

# Fictional novels by john boyne essay sample

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



The Boy In The Striped Pyjamas, a fictional novel written by John Boyne in 2006, is about the life of a boy named Bruno during World War Two.

Similarly, The Book Thief, directed by Brian Percival in 2014, is about the life of a girl also during World War Two. In these two biography-like texts, the protagonists, Bruno and Liesel, both grow and change throughout their life. Liesel develops a close relationship with Max the fleeing Jew while Bruno becomes closer with Schmuel the Jew on the other side of the fence.

However, as the text progresses, Liesel starts to discover her own inner strength and becomes more exposed to the harsh realities of war as opposed to Bruno who remains; childlike and innocent up until his death. Relationship development causes a drastic change on Bruno and Liesel. Both protagonists from each texts develop strong relationships with other people. Liesel is able to develop a strong bond with her parents whilst Bruno develops an inseparable bond with Schmuel who was his " best friend for life. " (p. 213).

At the beginning of the film, Liesel is shy and reluctant to meet her new parents. Even though her foster father, Hans Hubermann, made a good impression, Liesel did not like her foster mother, Rosa Hubermann, because of how she treated her. However, as the film progresses, Liesel becomes closer and dependant on Rosa. As they become closer, Liesel sees her free-spirited side which is evident during the snowball fight in their basement. The strong bond between Liesel and Rosa is also seen when Liesel watches over Rosa while she sleeps as if she is mourning and grieving with her.

Bruno's relationship with Schmuel, is similar in the sense that they become very close. Bruno accidently finds Schmuel when he goes exploring and over

time, they become closer and closer. He makes sacrifices such as dirtying his clothes, risking a cold, and getting into trouble, in order to meet up with Schmel. Furthermore, in the last moments of his life, Bruno tells Schmel that he is his " best friend for life. " (p. 213). Bruno also held Shmuel's hand, knowing that " nothing in the world would have persuaded him to let it go. " (p. 130).

However, Liesel creates many more close relationships with the people around her than Bruno does. Bruno was only able to create one close relationship throughout the story while Liesel created many, a few being with both her parents, Rudy, and Max. Thus, the development of characters are reflected through their relationships, should it be with one or many other people. The display of bravery in both main characters illustrates their maturity. After Max leaves the Hubermanns, Liesel's longing for him to come back tricks her into thinking that she sees him in public.

She immediately runs towards him while repeatedly calling his name but soon realises that he wasn't really there. Her bravery is depicted by the fact that she is aware that she and her family could be imprisoned or killed by the Nazis for knowing a hidden Jew yet she does it anyway. Percival shows how selfless Liesel can be when it comes to losing a family member and the lengths she will go to in order to reunite with them. As the film progresses, Liesel grows into a courageous young lady who breaks rules for her family and friends even when faced with danger and persecution.

In contrast, Bruno does not become more fearless in the face of injustice. This is seen when Lieutenant Kotler presumes that Schmel stole chicken

from the fridge. When asked if he knew Schmuel, Bruno lies, saying he does not know who Schmuel is. It is obvious that Bruno reacted cowardly and selfishly by lying because he is afraid of being punished by Lieutenant Kotler for not only befriending a Jewish boy, but also for giving him food. Therefore, instead of being truthful and standing up for his friend he denies the fact that he knows him or that he's ' never seen him before in [his] life.' (p. 172).

To sum up, Liesel is a strong character whose expression of love is not restricted by the social expectations and dangers of Nazi Germany, while Bruno is unable to protest against authority for the sake of his Jewish friend. Both Liesel and Bruno are exposed to various aspects of the war but their level of understanding of the war itself differs drastically. Bruno lives next to a concentration camp, while Liesel attends propaganda gatherings (book burning) and witnesses violence against Jews.

Liesel acknowledges the danger her family is in by hiding Max in her basement because she is constantly being warned to tell " Nobody. Not a soul. " She knows that she comes from a communist background but also that Max is a Jew who is in mortal danger, and that she is forbidden to express her hatred for Hitler in fear of being persecuted. This is due to Liesel being older, and having parents and friends who openly discuss the dangers of war. Her parents raise her so that she is fully aware of what is happening around her so she can gain power in knowledge.

Meanwhile, Bruno remains oblivious of who the people on " other side of the fence" (p. 100) were, and the fact that it was a concentration camp. Bruno fails to develop an understanding and appreciation of the war because not

only do his parents shelter him from the truth, he also lives in an isolated area where he has no one to inform him about the war. He was unaware of the fact that he entered a gas chamber, believing that they were just “wait[ing] [t]here till [the rain] eases off” (p. 212).

Even in the moments before his death, he was oblivious to the importance of his father’s role as a Nazi, the dangers of interacting with his Jewish friend Schmuel, as well as the genocide committed by the Nazis, and most peculiarly, the existence of the war itself. Both protagonists live in the oppressive environments of World War Two, however, Liesel is able to comprehend not only the exhausting but also the horrors of Hitler’s dictatorship that surrounds her while Bruno does not.

In conclusion, we witness the growth and development of both protagonists from The book Thief and The Boy in Striped Pyjamas. Liesel creates a strong relationship with Rosa while Bruno and Schmuel become close as well. She also becomes more brave and courageous, allowing her to protect her family as opposed to Bruno who remains a coward unable to stand up for his friend. Lastly, their perception and understanding of the war is completely different even though they are both exposed to it.