

The Descent: A Novel Study Guide

The Descent: A Novel by Jeff Long (writer)

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



Contents

The Descent: A Novel Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Book 1, Discovery: Chapters 1-4.....	5
Book 1, Discovery: Chapters 5-7.....	8
Book 2, Inquisition: Chapters 8-11.....	10
Book 2, Inquisition: Chapters 12-15.....	13
Book 2, Inquisition: Chapters 16-20.....	15
Book 3, Grace: Chapters 21-24.....	18
Book 3, Grace: Chapters 25-28.....	20
Characters.....	22
Objects/Places.....	26
Themes.....	29
Style.....	31
Quotes.....	33
Topics for Discussion.....	35



Plot Summary

The Descent is a novel by former journalist Jeff Long. In this novel, Long tells the story of a newly discovered race of people, the hadals, who live in the depths of the earth. Humans discover these people in a series of unrelated events and find themselves making forages into the earth to rid the world of these savages and claim a new, expansive land for themselves. The Descent is a novel of mystery and intrigue, but also a novel that explores some of the darker aspects of history and human nature in a refreshing take on an old story.

Ike Crockett takes a group of mountain climbers into a cave when they get lost shortly before a snow storm. After days of being trapped in the cave by the falling snow, one of the climbers disappears. Ike divides his group, sending his partner and lover, Kora, one direction with the other climbers, and goes the other alone. After a set amount of time, Ike turns back to meet up with Kora and her group only to discover that she has not returned. Ike goes in search of Kora and finds that the group has been assaulted by some unknown assailant and Kora has been kidnapped.

A few years later, Major Elias Branch is stationed in Bosnia when it appears that locals are attempting to destroy the recently excavated remains of war victims. Branch volunteers to fly his helicopter over the excavation to get proof of the vandalism. However, when Branch attempts to get low enough to see the area, his helicopter's engines are shut down due to high levels of nitrogen. On the ground, Branch and his navigator are attacked by an unknown group of people.

After witnessing odd physical changes in Branch after his experiences in Bosnia and his insistence that he was attacked by anemic monsters, the military gives him a small unit of men to take into the bowels of the earth. Branch's group brings back a picture of a footprint that seems to confirm what Branch has been claiming since his attack in Bosnia. This begins a worldwide exodus into the bowels of the earth. These voyages lead to the deaths of over forty thousand American troops and thousands of troops from all over the world when they are attacked by an unknown race of people. These people are given the name hadals. For several years, the world enters into a war with the hadals, finally declaring victory when sightings of hadals reduce to none.

A group of intellectuals, headed by Jesuit priest named Thomas, begin to investigate the possibility that the hadals are led by a single entity who has been known as the devil by people throughout the world for centuries. In order to further their investigation, the group sends Ali, a struggling nun, into the underworld as part of an expedition funded by the Helios Corporation. Helios plans to make a claim on thousands of miles of land underneath the Pacific Ocean with this expedition. The expedition is headed by Montgomery Shoa, the son of former presidential candidate and head of Helios Corporation, C.C. Cooper. The lead scout is Ike Crockett, a human who only a few years before was rescued after eleven years as a captive of the hadals.



The expedition goes undeterred for months despite the possibilities of disaster that await the group hundreds of miles under the Pacific Ocean. However, things begin to go terribly wrong when Shoat and the mercenaries hired to protect the group decide to go off on their own after the entire group becomes the target of a group of hadals after the militants kill all their women and children. Ike tries to reassure the remaining group, made up of scientists and intellectuals, but more than half of them choose to go back the way they have come. This group all come to their deaths. Ike's group survives for weeks, but suffers from starvation.

As Ike's group takes refuge in what appears to be an old trading center, the mercenaries return. The mercenaries take the remaining scientists hostage and begin to plot their way out of the bowels of the earth. One day the hadals attack, killing most of the mercenaries and remaining scientists. Ali, the nun, is taken hostage. Ike follows Ali to the center of the hadal world and rescues her, managing to escape the underworld despite the dangers and the release of a poison gas that kills the remaining life under the earth.



Book 1, Discovery: Chapters 1-4

Book 1, Discovery: Chapters 1-4 Summary

This novel is the fourth book by journalist and historian Jeff Long.

In Chapter 1, Ike Crockett is a mountaineer who owns a company that takes people up some of the most famous mountains in the world. Ike and his partner/lover, Kora, are currently on an expedition that was supposed to circumvent some of the historical and religious sights in the Himalayas, but somehow Ike has gotten lost. To add to their problems, a snow storm is coming. Ike takes the entire group into a small cave he has found quite by accident. Once inside, the group discovers the body of an Englishman that has been covered in writings and tattoos carved into his skin. This distracts the group for a time. However, after several days, one of the group has disappeared. Due to the fact that the man could not have left through the main entrance due to the snow packing it, Ike decides he must have moved deeper into the mountain. Ike divides the group in two, sending Kora and the rest of the group one direction, going in the other direction alone. Ike searches for several hours and then turns around to meet up with Kora and her group. However, Kora has not returned at the appointed time.

Ike goes down the tunnel in which Kora and her group left. After several hours of searching, the dead bodies of the rest of the group minus Kora. Ike can hear Kora singing an old religious hymn. Before he can find Kora, however, Ike senses the attacker coming toward him. Ike listens as the attacker drags Kora through the tunnel. In shock, Ike realizes the attacker is the reanimated body they had seen in the cave.

In Chapter 2, Ali is a nun who has been living in South Africa with a village of natives suffering the effects of leprosy. After a year in this village, Ali has learned that she is being transferred again. While living among these South African people, Ali has learned a great deal about them, including their languages and their stories of people living in the bowels of the earth.

In Chapter 3, Major Elias Branch is stationed at Camp Molly in Bosnia as the war comes to an end. Living on the base for protection is a group of scientists who have come to excavate the bodies of war victims tortured and killed by Serbs. One night Branch watches as the group of scientists discuss and watch a release of large amounts of nitrogen gas over one of their excavation areas. The scientists believe the cause of this release of gas is Serbs come back to vandalize the bodies of their victims. They need proof, however. Branch volunteers to fly his helicopter over the area to get this proof.

As Branch flies over the area, the team back at Camp Molly identifies movement on the ground. Branch attempts to fly closer, but the high concentration of gas causes his engines to fail. Branch crashes. On the ground, Branch and his navigator are attacked by some unknown group seconds before two other helicopters who accompanied Branch to the area open fire.



In Chapter 4, De l'Orme, a blind scientist and former Jesuit priest is having dinner with his lover in Java when a guest arrives. Thomas is also a Jesuit priest, an old friend of de l'Orme's, who has come see an excavation that de l'Orme has been working on that is about to be shut down. When de l'Orme and his lover take Thomas to the site, they discover that the artifacts have been disturbed and carved face completely destroyed.

Book 1, Discovery: Chapters 1-4 Analysis

These first chapters of the novel introduce three of the main characters and the situations that will propel the plot for these characters. In the first chapter, the reader meets Ike, a mountaineer who finds himself in the bowels of a mountain in a situation that goes against everything that makes him comfortable. Ike is in a relationship with Kora, a fellow mountaineer, who has recently told him that she no longer wants to be a part of the mountaineering company they have been running together. Kora appears to want a more conventional lifestyle, something that has caught Ike by surprise and causes him some grief. At the end of the chapter, Kora is taken from Ike by a man Ike had thought had been dead for a long time, a corpse he has named Isaac. This man, a British air force pilot, turns out to be a captive of some dark force that is yet unexplained at this point in the plot. The chapter ends on a cliff hanger, leaving the reader unclear as to what might happen to Ike and to Kora as the plot continues to develop.

