

Symbolism in the stone angel



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Ever wished you had the talent to write a story with astonishing symbolism? In the novel, *The Stone Angel* (written by Margaret Laurence) there is plenty of symbolism. There are many symbols: stone angel, water, plaid pin, Mrs Currie's shawl and the bird in the cannery. Firstly, there is the stone angel. Jason Currie put up this monument after his wife passed away while giving birth to Hagar. The stone angel stands strong and firm in the cemetery. Hagar can be compared to the stone angel because she tries to be strong her entire life.

Over time, the stone angel fell over and deteriorated. The same happened to Hagar. She aged over time and one day fell over and died. An event where Hagar showed she had a heart of stone was when her brother was dying. She did not cry, nor hold him. By the end of the novel, Hagar began to show her feelings and told Marvin she was frightened. The stone angel is one of the main symbols brought up in the book many times. Secondly, there is Mrs Currie's shawl. Hagar's mother's shawl was given to her son Matt. When he was dying he had it by his side.

The shawl represents the family's pride. It was passed on to each of her children. Also, it could show how when the mother was living, she provided shelter and could protect her family. Even though she had passed away, something of hers was left behind to show her accomplishments in life; her children. Thirdly, there is the plaid pin. The Currie family owned a store in Manawaka. Hagar's father, Jason, worked hard many years to earn respect from the town. He was very proud to be a Currie. He also sent Hagar away to become more lady like and educated. It made the family look better.

The pin had been passed down for generations. Hagar wanted it also to be passed down so the Currie name would never be forgotten. It symbolized pride that the family had and the respect they earned over the years.

Fourthly, there is the bird in the cannery. Hagar was sitting by herself when she fell on the ground. She did not remember her day and could no longer feel the pain she once had in her chest. A bird flew in and Hagar stared at it. She remembered hearing a saying about if a sea gull flew into your house it meant death or a bad thing was coming.

Hagar became furious and injured the bird so it could no longer fly. In Hagar's thoughts, the bird symbolized death. To the readers, it symbolized the independence and freedom the bird once had. Hagar had that independence and freedom in her own home until she was forced to move out. Lastly, there is water. Water is mentioned frequently in this novel. When Hagar was at Shadow Point by herself, she realized she had forgotten water. She said " I have not had a drop of water since- I can't remember how long it's been. " This could symbolize death or the life Hagar wished she had.

She had not lived her life for a very long time because she had a bad marriage, lost a kid and was living with Marvin and Doris. There were sunflowers in Hagar's garden than did not get any water during the drought and died. This is comparable to Hagar because if she did not get water, she too, would die. Without symbolism, novels, songs and poems would seem meaningless. In *The Stone Angel*, it seems like all the symbols branch out from one another, beginning with the stone angel and water. It is one novel, but if you're clever enough, you'll see that there are two interpretations; the story itself and the story within the symbols.