

Candy Study Guide

Candy by Luke Davies

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Plot Summary

Candy by Luke Davies is about an unnamed narrator and his girlfriend Candy who live in Sydney and Melbourne, Australia and are heroin addicts. The novel details their years of a heroin lifestyle, which includes scams, theft, prostitution and drug dealing until they finally hit bottom, stop using heroin and go their separate ways.

The narrator, who remains unnamed the entire novel, is a heroin addict who lives in Sydney. He meets Candy, who turns into the love of his life, and he introduces her to heroin. The narrator tries to find work any way he can to support his addiction. He stops using heroin to help his friend plant a hidden marijuana garden in the Australian outback. Yet he is too sick to help and loses the opportunity to share in the crop. He and Candy move to Melbourne. Candy meets up with her friend O'Brien, a heroin addict. The three all use together.

The narrator and Candy use heroin for nine days straight. They run out of money, so Candy becomes a prostitute. The couple also discusses having a baby. They employ a new dealer named Lester. In this time, they move to an apartment on Queens Road, a posh section of Melbourne. Candy works nights and the narrator sits around, gets high and does the occasional scam for money. They are kicked out of their apartment and move to a dingy warehouse. Candy grows tired of prostitution, so they turn to dealing cocaine to support their addiction.

They get married. The narrator continues to run scams and is arrested twice. Candy gets hepatitis and recovers a month later. Their heroin addict friend Schumann dies of an overdose. Candy then gets pregnant and miscarries at twenty-two weeks.

Candy and the narrator have an argument, which escalates into her hitting him with a glass ashtray. He receives sixteen stitches. They continue to use heroin and stop. They go through this cycle for years. On their longest detox, they only survive three days of detox illness. They are kicked out of the warehouse and live in Port Melbourne. They leave Port Melbourne and live on Alexandra Avenue. They meet an old friend named Casper who sells the narrator his heroin recipe.

The narrator cooks or freebases heroin to use and sell. He and Candy make a good profit. But they use twenty times a day and the narrator runs out of veins to shoot up. He and Candy decide to stop using. They enroll in a methadone program, have a family of cats and move to Albert Park. They then buy a farmhouse in the country with money from Candy's parents and move there. They fight constantly, Candy has an affair, then behaves strangely and the narrator leaves. When he comes back, Candy is in a mental hospital. She gets better and lives with him in the farmhouse for six months. They move back to Sydney and the narrator uses again. Candy leaves. The narrator goes into a hospital and detoxes. He takes it one day at a time now.



Prologue

Prologue Summary

Candy, by Luke Davies, details the story of two Australian heroin addicts, an unnamed narrator and his girlfriend Candy. Through scams, prostitution, robbery and drug dealing, the couple endures a continual cycle of years of heroin addiction and trying to detox while living in Melbourne. Finally, they hit bottom and successfully stop using heroin, but at the cost of their relationship.

In the first section of the Prologue titled Example of Good Times: Summer and Love, the unnamed narrator introduces Candy, a woman whom he loves romantically. He has just introduced her to the drug heroin, his other love. The narrator declares having a partner to share in his heroin addiction is a good thing. He admits to doing a credit card scam with Candy. They live in Sydney, Australia at this point.

In the next section of the Prologue entitled Example of Bad Times: Sugar and Blood, the story is set much later in the winter in Melbourne, Australia. The still unnamed narrator is self-admittedly deep into his addiction, as he says three times in a row that he is unable to stop taking heroin. There is a heroin drought, or an inability to buy heroin, which spirals the narrator deeper into depression. His circle of friends and he call each other, asking for heroin, but the drought affects everyone. In desperation, the narrator calls Dirty Julie, who indeed possesses heroin, but hangs around with thugs. The narrator makes up a packet of powdered sugar then calls up his friends O'Brien, Victor, Maria, Schumann and Martin to pick him up. The group piles in Victor's car and drives to Dirty Julie's. They are nervous and anxious.

The narrator goes into Dirty Julie's place, where the thugs hang out, and carries out the transaction. The narrator buys heroin for seven people and admits to getting ripped off by Dirty Julie and the thugs, but he hasn't had heroin in eighteen hours. The narrator tastes the heroin, admitting it's good, and puts half of it in a separate packet and slips it in his sock. Then he adds the powdered sugar packet he made up earlier to his friends' heroin. He devises a plan to pretend he's also been tricked with this half sugar heroin. He even leaves Candy out the loop because he wants the pure heroin all to himself.

His friends make the narrator take the sugar heroin back and follow him into Dirty Julie's place. The narrator warns them of the thugs, but they follow anyway. Martin says he wants their money back because the heroin isn't good. The thugs start shouting. The narrator and his friends back off, scared for their lives. They leave. The thugs follow them in their car and pull up beside Victor's car. One thug shouts out that the narrator cut the heroin and took some for himself. The thug rushes the car and punches the narrator, breaking his nose and knocking him unconscious. He wakes up, crying and in pain. Sobbing, the narrator says he didn't cut the heroin. They go back to the warehouse where each person takes a hit of heroin and feels nothing.



Candy takes care of the narrator. He goes to the toilet and injects a syringe of the hidden heroin into himself. Nothing happens. He can't cry anymore and realizes this is a horrific life. Once again, he says he can't stop taking heroin.

Prologue Analysis

In the Prologue, the author sets up the book with an unreliable narrator. Since the narrator is addicted to heroin and the experiences in the book thus far are told from the narrator's point of view, he is unreliable. The idea of an unreliable narrator occurs often in fiction, especially when the narrator has a skewed view of the world either through drug or alcohol addiction or if the narrator suffers from mental illness. In the case of this book, the unreliability of the narrator stems from drug addiction. A reader cannot trust him because these instances may be fabricated due to his drug-induced state.

The narrator does not introduce himself, even though he tells the story from a first person point of view. He is not given a name nor do Candy or his friends give him a name. This shrouds the narrator in mystery to fully understand who he really is. It also keeps the reader at arm's length, since the reader does not know the narrator fully.

The narrator foreshadows his doomed relationship with Candy when he does not share the hidden heroin with her. This foreshadows that addiction will take over every instinct of the narrator, including the one of love.

In the Prologue, the narrator repeats several times, "I can't stop", meaning that he can't stop his drug addiction. He ends the Prologue repeating this sentence. This repetition sets up the theme of the book of the inability to overcome drug addiction.



Part 1, Invincibility, Chapters 1-3

Part 1, Invincibility, Chapters 1-3 Summary

In chapter one, Crop Failure, the unnamed narrator says there were good times in the beginning. The good times begin with falling in love with Candy during an Indian summer. They start out in Sydney and live off money from Candy's grandfather, and then perform scams for six months to a year. The narrator wants to go to detox, but ends up buying a special Sri Lankan heroin from his dealer.

Candy leaves for Melbourne and promises to detox. The narrator hopes for normal life with Candy and promises to detox as well. Mason Brown, his pot-smoking and loyal friend, tells him of a crop he wants to grow in the Australian outback. The crop is never given a name, but it is most likely marijuana. Mason says the narrator can help him cut through the brush, plant the crop and sell it in bulk. The narrator agrees and promises Mason he'll meet up with him seven days later — after he detoxes. However, he does not keep his promise to Candy or Mason. He arrives at Mason's apartment high on heroin. The two leave for the outback. The narrator leaves a small stash of heroin hidden in Mason's apartment.

During the trip, Mason does all the work. The narrator helps a little, but mostly lies around helpless, feeling physically ill as he comes down from his high. He knows the deal is off with Mason due to his behavior. Mason is not critical though. They go back to his apartment and the narrator shoots the hidden heroin into his vein. A month later, Mason tells him that insects ate the entire crop, but the narrator knows this is Mason's way of politely declining him as a business partner. The narrator can't wait to get back to a heroin-free Candy.

In chapter two, Problems With Detachable Heads:1, the narrator and Candy decide to detox and get clean. They stop using heroin for six days and instead substitute it with Doloxene, sleeping pills and hash. They engage in normal people activities such as going to a movie and eating ice cream. Then they decide to do heroin again, yet they do not have a clean syringe. The narrator is afraid of contracting AIDS, yet many times, he finds a needle and hopes for the best. At the Cockatoo Club, he meets Ronny Radar, a drug dealer, who sells him heroin and a used syringe. In the bathroom at the club, the narrator attempts to shoot up but the detachable syringe head pops off and goes through the window into the alley. He goes out to find it, but is deterred by two approaching cops.

