

Bucky F*&ing Dent Study Guide

Bucky F*&ing Dent by David Duchovny

(c)2016 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

Bucky F*&ing Dent Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1-5.....	4
Chapters 6-10.....	6
Chapters 11-15.....	8
Chapters 16-20.....	10
Chapters 21-25.....	12
Chapters 26-30.....	14
Chapters 31-35.....	16
Chapters 36-40.....	18
Chapters 41-45.....	20
Chapters 46-50.....	22
Chapters 51-55.....	24
Chapters 56-60.....	26
Chapters 61-70.....	28
Chapters 71-79.....	30
Epilogue.....	32
Characters.....	33
Symbols and Symbolism.....	36
Settings.....	38
Themes and Motifs.....	39
Styles.....	42
Quotes.....	43



Plot Summary

This guide was created using the following version of this text: Duchovny, David. Bucky F*&ing Dent. New York: Farrer, Straus, and Giroux, 2015. Print (First Hardcover Edition, 2016).

The book opens in 1978 with Ted Fullilove, a graduate of Columbia University with a BA in literature, throwing peanuts at Yankee Stadium. Ted is a struggling novelist who hates fiction and insists on writing deconstructive works to no avail. Soon after his introduction, Ted learns that his father, Marty, who became rather distant after his divorce from Ted's mother, and even more distant after her death, is struggling with lung cancer.

After visiting Marty in the hospital, Ted decides to live with Marty for a while to help him. At Marty's apartment, the relationship between the two is initially rather tense, but becomes less so once he gets to know Marty's death-nurse, Mariana. Ted falls in love with Mariana and awkwardly tries to pursue her throughout the novel. During this time, Ted learns from his father's friends that Marty always seems healthier when the Red Socks win. So, Ted decides to trick his father into thinking that the Red Socks win every game by replacing the scores in the paper with previous scores.

At this point, the reader learns through separate narratives that Ted was a sick child and almost died, which Marty blames himself for. Mariana's daughter died years ago from bone cancer.

Eventually, Ted discovers his father's semi-fictional book, *The Doublemint Man*. Through the book, he learns that Marty may have loved another woman during his marriage. Ted finds the woman, Maria's, address in the book, and Mariana and Ted decide to stake the address out. They meet Maria and eventually bring Marty to see her. Ted learns that the two were never together, due to the fact that they were both married when they met. Marty and Maria have sex, and later, Mariana and Ted have sex.

Soon after this, Marty learns that the Red Socks scores were fake causing him to collapse into a coma. In the hospital, Mariana rejects Marty. Ted decides to buy two Red Socks playoff tickets which wakes Marty up. The two go on a roadtrip and never quite reach the game. Outside the stadium, the two listen to the radio as Bucky Dent leads the New York Yankees to a victory against the Red Socks. Even though Marty vowed that he would live until the Red Socks won the world series, Marty realizes that losers run the world and dies in Ted's car.

Mariana finally accepts Ted's love and they bury Marty. In the book's epilogue, Mariana and Ted get married and have two children. Also, Ted becomes a successful novelist after finishing his father's narrative, *The Doublemint Man*.



Chapters 1-5

Summary

The book opens with Jose Conucci, whose real name is Theodore (Ted) Fullilove, at his job at Yankee Stadium where he sells peanuts. The national anthem begins. Ted is a 30-something with a Bachelor of Arts in English from Columbia University. He compares himself doing his job to Wallace Stevens when he sold insurance. After the game, his friend and coworker, talks to him, and the narrator explains that Mungo counts his peanut throws (Ted has an impressive record). The chapter ends with the Red Socks beating the Yankees. This chapter also reveals that the book takes place in the 1970s.

In Chapter 2, Mungo tells Ted that he threw well that day. The chapter then turns into a description of some of Ted's rapid thoughts, including his theory that the 50s are really the 40s because a decade only counts once it is finished. Ted considers himself a Communist and voted for the Communist presidential candidate who received .07% of the vote. In college, while carrying around a copy of *Dos Kapital*, he meets a woman named Rachael Sue, with whom he falls in love. After college, Rachel became a model and left him for a male model. After this instance, Ted asked Rachael to have dinner with him with the intention of proposing. Those plans are dashed when Rachael explains that she is pregnant and getting married. Ted is still upset.

In Chapter 3, the narrator describes the outside of the stadium after the game. Generally, the fans wait outside to try to glimpse their favorite players. Ted comes out and they call him Mr. Peanut and Jerry Garcia, which Ted likes because he enjoys the Grateful Dead. He gets in his car, puts the Grateful Dead tape on, lights a joint, and drives away.

In Chapter 4, Ted arrives at his apartment, which is full of New York Review of Book copies and legal pads with writing. The narrator explains that Ted likes shows like *Happy Days* and has a mechanical fish as a pet. Ted then smokes more marijuana and goes to sleep.

Chapter 5 begins with a dream of a boy trying to get his father's attention. The boy decides that if he can make his father laugh, he will get his attention. He dresses up in a dress and then scuba gear, to no avail. The phone then rings in the dream. Ted wakes up to find his phone ringing. He answers it. Ted immediately knows it is about his father, and the nurse confirms it.

Analysis

This group of chapters sets up the rather unusual narration and point-of-view of the novel. The book is narrated by a third person narrator, but it seems like the narrator is narrating Ted's stream of consciousness. Through this stream of consciousness, the reader learns about Ted's character and his ideology. The narrator makes it very clear



that Ted is pretentious. On more than one occasion, he compares himself to canonical authors such as Jack London and Wallace Stevens. However, the talent that he thinks he has is unrecognized.

These chapters also go into Ted's ideology. He is a Communist and believes that the workers should rise up against the rich and powerful. This, along with his occupation, is an interesting dichotomy. Ted wants to become rich from the unpublished novels that he has written and wants to write. If he were to become a successful novelist, he could possibly become rich and powerful. Even though Ted believes himself to be a staunch Communist, he makes no comment about this contradiction.

In Chapter 3, we briefly hear about the novel's namesake, Bucky Dent. When the narrator says that the fans would stand outside and wait for their favorite players, the narrator mentions that one of the player's names is Bucky Dent, an actual player for the New York Yankees.

This chapter is also the first instance of the use of multiple symbols. For example, Ted's job symbolizes his failure as a writer. Also, The Grateful Dead makes their first appearance. The Grateful Dead continue to symbolize a universal constant for Ted throughout the book. Finally, baseball is clearly a running theme throughout the novel. Later, it will mirror his father's life and help push the character's lives along.

Discussion Question 1

Is Ted truly communist?

Discussion Question 2

Describe the relationship between Rachael and Ted.

Discussion Question 3

Other than the direct mentioning of the time period the book is set in, what references make it clear that the book is set in the 1970s?

Vocabulary

patrician, malaise, discernible



Chapters 6-10

Summary

Chapter 6 opens with the narrator telling the reader that Ted has not seen his father, Mitch, in five years. Ted recalls the time when Mitch gave him a negative response to one of his manuscripts to try to convince him to write poetry. This thought leads into Ted recalling the time when he brought a 667 page manuscript named "Magnum Opie" to his agent. The agent, Andrew, explained that his deconstructive work is about nothing and is not good because he had not experienced tragedy, like Vietnam, which Ted did not participate in due to his eyesight. Ted left the office glowing due to the fact that Andrew called him a writer.

Ted gets to the hospital and is greeted by the nurse, Mariana, by calling him Lord Fenway, an inside joke from his father. Mariana explains that they had to pump Mitch's stomach. Ted asks if he tried to commit suicide, but Mariana explains that it was due to his lung cancer. Mariana tells Ted that Mitch has a few months to live and gives him her card, which reads "Grief Counselor." Ted thinks this is funny because Mitch is not yet dead. Mariana gives Ted a letter that Mitch wrote to the universe, that explains, among other things, that Mitch is going to wait for the Red Socks to win the World Series before he dies. Mariana goes on to say that Ted should help Mitch finish his life's work, a sort of biographical fiction. Ted declines.

