

The bean trees – tone

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Don't Be Too Serious Let's say that someone handed you something unexpected. It could be anything: a computer, book, even a guitar! However, what if it was something of great value? What if it was a baby that was handed to you? Odds are, you'd probably freak out and hand the baby over to the authorities or something similar to that. But not Taylor Greer in the novel *The Bean Trees*! The words that Barbara Kingsolver chooses to use show a tone of informality and humor. One way Kingsolver establishes an informal tone is by using long, run on sentences and everyday words.

When Taylor gets a job at Tuscon after she stops traveling, she says, " I lasted six days at the Burger Derby before I got in a fight with the manager and threw my red-so-called jockey cap in the trash compactor and walked out. I would have thrown the whole uniform in there, but I didn't feel like giving him a free show" (Kingsolver 88). In this quote, Kingsolver shows informality by making the first sentence extremely long, and the second sentence shows humor when Taylor jokes about not wanting to give him a " free show. " Kingston also uses words that people use in everyday conversations, thus creating an even more informal tone.

Another way Kingsolver shows humor is by what Taylor names the baby that is handed to her. When Taylor first meets Lou Ann, she asks, "'How do you know her name's Turtle? '" Taylor replies, "'I don't. I named her that'" (Kingsolver 97). The fact that Taylor chose to name the baby " Turtle" shows humor. Taylor could have chosen any other name... A name " suitable" for a baby girl. However, she chose the name " Turtle. " Turtles are sea animals, and it's rare for someone to be named " Turtle. " Why would Taylor have

chosen that particular name for the baby? Kingsolver most likely wanted to convey a light, humorous tone for her

An informal tone is created by Kingsolver when Taylor speaks. When she tells Estavan about feeling like a foreigner, she says “Sometimes I feel like a foreigner too... People don’t look the same, talk the same, nothing” (Kingsolver 181). The first sentence is relatively normal. However, in the second sentence, Kingsolver reveals an informal tone by the way Taylor speaks. The way she talks to people is very informal. Because of this, we know that Kingston is purposely avoiding making Taylor a serious, somber character like she could’ve been. Another way that Kingsolver creates an informal tone is by the things Taylor does. “I lifted Estevan’s hand from my ribcage and kissed his palm” (Kingsolver 189). This quote reveals an example of how Kingsolver establishes an informal tone through Taylor’s actions. In this particular quote, Taylor falls asleep with Estevan on a couch. When she wakes up, she thinks about what Esperanza has been through, and makes a conscious decision to leave. Kingsolver could have simply stated, “I got off the couch and went to my own bed.” However, she chose to create a more informal tone by showing what exactly Taylor did when she was getting off the couch.

In this novel, *The Bean Trees*, by Barbara Kingsolver, a humorous – but more informal – tone is created by the sentence structure, characters’ dialogue, and description of events. The tone was effective because it made the novel more interesting, and less dull. Also, it was easy to see that Kingsolver used lots of informality and humor in this novel, so that made the tone more noticeable. Because of the tone that Kingsolver created, the main character

Taylor Greer was able to go through the negative events in her life a bit better than a more serious character would have been able to.