

A separate peace



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Throughout the course of the novel *A Separate Peace*, by John Knowles, there is one character that shows superior maturity and individuality over the other students at Devon School; that character is Finny. He is the best friend and roommate of the main character, Gene. Finny has characteristics that show his individuality and maturity. These characteristics are courage, modesty, forgiveness, appreciation, and peacefulness. The first occurrence resides in the first scene of the novel. Some of the boys at Devon are huddled around a tree overhanging the river.

The older students jump off of this tree as training for war. Finny shows his individuality and fearlessness by jumping off the tree saying, “ Here’s my contribution to the war effort! ” (16). This event is used to show the reader Finny’s courage when all of the other boys were fearful. Finny shows an immense amount of modesty in this particular scene. One day he is swimming with Gene, the main character and his best friend, and decides to try to break one of the school’s swimming records.

He says, “ I have a feeling I can swim faster than A. Hopkins Parker” (43). He breaks the record on the first try but makes Gene promise not to tell anyone. This incident demonstrates Finny’s modesty because he did not go around bragging about breaking the school record; he just kept to himself knowing that he broke it, and that was enough for him. This maturity continues onto this scene where Gene and Finny are doing a double jump out of the tree.

Gene has a sudden impulse to jostle the limb and send Finny falling to the bank, shattering his leg. Gene says, “ It was the first clumsy physical action I had ever seen him make” (60). Nevertheless, Finny never accuses Gene of

purposely making him fall; instead, he does not believe Gene when he says, “ I deliberately jounced the limb so you would fall off” (70). The instance when Finny shows the most maturity is in this scene where he expresses appreciation for Gene as a friend