

Let's Talk About ...

NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY



“Books written for children are intrinsically humanizing to any reader and are no less affecting than books written exclusively for adults. Adults also enjoy reading again books they loved as children.” – Elizabeth R. Baer, for the American Library Association, 1984

Featured book: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor (1976) is set in the 1930's, but it is a book that would not have been written for and distributed to children at that time. It chronicles a year in the life of fourth grader Cassie Logan, the second of four children in a black farming family in Mississippi. Cassie comes to consciousness in this year—consciousness of racial discrimination, consciousness of her father's gifts to her of dignity and determination, and her mother's gift of the value of education. Cassie tells her story in the first person, thus richly conveying her terror of the "night riders," her resourcefulness at revenge, her affection for her family, her dawning awareness of pride in her heritage and her land. Taylor won the prestigious Newbery Medal for this novel. (*Source: Theme pamphlet by Elizabeth R. Baer, for American Library Association, 1984.*)

Discussion Questions: [compiled from Let's Talk About It program scholars]

- Does the author demonstrate her hope for the future in this book? How?
- Have you ever felt yourself to be the victim of prejudice, racial, social, sexual, religious, etc.? How did you deal with it?
- This book presents disturbing incidents about racism and prejudice. It also challenges readers with a serious and complex plot and themes. It is an appropriate book for children? Why or why not?
- What are some positive values portrayed in the story?
- List ways the lives of the white and black children are different in this novel? Are there any parallels today in Idaho communities?
- What is the value of presenting a story that may provide experiences foreign to our own children's and grandchildren's lives?



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