

"perfect sunday" by  
jose ayala and  
"cathedral" by  
raymond carver



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The Second Joyful Mystery Ding-dong. As I lazily got up to answer the door of the short stories in my hand, I was surprised to see a blind man, named Robert and a long lost grandson, named Jorge. Perfect Sunday by Jose Ayala and Cathedral by Raymond Carver both revolves around the host-visitor dynamic. Raymond Carver's Cathedral revolves around the interaction of the character of the husband and his wife's long time blind friend, Robert and Jose Ayala's Perfect Sunday delves into Jorge's visit to his grandmother. As both pairs of characters engage in small talk they are able to reconnect, establish new ties and discover more of themselves. The characters of the short stories will be cross-examined with each other. First would be visitor to visitor then host to host, Jorge to Robert and Dona Santos to the husband. Then Jorge will be compared to the husband and Dona Santos will be compared to Robert. Through this we can discover the deeper ideas both short stories possess. Jorge and Robert are both the visitors in the short stories. Both characters appear to be unconventional to the host characters. The husband and Dona Santos are in a way traditional and conservative. In Cathedral the husband was at first not very comfortable with Robert visiting. Aside from Robert being a complete stranger, the husband was not at ease about the idea that Robert was blind. The husband had a lot of preconceived notions about how blind men behaved and looked like. The thought that Robert married an African-American woman came as a shock to him. He even reacted quite violently. " Her name was Beulah. Beulah! That's a name of a colored woman. " Was his wife a Negro? I asked". He also was surprised when he saw Robert with a beard and without a cane or a pair of glasses. He was even taken aback with the way Robert ate. " I watched with admiration as he used his knife and fork on the meat". In Perfect Sunday Dona Santos is <https://assignbuster.com/perfect-sunday-by-jose-ayala-and-cathedral-by-raymond-carver/>

the typical grandmother. According to the text she is of traditional Spanish descent. She is very conservative. Jorge's lifestyle seems to be quite not ideal to her. When Jorge took out a cigarette Dona Santos eyed Jorge quizzically. "Dona Santos looked at the cigarette, then at Jorge". She also seemed to be a little disappointed that Jorge is a musician. She seemed to have approved more on Jorge's cousin, Leo who was a taking up business administration and was disappointed when she heard that he was not able to finish school. The visitor characters represent the unusual in the society each of the short stories exist in. They also represent change and reform in the society. The host characters symbolize the norm and the tradition the society upholds. In both short stories the contrasting of these ideas are present. Both selections also look into how the concept of change and tradition can help shape the characters. Jorge and the husband are very much alike. Both characters have that tendency to be stereotypical and judgmental. For Jorge this can be seen in the first part of the selection when he was observing the passersby. This trait is apparent to the husband with regard to how he perceives and treats Robert. Both characters are not in tuned to their religious beliefs. Jorge's refusal to attend mass and even claiming that doing so will ruin his perfect Sunday is proof to this. The husband's "prayer" during their dinner was done jokingly and even bordering on mockery. When asked by Robert whether he was religious or not, he explicitly answered "I guess I don't believe in it". Dona Santos and Robert can be put next to each other. Both these characters are the religious or spiritual influence in the other characters' lives. Dona Santos' beliefs are more explicitly stated. Robert's can be considered as more spiritual. These characters serve as the catalysts for change in their co-characters. Dona Santos' sense of

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religiousness and spirituality influenced Jorge in a juvenile and very childlike way, the way a little boy is disciplined by his grandmother for not going to mass or rewarded for behaving well in the liturgy. Through this, although very superficial, Jorge was able to grasp a ritualistic and cultural concept of religion and his grandmother's beliefs. I found the husband's and Robert's "spiritual" enlightenment quite problematic, because both of them were high on marijuana when they engaged in the activity. This may be so, but in a way Robert was also able to help awaken and reconnect the husband's character to himself. Both selections had religious references in them, specifically with cathedrals. In Perfect Sunday, cathedral was used to describe Jorge's state of being, "...Feeling again like a vast and empty cathedral". As for Cathedral, the cathedral served as a vessel for the enlightenment and awakening of the husband. The cathedrals can also symbolize how the characters perceive religion and ultimately their lives. For Jorge religion is very tradition based. With his grandmother's influence, religion is an obligation and not devotion. So when his grandmother asked him if he went to mass his mind went into this trance-like, echoing and empty state. What Jorge knows of religion is its structure and like a cathedral, its vast hollowness. As for the husband's experience, the cathedral, at first, amplified his unfamiliarity with religion. But what the story promotes is that when the husband begins to open his mind to what Robert has to say and looks at things in a different way; profound, transcendent and unexpected experiences arise. What is similar to both texts is the factor of human interaction, connecting and reconnecting to the people around us; especially if like Jorge and the husband we have gone too comfortable being bubbled up in our own beliefs and realities. In a way, we have to let other

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people in for us to know or be reminded of who we are and what we really want to be. We all have to get up from where we are seated, answer the door and let that visitor in. 092308 R34