

Finders Keepers Study Guide

Finders Keepers by Stephen King

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Plot Summary

NOTE: All citations in this Study Guide refer to the Kindle version of *Finders Keepers*, published June 2, 2015.

The human mind can become obsessed with anything, even literature, the reader learns in the novel *Finders Keepers* by Stephen King. This novel tells the story of Morris Bellamy who murders the famous author John Rothstein and steals the work Rothstein has produced since his retirement from writing. Bill Hodges, a retired police detective, is called in to help Pete Saubers, the boy who found the trunk in which Morris hid the notebooks he stole from the famed author. Pete's life, along with that of his sister, is in danger because Morris will stop at nothing to get back what he believes belongs to him.

The timeline for the novel begins in 1978 when Morris and two friends broke into Rothstein's home. Morris confronted Rothstein about the direction in which the third Jimmy Gold novel took that character before Morris shot and killed Rothstein. Morris and his friends stole the money from Rothstein's safe as well as more than 100 Moleskine notebooks that the writer had filled after his retirement. Fearing his friends would ruin his scheme, Morris killed them. He was not interested in the money but desperately wanted to read Rothstein's latest work, hoping to find some hint of salvation for Jimmy Gold.

Back in his hometown Morris met with Andrew Halliday, an old friend who ran a business buying and selling collectible books. Andrew was appalled that Morris was bringing the notebooks to him especially since news had already broken of the author's death. Morris took Andrew's advice and buried the books and money in an old trunk beneath a tree near his home. Morris was angry because Andrew denied he had encouraged Morris to steal the notebooks and decided to visit a bar. At the bar Morris got drunk and later raped a woman. He was arrested and sentenced to life in prison. He never got a chance to retrieve the money or notebooks.

Thirty-one years later Pete Saubers' father, Tom, was among those injured when Brady Hartsfield drove a Mercedes into a crowd of people waiting for a job fair. Pete's family was already struggling financially. His injury made matters worse. Pete and his sister were distressed because their parents spent so much time arguing. One day while Pete walked along a creek behind his house, he noticed a hole revealed in the ground under a tree when a piece of thawing bank fell away. He explored the hole and found the trunk Morris had hidden there. Rothstein's money and notebooks were still inside. Wanting to help his parents, Pete began sending them a monthly allowance of \$500 through the mail. They had no idea from whom the money was coming but accepted it and began to dig their way out of their financial hole.

After several years the money ran out. By that time Pete was in high school and had been introduced to the author Rothstein. He recognized the writing in the notebooks as Rothstein's. After reading the notebooks he realized he had the manuscripts for two additional novels in the famous Jimmy Gold series. He believed these novels were



Rothstein's best work. Because his sister wanted to go to a private high school, one that his parents could not afford even though they were doing better financially, Pete decided to try to sell some of the notebooks to fund his sister's schooling. Meanwhile, Morris had been released from jail on parole and was headed back to his hometown. He had spent more than thirty years dreaming about and obsessing about what Rothstein's notebooks might hold.

At this point the novel switches to present tense. Tina Saubers, Pete's sister, and her friend Barbara Robinson go to Bill Hodges, who works as a bounty hunter, for help because Tina fears her brother is involved in something illegal. Hodges and his team from Mr. Mercedes, the first novel in this trilogy, put their heads together and save Pete and his sister from Morris who is determined to get the notebooks at any price.



Part 1: “Buried Treasure,” 1978-2009

Summary

In the first section of “Buried Treasure,” set in 1978, three men wearing ski masks woke reclusive author John Rothstein from sleep. Two of the crooks wanted money. The third was angry with Rothstein because in the final novel of the Jimmy Gold trilogy the central character became a normal person with a wife and kids instead of the rebel of the first two novels. That crook, Morris “Morrie” Bellamy, wanted the manuscripts Rothstein had in his safe more than the money his partners said was there. Rothstein degraded Morris. He finally told Morris to either shoot him or get out of his house. Morris shot him.

In the section set in 2009, Tom Saubers, who had lost his job as a real estate agent, prepared to leave home to stand in line to wait for a job fair at the City Center. His wife, Linda, argued with him because she thought he was leaving too early. When he arrived at the City Center there was already a long line. Tom took a picture to prove to his wife that he was right for getting there early.

In the early morning hours, a gray Mercedes was driven into the crowd waiting for the job fair to open. Both Tom and his friend Todd were hurt. When Tom woke up in the hospital he learned he was not paralyzed, but would not be able to walk for quite a while. Todd was in a coma but was expected to survive.

Analysis

Finders Keepers is the second installment in the Bill Hodges Trilogy by Stephen King. Thus far the novel has been told from the viewpoint of a third person narrator. One section is set in 1978 while another is set in 2009. The 1978 section focuses on Rothstein while the 2009 section focuses on Tom Saubers. Those who have read Mr. Mercedes, the first book in this trilogy, will recognize the job fair that Tom Saubers attempts to attend at the City Center. The first book focuses on the stories of the burly man and girl with the baby that Tom describes on page 19. During Mr. Mercedes’s attack on the crowd those three characters were killed by the car. Tom, the person on which the narrator focuses in the description of the attack in the second book is not killed, but badly injured by the car. When he wakes in the hospital Tom’s wife, Linda, tells him it will be a while before he is able to walk again.

The opening section of this second novel in the trilogy focuses on a home invasion in 1978. By opening the novel with the story of the robbery it is indicated that while the City Center Massacre will play a role in the novel, it is not the focus of the story. The main plot will instead focus on the theft from and murder of author John Rothstein.

The motive of the robbery described in this first section is not completely clear. While two of the men, the one wearing a blue ski mask and the one wearing a red ski mask seem to be looking for money, Morris Bellamy, the one wearing the yellow ski mask,



seems to have something different on his mind. He appears to have a vendetta against Rothstein because of the way he ended the Jimmy Gold trilogy. As Rothstein tries to figure out the motive of the robbery, he thinks to himself that “he didn’t believe money was the primary objective of the man who kept calling him genius” (8). Morris accuses Rothstein of writing the third novel, the one in which the rebellious character Johnny Gold got married and had kids, just because he knew it would make him lots of money.

The 1978 portion of “Buried Treasure” that focuses on Rothstein’s thoughts includes many metaphors to describe the action. For instance, when Morris pulls his gun on Rothstein it is described using the metaphor “The muzzle was a black eye” (12). Similarly when Rothstein wonders how much Morris understands about human interactions, he wonders if “when someone says they’re going to be honest with you, they are in most cases preparing to lie faster than a horse can trot” (7). Finally, Morris believes that Rothstein has been “hiding away from the world like a rat in a hole” (13) since he has retired from writing.

Discussion Question 1

In his notebooks Rothstein has written two more novels about Johnny Gold. Why do you think he did not tell Morris about these? Do you think it would have changed the outcome of the confrontation if he had?

Discussion Question 2

How is it particularly abominable that the Mercedes Killer drove into a crowd of people seeking jobs? How did this make his crime even worse? How did it affect the people who were already struggling to make ends meet?

Discussion Question 3

Why do you think Rothstein has chosen to become a hermit? Why is it important to him that he be allowed to keep the notebooks in which he has written two more Johnny Gold novels?

Vocabulary

perilously, balaclavas, banishing, solicitous, placating, capstone, calamity, exuberant, vindication, rogue



Part 1: “Buried Treasure,” 1978, 2010 and 1978

Summary

In the Section returning to 1978, the story returns to Rothstein’s house. Morris had not expected so much blood and gore when he shot the author. Before he left he wanted to go through Rothstein’s desk and see what he had there, but Morris figured if he had the writer’s notebooks that was enough. He reminisces about how he would have liked to have had the expensive notebooks that Rothstein wrote in when he was serving time in the juvenile facility. He had even offered to give a guard a blow job in exchange for more paper but he was only laughed at and punched in the face until his nose broke. He had been sentenced to serve time there because he had gotten drunk and broken into a house. He did not even remember what he thought he wanted from the house.

Before they left Rothstein’s house Morris could not help but look in one of the notebooks and see that Rothstein had indeed continued Jimmy Gold’s story. He and his partners used back roads to make their escape. It was when Freddy spoke up and said he doubted they would be able to sell the notebooks that Morris decided to kill his partners in crime.

Morris instructed Freddy to pull into a rest stop. Morris shot Freddy in the head inside the bathroom. He met Curtis at the vending machines and shot him in the chest but Curtis did not die. He hit Curtis in the head with the gun but the gun was not heavy enough to kill Curtis. Morris ran the car over Curtis which did kill him. Even though he knew he should throw away the notebooks and cash, Morris did not do so. Instead he headed for his childhood home. He made only one stop to buy a sturdy truck at an antique store on his way.

In the next section returning to 2010, Pete Saubers and his family had to move to “the Tree Streets section of Northfield” (39) because his father was out of work and his mother had only a job as a school librarian/study hall monitor. They were having more arguments than ever about money. Even though he did not want to, Pete often listened in on his parents’ arguments. He felt he needed to keep abreast of what they were arguing about. In reality he thought it might be better if they did get divorced.

Pete described his parents’ argument like a stage play. He went outside when he finally got enough of their childish statements. He could not concentrate on the story by John Rothstein he was supposed to be reading anyway. As he sat next to the creek behind his house Pete heard part of the bank near a leaning tree give way as the winter’s snow and ice melted. He looked into the hole and could see that a trunk had been buried there. Since Pete could not get it out, he got a spade and filled up the hole, hiding what he has discovered.



That night Tina asked her brother if he thought their parents would get divorced. He did not want to lie to her so he diverted the question telling her they would not do so that night because the courts were not open. As they continued to talk, he asked her what she would do if she found a hidden treasure. She told him she would give it to their parents so they would stop fighting.

Pete pretended to be sick and stayed home on a day his father had physical therapy. He used the time to dig out the chest. When he finally got it out and open he could see the contents had been wrapped in plastic. Notebooks and bank envelopes filled the trunk. He opened one of the bank envelopes expecting it to be empty but was surprised when he found \$400 in cash inside. He wondered what he should do with it. He was afraid if he told his parents they would argue even more about whether they should keep it or try to return it to the owner.

In the next section set in 1978, after checking in with his neighbor, showering, and eating, Morris went to sleep in his childhood bedroom. In the morning he went in search of his old friend Andrew Halliday. He found Andrew sitting outside a restaurant. He noticed Andrew seemed scared and demanded to know what he had done. Andrew told Morris that news of Rothstein's murder was already front page news. He insisted that Morris put away the notebook that he had brought with him. Even though Morris reminded Andrew he had stolen the notebooks like they had planned, Andrew denied ever having made those sorts of plans with Morris. He said even if they had made plans it would be the turn of the century before he would have any hope of being able to sell the notebooks. Andrew advised Morris to get rid of any evidence that he had anything to do with Rothstein. Before he walked away, he also ordered Morris to stay away from him or he would call the police and report him.

After his meeting with Andy, Morris went for a drive. He dropped his car at a mall and rode a bus back to his house. Even though he wanted to read Rothstein's manuscripts he knew he did not have the opportunity. He filled the trunk with the notebooks and money envelopes, taking only a couple hundred dollars from one of the envelopes. Even though it was raining and still light outside he buried the trunk under a tree near the creek. Because his head hurt when he returned and there were no pain killers in the house, he went to a convenience store to get some Anacin and beer. Beer did not cause him trouble, just hard liquor. Instead of getting beer, however, he asked the store clerk if there was a bar he could get to on the bus.

Analysis

Pete and Morris' stories intersect in this section of the novel. The trunk that Pete discovers in 2010 is the one that Morris buried there 32 years prior. The time of the find is ironic for Pete not only because his parents desperately needed money but also because he was studying the author John Rothstein, whose unpublished works fill the chest. When Pete finds the trunk just as Morris left it so many years ago the reader has to wonder what happened to Morris that he never went back for the manuscripts or the money. It is known that Morris spent some more time in jail. A reference to more jail time



after he killed Curtis and Freddy is made on Page 33. The reader must wonder if Morris has gotten out of jail yet and if he is even still alive.

Pete's discovery of Morris' buried trunk foreshadows that something bad has happened to Morris. The reader does not yet know what happened. When Morris got home from talking to Andrew he was wound up because Andrew had told him Rothstein's body had already been found and the theft discovered. In order to calm himself down Morris, decided it was a good idea to go to a bar even though he knows that drinking liquor puts him in a humor where he does stupid things. As the third installment of Morris' story from 1978 ends, Morris is headed toward a bar where the reader can only assume that he will get himself into trouble. Perhaps it is because of an incident in the bar that Morris lands in jail again.

Morris is disturbed by the way that Rothstein portrayed character Jimmy Gold in his final novel because Morris identifies with Jimmy. First, Jimmy's parents were like Morris' parents. They are described as being "self-involved, semi-alcoholic parents — so much like Morris's own" (27). Morris is also too devoted to the character of Jimmy Gold. When he talks to Andrew about the notebooks he stole from Rothstein, Andrew tells Morris that he is "batshit-crazy on the subject of Jimmy Gold, too. He's why you went to jail" (67). Morris denies he went to jail because of a literary character. The reader should remember in a description of the events that led Morris to juvenile detention on Pages 28 and 29, it is said that Morris and his mother had been arguing about the Gold Trilogy before Morris went on his drinking binge. Morris even compares his actions to those of the character in the novel. Notice when Morris gets frustrated with Andrew, Morris compares his reaction to Andrew with the reaction he believes Jimmy might have had: "He was growing increasingly irritated with Andy — PO'd, as Jimmy Gold would have said" (63).

Even though Morris may be a killer, he is also a lover of literature. The reader knows this not only because Morris claims to love literature but also because of the many references he makes to literature. These references show he has knowledge of great literature and writing techniques. For instance, when it begins raining after Morris talks to Andy, Morris describes what is happening as the pathetic fallacy "nature echoing the feelings of human beings" (69). Morris describes this technique as a "cheap, mood-creating trick of second-rate writers" (69). Additionally proving that he is a lover of literature, Morris refers to literature as he goes through his daily life. When he decides to kill Curtis and Freddy his thoughts turn to a quote by the Shakespeare character Macbeth as he contemplates a murder. Morris' thoughts also turn to Shakespeare when he thinks about how he and the rest of Jimmy's story are about to be separated. "Fate had come between him and the notebooks, just as fate had come between Romeo and Juliet" (73). As Morris heads for his childhood home he thinks to himself in the words of Robert Frost that: "Also, home was the place where, when you go there, they have to take you in — the gospel according to Robert Frost" (38). A final reference that Morris makes to literature in this section of the novel is his use of a line of poetry from Alexander Pope. As he thinks that his nosey next door neighbor might die before he has to speak with her again he says to himself "as another great poet said, hope springs eternal in the human breast" (61).



Even though he has not called himself a lover of literature, Pete has at least a passing knowledge of writing — particularly plays — in this section of the novel. Pete introduces his parents' argument for the day in the way a movie or stage play might be introduced: "Meanwhile, silence your cell phones and turn off your pagers, folks. The lights are going down and this afternoon's installment of *We're in Deep Shit* is about to begin" (41). The text of the resulting argument is written in the form of the script for a play. The main actors are his parents Tom and Linda but Pete includes asides to the audience to help clarify statements that are made. Along with dialogue, the format even includes stage directions as his parents move around the house arguing. Pete knows his parents and their routine of arguments so well that he can quote them word for word and even anticipate their arguments.

Notice the way Pete's parents throw around blame and guilt as they argue. When Linda scolds Tom for smoking in the house he tries to make her feel guilty because it was icy outside and he is still on crutches. She returns the favor by reminding him how much money his cigarettes cost and how big a bite they take out of their already tight budget.

Discussion Question 1

What do you think is the best way for Pete to handle the trunk full of money and manuscripts that he happened to find behind his house?

Discussion Question 2

Consider the conversation between Andy and Morris. Do you think a plan to kill Rothstein was ever discussed between the two of them? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

What might the consequences be if Pete's parents were to get divorced? Would their lives be any better?

Vocabulary

expectoration, reformatory, valise, inordinately, prodigal, articulated, uncontentious, pelted, surmise, benighted, nebbish, fallacy, severance, malignant, replicated, inanity



Part 1: “Buried Treasure” 2010-1978

Summary

In the next section of “Buried Treasure” in 2010, Tom was surprised when he opened the first envelope of money that came to the family. When Linda came home he was sitting at the kitchen table with \$500 in cash sitting in front of him. There was no letter or return address telling them from where the money had come. Pete acted surprised, even to the point of using vulgar language, when his mother told him about the money. When Pete heard his father make a joke that evening and then compliment Tina, proof he was in a good mood, he believed the decision he had made to send the money anonymously was a good idea.

