

Substitutional Attachment: A Path to Emotional Support in Jessica Soffer's *Tomorrow There Will be Apricots*

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Abstract

This study mainly focuses on emotional healing, where substitute bonds act as a significant component, where the title is also justified. The relationship is strengthened by emotional ties. The changes in the character can be clearly seen through the attachment and the emotional support that is created by the food. In this study, attachment theory was applied because this theory helps to understand the connections between the daughter and the mother, as applied in the lives of Lorca and Lorca's mother character. The book understands the importance of strangers by showing the value of strangers' emotional support. This study explores how food created a pathway in Lorca's life by providing a substitute bond. Though the character had not obtained the bond earlier, they were able to obtain a bond in which their emotional needs are fulfilled. Finally, the study proves how food plays a significant role in Lorca's life by providing a substitute bond.

Keywords: Connections, Emotional, Stranger, Substitute bond, Support

This study applies Attachment Theory to examine how food reflects the relationships between characters. This theory was found in the late nineteenth century by John Bowlby. This theory belongs to the psychology field. The attachment theory helps to understand emotional bonding between a child and caregiver and explains how relationships affect adult behaviour. It gives shape to emotional development, personality, and behaviour. Applying this in text allows us to explore emotional bonds in the Lorca character. Here, food acts as a substitute for emotional attachment. So, food explains how food connects people.

Jessica Soffer is an American writer. She started to write in the year 2013. Soffer's work is often connected with culture, sense, and emotions. The author has produced two literary works, which are as follows: *Tomorrow there will be Apricots* (2013) and *This is a love story* (2020). In this book, the writer employs food as a means to express love, demonstrating that affection can be conveyed in various ways beyond just words and familial connections. The narrative suggests that individuals who lacked emotional support in their upbringing often seek alternative sources of that support. The author encounters multiple challenges in her writing journey, ranging from anxiety to establishing confidence in her craft. Initially, during her writing sessions, she outlines the storyline and the structure of the novel.

Tomorrow There Will Be Apricots is a novel by Jessica Soffer, released in 2013. This work of fiction falls under the category of food literature. It revolves around two main characters, Lorca and Victoria. Lorca, a fourteen-year-old girl, contrasts with Victoria, an older woman. Both characters experience a deep yearning for love due to their lack of affection in their lives. Since childhood, Lorca has not received adequate care or emotional nurturing from her mother, resulting in a frail relationship. Following the death of her husband, Victoria has also been searching for love. In an effort to connect with her mother, Lorca decided to prepare her mother's favorite meal, leading her to enroll in Victoria's cooking class. Through their shared experience with food, both women discover a new bond.

At the age of six, she began cooking, particularly for her mother, in a bid to receive love and attention, as Lorca faced difficulties in obtaining her mother's affection from an early age. "The first time, I was six. I was making a cake for my mother's birthday and slipped on some grease when I was putting it in the oven" (Soffer 6). It shows the mother-daughter relationship at a young age; she did not receive any love from her mother. This affected her child's happiness. Due to the disturbance, Lorca forgot to enjoy her childhood days. The relationship between Lorca and her mother became weak. Here, she learned the importance of the character's father's love. The emotional and experiential are conveyed as a medium. The character did not have a happy life; if her mother had taken more care of her, she would have been happy in her childhood days. At a young age, she will not have any bad emotional experiences. All the mistakes are on the character's mother. When the character's mother gives attention to her child, her life may change, and she can live happily with her family members without any distractions. To give care and emotional support, the character's mother gave her desire, anxiety, fear, and bad memories throughout her childhood days. Lorca longed for her mother's love, but later it changed to fear because Lorca's mother's absence in emotional support made her feel fear; she also had fear of separation and loss. She had a weak attachment with her mother; this made her disturb her inner feelings. The inner feelings made Lorca feel like a failed girl in life. Do not be rude to children because they are pure and soft in feelings; behaving rudely can make them fall into different situations at a young age; this can change their lives throughout their lives. Young age is a very precious time in life. So, do not be rude to anyone; give importance to children.

