

# Cathedral by raymond carver

Literature



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## Cathedral by Raymond Carver

A short story written by Raymond Carver, “Cathedral” is a mind-opening revelation between the narrator and a blind man named Robert. The story focuses on the narrator’s blinded ignorance and the blind man’s openness to truth and to life. The narrator has a restricted knowledge about life and easily passes judgment as he emphasized, “And his being blind bothered me. My idea of blindness came from the movies. In the movies, the blind moved slowly and never laughed” (Carver, 186). The narrator’s ignorance and insensitivity even extends to his wife when he brushed off the poem she had written about a mind-boggling experience of being touched on the face by a blind man (187). To top it all, he is also jealous of his wife’s relationship with the visiting blind man “I waited in vain to hear my name on my wife’s sweet lips but I heard nothing of the sort. More talk of Robert” (Carver 191). But as a turning point, the blind man asks the narrator to describe the cathedrals for him. Just as when he thought he sees everything, the narrator begins to feel what it is like to have no sight. The blind man’s lack of vision is instrumental for the narrator to step out from the borders of ignorance and begin to realize that “My eyes were still closed. I was in my house. I knew that. But I didn’t feel like I was inside anything” (Carver 196). He also realizes that his use of mind-altering substances such as dope and liquor has not successfully given him a sense of satisfaction but instead has just filled a void just to get a certain jittery “high”. For the blind man, his sense of “high” comes from his wife and their time spent together while she was still living. In the end despite living different worlds, both men are able to see each other’s point of view. The narrator is able to see what a cathedral is in the eyes of a blind man while the blind man is able to see a cathedral in the

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eyes of the narrator. Both their blindness, literally and figuratively, has led them together in the end.

#### Work Cited

Carver, Raymond. " Cathedral." The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction. Ed. Cassill, R. V. and Richard Bausch. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2000. 186-196.