

The chrysalids – what is a ideal mother?



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

What Is An Ideal Mother? The purpose of motherhood is more than just the act of giving birth and keeping her offspring safe from danger. It is to ensure that her child does not just live, but rather thrives. In the novel, *The Chrysalis* by John Yamaha, the author uses an array of mother figures to portray his conception of an ideal mother. He does this by giving clear examples of characters that show both good and bad representations of motherhood. In this novel, the mothers are forced to choose between their society and frowned upon child.

They are also portrayed in situations that allow them the opportunity to demonstrate unconditional love, support and sacrifice. Furthermore, their different mothering styles are shown to be directly aligned with and impacting upon the ultimate survival of their community. There are several different characterizations of mothering but the one that is considered ideal is the one that encourages her child to succeed. Therefore an ideal mother is someone who puts her child before anyone and anything else.

The mothers in the novel are challenged with the difficult decision of choosing between fitting in with society and religion, or their child, who is frowned upon by their community. One might think that a mother's first instinct is to protect her child no matter the circumstance. However, the characters in this novel prove that this is not always true or simple. One of the mothers, Emily Storm, is greatly influenced by the unreasonable opinions and laws that govern the society she lives in. This results in her emotionally neglecting her children, making them feel unwanted, uncared for and unloved. When her son David hurts himself in the splinter incident and accidentally says that he wishes he had another hand Emily, "[makes] tech-

tech noises of disapproval" (Yamaha 26) and shows no sign of concern or care for her injured son. This proves that she cares more about what other people think than about her own child. Emily reprimands David for saying something against the rules of society instead of helping him. As such, David ends up resenting his mother and becomes unable to confide in her, in contrast. Mrs. Wander puts her daughter Sophie before anything else, including herself.

When Sophie hurts herself and David finds out that she is deviated, Mrs. Wander's first instinct is to go comfort and care for her daughter. " Oh, my poor darling! " She said, holding her and kissing her. Then she added, 'he's seen it? " (10). This demonstrates that because of her outstanding love and support for her rejected daughter, she is forced to live in constant fear of her society disapproval. She knows that they will not approve of Sophie's difference and it is very dangerous for them to be holding it, which is why she gets very nervous when she realizes that David has seen it.

Sophie, however, finds great comfort in knowing that her mother will always protect and support her. It is clear that the ideal mother will put her child first, even if it means sacrificing the way society views her and her family. Once a mother realizes the importance of choosing her children above anyone and anything else, it is equally important to show them unconditional love and 100% support. Mothers play a vital role in what a person becomes. As a child grows up to be, they set an example as well as help steer their child in the right direction through love, support and guidance.

Without this, the child feels disconnected and in some cases, such as David's, unloved and as if they are not good enough. David says, " I [can't] remember anyone saying before that I was a good boy. I knew no form of response designed to meet such an event. " (12). This shows that because David's mom Emily is very stern and restricted when it comes to her children and showing them compassion, David feels very unloved and is not even aware of the attention and love other children get from their mothers. David goes as far as to say that he, could not imagine [his] own mother doing such a thing for Petrel's sake" (126).

The ideal mother in a situation like this is Emily sister, known as Aunt Harriet. She unconditionally loves her child even though it is not perfect. She does everything she can to help and protect her child. It is believed that she ended her life because her child was in serious danger and she could not bare knowing she was helpless and possibly without her baby. When she came to Emily for help as her last resort, Emily became very angry because she was not able to understand the love Harriet has for ere child and how she felt knowing it was in danger.

Aunt Harriet proves that an ideal mother will always love and protect her child no matter the circumstance or consequence. Through their love and guidance, mother's have a strong impact on their children which reflects upon their community. The values and morals reflected in the town of Wink where the Storms live are strongly embraced by their mother Emily. She tries to raise her children in the same value system teaching them ideas such as, " any creature that shall seem to be human, but is not formed thus is not human. It is either man nor woman.

It is blasphemy against the true Image of God, and hateful in the sight of God" (13). The people of Wink are very close minded and do not seem to have a heart for people who are different. They Judge people based on their physical appearance, which is something that no individual can control. Thus treating them brutally and very rudely, showing no respect. By raising her children with these morals, Emily is encouraging the perpetuation of that kind of society. However, their society is not growing or improving because it is very difficult to live in and they refuse to embrace change, resulting in conformity.

Furthermore, David, Emily son ends up realizing that these values and morals are not ideal which results in him resenting and rebelling against his mother and community. The Fringe society contradicts Wink as it embraces difference and individuality as a creative force. Mrs. Wander's mothering style coincides perfectly with this type of society as it allows her to raise her daughter Sophie free to be who she is in a community where it is not only accepted, but encouraged.

Sophie learns through her mother and community that imperfection is beautiful, valuable and something to be embraced, not hidden. This is precisely why the Fringes community prospers and in the end survives. It is apparent that the ideal mother is one who raises her child in an environment that embraces her values and morals, allowing them and their society to succeed. Although it is difficult to say for certain what an ideal mother should be, it is clear that she must provide a positive, loving, and dependable environment for her children, allotting them every opportunity to thrive.

Throughout the novel the ideal mother proves Tanat seen PU Eric 10 above teen rules AT near collect demonstrating her unconditional love, as well as cultivating the person that her child grows up to be, thus defining her community. In today's society, it is often taken for granted the impact a mother's love has on her child. However, *The Chrysalis* demonstrates the defining impact that motherhood has on the development of all individuals in her society. In order for a child to flourish and be a positive influence on their community, they must have a strong foundation built by the values and morals nurtured by their mother.