After a cab drive, he and Candy are at his apartment. He chats with his brother Lex, who is also a drug addict. All three of them pretend they are clean. When Lex goes to bed, the narrator empties the kitchen trash and finds syringes. He and Candy shoot up in the bathroom.



In chapter three, titled *A Change Is As Good As A Holiday*, the narrator and Candy move to Melbourne permanently. Candy has never used heroin in Melbourne. Only her friend O'Brien uses heroin heavily. Candy's friends blame the narrator for introducing her to heroin. Therefore, they make another attempt to become clean. They stay with Candy's friends Anne and Len and use a stolen Visa card for money. They do what normal people do; i.e., smoke marijuana, drink beer, watch videos, etc. They have a picnic at the botanical garden, discussing their future, and Candy getting pregnant soon. That night they meet O'Brien. He explains how to be successful in the Melbourne heroin scene and gets them high.

It is two months later. The narrator and Candy are in a heroin haze, using for nine days straight. They need \$100 for more heroin, so Candy pawns off her beloved silver necklace. She has sex with the pawn shop owner and receives only forty dollars, which upsets both the narrator and her. The narrator is distraught at the idea of Candy having sex with someone else. Her friends Victor and Maria suggest the Carolina Club, a brothel where Maria works. Candy gets a job there, but tells Anne and Len she's working in phone sex. The narrator is reluctant, but lets Candy work there because they need money. Candy makes \$560 in one night and tells the narrator about her job in a clinical way. They employ a new dealer named Lester. The pawn shop owner is murdered.

Part 1, Invincibility, Chapters 1-3 Analysis

In chapter one, the narrator longs for a better life. He wants to be social and normal, only smoke pot and do less harmful drugs than heroin. Mason Brown represents the life that the narrator wants for himself and Candy. Though Mason smokes pot religiously, the narrator looks up to him. He sees his life as the life he wants. Mason represents the narrator's potential; however, this potential isn't very much since Mason is a drug dealer and pot-smoker.

In chapter two, the detachable head of the syringe is a representation of the narrator's life. It pops off into nowhere and lands in the alley, somewhere in a bag of trash. The narrator's life is much like this — a path to nowhere that ends up in the excrement of life. As long as he does heroin, he will end up in this exact same place every single time.

The character of Candy finally comes alive in this chapter. She converses with the narrator. Thus, she is real, not just a figment of the narrator's imagination. At the end of the chapter, the narrator sees Candy in the bathroom with a belt tied around her arm, ready to shoot up. He notes it is this enthusiasm he loves; therefore, heroin is his true object of love. Candy is simply a vehicle that helps him get to his true love.

In chapter three, the recurring theme of being "normal" continues. The narrator states "This is what people do" (p. 37). He tries to have a normal life, but cannot stop his addiction. He wishes for a child for he and Candy and to engage in activities of people who are not addicts, yet it is impossible.



The narrator has a sense of rationality. Despite his drug use, he makes rational decisions such as not to get Candy pregnant while addicted to heroin. He rationalizes that Candy must become a prostitute to support their drug addiction.

He and Candy feel invincible as the name of Part 1 suggests. On heroin, they can't be touched. The money rolls in from prostitution, they are happy with their new dealer and their enemy, the pawn shop owner dies. Nothing can go wrong.



Part I, Invincibility, Chapters 4-6

Part I, Invincibility, Chapters 4-6 Summary

In chapter four, Foursome, the narrator and Candy move to an apartment on Queens Road, an elite part of Melbourne. Candy works as an escort. The narrator drives her around from job to job at night, waiting for her while she has sex with clients. He feels a bit guilty, but is overall happy with his two loves: heroin and Candy. One night Candy is not allowed in a motel with her client, Keith. Keith only has \$200, but the narrator says a night with Candy in their Queens Road flat costs \$800. Keith gives \$200 upfront and promises the other \$600 in the morning. The narrator takes Keith's wedding ring and driver's license.

Candy and the narrator get high. Candy and Keith have sex. Keith and the narrator go to the bank, but Keith doesn't have \$600. He makes a call to his town branch and they give him the money and he gives it to the narrator. After the narrator and Candy return home, Kojak, a drug dealer they don't use much, asks to come over to give Lucy, a young heroin user, a shot of heroin. They use the bedroom to have sex. Candy and the narrator join them, having a foursome. After he is done, Kojak leaves. A few weeks later, Kojak tells them Lucy is in rehab and they never see her again.

In chapter five, Colin Gets Lucky, it is midwinter on a Sunday in Melbourne. Candy and the narrator were kicked out of their Queen Roads flat for not paying rent and now live in a disgusting warehouse. Candy is disillusioned with prostitution, so they try to deal drugs. A pay phone rings on the street. Candy picks up. It is Colin, a man who wants to commit suicide. Candy convinces him to meet her and says he must bring \$200 to help her friend in need. He brings the money, but they do not have sex. She scams him like this several times, making a profit off Colin falling in love with her. Candy runs out of excuses for money, tells Colin she's a heroin addict and that people are after her so she needs more money. He relents. They try to scam Colin one last time, but Colin won't give her anymore, refusing to sell off his washing machine.

In chapter six, Freebasing, Candy and the narrator support themselves from cocaine dealing. They see cocaine as a profitable market. Tucker, a has-been musician, buys their coke. Tucker sets up a coke deal at Candy and the narrator's warehouse apartment. The narrator must test the cocaine to make sure it's good, and if so, he will make \$1,000. Tucker, his girlfriend, two gangsters, Film Boy and his girlfriend all come to the coke test. The narrator freebases, or cooks, the cocaine into its most potent form of crack. He says the coke is seventy-three percent pure. Everyone is happy with this number. They smoke the crack and leave. The narrator calls Lester, his main drug dealer, to purchase more heroin, which is a real drug, according to the narrator.



Part I, Invincibility, Chapters 4-6 Analysis

In chapter four, the money keeps rolling in for Candy and the narrator. Thus, the invincibility theme continues. They live on Queens Road, surrounded by young, elite professionals. Candy and the narrator feel on top of the world. Keith foreshadows their demise by almost not being able to pay. This small moment of uncertainty of receiving payment foreshadows the financial hardships they must face once the bubble bursts.

In chapter five, the pair is now strike dumb luck when Candy answers Colin's phone call. Colin is a symbol of hope for them. If they're able to cheat him, there may be more Colins out there. Colin is a pathetic character, unattractive and nerdy, and is the opposite of what Candy and the narrator strive to be. Among the professionals on Queens Roads, they strive to be like them, fit in. But to be normal, like Colin, is not an acceptable kind of normal. It is downright pathetic.

Their move to the dingy warehouse is a downgrade in class and represents a separation from their goal of becoming normal people. They move further and further away from their goal as they leave Queens Road, which superficially symbolizes a rise in class status.

In chapter six, the narrator spends a good portion of the chapter demonstrating how to freebase or cook the cocaine. He is methodical, working as a chemist, impressing those around him. This methodicalness is a continuation of rationality, which serves him well as a drug dealer and scam artist. It is his rationality that keeps Candy and him somewhat financially stable enough to support their heroin lifestyle. In an unorthodox sense, he is the breadwinner and the brains behind the operation. Meanwhile, Candy uses her beauty and sex appeal. The tradition roles of man and woman are alive and well in Part 1.

The people involved the cocaine deal are also pathetic figures. They are has-been yuppies and two gangsters. The narrator has no respect for them. Again, he and Candy do not fit in with this type of normal. The still are on a quest to fit in with the normality of Queens Road, but are so far from it. He describes himself and Candy as looking okay enough for the yuppies to trust, which make them prosperous in cocaine dealing. But they still not people fit for normal, everyday society.



