

QUICK CARD: *THE LITTLE HOUSE*



Reference	<i>The Little House</i> , Virginia Lee Burton. (1942) ISBN: 978-0547790442
Plot	A little house in the country witnesses the passing years and seasons, which bring the distant city to her own back door.
Setting	The setting begins in the idyllic countryside, but spans many years to depict the effects of urban sprawl and industrialization.
Characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Little House • The man who built her • The man's great-granddaughter
Conflict	Man vs. Society – The effects of industrialization and urbanization on the countryside. The Little House enjoys her home in the country until progress blocks her view with skyscrapers and troubles her peace with noise pollution.
Theme	<p>Industrialization - The theme resonates with the poem, “The World Is Too Much With Us,” by William Wordsworth. Industrialization blocks the view of the Little House. Soot pollutes the air. Noise disturbs the peace of the once pastoral scene. Light pollution obscures the Little House’s view of the starry night sky. Everyone is in a hurry because everything moves faster in the urban period depicted. Burton takes a page out of Thoreau’s <i>Walden</i> with this meditation on progress and urbanization.</p> <p>Changing seasons and the passage of time – The Little House witnesses generations of change in order to provide an “unbiased” appraisal of progress. Notice how the literary device of personification allows the author to exploit this purportedly unbiased judgment. A house is an impartial thing, rather than an emotional person. It has no axe to grind, so to speak. By giving it a voice, however, she endows it with pathos as well as impartiality.</p> <p>The importance of memory (The Woman remembers the Little House in the country in which her grandmother grew up; consequently, she values the Little House, recognizes it and moves it back to the open air of another country meadow. It is restored to the family and to nature.)</p>

<p>Literary Devices</p>	<p>Personification – The Little House is referred to with the gender pronouns “she” and “her.” Painted a pretty pink, she stands in feminine domesticity, housing generations of the family that built her and lamenting the changing landscape which is being overtaken by the sprawling cement jungle.</p> <p>Imagery – Sensory language paints pictures of what the Little House saw, heard, and felt over the changing years.</p> <p>Repetition – “Pretty soon...” creates not only repetition, but also a kind of understatement, since the changes take place over a period of generations.</p> <p>Dramatic Irony – The Little House that the woman likens to her grandmother’s childhood home IS the very house she remembers, only the city has come to the country and swallowed it up. The restoration of the house to the family brings the story full circle, which images the cyclical nature of the passage of time and the regular change of seasons with poetic flair.</p>
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