In the second chapter, the reader meets Ali, a kind young woman who has been living in South Africa as part of an assignment given to her by the Catholic Church as her status as a nun. Ali is a linguist who has studied the language of these people and learned a great deal about them, including their legends of the Older than Old, a person who lives in the bowels of the earth and to whom the natives offer sacrifices to. This information may seem random at this point in the novel, but the reader will learn as the plot develops that this information is central to the main themes of the novel. At the same time, the reader has met Ali, a kind young woman who is highly intelligent and compassionate, a character who is easy for the reader to connect with and care about.

In the third chapter, the reader meets Elias Branch. Elias is a strong, military man who is the epitome of toughness. However, in this chapter Branch comes across something that even he cannot explain and that frightens him beyond reason. This seems to be connected to the man Ike faces in the first chapter, developing a connection between the two that begins to reveal to the reader the creatures that are instrumental to the main themes of the novel.

Chapter four introduces the reader to both Thomas, the Jesuit priest, and de l'Orme, a former priest and a scholar. Thomas is a pious man who had deep beliefs in God. As a Jesuit priest, Thomas is a man of great beliefs and a man who lives his life with strict rules to conduct and religion. Thomas is part of one of the oldest and most restricted orders of the Catholic Church. Thomas is also a scholar who has a deep interest in the history of our world, including archeology and a science where it pertains to religion. de l'Orme is much the same as Thomas, with the exception that his sexual orientation makes him something of an outcast in the Jesuit religion and forced his resignation from



the priesthood. These two men are good friends and work together where they can to prove their theories about God and the devil. This effort brings these two men together and creates a relationship that will draw these men together to cooperate together as the novel continues to develop.



Book 1, Discovery: Chapters 5-7

Book 1, Discovery: Chapters 5-7 Summary

In Chapter 5, after his experiences in Bosnia, Branch has had a long recovery. During his recovery, Branch repeatedly described the people who confronted him and his navigator while they were on the ground as monsters, pale, super strong, and showing odd growths. No one believes Branch, but they do not know what to do with him so they give him a small unit of men and allow him to return to Bosnia. Branch returns to the scene of his crash and begins making short trips into the caves around the area. After a few months, Branch and his team return from one of their trips underground with a picture of a footprint that seems to confirm what Branch has been saying.

Over the next few months hundreds of troops from all over the world begin making trips into the earth. Over time, these expeditions go deeper and deeper into the earth. Then one day thousands of troops disappear only to be found slaughtered. When the word gets out, the United States declares war on what they are calling hadals, the race of people who live inside the earth. Months into the war, Branch and his unit set up an ambush for a group of hadals only to find that one of them is human. It is Ike Crockett.

In Chapter 6, three years later, Ike is a part of the military fight against the hadals. Most of the hadals appear to have disappeared and the war has been declared over. Ike is in trouble with the military leaders for desertion under fire. Branch begs him to go to Washington D.C. to attend his court martial so that he might ask for leniency. When Ike arrives at the appointed time, he is confronted by Sandwell, a military officer who tells Ike that he has already been convicted and faces time in military prison simply because humans are afraid of him, a man who is both human and hadal. Sandwell advises Ike to disappear, giving him the name of a man who will take him into the bowels of the earth on an expedition that will keep him off the radar. Ike agrees, believing Sandwell was sent by Branch.

In Chapter 7, Ali is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art where she meets up with her adopted mother, Senator Cordelia January, Thomas, de l'Orme, and several others. This group of people takes Ali to a secret meeting of a group that calls themselves the Beowulf Circle. This group has been brought together by Thomas and consists of multiple Nobel Peace Prize winners, scientist, an astronaut, and scholars. The purpose of the group is to prove that the devil exists. As a part of this, the group asks Ali to join an expedition bank rolled by the Helios Corporation that will go into the bowels of the earth.

Book 1, Discovery: Chapters 5-7 Analysis

Branch becomes the center of a search for the creatures that both attacked him and his navigator as well as Ike Crockett and his group of mountaineers earlier in the novel.



Branch, who has suffered terrible burns and other odd physical manifestations after his helicopter crash, has told stories of terrible creatures who came from the bowels of the earth to attack him and his navigator. Although no one believes these stories, they give Branch the means to search for them himself. When Branch finds proof, a huge number of expeditions into the earth begin, soon coming to a tragic conclusion. This surprise turn in the plot creates a situation in which thousands of military troops are slaughtered by this unknown enemy, causing panic in the world.

The author describes in these chapters of the book the discovery of a new race of people living under the earth that scientist are not even sure are human, but some deviation of the human race. As humans normally will do, the humans in this book immediately declare war on and begin to destroy what they do not understand. In three years the war appears to be over as the hadals, as this new race of people are being called, appear to have disappeared.

Rescued by Branch is Ike Crockett, the mountaineer from the first chapter of the book who has somehow become a hostage of the hadals. The author never fully explains how Ike was captured, though it is implied that he was taken at the same time his lover, Kora, was dragged off by the hadal/human Ike nicknamed Isaac. Ike is now neither human nor hadal, but something in the middle. This causes Ike a great deal of trouble, both with the humans who must decide his fate after he disappeared during a military operation in the bowels of the earth and with himself as he struggles with a dislike of the hadals, but a respect for their way of life. In this situation, Ike finds himself shunned and left with few alternatives when he is faced with jail time. Therefore, Ike finds himself forced into joining an unknown expedition.

In chapter 7, the reader learns more about Thomas and de l'Orme. Thomas and de l'Orme are part of a group of intellectuals formed by Thomas with the purpose of discovering if the devil is a real person who has been the leader of the hadal people for thousands of years. To this end, the group asks Ali, the kindly nun from chapter 2, to join an expedition going underground so that she might learn some of the hadal language and learn to decipher their history. This sets up a situation in which Ali will be going underground with a group of scientist to face unknown dangers. Although the military thinks the hadal are extinct, the reader suspects this is not completely true and worries for Ali's safety.



Book 2, Inquisition: Chapters 8-11

Book 2, Inquisition: Chapters 8-11 Summary

In Chapter 8, Ali is taken to the Galapagos Islands where Helios Corporation has set up a way station that contains multiple elevators that take passengers into the depths of the earth under the Pacific Ocean. Ali is nervous on the trip down, but an orange given to her by Ike helps her focus and keep calm.

Incident at Piedras Negras. Osprey is a scientist who follows the migration patterns of monarch butterflies. As Osprey collects a few of the butterflies, he falls into a sinkhole. Attempting to find a way out, Osprey crawls through a narrow tunnel and comes to a larger tunnel. In this tunnel are a group of hadals. Osprey goes insane as the hadals tattoo his body with giant butterfly wings and is allowed to wander unattended through the bowels of the earth.

In Chapter 9, the members of the Helios expedition gather in Nazca City, a city that Helios has created under the earth. After a brief stay, the expedition boards a train to begin their trek. The first night on the train, the scientists gather and share information about their specialties. The leader of the expedition, Montgomery Shoat, introduces Ike to the group. When the scientists realize Ike is a former hadal captive, they are frightened of him. Ali, however, is impressed with Ike's quiet intelligence.

