

Black House: A Novel Study Guide

Black House: A Novel by Stephen King

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Plot Summary

The Black House is a composite by Steven King and Peter Straub. The Black House holds the entrance from Jack Sawyer's world to a parallel universe called the Territories. Jack must unlock memories of his past while trying to save the future of both worlds.

Dale Gilbertson is the police chief in the town of French Landing, Wisconsin. Dale Gilbertson is investigating the kidnapping and murders of several local children but is in over his head. He asks his friend, Jack Sawyer, a former L.A.P.D detective, to help him with the case. Jack is reluctant at first, having retired early believing he was having a mental break down due to the stress of the job. The murderer has been dubbed the Fisherman because of the likeness between the current murders and some that happened in the nineteen-twenties.

Jack is friends with Dale Gilbertson's blind uncle Henry. Henry Leyden is a local radio personality. Henry encourages Jack to help with the investigation to help calm the town if nothing else. Jack receives a package from the killer that has a shoe with a foot still inside belonging to a little girl named Irma with a note to Jack telling him where to find the body. Dale soon has the investigation taken away from him by the state police but continues to investigate with Jack's help along with a local biker gang, the Thunder Five. The leader of the Thunder Five, Beezer, lost his daughter to the Fisherman.

A boy in the town, Tyler Marshal, is kidnapped and his mother is taken to an psychiatric hospital. Jack soon finds out that Tyler is a breaker and is wanted by a evil being called the Crimson King. Jack begins to remember his past and with the help of his friends finds the truth of the story. Henry Leyden is helping Jack and Dale with the case when he is killed by the Fisherman but not before leaving a message to Jack as to the identity of the Fisherman.

Jack, Beezer, Dale and Doc, another member of the Thunder Five, head to the Black House to save Tyler and stop the evil that wants to destroy all the worlds that exist. Once they are in the Black House they are able to find Tyler, who has already killed the Fisherman, also known as Charles Burnside. Jack kills Mr. Munshun, the one that sent Charles Burnside to kill the children. With Mr. Munshun dead Tyler destroys the machine that the Crimson King had constructed to destroy all worlds. Jack returns to his world with Beezer, Doc, and Dale but is shot by the wife of a man that Jack sent to prison earlier in his career. A friend of Jacks from the Territories, Speedy, is able to take Jack to the Territories where Jack is able to heal from the mortal wounds he received but is never again able to live in his own world without the wounds returning in a matter of days.



Part 1: Chapter 1-3

Part 1: Chapter 1-3 Summary

The Black House is a composite by Steven King and Peter Straub. The Black House holds the entrance from Jack Sawyer's world to a parallel universe called the Territories. Jack must unlock memories of his past while trying to save the future of both worlds.

In chapter one, the Town of French Landing, Wisconsin is being attacked by a killer that is taking children in the town. The Thunder Five, a local biker gang, have made a sign threatening the murderer if they find him. At the French Landing police station the deputies are discussing the murders and the write up the local paper has given. The reporter, Wendell Green, has dubbed the murderer "The Fisherman" because of the similarities between the current murders and those that were committed in the twenties by a man named Albert Fish. The Maxton Care Facility readies itself for the annual Strawberry Festival. The Maxton Care Facility is the place where Charles Burnside is a resident.

Chapter two explains that six years before the murders began Charles Burnside arrived at the Maxton Care Facility with his stay at the Maxton Care Facility mysteriously paid for. Burnside was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Although it is unknown to everyone, Charles Burnside is also Carl Bierstone. Carl Bierstone has a secret, evil past that happened in Chicago. Charles has been eaten away by the Alzheimer's until the point that Carl slowly is able to take control of the body again. This leaves Charles riddled by the disease for part of the time and completely lucid for other moments.

Not yet found by the police is the remains of Irma Freneau at an abandoned eatery. She is a young girl and the body is alone except for a dog who sits eating one of her feet. The foot was left although the middle section of her leg was cut off and taken.

Meanwhile in Libertyville at the Marshal household, Fred, the father, reads about the local murders. Fred reads about a local baker that has found mutilated remains of a seven year old and the pieces strung up from the rafters of a chicken house. Several pieces of the child had been bitten. As he finishes the paper he turns his thoughts to his wife, Judy, and their son, Tyler. Judy's behavior has become increasingly irrational of late and Fred fears that the murders will add to her stress. Fred also worries about their son Tyler's safety with a child murderer on the loose and warns Tyler to stay with groups and not walk out alone. Tyler also realizes that something isn't right about his mother and worries the same as his father does.

Chapter three takes place at the local radio station, KDCU, where Henry Leyden gets ready for his sports report. Henry uses the name of George Rathbun to give the sports report. Henry also uses the name the Wisconsin Rat to do a punk music hour. Although Henry is blind, he is in no way handicapped. Henry's nephew is Dale Gilbertson, Chief of Police for French Landing. Dale has become obsessed with the case studying it



every free moment he finds. Dale knows the reason the murder has been likened to the Fisher killings. Both killers strangled their child victims and then ate pieces of their posteriors. Also both killers wrote letters in disturbing detail to the victim's families describing what was done. The letters are almost word for word exactly alike.

Dale has asked for help from the state police but received very little. Dale had met Jack Sawyer four years earlier but at the time had been unsure what to make of him. With the murderer on the loose Dale desperately wants Jack to put his eyes to the case as a former detective. Jack had put away a murderer while Jack was a member of the L.A.P.D. The murderer, Thornberg Kinderling, had been a native to French Landing.

Part 1: Chapter 1-3 Analysis

The reader sees much information given at this point in the story regarding the actual town layout. While this will be important later on, it will seem overly descriptive at times with little dialog. The reader will see that the author has the reader flying from one place to another. The relevance of having the reader fly as apposed to just introducing people and places is not clear. Later in the story the method of travel will be explained to the reader although the creature that is flying "us" around (as described by the authors), doesn't realize that the reader is flying with it.

The reader has seen at this point that Henry Leyden is an unusual character. He will prove to have substantial importance in the story due greatly to the fact that he is blind. He will also prove a loyal friend to Jack Sawyer.

The Maxton Care Facility is not a significant place in regards to the Territories or the murder other than the fact that it houses Charles Burnside. The reader will find that they are seemingly willing to take his money and keep him there but don't appear to care that he suddenly is cured of an incurable disease. There is no mention made later on in the book that the facility has any concerns at all when Charles, or Carl as he will be called, has disappeared. Charles will go back there one last time to murder the owner of the facility but it has little to do with the territories or the kidnapped children. The authors don't explain it at this point in the story but the reason that Carl was finally able to take over Charles' body is because they are Twinners and the Alzheimer's finally eats Charles away enough that Carl can claim control.

The black house was introduced briefly in the story but no information is given in respects to its history or the importance that it will play in the story. Also the Marshal family was introduced, but not much information is offered about them. The family will have a large role to play in the story when their son is taken. Although the reader hasn't learned about Twinners yet it is soon revealed that Judy Maxton has a reason for her current condition. Judy and Charles Burnside have both murmured in a language unknown in this world. The reader will see much of this explained later in the story but not until the main characters are ready to enter the Black House.



It appears at this point in the story that the author is spending considerable time laying ground work what follows. There is much in common between the killings in the nineteen-twenties and the killings that are currently happening. This, along with other murders, will be explained later on.



Part 1: Chapter 4; Part 2: Chapter 5-6

Part 1: Chapter 4; Part 2: Chapter 5-6 Summary

Chapter four describes when Jack Sawyer was still a detective with the L.A.P.D. and began to have odd visions and erratic behavior. He believes this to be stress from the gruesome nature of his job. He has money left to him from his deceased parents and decides to retire. When The Kinderling case had taken Jack to French Landing he decided he would retire there. Dale Gilbertson sold his father's house to Jack Sawyer. The house is secluded and gives Jack his desired solitude. Although Dale had asked a time or two, Jack never talked much about his past other than his parents were in the entertainment industry. Now, three years later in French Landing the visions that Jack has are growing steadily worse. He refers to them as "waking dreams" and in them sees red feathers and robins eggs. The visions get Jack so rattled that he even tries to call his mother forgetting that she died years before.

Jack Sawyer and Henry Leyden are good friends and discuss at length books and other things. Because of Henry's blindness he is able to gather things from simply listening to people. Henry is also experiencing odd sensations he can't explain. Henry isn't having visions or "waking dreams" like Jack but is hearing his wife, who has been dead for some time.