The money in the envelopes added up to about \$6,000 extra each year. Tom and Linda told Pete and Tina that they were not to tell anyone about the money they were receiving. Pete noticed there were fewer arguments and they were able to have cable services restored. Things improved even more as Tom’s legs healed and he was able to get a part-time job. The same month the man who committed the City Center Massacre was caught Tom, began walking without his crutches.

One day when his mother and father took Tina to the zoo, Pete got the opportunity to examine the remaining contents of the trunk. He stored the notebooks in the attic and read part of one. The chapter featured Jimmy Gold as a main character. Afraid he would be caught, Pete hid the notebook with the others and lay down on his bed. As he began to doze off he thought that the name Jimmy Gold sounded familiar.

In the next section returning to 1978, Morris sat in jail throwing up into the toilet and nursing a headache. He could not remember what he had done to get there, though he did wonder if it had to do with the murders of Rothstein, Curtis, and Freddy. Realizing his face burned, Morris put his hand to it and felt three deep fingernail scratches. He wondered if he had assaulted a woman.

Morris was called that afternoon by the guards to talk to his court appointed lawyer. At first the lawyer told Morris only that he was in deep trouble and that he needed to prepare for a long stay in the penitentiary. Morris asked what crime he was charged with and considered if he would trade the notebooks for a shorter sentence if he had the opportunity. When the lawyer, Elmer Cafferty, told Morris he would be charged on three counts, Morris assumed the counts were murder charges. When the lawyer finally read the charges they were not the murder charges Morris expected. They were instead resisting arrest, aggravated assault, and aggravated rape. Morris pleaded guilty because Cafferty told him if he did so he might get as few as twenty-five years in prison. Instead he was sentenced to a life term by the same judge who had sent him to juvenile detention years before.



Analysis

Tension builds as Morris tries to remember what he did to get arrested. “All he could be sure of was that something had gone horribly wrong. When you woke up wearing an orange jumpsuit, that was an easy deduction to make” (86). His fear is that he bragged about the murder of Rothstein. His reaction when he learns that he is in trouble for raping a girl is almost amusing. Though Morris does not think his charges are bad when compared to the fact he was expecting to be charged with three counts of murder, his young lawyer, Cafferty, is disgusted by what Morris did. Morris tells Cafferty that he was blacked out and did not remember anything he had done, but Cafferty does not seem to take that into account when discussing the case with Morris. Expecting to be charged with murder, Morris is dumbfounded to learn the charge is actually rape. Morris’ question asking why he would rape anyone seems rhetorical but Cafferty answers anyway: “‘I have no idea,’ Cafferty said. ‘Rape is foreign to my way of life’” (96). Morris chooses to keep to himself that rape is also foreign to him.

Morris’ luck is exceptionally bad because he faces the same judge as an adult who sentenced him to juvenile detention as a teen. Instead of fighting for a trial, Morris chooses to put his life in the hands of a judge who has already sentenced him to a facility where he got raped by guards and other inmates. The judge has no pity on Morris but sentences him to life in prison. Because of the length of the sentence, the reader knows that Morris has not yet come back for the notebooks because he is either still in prison or dead. Since Morris was about 23 when he went to jail for rape, it is safe to assume that at the time Pete finds the trunk that Morris is about 55 years of age.

Notice that even when Morris believes he is about to be jailed for three counts of murder, he makes up his mind that he will not give up the location of the notebooks even if it means he will get a shorter jail term. After all, the notebooks are the reason that Morris teamed up with Curtis and Freddy to rob Rothstein. “If things had gone differently, he (Morris) would have offered to trade Curtis and Freddy his share of the money for the written words” (93). Morris was never interested in the money, only the content of the notebooks. As the novel progresses it becomes more obvious how angry Morris was with Rothstein for the way he ended the trilogy. His desire to be the first person to find out what happened to Jimmy, if Rothstein did indeed write more about that character, outweighs his desire for a short prison term.

In 2010, Pete has brought the notebooks back to his house and has gotten interested in reading them. He makes it through a portion of one page before he hides the book because he is afraid of getting caught. Significant is that he remembers the name Jimmy Gold, the name of the main character in the page he does read. He decides to do some research on that character.

Notice the way that Morris describes the anger that overtakes him when he gets drunk on liquor. He uses the metaphor of a beast. “That huge anger he usually kept locked in a cage, that black beast with the yellow eyes” (87).



Note also in this section the way Pete's parents put so little thought into where the money they receive in the mail is coming. This unwillingness to question the source of this windfall will be significant later in the novel.

Discussion Question 1

Do you think it was in Morris' best interest to plead guilty to the charges against him? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Why is it significant that Morris treasures the notebooks he stole from Rothstein so much that he decides he will not turn them in, even if he would get a lighter jail sentence by doing so?

Discussion Question 3

If you were Pete's parents, would you try to find where the money was coming from? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

liquified, deduction, rampaged, reamed, matriculating



Part 1: “Buried Treasure,” 2013-2014 and 1979-2014

Summary

In the first section here that is cited as taking place in “2013-2014,” as a high school sophomore, Pete has decided he wants to major in English. He credited his decision to the final two Rothstein novels that he was the only one to have read and to Howard Ricker, his sophomore English teacher. He remembered a lecture Ricker had given about time being the ruler that measured what literature was stupid and what was not. The teacher was of the belief he could not argue the merits of a piece of literature because literature had to be judged subjectively.

One of the books that Ricker had his students read was “The Rocking Horse Winner.” Pete considered the trunk of money his rocking horse. Even though it had helped his parents through a bad time, however, the money was running out. His mother was working full-time, though, and his father even ran his own small business. Money was still needed because Pete’s sister wanted to go to a private prep school for her high school years. Their parents thought they could afford to send Tina there as a sophomore but did not know if she could start as a freshman. Tina had suggested they use the mystery money for that purpose. Pete was distressed because he knew the money would not hold out that long.

For his term paper Pete had written about Rothstein’s Jimmy Gold trilogy. His teacher praised his work and gave him an A+. Pete found it hard to discuss his report with his teacher because he wanted to include information from the final two Rothstein books—books no one else knew existed. Ricker did ask why Pete did not talk about how Rothstein died. Pete told him he thought the writer’s death was stupid and did not fit the theme of his paper.

Even though Pete had been careful when he had read the notebooks, Tina had caught him with one. He tried to convince her he was trying his hand at writing his own book. As he thought more about how good Rothstein’s last two books were, he thought the public deserved to know they existed. He did not know the best way to go about turning them over to someone. Besides, Pete felt he could use the notebooks to make money to help fund his sister’s private school. He did not feel he was in any danger of encountering the man who had killed Rothstein because he figured if that man was still alive he was probably too old to come looking for the loot.

When Pete sent the last of the trunk money to his father he included a note that read: “This is the last of it. I am sorry there’s not more” (113). Tina seemed to understand when her parents told her there was not enough money for her to go to the private school. Pete felt awful when he later heard her crying in her room.



Meanwhile Pete had realized he wanted to teach literature because he knew he did not have the creativity to be a writer. In order to do this he needed money for his own college dreams and felt Tina might benefit from going to a better school. To help turn the notebooks into money he needed for both of them, he tried to come up with an appropriate story.

One day after visiting a sidewalk sale at a bookstore where a sign indicated a treasure might be hiding in the discounted books, Pete went to talk to Mr. Ricker. He pretended he had found a first edition copy of one of Rothstein's books that had been autographed. He asked Mr. Ricker what book collector would be a good one to try to sell the book to. One of the places that Pete asked about was Andrew Halliday Rare Editions. Mr. Ricker advised Pete to stay away from Andrew Halliday because he had a habit of selling stolen works.

One night Tina came to Pete's room and asked him if he had been the one to send the money. He denied it but she seemed sure he had been responsible. She asked if all the money was really gone. He referenced the note that said the money was all gone. Tina told Pete she would keep his secret if he would keep one that she and her mother shared. She told him that they had gone on a tour of the school. He could tell she really wanted to go even though she told him it was not all that great. Before she left his room she told him what was really neat at the private school was the fact all the girls wore uniforms. That way mean girls could not pick on the girls whom they knew only had a few sets of clothes. After she left, Pete thought about the options Tina had for herself once she was out of high school if her grades did not improve. It is noted that after thinking about her options that Pete made "the biggest mistake of his life" (126-127).

The next section, which spans from 1974-2014, begins when Morris arrived at Waynville State Prison and his cell mate, Roy Allgood, raped him his first night there. About two months after he had been imprisoned a man named Warren "Duck" Duckworth asked Morris if he could write. Duck wanted Morris to write a letter to his wife that would keep her from divorcing him. In exchange, Duck would make sure that Allgood did not bother Morris again.

Later in his prison sentence Morris thought about the Rothstein manuscripts and was comforted. He thought about how his sophomore English teacher had introduced him to the first book in the Jimmy Gold trilogy one day after he had smarted off in class. It was the first book that really excited Morris. His book report on the novel earned him an A+. He had liked the second book in the trilogy just as much. When he read the third book he got angry that Jimmy had begun chasing money, just like other people.

Morris had always blamed his mother for him winding up in juvenile detention. He indicated that during her vacation she had read all three of the Jimmy Gold books in one day. Morris was already angry because she had read his personal copies. She called the books "interesting artifacts" (140) with little content. The only one she thought showed promise was the last of the three books, the one Morris hated. She tried to explain to Morris that eventually every teenager with his big rebellious dreams grows up to be like everyone else. After he had left the house he persuaded an adult to buy him a



quart of whiskey and drank it by the creek. He went on his rampage at Sugar Height after that.

It was Andy who had suggested to Morris that Rothstein had continued to write but had stipulated all his work be burned after he died. He suggested stealing the manuscripts as a rescue mission. Soon after this discussion, Morris had started working construction and had met Curtis and Freddie. They had put together a plan to steal Rothstein's money.

The first time Morris had been eligible for parole in 1990, Cora Ann Hooper had testified against him at the parole hearing. She testified at other hearings at five year increments during which Morris was also turned down for parole. He finally used his letter writing skills to try to convince Hooper he had received Jesus as his savior and deserved forgiveness. Despite his letter Hooper told the parole board she was still suffering from what Morris had done to her. She had also responded to Morris' letter telling him she hoped he rotted in prison.

It was not until March of 2014 that he was wanted in administration for a parole board hearing. Hooper, who had cancer, had sent a letter dropping all of her objections to Morris' parole. Morris cried when parole was granted.

Analysis

Although the two characters are very different, there are a good deal of parallels between Pete and Morris. First, they lived in the same house on Sycamore Street when their families were going through hard times. Pete and his family moved to the Sycamore Street house after his father was injured by the Mercedes Killer. Morris and his mother moved there after Morris' father walked out on them and took all their money. Both Pete and Morris slept in the same bedroom as children. When they were upset they both went to the creek behind the house for privacy. Also similar is the way the two boys grew familiar with Rothstein and his work. They were both introduced to this writer when they were sophomores in high school. Both of them wrote a paper about Rothstein and their work that earned them both an A+. Both credited their love of literature to Rothstein.

Although the two characters are similar in their love of literature and specific hero worship of Rothstein, there are also differences between the two. Morris was assigned to read the Rothstein novel after he smarted off in class to his teacher. Pete had begun to admire Rothstein after he discovered the manuscripts he had pulled out of the trunk were written by him and were follow-up novels to the Jimmy Gold trilogy. When forced to discuss their love for the Rothstein novels neither is able to defend his argument intelligently but both are unable to do so for different reasons. Pete cannot defend how he interpreted the ending of the third novel because he knows it was influenced by the fourth and fifth novels, the ones he cannot reveal that he has read. Morris is unable to argue his point on the Rothstein novels because his mother is working hard to get him into a frenzy about the books.



It appears in this section of the novel that Pete is going to try to sell some of Rothstein's notebooks to fund his college and his sister's private high school. It is stated that this decision is the "the biggest mistake of his life" (126-127) so it is assumed that Pete's attempt to sell the notebooks will get him into trouble. Note also that when Pete approaches Mr. Ricker about reputable collectible book sellers that Mr. Ricker tries to steer him away from Andrew Halliday because of Andrew's reputation for not caring from where a book came when it came to purchasing and reselling it. The reader should also remember that Andrew was the one to whom Morris went when he first stole the notebooks. Andrew already knows the circumstances under which the notebooks were acquired and how many of them there were. This is significant as Pete begins trying to deal with Andrew.

Pete's internal battle concerning what he should do with the notebooks begins in this section of the novel. He recognizes the books hold pieces of literature that should be available to all who loved Rothstein's work. At the same time he is fighting greed and the need for money. His greed is not pronounced because he rationalizes that he needs the money for his sister to go to private school. He believes going to this school will improve her life and give her better options. Meanwhile, his sister unknowingly manipulates Pete by telling that what she thinks she would like most about private school is that all students wear uniforms. She would no longer be made fun of because she did not have expensive clothes.

Significant in this section of the novel is the insinuation on Andrew's part that Rothstein wanted the work he had done since his retirement burned after he died. This will be significant later on in the novel.

Discussion Question 1

Considering the part of the discussion that Morris remembers about Rothstein's journals, do you think Andy did suggest to Morris that he steal the notebooks? Do you think Morris might have read that suggestion into what his friend said to him?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss Pete's inner struggle as he tries to decide if he should sell the notebooks.

Discussion Question 3

Why does Pete lie when Tina asks if he sent the money? Why does he not tell her the truth? How does his lie to Tina influence his decision to sell the notebooks?

Vocabulary

amiably, antiquities, resonance, intuited, culling, vital, peroration, tome, protagonist, succinctness, plagiarism, debunk, improvident, anonymously, provincials, erroneous, psychedelic, avarice, defacing, provenance, larcenous, conversely, jejune, pretentiously

Part 2: “Old Pals” 1-8

Summary

In Section 1 of “Old Pals,” Hodges waits for Oliver Madden’s plane to arrive. He checks in with Holly Gibney who tells him Barbara Robinson had called for him and that she seemed worried. Hodges hopes Barbara is not in trouble. She was with him, Holly, and Jerome when they almost got blown up in the MAC when Brady Hartsfield tried to detonate a bomb there. Jerome, Barbara’s brother, is away at college. Hodges plans to ask about him when he talks to Barbara.

In Section 2, Morris has trouble recognizing the world into which he has been released. In order to be able to get back to get the notebooks, Morris is following carefully the rules of his parole. He is hoping eventually his parole officer will relax. Duck had told him if he wanted to do anything questionable, he should wait until after his parole officer made a surprise visit.

In Section 3, less than a week after he was released from jail Morris returns to his apartment. His parole officer is sitting on the steps. He’d had a meeting with the officer, Ellis McFarland, earlier that day. When Morris agrees to a drug test with no objection, McFarland tells him he will not do the test after all.

Feeling he is safe from another surprise visit based on Duck’s advice, Morris takes a bus to Northfield. He walks past his old house. The lights are on and Morris knows the Saubers family, who lives in the house, is home. He assumes the kid who slept in the room that had been his is not interested in reading books. He makes his way to the Birch Street Rec and has trouble finding the path to the creek. When he finds the spot where he’d buried the trunk he begins digging and is relieved to find the trunk is still there. He does not try pulling the trunk out or opening it but instead goes back to the bus stop.

In Section 4, for the next month Morris goes to his job at the MAC just like he is supposed to even though he makes little money and thinks his boss is an ass. Even though Morris had learned through his time in jail that he had to tell jailers and counselors that he accepted responsibility for what he had done, he wonders if some of the blame does not lie with Andrew Halliday. He is watching Andrew’s store sitting on a bench down the street. He has been spending his Tuesday lunches studying Andrew’s routine. He is not worried that Andrew will recognize him.

Morris blames Andy for the time he spent in jail because he believes it was his anger with Andrew that caused him to get drunk and rape the woman. He compares Andy’s behavior the day he brought him the stolen Rothstein notebook as being like a girl who is a flirt. Even though he is angry with Andy he tries to convince himself it is the notebooks that really matter.



In Section 5, a mechanic at the airport tells Hodges he cannot leave his car where he has it parked. Hodges offers the man a fifty and tells him the man in the landing airplane is a criminal. The man agrees to pull up Madden's Navigator behind Hodges' car and then disappear for about 15 minutes.

In Section 6, as Hodges waits for Madden to come out of the terminal, he wonders for a minute what Barbara might need from him but then returns his attention to the task at hand. When Madden does walk out Hodges greets him and tells Madden that he is here for the plane. Madden had written a bad check for the plane to Dwight Cramm. Madden tries to resist, but Hodges tells him if he does not hand over the plane and then leave on a Delta flight to Los Angeles that has been arranged for him, Hodges will contact the police and Madden will be put in jail.

In Section 7, Hodges calls his old partner at the police department and tips him off about Madden. Their relationship has been cool since Hodges' involvement in catching the Mercedes Killer.

