

examination day characters

examination day characters play a pivotal role in the narrative and thematic development of the story "Examination Day" by Henry Slesar. This short story, known for its dystopian setting and thought-provoking plot, revolves around a society where intelligence is strictly regulated by the government. Understanding the key figures within this story provides insight into the social commentary and dramatic tension that drive the narrative. This article explores the primary and secondary characters in "Examination Day," analyzing their roles, motivations, and contributions to the story's overall message. Through a detailed examination, readers can gain a comprehensive understanding of how each character shapes the unfolding events on examination day. The following sections will delve into the main characters, supporting figures, and their symbolic significance within the story.

- Main Characters in Examination Day
- Supporting Characters and Their Roles
- Character Analysis and Symbolism
- Impact of Examination Day Characters on the Story

Main Characters in Examination Day

The main characters in "Examination Day" are central to the story's plot and themes. Their interactions and decisions highlight the oppressive nature of the society depicted in the narrative. These characters include the protagonist and his immediate family members, who collectively represent the personal and societal pressures surrounding the government-mandated intelligence test.

Dickie Jordan

Dickie Jordan is the protagonist of the story and a young boy about to take the mandatory intelligence test known as the examination. His character embodies innocence and the vulnerability of youth in a dystopian society. Dickie's experience on examination day illustrates the high stakes involved and reflects the story's critique of government control over individual capabilities. His nervousness and unawareness of the test's true implications add emotional depth to the narrative.

Mr. Jordan

Mr. Jordan, Dickie's father, is a significant figure who represents parental concern within an authoritarian system. His anxiety and attempt to protect his son contrast with the rigid societal rules they must obey. Mr. Jordan's character highlights the tension between familial love and the oppressive government regulations. His behavior and reactions provide insight into the societal fear that permeates the story's setting.

Mrs. Jordan

Mrs. Jordan, though a less prominent character, plays a supportive role in the family dynamic. Her presence reinforces the domestic setting and the personal stakes involved in the examination process. Mrs. Jordan's character adds emotional nuance, emphasizing the collective family experience and the psychological impact of the examination day on all members.

Supporting Characters and Their Roles

Besides the Jordan family, several supporting characters contribute to the atmosphere and plot development. These characters, though less developed, represent the societal forces and institutional mechanisms governing the examination process. Their roles are crucial in illustrating the broader context of the story's dystopian world.

The Government Official

The government official administering the examination represents the authoritarian surveillance state. This character is depicted as cold, impersonal, and bureaucratic, underscoring the dehumanizing effect of the government's control over citizens. The official's role is to enforce the law without empathy, symbolizing the oppressive machinery behind the examination system.

The Examiner

The examiner is responsible for conducting the intelligence test. While not heavily characterized, the examiner's function is critical to the story's tension. This figure embodies the government's intrusive reach into individual lives and the invasive nature of the examination. The examiner's presence on examination day serves as a constant reminder of the consequences tied to the test's outcome.

Neighbors and Community Members

Though not explicitly detailed, neighbors and other community members form the backdrop against which the story unfolds. Their implied acceptance or fear of the examination system reflects societal compliance and the normalization of governmental control. These characters help frame the social environment and collective mindset of the story's setting.

Character Analysis and Symbolism

The characters in "Examination Day" serve not only as individuals but also as symbols representing broader themes such as government control, loss of individuality, and societal conformity. Analyzing these characters reveals layers of meaning embedded within the story's narrative structure.

Dickie Jordan as Innocence and Vulnerability

Dickie symbolizes the innocence threatened by authoritarianism. His youth and lack of understanding highlight the vulnerability of citizens subjected to invasive government policies. The character's fate underscores the dangers of sacrificing personal freedom for societal control.

Mr. Jordan as Parental Concern and Powerlessness

Mr. Jordan represents the conflicted role of parents in oppressive regimes. His concern for his son clashes with the inevitability of the state's power, illustrating the helplessness experienced by individuals under strict governance. This character embodies the tension between personal affection and political reality.