Chapter 8 contains a small exchange between Ted, Mitch, and Mariana. Mitch uses the word "spic," and Ted complains about it. Mariana states that the word is okay to use in proper context.

In Chapter 9, Ted learns that Mitch will be on experimental drugs. Ted then goes home, reads some more of the letter that recommends that he write like "F. Scott Redux." Ted then throws the letter out the window.

Ted then sleeps and watches a Yankees v. Red Socks game. Ted remembers the time when he lived in Brooklyn and two airplanes collided above their house, resulting in corpses and wreckage landing near their house. Mitch calls during the game, and they argue about the teams. Ted asks if he should come down and be with Mitch and Mitch says yes.

Analysis

One of the main purposes of this group of chapters is background regarding the relationship between Ted and Mitch. In Chapter 6, the narrator explains that Ted has not seen Mitch in five years. This is odd, as the two seem quite friendly towards each other, so there is no direct evidence that something negative happened between the two at this point. It is also notable that the two have not seen each other in five years, but they live in the same city. It is true that they live in different suburbs of New York, but they still



live relatively close to each other. Essentially, all of this acts as a way of foreshadowing to the point when we learn what happened between the two men.

This group of chapters is also used to continue to inform the reader about Ted's pretentiousness. Firstly, he wrote a Derridian deconstructive work that is seemingly about nothing. While this novel makes sense within the Derridian school of the literary theory of deconstruction, it is quite pompous of Ted to think that a publisher would buy it. In the conversation between Ted and Marina, we also learn that Ted hates fiction, which is why he refuses to write Mitch's life's work. While some people do not like fiction, the author is attempting to portray Ted in this way in order to make it clear that Ted is somewhat intellectually ridiculous.

In Chapter 8, Mitch uses the racial epithet "spic." Other than being a rather humorous scene, the scene is also portraying 1970s race relations. Mariana explains to Ted that the word can be used in certain contexts. It is arguable that, in present time, that the word can no longer be used in those contexts.

The closing scene in this group of chapters, like the opening, uses foreshadowing regarding Ted and Mitch. Through this scene, it is established that Ted will now spend much more time with his father, possibly revealing more information about their background.

Discussion Question 1

What does Ted's fondness for Derrida show about his character?

Discussion Question 2

Does it seem like Mariana likes Ted or Mitch?

Discussion Question 3

Ted recollects about the Brooklyn plane crash. What purpose does this recollection serve?

Vocabulary

deconstruction, tarry, Borgesian



Chapters 11-15

Summary

Chapter 11 begins by entering into a different narrative. In 1946, a mother and father worry about their sick son and imagine a universe where he dies. The father believes that the baby knows what they are thinking and feels bad that he did not take him to the hospital because he wanted the son to live to be self-reliant.. He also thinks about leaving and starting a new life if the son dies. The chapter closes with the mother asking the father to take the son to the hospital.

Ted then drives to Brooklyn while listening to the Grateful Dead. The gentrification of New York annoys Ted due to his Communist beliefs. When he enters his fathers residence he notices the smell of dying. The two move Ted's bags to his childhood room while Ted thinks about what his younger self would think about his current self.

Some time later, Ted recalls the fact that the room was unchanged since he left for Columbia. However, this was not because his father felt that he lost his son that could have done better, but because he was lazy according to Ted. Ted comments on the embarrassing LPs on the wall from artists like Elvis Presley. He goes into his closet and finds a notebook with the name of Thor-adore Left Field Fillilove. Ted's mind then drifts to a time when he would catch puffer-fish and release them, while other boys would cause the fish to burst, killing it.

Ted continues to read the book and finds that a lot of his writing was about baseball. Ted then speaks to his father and tells them that the reason that Ted stopped talking to Marty was because he called him a "homo" after Ted sent him a book that he wrote. Ted also argues that the fact that many of Marty's girlfriends were younger than Ted also contributed to the cease in communication. The two then decide to go on a walk.

The two walk around the neighborhood and speak to many neighbors who knew Ted when he was younger such as Ivan, Benny, and Tango Sam. During the conversation with these men, Ted notices that his father smiles, something that he has not seen in a long time.

Analysis

The narrative in Chapter 11 is introduced without warning. The lack of information surrounding the characters and the situation allows the reader to speculate. Essentially, the placement of this chapter, right before Ted visits Marty, foreshadows the reveal of this information. It is heavily implied that the sick child was Ted and the father, Marty. These creates an interesting dichotomy regarding their relationship, as during this story, Marty is taking care of Ted, while now Ted takes care of Marty.



A large amount of character development regarding Marty takes place in these chapters. We learn that Ted has clearly changed over the years. He no longer likes the same music or writes about the same things. However, his egotistical personality did not change, as implied with the use of Thor, a Norse deity, in his nickname. Also, while we do not receive a lot of detail regarding the puffer-fish story, it does imply that Ted was different than the rest of the kids. He did not kill the fish, possibly due to his sensitivity or possibly cowardice.

After Ted reads his childhood writing, he has a seemingly heated conversation with his father. However, there is some implied details regarding the reasons why Ted stopped speaking to Marty. While Ted does list two reasons why he stopped speaking to his father, the amount of detail that he gives regarding the name-calling seems to suggest that this was the main cause. Through this, it is clear that Ted simply wants his father's approval and feels that his father does not understand him. This could be because his father thinks that he can do better, or that he does, in fact, not understand his son.

Finally, when Ted sees his father laugh, he focuses on it. While the reasons for this are not given, it may be because the laugh reminds him of some of the uncommon, good memories of his father.

Discussion Question 1

How does gentrification clash with Ted's Communist principles?

Discussion Question 2

What does the subjects of Ted's childhood writing say about what Ted was like as a child?

Discussion Question 3

Are there other reasons why Marty referred to Ted as a "homo?"

Vocabulary

gentrification, schtikker, numismatic



Chapters 16-20

Summary

Ted buys some marijuana from a Rastafarian in a Jamaican restaurant. He gets high and tries to pay attention to the reggae music in the restaurant rather than the disco music coming from passing cars. He recalls a quote from Bob Marley discussing that smoking marijuana reveals oneself. He then somehow sees his mother's face on a laundry detergent box.

Due to this vision, Ted decides to clean Marty's house. He does laundry as well. He asks Marty about Mariana and Marty suggests that the only reason that Ted is here is to see Mariana (Marty also claims her). Marty then makes comments regarding polluting Ted's DNA with "Wasp weakness" from his mother and several comments about his own penis. Marty then calls Ted's generation "the pussy generation" (81). Ted then goes to his room and reads more from his childhood work. The writings are about Ted's bowling average, which surprises Ted due to the attention to statistics. He wonders if statistics form who he is. Ted then asks himself who is piloting his life, his current self or his younger self.

The narrative then shifts back to the sick baby. The baby hurts with the want of absence. He asks himself what he did wrong. He decides that he did not do anything wrong, and therefore, must be wrong himself. He accepts his fate and decides that he loves his god, whom he refers to as father.

The situation is then told from the father's perspective once again. The doctors suggest that the child was brought in too late and may have meningitis, but tests will have to be performed. The father puts his finger in the child's palm and receives no response. He swears at the "demon" inside the child, and the baby awakens, thinking that his father is swearing at him. The father feels bad and attempts to suck the demon out of his son's mouth. The two then decide to continue the fight against the demon.

Analysis

After Ted buys his marijuana he sees a vision in a detergent box. This scene is interestingly placed, as it comes right after he recalls the Bob Marley quote. This seems to allude that the marijuana is, in fact, revealing himself. However, the details about how these things correlate are not exactly clear. It could be possible that he identifies with his mother more than his father, therefore the vision of his mother is a reflection of such thinking.

Marty and Ted's conversation is different than some of their previous interactions. Marty states that he polluted his son with his mother's Wasp DNA. Here, Marty is referring to the acronym WASP, meaning White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. Based on some of Marty's phrasings, it is suggested that Marty may be partially Jewish, therefore Ted's DNA is not



purely Jewish like his father's. Marty also speaks a lot about his penis in this chapter. He could be doing this as a masculine action in order to show his dominance over his son, or it could be an outburst of anger due to his condition.

