

By is intrigued by
many things and



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

byMasuji IbuseThe main character in the novel is in some ways like myself.
Mr.

Shizuma is a person that is intrigued by many things and likes to see what reaction people have from any action. Throughout the novel he feels the need to go to different parts of the city and surrounding communities in order to see the effects of the unknown bomb. Mr. Shizuma was not only interested in what happened to the people of the community but he was also interested in finding out what the weapon used was called and made out of. There were different names given to the bomb throughout the book and he sums up the names in one paragraph, The name of the bomb had already undergone a number of changes, from the initial new weapon through new-type bomb, secret weapon, special new-type bomb, to special high-capacity bomb. That day, I learned for the first time to call it an atomic bomb. (Black Rain 282)The importance of the name of the bomb may seem ineffectual, but he seems to dwell on finding out what caused this type of destruction.

Something else that Mr. Shizuma wants to do is remember every little detail about what happens to everything from what angle the house was on after the bomb to what his wife cooked for dinner with the food rationing. He even likes to write how people cured themselves of radiation sickness and what the burns and other injuries look and act like. These things are like myself in the fact that he does not like to forget what things are like, wants to see first hand what the effects are, and is very interested in finding information about new things that he has never seen before. He also likes to help people greatly such as his constant wanderings looking for coal for his community. If you were depended on would you help your community? I think so. The

theme that is very meaningful to me is that war hurts two different parts of a country.

The first is the military, which was not really talked about, and then there is the civilians. The civilians must ration food so that the military can eat, and then they must also suffer because the bomb that was dropped was not meant for any military base but to destroy and kill a city. The theme is clear in meaning that it hurts the civilians much more than it hurts the military and that war is very, very cruel.

The people that were rationing had very little to eat and that amount became smaller as the war continued. People were forced to grow carp in small, and search for mussels in ponds in order to get any type of meat. By the end of the war there were no mussels left in any of the many streams and there were also no fish in any of the ponds.

The only thing that survived were the eels who were seen swimming up the river a day before the surrender was given. This was a sign of rebirth. It only took a year after the Hiroshima bombing for the surrender and during that time the government did not help any of the people that really were hurt by the war, the civilians. It was strange that the people felt any remorse at all for losing the war when the government that they were supposed to believe in left them homeless and without any food. Innocent, unarmed people killed and mangled by a weapon that could kill the entire planet. For what purpose was the bomb dropped? Mr. Shizuma made many remarks about how if the opposition would have only waited a while longer they would not have had to drop the bomb because the country was internally falling apart. This seems

to me that the dropping of the bomb was nothing but a science experiment to the opposition.

That is the hidden theme to this novel. The only type of person that could possibly read this book is a person that is very open minded to other ideas. To most people from the United States the bomb was necessary in order to stop the war. In the eyes of the Japanese the bomb was not needed to stop the war. Which side is true? The answer is both sides.

To have an open mind and to be able to accept new ideas is crucial when you look at people from a different type of background and way of thinking. To read this novel you must also have a pretty solid stomach because there are many detailed entries about wounds and the way that the skin starts to melt right off the living body. The whole story is told from the eyes and thoughts of the main character Mr.

Shizuma is different than any first hand account that I have ever read and a reader must be willing to get into that character in order to get the message, feelings, and pictures that Mr. Shizuma is trying to put forth. The novel is written extremely clear but one of the problems is that it gets slow every once in a while if Mr. Shizuma gets something into his mind so he decides to get it done. The pond that his friend is growing carp in is traveled to what seems to be about a thousand times. What is good about the many travels to these same places is that each time the scene changes slightly with someone becoming sick or the carp growing.

What a person needs to read this book is careful thought because of the slight changes and also a map seems to grow inside your head of the

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different places that he goes to. These places are described in so much detail that it does not take very much imagination to see what is going on and what he is seeing. The title has a lot to do with the book because the title is how the whole thing started, with Mr. Shizumas daughter coming home with black spots on her skin where the black rain had hit her. It could not be washed off and it burnt through clothing. The ending to the novel was satisfactory because the end of the war was a good place to end the novel.

The only problem that I can see with this type of ending is that the reader wants to know what has happened to the community after a few years but what the writer is trying to say is very clear and enforced with people crying because they lost the war. The crying was not only because the war was lost but also for the people that died, or are dying, in the community. Also the crying was also from fear of what was going to happen to them now that another country had control of them. The men mostly feared that they were going to be castrated but they knew that the country would never be the same but they would be able to eat. The eels that were viewed in the river were still in the larvae stage and they were swimming upriver. This gives the man in the story hope that things will be all right and that they have the power to build a new community and help his family deal with the sickness that his daughter has.

The overall meaning of the novel is that war makes things hard for the people that have to stay at home and support their soldiers. The heart of any country is with the general population and when that general population was hit with something unknown it did not only shock the rest of the country but it made the country wonder if they were strong enough. People will pull

through for themselves and family before they think about what is going to happen to the way that they live. This novel shows the power and curiosity of the human spirit. It does accomplish what it set out to do, show the effect on the losing side of war.