

Cold Fire Study Guide

Cold Fire by Dean Koontz

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Plot Summary

Cold Fire by Dean Koontz is a novel that like many of this author's creations is full of twists, turns, and surprises. Jim Ironheart is a modern day Superman. He receives 'messages' to provide life lines to people who are about to die under circumstances that are not natural. He obeys each instruction blindly, putting himself in harm's way to stop untimely death wherever he is sent. Often he has no knowledge of actual events or circumstances, with details simply forming in his mind as he goes along, most of it at the last minute. Still, he manages to arrive in time and carry out whatever action necessary to save the innocent life or lives in jeopardy.

Holly Thorne is a journalist who longs for a life with more meaning. She tries to combine professionalism and honor in a career where both can be a detriment. When she happens to witness a rescue Jim performs, she seeks to interview him, but Jim is media-phobic and puts a high price on privacy. She still is persistent and he sees something in her that appeals to him. He is tired of his lonely existence, but reluctant to involve anyone in a life that is anything but ordinary. Holly persists, using her vacation time to pursue him, but instead of securing the interview she sought, she finds herself following him to learn his secrets firsthand. What she discovers is not at all what she expected. Holly is faced with her own mortality and discovers that she needs more meaning in her life and she finds that the closer she gets to Jim, the more intense her life becomes. When she reveals that she is dreaming about the windmill believing it has some connection to him, he relents and she finds the life that she has always yearned for. It will not be easy though. Jim has secrets and to make a life together work, she has to help him to remember his past before it manages to consume them both. In a journey of discovery, she takes Jim back to where everything began, which is the windmill. From there she will help him to rediscover himself, but to do so, he must give up the notion that it is all out of his control. The trauma of his childhood still persists and to move forward, he must go back and face the many truths that have been buried for years. His parents' death, and the death of his grandmother are only the beginning. He must trust Holly and let go of the stories and the entities his mind has created in order to heal and to get back his life. In return, she wins his heart and companionship in what will be a worthy and profoundly deep and meaningful life.



Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 12: Chapters 1 - 5

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On August 12th, Jim Ironheart is compelled to pack, although he does not know he is headed for Portland until he gets to the airport. Once in Portland, he hails a cab and has the driver show him the sights while he waits for clarity on this latest mission. Suddenly he knows his destination is McAlbury School and he has to be there in fifteen minutes. Holly Thorne is interviewing a private elementary school teacher who sold a book of poetry to a New York publisher. She works for the Press in the entertainment section and is that rare breed of reporter who doesn't feel the need to make subjects of her reports look foolish - even if they are. Unfortunately, Louise Tarvohl is a terrible poet. In fact, she is so bad that Holly finds her mind wandering.

Jim reaches the school in time and intuition pushes him to the crosswalk where after plowing Holly out of the way, he just manages to rescue a small boy before a truck flies through the crosswalk hitting Jim's foot and taking his shoe off in his haste. Holly reaches the boy who is safe, and Jim who sits on the sidewalk, his ankle already swelling. He smiles, and Holly is overwhelmed. She waits while he is treated at the hospital for a broken leg, knowing that this kind of hero would be something her readers would want to know about. Unfortunately, Jim is not interested in being interviewed. She manages to convince him to let her give him a ride back to the airport, but all of her probing yields nothing. That evening, Holly wonders how Jim knew that young Billy Jenkins would need his help. She suddenly has the impression that he is right outside but at the same time knows it is a ridiculous thought. Close to midnight, she is compelled to look again and yet again in the dead of night. At home, Jim wakes just before dawn in a sweat. A sense of onrushing death is overwhelming.



Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 12: Chapters 1 - 5 Analysis

Jim's life is not his own. He is assaulted by overwhelming feelings and urges that he can't ignore. When they happen, he has no choice but to follow them and each time he does, he knows that his response will decide if someone lives or dies. Often he is put in harms way, and the loss of life can just as easily be his own, but still he is unable to refuse the overwhelming sense of complying. This time, he wakes in a sweat, and should know that an incident is to follow, but it doesn't truly hit him until he is standing in the Supermarket. He cannot help giving the words 'life line' to the woman next to him before hurrying home to comply with the urge to fly. He doesn't even know where he is going until he reaches the airport and Portland jumps out at him. Arriving, he has no more knowledge than he had before he left, but driving randomly around in a taxi, the name of McAlbury School comes to him, and he knows this is his destination.

Holly is interviewing Louise Tarvohl for the Portland Press when Jim barrels past her, almost knocking her to the ground. She is ready to chase after him with a reprimand on the tip of her tongue, but out of nowhere, a truck barrels up the road to the crosswalk where the man who plowed into her rescues a young boy who would certainly have died otherwise. She is overwhelmed by the act and the man at the same time. She checks with Billy Jenkins who assures her that he is fine, and then checks on Jim who's very presence takes her breath away for reasons she can't quite explain. She offers him a ride which he accepts with a bit of prodding, and on the way to the airport, she attempts to interview him. Jim is not receptive to being interviewed, despite his incredible charm and straightforward manner. The description of Southern gentleman would apply if he were from the south. Despite her best efforts, she is unable to uncover any information about him, but long after she drops him at the airport, his presence stays with her in a way that makes her feel like a teenager again. She doesn't understand it, but likes it anyway. Jim arrives home and in the middle of the night is awakened with the feeling that the presence of evil is with him. It isn't, but he knows that it is close.



Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 20 - 22: Chapters 1 - 5

Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 20 - 22: Chapters 1 - 5 Summary

Jim barrels down the highway through the Mojave desert, certain he will be too late. A shotgun is on the seat next to him, barrels pointed to the floor. He tops a rise to see a Chevy station wagon on the side of the road, and an old Roadking motor home lumbering away. His attention is divided between them. Sensing no need for the shotgun, he approaches the wagon. A man covered in blood barely names his wife and daughter before he dies. Jim gets back into the Camaro and races after the Roadking with the Harley Davidson strapped to the back. He pulls along side but they use the Roadking to force him off the road. The Camaro flips twice landing on its side. He knows they are coming so he bails taking the shotgun, hides in an arroyo and follows it to a culvert under the road. He makes his way to the Roadking and hears them returning. He steps out, telling them to drop their guns but one rolls out of the way as he shoots the other one dead. After a brief chase of cat and mouse, he catches the second one in the motor home where he kills him too before freeing Lisa and Susie.

He unstraps the Harley and tells Lisa that he is leaving. She panics, but he promises someone will stop and he'll wait until they do. Jim tells her he will know if they are okay, and looking into his eyes she sees it is the truth. One car passes but another stops. A man gets out and Jim tells them that the woman and child, now catatonic, need a ride to the nearest town and medical attention. A woman gets out of the other side as Jim explains the situation. The man introduces them as Frank and Verna, telling him he's a hero, but understanding when he doesn't want to wait for authorities. They get into Frank's car, and Jim watches them drive away before he heads into the desert on the Harley. He rides for some time before stopping and succumbing to the blackness of despair. Later, he wakes to find himself traveling across the desert again. Father Geary finds Jim at the nave of his church, suffering from dehydration and sunstroke. Without asking questions, he gives Jim a bed, and nurses him back to health. He smears ointment on Jim's cracked and bleeding mouth and face, never prying. When Jim is well enough to be on his feet again, they are making dinner together when Jim is suddenly filled with the knowledge that he has to be in Boston. Geary takes him for the two hour trip to the airport and Jim questions why Geary kept his privacy. Geary explains that when he first found Jim, despite him not believing in such things, Jim was marked by stigmata. He had holes in his hands and feet, thorn marks on his forehead, and a spear injury in his stomach. Jim's very presence renewed his faith, for which Geary is grateful. He has heard enough of the news to realize that Jim is the one who saved Lisa and Susie, and respects his desire for privacy.



Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 20 - 22: Chapters 1 - 5 Analysis

Jim is filled with foreboding as he races along the highway. Part of the reason for that is revealed when he comes upon the Chevy station wagon with the man inside dying from gunshot wounds. Barely alive, the man is frantic for his wife and child, only having the strength to tell Jim their names before dying. Jim is filled with a feeling of anguish. If he'd gotten there earlier, he might have been able to prevent this, is all he can think. He stumbles back to the stolen Camaro and barrels after the Roadking ahead. The two men inside likely saw him stop for the man in the wagon, and when he pulls along side they run him off the road. His car flips over twice before stopping, but all he can think of is that they are coming for him. He gets out as fast as he can, and makes his way through a culvert to the other side where the Roadking sits. The men are returning, arguing about their chances of being free before Jim talks to police, but Jim surprises them by jumping out in front of them and telling them to drop their guns. Evil radiates so strongly from them that he has to fight down bile. They make a move for him, and he shoots them one at a time before managing to get to the bedroom where Lisa and Susie are being held. Seeing they are alone, he puts down the gun, aware that they are just as terrified of him. He tries to tell them they are safe, but Susie is so traumatized that she can't compute that yet. He unties them both, dimly aware that the room is wallpapered in horrifying pornography of the two men in various poses of depravity with a variety of victims - most of them young girls like Susie. He fights the rage that fills him and makes him want to go out and shoot the corpses again. Knowing Susie shouldn't be touched by anyone but her father, he backs up and asks Lisa if she can carry her. She asks about her husband, but Jim cannot put into words the next nightmare they must endure. She sees it in his face, and chokes on her grief before pulling herself together for Susie's sake. They abandon the Roadking, but not before Jim notices the row upon row of video tapes all labeled with names of victims. He can hardly comprehend the degree of savagery and he knows the perversion contained in them. The visions fill him with a blackness inside.

Lisa tries to thank him, but he is still filled with a sense of their loss of a husband and father. She is afraid to accept a ride from anyone, but Jim convinces her that he will know if it is safe to do so. Looking into his eyes, she knows this to be the truth, but does not know how. When Frank and Verna stop, Jim tells them they have a flat at first but when Frank offers to help fix it, and Jim is forced to tell him the truth. Frank looks to Lisa who confirms it all. Somehow, Frank knows that Jim won't wait for authorities, and he is even will to describe Jim differently but Jim tells him not to lie. They leave, and Jim rides the Harley across the desert, occasionally blacking out, and finally finding a town with a small church. He heads to it, feeling the need for spiritual consolation more than anything else. His visit at the church lasts only long enough for him to make a friend out of Father Geary, restore the priest's faith in God, and receive his next urgent need to move on. This time, his destination is Boston, and Father Geary takes him the two hours to the airport, alternately frustrated and amazed by the man who is moved by forces entirely beyond his control. Though their contact is for only a few days, Jim knows he has found a friend in Geary although when Geary asks him for more



information, Jim can only tell him that the more he knows, the more likely he is to draw the evil to him that is trying to stop him from saving the lives that are special. Even more perplexed, Geary tells him to go with God which Jim sincerely hopes he will.



Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 24 - 26: Chapters 1 and 2

Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 24 - 26: Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

Holly is sitting at work the day before her vacation is due to start. She doesn't feel like going home, so she calls up the coming edition on her computer and looks over the news headlines. One headline takes her by surprise. Opening the story, she finds another incident involving Jim Ironheart and the rescue of a young boy. Again, he leaves before media or authorities can get there. On impulse, she uses keywords like Jim and rescue and searches news items from all stations to see what comes up. Weeding out those that didn't belong, she tries the search again, using several different keyword combinations. She puts all of the stories she finds into chronological order, but the last one surprised her the most. It is the one that congratulates James Ironheart on his winning of a six million dollar lotto jackpot. Holly gathers all of the information she can about James Madison Ironheart and then catches a plane to Orange County. Tired, she falls almost instantly asleep. She has a nightmare in which she knows she is sleeping but still can't escape a mysterious whooshing sound that somehow feels malevolent.

After rescuing Nicholas O'Connor, Jim leaves Boston on Friday afternoon and returns home. He goes to his safe, takes out five thousand dollars and types an address label for Father Leo Geary. He tries to watch television, read a book and then pages through some magazines, but nothing holds his attention. It seemed as though since he saved Sam Newsome and his daughter Emily on May 15th, he finds it hard to just relax and do the mundane without thinking that he should be able to provide someone with a lifeline. He finally falls asleep with the light on and wakes sometime later, clammy and shaking, shouting the word 'No'. For over a year, Jim has been having a variety of dreams that contain the nameless and faceless creature he calls the 'enemy.' This time, his dream included the windmill again, as it did once or twice a month. It is the most frightening of the dreams he has even though the windmill from his childhood was a good place, located on his grandparent's farm. He cannot understand why he keeps having nightmares about a place that holds only pleasant memories for him.

Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 24 - 26: Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

Holly is restless and her life feels unfulfilled to her. She feels as though she hasn't done anything in life she wanted to and berates herself for being such a journalistic failure, condemned to writing puff pieces about inane subjects that no one cares about. She felt that she should have been on track for a Pulitzer Prize by now. She alternates between berating herself for being such a self involved whiner, and feeling sorry for herself and



wishing her life held more meaning. She thinks about going home, but can't face the place alone. Instead, to distract herself, she searches her computer for interesting news articles that have yet to be printed. She stumbles on an article that involves Jim Ironheart, and her attention is distracted for the rest of the night while she runs one search after another, to find any and all items that might be about Jim. There are several, and she puts them in order. One article surprises her as she reads that he won 6 million dollars in the lotto. Her vacation is due to start the following morning and though her intentions had been to stay at home and relax, rest and recuperate, instead she takes a plane to Orange County. She checks into a motel and falls immediately asleep. Holly has a nightmare where she feels as though she is being pursued, but can't escape and the only thing that is clear is a regular 'whooshing' sound.

Jim goes home after saving Nicholas O'Connor and makes good on his promise to send money to the impoverished Lady of the Desert church for Father Leo Geary, putting five thousand dollars in an envelope. He, like Holly, is restless and feeling as though his time could be better spent as someone's life line. Surely there are more people who are deserving of help. Ever since he saved Emily and her father Sam in the middle of May, he has been finding it increasingly difficult to live an ordinary life. Most of it feels like wasted time that could be better spent by extending other 'life lines' to what he is certain are a myriad of people deserving of the chance to live long and happy lives. Finally, he just goes to bed, and once again dreams the windmill nightmare. It is another thing in his life he cannot understand. The windmill was a place of happiness on his grandparents farm in his childhood and why he should have a recurring nightmare that involves the nameless and faceless enemy that takes place in its environs is beyond his comprehension.



Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 24 - 26: Chapter 3

Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 24 - 26: Chapter 3 Summary

Holly has breakfast in the diner the next morning and goes over what she knows so far. Since May 15th, she has discovered no less than twelve rescues by Jim that are of primarily children and young adults. Holly approaches Viola Moreno, a former teacher who taught in the classroom next to Jim's English class, and lying about who she is, she discovers more than she bargains for. Through Viola, she learns that Jim lost a student to suicide and soon after became interested in Tae Kwon Do so her next stop is to the academy in Newport Beach named Dojo. She interviews the manager, Eddie, telling him that she is a reporter doing a story on Tae Kwon Do and Jim Ironheart. Eddie works out on a stair master as they talk, telling her about Jim's obsession with the craft for months before he suddenly quit. During his lessons, he took two weeks off to take an aggressive driving course, and before leaving, asked Eddie if he knew of anywhere he could learn how to handle guns. Eddie asks Holly to make sure she spells his name correctly and she leaves, has lunch and drives by Ironheart's home again. She was going to stop in this time, but feels as though she is still missing part of the story - the part where Jim gets his psychic ability. She drives back to the motel, and falls asleep seeing Jim's face. The nightmare is more vivid this time. She can still hear the whooshing sound, but she can also smell the limestone. The room is circular with a wooden floor and rain can be heard on the roof. She can feel a hostile presence coming out of the darkness and a tendril touches the base of her neck. It probes into her neck, and she is too terrified to move. Like a parasite, it worms its way in until she finally finds the strength to sit up. She grabs the back of her neck, but nothing is there. Then she turns on the light and finds the wall behind the bed pulsing with a malignant animation. She runs to the door and when she jerks it open she is face to face with The Enemy. It comes through the door and grabs her with its talons. She screams, and it is gone as though it never existed. She talks herself back into her room and feeling pain in her sides, she sees that her t-shirt is spotted with blood and there are two slash marks on the right and three on the left.

Jim throws up after waking from his second nightmare in a row, which is an anomaly that has not happened before this night. Somehow he senses that the creature after him is more than just a dream and that sooner or later, it will cross the barrier.



Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 24 - 26: Chapter 3 Analysis

When the reality of her investigation dawns on her as Holly is having breakfast the following morning, a sense of profound wonder steals over her the likes of which she hasn't known since she was a child. Using information she gleans from reports about Jim after his lottery winnings, she approaches a woman who taught junior high in the classroom next to him for ten years. She feels like a heel, pretending to be his long lost adopted sister and only living relative, and discovers that Jim gave up teaching a year to the day before he made his first astonishing rescue after a student of his committed suicide. From there, Holly learns that Jim took Tai Kwon Do, aggressive driving lessons, and even learned how to handle a gun. It was as though he were attempting to become a soldier of fortune.

She almost interviews Jim next, or tries to, but at the last moment feels as though there is still a large piece missing. She goes back to the motel, and that night she has the nightmare again, only this time the malignant presence that is after her manages to cross the boundary from nightmare into reality. It probes her, violating her and clutching at her with its claws in such a way that leaves her terrified, and shaking with disbelief after she screams it back to wherever it came from. Afterward, all that is left is the feeling of intense violation, and claw marks that have drawn blood on both sides of her rib cage.

Jim wakes having had his nightmare for the second night in a row. This is an anomaly, as usually they only occurred once a week or so. This one is also more vivid, and he has the distinct impression that the boundaries between worlds is tenuously thin and it is only a matter of time before it manages to slip through.



Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 24 - 26: Chapter 4: Pages 130 - 167

Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 24 - 26: Chapter 4: Pages 130 - 167 Summary

Holly knows she won't sleep again so she showers and dresses her wounds. Then, determined to get to the bottom of whatever is going on, she decides to confront Jim. Somehow, she's convinced that the two twilight zone style incidents in her life recently are related. In a way, the knowledge is discouraging because it adds a dark side to what she had been sure were altruistic and heroic events. Just as she is getting to Jim's house in Laguna Niguel, he is pulling out of the driveway. He had intended to go to church that morning, but as he was getting ready, he heard himself say 'life line' and stood there until it became clear that he was headed for the airport but would not require luggage. Holly follows him discretely, determined to figure out what is happening without drawing attention to herself. She gets to the airport and by getting in the line he is in at the terminal, she discovers which flight he is getting on and books a seat for herself as well. She gets on the plane and makes it to her seat without discovery. Then, to her surprise, Jim walks down the aisle towards her. He stops at the woman and child in front of him, and begins talking to her without having seen Holly. She half listens to his conversation, wondering what kind of game he is playing, until he asks the woman and her daughter to join him for the remainder of the flight. She does, and they walk to the other end of the plane. He looks back at the woman who seemed so nervous in the seat behind and is stunned to see Holly.

He goes back to her and gives her no option but to follow him back to where he is sitting, and when she argues, he marches her to the nearest restroom and tells her she will die if she doesn't comply. She listens to him describe the events that will occur bringing the plane down, and she insists that he try to warn the pilot. He argues, but part of him knows she is right, so he approaches a stewardess, concocting a lie about who he is and asking to speak with the pilot. Before he can totally convince her, the sequence of events that will bring the plane down begins. In the cockpit, the crew struggles to keep control, having quickly lost the ability to steer. The captain asks that Jim be brought forward and without knowing what he will say in advance, he tells the pilot exactly what will happen and how he can best minimize the loss of life. There are mixed reactions to the things he tells them, and when he realizes he can do no more good there, he heads back to his seat to keep Holly and his two charges safe. It is two minutes until impact.



Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 24 - 26: Chapter 4: Pages 130 - 167 Analysis

Holly is angry. Instinct tells her that her nightmare and the rescue incident with Ironheart she witnessed are somehow linked. Now, in the light of day, she is more mad than fearful and wants answers, so she drives to Jim's house. As she arrives, he pulls out of the driveway and she decides to follow him. He goes to the airport, and Holly quickly goes from angry to curious. No longer interested in confronting him, she decides to surreptitiously watch instead and see what he does. She buys a ticket on the same flight he does, and sits down without being seen by him. When they are in the air, and he begins to walk down her aisle, she thinks the gig is up and is ready to begin defending herself, but Jim stops at the seat in front of her, and introduces himself as Steve Harkman, a friend of her husbands. Christine Dubrovec immediately relaxes at the mention of her husband Ed, and still not knowing what he will say until it erupts from his mouth, he tells her that her husband claimed he was quite a matchmaker. Holly listens as he describes himself as new to the area and lonely, asking Christine is she and her daughter Casey would be willing to finish the flight sitting with him in an effort to get to know him a bit. Perhaps she could suggest a female companion. She is pleased to help and gives up the seat that somehow Jim knows won't survive the coming crash. He barely registers the seemingly nervous passenger in the seat behind them, and glancing in that direction again as he settles them in, he is stunned to see Holly looking back at him.