The return to the baby narrative implies some interesting concepts. In the baby's thinking, he thinks about his god and refers to it as Father. Basically, this implies that the baby is actually speaking about his real father, and that the child thinks of his father as a god. In the chapter focusing on the father, heavily symbolism is used in order to portray the baby's sickness as a demon. Essentially this symbolism implies the illness' evil intent and that it must be vanquished.

Discussion Question 1

Are there clues in this chapter that suggest that the child is Ted?

Discussion Question 2

How is the baby's sickness a demon?

Discussion Question 3

Is there a reason why Ted hates disco music?

Vocabulary

surrenderingly, forger, solidity



Chapters 21-25

Summary

Marty and Ted have a conversation about marijuana, and Marty explains that he smoked pot with Alex Ginsberg, became paranoid and never smoked it again. They get in an argument where Marty states that Ted's mother loved him enough for the both of them. Ted explains that he was a sick baby. Marty asks what Ted wants him to apologize for and Ted does not state an answer. Ted, still high, apologizes to his father for being a disappointment and kisses his father goodnight. He compares his father to a nightshade.

Ted dreams of the Playboy model that he fantasized about in his youth. He awakens to the smell of smoke and finds Marty burning all of his advertisements. We learn that Marty was a big deal in the advertising community and created slogans for Volkswagen and Double-Mint Gum. Marty explains that his wife never realized how ashamed of his work he was. The door then rings.

Ted finds Mariana on the other side of the door. Ted becomes embarrassed due to his pajamas and accidentally says "genitally" instead of "genetically." Mariana then goes to Marty, puts an arm around him, and eats a marshmallow that he is cooking using the fire.

Marty and Mariana go downstairs to do yoga. Ted finds an unburnt book in the fireplace. The book is written by Marty and seems to be a partially fictional autobiographical work. Ted reads a selection and learns that the main character works 9-5 and plays baseball. During a game, the character meets a woman named Maria. Once the two finished their yoga, Ted leaves to smoke weed with a Rasta.

Ted then wakes up and goes to a newsstand. There, the stand-worker, one of Marty's friends, explains that Marty never comes outside after the Red Socks lose as they do that night. He goes on to explain that they once ripped a winning score out of an old paper and replaced a losing score with it. This made Marty walk and not use his wheelchair.

Analysis

In Chapter 21, we finally learn that the sick baby from the other narrative is, in fact, Ted. This also confirms that the father is Marty and the mother is his wife. After he kisses his father goodnight, he compares Marty to a nightshade. Ted explains that this is because Marty is like a plant that only grows at night. However, there is another meaning to this piece of symbolism. Nightshade is also traditionally thought of as a poison, implying that Ted may think of his father as a poison.



Marty's fire is also used as a piece of symbolism. Fire is often used as a symbol to represent a sort of cleansing or rebirth. This could mean that Marty is attempting to cleanse himself of the advertising work and products that he was ashamed of being a part of. We do not learn why exactly Marty is ashamed of his work, but it is clear that it has deeply affected him.

The relationships between Marty, Mariana, and Ted are also developed in this chapter. Through Mariana's actions, the author seems to imply that Mariana and Marty have some sort of romantic relationship. This is never stated explicitly, but it would not be out of the norm, as noted by Ted's complaints regarding his previous girlfriends' ages. Ted could also be jealous of his father, as it is very clear that Ted is also attracted to Mariana.

Chapter 25 seems to suggest that part of Marty's condition may be psychosomatic. While Ted does not know this for sure, his increased mobility when Marty thinks that the Red Socks one is not typical reaction.

Discussion Question 1

What evidence exists that Marty's mobility issues are psychosomatic?

Discussion Question 2

What exactly does Mariana do that implies that she and Marty are romantically involved?

Discussion Question 3

What is the importance of the Rastafarian?

Vocabulary

foyer, tuchus, Paraquat



Chapters 26-30

Summary

In Chapter 26, the narrative briefly shifts to the story of a young girl with bone cancer. The girl explains that she is going to marry Jesus, and that she wished Jesus would talk to her mother. The girl hears footsteps outside of her hospital room. Her doctors and mother enter. The girl tells her mother to not feel guilty and not to die. Her mother breaks down and begins to pray.

Chapter 27 shifts back to Ted's narrative. Ted is in the stadium locker room thinking about how he and his father share writing tics. He wonders if they are genetic. He then thinks about how writing slows life down which allows people to see things differently. He thinks of Mariana. As he is thinking, a coach spots him in the locker room and gives him a strange look.

Ted speaks to his father about the Double Mint Man, and informs him that the book is good. Marty tells Ted to burn it (he is also angry that the Red Socks lost). The doorbell rings and Mariana enters. Mariana enters and asks for Marty. He informs her that he went to bed since the Red Socks lost. Mariana explains that both her and Marty are going to do yoga and invites him to join. As she is walking away, he agrees to participate.

Ted moves the basement furniture and does yoga with Mariana. He admires her and notices a Grateful Dead tattoo on her ankle. He asks about this, and she explains that she got it when she was drunk and knows nothing about the band. He also spots a tattoo of the word "Christ." Mariana refuses to disclose the meaning. Mariana leaves him in a yoga position that he cannot get out of. Marty kicks him in the rear-end in order to free him.

Later, Ted decides to shave his beard, and Marty theorizes that he is doing it for Mariana which Ted rejects. Marty asks Ted to go swimming with him and offers to let him borrow an old Speedo.

Analysis

Chapter 26 utilizes the same strategy as the first chapter about the father and the sick child. The narrator does not reveal who the sick girl or the mother are, however due to its inclusion within the book, the reader can assume that either the mother or the child is a living or dead character within the novel's main narrative. The child's mentioning of marrying Jesus implies that the character may be a young Mariana, who, in Chapter 29, is revealed to have a tattoo of the word "Christ."

During the exchange between Ted and Marty about Marty's book, "The Double Mint Man," muddies the possible opinions Marty has of his writing. Marty is already clearly



angry that his baseball team lost the recent game, and he is probably in immense pain due to his cancer. This is just one of the incidents where Marty becomes irritable about something, and it can be due to either of these things. IT is possible that the reader is not privy to Marty's true emotions, as they are clouded by baseball and pain.

This group of chapters drop many hints that Ted has an intense attraction towards Mariana. It is unlikely that Ted would have ever agreed to doing yoga before meeting Mariana. He also probably would not have shaved his beard before meeting her. In these chapters, it becomes clear that Mariana is, in some way, giving Ted motivation. This is also likely why Marty likes Mariana so much. Perhaps Mariana is motivating Marty to live life to the fullest while doing of cancer rather than being depressed.

Discussion Question 1

What do Mariana's tattoos say about her as a person?

Discussion Question 2

Does Ted see things differently due to his writing?

Discussion Question 3

What are some other reasons why Ted shaves his beard?

Vocabulary

Namaste, tics, hitch



Chapters 31-35

Summary

Marty and Ted arrive at the YMCA. The first thing Ted notices is the saggy skinned penises of the old men in the locker-room. The two men swim and Ted notices that the slow, medium, and fast lanes are all slow. When they finish swimming, Ted becomes uncomfortable dressing in front of his father. Marty forces him to anyway, and the two men look at each other's bodies. Ted notices the damage that age and cancer has caused on Marty's body. The two men hug in the locker-room.

Chapter 32 is an excerpt from "The Double Mint Man." The main character has sex with Maria and fantasizes with her about a reality where everyone else has died in a nuclear holocaust except for them.

Ted is woken up by a whimpering in the apartment. He discovers that Marty is the source of the noise. He wakes his father up and his father exclaims that they took it all back. Marty elaborates that the Yankees took the Red Socks' success back. He begins to cry and Ted gives him some medication.

After the aforementioned incident, Ted conspires with Marty's friends including Ivan. Ted decides to fake the Red Socks' scores after every game. Ted explains that he can use game tapes and a VCR from his workplace and fool his father into thinking that the Red Socks win every game. After some thought, the men agree to the conspiracy.

