

Grace



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The theme of Vicki L. Sears "Grace" can be seen in the relationship that develops between two of the characters, Billie Jim and Paul. Billie is an orphan who gets along with his sister and is adopted by Paul and his wife. Billie displays a desire to trust and accept their new parents while sister remains suspicious. Vickie Sears illustrate that although children suffer abuse and neglect, there is hope that they can learn to trust and build self-esteem. Billie Jim is a silent child who relies on his sister to protect him.

Paul and his wife come to get them but Billie is hiding in a tree to escape from some of the bigger boys. His sister steps in and fights the older boys to get Billie down. She describes him as a "sissy". Billie has to use the bathroom, but instead of asking their new parents he pinches his sister. Paul takes him to the restroom and his sisters concern gives us an understanding into prior abuse and possible reasons for Billie Jim's reserved behavior. Although Paul would never hurt Billie Jim intentionally at the end of the story he does.

His death not only means an end to their relationship, but also an end to their secure home and protection. Billie loses the starring role along with the friend he has made, and is back into his uncertain life led by corrupt adults. "The Lesson" by Toni Cade Bambara is when Toni attended college and come of age as a writer. Bambara was at the head of radical politics, the feminist movement, and African American culture in Harlem when it was the 60's. Her writing uncovers the differences forced on African Americans of that time which America avoided and could not interfere.

The story is a window for the reader into Bambara's reality as much as it is a lesson for the immature woman Sylvia the main character. "The Lesson" is a

first person narrative told by a young, poor, black girl growing up in Harlem in an undetermined time period known as “ Back in the days when everyone was old and stupid or young and foolish, Sugar and I were the only ones just right”. Going by the prices some can accept it was sometime in the early seventies.

The story is about a trip started by a local woman, who is the only educated person in the neighborhood and has taken it upon herself to uncover the unthankful children of the neighborhood to the world outside of their worried community. The last stop is FAO Schwartz in Manhattan, where the toys of white children cost more than all of the children’s household yearly incomes combined and the lesson is almost lost on the children. The story closes by making plans to spend the left over cab fare change they stole from Miss Moore.

At the last second Sylvia turns on her friend and goes off alone to think of the events of the day. The story’s theme focuses on education and the need for education as the results of knowledge. It proves how learning can lead to grief but that the grief is necessary for helpful change. The author also studies different types of pride and purposes of leadership and the various ways people show respect or disrespect for each other. Underlying the entire story is the concept of economic difference between whites and blacks in the United States.