

### Character Analysis of "Harrison Bergeron"

Directions: Use the table to analyze the main characters of the text. Cite text evidence.

Character	Appearance	Dialogue/ Actions	Point of View/ Perspective
George Bergeron	<p>George has a mental handicap installed in his ear, which makes loud noises to prevent him from being smarter or having an advantage in his ability to think compared to others who have average or less than average intelligence.</p> <p>He is watching television and engages in conversation with his wife as the sounds go off and interrupt his thoughts. They appear to be painful, as the text states: "It was such a doozy that George was white and trembling, and tears stood on the rims of his red eyes."</p> <p>In addition to the mental handicap, he is also described as having "forty-seven pounds of birdshot in a canvas bag, which was padlocked around George's neck."</p>	<p>"All of a sudden you look so tired," said Hazel. "Why don't you stretch out on the sofa, so's you can rest your handicap bag on the pillows, honeybunch." She was referring to the forty-seven pounds of birdshot in a canvas bag, which was padlocked around George's neck. "Go on and rest the bag for a little while," she said. "I don't care if you're not equal to me for a while."</p> <p>When Hazel suggests George take off his handicaps, he refuses. He says, "I don't mind it," he said. "I don't notice it any more. It's just a part of me."</p> <p>He also tries to explain why he doesn't take them off, even at home: "Two years in prison and two thousand dollars fine for every ball I took out," said George. "I don't call that a bargain."</p> <p>His words suggest that he doesn't remove his handicaps because he</p>	<p>Despite the fact that the handicaps cause him pain and keep him from being able to think and engage in a conversation for long, George thinks that the handicaps are necessary. He worries about what would happen to society if people took them off, referring to the time when people were competitive with each other as the "dark ages."</p>

		<p>doesn't want others in the society to do so: "If I tried to get away with it," said George, "then other people'd get away with it-and pretty soon we'd be right back to the dark ages again, with everybody competing against everybody else. You wouldn't like that, would you?"</p> <p>His words suggest that he agrees that the handicaps are necessary and good for society: "There you are," said George. The minute people start cheating on laws, what do you think happens to society?"</p>	
Hazel Bergeron	<p>Hazel is described as having "perfectly average intelligence, which meant she couldn't think about anything except in short bursts."</p> <p>She sits and watches television with George and is described as simple in her thoughts and emotions.</p>	<p>Hazel's dialogue and actions show that she has some envy in wanting to know what others hear from their handicaps, and also that she seems to applaud mediocrity and the fact that people are at least trying. She says, "I'd think it would be real interesting, hearing all the different sounds," said Hazel a little envious. "All the things they think up."</p>	<p>Hazel feels bad for George because of his handicaps, but her words and actions suggest that she approves of the handicaps so that she is the same as others in society.</p>

		<p>When watching the television and the poor performance, she says, ""That's all right-" Hazel said of the announcer, "he tried. That's the big thing. He tried to do the best he could with what God gave him. He should get a nice raise for trying so hard."</p> <p>She also seems to genuinely care for George and tells him that she can take the handicaps out because she knows they pain him. However, she is also easily persuaded by him that it would be a bad thing for her and society if he did so. She said, "If you could just take a few out when you came home from work," said Hazel. "I mean-you don't compete with anybody around here. You just set around."</p>	
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<p>Harrison Bergeron</p>	<p>Harrison is described as a threat who is plotting to overthrow the government. The announcer describes him as, “ He is a genius and an athlete, is under-handicapped, and should be regarded as extremely dangerous.”</p> <p>The photo of Harrison shows that he is seven feet tall and wears the most, heaviest, and somewhat ridiculous handicaps of anyone to compensate for his strength, intelligence, and beauty.</p> <p>“The rest of Harrison's appearance was Halloween and hardware. Nobody had ever born heavier handicaps. He had outgrown hindrances faster than the H-G men could think them up. Instead of a little ear radio for a mental handicap, he wore a tremendous pair of earphones, and spectacles with thick wavy lenses. The spectacles were intended to make him not only half blind, but to give him whanging headaches besides.</p>	<p>Harrison comes into the dance studio and declares: "I am the Emperor!" cried Harrison. "Do you hear? I am the Emperor! Everybody must do what I say at once!" He stamped his foot and the studio shook.</p> <p>He tears the straps of his handicaps and removes all of them. He then selects a ballerina to be his “Empress!” and commands the musicians to play music; stopping them after they begin to ensure they play without handicaps and to the level they are capable of.</p> <p>He dances with the ballerina in a way that is described as beyond graceful, and the two “kiss the ceiling.”</p>	<p>Harrison disagrees with society and wants to be able to live to his potential. Not only does he take his handicaps off, but he does so on live television. This suggests that he wants to change society and incite some sort of revolution against the Handicapper General and government so that people can embrace their differences and live to their full potential.</p>
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	<p>Scrap metal was hung all over him. Ordinarily, there was a certain symmetry, a military neatness to the handicaps issued to strong people, but Harrison looked like a walking junkyard. In the race of life, Harrison carried three hundred pounds. And to offset his good looks, the H-G men required that he wear at all times a red rubber ball for a nose, keep his eyebrows shaved off, and cover his even white teeth with black caps at snaggle-tooth random. “</p>		
Handicapper General	<p>She is described as having “unceasing vigilance” in making sure that everyone obeys the law and wears their handicaps.</p>	<p>It was then that Diana Moon Glampers, the Handicapper General, came into the studio with a double-barreled ten-gauge shotgun. She fired twice, and the Emperor and the Empress were dead before they hit the floor.</p> <p>Diana Moon Glampers loaded the gun again. She aimed it at the musicians and told them they had ten seconds to get their handicaps back on.</p>	<p>The Handicapper General believes in the laws of society. She is willing to murder people on live television in order to preserve the system of handicapping.</p>

Ballerina who dances with Harrison	The ballerina is described as “swaying like a willow” as she walks to Harrison. When he removes her handicaps, she is described as “blindingly beautiful.”	They dance in a way that appears to defy gravity: “They leaped like deer on the moon” and kissed the ceiling.	The ballerina volunteers to dance with Harrison, which suggests that, like him, she disagrees with the handicaps.

Compare and contrast Harrison Bergeron and Jonas in *The Giver*? Cite text evidence to support your response.

Harrison Bergeron and Jonas are both individuals who take actions to fight against the leaders of their society and preserve individual differences and choices. In “Harrison Bergeron,” Harrison declares himself the Emperor and rips off all of his physical handicaps to show society what could be possible if they embraced each other’s differences rather than allowing themselves to be handicapped in the name of equality. This is similar to the actions that Jonas takes in *The Giver*, because he decides to flee from the community and sacrifice himself as a way to release the memories back to the community in the hopes that people will realize that Sameness keeps them from living full and meaningful lives. The two characters are different in the way that they respond and fight back against their societies. Harrison Bergeron actively challenges the government on live television, which shows that he believes it is necessary to confront the government in a way that is visible to others. Jonas, on the other hand, is secretive in his actions to try and change the community. He must disappear to Elsewhere in hopes that this will release the memories that he has received and lead to change in the community.