

## Facing Our Fears

When considering personal growth, facing the thing we dread most in the world can often be an incredibly efficient catalyst. The short stories “Schrodinger’s Baby” and “The Scream” painfully remind us of this unpleasant fact. Naturally, greatest fears differ greatly from person to person, taking widely varying forms. For young Anna in “The Scream”, a terrifying amusement park ride is the kryptonite that leaves her scarred, traumatized, and a changed person. Daniel Franks from “Schrodinger’s Baby” is an adjusting father unsure of his abilities to care for an infant. After facing their respective fears, Daniel and Anna undergo extensive amounts of personal growth that will stay with them their entire lives.

Although fears come in all shapes and sizes, there is commonly an underlying cause they seem to stem from. In the case of Daniel and Anna, a fear of responsibility appears to be that second level reason, however one may argue there is a third- a lack of faith in themselves. The two protagonists doubt their capabilities to care for another person. For example, Daniel was struggling with his emotional attachment to his newborn daughter, and seriously doubted his own parenting abilities. The honest mistake he made was enough to quickly convince himself of being “the worst father in the world.” (Fish) His parental instincts immediately kicked in however, and eventually Daniel proved to himself he was capable of doing right by his daughter. Similarly, Anna was pressured to take her younger sister on the rollercoaster ride. She felt it was her

responsibility, however crippling her fear of rollercoasters may be. Unfortunately, we know she accidentally ends up riding it, which terrifies her to her very core.

Only after undergoing brutal emotional, physical, and mental stress were the characters able to develop their personality and grow as an individual, though that growth is not inherently a positive one. In Daniel's case, fighting for his baby's safety played a key role in his process of accepting his paternal responsibilities. Though that experience was beyond unpleasant for him (and everyone involved), it altered Daniel's perspective on the baby. It transformed her from a "lump of dough" (Fish) as precarious as a bomb to his "small and perfect" (Fish) baby girl. Anna's ending, however, is not as heartwarming. After facing her fear of rollercoasters, she is left traumatized to such a severe extent one may infer it's repercussions **may** never end. She steps off the ride in a daze, hardly able to "stop herself [from] falling." (Briscoe) Daniel's real-life nightmare may have left him a self-secure, loving father, however Anna's only scarred her emotionally.

Regardless of whether the outcomes were positive or negative, both characters' experience of facing their fears allowed them to grow as a person. In times of crisis our true potential is revealed, unveiling our full capabilities. Whether they are pleasantly surprising or not, knowing what ones are provides room for massive personal growth that would not be otherwise possible.