In Section 8, Andrew Halliday paces himself while eating. He is at the point in his life he cares about only food and books. Recently he has been tempted by a new love, Rothstein's notebooks. Drew looks in his notebook at the name the boy has requested he be known by: James Hawkins. He wonders if the boy, whom he knows is Pete Saubers, is aware Hawkins is the hero and narrator in the book *Treasure Island*.

Analysis

The novel shifts focus in this section. The beginning third of the novel is written in past tense and focuses on Pete and Morris. Part 2: "Old Pals" ties together the narratives of Pete and Morris more securely. Pete's friend Andrew, to whom Pete originally showed the Rothstein manuscripts to when he first stole them, has apparently been contacted by Pete, who is using the alias James Hawkins. Andrew seems to believe that Pete has the Rothstein notebooks that Morris stole from the author so long ago.

New characters are also introduced in this section. For those who have read *Mr. Mercedes* these are familiar characters. Bill Hodges, Holly Gibney, Jerome Robinson, and his sister Barbara Robinson were among the significant characters in that novel. These characters are tied to Pete because Barbara is also a friend of Tina, Pete's brother. Hodges is a retired police detective now working as a repo man with the help of Holly. Ironically the name of their business is "Finders Keepers," a play on the children's rhyme and also the name of the novel. The developing question in the novel seems to be that since Pete found the money and manuscripts that Morris stowed away, does he have the right to keep those items? Whose are they at that point?

Morris, who has never been able to take responsibility for his actions before, blames his old friend Andrew for the time he spent in jail. He reasons that if he had gone to jail for the murders, he would have been responsible. Since Morris was jailed because of



things he did after Andrew made him mad, Morris believes that Andrew is responsible for his time in jail. It appears that Morris plans to seek revenge on his old friend.

Hodges' job is described using fishing imagery. "Most of the fish Finders Keepers nets are minnows, but today's is a bluefin tuna, and Hodges is stoked" (160). The analogy is complete with the use of the verb "nets" a word associated with fishing. The comparison between the minnows and the bluefin tuna indicates the man that Hodges is after is not only a bigger criminal than the ones he usually catches but also rarer and worth more money.

Notice also Morris' incorrect assumption about Pete. As he looks at the windows of his old bedroom, Morris assumes that the boy who lives there is "probably a lot more interested in playing games on his phone than reading books" (165-166). Morris is terribly wrong and would be surprised to learn that Rothstein had as big an impact on Pete as he did on Morris. Notice also the irony of Pete's decision to use the name of the character from *Treasure Island* as his alias. He had mentioned *Treasure Island* once before in his consideration of the contents of the trunk and what he should do with them. "This was not *Treasure Island*; this was a city of over a million people, many now out of work, and they would love to have what was in this trunk" (55). By selling the manuscripts, Pete is hoping to make his buried treasure pay off again.

Notice also the shifts in tense in this section of the novel. While the first part of the novel was written entirely in the past tense this section is both past and present tense. The use of present tense indicates the author is finished filling the reader in on background information and is ready to start building the action of the novel. There are still times the tense switches to the past tense to fill the reader in on details from the past, even though that past may have occurred only a day or two before the "present" of the novel.

Discussion Question 1

How is Pete more like Morris than Morris realizes?

Discussion Question 2

Why do you think the author includes the scene with Hodges catching the plane thief and repossessing the plane? How does this scene impact the novel?

Discussion Question 3

Why do you think that King decides to change to the present tense at this point in the novel? How is this change in tense significant?

Vocabulary

violating, indulgent, patronizing, purgatory, degenerate, carrel, pretentious, impose, laurels, incredulous, moke

Part 2: “Old Pals,” 9-17

Summary

In Section 9, Andrew had recognized that Pete was a teen on a mission wanting to make himself look older the first time he came into his store two weeks prior. Once Pete finally got the courage to speak, he introduced himself as James Hawkins. He said he thought he might have something Andrew would be interested in buying. As the boy laid out a copy of a page from one of Rothstein’s notebooks beside a letter handwritten by Rothstein and previously published, Andrew tried to hide his excitement. Andrew told the boy the page was a forgery. The boy showed him another page of writing. This one with mistakes and cross outs. It was about Jimmy Gold. Andrew finally told the boy he might be able to get fifty-thousand dollars for the six notebooks he was offering.

After Pete left Andrew looked at the copy of the book he had left. He knew it had come from the Garner Street Library. In the staff photos on the library’s website he recognized Pete as the boy who had just paid him a visit. Andrew believed the boy had all of the notebooks which might be worth as much as 50 million dollars. Believing Morris was still in jail, Andrew thought there was nothing standing in his way.

In Section 10, Andrew is concerned because Pete has found out about the third mortgage on his business. He has had financial difficulty since he was accused of selling a stolen book. While he walks back to his shop he thinks about the second meeting with Pete. He believed it had gone well and they were to have a third meeting that day. Back in the store he finds that Pete has left him a message on his answering machine. When he listens to it his fists clench in anger.

In Section 11, Pete had not brought the notebooks to the second meeting. He had told Andrew he wanted a figure of the amount he would be paid first. Andrew surprised the boy by telling him what he had learned about him. Andrew also told Pete what he knew about the murder of Rothstein. He accused Pete of finding the notebooks as well as money which he used to help keep his family afloat during their financial crisis. Andrew told Pete that he had called the police and tipped them off to what Pete was hiding.

If his family were found to have had more money going out than they had reported they had coming in Andrew warned Pete his parents could be put in jail for tax evasion. In exchange for keeping quiet, Andrew wanted all of the notebooks. It was after Pete admitted he had all of Rothstein’s notebooks and that there were two more novels written on the pages that he reminded Andrew that he, Pete, was still a minor. He told Andrew he needed a week to think about the offer.

In Section 12, Pete tells Andrew in a message that he had forgotten about a retreat he was supposed to attend. He promises to come on Monday.



In Section 13, Hodges gets a call from his former partner saying he has arrested Madden, and then another from Holly reporting that Barbara and her friend Tina have come to his office in a taxi and are waiting for him.

In Section 14, Pete got out of afternoon classes by saying he had a migraine. In reality, he planned to take care of the headache that Andrew was causing him.

In Section 15, Pete runs home after getting out of classes. He has lost weight and is having nightmares since he started trying to deal with Andrew. His first step in dealing with the problem into which he has gotten himself is getting the notebooks out of his house.

In Section 16, inside his father's office, Pete finds the keys to the Birch Street Rec. He packs the notebooks into cartons which he labels kitchen supplies and changes into his Key Club polo shirt.

In Section 17, Pete is carrying the cartons up the stairs at the Rec building when Mr. Evans stops him. He offers to help Pete move his boxes but Pete refuses the help. Although the first floor has mostly been cleaned out there is still a good deal of stuff stored in the basement. He puts his cartons in with some others marked "kitchen."

Analysis

While it has already been determined that Morris is a villain in the novel — he's murdered three people, raped one and spent about 35 years in jail — it appears his friend Andrew is also a villain. Andrew appears to be motivated by nothing but greed. He also has no qualms about using the advantage he knows he has over Pete. The only thing that seems to concern Andrew about his plan to manipulate the boy into giving him the notebooks is his fear that Morris is somehow behind the boy's appearance in his shop. He at first considers that Morris had sent the boy in to feel him out about the notebooks: "Ah, but he doesn't know what I know, which includes where they came from. Unless Morrie is using him as a cat's paw, and how likely is that with Morrie rotting in Waynesville State Prison?" (193). The idea that his old friend is using Pete as a "cat's paw" is a clever way of saying that Andrew thinks Morris might be using Pete as a way to play with him. The reference brings to mind the way a cat will pat and bat at something with its paw, playing with it before it decides to pounce. Once Andrew decides that Pete is acting alone, he pulls out all the stops to try to trick the boy into giving him the notebooks with no payment in exchange. Andrew's low opinion of Pete's worth as a person and his determination to take what he wants from a person he believes is weaker is described here: "with Morrie Bellamy safely tucked away in prison, all that stood in his way was one teenage boy who couldn't even grow a proper moustache" (198). Andrew has no respect for Pete and believes he owes the boy nothing.

Even though Andrew tries to tell Pete that he was innocent in selling the stolen book, the reader senses the case is different. "You found out about the Agee business and



thought I might help you do something illegal. Only my hands were clean then and they're clean now" (204) Andrew tells Pete. Before this when Andrew was thinking to himself how bad his business was, he had blamed it on the fact he sold the stolen book. He had at first even lied to himself and said he had not known the book was stolen but then went back on his declaration. "All right, he probably did know, certainly all the red flags were there and flying briskly, and he should have steered clear" (199). Andrew thinks to himself that he should have stayed away from the book, knowing it was too good to be true.

Both Andrew and Pete argue their cases hoping that they can get money out of their transaction but Pete's goal for the money he might get is very different from Andrew's. Andrew's prime concern is greed. He knows that if he could come up with a copy of more Rothstein novels written in that author's handwriting, proof it was written by the man himself, he could make millions of dollars. He would be set for life. Pete wants the money to fund his sister's private school, a selfless desire, just like his desire to help out his parents years ago when he doled the money in the trunk out to them. Because Andrew does not know why Pete wants the money, he assumes Pete is motivated by greed as well. When Andrew considers what he should say to the boy's requests for a bigger cut of the money he "thought of adding why be greedy, but under the circumstances, that might sound a little . . . off" (206). Andrew's instructions to the boy to not be greedy would be off because Andrew himself was being extremely guilty of greed in this situation.

The tone of the novel turns tense as Pete and Andrew stand off against each other. Each has information they are trying to hide from the other. For instance, Andrew knows Pete must have found the notebooks and the money because he was told by Morris that it was Morris who stole the notebooks. Morris also suspects it was the money from these notebooks that kept Pete's family from going bankrupt despite all their financial troubles. While Pete's tension and nervousness seems innocent, Andrew's seems dangerous.

Discussion Question 1

Based on what you learned about Andrew in this section of the novel how are he and Morris alike? In what ways are they different? Think about their goals, personalities and character traits.

Discussion Question 2

At one point in this section of the novel Andrew thinks to himself that "money simplifies everything" (210). Do you think this is true? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the change in the tone of the novel.

Vocabulary

quashed, placidly, impasse, contingent, bogus, pittance, trove, compromise, olfactories



Part 2: “Old Pals,” 18-28

Summary

In Section 18, Hodges has to calm Holly down before he can get her to tell him her take on what is going on with Barbara and Tina. She tells him that Tina thinks her brother stole some money.

In Section 19, when Tina tells Hodges her last name Hodges feels he recognizes the name but is not sure from where. Tina tells him that she thinks her brother stole money. Additionally, he has been talking in his sleep and losing weight since he grew a moustache. Hodges asks to be told the story from the beginning.

In Section 20, Hodges has Tina tell her story again with Holly listening. This time Tina remembers there was a time when nearly six weeks went by and they did not get a check. As she talks she realizes the time frame also matches with a time when Pete was out of town for a week with a friend. Because she had been talking about wanting to go to Chapel Ridge, the private school, Tina is worried she has pushed Pete into doing something illegal. Hodges tells Tina he will look into what is happening, but that he will have to talk to her brother. She worries that Pete will be mad at her. Hodges makes arrangements to try to meet with Pete after school on Monday.

In Section 21, after they are alone again Holly and Hodges discuss the case. Holly does not think Pete stole the money; she thinks he found it, especially since he asked Tina what she would do if she found a buried treasure. They also believe Pete came up with some way to get more money but his plan backfired on him, hence the growth of the moustache and ensuing anxiety. When Holly leaves the room Hodges thinks to himself that there is another possible reason for Pete’s anxiety: that the person who stole the money in the first place has come back for it and has discovered Pete found the money first.

In Section 22, Morris visits Charlie Roberson at the motorcycle shop where Charlie works. Morris asks Charlie for a favor in return for writing the letter to Charlie’s lawyer that ultimately got Charlie out of jail. Charlie agrees to loan Morris a panel truck but refuses when Morris asks for a gun as well.

In Section 23, thinking about the Rothstein notebooks later that day at work, Morris almost deletes a valuable file. He chides himself when he discovers his close mistake.

In Section 24, when Morris gets off work for the day he is shocked to see his parole officer standing in the MAC lobby. McFarland makes Morris do a drug test which Morris passes. Despite the negative test, McFarland tells Morris he does not like the way Morris looks. He warns Morris that he is too old to be a wolf, one of two types of parolees McFarland believes exists, so he needs to forget whatever crime he has in mind.



In Section 25, despite McFarland's warning, Morris rides the bus to pick up the truck Roberson has left for him. He stops at Home Depot and buys two totes, a spade, and a hatchet.

In Section 26, Morris pulls the truck up beside the old Rec building once it is dark. He thinks for a minute about storing the notebooks in the basement of that building but changes his mind.

In Section 27, Morris finds the tree and digs the trunk out. When he tries to pull the handle, he discovers that it is broken. He convinces himself there is nothing wrong, he might have broken the handle while moving the trunk, but when he discovers that the trunk is too light he becomes worried. The only thing in the trunk is plastic with which he lined it. He puts his hands to his face and begins to cry.

In Section 28, it is after midnight before Morris gets the truck back to Roberson. Since all the buses have run he starts walking. Once he reaches Government Square, Morris sits on a bench across from the Happy Cup and thinks about Andrew. He remembers his friend advising him to bury the Rothstein notebooks somewhere. He wonders if perhaps Andrew had dug up the notebooks and might still have them, waiting until the time was right to sell them. Morris decides it is time to pay Andrew a visit.

Analysis

The action in the novel takes a turn when Morris realizes that the notebooks are gone. It is this discovery that makes Morris become angry and focus his anger on Andrew. Since he intends to visit Andy about his missing books, it can be assumed that Andy will point him in Pete's direction. Another plot turn occurs when Tina and Barbara tell Hodges the story about Pete. Hodges agrees to help Pete and suspects that whomever stole the money that Pete found has discovered what Pete did.

Significant in this section is that Morris is so close to the place where Pete hid the stolen notebooks. When Morris parks his truck next to the Rec center he even considers hiding the notebooks there in the basement among the other boxes of stuff that he can see through the window. It is ironic that some of these boxes of stuff that Morris spies through the window might actually be the notebooks for which he is looking. Just like Pete did not want to be found with the notebooks if Andrew made good on his promise and told the police about the stolen money and work, Morris also does not want to be found with the stolen notebooks if his parole officer were to search his apartment.

Throughout the book the author uses simile and metaphor in descriptions. For instance, when Morris drives his truck to retrieve the notebooks from where he has buried them he believes he hears them "pinging like a sonar blip" (251). A simile is also used to describe the hole from which Morris had pulled the trunk. That hole is described as "gaping like a mouth that has just vomited something up" (256). After Morris discovers that his notebooks are gone he feels "as empty as that old trunk in the moonlight" (257).



Finally, Morris' hope is "swept away like a shack in a flood" (257) when he discovers the trunk is empty.

A few significant symbols are mentioned in this section of the novel as well. Morris' red lips are one of these symbols. The red lips are first mentioned when Morris is talking to Rothstein. Because the rest of Morris' face is covered, Rothstein focuses on the man's strange red lips. In this section the reader learns Morris was picked on because of the strange color of his lips. "Because of his red lips, he earned the nickname Revlon" (251). Also making another appearance in this section is the trunk in which Morris buried Rothstein's notebooks. While the trunk was a symbol of hope and treasure in earlier sections, it is symbolic of Morris' great disappointment in this section.

Morris picks up on a phrase that his parole officer uses with him during his surprise visit to Morris' workplace. "There are two types of parolees, and two only: wolves and lambs" (247). The lamb, of course, symbolizes the well-behaved, complacent parolee while the wolf is the one who wants to fight the system.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you think that McFarland is so suspicious of Morris? Why does McFarland, in turn, make Morris paranoid?

Discussion Question 2

Why is the point at which Morris realizes someone has taken the manuscripts from the trunk a turning point in the novel?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss Barbara and Tina's visit with Hodges. What is accomplished? Why does Hodges say he has to talk to Pete?

Vocabulary

incised, tutelage, complicity, plausible, lackadaisically, bludgeoning, recanted, amenable, palaver, redolent, provenance, rhetorical, reprimand, redolent, purling, exhumed



Part 3: “Peter and the Wolf,” 1-8

Summary

In Section 1, after Hodges and Holly watch a movie Holly asks Hodges if he thinks Pete will talk to him. Hodges replies that he hopes the boy will.

In Section 2, Tanya Robinson suspects something is upsetting Tina but is not sure what it is. Jerome surprises his sister by coming home from college unexpectedly. Later, Barbara persuades Tina to tell Jerome about Pete.

