

Far Far Away Study Guide

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Plot Summary

Far Far Away is a fairy-tale in the real world, written to place the horrific events and classic fairy-tale justice into the modern world. The town is in slight turmoil, as there have been steady disappearances of children with little to no explanation, and the sheriff declares them all runaways because he simply does not have the resources to pursue the case. However, morale is high as the green smoke signifies the arrival of a fresh batch of delicious Prince Cakes.

The protagonist is Jeremy Johnson, a teenager who has the ability to speak with those on the Zwischenraum, a spirit plane between the living and the afterlife. The narrator is one of these spirits, the ghost of one of the Brother's Grimm, Jacob. He is sent to protect Jeremy from the Finder of Occasions, a villain who does not resemble other villains. The two quickly bond, as they relate to their relative lack of friends in life. Jacob often feeds Jeremy quips and other sayings in various languages, which only helps label him as a tad strange in his community. Jeremy first has to deal with his own issues, however, as his mother had left him and his father and is now dead, and his father, Harold, is unable to pull himself off the couch, let alone out of the house. As a result of his father's lack of work their house and bookstore, the Two-Book Bookstore that was gifted to Jeremy in his grandfather's will, are subject to foreclosure and there is no salvation in sight. It is in this environment where Jacob enters, with his plan of protecting Jeremy centering around Jeremy's academic success and his leaving the town to go to college. Of course, nothing in this plan will help Jeremy pay off his substantial debt, so he instead turns to a budding relationship with Ginger to brainstorm for him.

The two begin their relationship in a rather conspicuous way, first with Ginger entering under Jeremy's enchantment as a result of the Prince Cakes (a town myth) as well as with a prank on Sten Blix, the baker that goes horribly wrong as the sheriff is involved. Sten Blix forgives Jeremy by pulling back his charges, but Jeremy suffers from a worse punishment, public shunning, as a result of the spreading of information by Deputy McRaven, who is in love with Ginger. This shunning only worsens when Ginger accidentally falls asleep in Jeremy's bed after attempting to console him. Shortly after this the baker offers them the opportunity to do some odd jobs, which comes as a shock and a great help to Jeremy who had lost all of his previous jobs as a result of the two incidents. Ginger feels especially bad about this and attempts to find a solution to Jeremy's money problems by signing him up to audition for Uncommon Knowledge for his languages, a show that is well liked by his town and loved by his father. Jeremy first has an ethical discussion with Jacob about using his information as his own, and he reluctantly accepts that his gift might be his ability to hear Jacob, and so it is not really cheating. Conk, a local lunkhead, drives them to the audition, where Jeremy does not do well at the languages, he is too slow. Jacob makes him state that he has skill in the Grimm Stories, which goes significantly better as the casting staff is very impressed.

When they return from this audition Jeremy is shocked to see his father dressed and singing with Jenny Applegarth, a widowed woman of the town. His father seems very



happy. He even leaves the house one day and gets a job as a bus boy, all due to Jenny. Jeremy receives a visit from the mayor who offers to loan him the money to pay off his bookstore leaving it as collateral after a period of six weeks. This is necessary as the bank is going to take it at the end of the week, and so Jeremy accepts, but this makes the TV show even more of a necessity. Fortunately, he makes it onto the show, much to his surprise and Jacob's glee. Harold is also very proud and excited. The show goes very well for Jeremy at first as he earns \$64,000 on the weight of Jacob's knowledge of his own writings and books until Jacob's pride and confidence gets ahead of him and they fail to answer a Disney question and lose all of the money. Jeremy is devastated, and Jacob attempts to bond with him and raise his spirits by finally sharing some of his personal history, his relationship with his nephew who had died at a very young age. This death took a large toll on Jacob, larger than he is willing to admit to Jeremy.

The next day Ginger and Jeremy go to work for the baker another time, this time construction related work in the forest at his cabin. Jacob, of course, tags along but doesn't see anything suspicious about this event. The two children chop some wood, swim and eat lunch, where they are drugged and taken prisoner by the baker as Jacob realizes that Sten Blix is the Finder of Occasions but can do nothing but watch him drive away with Ginger and Jeremy in his van. Using letters that Sten had the children write as part of an exercise he is able to get their parents to believe that they simply ran away, while he takes them into his bakery storeroom, through a hidden door in the wall and into a dungeon with three cells, one of which already occupied by Frank Bailey, his former assistant who was supposed to have gone to California for a cooking school. Frank fills them in on the workings of this dungeon, and Jacob tells Jeremy exactly where they are, hoping that this information will prove useful. Sten visits them from time to time, telling them his backstory, how he had ran away and was adopted by a baker and his wife, who showed him the Prince cakes, which are in memory of someone who had died in the village. Over the course of their imprisonment the children are told fairytales and are subjected to starvation, darkness and strange frightening noises by Sten Blix as well as writing additional letters to console their family members and keep them off of the baker's trail. Jeremy tries multiple ploys to escape, startling Sten with his knowledge of their location and attempting to write an acrostic letter, but fails. Eventually Sten poisons them, and although Jacob warns them of the danger, their hunger is too great to not eat it.

Jacob leaves the children, and in desperation attempts to get someone - anyone - to hear him but fails. He then hears the voice of his nephew who tells him to sing, and he is able to sing to Jenny Applegarth and get her to understand what is going on. She gets the entire town to follow her to the bakery, where Jacob sings her the information to get into the dungeon in time to save the children. The sheriff and Jacob arrive at the baker's house in time to watch him walk into his own oven and die. Jacob attempts to get information from the ghostly Sten but cannot. The story concludes with everyone happy and well, and Jeremy's 'I love you' to Jacob sends him off into the afterlife.



Introduction - The Prank (pg. 1 - 78)

Summary

Far Far Away is the story of Jacob Grimm (or rather his ghost), Jeremy Johnson, a boy that can hear ghosts, and a girl. As the narrator, Jacob begins his tale by describing it vaguely as one with romance, but quickly forebodes of the Finder of Occasions, the villain. The month is May, the setting a small village as the narrator introduces the protagonist Jeremy Johnson surrounded by three girls, one of which is Ginger Boultinghouse. They are discussing the word problem their teacher had assigned them, and Jacob gives Jeremy a small hint, acrostic, that allows Jeremy to figure it out. The children discuss the green smoke from the baker's shop, and how it signifies the Prince Cakes. The girls invite Jeremy to the bakery, which is a surprise to both Jeremy and Jacob, as it is out of the ordinary. Jeremy attempts to say no, but when he admits that he had never tried one, his case was lost. Ginger takes it as a necessity for him to try it, but Jeremy has to ask Jacob first as he is his protector. Jacob thinks it over and decides that there is nothing risky about this. He then tells the reader that this thought would be proven wrong, foreboding danger in the future.

The narrator formally introduces himself as Jacob Grimm, giving his date and time of death and how instead of meeting his brother in the afterlife, he found no one that he had ever known. He talked to scholars, and eventually found out that he had not, in fact, passed on. He was in the Zwischenraum. He describes the space to the reader as an aural location filled with specters that cannot have a physical effect on the environment besides seeing and in very rare cases speaking. The reason that Jeremy is able to hear Jacob is because he is an Exceptional, and he aims to describe this in the next part of his tale.

The children are walking towards the bakery when Conk Crinklaw takes a verbal jab at Jeremy, to which he responds with a Jacob-given German phrase. Ginger asks Jeremy what he had said to Conk, and Jeremy asks Jacob what it meant. After a moment Jacob tells Jeremy and he relays the information on to Ginger: "May you cross an endless desert on the back of a flatulent camel." Ginger asks him where he got this phrase, and Jeremy replies with a shrug.

Jacob describes the green smoke as appearing every four months or so, and signifying the Princesstarta or Princess cakes, also labeled by the baker as Prince Cakes in a marketing scheme. Jeremy tells Ginger and her friends about the enchantment of the Princesstarta, that the first living thing that one looks at while eating the first bite of a cake is the thing that you will love, an enchantment that could only be broken by a tear on the lips of the enchantee. They enter the bakery and Jacob introduces the reader to Sten Blix, a man who strongly resembles Father Christmas. After a little bargaining he gives the children each a slice of the Princesstarta in exchange for IOUs. The children continue to discuss the problem from school, wondering where Jeremy had gotten his information when Frank Bailey, the baker's assistant, arrives to deliver their cakes.



Ginger's friends and Jeremy all take their first bites with eyes closed, Ginger on the other hand seems like she is willing to wait to begin to eat it. Once the other children had finished, Ginger takes her first bite of the Princesstarta, of course with her eyes closed, when they suddenly jerk open as a result to a ridiculously loud sneeze from Jeremy.

Of course the significance is that Ginger has fallen under Jeremy's charm, which seems to make her friends fill up with hilarity. The children write their IOU note to the baker and leave. Ginger and Jeremy walk together, talking about the risk of eviction from Jeremy's house. Ginger offers to brainstorm some ideas. They also talk about Jeremy's mother, Ginger offering optimistic ideas about her whereabouts. Ginger says hi to Mrs. Truax, and Jacob takes time to explain to the reader her backstory, how her son had disappeared five years ago. Ginger teases Jeremy about his languages, and asks him if he had any French knowledge as that would really boost his charm. Jacob gives Jeremy a French phrase which he uses to Ginger's great satisfaction. Jeremy blushes and quickly heads home.

Jacob describes Jeremy's house, the Two-Book Bookstore of which Jeremy is the owner, not his father. He tells the story of Harold and Zyla's meeting, how they got married very early in their relationship and how Zyla gave Jeremy his love for fairy-tales. One day when Jeremy was six, he returned from school to find out that his mother had left. Five years before the present day of the novel Jeremy heard a voice saying "I'm sorry" over and over again and had no doubt it was the voice of his deceased mother. He and his father received a letter with an obituary notice inside, alerting them not only that Zyla had died but that she had remarried prior to that death. Harold ordered Jeremy to tell no one about this and make up the excuse that he had a rare illness and wanted to be left alone. He has never left the house since.

Back to the present, Jeremy returns home to find a final notice on his house, and of course, his father. Jeremy attempts to get his father to show some fight, but fails. He goes upstairs to study, as always. Harold attempts to get him to watch Uncommon Knowledge, a game show, together as he is afraid of losing Jeremy too, just like Zyla. Jeremy and Jacob discuss Ginger, making it obvious that Jeremy has somewhat of a crush on her. They return to studies very shortly after.

Jacob takes some time to describe Lucian Johnson, Jeremy's grandfather. Lucian was the one that told Jeremy that the voices he was hearing were ghosts, and the two of them became real friends, as Lucian supported Jeremy and built up his self esteem throughout his childhood. Three years before the novel Lucian died, saying goodbye to Jeremy through the spirit world. Jeremy raced home to find his grandfather dead in the Two-Book Bookstore.

Jeremy and Jacob are studying for a Latin exam when a masked face appears at the window, revealing itself to be Ginger with her two friends. They invite him out for a "night mission" and despite Jacob's advice to the contrary he agrees to accompany them. All dressed in black the children run through the town, sneaking around until they arrive near the home of the baker. Using a wood board to escape leaving mud prints, they



approach his house where Ginger asks Jeremy to put Pop Rocks into Sten Blix's Trix cereal. Jeremy agrees to do so in order to raise his reputation, again against the wishes of Jacob. Using Jacob's awareness assistance Jeremy successfully places the pop rocks in the cereal and goes back to watch him eat it with Ginger's gang. The baker eats it and reacts, looking out the window and setting off a flood light that lights up his entire yard. The gang runs away, but not before Jacob could see that the baker had called the sheriff. Ginger and Jeremy run into Jenny Applegarth on their way home, and asks her if she could keep it quiet. While they were hiding Jeremy realizes that he had left his house key at the scene of the crime, as well as one of his shoes. They part ways and Jeremy returns home.