In chapter five Charles Burnside walks towards the bathrooms in the Maxton Elder Care Facility. On his way he picks up a paper weight. When Burnside gets into the bathroom he begins to talk in an odd language into the mirror and goes into one of the bathroom stalls and disappears.

Meanwhile Tyler Marshal, who is ten years old, and three older children are riding their bikes to town. The four boys near the Maxton Facility when the three older boys decide to intentionally leave Tyler behind. Tyler is far behind the boys when he sees a crow in front of a bush that says Tyler's name. When Tyler gets near the bird, a scrawny white arm reaches through the bush and grabs Tyler. Something sounding like a paperweight coming down on the boy's head is heard but quickly quieted.

When the three older boys realize how far behind Tyler is one goes back to check on him. They are able to find a shoe on the sidewalk and Tyler's bike but nothing else. The boys are scared to tell anyone and ride away.

Judy Marshal jerks awake screaming her son's name and finds a fisherman's creel on the table. On the creel is a note from the Fisherman and inside it are heart, intestine and other organs that belong to a child. Seeing this Judy crosses over the thin line that had held her sanity at bay.



Charles Burnside appears back at the Maxton Elder Care Facility and replaces the paperweight and notices that it has blood and hair on it, but it goes unnoticed by the nurses.

A neighbor comes by and hears Judy screaming and calls Judy's husband Fred. Fred comes home but no one knows about Tyler except Judy. She has torn his room apart even to go as far as to take the picture and wallpaper off the walls to find him. Fred is able to get Judy to calm down. The fisherman's creel has disappeared, and Fred is able to get Judy to believe it was all a nonsense dream.

Meanwhile in chapter six a policeman finds Tyler's bike but has been told that he can't radio anything back to headquarters because of the people that listen to scanners. He decides to take the bike and shoe with him to keep anyone from messing with them until they can decide if it is a crime scene or not but marks their location before he removes them. The policeman use landlines to call Dale and let him know.

Fred Marshal is at home with his wife Judy. Judy is unable to control herself any longer with her son missing and the mysterious basket having been delivered to her. Fred tries desperately to control his wife while calling the police to report his son is missing. Fred didn't call the police right away when he got home believing his son would eventually show up but when four o'clock comes Fred decides to call. The policeman that answers the phone asks Fred if the bike that has been found matches the description of Tyler's bike.

Part 1: Chapter 4; Part 2: Chapter 5-6 Analysis

The reader will see that Dale thinks very highly of Jack and regards him as more than an equal. This is shown several times throughout the story. One example is when Dale discusses the fact that he seems to be honored that Jack wanted to live in the house in which Dale grew up. Dale will be in danger of losing his job and will fight to keep it when the case is taken from him. Dale doesn't want to give up his police position, but the reader learns at the end of the story that Dale wonders if he should step down.

There is something odd about Jack regarding his knowledge of the murder. He still doesn't have his memories but Jack is the one that told the reporter, Wendell Green, to look up the old Albert Fish murders. Jack realizes that he doesn't know why this is important and does not realize the significance of his knowing it yet. When the memories finally return to Jack he still appears to be pointing in the wrong direction about the murders and kidnappings.

Tyler's mother knows what is going on although she is unable to make herself believed by anyone around her including her husband. Everyone thinks her crazy, and she will be put into an asylum. It does appear for a while that Judy is not in control of herself, but when Jacnk goes to visit her it will seem that she has total control over herself and her situation. The reader doesn't know the significance of Tyler yet but Tyler was not killed when he was hit in the head. Judy was sent the vision of the fisherman's creel with the



child's intestines by Charles simply to torture her. The reader won't find out until later the reason the children are being taken. Tyler will appear as a victim for much of the story but at the end the reader will find he has more power and control than anyone else that in the story.

The reader will see momentary mention of bees throughout the story. These bees will continue to show up at and have a significance that will be explained in pieces. There is much regarding the bees that isn't revealed to the reader or to the characters in the book. The crow, named Gorg as we find later on, is the one that has been flying through the town with the reader. The crow does the bidding of what is called the Crimson King, although Gorg's exact job isn't explained.

Most of the characters that have talked about Wendell Green in the story so far dislike Wendell a great deal. Green shows up throughout the story but never actually has anything to do with the Territories. The author will take time to explain things from Wendell's point of view and Green even travels to the Territories at one point in time by accident. Although Green's point of view will help the reader understand more of what is going on, it has little to do with the actual plot.



Part 2: Chapter 7-9

Part 2: Chapter 7-9 Summary

Chapter seven focuses on Henry Leyden. Henry, as Symphonic Stan, one of Henry's many radio personalities, is in the process of playing the music for the Maxton Elder Care Facility. While Henry is at the record station he hears Charles Burnside being rude to Alice. Charles begins to talk nonsense about a king that is coming and leaves the party.

As chapter eight begins, Henry is on break from the Strawberry Fest and calls Jack. Henry tells Jack that it doesn't matter why he doesn't want to be involved in the case but that Jack needs to help the police. Henry explains that Jack's involvement will, if nothing else, calm those in the town. Shortly after Henry's call Jack gets another phone call from Chief of Police Dale confirming the bike found was Tyler Marshal's. Tyler's father, Fred, is demanding to see Jack. Dale explains to Jack that Judy has gone insane due to her child's disappearance and is in the mental wing of the local hospital. Jack reluctantly agrees to meet with Fred and Dale. Jack is still having problems with his "waking dreams" and is worried how this will affect him.

When Jack arrives at the police station he finds that the three older boys that had been with Tyler are in the interrogation room. Jack talks to the boys and figures out which one is the bully and has him removed so Jack can talk with the other two. Jack starts with the boy that went back to look for Tyler. The boys admit that they were the ones that rode off and intentionally left Tyler. The boy that went back to look for Tyler mentions that he saw crow feathers when he went back. One of the feathers had been inside the shoe that Tyler lost.

Chapter nine begins that night as Jack has a dream. He is not Jack in his dream but Jacky-boy. In his dream he meets up with Speedy, a man from Jack's past. Speedy admits that he is the one that has been sending Jack the visions of the robin's feathers and eggs. Speedy warns Jack that he has to stop the person that is killing the children. He tells Jack that Tyler is a powerful "Breaker." He tells Jack that if Jack can't get Tyler back to Jack's world then Jack will need to kill Tyler. Speedy tells Jack that Tyler might be all the Crimson King will need to bring "it" down. Speedy doesn't explain to Jack about the Crimson King, the "it" that it wants to bring down or what a "breaker" is. Jack tells Speedy to find somebody else. Speedy calls Jack a coppiceman.

After the dream Jack can't remember much of what happened and still is blocking his past. Jack finds a note written in his dead mother's handwriting but it doesn't make any sense. Fred Marshal calls Jack early and they decide to go and see Judy that afternoon. When Jack goes outside there is a box on his front steps with his name written across the top. There is no postage or return address. Inside Jack finds black feathers and a child's shoe with a foot still inside that has been mauled by a dog. Jack knows that by accepting the package he is now involved regardless of his desire to remain out of it. He



feels something changing inside of him. He begins running across his field as memories come back to him of people he knew in the Territories. He suddenly realizes that he has flipped to the Territories, a place that he remembers from twenty years ago in his past. He is both excited and sad over going back.

Jack suddenly remembers everything including the first time he flipped to the Territories when he was twelve. Jack is taking in his surroundings trying to decide how much of it is real when he smells something that makes he want to puke. Jack realizes that it is the smell of either the Fisherman or the dead bodies upon which the Fisherman has dined. Jack walks down a dirt road recognizing things and still unsure whether or not to believe it when he finds a baseball cap. He picks it up and finds the name Tyler Marshal inside the brim. Jack knows that the Fisherman took Tyler from his world and has Tyler stashed in the Territories somewhere. Jack also knows that the Fisherman is baiting him and taunting him. He takes a deep breath and is able to flip himself back to his own world and goes home.

When Jack returns home he puts the foot with the shoe, the baseball cap, and the other items into zip lock bags and marks the date. When Jack is sweeping the last of the feathers into the box Jack finds a note to him written on the bottom inside of the box. He realizes then that the killer knows Jack from the Territories. The note calls Jack a coppiceman, which is a term for police in the Territories, and is signed the Fisherman. It tells Jack where to look for the rest of the body that goes with the foot and sneaker that was sent to Jack.

