

The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic and Madness in the Fair That Changed America Study Guide

The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic and Madness in the Fair That Changed America by Erik Larson

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Plot Summary

Devil in the White City takes two actual stories that occur in Chicago in the late 1880s and the early 1890s and meshes them together. The story of the White City enhances the story of the Devil that found contentment within its walls.

Daniel Burnham and John Root created the White City with the help of many architects from New York, Boston, St. Louis and Chicago. Throughout challenges, disasters and tragedy, Burnham moved the planning and building of the White City forward. He focused on his own career and the fact that all of America was counting on him to earn the world's respect.

The White City is the name given to the 1893 World's Exposition celebrating Columbus' discovery of America. Chicago was given the honor of hosting the elaborate affair. Many people were afraid the Exposition would be no better than a county fair, because they believed that Chicago was an uncultured, meatpacking city. When the news came that Chicago would be the host, the people of Chicago were ecstatic. They could finally show everyone they were as cultured and civilized as New York.

The firm of Burnham and Root was given the task of creating the Exposition grounds. The task had to be completed in approximately three years, to be ready for the Dedication Ceremony and Opening Day. They had many challenges, but two of the major problems were the location of the Exposition and the planning and design of the Exposition. It took almost six months to decide on a location, and that left only two and one half years to design the building and landscape and then build the final product. It seemed to be an impossible task.

As soon as one challenge was met, three more would arise. One of the most prominent challenges was to create something that was comparable or preferably better than the Eiffel Tower that had been built for the Paris Exposition. Other issues included the continued possibility of strikes from the workers, fighting committees for the approval of everything, deciding who would design the buildings and landscape, the economy, which was on the verge of collapse during the entire time, and the power struggle between the National Committee for the Exposition and the Exposition Company.

Everything was always behind schedule. The architects from New York, Boston, Chicago and St Louis and the landscape architect from New York stepped up to the challenge. The workers, even with impending strikes, felt the patriotic spirit and worked harder and faster to complete the job. Burnham and his crew got the exposition grounds presentable for the Dedication Ceremony, which was about one month before opening day. Things still needed to be completed, but it was closer to being completed than anyone had expected.

On Opening Day, the team still had a few tasks left to accomplish, but for the most part the fair had been completed. The Ferris wheel, America's response to the Eiffel Tower, opened 51 days late, but from the day of its first rotation, people were enamored with



the wheel. The landscape was not quite done but that was completed within the first couple of weeks. Maintenance continued for the full six months that the fair was open. With many people out of work, this provided relief for many poor families, at least for a while.

At the end of the Exposition Grounds, on the corner of Wallace and 63rd Streets, H. H. Holmes started making his plans. He had started his criminal life with insurance fraud, but found killing to be even more enjoyable. He built his "castle" to feed his obsession, and when he discovered the Exposition was coming to Chicago, it made the castle all the more important. The people would come to him, and he could perform his evil at his leisure at his World's Fair Hotel.

Before the Exposition opened, Holmes began his killing. He would seduce the women before he killed them and their children. He continued this hobby until just before the close of the Exposition. It was said that he killed approximately 200 men, women and children; however, the courts could only prove nine actual killings. Holmes had been incarcerated on insurance fraud charges when the Pinkerton Detective Agency started probing into the disappearance of three children and linked their deaths to him.



Part 1, Prologue

Part 1, Prologue Summary

Nineteen years have passed since the World's Exposition of 1893 hosted by Chicago, Illinois. The Exposition's unofficial name was the White City. The official name was the World's Columbian Exposition. It was a celebration of the 400th anniversary since Columbus' discovery of America. Daniel Burnham, the chief architect of the Exposition, is aboard a ship bound for Europe. He is thinking of his friends that worked on the Exposition with him, the challenges, obstacles, and events that almost kept the Exposition from opening on schedule. Burnham could not think of the Exposition without also thinking of the disappearances and murders that occurred only a short way from the Exposition grounds. It did not matter that the disappearances and murders were not discovered until after the Exposition closed. They still marred the beauty of the Exposition and the work he had done to show the world that America, and Chicago, were as refined as the rest of the civilized world.

Part 1, Prologue Analysis

The reader is introduced to Daniel Burnham, one of two main characters this story involves. The prologue gives a very brief overview of what it took to create the World's Exposition of 1893. It gives the reader a little taste of what is to come in the rest of the book. It entices the reader to want to know more about the obstacles, challenges, deaths, triumphs and ultimately the evil that affected Chicago for the six months the exposition was open.



Part 1, The Black City

Part 1, The Black City Summary

It is the late 1880s and Chicago is a big city where people come to gain independence and make it on their own. Thousands of people take the train to Chicago everyday. Thousands leave Chicago every day too, but some are never heard from again. It is a violent city that has a large gray area between morality and vice. It allows things to happen that are not necessarily socially acceptable in other parts of the country. The people are riding on the edge of wickedness in every part of the city. The streets are dirty, and the smell of the slaughterhouse reminds them that the city itself is a slaughterhouse. Some people are slaughtered morally, others literally.

H. H. Holmes disembarks from the train. He savors the smells and the sights that surround him as he enters the city. He loves it from the beginning. He thinks it will be a perfect place to settle for a while.

Part 1, The Black City Analysis

Erik Larson explains the sights, sound and general view of Chicago in the late 1880s and early 1890s. The fact that violence and vice rule the city is very important to the story. It becomes obvious that many feel the police are inadequate in Chicago because the line of morality is very blurred. By knowing this now, the reader will more readily accept the fact that many of the events that will occur are overlooked or ignored.

The reader is introduced to the second main character of this story, Dr. Holmes. Dr. Holmes steps from the train and smells the scents coming from the slaughterhouse. He seems to savor the smell of the slaughtered animals that affronts him as he stands in the train station. It lets the reader know that Dr. Holmes is not necessarily concerned with protecting the lives of his patients.



Part 1, The Trouble Has Just Begun

Part 1, The Trouble Has Just Begun Summary

It is Monday, February 24, 1890. People are standing outside each of Chicago's major newspapers awaiting the news, waiting to find out if Chicago has won the congressional vote to host the next World's Fair. They wait all day until the first bulletin is posted. Chicago is in the lead, with New York second. All are hoping to win the vote and have the opportunity to show the world that Chicago is not just a "greedy, hog-butchered backwater" city. The crowds grow as night falls, and the offices and business close for the day. The tension is high. When Congress considers adjourning for the night, the crowd boos and makes statements that New York is just trying to gain votes. Eventually, Congress announces it will stay until the decision is made.

The crowd grew. Men, women and children wait patiently while the lamplighters lit the gas street lamps. Daniel Burnham and John Root were sitting in their offices atop the Rookery Building, waiting for the decision too. They waited because they knew if Chicago got the vote to host the Exposition, they would be hired to design and build the city that would be the Fair. Finally, after many hours, the last bulletin was posted in the front window of each of the newspaper offices. With the last bulletin posted, messenger and telegraph boys ran to their employers to tell them the outcome of the vote. One such telegraph boy ran to the head quarters of the White Chapel Club. Upon hearing the news, they immediately sent a telegraph to Chauncey M. Depew. They were not disappointed with the reply from Depew twenty minutes later, agreeing to a meeting.

Daniel Burnham took the time of waiting to reflect on the events that have led to this time in his life. This reflection included the events that brought both he and John Root together, allowing them to accomplish any project that was put in front of them.

By the next morning, Chicago had created the Exposition Company to finance and build the World's Fair, with Burnham and Root the lead designers of the exposition. Through all the elation, no one could foresee the challenges and problems the men would face before the opening of the fair.

Part 1, The Trouble Has Just Begun Analysis

Burnham is made more human. The reader is given his history, which includes his many failures, before he met his would-be partner, John Root. The two would go on to become the most highly acclaimed architects in the Chicago area. This chapter humanizes him further by showing the reader a little of his personal life. The reader can now identify with the character of Daniel Burnham.

John Root is given a bit more depth as well, although we do not know about his young years; we are made well aware that he was given every opportunity by his family. We see more of his personal life when Erik Larson describes his marriages.



The crowds outside the Chicago newspapers show the civic pride that most cities had at the time. The description of the city, the filth and trash that laid everywhere, give the reader an insight into the way the Chicagoans lived. Although it was worse in the poorer areas, it is obvious the rich lived in a similar fashion.

Other authors and people of notoriety had written about the beauty and the horror of Chicago at this time. Erik Larson uses some of these to show that Chicago was as horrible as it was beautiful. Even with all the filth, smell and vice that is described by Larson, the civic pride is not extinguished. People of this time have a sense of community no matter how bad it is to outsiders.

Chicagoans saw the hosting of the World's Exposition of 1893 as a way to show the rest of the United States and the world they were not second best, no matter what others thought of their city and its people.



Part 1, The Necessary Supply

Part 1, The Necessary Supply Summary

In August of 1886, Herman Webster Mudgett arrived in Chicago. He walked the streets of a Chicago suburb, Englewood, and planned his strategy for the city. He was a handsome man, with blue eyes and a moustache. He liked and was even a little impressed with the growth of Chicago. He was even more impressed with the inability of the law enforcement to keep up with the growth.

As a teacher, Holmes had made little money and as a doctor, he made less. He contacted a friend from medical school, who was doing no better, and they planned their first scheme to make some money through insurance fraud. Even though it seemed impossible, the scheme worked. A landlord of Holmes' stated that Dr. Holmes had plenty of money. During this time, Holmes was married to Clara Lovering on July 4, 1878. However, he left shortly after the wedding, never to return to her.

He registered with the Illinois Licensing Board as Dr. H. H. Holmes and obtained a job as a pharmacist in a small pharmacy run by an elderly woman whose husband is dying. Eventually Dr. Holmes purchased the pharmacy, and the old woman was never seen again. Patrons of the pharmacy asked about the previous owner. He won the patrons over by answering their questions with an almost false sincerity. Because of the sincerity and his way of charming people, he built relationships with his patrons, young and old. Everyone in the neighborhood came to like and respect the young Dr. Holmes who had come to their city to build his fortune, as so many others had done.

Part 1, The Necessary Supply Analysis

The reader becomes more aware of Dr. Holmes as a main character, and the type of person he is from the bits of his childhood, young adulthood, and the interaction with the original owner of the pharmacy. The reader can see how forces may have changed his life, or maybe not changed, but amplified elements from his early childhood.

From his actions with the insurance fraud, the reader sees that the man can do anything without remorse in order to gain. The reader hopes that the woman who owned the pharmacy really did go on a trip and that Holmes did not get her. In addition, his marriage is another indication that this man has no thought or care for other humans. They are nothing more to him than things to be used as he sees fit.

Holmes likes the filth and dirt of Chicago. He knows that Chicago will "allow a broader range of behavior" and this suits him just fine.



Part 1, Becomingness

Part 1, Becomingness Summary

The Exposition's Committee took from February to October 1890 to give Burnham the official job of Chief of Construction. Of course, he made Root the Supervising Architect and Frederick Law Olmsted the Supervising Landscape Architect.

James Ellsworth, the Chairman of the Exposition Company, visited Olmsted during the summer. At that time, Ellsworth asked Olmsted to be the landscaper by offering his own money and without the authority of the Company. Olmsted at first hesitated. He was getting older and he did not know if he wanted to worry with this impossible job, but Ellsworth got his way and Olmsted accepted. Upon his return to Chicago, Ellsworth proposed hiring Olmsted to design the landscape of the exposition. The Exposition Company agreed. They sent a telegram to Olmsted requesting that he come to Chicago. Olmsted and his assistant Harry Codman arrived in Chicago shortly thereafter.

When the two landscape architects arrived, it was late summer and the site for the Exposition still had not been decided. Olmsted met with Burnham, unofficially, and the two men agreed that the best site for the exposition was a desolate place called Jackson Park. Olmsted had to write two separate reports stating that Jackson Park was the best site for the Exposition. Everyone had been hired to design the Exposition, but as of October 30, 1890, no one could start work because the Exposition Company was still arguing about the location of the Exposition.

Dedication day was scheduled for October 12, 1892, and the Opening Day Ceremony was scheduled for May 1, 1893. Time was quickly running out.

During the summer of 1890, the Chicago Mayoral race was beginning. A man named Carter Henry Harrison was running again. He was trying to win his fifth term in office. Patrick Eugene Joseph Prendergast, a young Irishman, thought that if he helped Harrison, a friend of the Irish, win the election by sending out postcards requesting support for Harrison, he would be given a better job. Prendergast currently worked at the InterOcean Newspaper and hated it. He knew how politics of the day worked: if you helped a candidate win, you were rewarded with a job in the administration.

