

# Motherhood, the value of labor, marginalization, and race in under the feet of je...

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“ Under the Feet of Jesus” shows the history of a Latino family’s struggle to flee poverty and to seek a secure life. Above all, the novel focuses on the challenges of family relationships among the awful operating conditions that exist for migrant employees. The story portrays many ideas throughout the book such as motherhood, the value of labor, marginalization, and race. These topics can be processed as themes of the novel overall, but they all play a contribution in the character of Estrella. The most centralized idea throughout the narrative is the idea of race and marginalization. An example of this is when Estrella visited the clinic. She had interactions with somebody outside of her own socio economic standing. With the scene of the nurse, the nurses look and behavior can trigger her of her own poverty and therefore shows the gulf between her and the conservative society the girl represents. This scene shows the difference between Estrella and the nurses social life in terms of the privileges Estrella doesn’t have. In addition to privilege, in Estrella’s family, it contributes to a bigger problem for them as a whole because of their race in such a conservative location.

Estrella relies deeply on the crowbar. For example, she uses the tool as a dominance of power. In one of the scenes while Estrella was at the hospital, she walks out of the clinic towards the car, where Rocky and Arnulfo are playing. She then proceeds to open the trunk and grab the crowbar. She went back inside and demanded to take back the money. She then threatens the nurse that she’ll “...smash these windows first, then all these glass jars if you don’t give us back our money” (Viramontes, 149). Once the nurse tries to protest, she sets the crowbar down, breaking the picture frame of the nurses kids. The nurse begins to cry and Estrella holds her hand out, waiting

until she hands her the money. This scene shows the significance of the tool such as in one in all her early flashbacks, Estrella holds Perfecto's crowbar and explains the "significance it awarded her". Some time past, she thought the tools were a path to a meaningful existence within the American society. She then realized how the crowbar provided her with power, but its a certain power that builds a picture of a criminal in the eyes of society and cements her marginalization. This connection has a similarity to Audre Lorde's poem "Who Said It Was Simple", in terms of white privileged women. Their voices are easily heard and their rights are more effective in use compared to women of color and of their citizen status. In this case, Estrella is categorized as a woman of color and the majority of her family are not citizens of the U. S. Another conflict that occurred with the nurse and Estrella was when Alejo asked if she hurt the nurse in any way. At this point, Alejo knew about the situation but didn't know the full details because he wasn't present during the crowbar situation. Near the clinic, Perfecto buys 5 dollars of gas. Estrella peers outside the window where she sees a valley full of grapes and harvesters. Alejo proceeded to ask Estrella if she hurt the nurse. Estrella then says "they make you that way..." by refusing to concentrate until "you pick up a crowbar" (Viramontes, 151). She then gets mad and thinks that Alejo is being impractical. He then tells her to not "make it so easy for them". With this portion of the scene, Estrella's remark implicitly argues that criminal behavior is usually caused by desperation, outstanding character. Alejo's encouragement to not "make it easy for them" expresses his continuous hope to succeed within American society, but Estrella is currently convinced that she will solely move with that society as a helpless migrant or a

forbidding figure with a crowbar. The tool is a symbolism for communication and power.

The value of labor also plays in a contribution in the race and marginalization. A moment during part four that shows this was when Estrella thought back to the tar pits. It looks that her family's bones produce the oil within the pits, the oil that creates the nurse's car to run and permits her to pick up her children. Within Estrella's mind, she emphasizes how because of this statement, the nurse owes them more than they owe her. With this scene, the nurse sees Estrella and her family as those that depend upon her for charity. However, in the company by her deep information of her own labor, Estrella rethinks the situation to indicate that it's actually the center category that's deeply indebted to the migrants on whom it depends. She starts to realize how she's not the only one impacted by this, but instead it's quite a common action with other migrants. Another position that signifies on the value of labor and race and marginalization is when Perfecto heads to the hospital. He exits the main road and follow the signs of the hospital. Once he pulls into the parking zone, Perfecto keeps the car running and as a result of that, he's distressed that the battery can die. He instructs Estrella to take a hold of Alejo inside and leave him; the nurses could take care of it from there. Estrella thanks him and hauls Alejo out of the car. Watching them leave, Perfecto reflects that though he's " given this country his all", nobody has ever thanked him as sincerely as the young girl did. Like Estrella, Perfecto has despaired of finding a meaningful place to locate society, that essentially ignore his contributions. The sole ease of his

oppression are the non-public connections he forms with people who share his troubles, even as one in every of Estrella's few comforts in her separation.

Estrella also shows a sense of motherhood towards Alejo when he was taken to the hospital. At the hospital, the nurse concludes that Alejo has an infectious disease. However, she has no way to check her theory of why he's ill. To check, he must attend the hospital in Corazon before he becomes too dehydrated. Petra and Perfecto are annoyed once Estrella translates his judgment, saying that it's not their responsibility to take him to the hospital. Estrella reminds her mother that Gumecindo has gone back to Texas; there's nobody except them to take him. Petra points out that Alejo doesn't have papers with him, or cash to get medical aid. The twins question if Alejo is going to die, and Petra sends them outside. With this statement, the nurse is unable to supply relevant care and is clearly incurious with Alejo's difficulty. It's showing that even once the family manages to urge to the clinic, they don't get pleasure from the quality of care accorded to a lot of privileged patients. McIntosh mentions how "white privilege is like an invisible weightless backpack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas,..." (McIntosh, 3). This has a connection with Estrella and her family in general because they lack some of these attributes because they're not citizens. It's difficult for Estrella to roll through her everyday life because of not being of the same properties as a white woman. Estrella's loyal obtaining of the new responsibility of taking Alejo to the hospital shows that she's growing into her mother's shoes. With the idea of race and marginalization,

she couldn't help but to care for her friend like a mother because of the mistreatment they have received at the clinic.

The novel "Under the Feet of Jesus" captures many ideas of mistreatment towards Estrella and her family because of their race, class and poverty. She's a young woman who is a citizens in the States. Her and her family are migrant laborers, continuously moving to follow harvest season. Estrella, soon enough, has become the pacemaker among her family. With more of a privilege compared to her parents, she's able to use her power to fight for what she stands for in terms of her rights and for her family. Even when she faces fears and difficulties such as facing discrimination and being in poverty, she uses her power to resolve it for the sake of her and for the protection of her family.