

Roll of thunder theme analysis

Business



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

He invites them to his treasured spot-his tree house, and hastens to get help when he discovers the smoke. Jeremy is a friend who gives of himself without setting conditions on that gift. Two false friend relationships in the story parallel each other with different relationships are temporary and both involve ulterior motives. Cassie acts as a friend and personal slave to Lillian Jean, allowing the white girl to think she is using her. When she has collected enough information for her purpose, she turns on Lillian Jean; her revenge is weakened a bit, however, as Lillian Jean is not bright enough to realize that Cassie had been playing a game all along.

In T. J. 's case, the Simms brothers have befriended him-also to use him to their own ends. Everything they give him has a price-something he must do for them. Furthermore, T. J.

's low status in the community gives the Simms brothers a scapegoat; T. J. fails to understand that until it is too late. By the time of the revival meetings, he does recognize that he has ostracized the people who care the most about him, but he doesn't know how to turn back the clock.

The definition of family relationships are readjusted by Mr.

Morrison and uncle Hammer. Hammer is much loved, and as any true friend, will come to their rescue and give whatever is needed to prevent harm from coming to them. However, he cannot stay; his influence, reputation and personality are too volatile for the situation. Mr. Morrison, however, is better suited to the nuances of the community, better able to deal with the things that are but shouldn't be, able to be a part of the family.

Not only that, but having lost his own family, he is motivated to do what ever it akes to protect a second one. Identity and Surviving A second theme is one of preserving identity-not so much individual for the protagonist as the identity of a family with a heritage and traditions, and the intertwining of the identity with land ownership. The conflict between the Grangers and the Logans Is not personal until the Logans make It so by taking customers away Trom tne Wallace store ana snoppIng In VlckS Durg.

Dav10 Logan unaerstanas tnat Granger does “ have a need” to get back what he thinks ought to be his and to reserve his own identity as a major land owner, descendent of one of the great plantations. The fact that Black people who were once his familys slaves now own land-and not just any land, but land that had also belonged to his people- diminishes him in his own eyes as well as in those of his peers.

Land holdings have always been the great equalizer; thus if the Logans can own Granger land, are they not making an implicit statement of equality with the Grangers and ever other landowner in the area.

The Mississippi whites of the 1920's and 30's were a long way from accepting such equality. The Logans themselves look to the land, especially to the forest with its trees whose roots “ go deep. ” Hardship, perseverance and intelligence has gotten the land for them. Memories of grandparents who acted on opportunity and found ways to put roots in the Mississippi clay give them the assurance that as long as they do not lose the land, they ARE somebody; that ownership suggests a future for coming generations regardless of what Cassie's family may have to put up with.

Racism / Discrimination It is not Mildred Taylor's goal to simply present a book about the horrors of racism or to "blame" her white characters for their feelings.

Mama explains the pre-Civil War history to both her students and to Cassie when the opportunity arises. It is not racism itself, but rather Cassie's realization of it that is important. An understanding of the history of slavery and the justification by considering blacks as subhuman will enable Cassie to follow her father's advice in choosing when to stand up for what is right versus when to be patient and wait for a better opportunity.

She has the example of a few people who try to overcome the barrier; their friend Jeremy takes physical punishment from his father for conversing with the Logans, but continues to offer his friendship in spite of it. Mr.

Jamison helps Big Ma protect her land and tries to provide a means for the sharecroppers to get out from under the oppressive practices at the Wallace store. His father also sold Grandpa Logan part of the land and Jamison himself delivers warnings of threats and rumors in order to give the Logans opportunity to protect themselves.

Apparently, some of the landowners also try to be fair, as Mr. Avery mentions that "Harrison" won't raise his percentage because he is a "decent man." At any rate, the important concept is that Cassie learns that lighter skinned people are not "better" than she is; they just think they are. She can learn to endure the slights and insults because she has respect for herself regardless of what "a lot of useless people" think about her.

She also has a history of courageous and persevering ancestors and family members who have established themselves through their education and their own efforts.

Her family has established themselves as “equal” whether the whites want to grant that quality or not. Depression The depression is not explicitly mentioned in the story, but is apparent in much of the description and conversation. The parents talk about “hard times,” the school books have been used for eleven years by white children before being passed on to the black children. The children save the shoes for Sunday wear and for the winter when the ground is too cold for bare feet and many of them have patches on their clothes.

The price of cotton seems very uncertain from one year to the next, and both blacks and whites have transportation that ranges from horse and buggy to beat up pick-up trucks with only a few having truly nice cars.

Work is nearly impossible to find, which is one reason a man like Mr. Morrison will work for a room, food and a few dollars spending money at the end of the season. POINT OF VIEW The story is told in first person, entirely from Cassie’s perspective. The author uses gossip and story telling as devices to provide Cassie with information that a nine year old would not usually have.

She also does things that a child would do such as allowing her brother to go to the forbidden store, making an excuse to get out of the classroom so she can peer in at the windows of her mother’s classroom, and refusing to be left behind in anything that looks like excitement or danger.

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On the rare occasions when she cannot be in the middle of things, she is able to get Stacey to tell her almost everything. What he does not tell her, she is clever enough to figure out for herself. She is as reliable as a child can be, and her candid observation of the effects of racial prejudice creates a vivid image for the reader.