

Lady who you are.this
is proved through the



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Lady Oracle Lady Oracle by Margaret Atwood is a novel that tells the journey a woman takes from her teenage years until the present through her own thoughts and recollections. The protagonist, Joan Foster, is plagued by the memories and results of her mother's mental and emotional abuse. Joan does her best to change her interior and exterior appearance so people don't find out the secrets of her past, of which she is very ashamed. By the end of the novel Joan has gone through so much growth and change that she is finally happy with the person she is, and is done putting up false pretenses to be the person people expect her to be.

The main theme of the novel is to love and accept yourself for who you are. This is proved through the protagonist's thoughts, actions and spiritual growth throughout the novel. Most of the novel is told through Joan's own thoughts and memories. Because of the way the author chose to tell the story, we are able to learn a lot about the protagonist's troubled adolescence. Joan harbors a lot of resentment and anger towards her mother because of the serious emotional and mental abuse that she was put through.

As a teenager, Joan was morbidly obese which is what encouraged her mother's mistreatment and condescending attitude. A good example of this can be found when Joan's mother says to her (Pg. 87): " Is this all your good for? Sitting around and eating? Look at yourself, it's disgusting!" This shows us just how much her mother is focused on physical appearance. The way Joan feels about herself and her mother is clearly shown through her thoughts and reflections. Joan has little self-confidence or self esteem.(Pg. 124): " It seemed like everything my mother had accused me of and

predicted for me was coming true I was nothing more than a fat, insecure, uncultured and useless blob” This proves both the fact that Joan is insecure and also seriously influenced by her mother’s past actions.

A lot of times, actions speak louder than words. What Joan says is not necessarily a reflection of the way she feels about herself, although her actions definitely are, as most of them somewhat unintentionally deceptive. When she is a teenager, Joan starves herself until she reaches her ideal weight so as to gain the acceptance she so craves from her mother. Also, her mother is not very supportive of Joan’s quest for thinness, which makes Joan strive even harder. (Pg. 167)” I came home from work and having not eaten all day, decided to treat myself to a rice cake my mother, upon hearing the cupboard open, entered the kitchen and proceeded to tell me what a fat, worthless, lazy girl I was” This example shows us just how determined Joan was to become thin to please her mother. Also, when Joan and her husband are looking through some photos, she comes across one of herself and her Aunt Lou at the CNE.

The picture was taken before Joan’s dramatic weight loss, and so Arthur did not recognize Joan as the second person in the photo. When questioned about who the ‘ unknown’ person is, Joan replies(Pg. 196)” Oh, uh, that’s my Aunt Deirdre you never met her I didn’t like her as much as Lou, she was sort of a bitch.

“ Perhaps besides hiding her true identity from Arthur, by describing her imaginary aunt in this way, Joan shows just how she really felt about her old self. As Joan grows older, she begins to realize she is not worthless, and that

her mother was not always right. She involves herself in a number of relationships with people who love her for who and what she really is, thus building her self-esteem and a positive self-image. Living on her own and becoming more independent further helps Joan to grow and realize she is not dependent on the ideas and advice of other people.

Once Joan realized that her worth did not equal the company she kept or the image that she projected, she was free to love herself and be happy with all she had to offer. Also, another sign of her growth and maturity is that her preoccupation with her outward appearance is lost and forgotten. This is a major sign that Joan is changing, because her outward appearance was a major source of pain and heartache.(Pg.

331) “ Finally, I felt beautiful. I had shed the layers of fat that had confined me, but more importantly I had shed the emotional stress that I had carried for so long, and it felt so good to be free.” This really sums up the point that she is growing and maturing and on the path to self-acceptance. The novel Lady Oracle not only tells the tale of Joan Foster’s life and growth, but also teaches us a valuable life lesson. We are put on this earth not to hate and cry, but to love and live.

And this cannot be done until we are happy with who we are as individuals. Life is not worth living when you are unhappy with what you are. There are things that cannot be changed, things that can be changed, things to be remembered and things to be forgotten. The author of this novel tries to make the reader understand these things and accept them, and also tries to give an idea of what to remember, what to forget and what to change.

The main theme, love and accept yourself for what you are, is clearly conveyed through the protagonists thoughts, actions and growth throughout the novel.