

"looking for alibrandi":  
changes in the  
character of  
josephine essay  
sample



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## **“ Looking For Alibrandi”: Changes in the Character of Josephine Essay Sample**

In the novel “ Looking for Alibrandi” by Melina Marchetta, the main character Josie undergoes numerous changes by the end of the text. Throughout the year that the book covers, many events occur that change Josie’s personality and attitude towards the world. She matures from being a very stubborn and hot-tempered girl to a more responsible and experienced young woman.

When we meet seventeen-year-old Josephine Alibrandi, at the beginning of the text, our first impression of her is that she is very rebellious and cheeky. We know that she is rebellious because of the fact that she is reading a magazine during class. We also see this in the way that she speaks to and about Sister Gregory. “ Religion class, first period Monday morning, is the place to try to pull the wool over the eyes of Sister Gregory.” When she is caught with the magazine, she is able to skilfully talk her way out of trouble. “ I brought this magazine in today, Sister, to speak to everyone about how insulted we are as teenagers and how important it is that we think for ourselves...”. This reply also shows that she is intelligent, quick thinking and articulate. The reader is impressed and amused by Josephine’s antics, but feels that she was slightly disrespectful.

As we read further through the novel we get to see some of Josephine’s less attractive qualities. We learn that she tends to be very melodramatic. An example of this is “ It’s cancer isn’t it.... I threw myself down on the bed”. The reader is often frustrated with Josephine’s melodrama, as are her friends. Lee tells her “ Jacob is the only person I know who can put up with

your melodrama." Some other unattractive qualities we witness are Josephine's impulsiveness, her quick temper and her occasionally violent tendencies. She is constantly getting into arguments with Jacob and loses her temper quickly and easily. This can lead to her making rash and impulsive decisions. An example of this is after Carly Bishop calls Josephine a bastard, Josie hits Carly in the face with a book. Josephine acts without thinking of the possible consequences of her actions. While the reader does not like Carly at all, we think that Josie's actions are childish and unwise.

Josephine can be selfish and self-centred; she considers her problems to be much larger and more difficult than other people's problems. She is always thinking about herself. When she is with John he tells her that she has "no pressures in life". The first time we see her truly consider her problems in comparison to those of others is after John's suicide. Her selfishness means she can be insensitive and thoughtless. An example of this is when she rudely asks Jacob "Didn't your mother teach you any manners?"

Josephine is a very determined person which the reader admires a lot. During her final exams she works and studies very hard. She is ambitious and driven which we can tell from the way she speaks about wanting to get into university and become a lawyer.

As the novel progresses we witness many important events happening in Josephine's life. These events have a large impact on Josie and by the end of the novel she is quite different to the girl she was at the beginning. Josie often expresses her extreme dislike of her Italian heritage and family. "I'll leave and never have anything to do with my family again.... They stifle me

with ridiculous rules and regulations they have brought with them from Europe". However, at the end of the novel she states " I think my family has come a long way." She sounds quite proud of her family now. "...and say that I'm an Australian with Italian blood flowing rapidly through my veins. I'll say that with pride because it's pride that I feel." Josie comes to accept that her culture is a huge part of who she is and that it is not as bad as she makes out. She acknowledges that Italian women have come a long way since her Nonna immigrated to Australia and is proud of that. Meeting Michael Andretti is part of her changing attitude towards being Italian. She sees him as a big hotshot lawyer, which shows her that being Italian doesn't necessarily have to disadvantage her future.

Josie's self-centredness is also put into perspective towards the end of the novel. John Barton's suicide really upsets Josie but it also causes her to think about her own life. She realises that for all of her complaining she actually has a very nice life. She considers her problems compared to Jacob's (losing his mother) and looks at the way he deals with them. She can't imagine having to deal with what he has. " I would die if my mother died." Jacob and Sister Louise contribute to Josie's change in attitude too. They are the characters who are not afraid to point out Josie's flaws and bring her back down to earth. The reader is pleased that Josie is gaining some perspective. We feel that she sometimes blows things out of proportion.

As Josie matures, she becomes much more responsible. As I said above, she is a rebellious and cheeky girl who is good at talking herself out of trouble. It is talent we see throughout the book. One instance, however, when Josie does not attempt to wriggle her way out of consequences is when she is <https://assignbuster.com/looking-for-alibrandi-changes-in-the-character-of-josephine-essay-sample/>

pulled up for wagging. We watch Josie take responsibility for her actions and admit that she has made a mistake. The reader is impressed with Josie's adult actions and feels that she has done some real growing up.

In " Looking For Alibrand" i Josie undergoes many changes in her personality and attitude towards the world around her. This is a coming of age story to which the development of the main character Josie is essential. Over the year of her life that the novel is about, many aspects of her personality are altered. We watch as she transforms into a strong, responsible and mature young woman.