

Good Omens Study Guide

Good Omens by Neil Gaiman

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Plot Summary

Good Omens is the story of an angel and a demon who are both trying to do their jobs that are part of the Great Plan. Although Aziraphale and Crowley are adversaries by nature and profession, their relationship develops into a friendship merely because of the time spent together over thousands of years. In this unlikely pairing, compromises are made between the two of them so that they can both appear to be accomplishing their missions without overcoming the other too much. When the birth of the Antichrist occurs, they agree to work together and try to see if their influences on the child have any effect. By the time they locate the correct child, it is almost too late as Armageddon is about to begin. Events unfold and the world is saved. At the end, Aziraphale and Crowley wonder if their involvement had any effect.

From the beginning, it is clear that Aziraphale and Crowley are both instigators in their own way; their instigations having an enormous effect on the course of events in the world. After the birth of the Antichrist, Crowley convinces Aziraphale that they should do what they need to in order to influence the child's upbringing. They appear in the child's life as the nanny and the gardener, as well as other characters that will place them near the child. Panic sets in, however, as they discover they have been influencing the wrong child. Due to a baby-switch gone awry when the Antichrist arrived at the hospital eleven years prior, they have been spending their time and energies on the wrong child.

Meanwhile, young Adam and his friends are enjoying the summer as normal eleven-year-olds would. Through an interesting turn of events, Adam meets his neighbor, Anathema, who is a self-proclaimed witch. When she passes magazines along to him, his nighttime reading creates real-life havoc. It is these strange events that catch the watchful eye of Newt Pulsifer, a Witchfinder Detective in Witchfinder Sergeant Shadwell's Witchfinder Army. As Newt investigates the strange goings-on, he decides to pay a visit to Tadfield, which seems to have its own unusual story: perfect weather all year round. After a minor car accident brings him to Anathema's doorstep, he is further pulled into the realm of the supernatural. Anathema explains about Agnes Nutter's Prophecies and how the end of the world is about to happen.

Bent on preventing Armageddon, everyone converges at the Tadfield Air Base. Adam, who has some unusual issues going on within his own mind, convinces his friends to get their bikes and pedal along with him. Crowley speeds along in his Bentley while Aziraphale possesses the body of Madame Tracy. With Shadwell in tow, she makes the journey on her moped. Newt and Anathema follow Agnes Nutter's Prophecies and also follow suit. Once they are all there, Adam surprises everyone present by saying that he sees no reason why the world needs to be blown up again only to have the same cycle repeat itself. Somewhat disappointed, the Four Horsemen/Bikers of the Apocalypse, as well as the Metatron and Beelzebub, and Anathema depart. Everyone else breathes a huge sigh of relief.

The next day, no one is able to recall clearly the events of the previous evening. Even as Aziraphale and Crowley debate whether or not the events were part of the divine

plan or not, their memories are wiped out as well. They continue on as they had before the Antichrist entered the picture.



Section 1, Pages 1-8

Section 1, Pages 1-8 Summary

Good Omens is the story of an angel and a demon who are both trying to do their jobs that are part of the Great Plan. Although Aziraphale and Crowley are adversaries by nature and profession, their relationship develops into a friendship merely because of the time spent together over thousands of years. In this unlikely pairing, compromises are made between the two of them so that they can both appear to be accomplishing their missions without overcoming the other too much. When the birth of the Antichrist occurs, they agree to work together and try to see if their influences on the child have any effect. By the time they locate the correct child, it is almost too late as Armageddon is about to begin. Events unfold and the world is saved. At the end, Aziraphale and Crowley wonder if their involvement had any effect.

The angel Aziraphale and the serpent Crowley are talking about the emergence of evil in Eden. For the first time it is about to rain. The earth is just newly created. Crowley thinks that the impending thunderstorm is an overreaction to knowing the difference between good and evil. Aziraphale admits that he gave his flaming sword to Adam and Eve. He tells them they will probably need it. Subsequently, Aziraphale debates whether or not he has done the right thing by interfering.

