

Ruth's struggle as an African-American for justice, discrimination, and prejudice in Jodi Picoult's small great things

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Abstract

In this era, racism is still something that can be found in various places and we cannot hide that discrimination against a race will never end. This 'small great things' tells us how someone needs to struggle with her job because of the racism thing that she received. This study tries to see how justice in the United States works and what discrimination and prejudice using a racial approach and see how to struggle the main character of these 'small great things' through all of the racism toward her. Racism and discrimination are two things that can't be separated. It doesn't matter if you're a good employee or a good person. At the end of the day, you have different skin colors, and the next things you will get are injustice, discrimination, and prejudice. Every racism cannot be tolerated and this book will make you realize that people of color always struggle if they meet someone full of racist things in their life. Justice should be the last thing that they can trust from all of the things on the outside.

Keywords: African-American, discrimination, justice, prejudice, struggle

Introduction

We live in a world that has 3 or 4 basic races and can be further subdivided into more than 40 subgroups based on hair type, head shape, skin color, height, and so on. People nowadays are easily categorized as "African, Asian, European, Native American, and Oceanian". With the diversity of human beings in this world and we also live side by side with people who are different from each other, we need to have tolerance and think "We are the same, we are a human race as one". Without seeing our skin color, hair type, eye shapes, and anything that can make us look different from each other. We as one, as human beings need to respect and help each other.

Nonetheless, racism still happens and exists in every sector of the world. If we look around and open our eyes more, then

we will see a lot of discrimination caused by racial differences. In the United States African-Americans have a higher risk of discrimination and prejudice compared with other racial or ethnic groups there. In the United States, we can see when black people deal with the police, justice, voting, the workplace, society and etc. In 2020 all the world knows about the brutality of the police officers who caught George Floyd until he died because out of oxygen. Injustice towards black people in this country is very contrasting compared with American white people.

Such broad statistics mask the racial disparity that pervades the U.S. criminal justice system, and for African Americans in particular. African Americans are more likely than white Americans to be arrested; once arrested, they are more likely to be convicted; and once convicted, and they are more likely to experience lengthy prison sentences. African-American adults are 5.9 times as likely to be incarcerated than whites and Hispanics are 3.1 times as likely.⁴ As of 2001, one of every three black boys born in that year could expect to go to prison in his lifetime, as could one of every six Latinos—compared to

one of every seventeen white boys.5) Racial and ethnic disparities among women are less substantial than among men but remain prevalent.6) (sentencingproject.org,2018)

Justice is the last thing that must be a reliable foundation or foothold because justice must be neutral, without distinction of skin color, race, or other things that can influence the decision itself. Imagine if your last footing turns out to be your biggest nightmare, you will feel that there is no safe

Nurses are one the most important employees in hospitals, they usually take care of newborns from the mother's womb. Also, nurses play an important role in providing care for patients to help manage their physical needs, treat health conditions and prevent illnesses. As highly trained members of the medical team, most nurses have a broad skill set and a wide range of responsibilities that can vary from one patient to the next. Because of their important role in the workplace, it is they should get a very fair trial in court.

If one day they get some problems or accidents with their job and if they end up dealing with the police, it should be fine if they are innocent and not found guilty by the court. This is different in the United States where racism has interfered with justice. Whoever you are, if you are black African-American, you will not get what is called "justice". Discrimination and Prejudice are what you will get in this country. The things above are told in such a way by Jodi Picoult in her book entitled 'small great things'. This book is divided into 3 different perspectives. Ruth Jefferson, Turk Brauer, Kennedy McQuarrie. Ruth here is a black African-American woman who works as a nurse, Turk is a white supremacist whose baby dies while Ruth shifts to caring for a newborn, and Kennedy is a defense attorney. In this journal, we will just focus on what's Ruth perspective as a black nurse. She is a black nurse who works in a hospital in Connecticut. She said every baby is born beautiful. She got a lot of discrimination, prejudice, and injustice. It happens after Ruth on her duty, briefly alone in the nursery.

place left even in your country. Unfortunately, this injustice still happens in every place including the workplace. Hospitals should be neutral workplaces because the concept of the hospital itself is to help all the people who got sick, have accidents, or people who need help when they want to give birth

Prejudice and discrimination here happen when Ruth wants to try to save Turk's baby named Davis. Turk doesn't want every African-American staff touch his baby. There was a Post-it note left on the baby's file that said no African-American personnel to touch this infant. Turk's baby goes into cardiac distress and eventually died because no one helped. Davis will not die if his father requests 'nobody touches my son, especially Ruth' which is Ruth is a black African-American nurse.

