

Analysis of literary  
devices in under the  
feet of jesus by  
helena maria  
viramonte...



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In Viramontes novel, “ Under the Feet of Jesus”, Estrella’s, or the main character’s, nature of resilience comes as result of her prior life experiences and the trials and tribulations she has endured over her lifetime. Viramontes reveals this through the use of selective details, figurative language, and tone.

In the beginning of the passage, a question is posed to the reader by Viramontes. The question is “ So what is this?” This question is significant because it signifies how thirsty Estrella is for knowledge and not much she wants to discover. The scene begins with Estrella looking through Perfecto’s tool box. She is trying to figure out what all the tools are and what they all do. She describes them as “ foreign” and “ funny-shaped.” The tone is immediately set as confusion. It becomes increasingly clear that Estrella is frustrated by her own lack of knowledge and this confusion turns into anger. Her lack of knowledge overwhelms her and therefore she is unable to control her emotions.

The selective details that the author adds to the work also further Estrella’s appearance to the reader of being resilient. The narrator adds an additional story that happened earlier in Estrella’s life. This story is to give us insight into her character and why she is so easily frustrated and confused. The verb that is being used in this is “ hate” that gives the story the impression that it is a strong, passionate situation. This tone is the tone that will follow the story for the remainder of the time. Estrella honestly states that one of her teachers “ never gave her the information that she wanted.” As a result of this, Estrella is left to be ignorant to certain things, to no fault of her own. This is also the reason she is so curious.

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Figurative language also gives characters a look to her resilient nature. An example of this is her calling her teachers “ crumpled kleenex”, this shows her blunt personality, she is willing to say what needs to be said. When Perfecto enters Estrella’s life she begins to develop further. For example, she begins asking questions about his tools, this may be a seemingly insignificant detail but it shows Estrella’s thirst for knowledge. This thirst is helped to be kept alive by Perfecto.

Selective details also establish a firm foundation that is needed to realize the context of Estrella’s life. Figurative language is able to provide the emotional background we need, and want, for the story. The selective details are structured so that we are able to learn just enough about Estrella’s life but not know too much.

Finally, the tone and dialogue in the passage are vital tools that we need to fully understand the story. This helps the author have the character perceived as they were intended to be perceived. She is a strong and resilient woman and that is made very clear throughout the passage.