

To kill a mocking bird critical essay

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



To Kill a Mockingbird Courage cannot be defined with simple words but rather by an individual's actions. Despite many different definitions courage is someone's internal fortitude to do something that may frighten others. In To Kill a Mockingbird, by Harper Lee, Gem's definition of courage changes from the beginning to the end of the book. At the beginning of the book Gem's definition of courage is from an innocent perspective and by the end of the book Gem has an experienced definition of courage.

Gem learns the real definition of courage from it being demonstrated in his everyday life in Macomb. At the beginning of Harper Lee's , To Kill a Mockingbird Gem shows a naive, innocent view of courage because of his fears. Dill dares Gem to touch the Raddled house, which has always been one of his worst fears. Gem displays courage by touching the Raddled and hides his angst when reporting back to Dill and Scout. Gem dreads touching the Raddled house only because of his scary childlike imagination. Lee writes, " Gem threw open the gate and sped to the side of the house, slapped it with his alma and ran back past us"(118).

Gem's courage comes into play when he is told to do something he terrifies by his peers. Gem continues to demonstrate an innocent perspective of courage in the early part of the novel. Gem still has an inexperienced view of courage because he is still at a youth and is immature to his surroundings. Gem's youthful imagination forms ideas to get in contact with the horrifying Boo Raddled. He decides to put a note on a fishing pole and stick it through the Raddled window. The note was asking Boo out for ice cream, so the children can meet him.

Harper Lee says, " We're asking him real politely to come out sometimes, and tell us what he does in there - we said we wouldn't hurt him and we'd buy him an ice cream" (62). Gem's perspective of courage is slowly starting to advance because he was scared to death when he first went on the Raddled property. Gem demonstrates an innocent perspective on courage by engaging in childish games but he begins to learn the real view of courage by witnessing his dad in action. Gem believes Tactics doesn't have courage until he shoots the Mad Dog to save the community from harm, UT Gem's view is still a naive one.

The Mad Dog is beginning to approach in the distance when Officer Heck Tate throws Tactics the gun. Tactics takes the gun and walks to the center of the street showing no hesitation. Even though Tactics hasn't shot a gun in 30 years he kills Mad Dog with a single shot showing an outrageous amount of courage. Lee states, " In the fog, Gem watched our father take the gun and walk out into the middle of the street" (127). Tactics has an abundant amount of courage, even to something that he hasn't done in 30 years. Although Gem thinks

Tactics shooting the dog is courageous, he learns the real definition through the actions of Mrs.. Dubos. Gem's adult definition of courage is beginning to form from experience in the Macomb community. Gem learns the real definition of courage from Mrs.. Dubos who was a recovering morphine addict . Mrs.. Dubos makes a goal for herself to die free of her weakness. She dies UN-addicted to morphine and she is Gem's real definition of courage.

Harper Lee says, " When you are licked before you begin but you begin anyway and see it through no matter what" (119).

Mrs.. Double's fight exemplifies to Gem, no matter how hard something looks to never give up. Mrs.. Dubos didn't give up on her morphine addiction and came out on top. Mrs.. Debase teaches Gem the true definition of courage, and Gem does a fantastic job exemplifying it in front of the courthouse. Gem is beginning to have an experienced adult like sense of courage. In front of the courthouse Tactics is sitting one night and the mob shows up asking to see Tom Robinson. Gem and the kids run to Tactics because they knew his life is in danger.

Tactics tells the kids to leave and Gem shows an extraordinary amount of courage saying that he wasn't leaving. A mob member grabbers Gem telling Tactics he will make him leave. Scout stares kicking the man in the shins and eventually put Gem down. Gem still refuses to leave his father and tells him we are staying. Lee says" Tactics stood trying to make Gem mind him. I ant going was his steady answer to Attic's threat request and finally " please take them home Gem" (204). Gem not leaving his fathers side until the mob departed shows how courageous Gem is becoming.

Gem demonstrates an innocent perspective on courage by engaging in childish games, but he begins to learn the real view of courage witnessing his dad in action. Gem is beginning to demonstrate a more experienced sense of courage, from confronting the mob to saving Scout from Bob Lowell. Although Gem previously had a naive perspective of courage he now has a more experienced and adult like sense of courage. Gem and Scout are

attacked when walking home from the Halloween play. Gem pushes Bob Lowell off of Scout saving her from any serious injuries.

If Gem didn't push Bob Lowell off of Scout then he would have mostly likely stabbed and killed her. Gem jumped in and freed Scout from being harmed potentially in any way. Harper Lee states, " His stomach was soft but his arms were like steel. He slowly squeezed the breath out of me. I could not move. Suddenly he jerked me back and forth to the ground, almost carrying me with him" (351). Gem will not let Bob Lowell hurt his little sister in anyway so he does everything in his power to protect her from being injured. After Gem learns the real actions of courage and has an experienced view he saves Scout from Bob Lowell.