Jeremy goes to bed, and Jacob goes outside to think about the reason for his being there, the thing undone and all of it's vagueness. He thought of when his brother Wilhelm was alive and how if he was there they could have already figured out the thing undone. He went back in the past of his first existence in the middle plane, when he found an old man who had know his brother. This man sent him to find a boy who slept with fairy-tales and who was in great danger from a Finder of Occasions, one who looked to cause harm. He recalled his first meeting with Jeremy, how he was welcomed into his home, and how he came up with his plan to protect him, by moving him to college and out of this town.

Back to the present, Jacob observes the Sheriff and Deputy walking towards Jeremy's house. The two men walk into the house more or less unannounced and shout for Harold and Jeremy. Jeremy arrives, and with Jacob's advice does not give himself away. Harold enters into the room and defends and vouches for Jeremy. The sheriff presents the shoe they had found on the scene and takes Jeremy into the station.

Analysis

This novel is a mix of the ridiculous and the very real, and the introduction drills that idea home immediately as the protagonist is introduced with an unbelievable gift of talking with those just beyond the living, but also is the child of a broken marriage and who is about to get evicted. It almost forces the reader to climb down off of the cloud of fantasy every time Jeremy brings up his father or his problems at home, reminding the reader that this is not simply a fairy-tale, this is a fairy-tale in the modern, relate-able world.

It is clear that Jeremy and Jacob's relationship is slightly different than simply mentor and pupil, as they play jokes on other members of their community and Jacob seems quite willing to help Jeremy with his homework no matter what possible ethical issues there could be. In fact, Jacob is very much out of his element in this relationship, as is evidence by the strange and seemingly not very well thought-out protection plan for Jeremy: get him to college. The goal makes reasonable sense, obviously removing him from the town will remove him from the dangers that lie within it, but the long-term aspect of it simply does not make sense at all. If the goal is merely to get Jeremy out of town, all he would have to do is convince him that he truly is in great danger. Rather, he



seems to be going around the corner to almost trick Jeremy into leaving, as if he would only leave if there was something positive for him on the other side. This plan alone speaks to the level of their relationship, as while they are clearly friends, they are not good enough friends or companions that Jacob can be completely honest with Jeremy, but also too close that Jacob can simply use Jeremy as a pawn to get him out of the Zwischenraum. This idea of the fairy-tale world and reality continues with the introduction of Sten Blix, a man that strongly resembles Santa Claus and his enchanted Prince Cakes. Of course there is going to be something between Ginger and Jeremy, but the way in which she opens her eyes to see him is not in any way romantic or fairy-tale esque, she is startled into opening her eyes by a thundering sneeze from Jeremy.

The reality of the novel hits hard with Jeremy's reveal of his mother and how she left him and his father to pursue her fairy-tale ending, made even more sad by the fact that she didn't end up leading a life that was at all different from before, she simply remarried and adopted two children essentially replacing Jeremy and Harold without a word.

This section of the novel really establishes Jeremy's character, how is able to deal with hardship, not only the death of his mother but also his grandfather, with whom he had a better relationship than with his father. He deals with issues much better than his father, but is clearly not viewed by people as normal. It seems like he doesn't have any friends until Ginger reaches out to him, and even she seems attracted to his oddities, admitting to his lack of normality. He is not desperate for friendship, but seems willing to take risks in order to increase his relationships, as he agrees to go on the night mission with Ginger seemingly to please her, going so far as to commit the act himself not for Ginger but for her friends, in order to increase his reputation. In this way he does not really break any stereotypes regarding his being a high school aged boy, he is willing to make a fool out of himself to get the girl. His morality comes into play once again, as although he is not willing to fully cheat on exams and the like with the help of Jacob, he is willing to lie to protect himself and his friends, an interesting combination of ethical standards, but not too surprising given he is young.

Discussion Question 1

What is the relationship between Jeremy and Jacob when it comes to his studies?

Discussion Question 2

Is the budding relationship between Ginger and Jeremy stereotypical to a fairy-tale? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Jeremy decide, against Jacob's wishes, to go on the night adventure with Ginger?



Vocabulary

winsome, malignant, linguist, ecstasy, pedagogical, specter, zwischenraum, flatulent, marzipan, robust, burrower, acrostic, irrefutable, polarity, obituary, default, gnarled, trough, cardsharp, clairvoyant, clairaudient, axiom, postulate, inadvertently, silhouetted, apprehension, contrived, clamor, vehemance, begrudgingly



The Sheriff - The Song (pg. 78 - 152)

Summary

Jeremy and the sheriff arrive to the station to see the baker waiting for them. They discuss the poster of Possy on the wall and the missing children. The sheriff displays all of his circumstantial evidence and asks Jeremy who was there with him that night. Sten steps in and repeals his charges on Jeremy, to the sheriff's shock and dismay. Sten explains his reasoning, saying it is because there were bigger and more important crimes for the sheriff to be considering. Jeremy and Jacob leave the police station a little confused as to the result of the meeting. They agree to accept it as it happened, although Jacob shares another foreboding thought with the reader.

Jeremy returns home to find his father searching for clothing, stating that he wants to come and help Jeremy. He apologizes for everything that went wrong in their lives, and Jeremy states that he is just lucky that he has a dad. It is the day of the latin examination, and Jacob decides to help Jeremy by giving him the answers to some of the questions in a way that it would seem like it was coming from his own mind. Ginger approaches him after the class to ask if he had turned them in, to which he responds no. The next examination is Geometry, and Jeremy asks Jacob to not give him any answers this time around, which shocked Jacob a little because he thought he had been so slick with his wording.

Jacob leaves the school alone and hears the townspeople taking their own look and judgments of the events of the night before, assuming that Jeremy was trying to steal something. They decide to punish him themselves, and Jacob searches for the Deputy, assuming he is the one behind the rumors. He witnesses him shuffling through an envelope of photos, all holding information about the townspeople - scandalous information. Jacob believes that he has finally found the Finder of Occasions after seeing a picture of Jeremy and Ginger in that envelope. School let out for the day, and Jacob tries to get Jeremy's attention to inform him of this new information. Jeremy is greeted by silence and cold shoulders from the townspeople. He returns home, and receives numerous phone calls from members of the community informing him that his labor will no longer be required. Ginger calls him to apologize, leaving a voicemail. Jacob reveals the information that he has found out, and Jeremy believes him but thinks that the occasion was to start the public shunning.

Jeremy, depressed, stays home with his father the next day watching tv. Jacob attempts to change his mood, but to no avail. Jeremy and his father discuss what their next move would be regarding the store and house, but come up with no answers. Jeremy retires to his bedroom and begins to read fairy-tales when Ginger arrives at the window to apologize in person. She asks him to read her a fairy-tale, and a few minutes later she falls asleep on his bed. Jeremy decides to let her sleep, setting the alarm for midnight as the time when he would kick her out. The next morning Jacob frantically awakes Jeremy to make sure Ginger leaves relatively unseen. She sneaks around the town



back to her bed, where she prays that her grandfather won't find out, as well as praying for the general well-being of others. Jacob, hearing this, changes his mind about her, and gains a more positive opinion of the girl.

The next day Jeremy is greeted by Jenny Applegarth, the only person in town who is willing to talk to him. They discuss his father's past and his singing ability. Jacob attempts to talk to her, and she hears some rustling in the trees as a result. She also reveals to Jeremy that the Deputy had seen Ginger coming out of Jeremy's room that night, and alerts him that the town would be viewing him in an even worse light in the near future. Jeremy goes to his last remaining three jobs only to find that all of them no longer are requiring his services. He receives a letter informing of a Foreclosure Auction, which only makes the day worse until Ginger arrives and again promises to help him. He informs her that the deputy had seen her coming out of his room, which explains why her friends were no longer allowed to hang out with her. The two are about to have a romantic moment when the thunder hits and the rain began, and they part ways.

Jeremy returns home to a voice message from Ginger informing him that Sten Blix has some work for them to do the following day. Jeremy decides to go for a walk that evening, where he runs into the Deputy who harasses him a bit. Jeremy finds a note from Ginger and he leaves one for her in the same spot.

Jacob reveals a bit of his past, he had been in love with his brother's wife and would have possibly pursued this if an incident had not happened to his nephew. He refuses to give any more details.

The two children go to the bakery to see what Sten had in store for them and it seems that he holds no ill will as he accepts their apology and feeds them. He shows them their task, polishing silver, and spends the majority of that morning instructing them on proper technique, giving them some nectar for energy and sending them on their way. Ginger informs Jeremy that she has a plan in the works to get him his money, but decides not to tell him anything else about it. The two spend the following day together as well, in the bookstore where they discuss that the Deputy has informed Sten Blix that he will have to terminate their employment if he wants to continue having good business in his shop. That afternoon Jenny calls him for art help, and he quickly runs over to her house.

Ginger comes over three days later to let him know that she has a surprise voyage for him the following day. Jeremy and Jacob are not pleased with this, as they are not fans of surprises. He tries to get more information, but as always she declines. That night Jacob ventures out on his own and shares with the reader a story of his nephew, how only he could get him to sing, something that he found embarrassing. The following morning Ginger arrives with Conk, who is going to be driving them to their location, a TV studio where Jeremy will audition of Uncommon Knowledge for his language ability. Jeremy and Jacob have an inner conversation about the ethics of using Jacob's knowledge in this context. They agree to give it a shot and enter the audition where it goes well, but there is much too long of a gap between the question and the responses.



He is about to leave the room when Jacob tells him to mention his knowledge of the Brother's Grimm, to which he responds perfectly to their questions, leading them to give him very hopeful responses. They alert him that if Milo Castle himself calls, it means that he has made it onto the show. On the drive back Conk offers to ask his father about the chance for a bank loan of sorts, much to Jeremy's surprise given their relationship as less than acquaintances.

Analysis

This section reveals just how badly misinformed Jacob and Jeremy really were about the danger of their collective situation. Rather than a figure that is actually dangerous or at all intelligent, Jacob decides that the Finder of Occasions is a small town deputy, and Jeremy decides that the big event and act of this individual must be to set the town off against him. It also sheds new light on the sensibilities and values of this small town, one that does not need a conviction to declare someone guilty, and once declared guilty everything else must be taken in the worst way possible. It also shows the importance and power that local authority has in a town of this size, something that is all too real in today's world of police brutality and the fear of outsiders. In this case it is just a result of jealousy, but it has a great effect on Jeremy's life as well as Ginger's, although the reader does not get as much of an in-depth look as to her emotions.

The baker at this point in the novel makes an interesting decision; not only has he already pardoned Jeremy legally, he now decides to pardon him publicly by allowing him to work for him. Once he is revealed to be the Finder of Occasions this motive makes more sense, as he is clearly attempting to garner some good will and trust in order to get them to come to his cabin without the normal fear and caution associated with such an act, but at this point in the novel it is a strong gesture against the town as well as law-enforcement to hire these two individuals responsible for a crime against him, individuals who had been caught but released on his words.

Jeremy gives the reader insight into how a character feels when they have been fully alienated from society, as in the past he had clearly been somewhat of an outsider, but never like his father who chose to alienate himself from the outside world. Jeremy, having had this feeling forced upon him, feels it in a much deeper and stronger way as not only does he not have a large number of relationships at the adolescent level, even his adult relationships are being removed from him. It is a terrible feeling to lose everything that you have built up, and reminds the reader how easily a reputation can be lost.

