

### Refined Inspiration

From the beginning of one's inception, fresh from a mother's womb, adversity disseminates through one's innocent interior, paralyzing a soul in a capsule of vanity. As one grows up, he or she passes through events or tests that cultivate experiences that will eventually inseminate one's essence, thus creating wisdom which breaks vanity's hold. A book that reveals this phenomenon is The Red Badge of Courage, written by Stephen Crane, which depicts youth encouraged by arrogance and egotism versus real morality.

In the fictional story about the Civil War, vanity is conquered by maturity; in life, we are constantly indulging and epitomizing this phenomenon. As youth adventure into life's surroundings, they may become entranced with society's narcissistic traps; their naive guards can be let down, enabling them to fall into the hands of the conceited "entrappers" who ensnare them in a bubble of arrogance. This foe's enemy is ripeness; as grapes age in a barrel to make fine wine, the adolescents will ultimately age and become sound beings. The Red Badge of Courage illustrates that, to become a better human being, one's character must experience constant metamorphosis to reach maturity's glory. An example of this is when an unsightly caterpillar vaingloriously devours other life to nourish and nurture itself, so that it can transform itself into a vision of hope for all of mankind. As one submerges the mind into Crane's story, the intellect starts to harvest a multitude of experiences which seep into one's brain methodically, modifying one's thinking to store this newly acquired wisdom for later use. The author demonstrates this contrast between youth and maturity to inspire and show the perceptive reader life's journey and instill a myopic focus towards the inherent in real morality.

Crane's narrative creates an aura that can impel a feckless individual to look at life's outlook differently. For example, before reading The Red Badge of Courage, I lacked the thought necessary to succeed because I continually forced myself to perform in a theater that puts me at war with my identity, never allowing my accomplishments to somehow snuff my vain views concerning life. I could easily relate to Henry, the main character in Crane's novel, because he too struggled with spineless egotisms which choked out his wisdom and character. However, as I read this work of art, a universe of prudence was jammed into my mind by a force that resembles an angry river obliterating vanity's hold, liberating the wisdom deep within my soul. Reading The Red Badge of Courage refined my thinking, allowing the years of experience that were planted when I was young to surface and grow, giving me shade.

As Crane's main character, Henry, gained experience from the battles he fought in the Civil War, his faith in himself had secretly blossomed; there was a little flower of confidence growing within him, changing him into a wise individual. By reading The Red Badge of Courage, I too have gone through a similar transformation of confidence which has refined my thinking. Now, I acquire wisdom by listening in silence and freely storing it in my memory with no vain barriers preventing it from resurfacing when the need is there to acquire it, practice it, and teach it to others. My newfound ability to make sensible decisions and judgments based on personal knowledge and experience is a medicine that fortifies my maturity, especially when suffering's cry appears from mankind's woes. Crane's narrative revived me; it strengthened my sixth sense and intuition. It produced acumen that solidified my maturity, protecting my soul and preventing my existence from being ruffled when life's futile dragons confront me. It

instilled concurrent vicissitudes in my way of life which propelled me to face tasks head on, as well as subdue and conquer obstacles in my path, so that I can achieve my future goals and ambitions. This valuable experience created knowledge which, in turn, created an assurance in me to perform selflessly.

In a final analysis, Crane's story has created a significant change in my way of life, but the continued enhancement of my education was the catalyst to this mystical motivation. Edification is the key that unlocks aspirations and instills inspiration. As our thirty-fifth president, John F. Kennedy, states,

Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation. Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource.

Education's ultimate goal is to create knowledge that will spur action or a refined inspiration. In my case, reading the Red Badge of Courage, which was just an assignment, sparked a vicarious experience which unlocked my metamorphosis from a vain individual to a wiser, more selfless man.