

David Boring Study Guide

David Boring by Daniel Clowes

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

David Boring Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Act I.....	4
Act II.....	6
ACT III.....	9
Characters.....	12
Objects/Places.....	16
Themes.....	18
Style.....	20
Quotes.....	22
Topics for Discussion.....	23



Plot Summary

David Boring is a graphic novel by author Daniel Clowes. In this novel, David Boring is a 20 year old living in the city with his best friend, Dot. David narrates his own story as he falls in love, deals with the possibility that the world is coming to an end and tries to get his life back on track when his love leaves him.

As the story unfolds, the readers learn about the many secrets David has. It starts when David is having sex with an actress whom David admits is the sixth woman he's had sex with since moving to the city. David has an obsession with women's butts, so he has a scrapbook of naked women—mostly posing from behind. When his friend, Whitey, comes to the city to visit David, Whitey is killed and David becomes the prime suspect. On the airport bus, on the way to Whitey's funeral, David meets Wanda Kraml.

Wanda pretends to be an innocent young college student. After having unprotected sex with David on their thirteenth date, Wanda disappears taking David's scrapbook with her, but leaving behind the lucky penny necklace David gave her for her graduation. On the same night David finds out Wanda is gone, he is shot by an unidentified person.

When David is released from the hospital, his estranged mother and Dot take him to recover at an island bed and breakfast, Hulligan's Wharf. While staying on the island, David has an affair with his mother's cousin, Dot has an affair with David's married cousin, and two people wind up dead.

When the Hulligan's Wharf owner and David leave the island and wash up on land, they find out that the world hasn't ended after all. David moves on with his life, only to find himself trying to find Wanda again, along with one of Wanda's professor's, Ferdinand Karkes.

By the end of the novel, Dot and David are back at Hulligan's Wharf. They continue to live on the island with Pamela, David's cousin with whom he had an incestuous relationship, and Pamela's baby.



Act I

Act I Summary

David Boring is having sex with a young lady, who is an actress. It seems as if she is pleased with the sex, but David is also getting a sense that she might end the act at any moment and run off to a party filled with B-list actors.

David Jupiter Boring introduces himself as the narrator. He says he's the son of a cartoonist. David was born in 1978 and the story he is telling takes place in 1998. He says since he moved to the city, he has had sex with six women, but was a virgin prior to the move. David's roommate is Dot, a girl about his age.

Dot is looking through David's scrapbook that he created when he was younger. Dot is a friend of David's from high school in his town, after he was home schooled until he was 14. After graduation, Dot and David moved to the city.

Whitey, one of David's friends, comes to the city to see him. At a bar, Whitey picks up a woman and leaves David and Dot behind. When Dot and Whitey get home, David receives a phone call saying Whitey is dead.

When David identifies Whitey's body at the morgue, the cop says they think Whitey was jumped when he left the woman's apartment. David heads to his hometown for the funeral. He's worrying about his mother trying to get him to stay and what he'll say if they ask him to speak at the funeral. While David is on the bus that is taking him to the airport, the driver makes one last stop, when Wanda Kraml enters the bus.

David attends the funeral, which consists of him, Whitey's cousin and step-brother. While killing time between the end of the funeral and the time the bus leaves for the airport, David climbs into an old tree house. He sees a woman walking through the yard and into the house.

It's been 27 days since Whitey died. David has been watching Wanda come and go from the apartment where the airport bus picked her up when they first met. The cops are saying Whitey's death is an act of god. David follows Wanda into a diner and accidentally bumps into her. Three days later, David goes in to Wanda's candy shop and asks how her trip went. Wanda doesn't remember where she knows David from until he reminds her.

David and Wanda go out to eat together. David tells her he works for Datamax as a night guard. David goes back to Wanda's house and she asks him if he ever watched an X-rated movie. She says she had to watch a lot of them for a college paper she had to write. A few days later, Wanda stops by to visit David at work.

A series of sexless and lip-kissing dates follow. One day, when they are in David's room, Wanda finds the scrapbook of naked women that David keeps. A couple of weeks into



dating, David and Wanda are up to light petting, but one day he thinks he hears Wanda say she wants to have sex with him. Finally, one day while lying in bed, David starts groping Wanda and they have sex, which marks their thirteenth date. David says they didn't use any protection.

Walking home one day, David finds a guy harassing Dot, telling her that some woman doesn't want any more of Dot's dyke bullshit.