Shoat gathers the scientists when they reach their destination and tells them that rather than a fancy science station, the expedition will actually take the group through a path that cuts underneath the entire length of the Pacific Ocean. The group is expected to follow this path from end to end in a year, making notes of everything they see. Ali realizes that this expedition is designed to lay claim to a huge amount of land in the name of C.C. Cooper, the owner of Helios.

In Chapter 10, several members of the Beowulf Circle visit a research facility on the campus of the University of Colorado in Denver to see the body of a young hadal girl that has been dissected and is slowly being sliced away so that computers might create a detailed map of her internal and external organs. The scientist describes to the members of Beowulf Circle how this girl has many physical characteristics that are human and many that are not, theorizing that when *Homo sapiens sapiens* evolved, another group that is now being called *Homo sapiens hadalis* evolved from the same *Homo erectus* group.

In Chapter 11, the remaining members of the Helios expedition begin to descend the cliffs of Esperanza and begin their expedition. At the base of the cliffs, the group walks a mile to a base camp where they meet the mercenaries hired to protect the group from potential hostilities. This group, headed by Colonel Walker, is deeply religious and rarely speaks without being spoken to. The expedition begins the next morning and quickly



falls into an easy rhythm. Ali begins drawing maps each night to keep a record of what they have seen and done.

Holly Ann and her husband are in China to adopt a baby, but all the orphanages they visit no longer have any babies other than those who are sick and dying. They visit one last orphanage on the outskirts of town. When Holly Ann enters the building behind her husband and the cab driver, she hears a baby. Holly Ann saves the baby from a trash heap and is immediately confronted by a Chinese woman with a gun. The woman wants Holly Ann to return the baby, but she refuses. Instead, the woman takes Holly Ann to the roof of the building where a group of armed men and women wait with Holly Ann's husband and the cab driver. Holly Ann is again told to put the baby down as hadals begin to attempt to reach the people on the roof. When Holly Ann again refuses, she is shot. As she dies, Holly Ann realizes the baby that she is holding is a hadal.

Book 2, Inquisition: Chapters 8-11 Analysis

Ali descends into the bowels of the earth as part of the expedition. Ali does not know what to expect, but is placed at ease inadvertently by Ike when he gives her an orange on the trip down on the elevator. Later, Ali finds herself fascinated by Ike when he faces the group of scientists humbly even as they shun him as a hadal captive. It is clear to the reader even this early in their relationship that there is something between Ike and Ali. Ike has been without much human companionship for eleven years and then spent the last three years working with the military to rid the world of the hadals. This has left him unaccustomed to the interaction between man and woman, leaving him unsure of what to do with the feelings Ali evokes in him. At the same time, Ali has been a nun for many years and no longer is supposed to feel emotional attachment to a man in a romantic sense. In this way, these two are very similar as they find themselves in a situation that is both new and uncomfortable.

The expedition turns out not to be one in which scientists go out to gather specimen and return to a central science station. Instead, the expedition is to spend the next year walking and traveling by river under the Pacific Ocean. This expedition will take this group deeper and further into the earth than anyone has ever gone before, leaving many of the scientists afraid for their lives. This fear is underscored when the expedition hears a radio transmission that appears to be from the future of one of the scientists asking for help after the deaths of everyone in his party. This seems to foreshadow disaster for this expedition. In the first few weeks, however, the group has fallen into an easy rapport with one another, appearing to enjoy their adventures together. This seems to be a false sense of security if the reader takes into account the fact that they are there in a hostile world few of them understand in a situation that requires the presence of mercenaries.

The two small incidents that are recounted at the end of chapters 8 and 11 show the reader that the hadals, rather than having become extinct in the war with the humans, are still alive and well. In addition, a dead hadal has been dissected by scientists at the University of Colorado. This gives insight to scientists and others about the origins of



this species, but more insight is expected with the conclusion of the dissection in Colorado. At this point, the scientist only knows that the hadals have many human characteristics, enough that it appears that they evolved much like humans. However, the hadals also have other characteristics that are not human but appear to be evolution based on their living conditions under the earth. It is this that causes scientist to declare that hadals are not Homo sapiens sapiens, but another form of homo sapiens they call hadalis. All this really means to the reader is that these creatures are humanoids, but no one wants to call them human.



Book 2, Inquisition: Chapters 12-15

Book 2, Inquisition: Chapters 12-15 Summary

In Chapter 12, Walker brings two animals into the camp that he caught in a trap. They resemble gargoyles with wings and heavy, ugly bodies. One is injured. The scientists gather around the creatures, discussing their appearance and their possible function. Shoat overhears their discussion and cuts the male creature's throat so they might investigate closer. Ali insists they should free the remaining creature. Ike agrees, but instead of freeing it, he kills it.

In Chapter 13, the Beowulf Circle gathers in Venice, Italy where the Shroud of Turin is currently being held in a bank vault. de l'Orme and Vera Wallach, a New Zealand physician, play a trick on the others in order to show them how they believe that the shroud was created with a type of primitive photography. de l'Orme suggests that the shroud is a fake perpetrated by the devil himself and that the image is not that of Jesus, but of the devil.

In Chapter 14, the expedition reaches the first cache, the first appointed location where they will receive new supplies. Everyone lets their hair down and begins to relax. Ali asks Ike to dance. Ali learns as she speaks to Ike that at one point there had been hadals following the expedition, but Ike killed them. A few days later, the expedition finds the river at the bottom of a large cavern.

In Chapter 15, January and Thomas travel to Antarctica to attend a briefing being held at a military camp there. Sandwell, the general giving the briefing, shows video of a military unit accidentally setting off and dying from a poisonous gas canister. Sandwell announces that someone in the Helios expedition is planting these canisters in the walls of the caverns they are passing through and intends to set them off, killing every living thing in their path. Sandwell then announces that the culprit is Ike Crockett, that they believe it is him because he was inoculated against the gas while in Washington D.C. Even as Branch attempts to defend his friend, Sandwell orders groups of soldiers to go into the underworld and kill Ike on sight. A few days later Thomas calls Branch and tells him that the doctor who inoculated the man claiming to be Ike did not recognize a photo of him. Branch immediately goes AWOL to find his friend and warn him.

Book 2, Inquisition: Chapters 12-15 Analysis

The expedition, which has suffered little more than long hours of walking and a lack of bath facilities, suddenly is confronted with an odd creature they have never seen before. The scientists take a decidedly scientific approach to the creatures while others find this time consuming and annoying. Shoat kills the animals, not fully understanding what they are or what killing them might mean. Ike understands and is unhappy with Shoat, especially when he is forced to kill the other to keep it from alerting its other companions



or the hadals. This episode makes it clear to the reader that the members of this expedition do not fully comprehend the danger they are in as they travel through this strange, violent world.

The Beowulf Circle continues their own search for the devil among the hadals. As part of this search, de l'Orme makes some controversial suggestions about the Shroud of Turin. At this point, the author is beginning to build the idea that the devil is a hadal, but he is also a man who looks like a human and therefore can move among humans without being known. This suggestion stems from the idea that a highly intelligent and evolved set of people gave help to ancient man, as with the pyramids, and that the devil might have used things like the Shroud of Turin to manipulate humans as far back as the beginning of evolution.

As the expedition and Beowulf Circle's investigation both continue, someone begins to set Ike up for murder. It is clear that someone is setting poison canisters up along the expeditions path, but it is not clear who would do it and for what reason. Ike has become an easy scapegoat because of his past captivity among the hadals. However, the reader knows that Ike is not filled with enough hatred against the hadals to do this, therefore it leaves the reader wondering who might be doing this and for what purpose. With Ike out of the running, the true answer to this puzzle quickly becomes clear.



