

Frodo's seed of courage



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Courage is an essential quality that is found in every archetypal hero.

Courage is defined as the quality of mind and spirit that enables an individual to face difficulty, danger, and pain without fear. An individual is not born with a courageous heart, but instead develops courage through experience of difficulty and danger. The stimulation of courage is analogous to the growth of a beautiful flower. Courage starts off as a seed which is planted in the soil of the individual's heart.

The planting of the seed is usually initiated by a courageous act during a time of difficulty or danger. As an individual experiences many of these dangerous and difficult circumstances, the individual's courage begins to grow. After many acts of courage, the individual becomes brave enough to risk their life for a noble cause. Thus, the individual's courage blossoms into a noble flower that is invincible and unwavering in the face of danger. A great example of courage that develops within an individual is the character of Frodo in J. R. R. Tolkien's novel, *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

Tolkien states that, "There is a seed of courage hidden (often deeply, it is true) in the heart of the fattest and most timid hobbit, waiting for some final and desperate danger to make it grow" (Tolkien *The Fellowship of the Ring* 159). Tolkien uses the protagonist, Frodo, to demonstrate the growth of courage within a hero. In Tolkien's novel, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Frodo's "seed of courage" (159) grows through the dangers on his quest to destroy the Ring and transforms him into a courageous individual that decides to journey to Mordor alone. Frodo's "seed of courage" (159) begins to grow during his journey to Rivendell.

The beginning of growth of Frodo's "seed of courage" (159) occurs when Frodo and his friends are trapped in the Barrow-wight tomb. Before Frodo's "seed of courage" (159) starts to grow, Frodo feels great fear of the Barrow-wights. After cowering with fear for a few minutes, Frodo remembers that, "There is a seed of courage hidden (often deeply, it is true) in the heart of the fattest and most timid hobbit, waiting for some final and desperate danger to make it grow" (159). Suddenly, Frodo notices a Barrow-wight hand creeping steadily towards the unconscious bodies of Merry, Pippin, and Sam.

When Frodo sees the hand of the Barrow-wight, he first feels the desire to escape. But the "seed of courage" (159) starts to grow within Frodo through the danger of the Barrow-wight and, "The courage that had been awakened in him was now too strong: he could not leave his friends so easily" (160). As a result of Frodo's courage, Frodo grabs a sword and dismembers the hand of the Barrow-wight. While the Barrow-wight is distracted with the pain from its decapitated hand, Frodo remembers the chant of Tom Bombadil and shouts it. The chant summons Tom Bombadil to the hobbits' rescue.

Frodo's first act of courage cultivates the "seed of courage" (159) within him, thus saving his friends. Frodo's "seed of courage" (159) continues to grow again during his encounter with the Ringwraiths at Weathertop. When Frodo and his friends make camp at Weathertop, five Ringwraiths discover them and prepare to attack. The leader of the Ringwraiths steps out from the others and lunges at Frodo. Although Frodo feels fear once again, the "seed of courage" (159) within him grows and, "At that moment Frodo threw himself forward on the ground, and he heard himself crying aloud: O Elbereth!

Gilthoniel! At the same time he struck at the feet of his enemy" (221). As a result of Frodo's courage, the Ringwraith cries in pain and is chased away by Aragorn. Although Frodo's courage growth continues, Frodo does not leave the battle with the Ringwraith unscathed. Instead, Frodo receives a wound from the Ringwraith's Morgul-knife on his left shoulder. By enduring the pain from the Morgul-knife splinter in his shoulder during the rest of his journey to Rivendell, Frodo's courage grows even more.

During the rest of the journey to Rivendell, the splinter of the Morgul-knife challenges Frodo's courage. Although the temptation is great to let the splinter of the Morgul-knife overcome Frodo, his courage to resist the temptation remains steadfast for the rest of the journey to Rivendell. Once Frodo regains consciousness in Rivendell, Gandalf informs Frodo about the removal of the Morgul-knife splinter and tells him, " I have known strong warriors of the Big People who would quickly have been overcome by that splinter, which you bore for seventeen days" (248).

Gandalf's statement regarding Frodo's ability to overcome the challenge of the splinter clearly shows that Frodo's courage has grown enough during his journey to Rivendell to be visible to his companions. Frodo's " seed of courage" (159) continues to grow during the Council of Elrond and the journey through the Mines of Moria. Frodo's continual growth of courage is revealed at the Council of Elrond. During the Council of Elrond, Elrond speaks of how perilous the journey to Mordor will be and questions the other members of the Council on whom should make the journey to Mordor to destroy the Ring.