Jack calls Henry and tells him what he has got and where the note tells him to look. Henry tells him that Ed's Eats and Dawgs was run by a relative of Dale Gilbertson's but has been shut down since the time Jack would have been a toddler. Jack decides not to tell the police yet and has Henry meet him so that he can take him to the abandoned diner. Before Jack and Henry can make it to the diner, the Fisherman calls 9-1-1 and tells them where to find the girl's body and tells them to be sure and tell the coppiceman hello.

Dale gets everyone ready to go to the diner to look at what is left of the little girl's body. He decides that he won't call the county cops or the F.B.I. or anyone else until he has a chance to look for himself, since they are trying to take the case away from him. Dale gets angry that Jack has refused to help. One of the policeman stays at the station and calls his wife and tells her about it, who then calls her best friends and within an hour the whole town knows that several different bodies of murdered children have been found.

Part 2: Chapter 7-9 Analysis

Henry does not catch the mention of the song that Charles asked him to play. Later on in the story that request will become significant to Henry as the song that his wife loved. Henry also will be helpful in identifying a call due to the argument he heard between Alice and Charles.



Jack is well known in the small town since he had been a big city cop with a history of solving major crimes. Jack has remained so private that no one really realizes that Jack retired because of his fears and not because he simply wanted rest or just because he could retire. The Fisherman murders are bringing more into Jack's "waking dreams" than what he can understand. Although he doesn't yet know it, this will be important for Jack discovering his lost past. There is much that Jack is beginning to understand but doesn't share these memories or revelations with anyone.

The reader gets a look at the Territories, although there is still much that is not revealed about them. Even Jack himself doesn't remember everything yet he knows that something terrible is beginning to happen from a different world. Henry doesn't question Jack's decisions, and Jack may have been correct in not telling Dale before he went to the diner. The Fisherman appears to be setting Jack up as well as Dale although the reader won't see until later whether or not the county cops and the others are successful in removing Dale from the case.

The title of Part two is "The Taking of Tyler Marshal" but it encompasses much more information than that. Tyler will have little to do with this chapter which focusses largely on the memories that Jack is slowly regaining. There is not much information from Tyler until the third part of the book when the focus becomes Tyler and Jack's attempt at rescuing Tyler.



Part 2: Chapter 10-12

Part 2: Chapter 10-12 Summary

In chapter ten as Dale drives toward Ed's Eats and Dawgs, he pulls out his phone to call Jack and beg him to show up and help with the crime scene. Jack explains that he had received a box that morning and inside it were the remains of what he believes to be Irma Freneau's foot and Tyler Marshal's hat. Dale tells him that the Fisherman called the police station and gave them the location of the body and they believe also that it is most likely Irma Freneau's body, although the Fisherman didn't specify.

Jack and Dale manage to reach the diner at the same time, and Dale pulls Jack aside and tells him to be sure and put the foot inside so that it doesn't give the county or F.B.I. any reason to pull Jack into a room for questioning. Jack realizes this is prudent and sneaks the foot inside but finds no evidence of Tyler on the premises, so he and Dale decide to keep Tyler's hate for the local police. When Jack goes inside he finds foot prints that must have belonged to a man and foot prints that belonged to a dog in the dust on the floor. In the back of the diner Jack finds the body of Irma Freneau; "Hello Boys" is scribbled in black magic marker above her body.

Meanwhile in chapter eleven, it isn't long before word of the dead body reaches Beezer St. Pierre, the leader of the Thunder Five biker gang. Beezer's daughter was one of the earlier victims of the Fisherman. On the way the biker gang passes a road full of cars. They even pass the local newspaper writer, Wendell Green. When Beezer's daughter had been found half eaten, Wendell had gone to Beezer to ask how it feels to know your daughter has been dined on as if she were a pig. Beezer and the others had offered to pull off Wendell's head and use what was left of his body for obscene acts, so Wendell takes caution to stay behind the bikers.

Before long they reach the abandoned diner and find that the police have it blocked off. Beezer and his bikers don't slow down but turn around. Wendell follows them.

As chapter twelve begins Wendell finds that the bikers are helping the police secure the crime scene. Wendell happens to see Jack leaving with something and begins to take pictures. He realizes that Jack is trying to cover something up and can't wait to ruin Jack's reputation in the local paper. Wendell is heard by Henry. Wendell had intended to get pictures of the girls mutilated body and is excited over the thought of the credit he would get for such pictures but is content with the dirt he now has on Jack.

Part 2: Chapter 10-12 Analysis

The reader sees a lot of information about Beezer and Wendell at this point. Wendell has a good, upstanding job but is a real self-absorbed person. Wendell's only concern regarding Irma's body is whether he can manipulate the story to the point that he would win a prize. He believes himself to be such a great orator that he even makes a mental



note regarding the fact that the town would be better off if the local radio station would fire Henry and put Wendell in his place.

Beezer will prove to be a great help for the police as well as Jack. They are a biker gang and live life rather harshly in some respects, but gang members are well-educated and well-regarded business men. Beezer is obviously eaten up with grief about his own daughter but is still able to be sensible and control his emotions. It will be Beezer's love for his daughter that gives him strength to help Jack.

The one that realizes that Wendell is there is Henry, the blind man. His blindness doesn't limit him as much as the reader would think. The notes that the Fisherman leaves apparently has more to do with taunting Jack than anyone else, although it seems to do just as much damage to Dale in some ways. There is little known regarding the dog, other than it was there and was eating on the girl's body. There will be more questions raised from the things found than answered for some time. There will be a dog found at Black House later in the story when Jack goes there to find Tyler, but the reader isn't told if this is the same dog or not.

It appears that Jack is cautious about telling anyone about the Territories. He keeps it a secret from Dale where he actually found the hat. There will be some people in the coming chapters that Jack will be able to talk to about these things more than he would have thought possible.

Gorg left a feather in Tyler's shoe when Tyler was taken, and there were crow feathers in the box that was sent to Jack. Although these feathers don't necessarily have a significance other than identifying that the crow was involved, it will help Jack realize Gorg's effect on Irma Freneau's mother. The feather that Gorg gives her at that point will seem to have powers over the mother, although this is never stated.



Part 2: Chapter 13-14; Part 3: Chapter 15

Part 2: Chapter 13-14; Part 3: Chapter 15 Summary

In chapter thirteen, Jack tells Dale that Henry should listen to the 911 tape since Henry is used to relying on his hearing. While the crime scene is being investigated, Wendell Green is caught snooping around the back entrance. Wendell is confident that Beezer won't be able to beat him up in front of all the witnesses and county cops that have shown up. Beezer takes Wendell's camera and empties out the film thinking that what Wendell has on it was pictures of little Irma's body.

The county cops inform Dale Gilbertson that he hasn't handled the investigation the best way and relieve of the case. Beezer tells Jack to be sure and call on them if they need any more help and Jack and Henry drive away.

Chapter fourteen shows Fred Marshal taking Jack to meet Judy Marshal, Fred's wife, at the hospital where she has been admitted for psychiatric help. On the way Fred tells Jack that Judy has been telling him that Tyler is alive and in another world. When Fred and Jack reach the hospital Judy tells Jack that she knows that he is the only one with the ability to find her son. Judy tells Jack that she has heard a voice, her Twinner, from a place Judy calls Faraway, and this person has told Judy about the things that are happening. After they are out of the hospital, Jack produces Tyler's hat and gives it to Fred Marshal. Jack confides in Fred Marshal that he found the hat in the place that his wife calls Faraway.

In chapter fifteen, the Nelson hotel houses a man named George Potter. It is here that one of George's neighbors follows an elderly gentleman to George's room. Thinking the man must be lost and disoriented, since Maxton's Elder Care Facility is just up the road, he enters George's room and finds it empty. He looks in the closet and finds that there are Polaroid pictures of dead children that have been mutilated. Charles Burnside reappears at the Maxton Care Facility and walks slowly back to his room. Once in his room he smiles and thinks of George Potter. Potter will be blamed for the murders.

Tansy Freneau, Irma's mother, is sitting at home thinking of her daughter. Tansy hears a knocking on the door. When she opens her trailer door a small crow enters. Tansy decides she is having hallucinations but the crow, Gorg, tells her to come and begins to whisper in her ear.

Part 2: Chapter 13-14; Part 3: Chapter 15 Analysis

The reader doesn't fully understand what has happened to Tansy at this point. It is Gorg's intention to use Tansy to finish off George Potter for Charles Burnside. The reader will also see that Gorg's involvement in the story isn't done, but Jack will destroy Gorg later on. The author has said that Tansy's sanity will never return, but the reader isn't told what happens to her after the Black House is destroyed.



