# Searching for Peace

I, Lady Evania, daughter of King Irie’s head advisor and diplomat, stood upon a balcony jutting out of one graceful tower. I was intolerably uncomfortable. My strangled waist prevented me from taking all but the shallowest breaths; my back was ramrod straight; my legs, hidden in my voluminous skirts, were overheated. I had always been more comfortable in lose-fitting dresses that allowed me to practice sword fighting and riding. Although my father had taught me both these skills and gifted me with my beautiful sword and horse, as compensation for following the rules and propriety that I hated, he always advocated for peace. “Peace and knowledge were more powerful than the sword,” was his constant refrain. He obviously didn’t refer to the evil Alvarians, which had attacked Medora many times and were both ruthless and merciless murders. It was my frequent childhood dream that I would destroy the Alvarian army and free Medora from their evil clutches. However, such an opportunity was not open to women. The only assistance I was expected to give, was a goodbye wave from the balcony as new drafts of men headed off to war, as I was doing now. This time was different, however. My brother and constant companion, Zalam, was among the soldiers heading off to war. My heart ached. Who knew if he would return? I wanted to go and protect him. The jingle of harnesses and clip-clop of horses’ hooves alerted me to Zalam’s arrival. I raised a hand to farewell my brother, determined to be strong for him, not letting the tears break through. He looked back once towards me then was gone, forever.

An hour later saw me galloping through the forests surrounding the castle, my sword hidden in the folds of my skirts. Anger coursed through me. I hated the Alvarians. I would lose my brother because of their thirst for blood and conquest; lose him because those blackhearted assassins weren’t content with forests and must conquer peaceful Medora and kill its kind, generous citizens. My father would tell me, “Don’t hate what you don’t understand.” Right now, I didn’t care. A sudden chill breeze shifted my thoughts back to the present. The forest was darkening as the overhead canopy thickened. The breeze caused an eerie dance of tree branches and leaves, whispering and creaking. I slowed my horse, glancing left and right. My hand found the hilt of my sword. I had come too far. A twig snapped; I stiffened. Then pain exploded in my head and the darkness enveloped me.

I came slowly to awareness in a green haze. I blinked. I seemed to be lying in a tree, looking up at the canopy. A concerned faced appeared above me – an Alvarian! My hand flew to my sword but came away empty. The Alvarian notice my movement but didn’t comment. Instead, he asked, “How’s the head?”. A second passed, as my shock over his care left me speechless. He frowned at my surprised expression, then extended a hand. “Come, if you are well enough, and we will see Queen Elda.” In a daze, I took his hand and rose.

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If I had be told a week ago, that I would be looking forward to a dance with my new Alvarian friends, I would have laughed and questioned their sanity. However, after spending a week among them, I had a firm circle of friends. At the beginning, I was determined to see the faults their society and was quick to notice that everyone was expected to be skilled with at least one weapon and the deference given to warriors. But their genuine friendliness showed though and I quickly warmed to their open ways. Also, if I was honest with myself, our society had faults too. I felt guilty for all the evil names I had called the Alvarians. As I left the guesthouse in a long green dress, the skirts flowing easily around my legs, a messenger rushed up. I could tell by the look on his face that something was wrong. Very wrong. My hand found my sword hilt.

Three days later…

The battlefield was not as I imagined it: the Alvarian and Medoraen armies lined up facing each, on a wide green field. I was in the surrounding woods, as ordered by Queen Elda. The up-coming battle filled me with many emotions. I realised how selfish I’d been, only worried by Zalam’s safety. Everyone on this battlefield had friends and family that would mourn their death. Now I had friends on both side I couldn’t imagine any army winning. Now I truly understood what my father had meant, “Understanding is key to peace.” The two armies began to move towards each other. Instinctively, I drew my sword, holding it aloft, then paused. Reason was a better weapon. The sword fell to the ground.

I urged my horse into a gallop and the wind caught my hair. I pulled rein in the centre of the battlefield and yelled, “Stop!”. The armies stopped, more likely due to surprise at my foolish actions, than my command but I continued to speak anyway. “Why are you fighting today? Look at each other. Are you not the same? Fighting an enemy you know nothing about. The enemy today is not standing across from you, but in your mind. Lay down your weapons and instead speak about your differences. We aren’t children, squabbling and fighting over our disagreements. We are adults. Come, let us deal with this issue as adults and speak about it. King Irie, Queen Elda, bring forth your advisors and talk.”