Not only stop there, two weeks later Turk made a complaint and a lawsuit against Ruth for allegedly killing his son. He sued Ruth for being negligent in carrying out her duties as a newborn nurse, causing the death of his baby. Of course, this does not make sense because Ruth just fulfills Turk's request to not touch his baby. The state of Connecticut takes away Ruth's license and she's arrested. Even after all that discrimination, Turk could still do things that insulted Ruth. This outright hatred of Ruth is also due to the fact that Turk is a white supremacist. He spat at Ruth as she sat in the gallery.

It will be interesting to see how Ruth fights in court for justice. It will also be questioning why the hospital decided to fire Ruth. How she speaks for her right against racism in the court. This event lead to the miracle of Ruth's story because we know that African-Americans in the United States always got discrimination, prejudice, and injustice.

Actually, these 'small great things' contain all of the points of view of every character in the story. If we read all of that we will know how one event will affect the other event and so on. However, we will focus on Ruth's

struggle against all of the racist things that she got.

This journal will focus discuss one question: How struggle did Ruth through Injustice, Discrimination, and Prejudice?

The author's background and this book are about Jodi Picoult who wanted to write about racism, she started her book after reading a news story about an African-American undercover cop who was shot four times in the back on the subway by his colleagues. She tried very hard to write it but at the end of the day, she ultimately failed. She can't write an authentic story and she thought, even she doesn't have the right to write this story because she's a white woman. She does not live that life that African-American black woman is full of discrimination and prejudice.

In 2012, She read a news story that came out of Flint, Mich., and there was an African-American nurse there with 20 years of labor and delivery experience who helped deliver a baby. And in the aftermath, the father called her supervisor into the room and asked that she not touch the baby or anyone who looked like her. He pulled up his sleeve to reveal a swastika tattoo. There was a Post-it note left on the baby's file that said no African-American personnel to touch this infant. And the nurse wound up suing the hospital. She settled out of court. It became a seed for her that grew, and she began to push the envelope a little bit, wondering what would happen if that nurse had been left alone with the baby? What would happen if she had to make a decision that could result in her going to trial and being defended by a white public defender who, like she and like many people she knows, would never consider themselves to be a racist? And she began to think about trying to tell the story from three different points of view - the African-American nurse,

the white public defender, and the skinhead father - as they all confront their beliefs about power and privilege, and race.

Injustice

Based on John Rawl's book 'A Theory of Justice' which was revised and published in 1999, Rawls modifies and develops the principles of justice throughout his book. In chapter forty-six, Rawls makes his final clarification on the two principles of justice:

1. "Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all".[5]
2. "Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both:
 - (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle, and
 - (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity."[5]

In the United States, the principle of justice itself is mixed with various factors and this is what causes the injustice and imbalance in determining who is wrong and right. One of the factors is racism. The United States in effect operates two distinct criminal justice systems: one for wealthy people and another for poor people and people of color. The wealthy can access a vigorous adversary system replete with constitutional protections for defendants. Yet the experiences of poor and minority defendants within the criminal justice system often differ substantially from that model due to a number of factors, each of which contributes to the overrepresentation of such individuals in the system. As former Georgetown Law, Professor David Cole states in his book No Equal Justice,

These double standards are not, of course, explicit; on the face of it, the criminal law is color-blind and class-blind. But in a sense, this only makes the problem worse. The rhetoric of the criminal justice system sends the message that our society carefully protects everyone's constitutional rights, but in practice, the rules assure that law enforcement prerogatives will generally prevail over the rights of minorities and the poor. By affording criminal suspects substantial constitutional rights in theory, the Supreme Court validates the results of the criminal justice system as fair. That formal fairness obscures the systemic concerns that ought to be raised by the fact that the prison population is overwhelmingly poor and disproportionately black. (David Cole, No Equal Justice: Race and Class in the American Criminal Justice System, 8-9 (1999))

This double standard is not seen directly or maybe an open secret in the justice system in the United States. The rule of law is not to see any color or class in society. The criminal justice system tells the people that they must protect all constitutional rights. But in practice in society, these rules will oppress those who are in the minority or in the United States the 'African Americans' who are oppressed by the law itself. By affording criminal suspects substantial constitutional rights in theory, the Supreme Court validates the results of the criminal justice system as fair. That formal fairness obscures the systemic concerns that ought to be raised by the fact that the prison population is overwhelmingly poor and disproportionately black.