Section 1, Pages 1-8 Analysis

This opening section lays the foundation for Aziraphale and Crowley/Crowley to interfere constantly with earthly events henceforth. These two characters are introduced as agents of their masters, but they clearly do more than they are told as is evident when Aziraphale gives his flaming sword to the couple in Eden and Crowley sets the wheels in motion for the creation of true evil. The back-and-forth between them foreshadows what their relationship will be down the road.



Section 2, Pages 11-38

Section 2, Pages 11-38 Summary

Crowley speeds through the night in his Bentley, on his way to meet with Hastur and Ligur. When they meet, they recount the Deeds of the Day to each other. This is done as a way of securing souls for their master, Satan. Hastur passes a basket to Crowley, who dreads its meaning. Hastur and Ligur remind Crowley that this is what they have waited centuries for. Per the instructions, he goes to a hospital.

The hospital is run by nuns. There, Crowley meets Mr. Young, an expectant father. After making his way past, he runs into Sister Mary and is about to perform a baby-switch. As Sister Mary chats with Mr. Young, she does not realize the orderly's error when the wrong baby is taken and the Youngs are left with The Adversary. Sister Mary helps Mr. Young choose a name for the baby and the name he likes is Adam. Some days later, when they leave the hospital, Hastur strikes the building with a bolt of lightening that creates a fire that burns long into the night.

Section 2, Pages 11-38 Analysis

The baby in the basket is no ordinary baby. Although it is clearly a child of Satan, the fact that Hastur suggests that whatever needs to happen should happen quickly is a sign of impending doom. Something will happen surrounding this baby that suggests the end times are quickly coming. This is further solidified when Sister Mary babbles on to Mr. Young that his son is "very, very normal", when in fact he is the Antichrist.



Section 2, Pages 39-64

Section 2, Pages 39-64 Summary

Aziraphale and Crowley's relationship is laid out. Although they have been adversaries for over six millennia, they have grown accustomed to one another. They have almost become friends, and have lived their existences without imposing too much upon one another. If Crowley needed to do evil in Shropshire, Aziraphale was left to do good in Manchester. This Arrangement allowed them to coexist and have small victories to speak of with their respective masters without ever doing too much harm to the other. As they are feeding the ducks, they talk about Armageddon and debate which side will win. They poke fun at each other for which "side" was responsible for creating what, and then decide to go for lunch.

During lunch, they proceed to get very drunk, and it comes out that neither one of them wants to see the destruction of the planet. Crowley suggests that they intervene and prevent Armageddon from occurring. Aziraphale objects, but Crowley reminds him that intervening might also be part of the divine plan. If Crowley's job is to make the end of times happen, then it is Aziraphale's job to thwart the efforts. They agree to play a hand in the devil-child's upbringing so that it is free of Satanic influences, which can eradicate the threat of Armageddon happening.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse enter the picture. Scarlett is a red haired vixen who represents war and currently is spending time in an African village. Sable, who represents famine, is a best-selling author of a diet book that literally has people starve themselves to death. Mr. White represents pollution, and forces a tanker holding crude oil to dump its contents into the sea, causing destruction to the waters and the wildlife. Death is only alluded to as someone who is watching and waiting. Meanwhile, Crowley and Aziraphale do what they must to have a hand in Warlock's upbringing. They both use their influences to win the child over, but after ten years of intervention, they worry that the boy is too normal.

Section 2, Pages 39-64 Analysis

Aziraphale and Crowley agree to have a hand in the child's upbringing. As in the beginning of the story, when they were looking on at the events surrounding Eden, their plotting indicates that something will go wrong. At the end of the section, they worry that the boy is too normal and that he should already be exhibiting devil-like behavior. They do not yet know that they have been wasting their efforts. They will have confirmation of this as they await the entrance of the hell hound on the child's eleventh birthday.



