

Enduring love essay sample



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BUSTER**

From the very first chapter, *Enduring Love* is a gripping psychological thriller. McEwan's writing is always good, creating an atmosphere of tension and suspense, and his characters behave mostly in a very human and plausible way. At times the story becomes a little far fetched, particularly at the end, where events seem to unfold very suddenly and not entirely believably. However, for the most part the story is horrifying in its convincingness. The opening scene is brilliant; cinematically gorgeous, rich in tension, a lover's picnic is tragically ruined when a hot air balloon plunges from the sky.

What begins as an interesting character study of a man plagued by guilt becomes a mundane thriller. Ifans' over-the-top performance as mentally unstable zealot who becomes obsessed with the hapless hero is reminiscent of Glenn Close's knife-wielding jilted lover in "Fatal Attraction." This is one of McEwan's best reviews from the BBC yet for the film adaptation. McEwan introduces the narrator Joe, as a rational, scientific mind who appears to be a rather simplistic character representing a stereotypical science geek.

However, as the novel unfolds, we see signs of paranoia and irrational behaviour coming from Joe, suggesting he is more rounded and has different sides to his personality that slowly become apparent when reading *Enduring Love*. I find Joe to be a plausible character from beginning to end, however towards the end when he begins to severely break down, it seems almost over the top and not plausible. Also, due to the fact that the disorder 'de Cl?? rambault's syndrome' does not actually exist, it seems that the novel begins to show signs of being far fetched and unbelievable.

I think from a readers perspective, when we find out that the disorder is not true, some of the excitement gets taken away from the novel and leads us to thinking that is it a little schematic. Joe, being the main character, and naturally the one we want to live happily ever after and sympathise with, becomes the object of our focus. We closely follow his transformation from rationality into irrationality. We appear to be on his side throughout the novel and because of this, we share his dislike for Jed.

Jed Parry is introduced in the first two chapters as a young, religious man who exchanges a passing glance with Joe, a glance that has devastating consequences and that permanently burns an obsession into Jed's soul, a disorder that causes the sufferer to believe that someone else is in love with them. Jed's delusional and dangerous behavior creates havoc in Joe's life, testing both the limits of his rationalism, and driving him to madness. I believe McEwan succeeds in portraying Jed as a rounded character as within moments, he goes from simply being passionate about religion to have serious psychological problems.

Despite this, I'm not convinced Jed is completely plausible. He goes to the extremes to convince Joe that his love will be returned and some of his antics seem too contrived. For example, in his letter to Joe in chapter 11, Parry claims that when Joe touched some wet leaves, he left a message of love in them for Jed. " There was a glow, a kind of burning on my fingers along the edges of those wet leaves. Then I got it. You had touched them in a certain way, in a pattern that spelled out a simple message. " This is not everyday behavior nor a typical symptom of slight psychological problems.

It seems too contrived for such a sudden change. As an audience we are intrigued about Jed's behavior and look forward to finding out what his next move will be. There is a contrast in the presentation of Joe's partner in the novel and the film interpretation. She appears to have a more active role in the film version as she seems to be more complex; showing both sides of normality and power. In the novel, Clarissa represents normality much more than the others therefore making her seem plausible. However we don't see her in depth, perhaps making her schematic.

Judging by the book, I think McEwan creates a simplistic character for Clarissa who can be referred back to as the ordinary, typical middle aged woman in contrast to Joe and Jed. To conclude, I think McEwan cleverly begins the novel with a riveting, out of the ordinary situation arising with only the help of a group of very different, but appear to be relatively conventional people. However as the story unfolds, we see the normality fading and new, more complex characters emerging. I think Enduring Love is plausible right up into the end but arguably has a few far fetched concepts.