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Behind The Roll of Thunder

The book, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor, was focused on the year when everything went downhill for the Logan family. At the beginning of the book, the author explains how Cassie, the main character, was publicly embarrassed for doing something that wasn't her fault. As the book continues it talks about Cassie's "friend", TJ. TJ, the master manipulator, was always able to deceive people into giving him their belongings. He was later convicted for the firing of Cassie's mother. Resulting from that, Cassie's mother, nicknamed "Mama", needed to find a new job to pay for their family land. The book concludes with a lightning bolt striking the family's land; making the cotton catch on fire and a 1/3 of it getting burnt. With all that the story had to offer; we will talk about the symbols, the people, and the mood that was picked up while reading this book.

Symbols are a powerful tool authors use in their novels, for example, the symbol "land" in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* represents independence, family, and friends. There was only one instance when their land was sacrificed for anything else, this was at the end of the book when Cassie's father went to save their friend TJ. Unknowingly, lightning would strike their cotton field and cause it to burn. Cassie's father had told her that "All that [land] belongs to you" (Taylor 7). Even though, a lot of the land was burnt due to the fire; it was worth losing so they could save the people they cared about. Unfortunately, this incident impacted their money issues

even further and the fact that their land being a treasured possession was burnt to a crisp, it was worth knowing that all their friends and family were safe rather than letting the people they love die just to save their land.

Who was Mr. Morrison, and why is he important in this story? Mr. Morrison was a protector that Papa, Cassie's dad, had placed at their house while he was out working on the railroad. Mr. Morrison was a man Papa could trust to protect his family because he was formally Papa's coworker and the book said that "Mr. Morrison lost his job on the railroad a while back" (Taylor 37). Mr. Morrison was described as tall and strong but shy and quiet. He was formally living in Chicago before the violent events that he would experience later in the book. When he was young, the book explained how his mother was burned alive right in front of his eyes in a house fire. Sadly, that would be something that Mr. Morrison could never forget and he wanted to make sure it would not happen to anyone else.

A mood is something authors use to apply a certain emotion or an effect on somebody. This kind of technique would usually be used in persuasive papers to change someone's point of view on something. For example, the author talked a lot about how blacks were treated back in the day. As Mr. Barnett said, "Whose little slave is this?" (Taylor 111). Even though slaves were freed, the white people still took advantage of them, treated them wrong, and called them names. Throughout the book, it talks about Cassie's family protecting their land of cotton from the white people: and it talks about how the books that were "unsuitable" for white children were then given to the black kids. In conclusion, it makes a person realize how badly these people were treated back in the day and makes them wish they could have fixed it a long time ago.

Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry had a lot to offer; the symbols, the people, and the mood created a very emotional book that painted a very vivid picture of that time. To the Logan

family, family and friends were the most important things in life. This was put to the test when they had to sacrifice their most valued possession, their land. The way that an author characterizes the characters in a novel can quickly make you fall in love with them, relate to them, or despise them. They can make or break the book. Mr. Morrison is probably the character that stood out the most because he was always willing to help. He has gone through traumatic situations and was able to show them how to persevere through the trials of life. It was very interesting getting a peek into their life, and I think I would want to walk in their shoes for a little bit so that I could truly realize how blessed we are in the time we are currently living.