

In the book *Millions*, by Frank Cottrell Boyce, I saw clear examples of how the main character, Damian Cunningham, changed and developed new insight throughout the story. At the start of the book, Damian was a very timid character who wasn't much like other children his age. Throughout the stretch of the book, Damian becomes more of a wild character, and somewhat crazed and confused about what to do. In the concluding chapters of *Millions*, Damian realizes what the changes in his life have done to him, decides they weren't for the better, and changes into more of the person he was at the beginning of the book. This book had an obvious statement that money corrupts even the most careful of people.

In the beginning, Damian Cunningham was a very eccentric pre-teen. His favorite thing was researching about the "patron saints" of everything. Damian believed that everything had its own patron saint. In the first few pages, he writes about how, "The patron saint of moving house is St. Anne (first century)" (Boyce 2) and how "There is a patron saint of actual robbers- Dismas (first century)" (Boyce 2). Damian moves to a new school, where his dad says, "Good isn't good enough here. Excellence, that's what they're after" (Boyce 3). He is always striving to achieve this excellence at his new school, and he is always going above and beyond what the teachers are asking of him. Although Damian is so outstanding in school, he is still extremely modest and timid, and he takes insults from other students. His older brother, Anthony, is always having to stick up for Damian. After Damian answers a teacher's question in a very peculiar way, Anthony says to him, "You are making yourself conspicuous. You need to blend in more. People are laughing at you" (Boyce 6). When he moves into his new home, he even builds himself a hermitage by the train tracks near his house. But when a duffel bag full of millions of dollars lands at Damian's feet one day after school, he starts to change in enormous ways.

When Damian first gets the story-changing bag of money, the change inside him is not instant. His first thought was this: "For the record, this isn't the first time money has fallen down out of the sky" (Boyce 51). Then he goes on to explain how St. Nicholas (yes, Santa Claus) dropped bags of money down a family's chimney. Next, he runs to Anthony and explains to him that he made God feel bad for him by telling him that his mom was dead, and that God gave him an enormous bag of money out of sheer pity. This happened not to be completely true, but it was what sparked the change in Damian. After a few hours, Damian had begun to get giddy and excited. Anthony and Damian played Jenga with piles of cash. Before school the next day, he bought five students bottles of Sunny Delight, "the size of an oxygen tank" (Boyce 56) and rented some kids' bikes for enormous amounts of money. Throughout the middle of the novel, the Cunningham brothers continue to buy various things with their newly-acquired money and stock them under Damian's bed. Damian is still kind and is helping others with his money, but he is dramatically changing as a result of the wealth he now has. He becomes unmindful and unwise with his money. Damian starts buying multiples of silly little things and pays his friends to do everything for him. For example, he pays a girl ten quid to fetch him a fork, which he could easily do himself. Damian says that, "We spent 150 pounds just walking from the monkey bars to the boy's toilets." (Boyce 64) In one day, he buys a football set, walkie-talkies, a bicycle, a long cab ride, plus he had people do everything for him. A short while later in the novel, Damian writes that, "The minute we arrived at school next morning, we were surrounded by people trying to sell us stuff" (Boyce 67). Damian Cunningham was changed greatly throughout the book, and he was giving in to the temptations that money posed.

Even though money changed Damian, it was not permanent. It took a while for him to realize that the changes he was making were for the worse, but Damian gradually started to

change back to what he was at the start of this book. In the climax, Damian finds out that there are robbers after him and his money. This surprise is what starts to make Damian realize what he has done to himself, and what money has done to him. After he spends days hiding from robbers and running from a scary old man who wants his money, the main character notices that the wealth he has is hurting him more than it is benefiting him. This realization is what starts to transform Damian back into the character he was in the opening chapters of *Millions*. He isn't as happy as when he got the money. He regrets all of the unneeded purchases he has made throughout the book. Also, Damian feels accountable for all of the lies him and Anthony have made to keep their money a secret from their dad and other adults. "It was like he'd got so good at lying, the Shredded Wheat boxes believed him," wrote Damian of his brother. When he finally gets rid of the money and comes clean with his father at the conclusion of the book, Damian feels as if a large weight has been lifted off his shoulders. He starts to talk about saints and grades more often, and less about money. He completely stops buying useless junk that he doesn't need. Most of all, Damian realizes that he was a better person before he got wealthy and that he wanted to change back to what he was like before. Damian does end up changing back to just about the exact same person he was at the beginning of the book. The one thing that did change in Damian was his happiness and self-confidence level. In the final pages of *Millions*, Boyce explains how Damian looked at life just a bit more optimistically and was more confident in the things he did. What happens in this novel ends up changing Damian Cunningham for the better.

In conclusion, this book tells about what money does to people. In *Millions*, Damian starts as a timid, modest boy, until money comes into his life. Throughout most of the middle of the book, he starts becoming corrupt and crazed as a result of the bag that landed in front of him

that afternoon. In the concluding chapters of this beautifully written novel, Damian Cunningham starts to become the person he was at the beginning of the book and finds out that he liked himself better before he got enormous amounts of money, and other people liked him better also. This book reminds us that money can do damage to anyone's life, even if it doesn't seem like it in the first place.

Works Cited

Cottrell Boyce, Frank. *Millions*. New York, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.,

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