

"the cay" by theodore taylor essay sample

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



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The Cay is a breathtaking novel of Theodore Taylor. Though the book was written more than 30 years ago, it still remains very popular and became a classic piece of American literature. It was a landmark work for its author, because it won 11 literary awards, including the Lewis Carroll Shelf Award. The genre of the book is action, adventure and young adult fiction.

The main characters of the book are Philip Enright Junior, who is also the narrator of the story, 11-year-old boy, living with his parents on Curaçao Island, and an old black sailor Timothy: ugly, uneducated man, speaking with tough West Indian accent. The other characters are Grace and Philip Enright, the parents of Phillip Jr., and Henrik van Boven, Philip's friend from Denmark.

The story takes place in 1942 during the World War II in the southern Caribbean. The freighter with Philip and his mom, who are escaping from the attacks of German army, receives a torpedo hit and starts sinking. Philip falls overboard and receives a hard injury to the head. Timothy, who was also on that freighter, saves the boy and takes him onto the wooden raft. While being on the raft in search for lands, Philip's injury makes him blind, so he must totally rely on the old sailor. It is hard for the boy, because he was trained by his mother to neglect black people.

They find a lonely island, *The Cay*, where they are forced to stay waiting for help. Two people try to get along with each other and break down their differences. The old sailor becomes a guide for Phillip in their daily life. When a tropic hurricane rages over the island, exhausted with sickness Timothy saves Phillip's life for the exchange of his own. The boy suffers emotional distress and fights for the survival. Soon he is rescued and taken away from

the island. After some operations he regains his vision back and starts a new life. Feeling deep appreciation and gratitude to his gone friend for his care and friendship, Phillip dreams to be back to the island once again...

I enjoyed reading this book a lot: the story is moving, and the writing style is very exciting and tense. The author is very successful in portrayal of the scenes from the war, courage, struggle for life and personal transformations of the characters, their friendship and mutual trust, and the fall of racial prejudice. Undoubtedly, this book is quite educative for those readers, who are interested in history, geography, human psychology and other subjects.

Bibliography:

- Taylor, T. (1970). *The Cay*. New York: Avon Books.