David makes the lucky penny Whitey gave him into a pendant for a necklace. He gives it to Wanda as a graduation present. Wanda mumbles something about having to go to read a book and that she feels weird. David doesn't hear from Wanda for days. He suffers from depression and headaches. When he goes to her apartment, he finds it empty. She has even left behind her birth control pills and the lucky penny necklace David had given her.

As David is about to unlock the door to his apartment, a man says, "Hey" and then shoots at David.

Act I Analysis

David and his mother seem to have an unhealthy relationship. It appears as if she is overprotective, which is why he was home schooled until 14, and why he couldn't wait to leave the house when he graduated. When David meets Wanda Kraml on the bus to the airport, there is some foreshadowing that their paths will cross again.

David is taken with her beauty and innocence on the ride, which predicts him looking for her again when he returns to the city. Wanda offers David some candy on the ride, saying she gets it free from work, so this indicates that David gleaned the information for the candy shop from the container, so he'll be able to find Wanda again.

The implication is that the tree house was David's when he was a child. The woman walking through the yard to his house must be David's mother.

David is drawn to Wanda for some inexplicable reason. It's unclear if he's just attracted to her physically or if he is looking for more of a meaningful relationship. Wanda seems to have an unusual relationship with sex. She studies sex in college, watches X-rated videos and seems fascinated with David's scrapbook of naked women, but won't engage in sexual activity with David.

David and Wanda having sex without protection foreshadows Wanda getting pregnant. Wanda acting strangely toward David and saying she feels weird indicates that she's having pregnancy symptoms and she thinks she's pregnant.



Act II

Act II Summary

When David wakes up, he is in the hospital. Dot and his mother are asking him if he remembers who shot him. When he is released from the hospital, Dot and David's mom take him to Hulligan's Wharf, which is an island, to rest. When they check into the estate, the owner Mr. Hulligan says Mrs. Boring's cousin, Mrs. Capon, her daughter Iris and Iris's husband have already checked in.

On the island, there is no communication with the mainland. Iris turns out to be 16, with a husband who is just as young as she is. In the middle of the night, there is a thunderstorm and Iris tells her husband, Man, that she feels like something bad is going to happen.

David says his mother came to the hospital as soon as she heard he was shot. His mother is back in control of his life again, but this time he doesn't have the energy to fight it. He wonders if it is Wanda who shot him.

Mrs. Boring tells her cousin, Helen, to get Mr. Hulligan because she sees a boat approaching the island. The visitor turns out to be their Uncle August, telling both women that terrorists have launch germ warfare on them.

Every night, David reads a couple panels of one of his father's comic books. He wonders if his father was able to survive the bombs. David hasn't seen his dad since he left him and his mom in 1980.

After dinner, Uncle August, David and Man are talking about the war. Uncle August mentions it being the end of the world. Man says that he doesn't think it's the end of the world. Man, Iris and Mrs. Capon are Canadians, so he mentions that Canada doesn't have any enemies.

Mrs. Capon offers to change David's bandages. She mentions that David's mother should change his bandages every day. Later, David is remembering back to a summer he spent on the island with his cousin Pamela and her family. David had some incestuous acts with Pamela, although they never had sexual intercourse. When he returns to his room, he finds Helen Capon there. She takes off her shorts and she and David have sex.

The following day, Mrs. Capon is missing and so is one of the boats from the island. When Mrs. Boring looks through a scope, she sees a capsized boat. David doesn't remember hearing or seeing her leave the room last night, so he wonders when she wandered off. He even questions himself as to whether he might be involved in her disappearance.



They find Uncle August dead in his bed. They think he has died from the poisons of the bomb, or from natural causes. Dot and Iris become friends. Dot consoles Iris when she is sad over marrying Man. Iris confesses her love for Dot. Mrs. Boring sees the two girls embracing in the boat. Mrs. Boring tells David he needs to speak with Dot because her interactions with Iris are disrespectful to Man.

When David talks to Dot, she confesses that she has never loved someone as much as she loves Iris. Dot drinks something from the nightstand that she says tastes awful. Later, Man sneaks into Dot's room and takes her out in the boat to dump her in the water.

Dot wakes up when she hits the water and swims back to the island. She walks into David's room dripping wet and he asks if she's been swimming. She says she'll see him again someday and leaves. She goes into Man and Iris's room with a pipe, strikes Man over the head, ties him up and leaves with Iris.

