

## ***The Inferno: Written Exam (Final Lecture)***

This concept is much the same as the one that drove your *Gilgamesh* written exam: you're composing a lecture for a Myth/Sci-Fi class. This time, however, your class has already finished reading: I'm entrusting you with the responsibility of finishing the unit off in style! Since everyone in the class has already read the book and understood its plot, ***no summary is allowed***. You may make allusions and references to your heart's content, but you are absolutely not allowed to simply re-tell the plot.

The closing message to a long unit should leave your students thinking about what you said *and* what they read. Good luck.

You gave me wings to fly, then took away my sky.<sup>1</sup>

Man is the only animal that laughs and weeps; for he is the only animal that is struck by the difference between what things are and what they might have been.<sup>2</sup>

The seven deadly sins are: Politics without principle; Wealth without work; Commerce without morality; Pleasure without conscience; Education without character; Science without humanity; Worship without sacrifice.<sup>3</sup>

The best way out is always through.<sup>4</sup>

Two prisoners whose cells adjoin communicate with each other by knocking on the wall. The wall is the thing which separates them but is also their means of communication. It is the same with us and God: every separation is a link.<sup>5</sup>

I met on the street a very poor young man who was in love. His hat was old, his coat was worn, his elbows were in holes; water trickled through his shoes, and the stars through his soul.<sup>6</sup>

Very seldom will a person give up on himself. He continues to have hope because he knows he has the potential for change... Yet people are very quick to give up on friends, and especially on their spouses, to declare them hopeless, and to either walk away or do nothing more than resign themselves to a bad situation.<sup>7</sup>

As I grow older, I pay less attention to what men say. I just watch what they do.<sup>8</sup>

There are some griefs so loud they could bring down the sky, and there are griefs so still none knows how deep they lie.<sup>9</sup>

Everyone has a gripping stranger in their lives, a stranger who unwittingly possesses a bizarre hold over you. Maybe it's the kid in cutoffs who mows your lawn, or the woman wearing white shoulders who stamps your book at the library – a stranger who, if you were to come home and find a message from them on your answering machine saying, "Drop everything. I love you. Come away with me now to Florida," you'd follow them.<sup>10</sup>

Human compassion is equal to human cruelty, and it is up to each of us to tip the balance.<sup>11</sup>

The farther backward you can look, the farther forward you are likelier to see.<sup>12</sup>

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.<sup>13</sup>

It is easy to say what you would do in given circumstances if you know perfectly well that those circumstances will never arise.<sup>14</sup>

Most people believe that the Christian commandments, e.g. to love one's neighbor as oneself, are intentionally a little too severe – like setting a clock half an hour ahead to make sure of not being late in the morning.<sup>15</sup>

Always act as if you were seen.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Leonora Speyer

<sup>2</sup> William Hazlitt

<sup>3</sup> Mahatma Gandhi

<sup>4</sup> Robert Frost

<sup>5</sup> Simone Weil

<sup>6</sup> Victor Hugo

<sup>7</sup> Hugh Prather

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Carnegie

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<sup>9</sup> May Sarton

<sup>10</sup> Douglas Copeland

<sup>11</sup> Alice Walker

<sup>12</sup> Winston Churchill

<sup>13</sup> Desmond Tutu

<sup>14</sup> Henry Cecil

<sup>15</sup> Søren Kierkegaard

<sup>16</sup> Baltasar Gracián