Racial disparity also appeared in the United States criminal justice system. In policing aspect data said In 2016, black Americans comprised 27% of all individuals arrested in the United States—double their share of the total population. (FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program) Black youth accounted for 15% of all U.S. children yet made up 35% of juvenile arrests in that year.(Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (2017). Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2016; OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book.) What might appear at first to be a linkage between race and crime is in large part a function of concentrated urban poverty, which is far more common for African Americans than for other racial groups. This accounts for a substantial portion of African Americans' increased likelihood of committing certain violent and property crimes. (Peterson, R. & Krivo, L. (2012). Divergent Social World: Neighborhood Crime and the Racial-Spatial Divide. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation) But while there is a higher black rate of involvement in certain crimes, white Americans overestimate the proportion of crime committed by blacks and Latinos, overlook the fact that communities of color are disproportionately victims of crime, and discount the prevalence of bias in the criminal justice system. (Ghandnoosh, N. (2014). Race and Punishment: Racial Perceptions of Crime and Support for Punitive Policies. Washington, D.C.: The Sentencing Project.)

For decades, the United States has used mass incarceration as an easy answer to unpleasant questions. This policy has resulted in dramatic rates of detention, with a disproportionate impact on communities of color. Despite the dangerous consequences for people of color, mass incarceration has been a failed policy with regard to public safety outcomes. The spread of racial disparity in the US criminal

justice system has had a profound impact on the lives of people of color. Behind every statistic lies the face of a black man or woman whose potential has been shortened by a prison sentence. Behind each percentage point lies the face of a person or even a parent who will only get to play, grow and evolve with their child through hasty and awkward visits to prison visit rooms. Behind every data set lies a community of color that is losing hope because their people are confined.

Discrimination: Racial Prejudice

The simplest definition of this thing is, that racial discrimination refers to unequal treatment of persons or groups on the basis of their race or ethnicity. In defining racial discrimination, many scholars and legal advocates distinguish between differential treatment and disparate impact, creating a two-part definition: Differential treatment occurs when individuals are treated unequally because of their race. Disparate impact occurs when individuals are treated equally according to a given set of rules and procedures but when the latter are constructed in ways that favor members of one group over another (Reskin 1998, p. 32; National Research Council 2004, pp. 39–40).

Based on The United States Department of Justice explanation, race, and color discrimination is discrimination on the basis of race and involves denying equal employment opportunity to any person because that person is of a particular race or has personal characteristics associated with a particular race (e.g., hair texture, facial features). Discrimination on the basis of color involves denying equal employment opportunities to any person because of that person's skin color or complexion. Race or color discrimination also may include treating a person unfavorably because of his

or her association with someone or some group generally associated with a particular race or color (e.g., marriage).

Race and color discrimination could take the form of refusing to hire, discharging, failing to promote, harassing, or discriminating against a person with respect to any other term, condition, or privilege of employment. Prejudice, discrimination, and racism could affect many things. First, discrimination could determine a group's living conditions and life chances, affecting such areas as education, employment, and housing.

The United States has a poor history of discriminatory practices in the workplace. Until 1865, business owners were permitted to use slaves to operate their businesses. Until the mid-20th century, there were almost no laws preventing harassment and prejudice in the workplace, according to course materials at the California State University, Sacramento. An employer discriminates against an employee when he judges that employee based on a particular protected characteristic and uses that as a basis to deny that person employment or benefits, such as a promotion or raise, or simply harass them, according to FindLaw. Discrimination based on race or gender is the most obvious prejudice, but you also discriminate when you deny someone a job or fire them because of their age, nation of origin, religious preferences, and sexual orientation.

Numerous surveys have asked African Americans and other racial minorities about their experiences with discrimination in the workplace, in their search for housing, and in other everyday social settings (Schuman et al. 2001). One startling conclusion from this line of research is the frequency with which

discrimination is reported. A 2001 survey, for example, found that more than one-third of blacks and nearly 20% of Hispanics and Asians reported that they had personally been passed over for a job or promotion because of their race or ethnicity (Schiller 2004). A 1997 Gallup poll found that nearly half of all black respondents reported having experienced discrimination at least once in one of five common situations in the past month (Gallup Organ. 1997). Further, the frequency with which discrimination is reported does not decline among those higher in the social hierarchy; in fact, middle-class blacks are as likely to perceive discrimination as working-class blacks, if

The Injustice that Ruth received in *small great things*

1. Ruth as Employee

This injustice happens when Ruth is a Nurse in Mercy-West Heaven, a small hospital and more like a clinic. Ruth is a veteran nurse there because she has 20 years of experience as L & D Nurse. For 20 years she managed patients in labor, inducting assistance, epidural assistance, pain management, education, and some delivery supports. Until one day she got patient and made some “miss-action” during her shift. Her license for the first time got suspended.

