English II Honors

Into the Wild - Summer Reading Assignment #1

Due Date: August 1, 2014

PLEASE RETURN ALL ASSIGNMENTS TO MR. ROACH’S MAIN OFFICE MAILBOX

Book: Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer

Part I:

Directions: After reading the book, answer each question thoroughly in an extended paragraph using specific examples from the text.

1. Why did McCandless abandon his cash, identification, and Datsun?

2. Why does Chris change his traveling name to “Alexander Supertramp”? Is this anything symbolic about this name?

3. What role did his father’s affair play in his reckless actions?

4. What responsibility do the people he met along the journey have in McCandless’s death?

5. Support or criticize the author’s claim that “engaging in risky behavior is a rite of passage in our culture...”

Part II:

Extension Assignment:

Answer the following in a complete essay.

In Into the Wild, Jon Krakauer admits that Chris McCandless was rash, but he insists he "wasn't a nutcase, he wasn't a sociopath, he wasn't an outcast. McCandless was something else -- although precisely what is hard to say. A pilgrim, perhaps" (85).

What word would you use to define McCandless? Use one of Krakauer’s terms or offer your own term. Note passages as you review the text to support your central claim.

Contact Info: Please refer all questions to jroach@manasquanboe.org
Cat’s Cradle - Summer Reading Assignment #2

Due Date: September 5, 2014

Book: Cat’s Cradle by Kurt Vonnegut

Part I:

Directions: After reading the book, answer each question thoroughly in an extended paragraph using specific examples from the text.

1. How would you describe Bokononism?
2. What do you think the cat’s cradle symbolizes in the novel? Why is the book titled Cat’s Cradle?
3. Is John any better (more intelligent, moral, responsible, etc.) than the other characters in the novel?
4. Was Felix Hoenikker an evil man? Are any of the Hoenikkers evil?
5. Is humanity inevitably doomed, according to the novel? Why or why not? What are the biggest problems facing humankind?

Part II:

Extension Assignment:

Create a large-scale, full-color poster that details your own karass (a group of people who, unknown to them, are working together to do God's will. The people can be thought of as fingers in a cat's cradle). Indicate what might be the two wampeters (waxing and waning central points) of your own karass, as well as at least one granfalloon (a false karass, i.e. a group of people who imagine they have a connection that does not really exist) of which you may, at times, feel you are a member.

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