

# "as i lay dying" by william faulkner



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In the novel, *As I Lay Dying*, William Faulkner's utilization of symbolism in animals displays the Bundren's attempts to cope with the newly death of their mother. The mechanism of familiarity is displayed throughout the story to depict the instability the Bundrens feel now that they lost their head of the house. Whether it's Jewel's horse that represents his adoration for his mother and freedom, the fish that represents Vardaman's mother, or the cow painfully filled with milk that represents the burden that Dewey Dell contains, each of this character's objectivism leads back to the missing presence of their mother..

After Addie's death, Vardaman goes fishing where he catches a fish, he then states I can feel where the fish was in the dust. It is cut up into pieces of not-fish now, not-blood on my hands and overalls. Then it wasn't so. It happened then. And now she is getting so far ahead I cannot catch her. His comparison of his mother to the dead fish displays his naive understanding of how death works. He does not know how to process death so the only way he can think of it is as his mother is no more in the form she once was, similar to the fish who's no longer in their natural form. My mother is a fish is his my common monologue when he speaks. Being a child, the complexity of death is hard to wrap one's brain around. Vardaman being the youngest child, and stating his mother is a fish as mentioned shows that he doesn't really understand his mother's death, just that she is no longer around. Once the fish is dies, he compares it to his mother not being able to breathe that punctures her casket with holes, in return mutilating her face, just so she has air to breathe.

Similarly, Jewel's horse also stands as a remembrance for his late mother. Jewel had a close relationship to his mother, because he was created out of Addie's rage to feel free again. Through the commonality of expressing their emotion through violence, it is apparent that Addie has favoritism over Jewel. While all her other kids had to do chores, she allowed Jewel to work every night until he was able to afford his horse, and forced her other kids to take over his chores as well. As they travel to Jefferson, Jewel rides ahead on his horse symbolizing his desire of wanting to separate from the Bundren family. When Anse sells his horse for a pack of mules, it is almost like his mother was taken away from him again, as he was stripped from his freedom, forcing him to stay with the Bundren's. Anse's cruelty towards Jewel is apparent because he could've borrowed Armstid's team, instead of selling Jewel's horse. He even justifies his decision on page 191 by stating that he hasn't had teeth for 15 years because every nickel he earned was saved for the family. Of course the one time Anse makes a decision it has to be in spite of Jewel, even when it was not Anse's decision to make.

On the other hand, Dewey Dell being the only female, feels the need to take over the role as the head of the house. As a future mother, she relates to a cow filled with milk due to the fact that they both carry this burden that they don't want. The cow relies on them to relieve her from her milk, similar to Dewey Dell when she goes to the physician to get an abortion with the ten dollars that Laff left her. After being manipulated into having sex and given false pills, Dewey is still stuck with a baby she doesn't want. Going to New Hope, gives Dewey hope in finding meaning in her life. In comparison to her

mother Dewey also see having a child as her independence being taken away.

In conclusion, the stability of the family still waivers, but there are able to achieve Addie's goal of being buried in Jefferson. What should've had somewhat of a happy ending, instead shows Anse introducing to his kids a new bride, along with a pair of new teeth.