“It won’t happen again,” I say. “I can’t let you work,” Marie repeats, and I realize that she hasn’t met my gaze, not once. “I’ve been informed by HR that your license is being suspended.”(118)

2. Ruth as Defendant in Court

After Turk Bauer the ‘white supremacist’ sued Ruth, she become the defendant. At first, Ruth even doesn’t have a lawyer but one day she met Kennedy when she was asked by the judge, and coincidentally at that time Kennedy was interested and eventually became her lawyer.

not more (Feagin & Sikes 1994, Kessler et al. 1990).

Parallel to the study of racial prejudice (the more effective component of racial attitudes) is a rich history of research on racial stereotypes (a more cognitive component). Whereas many general racial attitudes have shifted toward more egalitarian beliefs, the content and valence of racial stereotypes appear to have changed little over time (Devine & Elliot 1995, Lane et al. 2007). White Americans continue to associate African Americans with characteristics such as lazy, violence-prone, and welfare-dependent. Kennedy is curious and thinks this woman killed a newborn? I’m running through scenarios in my head: Is she a nanny? Is this a shaken baby case? A SIDS death? (138). After that Kennedy offers herself to be Ruth's lawyer for this case “I lead her to the defense table, just a few steps from where we are standing. “I’m Kennedy McQuarrie. We’ll talk about the details of your case later, but right now, I need to ask you some questions. How long have you lived here?”(138)

A. “People of color in court”

In this case and court Ruth as the defendant almost doesn’t have a chance. She always got sued and questioned also accusations for every little mistake she has which led to racism aspect.

“You told me this lawsuit isn’t about race. But that’s what started it. And it doesn’t matter if you can convince the jury I’m the reincarnation of Florence Nightingale—you can’t take away the fact that I am Black. The truth is, if I looked like you, this would not be happening to me.”(229)

B. “Unfair Comparison”

This injustice happens when Odette Lawton as the jury gives her explanation and comparison to Ruth as the defendant and Turk Bauer as White-supremacist that sued Ruth in

this case. Odette said that Turk preferences are something normal because it's personal things. In this case, we can see that Turk's personal preferences caused Ruth can't do anything to give medical exercise or protocol to save the baby. The jury doesn't think about the Turk request itself is part of racism.

"Unlike all parents, however, the Bauers have some personal preferences that led them to feel uncomfortable with an African American nurse caring for their child. You may not like what they believe, you may not agree with them, but you cannot deny their just due as patients in the hospital to make decisions about the medical care of their baby. Exercising that privilege, Turk Bauer requested that only certain nurses attend to his infant. The defendant was not one of them—and, ladies and gentlemen, that was a slight she could not stomach."(323)

Kennedy here as Ruth's lawyer realizes it and said "The evidence is going to show that one day, a baby died during Ruth's shift. Not just any baby, though. The infant was the child of Turk Bauer, a man who hated her because of her skin color. And what happened? When the baby died, he went to the police and blamed Ruth. (325)

C. "Overemphasis"

Ruth as the defendant got a lot of pressure here, it usually happens in the court between the defendant and jury but in these cases, Ruth realized that she's Black African-American who looking for 'White' people justice in the court. So, she thinks that prejudice before evidence is what she will get in court.

"To them you had a legal duty to take care of an infant under your charge." She starts listing all the ways the jury can find a reason to convict me. Each feels like a brick being mortared into place, trapping me in this hole. I realize that I have made a grave mistake: I had assumed that justice was truly just, that jurors would assume I was innocent until

proven guilty. But prejudice is exactly the opposite: judging before the evidence exists. I don't stand a chance(197)

D. "Racial Pressure"

In this case, Kennedy doesn't want the straight-up racism that Ruth received because it will cause a domino effect and maybe worsen. But Ruth here realized that what black people usually got is 'advocacy' from some white people who are caring for black people and they indirectly forced black people to 'stay quiet or you will lose everything and of course, this thing isn't true, Black people need to speak aloud about their race against white people racism, not white people make some deals with their own race.

"White folks have spent years giving Black folks their freedom on paper, but deep down they still expect us to say yes, massuh, and be quiet and grateful for what we got. If we speak our minds we can lose our jobs, our homes, even our lives.(204)

But still, Ruth trusts Kennedy and almost doesn't want to speak about the racism aspect in the court. She believes it's because of the sue that she killed baby Davis and not about racism at all.