Part 1, Becomingness Analysis

This chapter is very important because we meet some of the other minor characters of the story, such as Frederick Law Olmsted, Harry Codman, Carter Harrison, James Ellsworth and Patrick Eugene Joseph Prendergast. Although some of these characters are minor, they are needed to show the true actions and intentions that surround the story, and if they were left out, the story would be incomplete.



This chapter also sets the tone for the Exposition. The reader can sense that if it takes the Exposition Committee over eight months to decide on a location, other problems will be caused by their inability to make a decision. It shows that the job of Burnham and all the architects is going to be a challenge and maybe even impossible.

The political machine is shown using Prendergast and Harrison. Harrison gains his support with the working class people and unions, which are usually the majority in most large cities. He ignores vices that would be strictly prohibited by other candidates and governmental agencies. Prendergast thinks that he is one of the campaign's main supporters, and that Harrison knows this. In reality, the only thing the two men have in common is the fact that Prendergast is Irish and people say that Harrison is the friend of the Irish. There is no other association between the two men. The reader can see that Prendergast could eventually become a problem.



Part 1, Don't Be Afraid

Part 1, Don't Be Afraid Summary

Dr. Holmes' pharmacy and drug store were booming. He began to think of a woman he met years before during his travels in Minnesota, Myrta Z. Belknap. He traveled to Minnesota to court her and eventually married her on January 28, 1887. Two weeks later, he filed for divorce from Clara Lovering. The divorce was never granted because Holmes "failed to prosecute." Myrta became pregnant in the spring of 1888 and worked with Holmes in the store. This was fine for a while, but eventually Myrta became a hindrance and when her parents moved to Willmett, Illinois, Holmes talked her into moving with her parents until she had the baby.

Myrta moved to her parents' house, and Holmes began a new scheme. Under another alias, H. S. Campbell, he purchased the lot across the street from his pharmacy. The empty lot was located at the corners of 63rd Street and Wallace Street. He designed a building that would be practical and give him income, but would allow him to fulfill his needs without any evidence. He made it a habit of not paying workers, to increase turnover, and to ensure the secrets of the building would not be understood. He would question some of the workers, and eventually he found three that thought as he did. Charles Chappell, Patrick Quilan and Benjamin Pitezel became Holmes' assistants. Eventually Pitezel would become Holmes' confidant as well.

While Holmes was slowly constructing his building, the Exposition Committee decided on the site for the Exposition, Jackson Park. This decision made Holmes giddy with excitement. The Exposition would be located at the end of 63rd Street. He would open his building to the hundreds of thousands of people that would be coming to the fair. He would feed his desire and his bank account at the same time.

Part 1, Don't Be Afraid Analysis

The reader sees deeper into the life of Dr. Holmes and realizes that this man is possibly more sinister than anyone could ever imagine. This chapter shows his true colors, his manipulative personality that gets him what he wants. He is charming and genteel as long as it is beneficial to him in some way.

Part 1, Pilgrimage

Part 1, Pilgrimage Summary

Daniel Burnham invited five architects to work on the designs for the World Exposition Fair, even though he did not have the authority to hire them. Three of the architects were from New York: Richard M. Hunt, George B. Post and Charles McKim. Robert Peabody was from Boston, Massachusetts and one was from Kansas City, Henry Van Brunt. He had invited none from Chicago. He did this to ensure all of America would realize this was not going to be a little backwater animal exhibit, but an exposition that would compete with the Exposition in Paris. However, because of his actions, he alienated the architects of Chicago. Eventually several architectural firms from Chicago were also selected to build some of the main buildings, but this only brought other challenges to the forefront.

Daniel Burnham spent most of December trying to find ways around the challenges that faced the Exposition, but the biggest threat loomed in the shadows. Daniel Burnham could do nothing about it but wait and see if the impending depression and failure of the American economy would end his dream of the Exposition.

Part 1, Pilgrimage Analysis

The reader is introduced to many of the other characters that are part of this story. Although they are not main characters, without their appearance in the story, some issues and challenges would not be as easily understood. These characters represent some of the first challenges to the Exposition. However, this chapter also sets up the reader to see that even though these little challenges at the beginning of the planning are minor compared to what is to come in the near future.



Part 1, Hotel for the Fair

Part 1, Hotel for the Fair Summary

With the news of the World's Exposition, Holmes focused on turning his building into a hotel for the fairgoers to stay in, with a few apartments for tenants as well. It was during this time that certain features of the building were constructed for Holmes' personal use.

Holmes had challenges as well. The young women working for him in the pharmacy kept disappearing. The patrons of his pharmacy questioned him, but he always had a plausible story and pacified them.

Holmes traveled to Willmetts every so often to visit his wife Myrta. During one of these visits, he met her Uncle John. From the beginning, Uncle John did not like Holmes. John did not trust him, but Holmes was charming enough to get Uncle John to lend him some money. Holmes also invited Uncle John to see the building in Chicago. Although Uncle John did not want to go, he was eventually persuaded to go to Chicago with Holmes. During his stay with Holmes in Chicago, he discovered that Holmes had forged his name to another loan for more money and his distrust of the young doctor grew. He was very much relieved when he was able to return to Willmetts for fear of the young doctor's retaliation.

Part 1, Hotel for the Fair Analysis

The reader can see the predator preparing the trap for his prey. The vaults, passageways and other conveniences he has built into the hotel for the disposal of his victims are taking shape. Holmes views the Exposition as a way to make more money, by converting his building into a hotel during the Exposition, and a way to have access to more victims. The reader can almost feel Holmes' excitement as he prepares for the onslaught of people to his hotel.

Holmes does face challenges, but they are not as overwhelming as Daniel Burnham's challenges. Previously, the reader learned that many young, single women would come to Chicago to try to get independence. However, it is assumed that while some do get the independence they crave, others return to their families' homes, find a husband and start a family, or are taken in by the fast living that Chicago offers. Therefore, the disappearances of women working for Holmes are easily dismissed. No one questions his stories.

The reader can see Holmes' mind working when he meets Uncle John. He is an older man with money and no direct family, perfect in Holmes' requirements for prey. Although he is Myrta's uncle, that does not seem to stop Holmes. Through the description given by Uncle John, the reader learns he had feared for his life while in Chicago, and had distrusted the man from their initial meeting.

The reader learns how Holmes works to get the money he needs and the prey he desires.



Part 1, Landscape of Regret

Part 1, Landscape of Regret Summary

The New York architects arrived in Chicago, as well as the architects from Boston and Kansas City. They all met with the Exposition's Committee to discuss the design and challenges of the Exposition. The Chicagoans wanted to show the Eastern architects that they could compete with the elite in architecture and wanted the Exposition to be more than cows and pigs. Once all the ideas were presented, the architects unofficially agreed that what they were proposing could not be achieved in the short amount of time that was left until opening day of the Exposition.

Part 1, Landscape of Regret Analysis

This chapter foreshadows some of the troubles that will plague Daniel Burnham and the Exposition. It also foreshadows the fact that no matter how hard Chicago tries, they will always be considered a country town and second-best.



Part 1, Vanishing Point

Part 1, Vanishing Point Summary

The family that moved into Holmes' building became the object of his attention, mainly Ned's wife and sister. Ned did not like the amount of attention Holmes paid to his wife and sister, but could not see any real harm in it either. He let it slide.

Chicago, at this time, had so many disappearances that there was talk of creating "a separate bureau, a mysterious disappearance department" within the police force. However, that did not happen, because unless the person who disappeared had some money, the police did next to nothing to try to find the person.

Part 1, Vanishing Point Analysis

The scene is being set for the reader to see how well Holmes' building will work for his plan. The availability of the victims and the lack of police investigation will allow him to proceed with his sinister plans.

The fact that the police are discussing a special department for missing persons shows that disappearances in Chicago are commonplace and that Holmes will have no problems from the police.



Part 1, Alone

Part 1, Alone Summary

The Board of Architects picked Hunt as their president, and Sullivan as their secretary. Although one of the New York architects was president, a Chicago architect was chosen as well. This tended to alleviate some of the tension between the two factions during their meetings.

The day after one of the meetings at John Root's house, his wife called Daniel Burnham at the Rookery to tell him that John had pneumonia and would not be able to attend the meetings. Daniel Burnham went to John and stayed with him. Hunt, too, became sick and stayed in bed at the Wellington Hotel. The remaining architects kept meeting and pushing the plan forward. They would go to the convalescent men and tell them of the plans.

The Board of Architects approved the preliminary drawing of the Exposition design created by Burnham, Root and Olmsted with only slight modifications. The architects decided on the site and the size of the buildings, the general style of the buildings, and set the height of the cornices of each of the main buildings to create a uniform style throughout the entire Exposition.

Hunt regained his health and began attending the meetings. Root, however, died from the pneumonia. The architects feared that the death of John Root would be the end of the Exposition. They all left to return to their own firms and work on the design of each of their buildings the day before John Root's funeral.

The United States was slowly moving toward an economic disaster. A bank in Kansas City failed. It was the first sign that the economy was definitely going to affect the Exposition.

The president of the Exposition Company quit and the unions used the Exposition to push for a minimum wage and an 8-hour day, with time and a half for any time worked over 8 hours. On top of these problems, the weather, disease and fire were always concerns for Burnham, who had a tight schedule.

Prendergast became more obsessed and insane.

Part 1, Alone Analysis

More obstacles are introduced in this chapter, as the reader begins to understand that the challenges of the Exposition seem to be impossible to overcome. This is even more apparent when the architects begin to feel the same way. However, the architects take this challenge and at least say they will try to complete the Exposition.

By going into such detail about the challenges and obstacles facing Daniel Burnham and his colleagues and the state of Chicago itself, Larson is able to convince the reader that the chance of failure is great. However, the hopes for the success of the Exposition rise when the architects continue to work on the design for the Exposition, even though they believe it will fail.

The death of John Root is a major blow to Daniel Burnham, the Exposition and the other architects. Daniel Burnham refuses to give up the dream of the Exposition, although he grieves for his friend and puts work on hold for a short time. He eventually pushes full steam ahead on the project and focuses on nothing but the Exposition until it is complete.

Part 2, Convocation

Part 2, Convocation Summary

The architects returned to Chicago in February 1891. They met with Daniel Burnham in the Library in the Rookery Building. They submitted their detailed building plans to the Grounds and Building Committee. The buildings were huge, elaborate and classic in style. Frederick Olmsted discussed the plants, birds and boats that were to be used and the fact that he wanted the people who attended the Exposition to use their imaginations. He notes that the buildings must be completed before the real landscaping could be done, and that left only 26 months until opening day.

Work on the buildings and the site was finally started. However, the unions stopped it almost immediately, but after two weeks of discussions, work resumed. Burnham was getting frustrated with the unions and the fact that everything had to gain the approval of the committee before work could begin. It took the committee too much time deliberating for the Exposition to be ready for the Dedication Service and opening day. Now, even more committees were being created for every type of exhibit at the Exposition.

No design had been proposed for the Women's Building because the prominent women of Chicago wanted a woman to design it. They held a contest that allowed only women to submit designs for the building. A woman from Boston, Sophia Hayden, won the contest with her design of the building.

Burnham also had to replace Root and the Chief Architect. It was hard for Burnham because Root had been his friend. He eventually chose Charles Atwood, even though he did have problems with dependability. Burnham thought he was a genius.

Chicago was having its own problems. Unions threatened the city and the police realized that with the amount of people that would be coming to the Exposition from all over the world, crime would increase and they would need to prepare now to keep up with it during the Exposition.

Part 2, Convocation Analysis

Daniel Burnham has many problems to overcome, but he has hope and the other architects fuel the hope by working with him as much as possible. The problems for the Exposition seem to be coming faster than they can be resolved. However, the human factor does not seem to allow the chance of failure to stop it. The architects and Chicagoans want to succeed and most are ready to accept the challenges.

The chapter gives a wonderfully descriptive and accurate picture of Chicago in the early 1890s. The large city already faces many problems without the prospect of the World

Exposition, which just adds to the workload of the already overburdened city employees such as trash collectors and police officers.



Part 2, Cuckolding

Part 2, Cuckolding Summary

Holmes' building was unofficially nicknamed "the castle" by residence of the area.

