

“Fear can hold you prisoner, Hope can set you free.” The Shawshank Redemption is a story of hope and fear. Discuss.

Fear is the enemy, an enemy that cannot be fought without hope. Throughout his film, The Shawshank Redemption, Frank Darabont illustrates the struggle between hope and fear. This essay will explore different characters and various elements of fear they express. From Andy who is abundant in hope, to the warden who instils the opposite.

Andy is a brave and hopeful character in The Shawshank Redemption. He’s positive minded and relies on hope. Andy encourages his friends to believe there is freedom and hope if you want it strongly enough. “There is something inside... that they can’t get to, that they can’t touch, that’s yours... hope.” Hope is something that they can’t get if you believe it strongly enough, nobody can destroy it. The jail tries to take prisoners hope away.” Remember Red, hope is a good thing. Maybe the best of things and no good thing ever dies.” There is always beauty in the world as long as people believe in something they want to achieve. Brooks is opposite minded to Andy; Brooks disbelieves in hope and fears the world outside the walls.

Brooks was a well-respected prisoner at Shawshank. He lived there for 50 years. The prisoners always treated him with kindness. They listened when he was talking. They asked him his opinion about things. Shawshank had become his home and he felt safe there. Brooks developed a need for those walls and he felt that he belonged there. Brooks had no sense of hope or freedom on the outside after losing his pet bird Jake. Jake had been his companion for a long time. Brooks felt that there was nothing on the outside for him. When Brooks was released from prison, he lived in a one bedroom flat. He felt lonely and afraid. Brooks states, “The world went and got itself in a big damn hurry.” When Brooks left prison he no longer had a place to call home. He didn’t feel safe and was no longer respected. So he took his own life. Brooks shows us what it is like to live in fear and the Warden shows us what it is like to make people afraid.

Warden Norton is a symbol of corruption and fear in the prison. Throughout the film, The Shawshank Redemption, he shows a fear of justice and instilled fear in others, claiming to be a man of God. When he first appears, he emerges from the shadows dressed in a dark suit with a small gold cross pinned to his jacket. He says, “I believe in two things: discipline and the Bible. Here you’ll receive both. Put your trust in the Lord, your ass belongs to me now. Welcome to Shawshank.” He lied heavily about his belief in God. He lied so much he began to believe it himself. This is shown by the picture his wife made with a Bible verse on it. It is just something to hide all of his scams. His illusion of his belief forced all prisoners to own a Bible. “Salvation is within.” He stated. This idea backfired by when Andy escaped and revealed his scams. The Warden then commits one last sin: suicide. As Warden Norton symbolises corruption and greed, another character, Red, symbolises change

“Fear can hold you prisoner, Hope can set you free.” The Shawshank Redemption is a story of hope and fear. Discuss.

Red is a man who surrounds himself with a cloud of fear and is afraid to go into the outside world. Andy comes along into Red’s life and gives him a spark of hope. Red is an institutionalised man as he was rejected by the parole board several times. Andy is the man who inspires Red to see the glass half full rather than the glass half empty. Red becomes a hopeful man by the inspiration of Andy. “Forget that...there are places in this world that aren’t made out of stone...that they can’t get to...that they can’t touch...that’s yours...hope.” Red actually begins to look forward to seeing Andy when he gets out in fact he hopes he can get out which means that Red finally starts to hope. “I hope Andy is down there. I hope I can make it across the border. I hope to see my friend and shake his hand. I hope the Pacific is as blue as it is in my dreams. I hope.” The prisoner who lives in fear becomes a man who finally begins to seek hope. The Shawshank Redemption shows us that the importance of overcoming fear through hope

The Shawshank Redemption enables us to understand that hope is the key to overcoming fear. This is evident with the case of Red and Andy. Red and Brooks are very similar, however the only difference is Red had a little more hope to motivate him, whereas Brooks became institutionalised and fear overtook him. Just like Brooks, the Warden was overcome by fear. “Remember Red, hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things and no good thing ever dies.”