

Story Grammar

Story: *Monster*

Author: Walter Dean Myers

Plot: Sixteen-year-old Steve Harmon faces life in prison for his involvement in a murder. He is also black. Is he guilty or innocent?

Themes: Prejudice & Racism
Decisions & Consequences
Peer Pressure

EPISODE

Setting: In the present day Manhattan Detention Center and a court room in New York City, New York.

Characters: Steve-sixteen year-old black man on trial for murder
Kathy O'brien-Steve's defense lawyer
James King-man on trial for involvement in the murder
Sandra Petrocelli-attorney for the state

CHAIN OF EVENTS

Initiating event: There has been a murder at a local store clerk. Sixteen year old Steve Harmon is picked up at the scene. Was he involved in the death of this man?

Internal Response: Is Harmon guilty or not guilty? Evidence points both directions and the reader is forced to be a jury member and witness at the same time.

Attempt/Outcome: Harmon pleads not guilty to killing the store clerk. The prosecution and defense battle as to Harmon's involvement in the case. When the evidence has all been presented, the jury deliberates. Harmon's life hangs in the balance of the decision of twelve people who know Harmon only from the sterile court room.

Resolution: While all other peers involved in the crime are found guilty, the jury finds young Steve Harmon not guilty. Harmon leaves the detention center in downtown Manhattan where he has learned many lessons. He returns to his home with his family in the ghetto.

Reaction: The story leaves the reader wondering what will happen yet to young Steve Harmon. Can he overcome the prejudices in the world and the situation he was raised in? Will he return to the friends that caused him to face a life in prison? Will he come home to his family and live the life his parents had always dreamed he would?

