme in the story is hypocrisy. The extraterrestrials in the story know that humans have been trying to contact them for hundreds of years, but they still decide to "erase the records and forget the whole thing". However, the last sentence of the narrative infers that they really want to make contact with other species. This shows that the

extraterrestrials are in fact hypocrites, and that last sentence can be exemplified as a Tu quoque. This intriguing short story can be compared to the episode " Devil in the Dark" in Star Trek.

In this story, there is also the presence of a non-carbon-based life form, called the Horta, a highly intelligent silicon-based creature made almost entirely of pure rock. Another short story similar to " They're Made Out of Meat" would be " A MartianOdyssey", written by Stanley G. Weinbaum. In this story, alien personalities and civilizations are described to be as real as those of humans, a same portrayal that is used in the narrative written by Terry Bisson. A question that I kept asking myself while reading the story was what were those extraterrestrials made of. After an extensive analysis, I discovered that photons are the only particles that are capable of travelling faster than the speed of light, thus making them the only plausible substance that the beings can be made of. Another question that came to me while reading is why do the extraterrestrials think that it is absurd that meat can be both sentient and conscious.

I suppose that it is most likely because that in their scientific theories, meat does not have the physical capability to contain intelligence. In conclusion, I can affirm that the author has written a wonderful and exhilarating short story that can trigger the reader's attention from the beginning to the end.