

“The Ways We Lie” by Stephanie Ericsson

Questions for thought:

1. What is the main idea or thesis?
2. What text structures/organization styles does Ericsson employ? What effect do these have on the meaning of the text?
3. Is there particular vocabulary with which we should be familiar?
4. What evidence does the writer offer to support the argument?
5. Is Ericsson’s argument/assessments valid? Why or why not?
6. Do you agree with her argument? Explain using evidence.
7. Why did Ericsson include this section in her argument? Explain.

“The Ways We Lie”

- *How does Ericsson use sentence structure in this section?
- *How does Ericsson utilize personal experience in this section?
- *How does Ericsson employ rhetorical questioning in this section? What does she seem to be implying?
- *So—Why do we lie?

“The White Lie”

- *So, is it okay to lie if we think we are sparing someone’s feelings?
- *Why did the writer use the example of the veteran here? What effect does she create?
- *Would a concluding sentence have been more effective here to help transition the topic?

“Facades”

- *How does the DICTION here (lines 11-12) reinforce the content of the sentence?
- *Why does Ericsson include the line about the UPS man knowing who she truly is/how she really dresses?
- *Why does Ericsson end the paragraph the way she does?

“Ignoring the Plain Facts”

- *Do you think Ericsson fully develops this argument? Why or why not?

“Deflecting”

- *Look back at the definitions of “lie”. Do you think “deflecting” is the same as “lying”? Explain.

“Omission”

- *Is Ericsson’s argument about Lilith being purposefully removed from Judeo-Christian religion a valid one? (Think about this: she doesn’t account for the fact Lilith was a Sumerian goddess, rather than a human like the stories of Adam.)
- *What fallacies do we find in her argument?

“Stereotypes and Clichés”

- *Does Ericsson fully develop the claim she makes in lines 22-24? Explain.
- *Read the examples Ericsson lists in the second paragraph. Are these really lies? Explain the argument she makes. Is she right? Why or why not?

“Groupthink”

*In lines 27-28, Ericsson writes, “Within the tight, good-ole-boy cohesiveness of the US command in Hawaii, the myth of invulnerability stayed well entrenched.” How does she use loaded language in this sentence? In doing so, is she stereotyping, and thus lying? Why or why not?

*How is ‘Groupthink’ a lie? How could Ericsson have strengthened her argument?

“Out-and-Out Lies”

*What does Ericsson seem to be saying about lying in general?

*Do you agree with her argument that bald-faced lies are a more acceptable form of lying? Justify your answer.

“Dismissal”

*How does Ericsson use evidence in this section? Is the evidence credible? Why or why not?

*How does Ericsson employ example dialogue? What effect does it have on the text? the reader?

*Read the last two sentences of this section: “But we must be careful and attentive about how far we take our ‘necessary’ dismissals. Dismissal is a dangerous tool, because it’s nothing less than a lie.” Is this an effective conclusion for the section? Explain.

*Ericsson warns readers to be careful about taking dismissal too far. In your opinion, how *far* is *too far*, so far as dismissal is concerned? What dangers could arise from continually dismissing someone else’s feelings or demands?

“Delusion”

*What does Ericsson mean when she says delusion “cannot see itself”?

*Do you think Ericsson is promoting delusion, or arguing against it? Use evidence to support your point.

*Do you agree with Ericsson about delusion being a necessary survival mechanism to help us live our lives? Explain.