

Danger Is Temporary: Cowardice Is Forever

Who pays the greater price and takes the greater risk – the brave man, or the coward?

The man who volunteers to defend his village against the dragon only experiences pain and danger momentarily. He either dies (temporary pain passing into nothingness) or lives (temporary danger or pain), but his negative state is temporary (exception: physical and emotional wounds).

Stack this up against the price the coward chooses to pay.

The man who – from fear – shrinks from his responsibility to defend his village still experiences the same anxiety of danger (it's why he refuses to fight), but he does avoid physical pain and physical danger. However he has one negative state now which will follow him forever: the internal feeling or the social reminder of being a coward. This persists well beyond the time when the danger is past.

Danger and pain are external: you feel them and experience them, and then they are gone. Your own conscience and your society discharge you.

Cowardice is a state of mind – and the memory of it lasts forever. Your conscience and your society hold you captive.

Which would you rather have?

Originally published at JamesWalpole.com.