

Taylor greer essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Taylor Greer, the main character in The Bean Trees, is a practical and optimistic and yet realistic young woman living in rural Kentucky. She wishes to avoid getting pregnant which seems to be the lot in life for her classmates and vows that life is not for her. She sets out to travel as far away from Kentucky as possible and in the process, becomes the mother of a three year old who has been abused, falls in love with the landscape of her travels and through her interactions with illegal immigrants from Central America, becomes more socially consciousness about the world around her. Her discovery is motivated by the people that she befriends, the landscape that she witnesses and rather than setting out to find herself, her self discovery instead, comes upon her to a degree that is inescapable.

Taylor experienced a cross country journey and in the process, overcame her weaknesses. At a young age, Taylor did not want to turn out like her classmates in Pitman County. Taylor wants to me mature yet is stuck in that awkward stage where one is too old to be considered a child and too young to be considered a mature adult. But this did not change Taylor's motivations to be taken seriously, " Missy was what everyone called me because when I was three supposedly I stamped my foot and told my mother to call me Miss Marietta." [1] Taylor wants to live a rich and full life and just cannot reconcile those feelings with rural Kentucky. She overcame her fears and forces herself to make the move out West. The destination does not seem to be the important aspect of her leaving. And in this trip, the remaining stages of her self discovery come to fruition.

On her way, Taylor comes across a young woman named Louanne. Her life has been different than Taylor's except for their upbringing which were both

dominated by strict men. “ Ivy brought her suitcase which was held together with a leather belt. Louanne recognized the belt as the one she was whipped with years ago, when her father was alive.”[2] Taylor gets the chance to assist Louann overcome her fears and intermediations and in the process, Taylor is able to help herself. When one’s actions have a direct and positive effect on another, it serves as a huge factor in the increase of one’s own shortcomings and feelings of inadequacy. This was the case with Taylor’s relationship with Louanne.

Another person that Taylor meets and receives strength from is Sandi. Sandi was one of those “ rudders” that Taylor has previously wanted to avoid a similar experience and perhaps the person as well. But even though Sandi ended up like a “ rudder” Taylor respects her in the fact that she did not let her life slip away and that she always strived to live a full life. Sandi, in return, helps Taylor build up her confidence. This is done more through her actions and less through any speech that she might have given Taylor. Leading by example is often times, more powerful than lectures where the receiver will automatically turn off their receptors out of fear of being made to look small in the process. This was never the case with Sandi and Taylor. There was a mutual respect and fondness for each other that made their friendship very real.

However, the single most important relationship for Taylor and the one that forces her to grow up and face her fears comes from the responsibility that she feels towards her newly adopted daughter Turtle. It is ironic and Taylor points out the irony in the fact that she left Kentucky with the sole intention of not becoming a mother and yet, within her travels, she is now the mother

to a three year old who some have believed is mentally handicapped. “ Do you know, I spent the first half of my life avoiding motherhood and, tires and now, I am counting my blessings?”[3] Turtle has been physically and sexually abused and the fact that Taylor has no job and no prospects, she is forced to confront her fears as well as reality in rapid succession. When Taylor first acquired Turtle, she found herself not knowing where to go in life and where they were headed. She has questioned her actions and is losing confidence in herself. “ I was starting to go a little crazy. This is how it is when you can fit all of your money in one pocket and have no job and no prospects.”[4]

In her travels, Taylor has overcome some of her most serious weaknesses; self doubt and not wanting to get pregnant. From her travels and experiences, she has learned from others invaluable experiences, mistakes and sacrifices. Taylor’s journey makes her face reality and find that her weaknesses can only hold her back if she lets it but that choosing not to listen to her self doubt, which it seems, will always be with her and will be something that she will have to face, will only make her stronger and her life much more worthwhile. Taylor embarked on her journey not knowing what to expect. She never would have anticipated that she would become the mother of a three year old, work in a tire store, befriend such good and different people and learn about herself to the degree that she did. Early in her life, Taylor’s actions were dictated by her fears which served as an impediment to her success. By the end of the story, the reader is led to believe that Taylor and Turtle will be just fine and that missed opportunities from Taylor’s past, brought on by fear and self doubt, will not be repeated.

Through her road to self discovery, Taylor overcomes many of her weaknesses and becomes stronger as the story continues. Her growth cannot come from any other source than from the experiences that she had on her trip as well as the invaluable relationships that she forged during her cross country travels.

References:

[1] Kingsolver, Barbara. The Bean Trees. New York: Harper Collins, 1988.

[2] Kingsolver, Barbara. The Bean Trees. New York: Harper Collins, 1988.

[3] Kingsolver, Barbara. The Bean Trees. New York: Harper Collins, 1988.

[4] Kingsolver, Barbara. The Bean Trees. New York: Harper Collins, 1988.