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**How does tragedy within a community shape the victims of it?**

The author's choices in tone and form, as well as placement within the books’ prologue helps reveal the theme of communities and the victims shaped after those tragedies. Whitehead describes the digging of the graveyard and the former Nickel Boys getting together in a very direct tone, containing very little opinionated speech. This creates a lot of hindsight, and the internal sorrow looking back on the terrible events that happened. The form of writing makes the reader feel as if they are experiencing the aftermath themselves, which can help connect them with the story and the characters' backgrounds. The act of making the prologue the very beginning of the book is also a good example of Whitehead making an authorial choice as it serves as historical context for the Nickel Academy and the Dozier school that it was closely inspired by. It can also indirectly remind the reader that while this is a work of fiction, the events of the Dozier School are very much real, and some of the survivors of it are still alive today.

This notion helps the victims of the school recover because they are still able to come together and piece together their own first-hand record of the events of the Dozier School, which can help remind them they they are not alone. This can be seen in the quote “If it is true for you, it is true for someone else, and you are no longer alone.” Afterwards, they can share that information to the public as a reminder and a learning experience for those who may not have heard their story. The descriptors about gravesite can also reveal the theme because the surviving victims witness first-hand the bodies that were dumped in the ground to simply be rid of the victims, and it helps them fully internalize the nature of the school. Sometimes, “No white crosses, no names, just bodies waiting for someone to find them.” It really illustrates to the reader the nature of the school and what the Nickel Boys had to go through.