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Ender’s Game – My Favorite Quotes

1. *“Ender nodded. It was a lie, of course, that it wouldn’t hurt a bit. But since adults always said it when it* was *going to hurt, he could count on that statement as an accurate prediction of the future. Sometimes lies were more dependable than truth.” (2)*

This quote happens very early in the novel when Ender is first getting his monitor, a device attached to the base of his skull that allows the government to see and hear everything he does, taken out. The monitor, it is later revealed in the novel, is in order for the government to be able to choose potential military leaders from among the populace. They then take the candidates to be trained. Ender’s views that are shown in the above passage about adults allow the author to advance the character of Ender by allowing the reader to realize that Ender does not think the same way as most seven year olds. This passage also packs a punch because there are times in life where a person realizes that sometimes a person lying regularly is more useful than a person who tells the truth half of the time: they can know what to expect from who they are talking to.

1. *“Ender was trying to figure out a way to forestall vengeance. To keep them from taking him in a pack tomorrow. I have to win this now, and for all time, or I’ll fight it every day and it will get worse and worse.” (7)*

The viewpoint Ender has on having to finish his enemy off for good is a motif that is repeated throughout the novel. This passage occurs after Ender is able to defeat a bully, a boy much larger than him with his own group off followers, in a fight. Ender realizes that if he just lets the other boy get up and walk away then he will have to continue fighting the same battle over and over again. After he comes to this realization Ender then proceeds to pummel the boy who is lying helpless on the ground. Afterward Ender is very shaken up by what he has done, despite knowing that it was necessary, and his actions and reactions show what kind of a person he is and how he will react to similar situations later on in the novel.

1. *‘”So, what are you going to do?”*

*“Persuade him that he want to come with us more than he wants to stay with her.”*

*“How will you do that?”*

*“I’ll lie to him.”*

*“And if that doesn’t work?”*

*“Then I’ll tell the truth. We’re allowed to do that in emergencies. We can’t plan for everything, you know.”’ (16)*

This passage is from a conversation that Colonel Graff, an old man in charge of Ender’s education and well being, is having with one of his aids or associates. Ender does not want to go to battle school because he is very attached to his sister Valentine. The school administrators are discussing how they will convince Ender to enter the program anyway. This passage actually contains a little bit of satire because of their comment on how telling the truth is a last resort. The truth in this case is the fact that Ender is in a lot of ways humanity’s last hope against the Buggers, an alien race who had invaded Earth in the past.

1. *“Of course not. So I’ll put it bluntly. Human beings are free except when humanity needs them. Maybe humanity needs you. To do something. Maybe humanity needs* me ­*– to find out what you’re good for. We might both do despicable things, Ender, but if humankind survives, then we were good tools.”(35)*

Colonel Graff on the launch up to battle school alienates Ender from all of the other kids in his launch group. Ender confronts Graff outside of the shuttle and asks him why Graff is trying to make him miserable. Graff tells him that *“I’m sorry if you’re lonely and afraid. But the buggers are out there . . . humanity doesn’t want to die.”* He is letting Ender know that in a lot of sense the ends justify the means when you talk about the survival of our species. It is worth having a few individuals suffer rather than have the entire species to be destroyed. Throughout the novel Graff struggles with the things that he is having to do to the children in the battle school program, especially Ender, and you can see this line of reasoning in his actions and conversations.

1. *“But I do care, thought Ender. The only reason I’m here is so that a bugger won’t shoot out Valentine’s eye, wont blast her head open . . . the way it happens in my worst nightmares, in my worst nights . . . I want to go home. (93)*

This passage summarizes the reasons that Enders stays and continues on through the hardship. It is the same reason that most soldiers fight, not for glory, fame, gore, or hatred for the enemy, rather they fight for those left at home. The above passage is especially powerful for me because my father was deployed to Iraq and when I was younger I always wondered why he had to go. He went for me, my family and every other family in our nation. Those ideals are the reason that I want to also serve in the military. I want to go for those I will have to leave behind. Ender feels much the same way and it is the motivation to protect Valentine from the Buggers that keeps him going through the trials of battle school.

