

# Courage in unwanted circumstances

Business



“ That branded me as a mutineer,” Navy Sailor, Joe Small later reflected on his experience at Port Chicago Naval Base, located in California.

The occurrences that labeled him a mutineer, involved 49 other Navy sailors who also had the bravery to speak up for their beliefs. These 50 sailors, in the nonfiction text, *The Port Chicago 50* by Steve Sheinkin, portrayed the trait of “ Courage Under Fire” by refusing to load ammunition. Therefore, the theme of “ Courage Under Fire” is displaying heroic traits even in undesirable circumstances. This theme can also be recognized by Jacqueline Woodson in her autobiographical memoir, *brown girl dreaming*. “ Courage Under Fire” is also portrayed by the actions of the 50 accused sailors and Alex in the nonfiction book *The Port Chicago 50* by Steve Sheinkin.

Furthermore, there is no doubt that Jacqueline Woodson endured difficulties but still remained a valiant character, according to her autobiographical memoir *brown girl dreaming*. In *brown girl dreaming*, Woodson writes about her most memorable experiences and how she overcame them, with courage. This can be seen in the chapter entitled “ the stories i tell” when Woodson writes about “ her” summer, “ In my writing, there is a stepfather now who lives in California but meets us wherever we go. There is a church, not a Kingdom Hall. There is a blue car, a new dress, loose unribboned hair,” (Woodson 291). This quote fully proves that Woodson displays fearless traits in unpleasant circumstances by, exemplifying the fact that Woodson covers up her “ shameful” summer and writes about a wondrous experience.

Woodson’s brave actions are also evident when she writes about her uncle being freed from imprisonment, “ When my uncle gets out of jail.... even

though we know we Witnesses are the chosen ones, we listen to the stories he tells about a man named Muhammad and a holy place called Mecca and the strength of all Black people,” (Woodson 300). The period following Woodson’s uncle’s release introduced great changes in the stories Jackie listens and remembers. Although Woodson knows her uncle’s beliefs are wrong, she still listens, sympathizes, and loves her uncle. Thus, portraying traits that are comparable to that of one who illustrates characteristics of, “Courage Under Fire”. Undoubtedly, the theme of exemplifying fearless traits in unpleasing situations is evident in the nonfiction text *The Port Chicago 50* by Steve Sheinkin.

One example of the heroic actions depicted in the text is the bravery of the 50 accused mutineers, including Joe Small. Whilst assessing on the facts of the aftermath of the Port Chicago blast, Sheinkin writes, “These six had initially agreed to return to work, but had wavered when it came time to load. All fifty prisoners were then taken by bus to Camp Shoemaker and locked in the brig,”(Sheinkin 93). This snippet of textual affirmation confirms the men were fearful of returning back to loading ammunition due to the exceptionally small chance of another explosion occurring. One sailor, Jack Crittenden, announced his distaste for the situation to lieutenant James Tobin, “When you say you’re afraid, that means you refuse?” “No, when I say I’m afraid, that means I’m afraid.

” “That means you’re refusing an order.” “No, that means I’m afraid,” (Sheinkin 84). Soon after he stated his beliefs, he was facing a court case that could result in the death of him and his fellow accused mutineers. The magnitude of the consequences related to the U. S. being in a time of war. <https://assignbuster.com/courage-in-unwanted-circumstances/>

Generally speaking, the 50 accused men spoke up about their concerns and beliefs, during the middlemost point of the second most lethal war in world history. In the nonfiction text *The Port Chicago 50*, there is a secondary character who portrays courageous traits, in addition to the 50 accused mutineers. “ Small Goes To Sea” was the chapter this character was first introduced in, and illustrated by Sheinkin, “ Gigantic redhead from Alabama named Alex,” (Sheinkin 156). Alex was a racist, and heavily believed in white supremacy and segregation in the armed forces. Alex expressed his distaste towards African Americans while speaking to Joe Small, “ By gawd, this is the first time I ever ate with a n\*\*\*\*\*!” (Sheinkin 156). Although he seems like a racist, Alex undermined a life changing moment that altered his views on African Americans, “ Small reached out his hand.

Alex took it. And from that moment on, they were best friends,” (Sheinkin 157). This clearly exemplifies that Alex displayed heroic traits, by befriending a type of person he previously despised, despite the post-war devastation in the army. In final consideration, the characters in the books *Brown Girl Dreaming*, by Jacqueline Woodson, and *The Port Chicago 50*, by Steve Sheinkin, present traits that represents the theme of “ Courage Under Fire”. These qualities are represented through the thoughts of Jacqueline Woodson, in her autobiographical memoir, when she listen and loved her uncle even though she knew his beliefs were “ wrong.

” The actions of Joe Small and the 49 other accused mutineers and Alex, in the nonfiction text *The Port Chicago 50* by Steve Sheinkin also illustrate heroic qualities. The qualities are represented by the 50 accused men refusing to return to work especially during the most lethal war in history, <https://assignbuster.com/courage-in-unwanted-circumstances/>

and Alex befriend a person of a group that was “inferior”. “Courage Under Fire” is this willingness to stand up for one’s beliefs in unwanted situations, much like the 50 accused sailors, and Alex in *The Port Chicago 50*, and Jacqueline Woodson in *Brown Girl Dreaming*. Traits that can be considered courageous under undesirable circumstances, are still recognized today; especially with the bravery of the armed forces, for they are willing to die for their beloved country, even if the situations are deemed “dishonorable”.