It is at this point in the novel where Jeremy faces his first real moral issue, as he is faced with the challenge of whether or not to use Jacob's information for the game show audition. This is a real issue, as he needs the money desperately but has an issue with using academic knowledge that is not his own. Jacob reasons with him and eventually, combined with the real need for money, convinces him that at the very least he is only slightly lying about his talent, as his real talent was to be able to talk with a ghost. Jeremy is convinced, but not fully okay with this situation, but does it out of necessity.



Discussion Question 1

Why does the baker decide not to press charges on Jeremy?

Discussion Question 2

What is the Deputy's motive for spreading the rumors about Jeremy and then Ginger?

Discussion Question 3

Why is Jeremy so anti-competing in Uncommon Knowledge?

Vocabulary

aroma, prosaic, repentant, malevolent, boisterous, alfalfa, decrepit, hypothesis, bungalow, tableau, municipal, pigment, tranquil, demurred, prospective



Jenny and Harold - The Nephew's Death (pg. 152 - 229)

Summary

Jeremy returns home to find his father and Jenny Applegarth not only together but singing with the smell of baked goods in the air. They eat dinner together and Harold asks Jeremy where he had been that day, but Jeremy doesn't want to respond, and instead runs out of the house. He starts to freak out not only about his problems but about the possibility of being on the game-show, as he thinks it makes him a fraud. Jeremy and Jacob argue, apologize and then Ginger arrives. Jeremy and Ginger discuss Conk for a while, until Jeremy asks her to choose him or Conk and she answers circumstantially, as in Conk is better at some things and Jeremy others. Jeremy begins to tell the story of Faithful John, a story full of love when the Deputy arrives and accuses them of loitering and breaking curfew.

Three days later neither of them have heard anything from the deputy, but there is something even more interesting; Harold has showered, dressed and exited the house with Jenny Applegarth. Ginger and Jeremy are hanging out once again, playing a board game when Jacob notices that it seemed that Ginger is more interested in Jeremy than the game. The two are about to kiss when the Mayor arrives at the door. He comes with an offer for Jeremy to loan him the money to pay off the debts but with the condition that Jeremy will have to turn over the house if he is unable to pay the mayor back within six weeks.

This development makes the TV show appearance more or less necessary, much to Jeremy's dismay. Conk and his friends challenge Ginger to some type of balance/strength game where Ginger beats Conk despite his much larger size and being male. The children then go to Frank Bailey's house where he tells his mother that Sten Blix has given him the choice to stay and work with him or go to a cooking school in California, one that Sten would pay for himself. Ginger comes to the bookstore later that day to tell Jeremy that Blix had asked for their help the next morning. When Jenny and Harold walk in, Harold is well dressed. It is announced that Harold has gotten a job as a busboy at the cafe.

The following morning, Jeremy and Ginger go to the bakery to do whatever the baker has for them. He takes them down to his storerooms and asks them to clean them for him, there is an air of danger but everything goes well. After they finish the job he gives them the nectar drink again. On their way home they have to hide in the trashcan from the Deputy, and so Jeremy is taking a shower when Milo Castle calls for him. Ginger answers, and then puts Jeremy on the line where he finds out that he has made it onto the show. Despite Jeremy's desire for no one to know, Ginger tells his father the second he enters the room.



The next day Frank is leaving the bakery to go to the cooking school, the baker as his chauffeur. Ginger arrives at the bookstore with new clothing for Jeremy to use on the show. There is a jump in time, and Jeremy is in the studio being prepared to go on the air. The show begins, and Jeremy answers all of the questions perfectly and without pause as Jacob feeds him the answers from his life. He is given the choice to take the \$8,000 and leave, but decides to stay for another question and another and another, ending up at \$64,000 as Jacob does not fail. With Jacob's prodding they decide to go on for one more question, a two-parter. The first part Jacob answers easily, but the second, having to do with the Disney version of the story, he has no idea and neither does Jeremy. Jeremy hears a human voice in the booth giving him the answer, but declines to use it, losing the round and all of his money.

The next few days are brutal for Jeremy as he struggles to come to terms with his failure. He tells his father about the voice that he ignored in the booth and his father expresses his pride in Jeremy. When they are alone Jacob apologizes to Jeremy for his prodding, and they talk for a while until Jeremy brings up Jacob's nephew another time, which Jacob starts to brush off until he realizes that Jeremy has opened up to him multiple times and he has yet to do the same. He begins the story of his nephew, how he loved him and how he got sick and died. He shares with the reader that when his nephew died he also died inside, but only tells Jeremy that his life had changed. This brings the two of them even closer. After Jeremy goes to sleep Jacob thinks about his nephew and how he had died, how it was against the laws of fairy-tales and how it affected his belief in God, as only a God who is not benevolent nor omnipotent or even possibly inattentive (the worst option) could have allowed his nephew to die.

Analysis

This section of the novel speaks to the changes in one's life when someone cares about them. It is very clear that Harold does not have any support or friends, his own son is embarrassed of him and pities him, doing his best to stay away from him. It is only when Jenny comes onto the scene that Harold regains some self-confidence as he now has someone who not only cares about him, but wants him to succeed and flourish. This is a monumental moment for Harold, not only in terms of his own personal growth but in his relationship with Jeremy, as he doesn't need to rely on Jeremy so absolutely as he did in the past. It also bodes well for the future, as Harold had previously been scared of Jeremy leaving for college, but it is clear now that he will be fine and self-sustaining if Jeremy were to leave.

There is also the idea of ego and competition, as even Jacob succumbs to exactly what these game-shows want to happen, make their competitors over-confident in their ability to the point that they go too far and lose everything. It is obvious in the dialogue that Jeremy, who is not even sure if he is comfortable being on the show in the first place, is more than happy with the \$64,000, as it is almost three times the amount needed to pay of his debts. Jacob, however, wants to continue. He attempts to justify his desire to continue by stating that it would be helpful to have more money for Jeremy's college fund, but admits to the reader that he had gotten caught up in the competition, believing



that there was no possible way that he could make a mistake. Of course this backfires, leaving Jeremy penniless again, only this time he is penniless and feels like a failure. This is an incredibly selfish act on the part of Jacob, because there is literally no consequence to his actions. The townspeople will believe that Jeremy simply got greedy, as they have no idea that Jacob even exists, and Jeremy is the one who will not be able to pay of his debts.

The one silver lining to their collective failure on Uncommon Knowledge is that Jacob feels the need to open up more to Jeremy, in a somewhat misguided but well-intentioned attempt to console him by telling him the story of Jacob's nephew and how he died. Jacob does, however hold back a piece of the story, being the way that he truly felt at the death of his nephew, but shares that fact with the reader. This leads him to discuss the existence of God and how he could let such an act happen. His conclusion, that God is inattentive draws heavy parallels with his own character, as he views God as a protector and caretaker, very much in the same light as himself regarding Jeremy, whom he too will allow an atrocious act due to lack of attention. The parallel is interesting because clearly God would have multiple, billions of individuals to look after in the same way that Jacob looks after Jeremy, and it is reasonable that he could allow something bad to happen to one individual. In Jacob's case it is far worse, as he is only looking after the well-being of Jeremy, and fails even at that task.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Jacob not want Ginger and Jeremy to become a couple at this point?

Discussion Question 2

Is the mayor's motive in buying off the debt genuine or monopolistic?

Discussion Question 3

What are the motives behind Jacob's desire to continue on with the game, even after they had won the money for Jeremy's house?

Vocabulary

emanated, unmistakable, slimeball, annihilate, pendulum, interlocked, quintessential, equilibrium, raucous, boisterous, gratifying, promissory, indignation, impetuous, ordinance, unflappable, phosphorescent, mellifluous, melancholy, conspicuously



The Cabin - 19 Peas (pg. 228 - 306)

Summary

Ginger alerts Jeremy that once again the baker has some work for them, this time construction related at his cabin in the woods. Jacob jumps out of the timeline to tell the reader that none of this caused him any alarm at the time, foreboding the fact that it should cause alarm to the reader. He admits to be taken away by the beauty of the forest rather than keeping aware of the situation. The baker begins splitting wood and then turns over this task to Jeremy and Ginger, after which they all eat lunch. The baker convinces them to write a fake letter as if they had left town, saying that it often helps to put those sentiments in writing to see if it affected their mentality at all. The children agree to do this, Jeremy writing about Arizona and Ginger about some unknown location. After this they go to the pond to swim, where they share a kiss.

Quickly after this the Baker arrives and gives the children the nectar juice again. They react strangely to it this time, their voices slurring and Jacob quickly realizes that something is wrong but is too late to act on it. The baker states "another moment has come" and to Jacob's horror he realizes that the Finder of Occasions is Sten Blix. Another man walks silently out of the woods and hands Sten a cigarette, helping him place the children in the van and then parts back into the woods. Sten shows no sign of anything wrong, stopping to talk with Jenny and Harold on his way back, only flinching when Jenny asks him about the secret of the Prince Cakes, but relaxing when he realizes that she was merely talking about the ingredients. He arrives at his bakery and takes the children down to the storerooms, revealing a hidden door in the wall. He takes them down inside where Jacob can hear another person there, of unknown identity.

After an hour or so Jeremy and Ginger awake from their drugged sleep and talk to each other. Shortly after, Frank Bailey reveals himself also to be trapped down there, having been drugged on his way to the airport to his Californian school. Frank fills them in on the situation, saying that Sten is nice at times but also cruel. He will bring him food and also tell stories. He also speaks on the noises that he heard at night, or what he assumed was night because of the artificial lights.

Jacob tells Jeremy that he is under the bakery behind the storerooms, and fills him in on everything he had seen while Jeremy was under the influence of the drugs. The baker arrives with a change of cloths, and Ginger and Jeremy respond negatively. Frank tells them the details of his experience, how he had written some postcards ahead of time with different themes and he assumed that this was the reason why his mother wasn't looking for him. Frank asks them to be nicer to Blix as he is afraid of the consequences that he had the last time, when he turned off the lights and didn't give him any food. Jeremy, with Jacob's prompting, starts to tell fairy-tales in an attempt to keep up spirits.

The baker enters, this time with dinner. Ginger does not give him a response. He gives them the food and settles down to tell them a story, one that very obviously referred to



him. He tells the story of a boy who ran away and was taken in by a baker and his wife, who taught him the secrets of Princesstarta, that it was prepared in memory of a villager who had passed. There was talk of his inheritance and how he was becoming a great baker. Years later the baker fell ill and died, the princesstarta were made. Then the wife fell ill and also died but not before making it clear that the bakery was to go to the boy. He waited for her to die, made the princesstarta then sold the bakery and left. After this the Baker left silently. Jeremy shows the other children that he had smuggled some peas to use for their calendar. The children come to the realization that while this was very much like a fairy-tale, the big difference is once you die you stay dead.

The days went on, Ginger praying that she would be able to die without regrets which leads Jacob to think about if she dies, she will most likely be trapped in the middle plane with him. The baker arrives the next day to inform them that Jeremy's house has been turned over to the mayor, and that the only one in town who is still searching for them is the Deputy, and that is because he is in love with Ginger, a fact that Jacob takes as truth immediately. During Sten's boasting Jeremy shatters his confidence for a moment when he tells him he knows exactly where he and the other children are located. The baker is affected for a moment, but quickly recovers and leaves. The room turns dark and the noises began, sounds of mice and other small creatures. This would have been frightening if Jacob wasn't there to immediately inform Jeremy that there are no creatures, it is just sound. The next morning Jeremy and Jacob come up with the adage "Resist, adapt, never give up" which seems to enliven their spirits.

