

## Response to Timmerman Was Here -611

We read a story called Timmerman Was Here. It was about a girl who was unhappy about her grandfather leaving and a man named Timmerman moving in to take on odd jobs. At first the girl didn't like Timmerman. Her dog showed her that Timmerman was a good guy because he helped take the burrs off Henrietta's (dog's) fur. She saw that Timmerman was kind. Unfortunately, the townspeople started negative rumours about Timmerman. The girl did not believe the rumours so, she wanted to defend him and received a black eye for doing so. At one point, she sees the sack and spade in Timmerman's room and her faith in Timmerman was starting to fade. However, after seeing her grandfather, the girl's faith is restored. She has lots of fun with Timmerman and tries to find out what was in his sack. He never tells her. Many months later tulips spring up everywhere where Timmerman had been working. The townspeople never made the connection that Timmerman had done such a nice thing for the town.

I strongly felt that in the story the meaning was never assume the worst in people. At the beginning of the book, the girl didn't like Timmerman because he was a stranger and he was occupying the space that belonged to her grandfather. She really missed her grandfather and hadn't wanted anyone to take his place. She assumed the worst about Timmerman and wanted to dislike him, even though she didn't know him at

all. It was only when Henrietta, the dog, accepted Timmerman, that the girl decided to give their friendship a try. She did this because she knew that dogs have a good sense of character and if Henrietta accepted Timmerman, he must be a good person.

Another example to prove that the meaning of the book was to never assume the worst in people was when the townspeople judged Timmerman negatively when they saw him walking at night with a full sack and a spade. They thought that he might have been a bank robber or that he was a cat murderer. At the end of the book the people still thought badly of Timmerman but the girl knew that they had assumed the worst because it turned out that the sack actually contained tulip bulbs and that Timmerman had tried to make the town a better place by planting the beautiful flowers. Even though he had left the town, he left behind a positive change despite the fact that the people still disliked him.

This message is important to society because people may lose the possibility of making a good friend if they assumed the worst about that person without getting to know them. That would lead to everyone keeping to themselves and being secluded and possibly becoming introverts.

After reading this book I was reminded of the message in the book I Am Not a Number. The meanings were not exactly the same, but similar. In the book I am Not a Number, the children who were taken to the residential schools were

assumed to have a negative or bad culture just because it was different from that of the nuns. This was a really sad thing to read about. It reminded me of how the girl in Timmerman stood up for him at school. In both these stories you can see how terrible it is when people assume the worst in others.

Illustrations is one feature of this book. I noticed in the picture that shows the girl looking at her bruised eye that she may have been feeling regret because she started to wonder whether she should trust Timmerman. The dark colours under the bed, represent mystery, uncertainty or possibly, dread. The dark colours could also represent the darkness lurking in the shadows of her brain - should she trust Timmerman? Are the rumours true? Another great illustration was at the very beginning of the book where we see the girl sitting on a swing and looking downcast as her dog looks at her in a worried manner. The body language of the dog and the girl showed me that the girl and dog were upset. There was sunlight in most of the picture but both Henrietta and the girl are in shadow which again may imply that their moods were both sad. The tree with the swing would later prove to be a much happier place when Timmerman helped to remove the burrs from Henrietta's fur.

The illustrations made the story better by the use of different colours to show the moods of the characters and the situation.

Another feature we noticed in this book was character development, specifically the character development of the girl. At the beginning of the book the girl resented Timmerman even though he hadn't done anything to cause her to feel that way. Later on in the story, the girl begins to like Timmerman and even stands up for him when the rumours fly about at school. At one point she begins to doubt Timmerman's character after she finds the sack and spade but, finally, after talking to her grandfather, she regains her faith in Timmerman. She believed in Timmerman until the end and was actually sad to see him leave. Her character development mirrors that of the development of the tulips in the story that start off as a drab bulb and finishes as a bright and joyful flower. Character development allows the reader to really know what is going on and feel the emotions of the characters more deeply.

In conclusion, I really liked the book because as a reader I became interested in what the character of the girl was thinking and whether Timmerman was actually good or bad and this encouraged me to keep reading and discover the truth of the situation. There was a lot more to this story than I originally thought and it kept my attention.