

Sorry for the loss
essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The treatment of prisoners and how lawbreakers should be handled is a difficult and ethical debate. Some believe that people can change, and that one mistake should not determine how your life should be. Others believe that there are no excuses for violence or criminality, they believe in a no-tolerance policy. In the short story ‘ Sorry for the Loss’ the author Bridget Keehan examines the statement “ don’t judge a book by its cover” through the main character Evie and the inmate Victor. Evie tries to see the best in Victor through her religious belief, but is every prisoner in fact just another cruel criminal?

Evie is a catholic and works as a chaplain in a prison. She is an extremely cautious, nervous and religious person. She does not feel safe inside the walls of the prison, but through prayers she can obtain a feeling of confidence and security, which makes her able to proceed with her duties. Evie is a younger woman perhaps in her thirties, and despite having worked in a juvenile prison facility for many years before, it is new and scary experience for her to be working amongst adult inmates.

She likes to walk over from the chaplaincy to whichever wing she is working on before the prisoners are unlocked, this allows her time to try and feel comfortable in her surroundings before the landings become choked with prisoners. ” In this quote, it is seen that she needs to prepare herself in calm surroundings in order to work with the prisoners. Evie is therefore not the typical person one would associate with a prison as she is insecure and very attentive.

With such a vivid description of her personality, the reader gets an idea of a fragile, small, diffident woman, despite the fact that there are no given details concerning her appearance. Because of her religion, Evie believes the best in people, and the same goes for the inmate Victor whom she visits to give the announcement of his deceased grandmother. Evie does not know who Victor is, because he is described as VictorE22A which is very impersonal. When the two of them meet, it turns out that Victor is a young guy, perhaps in his late teens, which surprises Evie.

He seems educated even though he is in prison. He is able to quote Shakespeare and appears well-groomed. Furthermore, the reader receives the impression that Victor is an open minded person, and that he does not belong inside the prison, which he also mentions himself. “ I am, just not very practising; I’m looking into the Qur’an and stuff. See it as a part of my education, like Shakespeare, and the Iman, he’s a good man. ” In terms of theme, the author puts up a lot of contrast between Evie and everything dealing with the prison including Victor.

Victor’s reality stands as a clear contrast to Evie’s, because how she would grasp the news of a deceased family member would be with a feeling of sorrow. Her reaction would be to cry and feel sad whereas Victor reacts completely opposite to that, he merely shakes it off, which is seen in the following quote: “ She said it was for her MS, but I think she’d have been a pot head even if she wasn’t sick. But good luck to her. Whatever gets you through right? ” Instead of reminiscing good times and what he will miss about her, he chooses to state the reality of his grandmother as it is.

In addition to the contrast between Evie and Victor is also the contrast between Evie and the prison. “ Her meditations are broken by the sound of heavy-footed officers coming back on duty, their keys jangling in readiness to open. ” This sentence summarizes the differences between the two parts. Evie is calm and meditates while the officers are loud and disturbing. The fact that they bear the keys to open the cells also stands in contrast as we are told earlier in the story, that Evie feels safest when the cells are closed.

The word ‘ broken’ also contributes to the heavy contrast creating a setting that is ruined because of a loaded word as ‘ broken’. In the ending the author has also form another contrast which symbolises Victor and the theme concerning not judging a book by its cover. Victor killed a fellow student with a butterfly knife, which makes Evie wonder how such a cruel weapon can have such a beautiful name, and those are the two elements that creates this contrast. To narrate this story with all of these contrast the author has chosen a third person narrator.

The person telling the story does not take part in the events of the story. The narrator has a limited view, because the reader only gets to know about how Evie is feeling. The only places that indicates other persons feeling are through dialogue or when the narrator tells about what Evie sees when another character reacts to something. The reader experiences the story through Evie’s point of view though it is not her telling the story, but with the technique used the story could easily have been told by a first person narrator without causing much change.

The restricted narrator causes the reader to engage more in Evie's life and sympathise with her. With limited insight in the other characters' emotions the reader forms a more personal relationship with Evie and a more distant one with Victor. The first person narrator contributes with a more thorough description of the setting and all along with the limited point of view the two creates a more intriguing plot. In a tough environment, Evie realises that sometimes a book cannot be judged by its cover, and other times it actually can.

At first she only sees a prisoner in Victor and therefore thinks of him as dangerous. Later she sees a nice looking young man who does not turn out to be as nice as he seemed. Victor turned out to be the person she saw as the cover despite her confusion in the process. Victor's behaviour is confusing to the ethical question of whether a criminal can change or not. In one way it seems as if he truly is a good person, in another way it seems as if the prison suits his personality and actions.