

They have their
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for example,



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

There is a saying that states that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. This means that everyone is beautiful in a unique way, depending on how others see them. For Pecola Breedlove, this was not a pleasant thought for her.

Pecola is an 11-year-old, African-American girl from Toni Morrisons novel, *The Bluest Eye*. Throughout the majority of her short life, Pecola struggles with the image of ideal beauty.

Pecola has to go through many tough and humiliating times because of her physical features and she never really got to learn the meaning of truly being beautiful. Pecola longs to have blue eyes so that she could look like the Caucasian women whose features were considered to be ideal. These features not only included blue eyes, but blonde hair as well. Still in society today, we have our standards of beauty as well. Caucasians may still consider ideal beauty to be blue eyes, blonde hair, and also thin physiques. Other ethnic groups also have their standards of beauty. For example, in African-American culture, a woman who is thick would be considered beautiful.

There were many references to Caucasian girls and women that Pecola idolized. The first was Shirley Temple. Temple, a popular young actress in the 1930s and 40s, was best known for her curly blonde hair and blue eyes. When Pecola first moves in with the MacTeer family, she immediately developed a fascination for the Shirley Temple cups. Morrison writes, She was a long time with the milk, and gazed fondly at the silhouette of Shirley Temples dimpled face (19). This became a problem for Mrs. MacTeer because Pecola was drinking so much of their milk. Another reference to idealized beauty is the little girl on the Mary Jane candy wrappers.

When Pecola goes to Mr. Yacobowskis store, she buys the Mary Jane candy. Pecola is also fascinated with Mary Janes blue eyes. She felt that if she ate the candy, then she would become Mary Jane. This is seen when Morrison writes, To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane.

Be Mary Jane (50). A movie actress that Pecolas mother, Pauline Breedlove, admired was Jean Harlow. Harlow was also a film star from the 1930s. When Pauline was five months pregnant (Morrison, 123), she tries to make herself look like Jean Harlow by doing her hair in the same style as Harlow. Paulines fascination with Caucasian beauty came about when she started spending more time at the movie theaters.

Morrison writes, Along with the idea of romantic love, she was introduced to another physical beauty. Probably the most destructive ideas in the history of human thought. Both originated in envy, thrived in insecurity, and ended in disillusion (122). Both Pecola and her mother suffer from major insecurity of themselves.

They both strive for positive attention from others and they want to be seen as beautiful. Caucasians are not the only ones who are seen as being beautiful in the novel, but there is also a young girl in the novel named Maureen Peal. Maureen was the new girl at school who was around Pecolas age. She also has a lighter complexion and lighter colored eyes than the others did. These characteristics gave Maureen a lot of attention from other students as well as teachers. Maureen gave the other girls the impression

that she was down to earth until one day the girls got in an argument over Pecolas father. Maureen had called Pecolas father black.

Claudia MacTeer had asked Maureen who she was calling black. Maureen then called Claudia black and taunted her by saying, I am cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly black e mos. I am cute (73)! Maureens words had hurt the girls feelings and they began to believe what she had said. The Breedlove family consider themselves as being ugly because of all they see around them as to what is considered real beauty. They feel like they cannot have more or be more because of this.

The family is full of low self-esteem. Pecola believes that by having blue eyes, they would take all of her