

Ordinary people
aren't ordinary essay



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The Jarrett's have always believed themselves to be ordinary people, but after their firstborn son, Jordan "Buck" Jarrett drowns and their second born son, Conrad, attempts suicide their whole world is turned upside-down. When Conrad comes home from his mental institution he feels that things have changed. Conrad's relationship with his parents has changed. Depression is an important theme in this book. It is present constantly, and may bring the reader into a saddened state, but this is necessary to truly understand the complexities involved in this family. The relationship that Conrad has with his parents changes throughout the novel. The Jarretts are not your typical ordinary people and this causes conflicts throughout the book.

When Conrad first comes home, he has an awkward relationship with both of his parents. He believes that his father is watching his every move checking for signals. While it is true that both parents love Conrad, they both have different ways of showing their love. Conrad's father worries about him more than his mother does. Cal believes that communication will help heal the wounds, while Beth wants to leave the past behind. In a conversation with psychiatrist Dr. Berger, Conrad is asked who does most of the worrying and he answers "My father, mostly. This is his idea." When asked about his mother he says "She's-I don't know, she's not a worrier." Clearly Conrad thinks that his mother doesn't care about him.

Conrad's father does most of the worrying because he blames himself for Conrad's suicide attempt. Though the logical part of Cal's brain tells him it wasn't his fault he still believes that he should have paid more attention to Conrad. This is usually the role a mother plays with her son. Calvin is not an ordinary parent.

Conrad's mother, Beth, on the other hand thinks that Cal worries too much about Conrad. Beth thinks that Conrad is just trying to hurt her. Conrad tells Beth that he would tell her more about him if he thought she "gave a damn." Conrad tells Beth that he thinks she is the one trying to hurt him. Beth is not at all an ordinary mother. Mothers are supposed to be close to their children. They are supposed to be caring and loving.

Conrad finally releases all of his emotions when his mother confronts him about his quitting the swimming team. Conrad tells Beth what he thinks of her visiting other countries instead of visiting him at the mental institution. After the fight, Conrad tells his father "She hates me. There's nothing I can do about it." Beth is a very unforgiving person, and Conrad doesn't think that she will ever forgive him for his suicide attempt.

She accuses Cal of being overprotective about Conrad and being oblivious to her feelings. Later in the story, Conrad realizes his mother is afraid of strangers. Beth seems to act so uncaring to Conrad because she sees him as a stranger. The Conrad that Beth knew would never attempt suicide.

The Jarretts are not ordinary people. Conrad is a suicidal and insecure person. He cannot deal with his emotions in a positive way. This gets him into trouble. Calvin is Conrad's father. Calvin acts like a mother towards Conrad because Beth doesn't. Calvin is always pestering Conrad and trying to help him. At the end of the story he breaks down and thinks he doesn't love Beth anymore. Beth is Conrad's mother. Beth isn't a typical mother. She leaves Conrad alone and doesn't bother to be a part of his life. She was close with Buck, who died in the boating accident. Beth can never forgive Conrad

for trying to commit suicide. She can never forgive him for all the pain she was put through. The Jarretts seem like Ordinary people on the outside, but on the inside they are deeply scarred emotionally and very extraordinary.