

Name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

SCORE/GRADE:

CONFLICT: *The Bronze Bow*

In a single page, evaluate the thematic significance of this story's CONFLICT – that is, explain how the author uses this structural element to emphasize the story's main themes. As always, refer to the events of the story in your answer. For page-length answers, attach a separate sheet if necessary.

This story is about Daniel trying to overcome Roman oppression in his own life and regain peace. Above all things, Daniel wishes to see the Romans expelled from Israel and a new kingdom established in its place. Whereas his desires are initially shrouded in the sins of revenge, hatred, and bitterness, Jesus sees in them the seeds of a new kingdom. Daniel vows “to live and die for God’s Victory!” (p.226). Jesus responds, “That is not a vow of hate...Go in peace, my son. You are not far from the kingdom” (p. 226). Daniel’s desire for a new kingdom is right and good. Yet it is not the oppressive presence of the Romans that keep him from it. Rather, it is his bitterness of spirit. Unable to forsake this, Daniel remains in bondage, isolated from others just as his sister is, a prisoner in his own stony heart. Yet the presence of Jesus and His silent forgiveness softens Daniel’s heart and delivers him (p. 248, 252).

The handicaps that Daniel must overcome are internal, not unlike our own. His greatest stumbling block is his own sinful nature. Although various conflicts develop circumstantially throughout the story (including the capture of Joel, which necessitates a daring rescue), they only serve to heighten or intensify Daniel’s inner conflict. As Daniel comes to realize his own bondage to bitterness and the isolation it causes, he despairs. Unable to turn from his bitterness, he abandons himself to the darkness, even as his sister Leah has done. “They were both alike, Daniel thought, turning his back on the blossoming roadway. They could not learn to hope again” (p. 246). Although his objectives don’t change, he sees himself and the snare in which he is trapped for the first time. The presence of Jesus, undeserved and unexpected, delivers him where he could not deliver himself. With this deliverance comes new freedom, perspective, and joy.

This conflict represents several struggles. First, Daniel's struggle with the Romans, and more specifically with the Roman centurion, Marcus, represents a Man vs. Man or Man vs. Society struggle.

However, a Man vs. God struggle is also present as Daniel wrestles with the new ideas presented by Jesus, the Son of God and the second person of the Trinity.

Perhaps the most acute struggle Daniel experiences is the inner struggle above referenced, or Man vs. Self.

Each of these conflicts serves the overarching theme of the story: While bitterness feels stronger than forgiveness, it can only destroy, not redeem. Love appears weak to a vengeful heart but eventually proves to be the ultimate saving force.