

# Carnal knowledge



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Ever since the beginning of human race, meat has been a primary source of food. From our ancestors hunting animals for meat, to our generation going into a fast food restaurant and ordering a cheeseburger, meat has always been a huge part of our food consumption. Today there are certain groups that look at meat industry as a slaughter house. They do everything in their power to “ stop animal cruelty”, as they put it. This story, “ Carnal Knowledge” revolves around this dilemma. It’s a story of a man whose perspective on meat changes throughout the story after he meets Alena Jorgensen, a Vegan.

In T. C Boyle’s “ Carnal Knowledge,” he uses first person narrator to tell the story of the main character, Jim. Throughout the story readers feel as if they are listening not only to what Jim thinks, but how he thinks as well. The story begins with Jim, the narrator, being a man who just turned thirty. He has a stable job but he doesn’t seem to be satisfied with his life. “ My plans consisted of taking a solitary late-afternoon movie as a birthday treat. ” The fact that he was alone on a beach, reading a book on his birthday tells us that he doesn’t have anyone close to him.

The author doesn’t waste any time expressing the narrator’s perspective on meat. “ I’d never really thought much about meat...it was all the same to me, food, the body’s fuel. ” This quote from the opening paragraph clearly tells the reader that the narrator doesn’t really care much about meat or animal rights. The narrator further says that he knows about the way animals are treated in meat industry but that doesn’t stop him from having KFC or chicken McNuggets. After giving his view on meat, the narrator says “ And then I met Alena Jorgensen. ” The reader could sense a change already.

One can already anticipate a change in Jim's perspective on meat. He is blown away by her beauty and so he tries to impress her and establish common interests. " Bare-legged, fluid, as tall and uncompromising as her Nordic ancestors, she blew me away, in any event. Piss-spattered and stupefied, I could only gape up at her. " This line from the story perfectly states how he felt about her upon seeing her. When a person has feelings of depression and loneliness it can be very easy for another person to come into their life and change their whole persona.

The timing couldn't have been perfect because Jim was very vulnerable at that moment and needed something crazy and exciting in his life. The reader can tell that Alena is a unique character because of her mismatched eyes. When she invites him over her house and starts talking to her, he finds out that she's a vegan and very optimistic about animal rights. Alena went to a veterinary but then dropped out. This tells the reader that she wasn't always an animal rights activist. Jim talks about how much he hates his work.