After telling the men begins to intercept the newspaper so Marty does not learn the actual baseball scores. Ted goes to the hospital to tell Mariana about the plan. After asking Mariana not to blow it, Mariana jokes with him by acting like he said not to blow me. Regardless, Mariana agrees.

Analysis

In this group of chapters, the reader becomes privy to Marty's declining physical and mental state. When Ted and Marty are in the locker-room, Marty seems to break down after comparing his body to Ted's. In this instance, Marty seems to realize what his cancer and age has done to his body. It is implied that Marty does not know that he would have this reaction, as it is unlikely why he would have done it would have upset him.

Marty's mental state is on display when he awakens Ted through his whimpering due to his dream. In this chapter, it becomes clear that the connection between the Red Socks and Marty's mental state is stronger than previously implied. The Red Socks affect Marty to such a degree that he has nightmares where the Red Socks lose that cause him to whimper and sob. Ted seems to realize this when he makes his decision to fool his father regarding the Red Socks' wins.



The author intentionally attempts to have the reader draw a connection between Maria in "The Double Mint Man" and Mariana. The clearest evidence of this lies in the fact that they both use similar language, such as "gringo." It is heavily implied that Marty's work is some sort of autobiographical fiction, so the contents took place in the past. Therefore, Maria cannot be based on Mariana. But, this does seem to point towards Marty's involvement with a similar woman in the past. This is probably why Marty is attracted to Mariana.

Lastly, the teasing that Mariana does to Ted seems to hint towards the idea that Mariana is attracted to Ted. This conclusion can be made through the belief that people tease others that they are interested in.

Discussion Question 1

What could be the reason why Ted first notices the YMCA patron's genitals?

Discussion Question 2

What other instances imply that Mariana is attracted to Ted?

Discussion Question 3

Why did the author place "The Double Mint Man" excerpt in this section?

Vocabulary

muumuu, kibitzed, cloying



Chapters 36-40

Summary

Ted puts on a tape of the Red Socks playing the Yankees. The two begin to talk about Edward Bernays, the nephew of Sigmund Freud and marketing pioneer, as well as Dichter, someone that Marty worked with. The baseball game is very close and Marty leaves the room (after asking why the players are in their away uniforms even though they are at home and why Ted is not at work).. Eventually, Ted yells to Marty that the Red Socks won, and Marty becomes reinvigorated.

The narrative then goes back to the unknown father's narrative. The father puts on a baseball game, a sign to his family that he is not to be disturbed. He contemplates about the other woman (not his wife) and how he would like to have a new life with her with new children. His son then speaks and snaps him out of his daydream.

Later, the Red Socks actually lost their game, but Ted's plot succeeds and Marty thinks that they won. Marty goes to pick up the paper without his wheelchair and everyone around overacts and stating that the Red Socks won. It is clear that Marty's friends coached them as to what to say.

After the next game, Ted oversleeps. He rushes to get the paper and Marty requests it. In a panic, Ted burns the paper in front of him. Marty thinks that this is a joke, not aware that Ted does not want him to know that the Red Socks lost. Ted then asks Marty if he wants to play catch, he initially declines, but after Ted discloses that he invited Mariana, he agrees.

Ted and Marty pick up Mariana. Ted puts the Grateful Dead on the cassette player. Marty complains but Mariana states that she likes it. They then play catch, and Ted plays badly. Ted throws the ball at Mariana who catches it. He then exclaims "nice snatch." They all laugh, but Mariana throws the ball at Ted, hitting him in the face.

Analysis

This group of chapters mentions Freud more than once. Marty explains that Bernays and Dichter used Freud's concepts to manipulate consumers into buying products. Marty seems to imply that the men utilized the animalistic and sexual side of consumers in order to make people desire certain products. It is very possible that Marty used similar strategies while he was in the marketing field. This could explain why Marty seems to feel bad about what he did when he was a marketer. Marty could feel bad about manipulating people.

Freud is also mentioned during the chapter where Mariana, Marty, and Ted play catch. Ted says "snatch" instead of "catch." Marty mentions Freud, alluding to the concept of the Freudian slip, where thoughts and desires from one's subconscious escape into



misspoken words. While this is definitely not the first time that Ted has misspoken in this way, this is the first time that it has been clearly connected to Freud after Freudian concepts have been explained. The author intentionally included that chapter mentioning Bernays and marketing near the chapter where Ted makes a Freudian slip in order to make these connections cohesive and clear.

The chapter about the father watching the baseball game intentionally dissolves the subtlety about the identity of the man in "The Double Mint Man." In "The Double Mint Man," we learn that the man has fallen in love with a Latino woman. In this section's chapter about the father, it is revealed that the father is having an affair with a woman that he loves. The author intentionally reveals these details to make sure that the reader knows that Marty, the character in "The Double Mint Man," and the father are all essentially the same person. This seems to explain why Ted and Marty seem to acknowledge that their family was a rather cold one. Essentially, Marty had an affair, degrading the state of the family.

Discussion Question 1

What other aspects of Freudian psychoanalysis appear in the novel?

Discussion Question 2

Is it possible that Mary suspects the truth about the Red Socks?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Mariana agree to go and play catch?

Vocabulary

savant, gesticulate, nonchalant



Chapters 41-45

Summary

Mariana tells Ted that he has a concussion. They go home, and the old men use a hose to make it look like it is raining. Ted puts on a cassette tape of jungle noises with thunder. He hopes that this combination will cause Marty to believe that a rain-out has occurred for the Red Socks game. Marty swears he hears a parrot and proclaims that he sometimes feels like a parrot in Brooklyn.

Ted leaves and arrives at work during the second inning, causing his boss to yell at him. While working he carries around an Emile Bronnaire poem with him and reflects on the words "without decline in love, without complaint, we shall live again."

Ted goes home to learn that Marty slept all day. Ted asks his father if he wants to eat the Chinese food that he bought. Marty explains that he has no appetite. Ted asks Marty if he would like to try some marijuana, as it will give him an appetite. Initially, he declines, but soon he accepts and Ted shotguns some smoke into Marty's mouth.

Marty becomes inebriated and tells Ted to never let him be without the drug again. They discuss "The Double Mint Man" and Marty explains that it is not a novel, but a disguised autobiography. Ted asks Marty if he loved Maria, and Marty avoids the question.

Ted opens "The Double Mint Man" to the back. He notices a section in a more feminine handwriting written in Spanish. Below it is an English translation explaining that the narrator and Maria went through lust, love, then love again. The section ends with the words "They Were," irritating Ted. On the page is an address and phone number.

Analysis

Marty's explanation of feeling like a parrot in Brooklyn reveals much about Marty's character. He apologizes to Ted, because he believes that fathers should be strong. It becomes clear that Marty has been putting up a front for Marty. Marty seems to feel alienated or like he does not belong in New York City. This is quite different than the tough exterior that Marty tends to put up.

It is possible that the words of the Bronnaire poem directly alludes to why Ted decides to look for Maria. It seems like Ted believes that if Marty finds Maria, the one he used to love, he may "live again." Here, Ted shows much more concern for his father than in some previous instances. This could also possibly translate to Ted's relationship with Mariana as well. Perhaps Ted believes that if he finds love with Mariana, he will be reborn, possibly as more motivated person or a better writer.

The last two chapters of the sections foreshadow a confrontation between Ted and the woman known as Maria. Marty does not answer whether he actually loved Maria,



alluding to a confirmation. Here, this situation becomes one about closure. Not only closure for Marty, but for Ted as well. Ted wants closure regarding his childhood, and the reason why his father was so distant to him during his childhood. Ted also wants to know the conclusion of the sentence "They Were." Ted believes that Marty needs closure, as something clearly happened between Maria and Marty, as they are no longer together. Ted believes that this is unresolved and if reinvigorated may make Marty feel healthier.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Ted become irritated with the ending of "The Double Mint Man?"

Discussion Question 2

Why did Marty disguise "The Double Mint Man" as a novel?

Discussion Question 3

What are some other possible meanings of the Bronnaire poem?

