

Character analysis: greasy lake by t. coraghessan boyle

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1

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The fantasy of invincibility exists in every young man's life until time comes mortality is recognized. As the clock ticks its hands, transformation occurs and the fantasy dissipates, maybe gradually to some, through a series of progression without a defining moment of enlightenment. For some others, there is a realization of mortality through a striking image or manifestation, maybe a tragic event that leads to their transformation. Just like the narrator in Thomas Coraghessan Boyle's Greasy Lake, remains unnamed, in the midst of all the wrongs and the gory happenings, he encounters an epiphany that gives him a glimpse of realization that leads him to his transformation.

Bad-wannabe

The narrator, unnamed, is described as a tough character through his description of his group: " We wore torn-up leather jackets, slouched around with toothpicks in our mouths, sniffed glue...we drank gin and grape juice, Tango, Thunderbird, and Bali Hai. We were nineteen. We were bad." (Boyle, 1986) As supported by an article published by Gale Research, the narrator and his two other friends are the embodiment of coolness. With his detached tone, he defines himself as someone who rolls marijuana cigarettes, a smooth dancer and an all-day-and-night sunglasses user. He thinks of himself as someone who is bad and so he personifies it even not being born on the streets but just a mere son of rebellion. His self-proclaimed bad character goes

on until sometime in the jungles of Greasy Lake.

Three mistakes 3 days before summer

The unidentified narrator, just like his bad-wannabe friends, could not wait for summer break. Just like any other impatient and thrill-seeking young man, he goes out with his friends to give his bored soul some thrills, not knowing he is about get himself more than what he is looking for. In an encounter he and his friends have near the banks of the Greasy Lake when he hits a guy with a tire iron in the head, he realizes the serious trouble he is in - murder. He then recounts the mistakes he could've avoided had he stayed in the house: loosing grip with the keys, identifying the wrong car and hitting a guy who freaks out in the head with a tire iron. These series of mistakes symbolize the epiphany that leads him to his transformation.

Biker in the lake

" Then I thought of the dead man. He was probably the only person on the planet worse off than I was. . . . My car was wrecked; he was dead." (Boyle, 1986) The narration itself depicts the narrators awakening. The encounter with the dead biker in the lake serves as a major ingredient in the dawn of awareness in the adolescent.

The narrator is the epitome of the young sons of rebellion in the US that era. His youthful ignorance of life outside his bailiwick is eventually replaced with awareness and knowledge that soon enough leads him to a deeper understanding of the world. His passage from the lake to land symbolizes ignorance to knowledge. Maturity becomes visible in his face as he walks towards the land. Overnight, an older soul emerges from the lake is ready to leave the jungles it.

Works Cited

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