

Details in the book
bless me ultima



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

He is one of Antonio's friends that does not believe in God or is religious.

Even though he is not religious, he still attends catechism just so he can be with his friends, including Antonio. He can be described as young, upset, and cloudy.

The feeling of being upset and upset is because both of his parents are dead and his sister's are prostitutes which is the main reason that he started to question the Catholic religion. This can affect a child dramatically because he does not have the love and support he needs from his family members.

Florence is a bad influence to Antonio in a way because he starts telling him that religion is not always reliable and can fail. Also he tells him that the Catholic religion is not perfect. This was the start of Antonio questioning religion. A key quote about Florence is, Why do you punish Florence? Why doesn't he believe? In this phrase Antonio is asking God why he punished Florence about not believing in religion. Miss Maestas is Antonio's first grade teacher that is very nice to her students. She notices that Antonio is very intelligent even though he does not know English. With three words, she can be described as generous, loving, and patient. She is very patient when teaching Antonio in school. By the end of the year, she advances Antonio to third grade because she believes that he is smart and is capable of moving up. Even though she is a minor character, she has a huge impact on Antonio education wise.

Contents

The novel takes place in Guadalupe, New Mexico, and the area around it.

Also, World War II in the late 1940's was happening when Antonio was

narrating his story. Basically, Antonio and his family were alive during war. This progresses to about two years in the future. Bless Me, Ultima takes place at Agua Negra in New Mexico where Ultima teaches Antonio more about land, freedom, and nature. Then, Ultima lifts a curse from the land by using her curandera powers. This specific setting is symbolic for the overall book because it makes the story authentic and includes the Native and Spanish culture. It also takes place in the Llano which is the Land of the Marez. Including beautiful land of hills, clusters of adobe huts, and dark plains. As said in the book, Antonio's father enjoys being free and the Llano is where he prefers to be. This land symbolizes freedom and the spirit of the vaqueros.

The writing of the author for Bless Me, Ultima can be said to be somewhat colloquial. Most phrases are something that we might hear everyday since there is a lot of dialogue between characters. On each page, there is some sort of dialogue amongst the characters. As shown, 'so it is. Be respectful to your teachers,' he said to us. 'And you Antonio,' he smiled, 'suerte.' It made me feel good. Like a man.'(page 54) This is an example of the familiar conversation because it is something our parents would tell us on our first day of school.

Ultima came to stay with us the summer I was almost seven. When she came the beauty of the llano unfolded before my eyes, and the gurgling waters of the river sang to the hum of the turning earth. The magical time of childhood stood still, and the pulse of the living earth pressed its mystery into my living blood.(page 1) In this brief passage, a lot of descriptive imagery is given which gives the reader a clear idea of what is happening. The tone of this

phrase is calming and Antonio's emotions are really clear to understand.

Also, it is lyrical because the llano is described in a very beautiful way that brings the reader peace and tranquility.

?" But I want to know, there are so many things I want to know," I insisted.

" A curandera cannot give away her secrets," she said, " but if a person really wants to know, then he will listen and see and be patient. Knowledge comes slowly™ (page 33-34) In this phrase, it is a conversation between Ultima and Antonio. This was when Tony wanted to seek knowledge and wanted the answers to all his questions. Ultima refused because she did not think he was ready yet to learn about certain topics. This is formal because in order for individuals to learn certain things, they have to be patient until the time comes. The dialogue between characters is that one is more sophisticated while the other is being more concentrated.

God was not always forgiving. He made laws to follow and if you broke them you were punished. The Virgin always forgave.(page 44) The sentences in this phrase are short and it creates it more informative to the reader.

Antonio is trying to show how the Virgin Mary forgives while God does not.

This is educational in a way for those who are Catholics. It contains no imagery because it is not being descriptive about any topic. Also, the phrase has a more serious tone since religion and Catholicism was important to Antonio's family.