The character came to know her mother's favorite dish. After knowing her mother's favorite dish, she felt very happy because she had a hope. "Masgouf," she said. "From an Iraqi restaurant that's closed now" (Soffer 21). To gain love, Lorca worked a lot, but it is an unnecessary part because parents should not expect anything from children; the protagonist's mother did not expect anything, but it shows the willingness of the mother. It shows, due to weak attachment, the character decided to search for a restaurant; her thought was that her mother would get attached to Lorca after her mother's favorite dish was made. It focuses on Lorca's mother's character because when Lorca's mother acts as a good mother, Lorca will enjoy her life more than searching the dish for her mother. By searching for the dish for Lorca's mother, the character's life has been destroyed, and it is a waste of time; she needs to enjoy her life by getting the love and emotional support from her mother. But she struggles a lot to get love and emotional support.

So, it is a waste of time. Her mother is a bad mother in her life. Being a bad mother can affect children's minds and peace. Some children will start to hate their parents due to their behaviors; this will not impact their parents, but it will affect their children. Due to weak attachment, the child will suffer from fear, anxiety, and trust issues, so they cannot form healthy relationships with strangers. When they suffer a lot at a young age, it may impact them badly, and they always feel as if they have failed in everything. In Lorca's life, her mother is shown as an avoidant attachment because her mother avoided Lorca's emotions. The mother should not be dependent on their own ideas; they must give attention, care, and emotional support to their children. When the parents do not give any emotional support to their children, they may feel emotionally absent from their mother because they may be physically present but emotionally unavailable. This emotional unavailability makes them feel fear because they are always left alone in every place; this gives them fear.

To get care and emotional support from her mother Lorca started to cook masgouf, Victoria joined and helped her to cook, and during this incident happened. "Victoria and I had ruined the masgouf" (Soffer 227). Lorca had a bad childhood experience due to her mother, but it changed due to a substitute bond. Lorca got emotional support and came from the substitute bond. It helped her to come out of bad memories. This substitute character helped Lorca to be happy. Due to pure love, Lorca came out of fear, anxiety, and trust issues. The bond helped Lorca to form a healthy relationship. This character helped Lorca forget the bad experiences, and the bond acted as a good mother to Lorca. Lorca got emotional support, so she was not left alone. She got a good attachment to substitute bond. In Lorca's life, the bond gave much support, which acted as secure attachment. Lorca and the bond had a good relationship, which helped Lorca to be at peace and happy. Lorca got a good character in her life through the cooking class. She lived her life happily with the new relationship.

It shows that when the child gets pure care and emotional support, they will be happy without any suffering. The good bond gives them emotional safety, emotional support, and positive vibes throughout life. When a child gets care and emotional support from a mother or mother-age characters, they feel comfort and safety. The comfort and safety will help them to have trust in everyone. The children will not fall into any

suffering when they get a good behavior bond; the bond will change a good person into a bad one and a bad person into a good one. Be close with good-behavior characters; it will change your bad experiences into good experiences. It also acts as a repair in life because when good characters enter in life, they will repair our inner feelings and help us to live with happiness. When the new good character enters into a lonely life, they will have a stable relationship with respect. The substitute bond helped Lorca to come out of fear and longing; it shows how the bond helped a character to come out of memories and bad emotional experiences.

When Lorca found the recipe, she shared the recipe with her mother and asked a question to her mother. “What was so special about that masgouf you loved?” (Soffer 235). In childhood, parents are very important, especially mothers. Mother-child relationships are significant because mothers should take care of them, especially when they do not take care; they will feel lonely. Lorca worked hard to get his mother’s love; it shows how much the character struggled to gain his mother’s love. When the child does not receive any love from parents or caregivers, it shapes their inner feelings at a young age. To gain her mother’s love, Lorca worked hard, but her mother did not give any attention; this may cause them to feel as if they have failed in everything. In this line, her mother was happy because Lorca speaks about her mother’s favorite dish; it shows the difference between real care and fake care. The character does not feel the difference, but she was happy because Lorca’s mother was speaking to her without any hesitation. This shows the bad behavior of her mother. Her mother speaks to her for a purpose; do not be like this to children, because when they come to know about this, they will get hurt and cry a lot at night, which will disturb their inner feelings and sleep. Her mother did not give any protection to her child, which led her to fear any incident. Children yearn for their mother’s attention because they only get support from their mother.

At a young age, children should get attention, love, care, and emotional support from their parents. When they do not get anything, they suffer from fear, anxiety, and trust issues. They also get scared while being alone. Do not leave children alone because they suffer a lot with many struggles. Their mind will change when there is nobody to speak with them; they will start to speak alone with their mind or with their imaginary character, so do not leave the child alone at a young age; give them special care and emotional support; this will help them to be strong and happy without any disturbance. Need to give extra attention and real care to children; it is very important in their lives. The childhood days are very influential for children. Their mind will grow and be more active. So, do not show fake love to children when needed.