Part 1, Invincibility, Chapters 7-9

Part 1, Invincibility, Chapters 7-9 Summary

In chapter seven, I Do, the narrator and Candy decide to marry. They go to Candy's father house, and Candy's father asks them about having a child. They respond they hope to have a baby soon. The father also asks when they will marry and they respond they'll start planning a wedding. They marry in winter on a Saturday. Candy wears dress she dyes black and the narrator rents a tuxedo. They marry at the registry office in front of Candy's dear Aunt Catherine and her sweet daughter Sarah, Anne and Len and Candy's parents. The narrator invites his brother Lex, but he doesn't come. The narrator forgets to invite his father, but doesn't want him to come anyway because of their strained relationship. They gather at Candy's parents' house for a small reception, and the narrator falls asleep after shooting up in the bathroom. Candy shoots up after him. The family notices he's asleep, yet he makes an excuse, saying wedding planning is exhausting. They all pretend he's telling the truth and he and Candy leave. They take a taxi to McDonald's, eat and look forward to a night of getting high as husband and wife.

In chapter eight, Wallet, the narrator buys heroin from Fat Nick, a cafe owner in St. Kilda, a section of Melbourne. It is a beautiful Sunday. Fat Nick gives him the heroin slyly, but doesn't make him pay for a two dollar milkshake. Candy and the narrator drive to Albert Park Lake to get high. The narrator goes into the bathroom and on the way back sees a wallet on the seat of an open car. He snatches it and they drive off. The wallet only has five dollars, but four credit cards. The narrator must practice the complicated signature. To stall for time, he calls the wallet's owner, Roger Moylen, and tells him he feels guilty for stealing the wallet. He offers to meet Roger and give it back the following morning at nine o'clock. Roger agrees. That evening the narrator perfects Roger's signature. At eight thirty the following morning, he goes to three banks and easily receives cash from unsuspecting bank tellers. At the last place he cancels Roger's insurance policy and cashes out the insurance policy check at the bank across the street. He amasses \$2,232 from this scam. He and Candy call a dealer and get high. The narrator imagines Roger sitting on a park bench waiting. He says, like Roger, as an addict he also spends most of his life waiting. Occasionally, Roger's image still haunts him.

In chapter nine, Crabs, Candy has a good job in an East Melbourne brothel. She brings in anywhere from two hundred to a thousand dollars a day. The narrator sits home and watches television while she works. A constant drawback is Candy often gets crabs. Instead of going to a regular clinic and receiving medicine to get rid of them, they kill the crabs off one by one, squeezing them to death while high. They remove and kill crabs for hours. The narrator put his heroin-laced blood on a crab and it dies instantly. Candy wakes up the next morning and goes to work. The narrator reads a book.



Part 1, Invincibility, Chapters 7-9 Analysis

In chapter seven, the narrator and Candy continue their quest for normalcy as they decide to plan a wedding and get married in front of their family. However, they can't keep up the facade, as the narrator falls asleep during the reception. The family knows they are drug addicts but plays into the lie, avoiding confrontation at all costs. Candy's father even declares his wish to become a grandfather, though he knows his daughter is a heroin addict. Therefore, this striving for normalcy is passed down from generation to generation, inferring it is an inherited trait.

At the heart of the marriage is heroin. They can only get through the wedding day with heroin in the morning and during the reception. What bonds them together is drug use. Their idea of love is skewed, but they marry anyway, hoping for a better life.

In chapter eight, the narrator's life is parallel to Roger's life. He says, "That I myself may well have been a ghost, and that I was haunting my own body, just as the image of Roger would occasionally haunt my mind" (p. 101). He relates himself to the every man, something he has refused to do earlier in the book. Though Roger is pathetic and gullible in the narrator's eyes, he can relate to waiting for something. The image of the ghost represents the shell that he has turned into. He is not a whole living man, but a shell of one due to his drug addiction.

In chapter nine, the crabs represent the narrator and Candy. Like the crabs, they suck and leech onto their victims, wreaking havoc wherever they land. The crabs are also the only thing distracting enough to pull them down from their high. They make Candy itch and she must pay attention to them. To deal with the situation, removing and killing crabs becomes a game. Like heroin, the game is fun at first but then become tedious. It is vicious cycle over and over again, just like heroin. Candy gets crabs, they remove and kill them and Candy gets them all over again.

When the narrator puts his heroin blood on the crab, this is symbolic of what heroin is doing to him. It may foreshadow a drug overdose or drug-related incident in the near future. Creatures can only withstand so much heroin. The same is true of people.

The narrator continues his methodical ways, removing and killing the crabs as if he performs delicate surgery. Even on heroin, his mind still brings a sense of rationale as seen earlier in the book.

Candy is now the breadwinner and the narrator takes on the homemaker role in the sense of watching television all day long. Though he scams, he does not hold a day-to-day job like his wife. He uses his cleverness to scam, but it is Candy who must provide for both of them.



Part 1, Invincibility, Chapters 10-11

Part 1, Invincibility, Chapters 10-11 Summary

In chapter ten, Books, Candy has bad diarrhea for a week. Her skin and eye whites are bright yellow. The narrator realizes she has hepatitis and brings her to a hospital. The staff quarantines her for two weeks, but Candy asks him to bring her heroin. The staff warns the narrator he may have hepatitis too. When Candy is in the hospital, he gets arrested twice. The first time is for shoplifting a pair of ten dollar earrings. The police book him and give him a court date. The second time he gets a stolen credit card from O'Brien. The cashier realizes he's a crook and gets the cops. He runs away then collapses in pursuit. A huge cop tackles him and takes him to jail for eight hours. He's released with a second court date on a cold Sunday night. Schumann pulls up driving a taxi. After a scam gone wrong that involved selling Thai drugs, Schumann is now a taxi driver. He is still generous and using heroin. He gives the narrator half of his heroin and they get high together. However, Schumann's brain has slowed considerably. Everything moves too fast for him, so he resorts to listening to a radio station for the handicap. The radio announcer speaks extra slowly. Schumann drops off the narrator at home. Candy gets better in a month and goes home. The narrator goes to court twice and must pay \$400. His hepatitis test comes back negative. Schumann dies of an overdose in his taxi. The narrator believes he died happy.

In chapter eleven, Life and Death, Candy is pregnant. Schumann's dying has shaken the couple, yet they look forward to the baby. They try to stop using, but can't. Candy is twenty-two weeks pregnant and starts to bleed. They go to the hospital. The doctor tells them the baby is premature and must be delivered. But it will not survive. The narrator comforts Candy as she goes through hours of delivering a corpse. A counselor comes into help them grieve. The narrator has a memory of himself at sixteen years old in the hospital. His mom was in a car accident and died two hours later. In the midst of delivering the dead baby, his mind wanders to heroin. The baby shakes in his arms, but the doctor says it's a spasm and the baby is already dead. The narrator swears the baby was alive for that second. They have a funeral at the hospital. Candy's parents come as well as some staff members. They say goodbye to the baby. He chooses to cremate the child. He leaves Candy at the hospital to cash his welfare check and buy some heroin.

Part 1, Invincibility, Chapters 10-11 Analysis

In chapter ten, the narrator and Candy receive of a wake-up call with Schumann's death. The death is a foreshadowing omen of what is to come. Their deaths may be around the corner, or another ominous consequence of their drug addiction. Schumann is a generous and loving character, always sharing with his friends and waiting patiently to take the last hit. Thus, goodness dies when Schumann dies. As Part 1 begins to



close, its name Invincibility also begins to come to a close. Heroin users are not invincible. Candy has hepatitis. Schumann dies. Drug addicts are mere mortals.

In chapter eleven, Schumann's death is on the couple's mind, but new life appears. Schumann is reincarnated in the fetus. Like Schumann, the baby is addicted to heroin. The baby represents the couple's quest for normalcy. In the hospital, they act like normal, grieving parents, but in the end, they aren't. Even the narrator's mind wanders to heroin as his wife screams in pain. The baby dies of overdose, just as Schumann did. No one is invincible anymore as the chapter ends. Not the narrator, Candy or their son. The life of a heroin user ends abruptly.

The narrator's memory of his mother dying in the hospital arouses feelings for loss of innocence. He loses his innocence at a young age and it continues throughout his adolescence and into adulthood. This loss of innocence carries onto his baby, who cannot survive even a second in the outside world. As the baby leaves the womb, he dies. There is no innocence at all.



