

Age 13

*The Black Arrow*

Assignment #5

November 17, 2015

### A Timeless Message

Surely Mercy and forgiveness are two of the most common virtues in classic literature. This is an exaggerated claim. Try to make a more supportable statement. In one of Robert Louis Stevenson best works, *The Black Arrow*, mercy and forgiveness are portrayed by the protagonist Dick towards the end of the book. The book follows the journey of Dick Shelton as he struggles against himself. When Dick finally confronts the antagonist, Sir Daniel, he throws his sword away, saying he relies on heaven alone, conquering his doubts of whether to kill Sir Daniel or not. He also realises that a good man is not one that takes revenge, but one that shows mercy, thus resolving the man versus himself conflict, 'Will Dick be a good, mature man?'

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At the beginning of the Stevenson's classic novel, *The Black Arrow*, the protagonist Dick Shelton is a young and immature boy. Towards the beginning of the book, Dick mercilessly kills a man who spared his and Joanna's life. Shortly after this Joanna scolds Dick. "Why did you slay him, the poor soul? He drew his arrow, but he did not let fly; he held you in his hand and spared you!" (Stevenson 58). Although Dick had great courage to charge a grown man with a bow and arrow, he is still a young and immature boy with a lot to learn about showing mercy. See previous comments on your outline. What in the quotation tells you that Dick's decision not to show mercy was immature? Use details from the text you quoted. Throughout the rest of the book, Dick Shelton gradually matures and becomes a better more mature man. Also he doesn't does not know whether he should be a knight or what path to take in life. Why is this significant? Tie all claims back to the main thesis of your paper here in the clincher sentence.

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Later on in the book Dick has begun to mature. He is showing some mercy despite the futile risk to his reputation. After the Battle of Shoreby, Dick daringly asks the crooked Richard of Gloucester to spare Arblaster's life because Dick stole his ship earlier on in the book. "Arblaster," said Dick, "I have done you ill; but now, by the rood, I think I have cleared the score" (Stevenson 208). Starting to become a better and more mature man, Dick realises that he has completely ruined Arblaster and tries to right his wrongs, also learning that one's actions can immensely affect other people. Selflessness and mercy are two key virtues in maturity and Dick is starting to show both of these.

However, this is not the climax because not all of the ~~climaxes~~ conflicts have been resolved and Dick has not quite reached his full potential. Remember your climax only needs to resolve one conflict, Dick vs. his immaturity. Why does this moment not represent that climax? What specifically about the conflict hasn't been resolved?

Dick has reached maturity. Try to give this topic sentence a little context. When does Dick reach maturity? How does he reach it? Be more thorough about what you will be arguing in this paragraph. He is relying on heaven and showing mercy despite the injustice Sir Daniel has wrought him. Confronting Sir Daniel in the forest, Dick finally gets the chance to take vengeance, but instead shows him some mercy. "I rely upon heaven only," answered Dick, casting his sword some way behind him on the snow" (Stevenson 238). Dick has matured considerably by saying he relies on heaven alone. Relying on heaven is mature because trusting God is what the Bible says to do in many different places and it is also very difficult. You are taking this interpretation from outside the world of the story. Why, according to Stevenson's own words, is forgiveness better? This part of the story also proves that a good man shows forgiveness and mercy instead of taking vengeance. It is not a person's place to take someone's life, that is only up to God. Good! But can you back up this claim with textual evidence? Look at Dick's words in this final scene again. He has reached maturity because he is being selfless and not relying on worldly things, he is relying on God.

During the climactic moment, when Dick encounters Sir Daniel, Dick shows mercy and forgiveness. Finally acting maturely, he throws his sword away saying he relies on heaven alone. The conflict “Will Dick be a good, mature man?” is solved in this moment. Dick also realises that a good man is one that shows mercy instead of taking revenge. Mercy is far better than revenge

because it is only up to God to place judgement. Also the Bible says “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the God” (Ignatius Catholic Study Bible New Testament, Romans 12:19). The Bible also states, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy (Matthew 5:7). **These quotes confirm that mercy is a better choice than revenge.** You can use these passages to discuss whether you agree or disagree with Stevenson's point, but make sure you don't get the two confused. Be clear that these Biblical passages are not what helps you interpret the story. You need to interpret the story only using Stevenson's words. Once again literature has left a timeless message for all people; show mercy and forgive to your enemies.

**Comment [ES1]:** Stick to the third person.

### Works Cited

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Black Arrow*. 1888. London: Dover,  
2001. Print.

Ignatius Catholic Study Bible New Testament. San Francisco: Ignatius Press  
2010. Print.

Great work!

I've pointed out some key moments that need clarification in my comments above, but this is shaping up to be a good paper!

In particular pay attention to clarifying the purpose of your second body paragraph, and making sure you support claims about the story by only using the words of the story.

I can't wait to read the final product!

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Element	Grade
Thesis	5
Supports	4
Structure	4
Mechanics	3.5
Style	4