

*The Bronze Bow* by Elizabeth George Speare is a historical fiction novel published in 1961 that tells the story of Daniel bar Jamin. Daniel is an eighteen year old young man with an interesting life. His father was killed by Romans and his mother died shortly after. Daniel goes to live with his grandmother, however she soon realizes she can't keep him and sells him to a cruel master. Though Daniel starts as a violent and selfish teenager seeking vengeance, he learns to change his point of view through new friends and different experiences into a selfless and loving young man.

Starting at a young age, Daniel's hatred towards the Romans fuels him. Daniel was just a child when his father was killed by Romans, and he has dedicated his life to avenging them ever since. Daniel soon runs away from his cruel master, Amalek, and is rescued by Rosh, the leader of an army sharing the same passion to destroy the Romans, to be taken in as a fighter. Years later he meets Malthace and Joel, who will later become his friends, and refers to the Romans saying, "I curse the air they breathe" (Speare 9). His strong hatred towards the Romans stops him from opening up his heart to others.

Transformation occurs within Daniel through new friendships and events. Daniel's change of heart begins when he meets Malthace and Joel, who are brother and sister, and they become friends. When Daniel is hurt by the Romans, Malthace and Joel care for him and show him love, a feeling he has not felt in years. Daniel's friend Simon comes to visit and invites Daniel to come to the synagogue with him to hear a man named Jesus preach. Speare describes Jesus' speaking as, "A gentle voice, barely raised, it carried every corner of the room, warm, vibrant, with a promise of unlimited power. It was as though only a fraction of that voice were being used, as though if the full force of it were unstopped it would roll like thunder" (47). Jesus'

speaking makes Daniel question how he's chosen to live his life. Lastly, when Daniel's grandmother dies, he must go back home and take care of his sister Leah. Leah was five when her parents were killed and has been traumatized ever since, refusing to leave the house. Daniel has to learn to take care of Leah, both physically and mentally. When it seems like there's no hope for Leah, Jesus' saves her.

Through many events and people, Daniel learns to be considerate and loving towards others. After witnessing the incredible works of Jesus, Daniel learns to love again and falls in love with Malthace. Daniel becomes welcoming to people of all types, even the Romans. The magnitude of Daniel's transformation is shown when he invites a Roman soldier that he once disapproved of into his house. Speare writes about this moment, saying "Daniel looked down the road and caught the white flash of Jesus' robe. Then he straightened his shoulders. 'Will you come into our house?' he asked" (254). It is clear at this moment that Daniel's faith in Jesus is stronger than anything else.

In the beginning of the story, all Daniel could think about was revenge, but over time he learns through different events and people how to be a kind and caring young man. Daniel goes from violence ruling his life to following Jesus' teachings of love and forgiveness. Speare demonstrates through Daniel that even the most violent of people can welcome love into their hearts. A lot can be learned about acceptance and welcoming from *The Bronze Bow* by Elizabeth George Speare.

Speare, Elizabeth George. *The Bronze Bow*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961.