Ned's sister, Gertrude, began to act strangely and wanted to return home to her family. Ned realized something must have happened, because when Holmes would enter the room, Gertrude would become uneasy. When he asked Gertrude, she refused to say what had happened and with whom. Gertrude did return home, but shortly after returning, fell ill and died.

Ned's marriage had never been an easy marriage. He and his wife, Julia, had separated and then reconciled. Now his marriage was even worse than before, and it seemed that it was again on the verge of ending.

Holmes offered to sell the pharmacy to Ned, to take care of all the legalities and offered a payment plan for the purchase. Ned agreed naively. He hoped this would ease some of the tension between himself and Julia, and that he, Julia and their daughter Pearl could be a happy family. However, this did not happen. Holmes sympathized with Ned and told him, "She would come to her senses in short order."

The thought of Holmes and Julia having an affair became more improbable with each act of kindness from Holmes. Holmes had even told Ned that now that he owned the pharmacy he should get life insurance for himself, and maybe even Pearl. He even brought a man to discuss it with Ned, but Ned refused.

Once Ned took over, creditors began coming to the pharmacy for payment on bills that Holmes had never paid. Ned initially thought the people were trying to defraud him, but with Holmes' signature on the bills, he knew they were legitimate. He made agreements with each creditor to pay them soon. This led to Ned thinking that maybe Julia and Holmes were having an affair. He said nothing of his suspicions, but told Julia they would have to separate. Ned left his pharmacy, wife and child, and went to downtown Chicago to start a new life.

Ned eventually left Chicago, met a woman and began a formal courtship. He returned to Chicago and Holmes' building to get his divorce and daughter. The divorce he obtained easily; the daughter he did not. Pearl remained in the custody of Julia, and now of Holmes.

Holmes had promised to marry Julia once she was divorced, but he had lost interest in her by that time. He had a new love, his kiln, and the wonderfully intoxicating heat it produced.



Part 2, Cuckolding Analysis

This chapter shows Holmes as an emotionless destroyer of people's lives. Ned is conned into buying a pharmacy with extensive debt, has his wife and daughter taken from him and Holmes smiles the entire time. The man has no conscience and that becomes very apparent. The reader sees a glimpse of the true Holmes emerging.

The fact that by the time Julia is divorced, Holmes is onto something new is a foreshadowing that he is ready to feed his obsession. The fact that Pearl remains in the custody of Julia and Holmes seems to seal her fate as well. Holmes must have been extremely satisfied with his acquisitions and the fact that he would be able to try out his new kiln in the process.



Part 2, Vexed

Part 2, Vexed Summary

Daniel Burnham rarely went home to Evanston to visit his wife and five children, but lived on the Exposition site to work on the challenges that face the Exposition.

Problems ensued between the National Exposition Commission and the Exposition Company. Daniel Burnham had problems too. The first was the unstable soil in Jackson Park, which was solved by using John Root's grillage foundation when the ground would allow it, and other types of foundation when necessary in certain areas.

The mayoral election saw Carter Harrison lose and Hemstead Washburne win. Daniel Burnham was glad Carter Harrison lost. He feared the man's influence on the Exposition, which would have included vices the unsavory people of Chicago preferred. Prendergast mourned his loss. He vowed to double his campaigning next time so that Carter Harrison would win.

Thomas Edison gave his ideas regarding the lighting of the Exposition. Two electric companies battled over the rights to illuminate the Exposition, General Electric with its bid of Direct Current (DC) and Westinghouse with its Alternate Current (AC). Westinghouse won, because it was cheaper but the use of it at the Exposition would change the use of electricity forever.

The main burden on Burnham was the inability of the architects to get their plans in on time, and then Frederick Olmstead became severely ill. However, he still worked on the Exposition from his bed, ordering bulbs and plants for the Exposition's greenhouse.

Daniel Burnham asked for bids with penalties if the work was not completed on time. He became a tyrant in regards to deadlines. This first bid was awarded May 14, 1891 for the Mines Building.

Colonel William Cody (Buffalo Bill) wanted to bring his Wild West show to the Exposition and submitted an application. He was denied. Instead of accepting the denial, William Cody leased the grounds close to the Exposition so that he could take his Wild West show to Chicago without the Exposition. Sol Bloom had also submitted an application to bring his Algerian village to the Exposition, but he was denied. He, too, refused to be defeated and kept trying, with repeat submissions.

Each state submitted an area, foreign countries submitted areas and the only thing the Exposition lacked was a structure that would be comparable to the Eiffel Tower. Burnham received many submissions for towers, even a query from Eiffel himself, but Burnham wanted something different and he would not settle for a tower.

Sol Bloom sought the help of publisher Mike DeYoung to help with his petition to the Exposition again. Instead, Mike DeYoung got Sol Bloom elected to select the



concessions for the Midway of the Exposition. Mike DeYoung told Sol Bloom to name his price and he would either accept or refuse. Bloom knew his price, but he would wait until the next meeting with DeYoung to tell him.

Burnham wanted to create a large Exposition police force, the Columbian Guard, whose main purpose was to be the deterrent of crime. They were to be the elite of the Exposition. Burnham also wanted safe drinking water for the Exposition. He had his sanitation engineer create a water sterilization plant on the grounds of the Exposition. He also wanted to offer water purified with the Pasteur filters or naturally pure water piped from springs in Wisconsin.

Burnham's biggest fear, however, was fire. He created a fire department just for the Exposition and placed fire hydrants and alarm boxes throughout the Exposition grounds.

Sol Bloom returned to DeYoung's office and requested a salary of \$50,000, the same as the United States President at the time. DeYoung agreed and Bloom was the Midway concessions selector.

With the buildings rising, the fact that the chief structural engineer failed to include wind factors for all of the Exposition's main buildings became apparent with the collapse of one of the buildings. European papers reported that the buildings were unsafe and some were condemned. Burnham replaced his chief structural engineer and made sure the buildings were "unnecessarily strong."

Bloom came to Chicago and took over for a Harvard Professor of Ethnology, and was immediately referred to Burnham by the President of the Exposition.

The Mines Building construction was going smoothly, but the Women's building was complicated by changes proposed by Bertha Honroe Palmer, the head of the Expositions Board of Lady Managers. Sophia Hayden drew the final plans and then returned home until the decoration of the building's exterior began. In her absence, Ms. Palmer had taken over and acquired architectural elements from many prominent women, and felt that all the things should be used. When Ms. Hayden rejected a door from a woman in Wisconsin, Ms. Palmer's secretary made sure she knew what Ms. Hayden had done. Ms. Palmer preferred a patchwork quilt look, but Ms. Hayden did not and she continued to refuse donations. Eventually, Sophia Hayden had a severe breakdown and was put in a hospital and required to rest. Ms. Palmer won.

Everything was bothering Burnham, even Olmsted's obsession with boats. There was an increasing threat of labor strikes, but the Mines building was completed with few incidents and deaths. The Exposition construction was behind schedule. Everything had to arrive and proceed perfectly if it was to be ready for the dedication day. In the midst of all these challenges, banks and companies all across the United States were failing.



Part 2, Vexed Analysis

The details of all the problems, setbacks and deaths allow the reader to understand why many thought the Exposition was impossible. The bureaucrats, the socialites, and the unions all battling against one another amplify Burnham's courage to keep moving forward against the odds. The economy was failing; it would cause problems with materials for the construction and possibly the attendance at the Exposition.

However, this is a real story. These problems and challenges really did occur, but the way in which the author uses them creates a sense of hope at the same time foreboding of failure. It shows the wonderful resiliency of the human mind when faced with improbable and impossible challenges. Many of these should have defeated Burnham, but he refused to allow defeat or even truly acknowledge defeat. Not yet anyway.

Burnham depicts the type of man that lived in the 1890s, the type of man the country was built by and the type of man that would take the country into the next century, the Gilded Age man. Although the Gilded Age was giving way to the Industrial Age, these achievements are the basis on which the achievers of the Industrial Age would build their dreams.



Part 2, Remains of the Day

Part 2, Remains of the Day Summary

Julia became pregnant and Holmes agreed to marry her only if she were to abort the baby. He would perform the operation on the night of Christmas Eve. She agreed. When Christmas Eve arrived, she put Pearl to bed and spent time with an older couple who had moved into one of the apartments in the building. Later, she met Holmes in the room prepared for her operation. However, the operation was never performed, and Pearl never saw Christmas morning.

Holmes paid Charles Chappell to clean Julia's bones and skull and create an articulated skeleton. He proceeded to sell the finished product to a medical school in Chicago.

The other couple that lived in the building questioned Holmes regarding the whereabouts of Julia and Pearl. They could not believe that she would have left on Christmas Eve and not told them she was leaving. Holmes assured them, as he told everyone who asked of Julia and Pearl, that she said she was going to Iowa, but that was only to ensure her ex-husband would not find her or Pearl. He did not know where she was actually going.

A new family moved into the Julia's apartment in January. The Doyles asked about all the belongings left in the apartment by the previous tenant. Holmes assured them the previous tenant would not be returning. She had left and did not want her ex-husband to find her and her daughter.

Part 2, Remains of the Day Analysis

This chapter takes the insinuation of Holmes being a murderer and makes it clear. This man is inherently evil. He thinks nothing of killing Julia and his unborn baby and then using her remains to make a profit. Pearl was just unnecessary material that needed to be disposed of. The fact they were alive meant nothing to him; only the excitement and arousal of Julia's death did he enjoy. The questions aroused by the sudden departure of Julia and Pearl are just annoyances to Holmes. It shows his disrespect and lack of empathy for other humans.



Part 2, A Gauntlet Dropped

Part 2, A Gauntlet Dropped Summary

Strikes were a continuous threat and the unions used this threat to gain strength in bargaining for workers rights. Upon allegations of discriminations against union workers, Burnham ordered his construction superintendent to investigate.

Across the United States, the economy was failing, murder rose 40% from the previous year, and now there was cold weather. The workers found ways to work around the cold, but they increased Burnham's fear of a fire breaking out on the Exposition grounds. However, that was minor compared to the almost non-existent treasury of the Exposition Company. Burnham was forced to cut costs and lay off workers who needed the jobs. The other problem that plagued Burnham was the fact that no submissions had been worthy of acceptance for a structure to out-do the Eiffel Tower.

Burnham was invited to talk to engineers at a Saturday Afternoon Club. Instead of talking about the challenges of the Exposition, he complimented the architects of the United States for stepping up to the challenges, while stating that the engineers of the United States had failed by submitting nothing original, and nothing that came close to the Eiffel Tower. During this talk, one of the engineers came up with an idea.

Burnham and the Director General of the National Commission were soon fighting. Burnham knew that if the committees did not start approving things faster, the Exposition would fall more behind schedule and never recover.

The Exposition Company tried to get a direct appropriation from Congress, which led to an investigation of Exposition expenditures. This investigation led to the Burnham and Davis feud beginning again. The committee left for Washington to analyze the data and help decide if Congress would help pay for the Exposition.

The Midway began to have a scope on paper. Bloom's flair for promotion came to the attention of the Exposition officials, who asked him for help with their areas and the Exposition's overall promotion. Now Bloom did not have to gain a concession for his Algerian village. He sent the contract to Paris and told his Algerian Company to come to the United States the following year.

Part 2, A Gauntlet Dropped Analysis

The reader learns that as good as bureaucracy is, it can also be a hindrance. As far as Burnham was concerned, bureaucracy and the interference of the governmental investigation were the cause of the majority of his problems. The author uses this to move the story along and show that Burnham is being hit from all sides with difficulties with no resolution in sight.



Bloom is coming into his own. The reader watches Sol Bloom take over promotion of the Midway and the Exposition. He says things that are not necessarily true to get the curiosity of people aroused. The reader watches this man who has the same ability to charm people and get his way, such as Holmes, but prefers to do it for the money he can make with his charm. This character seems to show the good side of a charismatic person to offset the evil of Holmes' charisma. Sol Bloom also typifies the type of man that takes part of the thinking of the Gilded Age Man and entwines it with the business savvy of Industrial Age Man, creating a man who is ever trying to make money and do things better than the others..



Part 2, The Angel from Dwight

Part 2, The Angel from Dwight Summary

Holmes' assistant Pitezel was sent to Dwight, Illinois to obtain Dr. Leslie Enraught Kelley's famous "gold cure for alcoholism." Holmes did this for two possible reasons: 1) because Pitezel did drink too much, and 2) Holmes wanted to know the cure and recreate it for resale.