George Potter has a past with Charles Burnside. This connection will be explained to the reader later on. Gorg's influence on Tansy will create problems that Jack, the police force, and the Thunder Five will have to deal with later. It will only be with the help of Jack's old friend Speedy that George Potter will remain safe.

Fred Marshal seems to take a back seat in the story. Fred seems to fall apart with his wife in the hospital and his son missing. It appears that any strength that Tyler Marshal has must come from his mother and perhaps even her Twinner, Sophie. It isn't that Fred Marshal doesn't want to help, it is that Fred simply isn't equipped to help. Even those that Jack takes with him later in the story to fight the evil that has descended on the town have trouble keeping their sanity. Jack will say that he hopes Dale Gilbertson has a firm grasp on his sanity because of the things that they will have to face.

The Thunder Five is a biker gang that is made up of educated men that are lifelong friends. In the coming chapters that friendship is strained, some of the gang handling the stress better than others. Wendell Green appears to be a person with no morals or convictions. Wendell does have a hard time in many ways but ultimately nothing happens that makes him change his ways. Wendell takes pictures of Jack at the end of the story that make Wendell famous.



Part 3: Chapter 16-18

Part 3: Chapter 16-18 Summary

Chapter sixteen finds Reginald "Doc" Amberson, a member of the Thunder Five, getting information from one of the policemen on duty regarding the Fisherman case. While Doc is getting what news he can, Dale Gilbertson, asks Doc if he would like to help arrest someone that may have something to do with the Fisherman murders. Doc agrees and quickly calls Beezer and the other Thunder Five riders to tell them to meet him at the police station.

Jack meets Dale to talk about the guy that saw the photos in George Potter's room. Jack's first impression is that George is innocent but doesn't try to stop Dale from arresting George. Henry Leyden is in the car with Jack and both comment on the smell in the air—death.

Across town Tansy Freneau enters a bar and unplugs the jukebox. She yells at everyone in the bar that the police have the monster that killed her baby and will let him go, and she wants help to stop the monster from being freed. At about the same time someone calls Wendell Green and tells him what is going on. Meanwhile in Lucky's Tavern, George Potter is being driven to the police station.

When Jack and Henry get to the police station Jack finds the Thunder Five standing out front. Jack greets them and stands with them. When Dale arrives with George Potter, Beezer asks George if he is the one that killed his daughter, Amy. George tells Beezer that he didn't and Beezer steps aside.

Dale pulls Jack aside once Potter is in a cell and tells him he wants to know if Potter is the Fisherman. Jack tells him he is sure Potter isn't the Fisherman but that the Fisherman had a specific reason for leading them to Potter, and Jack wants a few minutes to talk to Potter alone. Before Jack can go in to talk to Potter, they realize a mob is heading towards the station. Jack gets a phone call from Speedy telling him that there is something in the bathroom that Jack will need to use twice but that Jack needs to hurry.

Tansy shows up with a single feather in her belt. She has a noose and is crying for Potter to be brought out. Jack walks towards the crowd holding a bouquet of flowers. The flowers are lilies of the vale from the Territories. Tansy begins to cry asking for the man that killed her baby, but Jack explains that Potter didn't kill her child. She explains that Gorg told her Potter was guilty. Jack takes the feather from her belt and can feel the evil vibrating in the feather. She seems to calm when he gives her the flowers. He calls for someone to drive her home, but before the crowd disperses, someone in the back screams to bring the killer out. It is Wendell Green wanting the story to not be over. One of the policeman hits Wendell over the head knocking him out.



The county cops arrive and Jack hurries to talk to Potter with Dale promising he will give Jack at least 30 minutes alone with Potter. Jack has given away the flowers but there is enough of their scent on his hands to do what needs to be done.

As chapter seventeen opens, Potter says Jack should have let the mob, lead by Tansy Freneau have him. Potter explains that he has stomach cancer that is going to kill him in a few short months anyway. Potter tells him that no one would have a grudge like that against him. Potter does tell him about a guy that he had cheated out of a deal years ago in Chicago. Potter then remembers that he saw that same guy just a few months ago. Potter tells Jack that the same guy had a house being built and that people had accidents during the building of it. It was dubbed haunted before it was finished. The workers refused to work on it any more and the guy had to finish it himself. Potter can't remember the guy's name until Jack puts his hands under Potter's face. Potter still can't remember the name of the guy but remembers that it sounds like "beer stein." Potter does remember that the house was called Black House because of its color and the fact that the sun never shined there regardless of the time of day.

Jack tells Beezer and the other Thunder Five members to meet him the next day at a bar out by Tansy Ferneau's house. The next day when Jack gets to Tansy's house, he finds she still has the lilies in her house. The scent from the lilies is keeping the insanity that Gorg gave her from taking over. Jack realizes that soon the lilies will die and wonders what will happen to Tansy then. Tansy says that Gorg showed her the horrible place that the children are taken where fire burns up everything. Tansy soon tells him that she wants him to leave, so he does.

Jack watches a movie on the bar's television while he waits on the Thunder Five. The movie stars Lily Cavanaugh, who is on the screen with a bee that is flying around. When the Thunder Five arrives, Jack asks them about George Potter and the Black House that Potter described. Mouse tells Jack that once he remembered seeing a place that fit that description. Jack sends the Thunder Five off to find the house while Jack leaves to go see Judy Marshal at the hospital again.

Part 3: Chapter 16-18 Analysis

While it is obvious Jack thinks Judy Marshal is important to finding the Fisherman, it is unclear what role she plays, though it appears to have just as much to do with her Twinner as it does with Judy herself. Judy's Twinner wants to help Judy and Tyler, as well as Jack, but there is much of this that the reader will be left unsure about.

Jack hasn't spoken about his mother in the book other than to say that she was in the movie business. The reader will see later on that Lily Cavanaugh was Jack's mother. She has a scene with a bee in the movie that Jack is watching at the bar, and Jack remembers how he felt about it as a child. The fond memories that Jack associates with this film and the bee may be the reason that the bees enter the story. The reader will never be told where the bees came from or who sent them. Jack will also never truly know where or who they came from but only that they are there to help him.



The Thunder Five are going to have the first encounter with the Black House. Jack has warned them about the Black House and that they aren't to go in. While the Thunder Five want to help, they consider themselves to be able to take care of the situation themselves to some extent. This will be one of the things that will kill one of the Thunder Five and causes the friendships among the group to deteriorate.

The reader has seen that Henry has put off listening to the tapes that the Fisherman has left. When Henry finally does get around to listening to the tape, he will almost immediately realize who it is he is hearing, but by this point his life will already be in danger. Henry leaves Jack a lot of information but the information will come at a very high cost. After Henry is dead, Jack regrets keeping any of the story from his friend.



Part 3: Chapter 19-21

Part 3: Chapter 19-21 Summary

In chapter nineteen, the Thunder Five drive on their bikes looking for the hidden sign that points to the Black House. After passing it several times, they finally see it. They can't understand why it took them so long to see the road and sign. Beezer tells each of them to get their weapons where they can reach them quickly and they start slowly up the drive. Mouse goes in first and a monstrous dog comes out of the woods and attacks Mouse. Kaiser has blood shoot out of his nose and passes out. Sonny gets sick, as well as Doc and Beezer. Sonny, Beezer, and Doc shoot the dog. It takes a lot of bullets before the dog leaves Mouse. They take Mouse and Kaiser and head back to Nail House Row. Doc looks at Mouse's chewed up leg and tells him he needs a hospital but Mouse refuses.

Meanwhile in chapter twenty, as the Thunder Five are heading up the Black House drive, Jack gets a call from Fred Marshal saying that Judy is going insane due to a tape that was sent her from the Fisherman. Jack goes to the hospital and finds Wendell Green there when he arrives. Jack is able to convince the doctor to give him a moment to talk to Judy Marshal alone in the doctor's office. Wendell Green pays one of the orderlies to sneak him into the doctor's office so he can spy on Judy and Jack. Once in the office Jack gets a phone call from Beezer explaining that they found the house but that Mouse is dying, and Jack needs to get there immediately.

Once Jack hangs up the phone, he takes Judy Marshal's hand and flips to the Territories. Once in the Territories Jack finds himself in front of Judy Marshal's Twinner. Her Twinner, Sophie, is just as beautiful as Judy, and Jack realizes he loves Sophie.

In chapter twenty-one, Sophie tells Jack that she realizes she might have almost driven Judy mad, but she was trying to save Judy and Tyler. Sophie explains that she can't have children and Tyler is the closest thing to a child that she will ever have. Sophie explains that they are waiting on the one that will explain everything to Jack. While Jack and Sophie are walking, he finds Wendell Green who got caught in the flip from one world to the next. Wendell's sanity has momentarily left him while he is in this world.

