

The Merit of English Section

Junior Division

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Book Title : Seventh Son

Author : Orson Scott Card

Publisher : Tor Books

In fictions that are about fighters hunting down evil creatures and mystical monsters, the fighters are usually recognized as the savior of the day and the hero of all times. However, there may be an exception.

In the book *Seventh Son*, the hunter of evil – the Spook – John Gregory, was seen as a sinister man who dwells in the dark. However, the truth is that he actually has to go into the dark to capture beasts and monsters so people could live safely without being under a shadow of darkness. And in Priesttown, which is where priests live, he was wanted since the leader of the town claims he is a man full of sins. But despite the accusations and warrants, he and his apprentice, Tom Ward, ventured into the town, finding that the ancient evil spirit there, the Bane, had been corrupting the minds of the townsman, deluding them into believing the Spook and his apprentice are the evil ones.

I think the book is quite interesting and easy to read, since the language is rather simple. But in my opinion, it is more than just a story.

The protagonist of the story is Tom Ward, the Spook's apprentice. He is the seventh son of a seventh son, and he is a left-hander, whereas most people have their right hand as the dominant hand. Only under these two conditions can a person be a Spook, but as he is left-handed he is thought abnormal by others. This made me think: do people get discriminated just because they are different from others? As I thought on, I found it really unfair to be shown bias only for being different. For example, in society, some homosexuals are discriminated as people think it is not normal and against the beliefs in religion. However, I think every person has their own right to choose what they love or hate, and every single person is a unique individual, with no exceptions.

As an apprentice of the Spook, there are tough times during the apprenticeship because the creatures of the dark are never easy to hunt. Of course, being a hunter of the evil, it is a must to face fearsome creatures. Although we do not face actual monsters in our lives, I might as well make up a metaphor of the monsters bringing our own fears and adversity. Certainly, a fear cannot be overcome easily as a difficulty cannot be promptly solved. But as we stay strong, brave and have confidence in ourselves, we will not give up easily and eventually there will be strength over fear and we will find solution to problems. Just as Tom Ward, we should learn not to give in to the "monsters" in our mind and let them haunt us.

The third thing I learned from the story is that we often get blinded by the benefits in front and fail to think clearly whether it is wrong or not. In the story, the Bane, the evil spirit, tempts people into feeding him with blood to make him strong by promising them wealth and fame afterwards. Unable to resist the temptation, they gave in without thinking if it is right. Well, the definition of right or wrong is different to everyone, but generally, a kind of temptation is recognized as a wrong to everyone – corruption.

Some are easily corrupted. For instance, very often, just by giving money, one will do anything you want them to. Nowadays, the people's minds are filled with ambition for money that they will do anything to get more and more of it, but they forgot the consequences of their actions. They forgot to stop and think before they act. And in Hong Kong we have the ICAC banning corruption, so they end up regretting their mistake in prison. When reading this book, I was again reminded to stand strong against temptations, no matter how intriguing they seem to be. There is no free meal in this world, so one has to work hard to get a reward.

Lastly, whenever you feel like you have run into bad luck or have to do something you don't want to, you will probably ask yourself, "Why me?" And in this book, there is an answer, "Someone had to do it." This was said by Tom's mother, when he wanted to give up being a Spook's apprentice and asked why it had to be him. After reading that part, I learned that sometimes things are just destined for us to do and we can't run away from them. So

this very simple sentence encouraged me to accept whatever is to come, and the most important thing is we try our very best in doing our part in it and try to solve whatever we face.

Although this book is full of myths and seemed simple, there is no denial that it is meaningful deep inside. It somehow reflected a bit of darkness in humanity and makes one thoughtful after reading. Therefore, I think it is a good book not only because of its plot, but also because of the message behind.