

I heard the owl call
my name essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the novel, ' I Heard The Owl Call my Name' by Margaret Craven, the young twenty-eight year old vicar Mark Brian is sent to a remote village of Kingcome by the Bishop. In this he has no choice. However, it changes him. This essay will explain why this change is important to Mark. When Mark arrives he is very lonely.

' Often in the first weeks Mark was beset by a sense of futility and always he was lonely. ' This quote shows that found it hard to fit in and the word ' futility' shows that he didn't know if what he was doing was worthwhile and making any difference. The important change that happens to Mark is a result of a decision that Mark makes early on. This decision was to fit and to give even though he was lonely.

In deciding to serve the tribe Mark began to love the village and belong to people there. The first major decision Mark made was regarding the dilapidated old vicarage that warped and sagging. ' There was no doubt about it, the vicarage was falling down. ' Despite this, Mark decides that asking for help from the Indians is all wrong, " it was all wrong and he knew it. " Mark knew he had been sent here to give and to serve the people and he did not want to start on the wrong foot.

I want this, I need that. I need paint. " Mark's determined decision to serve well, pays off. Near the end of the book, the Bishop lets Mark know that he has served well, but is dying.

He first alludes to this by saying, ' It has always been easier here, where only the fundamentals count, to learn what every man must learn in this world... which is enough of the meaning of life to be ready to die. ' This is the real

reason that Mark has been sent here, to learn this lesson. The Bishop goes on to say, “ I will begin at once to seek a replacement for you, Mark.

Your work in the village is almost done. “ As Mark realises that he is dying and must leave Kingcome, he recognises an enormous change within himself. Despite the loneliness and deprivation he felt at first; he realises how much this place means to him and that he belongs here more than in the western world, ‘ he was going to leave it and the thought filled him with a twinge of sudden anguish. ‘ Mark spends time alone on the boat thinking about how Kingcome has changed. ‘ How would he live again in the old world he had almost forgotten, where men throw up smoke screens between themselves and the fundamentals whose existence they fear but seldom admit? Here, where death waited behind each tree, he had made friends with loneliness, with death and deprivation, and, solidly against his back had stood the wall of his faith. ‘ This quote tells the reader that Mark really has changed.

He no longer fears loneliness, deprivation or death. He is at peace with them. Furthermore, he sees that the western world tries to distance itself from these things because in general they are feared. Having buried Calamity Bill, Mark heads back to Kingcome. As he is ‘ alone and receptive ‘ he realises why he has been so tired, why the doctor hesitated, why his sister looked sad.

He hears an owl call his name which in Indian tradition tells a person they are dying. In chapter 22 Craven writes, ‘ the young vicar struggled with the one fact of his life about which no man has doubt, and yet is never ready to

meet... ' and a little further in the same paragraph, ' almost die or to leave this place of peace and return to the shiny superficial western world.

' How could he return to that far country he no longer knew, where, while awaiting death he would be a stranger? ' Grieving that he must leave, Mark is met a few days later by Keetah who asks him to stay. We have written to the Bishop and asked that he let you remain here to the end, because this is your village and we are your family. ' This means much to Mark. He describes it as a ' sudden, unexpected gift of peace. ' In conclusion, the change in Mark is that he comes to accept death, loneliness and deprivation as part of life and no longer fears them.

He comes to realise that he prefers this place to the ' smoke-screened' west where the fundamentals like death are avoided. It is here that he belongs and here that he wished to stay until he dies. Bibliography: Novel- I Heard the Owl Call my Name. By Margaret Craven