In Section 3, Pete finds it hard to concentrate as the senator drones on and on at his retreat. He thinks instead about how best to handle Andrew during their next meeting. He is fairly sure he is going to get cheated but believes he should get more than half of Andrew's projected selling price.

In Section 4, Morris wakes from nightmares. He retrieves his tools from Charlie's truck. He imagines himself threatening Andrew with the hatchet.

In Section 5, walking to Andrew's store Morris first buys a hat, and then a pair of sunglasses. He notices the cameras outside the store and pretends to be a tourist seeing the sights before he goes into the bookstore. Morris comes up with the title of a book he wants Andrew to see if he can find for him. At this point Andrew does not recognize Morris. When Andrew refers to his laptop, Morris turns the sign on the door to closed, and picks up the hatchet. Andrew is talking about the book he has found for Morris when he sees the hatchet. Morris orders Andrew to put his hands out. It is not until Morris mentions the Happy Cup that Andrew realizes the man is Morris. Morris requests they go to Andrew's office to talk.

The office is decorated lavishly. There are decanters that Morris suspects contain expensive scotch and bourbon. This is the first time that Morris thinks about the money that was in the trunk along with the notebooks. When Morris considers that the stolen money might have furnished Andrew's office, he is angry and hits Andrew in the leg with the hatchet. Morris tells Andrew he will not hurt him again if Andrew just gives him the notebooks. Andrew cries that he does not have them. He explains to Morris how a kid who lives in Morris' old house found them. When Andrew tells Morris the kid's name is Peter Saubers, Morris suspects he is telling the truth about the whole story because he learned the name of the family living there. Andrew says that Pete is trying to sell him the notebooks.

Morris is angered when he learns that Pete has read all of the notebooks. In retaliation, he kills Andrew with the hatchet. He finds a clean shirt and pair of expensive shoes that he exchanges for his bloody ones and then wipes down everything he touched while in the store. Before he leaves he wipes down the handle of the hatchet and leaves it on the desk.



In Section 6, Morris gets the information he needs about Pete off of Andrew's laptop. He also finds the footage from the security cameras and decides it would be best to take the laptop with him since he does not want anyone watching him murder Andrew. In the top drawer of Andrew's desk he finds an envelope containing about \$500 and a gun. He also locates a backup DVD of the footage of Pete's meetings with Andrew.

In Section 7, Hodges pays a visit to the John M. Kiner Hospital.

In Section 8, Hodges' journey takes him to the traumatic brain injury clinic. In the hallway he meets Library AI who says that the man Hodges has come to visit cannot read but does sometimes get an e-reader and seems fascinated by the game demos. Hodges is disturbed when AI calls him by the wrong name. Inside the room, Hodges greets Brady but the man does not move. Brady is responsible for killing eight people and seriously injuring twelve when he drove a Mercedes into a line of job seekers at the City Center. He also killed Holly's cousin, the woman with whom Hodges was falling in love, and his own mother. Holly was responsible for Brady's brain damage. She hit him twice in the head with Brady's Happy Slapper to keep him from detonating a bomb at a pop concert attended by thousands of kids and their parents.

Although Brady is classed as being semi-catatonic and is said to be able to do little for himself, some members of the staff say strange things are happening. Hodges asks the Brady if he is faking his brain injury. He gets no response. There is a framed picture of Brady and his mother hugging one another on a table in the room. When Hodges goes to leave he hears the picture fall over. He asks Brady if he knocked the picture over. He gets no answer and no repeat when he asks Brady to do it again. When Hodges leaves the room for good, however, Brady looks up and smiles. The picture falls over again.

Analysis

Just like Morris modeled his behavior after Jimmy Gold's example, Pete does the same in this section of the novel. He has already decided to borrow a quote from one of the Jimmy Gold novels about a slice of bread being better than none when he next talks to Andrew. He knows he has to stand up for himself and demand that he gets some money out of the deal as well. He borrows a phrase from Jimmy Gold as he thinks to himself that he does not want Andrew to think that he is "anyone's birthday fuck" (267).

The hatchet that Morris bought with the intention of using it to free the old trunk from the tree roots takes on a new role. Morris is infuriated first when he thinks that Andrew might have used the money Morris believes was his to furnish Andrew's fancy office. Morris is even more infuriated when he discovers that the boy, Pete, not only found the notebooks but also read them. He had believed that those notebooks and what was written inside them was his own personal property. It is this infuriation that prompts Morris to kill Andrew even though his old friend did not really do anything to deserve being killed. The reason Morris may have killed Andrew is to keep the number of competitors for the notebooks down to a minimum. The description of Morris' brutal murder of Andrew shows the cruelty of which Morris is capable.



In the midst of the rising action of Morris' story, King chooses to interject information about Brady Hartsfield. This interjection seems to be intended to remind the reader of the story started in the first novel of this trilogy that is still going on in the background of this second novel. It is because of Brady Hartsfield's actions that Pete's family got into such a bad spot in the first place. Perhaps if Pete's father had not been injured, Pete would not have been put in the spot where he felt he had to sell these stolen notebooks.

Threading in Brady Hartsfield's story also begins a transition to the third novel. The reader is already familiar with who Brady is. He is the man who drove the car into the group of job seekers. Pete and Tina's father was among those who were injured. The author gives a brief synopsis of the action of the book *Mr. Mercedes* and updates the reader on Brady's current condition. Although it is believed Brady is in a semi-catatonic state, there are rumors there are strange things happening. When Hodges visits Brady he asks the man if he is faking. Brady does not answer Hodges but a picture frame falls over just before Hodges leaves the room, a sign Brady does have more abilities than he is letting others know about. The best sign that Brady is more lucid than his doctors realize is his act of looking up and smiling after Hodges leaves the room.

A question central to the main plot of the story is raised in this section of the novel. Morris hints at this question when he thinks about the fact that he knows Rothstein's work by heart "except for the stuff young Mr. Saubers is sitting on, of course. The stuff he stole from its rightful owner" (281-282). This raises a question. Who is the owner of Rothstein's work? Is Morris the owner because he stole it? Is Pete the owner because he found it?

Literary techniques continue to be used to enliven the writing in this section of the novel. At one point Morris refers to his love of literature as he says, "Literary allusions always please him," (280) after he uses the phrase "Oh well, so it goes," (280) from the author Vonnegut. The reader catches the despair in Pete's thoughts through the way his Saturday at his retreat drags. "Each minute of this endless Saturday afternoon dies a slow and miserable death as he drones on" (266). Each minute is dying, and not only dying but dying a "slow and miserable death." These images of death and dying reinforce the gristly tone of the section. Notice also the onomatopoeia when Hodges describes the "clack" (292) sound that the picture of Hodges makes when it falls over on the table as he leaves Brady's room in the hospital.

Discussion Question 1

Who do you think is technically the owner of Rothstein's notebooks? Give reasons to support your answer.

Discussion Question 2

Why is it significant that Brady smiles after Hodges leaves the room? What about the picture falling over? What do you think that means?



Discussion Question 3

Discuss how calculated Morris is in cleaning up the room and collecting evidence after he kills Andrew. What does this say about him?

Vocabulary

negotiation, thesis, ultimatums, verifying, pungent, jovially, peripheral, portends, writhe, judiciously, fellating, garrulous, irreparable

Part 3: “Peter and the Wolf,” 9-20

Summary

In Section 9, Pete scares his teacher by spending Sunday walking the property of the resort instead of in the sessions he is supposed to attend. He is scared sick because of his confrontation with Drew coming up Monday afternoon.

In Section 10, Hodges gets a visit from Jerome and Odell. Jerome shares with Hodges that Tina told him what was going on with Pete. He asks to be allowed to help out. Hodges agrees, arranging for Jerome to keep an eye on one entrance to the school while Holly watches another.

Before he leaves, Jerome asks if Hodges is visiting Brady. Hodges admits he is but says that Holly does not know about the visits. He does not tell Jerome about the picture falling over and chooses instead to tell him that Brady is the same.

In Section 11, Holly paces her apartment and thinks about the Moleskine notebook Tina saw her brother with. One of the things that makes the least sense to Holly is that Pete would be able to buy such an expensive notebook if his family was struggling to pay the bills. She then thinks about the time gap from the last of the money to the time that Pete got stressed and wonders if he were trying to blackmail someone.

In a move unusual for her, Holly takes the initiative and calls Tina. Tina tells her that her brother might have talked to his teacher, Mr. Ricker, if there was something unusual going on. She looks up Mr. Ricker's phone number on the computer but cannot bring herself to call him. She decides to let Hodges do that if he thinks it is necessary.

In Section 12, borrowing from his parole officer's idea that all parolees are either lambs or wolves, Morris has begun calling himself Morris the wolf. He is paranoid when he returns to his apartment believing that McFarland will be waiting for him but he is not there and has not searched the room. Morris thinks to himself as he falls asleep that he needs to get his bloody clothes out of his apartment.

In Section 13, Hodges learns from Holly that he is to be in court that morning at 10. Holly begins to stress about all they have to do that day. Hodges asks her to relax and tells her she should smile more often because she is beautiful when she smiles.

In Section 14, Morris decides once he gets Rothstein's notebooks back he will break his parole and run away. He chooses not to go to work and instead walks to Andrew's shop to make sure his car is not there. He catches a bus and heads to Andrew's house. He has decided it is time to make up for all that he has lost.

In Section 15, Tina leaves her classroom sick on Monday morning but vomits before she makes it to the bathroom. A janitor sees her get sick and then slouch against the wall. He takes her to the school nurse.



In Section 16, Morris takes Andrew's car and goes to the Home Depot. After buying a screwdriver and chisel, he drives to the Rec building. He forces open a basement window and then leaves, making sure no police were alerted by a silent alarm.

In Section 17, Linda Saubers gets the news her daughter is sick. She leaves the school where she works to get Tina and take her home. Since Linda and Tom have begun to relax about their money situation, she has begun to notice strange things about Tina and Pete. She wonders if one of them could have been responsible for the surprise money they received. She decides it is time she started asking some questions.

In Section 18, Hodges behaves himself in court. Meanwhile Linda takes Tina home. She plans to ask about the money later that day. In class, Pete continues to go over the script he plans to use with Andrew. Morris leaves Andrew's car two blocks from his apartment. He walks to his apartment and gets his bloody clothes. During the tour of an empty IBM building that he is leading, Tom believes life is finally turning around. Meanwhile, Holly is excited when Jerome drops by the office to surprise her.

In Section 19, Morris drives past the Rec building and sees no police cars are there. He parks Andrew's car in the back and enters the building through the window taking his bag of bloody clothes with him. He sits down on a carton labeled kitchen supplies to rest. Once he feels better, he leaves the Rec and heads back to Andrew's business where he plans to wait until Pete arrives.

In Section 20, as Holly, Hodges and Jerome wait outside Pete's school Morris waits in Andrew's store. In class, Pete gets a message from his mother telling him that he needs to come straight home so they can talk. He suspects Tina has said something about the money and her suspicions that Pete sent it. Despite his mother's request, he plans to complete his business with Andrew first.

Analysis

As Morris makes up his mind to skip parole and read the notebooks, he becomes more and more paranoid. His fears center on his parole officer. The man has already paid him two surprise visits. Though he found nothing on Morris that would cause him to violate his parole during either of those visits, Morris knows if the officer were to search his apartment he would find the bloody clothes from where he killed Andrew. In his mind, Morris is building himself up as the wolf that his parole officer described him as during their last visit. "He's done being Ellis McFarland's pet lamb, too. No more baa-ing yes sir and no sir and three bags full sir each time McFarland shows up. Parole is finished" (312). Note that even as Morris' thoughts spiral toward self destruction, he notes that he has "never felt saner in his life" (312).

While Morris is spiraling toward insanity, Pete is steeling himself for his meeting with Andrew. Notice the parallelisms in the text of Section 18. "He must be careful, and allow for his inexperience. He must think before he speaks, every time. Above all, he must be brave" (319). The three uses of the phrase "he must" underline how sternly Pete is



talking to himself and peppering himself up. Beginning with the next paragraph Pete makes three statements beginning with the words: "He tells Halliday" (319) to remind himself what he is going to tell the book seller and how he will make his point that the purchase will be made only on Pete's terms. Interesting in this same section is how King refers to all of the main characters in the novel and accounts for their actions. He also takes this opportunity to remind the reader that Andrew is dead.

King works on developing Holly's personality during this section of the novel. Even though she is neurotic and does not like to interact with people, she can force herself to interact when she feels this interaction is necessary. When Jerome visits Hodges they talk about Holly and mention the successful way in which she handled the confrontation with Brady. The reader gets a very close look at Holly and the way she thinks as she tries to figure why the notebook that Tina said her brother was looking at one day bothers her so badly. She paces, she obsessively quotes movies, and she gnaws her lips. In order to convince herself to call Tina she has to remind herself that she has the right to think a clue is important even if Hodges does not.

When Jerome asks Hodges to be allowed to help with Pete's case, the old team is put back together again. Hodges, Jerome, and Holly are the ones who kept Brady from detonating a bomb in the first installment of the trilogy. Notice that even while King keeps the momentum going in the story of Pete and the Moleskine notebooks, he fills the reader in on information from the first novel and teases them with hints of the plot in the third novel. Notice that Hodges does not tell Jerome the truth about Brady's condition or hint at his suspicions.

Meanwhile, Pete has worked himself up into physical illness because of his stress over the coming meeting with Halliday. His act of skipping the sessions on Sunday because he feels so ill will be problematic for him later in the novel. Note the foreshadowing and melodrama as Pete leaves school wondering "if he'll ever be back" (324). Although it seems Pete is overplaying his situation, he realizes he is dealing with a tricky character in Andrew. He does not realize how much more dangerous his situation has become since Morris has stepped into the picture.

Objects that are significant in this section of the novel are the cartons labeled kitchen supplies that Pete had put in the basement of the Rec center. Morris does not realize how close he is to the precious notebooks written in by Rothstein when he sits on one of these boxes and then drags it to the basement window to use it as a step to climb back out. Even though Morris notices the box is heavier than he thought it would be he assumes the label on the box is correct and does not look inside. In his act of mislabeling the box, Pete has already outsmarted Morris. The reader must wonder if he will continue to be able to do so.



Discussion Question 1

Do you think it is strange that Linda waited until a point after the mystery money stopped coming to ask her children about it? What might you have done in this situation? How is her timing significant in the story?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss Holly's personality. What does it add to the story?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss Morris' decision to violate his parole. What motivates him to make this decision? Do you think this is his best choice if he wants to opportunity to read Rothstein's notebooks?

Vocabulary

gaunt, incanting, voluminous, enclave, melodrama, perilously, improvise



Part 3: “Peter and the Wolf,” 21-30

Summary

In Section 21, Hodges catches Pete as he leaves school and notices how tightly strung the boy looks. Pete’s answer to Hodges’ request that they talk is a tense “Who are you?” (325). When Hodges asks about the mystery money, Pete denies knowing anything about it. He tells Hodges he thinks some rich philanthropist must have sent it.

In Section 22, Pete goes into the pharmacy pretending he has a prescription for his father to fill. Instead he asks the pharmacist if he can sneak out the back because there are some kids following them. Just as he turns onto Lacemaker Lane his phone vibrates with a text from his sister. She tells him that she hopes he talked to Hodges and that their mother also knew what was going on even though Tina had not told her.

Pete has decided he wants Rothstein’s notebooks to go to NYU or The New Yorker. He does not plan to allow Andrew to sell any of them to a collector who will hoard them. Pete feels a weight fall from his shoulders when he makes his final decision not to sell Andrew any of the notebooks just as the sign to his shop comes into view.

In Section 23, a customer came into Andrew’s store just as Pete was getting out of school. Morris covered by telling him that Andrew was out of town on a family emergency.

In Section 24, at twenty minutes until four, Holly, Hodges, and Jerome realize that Pete has outsmarted them. Hodges and Jerome decide they should pay a visit to the boy’s home. Holly, who has been hugging herself and tapping her shoulders, asks Hodges if he asked about the notebook. She suggests they talk to Pete’s teacher before they leave. Jerome agrees.

In Section 25, Pete is thrown off guard when he finds a man he does not recognize in the book store instead of Andrew. Morris tells him that Andrew is waiting for him in the office. When Pete walks to the back of the store, Morris locks the door and turns the sign to closed.

In Section 26, while Holly and the others are waiting in the school hallway to talk to Mr. Ricker, Holly gets a text from Tina. Tina tells her that her mother knows Pete is the one who sent the money.

In Section 27, when Pete smells Andrew’s office and hears the flies buzzing he knows what has happened. The clerk (Morris) is holding a gun, standing in the back part of the store. He makes Pete turn on the light in Andrew’s office and look at the corpse. Morris warns Pete the same thing will happen to him if he makes Morris mad. Inside the office, Pete sees the hatchet on the desk and figures that must have been the murder weapon. Morris tells Pete that he wants to know where the notebooks are. Even though he says



it is not too late for Pete to get out of his predicament alive, Pete believes he already knows too much for that to be true.