A variety of different sentence and phrase patterns is used in the novel. This is used to enhance the complexity of the reading and make it more interesting for the reader. The sentences vary from being simple short

sentences to long complex sentences that include a lot of information. Also, most of the novel is written in English but some words or phrases are in Spanish to bring out the Mexican side of the book. An example is that the names of the characters are mostly traditional Mexican names such as Maria and Antonio. Some other words used are *vaquero*, *llano*, and *curandera*. The sentence structure of the book is not that formal because it is basically telling a story about someone's childhood; therefore, there is a lot of dialogue. As in diction, God was not always forgiving. He made laws to follow and if you broke them you were punished. The Virgin always forgave. (page 44) This statement can pass as repetitive because it is explaining how God does not forgive but the Virgin Mary does. This is an example of the book that does not include any sort of dialogue and is formal since religion is an important thing to all Catholics.

In the book, *Bless Me, Ultima*, there are a lot of vivid details, such as our five senses, that clearly gives the reader an idea of what the narrator is living. An important section in the novel that gives concrete details is the golden carp passage. Antonio describes what he is seeing so vividly that the reader can clearly imagine the emotions he was feeling and what he was looking at through his own eyes. Also, this is very significant to the overall book because it is the first time that Antonio encountered with something religious without it being related to Catholicism. As shown in the passage, ? The orange of the golden carp appeared at the edge of the pond. . . . We watched in silence at the beauty and grandeur of the great fish. Out of the corners of my eyes I saw Cico hold his hand to his breast as the golden carp glided by. Then with a switch of his powerful tail the golden carp disappeared

into the shadowy water under the thicket.’ This phrase is an example of when Antonio described what he was seeing for the first time. Another example of concrete details was towards the beginning of the chapter one when Antonio was describing the appearance of Ultima and what he first thought of her. As shown in the passage, She wrapped the black shawl around her hair and shoulders. Her face was brown and very wrinkled. When she smiled her teeth were brown. I remembered the dream. From this phrase, it is obvious that Ultima is old. Also, previously Antonio had mentioned the dream he had in which Ultima had an appearance in and reminds Tony.

Since the novel incorporates religion a lot throughout the chapters, it is clear that there are a lot of different symbols. The most important symbol is Ultima’s owl. Wherever she goes, so does the owl. Also, the owl calls out a warning whenever they are in danger. It is said that the owl is actually her spirit and soul. This is shown when Tenorio says, ‘It is the owl! Do you hear, little bastard! It is the owl that is the spirit of the old witch. Also, when the owl is killed, Ultima dies shortly after. They are both buried together. Ultima is thought to be generous and the best person one can imagine but once being compared with owl, the script changes. This is shown when the owl rips out Tenorio’s eye when Ultima is being intimidated. During this situation, the darker side of Ultima is given to the reader. Since the owl and Ultima are basically the same spirit, the owl enhances the revenge side of Ultima. In other words, a new layer of her personality has been discovered by the reader.

The last names of Tony's parents are Marez and Luna and when translated to English mean the moon and the sea which represents the background story of the lifestyle of each individual. Another symbol is the golden carp which symbolizes a religious topic that is not connected to Catholicism in any way. Instead of believing in Virgin Mary or God, the golden carp is another form to feel guidance, wisdom, and comfort. This religion involves a magical fish in which Antonio relies on when he feels abandoned by God. Last, the Virgin Mary is an important symbol throughout the novel because Tony's mom, Maria, is devoted and a firm believer of this saint. This Catholic figure represents forgiveness, trust, and moral support when someone is in the need of it. Most Mexicans rely on her and it is very important in religion. Antonio finds comfort in the Virgin Mary when he feels left by God and does not feel like he has a forgiving God. Symbols are something important that needs to be added in a book because over the course of the book, the reader finds out about the meaning behind what something symbolizes.

A variety of figurative language is present to develop a more sophisticated mood to the book.

An example is personification. Being pretty obvious, Ultima's owl is an example of a human characteristic in a nonhuman object. The owl has human traits such as being able to detect danger and warn Ultima. In reality, animals can detect trouble but are not always able to communicate it to humans, unless it is a trained service dog. As shown in the text, "The owl was the protective spirit of Ultima, - The owl was her soul!" (page 255)

Another example of personification is when the fish represented more than just an animal was to be good luck. When comparing to real life, it is

quite obvious that a fish cannot be magical but can be a good luck sign. In addition, allusion was also present throughout the book. An example of the allusion is how Antonio represents a christ figure.