While in Dwight, Pitezel met a woman and told Holmes all about her. Holmes wrote to her and offered her a job, which of course, she accepted, and she promptly moved to Chicago. He started a relationship with her, and everyone believed they were the happy young couple Holmes wanted portrayed. Her name was Emeline Cigrand. Emeline adored Holmes; he even told her he was the son of an English Lord in the strictest of confidence. She believed him since his demeanor did not fit the normal Chicagoan brash ways. Of course, she did tell her friends about him being the son of an English Lord, but after making them swear they would not tell anyone else. Emeline had many friends in Chicago and in Dwight. She also had cousins in Chicago, Dr. and Mrs. B. J. Cigrand. Although Dr. and Mrs. Cigrand never met Holmes, they knew him through the stories Emeline would tell them about her employer. Emeline was in love with Holmes, but Dr. and Mrs. Cigrand were not impressed with the young doctor. They would come to regret not telling her of their fears regarding Holmes. Holmes asked Emeline to marry him and she immediately agreed. He promised to take her to visit his father in Europe on their honeymoon.

Ned came back to talk with Holmes about Pearl and Julia. Holmes was not in the building, but Emeline was, and she spoke with him. Ned told her to get away from Holmes, almost warning her, but she did not listen to him.

Dr. M. B. Lawrence and his wife moved into a 5-room apartment in Holmes' building at this same time. They pitied the naïve Emeline for being in a relationship with Holmes, because of the way he took advantage of her as her employer.

Part 2, The Angel from Dwight Analysis

This chapter shows how the people of the time think about interfering with other people. Although Ned tells her to get away from Holmes, he never explains why she should leave. Dr. and Mrs. Cigrand, too, do not like this man, but do not interfere with their cousin. It is not their place to tell Emeline who to love and how to live her life.

Dr. Cigrand notices the shadowy corners and the unusual way of the house, which means that others must notice too, and say nothing. This deference allows the predator plenty of room to roam and find prey. The majority of people of the time would not stop him or interfere with his actions. Many think of Holmes as a strange, handsome

charismatic man. Others find him eerie and want nothing to do with him. Both types of people fuel Holmes and his obsessions.



Part 2, Dedication Day

Part 2, Dedication Day Summary

In 1892, Olmsted worked like a man much younger than his years. Even with Codman in charge of supervising the landscaping of the Exposition during his absences, the landscaping was behind schedule, as was all the construction at this time. Construction delays caused Olmsted much frustration. His main frustrations, however, were the fact that Burnham was still considering steam powered boats instead of the electrical boats he had recommended, and that the wooded island should remain without structure. Everyone wanted the island and Burnham knew that Olmsted would have to allow something built there. Olmsted finally agreed, but with reluctance, to a structure by the Japanese Government.

All the problems with the Exposition and the proposed changes to Central Park in New York took their toll on him. He was on the verge of a collapse, when he finally decided to rest and go to Europe with two of his children and Harry Codman's younger brother, Phil. The trip would not be the refreshing journey he needed, and while he was away, Codman took over the Exposition Landscape design. After a brief stay in England, Olmsted and the boys headed for Paris. His daughter remained in England with relatives. When he returned to England, he met Dr. Rayner and spent some time at this home in the country, traveling through the villages and countryside, reinforcing the concepts he had for the wooded island.

Upon his return to Chicago, Olmsted saw a noticeable change everywhere and found Codman ill. Although the place where he had envisioned lawns and flowerbeds was still covered with railway tracks, buildings had been built and the lagoons had been created. Things were accomplished during his absence. Dedication day was only a month away and Burnham wanted flowerbeds and temporary lawns in place for the ceremony. Again, Olmsted agreed reluctantly because it was not what he wanted for the Exposition. However, Olmsted felt a renewed satisfaction when Burnham awarded the boat concession to an electric boat company.

Sol Bloom had to go to New York to ensure his Algerian village made it to Chicago with no problems. The fact that the Algerian village arrived a year early only bothered Sol Bloom for a moment. After the initial shock, he began to think of ways to profit from the early arrival.

Because of the close proximity of the Dedication Ceremony, Burnham began enacting his czar clauses, forcing builders to work night and day or face financial penalties. He also worried that nothing had been submitted that compared to Eiffel's tower in France. Burnham denied a very original idea from a young engineer that would have competed, as it was "too fragile." Two windstorms caused damage to much of the Exposition. The architects again came to Chicago and decided on the color scheme of the Exposition. Unfortunately, the Director of Color was away during this time, and he resigned upon



returning and finding out that he did not have any say in the matter. William Pretyman was replaced by Francis Millet. Millet was given the task of finding a faster way of painting, and from this challenge, created the first spray painter. Rainstorms plagued the construction of the Exposition as well, and the water engineer was having problems getting water pumped from Wisconsin springs.

For the Dedication Ceremony, Francis J. Bellamy thought all the children of the United States should offer something and wrote the poem that with some rewording, would become the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dignitaries from all over the world, religious figures and 140,000 Chicagoans attended the Dedication Ceremony.

Part 2, Dedication Day Analysis

The Exposition is behind schedule, but the reader begins to see successes for the people working to create the Exposition. Human perseverance is winning. Although the Exposition is far from complete, the Dedication Ceremony is a success and gives hope to Burnham, Olmsted, and all the others that the Exposition can be completed.

There is a sense of success but the reader knows that there is still a chance of failure. The designers are riding high but reality returns shortly after the Dedication Day Ceremony ends.



Part 2, Prendergast

Part 2, Prendergast Summary

Prendergast is now completely insane and he is again campaigning for Carter Harrison. He writes to a lawyer named Alfred S. Trude, but his message did not follow any theme and said nothing. When Trude received the postcard, he kept it because it just did not seem right.

Part 2, Prendergast Analysis

The reader sees the mind of Prendergast has lost its ability to function in reality.. Although it is just a glimpse, the reader knows this young man will affect the Exposition in some way.



Part 2, I Want You At Once

Part 2, I Want You At Once Summary

The young engineer resubmitted his idea for the object comparable to the Eiffel Tower. With this submission, he included the names of investors, men on his board and the fact that he would finance it himself. He is awarded the concession to build his design. The engineer who is awarded the concession is George Washington Gale Ferris.

Part 2, I Want You At Once Analysis

Human perseverance is again the theme. Ferris kept trying until he succeeded. He refused to compromise on the design, so he compromised by financing it himself, and getting the backing of others in his field. He is similar to Burnham, Olmsted and Holmes, in that he plans, refuses defeat and in the end hopes to see his plans come to fruition.



Part 2, Chappell Redux

Part 2, Chappell Redux Summary

Emeline's love for Holmes seemed to change. She met with Mrs. Lawrence several weeks before Christmas with a present, and mentioned she would be returning to Indiana, maybe for good. Shortly, thereafter, the visits from Emeline stopped. Mrs. Lawrence asked Holmes about her whereabouts. He produced a wedding announcement from Emeline, but Mrs. Lawrence did not think she would have left without saying good-bye. She kept asking Holmes for more information, but Holmes had no answers.

Emeline's family in Indiana received the same type of marriage announcement that Holmes had shown the Lawrences. The local paper in Indiana also received one and mentioned it in the paper.

Changes in Holmes' routine followed Emeline's disappearance. Mrs. Lawrence began to speculate that Holmes had murdered Emeline, but she never went to the police. No one did, because they figured the police would not respond and they were not competent enough to investigate it even if they did respond. The letters had stopped. The family figured she must have died in Europe and her new husband did not know how to contact her family.

However, years later, a footprint would be discovered on the door of Holmes' kiln. It is speculated that Holmes put her in the kiln, placed acid on the floor and left her in there to die, having locked her in from the outside. She may have stepped in the acid at some point and then used her foot to try to push the door open. The footprint was etched in detail on the door. The police believe the footprint is from Emeline Cigrand.

Part 2, Chappell Redux Analysis

It is obvious that Homes had taken another victim in Emeline Cigrand. The fact that people have so little faith in the Chicago police force shows the normal way of thinking in Chicago, and most big cities, at this time. It shows that Chicago has a blind eye to crime and vice, and many criminals pay no attention to the fact they could be caught. It is obvious that in Chicago it is not a consideration. This forebodes the challenges of the Exposition on crime. The reader also knows that Holmes is very dangerous and wonders what his next crime will be.



Part 2, The Cold-Blooded Fact

Part 2, The Cold-Blooded Fact Summary

January 1893 was bitterly and extremely cold with temperatures well below zero. Ferris was having problems with the foundation of his wheel and his axle.

Harry Codman was in the hospital and everyone thought he was recovering; however, he did not recover, and died shortly after his appendectomy. Olmsted received news that Codman had died, so he and Phil left for Chicago. When Olmsted saw the Exposition grounds, he called upon Charles Eliot to help. Mr. Eliot agreed but with some hesitation. Olmsted felt that he would fail; there was not enough time and he was too sick to work on the Exposition himself. Before he left, he put Rudolf Ulrich in charge of supervising the landscaping of the Exposition. Olmsted did not like leaving Ulrich in charge, because he lacked the ability to see the big picture and worried too much about the small things.

In February 1893, a blizzard hit Chicago. Again, the structural engineer had made a mistake. He did not think about the buildings' need to withstand the weight of snow. This became obvious when the roof of the Manufacturers & Liberal Arts building fell from the weight of the snow.

Part 2, The Cold-Blooded Fact Analysis

Even with the success of Dedication Day and Burnham given full authority, challenges plague the fair. It shows that every step forward takes the construction designers two steps back. Even the architects are expecting failure. The reader can understand the feelings of elation and defeat and can sympathize with the characters. .



Part 2, Acquiring Minnie

Part 2, Acquiring Minnie Summary

Holmes now owned part of a legitimate company, had a mail-order sales company, and had opened his Silver Ash Institute for Alcoholism. He had tenants that paid rent in his building and owned two houses. He knew his time in Chicago would be ending soon. Creditors were knocking at his door and Mrs. Lawrence was only a moment away from blatantly accusing him of Emeline's murder. The families of Julia and Emeline sent private investigators to find their daughters. Holmes gave them no new information and from these visits, he knew he was not suspected of any wrongdoing.

His biggest problem in early 1893 was the need for a secretary. He knew the skills and personality needed for this job and sought out women just arriving in Chicago. He ran into a woman named Minnie R. Williams whom he had met in Boston several years earlier. He wanted to take her then but was unable to do so. He had courted her in 1889, but it did not last. However, when he heard she had arrived in Chicago, he sought her out immediately. He asked her to work for him. She agreed, and she eventually moved into his building.

When Holmes asked her to marry him, she agreed immediately. She wrote to her sister, Anna, to tell her the news. Holmes manipulated Minnie into signing over the majority of her inheritance without even realizing it. He placed these assets into a corporation to hold them for his use later on. Holmes and Minnie married quickly and quietly. However, no record of Holmes' marriage to Minnie exists.

Part 2, Acquiring Minnie Analysis

Holmes is playing his usual game with Minnie. The reader knows that Holmes does not love Minnie: he loves her inheritance. He plays with the families of Julia and Emeline too. It seems that all the plans he has made are falling into place. Everything is going his way. As hard as Burnham has to work, that is how little Holmes has to work. Although Holmes' challenges are created by the games he plays, the reader knows that perfection does not last forever. He will have to leave soon or he will be discovered.



Part 2, Dreadful Things Done By Girls

Part 2, Dreadful Things Done By Girls Summary

The city of Chicago was preparing for the fair. Hotels were being built, and stores were increasing in size and number. Brothels, bars and saloons were redecorating and growing in hopes of making a profit. None was disappointed.

Exhibits were arriving around the clock from all over the world. Society people from New York were sending advice to Chicago, making the people of Chicago realize that New York still thought of them as uncivilized. Others gave advice to clean up the city; even at its worst, New York was never as dirty as Chicago was.

Sol Bloom had been able to open the Algerian Village a year early. He recouped his debt and began making a profit.

Carter Harrison was running for his fifth term as Mayor. Prendergast knew Harrison would win this time. He had to win so that he could give Prendergast the appointment as a reward. Prendergast knew how the political machine worked. Harrison was obliged to give him an appointment.

Prendergast sent out more postcards to lawyers, judges, doctors, and other influential people. He sent another postcard to Trude as well. This time the note remained on the subject but there was something odd about it and Prendergast had signed it. Many recipients of Prendergast's postcards noticed something odd about them. Trude decided to keep his copy.

