

Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy*: Annotations of Chapter 8 "All God's Children"¹

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A

(to) **abandon** – leave/stop supporting somebody or something (p. 151)

absence (n.) – the non-existence or lack of something (p. 150)

abusive (adj.) – using cruel language or physical violence (p. 148)

accident (n.) – a situation in which somebody is injured or something is damaged without anyone intending them to be (p. 149)

(to) **acculturate** – to change so that you become more like people from a different culture (p. 161)

accused (adj.) – when someone claims someone else did something wrong (p. 149)

adjudication (n.) – to make a formal judgment (p. 155)

adversarial (adj.) – an adversarial system is one in which two sides oppose and attack each other (p. 150)

(to) **appeal** – apply to a higher court for a reversal of the decision of a lower court (p. 157)

appointed (adj.) – to be chosen for a job or position (p. 152)

(to) **arrest** – being picked up by the police because they think this somebody has broken the law (p. 152)

arson (n.) – the crime of setting fire to something (p. 156)

asphyxiation (n.) – preventing somebody from breathing normally, usually so that they die or stop breathing (p. 149)

(to) **attempt** – to try (p. 151)

B

bondage (n.) – the state of having your freedom limited, or being prevented from doing what you want (p. 147)

C

cane (n.) – a stick to support walking (p. 151)

(to) **charge** sb. (with sth.) – formally accuse somebody of something before a court of law (p. 152)

(to) **cherish** – to hold something dear (p. 162)

circulated (adj.) – pass from person to person (p. 157)

(to) **comply** – to do as told (p. 152)

(to) **compound** – to make something bad worse (p. 154)

(to) **conceive** – to become pregnant (p. 148)

¹ The annotations (page numbers) are based on the following edition of the book: Stevenson, Bryan. 2020. *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. London: Scribe Publications.



(to) **condemn** – to give somebody a severe punishment (p. 150)
(to) **confess** – formally admit to committing a crime (p. 159)
confinement (n.) – the state of being kept within certain limits (p. 152)
conscience (n.) – the part of you mind that tells you what is wrong or right (p. 147)
constantly (adv.): continuously over a period of time (p. 160)
correctional officer (n.) – an official working in a correctional facility/prison in charge of directly handling the inmates (p. 151)
court-appointed attorney (n.) – a lawyer who provides legal counsel for those who cannot pay for or obtain an attorney (p. 158)
criminologist (n.) – an expert in the scientific study of crime and criminals (p. 159)

D

(to) **decline** – lessen in quality or quantity (p. 160)
defendant (n.) – someone accused in a court of law (p. 150)
delivery (n.) – euphemism for childbirth (p. 151)
(to) **derail** – bring sth. or sb. off the way or direction they went (p. 153)
(to) **deteriorate** – sth. or a situation becoming worse (p. 151)
determined /dɪ'tɜːmɪnd/ (adj.) – having made a firm decision and being resolved not to change it (p. 161)
(to) **disbar** – to make a lawyer leave the legal profession (p. 150)
(to) **disclaim** – to deny being part of or responsible for something (p. 160)
discretion (n.) – (here) the ability to decide (p. 159)
(to) **disrupt** – to prevent sth. from going on the usual way by causing problems (p. 149)
distraught (adj.) – so upset and worried that you cannot think clearly (p. 149)
distressed (adj.) – very upset (p. 148)
district (n.) – an area of a city or country etc. that have official borders (p. 148)
ditch (n.) – a narrow channel dug at the side of a road or field (p.157)
domestic abuse (n.) – abuse happening in the family (p. 154)
(to) **drop charges** – take away legal charges against a person one had brought against them in the court of law (p. 150)

E

eager (adj.) – strongly wanting to do something (p. 161)
elation (n.) – a state of great happiness or excitement (p. 162)
(to) **encourage** – speak words that lighten their mood, tell sb. to do sth. they are unsure about (p. 152)



evidence (n.) – information that is given in a court of law in order to prove that sb. is or is not guilty (p. 160)

exacerbated (adj.) – very annoyed or upset (p. 149)

exchange (n.) – the act of giving sb. sth. and receiving sth. else from them (p. 150)

(to) **exonerate** – to show or state that someone or something is not to be blamed for something bad that happened (p. 159)

exposure (n.) – having no protection from something harmful (p. 159)

(to) **extend** – to make a time longer (p. 152)

extended (adj.) – for a longer period of time (p. 161)

extraordinary (adj.) – very unusual or surprising (p. 148)

F

(to) **face trial** – be about to be judged in a court of law (p. 150)

(to) **file a motion** – a proposal that is made formally at a meeting, and then is usually decided on by voting (p. 150)

flashback (n.) – a sudden memory of an event in the past (p. 155)

foster care (n.) – an organized system where children or minors are raised by other people than their parents because of their situation (p. 151)

frantically (adv.) – in a hurried, excited, or disorganized manner (p. 158)