When David's mother talks to David, David suggests to her that Man probably killed Mrs. Capon because he tried to kill Dot. Mrs. Boring finds Mr. Boring's comic book and tears it up.

While eating, Man confronts David about calling him a murderer. Man says everyone knows David was sleeping with Mrs. Capon. They get into a physical altercation. Mr. Hulligan breaks up the fight and starts to struggle with Man.

David plans to steal the boat in the middle of the night. When he goes to the boat, it's gone. He finds out from Mr. Hulligan that Man and Mrs. Boring took off with the boat and what was left of the cereal. David and Mr. Hulligan make a raft to get them to the mainland.

After a bad storm, David and Mr. Hulligan wash up on land. A couple of women rescue them. The women say that there was an attack, but that the military fought them off in a few days. David boards the train and leaves.

Act II Analysis

The lack of communication on the island with the mainland foreshadows something happening while they are at Hulligan's Wharf, such as a murder or an attack. Since someone shot David, it could be that the person follows him to the island and terrorizes him and the other guests.

Mrs. Capon suggesting that David's mother doesn't change his bandages every day foreshadows David getting an infection. They don't find Mrs. Capon's body, so she might be faking her disappearance. If Uncle August died of poisoning, he might have spread it to the rest of them while he was interacting with them on the island.

Man trying to kill Dot suggests that this is how Mrs. Capon went missing too. Man and Mrs. Capon didn't get along so Man got rid of her. Now, that Dot is trying to creep in on

Man's territory, he tries to get rid of her too. Mrs. Boring tells David that she received a letter several years ago saying his father is dead.



ACT III

ACT III Summary

On August 3, 1999, it's 11 months after David returned to the city. He has a new apartment, job and girlfriend. David still doesn't talk to his mom. Dot and Iris live together 60 miles from David. He tries to locate for Wanda for about a month and then gives up. He has been living with Naomi for three months, becomes a vegetarian and hardly thinks about Wanda anymore.

David decides to write a screenplay. He has verified that his father is dead, but David is still obsessed with his father's comic, the Yellow Streak. David is also having dreams again, where an eerie boy appears.

He finds Naomi reading a book one day and asks what she has because he recognizes a photo from his scrapbook. Naomi says it's a book where the author is talking about sexual deviants. David hunts down Wanda's old professor, Ferdinand Karkes, who is the author of the article using David's picture from his scrapbook.

The professor says that Wanda gave him David's scrapbook. He had an affair with Wanda too, but told his wife of his indiscretion when Wanda went away. The professor says he is sorry for his actions, indicating that he is the one who shot David.

David and the professor meet several times after this. At one of the meetings, Karkes gives David a video of Wanda. David can't help but notice that Wanda isn't acting like the Wanda he knew in the video. Eventually, Karkes and David meet with a private investigator. The investigator finds Wanda's sister, Judy, and David goes to see her.

Judy tells David that Wanda has always attracted men, done what she had to get them to love her and then left them. Later, while they are having sex, Naomi tells David that their relationship isn't work. David meets with Karkes again about a religious book David saw in the video and Karkes finds out she stole from the campus library.

Two fisherman find Mrs. Capon's dead body. The investigating officer gives Iris the necklace Mrs. Capon was wearing, which is the lucky penny one David had made for Wanda. Mrs. Boring and Man are at their house when there is a knock on the door. It's the investigator, Agent Roy Smith, asking to speak to Manfred Roland. Jr.

Naomi packs her bags and leaves to spend two months in Norway. David calls Judy but she says she can't talk right now because her husband is home. David goes to Judy's house. She insists that he has to leave right now and they kiss. Since David has been seeing Judy, the eerie boy dreams have stopped.

Judy and David continue their affair. Iris leaves Dot for the agent investigating her mom's murder. The two cops, the one for Mrs. Capon's case and the one for Whitey's case, talk. The cop for Whitey's case says he's sure David killed Whitey.



Judy's husband finds out about the affair. He shows up swinging a baseball bat at David's house. Judy breaks it off with David by phone and Dot shows David a gun she owns. She jokingly says she's going to use it to kill Judy and her husband.

