

# A book report on raymond carver's cathedral

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Blindness and disability is a strong theme in literature. Raymond Carver penned the 1983 short story Cathedral in an anthology of the same name. The story centers on an unnamed narrator, who has a strong sense of dislike towards a blind friend of his wife's.

Throughout the visit of Robert, the blind man, the narrator learns more about himself and passes on a message of tolerance and understanding to the reader. Carver's work was later published in Best American Short Stories, 1982. The majority of the story involves the unnamed narrator attempting to deal with his underlying hostility towards the blind man. Whether he's jealous or paranoid is unclear, but his dislike of the man is made clear from the beginning. It's a representation of how so many prejudices are based on nothing.

By leaving the reader guessing as to the narrator's motives, he makes this message as potent as possible. This is also a story of catharsis. Towards the end of the story, Robert asks the narrator to draw him the cathedral. The narrator had no words to describe it, so he did. Robert placed his hand on the narrator's as he drew.

He told the narrator to close his eyes as he drew. This is the crucial catharsis moment. He experiences what it's like to be like Robert, to be blind for the first time. Something changes inside him and the experience purges his resentment. What makes this part of the story so memorable is its simplicity. Carver is an author known for his minimalist stories.

Another area where we can see this is through his simple sentences. The language isn't complex and even a child could read and grasp the basic

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premise of the story with little effort. Carver writes Cathedral in such a way as to bring us into the narrator's mind. The narrator is living this life and it's essentially a personal account of his experience of meeting and interacting with his wife's friend. We can't get a full understanding of what Robert and the narrator's wife is truly like because we only have the narrator's word to go on. As such, we have a completely biased and distorted view of practically every character.

The same principle stands for the narrator. We can only go on what he thinks of himself. In many ways, this writing style closes off much of the world. We can't see and look at everything. The reader is forced to only look at what the narrator looks at. Overall, the fact the narrator's simplistic view is the only view we have symbolizes the narrow views of those who hold prejudices against different disabilities.

Carver shows how a simple 'coming out' moment can change even the most negative views. In the 1980s, when this story was published, views on disability were far less tolerant than they are in the present day. The author sends an important message of tolerance and understanding in a world where these two attributes existed in unfortunately small quantities.