Speedy shows up and explains things to Jack. He tells him that the Black House is close but has nothing to do with Twinners. He tells Jack that if he kills Charles Burnside the evil that hired him will simply get a new employee to fetch children. Speedy tells Jack that the greater concern is the Dark Tower. This tower binds the many worlds in place and the evil one, the Crimson King, wants special children, Breakers, to destroy the worlds so that the Crimson King can take over all the worlds. Jack learns that all the telekinetic children come from Earth, like Tyler. When the children are taken, the ones made to work for the Crimson King are put in a place where time doesn't matter so they never die. Parker tells Jack that Jack would never be powerful enough to kill the Crimson King but would be powerful enough to perhaps destroy Mr. Munshun, the



demonic entity that works for the Crimson King and has started Charles Burnside to killing.

Jack takes Wendell's hand so that he can take them back to their world. Jack tells Sophie that he loves her and flips quickly before she can reply.

Part 3: Chapter 19-21 Analysis

The reader sees that Wendell Green seems to go temporarily insane when he flips with Jack. These effects aren't lasting and in fact it seems that it doesn't even phase him long term. When they get back to the hospital the reader finds that Wendell more or less doesn't seem to have any memory of what happened and goes back to his normal business of trying to find good gossip.

When Jack gets to the Territories the reader will find that almost immediately he is in love with Judy Marshal's Twinner. It appears that it is Sophie that Jack was in love with when he first sees Judy. He even notes that at moments Judy doesn't look as beautiful as he first thought. The two have a very close bond and it may be possibly that Jack's attraction to Judy is based on her connection to Sophie.

The reader knows that Mouse is sick but the symptoms have not been explained yet. The reader will soon see that if Mouse had been taken to a hospital it would have more than likely have caused questions and problems for the gang and would not have saved Mouse's life. The sickness seems to have come from Mr. Munshun and there is no way to cure Mouse. Mouse tells Jack he remembers even though the others don't. The reader may not understand this at this point in the story but it becomes clear later that Mouse is referring to something about the Black House. The Territories in general causes people to forget things about them.

Much is explained to both Jack and the read as Speedy talks to Jack but there are still questions that the reader probably still has. Parker even poses a few new questions with the answers that he and Sophie give Jack.



Part 3: Chapter 22-24

Part 3: Chapter 22-24 Summary

Chapter twenty two has Jack in his own world leaving the hospital and on his way to Nail House Row to find Beezer and see what's wrong with Mouse. When Jack gets to Nail House Row, Beezer tells Jack that Kaiser Bill and Sonny got scared and ran off leaving just Beezer, Doc, and Bear Girl to stay with Mouse.

Meanwhile in chapter twenty-three, Henry is heading home from a meeting with Radio personnel when he smells his deceased wife's perfume. Henry is beginning to wonder if she is haunting him. Jack is at Nail House Row with Mouse, Doc, Beezer, and Bear Girl. Everywhere that light touches Mouse, his skin sizzles and melts. They have him lying in a dark room, and from the putrid smell, Jack knows Mouse is rotting from the inside out. Mouse warns Jack that "he" is not smelling the perfume of his dead wife, that the King is after him, but Jack doesn't realize to what Mouse refers. Mouse is talking crazy about everything from brewing beer to the Black House. Mouse vomits bits of black sludge which begin to move and seem to be live.

Henry has arrived home and opens a beer while he tries to dial Jack's number. Jack has left his cell in his truck and doesn't hear it ring while in Beezer's house. Jack walks through the house thinking of his dead wife.

Jack watches the stuff coming out of Mouse as it eats through the couch. Mouse is unconscious, but there are questions to be answered, so Doc injects Mouse with speed. Mouse comes around demands something to write on before he dies. He draws a map to the Black House realizing that he is the only one that can remember where it is. The black stuff in Mouse is trying to kill him before he can talk to Jack. Jack grabs a large portion of the black stuff, pulling it from Mouse's mouth and eyes relieving Mouse long enough to speak for a moment.

At the same time this is happening, Henry is in his house getting ready to listen to the tapes with the voice of the Fisherman on them. Henry realizes that someone is watching him but not speaking. The person watching Henry Leyden is holding hedge clippers that came from Henry's garage. Henry demands for the person outside his door to identify himself but nothing is said. Henry begins listening to the tape and immediately realizes that the Fisherman was at the dance he provided music for at the Maxton Care Facility. There is a soft knock on Henry's door.

Mouse is lucid enough to warn Jack not to go back to Black House at night because of the other things that watch over the place. Mouse knows Tyler is safe from Mr. Munshun for the moment even if he isn't safe from other things. Mouse makes Jack promise to stay away from the Black House until daylight. Speedy has been talking with Mouse and tells Jack to wait until the sun is strongest in both worlds. Mouse gives Jack a magic word, D'yamba, to use and tells him that if anyone is able to come out of the Black



House alive they are to burn it to the ground. After Mouse has delivered his message he dies.

In chapter twenty-four when Henry's door is knocked on Henry realizes that it is the killer. Henry pretends to be curious but doesn't answer the door. The door is opened and Henry is bent over pretending to be busy. When Charles Burnside lunges at Henry with the hedge clippers Henry dives out of the way. Charles clips off several of Henry's fingers and manages to bite off a large piece of Henry's cheek. Henry is able to get a knife and cuts Charles in the gut and escapes immediate danger. Henry is hiding in the living room with Charles smacking his lips eating the fingers he has cut off Henry. Charles begins to have a conversation with Mr. Munshun who seems to also live inside Charles Burnside. Mr. Munshun tells Charles that Henry is as good as dead and this is all it will take to mess up Jack. Mr. Munshun tells Charles to go back to the Maxton Care Facility and kill Chipper. Charles leaves a message for Jack on the wall and leaves. Henry, sure that Charles is gone, goes to his recording studio and in the voice of George Rathbun, gives Jack the identity of the Fisherman and an explanation of what happened. Henry also tells Jack that Charles killed him to mess Jack up so that Jack couldn't stop them and warns Jack that he had better not mourn for Henry Leyden's life.

At the end of Nail House Row, Jack Sawyer is suddenly encompassed by a swarm of gentle bees. They land on him and cover his body from head to toe. He realizes this is a comfort sent just to him. Jack leaves to go to Henry's house to tell Henry everything he has kept secret. When Jack reaches Henry's house he finds his friend and makes the call to the police department after listening to the tape.

Part 3: Chapter 22-24 Analysis

The reader has seen that Henry fought very well against his attacker. What the reader doesn't realize is the damage that Henry has done or what he will continue to do. He is gone from the story but will continue to help Jack and Tyler. In some ways it appears that by killing him, Charles Burnside may have inadvertently freed Henry from his blind body and making him even more effective in the fight against the Crimson King..

The bees have shown themselves at this point in the book although their true purpose isn't known yet. They are a comfort to Jack, but the bees will have a continual role in the story. The magic word that Jack was given by Mouse on his death bed, D'yamba, may be connected to the bees. Jack more clearly defines the word later.

Just as there is a magic word that Jack is able to use to help fight the Black House there are black magic words that Mr. Munshun will use that have effects of their own, too. There are more to the characters that Jack has helping him than was at first evident. Even Mr. Munshun describes them as ordinary and is only concerned with Jack but it appears that the others may be more than ordinary.

Tyler has been talked about and mentioned throughout the book but the reader hasn't really met Tyler and got to know him. Tyler will soon appear in the book and the reader

will see the events that happen from Tyler's point of view. This will be helpful in understanding part of the reason that Mr. Munshun wants Tyler so badly. Tyler is a "Breaker," which is a powerful telekinetic, but what that means becomes clearer later.



Part 3: Chapter 25; Part 4: Chapter 26-27

Part 3: Chapter 25; Part 4: Chapter 26-27 Summary

In chapter twenty-five Charles walks into Chipper's office at the Maxton Care Facility and kills him with the same hedge clippers that killed Henry Leyden. Jack has slept well and finds Dale and tells him everything, even things Dale can't understand. Jack and Dale go to meet Doc and Beezer at the Sand Bar.

