

According to Leper Lepellier in A Separate Peace, “Everything has to evolve or else it perishes” (117). This suggests that one has to adapt to one’s surroundings or else one will not survive. This is true because in A Separate Peace by John Knowles, Finny perishes because he fails to evolve into adulthood by refusing to see conflict.

The invention of blitzball represents Finny’s childhood innocence. After starting the game of blitzball, Gene is confused about the rules of the game. Finny tells him “There aren’t any teams in blitzball...we’re all enemies” (38). There are no teams in blitzball, which means no one can lose. The fact that Finny creates a game in which no one can lose is symbolic of Finny’s refusal to see conflict because having a winner and a loser is a conflict. This showcases Finny’s childhood innocence.

The conversation between Gene and Finny in Boston after Finny’s first fall symbolizes Finny’s transition from childhood to adulthood. Gene tells Finny that he jounced the limb on purpose so that Finny would fall. After he says this, Gene thinks “[Finny] looked older than I had ever seen him” and then Finny says, “Of course you didn’t” (70). Finny refuses to believe what Gene has told him. This is because believing Gene would be like admitting there was a conflict between the two of them, which Finny cannot do. The fact that Finny looks older than Gene had ever seen Finny look shows that Finny is starting to grow into an adult, but he still refuses to see conflict. In this way, Finny is not transitioning into adulthood and therefore, he is not evolving either.

Finny's death represents his failure to become an adult. After the surgery, Dr. Stanpole tells Gene, "As I was moving the bone some of the marrow must have escaped into his blood stream and gone directly to his heart and stopped it" (193). Finny dies from the surgery because when Dr. Stanpole tried to set Finny's leg, there was a complication. This happens right after Finny admitted that Gene had in fact purposely jounced the limb. Finny's death is symbolic of the fact that having to evolve, or become an adult, and face conflict was too much for him, so he literally perished.

Finny's death in A Separate Peace by John Knowles shows that Leper Lepellier is right and that everyone has to evolve, or else one will perish. Finny literally perished because of his failure to evolve into an adult. He had a childhood innocence about him, which prevented him from seeing conflict. When he should have seen conflict, he refused to see it, which prevented him from fully transitioning into adulthood. After finally seeing the conflict between himself and Gene, he dies because he cannot evolve and having to face this conflict causes his death.