"Well, that's all very well and good, but I'm not on trial because I'm Black. I'm on trial because a baby died when I was on duty." Adisa smirks. "Who told you that? Your lily-white lawyer? Of course she don't think this is about race. She don't think about race, period. She don't have to."(204)

Discrimination is portrayed in Ruth's life through *small great things*

1. Ruth Childhood

Discrimination can be anywhere and anytime, even when we're just kids. Ruth as a black African-American in her school got

some discrimination from her friends. Actually, they are her sister-friends but because they often play and sleep over at Ruth's house, Ruth should be their friend.

They called me Afrosaxon, instead of by my name. They sang along to music I didn't know. When I told Rachel that I didn't like her friends making fun of me, she told me to stop being so sensitive. "They just crackin' on you," she said. "Maybe if you let it slide a little, they'd like you more."(273)

After that even Ruth's mom has the stigma that 'we are black people always seen as black in other eyes'. Because of this stigma, Ruth becomes someone who always feels judged by everyone when they start talking about black people.

"Mama, no one's even going to see it once I put my sweater on." "And if you take that sweater off?" she asked. "You don't go to school with a stain on your shirt, because if you do, people aren't going to judge you for being sloppy. They're going to judge you for being Black."(174)

"Baby," my mama said, "it's not easy for a Black girl to want. You have to show them you're not a Black girl. You're Ruth Brooks."(49)

Even in a school where every kid should be friendly to each other, here Ruth also got some discrimination.

When I got into Cornell, and many others from my school didn't, I couldn't help but hear the whispers. It's because she's Black.(49)

2. Ruth as Edison's Mom

Ruth has one son from her husband, he is Edison. Edison is a smart and clever boy. He got a university scholarship because of his achievement in school. But that doesn't avoid the fact that Ruth as his mom still got some discrimination.

"Still," Marie says. "For a boy like Edison to be so successful...well. You should be proud, is all. I can only hope Ella turns out to be that good a student." A boy like Edison. I know what she is saying, even if she's careful not to spell it out. There are not many Black kids in the high school, and as far as I know, Edison is the only one on the Highest Honors list. (18)

Ruth always gives her son lessons to respect other people and don't be insecure about his skin color or race because your life is not about that. But ended with her son watching all of the discrimination toward her because of her skin color and race.

Just like that, they shackle my hands in front of me, as if that doesn't send two hundred years of history running through my veins like an electric current. As if I can't feel my great-great-grandmother and her mother standing on an auction block. They put me in chains, and my son—who I've told, every day since he was born, You are more than the color of your skin—my son watches.(166)

3. Ruth as Employee A. Nurse

Ruth started her career on L & D in a hospital 20 years ago and she has a license from that. The fact is she still got a lot of discrimination in her workplace. She is the only black African-American in the hospital where she worked on. And it starts with the day Turk Bauer and his wife come to the hospital where she works. Turk and his wife are white-supremacists so they don't want Ruth to touch their infant.

"Get away from her," Turk Bauer says. "I want to talk to your boss." They are the first words he has spoken to me in the twenty minutes I've been in this room with him and his family, and they carry an undercurrent of discontent. (23)

"That nurse," Turk says. "I don't want her touching my son again." (24)

Here Ruth also has some racial requests from Turk and his wife because she is an African-American nurse. "But when I open the folder, there's a hot-pink Post-it on the paperwork. NO AFRICAN AMERICAN PERSONNEL TO CARE FOR THIS PATIENT." (45)

Unfortunately, the hospital staff approves the racist request from Turk, and even the hospital staff 'normalize' the racism toward Ruth and said Ruth needs to calm down and don't mind this racism.

She doesn't pretend to misunderstand. "Ruth, it's nothing. Think of it the way you'd think of a family's religious preferences dictating patient care." (45)

"It's just a formality. The father is a hothead; this just seemed the smoothest way to get him to calm down before he did something extreme." "This isn't extreme?" I ask. "Look," Marie says. "If anything, I'm doing you a favor. So you don't have to deal with that guy anymore. Honestly, this isn't about you, Ruth." (45-46)

The staff calmed down Ruth and said that this racism is not about Ruth. But the fact that only Ruth is an African-American nurse in this hospital completely proves that Turk and his wife are racist.

"Really," I say flatly. "How many other African American personnel are on this ward?" We both know the answer to that. A big, fat zero. (46)

This racial request makes a big and tall wall between Ruth and her responsibility as a nurse. She keep asking herself when saw Turk's baby seizure and stop breathing.

Glancing over my shoulder at the door of the nursery, I angle my body so that if someone were to come inside, they'd only see my back. They wouldn't see what I'm doing. Is stimulating the baby the same as resuscitating him? Is touching the baby technically caring for him? Could I lose my job over this? Does it matter if

I'm splitting hairs? Does anything matter if this baby starts breathing again?(64)

Ruth thought that she was just a scapegoat for the Turk child's death because hospital policy take her license and the racial request from Turk is connected.

