

The theme of courage in the face of danger in literature

Literature



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Integrity is how morally sound somebody is, somebody with Integrity goes above and beyond in their moral choices. Instead of not participating in what is wrong, somebody with integrity would take the extra step and put a stop it. To have Integrity a person must, without a doubt, have courage, because without courage how could you stand up for what is right? By having courage a person can express himself/herself without worrying about others opinions, like the characters in the stories *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, "The Man in the Water" by Roger Rosenblatt, and "Sir Lancelot Du Lake" by Sir Thomas Malory. The characters in these stories show that they have integrity by demonstrating courage in the face of danger.

Atticus has the courage to defend Tom Robinson in court against white opponents (Bob and Mayella Ewell), even though he knows that he will not win "Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win." (Lee 41) At one point it seems like Atticus will win, but it is an ominous sign when the jury doesn't look at the defendant after the verdict is decided. Atticus defends Tom because it is the right thing to do not because he'll get paid. Some people don't support the prosecution of Tom, but they don't stand up and protest it, that is the difference between somebody who has integrity and someone who doesn't. Atticus says "Tom Robinson's case, is something that goes to the essence of a man's conscience—Scout, I couldn't go to church and worship God if I didn't try to help that man."(57) He stands up to his daughter whom questions his judgment, along with the whole town. Atticus doesn't stand much to gain from defending Tom either, not money or glory. In a sense he has the courage to take on the entire white community. In the time of Atticus

Finch, It took a tremendous amount of courage to just talk to an African American, let alone defend one and respect him.

Atticus showed courage when he sat outside the prison to defend Tom from the lynch mob. When Atticus was there innocently reading, a mob came that wanted to lynch Tom for raping Mayella. He told them to leave but they would not listen " you can turn around and go home again."(80) The mob didn't listen to Atticus until Jem and Scout came and convinced them to leave. Atticus was being bold when he told them to leave, because he knew full well that the lynch mob could hurt him also. It took lots of courage to send them away. If he had not made them leave then Tom would have been dead a lot sooner.

In " The Man in the Water", the man in the water shows that he has a lot of courage by saving people he doesn't even know. To them he is some no name man who helps them escape the perils of the freezing water, and gave them life. His courage is noted when " Every time they lowered a lifeline and floatation ring to him, he passed it on to another of the passengers."(Rosenblatt 275) He could have taken the line for himself and saved his own life, but he made the choice to put others before himself, that takes real courage.

In " Sir Lancelot Du Lake" Lancelot is captured by the evil queens, and shows great courage by denying them what they most want, him. When Lancelot wakes up in their Dungeon, he is disoriented but still obeys the code of chivalry, and remains faithful to his king. The queens tell him that if he doesn't marry one of them, they will kill him. He has the courage to deny

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them, all of them. By doing this he risks death but he doesn't care because the code of chivalry forbids it. "' So you refuse us?' asked Morgan le Fey ' on my life, I do' Sir Lancelot said.'"(Malory 653) The queens were going to kill him, but didn't have the chance because he escaped.

All the characters exhibited integrity through their acts of courage. Atticus because he defended Tom, both in court and in prison, the man in the water by putting others before himself to the point of death, and Lancelot because he put his king's rules before his own life. Although displaying courage does not always mean a person has integrity, it is one of the base principles of integrity