In Section 28, Hodges tells Mr. Ricker Pete's story. At first Mr. Ricker remembers nothing about any unusual situations in Pete's life. Hodges notices how deflated Holly looks because she believes her hunch was wrong. Just as they are leaving, Mr. Ricker tells them to wait. He has remembered that Pete had come to him asking where he could sell a first edition copy of *The Runner*. Mr. Ricker had made some suggestions and also mentioned a shady dealer that Pete needed to avoid. Hodges asks for the name of this shady dealer.

In Section 29, Pete realizes that as long as he keeps the location of the notebooks to himself, he can probably stay alive. Pete has also figured out that Morris is the man who killed Rothstein. He lashes out at Morris for killing such a great writer for money. Morris responds to Pete's verbal ambush that he did not want Rothstein's money, he wanted the writing; thinking of it was what had kept him sane during his time in prison. In his anger Pete throws a liquor decanter at Morris. When he throws the second one he trips on Andrew's legs and falls. The fall keeps him from being hit by the shot Morris fires at him. Close to the desk, Pete grabs the hatchet and throws it like a tomahawk. The hatchet hits Morris on the arm, causing him to drop the gun. Pete goes for the door while Morris tries to get his gun. Safely out on the sidewalk, Pete begins to run.

In Section 30, Hodges, Holly and Jerome begin to fit the pieces of Pete's story together as they drive toward Halliday's store. Holly believes the notebook Tina saw contained the work of a famous author. Pete had found the notebook at the same time he had found the money. She is frustrated as she tries to get her iPad to respond to her Internet search. Finally she screams as she finds the information she is looking for informing her that author John Rothstein was murdered in 1978. The men who killed him were believed to have taken money as well as work that he had completed while in retirement.

Analysis

Notice Hodges' police mind working as he tries to talk to Pete. He immediately sees and regrets the mistakes he makes. The police call card that he has in his car window allowing him to park at the curb even in the busy moments after school seems to put Pete on edge. This is an important symbol in this section because Hodges believes it puts Pete on the defensive right away. He also mentions the card is yellow, the color of caution. Hodges believes Pete is affected by the color and decides he needs to use caution while talking to Hodges.

Hodges also notices right away that Pete has abilities that will make it hard for Hodges to get answers from him. "It's the face of a good poker player. Hodges has questioned suspects who are able to wipe their faces like that, and they are usually the ones who are toughest to crack. If they crack at all" (326). Hodges has seen the same set and lack of expression on others he has interviewed and knows the getting the truth from the boy



will not be easy. Hodges is also impressed with the false story that Pete tells him about the mystery money that his family received. It is only after Hodges swears to Pete that if he did find the money and use it for his family that Pete seems as if he is about to sob, overcome with emotion. Hodges knows from his experience talking to criminals that when Pete's "eyes shift to his left" (329) that Pete is coming up with a lie and plans to avoid talking to him about any trouble in which he might be.

Even with the rapidly advancing plot, King ties into this section the question of ownership in reference to Rothstein's stolen notebooks. There has been a question throughout the novel of who technically owned the money and the notebooks since they were stolen from Rothstein by Morris and then discovered years later by Pete. Now, Pete broadens this question to ask who really owns literature in general. He concludes that literature does not belong to any one person alone, not even the person who wrote it. "They were never just Rothstein's, either, no matter what he might have thought, hidden away in his New Hampshire farmhouse" (333). Pete, like Morris, believes that Rothstein was wrong for keeping his writing about Jimmy Gold away from his fans. "He believes that, like the blood of Abel, the notebooks cried out from the ground. If that makes him a dipshit romantic, so be it. Some shit does mean shit" (333). King personifies the notebooks, giving them the ability to cry out and alert Pete to their location so he could find them and share them with others. A Biblical reference to the "blood of Abel" is also made. In that story, the blood of Abel cried to God wanting justice for his murder. Here, Pete believes the notebooks, representing the blood of Rothstein, cried out to Pete wanting justice. Notice also this quote ends with a reverse of the famous Jimmy Gold quote used often in the novel "Shit don't mean shit." Pete has come to learn that some things, in this case the fact that he happened to find Rothstein's notebooks, do mean something.

Notice that after Morris has declared himself to be a wolf, imagery connected to the wolf begins to be used. When Pete looks at Morris and his unusually red lips he cannot help but keep "imagining the big bad wolf telling Red Riding Hood, The better to kiss you with, my dear" (343). Simile is used to describe the workings of Pete's mind when he senses there is a dead body in Andrew's office even though he has not seen it yet. "The smell and the sound come together in his mind with a thud like a heavy piece of furniture falling over" (342). When Pete sees the hatchet on the desk that he believes was used to kill Halliday, "the sight of it clears his mind like a hard slap" (343)--another simile. Notice that even in the situation that Morris has found himself, he continues to dress his speech with literary allusions. When he tries to persuade Pete to tell him where the notebooks are Morris quotes from Shakespeare: "If 'twere to be done, 'twere well it were done quickly. Macbeth, act one" (349-350).

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the idea that even Rothstein did not really "own" his work. Do you agree with this idea? Why or why not?



Discussion Question 2

Consider Pete's encounter with Morris. How does he manage to outsmart Morris? Since he was so afraid of his encounter with Andrew, how do you think Pete manages to be so forceful with Morris?

Discussion Question 3

How does Holly's demeanor change when she and the others learn that the Moleskine notebook is really important in Pete's story?

Vocabulary

fatalism, inadmissible, brandish, conspiratorial, diversions, magnanimous, noir, ascertained, florid, jovially, ominous, disingenuous, eschewed, curmudgeon, cahoots, coherent, capacious



Part 3: “Peter and the Wolf,” 31-45

Summary

In Section 31, Morris calls Pete’s cell phone from the landline at Andrew’s store.

In Section 32, when Pete’s phone rings he recognizes the number of Andrew’s store. He feels better because he knows the man is at Andrew’s store and not going to Pete’s house where his mother and sister are at home alone. Morris, however, tells Pete that he plans to tell the police that it was Pete who killed Andrew unless Pete gives up the notebooks. Pete refuses the offer. Pete knows he first has to see to it that his family is taken care of. Because he did not take Hodges’ card, he has no choice but to call his sister.

In Section 33, Morris cleans himself up and leaves the store in Andrew’s car just as Hodges, Holly, and Jerome reach the front of the store. Hodges discovers the door to the store is unlocked as Morris heads toward Pete’s house intending to stop the boy from going to the police by getting to Pete’s little sister first.

In Section 34, sitting on the swing set in her backyard, Tina prays that Pete will not get hurt and that he will not be mad at her for telling their parents about the money. She left her cell phone in her bedroom after she sent Pete a text because she did not want to deal with an angry return message. Because Tina never switched the phone off vibrate, her mother does not hear it when it rings in Tina’s room. Pete tries to call three times before giving up.

In Section 35, Pete calls Finders Keepers and gets an emergency assistance number. He makes the call.

In Section 36, when Hodges smells blood in the store he tells Jerome and Holly to wait for him at the desk. Hodges is assessing the scene when Jerome and Holly appear behind him. Hodges and Jerome both see signs of a fight that happened recently, since Andrew was killed. Hodges pulls out his cell phone to call the police but it lights up before he can dial. Holly guesses it is Pete. Pete tells them what happened. Hodges arranges to pick him up on Government Square. They will go and tell Pete’s parents what has happened, and then call the police.

In Section 37, Pete tries again to call his sister. When the call goes to voicemail he decides it is time to call his mother. Before he can call, Pete sees a bus destined for Northside. He plans to call his mother once he is on the bus and then call Hodges to tell him where he is going. The phone rings. It is Pete’s mother. She questions him about the money but he tells her to shut up and warns her about the dangerous man who might be coming to their house.

In Section 38, Morris holds onto his goal of being able to read Rothstein’s notebooks even though he realizes it is a crazy goal.



In Section 39, Hodges' phone rings and Pete tells him he is on a bus to his house. Pete tells Hodges that Morris had once lived in the house where the Saubers family now lives and knows where it is. Pete has just talked to his mother, and learned that she and Tina are okay.

In Section 40, Linda goes to her husband's home office to play solitaire on the computer. She is not afraid of the crazy villain Pete told her about. She thinks he is having a nervous breakdown. Tina, wearing her best yellow blouse, is sitting outside. Just as a precaution, Linda decides to call Tina inside and lock the doors. Hearing a noise, Linda turns and discovers the man Pete described to her standing there. He sees Tina outside and remarks that the girl is pretty. When Linda asks him what he wants, he tells her that he wants "What's mine" (377) before he shoots her in the head.

In Section 41, Tina hears the bang from the house and thinks the pressure cooker her mother uses sometimes has exploded again. Inside the house, she is grabbed by a man who warns her not to scream. He tells her to get her cell phone so they can make a call.

In Section 42, Pete's phone rings. It is Tina. She is screaming about a man. Morris takes the phone and tells Pete not to bother coming home because there will be no one there. Pete lies and tells the man he has told no one about what is happening. Morris instructs Pete to get the notebooks and then call him. He has arranged a place where they can make a trade: Tina for the notebooks.

In Section 43, Morris slaps Tina when she asks if he shot her mother. He ties Tina's hands behind her back and forces her out of the house. When she asks if he plans to rape her, he tells her that he will not make that mistake again.

In Section 44, when Linda regains consciousness she knows she is in Tom's office but does not know how she got there. She slowly puts together what happened. Her head hurts and she feels like she might pass out when she tries to lift her head. She hears a yelp of pain from Tina and looks out to see a man leading her across the yard.

In Section 45, the car in which Hodges and the others are riding is hedged in by traffic in a construction zone. Jerome cannot get out to go to side roads, so Holly advises him to use the sidewalk. They take out a few signs and at least one mailbox but make it around the construction to clear road. Pete calls sounding out of breath. He tells them that Morris has Tina and is demanding the notebooks. Morris has said that he will kill Tina if he does not get the notebooks or if the police are called.

Analysis

King merges the stories of Hodges, Pete, and Morris as they all realize that Morris had killed Andrew and that he intends to hurt Pete and Pete's sister. Notice that as Hodges and the others hurry toward Pete's house, Hodges cannot help but think if the times he has been too late in instances like this. The reader already knows that Pete and Tina are in a life or death situation but the idea is strengthened when Hodges thinks about the difference twenty minutes can make in these situations: "The answer, he knows



from bitter experience, is quite a lot. Life and death. Right now all he can do is hope those twenty minutes don't come back to haunt him" (375). Even as Hodges tries to help Pete he is reminded of guilt he feels when other cases go bad. This confession on Hodges' part helps to plant more firmly in the reader's mind that Pete's situation could go bad as well.

Pete's mother admits that since she and her husband had to work so hard to keep their heads above water during their financial difficulty, that she did not get to know her children the way she should have. Instead of recognizing how earnest Pete is in his fear for his mother and sister, Linda believes her son is having a nervous breakdown. Because she does not trust her son, she waits too late to decide to call Tina in and lock the doors as a precaution. It is this pause on Linda's part that allows Morris to get into her house, shoot her and take Tina.

One image stands out in this section. It comes at the end of Section 34 when Pete is trying to get in touch with Tina to warn her about what is happening. "After thirty seconds or so, it starts vibrating again. And a third time. Then it quits for good. Pete's picture disappears from the screen" (363). This image of Pete's picture disappearing from the screen of Tina's cell phone has a feeling of finality, as if Pete is gone for good. This image keeps the reader in the mindset that Hodges and the others may not be able to stop what is about to happen to Pete and Tina.

Meanwhile, Pete is out of his mind because he thinks that Morris will be able to successfully accuse him of killing Andrew. Pete never considers that Morris, who killed Rothstein, probably would not want to go to the danger of turning Pete in since he is a wanted criminal himself. Nevertheless, Pete realizes there are significant holes in his alibi and that he would be a reasonable suspect.

Images of Morris as a wolf continue to be used in this section. Pete recognizes Morris as a wolf when Morris tells Pete how Pete could be accused of killing Andrew. When Morris asks who Pete thinks he is Pete thinks to himself: "The wolf, Pete thinks. You're the big bad wolf" (358). Wolf imagery continues when Tina gets her first look at Morris. She describes his teeth as looking "more like fangs than teeth" (377-378).

Discussion Question 1

How does King incorporate humor into this very tense section of the novel? What purpose does this humor serve?

Discussion Question 2

How do cell phones serve an important role in the novel?



Discussion Question 3

Do you think Pete is a good suspect for Andrew's murder? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

irrevocable, epitaph, incredulously, somnolently, ludicrous, suffice, admonitory, oscillation



Part 3: “Peter and the Wolf,” 46-55

Summary

In Section 46, as Morris leads Tina through the woods a tree snags and tears her blouse. He takes her to the Rec building. He tells her to drop through the open window into the basement. She falls and yells, telling Morris she thinks she has broken her ankle. Morris goes in behind her.

In Section 47, Pete sees his mother when he goes into his father’s office to get the key to the Rec building. She asks him to look at her head. He sees a trench cut through her hair with skull showing in one spot. Pete calls 911 and asks for an ambulance. He leaves, telling his mother that he has to get Tina. Before he leaves he asks his mother if his father still smokes. She says he does. Pete searches for something in his father’s desk drawer before leaving.

In Section 48, after Pete sees the scrap of fabric from Tina’s blouse hanging in a tree he realizes Morris took Tina to the Rec.

In Section 49, Hodges finds Pete’s mother. He examines her and discovers she is suffering only from a scalp wound. They hear the ambulance Pete called coming. Linda is able to tell them that she thinks Pete went to the Rec and took the key with him. Hodges tells Jerome to go with him and asks Holly to stay with Linda. He also asks her to call Pete Huntley, his old partner. Before Hodges leaves, Linda tells him that Pete took a lighter and can of lighter fluid with him.

In Section 50, when Pete sees a car parked at the Rec and hears a man’s voice coming from the basement he realizes that Morris is already there. Once he is inside the building he calls Tina’s cell phone. Morris asks if he has the notebooks and where he is. Pete tells Morris that where he is located is “pretty funny” (394) and that “Jimmy Gold would like it, I bet” (394). He tells Morris he is in the upstairs of the Rec building that the kids used to call the Saturday Movie Palace. To give Morris time to get upstairs, Pete runs to the kitchen to hide.

In Section 51, Morris thinks it over and decides Pete is telling him the truth about the notebooks being stored in the Rec building. He ties Tina up to the furnace and tells her that he is going upstairs to get his property and to kill Pete. When he comes back, he says he will kill her.

In Section 52 when Pete sees Morris head to the third floor, he runs for the basement. He works on the cords holding Tina’s wrists. Pete is worried he does not have enough time to get Tina free and get her out of the building before Morris comes back. He hears Morris yelling for him and dumps out both cartons of Moleskine notebooks. At the basement door, Morris asks if Pete is visiting with his sister. Pete says he is and claims to have a gun. He can see Morris’ shadow as he pours lighter fluid over the pile of



notebooks and struggles with the lighter. The lighter produces a flame just as Morris comes into view. Pete holds it over the pile of notebooks.

In Section 53, Hodges and Jerome reach the Rec in time to hear Morris yell for Pete. Hodges goes in through the open doors and tells Jerome to wait outside and find something to slash the tires on Morris' car. Hodges feels the need to keep Pete and Tina alive because of past mistakes, particularly the one in which his girlfriend died.

In Section 54, Pete holds the lighter over the pile of Moleskins. If Morris shoots him it will drop and set the notebooks on fire. Morris threatens to shoot Tina instead and Pete lowers the lighter telling Pete there are two new Jimmy Gold novels among the writing. As Pete talks to Morris, he realizes the characters in the novels are more real to Morris than anyone else. He knows he is dealing with insanity but recognizes that he also has a tinge of that insanity.

Pete tells Morris that if he will lower the gun and let Tina go they will leave and he can have the notebooks. He senses movement on the stairs and tries not to look that direction. Morris has begun to lower the gun but raises it again threatening to shoot Tina in the leg. A loud clap distracts Morris and he shoots his gun at it. Pete jumps and drops the lighter. Morris shoots at Pete but Tina kicks at him just as he fires, throwing his shot off. Hodges grabs Morris and tries to get the gun away from him. Pete tries to help and the two finally manage to subdue him as Tina screams that the ceiling is on fire. Morris manages to hit Hodges in the groin and runs toward the burning notebooks. Pete goes to his sister and begins trying to untie her bindings. When he and Hodges finally get her loose the basement stairs are on fire. Morris is also on fire.