There are only 16 peas left, it had been four days since they had eaten anything. The baker arrives and offered them food in turn for them writing new letters to reassure their relatives. The children agree, but only if he makes them spaghetti with ragu sauce, as part of their escape plan. He agrees to do so and the children write their letters. Jeremy attempts to grab the baker's knife but fails, grabbing the blade and cutting his hand. The baker realizes that this was just a ruse, and finds the acrostic lettering in Jeremy's letter. He also reveals to them that he can listen to their conversations and tells them why he had imprisoned them in the first place, Jeremy and Ginger for their prank, Frank because he chose to leave rather than to stay. That night the sounds get even worse, as there is slithering and shrieking and finally the sound of a human dying.

Analysis

The big reveal of the Finder of Occasions does exactly what the rest of this novel had done, flipping the script on the stereotypical fairy-tale tropes by making the lovable, Santa Claus baker the villain, one who not only kidnaps children but murders them, and has been doing this for a long period of time. It is even more of a shock to the reader because there have already been two red herring moments regarding the baker and the possibility that he is the villain. When the children are first hired there is the reasonable caution on the part of the reader if this is a trick, but nothing happens. The second time they work for him he shows them his storerooms, even referring to another room as one that they can't go into, but it turns out to be another storeroom. After this, any level of fear the children or the reader have for Sten Blix is more or less gone, because there is



a still a good part of the novel left. This final time is the occasion that Sten chooses, and with this third time is the charm style reveal.

Right after the children are taken to the dungeon it is clear that this is not going to be the usual, bad guy kidnaps the good guy but his friend saves him type scenario. Frank is there, and seemingly has been there for months. This setting and the conversations about how Sten acts around Frank brings the reader right out of the fairy-tale world and into the world of survival, how these children are going to stay alive long enough to be rescued or for Jacob to get someone's attention. The realism turns to near-horror as Saw-like noises play and it is clear that the baker has a real desire to mess with the heads of these children. This is the darkest moment of the novel, as the reader realizes that the baker enjoys this and will continue to do so until he gets bored, or feels the need to kill them. The children attempted to keep hope, but the baker wouldn't even let them have any inch of positivity telling them that he has been listening in on them. His reasoning for kidnapping them seems ridiculous, and it is unclear if he is a man that actually overvalues loyalty to the point of death, or is simply attempting to justify his horrible actions. Even his backstory does not make him at all more likable or pitiable, as he either leaves out key details or just decided to run away as a child, lucked into a fortune and steady employment but committed murder anyway.

There is also the theme of hope and how it can be both a positive and a negative thing for these children, as it does give them the willpower to survive through the periods of starvation and darkness, but as Frank points out, they need to also be aware of their actions and their effects, as their strength and resilience against Sten results in losing food and worse punishments. This is the major difference between Frank's prisoner mentality, and also demonstrates the effect of long term imprisonment on the human psyche, as he may have started out more combative, but has resigned himself to the inevitable.

Discussion Question 1

Is Jacob's overall plan for keeping Jeremy safe inherently flawed? Does it focus too much on the long term?

Discussion Question 2

What does it say about Sten Blix's character that he talks to Jenny and Harold with Jeremy in the back of his van?

Discussion Question 3

Does Sten Blix's background story make his character at all less evil?

Vocabulary

tendril, cherubic, perilously, furnishing, sumptuous, venerable, trepidation, annihilation, materialized, psychopathic, inadvertently, cataleptic, comprehensive, interminable, emanated, solicitous



The Nykoping Banquet - Conclusion (pg. 306 - 369)

Summary

Three days later the baker returns with scraps of food and the information that their letters have been received, and that no one is looking for them anymore. He settles down to tell them another story that sends a shiver down Jacob's spine. The story, called The Nykoping Banquet, is about a king who led his guest to a dungeon to starve to death. Before beginning Jeremy responds to him in Swedish and reveals his ghost, Jacob along with a smattering of information. Jacob uses his ability to move wind to move a rocking chair, which freaks out Sten for a moment, but again he recovers and leaves unscathed. Jeremy admits to Ginger and Frank that the ghost is real, which they have some difficulty believing. Jacob and Jeremy discuss it and agree that Jacob will slip out and attempt to get some more information or help if possible. The peas have run out and the children eat them, desperate for food. Jeremy begins to have a dream where he sees a younger Jacob as well as his nephew, it is the singing scene that Jacob had once described to Jeremy. The baker returns the next day with their spaghetti ragu, clearly spoiled with an awful stench but they eat it nonetheless. He gives them a new change of clothes, all black. Jacob takes advantage of this opportunity to slip out with the baker, who notices his presence and threatens him.

Jacob first goes to Mrs. Truax, desperately trying to get her attention to no avail. He tries with Jenny, Harold and Conk, all again to no avail. He witnesses the baker buy some rat poison, and telling the grocer that a new batch of Prince cakes was on the way, the last batch. He follows the baker to his home, where he observes him making and poisoning some porridge. Jacob returns to the basement to warn the children of the impending danger, but their hunger is too strong and they eat the porridge served to them anyway. The baker then tells them the story of Posy, how he had taken him in and killed him. Jacob knows that this isn't true as he had seen Posy in the forest, the silent assistant to Sten. The baker bids farewell to the children, and Jacob observes the entry code on the wall, 1317 the year of the Nykoping Banquet. Jacob tries again and again to get someone to hear him but it is impossible. Finally when he is near giving up, his nephew's voice appears asking him to sing and he realizes what he has to do.

He goes to Jenny and begins to sing, and to his surprise she hears him. She follows him all the way to the baker's house, only to turn back, but Jacob saves his plan by changing the lyrics to the song and she understands that the children are in the basement. She wakes up Harold and takes him to the sheriff to attempt to get him to go to the baker's basement. On their way they notice the green smoke rising from the chimney. They tell the sheriff what they know but he doesn't listen to them, and so they gather a group of citizens to go on their own, led by Deputy McRaven. They get to the storeroom, where Jacob sings them the information to find both the keypad as well as the code to enter. They enter the cells and take the children, still alive. They then go to



the sheriff, who is still somewhat skeptical until he sees Possy's shirt on the floor of the dungeon and realizes it's significance.

Jacob arrives at Sten Blix's house first, finding an apologetic self-pitying note and then the baker. The sheriff and his men arrive, and the baker strides calmly into his own oven and burns alive. Jacob goes up to the chimney to await the baker's ghost and ask him why he had done what he had done. The baker does not reply and leaves the middle plane.

Some time passes and the children have recovered from their ordeal, Jeremy better than Ginger. He leans in to kiss her on her hospital bed and his tear almost touches her lips until Jacob moves it slightly to her cheek, saving the enchantment.

Jacob goes farther ahead in time, informing the reader reader that the man in the forest was Possy, that Milo Castle had helped Jeremy by sending him a check of \$22,000 to cover his debt as well as advertising his bookstore, which became somewhat of a tourist attraction. Jeremy and Ginger hang out together often, and the mayor starts a plan to give Possy work as well as moving Mrs. Truax into his house in the woods. Jacob writes the story of this event with Jeremy as his pen in a few days. Jacob and Jeremy have their goodbye, sharing their feelings of love for each other which is what carries Jacob to the afterlife.

Analysis

It is incredibly intriguing that the baker mentions the effect that making the prince cakes has on him, as he states that they are tiring and draining and that he will probably only make one more batch. It would be very interesting to get a look into the inner monologue of this character, but given the dialogue that he uses it is clear that he does not really enjoy these actions and it seems that he is almost forced to do it, that there is something inside of him that he cannot control. This idea is backed up by Jacob's viewing of his suicide note as more self-pitying than apologetic, as he seems to try to explain his reasons for doing it by pushing the blame over to some other entity. In this world where ghosts can talk to humans, it is not that far-fetched to believe that Sten could have some spiritual demons, as he states to the children at one point, or even has a real mental illness.

There is also a subtle critique of local law enforcement here, as the sheriff is unwilling to check out the first lead to missing children he has had in over five years. This makes it very clear that it is not only Sten Blix's intelligence that keeps him from being caught, but also a negligence on the part of the law enforcement to go above and beyond to solve this very important issue, as missing children seems to be an issue worth showing more effort. In the context of the suspense, it makes sense that the sheriff rejects Jenny's information, as it lends the idea that maybe even with human assistance Jacob will be unable to save Jeremy and the other children.



The final theme that this novel has talked about is the issue of justice and if it has actually been served in the case of Sten Blix. At the beginning of the novel Jacob mentions the way that justice goes in fairy-tales, that the good get redeemed and the bad are punished. Although Sten does die at the end of the novel, he is not punished by the good, they do not get any sort of reconciliation or reasoning for his actions, even his ghost does not tell Jacob why he did what he did. Sten choosing the manner and timing of his own death escapes his judgment in the face of the people, he doesn't have to face his victims or show any sort of remorse, he is able to leave on his own terms. While the manner of the death is brutal, it is of his own choosing.

Discussion Question 1

Why does the baker wait so long to kill the children?

Discussion Question 2

Does Jacob do enough to try to save Jeremy and Ginger?

Discussion Question 3

Why does the sheriff refuse to search Sten's basement?

Vocabulary

reconcile, poltergeist, vigilant, fatalistic, exasperation, immune, slippage, contemplation, clamorous, enclosure, unbridled, excretion, irrigation, magnanimous, aggregation, contortion



Characters

Jeremy Johnson

Jeremy Johnson is the second most important character of the novel, around whom the narrative is created. It is his life that the narrator, Jacob Grimm is sent to save, and it is his gift to hear the souls that remain in between the earth and afterlife that allows for this connection to occur.

He is a shy boy, more or less without friends at the time that the novel begins. He and his father have gotten into some financial problems, and are in need of a substantial amount of money to save their residence and bookstore. His father has been in a rut, unable to even leave the house after his coming to the realization that his wife and Jeremy's mother was not only not coming back, but had remarried and then died in a tragic accident. Jeremy works several odd jobs to find the money needed, and to all appearances is a very straight-laced individual. This personality trait is aided by Jacob's influence on his studies, giving him the impetus and academic pressure to study and succeed so he can get a scholarship to a college. Jeremy has learned to appreciate his gift, although it has given him some difficulties, like when his grandfather passed and spoke to him on his way to the afterlife.

Jeremy is torn between his budding relationship with Ginger, and the advice of Jacob to focus on the serious things of life, and being a teenager, chooses Ginger over his studies leading to his imprisonment in the baker's dungeon. This relationship is unlike those typical of a fairy-tale story, as although they have the prince cake to theoretically blame for their initial interaction, they do not immediately fall into an inconceivable love. Rather, their romance is more similar to that of a high school romance novel, with an imposing jock character (Conk) that exists to make Jeremy jealous in the early stages of their relationship. Jacob describes their love as comfortable and working its way through friendship, something that he enjoys watching.

As a result of this relationship, in order to impress Ginger and her friends, he plays a prank on Sten Blix, the baker. This is a seemingly innocuous act but has major physical consequences. Jeremy has to deal with consequences for his actions two times over, the first when he is shunned by the town and the second in the dungeon of the baker, more or less accepting both and relying on Jacob and others to help him out of these situations. The two "punishments" were more or less in keeping with the fairy-tale trope that individuals who do bad things get punished, although in this case the punishment might be a little too harsh. From a certain point of view the two punishments are both isolation based, as the first isolates him from society on a mental level as he is free to walk around and do whatever he pleases, but is unable to make any human connections besides Ginger and his father (and Jacob if he counts). The second punishment is more of a traditional isolation where although he is with friends, he is unable to go about his business and is treated rather poorly.



