

The elements of fiction in “barn burning”

[Family](#), [Mother](#)



The Elements of Fiction in "Barn Burning" By: Cody Harper Plot: The exposition is understood at the beginning of the story. The reader learns that Abner is controlling over his family, and when someone does him wrong, he becomes abusive and violent. His son Sarty, who knows his dad is wrong, feels the need to defend him out of his loyalty to family. The rising action is when Sarty hopes that with each new start, his father will have a change of heart and stop setting fires. The climax is when Sarty realizes his father already has a new home picked out before he even starts the fire and realizes that his father will never change. The falling action is when Sarty finally decides that regardless of loyalty to his family, he has to do the right thing, even if it means losing his father. The resolution is when after losing his father, Sarty walks away from the rest of his family to get a fresh start on life because he knows it is his only option. Narration/Point of View: The story is written in third party omniscient point of view. Not only do you know what Abner does and how he justifies his actions in his own mind, you also learn why he really does it and how the rest of the family out of desperation, deal with the abuse. Protagonist: The protagonist is Sarty. He is the person that all of the emotional actions are centered on. He is the one that has to grow up and come to grips with his own morals, while having the courage to make the right decisions. He deals with the turmoil between knowing what is right, and the loyalty to family or "blood" as his father always preaches. Antagonist: The antagonist in the story is moral growth. Sarty defends his father even though he knows what he is doing is wrong, but he is always hoping that his father will have a change in heart and stop. He learns how to deal with the conflicts that he knows he has to overcome to grow up.

Conflict: The conflict in the story is when Sarty realizes his father is never going to change. He finds out when they are forced to leave town after his father burns down a neighbor's barn, that his father already had another home waiting for them. When he sees the home of the new landlord, he hopes that his father will finally be satisfied and quit. Soon he is brought back to the reality that it won't make a difference. In fact, jealousy of other people things and his sense of feeling inferior drives his fathers rage to start with. Symbolism: Some of the symbolism is the comparison of Sarty by the Justice of the Peace to Colonel Sartoris. He mentioned that since Sarty was named after such a noble hero, he could probably not tell anything but the truth. The fact was, he was ready to lie to save his father. Since Abner served in the war, you would believe that he was a man of honor, also a hero. But later in the story, it tells that he didn't go into the war for his country, he went in to profit for himself. Abner's weapon in the story seems to be centered on fire. Fire is one thing that Abner knows he can control. This is the same with his family. Fire is referenced even when he disciplines Sarty. The story says he struck him on his head, hard but without heat, meaning he controlled him and put him in his place without actually hurting him. Sarty felt sorry for his dad because he thought he was injured while fighting in the war. He didn't realize he was actually shot trying to steal horses for his own gain. Sarty warns Major deSpain about his father getting ready to burn down his barn. When Major deSpain chases Abner and shoots at him, Sarty runs after them, crying out for his father and yelling out that his father was brave, that he fought in he war. He was still trying to keep that good image of his dad in his head. Setting: The setting of the story is vague. The author never

really tells where the story takes place but it does give reference to the time it took place. Abner fought in the Civil War, the story takes place approximately thirty years later. The environment of the family is of poverty. They have few belongings and their clothes are described as being torn and tattered. There are three other children, but they are not discussed much in the story. The area that they live in is fertile due to the abundance of crops. It is in a rural area where there are large plantation homes, and farms. The story probably takes place in the South. Irony: The irony in the story exists because Abner leaves town each time for a new start, but he knows he is going to do the same thing again, so the new start never really happens. Sarty is described as being like his dad small and wiry, but other than physical traits, he is the total opposite. Sarty seems to love all of his family, only disagreeing with his father's actions. When his father supposedly gets shot and killed, Sarty walks away from his whole family for a new start. He doesn't go back and stay with the rest of his family, even though would have been free from his father. Theme: Sarty loves his family and longs for a happy life. He has lived a life with mixed emotions of terror and fear, but also grief. He is fearful of his father, but feels sorry for him as well. Sarty's desperation for emotional freedom was what he longed for the most. Unfortunately he may not have gotten true freedom in the end. The fear and terror might have been gone, but he still had to deal with grief and loneliness. Not only would he miss his father, but he would have to live with knowing he was the cause of his father's death.