
Analysis Of The Main Protagonist's Life in "Me, Earl And The Dying Girl" By Jesse Andrews

The definition of a bildungsroman is "a type of novel concerned with the education, development, and maturing of a young protagonist". Luke Skywalker, Harry Potter, and Scout Finch are all great candidates, but what about Earl Jackson? Throughout the novel, *Me, Earl and The Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews, Earl continuously matures. When the reader first meets Earl (though he is introduced later in the book), he is in a rut. His house is a mess, his family is extremely poor and his siblings are as wild as can be. In the novel, Greg explains "He basically lives unsupervised with two brothers... and they play video games and eat Domino's pizza pretty much all the time ... Meanwhile, downstairs it's six guys in a house, living it up. Nonstop party! What problems could there possibly be?". So, Earl lives in a teenager's dream and an adult's nightmare.

Secondly, a main feature of Earl at the beginning of the novel is the fact that he has nothing to strive for. Earl's only goal would be to get out of high school, along with Greg. But, as the novel moves on, Earl figures out who he wants to be and what he wants to do. Earl gives some life-changing advice to Greg to guide him for his future and, as foreshadowed at the end of the novel, Greg takes his advice and goes to do what he desires. Earl defines and helps Greg in *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*, by his coming of age and maturity near the end of the novel. In the novel, *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*, by Jesse Andrews in the year 2015, Earl is a part of a family with drugs, alcohol, and craziness. This type of behavior is common during the current year the novel is made. When thought about, Earl has a very tough life. As explained in the novel, Earl is the only one who goes to school every day. Now, this may not seem as much of a feat, but here are the descriptions of his family. "There are no dads in the house - Earls Dad is in Texas and the half Brothers' dad is in prison...Maxwell and Felix are in one of Homewood enterprising gangs... family's financial support by dealing drugs... drug dealing and gang activity in the house... Not an incredibly scholarly environment". So, for Earl to be even trying to get an education is surprising for what he comes from and from what he deals with at home. This information becomes really important for when Greg and Earl are at the end of their senior year and are ready to off to college. Earl's advice is "You don't know shit man...this is the first negative that has happened in your life... You can't be overreacting to it and making big-ass expensive decisions based on it...People die...I'm surrounded by family members doing stupid shit... you gotta live your own life... Care about your own shit before you started doing things for everybody else". This is the climax of Earl, this is his importance. This life-changing advice affected Greg for the rest of his life and defines who Greg is. Earl and Greg are both halves to one whole in a perfect symbiosis.

Though Earl's emotion may not show it, Earl really cares. Either if it is for Greg, or even for Rachel near the end of the novel. In the novel, Earl says to Rachel "You probably don't understand how grateful I am to have gotten to know you... the odds of that happening normally would be very low.. We don't travel in the same circles you and me. So it feels like... a blessing to have had you in my life... I admire a lot of things about you...your patience... I would be angry, and miserable... hurtful... and you've made me feel, uh, blessed". This is not the same person that is at the beginning of the novel. He is mature, kind and heartfelt but, how does this affect Greg?

After Earl delivers this speech for Rachel, Greg knows that Earl is telling the truth, but Greg does not believe in Rachel and so this makes Greg sad with himself. Greg is in deep thought about Rachel and how he feels about her dying. And so, when Rachel dies at the end of the novel, he truly understood what feelings he has for Rachel, and Earl helped discover those feelings. So, after Rachel's death, Greg has missed much of school and is failing his classes. Yet, Earl gives even more advice to Greg on his future and he says "You're stupid if you fail... You're smarter than that man. You got college and shit to look forward to. Get a job and shit". Because of Earl's coming of age, he is able to deliver Greg advice about the future for Greg that really helps him in the future. There are many examples of Earl defining and helping Greg that are because of odd and different situations. One of them include the dilemma with Mr. McCarthy's soup. So when advised not to eat Mr. McCarthy's soup, Greg and Earl eat it anyways and get high from weed supposedly in the soup (it is actually in a cookie that they ate). So, when Greg finally gets the feeling, he falls and gets laughed at. In the novel, it says " So I fell down ... I wasn't feeling normal... Everyone is laughing... I panicked... Meanwhile, I scrambled out the door into the hall". Even though it may seem odd, Earl is right there afterward to help and "guide" Greg. Even though this thing seems so little, there are so many little things that Earl does to help Greg.

Another example is Greg's movies. Greg Gaines' passion as a young child is filmmaking (and even still today) and Earl Jackson is there every step of the way. He is there every film, good, bad or even films made with lego s. There is a whole page dedicated to all the movies that Earl and Greg wrote. In the novel on pages 126 - 129 lists all of the movies that Earl and Greg have made together and there are a total of eight not including the one about Rachel. Earl really is always there for Greg. Winnie the Pooh and Eeyore are two of the most iconic and even influential characters of all time. Winnie is always looking to just go away with his honey in hand while his best (somewhat depressed) friend is there for him every step of the way. These two literary characters are very similar to Greg Gaines and Earl Jackson. Eeyore and Earl are underrated as characters yet, they define who their best friend is. Earl is critical because of his helpfulness and advice. Earl Jackson's matureness and advice throughout the novel define who Greg Gaines really is.