

## 1: Short Story Analysis: Cathedral by Raymond Carver - The Sitting Bee

*1 Cathedral By Raymond Carver () This blind man, an old friend of my wife's, he was on his way to spend the night. His wife had died. So he was visiting the dead wife's.*

Then he called to ask me to forget what I had going and to move up there and live with him. He said he was on the wagon. I knew about that wagon. He called again and said, Edna, you can see the ocean from the front window. You can smell salt in the air. I listened to him talk. A week later he called again and said, Are you coming? I said I was still thinking. I said, If I come up there, I want you to do something for me. Name it, Wes said. I said, I want you to try and be the Wes I used to know. The Wes I married. Wes began to cry, but I took it as a sign of his good intentions. When I made up my mind to go with Wes, I had to say goodbye to my friend. He said, What about me? What about my sake? We drank coffee, pop, and all kinds of fruit juice that summer. Not since the night Wes was drunk and threw his ring into a peach orchard. And it turned out Chef was letting us have the house for almost nothing. We paid the gas and light and shopped for specials at the Safeway. One Sunday afternoon Wes went out to get a sprinkler and came back with something for me. He came back with a nice bunch of daisies and a straw hat. Chef would pick him up in his car at the door and drive him home again afterward. Some days Wes and I would go fishing for trout in one freshwater lagoon nearby. At night, Wes would take me in his arms and ask me if I was still his girl. Our kids kept their distance. Cheryl lived with some people on a farm in Oregon. She looked after a herd of goats and sold the milk. She kept bees and put up jars of honey. Bobby was in Washington working in the hay. After the haying season, he planned to work in the apples. He had a girl and was saving his money. I was working at the sink. I could see his car, the access road and the freeway, and, behind the freeway, the dunes and the ocean. Clouds hung over the water. Chef got out of his car and hitched his pants. I knew there was something. Wes stopped what he was doing and stood up. He was wearing his gloves and a canvas hat. He took off his hat and wiped his face with the back of his hand. Wes took off one of his gloves. I went to the door. I heard Chef say to Wes God knows he was sorry but he was going to have to ask us to leave at the end of the month. Wes pulled off his other glove. Chef said his daughter, Linda, the woman Wes used to call Fat Linda from the time of his drinking days, needed a place to live and this place was it. Then Chef hugged Wes again, hitched his pants, and got in his big car and drove away. Wes came inside the house. He dropped his hat and gloves on the carpet and sat down in the big chair. I poured two cups of coffee and gave one to him. Her man will turn up in Ketchikan, Wes said. And who could blame him? Then Wes put his cup down next to his gloves. This has been a happy house up to now, he said. Not like this one, Wes said. This house has been a good house for us. This house has good memories to it. Now Fat Linda and her kid will be in here, Wes said. He picked up his cup and tasted from it. He has to do what he has to do. I know that, Wes said. Wes had this look about him. I knew that look. He kept touching his lips with his tongue. He kept thumbing his shirt under his waistband. He got up from the chair and went to the window. He stood looking out the ocean and at the clouds, which were building up. He patted his chin with his fingers like he was thinking about something. And he was thinking. Go easy, Wes, I said. She wants me to go easy, Wes said. He kept standing there. But in a minute he came over and sat next to me on the sofa. He crossed one leg over the other and began fooling with the buttons on his shirt. I took his hand. I started to talk. I talked about the summer. But I caught myself talking like it was something that had happened in the past. At any rate, like something that was over. Then I started talking about the kids. Wes said he wished he could do it over again and do it right this time. They love you, I said. I know a few things, Wes said, and looked at me. That Chef, Wes said, and shook his head. He threw us a knuckleball, that son of a bitch. Then I said something. I said, Suppose, just suppose, nothing had ever happened. Suppose this was for the first time. Say none of the other had ever happened. You know what I mean? Wes fixed his eyes on me. We were born who we are. I brought his hand to my cheek. But they were just babies. Wes sat next to me patting his chin, like he was trying to figure out the next thing. Wes, listen to me. What do you want? He seemed to have made up his mind. But, having made up his mind, he was in no hurry. He leaned back on the sofa, folded his hands in his lap, and closed his eyes.

## 2: Full text of "Cathedral and the Bazaar"

*"Cathedral" is perhaps the most famous and most anthologized story by American writer Ramond Carver. It first appeared in The Atlantic Monthly in An interesting documentary about Carver.*