Jerome calls to Hodges from the open basement window. He is reaching through for Tina to be handed up to him. Jerome pulls Hodges out while Pete pushes and then Pete is pulled to safety. When they look back into the building, Morris is completely on fire but still attempting to dig through the notebooks.

In Section 55, Jerome carries Tina as far as the baseball field before Pete asks for her. She holds out her arms to him and cries against his neck. Holly runs down the path to meet them. She tells them their mother was on her way to the hospital and seemed to be doing well.

Analysis

Pete sees the craziness in Morris and his skewed sense of reality when he faces off against him over the notebooks. What is perhaps more scary to Pete is his realization that he has the same potential as Morris to get so lost inside the fantasy world literature provides that he forgets what is really important. As he talks to Morris about developments in the last two novels that Rothstein wrote, he understands that Rothstein has taken refuge in the books to the point that those characters and what happens to them outweighs what happens to real flesh and blood people. Pete recognizes this is why Morris was able to kill Rothstein so easily. Even though it was Rothstein who had



created the character that Morris worshiped so much, his life was worth nothing to Morris. Remember back when Morris and his partners had broken into Rothstein's house that Morris had briefly wondered about Rothstein's motivations for keeping pictures of his ex wives in his office. He decided ultimately that having Rothstein's work was more important than understanding Rothstein as a person.

Because Pete realizes how hung up Morris is on Rothstein's characters, particularly Jimmy Gold, Pete uses Gold to lure Morris to the third floor of the Rec center. Pete's mention to Morris that his location is "pretty funny" (394) and "Jimmy Gold would like it, I bet" (394). Morris is infuriated that Pete is making jokes with him and is even more infuriated that Pete believes he knows Jimmy Gold well enough to know what the character would and would not like.

Images of wolves continue in this section of the novel. As Pete goes down to the basement to try to free Tina he thinks to himself in response to Morris' screaming voice asking where he is "Two little piggies in the basement and the big bad wolf upstairs, Pete thinks. And us without a house made of straw, let alone one made of bricks," (397).

In this section it is Hodges who alludes to literature when he tells Jerome he has to go into the Rec center alone. Hodges loosely quotes Sir Galahad by Alfred Tennyson when he responds to Jerome's concern that Hodges is going in with no gun: "True enough, but my thoughts are pure and my strength is that of ten." Hodges will not allow Jerome inside the building because he wants to keep anything bad from happening to him. At the same time, Jerome suspects that Hodges is acting heroically because he believes he needs to make up for mistakes of the past. "No kamikaze runs, Bill, you hear me? Because you have nothing to make up for," (400) Jerome tells his older friend. The reader, however, is aware that even though Hodges is making it appear as if he is not feeling guilty for any past mistakes he has made, he has the death of his girlfriend, Janey, on his mind.

Morris both lives and dies for Rothstein's notebooks. He used the notebooks and what they might contain as a reward he would earn once he got out of prison. When Pete accidentally sets fire to the pile of notebooks, Morris is so crazed that he reaches into the fire to try to save the books. He continues digging even as he burns to death. The final image of Morris is that of "A charred scarecrow kneels in there, digging into the burning notebooks with arms made of fire" (407). This ghastly analogy describes Morris' ending. The story ends with a bit of poetic justice, however, because Andrew once told Morris that Rothstein had requested that after he died all of the writing he had done since he retired be burned. Rothstein had probably not intended his work to be burned under these circumstances.

Discussion Question 1

How does the author begin planting in the reader's mind that Hodges feels guilty for some of his cases that have gone wrong in the past? For what purpose do you think these feelings of guilt are introduced?



Discussion Question 2

How does Morris allow his obsession with Rothstein's work to destroy him?

Discussion Question 3

Do you agree with Pete's assumption that Morris believes the characters of Rothstein's novels are more real to him than flesh and blood people? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

pelts, conjured, cryptic, reconnaissance, filched, corona, punting

“After”

Summary

In the section titled “Picnic,” in the novel’s epilogue, Holly and Jerome enjoy a picnic on Labor Day. Jerome will soon be going back to college. Hodges is not there because Pete had some news he wanted to share with Hodges in person. Meanwhile, Holly is going to Cincinnati to see her mother. Jerome is worried but Holly assures him she will be okay.

Jerome has trouble meeting Holly’s eyes when she asks if Hodges is all right. She’s noticed how much weight he is losing and is also worried because he is visiting Brady. She says she does not want Hodges obsessing over Brady. Jerome has a hunch that Hodges thinks Brady is not completely brain damaged but does not tell Holly. Before they part, Jerome gives Holly a shirt he bought for her. It is red with black lettering that reads “Shit don’t mean shit,” (418) the well-known Jimmy Gold quote.

In the section “Trunk,” Hodges joins Pete at the spot where the trunk has been dug back up. Pete says the people who are interviewing him are from The New Yorker. However, he has refused to let anyone else write his story; he wants to do it himself. Pete says he feels he needs to apologize because in many ways he was no better than Morris because the notebooks have cast a spell over him.

When Hodges asks Pete what he plans to do with the fifteen thousand dollars The New Yorker will pay him for the article, Pete says he will use it to send Tina to private school. Hodges reminds Pete that when he tells the story that he needs to start with Morris, the man who was at fault in the whole thing. He also reminds Pete to remember that Morris is to blame if he ever gets the urge to blame himself for what happened.

In the section “Clack,” Hodges leaves Pete with the photographers because he has gotten a call from Becky Helmington at the Traumatic Brain Injury Clinic. He pays her to keep him updated on Brady’s status. She directed Brady’s attention to an obituary in the newspaper and tells him she is thinking about transferring. Not only is she tired of the doctor she is also a little bit afraid of Brady.

When Hodges arrives at the clinic, the nurse on duty will not tell him about the tragedy that took place in the ward the day before. As Hodges walks down the hall he meets Library Al and notices the man is even more disjointed than he was when Hodges saw him before. In his room, Brady is sitting near the window like usual. Hodges wonders if Brady thinks at all. He watches for reaction on Brady’s face as he talks about the sexy photos that were found on his computer of his mother. He also tells Brady about a nurse who killed herself in the bathroom. Hodges wonders out loud how the nurse might have cut her wrists since the mirrors in the bathroom were polished metal, not glass. Even though there is no reaction from Brady, Hodges gets the feeling the man is watching him. The nurses say that the blow to Brady’s head gave him “powers” (430) he did not



have before. Hodges suggests that the nurse was mean to Brady possibly because a relative of hers was among those killed at the City Center. Hodges is terrified when Brady rolls his eyes up to look at him.

After Hodges leaves, the e-reader comes to life and then dies. The water in the bathroom turns on and then off. As Brady looks at the picture of himself and his mother it falls over.

Analysis

As King caps off the action of this novel and lets the reader know that all had turned out well for Pete and his family, he also begins to play up the strange behaviors being noticed by the nurses concerning Brady. Hodges already has his suspicions that Brady is somehow faking his condition. The reader is made aware of the fact that Brady has somehow developed telekinetic powers from his brain injury. Remember that Hodges is not certain of this yet, he only suspects Brady is in some way regaining power and that there are strange rumors circulating that relate to him. At the conclusion of the novel, the reader learns Brady is able to turn the water in his bathroom off and on, turn on his e-reader, and make the picture of himself and his mother fall over on the table.

Even as King builds the reader up for the next novel, he ties up loose ends for the characters in this story. Although the main plot of the story was not related to the first novel, the two are tied together with the same characters and circumstances. The Saubers family is doing much better financially and Pete is being paid enough money by *The New Yorker* for a story about his experience finding the money and manuscripts that he will be able to send his little sister to private school. Jerome is returning to college. Even though Jerome and Hodges believe they have hidden the truth about Hodges visiting Brady, Holly tells Jerome she knows about these visits and worries they are bad for Hodges.

In the same way that Hodges tells Pete he cannot feel guilty about what Morris did to his family, Jerome tells Holly she should not feel guilty because Brady is a catatonic. Pete feels guilty because he realizes how close his thoughts about keeping the notebooks came to mirroring those of Morris. He believes it was his obsession about the notebooks that brought some of the trouble on his family when he should have told Hodges what was happening when Hodges first approached him. Instead of holding Pete responsible, Hodges tells Pete to think about the man who put Pete into the position he was in to start with. Hodges adds "When you feel like blaming yourself for how it went down, you might want to remember that thing Jimmy Gold keeps saying. Shit don't mean shit" (423-424). Similarly when Holly questions why Hodges visits Brady since he is a vegetable, Jerome tells her that Brady's condition is not her fault. He has misread Holly's concern about Hodges visiting Brady since she tells him that even knowing how things turned out she would attack Brady again.



Discussion Question 1

How do Hodges and Jerome both try to help others understand they should not feel guilty for the things a criminal has pushed them to do? Compare and contrast Pete and Holly's reactions to this advice.

Discussion Question 2

Do you think Brady is in some way messing with the staff at the brain injury clinic? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

Does it surprise you that Pete is going to use the money he makes from The New Yorker article to fund his sister's private school? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

reexcavated, aslant, ominous, angst, validate, culinary, disarray, despicable



Characters

Morris “Morrie” Bellamy (Mr. Yellow)

Morris Bellamy is one of the main characters of this novel. He is the man described by Rothstein as having red lips and wearing a yellow ski mask. Morris put together the plan to rob Rothstein because he wanted the notebooks Rothstein had been writing in for the past twenty years. He hoped that Rothstein had written something to redeem Jimmy Gold, a character who went from a rebel to a family man, a change that Morris resented.

Morris was raised by a mother he felt was intellectually superior. She was frustrated with Morris because he did not get good grades. Morris' father abandoned his son and wife, taking all the family's savings with him. An English teacher introduced Morris to Rothstein's work and Morris became obsessed with the characters in the books, particularly that of Jimmy Gold. Morris is angered to the point of violence when his mother tries to discuss with him the virtues and failings of the Jimmy Gold trilogy. After the argument Morris got drunk and broke into a house in the Sugar Heights area of town. He was arrested and sent to a juvenile detention facility. Because it was his mother who angered him he always blamed her for the time he spent in jail.

Because his friend Andrew tormented him by telling him that Rothstein had asked that all his work since he retired be burned, Morris decided to break into Rothstein's home and steal his work. He employed two friends to help him in his plan by telling them the author had a good deal of money in his home. During the robbery Morris killed Rothstein. He later killed his two accomplices because he was afraid they would get him in trouble.

Back in his hometown, Morris showed Andrew one of the notebooks he had stolen but Andrew would not talk to him because news was already out that the author had been murdered. Morris buried the money and manuscripts in a trunk beside a creek. Because he was angry with Andrew, Morris thought it would calm his nerves to go to a bar with loud music. Instead, Morris got drunk and raped a woman. He was sentenced to life in jail for the rape.

Nearly thirty-five years later when Morris is finally granted parole for his crime, he returns to his hometown. He plans to dig up the manuscripts. While in jail, the idea that Rothstein had written a new ending for Jimmy Gold had kept him going. He is no longer interested in selling the work for money. When Morris digs up the trunk in which he had buried the manuscripts, however, it is empty. Morris first believes Andrew had stolen the money because he was the only one who knew about it. When Morris confronts Andrew, Andrew tells him that a boy named Pete is the one who had found the manuscripts. Morris kills Andrew and sets a trap for Pete. He kidnaps Pete's sister and tells the boy he will shoot her if Pete does not hand over the manuscripts. During their confrontation, Pete drops a lighter in to the pile of Rothstein's notebooks which he had soaked with lighter fluid. Morris is so obsessed with the work that he plunges into the fire trying to



salvage the notebooks. He stays there digging in the burning books until he burns to death.

Peter “Pete” Saubers

Peter “Pete” Saubers is the son of Tom and Linda Saubers and the older brother of Tina Saubers. Pete finds the trunk of money and notebooks that Morris hid near Pete’s house. Pete uses the money to help support his family. He doles it out in monthly increments through the mail so his parents are not aware that Pete is the one sending the money to them.

Pete faces a challenge when the money in the trunk runs out because his sister wants to attend the same private high school to which her friends are going. In order to fund her schooling, Pete tries to sell some of the notebooks he found in the trunk and becomes caught between a murderer and a greedy bully. Pete eventually comes face to face with Morris who holds Tina as a hostage. Pete has to destroy Rothstein’s notebooks, which he thinks are good literature, in order to save his sister.

Even though he is a young man, Pete is smart and inventive. He is also braver than he thinks. He cares deeply for his family and almost lets his desire to fix things get the best of him. Pete, like Morris, is a lover of literature. He realizes at the end of the novel how he suffered the same feelings of possessiveness for Rothstein’s work that Morris felt. Pete credited his ability to let go of the work to his knowledge of what really mattered.

Andrew “Andy” or “Drew” Halliday

Andrew Halliday, who is referred to by both Andy and Drew as nicknames in different parts of the novel, is the owner of Andrew Halliday Rare Editions, a store that specializes in buying and selling collectible books. He is a former friend of Morris and once suggested to Morris he should steal Rothstein’s work in order to keep it from being burned as Rothstein had requested.

When Morris first stole Rothstein’s notebooks Andrew does not want to be associated with them. Thirty-five years later when Pete shows up with the notebooks, Andrew sees them as a source of money for his struggling business. He had gotten caught for selling a book that had been stolen and had a reputation for being shady. This reputation seemed to hurt his business.

When Morris first discovers the notebooks are missing he believes Andrew dug them up and sold them. Andrew tells Morris he is negotiating with Pete to buy the notebooks. In reality Andrew is blackmailing Pete to try to get the boy to give him the notebooks for free. Morris kills Andrew with a hatchet.



Kermit “Bill” William Hodges

Hodges is the retired police detective who is the brawn for the repo business Finders Keepers. He is the cop who helped to capture Brady Hartsfield, who killed and injured multiple people, including Tom Saubers, who were standing in line for a job fair at the City Center.

Hodges agrees to help Pete when Hodges' friend Barbara brings Tina to Hodges' office and tells him about the boy's strange behavior. Hodges seems motivated by the idea that he needs to save Pete and Tina in order to make up for other situations that turned deadly, like the one in which his girlfriend, Janey, was killed.

John Rothstein

John Rothstein is an elderly author best known for writing the Jimmy Gold Trilogy. For twenty years since Rothstein had retired at the age of sixty he had lived as a recluse on a farm in New Hampshire. Rothstein is killed in 1978 when Morris and two other men break into his house, stealing his money and manuscripts. Morris is the one responsible for shooting Rothstein. He killed the man because he disliked the way he had turned Jimmy Gold, a character who had once been a rebel, into the typical family man in the final novel of the trilogy.

Howard Ricker

Howard Ricker is the high school English teacher who helps Pete develop his love of literature. When Pete decides to try to sell some of Rothstein's notebooks he goes to Ricker for advice about booksellers. Ricker tries to steer him away from Andrew Halliday.

Later when Hodges, Holly and Jerome are tracking the source of Pete's distress they talk to Mr. Ricker who gives them their best clue yet — that Pete had probably gone to Andrew about selling a book — in finding Pete.

Tina Saubers

Tina Saubers is the daughter of Linda and Tom Saubers and the sister of Pete Saubers. When Pete begins acting strangely, Tina becomes concerned about her brother. She talks to her friend Barbara who persuades her to talk to Hodges about her concerns.

After Morris shoots Linda, he takes Tina as a hostage. He believes having Tina with him will ensure that Pete will give him Rothstein's notebooks. Even though Morris threatens to shoot Tina, Pete and Hodges are able to save her from Morris.



Curtis Rogers (Mr. Red)

Curtis Rogers, the man who wears the red ski mask, is one of the two men who helped Morris rob Rothstein. Because Morris was afraid Curtis and his other accomplice, Freddy, would tell about what they had done, Morris killed both the men. Morris shot Curtis just like he shot Freddy but Curtis did not die from the first gunshot wound. Because he was afraid it would draw curiosity if he shot the gun again, Morris killed Curtis by running over him with his car.

Linda Saubers

Linda Saubers is the mother of Pete and Tina, and the wife of Tom. It is not until the day that Pete is scheduled to meet with Andrew about selling Rothstein's notebooks, the same day as the showdown in the basement of the Rec building, that Linda decides to question her son about the mysterious money that was sent to the family beginning nearly four years prior. When Morris gets into the house he shoots Linda in the head. She is lucky and survives with only a scalp wound.

Anita Bellamy

Anita Bellamy is Morris' mother. Anita was a literature professor who was disappointed that her son was not a better student. One day she read the entire Jimmy Gold trilogy. When she talked to Morris about the books, Morris felt like she was making fun of him. After the discussion with his mother Morris went out and got drunk. While he was drunk he got arrested for trashing a house in Sugar Heights. Morris always blamed his mother for that episode.