Part 2, The Kingdom of Momentum, Chapters 12-14

Part 2, The Kingdom of Momentum, Chapters 12-14 Summary

In chapter twelve, Truth 1: Dreams, the narrator has a dream where he is on a boat. It capsizes and water is everywhere. He is drowning. But he is not overdosing, as overdosing would be a snowflake dream. He is disgusted with his life as Candy is still a prostitute and they're both deep into heroin.

In chapter thirteen, Ashtray, it is after a long, uneventful winter. They still live in the warehouse. They have a new dealer named Little Angelo because their main dealers Kojak and Lester have delays. Candy is angry because the narrator buys heroin from Little Angelo and takes some before arriving home. This causes a major argument. Candy calls the narrator selfish and nasty things are said by both. As the day passes, Candy grows more annoyed at him for little disturbances such as television noise. She accuses him of being lazy and demands that he gets a job in gay male prostitution. He says no. He argues that when he does scams, she gets half the money. The narrator says he will deal again. The fight escalates to where Candy hits him with a glass ashtray. She rushes him to the hospital. He receives sixteen stitches and asks the doctor for morphine, but the doctor laughs and says no. The narrator says he thinks everything will be fine with Candy from now on because she feels horribly about what she did. They go home and have sex.

In chapter fourteen, Truth 2: How It Is, the narrator narrates the chapter in a heroin-induced daze or a dream sequence of some kind. Candy and he watch television while waiting for Lester or Kojak to call. Their television dies. They get another old television. They watch anything to pass the time such as *The Brady Bunch* and old movies. It is winter. The narrator's arm swells so badly he can't wear a wristwatch. Their routine consists of shooting heroin, watching television, Candy drawing and he reading books. While high, they promise to each other to stop heroin, but shoot up the next morning. They dream of going abroad to India or Thailand to get heroin for cheap. The narrator discusses speed and death approaching. Blackness surrounds the narrator and he feels trapped by the blackness.

Part 2, The Kingdom of Momentum, Chapters 12-14 Analysis

In chapter twelve, the dream symbolizes how the narrator drowns in a sea of heroin and misery. He keeps his head above water metaphorically, but the water surrounds him in

every direction. It is a sinister dream, representing his deeper addiction. The invincibility has come to end because he and Candy can barely stay afloat.

In chapter thirteen, Candy questions the traditional roles. She is tired of being a prostitute and being the main, stable breadwinner in the family. Therefore, the narrator must step up and become the breadwinner at her request. At this point, Candy becomes the dominant figure in the relationship, even resorting to domestic violence, which is generally known as male-oriented. Therefore, the roles of man and wife change once more in the book. Candy is the alpha male and the narrator is relegated the inferior partner.

In chapter fourteen, this dreamlike state defines how deep the narrator and Candy are in their addiction. He compares his life to the blackness and feels swallowed up whole by it. He also is taken by speed and how fast his life moves. This foreshadows a possible existence such as Schumann's life, where in the end, everything moved too fast for Schumann. Eventually, the speed catches up with Schumann and he dies of an overdose. The blackness surrounded him in the end as the narrator believes it surrounds him now. This chapter foreshadows a bad omen to happen to Candy and him very soon. Time is running out.



Part 2, The Kingdom of Momentum, Chapters 15-17

Part 2, The Kingdom of Momentum, Chapters 15-17 Summary

In chapter fifteen, GPO, the narrator and Candy need money for more heroin. They are high on Rohypnol. He leaves the apartment and Candy warns him not to do anything stupid. Candy goes out to find him sitting on a bench. They go into the post office and get passport applications. While in there, the narrator sees a postal teller counting wads of money. He gets the idea to grab a wad and run. Candy tells him he's insane and leaves. He thinks the girl teller will pause in shock and give him time to run. But when he grabs the money, she pulls back and it goes all over the floor. Someone tackles the narrator and he goes to jail. He is only charged with attempted theft and receives a court date. He goes home to find O'Brien, who lends them money for heroin, but tells them they should quit. The narrator responds they will quit soon and they're going overseas.

In chapter sixteen, Drying Out, the narrator and Candy go through months of detoxing on and off. They cannot stay clean. They were evicted from the warehouse and live in Port Melbourne. In the midst of winter, they decide to detox. They are convinced they can be successful this time. He tells Candy if they are clean there will be no cops and they will relocate to a foreign country and do normal things such as eat, sleep, etc. They start detox, but use a host of other drugs to get them through it. Detox is a hell of physical torture. They vomit, excrete, sweat profusely and every bone in their bodies hurt. They can't sleep. They keep downing pills. They decide to masturbate to relax and induce sleep, but it doesn't work. They last until the third day, then break. Lester gives them heroin and the narrator promises to pay him the next day.

In chapter seventeen, Truth 3: Kisses, the narrator is in a dreamlike state. He tries to write a list of things he likes but has trouble doing so. The list shows him his downward spiral. He mentions suicide for the first time. He has a memory of his family — mother, father, brother Lex and he — on a picnic when he was seven and Lex was five. They are at a river park. He canoes alone while Lex and his father canoe together. They all relax and eat and end the day with ice cream. His parents are loving. Back in reality, Candy and the narrator wait for a tram to St. Kilda to meet Kojak for heroin. They kiss and hug, get on the tram and hold hands the entire way.



Part 2, The Kingdom of Momentum, Chapters 15-17 Analysis

In chapter fifteen, the narrator says "Insanity meant repeating the same mistakes and expecting different results" (p. 152). This idea proves true in the narrator's life. He continually repeats the same mistakes over and over. The results are a deeper addiction to heroin and a wasted life. He succumbs to this theory by trying to steal the money. He is on Rohypnol, not heroin, and comes up with this poignant metaphor for his life. It is a duality. He philosophizes clearly not on heroin, but also tries to pull off a stupid scam. There is a duality, a contradiction of the narrator's mind that suggests he will never be right in the head, even if he kicks the heroin addiction.

In chapter sixteen, the reader roots for the couple to be successful in detox, yet the reader knows they will not last. The author employs the dramatic techniques of the five senses to describe the pain and torture the couple endures. The reader is disgusted by all the vomit, excrement and profuse sweating on the bedsheets. The reader hears how Candy throws up in a bucket or how her body is slathered in grimy sweat. Thus, the author makes unsympathetic characters sympathetic in this chapter. Making an unsympathetic character sympathetic is employed in fiction to keep the reader interested and personally invested in the book. Otherwise, the reader would stop reading entirely.

In chapter seventeen, the mention of suicide foreshadows an event soon to happen. The mention of death keeps coming up in the aforementioned chapters and here it is prominent. The inevitable will happen.

The memory of the narrator's family connects his desire to be normal. When he tries to be normal, he does what his family does in the memory, such as picnic and eat ice cream. It is a perfect memory of a perfect family. Yet the narrator is high on heroin and is therefore unreliable. There is a chance this memory is not true, only a figment of his imagination. Lex and he are both serious drug addicts and the idea of them coming from a perfect and loving home and ending up as drug-addicted adults may be a far-fetched concept. This family memory may be the result of the narrator's strong desire to be normal. It pushes him along and helps him escape from the surrounding feelings of death and suicide.



Part 2, The Kingdom of Momentum, Chapters 18-20

Part 2, The Kingdom of Momentum, Chapters 18-20 Summary

In chapter eighteen, Freelancing, Candy is profitable in the brothels, but ends up getting fired a lot. She downgrades from high class brothels to low class ones. She "freelances", or is a prostitute unassociated with one particular brothel. She and the narrator roam Grey Street to find clients. One night the narrator sees a young guy named David. David looks for gay sex and the narrator takes advantage of this opportunity. He lures David to outside his apartment building, makes him pay eighty dollars for oral sex and then hides. David eventually leaves, angry that he just got scammed.

The narrator and Candy move to Alexandra Avenue, which is along the river. They move here due to unpaid rent. Another night on Grey Street, a male client pulls up in a BMW. The man and Candy have sex. In order to receive payment, they must all drive to the Shangri La Club. The narrator rides with the man. The man drives erratically, pulls a gun on him and orders him to leave. The narrator rushes to the club in a taxi and informs Candy the man has a gun. She bolts out of there. Candy cries and pleads for them to stop with heroin. Instead, Candy's friend Casper moves back to Melbourne and the narrator looks to Casper to help supply heroin.