Burnham and the others did not want Carter Harrison the mayor for the Exposition, however, they were not given their wish. Carter Harrison won his fifth term and he would be Mayor for the Exposition.

Part 2, Dreadful Things Done By Girls Analysis

This chapter is foreshadowing the fact that this wonderful city created by the Exposition will also be a moneymaker for the vice of Chicago and work as a lure to provide new associates and victims to this world in the shadows.

This chapter also foreshadows the relationship of Carter Harrison and Patrick Prendergast. The reader can see that Prendergast is working hard and feels he deserves a wonderful appointment. His sanity is still questionable, as the people receiving the postcards feel there is definitely something odd about the person writing them.



Part 2, The Invitation

Part 2, The Invitation Summary

Holmes told Minnie to invite her sister to Chicago to see the World's Exposition at his expense. Minnie was exuberant and asked her sister immediately. Minnie's sister, Anna, agreed, only because she wanted to meet Dr. Holmes. The letter from Minnie made her not trust this man. Holmes knew that she did not trust him. He knew that if he could get Anna to Chicago, he could make her less skeptical.

Part 2, The Invitation Analysis

Holmes knows he will have trouble with Anna unless he makes her trust and like him. He knows the best way to accomplish this is through manipulation. The reader is not sure what Minnie has that Holmes could want other than the inheritance. Anna is a large obstacle between Holmes and Minnie's estate. This chapter is showing Holmes' ability to manipulate people's lives to get what he wants. Each manipulation makes the reader wonder how far he will go to fulfill his plan.



Part 2, Final Preparations

Part 2, Final Preparations Summary

Everything was still behind schedule, but the weather was beautiful and Burnham was in a good mood. The only possible problem was the carpenters' strike, but Burnham chose to hire non-union workers to replace those who were striking. During negotiations with unions, Burnham conceded to higher pay and fewer hours to reach an agreement and get the workers back on the job. These negotiations would set a precedent for later union negotiations in the years to come.

Wild Bill Cody's show opened at the beginning of April. His arena was usually filled to capacity. His show was doing well, but his marriage was not. His wife came to Chicago for a surprise visit and found that Mr. and Mrs. William Cody were already registered at the Hotel.

Olmsted returned to Chicago to see that Ulrich had lost sight of the big picture that was needed for the landscaping of the Exposition. There was no way to complete the landscaping on time. Although many things were in place, Olmsted was told by Burnham to set flowers in pots and set other temporary measures around the Exposition grounds for Opening Day. Olmsted's heart was broken; he felt defeated.

In the spring, rain began to fall and caused delays everywhere. People worked in the rain day and night to try to complete all the work. From January until April, seven workers died.

The night of April 30, train tracks and trash littered the Exposition grounds. Train cars were intermittent throughout the grounds too. The Opening Day Ceremony was scheduled for the next morning. The President of the United States, Grover Cleveland and other United States dignitaries were planning to parade through Chicago to the Exposition to begin the ceremony. It seemed as if Chicago had failed.

Holmes had put a small ad in the paper advertising his World's Fair Hotel.

Part 2, Final Preparations Analysis

This chapter portrays the hopelessness of the Exposition, from mainly Burnham and Olmsted. However, the ad Holmes places in the paper shows his excitement.

Even with hard work night and day, the dream is only half realized. It seems as if defeat is eminent. Burnham and Olmsted both feel the stress of Opening Day. Failure is not always overcome by hard work. This chapter portrays hopelessness, with Olmsted having to compromise his landscape design and Burnham having to look at all the trash and debris throughout the Exposition grounds the day before the Opening Day Ceremony.

Holmes, on the other hand, seems to be rewarded for his hard work by having the building ready for guests of the Exposition. Having the guests in the building will give him plenty of people to prey upon to fulfill his obsession.



Part 3, Opening Day

Part 3, Opening Day Summary

Opening Day began as a rainy day. Twenty-three carriages carried the dignitaries to the park for the ceremony. Once the carriages started moving toward the park, the sun came out. President Grover Cleveland gave a short address after others had spoken and turned the key to send electricity throughout the Exposition grounds. The Exposition had officially started.

Throughout the night, workers had cleaned, painted, repaired and planted, so that everything looked wonderful. Even though the Ferris wheel was not completed and some of the exhibits were not ready, the Exposition was ready.

The count for opening day ranged from 250,000 to 620,000, depending on who was asked. Unfortunately, the high attendance did not last long. The economy throughout the United States declined, banks and companies failed, and people lost their jobs. Frank Millet was given the task to increase attendance, but many people wanted to wait for the Ferris wheel or other exhibits to be completed. They did not want to go to an Exposition that was incomplete, especially with the economy declining.

Burnham pushed to have the Exposition completed. The daily attendance by the end of May was up to 30,000, far below what was needed to make the Exposition profitable. Religious dignitaries pushed to have the Exposition closed on Sundays, which kept many who worked everyday but Sunday from attending.

Burnham's firm had seen a halt to any new work. He knew there were going to be major problems with the economy and with the profitability of the Exposition.

Part 3, Opening Day Analysis

People can do great and miraculous things. This chapter shows the reader the resilience of humanity to succeed even when failure is imminent. It shows that people must readjust beliefs and decisions to overcome challenges and the threat of failure. Even though the end result may not be perfect or what you had wanted, one can still feel successful.

Part 3, The World's Fair Hotel

Part 3, The World's Fair Hotel Summary

Holmes opened his World's Fair Hotel. When men inquired about a room, his hotel was full, but when a young woman who was alone came, he always had a room available. His wife Minnie did not like all the women around all the time. Holmes eventually moved her to an apartment far away from the Hotel. Many guests left unexpectedly and did not pay their bill, but Holmes was always very understanding when this happened.

Part 3, The World's Fair Hotel Analysis

Many women must have left quickly without paying for the community and visitors of the hotel to decide that Holmes is a very understanding landlord. This chapter shows how easily Holmes can murder; how easily a person can live several lives at one time and not be discovered. Even the police respect Holmes and do not see the evil that lives within their beloved city.



Part 3, Prendergast

Part 3, Prendergast Summary

Prendergast believed he was about to be appointed corporate counsel. He wrote to W. F. Cooling on a postcard. He talked about Jesus and how he wanted Cooling to be his assistant when he was appointed to his position.

Part 3, Prendergast Analysis

Prendergast is completely living in an alternate reality. He awaits Harrison's appointment of him and begins to plan his assistants and job. His lunacy is complete.



Part 3, Night is the Magician

Part 3, Night is the Magician Summary

The Exposition fought daily for attendance, even with exhibits such as the completely electric kitchen, Juicy Fruit, Cracker Jacks, shredded wheat and belly dancers in the midway. Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show never had a problem with attendance. He upstaged the Exposition by having a race end in his arena and had a day dedicated to the poor, both of which the Exposition refused to do.

As the weeks progressed, the fair neared completion. By June 1, most of the exhibits were complete. The Court of Honor, however, was the biggest attraction. It produced an effect of majesty and beauty that was far greater than even the dream conjured in the Rookery Building library.

Burnham had wanted all the entrances to the fair to be located at the Court of Honor, however that was not to happen. The directors created many entrances on all sides of the Exposition.

At night, the Exposition was spectacular. No one place had so many electric lights as the Exposition. The presence of the Columbian Guard allowed fairgoers to feel safe even after dark. With Fair attendees raving about their experiences, people began planning trips to Chicago, even with the fear of economic collapse of the nation. The only problem was the Ferris wheel was not complete.

Part 3, Night is the Magician Analysis

All things begin to come together, and Burnham finally begins realizing his dream. The people of the United States start to feel that the trip is worthwhile. The Exposition is a relief from the problems of individuals and the country, if only for the time of their stay in Chicago. The reader watches Ferris go through the same stages that Burnham had gone through with the construction of the Exposition.



Part 3, Modus Operandi

Part 3, Modus Operandi Summary

Many people disappeared, and the Hotel always smelled of some chemical or gas. Families of the missing people inquired of Holmes, but he always knew nothing. The police were too busy to notice. Holmes sought "to hear the approach of death in the rising panic of his victims." He then disposed of all the remains.

Part 3, Modus Operandi Analysis

Holmes is living his dream, just like Burnham. Women are coming to him through his hotel. Holmes seeks even men and children at times. This chapter shows that unlike most serial killers, Holmes does not collect or keep physical trophies. He prefers to hear death and keep that memory with him forever.



Part 3, One Good Turn

Part 3, One Good Turn Summary

Ferris' wheel was finally ready to test. Ferris, himself, was unable to attend. The first turn took 20 minutes to complete and was successful. W. F. Grounau attended for Ferris and telegraphed Ferris of the success. Ferris telegraphed back to start hanging the cars, to which Grounau promptly responded, it had already been started.

However, the success of Ferris' wheel turning was overshadowed by the visit of the Royal Emissary from Spain. Chicago's society set out all their finery only to have her snub it. She looked upon even the most elite society lady, Mrs. Palmer, as only an "innkeeper's wife." However, she did enjoy many things and regretted having to leave Chicago.

Part 3, One Good Turn Analysis

In this chapter, the reader sees the shallow side of humanity. The fact that the successful turning of the Ferris wheel was overshadowed by the visit from a foreign dignitary shows this. Just like Burnham, Ferris is seeing his dream come to fruition without much notice.



Part 3, Nannie

Part 3, Nannie Summary

Minnie's sister, Anna or "Nannie," finally arrived in Chicago. Holmes took Minnie and Anna to the fair almost every day for two weeks. They saw the first electric chair, the telephone, movies and many other new inventions of the time. Minnie liked having Anna around. Holmes told her to invite Anna to stay the rest of the summer. She accepted Minnie and Holmes' offer. Pitezal, Holmes' assistant, takes his family to the fair. He buys a toy top with a tin man on top, which automatically becomes his son's favorite toy.

Part 3, Nannie Analysis

Holmes does have a human side, even if it was for the wrong reasons. Holmes is portrayed in this chapter as functioning in a normal way. He is able to hide his other life completely to ensure that he would receive Minnie's inheritance. Pitezal shows his human side instead of just assisting with the disposal of remains.



Part 3, Vertigo

Part 3, Vertigo Summary

A week after the first successful turn was made by the Ferris wheel six cars were hung and Grounau, Ferris' wife and others associated with the Exposition took the first ride in the one of the cars. Other visitors of the Exposition saw them riding the wheel and clamored into the other five cars. Eventually all the cars were filled during that first test with the cars. Each day they put on more cars. Opening day for the Ferris wheel was set, even though Grounau wanted to open the wheel two days early. The Exposition's Board said no due to an accident on a different ride.

Part 3, Vertigo Analysis

Ferris had fought because he knew his idea would work. He refused to be pushed aside by anyone. The public discovered the Ferris wheel, but they did not understand the battle that had been fought to bring this improbable structure to them.



Part 3, Heathen Wanted

Part 3, Heathen Wanted Summary

Olmsted had left the completion of the Exposition to Ulrich, even though he did not want to. He had not made it to the Exposition yet, but asked as many people as possible during his travels to tell him what they had heard or thought of the Exposition. From his encounters, he decided to write to Burnham and tell him what the public was saying about the Exposition. He also told Burnham what should be done to correct these misconceptions. Burnham listened to some of what Olmsted said, but chose to ignore other bits of advice. Burnham wanted the Exposition to be seen in a certain way and controlled everything down to the taking of pictures of the Exposition.

One of the buildings at this time had a small fire that was quickly contained and extinguished. The Fire Marshal of Chicago and the insurance companies found many problems with the building. Insurance was canceled and the Fire Marshal saw the building as a giant firetrap. This was the only private building in the Exposition grounds and the only building Burnham had not supervised. Burnham was not told of the fire.

Part 3, Heathen Wanted Analysis

Burnham is shown as a control freak. He has become more of a tyrant with the opening of the Exposition. He shares this control with no one. Burnham feels that this Exposition is his city and his dream only. He allows people to see it, but not influence it. It is because of his tyrannical attitude that no one tells him about the fire or the cancellation of the building's insurance.

Part 3, At Last

Part 3, At Last Summary

The first paying customers filled the cars of the Ferris Wheel after the Opening Day Ferris Wheel Ceremony. The Ferris Company had created a souvenir brochure touting the achievements of the inventor and the safety of the wheel. One reporter questioned its ability to withstand the wind.

