



The Ball - Assignments von Michael Gonszar, Frankfurt

1 What we see – Exercises in Observation and Description

1.1 Describe the first scene of the film introducing the two main characters!

Who?

You might find the following words and phrases useful:

1.2 Where are we?

backyard lane / brick buildings / wooden gates / unpainted window frames / curtains / terraced houses / garbage bins / poor neighbourhood

Describe the setting!

a girl (Amy) - curly hair / age / on her own / dressed in / moving

a boy (Jack) - smiling face / at home/ behind the window / standing still

to wear / to appear / to discover/ to observe/ to look up / to spot / to wave at/to sb

to play soccer / to score a goal / to cheer / to rejoice over sth / to withdraw / to hide / to prance about / to celebrate a goal

1.3 Now, watch the complete movie and carry on with your collection of observations:

The Items

a leather football, given to her by / a hole in the gate / a fence / a torch / a table-soccer set / tokens / table-soccer men / to destroy / a toy sword / a weird mask / a horror creature / light signals

What? Props and their stories



2 Understanding the Story

Actions and Attitudes

to kick a football about / to play with sth. / to be enthusiastic about sth / to go in for sth. / to impress s.o. / to give sth. to s.o. as a surprise / to lure sb. out of sth / to demand / to communicate with sb./ to make signals / to give a token of friendship to s.o. / to provoke / to defend / to hide behind / to watch secretly / to long for a message / to give a signal / to place / to hide / to discover

2.1 What does the ball mean to Amy? What do the table soccer tokens mean to Jack?

2.2 Why does Jack put them in places where Amy can find them? Why does Amy destroy the tokens?

2.3 He uses his mask and his toy sword twice; in which situations and for what purpose?

2.4 Which role does the ball have in the final scene?

3 Minor Characters and their Functions



Bully - a person who uses his or her strength or power to frighten or hurt weaker people
- to bully sb into doing sth

3.1 Jack`s mother

3.2 The other girls / the bullies

What do they do for the plot? Which purpose do they serve?

What do we learn about Amy and Jack through their appearance?

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4 How? Emotions and Behaviour

Curious - curiosity / to stare at s.o. / to glare at sb (silently) / to despise / to hate - hatred / angry - anger / shy – shyness / to hesitate - hesitation / excited – excitement / disappointed – disappointment / to envy - envious / upset / scared / to feel rejected / furious / to be at a loss / to feel helpless / to be puzzled / surprised / bewildered / to show courage / to be intimidated / defiant / to be embarrassed - embarrassment

4.1 Stop the movie to look at the still pictures of crucial moments.

4.2 Which feelings can you detect in the faces, in the physical postures? What does the body language and the behaviour of the two protagonists tell you about the emotions of Amy and Jack?

5 A Narrative - Telling the Complete Story

Now give a full synopsis of the plot using your observations and the words and phrases you have learnt.

Tell the story either

- from a narrator`s point of view
- or through Amy`s or Jack`s perspective

You could start like this:

***It was a boring Sunday afternoon last autumn.
I took my soccer ball***



Use the following words and phrases:

Soon after / suddenly / out of the blue / meanwhile / quite unexpectedly / while I was ... / no sooner / consequently / therefore / however / before / when / as / regardless / despite / nevertheless

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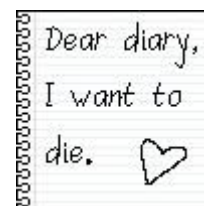


6 Trying to Understand - the Characters and Their Actions

- 6.1 Jack is mute. He is only used to and has been trained to sign language. How does he try to communicate with Amy in the different situations? What is the content of his different messages? How does she interpret them?
- 6.2 Why do the girls dislike and provoke Amy? How does she react?
- 6.3 At one point Amy says: "Why don't you talk to me?" How does Jack feel and behave at that moment?

7 Imagination - Creative Writing and Acting

- 7.1 Conceive and write down Jack's diary.
- 7.2 Amy talks to her mother after the 2nd encounter with the bully girls.



- 7.3 Create little love letters/letters of friendship between Amy and Jack.
- 7.4 How difficult it is sometimes to
get one's needs met
to communicate one's feelings in an appropriate way
- 7.5 Create a parallel story which shows your own experiences.
Turn it into a film script (try to work in groups!)

8 "Communication" - Topics for Presentation and Discussion

- 8.1 The problem of finding a friend: "Amy and Jack" and other examples!
- 8.2 Handicapped people and people without handicaps: How can they meet?
- 8.3 Bullying at school? When and in which way does it happen? How do you deal with it? What are your experiences and attitudes?

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9 The Grammar of Pictures - A Film and Its Tools

Instead of having a narrator like in a novel or short story a film tells the story by the following means:

- a) **Camera** Shot (Einstellung), Position, Movement, Angle
- b) **Composition** (what is shown in the picture: set, actors etc.)
- c) **Editing of Scenes** (Montage)
- d) **Sound** (background noises, music etc.)



- 9.1 Which film tools did you observe in “The Ball”?
What can you say about the intention/ the effect?

Popular movies are usually constructed according to the following pattern of “The Hero`s Journey”:

- a) the ordinary world
- b) the call to adventure
- c) refusal of the call / the reluctant hero
- d) crossing the first threshold
- e) tests, allies, and enemies
- f) approach to the inmost cave
- g) the supreme ordeal
- h) reward / seizing the sword
- i) resurrection
- j) return to the ordinary world



- 9.2 To what extent does “The Ball” follow this pattern? Does this analysis help to understand and appreciate the movie and the understanding of Jack`s development?