

Evaluation Example

Evaluation of "Raymond's Run"

Miss Hazel Elizabeth Deborah Parker is the fastest runner in her neighborhood. Her friends call her Squeaky. In kindergarten, she won the twenty-yard dash. Now she's grown and competing in the fifty-yard dash. Toni Cade Bambara's short story "Raymond Run" tells the story of Squeaky and her older brother Raymond. Raymond has a mental disability. Squeaky's main interest in life is running. Her main responsibility is looking after Raymond. Sometimes Squeaky resents Raymond. However, during the track meet, Squeaky learns to respect Raymond. She also learns to respect herself and others.

One reason "Raymond's Run" is a good story is that Squeaky and Raymond seem like real people. Squeaky is honest and direct. She also has a sense of humor. When a teacher calls her Squeaky, she thinks of him as Beanstalk. She describes her classmates as "Fatso" and phony. She even tells a funny story about herself. In a nursery pageant, she dressed up as a strawberry and danced around on tiptoes. She wanted her parents to applaud.

Raymond has a disability. He has thoughts and feelings of his own. He enjoys fantasy. Sometimes, he plays like a circus performer or a stagecoach driver. He has real talent, however, as Squeaky later learns. He also supports his sister. As the race is about to begin, he becomes excited and cheers for her.

The story has a serious theme that readers can care about. During the race, Squeaky looks over to see Raymond on the sidelines. He is "running in his very own style." She remembers the practices where Raymond kept up with her. She realizes that Raymond would make a good runner. If she loses the race, she thinks, she could be Raymond's coach. He could be the champion. Squeaky realizes that Raymond is his own real person. He is worthy of respect. She no longer resents him.

This discovery about Raymond changes Squeaky's attitude about herself. If Raymond can be a real person, then so can she. She doesn't have to dress up like a strawberry. Her attitude toward others changes, too. Squeaky shares a smile with the runner-up. Squeaky realizes that everyone is special and deserves respect.

"Raymond's Run" has real characters and a serious theme. It also has suspense that make the reader want to finish reading. Will Squeaky win the race? What will happen to Raymond?

"Raymond's Run" is about young people, but adults will enjoy it, too. In fact, most readers will want to read it a second time. It's that good.