Book 2, Inquisition: Chapters 16-20

Book 2, Inquisition: Chapters 16-20 Summary

In Chapter 16, as the expedition continues their quest down the river, they have gained a shadow. This man, known as Isaac to Ike, was once an English pilot, but is now more hadal than human. This man stole Kora from the cave near the Himalayas and raised a daughter with her until her death. Now this man is making plans to attack the members of the expedition.

One day, one of the female scientists is approached by Isaac, unaware he is a hadal. She believes him to be one of the soldiers. This woman, Molly, becomes ill sometime later. Molly is quarantined from the others, but Ali insists on staying with her. Eventually Molly tells Ali that she believes this illness has been caused by her sexual relations with a hadal. Ike seems to confirm this. A short time later Molly dies and Ike releases her body to the river.

A young boy has been captured by a group of female hadals who repeatedly force him to ejaculation. The young boy is confused and ashamed of his bodily functions in the face of these women. However, the boy is not comforted when his father and a group of local men come and rescue him because they kill all the women, including an older woman who was kind to the boy.

In Chapter 17, as the expedition continues deeper into the earth, much further than most men have gone, they find carvings and hieroglyphics that suggest the hadals once worshipped the moon and the sun. Ali is excited because she believes this gives her greater insight into the hadals' language. When they reach Cache II, the capsules that should contain their food have not been delivered yet. When the first one arrives, it is charred. When they open it, they discover three soldiers, two of whom are dead and one who is near death due to extreme heat from a volcano. The still living man attempts to kill Ike, calling him a Judas. Ike falls into a depression, meditating so deeply that no one can rouse him.

In Chapter 18, back at the University of Colorado, the body of the young hadal girl is nearly completely dissected. The young research doctor, Yamamoto, arrives at the lab during a snowstorm to check on the progress. When she bends down to greet the head, its eyes suddenly open. A short time later, January, Bud Parsifal, Vera, Thomas, and Rau arrive in Colorado. At the university, they learn from a former student of Vera's that Yamamoto went insane and killed a security guard. Researchers believe that Yamamoto is suffering some kind of brain seizure. Rau, however, believes that the spirit of the hadal girl entered Yamamoto's body somehow. Rau then enters the room as Yamamoto goes into cardiac arrest. A short time later, Rau attacks a lab tech and then shoves Vera's wheelchair before committing suicide by jumping from the roof of the building.



In Chapter 19, at the end of summer, the expedition comes to Cache III. When they arrive, they cannot find their supplies despite evidence that they have already been delivered. After searching everywhere else, Walker sends a man into a waterfall where they might have landed. The man does not come out. Walker sends another who also disappears. Walker finally sends a third who returns mortally wounded with a hadal woman in his arms. Walker and his soldiers open fire on the waterfall, killing multiple hadal women and children. The soldiers then continue through the waterfall to a cave where they corner many other hadal women and children. Ali argues against the murder of these women and children, but Walker is determined that they die for stealing their supplies, which have now been found and secured. Ike arrives and also argues against their killing, explaining that the hadals travel with women in the center, suggesting the expedition is now surrounded by hadal men who will not be happy with the deaths of their women and children. Ike also identifies one of the hadal women as human. Walker removes the human woman, but orders the deaths of the others.

In Chapter 20, in San Francisco, C.C. Cooper has begun to turn Candlestick Park into a laboratory and holding pen for hadals. Sandwell, who has retired from the military and now works for Helios, is attempting to explain the purpose of the facility to the members of the Beowulf Circle. As they speak, C.C. Cooper arrives with his son, Hamilton, and his second wife, Eva Shoat. de l'Orme confronts Cooper about the purpose of the facility, claiming that he has built it above ground because he plans to release a deadly gas below ground. de l'Orme tells the group that Hamilton Cooper often went to confession after the birth of his child and de l'Orme listened to his confessions. de l'Orme says that the younger Cooper confessed that he, his father, and Montgomery Shoat conspired together to plant and release a deadly gas along the route the expedition is taking in order to rid the area of hadals.

Book 2, Inquisition: Chapters 16-20 Analysis

Danger comes to the expedition in a series of both natural and manmade disasters, causing even Ike to become depressed by the situation. This raises the tension in the novel and makes the reader begin to wonder if all the members of the expedition will survive their current situation. At the same time, the reader learns that it is Montgomery Shoat who has been dropping the poison canisters along the route, claiming to the others that they are emergency locators to help them get out of the area should it become necessary. This sets up a situation where Shoat might prove to be the only hope of the members of the expedition should trouble find them. However, Shoat will be of no help, instead he could be their weapon of death.

The murders of the women and children of one hadal tribe is a situation that spells trouble for the expedition. Now the members of the expedition seem to be in real trouble that was caused by those who were hired to protect them, a twist of irony in the plot. At the same time, Ike has become a hunted man, causing him to feel as though he has no identity at all, no longer able to identify with the hadals or with the humans with whose family he had become a member. It is a difficult time for Ike, but it says something about his character that he refuses to abandon the expedition, Ali in particular.



The discovery of the human girl among the hadal women and children is an important turn in this section of the novel. This girl was raised hadal, but Ike and some of the others can see her human features despite the tattooing that is common among the hadal. This girl is rescued from the others, but it seems that she might be the daughter of Isaac, Ike's own nemesis. There is a great deal of potential in this girl, in that she might be able to help the expedition members protect themselves in some sort of deal with the hadals or she might be able to help them find a way out of the underground. At the same time, this girl could represent to Ike something deeply personal that even he has yet to consider.



Book 3, Grace: Chapters 21-24

Book 3, Grace: Chapters 21-24 Summary

In Chapter 21, the soldiers, Walker, and Shoat abandon the scientists and Ike. When Ali realizes what has happened, she shows the others some weapons one of the soldiers gave to her in the middle of the night. Ike suggests that they continue in the direction they have been following, but one of the scientists, Wayne Gitner, insists that they return the way they came. Ike and Gitner divide up the food and weapons. Gitner takes a large group of people while Ike is left with nine, including himself and Ali. For several weeks, both groups do well, making progress. However, they quickly run out of food. While Ike's group continues on in good spirits, Gitner's group begins to have doubts as they begin to disappear one after another. Eventually Gitner is left on his own to starve.

In Chapter 22, the Beowulf Circle meets in the Dolomite Alps at de l'Orme's castle. When Thomas arrives, he is quiet and unhappy. Finally Thomas shows the group the head of one of their members that has been sent to him. Thomas announces that their investigation has grown too dangerous and must come to an end. The others protest, suggesting that they have come too far to stop. In fact, one of the members has come to the conclusion that the devil can walk the earth as a man and might even be a member of the Beowulf Circle. Thomas dismisses this idea and tells the others if they wish to continue their investigation they will have to do it without the blessing of the Catholic Church.

In Chapter 23, Branch makes his way through the underground and finds the maps Ali drew that Gitner's group abandoned. Branch loses the maps when he is attacked, but a group of hadals later find them. Ike and his group come to a place that appears to be some kind of ancient trading center, a huge building built into the wall of the caverns on the edge of a huge sea. At the top of the facility, Ike finds row after row of carved soldiers that are larger than the current day hadals, suggesting to Ali that the hadals are somehow de-evolving. Further up on the facility, Ike finds a tower that seems to be some kind of viewing tower. From the viewing tower, the group of soldiers turns into a kind of three dimensional map of what they believe is the hadal world.

