

English

Literature



17 July “ In this world goodness is destined to be defeated” - Walker Percy

Analysis In this materialistic world, goodness is becoming rare. Everyone does demand goodness in others, but seldom displays it in his/her own mannerism. In the worldly terms, goodness costs whereas evil pays, but this is what happens in the short term. Goodness always wins in the long run.

People suppress goodness because of their unrealistic fears of costs associated with it. The cost may or may not be financial. It may also come as a tarnished image, bad reputation, and distorted rapport with friends. In the book, *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles, Gene does feel guilty about having pulled Finny into accident, though he does not have the courage to confess it for a long time because he fears that his confession would speak bad of his moral conduct and would also tarnish his relationship with Finny. Gene is a good person by heart. That is why his conscience hurts him, though he does not have the guts to face his guilt because he considers it his defeat.

One of the main themes of the book, *A Separate Peace* is denial. This theme is based upon the unrealistic consideration of goodness as defeat. Gene and Finny display different types of denial in the story. Gene denies the presence of a dark streak in his personality that encourages him to boot innocent people. Leper rightly tells Gene that he is a “ savage underneath”. Gene cannot admit this harsh reality even after the passage of 15 years. On the other hand, Finny denies that his best friend can cause him all the pain that he goes through as a result of the accident. Finny considers it too bad to be true and accordingly, keeps overlooking this fact until he is made to accept it by Brinker. In addition to that, Finny is also not ready to accept that a war is soon to take place. He tends to seek refuge in his own fantasy world. An in-

does suggest that Finny tends to feel that everything is good when it is actually not! Finny considers his friend faultless but Gene is not! But when Finny accepts the harsh fact in reality, he forgives Gene, and thus goodness wins.

Gene is rewarded for his confession in the long run. This essentially rejects the pessimistic interpretation of goodness's destiny. Although Gene ultimately confesses what he did to Finny, yet Finny does not break ties with him. In fact, after having overcome his guilt, Gene is in a better position to develop rapport with Finny. His confession is an overt expression of goodness that earns him the reward of forgiveness.

In light of this discussion, it becomes clear that goodness is not destined to be defeated. The goodness Finny seeks refuge in is actually an escape from reality, so its departure can not be considered as defeat. In reality, goodness overpowers evil. Goodness is hope, a ray of light that is not meant to be defeated.

Works Cited:

Knowles, John. *A Separate Peace*. Perfection Learning, 2003. Print.