Coming of Age—Discussion Questions

Congratulations! _____________________________________________ Period: ________

You have been selected by Mrs. Jones to be the:

LEADER     CO-LEADER

For our: _______________________________________________________________ discussion on:

______________________________________

DATE

Please come to class with at least 3 (THREE) discussion questions written about the assigned reading and ready to write on the whiteboard. It is your job to facilitate the discussion and make sure the class is staying on task. Avoid the urge to dominate the conversation, and also avoid the urge simply to pose questions. Your input and textual evidence is pivotal to the success of the discussion. Remember to choose questions that will spark a discussion about the reading, questions that could have more than one answer, and questions that require your peers to reference the text. Good luck! ☺

1. All 3 authors display an obvious theme of coming of age/maturity. What about maturity is the author trying to point out?
2. In all 3 short stories, there are examples of personification that have significance. List some examples and explain how/why they are important to characterization, central theme, conflict, etc.
3. **Longing** is a key theme in all three short stories. How does the longing for something/someone relate to the coming of age theme?
4. In “Two Kinds”, Jing-Mei fails at everything in her mother’s eyes (point of view). What is the significance in these failures and how do they relate to Jing-Mei’s coming of age?
5. Joyce begins “Araby” with an example of an allusion comparing the backyard to the Garden of Eden. He then describes the narrator’s love and says it was “like a summon to all his foolish blood.” Was Joyce trying to compare the protagonist’s girl he is in love with to God or to the serpent as in the Garden of Eden?
6. Why do you think the authors included obsession connected to each protagonist’s goal? Does this connect to the theme?
7. Why in both “Through the Tunnel” and “Araby” does the author choose to use light and dark imagery? What does this symbolize?
8. What roles do parents/adult figures play in these stories?
9. List distinct parallels between characters possession similar traits and significant allusions. Explain how the comparison/contrast develops the theme of “coming of age.”
10. List and analyze symbolism examples for the author’s purpose.
11. In “Araby”, Joyce uses complex diction to provide a richer, more interesting text. List repetitive imagery/diction and explain how the cultured combination of figurative language and word choice further enhances the plot.
12. In all 3 short stories, the protagonists are influenced or pressured by an outside force. Why do you think they are so vulnerable to the world and what kind of impact does that have on them and their surroundings?
13. What tones are demonstrated throughout all 3 stories? How do they contribute to the coming of age theme?
14. Why do the author’s create parallels between characteristics of children and adults and how do these characteristics impact the development of the story?
15. Thinking about the author’s backgrounds, why do you think they wrote about a character overcoming an obstacle? How are the author’s struggles related to the conflicts in the story?
16. **Blindness** is a motif mostly seen in “Araby”, yet there is evidence of this idea of “enlightenment” in the other stories as well. What is the significance of this motif in relationship to coming of age?