

Desserts as Stress Reliever in Marian Keyes's *Watermelon*

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The novel *Watermelon* belongs to chick lit genre. This genre mostly concentrates on the dark side of the women. The unspoken part of the female emotions is just expressed in a wild way. The protagonist are free from male dominance, their response towards men are something bold and tricky. Women take care of their body shape and show interest in dressing. The chick lit genre offers a detailed analysis of examining constructions of sexuality, beauty, independence, work, and singleness.

The chick lit articulates a distinctively post-feminist sensibility characterised by an emphasis on neo-liberal feminine subjectivities and self-surveillance and monitoring; the notion of the (sexual) body as the key source of identity for women; discourses of boldness, entitlement, and choice (usually articulated to normative femininity and/or consumerism); and a belief in the emotional separateness of men's and women's world.

From the above description about the chick literature in common it explains broadly that the women who love their body show least interest in food and feasting. This is because of the changing conception of the relation between body weight and attractiveness. "An underlying cause of many eating disorders in western women is their belief that being slender is beautiful. And certainly, our modern culture does celebrate thinness" (Gleitman et al. 100). The reality is that the bond towards food always exists, because chick lit gives importance to many partying scenes which picturize the consummation of Alcohol as the main event in this genre. The craze for food is universal.

Food is one of the fundamental needs of a human being. The taste and aroma may vary but the love for food will never vanish from the world. As long as the human beings exist in this world the craving for food will increase day by day. In every celebration, even during the sad time, food gives some sort of enthusiasm to tune the mood. The taste one senses will also have some possessions on their emotions. For example, if one is in a mood for celebration, the sweets will dominate and help you cherish the mood, if one suffers from depression or is stressed then alcohol leads to break away from reality.

The tang of Alcohol is vinegary, astringent and it imitates the mindset of the person in ignorance. When the sour and bitterness increase in a person's life their subsistence will be felt hollow. The strong stink and the taste of the alcohol will make one person to ignore the reality and delight in dream. The depressed person drowns himself by constant consumption of alcohol. Alcohol stands as a cure to drive away the bareness. To ignore and avoid the throbbing alcohol is used. Everyone cannot get the drugs or sleeping pills from the pharmacist so alcohol acts as a sedative for many depressed people.

When someone is ignored in every aspect of life, they will start ignoring the reality. The alcohol which they consume is a pretext, but it helps them to escape from the emotional imbalance. Food takes the lead in human emotions. The taste of food will bring a nature of feel which soothes the emotional imbalance of a person.

Food cannot only bring the joy but also accompany the lonely person. In the novel *Watermelon* the protagonist Claire who was happily married to James was betrayed after giving birth to a baby girl. She could not accept the truth that she was betrayed by her husband who was her one and only lover for the past seven years.

There was no clash between the couple for a long time, but the sudden break up turns to be a great shock for her. After she finds out the reason was that her husband maintained an affair with another woman, she felt flabbergasted. When she found out that all her friends and neighbors know about the affair of James, she could not digest it.

How do you know? I asked her, pouncing on her for the information.
Michael told me. Aisling told him. George told her.
(Michael was Judy's boyfriend. Aisling worked with him. George was Aisling's husband. George worked with James.). So, everyone knows, I said quietly. There was a pause. Judy looked as if she would like to die. (Keyes 19)

After knowing that everyone around her knew the affair of James she felt that she was ignored by everyone, because no one informed her that James was betraying. This sense of ignorance wounded her a lot which stops her urging emotion for a few minutes with the shock. She was blinded by the perfection of James and she was not aware about the betrayal.

Claire moved back to her parent's house which was in Dublin. When she reached the airport, it was raining in the city. The sorrow which she carries along with the season is too heavy for her heart. The betrayal of her husband and the ignorance from her friends made her lonely. Claire did her best to forget the past and to escape from the truth. She drowns herself in

alcohol. She became so addicted that she always needed the company of her drinks, if she found none, she would ransack her house.

Claire was the first girl in the Walsh family, she had four younger sisters, the second and third sisters were away from the home, and the fourth and fifth sisters were in her home. Anna who was the fourth sister was the only source for her alcohol. When Claire was at home, she drank all the bottles left in their house. And when she woke up in the middle of the night, she would go to Anna's bed and.

I dragged myself over to her room and quietly opened the door. The fumes hit me when I had the door opened about an inch... Anna sorry to disturb you like this but have you anything I could drink? I asked her. She just stared at me. Why are You here? She asked in a little frightened voice. Because I'm looking for a bloody drink' I said exasperatedly. (Keyes 67,68)

This shows how badly she needs the drinks. She cannot even stay a night without consuming it. The weaker she behaves the stronger she needs the alcohol to accompany her. She believes that the alcohol will help her to overlook the catastrophe of her life. The alcohol destroys her calm nature and turns her to be a vigorous character. The stronger she consumed the worse she behaved. Her rage and the abhorrence burst out to her parents and siblings that make an uncomfortable situation for her family members.

She gave away her strength to mourn for her misery. She thought to herself that she was just moaning for her betrayal. But she failed to notice that she was really becoming a troublesome person for her family. When she finally happened to eavesdrops, a conversation between her mother and her siblings, she realized her fault. Then she throwbacks her memory and realized how she behaves arrogantly to her family. Then she convinces herself to start a new life for her baby girl. She tries to create some good terms with her family, so she decides to make dinner for the family.

No, no I protested laughing. I mean I'm going to actually cook a real dinner for you all. As in, you know, go to the supermarket and buy fresh ingredients and make something from scratch. Oh really, said my mother and a faraway look came into her eyes. It's a long time since a real dinner was cooked in that kitchen. (Keyes 119)

The dinner made by her not only refreshed her from the suppressing past but also brings some kind of a new beginning for her life. After cooking the dinner for the whole family there

was an uninvited guest appears there with her little sister. Adam introduced himself as a classmate of Helen, the youngest sister of Claire. But he looks older in age. He complimented the dishes cooked by Claire and carries little Kate like a tender father. And that was a turning point in Claire's life. Food not only brings happiness but also unites people at the right time.

The dinner made by Claire was really a great feast for her because she happens to meet her stable life partner. Their love not only starts there but also continues throughout their life. Adam stays strong by the side of Claire in all her situations and helps her to bring up her child in a good and caring way. In this novel the food not only shares the joy but also brings a lot of hope towards the life. A changeover from the suffering to the happiness was carried out with the help of food.

So, it is true that food will calm down a person and will help them to take a clear decision. An empty stomach will go crazy and do things upside down. The restless mind is also a side effect of hunger. When the tummy fills with food the mind will open up and begins to listen and observe the surroundings. There is a saying in Tamil "Vaiyirara undu manathara vazhthuvom" which means when the tummy is filled the heart also filled with peace and pleasure so that they will praise the people who made a good food heartily. The food will bring peace and happiness. So, happiness means to be shared through food.

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Works Cited

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