He goes back to her, knowing time is short but not knowing how short, and tells her that she has to come and sit near him. She resists and he insists, warning her that to disobey him is certain death. Again, he does not know what he will say until he hears himself saying it. In order to keep their conversation from reaching other passengers and creating panic, he takes her to the restroom and tells her some of the details including that the chances of survival in her seat's area are slim. She insists that he try to save more than just herself, Christine and Casey. They waste precious minutes arguing, but she insists that not to try is tantamount to murder. Finally, Jim is convinced to talk to a stewardess providing she take the seat behind Christine and Casey and stay there. He tries to talk his way into the cockpit but before he is successful, the first catastrophic event occurs, setting the crash sequence in motion. Eventually, the pilot will ask for Jim and he will try to minimize the number of people that will die by telling the pilot what to watch for and how to respond. Then, having done all he can, he goes back to his three charges.



Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 24 - 26: Chapter 4: Pages 167 - 190 and Chapter 5

Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 24 - 26: Chapter 4: Pages 167 - 190 and Chapter 5 Summary

The events unfolded predictably, just as Jim had outlined them. The pilot, remembering what Jim had told him, fought to keep the plane from cartwheeling, and managed to do so. Jim sits behind Holly and the Dubrovs listening to the stewardess giving crash position instructions. When the plane finally comes to a stop, Holly is relieved but the relief is short-lived. The next danger is fire and smoke. Jim grabs Casey and they head for the forward exit, but it is hard to breathe and filled with obstacles. He manages to get her out, and finding Christine, he returns her to her mother's arms. He asks where Holly is, and Christine tells him she went back into the plane to rescue a child. Horrified, he returns to the fuselage, calling her name. She responds, telling him she's found the boy, and he needs help now. Getting the message, Jim grabs a woman and helps her out as well. Once outside with the child she saved, rescue personnel take over, and she sees a young woman wandering around. She is looking for her newlywed husband, but when Holly offers to help her find him, she refuses. She can't bear to see him if he hasn't made it.

Holly migrates with the rest of the survivors back to the terminal where airport staff makes all efforts to help reunite, counsel and help find accommodations for those in need. Media descend like locusts and Holly realizes Jim isn't going to make an appearance when she can hear multiple people asking his whereabouts. Christine asks her where Steve is, and it takes a minute for her to remember the lie he told her. She covers for him, telling her that he absolutely had to be in Chicago and had already left. Christine is determined to apologize to the man who works with her husband when they get home, and will cause the real Steve Harkman years of curiosity about the whole event. She books a flight back to California the following day, and checks into a room for the night. She finally manages to sleep but only after several drinks with a stranger who assures her all he wants is conversation, and lives up to it. She falls asleep almost as soon as she gets into bed and dreams about the windmill again. This time she can see her surroundings, and Jim is there beside her, telling her that the old mill will never make it to Chicago. It seems perfectly logical at the time, as does he metamorphosis into a child at her side. He tells her they'll survive, as long as The Enemy doesn't come. She wakes with the realization that her career as a reporter is over and the thought gives her a freedom she can't remember ever feeling.



Part One: The Hero, The Friend: August 24 - 26: Chapter 4: Pages 167 - 190 and Chapter 5 Analysis

Holly stays in her seat with the Dubroveks, terrified until Jim comes back from talking to the pilot. Somehow, she feels better when he is near, and while it makes no sense, she feels their chances for survival increase ten fold with him close by. He puts a reassuring hand on her shoulder and tells Christine and Casey that everything will be alright, settling into the seat behind them. The pilot remembers what Jim told him, and while the rest of the flight crew is skeptical, so do they, responding to his commands that follow Jim's suggestions even as they are being called out. Jim's intervention saves more lives than ordinarily would have been lost had he not given the pilot specific instructions. Now, with the plane on the ground, he disappears again in the confusion. Holly waits around for him to show up in the lounge set up by the airport but finally realizes he is not going to put in an appearance.

After being asked how she felt when she realized they were going down for what felt like the twentieth time, she loses her composure on an unsuspecting reporter. It is only after she's ranted that she realizes it has all been recorded and she has given him exactly what he wanted. Prime time material is now followed by his calm voice intoning that she can't be blamed after the ordeal she's been through. Holly hears it as she walks away, angry with herself for giving him the 'scoop' he wanted. All she wants now is to get back to California, but no flights are available until a connector the following day. It takes a few drinks before she is able to fall into bed and actually sleep and just before drifting off, she says, "Snuggle into my cocoon, be a butterfly soon." She has no idea where the words came from. Drifting off, she hears the whooshing sound again. This time, she is not fearful and Jim is beside her. She can see the details of the old windmill, right down to the candle that lights up the upper room they are in. He tells her they will be fine as long as The Enemy doesn't show up. She comes awake suddenly with the realization that she is not going back to her job. In fact, she actually knows what she wants and it is not to be a reporter. Had she truly wanted that career, she would have been getting the insider's scoop the day before and getting ready to file the story of a lifetime. Instead, she felt finished with the whole thing, and never more free. She paces the suite, too excited to sit, understanding for the first time that she was not meant to be a journalist and all it took to get her there was to meet a man who could work miracles, and to survive a plane crash. She giggles at herself, and even likes who she is now. All she has to do is now is get Jim to agree.



Part Two: The Windmill: August 27 - 29: Chapter 1

Part Two: The Windmill: August 27 - 29: Chapter 1 Summary

Back in California, Holly picks up her rental car again and drives to Jim's. She knocks on the door and when he doesn't answer, she drives back to the motel, changes into more comfortable clothes and picks up a cooler, ice, soft drinks, a lawn chair and a paper back. She drives back to Jim's and he still refuses to answer the door. She takes her things around to the back yard where she settles in until he finally asks her what she is doing. She tells him she needs to talk to him, but he again refuses. She dozes for an hour, and at four he asks her what she wants, giving her one minute to explain but she says she'll wait until he has more time. He leaves again, and forty five minutes later he returns, showered and shaved and asks her again what she wants. His facilities are first on the list, and going into the door, she suggests an early supper, but Jim is not biting. They sit at the table and she begins by telling him she doesn't want to invade his privacy or do a story on him. Instead, she wants to join him, help him in any way she can. Again, he isn't biting. She explains herself as best she can, and when she feels as though she's blown it, he offers her a beer and tries to explain to her that he has no psychic powers and that he never knows what or who until he gets there. They make omelets together, all the while Holly trying to understand more. When they are finished, he tries to send her on her way, telling her he's tired, and she refuses saying that if she leaves now, he'll disappear. Then she tells him she cannot go until he explains the windmill. He relents and tells her to sleep on the couch. She borrows pajamas, and takes a shower. When she is done, he is still awake, unable to shut off his mind. Instead of going down to the couch he offered her, she climbs into bed next to him. They talk more, holding hands quietly in the dark. Finally, he kisses her and they share more than she would have thought possible.

This time the dream is different. Holly is outside the mill and it is old and decrepit looking. She walks towards it with no will of her own. She goes inside, fear gripping her and on her way up the stair she sees her reflection in a glass window and she is someone else. She can't stop the woman who propels her up to where a young Jim stands terrified, asking for her help. The walls throb with a luminosity of their own, and young Jim tells her it's coming and nothing can stop it. She chokes on a scream and wakes with a start. Sunlight is coming in the window, but it doesn't stop The Enemy. The ceiling is throbbing and Jim rolls off the bed, telling her to get out, but the furniture is propelled against the door before she can reach it. They go into the bathroom where he asks her what it is. She tells him it is The Enemy from the dream, surprised that he does not know. The door crashes open and the ceiling bursts, raining plaster and debris on them. Finally, exhausting itself, it vanishes leaving a hole in the bathroom ceiling. Dust



hangs in the air and Jim pulls her through to the bedroom where the furniture is still piled against the door. They both realize that there is no sanctuary.

Part Two: The Windmill: August 27 - 29: Chapter 1 Analysis

Holly isn't sure how she will convince him. She only knows that she has to, no matter what it takes. She is willing to do whatever she has to. Perhaps it is that quality in her he recognizes when he finally relents after she has been in his yard sunbathing for hours. They sit at his kitchen table and she tries to explain that she wants to help him, but he assures her that she will be little more than a nuisance, and make more trouble for him. She tries everything she can think of, and refuses to rise to his repeated efforts to make her lose her temper. Finally, when she senses that she is losing, she tells him she can't possibly leave until he tells her about the windmill. His face turns ashen and he asks her if she's been there, and she is stunned to find out it is a real place.

Jim is so tired that he can hardly keep his eyes open. He wants to go to bed and tells her they can resume their discussions the following day, but she refuses to leave, knowing that if she does now, he'll never let her in again. He tells her she can sleep on the couch. He gives every outward indication that she is a royal pain, not unlike an unwanted family member who shows up unannounced. She showers and when she realizes he is still awake, she goes into his room. He tells her about the windmill, and his childhood at his grandparents farm. She climbs into his bed beside him as though it is the most natural thing and they lie there holding hands and talking until he finally turns to her and kisses her. His touch surpasses everything that her imagination could have conjured up and she marvels at his strength and gentleness. They fall asleep next to each other and Holly dreams again. This time, she begins outside the windmill, and enters it despite fear and trepidation. Part of the way to the top, she realizes that she is a spectator, and the body she is in is not her own. Young Jim is standing in the room at the top, just as afraid, and asking her for help. He tells her it's coming and there's nothing anyone can do. Again the walls throb and she is frightened awake, but the malevolent presence is still there, despite the daylight illuminating the room. Jim asks her what it is, unaware that this is The Enemy that chases him through his dreams as well. It throbs and pulses, opening up the ceiling and raining debris on them, finally exhausting itself and leaving them with the mess. There is no denying the reality of it's attack in the full light of day.