Vocabulary

kumquat, fallible, neutrino



Chapters 46-50

Summary

Ted wakes up early and drives to Spanish Harlem. After arriving, he calls Mariana and asks her to meet him at a diner. Ted explains to Mariana that he is searching for Maria because he wants answers. Ted asks Mariana to mediate, which Mariana calls babysitting, and agrees.

Marty, possibly during the time when Mariana and Ted are at the diner, is at home and has not gotten out of bed yet. He reads Walter Benjamin's "On Hashish."

Mariana and Ted arrive at the address. While waiting to spot someone who might be Maria, Mariana asks Ted about his mother. He explains that she died when she was 42 of a cerebral hemorrhage. A crowd approaches the two, as some people recognize Ted as "Senior Peanut." They spot a woman in her 60s that could be Maria. She makes eye contact with them and Mariana kisses Ted as a disguise. Still shocked, Ted approaches the woman, and she proclaims that his eyes look like Marty's.

Ted and Mariana tell Marty that they met Mariana, he becomes angry and storms out of the room. He eventually reappears, dressed in a suit and jacket and ready to go.

Unfortunately, Ted's car would not start so the group took the subway. Ted was surprised that Marty did not bring his cane or wheelchair. Marty attempts to pick up a New York Post on the subway. Ted snatches the paper and adjusts Marty's tie as a distraction. He wants to adjust Mariana, but she is perfect.

Analysis

The author intentionally tells the reader what book Walter is reading. Walter Benjamin was a Western Marxist philosopher who wrote about a variety of things, from literary theory to the origins of German drama. One of his most famous works is "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." This could possibly connect to the novel as Benjamin theorizes that art becomes less effective when it is mechanically reproduced. Marty's novel is handwritten and therefore not mechanically reproduced. This could imply that Marty's book has some sort of power that published works do not. The actual book that Marty is reading is "On Hashish." A book that Benjamin wrote while he was under the influence of drugs. This connects to the novel as Marty had been high prior to this point.

This group of chapters also furthers the idea that both Marty and Ted need closure. When Ted explains to Mariana that his mother died young of a cerebral hemorrhage, Mariana even mentions closure. As his mother died of a condition that can kill someone without warning, it seems like her death let many things go unresolved between Ted and his mother as well as Marty and his wife. Marty seems to make a concerted effort to find



closure. While he becomes angry at first, he eventually gets dressed up and goes to meet with Maria. This implies that he wants to reconnect and that some things may have been left unresolved.

Discussion Question 1

Are there any other connections between Benjamin and Marty?

Discussion Question 2

In this group of chapters, are there clues that Marty is catching on to Ted's Red Socks conspiracy?

Discussion Question 3

Does it seem like Marty feels comfortable on the subway?

Vocabulary

mediate, cascade, bodega



Chapters 51-55

Summary

The subway stops and Ted, Mariana, and Marty go to Maria's house. Maria opens the door and she and Marty stare at each other. Maria declares that he looks like someone she used to know. Marty replies that he looks like half of someone she used to know.

Maria's apartment is modest and smells like Latin food. The group drink beer and eat, while Marty sits attentively, something Ted has not seen him do before. Maria opens a manila envelope full of photos, one of which shows Marty trying to teach Ted how to hit a baseball. Neither of the men remember this moment. Mariana and Ted step away, and Mariana theorizes that they do not remember because it does not fit their story, and perhaps it will cause their stories to change. The two hear Maria and Marty having sex in the bedroom.

Mariana and Ted step out and get shaved ice. When Marty joins them, they go back onto the subway. While riding, Marty and Ted recite Walt Whitman's Crossing Brooklyn Ferry. Ted asks what the Spanish word for closure is, and Marty replies that it is "pendejo"

Mariana and Ted put Marty to bed. Suddenly, Mariana begins kissing Ted and eventually they begin to have sex. During the act, Ted notices that Mariana's tattoo does not say "Christ," but it says "Christina." The two eventually finish having sex.

The narrative then focuses on Marty. Marty realizes that Ted is gone and that the Red Socks are winning. He has been waiting for this and thinks that maybe it is time for him to die. He picks up the paper and cannot read the language that the scores are written in. He wakes from this dream and spots Ted laying in bed with Mariana. He goes outside to get the newspaper and notices no one around. He checks the sports scores and is shocked to see that the Yankees and the Red Socks are tied. Puzzled, Marty collapses.

Analysis

This group of chapters deals a lot with reality and memory. Mariana theorizes that both Marty and Ted have their own stories about what their family life was like. However, neither of them remember the instance where Marty taught Ted how to hit a ball, even though it clearly happened. This is because the contents of the picture does not match Ted's narrative of Marty being a distant father, nor Marty's narrative of him being an awful father and husband. Like Mariana later states, it is possible that this realization will change the two character's perspectives about that time of their lives.



The theme of closure also once again appears in section. On the subway, the two men recite the Walt Whitman poem *Crossing Brooklyn Ferry*. It seems that the two men believe that the theoretical journey within the contents of the poem end in a type of closure. As both men were thinking of the poem, it is clear that both of them believed that some sort of closure had just occurred

The instance where Ted spies the full text of Mariana's tattoo foreshadows some sort of reveal that will take place. Up to this point, the reader is led to believe that the text of the tattoo is actually "Christ," thanks to the chapter length narrative regarding the child with bone cancer who states that she is going to marry Jesus. This connection is intended as a red herring, as readers most likely believed that the identity of the sick girl is Mariana. In a way, it is falsely implied that Mariana tattooed "Christ" on herself as some sort of thanks for her survival during her sickness. The reveal of "Christina" changes this, as it is no longer clear that the sick girl is Mariana. If the sick girl is still not Mariana, it is unclear why exactly her chapter is in the book. This is a demonstration of a very long-running red-herring that has taken throughout the majority of the novel.

Discussion Question 1

What could be some other meanings for Marty's dream?

Discussion Question 2

Why was Marty shocked to the point of collapsing?

Discussion Question 3

Who could "Christina" be?

Vocabulary

inkling, meagre, fathomable



Chapters 56-60

Summary

Ted wakes up to a banging on the door. He answers, and one of the old men tell him that the kiosk worker found Marty unresponsive on the floor. The man called 911, and Marty was taken to the hospital.

Ted arrives at the hospital to see his father in critical condition and in a coma. Ted is told to prepare for Marty's death. Ted tells Mariana that he believes that he killed his father by faking the scores. Mariana tells Ted that she has to say goodbye and that nothing was personal, but it was unprofessional. He asks if she helps people die and then has sex with their relatives. She walks away.

While Marty sits in the hospital, Maria visits and Ted rereads "The Double Mint Man." He goes to work and notices an advertisement for the watch brand Longines, but he believes it to say "Longingness." Ted's boss gives him an angry look.

Ted's boss takes him into a room and tells him that they know that he stole a VCR and game tapes. The boss continues, saying that they are considering pressing charges, but regardless he is fired. Ted leaves and shouts "Up the Workers" to Mungo.

Analysis

Ted feels an immense amount of guilty during this section of the book. Ted does not know it, but according to the chapter when Marty collapses, it seems like the realization that the previous Red Socks scores were a lie played a part into Marty's reaction. Ted is also very confused by Mariana's reaction to the whole ordeal. However, Ted does not realize that Mariana could be distancing herself from the situation because she played a part in the Red Socks score conspiracy. Perhaps her guilt is causing her to lash out at Marty.

The word that Ted believes he sees at the Yankees stadium "Longingness" is very significant in this group of chapters. Ted seems to long for a variety of things. He longs for a relationship between himself and Mariana, which no seems out of reach. He also longs for a time where Marty was not sick or in a coma.

Discussion Question 1

What is the significance of "Up the Workers" in this section?



Discussion Question 2

In the typical story arc, what position does this section fall into?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Ted reread his father's book?

Vocabulary

consultation, admonishing, clanging



Chapters 61-70

Summary

Ted spends much of his time in the hospital with his father. The Red Socks are down by one game. To make sure that Marty knows the game scores, Ted reads the entire "Post" to Marty every day. Soon after, Ted goes back to his father's house and learns that Tango Sam is dead; he then cuts his hair.