Section 3, Pages 67-90

Section 3, Pages 67-90 Summary

Aziraphale and Crowley eagerly await the hell hound's arrival at Warlock's eleventh birthday party. Three o'clock comes and goes, and still no dog appears. When they realize something is wrong, they take off. They both immediately know that they had the wrong child all those years. Meanwhile, the right child, Adam, is convinced that he is getting a dog for his birthday because he just knows it. As the hell hound gets closer and hears the sound of his master's voice, it waits for Adam to name it, as this is an important event for the animal. The name defines what kind of dog it will be. Adam names the dog he is going to get "Dog". When the hound hears the name, he transforms himself into the kind of dog that the name Dog suggests.

Aziraphale and Crowley now try to rack their brains to come up with a new plan. Since they know they had the wrong child, they need to find the right one. They decide to go back to the hospital where the babies were switched eleven years ago. On their way there, they hit a girl on a bicycle, named Anathema. As they miraculously heal her and fix the bicycle, they offer her a lift home, and ask about the location of the hospital. She does not know about any hospital, but she directs them to Tadfield Manor.

Section 3, Pages 67-90 Analysis

Anathema's book of Prophecies is missing. She also does not know that Aziraphale and Crowley are more than just cycle repairmen. When they realize what has fallen into their hands, they will no longer have to second-guess their actions or wonder what will take place as part of the divine plan; it will be laid out for them. The missing book also makes another connection between Anathema, Aziraphale, and Crowley, indicating their paths are likely to cross again.



Section 3, Pages 91-114

Section 3, Pages 91-114 Summary

When Aziraphale and Crowley show up at Tadfield Manor, they realize that things have changed. They step out of the Bentley and are shot with paint pellets. Feeling sneaky, Crowley changes the guns the men are using from paint guns to real weapons. As the panic ensues, the police arrive. They encounter Mary Hodges and ask about the baby switch that occurred eleven years prior. They put her into a trance but she does not give them the information they need. They hightail it out of the Manor as the police and several ambulances arrive on the scene.

As the angel and demon continue on into the night, they debate over what their next step should be in finding the right child. Aziraphale suggests that they use a human to locate the boy. When Crowley drops Aziraphale back at his bookshop, they realize that Anathema left her book behind. Knowing that he has stumbled on to something big, Aziraphale takes the book and Crowley leaves.

Section 3, Pages 91-114 Analysis

Another hint is dropped that foreshadows Armageddon. The two holidaymakers missed the significance of what just happened. Red/War's comment to herself that there would not be a next year suggests that things are moving toward a dramatic climax that humans are not privy to.



Section 4, Pages 118-137

Section 4, Pages 118-137 Summary

Adam and the Them, his friends Pepper, Brian, and Wensleydale, agree to play at having a new Spanish Inquisition. They do this as a method of putting witches on trial. They convince Pepper's little sister to play along as the witch on trial. As a result of the game, Adam gets punished for what happens to Pepper's sister's shoes and dress. He is relegated to spend time by himself, thereby encountering Anathema, his next door neighbor. She tells him that she lost her book and that two men in a black car took it by accident.

Section 4, Pages 118-137 Analysis

Although Adam is not yet aware of the powers he possess, the fact that the Them start playing at the Spanish Inquisition indicates that Adam, as their leader, is no ordinary little boy. His friends go along with the game because he told them they must, but it is an unusual game for them to play. Even when Anathema meets Adam a little later, she knows that there is something different about the boy, but she cannot place her finger on it. When she does, it is because she realizes that he has no aura. Since she has never heard of anyone without one, she knows for certain that there is something off. Without her Prophecies to guide her, she needs to figure it out using her basic senses. Although she does not know it, Adam's power begins to emerge after reading an article in a magazine she gives him about nuclear reactors. At the Turning Point power station, the uranium disappears, leaving only a lemon drop in its place; the same type of lemon drop that Adam was eating.



Section 5, Pages 141-172

Section 5, Pages 141-172 Summary

Raven Sable meets with the head of his marketing group as they are rolling out the latest product, MEALS. While he is in the Burger Lord, throwing out the food that he just ordered, he receives a package. It is a small pair of brass scales. When he sees it, he knows instantly what it means. He leaves and gets back into his limousine.

