|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Courage** | *Having the courage to stand up for yourself and others* |
| **Loyalty** | *Being loyal to yourself and others, making sure not to betray anyone’s trust*  |
| **Finding one’s true self**  | *The author talks about characters wearing “masks” and removing the masks to find their true selves* |

**Themes in the Novel**

**Courage**

* Shayne has the courage to stand up for others (Mikey, Marie, etc)
* Mikey gets the courage to stand up to Jon (he refuses to give money)
* Rawls has the courage to quit his job as a police officer and go back to teaching

**Loyalty**

* Shayne is loyal to Mikey and Marie. He is always protecting them and tries not to betray them (although he does unfriend them at one point)
* Marie is loyal to Jon Brande, but he betrays her in the end.
* Mikey is loyal to Shayne and trusts Shayne, even though he’s only known Shayne for a small amount of time.

**Finding one’s true self**

* Mikey talks about wearing masks. He says his suits and his sarcasm are really masks that cover up his fears to be himself.
* Mikey learns to speak up for himself and be himself.
* At the end of the novel, he stops wearing suits and decides to stay true to himself.
* We find out Shayne is really Herman LaRose, and HASN’T been himself.

**Symbols in the Novel**

Tazer – Jon tazes Mikey’s dog, Barkie. He also tazes Mikey. At the end of the novel, Mikey tazes Jon and Jon falls off the roof.

Harley Motorcycle – This is the motorcycle in Wart’s living room. At the end of the novel, Mikey uses it to identify Wart’s house as a meth lab and he tells Detective Rawls.

Empty Pool – Jon falls off the roof into an empty pool. He doesn’t die, but he is paralyzed and will spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

Paper Bag – At the beginning of the novel, when the police raid the school, Mikey throws away Jon’s paper bag which is allegedly full of drugs. Jon tells Mikey he owes him $500.

**Conflict**

* Man vs. Man
* Man vs. Nature
* Man vs. Himself
* Man vs. Society

Man Vs. Man – Two people in an argument or fight. In Blank Confession, there are several man versus man conflicts, including Mikey vs. Jon with the tazer. Also, Shayne Vs. Trey when they meet outside the school and Trey breaks Jon’s mirror. These are just two out of many examples.

Man Vs. Himself – Mikey’s Dad struggled with alcoholism. This would be his dad’s inner struggle with himself. He struggles to overcome his addiction to alcohol and eventually becomes a better man. At the end of the novel, we discover that Shayne’s dad struggled with mental health issues (PTSD) after being involved in the war and was admitted to a psychiatric ward.

Man vs. Society – One versus a group of people or a community, etc.

Man Vs. Nature – A person or small group of people versus nature. Example, a storm, tornado, etc.

**Important Characters**

* Detective Rawls
* Jon Brande
* Mikey
* Marie
* Shayne Blank (Herman LaRose)
* Trey
* Wart (Stewart Hale)

\*Be sure to also study the novel details by reading the chapter questions.\*