Ike's group is starving to death and no longer has the energy to continue. Ike asks Ali to continue on with him alone, but she refuses. The hadals deliver to them the body of one of the soldier from Walker's group, but they refuse to eat him. It begins to look as if the group will die, but then Walker and his group appear. They share their food with the starving expedition members, but also hold them captive.

In Chapter 24, in New York, where he has been holed up in a hotel room due to illness, de l'Orme receives a phone call from Bud Parsifal warning him that someone has been killing members of the Beowulf Circle. It seems that Thomas was killed on Mt. Sinai and that another member of the group has been killed. In her home in Georgia, Vera is killed by someone she knows. On Mt. Sinai, de l'Orme kills his lover in the mistaken belief that



he is the killer. However, de l'Orme is later killed by someone that he knows. This person returns to his world under the earth.

Book 3, Grace: Chapters 21-24 Analysis

Things go from bad to worse as the scientists are abandoned hundreds of miles underground by Walker and Shoat. The scientists have two choices, return to where they came from or go on. Most chose to turn around and go back, but this group has no experience and become lost almost immediately. This causes the deaths of these people from both starvation and hadals who have been shadowing them for weeks. Ike's group, however, thanks to Ike's knowledge, survive much longer. Unfortunately, starvation begins to take its toll on these people. Clinging to humanity, they refuse to eat human meat, leaving them with nothing to eat in the bowels of the earth.

Ike and Ali have grown close during their time with the expedition. Now that it seems they have nothing to look forward to but death, they cling to one another. Ike could leave Ali and survive on his hadal knowledge, but he refuses because of his love for her. Ike already lost one lover in these depths, he does not wish to lose another. However, Ali refuses to adopt his hadal ways and survive by becoming something less than human.

The discovery of the map of the hadal underworld seems to suggest to the reader that there is a central place under the earth that is important to the hadal people, perhaps a place that is not unlike the myths of hell. This seems to be where the starving and quickly de-evolving people are headed. This could prove to be important later in the novel. At the same time, the reader becomes aware of the de-evolution of these people, making the reader wonder if this also fits with the myths of hell and the devil. When the man who has killed de l'Orme thinks of these things and the punishment he believes God is placing on his people, this idea becomes more concrete for the reader. Perhaps these people are de-evolving because of some crime against God and will continue to do so until they fail to live at all. It also gives motive to the leader of the hadals to try to find a way to read the ancient texts so that he might find an answer to appease God and end this de-evolution.

The end of the Beowulf Circle just as one of the members suggests that the devil might be an intellectual who could possibly move among them is curious. It suggests that this theory is indeed a strong one, a theory that is supported by the apparent ability of the hadals to jump bodies at the moment of death or thereafter, as exemplified when Rau was possessed by the hadal girl in Colorado. Therefore when the members of the Beowulf Circle begin to die, the reader must begin to believe the killer is the devil and he is a member of the Beowulf Circle.



Book 3, Grace: Chapters 25-28

Book 3, Grace: Chapters 25-28 Summary

In Chapter 25, Walker's men plan to mutiny, leaving their injured colonel behind with the prisoners. However, before they can leave a large group of hadals attack. Ali manages to get away with some of the other expedition captives, but she cannot find Ike and goes in search of him. One by one, the surviving members of the expedition are killed along with most of the soldiers as the hadals overrun the trading center. Ike calls out for Ali, discovering she is still alive.

In Chapter 26, the young hadal girl Ike rescued has survived despite torture and rape at the hands of the soldiers. She stalks Ike for several days, finally attempting to attack. However, Ike gets the better of her and takes her captive. Ike forces the girl to show him the way to the center section of the hadal world where he believes Ali has been taken.

At the same time, Ali is taken to the center of the hadal world to a place that was once a great city but is now in ruins. Isaac takes her to a library and tells her she must begin deciphering the old writings. Ali is joined by Thomas, who tells her that he came in search of her and was captured. As Ike arrives outside this same city, he is overrun by Shoat who has been following him. Shoat demands that Ike take his laptop into the city and make a trade, the girl for his remote control for the poison canisters.

In Chapter 27, Ike walks into the city as Shoat has requested. Ike goes to the library and confronts Ali. Before Ike can tell her the truth of everything, they are joined by Thomas. Thomas bites off Ike's finger in punishment, causing Ali to realize who he really is. Thomas then begins to speak to Shoat, angering him with comments about his mother. Shoat fires his gun. Ike jumps out of the way, dragging Ali with him, so that Thomas is the one hit by the bullet. In the aftermath, chaos reigns as the hadals come to mourn over their leader, the Older than Old, the devil.

In Chapter 28, Thomas is dying and is offered multiple young bodies to move his spirit into, but he knows that he is better off where he is should the poison gas be released because his current body has been inoculated. At the same time, Ali and Ike escape out of the city in the chaos of Thomas' injuries while the hadals hunt down Shoat and kill him. Using his memory of the hadal map, Ike leads Ali to safety. However, before they leave, Ali reveals that she took Shoat's remote. She sets it off, but is disappointed when nothing seems to happen. Unbeknownst to them, the hadals are all killed due to five of the canisters that were attached to the laptop Shoat forced Ike to take into the city. Thomas is the only one still living until Branch arrives, having survived because of his own inoculation.



Book 3, Grace: Chapters 25-28 Analysis

In these final chapters of the book, Ike discovers that the young girl he saved from Walker and his soldiers is actually his daughter, born and raised among the hadals. This explains Kora's decision to leave Ike after their final expedition in the Himalayas, something that had worried him at the beginning of the book. Ike is forced to choose between a daughter he does not know and the woman he loves, eventually choosing Ali and humanity rather than his daughter and the devil. This seems to be a classic turn on the theme of good versus evil.

The reader also realizes that the hadals have kept away from the Helios expedition and Ali in particular throughout their time under the earth under orders from their leader. Ali has a talent with languages and the devil is hoping that she will be able to decipher the ancient hadal texts and perhaps give them the solution to their de-evolution, saving the entire race. Ali has help in this from Thomas, whom she thinks is another hadal captive, but whom it turns out is the hadal leader, the devil himself.

Ike is forced to confront his past in saving Ali, but it all seems to turn out well when Shoat shoots Thomas and then is killed himself. However, even after all the hadals are killed by the poison gas that Ali has unintentionally set off, Branch is still alive. When Branch arrives in the hadal's ancient city, it seems that Thomas will use his damaged body as his next incarnation. However, all the other hadals are dead and both Ali and Ike survive to make it to the surface.



Characters

Ike Crockett

When the novel begins, Ike Crockett is a mountaineer who would rather live his life on a mountain than to live a more conventional life. Ike runs a tour company in which he and his partner Kora guide people up the mountains and to visit other areas of significance. At the beginning of this novel, Kora has told Ike that this is her last trip with him because she wants more of a conventional life. Perhaps this is part of the reason Ike becomes lost on a mountain that he has climbed hundreds of times. The group gets caught in a snowstorm and are forced to take refuge in a cave. In that cave is the body of a long dead man that has been tattooed and carved in an odd way. In time, the group notices that one of their members is missing and they go in search of him. When they do, the body comes back to life, kills all the paying customers and takes Kora captive.

Ike spends the next eleven years as a captive of the people that will later become known as the hadals. Ike is held captive by a man whom he comes to later know as the supreme leader of the hadals, the devil. The reader never learns for sure how Ike becomes a captive of the hadals because he manages to hide when Isaac takes off with Kora and Ike seems to imply that Isaac was not his captor. Later, Ike is rescued when Major Branch sets up an ambush that kills all of the hadals that Ike has been leading as something of a slave trader or master. Ike begs to die, but instead Branch saves him and incorporates him into the military to fight against the hadals.