In chapter nineteen, Cooking, Casper finally sells the narrator his heroin recipe for \$500. The narrator works as a chemist, employing trial and error until he finally makes good heroin. He finds beauty and excitement in chemistry. He is now the breadwinner and their daily salary is \$1,000. Candy and he live well because they have disposable income and heroin is at their disposal. O'Brien buys from them. He is endearing, but a bit annoying. The narrator remembers a time where he, Lex and Candy spilled Fanta on heroin and then shot up the Fanta heroin anyway. These were the good old days when the narrator's veins could easily take heroin. Now he has trouble finding a vein. He uses multiple tourniquets and utilizes any vein in his body for shooting. They go from one shot a day to twenty shots of heroin a day. The narrator admires O'Brien because he has great veins. The narrator uses his femoral vein to shoot, which is a desperate measure.

In chapter twenty, Problems With Detachable Heads: 2, the couple meets Carl. Carl was Yolanda's boyfriend. Yolanda works at the brothel with Candy. Carl has no veins to shoot either, thus he and the narrator bond. The narrator reads a National Geographic story on opium with a photo of woman sticking a syringe in her neck. He saves it and waits to show Carl later. Candy rarely works anymore, but once a while she still does. One night she goes to work and Carl comes over and begs the narrator for heroin. He cooks some heroin for Carl, but they can't get a good vein to shoot up. He pulls out the



National Geographic article. They look at the photo and stab syringes into their necks. Nothing happens to the narrator. But blood shoots everywhere out of Carl's neck. It is a gory, horror movie scene. Candy comes in and is terrified. The blood comes from the detachable syringe head, not Carl's neck. Candy cleans up Carl. Carl apologizes for the mess and helps them clean the living room. Weeks later Carl botches an easy robbery and gets sent to jail. In prison he hangs himself in his cell.

Part 2, The Kingdom of Momentum, Chapters 18-20 Analysis

In chapter eighteen, the narrator must face his worst fear: becoming a gay prostitute. However, instead of becoming one, he exploits the opportunity and scams the young gay client. Even the narrator will not go as far as becoming his worst nightmare. His morals are intact in regard to sexuality and his sense of rationale is present. Yet his morals lack when stealing from David. This is the complexity of the narrator. When he is in a moral dilemma, his reaction simply depends on the situation. This may not be a problem with heroin, but more an inner struggle with the narrator himself.

He continues to use this rationale as he looks to Casper to supply heroin. The scams become old and tiresome, and the narrator must be the breadwinner of the family. The only way he can accomplish this is to make and sell his own heroin. This is the inner workings of his mind. His logic is to entrench himself one step further into the heroin world, instead of doing the opposite.

In chapter nineteen, the narrator says, "Everything was scarred. That was a way of viewing our lives too, though of course we never did" (p. 202). He speaks of his body, scarred by constant needles. He views his veins as a road map of life. His veins tell a story and his scars do as well. However, the story they tell are not ones of laugh lines and good memories. Instead, they are scars of his battles with heroin both literally and figuratively. The only way he knows to complete the story is to scar more. In this life, it's full speed ahead and the narrator can't stop. His life road map is doomed.

He is a methodical chemist, learning by conducting experiments of trial and error. This routine methodology helps him become the breadwinner and earns him respect with Candy and O'Brien. He is now in the traditional role of man and provider for the household. Yet on the inside, he feels his sad soul. The soul desires for change. He can give the soul heroin, but that is the only way he can provide for it. His soul remains sad and sick.

In chapter twenty, the exploding vein foreshadows a situation that is about to blow. Something is waiting to explode in the narrator and Candy's life. They have been lucky so far, but cannot escape harm with their dangerous lifestyle. Carl's death is another wake up call. All signs point to the couple ending up the exact same way. As Part 2 is named the Kingdom of Momentum, their momentum slowly dies.

Carl brings out the sensitive, parental side of both the narrator and Candy. The narrator does not charge him for heroin because of the exploding vein incident and Candy soothes and cleans him off. This is as close to parents as they can get.



Part 2, Kingdom of Momentum, Chapters 21-22

Part 2, Kingdom of Momentum, Chapters 21-22 Summary

In chapter twenty-one, Truth 4: Where Is The Earth?, the narrator is in a dreamlike state. He ponders the beauty that escapes as he envisions an eagle. There is only sadness caused by heroin. Heroin gives comfort. But heroin gives sadness when it's not in the narrator's body. He hardly sleeps and there are needle scars (called track marks) all over his body. He wakes up with leg cramps and decides he is pure need. Candy is the same. He imagines her soul in a tug-o-war. They bathe and decide they can't go on living like this. They want out of this lifestyle.

In chapter twenty-two, Cats, the couple enters into a government methadone program. Methadone helps addicts get off heroin slowly. They must drink methadone syrup daily, see a doctor every two weeks and provide a urine sample once a month. They owe money on their water bill at Alexandra Avenue and leave this apartment. On their last day at this apartment, they start the methadone program. Willy is a stray cat they adopt. It moves with them to their new place at Albert Park. Willy gives birth to kittens named Tiger, Tom, Coco, Mavis and Barney. Six months later they find a stray cat named Sam and bring him to mate with Coco. Sam is happy with the couple. They put Coco and Sam in a room and watch them mate with raw animal passion eight times in a half hour. They watch in awe and arousal. In turn, the narrator and Candy have sex. The next morning they take their methadone, ride bikes and watch television. The narrator ends Part 2 announcing that he and Candy will move to the country, come off methadone, go crazy, move back to Sydney and break up. Candy declares Coco and Sam's kittens will be beautiful.

Part 2, Kingdom of Momentum, Chapters 21-22 Analysis

In chapter twenty-one, the narrator speaks about an eagle. This eagle is beautiful and flies freely. It is possible for others to follow the perfect path of the eagle. Even in a heroin-induced state, he can follow the eagle's path. The bird represents freedom and bravery and the beauty that is missing from his world. Everyday is the same to the couple. They are so thick in drug addiction, they can't appreciate or even acknowledge small delights of life. They can barely function in their daily lives. Thus, the eagle is a metaphor for hope and flying away from this addiction. This is the first time it shows up. It is the first real sign of the couple seriously trying to get off heroin.



In chapter twenty-two, the kittens' birth represents a new beginning for the narrator and Candy. They also represent a sort of normal family. The couple now has babies to take care of and love. They continue their dream of working towards normality with this animal family in lieu of a real one. The normality becomes more real as they have a family and are off heroin. Life is getting better.

The sex scene with the cats represents the feral instinct in the narrator and Candy. They try and act like normal people and have sex like normal people, but in reality, they are aroused by animal pornography. They can pretend to be normal, but it is only a facade as their lives delve into what normality is. The narrator and Candy explore their normality boundaries through the cat family and animal sex, but in the end, they still struggle with these boundaries.

Part 2, Kingdom of Momentum, ends as does their momentum for living a heroin-addicted life. They will begin a new life in Part 3.



Part 3, The Momentum of Change, Chapters 23-27

Part 3, The Momentum of Change, Chapters 23-27 Summary

In chapter twenty-three, Truth 5: Poplars, the narrator is in a dreamlike state. He remembers a weekend where he and Candy drive to hot springs and pick up an old man along the way. They drop the old man off and he says they are good people. In a small hotel room, the couple takes pills because they don't have heroin. The narrator says it's his saddest memory. They leave and go back to Melbourne a few hours later. On the drive home, Candy stops the car and they have sex in the backseat.

In chapter twenty-four, Country Living, Candy's parents give her \$10,000 and the couple buys a two-acre farm near their friends Peter and Michael. They are still on methadone. The narrator doubts his new sobriety and drinks and takes pills. Candy and he are cordial to each other. They have superficial conversations, but never really talk as before. In nine weeks, their relationship falls apart. The farmhouse is dirty and disgusting, but they don't clean it. The cats are happy roaming the farm all day long.

Candy decides to invite her parents over to Sunday lunch. A horrible argument ensues between she and her mother. Candy keeps saying her fists have been clenched since she was thirteen years old. Her parents are shocked and leave. Candy says she thinks she and the narrator will break up. He says they won't. She refers to this Sunday afternoon with her parents as "The Afternoon of Closed Fists" (p. 246). This afternoon marks Candy and the relationship's downward spiral. The couple fights all the time. Candy begins to behave erratically. She writes foul sayings all over the farmhouse's walls in lipstick. They meet a marijuana dealer named Paul Hillman. Candy has an affair with him. The narrator feels betrayed. He leaves for Sydney to stay with his old friend Kay. He feels confused by Candy and his failing relationship and goes to Sydney for a break.