For a moment, I'm speechless. I was removed from the care of a patient because of the color of my skin, and then penalized for following those directions when the same patient went into distress. How on earth could the two not be related? "But I'm the only nurse of color on the birthing pavilion." (197)

Even in the trial, Ruth as the defendant received unreasonable accusations, she was accused of doing nothing when she saw the baby having distress and difficulty breathing even though it was very clear beside the crib that Ruth as an African-American was not allowed to touch the baby.

"On Saturday morning, little Davis Bauer was taken to the nursery for his circumcision. The defendant was alone in that room when the baby went into distress. So what did she do?" Odette hesitates. "Nothing. This nurse with over twenty years of experience, this woman who had taken an oath to administer care as best she could, just stood there." Turning, she points to me. "The defendant stood there, and she watched that baby struggle to breathe, and she let that baby die." (323)

B. McDonald Cashier

After Ruth's license as a nurse was suspended, she starts to work at McDonald's as a cashier. Again, this time she got discrimination from customers. She got some verbal abuse from her customer because she's black. It comes from Edison's friends

Edison clenches his jaw. "Bryce said, 'Why is yo mama like a Big Mac? Because she's full of fat and only worth a buck.' (225)

4. Verbal Abuse

Discrimination is very identical to verbal abuse. This is often used by people who hate something, they will just say some bad words to the things that they actually don't understand at all. Here, Ruth always got verbal abuse from any source. Ruth with her principles that "You are going to get everything good that's coming to you—not because you beg for it, and not because of what color you are. Because you deserve it."(49). After all of the verbal abuse that she received, she tired. Ruth said I'm tired of being the only Black nurse on the birthing pavilion. I'm tired of pretending that doesn't matter. I'm tired. (48).

Ruth got several verbal waves of abuse during her trial.

"What did you tell him?" "That that bitch killed my baby."(92)

"Would you please identify yourself for the record?" the judge asks. "Ruth Jefferson," she says. "Murderer," a woman screams.

"Ruth Jefferson's behavior was wanton, reckless, and intentional. Ruth Jefferson is a murderer."(324)

Behind me, in the gallery, someone whispers: Bitch.(341)

But Brittany points a shaking finger directly at me. It might as well be a Taser for the current that runs through my bones. "You fucking killed my baby." She stumbles into the aisle, approaching me, while I stand caught in the spell of her hate. "I'll make you pay for this, if it's the last thing I do."(356)

In her trial, Ruth also got some discrimination verbal from Carla Lungou who is the chairperson of the hospital. Carla Lungou gave Ruth pressure to not sue the hospital because the staff are agree with Turk Bauer's racial request.

"The baby was fine," I say carefully. "And then I heard him gasp." "What did you do?" I look at her. "I followed orders. I was told not to do anything," I tell Carla Luongo. "So I didn't." I hesitate. "You know, another nurse in my situation might have looked at that note in the infant's file and found it...biased." She knows what I'm implying: I could sue the hospital for discrimination. Or at least I want her to think I can, when in reality doing so would cost me money I don't have for a lawyer, as well as my friendships, and my job. "Naturally," Carla says smoothly, "that's not the kind of team player we'd want on staff." In other words: keep threatening to sue, and your career here is history. She jots something down in her little black leather notebook and then stands up. "Well," she says. "Thanks for taking the time."(107)

She also got indirect verbal discrimination from her lawyer, even though it was her own lawyer who asked not to mix racial elements in the trial.

"First," she says, "do you prefer the term Black or African American or people of color?" What I prefer, I think, is Ruth. But I swallow my response and say, "People of color."(196)

My lawyer is still talking. "I don't even see color," she tells me. "I mean, the only race that matters is the human one, right?" It's easy to believe we're all in this together when you're not the one who was dragged out of your home by the police. But I know that when white people say things like that, they are doing it because they think it's the right thing to say, not because they realize how glib they sound.(196)

In her new job as McDonald's cashier, she also got verbal abuse from customers.

"Don't worry, mama, I was jus' aksin' ..." I freeze. This girl isn't Black. She's about as far from Black as possible. So why is she talking to me like that?(263)

When Ruth and Edison visit her lawyer's house, Edison got verbal abuse from the daughter's lawyer. It's not totally her lawyer daughter because we know she's still a kid and doesn't know some racist words. But still, it still hurts Ruth and her son even though her lawyer daughter didn't mean to be racist.