He gives the reader insight into the mentality of individuals who are in fairy-tales, adding a level of reality and humanity to a story not too dissimilar to Hansel and Gretel. In a classic story of evil and an ordinary boy, not unlike most every popular fantasy novel, Jeremy gives the reader a point of view that is decidedly different and relate-able, he is a boy that has everyday problems, he has to study, he has to pay his rent, he's working on a relationship with a cute girl but at the same time he can speak to ghosts and ends up trapped in a dungeon. The modern timing of the novel also gives a more realistic edge to Jeremy, as instead of going to speak to the king he goes on a talk show, instead of stealing an egg from a giant's house he puts pop rocks in a baker's cereal.

Jacob Grimm

Jacob Grimm is the ghost Jacob Grimm of the Brothers Grimm who compiled and rewrote various folktales as to put them into writing and preserve them longer than possible with the oral tradition. He is the studious, hardworking brother of the team, focusing on and burying himself in his work after the tragic death of his nephew, something that he has yet to come to terms with even after death. He has difficulty even mentioning it to Jeremy, even though he is the only individual still living that he can talk to. He is desperately trying to get out of the midway point between life and death, and is not entirely sure as to how he can actually do this. He has a vague clue from a stranger ghost that he needs to protect Jeremy from the Finder of Occasions, but has no idea how to do so. As a result, he channels his own personality and lifestyle into Jeremy, focusing on his studies and giving him his knowledge at times when it is helpful, such as his conversations with Ginger or the game show contest. His motive for trying to see Jeremy safely to college is a little muddled, as he seems to care about Jeremy as a person as well as needing him in order to move on with his own afterlife. As a result, why the two of them have a friendly and simple relationship, there is sometimes a level of pressure applied by Jacob that is clearly not positive for Jeremy.

Jacob is a midway character between simply acting as a source of information and assistance for Jeremy, and really having his own development as an individual. The best example of his own personal story is through the slow reveal of his own backstory regarding his nephew, as in each third of the novel he reveals more and more details, albeit most of them more towards the reader than to Jeremy himself. He eventually opens up enough to give the whole story, also revealing his aversion to singing is because he only sang to his nephew, and every time he sings now it rips him apart all over again. He is able to get over this aversion in order to save Jeremy and Ginger, as he gets the attention of Jenny Applegarth.

He is a relatively respectful individual, as he does not do much to make Jeremy uncomfortable and seems to be more or less interested in his good will. Although he is supposed to be looking out for Jeremy in all senses, he has a limited ability to do so as even when he senses that a situation carries a certain risk he cannot physically prevent Jeremy from acting as he wills. As a result, his influence can only be as a result of Jeremy's respect for him, leading to an interesting relationship where Jacob has the



experience and age of an elder, but needs Jeremy's love and respect in order to keep him safe and get out of limbo.

Ginger Boultinghouse

Ginger is the object of Jeremy's budding affection, a girl who is interested in him for his personality and intelligence, and seemingly is one of his first friends. She invites him into her friend group, and goes out of her way to spend time with him, making it clear that she has feelings for him. She is a somewhat boisterous individual, almost the complete opposite of Jeremy in her social confidence and ability to stand up for herself. If there is a choice between fight or flight, Ginger will always choose fight. She single-handedly pulls Jeremy out of his depression and gives him the opportunity to win the money necessary for his home and bookstore. She is a relatively spiritual individual, turning often to prayer in times of hardship. For all of her maturity, she is the cause of the town shunning Jeremy, as her late night prank went badly off the rails.

Conk Crinklaw

The son of the mayor, he is the classic small town muscular individual. He has a good sense of humor, although at times he talks before thinking, leading to some unnecessarily biting remarks. He acts as the chauffeur to Ginger and Jeremy, and is a source of jealousy for Jeremy until Ginger tells him she is not interested in Conk. He loses a balance competition to Ginger which gives his reputation a bit of a hit.

Frank Gaily

Frank is the assistant to Sten Blix in the bakery, a talented young boy who is given the opportunity to go to bakery school in the city by Blix. Unbeknownst to Frank, this was a test of loyalty and he failed by choosing to leave the bakery. As a result he is put in Sten's dungeon and acts as the orientation guide to Ginger and Jeremy upon their arrival.

Sten Blix: The Baker

A man with a fairy-tale backstory, he was the adopted son of a baker and his wife, growing so well in their graces that they promised him their shop and all of their inheritance. As a result, he ushered along their deaths a little early, sold the shop and opened up a new business in Jeremy's town. He learned the secret of the Prince Cakes from them, as well as started his murderous tendencies. He is often compared to Saint Nicholas in the novel, as in appearance and manner he seems kindhearted. He is obsessed with telling dark tales, stories that carry weight and reality and acts as the counterbalance of powers to Jacob Grimm. In the end he is almost caught then decides to end the journey himself, as he ritually walks into his own oven and burns to death.



Marjory Falls and Maddy Saxon

Ginger's two friends, they act more or less as a cohesive unit with very little difference in personality between the two of them. They are typical young girls fond of gossip and making romantic assumptions about their various friends. They are more or less accepting of Jeremy into the group, but only after Ginger makes it very clear that she wants him there and he proves himself by playing the prank on Blix.

Finder of Occasions

This character exists on a mysterious meta-level for almost two thirds of the novel, with Jacob desperately trying to find out who he is so he can prevent him from doing harm to Jeremy. The big reveal, after Jacob is too late to act, is that the finder is Blix the baker.

Zyla Johnson Newgate

Jeremy's mother and Harold's wife, the reader never gets to meet this character, only hearing mention of her while Jacob gives the backstory. She was in love with the fairy-tales and the idea of a happy ending, and seeing that her life was not like the books she loved to read Jeremy, left her family without warning. They never heard from her again until receiving her obituary, which stated that she had died in a canoe accident with her new husband and two step-children, the Newgates.

Mrs. Truax

The mother of Possy, she live alone in the town seemingly without direction or hope. Some of the children view her as a witch, but Ginger takes it upon herself to greet her everyday as if she was a normal person, to little avail.

Possy Truax

He is the first victim of Baker Blix, although he was not killed. He has a sort of mental disability that the town was aware of but didn't really have any real means to treat it. He lives in the woods alone, by Blix's cabin and is a side-note addition to the happy ending when the townspeople are alerted to the fact that he is alive following the children's escape from the dungeon.

Deputy McRaven

Deputy McRaven is the first and prime suspect to be the Finder of Occasions in the mind of Jacob, a sentiment that is backed by the Deputy's collection of "dirt" on the town and his apparent borderline stalking of Jeremy and Ginger. Of course this is not true,



and it is revealed that the deputy simply has a crush on Ginger and is looking out for her well-being.

Harold Johnson

Jeremy's father is a simple man who has had two heartbreaking and terrible experiences caused by the same woman, his wife who left him without warning and of whom he later found out had remarried and subsequently died, all without ever talking to her ex-husband. He did not handle this well, and at the time of the novel spends almost all of his time indoors, without work and without pants. He is afraid of his son's intelligence and of the fact that he will soon leave for college, and so tries to get him to watch TV with him or just spend time with him at all. He is brought out of this semi-stupor by Jenny Applegarth, and returns to the public fold as a new man, even working as a waiter.

Lucian Johnson

This is Jeremy's grandfather, of whom very little is said. He was a man of many trades, although his main one was owning and managing his bookstore, the one where his son and grandson live during the novel. His passing alerted Jeremy to his talents, as he said goodbye to him on his way to the afterlife. A good man, arguably more of a positive father figure to Jeremy than Harold, he once made Jeremy a necklace for his keys after Jeremy lost them and was distraught. This same necklace leads Jeremy to be arrested by the Sheriff.

Mrs. Jenny Applegarth

Jenny is friendly, like-able woman, a tad on the outskirts of society. She is important to the story for two reasons, the first being that she is solely responsible for bringing Mr. Johnson out of his depression and back into public life (including wearing clothing on a daily basis). The second, and of utmost importance, is that she was able to hear Jacob's song in order to rescue the children before their death by poison at the hands of Mr. Blix.

Sheriff Pittswort

A man caught in a very tough position, he really only has the skills and wherewithal to deal with childish pranks and small petty crimes such as those of Ginger and her gang. He is thrust into the spotlight of tragedy as multiple children have been disappearing seemingly without explanation, and he has failed to find said explanation. As a result he does his best to find something or someone to bust, in this case it being Jeremy and Ginger.

Mayor Dauntless Crinklaw

The father of Conk and the Mayor of their little village. He is a goodhearted man, albeit relatively hapless in his management of town issues. He loans Jeremy the money to keep his house and bookstore, with the intent of taking over ownership if they are unable to pay him back in a reasonable amount of time. He seems to be unsure about what he would do with the space, but is interested in purchasing it just to have it.

Mr. Milo Castle

Mr. Castle is the host and "star" of the game show Uncommon Knowledge of which Mr. Johnson is a very big fan. Jeremy receives a phone call from Mr. Castles informing him of his acceptance onto the show, and spends a period of time with him answering Brothers Grimm orientated questions until he fails to win.



Symbols and Symbolism

Princess/Prince Cakes

The Princess Cakes symbolize love eternal at the start of the novel, as the first person that you see after taking your first bite you are said to fall in love with forever. This is a great sentiment and perfect fairy-tale style opening for this novel, but of course it is not the only significance. Because, as Sten Blix later explains, they are in fact a mourning cake for someone who has died, and the only way that he can make them is to kill a child. So every-time that someone eats a cake, they are eating the result of a murder, which drastically changes the significance of the first scene in the bakery.

Green/Gray Smoke

The green/gray smoke symbolizes a new, fresh batch of the princess/prince cakes of which the town is completely in love with, ordering in advance and fighting to get a piece. It is only later in the novel when the green smoke begins to symbolize something else, something far more sinister, the death of a child.

The Fairy-Tale

The idea of the classic fairy tale symbolizes a lot in this novel, for Jeremy it is the source of his childhood and his teenage years, reading about them and hearing about them from Jacob. For his mother, it symbolized the life she would never have, as she idealized them as her dream which she never achieved as a Johnson. This novel reworks the classic tropes of a fairy tale and makes them far more realistic and hard-hitting, as the dead stay dead and events have real effects on the mental health of the characters.

Uncommon Knowledge

This is the talk show that has the whole town up in a buzz even before one of their own wins the audition to be on it. It is a show that celebrates the extraordinary and the strange which is perfect for this novel, as it is slightly hypocritical for the townspeople to be so enamored with this TV show and at the same time are anti-Jeremy for his differences.

Jacob's Singing

Jacob's singing represents everything profound and emotional in his very being, as he had only sung for his now dead nephew. He shows his love and deep care for Jeremy by singing once again, even though it reminds him of the darkest time of his life.



Foreign Languages

Jeremy is able to speak in multiple languages as a result of Jacob's help, which makes him seem both strange and intelligent. Multiple languages is always a symbol of intelligence and even more so in this novel where the entirety of the cast is relatively under-educated and mystified by his knowledge of these languages. It also represents that there is something special and different about Jeremy, that makes him even more of the protagonist.

The Finder of Occasions

The Finder of Occasions is the name or symbol of great evil, but an evil that cannot easily be seen - a hidden evil. Even the name itself does not sound particularly sinister, it rings opportunistic which does not necessarily have a negative connotation. However, the way in which it is revealed that Blix is the Finder perfectly embodies the sinister quality of the name, he found an occasion and an opportunity to do evil.

