

Model Prompt

“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.”

Explain what John means: 1) Where did John and Lorraine “trespass”?

2) What died in the narrators as a result of Mr. Pignati’s death?

#1 Restate (Reword): In the passage from the end of *The Pigman*, John indicates that he and Lorraine are being punished for “trespassing”...

AnsWER (the question): ...on adulthood.

Cite (evidence): Despite the fact that he is only a sophomore in high school, John smokes cigarettes and drinks beer throughout the story, stating in his first chapter as narrator, “I smoke one with a recessed filter myself” (2). For the entirety of Chapter 9, he is in the cemetery drinking beer with Norton, and in Chapter 13 he throws a party where all kinds of alcohol is served and ashtrays overflow with cigarette butts. Lorraine tries to talk John out of smoking, but she does indulge in drinking wine with Mr. Pignati when she visits and again with John when they dress up in the Pignatis’ fancy clothes in Chapter 12.

Explain (Elaborate/Reasoning): The law states and most reasonable people agree that kids should not smoke and drink, yet we see the main characters doing so quite matter-of-factly all the time in this novel. They pretend to be older than they are because adults have the control over their lives that John and Lorraine lack. Mr. Pignati desires their company to ease his loneliness, so he allows them to go on “trespassing” on the adult world, even giving them access to his house when he is hospitalized. They dress as adults to act out a romantic evening and ultimately throw a “cocktail party” where the house gets trashed.

Restate Answer/Conclude Explanation: All of these incidents make up the “trespassing” John refers to. These kids are pretending to be something they are not, trespassing on territory they should not be on until they reach legal age, the age of responsibility.

#2 Restate (Reword) Part 2: When John says “something had died in us as well,” he is referring to...

AnsWER (the question): ...their loss of the innocence of childhood.

Cite (evidence): Throughout the story, John and Lorraine have pretended to be Mr. Pignati’s children. After Mr. Pignati’s heart attack (Chapter 11), John tells the police he is John Pignati and answers their questions about his “father”. In Chapter 12, they continue this lie in order to visit Mr. Pignati in the hospital, and it brings him great joy when the nurse says, “Your son and daughter are here (104). In fact, he has treated them like family since their trip to the zoo (Chapter 6), when he bought them all sorts of treats and their shopping trip (Chapter 8) when he bought them roller skates.

Explain (Elaborate/Reasoning): John and Lorraine now realize they are responsible for Mr. Pignati’s death. They repeatedly betrayed his trust, and the painful lesson they have learned is that adult actions have real consequences. Small children are not held responsible for their mistakes because “they don’t know any better,” but John and Lorraine should have known better. By trespassing on adulthood, they engaged in adult behaviors and enjoyed the freedoms of adulthood, but with those freedoms come responsibility. Their actions had consequences, and they cannot bring their Pigman back to life. It is too late to apologize.

Restate Answer/Conclude Explanation: John and Lorraine will no longer be able to hide behind the child’s argument that they didn’t know any better, and in this sense they have lost their own childhood and the irresponsibility of innocence.

Your Turn: Using the RACE strategy, write a constructed response to this prompt:

Baboons.

Baboons.

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

1) **How are the characters in this book like baboons (or monkeys)?**

2) **How did they “build their own cages”?**

#1 **R**(estate): _____ The characters in this book are like baboons (or monkeys) because... _____

A(nswer): _____

C(ite): _____

E(xplain): _____

Restate Answer/Conclude Explanation: _____

#2 **R**(estate): _____

A(nswer): _____

C(ite): _____

E(xplain): _____

Restate Answer/Conclude Explanation: _____