David makes a living by selling Naomi's rare books. He works on his script, trying to turn his father's comic strip into something. On Christmas, Karkes calls David in the middle of the night to say he's found Wanda. Wanda is living in a "group home" of the followers of the religious book she used to have on her nightstand and the one from the video.

David and Karkes part ways, but both say they are going to get Wanda back. When David gets home, Dot says the police have been in the house planting evidence, such as Whitey's hat under the kitchen sink.

On his way to meet Judy to try to convince her to run away with him, Wanda calls to tell David goodbye. David gives Judy the penny on a chain and asks her to run away with him. She refuses and David calls to tell Dot he's going to jump off a bridge. Dot tells David she has a plan and they meet at a Vaudeville show. The girl in the Vaudeville show turns out to be the actress with whom David was having sex at the start of the novel.

Judy's husband, Paul, jumps out of the audience, onto the stage and starts fighting with David. The producers kick David out of the show. David climbs on the ledge of the bridge as the agents come up to him with their weapons drawn. Dot shoots both agents and a bullet from the agent's gun grazes David's head.

Dot gets them into a boat and makes a harrowing journey for 15 hours. She returns them to Hulligan's Wharf. When they arrive, they find another boat tied up to the dock, so Dot loads her gun. They find David's cousin, Pamela, with a baby. Pamela says something about them expecting the terrorists to attack again on New Year's, which is today. She also mentions that she doesn't know who the father of her baby is.

David finds one of his father's comic strips in one of the rooms. Pamela and Dot are talking across the room where David can't hear what they are saying. Four months later, they are still living on the island. They are enjoying the moments they can in case it is the end of the world.

ACT III Analysis

It seems as if Wanda used David. She used him as a study for her college class on sexuality. Once she left, taking David's scrapbook of naked women with her, she used the scrapbook and her time with David for her study.

It seems as if Wanda had been putting on an act with David the entire time she was with him. David is becoming so absorbed with the Wanda issue again that he is ignoring Naomi and his life with her. This indicates that Naomi is going to leave him.

Apparently, David and Judy have been having a secret affair.

It seems as if Dot might be responsible for killing Whitey. Wanda calling to tell David goodbye when he's on his way to meet Judy foreshadows Judy killing David.

The secret conversation between Pamela and Dot infers that Dot is the one who has been doing all of the killing. It seems as if she's been killing everyone because she's in love with David. This is ironic since Dot is a lesbian.



Characters

David Boring

David Boring is the main character and narrator of the novel. He is 20 years old when the novel opens. He turns 21 and the novel unfolds. He grew up in Merryvale Township, raised by a single mother after his father left when David was very young.

David's father was a comic strip creator, so David has managed to save a few of his comic strips over the years. David's mother has always been very overprotective of David, so she home schooled him until he was 14. At 14, he had started going to public school, where he met Whitey.

David spends his senior year at a school for gifted kids. This is where he and Dot meet and became friends. Dot and David used to make super-8 movies together. David's obsessions with women and their bodies also had him create a scrapbook of naked women over the years. After high school, David moves to the city to get away from his mother. He lives with Dot.

Dot

Dot is the same age as David, so she is 20 or 21 as the novel unfolds. Dot is a lesbian and when the novel first opens, she is involved with a woman by the name of Ginger. Dot and David are best friends and roommates, so they tell each other everything and seem to talk openly about almost any topic.

When Dot accompanies David and his mother to Hulligan's Wharf, she meets David's married 16-year-old cousin, Iris. Dot starts an affair with Iris that leads to Iris's husband trying to kill Dot. After Iris and Dot break up, Dot suddenly shows David a gun—saying she is going to use it to kill Judy, Wanda's sister with whom David is having an affair, and her husband.

By the end of the novel, Dot implies to David's cousin, Pamela, that Dot is in love with David. Pamela makes a statement about Dot doing what she has to do to protect a good man—referring to David.

Whitey

Whitey is David's friend. David and Whitey meet when David starts going to public school back in Merryvale Township. At the beginning of the novel, Whitey comes to visit David in the city. While he's there, Whitey picks up a woman in a bar and goes home with her. As he is leaving this woman's apartment, Whitey is killed.



Mrs. Boring

Mrs. Boring is David's mother. She seems very overprotective of David, which ultimately drives a wedge between them and sends David away. When David is shot, Mrs. Boring goes to the hospital right away and never leaves his side thereafter. While at Hulligan's Wharf, Mrs. Boring starts an affair with Iris's husband, Manfred. They escape the island together and live together when they get back to the mainland.