Part Two: The Windmill: August 27 - 29: Chapter 2

Part Two: The Windmill: August 27 - 29: Chapter 2 Summary

Jim goes into the attic, revolver in hand, to reassure himself that whatever had come through the bathroom ceiling was not in the house. Holly knew he wouldn't find anything, and says it is just like in the dream. He doesn't understand. In his dreams there is only the threat of The Enemy - never a visible presence, whereas in Holly's dreams, the walls throb with the malevolent heartbeat. He wants to know every detail of her dreams, but Holly's priority is to shower and have the two of them go to the windmill. They drove to her motel and she packed up her belongings. Safely in the car again, Holly tells Jim every detail of her four windmill dreams as she had promised. They talk about the well pond, but Holly is unable to describe what she saw in her dream in the pond. Formed over an Artesian well instead of an aquifer, it is forty or fifty feet deep in the center. He gets quieter and more reserved as the farm nears, telling her they'll need to pick up some things on the way. Questioned by Holly as to what, he cannot provide an answer other than that he will know.

They drive through New Svenborg, obviously designed to delay the two mile trip to the farm, stopping at the hardware store to get sleeping bags, Coleman lantern and air mattress liners. Holly would have preferred to drive to the nearest motel in Santa Ynez. Jim tells her that something will happen that gives them answers. After leaving the hardware store, his mood visibly improved. They drove out of Svenborg and into the valley where the Ironheart farm was, nestled between the San Rafael Mountains in the east, and the Santa Ynez Mountains in the west. Holly couldn't help but notice how beautiful it all was. The farmhouse was about a hundred feet from the road and behind the house and barn and visible between them was the millpond and the windmill itself.

Part Two: The Windmill: August 27 - 29: Chapter 2 Analysis

Holly wanders only as far as Jim's study as he packs a bag and gets ready to leave. Like the rest of the house, it is sparsely furnished in what she would describe as early garage sale. Of his two hundred or so books, all are of a religious nature of one variety or another, and it seems as though all of the religions are represented. The walls are filled with an assortment of 8x10 photos of Jim as a child and his parents. In all of the photos, the faces were naturally happy. Holly could see that the death of his parents when he was ten profoundly altered him. On the way to the windmill, she shares her dreams about it with him, and he finally admits that she caught his eye from the beginning as he had hers. His mood began to darken as they neared the farm, but once



they had finished purchasing the supplies he felt they would need for their stay at the windmill, his mood improved dramatically. In fact, it was almost as if their emotional states reversed. Jim became playful and lighthearted, and in fact behaved in a way she had never seen him before. By comparison, she becomes nervous and would prefer not to spend the night in the windmill. While Jim feels that despite some fearful time, they will get some answers at the windmill, Holly is fearful of the answers and of the windmill, especially once nightfall comes. She is so possessed by this feeling that it even seems to attach itself to the general area for a little while.

Once they get out of Svenborg, the atmosphere changes again. Looking back at the town, instead of seeing and feeling the oppression that she sensed radiating from the town, she now feels as though the town is holding all of that malevolence at bay. She is also feeling a creeping sense of pyrophobia that she struggles to suppress as they approach the Ironheart farm. Her first impression is that the farmhouse is unimposing, and that the most arresting sight is the millpond and the windmill seen between the farmhouse and the barn.



Part Two: The Windmill: August 27 - 29: Chapters 3 - 5

Part Two: The Windmill: August 27 - 29: Chapters 3 - 5 Summary

Holly watches a change come over Jim. She asks who owns the property only to discover that he does, and when she inquires as to whether or not he would consider living there himself, he is adamantly opposed although he cannot say why. They park in front of it and he gives her a tour of the mill's workings. The upper level is in need of cleaning, and Jim offers to go to the house for supplies. Holly suggests they stay at the house and only visit the windmill, but Jim tells her they will have to stay there. The sound of bells ringing stops her and grinning, Jim tells her it is the sound of the stones ringing. She touches the walls and they fall silent. Jim gets cleaning materials, and they have it comfortable in short order. They inflate the mattress, make food and then Holly goes back to the house to use the washroom before it gets dark. Inside, the electricity still works, and it appears to have been left as it was when his grandparents died. There is about three months worth of dust instead of five years, and curious, Holly looks around. A photo on the wall reveals Jim's grandparents, and Holly immediately recognizes the woman as being the one who's body she occupied in her mill dream. Feeling as though she is under scrutiny, she leaves in a hurry. The bells ring again, and the millpond lights up when they do, stopping her in her tracks. By the time she reaches the half way mark up the windmill, the light in the pond is amber with each ringing. She calls out to Jim and reaching the top finds him staring dreamily in wonder as the ringing continues. She tries to show him the colors changing in the millpond, but when they descend to the window, the ringing stops and she has a difficult time explaining what she has seen. He urges her to go back upstairs.

When she questions Jim about the pond, he admits it has been there a long time, preceding the Ironheart's ownership quite possibly for a long time. Something about Holly's story about the pond helps Jim recall an encounter he had, which is something alien, he tells her. She offers to help him pack up his grandfather's belongings, and asks him about their photo and why he didn't recognize her description of his grandmother, but just then the bells begin again, and Jim insists she grab the tablets although he does not know why. He senses he is on the verge of a greater understanding of everything. This time the ringing lights up the walls and when the ringing stops, the colors remain. Holly says she feels as though they are in a giant bathysphere, and Jim loves her even more for putting into words this feeling he will remember forever. On the tablet in front of them the words "I AM WITH YOU" appear.



Part Two: The Windmill: August 27 - 29: Chapters 3 - 5 Analysis

The sight of the old farmhouse hits Jim harder than he thought it would, and he gets out of the car, taking deep breaths in an effort to maintain control. While the house invokes some sense of melancholy, and the barn has little pull whatsoever, the windmill is entirely another story. He feels completely disoriented. Holly is convinced that something happened in Jim's past that involves the windmill, but he has no memory of it. Inside the windmill, his mood changes again, and he goes back to boyishly happy. Holly hasn't known him long enough to know whether these mood swings are part of his character or an anomaly. When the walls inside produce the sound of ringing bells, Holly asks him what it meant the last time he heard them. He can't quite remember, but his mood is so elevated, and he is certain that it is a good sign. After cleaning and eating, she goes to the house to use the bathroom, but is nervous about leaving Jim alone for reasons she can't quite discern. Inside the house, she has the feeling she is under observation. A photo on the wall reveals the woman she described to Jim as having been the one she occupied in her dream of the mill and he claimed not to have recognized despite Holly's having well described her. In fact, the feeling is so intense that she is unable to complete the climb she began to the upper level. She hurries back to the windmill and as the ringing begins again, she can see a corresponding red/orange light coming from the millpond. The water goes back to black when the ringing stops, and lights up again with each new peal. When she tries to show Jim the Spielberg like event, it stops before she can get him to descend to a window.

Back upstairs, Holly is struck by how yin and yang she and Jim are. He recalls a memory of something alien in the millpond and they speculate as to it's motives. Holly feels like a child on an adventure of a lifetime. When nothing happens for a while, she asks him why he never packed the personal belongings from the house and he admits procrastinating, unable to put away his grandfather's life so soon after having done the same with him where his grandmother was concerned. She offers to help him. When the ringing begins again, she is frightened, but he tells her there is nothing malevolent here. He waits with anticipation as the walls light up the way the pond did. Words appear on one of the tablets announcing the presence of something else.



Part Two: The Windmill: August 27 - 29: Chapters 6 and 7

Part Two: The Windmill: August 27 - 29: Chapters 6 and 7 Summary

Jim believes they are being encouraged to ask questions, so Holly tells him to ask it what it is. He writes, "Who are you?" on the tablet he is standing and holding, and the answer slowly appears on the tablet on the floor. "The Friend." When asked where it comes from, the answer is another world. To clarify, Jim asks if it means another planet and the answer is yes. Holly is in awe. The questions and answers continue as they learn it is from another solar system; another galaxy; its vessel is in the pond; and it's been here for ten thousand years. It reveals it is here to study, observe and to help mankind. Holly begins to ask questions without writing them, and the answers still come, but Holly senses that something isn't right and that they are being lied to. She asks why its approach is marked by the sound of bells, and gets no answer. Finally, it answers 'For Drama?' When Holly questions it further for clarification, it tells them it is leaving but that it will return when the tide is right. It claims to share the ebb and flow of tide. The light tide is his but ;The Enemy' rises with the dark, he explains and warns them not to sleep because dreams are portals.

After it is gone, Holly sits with Jim and trying not to offend him, she tells him he is a lousy reporter and suggests that before it returns, they write out a list of prepared questions. The bells ring again and the walls shimmer with colors but Holly is unimpressed. She asks that The Friend talk to them instead of writing, and Jim notices that all of their questions have already been answered. Holly throws the tablet at the wall and insists it communicate and it finally does. She asks if it is the power that drives Jim and it admits it is. Then she asks for an accounting of the people he saved, and one by one the voice tells her why these people were rescued from certain death. She and Jim discuss the likelihood of all of this being true, and Holly tells him that she has a pretty good nose for deception which prompts the alien voice to begin bickering with her. When she asks about the oldest saved person, Steven Aimes, it again claims the tide is changing and it must leave, but will be back. It also tells them that it would be unwise for them to attempt to leave. When Jim argues that point, it tells him they have to wait for its return or they will die, followed by they dare not sleep because dreams are doorways.

Part Two: The Windmill: August 27 - 29: Chapters 6 and 7 Analysis

The writing on the tablet feels like an invitation to communicate, so Jim writes questions, and the responses appear. They continue to appear when Holly asks the questions



aloud, and she becomes increasingly suspicious of the answers they are given. When they are told it is a child, and it is immortal, Holly boldly insist it is lying. Jim is appalled. She continues to be suspicious of it and of its intentions, asking it questions that it cannot or will not answer. When it admits to the bells as announcement being a dramatic entrance but follows it with a question mark, Holly asks why it is uncertain. The questions irritate it and Jim who can't believe that Holly is being so confrontational. Finally, as though frustrated with Holly and her questions, it announces its departure and warns them not to sleep because dreams are portals and he shares the tide with The Enemy. It all seems a little too Hollywood for Holly.

