

Speak response to literature

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ It is easier not to say anything. Shut your trap, button your lip; can it. All that crap you hear on TV about communication and expressing feelings is a lie. Nobody really wants to hear what you have to say. ” (Speak. Pg. 9, Paragraph 4.) Everyone at some point in their lives have felt that terrifying feeling of dejection, sorrow, anger, frustration and pain. Whether it is an action done by one or an action done by others, there is always the fear of being judged, to which people decide it is best if they don't talk their problems with others.

Melinda used to be a serene, sweet loving girl that loved to play sports and had a good relationship with her parents and friends, but suddenly, as she started her first high school year, she skips days of school, drop her grades and feels completely empty. The tones of fear and relief in Speak, by Laurie Halse Anderson reflect an inner growth presented by the main character when she overcomes the challenging and devastating condition of being sexually abused.

The foreshadowing presented several times in the story reinforces the mystery and the intrigue in the reader as it discovers and resolves the conflict and causes of it. In the beginning of the book, Melinda expresses what she has “ been dreading”; she is the “ Outcast” and the only person “ in the entire galaxy [she is] dying to tell what really happened” (Pg. 3, Paragraph 3; Pg. 4, Paragraph 2.) and whom she trusted all her life, Rachelle, Melinda's best friend until 8th grade, hates her to death.

For this reason the reader can infer that something inconveniently awful occurred since there is a very sudden shift in their friendship that caused not only their total isolation, but also, feelings of anger and resentment. The

author does this to emphasize a sense of interest, charm and curiosity as a hook to capture the reader's attention from the beginning to build up the plot in the story. Equally, later on in the book, there is a shocking event when Melinda gets trapped with Andy Evans in the janitor's office; she was about to "wet [her] pants" as Andy vividly "cracks his knuckles" and "stares at [her] without talking. (Pg. 193, Paragraph 3.) As Melinda gets cornered face to face with her biggest fear, the reader feels anxious wondering whether he is going to rape her again or is Melinda going to stand up for herself, be courageous and take revenge from that pervert selfish man. The author does this to built suspense in the reader as it gets to the ending resolution of the book's plot; this anxiety is built up by giving small clues that indicate certain actions. For this reason the reader is able to get the traumatic feelings of terror and affliction from a likely experience.

The symbolism behind the abandoned janitor's office in Speak, conveys the reader of the powerful conflict of man versus self. In a moment of trouble, Melinda discovers the inactive and decrepit janitor's office and she describes it as an "abandoned [place] - [with] no purpose, no name" and finds it appropriate for her. (Pg. 25, Paragraph 4.) The closet represents isolation from the rest of the school as well as it provides her with a place of self-reflection and tranquil safety.

The author does this to emphasize Melinda's affliction and her insecurity, hiding from people and not expressing her feelings to others. Consequently, the Secret Annex was a place for protection and avoiding any type of harm during the World War II in which Anne Frank and her family lived for a very long time. Furthermore, in the end of the story, Melinda is packing her stuff

from the closet when suddenly, “ some body slams into [her] chest and nocks [her] back into” it (Pg. 193, Paragraph 3.); she trapped with Andy Evans, the beast that hurt her once and came to do it once more.

As they were fighting, Melinda breaks the mirror hanging form the wall and “ wrap [her] fingers around a triangle of glass”; she holds it into Andy Evans neck “ hard enough to raise one drop of blood”. Immediately, “ his lips are paralyzed” and “ cannot speak”. Melinda added, “ I said no” (Pg. 195, Paragraph 2.). The closet reflects the place of self-transformation as she becomes courageous and gains control of the situation to fight for herself. The author does this to demonstrate the rewarding satisfaction of fighting over the problems and the huge change that involved courage and maturity.

Melinda is able to defeat her biggest fear by growing up, having confidence in herself just like an invincible hero. The first person point of view gives the reader a personal-hand experience of the struggle the protagonist experience as she overcomes her condition. After confronting the truth about what happened that night in a TV show, she feels extremely sick, devastated and confesses, “ My head is killing me, my throat is killing me, my stomach bubbles with toxic waste. (...) A coma would be nice. ...) Anything just to get rid of this, these thoughts, whispers in my mind. Did he rape my head too? ” (Pg. 165, Paragraph 2.) When the character starts reflecting about what happened, she feels fearful and uncertain. The author does this to help the reader understand a personal experience by getting inside her head, which is the only place where Melinda expresses without restrictions or concerns of being judged by her parents, friends and society. In the last pages of the story, Melinda makes a self-reflection in which she says, “ IT happened.

There is no avoiding it, no forgetting. No running away, or flying, or burying, or hiding. (...) It wasn't my fault. He hurt me. It wasn't my fault. And I'm not going to let it kill me. I can grow. " (Pg. 198, Paragraph 1.) As Melinda cogitates on the events that occurred that night, she has a drastic transformation from her mature beliefs compared to her callow, insecure ones. The author uses this point of view to emphasize the emotional and personal growth of the protagonist by becoming courageous and confronting her fear.

This perspective is intended so the reader can feel empathy and understanding as it becomes aware of the main character's personal opinions. Melinda's challenge reinforces life's most challenging task, growing up. Being in such a traumatic age of 14 to 16, it is very hard to deal with these types of situations that are ordinary in our society but are often excluded from conversations; however Melinda's actions should endure as being a raw model to other people that have experienced the same abuse.

Society should protect and look after everyone involved in any abuse, instead, of being so close-minded and judgmental. Furthermore, in order for these abuses to stop, people should gain courage to defend themselves by denouncing their acts; the society around them should not let these misdoings be forgotten with neglect. Bibliography Halse Anderson, Laurie. *Speak*. New York: Penguin Group, 2009. Print.