The Them hang out in the quarry. Adam tells his friends about what he read in New Aquarians. He tells them about UFO sightings and the men that drive around in black cars telling people off and trying to keep their mouths shut. Then he recounts the history of Atlantis, which holds their interest.

Newton Pulsifer calls Shadwell to inquire about the ad he placed in the paper about becoming a Witchfinder. Newt's first job was to find newspaper articles on witches and unexplainable phenomenon. As he goes through the papers, he notices that strange events are happening around nuclear power stations and that there are reports that Atlantis has risen. Newt remarks about the weather in Tadfield and says he wants to take a trip there to investigate it.

Section 5, Pages 141-172 Analysis

The reader sees more and more of Adam's power emerging as the events occur surrounding volcanoes and the discovery of the lost continent of Atlantis. The more Adam reads, the stronger his power becomes. Although he does not yet seem to be aware of his powers, it is evident that he is capable of turning the world upside down if he chooses. The only one that senses that things are going awry in the world is Newt, who picks up these events in news stories he is reading about the strange occurrences.



Section 6, Pages 175-205

Section 6, Pages 175-205 Summary

A deliveryman delivers a parcel to a man in white in the middle of a street. The man in white, Chalky, accepts the package and sees that it is a circlet of white metal, set with diamonds. As he puts it on, it turns black, and the area around him becomes thick with pollution. The deliveryman is about to deliver his next and last parcel and is killed in the process. It is merely a message for a presence that says, *come and see*.

Newt is preparing to leave for Tadfield, and Shadwell is giving him the tools he needs. After he is on the road for a while, he pulls over and throws some of the items out the window, deciding that he will not need them. Agnes Nutter is considered to be the Witchfinder Army's great failure. In her book, *The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter*, she predicts her own death where she is burned at the stake. As she is burning, she lays a curse on those that meddle in such witch affairs that they do not understand. When the crowd gets closer, everything around her explodes.

Newt continues driving and has an encounter with a UFO that has landed in the street. The aliens ask him questions about earth, and he carries on. Looking back, he sees that the UFO is gone. After that, he has an accident which Adam and the Them hear and they go to Anathema for help. When Newt shows up, Anathema explains that she was expecting him. She goes on to explain Agnes Nutter's prophecies and how they have all come true, and how it was predicted that Newt would end up at her home.

Section 6, Pages 175-205 Analysis

Throughout the story, the Four Horsemen/Bikers of the Apocalypse are gathering forces and coming together to begin their reign of terror. As they come together, Adam's power seems to grow. More and more odd occurrences are taking place. Newt's drive to Tadfield is an example of this. He encounters a UFO and aliens; and when he has the car accident that lands him at her home it is because he was swerving to avoid hitting a Tibetan in the road.



Section 6, Pages 206-236

Section 6, Pages 206-236 Summary

Adam starts having a strange reaction. He knows something weird is going on in his head but he cannot explain it. He starts speaking about odd things and events and even his friends have a hard time understanding what he means. Adam talks about what the world he grows up in should be like. He suggests that the world needs to start over because everything has become too much of a mess. Adam goes on about the new world he will create. He and his friends will each be able to rule a part of it as they want. They can put all the things they want in it and take out all of the things they don't want. As Adam recounts all of the changes he will make, strange things begin to happen all around the world; rainforests begin to grow and all of the whales disappear.

After debating with himself, Aziraphale decides to contact the Metatron and tell them that he knows the location of the Antichrist. He is anxious for them to know so that evil will be thwarted; he is told that good will prevail, they do not need this information. The Metatron agrees to give him time to tie up his business ends and he calls Crowley, who is not available. At the same time, Shadwell comes upon Aziraphale and commands him to vanish. As Aziraphale steps back into the circle for the Metatron, he disappears instantly.

Section 6, Pages 206-236 Analysis

Newt explains his reason for visiting Tadfield, and tries to figure out why the weather anomaly is occurring. Anathema inadvertently solves the puzzle-without the help of the Book-of what is happening around them when she calls Tadfield a "kids' paradise". She feels that she is close to solving the puzzle, but feels as though something is blocking her. This is the clue that will lead them to Adam at the center of the events.



