

Bleeding Red, White, and Blue

Saving Dr. Warren... "A True Patriot" by Jeffrey McKenna was just another title of many that was a part of our reading curriculum for this year, or so I thought. I went into reading this novel just like all the others, absentminded. I had never heard of the book until it was mentioned in class, and did not expect it to settle with me as much as it did. The journey of Steve O'Dell is an inspiring experience that will forever change my way of thinking about patriotism. By the end of this book, I can recognize the depth-filled instances of unquestionable patriotism from the events in the novel, my personal life connections, and how I can make America a better place just by being patriotic.

Patriotism is shown in the novel when Dr. Joseph Warren and Steve travel with the musket ball and enter the Battle of Bunker Hill. It was June 17, 1775, and they stood on Breed's Hill (which would soon be known as Bunker Hill) looking at the smoke rising from Charleston, where buildings caught fire and smoke engulfed the hill. Steve and Dr. Warren were inside the fort on the top of Bunker Hill, preparing for an attack to come upon them. In this battle, the soldiers were commanded by their leading generals not to fire "until you see the whites of their eyes" (McKenna 253). When the time finally came, the battle began. Shots were fired from both sides. Patriotism would never be the same to me after the actions of Dr. Warren that day. He showed his deep care for his country by sacrificing his life for the concern of America. When he fought in battle, he would not be doing it halfway. It was all or nothing for Joseph Warren, and he chose all. The way Dr. Warren wore courage on his sleeve during his last moments alive, affected how I see the importance of stepping in and standing up for what you believe in. Before reading this book, I had never realized how much one person's devotion to their beliefs could make an effect with such great weight. Who knew that one specific moment of a character's journey in a book could teach the real significance of patriotism?

Another place where patriotism revealed itself to me was in my personal life through my

great-grandfather James Alvin Black Junior. We call him Daddy Doc. He was a private in the army during World War II. He passed away when I was young. Therefore, I do not have many first-hand memories with him, but the stories I hear tell me everything I need to know about his personality. He was a brave, hardworking man, who cared for others more than himself. He always wanted the best for the ones he loved and to protect the country he called home safe. His thoughts were similar to Dr. Warren's in that they both believed ““If I die, I do so for a cause far greater than one man”” (McKenna 247). If he were to make a difference in the world from his life, he would want it to benefit everyone. Or maybe, just maybe, if he is lucky enough, people would remember all he stood for and carry on his legacy of deep care for his country and others he knew and loved.

The last reason I believe reading this novel is significant for patriotism is that I can realize how important it is to show genuine care for the things people continuously work for. Not honoring the country that people died for to shape a better place for future generations is disrespectful. The way that freedom is taken for granted every day is a shame. Before reading this book, I had not given much thought to the fact that I can have rights. After seeing how one person cared so much about America he fought to the death, I need to make every single day count. Patriotism can unite our nation and make it a much stronger place that I can take pride in. I must take the opportunities that I am given and try my best to make a difference. Efforts from just one person can make the change America needs.

With all of this information in mind, Dr. Joseph Warren proves himself in the book to be a perfect example of a true patriot. His characteristic traits of generosity, care, and protective instincts all contribute to his final personality to prove this point. He did what he felt was needed to make America prevail, even though it meant he would lose his life. By the end of the book, any reader should come to know what a true patriot is and how tremendous the effects of their actions can be.

Work Cited:

McKenna, Jeffrey. *Saving Dr. Warren... "A True Patriot"*. Jeffery J. McKenna, 2020.