In an attempt to incite a reaction from his father, Ted dresses up in his childhood scuba suit and dances; as Ted is doing this, the Yankees lose a game. The next day, Ted tells his comatose father that he cut his hair and that there will be one playoff game between the Red Socks and the Yankees. After he announces this to his father, he goes to his Rasta drug dealer and asks for something harder than both marijuana and cocaine.

Ted brings the product to his comatose father. It is two playoff tickets. Ted breaks down and apologizes for being a loser. Suddenly, Marty wakes up and asks about the two tickets. The two decide to go on a road-trip to Boston in order to watch the game. Maria visits to see the two off. On their way out they open the door to see food left by Mariana. Ted decides that he wants bologna instead. In the car ride Ted learns that Marty did not live near Boston like "The Double Mint Man" states. Later, Ted coughs, inciting a panicked reaction from Marty.

Ted then tells his father that during childhood family trips, Ted would fantasize about stepping off a train and finding new parents. This saddens Marty, but Ted reassures him that he never stepped off the train.

Analysis

This group of chapters demonstrates the final steps of Ted rekindling his relationship with his father. This is shown in a variety of ways. The most obvious is probably the fact that Ted cuts his hair. Much earlier in the book, Marty expresses his distaste for Ted's hair, but now Ted is finally taking Marty's opinions seriously. Ted's long stints of staying with his father in the hospital also show this rekindled relationship. It is very unlikely that Ted, as we meet him towards the beginning of the book, would have treated his father in the loving way that he does later.

Ted's donning of the scuba outfit hearkens back to the narrative regarding the little boy and his father who watches baseball on television. In that chapter, the child was able to get a reaction from his father, while this was not a verbal reaction, his father definitely noticed it. In this chapter, Ted hopes for the same thing. He hopes that his comatose father will notice his outfit and give some sort of response, releasing him from his coma.

Lastly, the author mentions Marty's reaction to Ted's coughing too extensively for it to be a passing detail. His reaction is definitely foreshadowing something. The two



possibilities are that it reminds him of his lung cancer or that it reminds him of Ted's childhood sickness.

Discussion Question 1

What is the relationship between Marty's love of the Red Socks and his lie about Boston?

Discussion Question 2

What could Marty's reaction to the cough be foreshadowing?

Discussion Question 3

Why would Ted tell Marty about his fantasy of stepping off the train?

Vocabulary

chokers, apparatus, spanglish



Chapters 71-79

Summary

Marty asks Ted what happened between him and Mariana. Ted explains that he thinks that she sleeps with many people. Marty finally explains his reaction to Ted's coughing. It reminds him of Ted's childhood illness and the hopelessness that he felt during it (confirming that the father and son within that chapter were Marty and Ted). Marty explains that this is why he and Mariana clicked. She had a child die too, a daughter, from bone cancer. Her name was Christina. When Marty falls asleep, Ted tries to inhale Marty's breath to take away the cancer.

On the way to Boston, the father and son pop a tire. They realize that the game already started as the score is 1-0 in favor of the Red Socks. While they are still driving, Bucky Dent of the Yankees steps up to the plate (who has a pathetic batting average). Eventually, he hits home-run, making the score 5-4 in favor of the Yankees. Marty exclaims "Bucky Fucking Dent." Marty explains that it was always going to be Dent that would win the game, as the world belongs to the losers. Marty then goes silent, Ted checks for a pulse and find none.

He drives his fathers corpse home towards New York. He stops and calls Mariana and explains that he loves her. She questions, "What if I do not love you?" but Ted answers that he will wait, and that he finally accepts her love of disco music. Ted continues home, blasting the Grateful Dead.

Ted picks up Maria and Mariana and drives towards Marty's block. On the way, they pass over the river. On the block, they find all of his neighbors in Red Socks' colors congratulating the team and praising Marty.

Analysis

The first major reveal within this section of the book is the final confirmations regarding the identities of the characters within the side-narrative-based chapters. Here, we definitively learn that the young boy and his father are actually Ted and Marty during Ted's childhood. A less foreshadowed reveal is the reveal about the young girl with bone cancer. A red herring occurred that attempted to make the reader think that the girl was a younger version of Mariana. Here, we learn that the girl was actually Mariana's daughter, who died, driving her to get her "Christina" tattoo on her ankle.

Also, it must be noted that when Marty dies, the Red Socks did not beat the Yankees in the playoffs, something was initially suggested and referenced that Marty would not die until this took place. However, it seems like Marty finally accepts that his fate is independent from that of the Red Socks and becomes satisfied with his life.



Marty's explanation that "the world belongs to the losers" has great meaning in this chapter as well as the entire novel. Not only does Bucky Dent, a rather mediocre player, lead the New York Yankees to victory, Marty, someone who thinks of himself as a loser finally becomes satisfied. This is also foreshadowing towards the final fate of Ted, who could certainly be considered a loser towards the beginning of the novel.

Discussion Question 1

What does Marty mean when he says that he and Mariana "clicked"?

Discussion Question 2

Why is Bucky Dent a loser?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Ted blast the Grateful Dead while driving to New York?

Vocabulary

inning, Kabbalist, capricious



Epilouge

Summary

Four figures walk towards a grave within a graveyard. Two of the figures are older, while the other two are quite young. The two older figures turn out to be Mariana and Ted, while the younger figures are their children. Ted leans a novel entitled "The Double Mint Man" against Marty's grave. Ted has become a successful writer of nine novels, some of which were turned into movies and television shows.

Analysis

As foreshadowed in Chapter 79, Ted, a loser, finally becomes successful. He also finally finishes his father's narrative, something that was suggested by Mariana much earlier in the novel. His writing of his father's partially fictional story led to Ted's success. Ted also succeeds by having a family with Mariana, who eventually loved him, and having a family.

Discussion Question 1

In what other ways is Ted not a loser?

Discussion Question 2

What would Marty's reaction be regarding Ted's place in life?

Discussion Question 3

What do Ted's children seem to think about their grandfather?

Vocabulary

blaring, bemused, amid



Characters

Ted Fullilove

Ted Fullilove is the protagonist of this story and the son of Marty. Prior to the start of the novel, Ted earns his M.A. in English from Columbia College (this causes him to be quite pretentious about literature). Later, Ted's mother has died and he becomes rather estranged from his father. Ted aspires to be a novelist, but does not get very far in his chosen profession.

In order to support himself, Ted becomes a peanut thrower at the Yankee baseball stadium. Here, he becomes a local celebrity known as Mr. Peanut. Eventually, he learns that his father has fallen ill due to lung cancer and reconnects with him. However, Ted is rather cold towards his father in response to the feeling of abandonment that was initiated when Ted's mother died and Marty became distant. This creates a rather significant amount of unresolved anger that Ted shows to Marty towards the beginning of their reconnection.

Ted can also be described as a "stoner-type" character, as he listens to the Grateful Dead and smokes copious amounts of marijuana. It is implied that he does this in order to not think about his feelings and familial issues. During the course of the novel, Ted falls in love with Marty's nurse, Mariana, and eventually pursues her. During the epilogue, it is revealed that Ted becomes a successful novelist and marries Mariana.

Marty Fullilove

Marty, Ted's father, is quite a complex character. He is constantly haunted by the instance when Ted, as a child, became very ill, and his condition worsened because Marty put off taking him to the hospital. This feeling of hopelessness caused him to become a distant father, who found an outlet for his feelings in his book, "The Double Mint Man," which he never published. While Ted was a child, Marty worked as a very successful advertising executive who wrote advertising for companies like Double Mint and Volkswagen. Marty also becomes very connected with the Boston Red Sox and vows to not die until the Red Sox win the World Series.

Marty eventually contracted lung cancer which caused him to reconnect with his son. Eventually Marty tells Ted about the hopeless feeling he felt when he almost lost him and they become close. After hearing the Yankees beat the Red Sox in the playoffs, Marty dies, and Ted eventually publishes his own version of Marty's book, "The Double Mint Man."