In chapter twenty-five, Breakages, the narrator is in denial. Candy is back in Gippsland country and he heads to stay with Kay. Kay's husband is rarely sober, but lives in the house. Kay and the narrator sleep together. Sally, Kay's young housekeeper and assistant, comes to stay and sleeps with the narrator. Kay is furious and kicks them both out. The narrator goes with Sally to her parents' house in Queensland. He and Sally take a week-long trip. He calls Candy from a phone booth and she keeps repeating "Everything's fine. Everything's turning blue" (p. 258). He hangs up, confused by her strange behavior.

Sally and the narrator smoke a lot of marijuana. He is ten days off methadone. Sally's mother helps arrange a marijuana deal with an old friend. They wait for the friend to come through. In the meantime, Candy's mother calls and tells the narrator Candy has



had a nervous breakdown and is in a mental hospital. He has to wait for the deal to come through, which takes a couple days. He takes a bus to Melbourne and sees Candy. He sees her completely broken down in a mental ward.

In chapter twenty-six, Hospitals, the narrator sees Candy in the worst shape possible. She's lost thirty pounds, smells and fits in seamlessly with all the other mental patients. She thinks the actor Mel Gibson is her real father. Another mental patient told her. The narrator realizes that Candy is seriously mentally ill. He says that everything is real now. Candy's doctor tells him to accept her as she is. She will not get better. He finds out from Peter and Michael all the erratic things Candy did on the farm while he was gone. She slept in the shed because the cats told her to leave, ran around naked because clothes hurt her skin, climbed up a tree and wouldn't get down, etc. Peter and Michael coaxed her to get down and called Candy's parents. That is how she ends up in the mental hospital.

The narrator stays with Candy's parents and visits Candy in the afternoons. He goes back to the farm and finds that Coco had kittens. Coco sacrificed a kitten for her starving litter. The narrator finds the kitten's head and is in shock. Candy gets out of the hospital, hopped up on psychiatric drugs. She can barely stay awake. Six months pass and Candy gets off the drugs. They sell the farm. They move back to Sydney on one condition: no heroin. He bumps into Casper, the dealer that sold him the recipe to make heroin. The narrator starts to use heroin again, Candy warns him, then leaves. Casper gets caught and risks losing his job, but he leaves detox. Casper cooks one final batch of heroin. He takes heroin, alcohol and pills and commits suicide. The narrator goes back to the heroin lifestyle, eventually sleeping in doorways. He enters a detox program in a hospital. He finally smiles a genuine smile after his eleventh day clean in detox.

In chapter twenty-seven, Blinding Truth: Frisbees, the narrator leaves detox. He meets a friend Ken in detox, where they were roommates. They play Frisbee. He cannot contact Candy for ninety days per the detox rules. They meet on the ninetieth day. She comes to Sydney. They eat and have sex in the car. They both know it's the last time. They hug and cry. The next morning she returns to Melbourne and he knows he'll never see her again. He hears about her from time to time, both good and bad things. She has a baby. Eventually, he hears nothing about her. The narrator's life drags on and he takes life day by day. He can start to breathe once again.

Part 3, The Momentum of Change, Chapters 23-27 Analysis

In chapter twenty-three, the narrator is another dreamlike haze. Since he is an unreliable narrator, this event may not have happened. The old man in the dream is symbolic of the narrator's life. Both men suffer a terrible life, the narrator's to his own doing while the old man looks like a victim of the Holocaust, according to the narrator. At the end of his life, the narrator will still wander and be as lost as this man.



The couple's intercourse suggests they will break up. The sex is uninspired and the narrator says they don't feel complete afterward. As the narrator says, "There are times love would seem to be the only word capable of describing the frightening physics of this momentum" (p. 234). Therefore, it is a superficial kind of love that pulls them through on their mission to stay clean. It is not passionate love anymore, but a love of pure momentum. Also, they don't have their one true love of heroin anymore. So this love will probably end soon.

In chapter twenty-four, Candy's clenched fist represents her anger built up for years. While on heroin she is mostly calm and unable to deal with her real feelings. However, off heroin, she feels a rush of real feelings, including anger toward her parents. She can feel now and that is not good for her relationship with the narrator because she is lost in those feelings. This is where Candy's mania begins, with the clenched fists.

Though the narrator is confused and upset and uses milder drugs to deal with the situation, he does not go back to heroin. Reality sets in for him as well. He's finally dealing with normal, real life marked by a failing marriage. At the end of the chapter, he says he feels like he's balancing on the edge of a cliff. The reader waits for the next chapter to see what keeps him on this proverbial cliff.

In chapter twenty-five, it seems as if the narrator and Candy are worse off in normality. They simply cannot cope. Candy mentally deteriorates. The narrator cannot deal with his life, avoiding his problems by smoking heaps of marijuana with Sally and living with her parents. The real world is much scarier than heroin ever was for them. This chapter is named Breakages and it is apparent here the breakages run deep.

Sally is a vehicle for the narrator to stay clean. She nourishes him with marijuana, a place to stay and parents who don't mind him staying at their place. She takes on an unorthodox mothering role while the narrator takes a break from his wife. He needs Sally to figure out his life.

In chapter twenty-six, the narrator can finally find himself. He does not heed the warnings of Casper's death or Candy's verbal warnings. Everyone leaves him and he is finally alone with no distractions. As he descends again into the cycle of heroin, he has a self journey of going from squatter to patient. The journey ends at the hospital, where he can finally be at peace and find himself. Like Candy, he builds up strength and self-worth to finally kick the addiction. The reader gets a sense that the narrator will stay clean this time, since he's doing a proper detox. His genuine smile represents a genuine want to stop using and to finally live life. It may not be normal, but it is a day-by-day journey. The momentum of change is finally here.



Epilogue

Epilogue Summary

The Epilogue, Candy, repeats the first three paragraphs of the book. It is summer in Sydney and the narrator meets this great girl named Candy. He details exactly how he gets her into heroin. At first he deters her from it. Then he helps her do it for recreational use and then spiraling toward addiction. He is in love with Candy. He wants their love to be stronger than heroin. Then they can live their lives. But one night when he, Lex and Candy use a strong amount of heroin, Candy overdoses. The narrator fills a syringe with salt water and injects Candy. She comes back to life and asks for more heroin. The narrator is in love and ends the book saying he has a good feeling.

Epilogue Analysis

The book ends where it began for the first three paragraphs. After all this time, the reader still doesn't know the narrator's name. Not once does he mention it or another character say his name. He is the faceless drug user. He represents the everyman of heroin addicts. The author is making a statement that this man could be anywhere in society and could have any name, face, etc.

The author shows that drug use is cyclical. Where drug use begins, it ends and begins again. It is a never-ending cycle. The cycle will continue unless there is a separation and self exploration as both the narrator and Candy go through in the book's final chapters. The author begins the Epilogue the same as the Prologue because it shows the repetition of madness. As the narrator states insanity is repeating the same mistakes and expecting different results.

The Epilogue shows that the narrator did have the best intentions for Candy and their love. In his warped mind, he thought he could put his love for her above his love for heroin. But in reality, the entire book is about heroin. No matter the best of intentions, the addiction will take over and control the entire situation. In the end, the drug always wins.



Characters

The Narrator

The narrator is the main character. He remains unnamed throughout the entire novel. The narrator is Australian and lives in Sydney. He is a heroin addict. Heroin is the love of his life. He introduces heroin to the second love of his life, his girlfriend Candy. The narrator is a mentor to Candy in regard to heroin addiction and soon they are both addicts.

He supports his addiction by running scams. These scams include robbery and forgery. He steals credit cards, wallets and books for fast cash. He preys on weak individuals and scams them into giving money to himself and Candy. He uses Candy's beauty as a vehicle to prey on these weak men. Once Candy and he get married, they delve deeper into addiction. He becomes lazier, sitting around the house and only running an occasional scam, but Candy is a prostitute and the breadwinner.