As I write this, I am listening to my six-year-old daughter Poppy while she pretends to go to sleep listening to the soundtrack from the Coraline movie. She listens to all of it. Not just the pretty bits but the whole thing, including the strange parts. And she takes a couple of soft toys to bed and has them act out parts of the story to the music. She does this almost every night at the minute. When she first saw Coraline, she watched it about four times in the same week. She clearly had a moment, while watching that movie, that made her believe this was one of the best stories ever. Joyce called it the epiphany, for Woolf it was a moment of being. I had never read anything like it. I went on and read every other Carver story I could find. I mourned the fact that he was already dead and I would never get to meet him. Why is it so good, I thought? Later, I chose Carver as a key text in a course I taught to English undergraduates. Firstly, I read somewhere that this story was written on a train. I wonder if Carver had to rush to finish it before he reached his stop. Sometimes the best things are written quickly. The opening is simplicity itself: When Robert comes, they drink whiskey and eat a large dinner. When she goes upstairs to change into her robe, Robert and the narrator smoke a joint together. The narrator explains to the blind man what a cathedral looks like and feels he has failed. Robert tells him to get a pen and some heavy paper. The wife wakes up and asks what is happening. His spare prose style, peopled by inarticulate characters who struggle to connect, is almost saying "See? It is flat and spare: He is not restricted by his condition, visiting friends and relations, and uses ham radio to connect with people all over the world. The wife is open-minded and creative: Through this brief vignette, Carver manages to explore some profound themes. I was in my house. It is still enclosed, and therefore safe, but expansive enough to allow the spirit room to breathe. His spare prose style, peopled by inarticulate characters who struggle to connect, is indicative of this need to communicate. Rebecca Mascull lives by the sea in the east of England with her partner and their daughter. She has previously worked in education and has a Masters in Writing.

## 3: DRAGON: Raymond Carver / Chef's House

*"Cathedral" is a short story written by American writer and poet Raymond Carver. It was the first story written after finishing What We Talk About When We Talk About Love. [1] It is the title story of a collection published in Cathedral.*

These characters do not belong to me. Just pay me back with one thousand kisses. Written for this prompt at the Kink Meme. Well, not sulking, precisely, but he was angry. Well, no, not angry, precisely, either. He was definitely quiet. Days now, days and days of quiet and Sherlock watching and waiting, waiting for John to do something. Stop being quiet, mostly. It was becoming most tiresome as the days went by and John kept being quiet. Sherlock had tried everything, from making tea and abandoning his messier experiments, to not playing violin after 1 a. Not too hot, not too cold. Just right, in fact. With some kind of sauce? Did you hear about that celebrity? The one who got pregnant by her? Still, nothing. Apparently, extreme measures were needed. He decided to try at breakfast, when John was most warm and muzzy-headed and amenable. John looked up from his food and looked up at him. John tilted his head. His fingers were curled around his mug. Sherlock waited for him to stop waiting. He took a bite of toast. He was a very thorough chewer. His digestive system would thank him for that. Now for the hardest part, for various reasons. His gaze was very blue and steady, but not cold. He seemed to be deliberating. The quietness spun out. Sherlock felt sweat starting to form along his hairline. What else could there be? He licked dry lips. Blew up the kettle two days ago? Burned a hole in the carpet? He put the toast down and put his hands in his lap. He nodded, very slightly. He waited a full minute. You still owe me, I think. He felt unaccountably nervous. For all the undue pain and suffering you caused. Laundry for a month? What if John asked him to give up work? He needed to head this off, fast. What did you say? What do you want? That you just said. Though a clean fridge would be nice. But, more than one, I should think. He felt a cutting retort curling on his tongue, but he bit it back, hard. Sherlock suddenly realized what he had, indeed, just agreed to and felt something unfurling in his stomach. It was either panic or excitement, he decided. Most likely a combination of the two.

## 4: Cathedral Summary - [www.enganchecubano.com](http://www.enganchecubano.com)

*Raymond Carver, [www.enganchecubano.com](http://www.enganchecubano.com) - Google Drive Main menu.*

Taken from his collection of the same name the story is narrated in the first person by an unnamed man and from the beginning of the story the reader realises how detached the narrator is. Not only is he displeased with the fact that Robert is visiting but the reader also senses that in some ways the narrator is also jealous of the connection that his wife has with Robert. The narrator also appears to have a very limited viewpoint on blindness. For the first time he is seeing, rather than looking. It is as if the narrator prefers to be ignorant of what Robert might think of him, rather than hearing something that he may dislike. Again this could suggest a detachment from others. This is noticeable by the fact that she had previously attempted to write a poem about the incident of Robert touching her face. It is also interesting that the narrator appears to long for a similar connection with his wife. As he is sitting listening to his wife talk to Robert, he waits, expecting to hear his name being mentioned, however it never is. The turning point in the story appears to be when the narrator and Robert are looking at some Cathedrals on the TV. It is obvious that despite his ability to see the Cathedrals, the narrator has difficulty in describing them to Robert and if anything he appears to be stuck for words in describing the Cathedrals. By having the narrator stuck for words and unable to describe to Robert what a Cathedral looks like, Carver may be suggesting that the narrator, at least symbolically, is also blind. It is also at this stage, as the narrator is drawing a Cathedral that the reader suspects that both the narrator and Robert are connecting in some way. It may also be significant or symbolic that Carver uses the cannabis as a means of connecting both men. Some critics suggesting that it represents a communion between Robert and the narrator. Symbolically the Cathedral that the narrator draws is also significant. A Cathedral is a place for people to go and worship, to connect with God. By drawing the Cathedral the narrator is in some ways also making a connection. For the first time he appears to be able to see. There is also a sense of irony at the end of the story. Carver never explains what it is the narrator sees, but there is the sense that he has found a connection and is no longer detached or isolated. Cite Post McManus, Dermot. *The Sitting Bee*, 3 Jan.

