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Book Review

*A Lesson Before Dying* is a book about a man named Jefferson that takes place in the 1940’s at Bayonne, Louisiana. Jefferson and two men went to a liquor store. While at the liquor store, the two men began to argue with the store owner and a shootout occurs. Everyone died, except for Jefferson. Jefferson was the only man on the scene when the police arrived so it looked as if he killed all of them. While Jefferson was on trial, his lawyer tried to defend him. His lawyer attempted to convince everyone that Jefferson was a hog and could not commit an act of murder. However, Jefferson plead guilty and was sentenced to death for murder. While in jail, Jefferson begins to believe that he, actually, is a hog and not human. His aunt gets help from a friends of hers named Grant. Throughout Jefferson’s trial, Grant visits Jefferson and tries to help him get through his tough time. Jefferson’s aunt uses Grant to help Jefferson die like a man and not a hog. While doing this, Grant is able to learn more about himself and see the injustices the black community face in the south.

*A Lesson Before Dying* is remarkable. The book is intended for anyone that is interested in an African American read for entertainment or a read that is intriguing. When reading the book, the reader feels as if they are in Bayonne, Louisiana in the 1940’s. The reader is shocked by the emotions the characters express and will be shocked at how strong everybody came to be towards the end of the book.

The book brings light to the racism in the south. Blacks were not treated fairly, simply because of the color of their skin. Jefferson was the only black person in the store when the police arrived and automatically was seen as a murderer. The book is realistic fiction, but situations like Jefferson’s happened all the time in south in the 1940’s and still happen today. If an ignorant person was to read *A Lesson Before Dying*, they would soon have an idea of what it was like to be a Negro in the south.