

Roll of thunder

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the novel *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, by Mildred D. Taylor, an important character is T. J. Avery. During the course of the novel, T. J.'s personality develops as he consorts with the Simms brothers. He becomes even more arrogant as he begins to associate down at the Wallace store with the white community who treat him as a joke. He then begins to seek attention as he is manipulated by the Simms brothers. Their bad influence, T. J.'s naive personality and his casual approach to right and wrong results in committing crimes.

The cause of his moral approach towards serious matters is the lack of a dominant father figure in his life. T. J. Avery begins in the novel as a devious yet naive boy who remains naive throughout the novel, but whose cunning attitude develops and flourishes and he becomes more manipulative.

He is described as being "... emaciated-looking" and their "... Sunday clothing, patched and worn, hung loosely upon their frail frames... When he starts to associate with the notorious Simms brothers they pressure him to blur the lines between good and bad. T. J. soon begins to cause increasing trouble as he, himself begins to be manipulated by the white people. He thought befriending them would benefit him in return and gets into deep trouble as he doesn't realize the risk he is taking by being friends with the Simms brothers. After being enraged by Mrs. Logan, he goes to tell the Wallaces about Miz Logan's terrible teaching.

He thought he was doing the children a favour but his actions backlash against him as he loses his childhood friends and a skillful teacher. Despite being headstrong and having too much confidence, he struggles to comprehend the consequences of his actions beforehand causing him to get

into serious trouble. For example, during the scene where T. J. went to church to show off his white friends, what he had to do in return was nowhere as dangerous and risky as what the Simms brothers had to do for T. J. For T. J. earning that he is easily manipulated by the white people when he had to return the favour was too late to turn back.

In these quotes: " All right, T. J. , we come down here like you asked. Now you come on into Strawberry with us like you promised. " said Melvin and " You comin', ain't you? You still want that pearl-handled pistol, don't you? " said by R. W. shows the way T. J. can be easily manipulated as he gets peer pressured by the two brothers to " return the favour" but suddenly realises that the Simms brothers were using him.