When Ike learns that he faces prison time for going AWOL during a battle, he takes another man's advice and joins the Helio Corporation is sponsoring. On the expedition, Ike meets and falls in love with Ali. Ike also meets the girl who was his daughter. Ike realizes that Kora wanted to leave him because she was pregnant and did not want to raise their child on a mountain. This leaves Ike wondering what might have happened had they not gotten lost. It also forces Ike to choose between his daughter, whom he does not know and who treats him with hostility or the woman that he loves. Ike eventually chooses Ali.

Ali

Ali is a nun whose parents died when she was young, leaving her to be adopted by Senator Cornelia January. January never understood Ali's decision to become a nun, but supports her wholeheartedly. Aside from her role as a nun, Ali is also a student of cultures and language. It is this latter skill that brings Ali to Thomas' attention, causing him to ask her to join the Helios Corporations' expedition under the earth. Ali agrees to go, fascinated with the idea of cracking a new language and learning more about the hadals.



On the expedition, Ali becomes the confidant to all the other expedition members. At the same time, Ali begins to fall in love with Ike. When it appears that she is going to die of starvation because the leader of the expedition abandoned the scientists, Ali gives in to her affections for Ike. Later, Ali is saved from starvation only to be taken captive by the hadals in order to decipher their ancestors' writings. Ike saves Ali and they return to the surface together.

Thomas

Thomas is a Jesuit priest who is also a scholar and a student of past civilizations. Thomas creates the Beowulf Circle, a group of intellectuals who travel the world to investigate the possibility that the hadals have a central leader who is the role model for myth and legends about the devil. Thomas pushes his team to use their expertise to find science that supports the existence of the devil. In time, however, it becomes clear that someone does not want this investigation to continue as members of the Beowulf Circle begin to die. It is later revealed that Thomas is the devil the Beowulf Circle was searching for. They got too close and he killed most of its members.

Montgomery Shoat

Montgomery Shoat is the illegitimate child of C.C. Cooper and his mistress, who later becomes his wife, Eva Shoat. Montgomery is given the task of leading the expedition under the Pacific Ocean in an attempt to make his position with Helios Corporation stronger. Montgomery Shoat is also the man who is planting the poisonous canisters that are designed to kill every living thing under the Pacific Ocean to make it clear for Helios to own the land without the presence of hostiles. Shoat fails to set off these canisters because Ali steals his remote for the canisters, believing it is a device to find locators Shoat as supposedly been leaving all along their route, to protect him from soldiers who beat him in an attempt to steal the remote and make their way out of the underground world. Later Shoat realizes who took the device and he blackmails Ike into helping him get it back, but he shoots Thomas, bringing the wrath of all the hadals down on himself.

Isaac

Isaac was once a pilot for the British air force. Isaac was apparently shot down during World War II and taken captive by the hadals. Isaac has since become a powerful member of the hadal community, giving him the right to roam anywhere he likes under the earth. Isaac tricks Ike's group of mountaineers into a false sense of safety and then kills the majority of the group when he lures them deeper into the earth in search of one of their members. Isaac later takes Kora, Ike's lover, hostage and raises a daughter with her. Isaac shadows the Helios expedition as they make their way under the Pacific Ocean, clearly under orders from Thomas to keep Ali safe so that she might be used to decipher ancient hadal texts.



Major Elias Branch

Major Elias Branch is a decorated officer and talented helicopter pilot when the novel begins. However, after being attacked by the hadals and badly burned when his own people open fire on the attackers and ignite some gas, Branch becomes obsessed with locating and killing the hadals. Everyone believes Branch is insane until he brings to the surface proof of the hadals. War breaks out between mankind and the hadals after Branch's discovery. Later, Branch finds Ike among the hadals and rescues him, giving him a place among the military. When Ike is accused of trying to poison the hadals and the members of Helios' expedition, Branch tries to save him from military orders to execute him.

de l'Orme

de l'Orme is a disgraced, former priest who spends his life researching ancient peoples. de l'Orme is blind and is often assisted by his lover. de l'Orme is good friends with Thomas and becomes a member of the Beowulf Circle as a result. de l'Orme is the one who discovers that the Shroud of Turin is more than likely a likeness of the devil. At the end of the novel, de l'Orme is murdered by Thomas after killing his lover with the mistaken idea that it is his lover who currently embodies the devil.

Senator Cornelia January

Senator Cornelia January is a close friend of Ali, the woman who took her in when Ali's parents were killed. January uses her influence with the Congress to help the Beowulf Circle learn more about the hadals and the possibility of a real devil. January becomes close to Thomas and is disappointed when Thomas calls an end to the search for the devil. In the end, it is unclear whether or not January survived Thomas' cleaning up of the Beowulf Circle and all they discovered, but the reader hopes she survived for Ali's sake.

Kora

Kora is Ike's lover at the beginning of the novel. Kora is a kind, gentle woman who also enjoys mountain climbing. However, when Kora learns that she is pregnant, rather than tell Ike the news she decides she must leave him in order to provide a more conventional life for her child. Before she can do this, however, Kora is captured by Isaac, a hadal, who takes her into the bowels of the earth and makes her his lover. The child is born and is raised by Isaac as a hadal. Kora dies an unexplained death, but it is clear to the reader that Kora was a strong woman who survived a significant amount of time among the hadals and was deeply loved by Ike and Isaac both.



C.C. Cooper

C.C. Cooper is the owner of Helios Corporation. During his career, Cooper became a United States senator and ran for president in a race that proved to be corrupt. Rather than simply retire and return to his multimillion dollar empire, Cooper decides that he wants to take advantage of the new world discovered under the earth's surface. Cooper learns of a large tunnel that runs under the entire length of the Pacific Ocean. Cooper sends a team of scientists down to the tunnel to explore it. Cooper intends to kill the entire expedition, however, to prevent leaks of the tunnel's location, as well as any hadal who might live in the area with a military created poison that kills almost instantly. Cooper has his own child place the canisters of poison under the earth's surface, but it is a nun who accidentally releases the gas under the earth's surface, killing all the hadals except for Thomas, the leader of the hadals.



Objects/Places

Rafts

The expedition travels a great deal of time on rafts on a river under the earth's surface. These rafts are later stolen by Walker and Shoat when they abandon the scientists after Cache III.

Lights

While at the trading center, Ike shows Ali a bunch of oil lamps that he found hidden in a room at the top of the center. Later, Ike uses this oil to light the entire structure on fire to escape from the attacking hadals.

Hadal Tattoos

It is customary for the hadals to cover their bodies and the bodies of their captives in tattoos. When Ike is rescued, his face, arms, and torso are covered with tattoos that make it difficult for him to hide his experience as a captive.

Ali's Maps

During the expedition, Ali draws maps of the expedition's course and everything they see. When the scientists are marooned by the mercenaries and Shoat, Ali is forced to give her maps to Gitner, the scientist who takes off with the largest group of survivors. Later Branch finds the maps and then the hadals, returning them to Ali in the hadal city.

Shoat's Box

Shoat wears a box around his neck that he has told all the members of the expedition allows him to find locators he has left all along their trail so that they might find their way out in an emergency. However, the box is really a device to set off the canisters he has left behind that are filled with poison. Ali steals the box to protect Shoat from the angry soldiers who want out of the underworld, but sets it off later in the belief that it will show her and Ike the way out.

