Title: DON’T CRY FOR BILLIE

Author: Beverley Dunlop

Text Type: Short Story

Date Completed: 30 May 2013

This story was about a girl named Billie that was a tomboy and was disliked by all the children at school. She got into a lot of fights with the boys and aspired to be a farmer like her father. One day Billie didn’t come to school and rumour spread that her father had died, later Billie came back to school and was given a card that was signed by all the girls and Billie’s teacher. Billie didn’t accept this card and seemed normal, later on in class Billie broke down and started to cry, all of her emotions had been building up inside her.

When I read this text I felt really sad for Billie, I felt this because of the way she was treated by her peers. It’s not fair that because she was different compared to the other girls, that she was bullied and encouraged to fight with the boys. All of this just so those girls would feel good about themselves and would feel like real girls. I felt especially sad when Billie couldn’t hold her emotions in anymore and burst out crying, this made the girls feel sorry for her and realise that she did have emotions. They then seemed all down, but they had caused her depression and their sincerity was a little too late. This reminds me of the society we live in, if someone is different or not what people might consider as ‘normal’ they are sometimes treated with no respect and are often left out. These people know they are different and are maybe already sad by it, but there’s always someone that has to come along and make them feel worse.

An interesting idea that this text made me think about was, not to judge a book by its cover. We see this in the text when everyone at Billie’s school thought that she was real tough and had no feelings and emotions. They thought that they could just say awful things to Billie and she would take the comments and not be affected by them, but eventually the comments got the better of her and she burst out crying. These girls needed to get to know Billie for the person she was and realise the reasons she held in all her emotions. They needed to realise that there was more to Billie than her physical appearance, that inside she was a totally different person, but their selfish natures took over. This show us that even the toughest looking people are hurt by awful things that are said to them and eventually all of that emotion building up on the inside, is going to burst out. I think it is so important to be able to get to know someone really well, you need to be able to connect and understand what affects them emotionally.

Another interesting idea that this text made me think about was how people that are different are sometimes left out of society. The author seemed to be suggesting that when children in particular, find something different, unusual or not what they see as normal, about one of their peers they put them down and exclude them. We see this in the text when Billie is continuously discriminated against, for being so unfeminine and unlady like. They called her ‘ smelly Billie’ and seemed very pleased when they thought Billie was going to get the strap These girls had no respect for Billie and never once stopped to think what they were doing was selfish and really hurtful towards her. Even though these girls thought that Billie was different, maybe it was because she wanted to have some friends, so thought she had to act differently to be recognised. This is reflected in the society we live in, we seem to cater for the so called normal people and don’t always have an alternative pathway for people with disabilities as such. For example people in wheelchairs find it difficult to use stairs and manoeuvre themselves, we do not always supply these people with an alternative pathway, therefore excluding them. People that are different sometimes find it hard to befriend others and find where they belong. All it takes is for one person to become friends with this person and it would change his/her life. This is the same for society, all it will take is for one person to stand up for those that are different and make sure they are promised a life with the same privileges as everyone else.

Overall this text has many main ideas and a lot of meaning behind it. It shows that everyone has feelings and criticism and discrimination have a serious effect on one’s emotional wellbeing. Billie has taught me to only accept apologies and sympathy if they are really sincere. The author has achieved a great text with a deep connection with society.

By Zac Borrie 815 Words

Life of Pi - Film

Title: Life of Pi

Author: Yann Martel

Director: Ang Lee

Text Type: Film

Date: 9/6/2013

Life of Pi is about an Indian boy called Pi Patel, him and his family own a zoo and find themselves one day moving to Canada taking all the animals with them. After four days at sea the ship sinks during the night killing everyone on board except Pi, he manages to get himself into a small boat. His journey them begins as he sails his way across the Pacific Ocean not alone though as he later finds out he is travelling with a Bengal Tiger named Richard Parker. This is an inspirational story of courage, co-operation and sheer determination.

When I watched this film, I felt really inspired and proud of the way Pi approached this journey. I felt this because of what Pi had been through prior to ending up on a small boat stranded in the middle of the Pacific Ocean with a tiger. When they left for Canada Pi had to say good bye to his girlfriend, he then had to abandon his family to save his own life and watch their ship sink to the depths of the Ocean. I felt that any other normal human being would just give up all hope of surviving let alone trying to keep Richard Parker alive so that you wouldn’t get eaten. I know that I would put this in the too hard basket and probably run out of supplies before anyone found me. Not Pi though he shows that determination is such a great trait to have and will pay off in the long term. I think that this reflects on the wider society we live in. Many of us give up too easily when things get tough and there seems like there is no light at the end of the tunnel. I think that you have to believe that you can accomplish something and be in the right frame of mind before you can really achieve it.

