

# the sampler essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

“ To be or not to be” is very much a question everyone is trying to figure out through life. Your acts and your sayings decide who you are, and you can put yourself in a certain way, that you want your surroundings to look at you like. But why is it that we do everything for our own sake? Why can't we do a good deed for the day, without expecting to get anything in return? Certainly most of us know the feeling of discomfort you get, when you attend someone, who appears shabby, and clearly cannot afford anything. You feel sorry for them, and you want to help them out, but you do not, and you cannot, because you are afraid of hurting their feelings, or reminding them, that they do not have enough money. Or maybe they would misunderstand your act, and think that you are making fun of them. That is the way our society is fitted - no good deed is given without an ulterior motive.

The Sampler is a text written by Ira V. Morris. The story is about the narrator who attends an old man, who sample puddings in a shop. He does that almost every week, so the shop girl knows him well. It is Christmas and the narrator feels sorry for him, and offers to pay for a pudding. The old man gets so ashamed, that he is forced to buy the largest and most expensive pudding, to save his honour.

One of the themes in the story is that one man cannot save the whole world, even if he wants to, and that a good deed often is mistaken with wanting something from it. “ Pardon me sir, will you do me a favour? Let me purchase you one of these puddings. It would give me such pleasure” (p. 96, ll. 14-15). The narrator feels sorry for the poor man. It is Christmas time, and everyone is out for holyday shopping. But the old man, with the shabby appearance, clearly cannot afford the puddings. By purchasing the old man a

pudding, the narrator hopes the old man will be pleased, and the narrator can feel satisfied, because he helped another person. This is a good deed with no condition, except maybe the narrator staging himself as a good person to the other costumers in the shop. But even before the narrator addresses to the old man, he knows what he is doing is wrong: "...one of those bursts which so often brings pain instead of joy..." (p. 96, ll. 12-13).

Amidst the feeling of Christmas and the wealthy-looking customers, the old man looks so tragic, and in a burst of benevolence, the narrator feels kind of heroic, and helps him out. Or so he thinks. When the narrator asks for permission to buy a pudding, quite the opposite happens, as the old man will not accept the gift from the narrator. The old man gets so ashamed that "the blood rushed into his wrinkled face" (p. 96, l. 17) and he is therefore forced to save his honour by buying the largest and most expensive pudding in the shop: "... while he extracted a worn little black pocketbook and began counting shillings and sixpenny pieces onto the counter". (p. 97, ll. 2-3). The old man thinks it is embarrassing getting reminded that he cannot afford the puddings, and he is therefore forced to buy the most expensive of the puddings to save his dignity. This purchase probably meant many unpleasant privations in other things.

Also the shop girl feels sorry for him: " You pay at the desk", the shop girl was telling him, but he did not seem to understand and kept trying to put the coins into her hand..." (p. 97, ll. 8-9). The man comes to the shop almost every week to sample the puddings, so the shop girl knows him well, and she is aware of him not making a purchase, because of his money situation. Now she is witnessing him making a purchase he cannot afford, and all she can

do, because of her job, is to tell him, that he has to pay at the desk. Also the old man is so confused and embarrassed, that the only thing he can think of is paying for the pudding, and to get out of the store quick. The shop girl is an example of a caring person, who is doing a good deed with no strings attached: " Well let him come" (p. 95, l. 12) she says, and she hopes there are other stores which does the same as her. She knows that the old man do not buy anything, and she supposes he never will. But she is a good soul, and she lets him stay at the shop, and have a good time pretending that he can afford the puddings, like he once probably could.

This text is a brilliant example of how society has ruined the term " being friendly towards people you do not know". The narrator just wanted to help, but help is so rare nowadays that it is often confused with wanting something in return, or wanting to draw attention to yourself. The shop girl is the perfect exemplar of a generous person, who helps but do not expect anything in return. I think it is terrible that humanity has been fitted this way. Everyone is selfish, impatient and way to busy. I think it would be a wonderful world, if everyone would stop up for a minute, and feel the joy of helping someone in need, or the bliss of being helped.