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Literary Elements

Meet the Austins by Madeleine L'Engle

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The book Meet the Austins, by Madeleine L'Engle, is about a loving family dealing with their grief over the death of their uncle Hal. The main character is Vicki Austin, the eldest daughter, who goes through a lot of trouble with her family during the course of the book. In the story, Madeleine L'Engle used a lot of literary elements, but the three that seemed to stand out most were the mood, the theme, and the perspective.

The mood varied a lot throughout the book. In the beginning it was happy and calm. After that, the Austins received a phone call telling them that their uncle Hal died. This changed the mood to sad and mournful, especially for the uncle's husband aunt Elena. It stayed in that mood for a long time, when the author gave even more bad events, such as when one of the daughters named Suzy stole from a candy store and when she stopped eating any kind of pig after reading about Wilbur in Charlotte's Web. In the end the mood changes from bad to good again. The Austins take a vacation and in the last few pages of the book the family returns and settles nicely at home.

The theme of this book is to always stay together with your family through thick and thin and the losses ahead of you. I feel that this would be the theme because the whole book shows the family going through lots of problems like the loss of uncle Hal and when Vicky broke her arm. Though they get into fights and disagreements but they always forgive each other or forget it. All of these examples increase their bonds and they also learn valuable lessons like to help each other. Those are the reasons a chose that particular theme as most important.

The story of this book is told from the perspective of 12-year-old Vicki Austin. She is the main character, and is involved in most of the events in the plot. She is very mature and responsible; for example, she takes care of her younger brother Rob. I think that the author chose to tell the story from Vicki's perspective because the most of the readers will be young readers so they would be able to relate more to Vicki and child than if she were someone else or an adult. I think that the perspective gives the reader more relate to and think about, and it makes the book even better.

With these three literary elements, Madeleine L'Engle made the book a great deal better, and helps the reader greatly in understanding the book. You can almost put yourself in the characters' shoes.