Section 6, Pages 237-267

Section 6, Pages 237-267 Summary

The Four Horsemen congregate at a roadside cafe and have a run-in with the local bikers there. Both Aziraphale and Crowley seek alternate means to stay on earth and do what they need in order to prevent Armageddon from occurring. Aziraphale emerges in the form of a television evangelical preacher and then possesses Madame Tracy. Crowley does everything in his power to elude the evil forces attempting to gather him back into Hell.

Section 6, Pages 237-267 Analysis

In another element of foreshadowing, Scarlett/War tells the waitress at the cafe that it is not Hell outside-yet. As the Four Horsemen/Bikers of the Apocalypse finally come together their power is increasing symbolized in the ensuing violent weather occurring outside.



Section 6, Pages 268-298

Section 6, Pages 268-298 Summary

Shadwell is still in Madame Tracy's bedroom, dreaming about Agnes Nutter's death at the stake. He wakes up and hears Madame Tracy's voice, then that of another. When he enters the room, he realizes that there is something else possessing her body. Aziraphale is speaking through Madame Tracy. She explains to Shadwell that Armageddon is upon them and they need to stop it from happening. They hop on a moped and head toward Tadfield. At the same time, the Four Horsemen/Bikers of the Apocalypse are doing the same, as is Crowley in his now-demolished black Bentley, and Newt and Anathema.

Section 6, Pages 268-298 Analysis

In Shadwell's dream, he experiences a psychic power that he is not aware he possesses. For reasons he cannot explain, the dream makes him uncomfortable. He does not realize that his dream is a reenactment of a true event: Agnes' death. It is ironic that as a Witchfinder Sergeant he does not inherently know this, although his vocation indicates he should.



Section 6, Pages 299-329

Section 6, Pages 299-329 Summary

Newt and Anathema are the first to arrive at the Tadfield Air Base. Adam and the Them are pedaling their way on their bikes. The Four Horsemen/Bikers of the Apocalypse are also racing to get there. On the way, the Bikers get lost and run into R.P. Tyler, a member of the Lower Tadfield Residents' Association. He gives them directions and they once again take off. Shortly after, Madame Tracy and Shadwell approach R.P. Tyler, looking for Adam. R.P. Tyler tells them where Adam was headed and they follow after the Bikers.

The guard at the air base is receiving visits from various individuals. In order to gain admittance, the Four Horsemen/Bikers of the Apocalypse appear as generals conducting a surprise inspection. Then Shadwell and Madame Tracy appear, trying to get in right as Crowley arrives. Crowley raises the gate and the Them zip in right before them. They know that they are supposed to meet others there, they do not know who; even Adam suggests that they could be anybody. When the soldiers at the base appear and try to find out why the kids are there, Adam puts them to sleep.

The Four Bikers await the arrival of the Antichrist and know that he is close by. As they get closer to Adam, Famine, War, and Pollution begin to resemble humans less and less. Death, who turns into a skeleton, is the only one that closely resembles anything human. They approach Adam and tell him "it is done". Adam then announces that he does not wish any of it to be done and so therefore it will not be done. He explains that he has only recently discovered some interesting things and he wants the time to uncover the rest of it. He is a curious boy and if things end now, he will never know. Thus, he tells them to go away.

Not willing to simply turn and go, Adam tells the Them to go after the Four Bikers. Pepper takes her toy sword up against War, who disappears when their swords connect. Wennslydale used his makeshift scales and swings them against Famine, who also goes down, then disappears. Pollution tries to make a run for it but Brian goes after him with grass stalks, which are hurled like a discus. Death, who cannot be destroyed, admits that Armageddon can no longer commence with the other three Bikers now gone. He indicates though that they are not gone for good, as they are in the backs of men's minds forever.

Section 6, Pages 299-329 Analysis

The storm that has been building in the background signifies rising events. Things are coming to a head as each of the characters arrives at the same place at the same time for the same reason. As it gets closer to the start of Armageddon, there is more use of supernatural phenomena.