She talks to Jim after the alien presence is gone, explaining to him that they need to ask more pointed questions. Is it the one responsible for Jim's behavior as a savior? Why are some people being saved? What is its purpose? Why is it taking the time to save some and not others? So many questions Holly has that haven't been answered. She begins to write them down on a tablet. Suddenly the presence returns and Holly, to Jim's surprise, acts in an adversarial manner, interrogating the presence more aggressively. Jim is concerned with the tone she is taking, but she senses that something is wrong. She smells deception. Some of her comments obviously needle the entity, as it begins to bicker back at her, making references to her failed career as a reporter. She would have laughed had she been able to think about it for a minute. Instead, she gets more insistent. She demands answers and the entity gets flustered and tells them that it has to leave again. Holly comments on the short duration of this 'tide' but the entity tells them that the tides are not all the same. It leaves but tells them they can't. That surprises Jim. The entity has always been something of a wonder to him, and a presence representing good, but now it is responding in a threatening tone. He tells it they'll leave if they want to, but it tells them they need to wait for its return and not to sleep because dreams are portals.



Part Two: The Windmill: August 27 - 29: Chapter 8

Part Two: The Windmill: August 27 - 29: Chapter 8 Summary

They speculate as to whether The Friend and The Enemy are just two sides of the same being. Jim is beginning to question everything now, and the idea that this entity has been lying to them is unnerving. When it returns, Holly is less aggressive with her questions, but it still seems to have a mean streak. She asks if it will ever release Jim, but it claims it will not. It claims Jim needs the purpose that this work gives him. Holly questions the length of time it have been here before it began to use Jim, and it gets flustered again, telling them it has to go. Again it tells them not to sleep because dreams are doorways.

Despite how hard she tries to stay awake, she finally sleeps, and the nightmare she has is like no other. She is on the floor in a Dixie Duck burger barn and everywhere she looks are dead people. An overweight man in camouflage is using an automatic weapon to kill everyone. When she wakes, she is gagging. Jim is asleep on the floor and it is morning. She pulls herself together, wondering if the dream is a warning, and quietly crosses to the tablet she threw at the wall earlier, looking at the answers to the questions she never asked. When she gets to the fifth page, she sees two lines repeated for the next three pages. "He loves you Holly. He will kill you Holly", over and over in the same scrawl. Unnerved, she tries to understand what it means. She flips back through the pages to the one rescue the entity had no answer for earlier. Steven Aimes is listed and beside his name, "Because he looks like my father whom I failed to save". That statement implies that The Friend, The Enemy and Jim Ironheart are all one and the same person and deeply disturbed. Filled with fear she makes her way out of the windmill and down to the car. It starts and she almost leaves the property before realizing that he is capable of following her anywhere, including into her dreams and there is no where to hide. Besides, he needs her.

Part Two: The Windmill: August 27 - 29: Chapter 8 Analysis

The childish attitude of the entity unnerves Jim a little. While he came with the intention of discovering the truth behind the power that compels him to play the savior, he is troubled by the thought that this entity might be lying to them. He deeply regretted that Holly had been dragged into all of this. Holly speculates that the Enemy and Friend are one and the same entity. Jim realizes that she may as well be telling him that whatever is in the pond is insane. She agrees. She also tells him that she'll modify her tactics when it returns. When the entity comes back, it is still petulant and lists the people Jim



saved one at a time with grandiose claims as to what they will accomplish in their lives. Holly is unimpressed. It even makes reference to Casey Dubrovec, who it says will be a school teacher who will influence many students and not lose one to suicide. The pettiness is sickening to Jim.

They stay awake as long as they can, but finally both drift off. Holly has a nightmare about a gunman in a restaurant, and wakes gagging, trying to make sense of it. Will she face this reality? Is she supposed to do something about it? She looks over The Friend's answers on the tablet while Jim sleeps and sees three pages of repeated text that make her blood run cold. Does this mean that The Enemy will possess him and during that time he will kill her? She is too filled with fear to wake him now, afraid of who he will be when she does. What she finds beside Steven Aimes is even more terrifying. The use of the words 'I' and 'my' imply that the two entities are really part of Jim and not some alien presence living in the millpond. More terrified by the moment, she decides to leave, and carefully creeps down the stairs, for the first time afraid of Jim. She makes it to the car and almost leaves before she realizes that not only does she have no where to hide where he can't find her, but that he needs her and she simply can't abandon him.



Part Three: The Enemy: The Rest of August 29: Chapter 1: Pages 343 - 365

Part Three: The Enemy: The Rest of August 29: Chapter 1: Pages 343 - 365 Summary

Holly sat in the car as it all began to make sense. Jim had created these identities at the age of ten. It was why The Friend had such a young demeanor, petulant and argumentative. The Enemy was the embodiment of his frustration and anger at having his parents taken from him at such a young age. It all fit. The power was all Jim. Good, bad and in between, she accepted the reality of it and suddenly understood that when they had first driven through New Svenborg, he had given her all of the answers, pointing out the places that were important to him. She honked the horn three times, repeating it until he was standing in the doorway. She asked him if he was awake - really awake, wanting to make sure that she was dealing with the Jim she loved. Then she asked him to get in, telling him they had to talk. Behind him, the windmill began to turn. She told him to stop it, getting a confused look from him. First, she told him she loved him, without reservation, and that everything she said now came from love. She wouldn't let him speak until she explained it all, and showed him the tablet. The latter makes him white, but a part of him still fights the possibility. To admit it is all him would be to admit he is truly disturbed.

She drives to town, while The Enemy manifests itself by writing 'You Die' on the tablet, and then the word 'Dead' repeated on the windshield. Holly tries to ignore it, and continues to deal with Jim from a place of love. On the way to town, Holly realizes the voice of The Friend is Richard Vaughn. Jim remembers having actually met him once. They go to the pharmacy first where Corbett Handahl greets Jim with obvious pleasure. Jim is unable to stay inside as Corbett reveals some of the truths of Jim's childhood, and going outside to wait, The Enemy manifests itself inside in displeasure, making it seem as though an earthquake is occurring. Holly remains inside and discovers his parents were mentalists; his grandmother died twenty four years previously; the farm has never been put up for sale, and would sell immediately if it had; and as a child, Jim read every science fiction he could get. To stop the 'earthquake' from destroying the pharmacy completely, Holly goes outside and holds Jim, quietly calling his name until he responds by putting his arms around her and the shaking subsides.

Part Three: The Enemy: The Rest of August 29: Chapter 1: Pages 343 - 365 Analysis

Holly is angry with herself for not having asked the right questions on that very first day that he'd opened his door. He had claimed to be nothing more than an instrument, and the romantic in her wanted so badly to believe in it that she questioned none of it. It had



annoyed her when he had taken everything The Friend said at face value, and she had done exactly the same thing with him. The more she mulls it all over in her mind, the more sense it makes. The manifestations of both The Friend and The Enemy are the creation of a ten year old Jim Ironheart. They were created to help him cope with a world that surely felt as though it was coming apart. All of the power, intuition and manifestations are Jim. His psyche fractured into slices he could manage one at a time. The Friend was the benign and humanitarian part of him, wanting only to help mankind, and save those who were deserving. The Enemy was the punishing, angry manifestation of a young boy who couldn't understand the reasons his loved ones were torn from him. It's angry and self serving presence asserts itself only when Jim is unconscious. This changes when Jim is directly confronted by Holly about his direct connection to the entities. Then The Enemy asserts itself even when Jim is awake, communicating obvious displeasure at Holly's attempts to bring him out into the light and by doing so, hopefully help to heal Jim.

She realizes that her love for him is stronger than her fear of that side of him, and she takes him back to New Svenborg in an effort to discover what it is that Jim has buried about his past. They begin at the town pharmacy where pharmacist Corbett Handahl still mans the counter. He greet Jim with obvious affection, but when he begins revealing the details of Jim's childhood, Jim has to leave the store. For reasons he can't understand, he is terrified of Corbett and can't face the revelations that are coming. He stays just long enough to remember that his grandmother has been dead for twenty-four years, not four as he had told Holly, and that his parents had operated a traveling mentalist act. When he hears Corbett reveal these items, he remembers them without problem and can't understand why he kept this information from Holly. His alter ego manifests itself in an effort to stop the conversation going on inside, and when the damage is getting out of hand, Holly goes outside to calm Jim until he manages to suppress it again.



Part Three: The Enemy: The Rest of August 29: Chapter 1: Pages 365 - 389

Part Three: The Enemy: The Rest of August 29: Chapter 1: Pages 365 - 389 Summary

Next, Holly and Jim drive to the cemetery. The gravestone for his grandmother states that she died when she was fifty three years of age. The date she died is September 25th, and Jim realizes this is the exact date he came with flowers to grieve for her, only it happened five years ago - on the nineteenth anniversary of her death. At that time, it had felt as though she had just died. Holly asks Jim how she died but for some reason he can't remember. Holly believes she likely died in the mill and says so. She also believes, based on her dream, that he witnessed her death. He is so intent on leaving that he doesn't notice that his grandfather's plot beside hers has no date of death on it. She asks him about his death, but Jim can't wrap his mind around it all. Next, she takes him to Tivoli Gardens. A plaque in the mill cites 'The Black Windmill - book and movie.' She draws Jim's attention to it. Reading the plaque, Holly notes that the movie had been made the year that Jim came to Svenborg. Jim tells her something is coming. The fifth cast member listed is Robert Vaughn. She looks outside and sees a yard wide bump of dirt coming towards them as though tunneling, and whirls on Jim telling him to stop it. As it gets closer, she tries repeatedly to snap him out of it but when nothing works she kicks him in the shin. Immediately, the tunneling under them stops. Still, Jim can't believe it was him.

The next stop is the library. They find the book called The Black Windmill and Holly begins reading it, astounded at the similarities. The main character is named Jim, and he finds an alien in a mill pond. Every detail is exactly the same except for one. In the book there is no Enemy. Jim and Holly research Jim's history by reading, and then talk to librarian Eloise Glynn. She reveals that Lena did indeed die in the windmill, but she was unaware that Jim was there with her. She also tells them that Jim's grandfather, Henry, is living in Fair Haven in the town of Solvang. With prodding, on the way to Solvang Jim remembers the court appearance that made him the executor of his grandfather's estate. He cannot understand why he had such a clear memory of him having died. It just doesn't make sense to him. Holly comforts him, telling him that it was simply a defense mechanism. He responds by telling her that 'something very dark is coming' but he doesn't know what he meant by it.