"Edison?" Violet asks. "Is that a chain?" He touches the necklace he's been wearing lately, ever since he started hanging with his cousin. "Yeah, I guess so." "So that means you're a slave," she states matter-of-factly. "Violet!" Both Micah and Kennedy shout her name simultaneously. "Oh my God, Edison. Ruth. I'm so sorry," Kennedy blusters. "I don't know where she would have heard that—" "In school," Violet announces. "Josiah told Taisha that people who look like her used to wear chains and their history was that they were slaves."(270).

5. Physical Abuse

Besides verbal abuse, discrimination is also identical to physical abuse. In the United States, this abuse happens almost every day to black people there. The police always do something aggressively when they know they will encourage or catch black people. Instead of using subtle means, they choose to use violence. Can you imagine black kids standing in front of them without any suspicious move or weapon but they consider it as a threat and treat them as terrorists?

They are all over Edison, three of them wrestling him onto the ground. He is handcuffed like me. I see him straining toward me, panic lining every muscle of his neck, the whites of his eyes rolling as he tries to see if I am all right. "Leave him be," I sob. "He has nothing to do with this!" But they don't know that. All they see is a six-foot-tall black boy.(125)

The police who caught Ruth said it was not a racist move, they just do some standard procedure. The facts and the history list of police in the United States toward black people cases are very bad and full of violence.

"Isn't it also true that you pushed her son to the ground and pulled his arms behind his back to subdue him?" "That's standard procedure for officer safety. We didn't know that was Ms. Jefferson's son. We saw a large, angry Black youth who was visibly upset."(350)

6. Prejudice

The definition of this thing is, that racial discrimination refers to unequal treatment of persons or groups on the basis of their race or ethnicity. So society will always judge some person with this treat. For example, they will always see you as a bad person when your skin is black. In this case, Ruth also got a lot of prejudice because of her skin. She is always seen as a murderer by people who prejudice her. Whatever happens, as long as she has black skin, people will always prejudice against her as a criminal.

I could tell him what happened. I could tell him the Horrible Thing I see every time I close my eyes: that black bitch beating on my son's chest. She was alone with Davis. I overheard the other nurses talking about it, in the hallway. She was alone, when she wasn't supposed to be. Who knows what happened, when no one was looking? (85)

"Her job is to rescue you so she can feel good about herself," Adisa says. "It's called a white knight for a reason." She narrows her gaze at me. "And you know what's on the other end of that color spectrum." I don't give her the satisfaction of a response. But we both know the answer. Black. The color of the villain.(205)

Wallace Mercy said "I want to say to all the black and brown children out there, who are afraid that they too might be misunderstood because of the color of their skin..."(203)

The reason that judge didn't want to bring up race—the same reason your

lawyer is skirting it like it's the plague—is because Black people like you and Trayvon are supposed to be the exceptions. You are the very definition of when bad things happen to good people(219)

The prosecutor, who's a woman of color, does not even make eye contact with me. I wonder if this is because she feels nothing but contempt for me, an alleged criminal...(166)

This prejudice toward her is worsened because, in the trial, she was accused of murder in this case. She was prejudiced that she was angry when Turk request some racial note which is directed at her.

Had she acted in accordance with her training as a medical professional, instead of being motivated by rage and retaliation, Davis Bauer would be alive today. But with Ruth Jefferson on the job?" She looks me square in the eye. "That baby didn't stand a chance."(324)

"Were you angry?" "I beg your pardon?" "Were you angry? I mean, you were left to care for this infant, by yourself, when you'd already been given the directive to leave him alone." "We were shorthanded. I knew it wouldn't be long till Corinne or Marie came back to relieve me," I reply, and then realize I haven't answered her question. "I wasn't angry."(106)

"There's evidence that Ruth Jefferson may have been at fault in the death of your son. And that it could have been a racially motivated incident," MacDougall says. "I'm putting in a call to the district attorney's office."(94)

Even in a critical situation, whatever she doing is become her fault and it's because of prejudice that black is full of violence and hate white people they need to encourage to.

"Yet I just finished looking at photos from the medical examiner that suggest the child was physically abused—" "Well, there you are," I blurt out. "I didn't touch

that baby." "You just said you were part of the crash team," MacDougall points out. "But I didn't touch the baby until he started to code." "At which point you started hammering on the baby's chest—" My face flushes with heat. "What? No. I was doing CPR—" "A bit too enthusiastically, according to eyewitnesses," the detective adds.(128)

7. Public Scam

We realize that we can do anything when we get upset with something or we hate someone. Usually, humans need other supports to satisfy their feeling or we can say some affirmation. This affirmation is like drugs, they want to get this whatever it takes. Even if they give a lie to the public, said something different from the fact. Unfortunately, people on the internet will believe easily this hoax or scam. In this book Turk Bauer make his personal web to give the public some hoax with his story about his son's death caused by a black African-American nurse who in this story is Ruth Jefferson.