The narrator decides to cook heroin to sell and use. It is a profitable business. He is addicted, shooting himself and Candy up twenty times a day, that he cannot find anymore veins to shoot up in his entire body. They stop and go on methadone. After fighting and an eventual break up with Candy, he goes on a self exploration. He is alone, using heroin again and realizes he can't do this again. He enters a methadone program in a hospital and detoxes successfully. As the book ends, he begins his new life clean and sober.

Candy

Candy is the other main character in the novel. She is the narrator's girlfriend, then wife. Candy is a young, innocent and stunningly beautiful Australian woman. She is an aspiring actress. She falls deeply in love with the narrator, who is already a heroin addict. She becomes an addict as well. To help support their habit, she becomes a prostitute and also becomes the breadwinner of the family. She treats the job with no emotions, but she pushes the narrator to work and become the breadwinner.

When the narrator cooks heroin and sells and uses it, Candy does not work as much. She's only a prostitute when they absolutely need cash. She also helps out with scams because her beauty lures in weak individuals. When Candy and the narrator marry, their addiction worsens to the point they're shooting up twenty times a day. They stop and enroll in a methadone program.

When they move to the farmhouse, Candy's behavior is erratic. She lashes out at her parents and writes foul language in lipstick on the house walls. She has a complete nervous breakdown. She thinks everything turns blue. Her friends find her up in a tree, naked. She goes into a mental hospital. High on psychiatric drugs, she moves back to the farmhouse and rests and sleeps for six months. She moves back to Sydney with the



narrator, but he breaks their pact by using heroin again and she leaves him. Candy is now free of the heroin lifestyle and she can live finally.

The narrator finds out later that she has baby and that is the last he hears about her.

Lex

Lex is the narrator's brother and an addict of a variety of drugs. He's in the novel infrequently, but comes in to shoot up with the couple or when the narrator has a memory of his family. Lex is in the Epilogue, helping the narrator with Candy's overdose.

O'Brien

O'Brien is Candy's old friend from Melbourne. He is infrequently in the novel. He tells the couple all about the heroin scene in Melbourne and gets them high their first night in the city. He is a heavy heroin addict as well. He is a bit annoying when he gets high, but he buys heroin from them and helps them out occasionally.

Schumann

Schumann is a heroin addict friend. He is sweet and generous and helps everyone. He is infrequently in the novel. He runs a scam with a Thai drug dealer, but it eventually ends. He drives a taxi cab and uses the income to support his heroin habit. He must listen to a special radio station for the handicap because everything is too fast for him. He dies of an overdose in his taxi and the narrator says he probably dies happy.

Casper

Casper is a assistant professor and student. He sells the narrator the heroin recipe. Casper is the vehicle that drives the narrator and Candy deeper into their addiction. Casper gets caught with heroin at his job, leaves detox and commits suicide by taking one last batch of heroin, pills and alcohol.

Lester

Lester is the couple's main heroin dealer. He's very reliable, but isn't in the book much. Mostly they call Lester and get the heroin.

Kojak

Kojak is the couple's second choice heroin dealer. He doesn't answer his pager for hours. Kojak brings a young girl to the couple's apartment and they end up having a foursome.



Candy's Mother

Candy's mother only appears in the latter part of the book and she doesn't appear much. She disagrees with her daughter's lifestyle and can be vocal about how she feels about her daughter. She makes a comment here and there.

Candy's Father

Candy's father is a Vietnam vet and is very quiet. He just wants a grandchild. He is nice to Candy and the narrator, and unlike his wife, he refrains from commenting on their lifestyle. Again, he rarely appears in the book.



Objects/Places

Smack

Smack is a slang term for heroin. The main characters refer to heroin as smack throughout the novel.

Dope

Dope is a slang term for both heroin and marijuana. The characters in the novel use it interchangeably depending on if they are referring to heroin or marijuana.

Drought

Drought is when an illegal drug is not available in a certain area. The narrator and Candy experience a heroin drought when they cannot buy the drug anywhere.

Junk

Junk is a slang term for heroin. The narrator and Candy refer to heroin as junk throughout the story.

Pick

A pick is a syringe or needle. The narrator and Candy use a pick to inject themselves with heroin.

Muso

A muso is a person who is obsessed with music. Tucker, a minor character, loves music and his life revolves around it, thus he is a muso.

Holy Grail

The Holy Grail is a sacred cup used at the Last Supper by Jesus. In Christian tradition, it is said to possess magical powers. In the novel, the narrator refers to a potent batch of heroin as the Holy Grail. The heroin is divine in the narrator's eyes.

Gear

Gear is a slang term for heroin. The narrator and Candy often refer to heroin as gear.

Track Marks

Track marks are the scars that heroin addicts leave on their arms and all over their bodies when searching for veins and injecting needles into their veins. One way to identify a heroin user is by her/his track marks. The narrator has a road map of track marks all over his body.

Yellow Jesus

Yellow Jesus is what the narrator refers to as liquid methadone. The methadone is in the form of a sweet yellow syrup. A heroin addict who stops using often takes methadone daily. It curtails sickness as the addict comes off heroin. The addict tapers off methadone over a period of time. The result is to be drug-free. The narrator and Candy take Yellow Jesus daily to accomplish this.



Themes

Being Normal

There is a constant theme of being normal or living like normal people do. The narrator repeats it over and over, he simply wants to be normal and doesn't know how. His first attempt of being normal is their move to Queens Road to live amongst professionals in a posh neighborhood. He tries to fit in with the normal people, but it is impossible with their lifestyle.

He also aims to do normal activities such as eat ice cream, ride bikes, have picnics, etc. This type of normality does happen once in a while, but heroin eclipses everything. Throughout the book, he has this love of reaching normality as if it's a nirvana state. In fact, he and Candy wish for a baby. When the baby miscarries, he holds the dead baby in his arms and this sad, familial moment is one of the most normal in the book. He is a father grieving.

He and Candy also get married and attempt a somewhat normal wedding of renting a tuxedo, getting married at the government office and having a small reception back at Candy's parents' house. He plays along with the normal day until he goes into the bathroom to shoot heroin. This normal facade comes to a screeching halt.

He finally reaches some type of normality when he goes off heroin and enters a methadone program. He feels again and feels deceived by his cheating wife. He has normal family problems. At the end of the book, he enters a detox and is successful. And he takes his life day by day and announces that he can start breathing again. A daily sense of normal may finally be his.

Methodicalness

A constant theme throughout the novel is methodicalness. In the most unlikely place, a sense of the methodical appears. The narrator is absolutely methodical when it comes to cooking cocaine and heroin and find veins to shoot. He has a system for all these things. In fact, he goes into great detail about how to cook both cocaine and heroin, working as a chemist. He feels comfortable in this methodical role and somehow it brings stability to his otherwise unstable life.

He moves with methodicalness in the way he scams as well. Each scam is thought out completely, even if he's high on heroin, and the methodical way in which he performs the scams is apparent. In one scam, he arranges to withdraw money from four banks with stolen credit cards. He practices the complex signature on the cards for hours. He plots what time each bank opens, what teller to hit and how to interact unsuspectingly. He is successful due to his methodical nature.



The book is also written in a methodical way. The author details the couple's exploits and cycle of heroin addiction with extreme precision and detail. Every hit, shoot up, track mark and recipe is written in great detail to allow a reader to follow along in the methodicalness.

Hopelessness

There is a constant theme of hopelessness. The narrator feels sad when he uses heroin and physically ill when he doesn't. When he is in the dreamlike states in certain chapters, there is underlying despair in his words. He uses images, such as an eagle soaring, to explain that he is hopeless. He wants to fly free like the eagle and thinks it's possible, but he can never achieve it. As he goes deeper into his addiction, the more hopeless he feels in these dreamlike states. He can't see any hope through the fog.

As the narrator and Candy continue on a cycle of using and stopping heroin, their predicament becomes more hopeless to the reader. Though they are unsympathetic characters, the reader still sympathizes with them. And when they stop for three days, the reader hopes they'll make it. But alas, they use again and hopelessness appears again.