Mariana

Mariana is Marty's death nurse. According to Marty, both he and Mariana connected so well because like Marty, Mariana had a traumatic experience involving her child's health. In Mariana's case, her daughter, Christina, died of bone cancer. This death deeply affects Mariana, causing her to flee from those who want to understand her, like Ted. Before Marty falls into a coma, Mariana sleeps with Ted and Ted legitimately falls in love. Initially, Mariana rejects Ted, but later accepts him.

In the epilogue, it is revealed that Ted and Mariana marry and have two children.

Maria

Maria is Marty's former love interest who lives in Spanish Harlem. It is revealed in *The Double Mint Man* that Marty loved Maria but could not be with her due to his marriage to Ted's mother. Eventually, thanks to Ted, the two reconnect for a brief time before Marty's death outside of Boston. Maria is Hispanic, like Mariana, implying that their race may be what attracted Marty to both of the woman.

Christina

It is implied through a side narrative, but later fully revealed that Christina is Mariana's daughter who died of bone cancer when she was very young. Before she died, Christina stated that she was going to marry Jesus and told Mariana not to die.

Mungo

Mungo is Ted's coworker at Yankee Stadium. The two connect through the baseball team, and the two joke about Ted's Communist tendencies.

Ted's Mother

Not much is known about Ted's mother due to the fact that both Ted and Marty seem to be quite traumatized by her death. However, it is revealed that she attempted to convince Marty to bring Ted to the hospital much earlier than they actually did.

Bucky Dent

Bucky Dent, the shortstop for the 1978 Yankees, is a very minute character in this book. At the end of the book, Dent hits the home-run that causes the Red Socks to lose the playoffs. Due to Dent's mediocre performance in the past, Marty states that the losers rule the world.



The Protagonist of The Double Mint Man

The Protagonist of The Double Mint Man is loosely based on his creator, Marty. He falls in love with a Hispanic woman, just like Marty. But in the book, the protagonist is actually able to be with the character inspired by Maria.

Andrew Blaugrund

Andrew Blaugrund is Ted's agent. Toward the beginning of the novel, Blaugrund attempts to help Ted by telling him that he can write, but that he has to be less abstract.



Symbols and Symbolism

Ted's Day Job

Ted's day job, throwing peanuts, represents Ted's failure and the monotony of his life up until the events of the novel. Ted becomes frustrated as he has a degree from a prestigious institution, but simply throws legumes at Yankee Stadium. However, it also symbolizes one of the reasons for his writing motivations, as his unhappiness causes him to write.

The Grateful Dead

The band The Grateful Dead represents a universal constant for Ted. The band's lyrics are something that Ted understands. The band also seems to lead him in the proper direction, as Mariana's drunkenly acquired Grateful Dead tattoo seems to somewhat bring them together.

Baseball

Within the novel, the game of baseball seems to mirror life and sometimes push it along. Throughout the novel, Marty's life seems to proceed and change through the performance of the Red Socks. Baseball also seems to push life along as baseball allows Ted to get the VHS, and Marty meets Maria through a softball game.

Literature

Like The Grateful Dead, literature symbolizes a constant that both Ted and Marty understand. The two are able to find solace by reciting and thinking about literature. Ted is even able to understand that driving Marty home is the last water crossing by relating it to Whitman's poem "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry."

The Demon

The demon simply symbolizes life threatening disease. Marty refers to Ted's childhood disease as a demon, and Ted later refers to Marty's disease as the same. But more importantly, they both believe that the demon, like a disease can be fought.

The Parrot

The parrot represents Marty's alienation within New York City. He realizes this once Ted lies and explains that his neighbor bought a parrot. As parrots do not belong in New



York City, Marty believes they are alienated and overwhelmed, just as he is in his old age.

The Scuba Suit

To Ted, his childhood scuba suit represents a time when Ted was able to get a reaction from his father. He demonstrates this by putting on the suit when Marty is in a coma, to hopefully incite some sort of reaction.

The Newspaper Conspiracy

Ted's newspaper related conspiracy symbolizes the point when Ted actually begins truly caring much more for his father's condition. Ted goes through a huge amount of effort in order to pull this off. However, later, it symbolizes Ted's failure, as he temporarily believes that the plot led to Marty's collapse.

The Doublemint Man

The Double Mint Man, the novel, represents a semi-fictional version of Marty. Much of the character's life mirrors Marty, except for the sections about being with Maria. Here, the Doublemint Man represents what Marty wished could have happened.

The Playoffs between the Red Socks and the Yankees

The playoff game between the Red Socks and the Yankees symbolizes the instance where Marty finally realizes how the world actually works. When Bucky Dent leads his team to victory, Marty begins to understand that it was always going to happen, as the losers rule the planet.



Settings

Brooklyn

The vast majority of the novel takes place within Brooklyn. Brooklyn is the home of Ted's childhood home, currently resided in by Marty. , Ted decides to drive to Brooklyn in order to spend time with his ill father. However, Marty seems to have mixed feelings about the area, as he believes that he feels like a parrot in Brooklyn, hinting at his alienation and discomfort. One of the most noted details about this area is the diversity of its citizens. Ted, more than once mentions the variety of people and things he sees on the streets of Brooklyn. Like most settings within the novel, the city is more of a backdrop than a plot point.

Boston

Boston, the home of Marty's favorite baseball team, the Red Socks, is only a setting within a very small portion of this book. In an act of desperation, Ted buys Marty and himself two Red Socks tickets and decides to go on a road trip to watch the game. They do not even really see the game. The area around Boston is also the place of Marty's death within Ted's car.

Yankee Stadium

New York's Yankee Stadium is Ted's workplace. While the stadium is not described in detail, Ted is somewhat of a celebrity there, as he is a peanut salesman. Ted describes the stadium as an incredibly diverse place of people who are fascinated with the game of baseball and the celebrity of the players.

Spanish Harlem

Spanish Harlem is the area where Ted and Mariana search in order to find Marty's lost love Maria. Spanish Harlem is described as less diverse than other settings, as it is predominately populated by individuals of Hispanic descent.

Hospital

A hospital is visited two important times throughout the novel. First is when Marty becomes sicker towards the beginning of the story, then when Marty collapses. It is also visited within the secondary narratives regarding the sick boy and the girl with bone cancer. It seems that every character thinks of death while in the novel's hospitals, most likely as all of the characters faced death within a hospital at some point.



Themes and Motifs

Death

Within the novel, the theme of death is used to portray that it is an inevitable factor within everyday life, and that it must be confronted. This type of thematic use is shown in three different instances within the novel, the first is when Ted, as a child, becomes sick, when Mariana's daughter, Christina, becomes sick, and when Marty becomes closer to death.

In the instance of Ted's sickness, Marty learns that death is inevitable, but it is the first instance of a character trying to overtly fight it. Marty initially blames himself for the worsening of his child's condition. While he does realize that this type of thing happens, he decides to do something about it. Marty and Ted decide that they must fight the "demon," which they do and are successful. But through this, Marty does realize that death comes for all people, but can sometimes be avoided.

The instance with Christina is quite different, as it does not seem like Mariana takes her daughter's sickness as well as Marty does. But here, Christina is the one realizing that death is inevitable, reassures his mother, and tells Mariana to avoid her own death if she can. It is apparent that Mariana evidently accepts this and moves on as much as she can.

Finally, Marty's death is dealt with by both Marty and Ted. After the baseball game, Marty finally concedes that he must die and does so. Ted, accepts this and believes that it makes sense that it would happen after the Red Socks loss. This final death is dealt with in a much more accepting way, as both men have learned the nature of death's inevitability.

Love

The author uses the theme of death to portray the fact that love does not come into one's life in one concrete way. The two times that this is shown is Ted's relationship with Mariana and Marty's relationship with Maria.

Ted and Mariana's relationship is not a usual one. The two characters do not meet under normal circumstances. Mariana meets Ted as his father's death nurse and tries to help Marty reconnect with his father. The two do not initially agree on many things, but eventually come to a mutual point in their relationship after Ted learns to accept Mariana within the context of her daughter's death.