Turk Bauer wrote and made the website contain of white-supremacist "Many of you know me by my blog posts, and have responded with your own comments. Like me, you are a True Patriot. Like me, you wanted to follow an idea, not a person. But today, I am going to step into the light, because I want you to know me. I want you to know what happened to me. My name is Turk Bauer, I type. And I am going to tell you the story of my son. After I hit the post button, I watch the story of my son's short, brave life hover on the computer screen. I want to believe that if he had to die, it was for a cause. It was for our cause." (155)

Cybercrime is a 'popular' thing in this day and netizens usually just ride the waves and just throw hate comments toward who is the object in the hoax news or web. This also happens when Turk's web becomes bigger and there are so many comments on it.

The comment on the Turk website By the time the sun comes up, more than thirteen thousand people know Davis's name. I make coffee, and scroll through the comments section as I drink my first cup. I'm so sorry for your loss. Your boy was a race warrior. Goddamned blue gum shouldn't have been allowed to work in a White hospital anyhow.(156)

Ruth struggles through problems in small great things

We can see here Ruth very struggles with all of the discrimination toward her. She always has a positive side when people say something about her race and skin color. She also always gave her son explanations about their skin and told him to become positive and not insecure about what they are. But it changed in *small great things*.

Before that maybe Edison had noticed, maybe he hadn't. But that was the first time I had the Talk with my son about skin color. "You remember what I told you?" "That my skin was brown because I had more melanin than anyone else in the school." "Right. Because everyone knows it's better to have more of something than less.(54)

Ruth also struggles with her principle of not being upset with people who throw their racist words and she was trying to be not angry. If she is upset and angry because of racism, black people will get more bad prejudice.

This isn't me. I don't accuse; I don't believe the majority of white people judge me because I'm Black or assume they are superior to me. I don't prowl the world looking for an excuse to pick a fight. I leave that to Adisa. Me, I do my best to fly under the radar. Sure, I know that racism exists and that people like Turk Bauer are waving that banner, but I don't judge all white folks by the historical actions of a few.(113-114)

Ruth also struggles with her life because of the sue of Turk Bauer, she lost

her license as a veteran nurse and needs to find another income to fulfill her household needs. From nurse, she changed her job to McDonald's cashier which is not what she is supposed to do if Turk Bauer doesn't sue her. Her son, Edison, thinks that he needs to use his money and that it should be money for his future. Ruth is very sad here because she needs to see her son want to sacrifice his future for Ruth's bail.

His face crumples. "Mama, I can't. I can't let you work at McDonald's when I have money we could use. You got any idea how that makes me feel?" "First, that isn't money, that's your future. Second, there's no shame in a good honest day's work. Even if it's making French fries." I squeeze his hand. "And it's only for a little while, till this is all cleared up and I can work at the hospital again."(215)

Ruth finally tired because of her trial and she said it didn't matter if she was part of black or not, it didn't matter if she tries to rescue Turk's baby or not. It is just because her fate needs to meet this kind of person.

it really didn't matter if the nurse attending to Davis Bauer was Black or white or purple. It didn't matter if I tried to resuscitate that baby or not. None of it would have made a difference. She put her hand on my arm. "Ruth," Kennedy reminded me. "Bad things happen to good people every day."(313)

Conclusion

After all of the evidence above, it can be concluded that Ruth very struggles with her life as a black African-American. The injustice and various kind of discrimination that she got is proof that racism still exists and get worst day by day. It does not just happen only to black people but also to the other race that becomes minorities or has some strong prejudice against them. Racism will affect you in every aspect including your job or your life.

In *small great things*, we can see that Ruth fights for her justice and freedom and she very struggles with her life as a nurse because she has black skin. She needs to defend herself during the trial which shouldn't be her fault, she needs to keep in touch with her son because her husband has already passed away, and she needs to clear her name because of all of the accusations and prejudice toward her, she needs to saw her son heard all of the taunt directed to her like 'murderer', 'bitch', 'big fat black', etc.

In the end, Ruth is just an ordinary woman who wants her career and her life as

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a mom to come back to normal conditions. She just wants justice for the accusations leveled against her, she just wants to be an ordinary employee in her favorite job, she just wants to be a mom who will be proud of her children, she just wants peace instead to deal with racism.

Finally, Ruth's struggle with *small great things* came to an end. She got her freedom and her normal life back after injustice and various discrimination.

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