Charles Burnside has returned to Black House, in chapter twenty-six, and is trying to sleep. He was sliced in the gut area a lot more than he realized and hurts all over. Mr. Munshun is trying to rouse Charles to take Tyler through the gate to where Mr. Munshun waits for him. Charles doesn't want to get up. Mr. Munshun, using a lot of his power, takes a physical form long enough to force a hand into Charles' shirt and twist Charles' guts. Mr. Munshun tells Charles that if brings Tyler to Munshun, the Crimson King can restore Charles his youth and heal his body.

Tyler is dreaming he is at a ball game with the radio personality George Rathbun. Tyler suddenly notices that George is blind. George tells him to be cool that help is on its way. Tyler is suddenly shaken awake by Charles. Tyler sees the blood soaking through Charles' shirt, but Charles is steady and holding a taser. He walks Tyler to the door that leads to a different world and makes Tyler put on a strange cap. Charles tells Tyler that Mr. Munshun hurt Charles and Charles doesn't trust Mr. Munshun to give him his fair share, so he is going to eat what he wants of Tyler before he hands him over to Mr. Munshun.

In chapter twenty-seven Jack and Dale meet Doc and Beezer at the Sand Bar and wait for high noon to drive to the Black House. Tyler's father shows up and suddenly all of them, except Dale, hear something that affects each of them.

Tyler is being chained up by Charles Burnside in a house where he has killed many children. Tyler, hearing both his mother and her Twinner, waits for his chance and attacks Charles with his one free hand. Tyler grabs Charles' guts through the hole that Henry Leyden made and jerks on them until Charles lays dead. Tyler then begins to scream for help.

At the sand bar Jack and the others hear Tyler. Fred hands Jack a box from George Rathbun, also known as Henry Leyden. Inside is a bat. Jack sends Fred Marshal home and heads toward Black House. Once they get to the driveway Jack is able to shoot and kill Gorg, the evil crow. He tells each of them to get ready for anything.



Part 3: Chapter 25; Part 4: Chapter 26-27 Analysis

There is a cap Tyler is given to wear, which Tyler thinks protects him, but the true nature of the device will become known as Jack and the others find Tyler. Tyler isn't free yet, but Tyler isn't fighting alone.

George Rathbun, a.k.a. Henry Leyden, has appeared in the story in several different ways. As the story continues the bat that Jack carries, which the late George Rathbun sent, will play a crucial role in the story. The reader doesn't know the exact reason Mr. Munshun is familiar with Jack Sawyer's past but it does become clear that Munshun's recounting of the events in Jack's life will add to the reader's knowledge of the main character.

Dale is following Jack's lead but is skeptical of everything that is happening. After the men get out of the Black House they continue to be skeptical. It is possible this happens because the Territories seem to want to remain unseen and forgotten, just like the Black House when it was bathed in magic. There are other possibilities but the reader won't be told the truth of the situation.

Judy Marshal and her Twinner, Sophie, were talking to Tyler but the reader will see that Judy's part in the story seems to be finished and the reader won't see her again in the story, only brief mentions of her.



Part 4: Chapter 28-29

Part 4: Chapter 28-29 Summary

In chapter twenty-eight, Sophie calms Tyler while he tries to get the bag that hopefully holds the key to the cuff that holds him. Tyler gets the bag and once out of the building is quickly snatched by Mr. Munshun, who was hiding behind the shed. Mr. Munshun says a single dark word and Tyler goes limp. Mr. Munshun stops in his tracks when he sees four men heading towards him. Mr. Munshun tries the word again thinking it will have the same effect on the three ordinary men and then he can attack Jack. Mr. Munshun is shocked to find the other three are unaffected. A single blast of light comes from the bat that George Rathbun had sent to Jack, hitting Mr. Munshun in the head. A bolt of light also comes from a ring on Beezer's finger and hits Mr. Munshun again. Mr. Munshun realizes he is losing and tries to kill Tyler before they can take him. Jack swings the bat, now blazing with white fire, and caves in Mr. Munshun's head.

Jack tries to get Tyler to destroy the giant combination machine they are standing close to, but Tyler is unresponsive. Jack, in frustration, hits Tyler and the cap flies off Tyler's head. Immediately the power Tyler holds is obvious. Tyler concentrates only a little and the machine begins to tear itself apart. Children start trickling out of the giant machine running free from their captors. The queen bee leads them back out of the Black House. The rest of the bees lead hundreds of children out, most of them speaking unknown languages safe into Wisconsin.

Jack, Doc, Beezer, and Dale ready themselves for a press conference in chapter twenty-nine. Many of their answers to the questions are intentionally going to be "I can't remember," since they have no way to explain what happened. Beezer had gotten enough explosives to completely demolish the Black House closing the door just as they had promised Mouse.

The four men make their way to the podium where a woman in a crown watches. It is Wanda Kinderling. She is the wife of a man that Jack sent to prison when he worked for the L.A.P.D. Wanda makes her way to the podium and pulls out her gun emptying it into Jack Sawyer's chest and throat. Wanda then turns the gun on herself to find it empty. Doc dives off the stage to tackle her and breaks her neck in the process. Speedy grabs Jack and takes him into a trailer. When Doc, Beezer, and Dale enter, knowing Jack is dead, they find blood but not Jack's body and no Speedy. Dale and the others have to hope.

Jack is in the Territories. Sophie and Speedy are discussing the fact that Jack would have died had it not been for the Talisman's lasting effects on Jack. Jack will never be able to go back to his home world because his wounds will slowly return and kill him in a matter of days or weeks.



Part 4: Chapter 28-29 Analysis

There is a lot the authors don't explain by the end the story. Parker is able to take Jack to the territories and Jack is well. Sophie calls Jack her love and it seems to be clear that they will remain together. Speedy and Sophie talk about a lot of things that are left unanswered, such as what the Tower is moving toward. The authors seem to be leaving the book open to another in the series or perhaps just to the imagination of the reader.

The reader doesn't know what happens to all the children that came through the gate at the black house. The reader isn't actually told what happened to Tyler and his mother. It would seem very possible that Tyler will block those memories just as Jack blocked his for so many years. The differences between Tyler and Jack may prevent Tyler from blocking, but that isn't explained. Jack went to the territories and in reality Tyler only went to a type of boarder land. Jack is surprised when he, Doc, Beezer, and Dale went through that the guns didn't turn into something else. When the guns remain the same Jack realizes that they aren't in the Territories, and the same rules don't appear to apply. Also Tyler has great power, as seen when he uses his "Breaking" skill. Jack had touched the Talisman and it gives Jack a type of protection, but the reader doesn't know if Jack himself would have had any power if he hadn't had the experience earlier in his life with the Talisman. Speedy discusses with Sophie the fact that if Jack had never touched the Talisman, Jack might have never been involved with any of the events that happened.

Wendell Green appears to get what he wants and will have fame and fortune. This may be irritating to the reader but Wendell did appear to go through a lot while involved in the story. He was punched by Jack, hit on the head with a flashlight by one of the policemen, got accidentally flipped to the meeting ground where Sophie and Speedy waited for Jack, and got punched once again by Jack.

The reader hadn't seen a lot of Wanda Kinderling until this point but it the author described her in detail in the brief moments that she is seen. It is obvious how hard she was taking her husband's imprisonment. Her bullet will be what keeps Jack in the Territories. Jack said he loved Sophie but the book does not reveal if he would have went there to be with her had it not been necessary. Wanda Kinderling may be the reason that Jack and Sophie are able to be together.



Characters

Jack Sawyer

Jack Sawyer is the main character in the story. When he was younger he had to save his mother from certain death. Jack is a loner avoiding questions about his past and his family. He has blocked out memories about the time when he was young and the parallel universe, called the territories. Jack had been a detective in California with the L.A.P.D. and was one of the best. Jack begins to have visions regarding his forgotten past and believing the job has gotten to him, retires early on the money his deceased parents left him.

Because of his visions, which Jack describes as "waking dreams," he is reluctant to start any more police work even though his friend, Dale Gilbertson, is desperate for Jack's help on a current case. Jack is a handsome man who is very lonely. Jack is described as someone who is Intelligent and dependable with resolve whom others turn to when they help. Although he is attractive and becomes a success at seemingly anything he puts his hands to, Jack remains humble. Jack traveled to the Territories when he was a child save his mother. When this happened Jack touched an object called the Talisman. His contact with the Talisman is what will enable Jack to fight the evil that comes to French Landing.

