

Sterling Rowe

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Red Badge of Courage Rough Draft

The Red Badge of Courage is a short novel written by Stephan Crane that explores maturity and awareness through the graphic experiences of a young boy in the Civil War. Through this story, the boy learns what it means to be at war and how gruesome bloody it can be on the front lines. These experiences collectively shape him into being more mature.

Throughout the events of the book, Henry is constantly exposed to real warfare and death. He sees what really goes on out in the battlefield rather than what he expects to see from his knowledge of old heroes and war stories like the Trojan War. Through these harsh experiences, Henry is forced to mature from a boy into a man.

What forces Henry to mature on his journey? When he first experienced battle against other men, he couldn't fathom fighting back at all and ended up deserting at the sight of the battle to hide until the shooting came to pass. Once he finally mustered his courage to return, he found fields and woodland filled with corpses and even watched his friend die in front of him. This experience was traumatizing for him but it made him see what happened when cowards like him couldn't fight back. He felt great shame and was considering not returning to their camp until he was guided back by a soldier who was also on the verge of death.

During Henry's time in recovery at the regiment camp, he grows closer to his regiment and gains a better understanding of their situation. At this point, he's already complaining and

blaming people a lot less than he was at the beginning. When the fighting flared up again, Henry mustered his courage to contribute to their defense and helped keep up troop morale by being a flag bearer. Once the fighting ended, he possessed a greater appreciation for his generals. At the beginning of the book, he would complain and blame them for not knowing what to do to set up their victory. Only through his punishing time on the battlefield does he learn to understand how hard it is to control what goes on in a fight. He sheds the shell of an ignorant boy and learns the patience and understanding of what it takes to be a man.