Part 3, At Last Analysis

The Ferris Wheel opens 51 days late. It shows the incompleteness of the Exposition. The bureaucracy and Burnham have caused this delay. Burnham takes it personally; he feels the incompleteness of the Exposition was his fault. Even though the Exposition is now complete, Burnham feels as if he is a failure, and he has let down many people. He worked hard to correct things and complete them quickly, but it did not completely succeed.



Part 3, Rising Wave

Part 3, Rising Wave Summary

By the end of June, attendance had more than doubled. This caused new problems for Burnham and Olmsted. Burnham took these problems personally. Visitors dressed up for the fair. Considering the amount of people that attended, there was little crime and few accidents. Commoners rubbed elbows with famous people all the time. Helen Keller met Frank Haven Hall, the man who invented the machine to type Braille, and Susan B. Anthony met Wild Bill Cody.

However, there was tragedy too. England had sent a model of its best naval ship. In June, the original sank off the coast of Tripoli. Many used this model as a memorial for the lost lives on the ship. The favorite attraction was the Ferris Wheel. It had only one small incident in the whole time it was operational. It seemed to prove very safe.

Part 3, Rising Wave Analysis

With attendance up, Burnham faces new problems, ones he does not expect and which he has to solve immediately. The sinking of the English ship is always remembered when people look at the model. People have come to the Exposition to escape reality, not be reminded of it by models.

Even though it seems that Burnham's dream has finally been realized, this is a misconception. His dream is only partially realized. The new problems make Burnham feel more defeated. However, the people that visit the Exposition find inspiration and hope.



Part 3, Independence Day

Part 3, Independence Day Summary

The fireworks display at the Exposition was overshadowed by the chance of a storm. Nevertheless, luck held out, the Exposition grounds were packed and the fireworks were a success.

Holmes took Minnie and Anna to the fireworks display. They loved it. They spent several hours trying to get home, but were delighted because during this time, Holmes had told them of a new plan. He had told Annie she should consider studying art. They would leave shortly, travel east and then to Europe. Anna wrote to her aunt to tell her the news. Before they left, Holmes told Minnie that he had to wrap up some business at the Hotel and would take Anna with him to see the Hotel.

Part 3, Independence Day Analysis

Burnham's dream is finally being realized. Things are starting to work out better and are more aligned with his original plans.

Holmes seems to want to get back to work. It seems that his time with Anna and Minnie is almost at a close. However, perhaps he will be using them to get out of the area before he is discovered. It seems more likely from his previous actions that he will be taking his next victim when he and Anna go to the hotel the next day.



Part 3, Worry

Part 3, Worry Summary

The attendance at the Exposition was over 200,000 people for Independence Day, but dropped drastically within the next few days. Burnham had to raise attendance if bankers were going to be satisfied enough not to take over the Exposition and ruin it. Burnham knew that Millet needed to draw attention and hoped the trains would lower their rates. Burnham watched as more businesses failed and wondered how he was going to get the necessary number of people to attend to keep the Exposition under his control

Part 3, Worry Analysis

Burnham feels the financial strain and the overwhelming sense that bankers will ruin his Exposition. He is looking to everyone else to solve the problem with attendance except himself. He wants the trains to lower fares, and Millet to draw the crowds. He does not see any other answer to his problem.



Part 3, Claustrophobia

Part 3, Claustrophobia Summary

Anna and Holmes went to the Hotel the next morning. He showed her the stores and restaurants of the first floor and the view from the roof. When they entered his office, he began the final phase of Anna's life. He asked her to go into the vault for a document he had forgotten and needed. She entered the vault and Holmes sealed the door and her fate. He listened to her die and then went back to the apartment to pick up Minnie. He told Minnie, Annie was waiting at the Hotel for them. Later that night, a man who moved furniture came and picked up two large crates. He delivered one to the train station and the other possibly went to Chappell.

Several days later Holmes sent a letter to the landlord of the apartment saying that he and Minnie had moved out of the apartment. The landlord received this letter on the same day that Anna's trunk reached Chicago. No one was available to claim the trunk, so it was sent back to the Wells-Fargo office.

Holmes gave Pitezel's family some presents and old clothing. He instructed that the dresses should be cut up and remade and gave them two trunks with the initials MWR on them.

Part 3, Claustrophobia Analysis

Holmes had been quiet for several weeks and his need to hear death took the lives of Anna and Minnie in one day. Holmes' time in Chicago was growing short, but his appetite seemed to be growing larger.

Part 3, Storm and Fire

Part 3, Storm and Fire Summary

Attendance was still lacking and Burnham was focusing on finding ways to get more people to the Exposition. He got his wish but at an extremely high cost.

The first incident was a windstorm on the verge of becoming a tornado. The Ferris Wheel was full of people when the storm hit. However, it was later reported that they were safe. The wind did nothing but cause mild vibrations. It continued to work as normal.

The second incident did not have such a happy ending. Another fire broke out in the same building as before. However, this time it was much worse. Sixteen people died from an explosion and fire within the building. The coroner requested an investigation. Burnham, the Fire Marshal and two construction companies were charged with criminal negligence. Burnham had no authority over the building except to approve its design. He posted his bond the following day.

The third incident was that a Retrenchment Committee was put in place. All previous Exposition expenditures were to be investigated and any new expenditure had to be approved by the committee. Millet had planned things for August that would not be approved by this committee. Burnham also feared the committee would lay off workers that cleaned and maintained the Exposition landscapes and buildings.

Part 3, Storm and Fire Analysis

The reader watches Burnham's world fall apart; first the fire and then the Retrenchment committee's investigation and approval process. He is being bombarded by things that are out of his control. This chapter helps the reader identify with Burnham's feeling of being overwhelmed with no solutions readily available. The highlight is that the Ferris wheel withstands the storm and it is proven safe.



Part 3, Love

Part 3, Love Summary

The Ferris wheel and the Exposition prompted people to fall in love. The first known case is Theodore Dreiser and Sara Osborne White. Dreiser was a reporter in St. Louis, and Sara was one of the 24 teachers who won the trip to the Exposition from the St. Louis paper. After the fair, Dreiser tried several jobs and ended up in Pittsburgh before he was content. In the meantime, he courted Sara and finally asked her to marry him against the advice of his friends.

The 68-year-old Carter Harrison fell in love with a twenty-something Annie Howard. They decided to marry and he planned to announce it to all of Chicago during Cities Day at the Exposition.

Holmes, too, had a new woman named Georgianna Yoke, who worked at a local department store. He bought her diamonds and pearls, and told her all of his family was dead except an aunt in Africa. When he asked her to marry him, she, of course, accepted. He told her that his uncle requested that he take the name Henry Mansfield Howard upon his uncle's death, and that he had agreed. They would be married with him using this name; she still agreed to marry him.

Many people wanted to get married on the Ferris wheel, but no one was ever allowed to exchange vows in one of the cars. They were allowed to say their vows in the Ferris Wheel's office and then ride the Ferris wheel.

Part 3, Love Analysis

The Exposition provides enchantment for people and leads them to love. This happens today as well. When people go away from their normal lives, everything seems better for a while. This enchantment happens all around Burnham, but he is unable to bask in the enchantment with them.

Holmes, however, uses this magic to find his next companion in Georgianna Yoke, and creates a completely new set of lies for her. The reader sees how naïve she must be not to realize that Holmes is changing his name because he is still legally married to another woman.



Part 3, Freaks

Part 3, Freaks Summary

The Retrenchment Committee resigned after the Exposition Company refused to give them full control of all expenditures. One New York editor called for all New York editors to apologize to Chicago, because Chicago had risen to the challenge and proven themselves to New York and the world.

Millet did his job as well. He organized boat races in authentic native boats and swim races between inhabitants of the midway. However, the high point was the Midway Ball. He promised all the midway women would dance with Exposition Officials. He did not disappoint his customers.

Attendance finally increased, but the economy was falling. Another Chicago bank failed. A former top official of the Reading Railroad walked into the Exposition and shot himself. Laborers were unemployed and leaders within the laboring class were calling for changes—changes the wealthy did not want to consider.

Part 3, Freaks Analysis

Burnham retains control of the Exposition and attendance is finally rising; however, the economy outside the White City was diminishing. He knows attendance is still the main problem of the Exposition.

Part 3, Prendergast

Part 3, Prendergast Summary

Prendergast went to City Hall to find out why he was not appointed yet. He was introduced to a man named Krause who was the current Corporate Counsel. Everyone in the office started smiling when Krause introduced Prendergast as the next Corporate Counsel. Prendergast did not understand and said he was in no hurry to take the job when Krause asked if he wanted to start that day. Prendergast did not like what was going on.

Part 3, Prendergast Analysis

Prendergast is growing angry and unstable. He feels betrayed by Carter Harrison. He is not sure what to do next, but anything is possible.



Part 3, Toward Triumph

Part 3, Toward Triumph Summary

With three weeks left in the Exposition, Carter Harrison declared Chicago Day at the Exposition and urged businesses to close for the day. Chicago Day's attendance was approximately 750,000, breaking the Paris record for World's Fair attendance. The attendance that day also created enough revenue for the Exposition Company to start paying off all of its debt.

Burnham's triumph would reach its climax during the Closing Day Ceremony. Everything was done; the Exposition had been a success, even with all the problems that have faced Burnham from the conception of the Exposition until the day of its closing.

Part 3, Toward Triumph Analysis

Human resilience prevails. With all the setbacks, challenges, criminal charges and obstacles, Burnham's dream is finally realized. He has succeeded where others thought he would fail. He has helped Chicago succeed and proven to the United States and the world that Chicago is a real metropolitan city.



Part 3, Departures

Part 3, Departures Summary

While many of the Exposition Officials were thinking about the closing day ceremonies, McKim left. He hated to say good-bye. He wrote a note to Burnham and thanked him for the opportunity of working on the Exposition. He latter stated that he hated the idea of the White City ending.

Many people thought the buildings should be blown up or set on fire, but the buildings were created and built with salvage in mind. Olmsted left mainly due to his busy schedule and failing health. Sullivan left to go back to work at his firm. Once there, he discovered that a junior architect, named Frank Lloyd Wright, was designing houses for clients outside of the firm. Mr. Wright was fired.

With the end of the Exposition, all the workers were let go, adding to the thousands of the unemployed across the country.

Creditors and parents of missing daughters and grandchildren pushed Holmes into leaving Chicago too. People came looking for Minnie and Anna and letters continued to come from others. No one accused Holmes of their disappearances, but things were getting too close for him. Holmes set fire to the hotel and tried to submit the insurance claim. However, the investigator believed that the funds should only be paid to Hiram S. Campbell in person, so the insurance money is never claimed.

During the fire investigation, the investigator gathered all of Holmes' creditors and they hired an attorney, George B. Chamberlin. Mr. Chamberlin asked Holmes to come to his office; when Holmes arrived, he was met by all of his creditors. Holmes was placed in an adjacent room while the creditors and attorneys talked. No one is quite sure what happened, but when one of the lawyers went into the room with Holmes, Holmes fled.

Holmes headed to Texas to claim Minnie's land. He planned to sell some of it and build another castle on the rest of it. He took Pitezel and Georgianna with him and he insured Pitezel's life before they left Chicago.

Part 3, Departures Analysis

People are leaving Burnham and his White City. No one who had wanted to help build it wants to watch the city's destruction. They each want their fantasy to live on, and to watch the city be torn apart would end the fantasy.

Holmes' departure stems from the fact that the authorities are too close to discovering his secret. He is cornered by his creditors, but he finds a way to escape. His world is now being torn apart as well. He wants to go and rebuild his world elsewhere.



Part 3, Nightfall

Part 3, Nightfall Summary

All through October, attendance rose. Officials were hoping to break the Chicago Day record on Closing Day. Millet had planned fireworks, music, speeches and the landing of Columbus for the Ceremony.

However, two days before, on American Cities Day, one event changed the schedule of the Closing Day's ceremonies. On the morning of American Cities Day, Harrison announced his upcoming marriage to Annie Howard. In the afternoon, his second speech of the day promised the growth of Chicago and that he would live another half century.

Prendergast tried to enter the building where Harrison was speaking, but he was refused entry. Later that night, Prendergast was put off again at the Harrisons' house; he was told to return in a half hour. When Prendergast returned, he shot Harrison and ran away. Harrison died from the wound shortly after Prendergast left. Prendergast turned himself into the police immediately even before they had knowledge of Harrison being shot.