Charlie Roberson

Charlie Roberson is the inmate whom Morris helps to get out of jail with one of his letters. Morris writes to Roberson's lawyer asking that he do a DNA analysis of the sperm found in the lady's underwear whom Roberson was said to have raped. It was discovered the semen did not belong to Roberson.

Roberson later returns the favor to Morris by allowing him to borrow a truck even though Morris does not have a driver's license.

Freddy Dow (Mr. Blue)

Freddy Dow, the man who was wearing the blue ski mask, was one of the men who robbed Rothstein. Because Morris was afraid either Freddy or Curtis, the other man who had helped with the robbery, would leak information about what they had done to



Rothstein, Morris killed Freddy. Morris killed Freddy by shooting him at close range with the same gun he killed Rothstein.

Holly Gibney

Holly Gibney is Hodge's associate. She is neurotic and obsessive compulsive. Even though Hodges disregards the notebook Tina saw in Pete's room, Holly is determined that the book has something to do with what is bothering the boy. Holly's determination to work through this clue leads her, Hodges, and Jerome to Mr. Ricker, the teacher who gives them their first good clue about what is going on with Pete.

Tom Saubers

Tom Saubers is the husband of Linda Saubers and father of Pete and Tina. Tom is badly injured when he is hit by the Mercedes Benz driven through a crowd of people waiting for a job fair to begin. Tom struggles to learn to walk again and get a new job. He finally begins his own small business working as a real estate agent.

Judge Bukowski

Judge Bukowski is the judge who ruled in Morris' case as a juvenile. She is again the judge when he faces charges of rape as an adult. Although he throws himself at the mercy of the court hoping he will get a lighter sentence, the judge instead sentences him with a life sentence.

Jerome Robinson

Jerome Robinson is the older brother of Barbara Robinson. On his summer break from college he asks Hodges to allow him to help in Hodges' investigation of Pete's case.

Jerome is a very attractive and very intelligent black boy. He is the one who drives Holly's car when he, Hodges, and Holly search for Pete.

Ellis McFarland

Ellis McFarland is Morris' parole officer. He surprises Morris with an unexpected visit on a variety of occasions. McFarland tells Morris at one point that parolees are either wolves or lambs. He warns Morris that he is too old to be a wolf by Morris chooses to go that route anyway.



Cora Ann Hooper

Cora Ann Hooper is the woman whom Morris raped while he was drunk. For years Hooper would not allow Morris to be paroled because she said she was still suffering. It is only after Hooper gets cancer that she allows Morris to be paroled.

Roy Allgood

Roy Allgood is Morris' cellmate at Waynesville State Prison. Allgood rapes Morris the first night they spend together. After Morris writes a letter for Duckworth, Duckworth arranges for Roy to be beaten. He never bothers Morris again.

Warren "Duck" Duckworth

Warren "Duck" Duckworth is a heavily muscled black man who is a prisoner at the same time as Morris. Duckworth tells Morris that if he can write a letter to his wife that keeps her from divorcing him he will see to it that Morris does not get raped again.

Pete Huntley

Pete Huntley is Hodges' old partner at the police department. Hodges calls Pete to arrest Oliver Madden after Hodges repossessed the plane Madden had stolen. When Hodges had Holly call the police about the Morris issue he told her to ask for Pete.

Oliver Madden

Oliver Madden is a thief with whom Hodges and Holly work together to repossess a stolen plane.

Barbara Robinson

Barbara Robinson is Jerome's little sister. She persuades Tina to tell Hodges and Holly about her brother, Pete.

Library Al

Library Al is the librarian at the Brain Injury Clinic. Hodges is disturbed because the usually gregarious man seems more confused and distant each time he visits the hospital.



Becky Helmington

Becky Helmington is the nurse at the Brain Injury Clinic that Hodges pays to give him information about Brady's condition and any rumors circulation about him.

Elmer Cafferty

Elmer Cafferty is the court appointed lawyer who is assigned to Morris' case.



Symbols and Symbolism

Jimmy Gold Trilogy

The Jimmy Gold Trilogy represents the source of Pete and Morris' love of literature. This trilogy is also the reason why Morris winds up in jail both times, though he does not want to admit it. The first time he goes to jail because he gets drunk after an argument with his mother about the books, while the second time is because he gets drunk after Andy tells him he cannot be seen with the Rothstein's notebooks, which include more writing about Jimmy Gold, because they are stolen.

Rothstein's Notebooks

Rothstein's notebooks represent different things to different characters. To Pete the notebooks represent great literature as well as a possible way to make money to send his sister to private school. To Morris, the notebooks represent a possible redemption for Jimmy Gold. In his twisted mind he has come to see the notebooks as his personal property written only for him. For Andy the notebooks represent a big pay day. He sees them as nothing but a way to make a good deal of money quickly.

Red Lips

These unusually red lips are a symbol of Morris. Rothstein notices these oddly red lips when Morris talks to him after Morris and the others break into his house. Morris' red lips are so prominent that he was called "Revlon" in school. Before Pete knew Morris' real name he referred to him as "Red Lips."

Used Trunk

This used trunk is symbolic of a treasure chest. At one point Pete compares it to the treasure chest in the novel *Treasure Island*. At another point he compares it to the rocking-horse in the story *The Rocking Horse Winner*.

Money from the Trunk

The money that Pete finds in the trunk buried beneath the tree represents financial salvation for him and his family.



Happy Slapper

The Happy Slapper is a non lethal weapon that Hodges carries with him. It is representative of Brady's injuries because Holly used the slapper on Brady to turn him into a near vegetable.

Hatchet

This hatchet is a symbol of Morris' ability to badly hurt another person. He is unable to buy a gun because of his status as a parolee so he uses the hatchet that he had bought to help dig up the trunk when he murders Andrew.

Containers Labeled "Kitchen Supplies"

These containers labeled "Kitchen Supplies" represent the notebooks. Pete put the notebooks in these containers in order to disguise them from people who might be looking for them. Ironically, Morris uses one of these containers as first a seat and later as a step to get out of the basement of the Rec building without realizing how close he was to the notebooks that he wanted to badly.

Police Call Card

Even though he is not active duty police, the police call card Hodges has in the window of his car makes Pete nervous because he associates Hodges with the police. Hodges notes the card is yellow, the color of caution, and wishes that he had taken it out of the window before talking to Pete.

Scrap from Tina's Blouse

This scrap from Tina's blouse represents Tina and her location. When Pete sees this scrap hanging from a tree branch he gets the feeling that Morris has taken Tina to the Rec building.



Settings

John Rothstein's Home

John Rothstein's home is where Morris and his two associates steal Rothstein's money and the notebooks he has unpublished work written in. Morris also shoots Rothstein dead before he leaves the home.

The City Center Parking Lot

It is in the City Center Parking lot that Tom and his friend Todd are waiting for a job fair when a Mercedes is driven through the crowd badly injuring Tom.

The Tree Streets section of Northfield

Tom and his family are forced to move from their upper class home to the less prestigious tree streets after Tom is injured in the City Center Massacre. They wind up living in the same house that Morris lived as a teen.

Basement of the Birch Street Rec

It is in the basement of the Birch Street Rec that Pete hides the notebooks that he found hidden in an old trunk. Ironically Morris decides this same basement would be a good place to read the notebooks once he finds them. When Pete and Morris have their final standoff over the notebooks it takes place in this basement.

Andrew Halliday Rare Editions

Andy's bookstore on Lacemaker Lane is called Andrew Halliday Rare Editions. Pete visits this store to see if Andy can find a buyer for the notebooks. Later Morris confronts Andy in this store and kills his friend in the office. When Pete returns to the bookstore to tell Andy he is no longer interested in selling the notebooks, he instead finds himself face to face with Morris.

Waynesville State Prison

Waynesville State Prison is the place to which Morris is sentenced for rape. At the prison Morris makes a name for himself writing letters for other prisoners. Morris remains imprisoned in this prison for more than 30 years before he is finally released on parole.



Saturday Movie Palace

The Saturday Movie Palace, the third floor of the Birch Street Rec Center, is where Pete sends Morris telling him the notebooks are there so that Pete can try to rescue his little sister.

The Saubers' House

The Saubers' house, located at 23 Sycamore St., is the home of Pete and the former home of Morris when he was a teen. Both boys used the same room as their bedroom growing up. Morris goes to this house where he shoots Linda and kidnaps Tina.



Themes and Motifs

Who Owns Literature

If a person finds an item, does that really make them the owner? In this particular novel Pete finds two unpublished novels written by the author Rothstein. Pete struggles with the choice to sell the manuscripts for profit or donate them. Meanwhile, Morris claims “ownership” of the manuscripts because he stole them from the author. Although King offers suggestions about the ultimate ownership of literature, he leaves the final decision up to the reader.

One conclusion to which the reader can come about the ownership of literature, particularly Rothstein’s manuscripts, is that since Pete found these works he is the owner. The novel’s title, *Finders Keepers*, plays off the childhood taunt “finders keepers, losers weepers,” indicating the person who finds an object has the right to claim ownership. In this case since Pete found the manuscripts, basically abandoned since they had been in the trunk for nearly 35 years, he can claim ownership.

Pete struggles with the more wide reaching impact of literature when he considers the loss if Rothstein’s work is not made public so others can enjoy it. He knows if he were to sell the manuscripts to a collector, his sister might benefit by going to private school, but the manuscripts would still be locked away in a private collection. As Pete considers his decision to donate the manuscripts, he thinks to himself that they “deserve to be seen and read by everyone” (333).

Another take on the ownership of literature indicates that literature belongs to the people. As Pete tries to decide how he should handle the notebooks he thinks about how his opinion of them has changed over the years. He once had the idea they were just buried treasure that belonged to him alone. As he has gotten older he sees the need for the novels he has found to be publicized. “The notebooks were never just his. They were never just Rothstein’s, either, no matter what he might have thought, hidden away in his New Hampshire farmhouse” (333). Even Morris, right after he has stolen Rothstein’s notebooks has thoughts similar to Pete’s about Rothstein’s work. “Nobody with his kind of talent has a right to hide it from the world” (31).

In fact, Pete goes so far as to suggest that the work of Rothstein has taken on a life of its own. When discussing the new work with Andrew, Pete says: “It’s alive, that’s what I think. Alive and breathing” (194). He also credits the landslide that uncovered the trunk as more than a coincidence. “He believes that, like the blood of Abel, the notebooks cried out from the ground. If that makes him a dipshit romantic, so be it. Some shit does mean shit” (333).

Ultimately because Morris is insane and believes the notebooks are his personal property — even though his only claim to them is that he stole them and shot their



owner — the notebooks are lost to everyone. Pete is the only one who had the opportunity to read and learn from the novels.

The Destructive Nature of Greed

King's novel speaks to the destructive nature of greed whether it is for money or things. Andrew Halliday is one person who allows his life to be destroyed by greed. Morris is also destroyed by greed but his greed is for things and not money. Meanwhile Pete struggles not to fall into the circle of greed that he sees portrayed through literature.

Andrew Halliday allows greed to destroy his business and his life. Because he knows there is money to be made, he agrees to buy a book that he knows has been stolen. He trades this one good sale for a shady reputation that haunts him for the rest of his career. Andrew does not learn his lesson from this first go around with selling a stolen book. When he is tempted with the Rothstein notebooks, which he knows are stolen goods, Andrew not only tries to make a deal with Pete in order to get the books because he knows they are worth a good deal of money, but he also tries to manipulate Pete into giving him the manuscripts. Andrew's reputation is so shady that when Morris finds that his notebooks have been taken, he immediately assumes Andrew is responsible for their disappearance.

Just like Andrew ruined his life through greed Morris also ruins his life as a result of greed. Morris' greed is different because his greed is for Rothstein's physical manuscripts. His greed is so obsessive that it pushes him to go as far as killing and kidnapping in an attempt to get the manuscripts to himself. Even at the point that the notebooks are being destroyed by fire Morris cannot stay away from them. He reaches into the fire for the notebooks. By doing so Morris catches himself on fire.

Pete is one character in the novel who tries not to be overcome by greed. He has lived through hard times and knows how the need for money can make life hard. Pete learns that having money can also lead to problems, like the feeling one can never have enough money. When Pete decides to sell some of Rothstein's notebooks he does so not because he wants to get rich but because he hopes to send his sister to private school. Even though he wants to make some money off Rothstein's work so he can help his sister, Pete also struggles with the feeling that literature should not be something to be bought and sold; it should be somewhere that it can be enjoyed by all.

Insanity and Connection to Literature

King suggests through this novel that those who enjoy literature have a certain kind of insanity. Morris is an extreme case of this insanity while Pete realizes he needs to control the hold that literature has over him. In his own way, Andrew also suffers from a sort of insanity brought on by literature.

Pete and Morris are alike in the way that they both admire Jimmy Gold, a character created by Rothstein. Unlike Pete, however, Morris takes to admiration to the extreme.



An argument with his mother about the virtues of the Gold trilogy ultimately lands Morris in jail. He is so angry with the way Rothstein handles Jimmy's character in the third book of the trilogy that he kills the author. Then he goes to jail again because he rapes a woman in a drunken rage after the friend he thought could sell Rothstein's notebooks for him threatens to call the police on him. "You're batshit-crazy on the subject of Jimmy Gold, too. He's why you went to jail" (67) Andrew told Morris during the conversation after Morris stole the notebooks.

After his experience with Morris, Pete realizes how close he came to having the same possessiveness that Morris felt for the notebooks. "They cast a spell over me. I need to apologize because I really wasn't so different from Morris Bellamy" (422) Pete says as he explains to Hodges why he would not talk to him about the notebooks when Hodges first approached him. Pete admits that even through all that had happened at that point he still thought there was a chance he could keep the notebooks for himself.

When Pete comes face to face with Morris he realizes what this spell literature can cast can lead one to. He was angry with Morris because Morris had killed Rothstein. Pete did not understand how Morris could do that until he saw Morris' reaction when Pete talked to him about the content of the two additional Jimmy Gold novels. "Tears actually came to his eyes. Such tears, Pete realizes — yes, even now, especially now, because their lives hang upon it — mark the core power of make-believe" (402). Pete recognizes that Morris was more emotionally attached to the characters of the Jimmy Gold novels than he might ever be to another human being. This lack of feeling even spread to the man who had created Jimmy and the other characters Morris loved so much. "He did it (killed Rothstein) out of his own core belief: that the writing was somehow more important than the writer" (403).

Andrew also suffers a sort of insanity brought about by literature but his insanity shows itself as greed. When he first meets Pete he knows the love of literature enough that he recognizes it in the boy. "The boy's eyes glowed. It was a glow Drew had seen often, but never in one so young" (194). Andrew also loves literature, but he loves for the money it can bring to him. Unlike Pete and Morris, Andrew does not care anything about the content of Rothstein's notebooks; he just wants to figure how he can get the most money out of them.

The Motivating Power of Blame/Guilt

As characters in the novel are motivated by guilt, the idea that people often feel the need to make up for the mistakes of the past is significant in this work. Pete is one character who feels immediately guilty about the trouble his actions created for other people, particularly his family members. Hodges also struggles with guilt as he thinks about the death of this girlfriend even as he tries to help Pete and Tina.

In the final section of the novel Pete apologizes to Hodges because he sees in himself his own ability to be like Morris. Just as Morris was obsessed by the notebooks and did not stop at anything, not even murder, to keep from trying to possess them Pete realizes



that he put many people in danger because he believed in the back of his mind there was a way for him to keep the notebooks.

Hodges reminds Pete that it was Morris' actions that ultimately started the process but Pete is mature enough to know he did not help the process. He tells Hodges he knows that if he had talked to Hodges during their first meeting his mother would not have gotten shot and his sister would not have been kidnapped by Morris.

Even as Hodges tries to convince Pete he should not feel guilty because of what Morris did Hodges is suffering with his own guilt. His girlfriend, Janey, was killed by Brady Hartsfield who is insane like Morris. Hodges believes Janey's death was somehow his fault. Even while he tries to rescue Tina and Pete he has in the back of his mind that his ability to save them, regardless of the cost, will help to redeem him from the guilt he feels from Janey's death.

The Impact of Literature on Life

The impact of literature on life is its ability to speak to readers, even through the generations. This is one lesson that Pete's high school English teacher strives to teach his students. It is also one that is put to the test in the lives of Pete and Morris.

In one of the first days of English class, Mr. Ricker describes to his students how literature will speak to them differently as they grow older. He says, pointing to the poem "Dulce et Decorum Est" by Wilfred Owen in particular, "Each time that poem steals back into your mind, it will seem a little less stupid and a little more vital" (101). The idea is that as the students grow older and have more life experiences, literature will make more and more sense to them. Rothstein echoes this same idea when Morris confronts him about the path he chose for his character Jimmy Gold. "What are you, anyway, twenty-two? Twenty-three? What do you know about life, let alone literature?" (36) The elderly author asks Morris indicating that he is too young yet to understand how life or the literature based on it should go.