Mr. Boring

Mr. Boring is David's father. He is an elusive character in the novel because David doesn't know much about him. Mr. Boring writes comic strips, specifically one called the Yellow Streak. Since Mr. Boring had left when David was a baby, David has only been able to save a few of his father's comics from destruction by his mother. Later in the novel, Mrs. Boring admits that Mr. Boring is dead. David is able to confirm his father's death when he returns from Hulligan's Wharf to the mainland.

Wanda Kraml

Wanda Kraml is a college student. David meets Wanda on an airport bus when he is on his way to Whitey's funeral. Wanda works at a local candy shop. When David returns from his trip, he follows Wanda and eventually the two start a relationship. After having sex for the first and only time, Wanda disappears.

According to Wanda's sister, Judy, Wanda has always been the type to attract a man, use him for what she could get out of him and then leave him.

David finds out later that Wanda had also been having an affair with her professor, Ferdinand Karkes. Wanda ends up joining a cult and living in a group home, which is where a private investigator hired by David and Karkes finds her. Wanda rekindles her affair with Karkes.

Mrs. Capon

Mrs. Capon is Mrs. Boring's cousin. Mrs. Capon joins David, his mother and Dot at Hulligan's Wharf. She is Canadian. She has one daughter, Iris, who is 16. Mrs. Capon takes a special interest in David, such as changing his bandages.

One night, Mrs. Capon seduces David and puts the lucky penny necklace David had made for Wanda around her neck. At some point that same night, Mrs. Capon ends up missing and they only find the capsized boat that belongs to the island. Later in the novel, two fishermen pull Mrs. Capon's dead body out of the water and an investigation into her murder ensues.



Iris

Iris is David's 16-year-old cousin. She is married to Manfred and at Hulligan's Wharf with everyone else. Iris seems very unhappy with Manfred. When Iris starts confiding in Dot about her problems, the two start a lesbian affair. Iris and Dot live together after returning to the mainland, but break up shortly after Mrs. Capon's body is recovered.

Manfred

Manfred is Iris's 16-year-old husband. He goes by the nickname, Man, which is somewhat ironic since he is still a teenager. When Mrs. Capon goes missing and Manfred tries to kill Dot for her relationship with Iris, it implies that Man is responsible for Mrs. Capon's death too. Man ends up having an affair with Mrs. Boring and they return to the mainland and live together. When Mrs. Capon's body is found, the police focus on Man as the prime suspect.

Mr. Hulligan

Mr. Hulligan is the owner of Hulligan's Wharf. He stocks volume supplies of food and other supplies on the island. He goes to the mainland a couple times a week to restock supplies. When Uncle August arrives telling them that the world is ending, Mr. Hulligan suspends his trips to the mainland. Mr. Hulligan breaks up the fight that occurs between Man and David, and he also builds a raft with David to escape Hulligan's Wharf after Man and Mrs. Boring escape with the island's only boat.

Uncle August

Uncle August is Mrs. Boring and Mrs. Capon's uncle. He arrives at Hulligan's Wharf to tell them that the terrorists have launched a germ warfare attack. He is in his 70s. Uncle August dies in his sleep while on the island.

Naomi

Naomi is the woman with whom David has a relationship and lives when he returns to the city. She is constantly worrying that the world is coming to an end. After she realizes that David is preoccupied with his own life, rather than making a life with her, she goes abroad for a few months.

Judy

Judy is Wanda's older sister. The private investigator finds Judy and David starts visiting Judy. An affair blossoms between Judy and David. After Judy's husband finds out about



the affair, Judy breaks it off with David. David is so taken with Judy that he continues to pursue her.

Ferdinand Karkes

Ferdinand Karkes is Wanda's professor for her sexual identity class. It turns out that Ferdinand publishes an article about sexual deviants, which includes some of the pictures from David's scrapbook. Wanda gave Karkes the information about David and David's scrapbook because Wanda was having an affair with Karkes. Karkes also implies to David that he is the one who shot David.

When Karkes's wife finds out, Wanda is already gone. Karkes rekindles his relationship with Wanda when the private investigator finds Wanda again.



Objects/Places

City

The city is where David moves after leaving his home town. He never indicates which city it is. The author implies that it is New York City, but this is never explicitly said in the novel. The city is the primary setting for the majority of the novel.