### 5: Raymond Carver, [www.enganchecubano.com](http://www.enganchecubano.com) - Google Drive

*The narrator asks Robert whether he has any idea what a cathedral looks like. Robert says he doesn't and asks the narrator to describe one. The narrator tries, but he knows he doesn't do a very good job.*

The narrator is clearly unhappy about the upcoming visit. He then flashes back to the story of how his wife met the blind man when she worked for him as a reader. At the time, she was engaged to marry an officer in the Air Force. When she tells the blind man goodbye, he asks if he can touch her face. The touch of his fingers on her face is a pivotal moment in her life, something the narrator does not understand. Although his wife has maintained contact with the blind man for ten years, this will be the first time she has seen him since her marriage, subsequent divorce, and remarriage. Robert, the blind man, has just lost his wife and will be travelling to Connecticut to visit with her family. Along the way, he will spend the night at the home of the narrator and his wife. His wife tells the narrator that Robert and his wife, Beulah, were inseparable. The narrator further denigrates the blind man by considering how dreadful it must have been for Beulah not to have been seen by the man she loved. They all drink heavily and eat a large dinner, complete with strawberry pie. After dinner, they drink more, and the narrator continues to observe. The narrator attempts to describe what he sees on the television; however, when a cathedral appears in a documentary, the narrator is unable to find the words to describe it. Robert asks the narrator to get some paper and a pen so that they can draw a cathedral together. The narrator does as he is asked. When he returns, he gives the paper to Robert who feels the size of the paper. Then Robert places his hand on the hand of the narrator that holds the pen. Finally, Robert tells the narrator to close his eyes and continue to draw. At this moment, something strange happens to the narrator. Even when Robert tells him to open his eyes, he keeps them closed. Something has happened to him that has changed his understanding of life. I was in my house. With its publication, Carver finally received the critical praise he had longed for. I was in a period of generosity. The character there is full of prejudices against blind people. He changes; he grows. The sighted man changes. The story affirms something.

## 6: Short stories and Raymond Carver's Cathedral | 51stories

*Raymond Carver used different ways to put together these two men in the story Cathedral - the "blind" narrator and the "sighted" blind Robert. But the moment when the wife falls asleep on the couch in the room and two men (her husband and Robert) stay alone, plays a very important role in the literary work.*

He explains that his wife met the blind man ten years ago when she worked for him as a reader to the blind in Seattle. He says that on the last day of her job there, the blind man touched her face and she wrote a poem about the experience. Unhappy with her life, she tried to commit suicide one night by swallowing pills, but she survived. She and the blind man kept in touch by sending audiotapes back and forth to each other throughout her marriage, and she told everything to the blind man on tapes. They started to listen but were interrupted before the narrator could hear anything about himself. The narrator suggests taking the blind man bowling. She then tells him more about Beulah. After eight years, however, Beulah died from cancer. The narrator thinks how awful it must have been for Beulah to know that her husband could never look at her. He speculates that she could have worn whatever she wanted. When they arrive, he watches his wife laughing and talking with the blind man as she leads him by the arm to the house. The narrator is shocked to see that the blind man has a full beard. The wife introduces the narrator to the blind man, whose name is Robert. They all sit in the living room. He wishes Robert would wear them because his eyes look weird and turn in strange directions. Robert smokes several cigarettes. They sit down for dinner and eat ravenously, not speaking, eating so much that they are dazed. After dinner, they go back to the living room to drink more. The wife and Robert talk about things that have happened to them in the past ten years, while the narrator occasionally tries to join in. He learns that Robert and Beulah had run an Amway distributorship and that Robert is a ham radio operator. When Robert asks the narrator questions, he makes only short responses. The narrator then turns on the television, irritating his wife. The wife goes upstairs to change clothes and is gone a long time. The narrator offers Robert some pot, and they smoke a joint. The wife joins them when she comes back. The narrator changes the channel and asks Robert if he wants to go to bed. The narrator says he likes the company and that he and his wife never go to bed at the same time. There is a program about the Middle Ages on television. Nothing else is on, but Robert says he likes learning things. The TV narrator begins talking about cathedrals, showing different ones in different countries. The narrator asks Robert whether he has any idea what a cathedral looks like. Robert asks the narrator to find a piece of paper and pen. Then he and the narrator sit around the coffee table, and Robert tells the narrator to draw a cathedral. Robert tells the narrator to close his eyes and keep drawing, and the narrator does so.

## 7: SparkNotes: Cathedral: Plot Overview

*Cathedral study guide contains a biography of Raymond Carver, literature essays, quiz questions, major themes, characters, and a full summary and analysis.*

## 8: Raymond Carver: Collected Stories | Library of America

*In "Cathedral," the narrator feels threatened by a blind man named Robert. After dinner, the narrator gets to know Robert, and under the influence of marijuana the two share a spiritual experience.*

## 9: Cathedral (short story) - Wikipedia

*Cathedral is a short story written by Raymond Carver. The story unfolds as a first person narrative of a main character named Bub. The story is short and slow paced.. In fact, the whole conversations and drama in the story is an event that took place in one day. The story beautifully depicts the.*

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