

The meaning of the stranger in albert camus



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The Stranger the leading character is a young man named Meursault. He is a Frenchman living in French ruled Algeria in Algiers. The novel begins with Meursault receiving a telegram informing him of his mothers passing.

After receiving the telegram Meursault takes the bus to Marengo to the retirement home his mother was living in. He falls asleep during most of the trip awaking and eventually walking the rest of the way to the retirement home. He is greeted by the director of the home. The director allows Meursault to see his mother, but Meursault finds that her body has already been enclosed in the coffin. the caretaker's offer to open the coffin for Meursault but he declines. When questioned by the caretaker why not he simply says he doesn't know, and the caretaker tells him he understands. That night Meursault keeps watch over his mother's coffin. The caretaker stays with him rest of the day annoyingly to Meursault. Meursault was offered coffee witch he accepted and began to crave a cigarette but pondered if it was acceptable in the circumstances of his mother death and eventually decided it didn't matter and smoked. He dozed off shortly after and awoken in the morning just in time for the vigil. Many of his mother's friends were poured into the room and mourned while Meursault stays indifferent through the vigil and eventually dosing off once again. Before the funeral, he meets with the director once again. The director tells Meursault that old man named Thomas Perez, who had grown very close to Meursault's mother, will be attending the funeral service. The funeral procession heads for the small local village, but Perez has difficulty keeping up and eventually faints from the sun. After the funeral Meursault reluctantly goes homes home to his modest apartment in Algiers.

The next day, Meursault awakes and thinks there's no better way to spend the day but the beach for a swim. There, he runs into Marie Cardona his former coworker. The two make a date to see a comedy at the movie theater that very day in the evening. After the movie they spend the night together. When Meursault wakes up, Marie is gone. He stays in bed until noon and then sits on his balcony until evening people watching. The next day Meursault returns to work. He meets up with his friend Emmanuel and has lunch and then works all afternoon. While walking to his apartment that night after work, Meursault runs into his neighbor Salamano, an old man owns a dog with a skin condition. Meursault also runs into his neighbor, Raymond who is known to be a pimp. Raymond invites Meursault over for dinner. During the meal Raymond tells how he beat up his now ex-girlfriend after he believed that she had been cheating on him and using him for his money. As a result, he got into a fight with her brother. Raymond now decides he's not done with ex-girlfriend wants to torment her, but he needs Meursault to write a letter to attract her back to him. Meursault agrees and writes the letter that night.

The following Saturday, Marie visits Meursault at his apartment. She asks Meursault if he loves her, and he replies that it didn't mean anything to him but probably not. The two then hear shouting coming from Raymond's apartment. They go out into the apartment landing and watch as Raymond begins to slap his ex-girlfriend. Marie tells Meursault to go get policeman, but he says no and reasoning behind it is because he doesn't like policeman. Eventually one shows up slaps Raymond and says that he will be summoned to the police station for beating up his ex-girlfriend. After Raymond asks

Meursault to testify for him saying that his ex-girlfriend cheated on him and Meursault agrees to help him. That night, Raymond runs into Salamano, who weeps that his dog has run away.

Marie once again visits Meursault and asks if he wants to marry her. He replies indifferently but says that they can get married if she wants to and that he didn't care. The next Sunday Meursault, Marie, and Raymond go to a beach house owned by one of Raymond's friends named Masson. They swim in the ocean and then have lunch. That afternoon, Masson, Raymond, and Meursault run into two Arabs on the beach, one of them happens to be the brother of Raymond's ex-girlfriend. A fight breaks out and Raymond is slashed across his arm and face. After tending to his wounds, Raymond returns to the beach with Meursault. They find the Arabs at the spring. Raymond contemplates getting back at them by shooting them with his gun, but Meursault calms him down and takes the gun away. Later that day Meursault returns to the spring to cool off. The sun begins to beat on him causing him to get overwhelmed and begins to walk back at a faster pace. he runs in to Raymond ex-girlfriends brother laying in the shade. Getting closer to the Arab the man draws his blade one again toward Meursault. Meursault draw Raymond's gun and shoots him. While the man laying on the ground shot, he shoots him another 4 times.

