

The transformation of the characters in year of wonders

Literature



Introduction

Geraldine Brook's novel 'Year of Wonders' highlights the extensive ways in which Transformation occurred to those who survived the plague in the small village of Eyam. As a result of the plague many of those whom survived all experienced dramatic changes. Many of these changes were highlighted in characters such as Anna Firth, Michael Mompellion and Elinor Mompellion. Anna was pushed to extreme lengths in which her character evolved into a much more sympathetic and caring person who loved to help those in dire need of support regardless of the danger of the situation. Michael Mompellion shows change due to the loss of his beloved wife Elinor as he loses his faith and his love for god. Elinor also experiences change as her trust and compassion grows for others. These all highlight that due to the terrors brought about by the plague there are those who change whether it be for good or bad.

Anna Firth

Anna Firth, the main protagonist in Year of wonders is one of the many whom are lucky to survive the plague. Anna is pushed to outrageous lengths because of melancholy, confidence and dread that she develops, which are ultimately the source that lead to her change. Anna's fear and grief cause selflessly her to help others who are in need and put their well-being before her own. Anna's caring nature also acted as a distraction do the devastation that she had encountered, and therefore did not need to mourn for those who she had lost. Unlike the ordinary house servant of the 17th century, Anna learns how to write and read providing her with the knowledge that

many others did not have. Throughout the novel Anna experiences the death and catastrophe brought about by the plague, “ it seemed as if the flesh inside of him was dying while he yet breathed, the putrefying meat pushing and bursting its way out of his failing body.” Although most whom had faced such terrors as Anna did throughout the novel, would isolate themselves as they feared the effects of the plague. However, Anna’s new defying warrior like demeanour allowed her to act courageously and selflessly when she was faced with the plague as she helped others, ultimately bettering herself as she learns that even little signs of hope can bring those who are in dire need of help happiness and Appreciation. Anna ultimately changes for the better as she is impacted by the plague.

Michael Mompellion

Michael Mompellion the towns rector is another individual who shows significant change as a result of the plague. Throughout the novel, Mompellion preaches about god and spreads his faith to the community, making him the main religious figure in the novel. However, due to the terrors brought about by the plague, in this case Elinor’s death. Mompellion breaks down questioning god ultimately losing faith and any love for god. Mompellion questions if the plague was truly “ a test of faith sent by god, or evil working of the devil in the world?” ultimately showing the resentment towards god that he develops. After the death of his wife, Mompellion falls into a melancholic state as he mourns for the loss of his wife. As his life continues, Mompellion is left lonely without the affection and companionship of a women, to which he begins an intimate relationship with Anna, as she had long been drawn to the preacher, and together with his partner gone,

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she could no longer resist. Due to the terrors that Mompellion had faced, ultimately resulted in a negative change and lead to the abandonment of his puritan beliefs and his beloved god.

Elinor

Elinor is another protagonist whom was lucky enough to survive the plague. However, her life is cut short as she is brutally murdered by Aphra the “gibbering, broken thing.” Elinor was murdered out of jealousy as Aphra believed that the Mompellion’s had stolen her late husband’s daughter Anna away from them. Elinor changes on many personal levels as she is faced with the plague. Like Anna Elinor develops a caring nature and therefore her “motherly concern” influence her to feel compassionate for those who are in dire need of support as they are either very ill as result of the plague or are struggling with the loss of a loved one. Elinor changes for the better as she shows sympathy for those who are not at their best however, this ultimately leads to her demise as there are those overwhelmed with jealousy whom take her life.

Conclusion

In conclusion, throughout the novel Year of wonders it is evident that the characters within the novel who manage to survive the plague all show signs of drastic change. Anna, Michael and Elinor are all prime examples of this as they have all survived the terrors and clearly show signs of transformation.