Closing ceremonies became Harrison's funeral service. Instead of music, fireworks, Columbus' landing and praise for Burnham and Olmsted, there were tears of sorrow for the man who was a friend of Chicago's workers.

Part 3, Nightfall Analysis

Prendergast's action changes the events for the next few days, including the climatic moment Burnham feels he deserves. Although he had succeeded, he will never get the acclaim for that success, which causes him much anguish and breaks his heart.



Part 3, The Black City

Part 3, The Black City Summary

The homeless of Chicago converged on the White City for shelter after its closing. Without its workers to clean and maintain the buildings and grounds, the Black City that was truly Chicago took over. People who had attended the Exposition could not believe how quickly litter and filth plagued the White City.

Within the first year following the closing of the Exposition, two separate fires were started. One consumed several of the smaller buildings and one of the main buildings. The second fire destroyed the buildings surrounding the Court of Honor.

Pullman continued to lay off workers at this time and cut wages, and yet the Pullman Company refused to reduce the rent its workers paid to live in its town. Eugene Debs and Samuel Gompers roused the workers. Pullman workers listened and went on strike with the support of Debs' American Railway Union. Strikes were starting all over the country. President Grover Cleveland sent federal troops to Chicago under the leadership of Nelson Miles, the Grand Marshal of the Exposition. Miles now, had to fight against the men he had protected while they were building and maintaining the beautiful city.

In late 1894, the disappearance of so many people, mainly young women, came to the forefront in the public and Holmes finally became a suspect.

Part 3, The Black City Analysis

The dream ends and causes much grieving to the designers, workers and attendees. However, the working class feels it worst of all. Strikes and vandalism destroy the once magical city within a year's time. Burnham has no regret with the destruction of the city. His work has been completed. His dream was fulfilled even without the public praise he felt he deserved.

Holmes is now gone from Chicago and the authorities are finally connecting him with many of the disappearances.



Part 4, Property of Holmes

Part 4, Property of Holmes Summary

In 1895, Detective Frank Geyer was charged with finding three children, Alice, Nellie and Howard Pitezel. His suspect was in police custody for suspected insurance fraud. From the beginning of this investigation, Geyer knew this was different. Geyer accepted the job with hesitation. He interviewed Holmes and saw through his masquerade. Holmes told him how he came into the custody of the three children.

The children had written letters. Although their mother never received the letters, the police had them and Geyer was going to use these letters to find the children. He started in Cincinnati, Ohio and tracked the children and Holmes to a hotel. He had found the beginning of the trail. Holmes had stayed in two separate hotels and even rented a house for one day before moving onto Indianapolis. He followed the trail to Indianapolis.

In Indianapolis, he found that Georgianna Yoke had been in one hotel while the children were in another. The hotel had since closed, but Geyer found the hotel manager and asked about the children. The manager told Geyer, that the children were always crying and homesick and that Howard had become very unruly. Holmes wanted to be rid of him. The manager told Geyer that the chambermaid moved to Chicago. Geyer went to Chicago to talk to her, and then headed to Detroit. He did not think Howard ever left Indianapolis, but he could not find proof.

In the Detroit letter it was revealed that Howard was not with them anymore, but the biggest discovery was the fact that Holmes now had the children in one hotel, Georgianna Yoke in another and the children's mother and siblings in a third.

Part 4, Property of Holmes Analysis

Holmes is playing the game that he loves, manipulating the lives of people that trust him. He is happy with the game and possibly feeding his evil desires also.



Part 4, Moyamensing Prison

Part 4, Moyamensing Prison Summary

While in prison, Holmes wrote and read all the time. He wrote his memoirs and a prison journal. However, he wrote what other people wanted to hear, not was necessarily the truth. He also wrote a letter to Carrie Pitezel, telling her where her children were and asking how she could believe he would hurt her children or her husband. He gained satisfaction from believing Geyer was never going to prove anything. He watched the papers and watched Geyer stumble through the investigation.

Part 4, Moyamensing Prison Analysis

Holmes loved watching and reading and playing the game. He still felt as if no one could touch him and that his charm could dispel any beliefs that he could hurt another person.



Part 4, The Tenant

Part 4, The Tenant Summary

Geyer's search led him to Toronto, Canada. He found a house Holmes had rented and found the bodies of Alice and Nellie. Mrs. Pitezel found out about the discovery from the morning paper. She rushed to Toronto to identify her children. Geyer still could not figure out what happened to Howard. Everyone was hoping he was still alive, maybe in an institution, as Holmes had told people.

Part 4, The Tenant Analysis

The finding of Alice and Nellie's bodies is the first link to connect Holmes with murder and not just fraud. Geyer and the public cannot believe Holmes killed two children and possibly a third without a motive. Holmes' world is again falling apart and this time it does not seem that he will get out of it.

Geyer is a man who refuses to let Holmes win. He is obsessed with finding the children and seems to be the type that will not stop until he has all the answers.

Part 4, A Lively Corpse

Part 4, A Lively Corpse Summary

The Assistant District Attorney, Thomas W. Barlow, tried to keep the newspapers from Holmes the day the story ran about finding the girls. The attempt failed and Holmes read the story before the Assistant District Attorney could question him. He sat in Barlow's office for two hours and said nothing. Neither was Holmes bothered by the questioning nor did he change his demeanor. He just refused to talk.

When returned to the prison, Holmes focused on getting his memoirs published to try to change the public's opinion of him. In his memoirs, he alleged that Minnie and a man named Hatch killed the girls and possibly Howard too. He found a journalist, John King, to help publish the book. He told King exactly what to do to prepare for publication, and where and how to sell the book. He also told King to go to Chicago and his hotel to inquire about the fact that Minnie was still living there after her supposed murder. He hoped this would help gain him public support too.

Part 4, A Lively Corpse Analysis

Holmes starts playing the game with a vengeance. He knows that unless he can change the public opinion about him, he will lose. His book is created to charm and manipulate thousands of people. He is trying to keep the fantasy world alive rather than letting it die like the White City.



Part 4, All the Weary Days

Part 4, All the Weary Days Summary

Geyer returned to Indianapolis because he had a feeling Holmes had murdered Howard there. He called the press to announce his arrival. People came to visit Geyer and give him leads, and all turned out to be dead ends. The discovery of the girls prompted the police to enter Holmes' Hotel in Chicago. They uncovered the bones, the kiln, the vault, acid to strip bones, a dissection table that was stained, children's dresses, and the footprint believed to belong to Emeline Cigrand. They recruited the help of Charles Chappell and retrieved the articulated skeletons Holmes had Chappell make for him.

Police contacted District Attorney Graham and he sent Geyer to Chicago to check it out. The skeleton of the child was a girl, possibly Pearl Conner. Geyer then returned to Philadelphia until August. He continued his investigation with the assistance of W. E. Gary of Fidelity Mutual. They reinvestigated all the places Geyer had visited earlier that summer. All together, they investigated nine hundred leads. They went to a small town outside Indianapolis called Irvington. The first real estate office they stopped at had information about Holmes and the house he rented.

Geyer and Gary went to the house and found the remains of a child. Mrs. Pitezel again was asked to come identify her child. She did so through several items including Howard's most favorite toy, a tin man mounted on a spinning top.

Part 4, All the Weary Days Analysis

Geyer succeeded in finding Howard, but the success was short-lived. Howard had been murdered. Geyer had seemed to succeed where others had failed. All that was left was to put the murders on Holmes.



Part 4, Malice Aforethought

Part 4, Malice Aforethought Summary

Holmes was indicted for the murders of Benjamin, Howard, Alice and Nellie Pitezel in their respective cases in several states. Many hoped for a conviction in Philadelphia, which would give him the death penalty. Holmes' book reached the newsstands, and in the conclusion of the book, he maintained his innocence. The one thing no one understood was how Holmes could elude the Chicago Police.

Part 4, Malice Aforethought Analysis

Like Burnham, Holmes does not get to fulfill his dream. He is stopped just shy of the ultimate end.



Epilogue, The Fair

Epilogue, The Fair Summary

The Exposition influenced people until the 1950s and perhaps beyond. Americans wanted their cities pretty and clean, and believed it could be done since the White City had done it. Burnham went on to become one of the first urban planners and environmentalists. In later in life, he developed diabetes and colitis. Sullivan began drinking heavily and only designed 25 buildings from 1895 - 1922. He held a grudge against Burnham and blamed him for many of his problems. Even when writing his memoirs, he faulted Burnham.

Epilogue, The Fair Analysis

Working on the Exposition did not ensure fame, as Sullivan finds out. Burnham promises his wife that he will slow down, but does not, becoming a much sought after urban planner. He achieves his recognition by the number of cities who want his help. He finds contentment.



Epilogue, Recessional

Epilogue, Recessional Summary

Olmsted began losing his memory and became unmanageable. He was admitted to the McLean Asylum; it was his biggest fear. He died the morning of August 28, 1903.

Ferris became financially ruined. He sold most of his ownership of the wheel. He died in November 1896. The Ferris wheel was sold at auction for \$8,150.00 and reconstructed at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904. The wheel was destroyed and used for scrap metal in 1906.

Buffalo Bill had made a lot of money, but he too lost it all and died in January 1917 without enough money for his funeral.

Theodore Dreiser married Sara Osbourne White but was never faithful.

Dora Root never felt that her life was fully lived. She spent the rest of her life thinking of what her life would have been like if John Root had lived.

Patrick Eugene Joseph Prendergast was convicted of murder and sentenced to death. He tried to plead insanity, but the fact he had left one chamber empty showed he had had the ability to understand and think logically.

Epilogue, Recessional Analysis

Even the most successful people think about what could have been or why they have done things in their life. The rich can become poor and the smart can become foolish. Life changes and everyone changes with it.



Epilogue, Holmes

Epilogue, Holmes Summary

Holmes was convicted of the murder of Benjamin Pitezel and sentenced to die after a graphic trial in Philadelphia. He wrote three different confessions. It was claimed that Holmes murdered up to 200 people, but only nine cases had sufficient evidence to bring him to trial.

Before his death, Holmes believed he was taking on characteristics of the Devil. He was hanged on May 7, 1896. He had left instructions with his attorney about his burial, which the attorney faithfully carried out. Holmes did not want to become a specimen.

Epilogue, Holmes Analysis

Holmes has grown too confident and started taking too many risks. Only at the end, he acknowledges his behavior as evil. Even during the trial and the day of execution, his demeanor stays the same. Selfish to the end, he cares greatly about the way his own body will be treated, despite having mutilated so many others.



Epilogue, Aboard The Olympic

Epilogue, Aboard The Olympic Summary

Burnham waited for more news of Millet and the ship he was on, the Titanic. The Olympic retained its original course; another ship was helping the Titanic.

Millet froze in the sea on that fateful night.

Burnham died in June 1912 from a combination of his ailments and food poisoning. His wife, Margaret, died in December 1945. Both are buried in Graceland Cemetery in Chicago with other officials of the World's Exposition of 1893.

Epilogue, Aboard The Olympic Analysis

This marks the end of the epic of the last two World's Fair designers.



Characters

David Burnham

Burnham was born September 4, 1846. His family moved to Chicago in 1855. His love for drawing landed him a job as a draftsman. He had wanted to go to either Yale or Harvard, but had performed badly on the entrance exams and was denied entrance. He tried several other careers, such as mining for gold in Nevada and selling plate glass in Chicago, but he did not succeed in these careers. He eventually was hired as a draftsman again for Peter Wight. Here he met John Root and the two became immediate friends. The two men built some of Chicago's most famous buildings and created the first skyscraper, the Montauk. His and Root's firm flourished, and he married Margaret Sherman on January 20, 1876. They eventually had five children. When Chicago was voted to host the World's Fair of 1893, Burnham was named Chief of Construction. He spent the first four years of the 1890's devoted to proving to the world that Chicago could stand on its own, culturally and architecturally. He had promised his wife that he would slow down after the Fair, but he did not and would later become a world-renowned urban planner and environmentalist. During his travels in 1912, Burnham drifted into a coma from a combination of his diabetes, colitis and food poisoning. He died on June 1, 1912 and he was buried in the Graceland Cemetery in Chicago.