Fire/Flames

Fire is traditionally a symbol of cleansing and of rebirth, and there is no difference in this novel. It also is a traditional fairy-tale ending for a bad guy, that he is burnt in his own flames which literally represent his punishment for his actions, for example when Hansel and Gretel burn the witch in her own oven. In this novel, the fire is also represented by an oven, but it is a coherent decision by Sten Blix to willingly walk into it, therefore robbing the town and it's people of proper vengeance and punishment.

Cooking School

The cooking school that Frank Bailey seems to be headed to represents two things, for Frank and for the townspeople it represents a bright future and a way out of the small town life, as Frank seems headed to monumental success. Of course it does not symbolize the same for Sten Blix, as he made it all up as a loyalty test, giving himself prerogative to lock up Frank in his basement.

The Green Shirt

The green shirt, or Possey's shirt, is representative literally of the first child that Blix had imprisoned in his dungeon. He was, however, unable to kill him and instead left him in the woods where he still lives. For Blix it symbolizes the start of his journey and his first reason for making the Prince Cakes in his sick journey to the present day. For the children, it symbolizes a glimmer of hope, as if Possey had escaped death maybe they can too.

Jeremy's Key Necklace

This necklace was made for Jeremy by his grandfather, as a consolation gift after Jeremy had lost his keys to the house and was distraught about it. Him losing the keys made him lose faith in himself and his abilities, and only his grandfather's actions gave him the confidence to continue. These keys have an even greater sentimental value to him after the death of his grandfather, and they represent him and all of his good experiences with Jeremy.



Settings

Zwischenraum

Zwischenraum is the limbo-like spiritual plane between death and the real afterlife, where the narrator, Jacob Grimm, currently resides. It does not have any physical differences from the natural world, and it appears that the individuals stuck there exist on a different dimension in the same human world. They can have very little real effect on the world itself, as they can only affect the wind, as Jacob does when he moves the rocking chair in the basement. He has somewhat free reign to travel about before meeting Jeremy, but this is not in the tradition sense of a ghost that can walk through walls as he has to follow Blix out of the dungeon to be able to help the children within. It is not a pleasant place, as he is trying desperately to escape, and even likens it as worse than death itself. It is a lonely existence for these spirits generally speaking, as their means to escape are not very clear, and even Jacob's escape route is relatively vague.

Green Oven Bakery

This setting is twofold, as on the outside it is the friendly local bakery where the wonderfully delicious Prince Cakes are made, foretold by the telltale green smoke rising from the chimney. This is the place where everyone goes to enjoy sweets after class, and numerous members of the community order their cakes far in advance. There is a nice banter between Blix and his patrons, and he often lets them eat for free in return for IOUs. He has hired a local boy, Frank Bailey as his assistant and for the majority of the novel this setting has a warm and homey feel. There is one red herring moment when he leads the children into his food storage area, but there is nothing amiss as he merely wanted them to clean it up. However, as the reader finds out in the final act of the novel, the bakery has a dark secret behind the storage rooms, a secret dungeon where Blix hold Frank and has held and murdered multiple children in the past, the green smoke symbolizing their death and the cakes made to mourn their passing. This setting is completely different, as it is filled with strange noises pumped in by Blix to bewilder and frighten the children, as well as all of the damp and dark atmosphere expected in a dungeon.

Two-Book Bookstore

This setting also has two parts, because it serves as both the bookstore front itself as well as the living space for the Johnson family. It has a lot of history, not only with Lucian Johnson and his background, but with the books themselves, a myriad of fairy-tales and other old books that Jeremy reads constantly, due to his mother's pressure to do so. In a way this setting holds a piece of both the past and the present, as in the bookstore itself Jeremy remembers his grandfather and his passed mother in the books that he



reads, as well as in his bedroom with his private collection. Since he lives there in the present with his father, it is a constant reminder of his current problems with money and his near future survival, with his depressed father unable and unwilling to do anything for the family. The home and setting has a generally somber atmosphere for the majority of the novel, as Jeremy is openly looking to get out and move on with his life. It is only with the introduction of Jenny Applegarth that the house takes on new life, and seems more like a home with living and moving individuals.

Uncommon Knowledge Set/Audition

This setting is the location for both Jeremy's biggest moral dilemma and also his biggest failure as an individual. The show itself represents the relationship between Jeremy and his father, as it is the only activity that they share together, as Harold desperately tries to keep the bond with his child as Jeremy inches farther and farther away. Ginger gets Jeremy an audition for the show, knowing his large knowledge of languages, but this transforms into his knowledge of fairy-tales. He has to make a moral decision to accept the use of Jacob's information in order to save his house and family, and is convinced to do so more because Jacob wanted to compete and win than for any real moral reasoning. When he loses the competition it is almost like death itself because he no longer has the opportunity to pay off his bills and there is no end in sight. Overall, the atmosphere of this setting is overwhelming and disappointing for Jeremy, as he not only deals with an ethically gray issue, he fails as well.

The Baker's Cabin

This is the typical "cabin in the woods", very very deep in the forest and with a certain nagging thought of foreboding danger. Although when the children arrive there with Mr. Blix the atmosphere is bright and cheerful, there is the thought in Jacob's mind that danger lurks, especially when they attempt to jump into the lake from very high up. Unfortunately, this is not the only danger in the area, as they are drugged by Blix and taken back to his dungeon, all while Jacob watches. This is a twist on the trope of an isolated location where a killer lives and hides his dark secrets, as while it is isolated and serves as a great location for the children to be captured, Blix keeps his dark secrets in his own basement.



Themes and Motifs

Honesty

Honesty and the moral choices that come along with either being honest or dishonest is a central theme in this novel regarding the character of Jeremy Johnson. While there is no religion mentioned in the novel, Jeremy follows a moral code typical of the main positive character of a fairy-tale, doing his best to stay abreast of the law and out of the moral gray. His moral guide, interestingly enough, it not his mother or father, as the former has left the family and is dead at the time of the novel, and the latter is a depressed shell of a man who does not even have the willpower to leave the house to find work to save them from being evicted. Jeremy can't even turn to his grandfather, who he had a good relationship with, because he is also dead. As a result, and through sheer chance, Jeremy's only option for moral and ethical guidance is his spectral companion Jacob Grimm, a man who has more in common with Harold Johnson than he would like to admit. Also, Jacob is not exactly the most competent of moral guides as he is less concerned with any action that could be taken against Jeremy as his overall safety, which he has defined as safely arriving in college for some reason.

As a result, when Jeremy is faced with situations that could deal with morality or honesty, his only friend to turn to is Jacob, who is not the greatest resource. The first instance of honesty and morality is when Jeremy goes out late at night with Ginger and her friends, without at first knowing why. When he does find out the reason, to prank the baker, he has his first moral decision to make, and despite Jacob's warnings and advice to not commit the act he decides to do so in order to increase his reputation in the eyes of Ginger and her friends. Worse than committing the crime itself, he is faced with police interrogation as a result of the shoe and key that he left at the scene of the crime, all of which he denies despite the mounted evidence. His father covers for him, although he had no knowledge whatsoever as to where Jeremy had been the night before. Jacob does not give Jeremy any advice towards telling the truth and turning himself in; rather, he sits on the sidelines and awaits the end result.

The biggest element of honesty with the character of Jeremy is in his everyday life, as he is constantly fed information from his ghostly friend and has to choose whether or not it is honest to use it. This starts very early on in the novel, as he gets advice but not the exact answer from Jacob regarding an acrostic poem. He also continually uses phrases in German, French and Swiss throughout the novel with no explanation to his friends. He constantly uses this information as a slight advantage, but never goes all the way to taking information directly from Jacob on tests or quiz material even though Jacob offers at times. In fact, Jeremy only tells the truth about where he had been getting all of this information to Frank, Ginger and Blix in an attempt to scare the baker, but also an attempt to finally come clean about his perceived weirdness in his society and town.

The most important event that tests Jeremy's honesty and morals is the contest on Uncommon Knowledge, one that he has been more or less tossed into without any



decision on his own part. He needs the money desperately, and this is the main motive for the moral gray area that he treads upon when taking Jacob's answers for the brother's Grimm questions. He is convinced by Jacob that it is not really lying, because his gift is to be able to talk to ghosts, and so it's fine for him to use this power in a way that the people on the show can actually understand. This is the logic and reasoning that Jeremy subscribes to, as he hears a human voice in the booth trying to help him and ignores that, only using his connection with Jacob. Later in the novel his father expresses pride that Jeremy did not cheat by listening to the voice, his first instance of real moral advice.

Death/Afterlife

Death and the afterlife play a huge role in this novel not only for the consequences of one's actions during life, but with regards to the value and use of one's human life especially when this limbo-like world exists where one is essentially still mentally living, missing only the connections and physical actions. As a result, there is a large emphasis in this novel placed on human relationships in general as having the most long-lasting importance, as well as being the key to happiness prior to death. This emphasis has its weight and importance as a direct correlation to the type of afterlife that is created by the author, an afterlife where Jacob has incredible difficulty simply finding someone to talk to, someone to explain what is going on. The characters without any human companionship in the human world are portrayed as lonely, pathetic, strange, creepy or flat out evil as exemplified by Mrs. Truax, Harold Johnson, Deputy McRaven, and Sten Blix. There is another strong point being made by the author, as he more or less downgrades the importance of Jacob's writings by portraying the time in which he spent writing them and researching as his most miserable and lonely period.

The most clear physical example of the result of the stripping away of relationship in the real world that parallels this afterlife is in Jeremy's shunning by the town, where the reader can see how stripping him of all of his daily human interactions reduces him to staying in his room and reading, too depressed to even come downstairs let alone leave the house.

Death is largely important for how the author displays the value of human life in the eyes of Sten Blix, and how death and the announcement of death is the strongest anti-hope force. The example of this force is with Zyla Johnson, who leaves Harold and Jeremy to explore life to a more full degree, searching for her fairy-tale ending but instead ending up in nearly the same situation and then dying in a fatal accident. Before the knowledge of her death reaches Harold, he acknowledges that they will probably never be together again, but still has the hope of their reconnecting at some point. The obituary article that he and Jeremy receive is the last blow to his hope and as a result he is shattered by the truth. This is similar to the children who have gone missing, as their parents and friends tend to believe Blix's fake letters and such because it is easier than finding out the truth that they are really dead. It is this general acceptance of what one wants to believe that leads to harsh results when the opposite or the worst case scenario is revealed to be true.



Sten Blix obviously does not hold the life of a child to that high of a degree, as he kills them basically for profit, as it is with their deaths that he is able to make the Prince Cakes on a consistent basis. However, the reasoning that he gives Jacob and the reader is not sheerly for this profit, but rather to teach a lesson on how the world really works. He seems very preoccupied with the children knowing his own story and tragic path that lead him to where he is now, and with informing them that the world is not a fairy-tale, there is not always a happy ending and that a sad or evil ending is actually preferable. He is not merely content with taking the children and ritually killing them, he needs them to understand that the world is a frightening and unjust place as he views it, in a way justifying the reason why they have to die.

The most telling moment in the novel regarding death and the afterlife is the one sentence by Jacob where he thinks about what would happen to Ginger if she died in the dungeon, if she would move onto the full afterlife or stay with him on his middling plane, meaning she would be able to talk to Jeremy while not being with him physically. In Jacob's mind, that result is worse and more cruel than if Jeremy were to lose her forever, and it is incredible that at this point in the novel Jacob, who was never a great fan of life when he was living, has now admitted that there is something worse than death, it is the way in which he is living now.