Charles Burnside

Charles Burnside built the Black House. After being admitted into the Maxton Care Facility, he spent six years apparently with Alzheimer's. The year before the murders begin, Charles seems to will himself back to health asking to feed himself and slowly take on his daily care. Although he is often well and able to control himself, he has glimpses of moments when he is suddenly stricken with late stage Alzheimer's and is suddenly back to being lucid again. Charles Burnside has a Twinner named Carl Bierstone. Twenty years earlier in his life Carl Bierstone committed evil acts because he enjoyed it. The Alzheimer's eats away at Charles until Carl is able to fully take over Charles' body, although this isn't explained to the reader until later in the story.

Carl is able to jump from one place to another and slip away from the nursing home and begin killing. When he begins to kill the children and eat certain ones that don't have mental powers, the police dub him the Fisherman. His murder's mimic those of a serial killer from the turn of the century named Albert Fish. Although Carl is very evil and enjoys the things that he does, he is a follower and it will take some time for Jack to realize who the mastermind is behind the kidnappings and killings.



Henry Leyden

Henry Leyden is a neighbor of Jack Sawyer. Although Henry is blind, he works successfully on the radio using three distinct personalities. George Rathbun is the personality for the morning sports program and is popular in the town. The infamous Wisconsin Rat comes on air for the college F.M. station. The town is not aware that the Rat is also Henry. Henry also plays the part of Henry Shake, who is described as the embodiment of hipster cool, laid-back, and authoritative.

Henry helps the investigation with things only Henry can "see" because he is blind. He is very intuitive but this is not enough to save him from the villain in the book. Even though Henry dies, he leaves a clue for the others to follow. Henry is well liked by all that know him and remarkably capable despite the fact that he has what others believe is a disability. Henry and Jack Sawyer are very much alike in some respects and seem to find a connection in their loneliness. Jack will spend time reading to Henry; they connect in ways that others don't seem to understand. The reader will find that Henry is so well liked that after he dies the other characters in the story go out of their way to ensure that people know that Henry was crucial in finding the killer.

Dale Gilbertson

Dale is the Chief of Police for French Landing. He is a good cop but needs Jack's experience to help solve the Fisherman killings. He is Henry's nephew.

Judy Marshal

Judy Marshal is the mother of a boy, Tyler, that is kidnapped and taken to the territories. She has a Twinner named Sophie who begins to contact her causing Judy to feel she might be crazy.

Tyler Marshal

Tyler was kidnapped and taken to the Territories for his mental ability. Tyler is the "Breaker" that will destroy the big combination that the other "breaker" children are being forced to operate.

Wendell Green

Wendell Green is the journalist who is writing about the Fisherman murders. The cops and the men working the case dread the thought of the editorials that Wendell writes as they convey fear and unrest. Wendell is excited over the murders because it will give him an opportunity for fame.



Beezer St. Pierre

The leader of the Thunder Five biker gang. He lives on Nail House Row and is the father of one of the first victims found dead, Amy Pierre.

Thornberg Kinderling

Thornberg is the person responsible for the murder of two prostitutes in California where Jack was on the L.A.P.D. Thornberg had lived in French Landing which is the reason Jack was introduced to the town where he would retire.

Wanda Kinderling

Wanda is the wife of Thornberg. Wanda thinks her husband is innocent and eventually seeks revenge for his imprisonment. She shoots Jack Sawyer in retribution.

Mr. Munshun

Mr. Munshun, also called Monday Man, is a loyal servant of the Crimson King. Mr. Munshun isn't seen until the last few chapters of the book, but he is the one ultimately responsible for the murders that have been happening.

The Crimson King

The Crimson King is talked about but no one actually sees him. The Crimson King needs "Breakers" to topple the towers that keep him imprisoned.

Mouse

Mouse Baumann is one of the Thunder Five biker gang. He dies from wounds inflicted at the Black House. Mouse makes Jack Sawyer promise to close the gate in the Black House and gives Jack a magic word to use.

Doc

Reginald Amberson, also called Doc, is one of the Thunder Five. Doc really was a doctor but begins riding with Beezer and the others after he accidentally killed a girl by giving her the wrong dose on a prescription.



Objects/Places

The Territories

The Territories are a parallel universe to Earth. Jack Sawyer has spent his adult life blocking memories about the Territories but is forced to remember to stop the murders.

Twinner

Twinner is the term given for a person's duplicate from the Territories. Most earth people do not have Twinners, although Jack Sawyer's mother did as well as Judy Marshal, Tyler Marshal's mother.

French Landing

Fench Landing is the the town where Jack Sawyer lives. It is located in Wisconsin and much of the story takes place in this town. The Black House is located in this town.

The Black House

The Black House is the gate to parallel worlds. It is hidden in the woods, and the men that built it claimed it was haunted even as it was being built. Charles Burnside built the house thirty years before the murders began.

Breakers

Breakers are what the children are called that have mental powers. These children are kidnapped in order to break down the Towers that keep evil in control.

The Cap

Charles Burnside forces Tyler to wear a hat when they go through the portal in the Black House. The cap keeps his mental powers under control, and Tyler is unable to wield his powers until the hat is removed.

Nail House Row

A name given to a group of old, run-down houses where a gang of bikers live. The gang leader's daughter is one of the first victims.



Ed's Eats & Dawgs

Ed's Eats & Dawgs is an eatery that has been closed for years. It is here that the body of Irma Freneau is found.

Baseball Bat

Tyler Marshal receives a package from George Rathbun, also known as Henry Leyden, with a baseball bat inside. Jack Sawyer will use the bat to kill Mr. Munshun.

French County Lutheran Hospital

This is the Hospital where Judy Marshal is being held for psychiatric help after her Twinner begins to contact her from the territories. It is here that Jack meets Judy.

Bees

The bees have been sent to Jack from someone as comfort. The bees will lead Jack and his friends through the Black House and help to get the children out of the house after Mr. Munshun is killed.

Gorg

Gorg is the black crow that helps Charles Burnside kidnap the children. It is on Gorg's wings that the reader flies over the town. Gorg is responsible for Irma Freneau's mother going insane.

D'yamba

Magic word that Mouse tells Jack to use when they go to the Black House. The word brings the bees to help.



Themes

Good Versus Evil

This is definitely a good versus evil story. The characters in the story that are considered the "good" characters are flawed in certain ways. They don't equal what would have been thought of as "knights in shining armor," but this makes them all the more believable. Jack Sawyer, for instance, didn't want to get involved. He was forced into helping with the murders. Though the ideal hero in a book would be someone that comes to the aid of the defenseless simply because he knows they need his help, the fact that Jack tries to stay uninvolved adds a lot of detail to Jack Sawyer's character.

The evil in the book is represented by those that are stealing the children. The reader gets a very clear idea of what kind of monster it is that is being used from the pictures of the bodies that are found. The fact that the victims are children further enforces the fact that the killer is beyond human. The reader begins to look at the killer as a type of mythical "bogeyman," even more so after Tyler Marshal is snatched from the bushes by a withered hand and simply disappears. Children are looked at as innocent members of society. The victims being so young forces a reaction from the reader that might have been different if the victims had been older people. The murderous nature of the villain is counterbalanced by the "good" guys who almost seem to have super hero powers. Jack Sawyer is able to flip between his world and the Territories. Henry Leyden is blind but is able to see the world in an unworldly way. Even Judy Marshal has abilities that cannot be explained other than the fact that she has abilities beyond this world, thanks to her Twinner in the Territories.

The Quest for Understanding

The story's tale is from the point of view of those that are desperate to solve the murders in French Landing. The reader will find that Dale Gilbertson, Henry Leyden, and Jack Sawyer are just a few that are trying to piece together the puzzling pieces left to them in the form of mutilated bodies of children. There are also those that are simply trying to figure out what is happening to them as individuals. Jack Sawyer and Judy Marshal are both having visions and hearing things they can't explain. It isn't until Judy is taken to the Territories by Jack that she is able to regain part of her sanity.

Jack begins to understand what is going on when his friend, Speedy, visits him in a dream and then brings him to the Territories. Although this is far from the end of the story, it will be the first moment that Jack understands more than what he has read from police files. There are moments in the story when Jack is able to give information to someone and then realizes he doesn't know how he knows the information. An example of this is when Jack tells the newspaper writer, Wendell Green, to look at Albert Fish as a connection to the current murders. Jack realizes later that he isn't sure why he knew it but was aware of it on some level. The reader will continue to see the group of



characters fighting against what the evil while they try to figure out the rest of the "whys" and "hows."

The Desire for Power

The reader will see that there are many of the main characters that strive for power of some type. The characters in the book that would be classified as evil, Mr. Munshun, Charles Burnside, and the Crimson King, have an obvious desire for power. They seek to control others, and it is mentioned that they want to rule the other worlds. While this form of power is obvious, the reader will see the characters that fight against the Crimson King looking for power that can be used to destroy the Crimson King's servants. This power often comes in the form of information such as Jack's memories and the identity of the Fisherman.

