

Name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

SCORE/GRADE:

PLOT: *The Bronze Bow*

In a single page, evaluate the thematic significance of this story's EXPOSITION – that is, explain how the author uses this structural element to emphasize the story's main themes. As always, refer to the events of the story in your answer. For page-length answers, attach a separate sheet if necessary.

This story takes place in a small town just outside of Jerusalem, 34 years after Pompey conquered Jerusalem for Rome in 63 B.C. Since Pompey's victory, Herod, a Jewish convert, has been appointed king by the Roman Empire. He has rebuilt the city of Jerusalem and created a temple complex which mocks Solomon's structure in its sheer size. This temple has become the focal point of tension between two Jewish factions.

Peace-loving Jews are satisfied to endure the Roman occupation, considering the money being poured into the building projects in their capital. Dissidents, however, disdain all resources tainted by Roman influence and await a Messianic kingdom which will establish an earthly and political freedom.

Daniel, the story's protagonist, typifies this second Jewish sect. His personal hatred for the Romans, fueled by the tragic story of his parent's deaths, combines with his anticipation of the coming kingdom to heighten the tension of the story. He is representative of many 1st century Jews who refused to await the Messiah patiently while Rome destroyed their nation and rather covertly armed themselves to have a ready army in expectation of the Messiah.

This tension is woven into the social fabric of Daniel's world at the start of the story. As a result, when Jesus appears, preaching his counter-cultural message of "loving one's enemies" and "giving unto Caesar that which is Caesar's," he challenges his contemporaries' expectations for a Messiah. No military hero, this carpenter preaches a message of grace which spreads peace instead of fomenting revolution. In the very exposition and setting of her story, Speare seeds thematic significance and sets this stage for this paradox.