G

(to) **gain** – get sth. that you want or need (p. 147)

H

handcuffs (n.) – metal rings you can lock around someone's wrists (p. 151)

harsh (adj.) – very cruel, overly rough (p. 153)

homicide (n.) – formal word for murder (p. 153)

hospitalized (adj.) – admitted to a hospital (p. 154)

I

impending (adj.) – something about to happen (p. 159)

(to) **impose** – to force sth. on sb. (p. 150)

impunity – without punishment (p. 155)

inappropriate (adj.) – not fit for the job (p. 152)

incarceration (n.) – the state of being imprisoned (p. 159)

incompetency determination – a professional psychological evaluation of mental health that shows that a person is not able to do sth. (p. 150)



incompetent (adj.) – not very good at doing/unable to do something (p. 150)

(to) **ingest** – swallow (p. 149)

inhumane (adj.) – cruelly not fit for humans (p. 153)

(to) **insist** – to say firmly and often that sth. is true, especially when other people think it may not be true (p. 149)

insubordinate (adj.) – not following orders (p. 152)

insulated (adj.) – protected from unpleasant experiences (p. 160)

intellectual disabilities – a disability that limits the sb. can think, read, speak or do anything to do with the mind (p. 151)

intent (n.) – the intention to do sth. illegal (p. 150)

internal injuries (n.) – injuries not visible from the outside of the body (p. 154)

interrogation (n.) – ask questions of someone closely, aggressively, or formally (p. 157)

(to) **intersect** – two lines, roads, or other things meet or go across each other (p. 148)

(to) **intervene** – to interfere with something to stop or settle it (p. 158)

J

invisible (adj.) – sth. invisible cannot be seen (p. 148)

juvenile (n.) – sb. who is not legally an adult yet (p. 152)

juvenile detention facility (n.) – a prison for juvenile offenders or delinquents, often under the supervision of a juvenile court (p. 157)

L

law enforcement (n.) – the police or other officials who stop crime or catch criminals (p. 155)

lighter fluid (n.) – fuel of a lighter (p. 149)

limp (adj.) – not firm or strong, not moving (p. 148)

listless (adj.) – feeling tired and not interested in things (p. 149)

(to) **lynch** – to kill someone for an alleged crime without a trial (p. 158)

M

mandatory (adv.) – something that must be done or is demanded by law (p. 150)

maze (n.) – a network of paths and hedges designed as a puzzle through which one has to find a way (p. 160)

mind's eye (n.) – the part of your mind that allows you to visualize things (p. 162)

misconduct (n.) – unacceptable behavior (p. 150)

misgivings (n.) – a feeling of doubt and fear about what might happen or about whether sth. is right (p. 150)



multiple sclerosis – sickness of the nervous system (p. 151)

municipality (n.) – a town, city, or other small area, that has its own government to make decisions about local affairs (p. 148)

(to) **mutilate** – hurt sb. or sth. so that they remain scarred (p. 152)

N

NAACP – National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – a prominent civil rights organization (p. 158)

neglected (adj.) – not being given attention (p. 154)

norm (n.) – an accepted standard or a way of being or doing things (p. 159)

O

obedient (adj.) – willing to obey orders or requests (p. 155)

P

parole (n.) – release of a prisoner on the promise of good behavior (p. 152)

(to) **permit** sth. – to officially allow sth. (p. 151)

personnel /pəːsə'neɪ/ (n.) – people employed in an organization (p. 158)

petty crime (n.) – a type of crime that is not considered serious when compared with some other crimes (p. 155)

plea (n.) – a statement by sb. in a court of law saying whether they are guilty or not (p. 152)

plight (n.) – a dangerous, difficult, or otherwise unfortunate situation (p. 153)

poverty (n.) – the state of being poor (p. 148)

practice (n.) – a habit or way of doing sth. (p. 151)

predator (n.) – someone that exploits, victimizes, or preys on others (p. 159)

prediction (n.) – statement about what you think will happen in the future (p. 160)

preoccupied (adj.) – thinking or worrying about something else (p. 160)

(to) **presume** – to think that something is the case (p. 155)

pretend victim (n.) – a fake victim (p. 155)

prison processing center (n.) – place in a prison where new arrivals are searched, cleaned, and dressed before being placed in their cell (p. 152)

probation (n.) – being allowed to stay out of prison after committing a crime if one behaves well (p. 155)

procedural rule (n.) – law that establishes the rules of the court and the methods used to ensure the rights of individuals in the court system (p. 160)

proceeding (n.) – when sb. uses a court of law to deal with a legal case (p. 150)



property (n.) – sth. owned by sb. (p. 152)

prosecution (n.): the process of officially accusing someone in a court of law of committing a crime (p. 157)