Candy's descent into manic depression is the peak of this theme. She is so far into her own world, she can only see blue. Everything around her is hopeless, including the hospital, its patients and the narrator. When the narrator uses heroin again, she finally leaves and finally hope is given a chance. But the narrator is still in a hopeless state until he goes until the hospital to detox. As he smiles genuinely at the book's close, suggesting that hope is finally alive for him.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of the novel is first person. This point of view is a very close first person. It is unreliable, since the narrator uses heroin throughout the book and some chapters read as though he is in a dreamlike haze. The narrator tells of his emotions, but also observes the emotions of the other characters around him, especially those of his girlfriend then wife Candy. The point of view is essential to the novel because it shows the cyclical nature of him as a human being struggling with drug use. He often repeats the same types of emotions and observations, yet in different ways. This first person point of view helps with dramatic impact because the reader observes the repetition and finally sees his growth at the very end of the book. However, the whole time the reader is not sure the narrator is reliable and if the stories he tells are true, exaggerations or figments of his imagination.

The story is told through exposition and dialogue. The reader focuses on the narrator, yet Candy is so essential to the book that her voice must be heard as well. In the beginning chapters, Candy does not speak; she is merely there. Finally, Candy begins to have a voice and as it grows louder, the reader can see another heroin-induced perspective, much like the narrator's. He and Candy move together throughout the book, yet the reader can read his inner thoughts. The book moves through years of his life, although the reader does not know how many exactly, this point of view helps the reader understand it's years. Events are seen through the narrator's eyes, but Candy has a voice through dialogue and comments on the events. Most often, they confirm the narrator's thoughts and observations.

Setting

The novel is set in Australia. It moves from the fast-pace and heroin-induced cities to the quietness of the country. The narrator and Candy start out in Sydney with their heroin addiction. They don't stay there long and move to Melbourne. Melbourne is the city where all the addiction begins a deep spiral downward and sets up the heroin cycle for the entire novel and years of their life. They move from apartment to apartment due to not paying rent or bills.

They start on Queens Road, a posh section of Melbourne where the yuppies live. They see businessmen and women in suits coming to and from their jobs. Yet they move through Melbourne in the night. Not much description is given to the city except for generic ones for an occasional nightclub or cafe. Descriptions are so sparse, these places could be in any city. However, one constant is St. Kilda. It is the section of Melbourne where they occasionally stroll or eat in restaurants by day. St. Kilda also serves as a place to pick up drugs.



They get kicked out of Queens Road and move to a warehouse with deplorable conditions. It is a virtual crack den from its description, complete with an outside bathroom. They move from there to Alexandra Avenue and then Albert Park. Both locations are not described. Then they buy a disgusting farmhouse in the country. It is a grimy house and they do not clean it. The two acres they own are full of weeds. Finally, they move back to Sydney, which is described as hot and sunny. Candy leaves for Melbourne and the narrator is in a generic hospital in Sydney. He leaves the hospital and plays Frisbee with a friend in the park. It is hot, but the narrator is happier.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is very informal. There is a lot of heroin and drug slang and swearing. The sentences are constructed to show the common lingo of Australians in the 1990s. However, the language is not without rules as the author writes in a grammatically perfect way. The sentences follow grammar rules and complex rules of literature. The language adds depth to the novel as a whole because the reader can understand what is going on even though the narrator and Candy are deep into heroin nearly all of the time. Though slang terms and swearing are used, there is no colloquial or indecipherable language that an American reader can't understand.

The language holds steady throughout the novel. Heroin use does not influence the characters' verbal abilities in any way. It only affects the narrator when he goes into dreamlike states in certain chapters. The language is still easy to understand, but he tends to be speaking as if he's in a dream or haze of some kind. The language overall is tight and well-constructed. Descriptions are sparse. Only when the narrator cooks drugs and kills crabs do descriptions become elaborate. Instead, the author uses the language to convey repetition and the cycle of drug abuse. Language is powerful when Candy speaks. One word or sentence from Candy confirms the narrator's observations instantly. The author uses language for the narrator's inner musings and to discuss in detail what the narrator thinks of each situation. The overall effect of language in the novel is the reader is in the narrator's head and joins him in his heroin-induced state.

Structure

This novel is comprised of a prologue, twenty-seven chapters and an epilogue. The book is divided into three parts. Each part has a name, which displays the overall theme for each part. Chapter length varies from two pages to approximately fifteen pages long. Each chapter is not numbered. Instead, each chapter has a name alluding to an event that happens within the chapter. The chapters have short paragraphs that lack description. Months can pass from one paragraph to another. Exact time in the book is uncertain, though the book spans years.

The plot of the novel is simple and without subplots. The novel is about the narrator and Candy's descent into heroin addiction. They spiral downward, deeper into addiction. At times they try and stop, but they are not successful until the end of the novel.



The novel's pace is normal and moves moderately. It is neither fast-paced or slow. It is the right speed for a modern-day reader. It is an easy read with some difficult vocabulary interspersed throughout the story. There are swearing and slang terms. The plot engrosses the reader into this world of heroin and the cycle of drug abuse. The story moves in linear fashion with the narrator having a couple memories of his childhood. Back story is virtually nonexistent except for a few passages. The novel is a relatively easy read and entertains as a whole.



Quotes

"And I can't stop. I just can't stop. I can't stop anymore."
Prologue, Example of Bad Times: Sugar and Blood, p. 8

"There were good times and bad times, but in the beginning there were more good times."
Chap. 1, Crop Failure, p. 11

"As a junkie you had to spend a lot of time crossing your fingers and hoping for the best."
Chap. 2, Problems With Detachable Heads: 1, p. 29

"I always thought that heroin was a temporary thing, an obstacle on the other side of which lay the real future." Chapter 3, A Change Is As Good As A Holiday, p. 35

"I was sure I loved her, but it seemed that no matter how hard I tried, smack came first."
Chap. 13, Ashtray, p. 135

"We are trapped inside the thickest of boundaries."
Chap. 14, Truth 2: How It Is, p. 147

"Better to welcome and accept the mist that seeps into our life, that clings to our clothes, that soaks us to the bone in this scrapyards we are lost in."
Chap. 17, Truth 3: Kisses, p. 178

"Everything was scarred. That was a way of viewing our lives too, though of course we never did."
Chap. 19, Cooking, p. 202

"Everything's fine. Everything's turning blue here."
Chap. 25, Breakages, p. 258

"The real world, away from heroin—I was not handling it."
Chap. 25, Breakages, p. 263

"The light would never reach us."
Chap. 26, Hospitals, p. 275

"I've never moved a muscle. All I ever did was wait here for you to come."
Chap. 26, Hospitals, p. 279

"And I come to realize that all my small todays, the way I act, will lead into my tomorrows."
Chap. 27, Blinding Truth: Frisbees, p. 284

"My plan is that love will be stronger than heroin, and then we can get stuff done."
Epilogue, Candy, p. 291



Topics for Discussion

Discuss hopelessness. How does the theme of hopelessness keep recurring throughout the book? In what ways do the narrator and Candy counter hopelessness? Do you find the ending hopeful or hopeless for their futures?

Why do the passages about cooking cocaine and heroin specifically go into detailed description? The author rarely describes anything, but when the narrator cooks these drugs, there is painstaking description. Does the author describe intensely anywhere else in the novel?

Does the physical location of the places the narrator and Candy live influence them in any way? They constantly move throughout the novel. Do these moves reflect on them emotionally and mentally? How does the move from the city to the country affect both characters?

Discuss Candy's beauty. How does beauty play a role in this book, especially in regard to Candy? How does her beauty make her accessible and help her? What does the narrator find beautiful in his heroin-induced state? Near the end of the book, Candy says the litter of kittens will be beautiful. What is the significance of this beauty?

Addiction is at the heart of this novel. What drives addiction? In other words, are the narrator and Candy escaping something? How do they use addiction to their advantage and/or to function in their daily lives? Does addiction ever take a backseat to anything else in the novel? If so, when and where?

How would you define love according to this novel? The narrator loves Candy and heroin. But how is each love different? Are both loves an addiction or are both loves separate from one another? As the novel ends, is there love there?

Discuss the role of husband and wife in this novel. When do the narrator and Candy play to their traditional marital roles? When do they not? Do the roles keep switching, and if so or if not, why? Who defines traditional marital norms? Are Candy's parents normal?