

JENN ASHWORTH FLAT 19 2022

Well hello Mr Kubrick !

You are back ! "2001" a space odyssey, over 20 years ago !

This story is a new replay of a very old theme .

The inherent danger of technology for the human being who uses it?

Flat 19 by Jenn Ashworth Discussion guide Questions •

What do you think about the character of Steven, Eve's husband?

• Is there a significance around the main character being called Eve?

What is it, if so? •

Would it be better or worse if Eve had had an affair? •

Do you feel sorry for Eve?

Or should she be grateful for her privileged life?

This thought-provoking story asks what it is to be human, but also asks what it is to be a wife and mother.

Eve, feeling overwhelmed by her life at work one day, finds a card from an agency that can replace her with clones of herself for an agreed period of time.

Cloning, of course, raises many questions about whether there is some kind of essential 'selfness' inherent in every human being that it would be impossible to replicate in a physical copy.

Summary: A woman arranges a hiatus from her life with a mysterious agency who replaces her with a series of clones.

She realises, at the end of her three-month break from her life, that she doesn't want to go back.

In Flat 19, Eve has many clones that satisfy the requirements of different roles she plays. They don't seem to possess the full 'Eve-ness' to us, the reader, but – tellingly – her family don't seem to notice

Flat 19 asks the question that many women may have asked themselves: would anyone miss me if I was gone – provided that all the general tasks of a wife, employee and mother were completed?

Discuss this theme of the story. Why is it that Eve, once in the flat, reverts to a kind of selflessness?

Has she altogether lost her identity in the years of being a wife, employee and mother?

Who is Eve?

What to look out for Ashworth's story is beautifully perceptive about the ways in which we can harm ourselves by living up to other people's sometimes impossibly high standards

In the story, Ashworth shows us how Eve ends up baking fresh bread every day because her family likes it more than bought bread; when she wins the award at the beginning of the story, she knows that it means that she will now have to start winning awards all the time.

Eve's excellence works against her because it means that, with every achievement, she has to work harder to retain the new level that everyone now expects

Rather than be a source of comfort and enjoyment, in fact, food is described as grounds for competition in Flat 19. Steven is competitive about his omelettes, and Eve's bread is so good none of her family will eat anything else. All the domestic detail in Eve's life makes us feel as exhausted as she does.

Nothing seems to exist purely for her enjoyment.

Next steps: Write a list of all the identities you have.

If clones were going to be made for all the 'yous' how many would there be, and what would they have to do?

Write a list of responsibilities and characteristics for each 'you'. Are you different in different groups or circumstances? Do you dress differently in different scenarios, like the Eves do on the beach at the end of the story? You might even speak differently or use different words and phrases,

Do you dress differently in different scenarios, like the Eves do on the beach at the end of the story? You might even speak differently or use different words and phrases, depending on the different 'you' you are being at the time. Alternatively, The W representative tells Eve that some people write a novel with their three months off, and some people have travelled to Nepal

What would you do if you were Eve?

Do you think you would use the time for a big project, or do you think you would pass the time watching TV? Make a list of three things you would do with three months completely to yourself with no responsibilities.