Herself tried making Masgouf at her house, but unfortunately, Lorca cut her hand, so he could not complete the dish. This made Lorca’s mother angry. “We brought the food outside and sat on the stoop of Victoria’s building and ate with our hands” (Soffer 331). In Lorca’s life, Victoria acted as a nurturing secure attachment because Victoria was emotionally supportive to Lorca. More than her mother, Victoria gave much emotional support and care to Lorca. This shows the good behavior of Victoria. When the character is good, relationships will form throughout life. There must be good character in children’s lives to show them their way for the future; bad character will destroy the child’s life. A good mother should be emotionally available by listening to them, supportive, like encouraging their dreams, even if they are different, and should be affectionate by showing love through their words and actions. They should be protective but not controlling and should understand their feelings, must be patient with children even though they make mistakes, and even when the children are younger than their parents, they should give respect to their children; daughters should feel secure to share anything and should teach them strength, not fear. This is how mothers should be with their children.

This type of mother will help their child to live their life happily; they grow with confidence, self-worth, and emotional security. The bad mother will be emotionally distant, over-controlling, and compare with others, invalidating feelings, using silence as punishment, showing conditional love, and neglecting emotional needs. Being like this to their children, they grow with insecurity, fear, and loneliness and have trust issues. For every child, the mother is the first attachment in their life, mainly as an emotional attachment, but when they do not receive any care from their mother, they become an avoidant person inside the child’s mind. So, do not be bad in front of your children; this makes them feel different and get hurt. They get scared while seeing their parents. Be friendly with children; do not give any big punishment at a young age; they cannot handle the situation. Even the small problems will be seen as big problems in their lives because they still have not developed the maturity to handle the problems. So, be friendly with your children and give them full emotional support and care.

The above discussion has shown that applied attachment theory explores Lorca and Lorca's mother character. In Lorca's life, her mother acted as an avoidant attachment, and the new character as a secure attachment. For a person living, a stranger's attachment helped to shape their feelings. The food proves that through food, a bond can be created. To apply this theory, use many quotes that suit the situations.

In Lorca's life, she struggled a lot to gain her mother's love at a young age, but it was a failure. So, in her childhood days, she acted as an avoidant attachment. When children did not get any motherly love, they would suffer from anxiety, loneliness, and fear. They must need care and emotional support from their parents; it will help them shape their inner feelings. The Lorca character helped and gave lessons to the future parents. They came to know how to be with their children. When the children suffer a lot from their parents, they can solve the problem with the formation of a new bond. The new bond will be converted into a substitute bond; with the help of a substitute bond, their lives have been changed. The substitute bond helped a lot by giving care, love, safety, and emotional support. Some parents use their children for their needs; it will hurt the children, and they will hate themselves and their parents. Do not use the child for any purpose. Do not beg to gain love from parents; it is their work to give love and care to the children. When they did not give any care and love, they acted as a weak attachment in children's lives. The parents should not expect anything from their children, but children can expect anything at a young age, and children must understand their parents' situation. In Lorca's life, her mother acted as an avoidant attachment, and a substitute bonding as a secure attachment.

Overall of the novel, the attachment brought her a life filled with joy. In her existence, the attachment consists of characters and encompasses emotional elements as a medium; with the assistance of a medium, a variety of memories are illustrated clearly. Through these characters, she overcame her pain and memories. In her life, food fostered a new connection, as it linked them together. Showing that life can transform and can find substitute bonding connections through genuine love and care.

In Lorca's life, food plays a major role. The character longs for love, which makes her insecure, lonely, and have trust issues in relationships, so she is not able to create healthy relationships, but the food broke this in Lorca's life. Lorca came out of the issues and lived a happy life. The attachment helped them a lot by shaping their lives. Applying this theory proves that life can change with the help of attachment. The attachment gave shape to their relationships and emotions throughout their lives. Through this theory, Lorca got a new relationship, her pain was solved, and she was restored from the broken world. In the end, Lorca got a new life and lived happily with the help of food. In these studies, food proved that it can create a substitute for bonding with good memories and love, and it also proved that love can be given by anyone, so do not long for love. Findings from this paper are that food can provide a substitute bond, and the substitute bond relationship is a mother-daughter relationship created with a stranger through food.

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