The Government Official and Examiner as Instruments of Control

These characters symbolize the impersonal and authoritarian nature of the government. Their detached behavior and enforcement of rules without regard to individual circumstances demonstrate the dehumanizing effects of systemic control. They are the face of bureaucratic oppression in the narrative.

Supporting Characters as Societal Conformity

The implied community members represent the normalization of surveillance and control. Their acceptance or passive compliance with the examination process reflects the societal pressures to conform and the suppression of dissent. These characters illustrate how authoritarian systems rely on collective acquiescence.

Impact of Examination Day Characters on the Story

The examination day characters collectively drive the story's plot and thematic exploration. Their interactions and individual traits create a compelling narrative that critiques authoritarianism and questions the value of intelligence when used as a tool for oppression. Each character's role enhances the story's emotional and intellectual impact.

Driving the Plot Forward

The characters' actions and reactions create tension and suspense throughout the story. Dickie's preparation and participation in the examination, alongside his parents' anxiety, build anticipation and emotional investment. The government officials' presence introduces conflict and foreshadows the story's climax.

Enhancing Thematic Depth

Through these characters, the story explores themes of freedom, control, and the consequences of a society that values conformity over individuality. Their symbolic representations deepen the narrative's critique of oppressive systems and provoke reflection on the cost of such governance.

Creating Emotional Resonance

The family dynamics and personal struggles of the Jordans evoke empathy and highlight the human cost of political policies. This emotional connection makes the story's message more impactful and memorable for readers.

Summary of Examination Day Characters' Roles

- Dickie Jordan: Protagonist, symbolizes innocence and vulnerability
- Mr. Jordan: Father, represents parental concern and helplessness
- Mrs. Jordan: Mother, adds emotional depth to family dynamics
- Government Official: Enforcer of authoritarian control
- Examiner: Administers the intelligence test, symbolizes invasive governance
- Community Members: Represent societal conformity and compliance

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the protagonist in 'Examination Day' by Henry Slesar?

The protagonist in 'Examination Day' is Dickie Jordan, a young boy living in a dystopian future.

What role do Dickie Jordan's parents play in 'Examination Day'?

Dickie Jordan's parents are portrayed as anxious and supportive; they prepare him for the mandatory government intelligence test.

How is the government depicted through the characters in 'Examination Day'?

The government is represented indirectly through the characters' interactions and the mandatory intelligence test, highlighting a controlling and oppressive regime.

What is the significance of Dickie Jordan's character development in 'Examination Day'?

Dickie's character development reveals themes of innocence, fear, and the consequences of a dystopian society's control over individuals.

Are there any secondary characters in 'Examination Day' that influence the story?

Apart from Dickie and his parents, other characters are minimal or implied, emphasizing the focus on the family's experience and the government's role.

How do Dickie Jordan's parents react to his examination results in 'Examination Day'?

Dickie's parents show shock and despair after receiving the results, highlighting the story's dark and tragic tone.

Additional Resources

1. *Examination Day*

This short story by Henry Slesar explores a dystopian future where children must pass a government-mandated intelligence test at age twelve. The protagonist, Dickie Jordan, faces the pressure of the exam, which ultimately has tragic consequences. The story delves into themes of control, conformity, and the value of intelligence in society.

2. *The Giver* by Lois Lowry

In a controlled society where emotions and memories are suppressed, Jonas is selected to be the Receiver of Memory. As he learns about the past, he begins to question the rules governing his community. The novel examines themes of individuality, freedom, and the cost of a seemingly perfect society.

3. *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury

Guy Montag is a fireman in a future society where books are banned and "firemen" burn any that are found. As Montag encounters new ideas, he starts to rebel against the oppressive system. The story highlights the dangers of censorship and the importance of critical thinking.

4. *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card

Ender Wiggin is a gifted child recruited into a military training program to prepare for an impending alien invasion. The story follows his rigorous training and moral dilemmas. It explores themes of leadership, ethics in warfare, and the pressures of expectation.

5. *The Hunger Games*