An interesting idea that this film made me think about was not to judge a book by its cover. The author seemed to be suggesting that things often seem less harmful than they really are. We see this in the text when Pi first meets Richard Parker, he holds out his hand to feed him and his father stops him just in time. The father give his sons a lesson by tying a goat to the bars of Richard Parkers cage and letting the tiger attack it, showing them what the tiger would have done to Pi’s arm. We also see this in the text when Pi finds himself on an island that is tranquil and has many resources during the day but takes all these privileges away at night and is very deadly. This shows us that Pi’s father’s lesson was very valuable to him and without it he wouldn’t have survived. I think that not to judge a book by its cover is a very valuable life lesson. I think that you need to be able to get to know someone really well which is something that our society is getting worse at. The number of people that get divorced now days is unbelievable and is because people think they know their partners really well but they sometimes don’t. This is really sad because it is really confusing and complicated for the children of the family to think that their mother and father don’t love each other anymore.

Overall this film was a very intriguing story about a young teenager’s struggles sailing across the Pacific Ocean with a tiger. The director has achieved a great film that is told through flashbacks and adds that extra element to the film. I really admire the way Pi handled the situations he was in and the way he survived at sea over a long period of time. He has taught me that determination and perseverance will get you places, to never give up because there is always light at the end of the tunnel.

Zac Borrie 664 Words

Name: Edward Scissorhands

Director: Tim Burton

Text Type: Film

Date: 22:06:2013

In a castle high on top of a hill lives an inventor's greatest creation - Edward, a near-complete person. The creator died before he could finish Edward's hands; instead, Edward is left with metal scissors for hands. Since then, Edward has lived alone, until an Avon specialist called Peg discovers Edward and welcomes him into her home. At first, everyone welcomes Edward into the community, but soon things begin to take a change for the worse as he is shunned out of town.

When I read this text, I felt sad for Edward Scissor-hands. I felt this because Edward is manipulated by the suburban society and treated as an outcast because he is different, everyone was judging Edward for his looks, however on the inside he very gentle and humble. For example, in the film Edward gets tricked into a “robbery” and this misunderstanding turns the town against him. If Edward were just another neighbour, this misunderstanding would have been forgivable. However, since Edward is different and mistaken as harmful he is shunned out of the town after trying to save Kim’s little brother off the street. I believe that this very similar to today’s society, where because of conformity people feel that they need to look and behave the same to be accepted in a community. So if some-one like Edward who is different is in a community, they will be treated differently and often not respected or discriminated against. Therefore, if an outcast does something that is not accepted than they will be immediately shunned because they are already different.

An interesting idea that this text made me think about was that you should not judge a book by its cover (appearances vs. reality). The director, Tim Burton seemed to be suggesting that Edward was a unique character with his fascinating personality. He wanted to show the audience how this person may look like a monster but on the inside he is really someone special. We see this in the text when Edward creates beautiful hairstyles and sculptures from ice and bushes using his scissor-hands, the biggest object that stops him from being considered ‘normal’ by the suburban community. This shows us that a physical appearance has no effect on how some-one can feel emotionally on the inside. For example Jim always made Edward feel less of a person than he is, and pointed out that he would never be able to hold Kim’s hand without hurting her. He needs to realize that there is more to Edward than his appearance and he actually has feeling, especially for Kim who he loves (an emotion shown by Edward despite his appearance). I think this is bad because it is very important to be able to accept everyone into a society no matter what their differences. In a society where there are differences there is a diverse society and a diverse society is one that is understanding and accepting. A good example of this in the film is Tim Burton’s perception on suburbia, something that he describes as a place with a lockstep mentality and conformity and a place like this does not have an accepting approach. This largely reflects the majority of our society today, where discrimination and exclusion take part because we cannot accept the ‘appearances’ or differences people may portray.

Overall, this text has a lot of deep underlying themes and principles that Tim Burton has presented exceptionally throughout the film. Discrimination and exclusion had a serious effect on individuals that should not be tolerated. Edward and the suburb community have taught me to accept people for their differences and that their appearances may not represent their emotions.

**Words: 611**

**Colby Putnam**