Section 6, Pages 330-347

Section 6, Pages 330-347 Summary

Adam comes face to face with everyone at the air base. The Metatron and Beelzebub both appear and are eager for Armageddon to begin. Although they insist that Armageddon begin immediately, Adam chooses to thwart their efforts. It fails to make sense to him that the world needs to be burned up in order to start over. He sees good and evil being a cycle and knows that beings such as Aziraphale and Crowley will always be around and interfering with people. The Metatron and Beelzebub are confused and do not know if this is part of the Great Plan or not. Adam sends them on their way without Armageddon ever occurring.

Section 6, Pages 330-347 Analysis

Just when Aziraphale and Crowley are prepared to do a final battle against Adam's real father, Satan, Adam makes it all go away. At that same moment, Adam's human father shows up. The Metatron and Beelzebub show their confusion over Adam's aversion to Armageddon, and indicate that there may not actually be a divine plan. Although they should be thrilled that the end of the world has not happened, they walk away almost disappointed.



Section 7, Pages 351-369

Section 7, Pages 351-369 Summary

The next morning, Newt receives a visitor at Jasmine Cottage. It is a man delivering a parcel postmarked from the seventeen hundreds. It is from Agnes Nutter as part of her prophecies. Anathema wakes up to see the package in the kitchen and is desperate to open it, but Newt stops her. Everything in the world appears to be going back to the way it was and no one seems able to remember the exact events of the previous day. Aziraphale and Crowley wonder amongst themselves what it all means and if it was truly planned to happen as it did. Adam is the only one who recalls what has happened, but when his friends ask, he tells them it was nothing and sends them on their way.

Section 7, Pages 351-369 Analysis

In an ironic episode, the story ends as the story starts: eating a forbidden fruit. The neighbor threatens to tell Adam's father what he has done; and in Eden, Adam's father, which is his Creator, punishes him for doing the same thing; eating fruit that he is not supposed to.



Characters

Aziraphale

Aziraphale is an angel. From the beginning of time, he has been trying to do good by humans. This interference of his becomes an ongoing theme throughout the story. To help the couple in Eden, Aziraphale gives them his flaming sword. It is his desire to help humans and to do good that makes him who he is. His sole purpose is to thwart evil—provided that his interference does not interfere with the Great Plan. He is friends with Crowley, who is a servant of the devil; not because he planned to be, but rather because they spent so much time together, they ended up developing a good relationship. They compromised on their assignments, arranging it so if Aziraphale did good in one place, Crowley would do evil in another. This is so it would look as though they were both accomplishing their work to their masters.

After meeting Anathema Device and accidentally keeping her book, Aziraphale becomes enthralled with the prophecies. He quickly realizes that there is more to the book than first appears. His first instinct is to tell Crowley, though he knows deep down that he needs to report it to his superior. When the Metatron come to talk to him of the matter, they brush him off and direct him not to interfere. Aziraphale eludes the Metatron by possessing other people that will help him in the mission to thwart Armageddon. After the encounter leading to Armageddon is past, he falls into a similar situation that everyone else did, which made them forget the details of what occurred. At the end, he never knew whether or not what happened was part of the Great Plan or not.

Crawley/Crowley

Crowley is a demon who started out as Crawley the serpent. At one time, he was an angel that fell from Heaven. He is described as having dark hair and good cheekbones. Since he had once been a snake, he every once in a while spoke as though he were hissing. He also does not blink much. Early on, Hastur describes him as being "up here" too long and suggests that he has gone native. Driving around in his black Bentley, Crowley is also known for wearing dark sunglasses most of the time. Although Crowley is a demon from Hell, he is not purely evil. However, he did receive a commendation from his superior for the Spanish Inquisition.

