

QUICK CARD: *THE GIVING TREE*



Reference	<i>The Giving Tree</i> , Shel Silverstein. (1964) ISBN: 978-0060256654
Plot	A tree loves a boy and spends her life selflessly giving herself away to make him happy and meet his growing needs.
Setting	In the countryside Over the course of a boy's lifetime
Characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Giving Tree • The boy • The boy's girlfriend
Conflict	Man vs. Man Man vs. Self
Theme	<p>The tree wants to serve the boy, to be useful, and to make the boy happy. Making him happy makes her happy, at least for a while. At the story's turning point, however, neither the boy nor the tree are really "fed" by the tree's self-sacrifice. He never seems to appreciate or even to acknowledge the tree's loving gifts, but rather treats her as an object. As she gives, she herself is depleted. The giving ceases to satisfy her. Instead, she is lonely and sad, like the boy. The somewhat anticlimactic resolution depicts a quiet if sorrowful companionship.</p> <p>If anything good is depicted, it is a love that gives and a welcome that never ends. In this way, it hints at divine love. Yet, the waning joy of the tree as the narcissistic boy continues in his childish treatment of her forbears a straight ahead, allegorical, religious treatment of the story. God's love gives; however, in giving, His resources are never depleted. Additionally, He is not disheartened by man's selfishness or neediness. He expects it. He rejoices in man's need of Him, and He never runs out of resources. It is true, however, that man remains sad when he fails to recognize the giver of the gifts. Even in the quiet companionship of the final pages of the story, the boy and the tree are not happy. The boy remains immature, even in his great age. He continues to take, but never rejoices in the gift by acknowledging it, its source, or its meaning. Consequently, the love of the tree for the boy never produces joy in him or a mutual loving relationship between them.</p> <p>Themes include: Self-sacrificial love, materialism, selfishness, the eternal welcome.</p>

<p>Literary Devices</p>	<p>Personification – The tree is given the attributes of a nurturing woman. She feels and loves and sacrifices for the boy. In this way, she is personalized. On the other hand, the Boy is always referred to generically, which rather depersonalizes him, making him a more universal character. The author always refers to him as the Boy, in this way communicating that, although he ages, he never really matures.</p> <p>Repetition – “And the tree was happy...” This repetition causes the turning point (“but not really”) to communicate gravity and change. This tree, the source of life and joy, is growing lifeless.</p>
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