

Motifs in *The Pigman*

Motifs are incidents, images, or ideas that appear repeatedly in a work of literature (or art or music). In *The Pigman*, motifs unify the story, which might otherwise seem disjointed because it is told by two different narrators. Below are some motifs that appear in the novel. List as many examples from the book as you can think of for each motif. Include a page number, a quote, and an explanation for each.

Pigs

Page(s) #37&38: "Oh, I forgot to show you my pigs!" he exclaimed.... Mr. Pignati shows them his collection.

Page(s) #____: _____

Page(s) #____: _____

Lying/Betrayal

Page(s) #____: _____

Page(s) #____: _____

Page(s) #____: _____

Death

Page(s) #____: _____

Page(s) #____: _____

Page(s) #____: _____

Caged Animals

Page(s) #____: _____

Page(s) #____: _____

Page(s) #____: _____

Smiling Faces

Page(s) #____: _____

Page(s) #____: _____

Page(s) #____: _____

Adults (Parents)/Children

Page(s) #____: _____

Page(s) #____: _____

Page(s) #149: "...we could almost hear the Pigman whisper, as he took his children with him." Mr. Pignati dies, and John and Lorraine (who have pretended to be his children) lose part of themselves as a result.

Identify places in the novel where two or more of these motifs appear at the same time.

The Final Lines of *The Pigman*

We had trespassed too – been where we didn’t belong, and we were being punished for it. Mr. Pignati had paid with his life, but when he died something in us had died as well.

There was no one else to blame anymore. No Bores or Old Ladies or Nortons, or Assassins waiting at the bridge. And there was no place to hide – no place across any river for a boatman to take us.

Our life would be what we made of it – nothing more, nothing less.

Baboons.

Baboons.

They build their own cages, we could almost hear the Pigman whisper, as he took his children with him.

These last lines are profound, poetic, and strangely beautiful. Answer the questions regarding these lines.

1) Trespassing

- a. How did John and Lorraine trespass? (On what were they trespassing?)
- b. How did Mr. Pignati trespass? (On what was he trespassing?)
- c. What is John and Lorraine’s punishment for “trespassing”?

2) Responsibility

- a. What does John mean when he says there is no one else to blame?
- b. What important lesson have John and Lorraine learned?
- c. In Chapter 14, Lorraine compared the night she and John dressed up in the Pignatis’ clothes to a playing kitten. What have they learned about this kind of “play”?

3) Baboons

- a. Why is the word *Baboons* repeated?
- b. To whom is John referring when he mentions baboons?
- c. How are the characters in this book like baboons or monkeys? (Remember their visit to the pet store in Chapter 8.)

4) Cages

- a. Explain the metaphor: What does “They build their own cages” mean?
- b. How do John and Lorraine build their own cage?
- c. How did the Pigman build his own cage?

5) Children

- a. Who are the Pigman’s children? Explain.
- b. How can the Pigman take his children with him?
- c. What part of John and Lorraine has “died” as a result of the experience with the Pigman?