

# [I’m not scared essay](https://assignbuster.com/im-not-scared-essay/)

I’m Not Scared “ I’m Not Scared” by Niccolo Ammaniti is a dramatic thriller in which the author portrays the contrasting themes of loyalty and betrayal with the use of symbolism and characterisation. “ I’m Not Scared” is a dramatic tale set in a small Italian hamlet written in first person narrative. The protagonist in this novel is Michele, a 9 year old boy who accidentally stumbles upon a young boy who is being held ransom. Throughout the novel Michele visits and as the story progresses Michele finds out that his ‘ Papa’ and all the adults in Acqua Traverse are holding the young boy ransom.

As Michele develops as a character we see the contrast of loyalty and betrayal. We are shown this particularly at the novels climax as Michele’s loyalty to the young boy is entwined with the betrayal of his father. The themes of loyalty and betrayal are effectively conveyed through the use of the ‘ matches’ as a symbolic object. Michele and his younger sister, Maria are arguing over who has to fetch the water and as there is no fair solution, Michele’s father comes up with the soldiers draw idea:- “ Do you know the soldier’s draw?… You take three matches,… Whoever draws the headless Match goes to get the water.

Pick one, come on” The use of the matches in this case show the reader that papa is trying to be fair and be a loyal and loving father to his children. He doesn’t want either of them feeling as if he favours one or the other. As mama is pestering Michele to do it, it can clearly be seen that the use of the matches symbolises fairness. Papa recounts the anecdote of the soldier’s using matches to make important decisions. Matches are also indicative of fire and fire suggests danger, fear and risk. However, towards the novel’s climax the matches are used in a more serious, surprising and sinister manner.

Michele overhears all of the adults talking downstairs about who is going to kill the young kidnapped boy, Fillipo and it is once again papa who comes up with the fairest solution:- “ Papa picked up a box of matches and showed them around…. Do you know the soldiers draw?… I shut the door. I knew that game. ” The purpose of the matches here in this scenario has drastically changed as what was used as a game which showed loyalty and fairness previously, dramatically regenerated into a grim matter of death. The reader feels shocked because Michele’s father has effectively betrayed his family including his son.

Ammaniti cleverly uses “ subbuteo” to indicate the contrasting theme of loyalty versus betrayal. Michele and his best friend, Salvatore are playing this game in Salvatore’s manor as it is commonly contested between the two friends. As it’s Salvatore’s game, he has the best teams and always wins. Michele does not have a team of his own and wishes to acquire one of Salvatore’s many teams. Salvatore is not fond of the idea but Michele persuades him with the exchange of the secret about the boy. Betrayal is brandished here as Michele betrays Fillipo by telling Salvatore about him.

Subbuteo is a football-related game. Football is clearly a team sport where trust and loyalty are required in order to succeed. This highlights the theme of loyalty but more importantly how Michelle has betrayed Fillipo. He isn’t using the morals of team spirit when he is out for his own game. However Michele’s loyalty to Salvatore is later forsaken as Salvatore tells the adults Michele’s secret in order to get to drive their car. To Salvatore the chance to drive a car symbolises maturity and adulthood. Betrayal is a very adult trait. There are not many children who possess the ability to betray others.

However these children are beyond their years of innocence and, at times, behave like the adults surrounding them. The characterisation of Michele further indicates the theme of betrayal. Michelle’s papa purchases Michele a new super bike and his mama is expectant of him to try the new bike out and love it. Instead, Michelle gloomily concludes:- “ Can I take it indoors? ” The bike symbolises disappointment as Michele discovers that it is a distraction from Fillipo. Michele’s lack of excitement about the bike show his realisation that his father has betrayed him and insulted his intelligence.

Michele’s mama and papa would like to think that Michele is just tired and will ride it later, but Michele knows that “ red dragon” is just a bribe, blinder to the adult world. Furthermore, this shows that Michele has matured and developed as a character as he remains loyal to Fillipo, even though his papa has betrayed him. Michele’s father:- “ Papa” is perfectly portrayed as a highlight of the contrasting themes of betrayal and loyalty. At the beginning of the novel, Ammaniti portrays Papa as the children’s favourable parent, as he is a bit of a pushover and that he always excites the children when home.

By creating a character that works away from home for weeks at a time Ammaniti allows great excitement in the children when Papa comes home. His return shows his loyalty to his family. However, the darker side of Papa’s character is clearly shown late in the novel:- “ Papa was the bogeyman. By day he was good but at night he was bad. ” Michele now feels afraid and disappointed in this quote, as Papa plotted to kill Fillipo even though his son begged and pleaded with him not to. By comparing papa to the bogeyman, the reader conjures up ideas of fear, anger and a lack of love.

Through the use of plot and the kidnapping of Fillipo Ammaniti has cleverly shown Papa’s sinister side. Kidnapping is a very serious offence but not only that, it is an offence on an innocent child, which makes Papa appear less loyal to his own children. However, it is not only Papa who breaks the promise. Michele follows in his Papa’s footsteps when he also breaks his promise:- “ I was breaking the oath” Although Michele betrays his father he remains loyal to Fillipo by “… breaking the oath” and sneaks out to save Fillipo.

Confident in his own ability to save his friend and outmanoeuvre his father, Michele goes to rescue Fillipo. In this scene, Michele shows outrageous courage and tremendous loyalty as he does whatever it takes to rescue Fillipo, however there is still one final act of betrayal to take place. The final act of betrayal is represented in Papa’s attempted assassination of Fillipo resulting in the accidental shooting of Michele instead. In conclusion Nicolo Ammaniti’s cleaver novel “ I’m Not Scared” is one which clearly demonstrates the contrasting themes of betrayal and loyalty through the use of symbolism and characterisation.