Responsibility

Responsibility plays a large role in numerous character's lives in the novel, notably Jacob, Harold, Jeremy, Ginger and Sten Blix. It even plays a smaller role in the life of the mayor and sheriff, as they attempt to solve the mystery of the missing children. This is the first instance of communal responsibility as the mayor and sheriff, having been appointed to these positions and seemingly being paid by the community have a responsibility to look into and solve these crimes, which are seemingly happening often and without an end in sight. The mayor does take responsibility for these crimes, but passes on the need to resolve the issue to his sheriff, who is helplessly inept to deal with a crime of this degree. So, in order to fill his need to feel like he was fulfilling his role in the community, he unnecessarily goes after Jeremy for his prank. This represents a sheer sense of desperation in communal responsibility from the leadership of the town, and an inability to do anything about it.

Personal responsibility also takes on a large role in the novel, the first being Jeremy and Ginger's responsibility for their prank on Sten Blix that eventually leads to their imprisonment, but at first only has effects on Jeremy's life. Although Jeremy does not fully take responsibility in the form of a confession, he does the next best thing by not turning in his friends (Ginger especially) and subjecting them to the same punishment. He has been found guilty by the court of public opinion, arguably a worse fate because they believe him a criminal and he has not confessed nor apologized for his crimes. He takes on the public punishment as well as punishment of himself by locking himself in his room, and it is easy to see as a reader that he has atoned more or less for his crimes. Ginger, on the other hand, feels bad that Jeremy has taken the brunt of the punishment but does not take responsibility for being the leader and main impetus of



the action to any extent that will help Jeremy out of his current situation. Rather, she takes a roundabout way of atoning, rather than atoning for the community at large, she does something to help Jeremy personally, getting him an audition at Uncommon Knowledge. Both of the children take relative responsibility in terms of accepting their fate when they are imprisoned by Blix, admitting that although this was a messed up situation, they could have avoided it if they did not go out of their way to antagonize.

Jacob has another type of responsibility more similar to that of the sheriff than Jeremy, as he is another acting protector. He is more like a bodyguard than a sheriff, although his sole and only responsibility in his afterlife is to make sure that Jeremy is not taken by the Finder of Occasions, something that he fails at miserably. He is able to accept the responsibility for his failings, and rather than bury himself in his despair as he had done in the past, he actually acts on his failings and attempts to rectify the situation, atoning for his failings by bringing salvation to Jeremy, Ginger and Frank. This is a huge improvement in the character of Jacob, and arguably the reason for his need to take on the quest in the first place, as he has learned a different way to respond to hardship, one that does not result in self harm and the harm of other relationships.

Sten Blix is the last individual who has to deal with personal responsibility to a large degree in the novel, as he is responsible for the torture and death of numerous children, seemingly without any real reason or remorse. He has no issue with admitting to what he is doing, although he obviously does not tell everyone what he does, he has no qualms about the fact that he is committing murder. He acknowledges the weight that these murders have on him in terms of making the cakes, and realizes that he cannot continue to do this for the entirety of his life, it is just unsustainable. He eventually does hold himself somewhat responsible for their deaths, although not showing any remorse or regret, when he walks into his own oven to burn alive.

Regret and Despair

This theme deals mostly with the characters that commit an action or are the victims of a tragic event (in or out of their control) and how they are affected by it. In this novel, for the most part these reactions and means to deal with tragedy are entirely negative. There are no examples of someone coming to terms with their past self and changing their life for the better as a result of their desire to improve or respond to a hardship; rather, these individuals accept the event and, oftentimes unnecessarily, the blame. The first example of this is in the introduction of the character of Mrs. Truax, a woman whose son has disappeared years ago and she seems shell-shocked as a result. She is seemingly unable to speak, as she is greeted by the children, and has the appearance of a woman who is already dead. This attitude is mirrored with Harold Johnson, whose wife left him and then remarried and died, all without Harold putting up a fight, trying to go after her or even moving on with his life to support his son. He clearly has certain regrets and remorse for the events that took place, but firmly places the blame and self-pity on himself as he drifts further and further into despair. He accepts his role in the events but in a negative manner, one where he is continually hurting not only himself but his son and their prospective future.



Jacob is guilty of a very similar reaction to a tragedy in his prior life, where his nephew died without there being anything he could do to save him. He gives the reader insight into his feelings, and they can most likely be extended back to Harold as well, of complete and utter loss, like a piece of his heart, a large piece, had been ripped out and never healed. Jacob's response to that loss was to never open himself up again to that degree, and bury himself in his work, something that benefited the literary world but had no good effect on his life or his relationship with his brother. It also limits his relationship with Jeremy to some degree, as he is unwilling to have that great of a connection with another person, although he breaks his own rule and acts strongly and with purpose to save Jeremy.

Jeremy has a similar incident of remorse and despair when the entire town turns on him, assuming that he had assaulted the beloved baker as well as having an affair with Ginger after she accidentally slept over in his room one night after attempting to console him. His initial reaction to this setback is to feel sorry for himself and bury himself in his studies in his room much like a combination of his two influences, his father and Jacob. However, the large difference in his situation and that of Jacob and his father is that he has a support system, namely Jacob and Ginger who go above and beyond to bring him quickly back into society and attempt to help him atone for his actions.

Human Relationships

The idea of the friendships/relationships and their importance in the human experience is an important theme in this novel when looking at almost all of the character involved. The most simplistic starting point would be to look at the relationship between Jeremy's parents, Harold and Zyla. Their relationship is decidedly one-sided, as Harold is enamored with her and is absolutely crushed when she leaves and then dies. Harold had put all of his hope and will-power to live into one individual and he is only able to get out of this funk when a new person enters his life, Jenny. This is a helpless type of existence, as Harold did not go after his wife but blamed himself and sank deeper and deeper into this self pity. This is obviously not a healthy way to live one's life, and as a result his son Jeremy is more keen to follow Jacob as a mentor and example than his own father, who for the majority of his life has sat around the house depressed.

Interestingly enough, in Jacob's past he had a situation very similar to that of Harold, although he does not share the depth of his pain with Jeremy, only with the reader. It is almost the exact same fatal error of placing one's entire life and happiness in that of someone else, in Jacob's case his nephew. He loved his nephew so much, getting to a level of familial intimacy with only him, he would sing to him and spend a lot of time with him. At the time of his nephew's death, he felt like there was nothing he could do, and as a result a piece of his heart died with his nephew. He buried himself in his work, and carries this burden and focus on studies with him to Jeremy.

As another common fairy-tale trope the individuals without a relationship are viewed as outsiders and outcasts, and so when the Deputy McRaven, with his obsession over Ginger and Jeremy, is introduced both the reader and Jacob label him as the first



suspect for the Finder of Occasions, because he is lonely and unhappy, unlike the baker who is lonely but jolly. In fact, there are numerous individuals who fit this category of lonely and unhappy, Mrs. Truax is viewed as an early threat because she is viewed as an outsider by the town. Ginger herself has issues with her family and parents, although she does not elaborate on them, they are clearly known by the people of her town. Although she has her two friends, they are less than on equal footing and there is a certain level of desire on Ginger's part to find someone that she feels is intellectually her equal, in this case Jeremy. The Finder himself has issues with his relationships, as he is easily able to get to the acquaintance level but this is all as part of his plans, as in the past he had killed his adopted parents, showing how well he can handle both life alone and life in a semi-traditional family.

Jeremy has three types of relationships that are important to his growth as the protagonist. The first is his familial relationship with his father and grandfather. He is able to get along well with his grandfather, as Jacob respects him as a hardworking individual who had more or less built up his own "fortune" and who is there to build up Jeremy's ego when he is feeling a little down. His relationship with his father is quite the opposite, as he has little respect for him although he does pity him for the hardships he had gone through. Harold is unable to pick himself up after his wife left him and Jeremy is left as more of a male household leader than a son as a result. He is sad to be around his father, having seen the way he has been effected by the death of his wife, and chooses to study and hang out with his friends in an attempt to get out of the house as soon as possible, by going to college.

His second relationship is that of friendship, one that he shares with his spectral friend Jacob Grimm. This is a mutually respectful relationship as the two individuals respect greatly certain qualities that the other has, while at the same time having the independence and free will to disagree with each other at times. This is the relationship most responsible for Jeremy's growth intellectually and personally, as Jacob's values align strongly with his own, making it a very easy relationship to sustain. His third relationship is on the friend level as well as the budding romantic level with Ginger, as the two meet and have an instant friendly connection if not the grand romantic one of the classic novel. This relationship is a huge and necessary boost and support to Jeremy's social confidence, the one thing that lacks with a ghost for a friend and a father who won't get off the couch. Although this is the relationship that gets Jeremy into the most trouble, it is also the one that allows him the confidence to stand up to Blix as well as other things.



Styles

Point of View

This novel is written in the first person narrative point of view of Jacob Grimm, a ghost/specter who is trapped in a dimensional plane between the living and the full afterlife where he wishes to end up. He is an interesting narrator, as he only exists on the mental plane, more or less, and can only communicate through Jeremy Johnson, a boy who has the gift of hearing individuals in-between the living and the afterlife. As a result, although the novel is told only from Jacob's point of view and perspective, it is almost as if Jeremy has an equal share in the narration as he acts as the real world mouthpiece for Jacob. It is a very interesting combination of perspectives, as there is the mentor figure of Jacob who is concerned more with Jeremy's intellectual growth (as that is the greatest impact Jacob can have on the boy) than his growth as an individual, more concerned with his safety than his experiencing life, making mistakes and learning from them. In a way, Jacob almost replaces Jeremy's mother in terms of the trope that he fits in with most, as the worrisome motivating mother making sure that her (his) son stays out of trouble and succeeds, always with the future being held at greater importance than the present.

The combination of the two characters gives an interesting mix of perspective as the young and inexperienced boy is the actor and main agent of the novel, and has some assistance from Jacob but can choose to ignore it or simply send Jacob away when he does not feel like listening to him. This is what makes their relationship and the point of view that the novel is told from very unique, that the two of them through their strengths and weaknesses are essentially equal. In this sense the point of view of Jacob is less paternal and controlling than previously stated, as he lacks any of the enforcement that a parent typically has. His only connection with Jeremy is through their mutual respect, and he needs to maintain that in order for anything that he says to be listened to by Jeremy. This leads to their relationship and the subsequent point of view that the novel is scene through seeming more like cousins or maybe uncle to nephew (mirroring the relationship that Jacob had when he was alive to a degree), where Jeremy clearly respects Jacob's experience and superior intelligence but has no qualms sending him away when he needs to think alone or when he feels that Jacob is suffocating him.

Jacob also speaks with a redemptive tone, as he has lived his life and made mistakes after the death of his nephew, and now has the opportunity to help another boy grow from an age very similar to that of his nephew. This leads to some emotional skirting by Jacob, as he is unwilling to share everything with Jeremy, but does share more with the reader for whom he is writing the story. It is also the author's intent for this to be the recounting of a story by Jacob Grimm, and so while it is an "attack" on the classic fairy-tale, it also carries very much the same narrative style of a brothers Grimm fairy-tale, because it is written as if Jacob Grimm himself wrote the story. As a result, all of the references to other fairy-tales or to the tropes and expectations are made not by the



author, but by Jacob himself as he is most likely the best individual to be making these statements, being one of the brothers Grimm.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is also two part, as it is a mix between the common, borderline uneducated and wary of change language of the townspeople and the over-educated bordering on pompous language of Jacob Grimm. Beyond that, there are numerous non-english languages that are used often in this novel, and they are used for the sole purpose of giving Jeremy a comeback line or to rattle someone, be it Cronk the athletic villager or Blix the psychopathic murderer. This is a novel where intelligence is a huge source of power, and the knowledge of something that other people do not have is both feared and celebrated, as in the game show *Uncommon Knowledge*. This gap in language and perceived intelligence works at times in Jeremy's favor, as he is able to impress Ginger on multiple occasions and set himself up as an intriguing potential mate for her and other women, but more often than not it backfires and labels him as an outsider and as someone who is different - distinctively different - from the rest of the village. The main issue with this backfiring and outcasting is that Jeremy has no real reason for having this intelligence and knowledge of languages, sure he studies often and is in the process of learning these languages for real, but when he has biting phrases and other statements on the tip of his tongue he is unable to explain to his friends why he has this ability because he can't just say he has a multi-lingual author ghost in his ear feeding him information at all times.