Merryvale Township

Merryvale Township is where Mrs. Boring lives and where David Boring was raised. Again, the author never states where this township is located. When Whitey dies, David returns to Merryvale Township for Whitey's funeral.

Lucky Penny

When Whitey comes to visit David in the city, he brings his lucky penny with him. He gives it to David as a gift. Whitey says that his father gave him the lucky penny and it has brought him luck throughout his life.

Lucky Penny Necklace

David turns Whitey's lucky penny into a lucky penny necklace for Wanda. David gives Wanda the necklace as a graduation present. When Wanda leaves the city, she leaves the necklace behind in her apartment, so David gets it back. Mrs. Capon is wearing the necklace, which she had retrieved from David's room, when she goes missing. Dot returns the necklace to David after Mrs. Capon's body is found wearing the necklace.

Hulligan's Wharf

Hulligan's Wharf is a remote island with a bed and breakfast on it. While David is recovering from being shot, Mrs. Boring and Dot take David there to recuperate. The families are stuck on the island when they think terrorists are attacking the mainland with germ warfare. Eventually everyone leaves the island, but Dot and David return to living at Hulligan's Wharf with David's cousin Pamela and Pamela's baby at the end of the novel.

Gun

Dot shows David a gun after Judy's husband finds out about the affair David is having with Judy. Dot says she's going to use the gun to kill Judy and her husband. Eventually,



Dot uses the gun to shoot the two police officers who are investigating Whitey and Mrs. Capon's murders, so that she and David can escape back to Hulligan's Wharf.

Scrapbook

During David's adolescence, he kept a scrapbook of pictures of naked women. Wanda finds the scrapbook when she and David are dating and asks if she can keep it. Wanda ends up turning the scrapbook over to Ferdinand Karkes, who uses some of the scrapbook for his article in a book.

Wanda's Book

Wanda steals a religious book from the college library. It is a book that David remembers her keeping on her nightstand. David is reminded of the book when he sees it again in a video of Wanda that Karkes gives to David. It is the book that leads the private investigator to Wanda, who is living in a group home run by the author of the book.

Comic Strips

David is constantly reading his father's comic strips looking for clues as to whom his father is in the comic strips. The copies of his father's comic strips that David has, he keeps in secret because his mother would be angry if she knew he had them.

Home Movies

After they meet in high school, Dot and David create home movies, super-8s. They often watch the home movies together, when the projector is working. David aspires to be a filmmaker, but by the end of the novel still has not realized his dream.



Themes

Relationships

One of the primary themes running through the novel is relationships. The novel reveals that even the individuals who make up a family have different relationships among the family members. For example, David feels a sense of closeness to a father that he never really knew. At the same time, he is estranged from his mother.

Friendship is another type of relationship the novel tackles. Dot and David are best friends and roommates. They share everything with each other and often comfort each other in their times of need. It is the close relationship David and Dot have that lands them in some of the trouble they end up in as the novel unfolds. Whitey is one of the only other friends David has. Whitey winds up dead and David ends up being one of the prime suspects.

Romantic relationships are also tackled in the novel. David falls in love with Wanda, but it turns out that Wanda was just using David. The same holds true for the relationship Wanda has with her professor. Dot too experiences a few lesbian relationships throughout the novel. One is prior to David's shooting. Going with David to Hulligan's Wharf causes Dot to fall in love with David's married cousin, Iris. Finally, it seems that the person Dot has been in love with all along is David.

Coming of Age

One of the primary themes that run throughout the novel is growing up and coming of age, even against adversity, such as being shot, thinking the world is ending and being the prime suspect in two murder investigations. David leads a very sheltered life when he is growing up. It is not until he graduates from high school and moves to the city that he truly begins to experience rites of passage in his life. For example, before moving to the city, he had never been in a sexual or romantic situation with a woman. Since moving to the city, he has lost his virginity and has been involved with several women.

David also faces the rite of passage of having his first girlfriend. Along with having his first girlfriend, David experiences his first heartbreak. David faces the situation that Wanda has left him, left the city, and he doesn't know where she is or what has happened to her. He especially struggles with Wanda's whereabouts when he finds out that Wanda had had an affair with her college professor and that the professor is responsible for shooting David.