Meursault is later arrested and thrown in jail. Meursault is later appointed a lawyer to represent him after making no deliberation to get one. During the meeting with his newly appointed lawyer he his informed that the police have been appearing into his personal life. He begins to question him how he felt during his mother's funeral and how he felt during the shooting.

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Meursault replies that he felt indifferent on both occasions. The lawyer is revolted by Meursault's answers and leaves him in his cell. Meursault is taken to the courthouse early on the morning of his trial. Spectators and members of the press fill the courtroom. The trial begins with the day of the murder then hastily to an examination of Meursault's character. Mainly what was focused on his reaction to his mother's death. The director and several other people who attended the vigil and the funeral were called to testify against him. They all attest to Meursault's lack of emotion. Marie testifies that the day after his mother's funeral she and Meursault went on a date and saw a movie. During his summary the following day, the prosecutor calls Meursault a monster and says that his lack of morality and feeling threatens all of society. Meursault is found guilty and is sentenced to death by guillotine.

Meursault returns to prison to await his execution. He begins to struggle to come to terms of his fate. He thinks of escaping and he dreams of filing a successful legal appeal. One day the chaplain comes to visit Meursault's after many tries. He urges Meursault to turn to God, but Meursault refuses. The chaplain cannot believe that Meursault does not believe in faith and the afterlife. Meursault suddenly becomes infuriated and grabs the chaplain and starts to scream at him. He asserts that he is correct in believing in a worthless, purely physical world. Meursault begins to truly embrace the idea that human existence holds no greater meaning. He abandons all hope for the future and accepts the gentle indifference of the world. This acceptance makes Meursault feel happy.

Taking a closer look at Camus's novel the main character Meursault comes off as a nihilist. This is because of the way Meursault is portrayed as a

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person who devoid of feeling any type of loss or sadness and is distant with the world around him. Life and death to Meursault has no meaning. One the ways he portrays this is his trip to Marengo. The trip to his mother's funeral seemed more of inconvenience for him than a time of mourning. He also declined twice to see his mother in the casket. When the caretaker questions Meursault on why he would not like to see her he simply replies I don't know. He also seemed not to care much for tradition or religious beliefs by drinking coffee and smoking near his mother's casket after concluding that it did not matter. During the vigil he also displays this by not feeling any type of sadness or mourning when all his mother's friends were at mourning and carelessly dozed off. After the funeral he was reluctant to go back home in his modest apartment and awoke the next day as if nothing really happened and was back to his normal routine.

Meursault doesn't immediately everyone around him. There are some people who seem to be interested in him case and point Marie Cardona and his neighbor Raymond. They both find his careless and distant nature inviting. This is because it makes him easy to talk to because of his lack judgement toward people. This is also revealed when Raymond ask Meursault to write him a letter to lure his ex-girlfriend to Raymond to teach her a lesson. Meursault doesn't bat an eye when asked and doesn't think of the morality of what he and Raymond are doing. He also doesn't feel any type of affection toward a person. He displays this with Marie when asked if he loved her and when asked if he would marry her. Both times he replied with he was indifferent about it and that it didn't matter.

Only when Meursault begins to feel any type of worth in life is when he is finally convicted of murder and sentenced to death. Because of his lacking emotion displayed in court and described by witnesses. In his cell he begins to ponder and dream about escaping his fate of death. In this instance he decides to give himself a sense of self-worth after he puts the chaplain to tears and which brings him peace and embraces his death.

This brings me to the meaning of the Albert Camus *The Stranger*. Camus wants people to learn to focus on what makes life worth living and what it has to offer. Why waste time looking for the meaning of life when you can find happiness in what you do. Meursault distances himself and devoids himself of emotion because his thought of life and death being truly meaningless and in turn is what brought him to his fate. This brings out Camus's existentialist views on the world and in an attempt to persuade people to have an existentialist approach to things and in hopes of stopping the nihilist trend in his time.