One of the stories that Pete feels this resonance with is the short story "The Rocking Horse Winner." In his mind the trunk of money he has found is his version of the rocking horse in the story. Just like the house in the story is heard whispering that there must be more money Pete also hears these whispers in the desire of his little sister to go to private school and his own desire to go to college. Another book with which Pete feels this resonance is the novel *Treasure Island*. This novel comes to his mind when he first pulls the buried trunk out of the ground. It is also from this novel that he gets the name he uses as an alias when he tries to sell Rothstein's notebooks.

Between his high school literature experience and his discovery of the two Rothstein novels in the trunk Pete decides he wants to go to college and study literature. His goal is attend a New England school where it was believed that "literature instead of cleanliness was next to godliness," (97). Even though Pete credits literature with changing his life at one point, he clarifies at the end of the novel telling Hodges that it

changed his heart. It is in this way that he distinguishes himself from Morris. While Morris let his life get caught up in the fake world of literature, Pete has allowed himself to be formed by the lessons taught in books.



Styles

Point of View

King tells his story from the point of view of a third person narrator. In different sections of the novel this third person narrator focuses on the thoughts and emotions of different characters. For instance, in the opening part of the novel the sections alternate between a focus on Pete and a focus on Morris. Other characters of focus in the novel are Hodges and Holly.

Use of this third person point of view with a focus on only one character at a time gives King a chance to tell that character's story. Because the narrator is omniscient he knows the thoughts and emotions of the character of focus and is able to report those to the reader.

The use of a third person point of view is appropriate because it does not allow the reader to become too close to any one character. All main characters are given the opportunity to tell their stories but in such a way that distance is still maintained between the character and the reader. If the story were told from the first person point of view of any one of the characters King would not be able to tell all sides of the story.

Language and Meaning

Literature and the power of literature are important in this novel so it makes sense that a good deal of literary quotes and allusions are used. One allusion in particular is to that of the fairy tale Peter and the Wolf. Part 3 of the novel takes its name from this fairy tale with Morris being the "wolf" who tries to devour Pete. Because Morris likes literature so much, he often alludes to famous writers in his thought process. One of his favorite quotes and his mantra is the quote "Shit don't mean shit" by Jimmy Gold.

As the novel progresses there are several characters that stand out because of their thought processes. These include Holly and Andrew. In the one section told from the focal point of Holly the reader notices that she is obsessive in her thinking. She repeats movie quotes as she thinks. For example, Holly talks to herself as she thinks, saying: "'Doesn't make sense,' Holly says. Then, as if just following this train of thought: 'Leave the gun. Take the cannoli.'"

In sections focusing on Andrew the reader recognizes from his thought patterns that he is a bully. "Drew's first impulse was to say Hello, son, but he quashed it. Let the kid have his college-boy disguise. What harm?" (188). Even though Andrew saw through Pete's attempt to look older he egged the boy on, as if he enjoyed toying with him. Later, after Andrew discovered Pete's identity he seemed to enjoy telling the boy how badly he had done at cover his footsteps.



Structure

This story is divided into three main sections or parts. Each part has a title describing some important aspect of that section. For example it is in Part 1: "Buried Treasure" that Pete finds that money and manuscripts that Morris hid near his house nearly thirty years before the time of the novel. Part 1 also includes much of the background information or exposition of the novel. These first seven sections of this part of the novel alternate between the years of 1978 and 2009-2010. The reader learns how the manuscripts and money came be buried near Pete's house in the 1978 sections. It is also during these sections that the reader learns why Morris never came back to get his treasure. In the sections set in the years 2009-2010 the reader learns how Pete's father was among those injured when a Mercedes was driven into a crowd of job seekers. Pete's family was struggling financially until Pete found the hidden money and began secretly doling it out.

The final two sections of the first part of the novel describe the conflict for the story. In the section set from "2013-2014," Pete runs out of money in the trunk but his family is still under financial pressure. Pete feels particularly worried about his little sister, who wants to attend a private college. In order to get money for her schooling Pete decides to try to sell some of the notebooks in the trunk. In the final section "1974-2014," the reader learns that Morris has gotten paroled from jail and is looking forward to being reacquainted with Rothstein's work.

The action rises in Part 2: "Old Pals." Hodges and his associate, Holly, talk to Barbara and Tina and learn Tina's concerns about her brother's recent strange behavior. Pete has tried to sell some of the notebooks to Andrew. Andrew has threatened to tell the police that Pete is harboring stolen goods. This threat motivates Pete to move the notebooks to the old Rec building. Meanwhile Morris has gone to the place he hid the manuscripts in the trunk and has discovered the trunk is empty. He believes Andrew is responsible for the theft and plans a visit to his old friend.

The climax comes in Part 3: "Peter and the Wolf," as Pete and his sister, Tina, get away from Morris after he threatens to kill them both if he does not get the manuscripts. Hodges aids in the rescue of the two young people. In order to keep Morris from shooting his sister he had threatened to set fire to the notebooks. Pete drops the lighter when he is startled by a shot from Morris' gun. Morris is burned alive as he tries to save the notebooks from the fire.

The "After" section serves as the novel's denouement as King updates the status of each character following the trauma of dealing with Morris.

Part 1: "Buried Treasure" is told in the past tense while the remainder of the novel is told primarily in the present tense. Part 1 of the novel also skips back and forth through time from 1978 to the years of 2009-2014. Each section of this part is titled with the year in which it is set, making it easy for the reader to follow the novel's progress. Beginning with Part 2: "Old Pals," the story is told in a basically linear format although there are some sections that go back in time to fill the reader in on things that have occurred in

the recent past. Background information is given through flashbacks or conversations between two or more characters.



Quotes

Morris had no time to consider this, or to investigate the contents of the writer's desk, which he would dearly have loved to do. But was such investigation even necessary? He had the notebooks, after all. He had the contents of the writer's mind. Everything he'd written since he stopped publishing eighteen years ago."

-- Narrator (Part 1: Buried Treasure, Section "1978")

Importance: In Rothstein's office Morris looks briefly at the pictures of Rothstein's ex-wives that the author has displayed. He does not stop to think about why the author keeps the pictures there or to see what he keeps on his desk. He figures since he has Rothstein's work he has the best part of the author. The idea that Morris cares more about the characters in books than people themselves is echoed again when Pete stands off against Morris at the end of the novel.

Drinking did not agree with Morris. He did things when he was drinking that he couldn't remember later, and they were never good things."

-- Narrator (Part 1: Buried Treasure, Section "1978")

Importance: The first time Morris got drunk on liquor he broke into a house in Sugar Heights and was sentenced to serve time in juvenile detention. The second time he drank he raped a woman and was sentenced to life in jail.

When he got back to the house, he went immediately to the shower, as a boy named Pete Saubers would do many years later in this very same bathroom, after visiting that very same embankment and overhanging tree."

-- Narrator (Part 1: Buried Treasure, Section "1978")

Importance: The narrator points out the parallels between Morris' actions after he buried the trunk originally and when Pete discovered the trunk more than thirty years later.

He would never be able to retrieve the trunk, never find out Jimmy Gold's ultimate fate."

-- Narrator (Part 1: Buried Treasure, Section "1978")

Importance: As Morris' lawyer talks to him about his fears that Morris may have to do a very long prison term, Morris, who still does not know exactly why he has been arrested, thinks that if he is put in jail for life he may not get the chance to ever read Rothstein's notebooks.

About majoring in English there was no question. Some of this surety had to do with John Rothstein and the Jimmy Gold novels; so far as Pete knew, he was the only person in the world who had read the final two, and they had changed his life."

-- Narrator (Part 1: 2013-2014)

Importance: Pete admits that it is the chance he got to read the final two Jimmy Gold



novels that influence him to be an English major in college. Ironically Pete is the only one to ever read these two Rothstein novels.

The Rocking-Horse Winner' had resonance, all right, big time resonance, because Pete could hear his own house whispering There must be more money . . . and all too soon there would be less. But money wasn't all the trunk had contained, was it?"

-- Narrator (Part 1: 2013-2014)

Importance: Pete's English teacher challenges his students to find things in literature that are true for them. Pete finds this resonance in the story "The Rocking-Horse Winner." Because he knows the money from the trunk is running out, he hears the walls of his home whispering to him that more money is needed, especially because his sister wants to go to a private high school.

The notebooks were, after all, evidence of a crime as well as a literary treasure. But it was an old crime, ancient history. Better to leave well enough alone."

-- Narrator (Part 1: 2013-2014)

Importance: Pete considers turning in the Rothstein manuscripts to the police. He decides not to and instead keeps them for himself justifying that the crime had taken place a long time ago and no one was really interested any more.

Seems to do quite well, but there's an odor about him."

-- Mr. Ricker (Part 1: Buried Treasure, Section "2013-2014")

Importance: When Pete goes to his high school English teacher for advice about the best collectible book dealer to go to with his uncle's signed copy of Rothstein's first novel Mr. Ricker warns him away from Andrew Halliday of his bad reputation for selling a book that had been stolen.

You and Jimmy Gold will get along. He's a sarcastic, self-hating little shit. A lot like you."

-- Miss Todd (Part 1: Buried Treasure, Section "1979-2014")

Importance: Sensing Morris is trouble, his high school English teacher suggests that he read Rothstein's work. She feels he will be able to write a good book report on this particular novel because he and the main character are a good deal alike.

For readers, one of life's most electrifying discoveries is that they are readers — not just capable of doing it (which Morris already knew), but in love with it."

-- Narrator (Part 1: Buried Treasure, Section "1979-2014")

Importance: Morris is mesmerized by Rothstein's novel. His book report earns him an A+. It is one of the most influential books he had read up to that point. This may also be the point at which Morris begins his infatuation with Rothstein's work.

Then steal em,' Andy said, still smiling. 'Call it theft as a protest on behalf of English literature. Bring em to me. I'll sit on em awhile, then sell em. If they're not senile



gibberish, they might fetch as much as a million dollars. I'll split with you. Fifty-fifty, even-Steven.”

-- Andrew Halliday (Part 1: Buried Treasure, Section “1979-2014”)

Importance: Even though Andy later denied to Morris he had suggested the theft of Rothstein’s work, in this quote it appears that he did challenge Morris to steal Rothstein’s work. He tempts Morris with the idea that if he does not steal the work it will be burned and lost forever.

The woman who once hardly dared to step out of her house now runs many aspects of his life. She might let up on him a little if she had a boyfriend, but Hodges knows that’s not likely. He’s as close to a boyfriend as she’s apt to get.”

-- Narrator (Part 2: Old Pals, Section 5)

Importance: Hodges thinks how much his office assistant, Holly, has changed from the woman who was so neurotic that she could barely stand to be around people. Now Hodges compares their relationship as almost like that of boyfriend/girlfriend though he doubts Holly could ever handle having a boyfriend.

He reflects that the Saubers boy and his old friend Morris Bellamy, although at opposite ends of the age-spectrum, are very much alike when it comes to the Rothstein notebooks. They lust for what’s inside them.”

-- Narrator (Part 2: Old Pals, Section 12)

Importance: Andrew Halliday makes a telling statement about Morris and Pete. They both have an overly strong love of Rothstein’s work. What Andrew does not realize is that Pete refuses to let his “lust” control him while Morris lets his desire for the manuscripts drive him crazy.

Morris puts his filthy hands to his face — once young, now deeply lined — and begins to cry in the moonlight.”

-- Narrator (Part 2: Old Pals, Section 27)

Importance: This image of Morris crying in the moonlight after he discovers the trunk is empty is a picture of despair. This is perhaps the only point that the reader feels any sort of compassion for Morris.

This ignites a spark of poison jealousy in Morris Bellamy’s head and lights a fire that quickly spreads to his heart. The Saubers boy has read what was meant for Morris and Morris alone.”

-- Narrator (Part 3: Peter and the Wolf, Section 5)

Importance: The knowledge that Pete has read the Rothstein notebooks angers Morris because he had believed he would be the only one who would ever read those books. It is this jealousy that sparks his hatred for Pete.



No prosecutor in this city, no prosecutor in the whole country, would try bringing charges against a kid who found some money and used it to help his family after his dad first lost his job and then got his legs crushed by a lunatic. The press would crucify a man or woman who tried to prosecute that shit.”

-- Hodges (Part 3: Peter and the Wolf, Section 21)

Importance: In order to try to get Pete to tell him about the money he sent to his family over the course of several years Hodges tells Pete that there is no one who would dare to try to prosecute him for using the money.

What he really wants is to send the notebooks, especially the ones containing the last two Jimmy Gold novels, to NYU. Or maybe The New Yorker, since they published almost all of Rothstein’s short stories in the fifties.”

-- Narrator (Part 3: Peter and the Wolf, Section 22)

Importance: Instead of selling Rothstein’s work, Pete decides he wants to donate it to an organization that can get it to the people. He does not believe any longer it is right to keep it to himself or even sell it to a collector who would keep it secret from the rest of the literary world.

Pete does not fess up. To fess up is to die. This is the man who stole the notebooks in the first place, he knows that now. Stole the notebooks and murdered John Rothstein over thirty years ago. And now he’s murdered Mr. Halliday. Will he scruple at adding Pete Saubers to his list?”

-- Narrator (Part 3: Peter and the Wolf, Section 29)

Importance: Still in the office with Andrew’s corpse Pete knows better that to tell Morris where he has hidden the notebooks. He knows Morris killed Andrew and Rothstein, and that he will kill Pete as well. Keeping the location of the notebook a secret is the only way Pete believes he will stay alive.

I don’t want to sell them. Maybe once, when I was young and stupid, but not anymore. I want to read them. They’re mine. I want to run my hand over the ink and feel the words he set down in his own hand. Thinking about that was all that kept me sane for thirty-six years!”

-- Morris (Part 3: Peter and the Wolf, Section 29)

Importance: When Pete accuses Morris of wanting to sell Rothstein’s notebooks to make money off them, Morris tells him that is not the case at all. He wants to read the notebooks to find out what happened to Jimmy Gold. It has been the dream of reading more about his hero that Morris says kept him alive during his time in prison.

Pete unscrews the cap on the can of lighter fluid and upends it over the notebooks, dousing the jackstraw heap of stories, poems, and angry, half-drunk rants that often end in mid-thought. Also the two novels that complete the story of a fucked-up American named Jimmy Gold, stumbling through the sixties and looking for some kind of redemption. Looking for — in his own words — some kind of shit that means shit. Pete



fumbles for the lighter, and at first it slips through his fingers.”
-- Narrator (Part 3: Peter and the Wolf, Section 52)

Importance: Knowing that saving his sister is more important than any novels, Pete prepares to set fire to Rothstein’s notebooks proving to Morris he is serious about his family.

Red Lips took the life of a great writer, and why? Because Rothstein dared to follow a character who went in a direction Red Lips didn’t like? Yes, that was it. He did it out of his own core belief: that the writing was somehow more important than the writer.”
-- Narrator (Part 3: Peter and the Wolf, Section 54)

Importance: As Pete stands holding the lighter over Rothstein’s notebooks and talking to Morris about the last two novels Rothstein wrote about Jimmy Gold he realizes that the characters in Rothstein’s novels are more real to Morris than actual living people. It was for this reason that Morris was able to kill Rothstein because Morris believed the writing was more important than the man who had written the stories.

He goes to his knees in front of the notebooks like a religious zealot in front of a blazing altar.”
-- Narrator (Part 3: Peter and the Wolf, Section 54)

Importance: When Pete accidentally drops the lighter after he is spooked by Morris’ gun going off Morris runs to the pile of burning notebooks and plunges his hands into it trying to pull out any unburnt books.

There were enough charred scraps in the burned-out basement to validate Pete’s claim that the lost notebooks really had been Rothstein’s work.”
-- Narrator (After: Trunk)

Importance: It is noted that writing experts were able to validate Pete’s claim that the writing in the notebooks was Rothstein’s from fragments of the notebooks salvaged after the fire.

I need to apologize because I really wasn’t so different from Morris Bellamy.”
-- Pete (After: Trunk)

Importance: Pete recognizes the similarities between his love for literature and Morris’ love for literature. Pete also knows that he is different from Morris because he does know what is important is what is real, his family is one of these things.

Some of the nurses believe that being whopped repeatedly in the head on the night he tried to blow up Mingo Auditorium has somehow rearranged Hartsfield’s brains. That being whopped repeatedly gave him . . . powers.
-- Narrator (After: Clack)

Importance: Brady, whom Holly had hit in the head twice with Hodges’ Happy Slapper

because he was trying to detonate a bomb during a sold out pop concert, is believed by some of the nurses at the hospital where he lives to have telekinesis, the ability to move things with the power of his mind.