Family

Family is the central theme throughout the entire novel. In this novel, it is not always biological family, but the people whom you consider to be your family around whom the



theme revolves. Even though David does not have a close relationship with his mom, she rushes to his side when he is shot and continuously tries to stay in contact with David. Dot and David are like a surrogate family to each other. By the end of the novel, David, Dot, Pamela and Pamela's baby are a family living together on Hulligan's Wharf.

While every family has their trials and tribulations, David's family has its own family dynamics that are the same and that are different from those of other families. In the end though, they are a family and they will get through it together, one way or the other.

Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the first person point of view. The narrator of the novel is also the main character of the novel, David Boring. The narrator is telling the story as it unfolds, but he also switches back to some past events in his life to provide the reader with some perspective and background information.

The point of view of this novel is an intimate point of view that allows a reader to connect closely with the main character, who also happens to be the narrator of the story. The point of view also allows the author to inject his own opinions into the narration and to expand on the events taking place without having to move out of character or interrupt the flow of the narration. For these reasons, the point of view works well with this novel and the author's writing style.

Setting

The novel is set primarily in the city. The author never states the city, but indicates it might be New York City. The novel is set in 1998. The setting of this novel is important because it is the mysterious occurrences in the city that set the scene for the entire plot of the novel. The second primary setting is a remote island, known as Hulligan's Wharf.

The setting of this novel works well with the plot. At first, the reader is not aware of all of the family secrets that exist and that the world might be coming to an end. However, as events unfold, one secret after the next is either explained or inferred.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is modern. The language of the novel is not formal and is from 1998. The language is educated, strong and descriptive enough that it creates a flow that leaves the reader impressed with the words as much as the plot when the novel ends.

The language of the novel is appropriate to the plot because it is accurate to the characters in the novel and the education level of the writer. The novelist is not enamored of his own words, but is descriptive enough that the reader finds enjoyment in the words as well as the plot. The language is not difficult to understand, however, and everything is clear in context. The language of the novel fits well with the plot of the novel.

Structure

The novel consists of three acts. Each act is approximately 40 pages long. The chapters tell the story both in exposition, dialogue and pictures. The author is the narrator and main character of the book, so it seems as if he is injecting his own voice throughout the novel—as if he has become David. This allows the author to provide his own opinions of the events surrounding the setting of the novel, as well as the actions taking place within the plot, but from the eyes and words of David.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot follows the various relationships between the characters in the novel. The subplots involve coming of age and the trials and tribulations of the family.



Quotes

"That's my lucky penny...I've had that with me ever since my father died...I know it probably doesn't mean much to you, but I—anyway, i hope it brings you luck—"
Act I, p. 5

"It's germ warfare, they say...The air is filled with poison!"
Act II, p. 44

"When you find a good man, you have to do whatever you can to protect him."
Act III, p. 115



Topics for Discussion

Who is David? Why does he feel like he is an outsider in his own family? What does David recall about his childhood? What is David's biggest demon that haunts him throughout his life? Why is this important? How does it change his life?

Discuss the relationship between David and Wanda. Are they really in love? Is there love, guilt or a sense of obligation in their relationship? How does David feel about Wanda? How does Wanda feel about David? Why does David think Wanda leaves town without telling him? What does he do about it?

What happens to David's father? How does this affect David? How does Mrs. Boring react emotionally to his leaving? Why is David obsessed with his father's comic strips? Does anyone ever really determine what happens to Mr. Boring?

Who is Dot? Why does she agree to help David in his recovery after David is shot? Does there seem to be a strain in the relationship between David and Dot at times? What does David do when Dot shows him her gun? How does David feel about Dot? How does Dot feel about David? How does the reader know this?

Who is Mrs. Boring? Why does she continuously try to stay in contact with David throughout the novel? Why do you think Mrs. Boring becomes involved with Manfred? What happens to Mrs. Boring when the police haul Manfred in for questioning in Mrs. Capon's death?

Discuss the culture of Hulligan's Wharf. What impact does the culture have on the characters of the novel? How does it motivate them or hold them back? Why is the culture an issue to the characters? Does the culture have anything to do with the way that relationships develop and evolve between the people on the island?

Who do you think is responsible for Whitey's death? Do you think it is a coincidence that David and Dot know two people that are murdered in such a short period of time? Do you think one of them is Whitey's murderer? Do you think either of them had anything to do with Mrs. Capon's death? If not, who is responsible for her death?