

Story Review 1B

The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein Reviewed by D. H. Law

Introduction:

What is the title?
Who is the author?
What kind of story is it and what do you think about it?

Summary:

What is the story about?

Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree* is loved by many people, but in my opinion it is just another story that tries to teach us a lesson about life that everyone knows. The story is about a loving tree and a selfish boy. Personally, I think it is a silly story with a naïve message.

The story is about a tree that, for some unexplained reason, 'loves a little boy'. The boy makes crowns with the tree's leaves and plays king of the forest. Then he climbs the tree's trunk, swings from her branches and eats her apples. The boy really must think he is 'king of the forest'. When he grows older, he goes away and leaves the tree. He only comes back to visit the tree when he wants something from her. First, he takes the tree's apples to sell them in the city for money. Then he takes the tree's branches and builds a house so he can get married and have children. Later, he takes the tree's trunk to build a boat and sail away. In the end, the tree is just an old stump and the boy is just an old man. We are supposed to believe that the tree is happy.

Personal reflection:

What do you like/dislike about this story? Why?

I like the illustrations of the story, but that's about it. I really don't like the character of the boy. He just takes whatever he wants from the tree and does not give the tree anything in return. He is actually destroying nature! I also don't understand the character of the tree. Why does the tree love the boy and why is the tree happy in the end. If I were the tree, I would use my branches to spank the boy and teach him a lesson!

Critical analysis:

What is the author's purpose? What is the story's theme or message?

The Giving Tree is supposed to be a story about giving and love. We are told that the tree is happy whenever she gives something to the boy. It sounds very nice, but I think people who read this story should be careful. In real life, most people are more like the boy. They will try to take advantage of you if you are too kind or generous. If you are like the tree, you may end up with nothing left.

Conclusion:

Would you recommend this story to others?

Many people love *The Giving Tree*, and you may enjoy reading it too. Personally, I wouldn't recommend it. The message of the story is too idealistic. I prefer stories that reflect reality.