

# Fiction and right thing



Stolpestad is a short story written by William Lychack in 2008. The short story takes place in a little town named Stolpestad. In this story we meet a man who works as a police officer<sup>1</sup>, one day he is called to a house where he is told that they have some problems with a dog. He goes there, and finds that the dog is sick, the mother asks him to shoot the dog, which he does after asking if they shouldn't take it to the vet. While being at a bar after work his wife calls him telling him that there are some people at the house who wants to talk with him. He goes home and meets the dog's owners, a boy and his father.

The father is very upset, and makes the police officer feel guilty about shooting their dog, telling him that he didn't kill it, and only left it there to suffer. The police officer feels guilty. The short story is chronological, though it has few flashbacks for example when he thinks back upon his childhood. The main character is police officer, who has no name because of the way the story is written. He has always lived in Stolpestad, always in the same part of town. <sup>2</sup> He seems to be a person who is not quite happy with his job, which we see in the way he thinks.

He is kind of sarcastic, but also quite pessimistic. <sup>3</sup> He doesn't seem like a person who enjoys his life, and he finds it difficult to deal with the things he experiences at work, therefore he goes to a bar after work, and we get the picture that he goes there quite often since his wife, without him telling her that he is there, calls him at the bar. It is also kind of ironic that he, as a police officer, goes to a bar and drinks and then drives home afterwards<sup>4</sup>, but of course we are not told how much he exactly has been drinking.

Besides the fact that he finds it difficult to deal with what his life is like, he is a loving and caring person.

This we see when he goes to the boy's house to take care of the dog. He wants to tell the boy that everything is going to be all right, and he tries to smile to him, asking him what the dog's name is and so on. He tries to comfort the boy in this unpleasant situation. He is also moved when he sees that the boy is about to cry while kneeling by the dog's side.

When he comes home and meets the father and the boy he is rather confused, since he thought that he had done the right thing, and it is also kind of interesting how he doesn't tell the man that he was only doing his job, and that he only did as the man's wife told him. 6 Since the man clearly thinks he did it without even thinking, which is definitely not the case. He was only doing his job, and he could have known how he was supposed to shoot the dog. The father of the boy gives him a hard time, and makes him feel very guilty, despite doing him a favor.

Stolpestad, which is also the title of the short story, is as mentioned the town where the protagonist lives and always has lived. The town is not too big, but it has some stores and public places. 7 Also these places are something he passes everyday. The part where we are most of the story must be in the outer edge of the town, at a the family's house, a family who doesn't seem to have a lot of money, since they chose to call the police officer instead of the vet, because the vet is expensive, and the police officer is free.

Also the description of the house gives us the idea that is a rather decayed<sup>8</sup> place, which is also more typical for the outer edge of towns. The narrator of the short story is a second person, which gives the short story a very special

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feel. We, as readers, feel like we are part of the story since everything is told as if it was us who were the protagonist. 9 Writing the story this way makes it much easier for the reader to get involved with the story, and it is much easier to imagine the story inside your head. The narrator is also a know-it-all narrator, since he knows what the protagonist is thinking.

This is seen through out the story, since we know what goes through his mind, even though he is not having a conversation with anyone. ? When the story is written like this, it kind of feels like the writer is telling us what we are about to do, as if we are the police officer. This is intensified by the story being written in present tense, which makes the story very present for us, and it makes it look like not even the writer knows what is going to happen next, it makes it more exciting. The themes of this short story is choosing the right thing, and making sure that this is what you want to do with your life.

Here i am thinking about how the main character makes us think that he doesn't really like his job, and therefore I think that it is very important that you choose something you want to do since this will make your life more worth living. I also think that the message of this story is that you should never rush to conclusion, and that you should never judge a person before knowing them. This is what the boy's father does when he goes to the main character's house and makes him feel guilty about what he has done, though he only did what he was told. The father is very quick to judge him and make him look like a bad person.