Part Three: The Enemy: The Rest of August 29: Chapter 1: Pages 365 - 389 Analysis

Jim feels almost claustrophobic as he and Holly near the grave sites of his grandparents. He is grateful for Holly's hand in his. When he realizes how deeply he



suppressed the memory of his grandmother's death, he truly feels as though he's lost his mind, but Holly is calm when she tells him simply that this is method of self defense. Being unable to remember how she died makes him tense and agitated. His heart is slamming against his chest when Holly suggests that he likely witnessed her death. When she draw his attention to the lack of date of death on his grandfather's side, he becomes even more agitated, and can't remember exactly how his grandfather died. While he had been relatively eager to confront the cemetery and whatever information might be gleaned from it, Holly senses that his enthusiasm for self discovery is waning quickly. She's sure he'd be just as happy if they left town now, and never mentioned any of it again. She also senses that they are running out of time. The windmill at Tivoli Gardens is the next stop. Reading the plaque inside, she remembers that in her dream as Lena, she had seen a book at young Jim's feet titled *The Black Windmill* though she had never heard of the movie. She is as gentle as she can be as she explains her theories to him, and tells him how he's adapted the *Black Windmill* to his life for many years. She ignores the threats coming now and then from the Enemy, refusing to acknowledge it at all.

After librarian Eloise Glynn reveals that Jim's grandfather is living in Fair Haven in Solvang, Jim tries desperately to remember his past. He struggles with the presence of the Enemy and warns Holly that something very dark is coming.



Part Three: The Enemy: The Rest of August 29: Chapter 2

Part Three: The Enemy: The Rest of August 29: Chapter 2 Summary

Holly likes Fair Haven immediately. It doesn't have the usual smells that one would normally associate with a nursing home. The air is fresh and clean and Mrs. Danforth is happy to see that Jim has come to visit at last, and says so. Holly might not have recognized Henry without help. She waited until the hand was done before introducing herself, but without telling Henry who she was to his grandson at first. She simply asks if they can talk. The rest at the table take a break and she begins to explain her presence there, telling him that she is in love with Jim and intends to spend the rest of her life with him, but needs to know some hard truths before that can happen. Tears well up in the man's eyes as he explains the chain of events that led to the estrangement of him and his grandson. He reveals Jim's last secrets to her, and in them she hears the truly horrible things that the love of her life carries deep inside. She hears the sounds of birds gathering, fearing she should never have left Jim alone, and suggests they go out to the courtyard, but Henry needs to finish the story now that he's started. His wife's death had been the last straw for him too. His grief was so strong that until Jim went away to college, a part of him blamed Jim, and held him responsible. The birds are louder. When Henry had his stroke and Jim came to him, he'd tried to apologize, and to tell him that he knew it wasn't him, but aphasia made it sound as though he were calling Jim a murderer instead, and Jim had fled, never to return.

Finally, Holly tells Henry he will have a chance now to tell Jim everything. She reveals that Jim is with her and asks if Henry wants to see him. Holly sees the birds in the sky circling and takes control, telling Jim there was no car accident, and helping him to remember the Dixie Duck. Henry realizes in that moment the extent of the damage in his grandson and his remorse is almost unbearable. Holly holds him, telling him the truths he needs to know, and more birds gather. She stands her ground telling him softly how much she loves him. Henry tells Jim that he knows the truth about Lena and that he is sorry he ever allowed his grief to override his sense. Jim reveals the rest of the windmill story. It was the first time The Enemy had appeared, and Jim watched as horrified, Lena had backed away from the pulsing walls and had fallen down the stairs, breaking her neck. Finally, Jim reaches for Henry's hand, kissing it as the final wall between them falls.



Part Three: The Enemy: The Rest of August 29: Chapter 2 Analysis

Jim is terrified. He can't face the idea of going in to visit his grandfather and begs Holly to go in and see him first. Find out if he hates him, and if he wants to see him. For reasons he can't explain, he needs to know that his grandfather will be receptive to seeing him. He is so insistent, and so filled with anxiety that finally Holly agrees and allows a staff member to lead her to a common room where Henry sat in a wheelchair with three other elderly people playing poker. His frame was gaunt and the stroke had taken much from him. One side of his face had less muscle control than the other, and it took away from the features she'd seen in his photographs. Finally, Holly learns the last of Jim's secrets. The dream she had in the Dixie Duck had actually happened, but to Jim and his parents. He had watched as a crazed gunman mowed down twenty-four people including his parents, and as the sole survivor, he had been found in his father's bloodied, dead arms. Tears stream down Holly's face as she realizes the full extent of the horror he lives with and blocks out. Having lost all of his loved ones, just like Jim, he also lost his way. Jim had been so strange after the incident in the Dixie Duck that when Lena fell to her death in the windmill, he shook Jim and tried to get him to confess that he'd pushed her down the stairs.

They go to the courtyard where Jim sits, unable to even get to his feet. Henry reaches for him but Jim won't meet him halfway, or meet his gaze. She begs him to remember, and to face the realities he has shut out for so long. They're coming, he tells her, in a disembodied state of mind. The birds swoop down and beat at him, pecking at him, and she hides her face at first, but then realizes they are all part of him as well. She tells him that he can commit suicide, but the life he takes won't just be his own. She will die with him and live in hell with him if it is the only place they can be together. She faces the birds, looking into their eyes as they try to intimidate her and make her run. Henry begs Jim to forgive him for his unforgivable behavior and the birds vanish.



Part Three: The Enemy: The Rest of August 29: Chapter 3

Part Three: The Enemy: The Rest of August 29: Chapter 3 Summary

Holly leaves the area, unwilling to even return to the windmill for the time being. She leaves the remainder of their belongings behind and heads for Santa Monica. All Holly wants now is to be somewhere that has no memories for either of them. Jim sleeps in the seat beside her, worn out, and in a state not that unlike a chrysalis. She is confident that The Friend and The Enemy are gone. She drives along, thinking about the boy who created elaborate personality extensions that stemmed from a book he read in order to cope with the real life horrors that his young mind couldn't adjust to. She marvels at the depth of his survival instinct. Finally, she checks them into a motel as he continues to sleep in the front seat. She manages to rouse him enough to get him inside, and then darkens the room and watches him sleep for a while, wondering how he will feel about her when he wakes. Finally, she crawls into bed. The next thing she is aware of is Jim waking her, telling her they have to get up.

He tells her they have to get to Scranton, Pennsylvania because a school bus driver is going to recklessly try to beat a train at a crossing and twenty-six children will perish unless they get there before tomorrow afternoon. She is surprised that he knows all of it in advance and he grins like a young boy and reminds her he is a psychic after all. They are really going to be something, he tells her. Of course she will have to learn how to handle a gun, take martial arts training and a few other things, he tells her, but they are going to be great together.

Part Three: The Enemy: The Rest of August 29: Chapter 3 Analysis

Jim is so exhausted that when they leave Fair Haven, he can do nothing beyond sleep. For the first time, Holly doesn't fear his unconscious time, and knows instinctively that The Enemy is gone for good. Relief is so strong that she has no desire to return to the windmill for their belongings. In fact, she has no desire to stay in the area at all. She drives towards Santa Monica, thinking about all that Jim has been through, and recently faced. His awakening, when it happens, will be the equivalent of a chrysalis. She is amazed at how strong and resilient he has been throughout his life to date. She manages to rouse him just long enough to transfer him to a motel room.

He wakes her gently, telling her that they have to go to Scranton, and the look on his face tells her everything she needs to know. Her Jim, the Jim she loves, is the man in front of her now. He is also very aware of his own transformation, assuring Holly that

they will make a formidable team and that they will be great together. This does not come as a surprise. Holly already knew all of that.



Characters

James (Jim) Madison Ironheart (Anglicized from Eisenherz)

Jim has eyes that are the color of the morning sky, and have an arresting clarity and beauty to them. He has thick brown hair and is a well muscled man of about thirty five years old. He is soft spoken and smiles easily coming across like a Southern style gentleman. He moves with unusual grace, but is reluctant to discuss himself and has a poise that is unshakable. He has a Bruce Willis like wardrobe and enough aplomb for all of the men in Rhode Island. He lives in Laguna Niguel, in a small house he purchased in early January, after winning six million dollars in the lottery. Finalizing the purchase on May 3rd, the modest home is located on Bougainvillea Way in a relatively new neighborhood, and is the smallest home in the area. It has white stucco walls and a red tiled roof with large pane French windows, and is about two thousand square feet. It is a pleasant looking and incredibly ordinary looking house for such an extraordinary man.

Jim was an English instructor at a junior high school in Irvine, California. Well liked by students and faculty alike, he is still mothered by Viola Moreno who taught in the room next to his. He quit soon after winning the lottery when on May 15th, he lost an eighth grade student named Larry Kakonis to suicide. Soon after, he begins a path of rescue, where he seems to be able to see events before they occur, and save the lives of some people who he senses will go on to have a positive impact of some kind on the world.

His parents died when he was ten years old, an only child. His father had been an accountant and his mother an actress until they both quit and formed a mentalist act. His father and New Svenborg's pharmacist Corbett Handahl had been in the county high school together, one year apart and his father had always had what Corbett refers to as exotic interests.

Holly Thorne

Holly is an entertainment reporter for the Press in Portland. She enjoys walking, and has been a reporter for twelve years but only a year of it in Portland. The rest of her career was worked in Chicago, Los Angeles and Seattle. She is determined and not used to having her efforts thwarted. Holly has occasional bouts of self deprecation - times she spends alternately chastising herself for wallowing in self pity and feeling sorry for herself for not becoming the Pulitzer Prize winning author she had hopes of becoming. All of that changes shortly after meeting Jim Ironheart. After that incredible incident, she begins the pursuit of a career making story about courage and hope, wonder and amazement.

Holly was never very good at deception, although the likes of Bob Woodward or Joe McGinniss have argued the necessity of ingenious stretching of truths in order to get to



the heart of a story. She at least still has the good graces to feel twinges of guilt and remorse when she lies to elicit information. After an episode with Jim Ironheart where they are both part of a plane crash, her life changes. She realizes that she will never be reporter and that her life requires more meaning. She gets a glimpse of what life can be like when she goes back into the burning plane to rescue a young boy she hears crying, and that act of selflessness opens her heart to who she could be. Afterward, she is never the same. She becomes instrumental in helping Jim to unlock the myriad of misery and pain that keeps him from the truth. In a journey of discover, she retraces Jim's past with him, encouraging him to remember and face the painful events of his childhood, including the deaths of his parents and his grandmother, and eventually helping him to reconcile with his grandfather. Her love for him is so strong that she is able to help him overcome the depth of grief that caused The Enemy to exist.