Ike's Rifle

Ike carries a rifle for protection as he acts as scout for the Helio's expedition. However, when Ike kills, he more often than not kills with his hands or a knife.



Shroud of Turin

The Shroud of Turin is an ancient cloth that is believed to have been the cloth that was wrapped around Jesus upon his death from crucifixion. The cloth is said to have the image of Jesus on it. de l'Orme proves to the Beowulf Circle in this novel that the image on the cloth was made with primitive photographic techniques and that the image on it is that of the devil. de l'Orme claims that the devil has done this in a manner of manipulation, to cause people to believe in Jesus so that they might also believe in the devil.

Hadal Statues

Ike and Ali find a group of hadal statues at the trading center that appear larger than the hadals they have seen recently. Ali thinks that the hadals have begun to de-evolve for an unknown reason.

Hadal Library

Ali is taken to a hadal library where it is hoped she might be able to decipher the ancient hadal texts and tell the current leader of the hadals, Thomas, how to stop the de-evolution of his people.

Trading Center

Ike, Ali, and the rest of their group come across a structure carved into a cliff near what appears to be an underground ocean. They believe that this is some kind of trading center or shipping port.

Hadal World Map

Ike discovers that when someone stands on a tower at the top of the trading center and looks down on the soldier statues that there is some kind of map among the statues. If one stares at the map long enough it becomes three dimensional, showing rivers, tunnels, and other structures that appear to exist in this world. Ike uses his memory of this map to find a way to the surface when he and Ali escape at the end of the novel.

University of Colorado

A hadal girl has been taken to the University of Colorado after her death so that her body might be studied to reveal more information to scientists about the hadals. However, as the girl's brain is about to be dissected, she somehow transfers her spirit into one of the researchers, causing the woman's death. Later the hadal also moves her spirit into one of the members of the Beowulf Circle, prompting his suicide.

Hadal City

All the hadals in the underworld migrate to a central city at the end of the novel. Ali is taken here as well, therefore Ike follows her here to save her. The city appears to have been a great place once, but is now in ruins. This city appears to be further evidence that the hadals were once highly intelligent, but have somehow lost some of their intelligence.

Themes

Good Versus Evil

The overall theme of this novel is good versus evil. As the novel begins to develop, the reader is introduced to the idea of a real devil who lives in the earth with a group of people who look like demons, but who are really just another version of the human evolution that led to *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Thomas brings together the Beowulf Circle and they begin to study the hadals, exploring the idea that one of their own might be the devil that both myths and legends have been written about.

As the discovery of the hadals becomes more public and the military begins to make frequent forays under the earth's crust, the Beowulf Circle begins to hear more about the places that exist down there. The group finds a curious connection between the descriptions of these places and the descriptions of hell in such writings as Dante's *Inferno*. This leads to more discoveries that include ancient art and artifacts that make the Beowulf Circle begin to believe that the hadals were once a highly intelligent, highly evolved group of beings who encouraged and helped civilizations throughout time. This seems to support the idea of a devil, especially when de l'Orme suggests that the devil created the Shroud of Turin in order to manipulate people not only to believe in God, but to believe in him as well.

As the novel continues, it is clear to the reader that the author has introduced the theme of good and evil not only in the larger idea of a God and a devil, but also in the simple actions of human beings. On a slightly smaller scale there is the Helios Corporation and their plan to eradicate all living things from under the Pacific Ocean in order to take control of the area and make money from future settlers. On an even smaller scale is the battle between the starving hadals and the human intruders who are destroying their way of life. On an even smaller scale there is Walker and his demand of complete control over the expedition and his decision to abandon the scientists with little food and no protection. There is good versus evil throughout the novel, therefore it is no surprise to the reader that the nun and her lover are two of the ultimate survivors.

Love

Love is a theme of this novel for several reasons. The first reason why love is a theme of this book is the relationship between Ike and Kora. Ike never would have continued his search for the survivors of his group after finding the one woman who had gone insane if he had not heard Kora's voice and had become determined to find her. Ike felt a need to find Kora and rescue her from the fear he could hear in her voice. It was more than likely this love that fueled Ike's anger and the grief that kept him alive while he was a captive of the hadals.



It is also love that inspires Ali to go on the Helios expedition. Ali goes on this expedition not only for a love of languages, but because of her love and trust in January, her adoptive mother who has asked her to trust Thomas and to go on the expedition. Thomas is aware of this relationship and takes advantage of it, determined to use Ali to find a way to decipher the old hadal texts he can no longer understand.

Finally love is a theme of the book because of the relationship between Ali and Ike. Even though Ali is a nun, the world of the hadals is such a place that Ali feels that her love of God is strong, but her love of Ike is much stronger. Ali turns to Ike because he makes her feel safe, but also because he is wounded and he needs someone like her. If not for Ike, Ali more than likely would not have survived for as long as she did. Later, it is because of his love for Ali that Ike goes after her and rescues her from the hadals. For this reason, love is a strong theme of the novel.

Human versus Animal

When the hadals are first discovered, there is a great deal of fear and misunderstandings. However, as military expeditions under the earth continued to go further and further into hadal territory, the hadals were bound to respond in the only way they knew how. For this reason, thousands of humans are murdered at the hands of the hadals. The humans respond in the only way they know how - they declare war.

Despite evidence that the hadals are very close to human if they are not truly human, the scientists and politicians insist on calling the hadals animals. This makes it easier for the humans to kill and destroy the hadals, to exterminate them from their natural habitat. The hadals have clearly existed for thousands of years, perhaps even before humans, but the humans feel free to exterminate them because of the deaths of a few soldiers who had gone somewhere they never should have been. This is part of the need for humans to control and take over everything, including a new habitat that they never knew of before or cared about before.

In this novel, by presenting the hadals in the way he does, the author makes the reader question the rights of people to take over the habitats of these creatures and destroy their way of life. To extend this theme, the author seems to ask the reader if taking over the habitat of any animals is the right thing to do. At the end, the reader realizes that the hadals are a dangerous group, but that they were slowly growing extinct on their own and would have eventually died a quiet death if not for Branch and his determination to prove they existed.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of this novel is the third-person omniscient. The point of view of this novel is made omniscient because the author does not use a single character as his narrator, but moves from character to character to tell his story. The author uses three main characters to tell his story, Ali, Ike, and Thomas, but he also makes forays into the minds of other characters such as January and Vera, when these characters are better in a situation to carry on the narration of the novel.

The point of view of the novel works well with the plot of the story because the story is so involved and includes so many characters that using multiple characters to tell the story gives the reader a more rounded understanding of the events taking place within the plot. By telling his story this way, the author also allows the reader to know certain things that other characters are not aware of. Therefore, he gives the reader an advantage that adds tension to the plot and an understanding of the events unfolding around the main characters. The point of view of this novel works well with the plot of the novel.

Setting

The novel takes place all over the world, but the main setting is the underground world of the hadals. This setting involves taking several of the main characters of the novel deep under the earth's surface to places that most humans have never seen. The author describes his setting with authority, allowing the reader to understand how these extreme conditions can impact a human being, therefore making it reasonable to the reader the effects these conditions have on multiple characters in the novel, including Ike and Branch.

