

Prompt:

What do you make of the men in Joyce's story "The Dead"? Consider the living ones and dead, and pick one to focus on. Is he a good guy? A loser? Successful? A failure? Upstanding citizen? Reprobate? What is being suggested about Irish manhood here? How might it relate to Ireland's contemporary, prostrate position within the British Empire? How do the men compare to the women?

Gabriel Conroy

It's interesting that Joyce chose Gabriel Conroy as the main character for "The Dead". He initially comes across as being somebody that is exceptional (as many lead characters tend to be), but instead the reader begins to discover that he is something less than that.

His speech given after dinner is delivered strongly and convincingly, yet it consumes his thoughts earlier on and the reader is given the strong impression that the success of it is as much for himself as it is for the people he is supposed to hold dearly. Meanwhile he writes book reviews for *The Daily Express*, a conservative paper opposed to the struggle for Irish independence (2236), and instead of expressing an opinion about the nationalist stirrings in Ireland he communicates his discomfort about the topic. At the end of our reading Gabriel learns a history of his wife that he never knew or suspected, and is faced with something that is his familiar reality, something which he has always avoided and will avoid again.

Re: The Dead

The "Living" men at the party do not seem to live up to the "Dead" men who are mentioned throughout the night. It seems that this story suggests that the past traditions are stronger than the new generations.

I was struggling to come up with an explanation for the title, but you hit the nail on the head. The characters we see are something less than they people and times they compare themselves to and hold in regard.

It's interesting to note that this was published in 1914, before many of the events that are discussed in W.B. Yeats's poems, and the establishment of the Irish Republic in 1919. It's like a very expressive peak into the average day around the time.

Re: Week 16

Although no angel, Freddy seems to have the ability to judge people for their ability and not because of their outward appearance (Ibid 2242). This is reiterated when Gabriel says that Freddy is "a decent sort of chap after all" (Ibid 2252).

Yes, but Freddy did not have a sip from his lemonade, given to him by Mr. Browne, and we all know what that means...

...that there's an exceptionally warm glass of sour lemonade somewhere in Ireland right now.

(It's the last week of responses and this the best I've got right now. If this is any indication of the quality of my second paper, then at least it will be funny.)

Re: Quiz Answers

Yeats compares Helen of Troy to the object of his affection, Maud Gonne, to whom he proposed marriage many times in his adult life. She never consents and instead marries Major John MacBride who was executed for his role in the Irish revolt of 1916 against Britain.

Yeats alludes to the centuries of efforts and sacrifices made by many nationalists for Ireland to be separated and removed of British dominance. The times are troubling, however, and the development is not as many had imagined it to be.