The Enemy

A membrane of wet, malignant animation, the Enemy is beyond human experience or comprehension. It is insectile, arachnoid and reptilian at the same time that squirms and jitters with a tangled mass of spider legs. It has antennae, serpentine coils and roach like mandibles with multifaceted eyes and the fangs of a rattlesnake. It has claws and throbs repulsively as it crosses the boundaries between nightmare and reality, attacking Holly Thorne. The Enemy only seems to appear when Jim Ironheart is unconscious, until Holly realizes who The Enemy really is. Then the manifestations come at her in the bright light of day.

The Enemy is a manifestation of Jim's psyche, revealed when Jim and Holly spend a night in the windmill on his grandfather's farm. It is the embodiment of his rage and helplessness and surfaces in times of stress or when the events he is suppressing threaten to surface. The Enemy can manifest itself in a myriad of ways, becoming everything from a flock of birds to a throbbing wall, and even a monster that is a combination of every science fiction book Jim ever read as a child.

The Friend

A manifestation that appears to Holly and Jim when they go to the windmill, The Friend claims to be responsible for sending Jim on his missions, and for helping him to forget the existence of a 'friend' until he felt compelled to bring Holly to the windmill. While he seems to be a benign presence, the self proclaimed male entity is also petulant and argumentative. He reveals himself to Holly and Jim repeated in the windmill, first writing answers to their questions on tablets, and then communicating in the voice of Robert Vaughn. His initial benign personality becomes more agitated as Holly probes, sensing there is more to The Friend than is being revealed, and finally even tells them both that they cannot leave the windmill until he makes another appearance, even telling them that if they try to leave, they will die.



Henry James Ironheart

Jim's grandfather, who took him in at the age of ten, and raised him when his parents were killed. After the death of his parents in the Dixie Duck, Jim had been withdrawn and difficult to reach. When Henry found Lena at the bottom of the stair in the windmill, something in him snapped and in his grief, he blamed Jim, accusing him of pushing her down the stairs, and causing Jim to retreat into himself further still.

After his stroke, Jim returned, but Aphasia made speech difficult and when Henry tried to explain that he knew Jim had not been responsible, it came out sounding as though he were calling Jim a murderer. Jim fled and never returned. As a result of the stroke, Henry's words are slightly slurred. The right side of his body is weakened and he holds his right arm curled against his chest. He has lost a great deal of weight, and he has lost his burly appearance. His face is almost gaunt and the muscles on the right side are unnaturally relaxed causing them to droop a bit, even though he has good color. His soul however, revealed in his eyes, in unbowed by the events.

Henry loves Jim and always has, although for a time he had a difficult time showing it. He is filled with anguish and remorse over his behavior with Jim after Lena died.

Lena Louise Ironheart

Jim's grandmother, who took him in at the age of ten, after his parents were killed. Lena predeceased Henry by twenty years, dying when she was aged fifty three. Jim blocks out her death, recalling only that he woke one morning with the memory that she was dead five years earlier. He had been living in Irvine at the time, and had gone out, bought flowers and then drove to her grave site. He remembers no funeral, no mourners and no other flowers. He just remembers crying at her grave. Her gravestone gives her date of death as September 25th. She died after having gone out to the windmill one of many nights she had gone out, to bring Jim back into the house. It was the first encounter anyone, including Jim had with The Enemy. Fear propelled her backward and she lost her footing, falling to her death in the windmill in front of Jim. Her neck was broken in the fall.

Viola Moreno

Viola lives in Irving California. She is a Mexican-American woman of about fifty years of age who has flawless skin that is the tone of lightly tarnished copper. her eyes are a liquid black, but merry and radiate warmth. Slightly on the short side, and slowly broadening with age, she is still lovely enough to turn heads. Viola is a Vietnam war widow, having lost her husband in 1969 when she was just thirty and he was thirty two. Joe was a career Marine, and proud of it. To hear Viola talk, she is still equally proud of him and his service. Though the death had occurred some time ago, it profoundly affected her as he was so obviously the love of her life.



Viola taught junior high school in a classroom next to Jim Ironheart for ten years and her affection for him is genuine and motherly.

Father Leo Geary

Father Geary is a slightly plump man of about fifty years of age. He is balding, has thick eyebrows and a nose that has a squashed quality to it. He is a gentle man with sometimes wavering faith who is the custodial Father of Our Lady of the Desert church. When Jim appears in his church, dehydrated and on the verge of sunstroke, Father Geary takes him in and nurses him back to health. The local paper has printed a story about the recent rescue and Geary knows or at least suspects who Jim is, but also realizes that Jim left the scene to preserve his privacy and he respects that.

When Jim is conscious and coherent, Geary tells him that when he first found him, he exhibited all the signs of stigmata. His hands and feet were punctured, his head showed evidence of a crown of thorns worn recently and he had what appeared to be a pear wound in his stomach. Combined, they give Geary back something he thought he'd lost - his faith. He is grateful and awed by Jim, and helps him to get to the next place he is compelled to go - the nearest airport.

Corbett Handahl

Owner of Handahl's Pharmacy on Main Street in New Svenborg, Corbett still works the counter himself. He is a wide shouldered, heavy man who has white hair and matching mustache. He is the perfect small town pharmacist, . He is jovial, and has the air of competence that makes you immediately feel as though you can trust him. Handahl's Pharmacy is the first stop Holly makes with Jim as they go through town on a voyage to rediscover who he is. Corbett reveals several things to Holly before The Enemy manifests itself with such force that she stops asking questions. By then Jim is outside, and it takes several minutes of her holding him and gently calling his name to bring him back.

Holly learns that Jim read every science fiction that came in the door as a child. She also learns that Lena Ironheart, his grandmother, didn't die five years previously as he had told her, but actually twenty four years ago, when Jim was eleven. Astonishingly, he reveals two more truths. One is that had Jim ever put the property up for sale, people would line up to buy it because of the never ending supply of water, and also that Jim's parents used to have a mentalist act.

Eloise Glynn

Eloise is the New Svenborg librarian, and had been since Jim was a child. She remembers how he used books as a way to escape reality. She has high praise for both the area and for Jim's parents for having given him the kind of education that made him love books.



She is the kind of woman that enjoyed her job immensely. She has a bouncy personality and puts a great deal of energy into her job. She has the kind of smile that children would love.

Mrs. Danforth

The administrator for Fair Haven, she is a little on the plump side, but is well groomed and competent.

James and Cara Ironheart

Jim's parents, killed when he was ten by a crazed gunman in a Dixie Duck restaurant.



Objects/Places

McAlbury School

This is Jim Ironheart's destination of desperation in Portland for reasons he can't yet understand.

Our Lady of the Desert

This is the church that Jim stumbles into, half-dead from dehydration and sunstroke after saving Lisa and Susie.

Bougainvillea Way

This is the road in Laguna Niguel that Jim purchased his house on.

Dojo

This is Japanese for a martial arts practice hall and the name of the Tai Kwon Do academy where Jim learned his craft.

New Svenborg

This is the location of the Ironheart farm.

Windmill

This is located on an Artesian well on the Ironheart farm.

Handahl's Pharmacy

This is located on Main Street in New Svenborg, owned and operated by Corbett Handahl.

Svenborg Memorial Park

This is adjacent to Tivoli Gardens and next to the Svenborg graveyard.

Solvang

This is the town close to New Svenborg where Henry Ironheart has lived since his stroke.

Fair Haven

This is the name of the facility in Solvang where Henry went after his stroke.



Themes

Career vs Purpose

Holly Thorne is a career journalist who aspires to one day win a Pulitzer Prize. She has always wanted to be a writer and has worked for several different papers and journals. Despite being employed in her field of choice, there is something missing in Holly's life. Most of time, she is content with doing the best job that she can without resorting to what she feels is negative journalism. If the story she is working on involves someone who has less than stellar talent, she would rather find something positive to say than to resort to writing a piece that focuses on the obvious flaws. A prime example is the poet Louise Tarvohl that she is slated to interview. While she personally feels that the woman is a waste of the written word, she would rather not point this out and ridicule the woman in print. This is part of the reason that she realizes she is not cut out to be a journalist.

The second revelation that she is in the wrong field comes after the plane she and Jim Ironheart are on a plane that crashes. During that tumultuous and frightening experience, any other journalist would have been recording their feelings, as well as getting insider reports from fellow passengers unequaled by other press members who are not part of the actual crash. Instead, she finds herself resenting the media intrusion and realizing that they collectively make up everything she resents about her profession. In fact, the most alive she has felt in all of her years so far is in the brief period of time that she crawls her way back into the burning plane to rescue the young boy that she hears crying. In those moments, she finds a profound purpose to life and knows within twenty-four hours that she will not return to journalism in any capacity.

Trauma vs Coping Mechanisms

Jim Ironheart survives several extreme traumas. The first one occurs in a Dixie Duck restaurant. A madman with no connection to him or his family comes in shooting and when he is finally rescued, he is the sole survivor. His parents are both dead, along with over twenty others, and at the age of ten, he is found in the bloodied arms of his dead father. The experience is enough to unnerve any child, but Jim is not just any child. Since an early age, Jim has shown some incredible capabilities. He can take an object from a stranger, and use it to gain intimate knowledge about them. His parents turn this into a mentalist show, and the family is happy. Jim becomes stronger, able to move objects with his mind. The incident at the Dixie Duck hounds him because he believes that if he had concentrated, he would have been able to somehow stop the bullets or the man behind them. The more he broods about it, the less he is able to reconcile the facts as he sees them. He should have been able to save them but didn't. Guilt and remorse, both powerful emotions, battle in him.



To cope with the trauma, and what he sees as his part in his parents' death, he creates an entity patterned after a movie that was shot in New Svenborg. The entity, an exact copy of the one in the Black Windmill, is called The Friend as well. This entity deals with Jim's remorse, but doesn't address the guilt he feels both as the only survivor, and as the special boy who neglected to use his special gift.. To cope with that side of his psyche, he creates an alternative to The Friend called The Enemy. It is the first appearance of The Enemy that causes the death of his grandmother. This coping mechanism is popular among multiple personalities, although Jim didn't actually create personalities that acted independently of him. He created personalities that took control of his life, but left him aware and able to make choices and follow directions.