1. *“Right now is the time I can shape events. The world is always a democracy in times of flux, and the man with the best voice will win. Everybody thinks Hitler got to power because of his armies, because they were willing to kill, and that’s partly true, because in the real world power is always built on the threat of death and dishonor. But mostly he got to power on words, on the right word on the right time.” (131)*

Peter Wiggin, Ender’s older brother, is left on Earth while Ender is away at battle school. Rather than staying inactive Peter decided to recruit the help of his sister Valentine to gain influence on a global scale. He realizes that around the world forces are going into motion that may allow him to take a major leadership role. Seeing patterns in history compared to the day in which he lives he decides he will be the next Alexander the Great, Napoleon, or Hitler.

1. *“Forget it Mazer. I don’t care if I pass your test, I don’t care if I follow your rules. If you can cheat, so can I. I won’t let you beat me unfairly – I’ll beat you unfairly first.”*

Ender is put up against what seems to be an impossible task. He has been moved to command school and is placed in charge of a fleet of virtual ships. Mazer Rakham, an old man who was the commander of the forces from the last Bugger invasion, has been setting up situations for Ender that have been getting progressively harder. When this situation is shown Ender realizes that in warfare or any other real world application you can throw the rules out of the window. Ender ends up taking huge risks with large losses inflicted on his ships but is able to destroy the enemy planet in the end.

1. *“So they boarded a starship and went from world to world. Wherever they stopped, he was always Andrew Wiggin , itinerant speaker for the dead, and she was always Valentine, historical errant , writing down the stories of the living while Ender spoke the stories of the dead. And always Ender carried with him a dry white cocoon, looking for the world where the hive-queen could awaken and thrive in peace. He looked a long time.” (323-4)*

The last passage in the book carries a lot of weight behind it. Ender has defeated the Buggers and has boarded the first colony ship to a new world for humans to colonize. He finds a life size model of the giant’s corpse and the tower at the end of the world from the mind game in his childhood. Inside the tower he finds an egg sac for a queen bugger. Ender establishes a mind link with the bugger and it tells him their story. He writes a book with the buggers’ story and sends it back to Earth under the penname The Speaker for the Dead. Ender then went on and traveled with his sister to all the different colonies, trying to find a place for the queen to hatch in peace.

1. *Quote that best shows the spirit of the book – “In the moment when I truly understand my enemy, understand him well enough to defeat him, then in that very moment I also love him . . . And then, in that very moment when I love them . . . I* destroy *them. I make it impossible for them to ever hurt me again. I grind them and grind them until they don’t* exist*.”*

In this passage Ender is given leave on Earth between when he left battle school and when he has to go to command school. He is completely defeated and no longer has the heart to put into training any more. His sister comes to the lake where he is and is talking with him when he says this passage. This is what, in the end, the book is really about. When you decide that you have an enemy there is always something good inside them. At the end of the book Ender discovers how to defeat the Buggers but at the same time he also falls in love with what they are. When he discovers that he has killed them all it devastates him. He is stuck in a vicious cycle, whenever he finally understands someone he finds he has to destroy them to keep himself safe.

10, Final Letter

Since I first read Ender’s Game when I was in sixth grade it has fascinated me. This book makes us look at our humanity, at what makes us who we are and whether or not something else could still be considered human. If an organism has intelligent thoughts and feelings does it deserve the same respect as us humans? Also, Ender is set up to be the ultimate leader and by looking at the book I have been able to pick up techniques and examples to use in real life to be an effective leader and follower. Sometimes I feel a lot of the same emotions and struggles that Ender goes through. This assignment has allowed me to better look into the book and the techniques that Orson Scott Card uses to attempt to explain to us the meaning of humanity.