Heroism In To Kill A Mockingbird

A hero is someone who stays strong even when facing the most difficult problems. They are recognized and admired for their courage, outstanding achievements, and noble qualities. Most importantly, they persevere when they're facing a conflict. In the novel To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee displays the theme of heroism through several characters. These characters show both physical and moral courage when facing difficulties. Harper Lee shows courage and dignity through the characters of Boo Radley, Mrs. Dubose, and Atticus Finch.

To begin with, Boo Radley is a hero because of his efforts to keep Jem and Scout safe. Throughout the novel, it is apparent that Boo Radley has been keeping watch on the children, making sure they are safe. This is especially evident when Jem finds his pants neatly folded and hanging over the fence of the Radley property, and when Boo gives Scout a blanket during the night of Miss Maudie's house fire. Boo Radley truly becomes a hero when he saves Jem and Scout from being killed by Bob Ewell. One day, as Jem and Scout are walking home from the Halloween pageant, Bob Ewell attempts to murder the children. However, Boo Radley comes to rescue the children and in doing so, he kills Bob Ewell. Scout describes the incident as, "…his arms were like steel. He slowly squeezed the breath out of me. I could not breathe. Suddenly, he was jerked backward and flung to the ground" (Lee 262). Through Scout's description, one can assume Boo Radley kills Bob Ewell as Jem does not have the physical strength to lift Bob Ewell, and no one else is present at the scene. Boo Radley displays a great deal of courage and bravery through his actions. He takes on a strong, knife-wielding man, and puts his own life on the line to save Jem and Scout. He even risks his privacy, when he can just stay at home. Boo Radley is heroic because he risks his own life to save Jem and Scout.

Another hero present in the novel is Mrs. Dubose. Mrs. Dubose is a hero because she overcomes her morphine addiction. When Mrs. Dubose makes rude and disrespectful comments against Atticus, Jem becomes angry and destroys Mrs. Dubose's flowers. As a punishment, Jem has to read to Mrs. Dubose every afternoon for a month. The real reason Mrs. Dubose wants Jem to read to her is to die free of her morphine addiction. The reading is just a distraction for her. Mrs. Dubose has been living alone and in sickness for many years of her life. Her goal is to overcome her addiction before she dies. Mrs. Dubose displays heroism by being courageous and persevering through struggles. After Mrs. Dubose dies, Atticus reveals to Jem about her addiction, "Mrs. Dubose won, all ninety-eight pounds of her. According to her views, she died beholden to nothing and nobody. She was the bravest person I ever knew" (Lee 112). Mrs. Dubose's heroic act teaches Jem and Scout about courage. She decides to do something about her problem and does not let any excuses get in the way. This is a difficult decision to make, as she could easily take the easy way out and die with the drugs in her system. However, it is courageous of her to identify and admit she has a problem, and decide to act on it. She is a strong, resilient woman who dies as a hero and free from her morphine addiction.

Finally, Atticus Finch is a hero because he accepts the Tom Robinson case and tries his best to prove Tom innocent. Throughout the whole novel, Atticus always tries to do the right thing. Atticus displays heroism by courageously facing challenges and maintaining his integrity. One incident when Atticus demonstrates courage is outside the Maycomb jailhouse when Atticus prevents the mob from lynching Tom Robinson. Atticus displays courage and bravely

challenges the mob. This shows Atticus is heroic as he is willing to risk his own life in order to protect Tom Robinson. Even though Atticus knows his life is in danger, he still defends Tom Robinson because it is the right thing to do. Atticus is also a role model to his children, constantly teaching them life lessons. In one instance, Atticus explains to Scout what real courage is, “I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It’s when you know you’ve been licked before you begin, but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do” (Lee 112). Atticus fits this description as he is willing to defend Tom Robinson, even though he knows he will lose. Atticus accepts the case because he believes Tom is innocent. Although Atticus presents strong evidence on Tom’s innocence, the all-white jury still decides he is guilty. However, Atticus still does not give up. Atticus is determined to appeal the case and take it to a higher court and bring Tom Robinson justice. Atticus perseveres through many challenges and does not let anyone bring him down. He endures rude and hateful comments from others, including his own sister. Atticus Finch is a true hero because of his efforts to defend Tom Robinson.

In the novel To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee displays the theme of heroism through the characters of Boo Radley, Mrs. Dubose, and Atticus Finch. Boo Radley is a hero because he saves Jem and Scout from being killed by Bob Ewell. Mrs. Dubose is a hero because she overcomes her addiction and indirectly teaches Jem and Scout about courage. Atticus Finch is a hero because he accepts the Tom Robinson case and tries his best to defend him in court. All these characters persevere through struggles and display courage and bravery. Every society needs a variety of heroes to inspire others. In this case, it is Boo Radley, Mrs. Dubose, and Atticus Finch.