Deafening silence followed my speech but then Queen Elda, standing at the front of the Alvarian army, placed down her sword and stepped forward. Another sword followed. Then another. Alvarian and Medoraen weapons hit the ground and King Irie appeared, leading Queen Elda over to the side. Tears stung my eyes.

I had done something more powerful than win a battle; I had created peace.

**Word Count: 998**

# Writer’s Statement

In my story, I used two themes of prejudice and courage and four other intertextual features from *To Kill a Mockingbird.* These features helped give more meaning to my story and assisted in portraying the themes to the audience.

The theme of prejudice and the evils associated with it are shown in both Lee’s novel and my story. Lee describes the black people in a good light, showing they were underserving of the prejudice against them. The detrimental issues related to prejudice are displayed in the case of Tom Robinson, as he is condemned because he is a black man. Similarly, in my story, a long war is carried out, due to prejudice. Many people died on both sides when, if prejudice had been put aside, they could have talked through the problem. This demonstrates the dangers of prejudice and its effects, as many innocent people were needlessly killed. My story focus more on displaying the effects of racism rather than the injustice of it and, in this way, adds to Lee’s novel.

To assist in displaying the prejudice the Medoraens and Lady Evania had for the Alvarians, several prejudice terms were used for the Alvarians such as “blackhearted assassins” and “merciless murders”. This displays a lack of respect and understanding of the Alvarians. Lady Evania’s growth is also shown as she stops using these terms and “feels guilty” about using them in the past. Prejudice and racist terms are also used in Lee’s book to demonstrate the prejudice of the villagers and their lack of respect. The black people did so much work for them but they were unable to respect them, due to their prejudice. It also highlights the difference between Atticus and the rest as he does not use these terms. So, in both my story and Lee’s novel racist terms are used to display the prejudice of the people and highlights difference in a few. My story, in particular, shows growth by the cessation of using racist terms.

Lady Evania’s sword was a symbol for the prejudice and its effects. Prejudice could be found in both the Medoraens and Alvarians and that forced them into war. A sword carries the connotations of war, which was the effect of the Medoraen and Alvarian prejudice. Lady Evania displays this idea by always reaching for her sword, rather than trying to speak and reason through a problem. However, once the sword of prejudice was left behind, the kingdoms could talk and come to peace. Lee’s story also uses the symbol of a mad dog to demonstrate prejudice and its effects. Prejudice effected once reasonable people with a “disease” that made them behave irrationally. Both these symbols depicted the theme of prejudice and its effects to the audience. Furthermore, my symbol adds that prejudice can be voluntarily left behind, rather than having to be destroyed by an outside influence.

Another theme found in both stories is courage in words rather than actions. In Lee’s story, Atticus explains to the children, “real courage is… when you know you’re licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what”. Atticus displays this courage by using words to try to protect Tom Robinson. My story contains a similar theme. Evania’s father informs her that “peace and knowledge were more powerful than the sword”. To begin with, Evania struggles to understand that the war could be solve by peaceful means. To her, destroying the Alvarian army is the only way to free her people. However, as she grows, she figures out that using words is the best way to create peace. My story demonstrates more clearly that conflicts can be resolved for good, by peaceful means, as Lady Evania was successful in persuading people with her words.

Aphorisms are used in both stories to demonstrate the themes more clearly to the audience. In both stories, it is the father figure that passes on these lessons and the daughters’ growth is shown as she comes to understanding these aphorisms. In my story the aphorisms are based around understanding and peace. Some examples are, “understanding is key to peace” and “don’t hate what you don’t understand”. These aphorisms display both themes of the story and Lady Evania’s growth is shown as she comes to understand. A similar thing occurs in Lee’s story. Atticus tells Scout, “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view…”. And, at the end of the book, her growth is shown by her eventual understanding of the aphorism. My aphorisms expand on Lee’s, as they point out understanding’s importance to peace and reason.

My final intertextual element is the use of perspective. Both stories are written in first person and this assists in displaying the growth of the character. Lee’s Scout demonstrates much growth throughout the story, as demonstrated by her growing understanding of the world both from her and others perspective. As the story is written from her perspective, the growth is easy to see. Similarly, Evania’s growth can be seen, as the story is written from her perspective. This is particularly noticeable in growing understand and change of opinion in the Alvarians. For instance, she “felt guilty for all the evil names [she] had called the Alvarians.” She is also able to see the conflict can be resolved peaceably and courage comes in many forms. The use of first person allows the audience to see the growth in understanding of both Scout and Lady Evania.

**Word Count: 917**