

A thousand cranes shade motif assignment

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Shadows in Thousand Cranes In Thousand Cranes by Yasunari Kawabata, Kikuji is mentioned as living in the shadow of his father. Kawabata uses shade as a leitmotif to signify the guilt Kikuji has to live with. Not only does the shade represent guilt, it represents a sense of bewilderment and corruption. The shadow from Mr. Mitani??? Kikuji's father??? cast on Kikuji denies Kikuji a life with happiness and excitement. The shadow??? Mr. Mitani's affairs with Mrs. Ota and the other one with Chikako??? isolates Kikuji from the outside world, as well as, having a normal relationship with Fumiko or the Inumura girl.

The shade, or shadow, which haunts Kikuji wherever he goes, is not the only object following him; fireflies also pursue Kikuji. However, the fireflies symbolize the opposite of the shadow. They represent “light” unlike the shadow, which represents “darkness.” The fireflies also portray the life Kikuji could obtain, if he steps away from the shadow. If Kikuji leaves the shadow left on him by his father, he could have a typical affectionate relationship with Fumiko; however, the fireflies are not always in the same place causing Kikuji trouble to “capture” his happiness.

They erratically move around Kikuji flashing their light in one place, and then rapidly resurfacing in another position. The fireflies are “like [the] ghost” of Mr. Mitani (Kawabata 120). They represent Mr. Mitani's regret of his wrongdoings and a chance of freeing his son??? Kikuji??? from the same life he lived; however, Kikuji is “poisoned” from Chikako. Chikako tries to live vicariously through Kikuji seeing as she is discontented with her own life. She tries to “poison” him the same way she did with Mr. Mitani. Chikako is

jealous of Fumiko for loving Kikuji, the same way Mrs. Ota??? Fumiko's mother??? loved Mr. Mitani.

Chikako's "poison" obscures Kikuji's mentality denying him the opportunity to seize his share of happiness from the "light" of the fireflies overpowering the "darkness" of the shadows. The fireflies also give the novel a sense of time. As time passes and Kikuji is drawn deeper and deeper into the shadow, fewer fireflies appear around Kikuji. This symbolizes how the possibility for Kikuji to obtain happiness with Fumiko or anyone else is becoming less and less. The garden in Kikuji's house also gives the novel a sense of time. When Mr. Mitani's was alive he kept the garden green and fertile; however, since the death of Mr.

Mitani "Kikuji had not called a gardener" (121). Chikako can see??? even in the dark"??? how he left the garden unattained (121). She describes the garden as "the gloomiest garden [she's] ever been in. The darkness, or shadow, of the garden symbolizes the guilt and confusion Kikuji has lived through since his father's death. With the guilt left on Kikuji from his father, it makes it difficult for him to live a normal life. However, Kikuji tries to overcome his father's "shadow" of guilt by breaking free from his Japanese traditions. Nevertheless, Chikako's toxic manner rejects him from living his own life.

Eventually, Chikako decides to attack the only thing Kikuji loves??? Fumiko. Fumiko unable to eliminate Chikako's venom chooses to commit suicide. Chikako once again succeeds in ruining Kikuji's life after seeking revenge from humiliation caused by Mr. Mitani. At the end of the novel, Kikuji finally

decides to liberate himself from Chikako by “ spitting out all the accumulated venom” for Chikako (147). However, Kikuji flees “ into the shade of the park” portraying how he will never flee from his father’s guilt left upon him, as well as, the chance of a normal guilt free life.