

An american childhood



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An American Childhood In the novel *An American Childhood*, Annie Dillard, the daughter of a well- to-do Pittsburg family, conveys her social station in life to the reader through many examples. The activities she had as a child, such as piano lessons and dance class, show her family's wealth. Instead of having to work as a child she shares stories of fun and learning. This is illustrated on page 30, where she is describing the night when her family saw Jo Ann Sheehy skating on the street.

As she is talking about how Jo Ann was “ turning on ice-skates inside the streetlight's yellow cone of light” Annie describes her home and family. Annie stood at the window and watched Jo Ann Sheehy and said she expected her to get hit by a car any second. Annie had always thought that if anyone wanted to skate they would just go to a nearby skating rink where they were not in danger of getting hit by a car. The street was the only rink the girl was able to have. The next example is on page 41 when Annie is talking about treasure.

The treasure represents the independence she earned from breaking rules and being rebellious. Annie says the treasure was something you found in an alley, or dug up out of the dirt in a chaotic place far removed from the ordinary comings of people who earned salaries in the light. Finding old coins was one of her activities because her father told her that the older the coin the greater the value it had, and it was one way she worked to get her own money as opposed to always being given money.

Another example of her station in life is on page 133, where she talks about the girl she met at camp from the orphanage named Liz, who had never

been adopted. She talks about how year after year Big Liz would return to camp unadopted and every Sunday night at services would request the hymn, " No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus. " This is an illustration of how different her life was from these young ladies. Throughout the story she talks about how much her parents helped her and how much they influenced her life, especially her father.

In the epilogue Annie Dillard continues to share stories of everything she had been taught, such as French, and how the opportunity to read everything that she was able to as she grew up was because of her social class. She always had the privilege of having and doing stuff that others were not always as lucky to have. However, she doesn't do this to impress people. She shares this information to show how it made her who she is.