(to) **prowl** – an animal slowly walking around an area looking for prey/sth. to kill (used metaphorically here) (p. 148)

punishable (adj.) – sth. will lead to a punishment (p. 152)

pursuit (n.) – a chase after something or someone (p. 156)

R

rage (n.) – intense anger (p. 148)

ransom (n.) – money demanded to release a victim of a kidnapping (p. 155)

reckless (adj.) – not caring or worrying about the possible bad or dangerous results of your actions (p. 153)

(to) **recover** – to get better after an illness, accident, shock etc. (p. 149)

(to) **refuse** – to actively decide not do sth. that sb. else demands (p. 158)

(to) **rehabilitate** – to return someone to a usual way of living (p. 156)

regularity (n.) – sth. happening repeatedly (p. 154)

(to) **relinquish** – to let sb. else have your position, power, or rights, specially unwillingly (p. 147)

remorse (n.) – feeling bad for one's actions (p. 153)

remorseless (adj.) – without feeling regret or guilt (p. 159)

(to) **require** – demand sth. in order to do sth. (p. 151)

(to) **resist** – try to refuse to do sth. (p. 151)

(to) **revive** – bring back to life (p. 148)

(to) **roam** – to walk or travel for a long time without a clear goal (p. 149)

robust (adj.) – strong and unlikely to break or fail (p. 161)

S

score (of something) (n.) – a group of twenty (p. 157)

secluded (adj.) – separated (p. 150)

second-degree murder (n.) – second-degree murder is murder that is not premeditated or caused by an obvious lack of concern for human life, punishment is usually lower than for first-degree murder (p. 150)

sensitive (adj.) – having or showing awareness and understanding, esp. of other people's feelings and needs (p. 161)

sensory deprived (adj.) – the deliberate reduction or removal of normal external stimuli such as sight and sound for an extended period (p. 162)

sentence (n.) – punishment set by a court (p. 150)



shackling (n.) – putting chains or handcuffs on sb. to keep them from going away (p. 151)
(to) **shatter** – break sth. hard into many small pieces (p. 152)
shoplifting (n.) – stealing from a shop (p. 152)
skin graft (n.) – piece of healthy skin taken from one part of the and put in another that has been damaged (p. 149)
(to) **spare** – to not give sb. sth. bad or unpleasant (p. 150)
(to) **spasm** – strong muscular contractions that keep sb. from moving in a normal way (p. 151)
sobering (adj.) – creating a more serious, sensible, or solemn mood (p. 161)
solitary confinement (n.) – the isolation of a prisoner in a separate cell (usually as a punishment) (p. 162)
staff (n.) – people who work at a certain place (p. 152)
(to) **stand trial** – to be judged in a court of law (p. 150)
statute of limitations (n.) – a statute assigning a certain time after which rights cannot be enforced by legal action (p. 160)
(to) **strangle** – to kill or hurt sb. by pressing their throat with your hands (p. 148)
(to) **subject** sb./sth. to sth. – cause or force someone or something to undergo an experience (p. 157)
subsequently (adv.) – after an event in the past (p. 150)
suicide (n.) – killing oneself (p. 153)
supervision (n.) – sb. more experienced or in charge checking after sb. who is not (p. 152)
(to) **support** – if results, facts, studies etc. support an idea or statement, they show or prove that it is correct (p. 150)
summarily (adv.) – in a direct manner; without notice or delay (p. 158)
(to) **surface** – to come into public view (p. 159)
surgeon general (n.) – the head of the public health service in the US (p. 159)

T

(to) **take sth. into account** – to consider, to think about sth. (p. 150)
(to) **testify** – to make a formal statement of what is true, especially in the court of law (p. 150)
throat (n.) – the passage from the back of your mouth to the top of the tubes that go down to your lungs and stomach (p. 148)
treatment (n.) – a particular way of behavior towards sb. or of dealing with them (p. 150)

U

unattended (adj.) – left alone without anyone in charge (p. 149)
uncertainty (n.) – not being sure of sth. (p. 150)
(to) **unravel** – here: to become much worse (p. 153)



V

violence (n.) – behavior that is intended to hurt other people physically (p. 149)

vulnerable (adj.) – able to be easily physically or mentally hurt, influenced, or attacked (p. 156)

W

ward of the court (n.) – a person, especially a minor or one legally incapable of managing his or her own affairs (p. 154)

(to) **writhe** – to twist your body from side to side while in pain (p. 148)

The annotations were designed with the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (<https://www.merriam-webster.com>), the Oxford Advanced American Dictionary (https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/), and the Cambridge Dictionary (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org>) and adapted by the authors.