Love vs Trauma

Jim suffers incredible trauma as a child. First, he witnesses and is the sole survivor of a massacre at a Dixie Duck restaurant. He sees his parents and more than twenty other people killed before he is finally rescued and taken from the arms of his dead father. He goes to live with his grandparents and has great difficulty coping with his parents death. This is largely because in hindsight, he realizes that had he concentrated on the gunman or on the gun he was using, he might have been able to save his parents. This revelation is so painful and causes so much guilt and remorse that ten-year-old Jim fractures to cope with it, creating an alternate entity. He spends so much time in the windmill, alone with his new 'friend' that his grandmother often goes out to bring him back into the house. During one of these times, Jim has become angry and created a personality that is more malevolent in character for the first time. This personality is present when his grandmother arrives, and in fear, she steps back and falls to her death. Another layer of self reproach and guilt is assumed by young Jim which is compounded by his grandfather, who in a time of extreme grief himself, blames the boy and accuses him of pushing his grandmother to her death. The angry entity becomes more firmly entrenched in Jim's personality.

When he meets Holly Thorne for the first time, something tells Jim that she is different, although he is afraid to pursue the issue. Instead, feeling the same connection, Holly pursues him. Her determination to understand his unique personality puts them together on an airliner that crashes, and causes Jim some additional anxiety as he works to ensure her safety as well. The bond that grows between them opens Holly to a new level in her life, making her realize that everything she has done in life to that point was merely a prelude to living. Jim's feelings for her are so strong that he begins to trust her in a way he hasn't trusted anyone since he lost his parents. This trust forms the basis for the love which leads to the resolution of his fractured mind. The strength of Holly's love for Jim helps her to overcome her fear of the unknown and push him to resolve the issues buried in his subconscious before they bury her instead. Love overcomes.



Style

Point of View

Cold Fire by Dean Koontz is written entirely in the first-person perspective, alternating between the two main characters of Jim Ironheart and Holly Thorne. The author does a very credible job of introducing these two characters, and the conflicts they both face separately and then ultimately together. Jim Ironheart is a tormented man and a modern day superhero that lives his life in anonymity by choice. He is financially stable and employment at a steady job is unnecessary which is a benefit revealed immediately by his last minute revelations that someone will need a life line from him. These connections to virtual strangers happen with little or no warning, and by following them Jim is able to interrupt what would surely be the events that results in the death of some people before their time. Then he quickly fades himself out of the picture again, without revealing himself to anyone. He holds privacy at such a premium that he often lies to the people he rescues about who he is in order to ensure that his privacy is upheld.

For some reason, Jim is compelled to tell Holly just enough about who he is to intrigue her, and set her on a journey to discover the truth behind the man who is compelled to save virtual strangers with little regard to his own safety. While he manages to elude her at first, Holly's nose for a good story is the catalyst that sets her on a collision course with Jim. She uses her vacation time to track him down and to find out the truth about him, but in the course of her investigations, she loses her desire to be a journalist and finds herself. By doing so, she also discovers true love and the power that it has to heal all wounds no matter how deeply entrenched they are.

Setting

Cold Fire begins in Jim Ironheart's home in Laguna Nagueles, California. Jim's unique life has him traveling a great deal and usually without warning. One such trip is quickly revealed when Jim travels to Portland, Oregon and meets Holly Thorne. Their meeting sets the stage for Holly to fly to California to confront Jim. When she does so, she finds herself following him instead and in an effort to unlock the key to who he really is, she ends up on an airliner with her that is destined to crash and is instrumental in helping him to save more than merely the two he was sent for. The plane crash convinces Holly that her career is over, and she returns to California to finally confront Jim at his home. When she does, they discover they are having the same dream which leads them on a voyage of discovery in the small town of New Svenborg where Jim lived with his grandparents from age ten until college. Clues from this visit and from several locations within this small town lead Holly to Jim's grandfather who is alive and well in Solvang's nursing home called Fair Haven.

The novel is set to a large extent in either Jim's home in California or at his grandfather's property and specifically in the windmill on the property. The town of New



Svenborg holds a great deal of insight allowing Holly to unravel Jim's past and helps her to prepare for a more stable future with him. It also enables Jim to reconcile himself with issues in his childhood that were so traumatic that he created two separate entities in order to cope with them.

Language and Meaning

Cold Fire by Dean Koontz is written in a unique style. It covers a time period in August that is just over two weeks in length from the 12th to the 29th, but in that time period, he allows both of his main characters to explore and resolve a lifetime of issues. Jim Ironheart is a good man who is plagued by the best of intentions. He has vivid premonitions of premature deaths involving total strangers that he is compelled to stop. In the process, he is often put in considerable danger himself and is at odds with a basically God fearing upbringing.

While written in a straight ahead and believable style, Koontz blends two more incredible aspects in such a way that the reader is not questioning the validity of the character. Jim is a modern day superhero who gets his information as a result of psychic talents he was born with. Both of his parents also exhibited similar gifts, but the combination of their strengths in him gave him abilities far beyond their own. None of his gifts are unheard of, although often scoffed or made light of. As such, Koontz introduces these gifts by way of parents who did a stage act involving mental readings allowing their son to practice his gifts publicly without announcing them on a scientific or openly public manner. Their act was spiced with many outrageous winks and lifted eyebrows which left their audience questioning how the 'trick' was done. As an adult, Jim uses these gifts of premonition to benefit the well being of people who are about to die before their time, but again, he avoids the public eye. A childhood trauma has him creating two alternate source for his gifts - the epitome of good and evil that he calls The Friend and The Enemy.

Throughout the book, the reader is left wondering how the information is passed to Jim. At the end, it is revealed that Jim is the source of the power that he uses and the entities created are also a part of his consciousness. The story is well told and well presented.

Structure

Cold Fire by Dean Koontz is written in three parts. Part one - The Hero, The Friend is just over two hundred pages in length and is the longest of the three parts. As is usual with this author, he has chosen a unique way to represent these portions of this novel. Each part is further divided by a specific date range and each date range is then further broken down by a new chapter count. For example, part one begins with five chapters that cover the day of August 12th. The next section of part one is the range of dates between August 20th through 22nd, and is also five chapters in length beginning again with chapter one. As such, part one has two chapters that are number one through five.



Each section also covers specific subject matter. This particular section deals with the introduction of the main two characters, Jim Ironheart and Holly Thorne. It introduces them to each other during a heroic rescue performed by Jim, and sets the stage to reveal the existence of 'The Friend' who guides Jim's movements during his rescues.

Part two - The Windmill is one hundred and thirt- five pages in length and deals entirely with August 27th to 29th. It is eight chapters in length and covers the specific period during which Holly and Jim go to the windmill on his grandfather's farm, and learn how it is significant to Jim's life. It begins by linking the main characters emotionally as a couple after Holly reveals that she is having dreams of a windmill which is significant to Jim. Further discussion between them leads Holly to believe that the answers to many questions will involve a trip to the actual location. Jim agrees.

Part three - The Enemy is the shortest section at just under eighty pages in length. This section covers the balance of August 29th and is only two chapters in length. It deals specifically with the novel's protagonist which turns out to be a manifestation created by Jim in his youth. The section is a revelation that begins just after Holly realizes that The Friend and The Enemy are both entities created by Jim's mind. Realizing that to heal him, she must make him face this fact, she takes him on a journey through the town he spent his life from age ten until college in. It reveals the fact that much of Jim's memory of his past is skewed or just recreated to help his psyche deal with trauma that began at a age when he was simply too young to have coping mechanisms to face any other way. A trip from the pharmacy to the town cemetery, to the park's windmill and then to the library reveal the source of Jim's creations as well as the existence of Jim's grandfather whom until now he has asserted is dead. Taking a trip to the nursing home Henry Ironheart resides in reveals the remaining truths about Jim's childhood and in doing so, unlocks the key to ridding himself of the entities he created as a child.



Quotes

"This isn't a game of twenty questions, you know" (Part 1, pg. 28.)

"Maybe you should know...you brought a sense of the mystical back into the life of a weary priest who had sometimes begun to doubt his calling - but who'll never doubt again" (Part 1, pg. 76.)

"Life... it's like gettin' a blueberry muffin in a coffee shop when what you ordered was the apricot-nut. There aren't any apricots or nuts in it, and you can get tied up in knots just thinkin' about what you're missin', when the smarter thing to do is realize that blueberries have a nice taste too" (Part 1, pg. 81.)

"He said I'd given him what he needed, he didn't want anymore" (Part 1, pg. 118.)

"If you sit there, you're going to die" (Part 1, pg. 147.)

"Snuggle down in my cocoon, be a butterfly soon" (Part 1, pg. 199.)

"If you're having that dream, then you're part of this whether I like it or not" (Part 2, pg. 224.)

"You know, I always had trouble accepting that it was God working through me, it seemed like such a crazy idea, but I lived with it just because there wasn't any better explanation" (Part 2, pg. 256.)

"I feel like we're in a bathysphere, all glass, suspended far, far down in the ocean" (Part 2, pg. 290.)

"To observe, to study, to help mankind" (Part 3, pg. 293.)

"We would like you to dispense with the cumbersome way you answered our questions previously and simply speak directly to us" (Part 3, pg. 307.)

"If allowed to live, each of them will make a major contribution to the betterment of mankind" (Part 3, pg. 309.)



"Because he looks like my father whom I failed to save" (Part Two, pg. 337.)

"The Enemy resents me, and sooner or later it'll kill me" (Part 3, pg. 356.)

"Superman? Why the hell did he waste so much time holding down a job on a newspaper when he could've been doing good?" (Part 3, pg. 420.)



Topics for Discussion

Why is Holly Thorne unlike most reporters? How is her difference a detriment in her profession?

Which of Jim's entities does Holly meet first? Describe the encounter.

Why is Jim tasked with saving certain people? How is his behavior altered as a result of contact with Holly on the plane?

What happens to Holly on the flight that changes her profoundly?

How does Holly convince Jim to talk to her and to take her seriously?

What place holds tremendous significance for Jim?

What is the difference between The Friend and The Enemy? By what method does each announce its presence?

What does Holly discover about the two entities while they are at the windmill? How does this affect Jim?

Why is The Enemy more aggressive as a result of Holly's identification of its origin?

How does Holly help Jim to reconcile the two entities?

What do Jim and Holly discover at the cemetery?

What relevance does the book 'The Black Windmill' have to Jim?

What makes Jim fearful when they go to Fair Haven? Why is that the case?

What does Holly learn from Henry and how does this information bear directly on the The Friend and The Enemy?

What part did Henry play in his estrangement from Jim and why?