John Root

John Root was born on January 10, 1850 in Lumpkin, Georgia. During the Civil War, Root's father sent John to England and John attended Oxford. However, John did not get to finish at Oxford because he was called home when the civil war ended. His family moved to New York and he studied civil engineering at New York University. He married Mary Walker, but within six weeks of the wedding, Mary died from tuberculosis. Two years later, he married Dora Monroe, and remained married to her until his death on January 12, 1891. Daniel Burnham, as Chief of Construction of the World's Fair, named Root Chief Architect. Root became very ill from pneumonia. He seemed to be recovering when his wife called Burnham to come to the house right away. All planning of the building of the Exposition was completed, but before the construction could begin, Root died of pneumonia. He was buried in the Graceland Cemetery in Chicago

Dr. Holmes

He was born Herman Webster Mudgett. His family lived in New Hampshire Lake County and they were devout Methodists. He was extremely intelligent and graduated school at the age of 16. He became a teacher until he decided to go to the University of Michigan and become a doctor and began his life of crime with an elaborate scheme of insurance fraud. Throughout 1888 to 1896, he used up to five different aliases to keep people from



knowing what he was doing. It was during this same time that he used the World's Fair in Chicago to fill his building with victims. He built the building for one purpose, and that was to give apartments to young women that he would eventually murder. He included in the building secret passageways and chutes, vaults with gas lines attached, and a kiln in the basement to dispose of some of his victims. He was very calculating and manipulative, but many did not notice due to his charming ways. He knew how to play people to get what he wanted from them. He had approximately four wives and at least two children. One of his wives, Myrta, believed to the end that Holmes was a gentle man who loved children and animals. She claimed that no man could have been a better husband. Eventually he was incarcerated and under investigation for insurance fraud when he was linked to at least nine murders. He was convicted in Philadelphia and hanged on May 7, 1896.

Frederick Law Olmsted

Frederick Olmsted was the landscape architect that designed Central Park in New York and the grounds of the 1893 World's Fair. He accepted the project of the World's Fair at the age of 68; he continued working well after the fair, until his memory failed. He eventually died in the McLean Asylum.

George Washington Gale Ferris

Ferris was a young engineer from Pittsburgh, who created the Ferris wheel, which was the United States' answer to the Eiffel Tower.

Buffalo Bill

Buffalo Bill's real name was Colonel William Cody. He had wanted to bring his "Wild West" show to the fair, but he was denied a concession. Without further thought, Cody leased land adjacent to the fair and opened his Wild West show. His show opened a month before the fair, and his stadium was usually full, upstaging the fair's attendance for most of the six months the fair was open.

Charles Chappell

Chappell met Holmes while working as a laborer on his building. However, Holmes eventually used Chappell to clean the bones and skulls of his victims and create articulated skeletons that Holmes sold to medical schools.

Detective Frank Geyer

Frank Geyer was a detective for the Pinkerton Detective agency and was hired to find three children that were last in the custody of H. H. Holmes. Geyer had recently lost his



wife and child and took the assignment reluctantly. He eventually traveled to several states and Canada to find the remains of three children, helping to bring H. H. Holmes to justice.

Carter Henry Harrison

Harrison had been the Mayor of Chicago for four terms. He won his fifth term before the World's Fair opened. He was a man of 68 years old at that time. He was a friend to the working-class, and not much liked by the richer people of Chicago. Patrick Eugene Joseph Prendergast murdered him two days before the end of the fair.

Sophia Hayden

Sophia Hayden won the competition for the designing of the Women's Building for the fair. She worked very hard designing the building but she was often overruled by the President of the Lady Managers, Mrs. Bertha Honroe Palmer. Eventually, from the stress created by Mrs. Palmer, Sophia Hayden was hospitalized with exhaustion.

Richard M. Hunt

Richard Hunt was a prominent New York architect who accepted the invitation of Daniel Burnham to design a building for the fair. He was also voted as the President of the Board of Architects for the fair.

Charles McKim

Charles McKim was a prominent New York architect that accepted the invitation of Daniel Burnham to design a building for the fair.

Robert Peabody

Robert Peabody was a prominent Boston architect that accepted the invitation of Daniel Burnham to design a building for the fair.

George B. Post

George B. Post was a prominent New York architect that accepted the invitation of Daniel Burnham to design a building for the fair.



Patrick Eugene Joseph Prendergast

Patrick Eugene Joseph Prendergast was a young man that worked at one of Chicago's newspapers, supervising the newsboys. He was an Irishman and therefore wanted to see Carter Harrison become the mayor for a fifth term. He worked hard on the campaign that Harrison lost, and even harder on the campaign that Harrison won right before the fair opened. He had sent thousands of postcards out to people of Chicago, pressing for them to vote for Harrison. Prendergast was sure that his hard work would pay off and he would be appointed to a position within Harrison's administration. When he was not appointed or even acknowledged, he went to Harrison's house and shot him. On December 29, 1893, Prendergast was found guilty by a jury and sentenced to death.

Henry Van Brunt

Henry Van Brunt was a prominent Kansas City architect that accepted the invitation of Daniel Burnham to design a building for the fair.



Objects/Places

Jackson Park

The location chosen to build the World's Exposition of 1893, which would become known as the White City.

The White City

The unofficial name of the World's Exposition of 1893.

Midway Plaisance

A stretch of fair from Jackson Park to the border of Washington Park. It would include people of different lands and the Ferris wheel.

Wallace and 63rd Streets

The location of Holmes' building where he was suspected to have killed up to 200 people. The building was unofficially named the "castle" but Holmes named it the World's Fair Hotel.

World's Fair Hotel

The name of Holmes' building.

The Rookery

A skyscraper in Chicago designed and built by Burnham and Root where Exposition Officials met.



Themes

Good and Evil

Where there is good there is also evil. The two stories of Burnham and Holmes show this dichotomy. The World's Exposition did many good things for the country. It proved that the United States was as cultured as Paris. It showed New York that Chicago was not a pig-slaughtering country town. It created the ideal that people would come to expect from their own cities, clean and safe. The World's Exposition also created jobs in a time when the economy was failing. Unions used this to get time and a half for overtime and the acceptance of an eight-hour workday. They actually went a long way to ensure the rights of laborers and it would never revert.

However, within all this goodness there were bad things happening too. Thieves and pickpockets preyed on the visitors of the Exposition. However, this was minor compared to the evil that lived a short ride on an Alley L from the Exposition. The World's Fair Hotel and Holmes were destroying the lives of many people. Holmes reveled in the number of people brought to him by the World's Exposition. He may not have stayed so long or killed so many if the Exposition had been somewhere else.

Man's ability to overcome adversity

Burnham and Holmes both show us how people can overcome challenges that face them. Sometimes the person only overcomes their challenges for a short time, but they keep on trying.

Burnham has to overcome rivalries, committees, money problems, the death of his partner and a failing economy to create and build the World's Exposition in a period of approximately two years. The feat seems impossible and yet this man cannot see anything but success. He refuses to believe it cannot be done.

Holmes has obstacles too. He has wives, bill collectors, parents and families of missing people all knocking on his door. He has to stay one step ahead. His challenges were different than Burnham's, but both of these men show the reader that when someone

believes in something, they can achieve anything.

Money is Power

This theme plays throughout the stories. It shows that people with money have the ability to do things others cannot. Ferris builds his wheel with the money of his own investors; Buffalo Bill opens his Wild West show near the Fair and uses his own money. These two people use their own finances and resilience to see their dreams come to fruition.



Sophia Hayden is sent to the hospital because of the stress caused by the President of the Exposition Board of Lady Managers. H. H. Holmes is a respected doctor and pharmacist and not questioned about the disappearances of his employees and tenants. These two examples show how people with money can hurt those without money and not be considered evil, at least not initially.

This theme winds throughout the narrative and makes the reader think about whether the world is still this way, or if there has been a change.



Style

Point of View

Devil in the White City is written as a third person narrative. Erik Larson is telling two extremely interesting stories, using the fact that one works to help the other.

The reader is outside the story looking in. The reader can see the challenges as they arise and can feel the stress Burnham is feeling. With Holmes, the reader can understand how he is liked by just about everyone, and yet the reader knows he is purely evil.

Setting

The setting is the late 1880s to the mid-1890s in Chicago, Illinois. Women are for the first time, venturing away from their parents' homes to find jobs and be independent. The naïveté of these women is just what people like Holmes look for. The police are shown as ineffective since they truly have no idea what is going on in their city. People accept this as they accept the unsanitary conditions of the city. These same people, however, want a city like one that was created during the World's Fair 1893: the clean, happy and magical White City.

Language and Meaning

Erik Larson tells these stories in a way that many fiction writers use. He explains everything vividly and uses the reader's imagination. He knows this is the way to get fiction readers to read a non-fiction book.

There are two stories, one of something good and one of something evil that feeds off the good and "magical" White City. It exemplifies the concept of with good there is evil. It also focuses on the resilience of humans to defy failure and push to succeed, even if that success is compromised and it does not last very long.

Structure

The book is structured in phases. The prologue sets the tone of the story. It consists of a man reflecting on the best time in his life and the horrors that occurred at the same time.

Part 1 of the book explains the planning phases of the two main characters, Daniel Burnham and Dr. H.H. Holmes. It gives the readers insight into the social norms of the time. Part 2 goes into the construction and the preparation of executing of the plans of these two men. Part 3 is the climax, the time of triumph for one man and failure for the other. Part 4 is the final account of many events and Holmes' undoing. The Epilogue

gives the reader closure. The readers find out what happens to Jackson Park, some of the secondary characters, Holmes and finally Burnham. It closes the era of the World's Exposition of 1893.



Quotes

"Cities began to see it as a prize to be coveted, mainly for the stature it would confer, stature being a powerful lure in this age when pride of place ranked second only to pride of blood." Part 1, Page 16

"Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood." Part 1, Page 26

"He broke prevailing rules of casual intimacy. He stood too close, stared too hard, touched too much and long and women adored him for it." Part 1, Page 36

"At one point half of the city's detective force was involved in investigating disappearances, prompting the chief of the city's central detective unit to announce he was considering the formation of a separate bureau, 'a mysterious disappearances department.'" Part 1, Page 102

"I was born with the devil in me," he wrote. "I could not help the fact that I was a murderer, no more than the poet can help the inspiration to sing." Part 1, Part 109

"After asserting that 'the architects of America had covered themselves with glory' through their exposition designs, Burnham rebuked the nation's civil engineers for failing to rise to the same level of brilliance." Part 2, Page 157

"The possession he craved was a transient thing like the scent of a fresh-cut hyacinth." Part 3, Page 257

"What shall we do when this Wonderland is closed? - when it disappears - when the enchantment comes to an end?" Part 3, Part 289

"The fair was so perfect, its grace and beauty like an assurance that for as long as it lasted nothing truly bad could happen to anyone, anywhere." Part 3, Page 289

"Or he could open the door and look in on Anna and give her a big smile - just to let her know that this was no accident - then close the door again, slam it, and return to his chair to see what might happen next." Part 3, Page 295

"The firemen still on the balcony knew their situation was deadly and began to tell each other goodbye. Witnesses watched them hug and shake hands." Part 3, Page 302

"The Exposition by day might wear a chaste gown of white staff, but at night it danced and guzzled champagne." Part 3, Page 315

"Now Burnham and Millet made final arrangements for Burnham's own great day, the grand closing ceremony of October 30 that would recognize once and for all that Burnham really had done it and that his work was now complete - that for once there was nothing left to do." Part 3, Page 320



"You gave me a beautiful time and the last days of the fair will always remain in my mind, as were the first, especially identified with yourself." Part 3, Page 321

"'We are turning our backs upon the fairest dream of civilization and are about to consign it to the dust,' Barrows read. ' It is like the death of a dear friend.' " Part 3, Page 332

"I am convinced that since my imprisonment I have changed woefully and gruesomely from what I was formerly in feature and figure□ My head and face are gradually assuming an elongated shape. I believe fully that I am growing to resemble the devil - that the similitude is almost completed." Part 4, Page 385



Topics for Discussion

What were some of the major challenges Burnham faced?

Why did H. H. Holmes use the aliases he did?

Explain how H. H. Holmes used the Exposition to his advantage.

Explain why the Chicago Police never suspected H. H. Holmes to be a criminal and murder.

Explain how the National Committee and the Exposition Company could have made Burnham's job easier.

Explain why Burnham feared the creation of a Retrenchment Committee.

Why did the attendance at the Exposition fluctuate as it did?

Why did H. H. Holmes like to kill people with suffocation or gas?

What would have happened if the Exposition Company had allotted a day for the poor?

How did the railroads affect attendance at the Exposition and why?

Explain how the World's Exposition of 1893 changed America forever.