

To kill a mockingbird – courage



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

To Kill a Mockingbird is a book about courage. To what extent do you agree with this?

Courage is the quality of mind that enables one to face danger with confidence, resolution, and gain a firm control of oneself. Many of the characters in To Kill a Mockingbird showed courage in their own way.

Courage can come in many different forms: physical, mental, emotional and moral. Courage is not the only main theme displayed in To Kill a Mockingbird; prejudice and education are also very important themes exhibited throughout the progression of the novel. Through the eyes of Scout Finch, a bright, sensitive and intelligent little girl, these themes of the novel are explored in great depth.

The many forms of courage are shown throughout the novel by the characters of Jem, Boo (Arthur), Mrs. Dubose, and Atticus. Jem showed one of the greatest acts of physical courage as he protected his little sister Scout from the attack of Bob Ewell on the night of Halloween. Boo was also very courageous, he lived many years without human contact. That is a lonely thing to do, and it took mental courage for him to try and reach out to Jem and Scout when his father kept him imprisoned. Emotional courage is shown through Mrs. Dubose; she was a morphine addict and it took great courage for her to quit before her death to die beholden to nothing and nobody. Atticus is one of the most courageous characters in the novel. He showed moral courage when he defended a black man who was falsely charged with the rape of a white woman. He stood up for his beliefs despite of what the people of Maycomb thought of him as a Nigger lover and a disgrace to his family.

Prejudice is a strong opinion an individual may possess for or against someone without knowing all the facts about them. It can be passed down from generation to generation. In the novel To Kill a Mockingbird there are numerous accounts of racism and prejudice. The novel is set in the 1930's, a time when racism was very prevalent. Although bigotry and segregation were pointed in majority towards blacks, other accounts towards whites were also heard of, though not as commonly. Anyone that is out of the ordinary from society is treated differently because of their dissimilarities. The most obvious example in the novel would be Tom Robinson. An innocent, hard working, warm-hearted black man who went out of his way to help Mayella only to end up with seventeen bullet holes in his body. Tom was charged with rape and death penalty based on, and only on the colour of his skin. This shows the racial intolerance the white people in Maycomb have towards African-Americans.

During this time in history racism was acceptable, not only those who were black, but also those who affiliated with blacks, were also considered inferior. Atticus and Mr. Dolphus Raymond were both treated unfairly because of their non-segregation beliefs. Mr. Dolphus Raymond pretended to be a drunk so he didn't have to explain the fact that he was simply in love with a black woman. The alcohol, he said, gave the people an excuse to say he didn't know what he was doing. Atticus defended Tom Robinson because it was what he strongly believed in. For this he was mocked, according to Mrs. Dubose, Atticus was no better than the niggers and trash he works for!

Aunt Alexandra introduced Jem and Scout to social prejudice by not letting them play with Walter Cunningham. Its because the Cunninghams were

farmers that lived out of town, Aunt Alexandra regarded Walter to be socially inferior, and said she would only let him in the house on business. “ Because he’s trash, that’s why you can’t play with him. This is the prejudice based entirely on class in society.

Education is also a main theme in the novel. It can come in two forms, school and life education. School education is what is learnt through school. Whilst life education is what is learnt about life through personal experiences. At the beginning of the novel, Jem and Scout were young, playful, immature and totally unaware of the cruel society in which they live in. By the end of the novel they mature and learn to see the evil in society, that not everyone is what they seem at first and they wouldn't totally understand a person until you climb into their skin and walk around in it.

A good example of this would be Boo Radley. At first the children thought him as a malevolent phantom, but slowly they begin to realize that he is a gentle, sweet person who brought them gifts in the knothole of the tree. He is someone who considered them to be like his own children and the brave hero that saved them from the evil hands of Bob Ewell. They learnt that he is a mockingbird, who was harmless and generous, but others condemned him because of his differences.

Mrs. Dubose first seemed just like a grumpy old woman that did nothing but abuse people. Jem and Scout soon found out that she was a morphine addict that wanted to quit before her death, as she wanted to die free. They learnt that she had a sickness and she was an old woman with strong emotional courage and will power.

Mr. Dolphus Raymond seemed like a drunken man who was only friends with the Negroes. Later Jem and Scout find out that he only drunk Coca-Cola but pretended to be drunk all the time. He doesn't believe in the simple hell people give Negroes and he pretends to be drunk to give the other whites in Maycomb an excuse to accept his ways. They could not understand why anyone would prefer to be with the blacks instead of the whites, so pretending to be drunk, Mr. Dolphus Raymond gives them a reason to see why.

To Kill a Mockingbird is not only a book about courage. It has explored and displayed many other important themes. Through the exploration of these themes, To Kill a Mockingbird is a book that's full of morals and ethics. It educates the people of today to be courageous towards life, to perish racism, to always stand in other people's shoes and to learn from experiences in life.