As the question of whom should travel to Mordor to destroy the Ring lingers among the members of the Council, Frodo's courage begins to grow again. After struggling with the decision for a moment, Frodo states, " I will take the Ring, though I do not know the way" (303). Frodo volunteers despite facing greater dangers on the next journey. Frodo's act of courage to take responsibility for the Ring is surprising considering all the dangers that Frodo experiences on his journey to Rivendell. Frodo's willingness to face even greater dangers clearly demonstrates that his courage continues to grow.

Frodo once again shows his constant growth of courage during the journey through the Mines of Moria. When the Fellowship is venturing in the Mines of Moria, they run into a large group of orcs. As one of the orcs tries to break into the room that the Fellowship is trapped in, Boromir strikes at the arm of the orc. Although Boromir is a powerful warrior, his sword does nothing and slips from his hands. After Boromir fails to harm the orc, " Suddenly, and to his own surprise, Frodo felt a hot wrath blaze up in his heart. ? The Shire! ? he cried, and springing beside Boromir, he stooped , and stabbed with Sting at the hideous foot" (364).

Consequently, Frodo's courage overpowers Boromir's brute strength. Furthermore, Frodo's attack on an individual orc causes his courage to grow strong enough to fight against a hoard of orcs. After Frodo and the Fellowship kill thirteen orcs, the rest of the orcs temporarily run away giving time for the Fellowship to escape. Following the Council of Elrond and the journey through the Mines of Moria, Frodo's courage becomes more natural, thus revealing that Frodo's courage is near full growth. Frodo shows full

transformation into a courageous individual at Lorien and through his most courageous act of all at Amon Hen.

Frodo first shows his full transformation into a courageous individual at Lorien. During the Fellowship's stay in Lorien, Frodo finds Galadriel standing next to a silver basin. When Frodo asks about the basin, Galadriel tells him that it is the Mirror of Galadriel that if looked in, will reveal things from different points of time and things that Frodo may desire to see. However, Galadriel warns Frodo that the Mirror may also show unbidden, profitable things that are evil and may discourage Frodo from continuing on his quest to Mordor.

When Galadriel notices that Frodo begins to feel doubt in the decision of whether he should look in the Mirror or not, Galadriel states, " You may learn something, and whether what you see be fair or evil, that may be profitable, and yet it may not. Seeing is both good and perilous. Yet I think, Frodo, that you have courage and wisdom enough for the venture, or I would not have brought you here. Do as you will! " (407). Suddenly, Frodo begins to feel his courage grow once more and finally, Frodo replies, " I will look" (408).

When Frodo looks through the Mirror, he sees many things including the fearsome Eye of Sauron. Although Frodo is temporarily frightened by the Eye of Sauron, Frodo quickly regains his full courage and decides to continue on the quest to destroy the Ring. Frodo's demonstration of great courage before and after he looks in the Mirror of Galadriel shows that his transformation into a courageous individual is complete. Frodo further demonstrates his full

transformation into a courageous individual through his most courageous act of all at Amon Hen.

When the Fellowship takes a break at Amon Hen, they must decide whether they should continue to Mordor to destroy the Ring or if they should travel to Minas Tirith. Frodo states that he needs an hour to make the choice between Mordor or Minas Tirith so he ventures off into the woods. After a few minutes alone, Frodo runs into Boromir who advises Frodo to go to Minas Tirith. When Frodo insists that he must take the Ring to Mordor, Boromir begins to unconsciously reveal his desire for the Ring. Frodo refuses to give Boromir the Ring which causes Boromir to attack him.

After escaping from Boromir, Frodo realizes that he can't trust the rest of the Fellowship with the Ring. Using all of his courage, Frodo makes the final decision of what he must do by stating to himself, " I will do now what I must. This at least is plain: the evil of the Ring is already at work even in the Company, and the Ring must leave them before it does more harm. I will go alone" (451). Although Frodo knows that the journey to Mordor will be extremely difficult and dangerous without the Fellowship's aid, Frodo understands that he has to travel to Mordor alone for the sake of Middle Earth.

Frodo's decision to journey to Mordor alone is Frodo's most courageous act, thus proving that he is fully transformed into a courageous individual at Amon Hen. In conclusion, the dangers Frodo experiences on his quest through Rivendell, the Council of Elrond, the Mines of Moria, Lorien, and Amon Hen causes Frodo's " seed of courage" (159) to grow and transforms

him into a courageous individual that decides to journey to Mordor alone to destroy the Ring in Tolkien's novel, The Fellowship of the Ring.