The setting of this novel is important because it is necessary for the reader to understand and appreciate the impact the setting has on the characters of the novel. The premise of the novel revolves around an entirely new race of people who live beneath the earth's surface. In order for the reader to appreciate the impact of this new race on society as a whole and the impact of their world on those accustomed to life above the earth's surface, the reader must fully understand what it would be like to live in such a place. For this reason, the author goes to great lengths to describe this underworld and to show the impact of living in such a place on a human being. Therefore, the setting of this novel works well with the plot of the novel.

Language and Meaning

The novel is written in basic English that includes simple language as well as the language of the educated. This novel revolves around an investigation into the



possibility of the real existence of the devil by highly intelligent people, therefore a great deal of the language in the novel, including some of the dialogue, is filled with words that the average reader might not be accustomed to. However, the author has taken this technical language and pared it down so that the average reader will not struggle to understand the basic concepts of this language and the ideas behind it. The author also uses some foreign phrases and words in his novel based on the ancient languages of man as well as the foreign languages of countries around the world. These phrases are used in such a way, however, that the average reader will have little trouble understanding their meaning.

The author uses language in this novel that is appropriate to his characters. While many of the characters are highly educated people, the language they use is often the kind of language used in common conversations, allowing the average reader to fully comprehend most of it. The language supports the backgrounds of all the characters without leaving the reader feeling lost or uneducated. The language also supports the international flavor of the novel. The overall effect of the language of this novel gives the reader a sense of authenticity regarding both the situations presented in the novel and the characters portrayed in the novel, making it work well with the overall plot of the novel.

Structure

The novel is divided into three books or parts. Each book has a title of its own, describing in a single word some of what will happen in the following pages. The book contains twenty-eight chapters. Most of the chapters are fairly long, containing multiple scenes in each chapter. At the same time, three of the chapters have an added section at the end of the chapter that tells of an incident that takes place in various locations around the world that allows the reader to understand that the hadals are still alive and well and have begun to make their presence known to the outer world, perhaps in a last ditch effort to save their quickly dying race.

The novel contains one main plot and multiple subplots. The main plot of the novel is a story of good versus evil. The main plot revolves around the discovery of a race of people who live under the earth's surface who could be the inspiration for many myths and legends about the devil and his demons. As the plot develops, many of the main characters of the novel find themselves pitted against this race of people in a fight for life or death. Among the subplots that fill the novel is the relationship between Ali and Ike. Another subplot revolves around the owner of Helios Corporation and the greed that has led him to send his own son under the earth's surface to poison all living things so that the corporation might claim the land and create new settlements there. All of the subplots come to a satisfying conclusion as the main plot of the novel comes to an end.



Quotes

"In the beginning was the word." (Book 1, Discovery: Chapter 1, p. 3).

"Later, people would not blame Branch for the death. Even after Army coroners determined that Ramada's death was accidental, few believed Branch had not meant to kill him. Some felt it showed his compassion toward this mutilated victim." (Book 1, Discovery: Chapter 3, p. 67).

"It was as if a race of aliens had just breached upon man's shores." (Book 1, Discovery: Chapter 5, p. 89).

"The term Satan signifies a historical character. A missing link between our fairy tale hell and the geological fact of it. Think about it. If there can be a historical Christ, why not a historical Satan?" (Book 1, Discovery: Chapter 7, p. 127).

"It seemed the helicopter was bound west forever across the cobalt blue water, landless, stained red by the sunset. Night chased her across the infinite pacific. Childishly, Ali wished they could stay ahead of the darkness." (Book 2, Inquisition: Chapter 8, p. 137).

"That had surprised Branch. You expected stereotypes and racism and prejudices from the ordinary masses. But it was turning out that the sciences were just as rife with it. Indeed, intellectual biases—academic arrogance—helped explain why hell had gone undiscovered for so long." (Book 2, Inquisition: Chapter 10, p. 177).

"Ali wondered, if in passing this lost knight, Ike had seen himself." (Book 2, Inquisition: Chapter 11, p. 196).

"The Shroud hung before them, almost five meters high. From darkness to radiant display, it made a dramatic first impression. Just the same, even knowing its significance, the relic appeared to be little more than a long, unlaundered tablecloth that had seen too many dinner parties." (Book 2, Inquisition: Chapter 13, p. 216).

"Listen to humans, and their very speech defiled the construct. Space addled them. With nothing above their heads, no stone to cap the world, their thoughts went flying off into a void more terrible than any chasm. No wonder they were invading willy-nilly. Man had lost his mind to heaven." (Book 2, Inquisition: Chapter 16, p. 253).

"Even the mercenaries had come to depend on Ike's infallible sense of danger. Somehow the word got around about his climbing days, and they nicknamed him El Cap for the monolith in Yosemite." (Book 2, Inquisition: Chapter 17, p. 281).

"What if subterranean conditions had evolved Haddie from a creature capable of sculpting this fortress, firing these terra-cotta warriors, and plying the sea and rivers, into a virtual beast?" (Book 3, Grace: Chapter 23, p. 365).

"They were not really lost, because they had started their escape with little idea of where they were anyway." (Book 3, Grace: Chapter 28, p. 449).



Topics for Discussion

Who is Ike Crockett? Why is he in an unfamiliar cave at the beginning of the novel? What does he find there? What does Ike find unusual about this thing? Why does he separate from the rest of his group? What does he find when he goes in search of his group? Who has taken his lover, Kora? How does Ike know this? What happens to Ike after this event? How does it change his life?

Who is Ali? Where is she when the reader first meets her? How does her situation compare with Ike's in the first chapter? Why does Ali believe she is being punished by the Catholic Church? How does Ali appear to feel about her future as a nun? Does Ali make a good nun? Explain. What is Ali's relationship to Cornelia January? How does Ali find herself on the Helios expedition? What is her purpose on this expedition? Who appointed her to this purpose?

Who is Thomas? What is the reader's initial impression of Thomas? What are his interests? What is his job? What is Thomas' relationship to the Beowulf Circle? How was the Beowulf Circle founded? What is its purpose? What does the Beowulf Circle plan to do with the information they uncover? How does this change the lives of those who are members of this elite group?

What are the hadals? Where were they first discovered and by whom? Why does the United States declare war on these creatures? What do scientists believe these creatures are? Why can they not think of them as human? Why does Ali come to believe the hadals are moving backward in terms of evolution? What is implied by Thomas to be causing this? Why does Thomas want Ali to decipher the ancient writings of the hadals? What does he hope it will reveal?

Who is C.C. Cooper? What happened when Cooper ran for president? Why does Cooper send the expedition down under the Pacific Ocean? What does Cooper ultimately want? To what end is Cooper willing to go to get what he wants? What does Cooper intend to do with the scientists he has sent on the expedition? What happens to the scientists during the expedition? Was this a part of Cooper's original plan?

What evidence of the devil do the Beowulf Circle uncover? Who believes that the Shroud of Turin is actually a portrait of the devil? For what reason? What evidence on the shroud prevents the members of the Beowulf Circle from believing the image on the shroud is not that of a man who has recently died? What other evidence has the Beowulf Circle uncovered? Why does Thomas tell the members of the Beowulf Circle that it has become too dangerous to continue with their investigations? What proof does he have? What begins to happen to the members of the Beowulf Circle after this discussion?

Discuss the character of Ike. How has being a captive of the hadals altered his life? What might his life be like if he had never wandered into that cave? What happened between Ike and Kora shortly before they are taken captive by the hadals? How does



understanding of this situation come to Ike more than fourteen years later? How does this understanding force Ike to have to choose between Ali, the woman he loves, and a wild hadal girl that he saved from Walker's soldiers? What choice does Ike make? Why?