It is also with the archaic, high brow language of Jacob Grimm through which the entire novel takes place, which takes away from the reality and modern time of the novel to such a degree that when the police car arrives at the end of the novel to rescue the children it is a shocking reminder that this novel does not take place in medieval times but in the past 30 years or so. There is a constant struggle between the language and storytelling style of Jacob Grimm and reality, as he reminds the reader of constantly but then continues to tell the story in the same style as any other classic Grimm tale. This both adds to and takes away from the point that the novel is trying to make, as it is necessary for the reader to be lulled into that fairy-tale sense and way of thinking that everything will end okay, that the good guys will win and that any hardship inflicted is unrealistic as this took place once upon a time. At the same time, the point that the author is making with writing this novel in the first place is that events like this happen in the real world, there are abductions and murders and the pain that these individuals feel and the realism that is associated with them is real and should be viewed without that filter, while at the same time the author's choice to place Jacob Grimm at the helm of his narration gives the book that same filter.

The language and the style in which Jacob talks is so old and stereotypical that it reminds the reader that all of the classic fairy-tales, even the ones that are so ridiculous now started out as tales told in villages and among families and all had realistic origins, human origins. At the end of the novel the reader has to take a look back at some of the classic fairy-tales and re-imagine them in the context of their own time, where a wagon



or a walk through the woods are the same as a car and a highway now, and that the imagery that the reader sees and is given by the narrator as so picturesque was as real to the reader at the time of their first release as a kidnapping case on the news is now.

Structure

This novel is told in the story within a story style, with the narrator speaking directly to the reader as he recounts the events of the novel from two timepoints. Often, he will describe an event and the choices and thought process behind his actions during the event with both his mentality at the time as well as his knowledge of how the event turned out, criticizing his lack of action or his misguided optimism. It is also necessary to point out that the narrator is also the author of this novel within a novel, as his introduction and insights take the reader out of the chronological action, giving them some foreboding insight as to what will take place later in the novel. This narration is a seamless mix of the present tense action, told in the past tense as if looking back, which features the narrator alongside other characters, and the narrator/author's own voice added in at the time of his writing, much later than the events themselves had taken place but spoken in the past tense in hypotheticals such as "if only I had" etc.

Although it is done very well by the author, this system of semi-present tense events being told from the future mixed with past tense sentiment can be quite confusing at times, and this is only worsened by the introduction of flashbacks and even more stories within the story being told by numerous characters. At one point there is even a dream event where Jeremy has a dream that is actually a flashback into the life of Jacob when his nephew is still alive. The flashbacks are from both Jacob's and Jeremy's lives as Jacob flashes back to his experiences both when he was living and his time prior to his meeting Jeremy. Jeremy has flashbacks to when his grandfather was still alive and the experience they shared, as well as when his mother was both still alive and a member of the Johnson family, as a means to provide contrast for the reader and to show the level of degradation in his family life since that time. Even Sten Blix himself gets an opportunity to share his past with the reader, although he opts out of the direct flashback and chooses to relay his past in the manner of a tragic fairy-tale. These interruptions to the action are necessary for character development and for the general idea of the novel, which is to take a more profound look at the classic fairy-tale characters: the evil villain, the unnatural mentor and the inexperienced but gifted child.

The action of the novel follows a chronological order, with the only real shift being in terms of who is viewed as the central character as the novel opens with Jacob's journey from the limbo like plane to Jeremy, but as soon as Jeremy is introduced the novel shifts its focus from the issues and problems that Jacob is concerned with, and puts Jeremy firmly in the protagonist role and Jacob firmly in that of mentor and narrator. From that point on the novel is told in the present tense with Jeremy's actions being described in the third person by Jacob.



Quotes

In the old tales, kindness is the purest form of heroism. Find the character who meets the world with a big heart and an open hand and you have found your hero or heroine.

-- Jacob Grimm (chapter 1)

Importance: This quote occurs very early in the novel, spoken by the second most important character as well as narrator. He sets the stage for this novel as a fairy-tale, labeling it's protagonist, Jeremy Johnson, as the classic kind individual about whom fairy-tales are written. This quote is important as it draws the link between the real world and the fairy-tale from the very start of the novel, making the parallels between the books that Jacob Grimm had written and the story that he is about to narrate very obvious.

To be truthful, Mrs. Truax made everyone somewhat uneasy. Hers was a sad story, full of dark corners and odd circumstances. Long ago her son, Possy, only five years old, disappeared, as if into thin air.

-- Jacob Grimm (chapter 1)

Importance: This quote mentions the first inkling of something dark in the town, as to this point all of the characters introduced have had relatively happy backstories. It has more weight once it is revealed that her son was one of the first abducted by Blix, but even at the moment of the quote it sheds a pall and a cloud over the town and begins to get the mind of the reader working as they try to figure out where he had disappeared to, and what could be going wrong in this seemingly picturesque town.

Lucian Johnson had spent his entire life working as a steam-fitter, dynamiter, water witcher, cardsharp, and coffin maker, and when his working days were at last behind him, he thought a written account of his life might be of interest to the public.

-- Jacob Grimm (chapter 1)

Importance: This quote is important as it defines Jeremy's grandfather, a simple man, but arguably having more influence over Jeremy's life than his own father. His death effects Jeremy very deeply, and his principles and actions are very much based on his grandfather's life, especially as his father buries himself in his own sorrow at the passing of his wife, Jeremy's mother.

The tales are full of terrible punishments, yes, but they follow just cause. Goodness is rewarded; evil is not.

-- Jacob Grimm (chapter 2)

Importance: This quote again helps support the parallels between this novel and the classic Grimm fairy-tales, reminding the reader of certain tropes and traditions. It sets up an ideal world, where every good action receives it's due, and every evil action receives a punishment. Throughout the novel this idea is more or less challenged by the events that take place.



They were quiet for a while, and it had to be admitted that these two youths at ease with themselves and each other made a pleasant picture, and I suddenly understood that, for Jeremy, the surprise of love would not arrive, as it does in the tales, with a strange enchantment or with a single smiting glance or with a lilting voice riding the wind through the woodland. No, for Jeremy, the surprise of love would be carried on the lazy currents of friendship.

-- Jacob Grimm (chapter 2)

Importance: This quote is important in both defining Jeremy and Ginger's relationship as well as their individual personalities in how casually and easily they seem and are together. This is counter the traditional fairy-tale lovers trope, where they meet by coincidence and immediately sink into a borderline insanely passionate romance.

It was a funny sight, this plump, cherubic man swinging an ax and issuing a little Oof! each time he brought the force of it to the wood, but he was surprisingly adept at his work.

-- Jacob Grimm (chapter 2)

Importance: This is the first image of the baker in a way that sheds a slight level of doubt or suspicion regarding his past and motives. While chopping wood is clearly not something that is inherently evil, the fact that Jacob notices that something is off about him is telling, especially in hindsight.

In a soft voice, he said, "Sa borjar det igen." I translated at once: So another moment has come. These words and the calmness with which he had spoken them filled me with terror. Nein! I cried out. Nein! Nein! Nein! But of course no one heard. And so I could disbelieve it no longer. It was the baker. The kind, jolly Saint Nicholas-like baker. The villain without villainous qualities. The Finder of Occasions.

-- Jacob Grimm (chapter 2)

Importance: This quote is important as it is the realization of Jacob that he has failed in the task that would get him past the limbo that he is currently in. More than that he has failed his friend Jeremy and there is nothing physically that he can do.

In the tales, horrific evils are routinely perpetrated against innocents-maidens are butchered before our eyes, children are devoured-yet in the end, justice is meted out, and bodies are reassembled and restored to life. Innocence is rewarded; cruelty is punished. And there is something else, too-a small but critical distance between the words on the pages and world as we know it.

-- Jacob Grimm (chapter 2)

Importance: This quote is incredibly important as it defines what the author's intent was in writing this novel. It's intent is to make the reader fully understand what the individuals in the fairy-tale are going through by bringing it out of the pages and into the real world. There is no resurrection in real life, those who die stay dead.



Once Jenny Applegarth stopped at the baker's table and stood smiling down at him. "So, Sten, maybe you'll tell me the secret of the Prince Cakes." The baker seemed startled. "What do you mean, the secret?"
-- Jenny Applegarth (chapter 2)

Importance: This quote is important as the reader can see Blix's negative reaction to the question, which gets them to think about why that is. What is the green smoke? What is the secret that is not food-related?

The baker taught him the secrets of the Prinsesstarta, which he prepared as a sweet commemorations whenever a villager died, and he taught him his method of announcing the arrival of this delicacy with green smoke.
-- Baker Sten Blix (chapter 2)

Importance: This quote is important in it's connotation, as it gives the reader 100% knowledge of the process that leads to the prince cakes involves and has involved the death of a child. The cakes that the children ate at the beginning of the novel, were only made possible by the abduction and murder of another child.

What might she be regretting not having the chance to do? And a darker question yet: If in this dungeon she were to slip free of her mortal self, would she, too, be destined to drift through eternity searching for the thing undone? It did not seem impossible. Nothing, it seemed, was too cruel to be true.
-- Jacob Grimm (chapter 2)

Importance: This statement by Jacob leads the reader into a certain meta-plane of negative events, where not even death ends the pain and suffering of the individuals in the dungeon. It also gives a real sense to the level of pain that Jacob is feeling in his current state, as the worst thing that he could think of happening is not merely death, but what could happen after.

She is right, Jeremy, I said. Perseverance is all. You must resist and adapt and never give up.
-- Jacob Grimm (chapter 2)

Importance: This quote is the rallying cry for the three children stuck in Blix's basement, a cry based on the life principles of Jacob Grimm. Ironically it does not apply directly to Jacob's own life experiences as after the death of his nephew he did the exact opposite, he crumbled and buried himself in his work, fulfilling only the "adapt" part of this mantra.

In his old loose-fitting athletic apparel, he looked like a prisoner being led out into the light, which, by a certain line of reasoning, was exactly what he was. He blinked and gaped and allowed Jenny Applegarth's hand to guide him along the street. And so, for the first time since I had come to the village, Mr. Harold Johnson crossed the threshold into public life.
-- Jacob Grimm (chapter 1)



Importance: This quote is a turning point for Jeremy's father, the first time that he has been outside of the house in a social manner in more than five years. This is also important as when Jeremy gets abducted, his father does not have as great of a need to get him back, as he can more or less replace him with Jenny.

After a long silence, Jeremy said in a quiet voice, "What did you do when your nephew died?" I died a kind of death. My heart shrank and blackened and I died. Though I did not quite know it at the time. But of course I could not tell Jeremy this. I went on, I said. My life had changed and I had changed, but I went on.

-- Jacob Grimm (chapter 1)

Importance: This quote is very important as it goes to a very profound level into Jacob's character, and how he is not only a ghost but a broken man who has yet to get over the death of his nephew. This brings his relationship with Jeremy to a new importance, as he had failed once to save a filial figure, and now is working to protect another one.