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*Just Mercy*

This book *Just Mercy* is centered around the themes of empathy, hope, equality, and resilience. Bryan Stevenson is a young lawyer who founded the Equal Justice Initiative. This is a legal practice dedicated to defending the rights of those that are most desperate and in need. Throughout this whole book several different stories were told and many real life scenarios were displayed. I believe Stevenson wrote this book to display why the Equal Justice Initiative exists. EJI is a nonprofit organization that works to end mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, challenging racial and economic injustice, and protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society. This includes: the poor, the wrongly condemned. And women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system.

*Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson is a powerful and compelling book that examines the broken criminal justice system in the United States. The book tells the spirit of Stevenson's work as a defense attorney in Alabama, representing those on death row and those who are wrongfully convicted. Throughout the book, he looks at the causes of mass incarceration and the impact it has on communities and individuals, as well as how it perpetuates systemic racism and inequality in the United States.

Stevenson's main concept is showing how the system is broken and how it has failed people of color and those from low-income backgrounds. He also highlights the lack of

resources, such as legal representation and access to justice, can lead to wrongful convictions or unjust sentences. While displaying all of this he shows how significant hope and mercy can be and how we can fight for justice and bring about change.

Many quotes throughout this reading I found to be very significant to the reading and Bryan Stevenson's message. The first one being "capital punishment means 'them without the capital get the punishment.'" (Stevenson 6). This quote is from one of the stories he used and he was told this while defending someone on death row. It displays and supports his message of how our system treats some people unjustly more than others. Another quote is "It is about how easily we condemn people in this country and the injustice we create when we allow fear, anger, and distance to distort the way we treat the most vulnerable." (Stevenson 14). We need to remember to treat each other with respect and treat each other fairly. We must look past the crime sometimes and remember that we are all still human beings. The last quote that stuck out to me is "Sometimes we're fractured by the choices we make; sometimes we're shattered by things we would never have chosen. But our brokenness is also the source of our common humanity, the basis for our shared search for comfort, meaning, and healing. Our shared vulnerability and imperfection nurtures and sustains our capacity for compassion." (Stevenson 289). Our common humanity is a powerful tool that can unite us as a society. By embracing our shared experiences and understanding our shared struggles, we can create a strong connection between individuals and communities. Whether it's a shared love of music or a shared commitment to justice, our common humanity can bring us together and foster a sense of belonging. We can recognize each other's unique strengths and talents. We can celebrate our differences while still connecting on a deeper level. We can find common ground on which to build relationships and trust.

By recognizing our common humanity, we can learn to empathize with each other and understand each other's perspectives. We can create an environment of mutual respect and understanding. We can work together to create a more inclusive and just society. Our common humanity can also help us build a sense of collective responsibility. We can recognize our responsibility to care for each other and work together to create a better world. We can come together to create positive change and make a difference. I believe this was Bryan Stevenson's goal.

*Just Mercy* is an important book that offers a powerful look at the criminal justice system and its many flaws. It is a must-read for anyone looking to understand the issues that plague our justice system and those who are most vulnerable within it.