Power is also looked for by other characters in the book such as Wendell Green. The reader sees that Wendell wants fame and fortune. While he never actual says he wants power the reader finds that Wendell looks for ways to control those around him. He even attempts to blackmail Jack Sawyer when they are at the eatery where one of the bodies is discovered. Wendell is willing to twist any situation he can find in order to gain what he wants.



Style

Point of View

The story is written in third person point of view. The author tells the story from the point of view of several different characters to give the full effect of knowing what each person is experiencing, such as Jack Sawyer and Dale Gilbertson. The omniscient point of view is shown in that the reader is given explanations as to what people are thinking, even when they are not significant characters. The effects of the Territories on the people are often vaguely described and so the omniscient point of view helps the reader recognize the connection between the different characters' reactions. There is a lot of background given, and the author uses different methods throughout the book to explain when a piece of the past is being told. The story over all is given in past tense with the author giving small revelations as to what will be coming in the story. For instance, in chapter three, the narrator tells the reader that there are things the reader knows but many things that the reader doesn't know yet. The narrator may give these glimpses to the reader to further solidify significant facts for the reader

Setting

The majority of the story takes place in modern-day Wisconsin in a little town called French Landing. French Landing is almost mythical in itself and seems to be described almost as a paradise until the town begins to be plagued with the Fisherman murders. While it is easy for the reader to identify with the surroundings and common setting of the book the details of the setting is unique. The story portrays a fantasy realm called the Territories. The Territories is a parallel universe, and it is from here that the town is being attacked. While much about the Territories isn't explained, *The Talisman* a later book, gives a better picture of the Territories.

While the territories is a vividly exciting place that the author has created the majority of the places mentioned in the book are real places or at least realistic. An example of this is California and Chicago, which are real, and Wisconsin is real even if French Landing is fictional. The authors, Steven King and Peter Straub, use other points in the story that are very real. The murderer, Albert Fish, that the reporter got the name from for the current killer in French Landing was in fact real. He was captured and put to death in 1936. Albert Fish claimed to have "had" many more children than what he was accused of killing although it is unsure if he meant he assaulted other or killed them.

Language and Meaning

The language in the book is very informal. The authors have written the book in their own world and so there are many phrases and words that have been invented simply for the story, such as Territories, Breaker, and Twinner. There are usually not written



definitions of the phrases and words that have been created in this story, but over the course of the book the meaning becomes quite clear for the majority of them.

There are also moments in the story where one word has a greater meaning and the reader will need to recognize the importance of that word being used. For example the phrase "king" comes into play quite often, and it isn't for some time that the reader begins to see that it may be pointing to something that is significant in the story. There are some of the characters that the reader may have trouble understanding since they speak in riddles. The dream Jack Sawyer has where Speedy tries to tell him what is going on is almost as confusing as it is helpful in some respects. Even after Jack's memories come back, there aren't complete definitions and explanations for certain phrases. The book is the second in a series and the reader is expected to know some background about the situation.

Structure

Black House is 658 pages long and is divided into four parts. The four parts vary in length from as little as ninety-three pages long to as much as two-hundred and fifty-seven pages long. The four parts are titled with the theme upon which that part focusses. The first part is "Welcome to Coulee County" and takes the reader through introductions of the town and the people in it. The four parts are further divided into chapters. The chapters in the book are numbered one through twenty-nine. The first part and last parts in the book have only four chapters while part three and four have ten chapters. The chapters vary greatly in length, focusing more on events that signify the end of a chapter rather than the number of pages.

At the back of the book is an Epilogue and explanation as to what happens to Jack Sawyer once he is in the Territories. These will add to the readers' understanding of the book. This book is the second in a series following book called The Talisman.



Quotes

"Two children have been foully murdered and their remains partially consumed. Now a third child has disappeared." Part 1: Chapter 1: Page 15

"We don't know everything yet, but we know three important things: first, that French Landing is a town in terrible distress; second, that a few people (Judy Marshal, for one; Charles Burnside, for another) understand on some deep level that the town's ills go far beyond the depredations of a single sick pedophile-murderer; third, that we have met no one capable of consciously recognizing the force-the slippage-that has now come to bear on this quiet town hard by Tom and Huck's river." Part 1: Chapter 3: Page 73

"When he goes back out to the common room, the blind record-hopper-Mr. Leyden, Symphonic Stan, whoever the hell he is-has begun unraveling wires and plugging them in with a speed and accuracy Pete finds a trifle unnerving." Part 2: Chapter 6: Page 152

"'Actually, it was kind of surprising,' Jack says. 'In no time at all, I felt like a cop again.'" Part 2: Chapter 8: Page 199

"It's easier than he would have expected, but he supposes some things you never forget-how to peel an orange, how to ride a bike, how to flip back and forth between worlds." Part 2: Chapter 9: Page 217

"When, after the death of Amy St. Pierre, Wendell, who was merely obeying the ancient rules of his trade, dropped in at 1 Nailhouse Row, and inquired of the grieving father how it felt to know that his daughter had been slaughtered like a pig and partially eaten by a monster in human form, Beezer had gripped the innocent newshound by the throat, unleashed a torrent of obscenities, and concluded by bellowing that if he should ever see Mr. Green again, he would tear off his head and use the stump as a sexual orifice." Part 2: Chapter 11: Page 251

"The spirit that now controls him-the demon, we might as well say-has its own agenda in French Landing, and it has used Burny roughly over these last few weeks (not that Burny's complaining; he is a very willing accomplice)." Part 3: Chapter 16: Page 331

"Only house I ever heard of people were calling haunted even before it was all the way built." Part 3: Chapter 17: Page 367

"The deal Mr. Munshun has with your killer is a simple one: this Burnside can kill and eat all the children he wants, as long as they are untalented children. If he should find any who are talented-any Breakers- they are to be turned over to Mr. Munshun at once." Part 3: Chapter 21: Page 471



"And the being on the other side of his studio door is the horrible old man from Maxton's, who intends to do to Henry the same thing he has done to three children."
Part 3: Chapter 24: Page 522

"The boy is not just a Breaker; he's perhaps the most powerful one to ever live." Part 4:
Chapter 28: Page 625

"And if Jack were to try living in his own world again, returning to his little house in Norway Valley for instance, his wounds would return in a space of days or weeks. Perhaps in different forms-his death certificate might specify heart failure, for instance-but it would be Wanda Kinderling's bullet that killed, all the same." Part 4: Chapter 29:
Page 657



Topics for Discussion

Discuss the connection between Judy Marshal and her Twinner, Sophie. Jack has never met Sophie or Judy Marshal before but claims that he loves both of them. Based on what the reader sees, is what Jack Sawyer feels more closely related to love or lust? Explain.

The bees are an interesting part of the story that show up in the form of Jack's memories and a symbol of the good that is assisting Jack. The reader never knows from where the bees come. Explain the significance, if any, in the reaction that Mr. Munshun has to the bees on page 626.

Henry Leyden has several different personalities that surface while he is on the radio. Explain why these personalities seem to be so strong when Henry is dying and when Tyler sees Jack in his dream.

Define friendship. The biker gang, The Thunder Five, consists of five friends. The reader is given background on Sonny and Doc. Sonny saw two of his friends killed and went to the police. Sonny accidentally killed a girl by prescribing the wrong medicine. In the end Sonny runs away and Doc remains to help Beezer. Describe the differences shown in these two characters that gives the reader an understanding of why one stayed and one left.

Henry Leyden didn't listen to the Fisherman tapes that he had received from Dale and Jack until after Beezer and the others had already gone to the Black House. The delay gives the killer more time. How would the story have differed if Henry had listened to the 911 tape from Dale right when he got it? Is it possible that Henry wouldn't have been able to place the voice at that point?

Explain the importance that belief plays in the story. Jack explains that belief is very important when they go to Black House. Where else is belief shown as an important factor in the story? Explain.

Everyone seems to forget what they have seen of anything connected to the Territories or other worlds. The Black House and even the road to it is hidden, and Jack's memories are hidden for a time. The magic word that Mouse gives to Jack is forgotten by the others that hear it. Why is it important that these things are forgotten by all that hear or see them? Explain your reasons.

Dale Gilbertson decides at the end that perhaps he might need to give up his life as the chief of police. Explain what it is that seems to pull him to this realization. Explain why he would be right or wrong to quit.