Love does not come into Marty's life within a concrete way either. While we do not know much about how Marty and Ted's mother met, we do know how Maria and Marty met. Essentially, the two met while they were both already married. While, according to



Maria, they never truly "got together," it is clear through *The Doublemint Man* that Marty wishes that they actually did.

However, they do finally consummate their relationship and find that they love each other in another odd way. They finally find their love while Marty is close to death. They do both seem to believe that this was a long time coming, but the circumstances in which it happens are still unusual.

Fiction

The theme of fiction works as a sort of bane to Ted's existence towards the beginning of the book, but as the novel goes on, it allows him to understand things that he was unable to before.

Towards the beginning of the novel, Ted explicitly states that he hates fiction. Essentially, he finds it useless to him, and instead of writing normal fiction, he decides to write abstract deconstructive works. This is possibly due to the fact that in college, he learned to dissect or deconstruct fiction down to its skeleton, possibly diluting its fiction-based teachings. It seems that while in school, Ted did not learn anything about his life through any of the fiction that he read during this time.

However, when he finally comes into contact with the semi-fictional narrative within *The Doublemint Man*, he begins to understand things through fiction. Basically, he learns to understand his father's mindset throughout his childhood and learns why Marty made particular decisions that he did. This revelation seems to open up Ted to fiction, as according to the epilogue, it is implied that Ted writes several successful pieces of fiction.

The Effect of Trauma

The work uses trauma and its effect on people in order to explain that trauma can affect different individuals in different ways. It also attempts to explain that different people deal with trauma differently.

The three main characters who deal with trauma are Marty, Mariana, and Ted. Marty's main trauma is when Ted becomes very ill. As he feels guilty for Ted's condition, he reacts to this trauma through distancing himself away from Ted. However, he finally resolves this trauma by becoming close to Ted throughout the entire book. By the time Marty deals, he seems to have completely dealt with the trauma.

Mariana deals with Christina's death by becoming close to individuals physically but never emotionally. For example, she has sex with Ted but initially refuses to enter into an emotional relationship with him. He somewhat overcomes this trauma by letting Ted understand her emotionally.



Ted reacts to the trauma of his father's death in a much calmer way than the other two characters. Ted seems to realize that it was time for Marty to finally die. While he does feel sad, he deals with it by finishing his father's narrative, *The Doublemint Man*.

Poetry/Music

The motif and poetry of music is used to explain that Marty and Ted both use different forms of art in order to understand things, and that sometimes, they use the same form of art for understanding.

For example, Marty constantly quotes poetry and name-drops poets throughout the story. He also begins reciting "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" while the characters are on the subway. Through these instances, we learn that Marty understands things through poetry.

However, Ted seems to primarily understand things through music. Ted makes several Grateful Dead references throughout the novel and tends to try to use their lyrics to understand particular metaphors or situations. However, towards the end of the novel, it must be noted that Ted and Marty find common ground through poetry, like the aforementioned "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry." In fact, Ted uses this poem in order to understand that while he is driving his father's dead body back from Boston, his father is crossing the river once last time.

Styles

Point of View

The point-of-view in the novel is a omniscient third-person narrator. This style of narrator is able to narrate the narrative of Ted's present life, his childhood, and the chapters about Christina, all without changing perspective. Through this narrator, we are able to determine each character's thought processes and motivations.

Language and Meaning

The language within the book is quite mature in its use of profanity. Also, Ted, who has an BA in Literature, makes several vague literary references that those who are not familiar with some aspects of literature may not understand. The fact that both Ted and Marty seem rather smart, some metaphors (such as the demon within young Ted) are used without extensive explanation. This causes the reader to seek out meaning through symbol and metaphorical analysis.

Structure

The structure of the novel is in a mostly chronological way. The instances where the narrative is not chronological are when the narrator narrates Teds childhood, when Christina is in the hospital, and excerpts from The Doublemint Man.

Many chapters are proceeded with baseball scores. Many of these scorecards list the scores of both the recent Yankee and Red Socks games. This makes sense as the climax of the novel takes place when both the Red Socks and the Yankees are in the playoffs. Through this motif, the reader is able to determine how the Red Socks are doing within various periods of time.



Quotes

No, war would've been good for you if you didn't get killed, would've given you a subject, a fucking plot. Think of Hemingway and Mailer. Without WW Two, Mailer is nothing but a genius momma's boy who wants to hang with made guys and boxers, and poor Hemingway, even with the war, he's really only known as another wannabe tough-guy boxer bullfighter backstage Johnny with a smoking-hot granddaughter in a soon-to-be-released Woody Allen film. But war is good for art. War is good for industry and fiction."

-- Andrew Blaugrund (Chapter 6)

Importance: This quote is a comment on the 20th century view of what leads to good writing. Andrew theorizes that Ted has not seen enough trauma to write about something notable.

This is a fruitless imagining. There is only science."

-- Narrator (Chapter 11)

Importance: The nameless father finally decides that he cannot help his son. Instead, he must leave it to science.

He looked on the sidewalk where once he had scratched his name on the wet cement, but it was no longer there. It was smooth, like when a wave washes away initials in a heart someone drew in the sand. Always more waves than words in hearts in the sand, it seemed."

-- Narrator (Chapter 12)

Importance: Ted realizes that things have changed since the last time that he saw his father. He finds that things wash away with time.

And the bowling average? The obsession with statistics, the purity and power of the numbers worked to the seventh decimal place, as if some truth were hidden in the golden mean. He could feel his young self grasping for solidity in those numbers, keys to himself - I am this concrete, numerical thing. I am 134.7538658."

-- Narrator (Chapter 18)

Importance: This reveals some inner-workings of Ted's mind. Statistics are pure and other things are not. However, eventually Ted's view about this seems to change, especially after reconnecting with Marty and meeting Mariana.

You'd think a con artist who made his living making people want what they don't need would no longer be blinded by a nice set of tits. You're like a death in Venice, the con man finally gets conned.

-- Ted (Chapter 21)



Importance: Ted lashes out in anger towards his father. Here, the reader sees the result of Marty's distant connection with his son.

When Ted opened the door to find Mariana there, his first thought was, "I don't know what I'm wearing." And he didn't look down; he had a bad feeling and didn't want to face it, he kept his eyes on the girl, who said, "Hello, Theodore.

-- Narrator (Chapter 23)

Importance: This is the first hint to the fact that Ted wants to be romantically involved with Mariana.

The Doublemint Man wasn't looking for anything special, wasn't aware of a lack per se. But on this Sunday, something was bothering me; I was having some control problems.

-- Narrator of The Doublemint Man (Chapter 24)

Importance: These control problems imply that the Doublemint Man, or Marty's alter-ego, was unhappy in his current situation.

The young girl was named Christina, and she was dying. She knew that. Bone cancer. Leukemia. They called it first names like that, but she knew its last name was death."

-- Narrator (Chapter 26)

Importance: Christina realizes, even before Mariana, that she is going to die.

Let things sit. Let things sit on your heart. You will learn of them by their weight."

-- Marty (Chapter 41)

Importance: Marty attempts to get Ted to think through his feelings regarding his father.

This was a country within a country and Ted did not really speak the language.

-- Narrator (Chapter 46)

Importance: This shows the diversity of Spanish Harlem, which is not far from where Ted lives. But it seems like a completely different county.

I never saw it before. I see it all now. All of it. It's never Mickey Mantle that kills you. Never Willie Mays. Never the thing you prepare for. It's always the little thing you didn't see coming. The head cold that puts you in your grave. It's always Bucky Dent.

-- Marty (Chapter 75)

Importance: This is the first instance that leads Marty to the conclusion that the losers control the planet.

What if I don't love you?" "I'll wait till you do." "You might have to wait a long time." They both got quiet. They both listened to the other breathe. They stood in different places on the exact same spot. "What are you doing?" she asked. There was a long pause, and then Ted said, "Waiting . . ."



-- Ted and Mariana (Chapter 76)

Importance: This is the instance where both Ted and Mariana realize that Ted wants to understand Mariana, and that Ted is willing to wait.