

Text 2 At the zoo

The scene takes place in a zoo.
T. is quietly watching the bears.



Then the stillness was disturbed by yelling boys, hitting each other in the face. The father, in shorts, stood at T.'s elbow, looking down into his camera and adjusting a ring on the lens¹. A projectile – someone had lobbed a balled-up piece of litter. It hit the bear a glancing blow on the ear and he stirred, disoriented, turned around once and then settled down again. “Too soon, I wasn’t set up yet. Missed the shot”, said the man, shaking his head. “Go again.”

The wife looked around for something else to throw and T. felt heat filling his face. A tension rose in him: he felt a rush of fury. “Are you kidding?” he asked, turning to the wife. [...] “You’re throwing garbage at a bear? For a picture?” “What’s the big deal?” said the family man.

The man shrugged² and the wife began rifling through her purse, apparently ignoring him; a few feet away one of the flailing³ children, a thin boy in khaki camouflage pants, was already lofting a second missile, a foam cup half-full of brown slush⁴. The cup missed the bear and fell in the moat⁵ below [...]. The bear reared up again, doubly confused. The thin boy jeered.

T. turned to the father, who was still fumbling with his zoom lens. A split second of hesitation. “You let your kid do that again, I swear to God I’ll grab that camera and break it open on the cement,” he said. He realized his molars were grinding⁶. He had never done this, never. He was thrilled and at the same time he hated the man, hated his wife and even his children.

“Mind your own business,” said the family man. “I’m dead serious. I’ll smash it to fucking bits.” “I’ll sue you!”

Lydia MILLET, *I’m with the Bears*, 2011

1. objectif 2. rose his shoulders 3. agitated 4. (ici) granité 5. fosse 6. il grinçait des dents

Text 2



- d. After reading the text, explain who wants to sue whom and why.
- e. How does the atmosphere of the scene evolve?
- f. How would you react to the father’s threat?

Texts 1 & 2



- g. Why is justice a “daily reality” for the two families?
- h. What tone is used to describe justice in both texts?



i. ROLEPLAY: The father of the second text decides to sue T. Imagine the conversation with his lawyer: he explains what happened and what he reproaches T. with.

BUILD UP & PRACTISE p. 137

Notion Focus

Places and forms of power

1. Comment upon the excesses depicted in each text.
2. What do these two texts reveal about the place of justice in American society?
3. Does justice in everyday life mean it is more accessible? Why?