

More than just a
disease essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Focuses on a young boy, Neil who has a skin condition called psoriasis. This disease makes Neil feel insecure and his mother's attitude towards him also does not help, she is almost ashamed of her sons condition and this makes Neil feel that he has to hide the fact that he has psoriasis. Neil feels the pressure when he goes to stay with his friend Michael and his family, and faces situations where people may find out about his condition. These experiences help mature and develop Neil as a character and help him face up to his psoriasis.

At the beginning of the story, the author establishes how dependent Neil is of his mother. When Neil is unpacking his case he hears his mother's voice. "Be tidy at all times, then no one can surprise you" We can see that Neil's mother has a huge influence on him and then the writer uses italics to show the reoccurring voice inside Neil's head. The writer also tries to put the point across that Neil sees the world through his mother's. Lastly, a contrast with Michael is developed, as he is swimming into the deep end, and the writer also makes this represent his life as he is fully stepped into it, is independent of him.

Therefore, the writer starts with a totally naive, easily influenced character of Neil and transforms him into a more matured, at ease with himself character. The story left hope for the character of Neil that hopefully he will one day fully step into life and not care about how people will judge him, upon his psoriasis. Start of the story -come face to face with the dominance of Neil's mother. ie," Be tidy at all times, then no one can surprise you. " " A little too ornate for my taste-vulgar almost"= shows that Neil's mother does not just exist in planning everything for him (although Neil had been reluctant

because called a as a mama's boy. , embedded herself in Neil's thoughts, even to the end of the story ie " Close your mouth when you're eating, please. Others have to live with you" and " It will teach you how to conduct yourself in good society" -brings about irritation and annoyance as Neil is really a " Mama's boy" -does not seem to have a mind of his own personality -lacked the moral courage to be his own personality -the dominance of his mother may stay with him all his life Process of the story -continuous excuses given by Neil to avoid swimming

le " Too cold," " I told you I can't swim", " No, it's too cold" shows his defences to cover up his disease, psoriasis as he is inferior about it = understanding as he is fearful of being found out and shunned by everyone -" If there is one thing he couldn't abide it was to be laughed at" = unfortunate to have the disease and desperately trying to hide it -when he gave his final excuse " I've got my period", whole situation changed = entertainment for readers, fairly amused and laughed behind his back le " There was a long silence" and " Neil heard her (Anna) make funny snorts in her nose".

Most ironic thing is that Neil does not know about it ie " There was something not right". -worst came when Michael confronted him. Michael expressed his anger and frustration on Neil, wishing he " might as well have asked a girl to come away on holiday" since Neil was no fun, calling Neil a " useless bloody Mama's boy", " flinging a handful of sand at Neil and ran down the water". Humiliated, " Neil's fist punched in the sand", " he was almost sure Anne had laughed". (p. 5) -Neil went back to the house - angry, helpless and lonely, having Michael angry with him " Anne and her father

had gone into the village on bicycles” and only Mrs Middleton was left, felt depressed and little about himself , “ Right now he felt he was a Mama’s boy” -Short stay was lengthened as he thought that “ he had been here a night, day and a morning, it would be a whole week before he got home”= pitiful and rather worrying

Got worse when his depression is escalated by his homesickness ie “ he just wanted to climb the stair and be with her behind the closed door of their house” = would be better if Neil had been more sociable and independent, but Neil was not very strong and thus felt despondent -At lunchtime, he chewing his roll with difficulty, probably trying to hold back his tears (p. 87)

Ending of the Story -When Neil returned the cat to Mrs Wan, able to pour out his troubles to her -Mrs Wan made him feel comfortable and good about himself ie “ Yes, I am said Neil and smiled and sipped his tonic” = he opened up and told Mrs Wan about his disease. = comforting for Neil has taken his first step to relieve himself of his problems. -When Mrs Wan warned him, “ watch that you don’t suffer more than just the disease” p. 0 = full

significance of Neil’s inferiority and behaviour comes to light -Neil’s embarrassment and shyness are understandable, yet hard to empathize with -happiest moment came when Neil took another big step in not letting his disease affect him , went swimming at night with Michael (shown by his action that he will be strong since he gained self-confidence.) = enable him stand up more for himself, develop his personality and be himself Lesson Neil has learned -trusting another person -learned the importance of friendship -learned about self-esteem -learned standing up for himself -away from holiday with the Middleton family experienced and learned much. -

managed to take the first step of overcoming his shyness, not to suffer from more than just the disease Setting Weird, bizarre -“ strange house” = suggest something unusual is going to happen -a sense of unfamiliar