

A that she is
struggling and shows
she

[Art & Culture](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A Tree Called Melinda” Be like a tree and let the dead leaves drop” (Rumi).

Melinda Sordino, the main character in the book *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson, has started high school with a bad reputation. Everyone knows who she is.

On a summer night before her freshman year she was at a party and something bad happened and she called the cops. Everyone thinks she called the cops cause she couldn't handle it. Melinda was actually raped and has no idea what even happened to her.

At the start of her year she is given an assignment in art which is to draw a word and make it into a piece of art and turn it in by the end of the year.

Melinda draws a tree. She has a strong point in art but she is having problems making this tree. But a tree is mentioned not just in art. A tree is mentioned in other classes and nature. As the story moves on her tree gets better and better with Melinda. Melinda's tree symbolizes her from pain and suffering to her recovery and healing.

Beginning her freshman year, Melinda starts to paint trees so they are near to death (Anderson 31). Melinda starts to show that she is struggling and shows she is dying inside mentally but not physically. Her first trees she drew leave her frustrated on how to begin. Frustrated she takes out a piece of paper and begins to draw a tree her “second grade version” (Anderson 32). Then she takes her paper to form it into a ball and takes another piece of paper out (Anderson 32).

She struggles to draw the tree like she is struggling to find herself and her voice (“How does the Symbol...”). Melinda's tree and her attempts at a tree show

pain. Melinda's pain is showing and she doesn't know how to deal with it. Her tree still needs work and so does Melinda. The second marking period and Melinda is still not feeling it.

From her thanksgiving she brings in turkey bones to work on her tree. Melinda makes a piece of art that has forks and knives poking at it. The knives and forks poking at her tree make Melinda she is in pain. She is being attacked mentally on what she feels and thinks all the time. Marking period three is when she finds something.

In art class she is forced to look at a book of Picasso. She finds a chapter that talks about "Cubism or seeing beyond what is on the surface" (Anderson 119). Melinda is like a piece of art.

Melinda can be judged like a loser on the surface but inside she needs help. She realizes that you need to see beyond the surface. Her tree is growing now along with herself to come out perfect. In marking period four she is doing well in school and her tree is growing but she needs help from someone. Melinda visits the zoo and sees a former friend named Ivy. They both talk about how their projects are coming along. Melinda is having a hard time with hers but Ivy gives Melinda a little advice that lets her draw one.

She gets help with her tree and also gets encouraging words from Ivy saying "You're better than you think you are" (Anderson 146). Later she wakes up to the sound of a chain saw cutting away branches that are long dead from disease. Her dad explains that "By cutting off damage, you make it possible for the tree to grow again" (Anderson 187). If Melinda "cuts off" the damage of her tree she can grow and be herself.

Later she gets attacked by IT who raped her. As she gets attacked her fingers are searching for a tree branch to hold onto (Anderson 195). In the end she actually use her turkey tree to confront IT and saving her all together. Melinda after that maddens is seen " beyond the surface". Her " tree" is grown and her tree in art is complete. Melinda's tree is finally finished along with her problems. Her assignment has symbolized on how the Melinda has grown out and heal.

As the beginning of her year and parts of the middle were really rough. Then as she moves on she realizes that she see things differently and confront her pains. The tree has finally grown and with Melinda she has grown as well.