When the Antichrist enters the picture, it is Crowley who wants to prevent Armageddon from occurring. It is as a result of his persuasion that Aziraphale joins him in thwarting the divine plan. Thinking that he has the right child pegged as the Antichrist, Crowley poses as the nanny and later as a tutor, using evil influences to see if he has any effect on shaping the child's future. Once he finds out he has the wrong child, he does what he can to elude the forces attempting to bring him back to Hell. Still determined to thwart Armageddon, he manages to make it to the Tadfield Air Base in time to witness the child Antichrist in action.



Adam

Adam Young is the Antichrist, although he does not know it until right after he turns eleven. Growing up without the direct influences of good or evil, he has had, by most standards, a normal upbringing. A natural leader, he has a group of loyal friends: Pepper, Wensleydale, and Brian. For his eleventh birthday, and according to Crowley, Adam receives a hell hound. The beast seeks Adam out and becomes a rather tame pet, as Adam names him Dog, which defines what type of animal it will be personality-wise.

When he meets his neighbor, Anathema Device, she gives him a stack of magazines that he voraciously reads right away. Unbeknownst to him, his dark powers begin to unfold. The things he reads in the magazines become a strange reality as the lost continent of Atlantis resurfaces, rainforests grow in odd places, and nuclear power stations have unexplained uranium losses. He gathers his friends at the Tadfield Air Base to meet people and work these things out. Adam talks about creating a new world that will be theirs, a world where they can have all the toys and games and fun things kids want. When he learns that the Metatron and Beelzebub merely want to start a war to see who wins, Adam puts a stop to it. He knows that the cycle will only start all over again with good and evil trying to interfere with everything that humans do and that it is not worth it to blow everything up. After Armageddon is averted, Adam goes home to being an almost-ordinary boy with a dog.

Newton Pulsifer

Newt is a young man who decides to join the Witchfinder Army as a Private under Shadwell. One of his assignments is to find and cut articles from the newspapers about witches and supernatural phenomena. During his investigations, he comes across an interesting situation with Tadfield's weather and goes to check it out. When he gets there, he has a car accident where Adam and the Them find him and bring him to Anathema, who is waiting for him as per Agnes Nutter's Prophecies. Anathema finds Newt to be tall and dark, though not handsome. There is nothing stylish about his hair or his clothes, as he learns from a young age. Despite the differences in backgrounds, Newt and Anathema come together.

Anathema Device

Anathema is an ancestor of Agnes Nutter and the rightful owner of *The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter*. She lives her life by these prophecies. One day, as she is out riding her bicycle and doing a bit of astronomy, Crowley hits her with his Bentley. Aziraphale performs a quick heal on her and the bicycle and drops her off home, subsequently leaving with her book. This sends Anathema into a panic, as she has lived her life by the Prophecies. According to the Prophecies, right on schedule, Newt Pulsifer arrives at her doorstep. Although they have an affair that is predicted in



the Prophecies, they end up staying together after Armageddon is thwarted. She begins to live her life without relying on someone predicting what will happen.

Witchfinder Sergeant Shadwell

Shadwell is an older gentleman who stands about five feet high and wears strange clothes. His teeth are in atrocious shape and he seems to live entirely on cigarettes, sweet tea, and condensed milk. Despite his best efforts, people seem to be drawn to him. He shares accommodations with Madame Tracy who, on the surface, he appears to dislike. Any time she is around, he makes rude comments and calls her names. He comes upon Aziraphale in his bookstore as the Metatron are awaiting his turn. Not realizing what is going on, Shadwell forces Aziraphale into the circle that transports him directly home. Thinking he has the power to banish witches, he insists on going to Tadfield to check on Newt, as he thinks Newt is in trouble. Seemingly humbled by the experience of the events that take place at Tadfield, he warms to Madame Tracy and agrees to let her include him in her life.

Madame Tracy

Madame Tracy is the psychic woman who shares the other half of Shadwell's dwelling. She has hours where she conducts private readings, parties, and syances. Madame Tracy is a warm woman who seems to look out for Shadwell, despite his ornery comments. Her psychic abilities are not particularly active until Aziraphale enters the picture. Bent on getting to the Tadfield Air Base, Aziraphale takes possession of Madame Tracy's body. What happens as a result is that Madame Tracy and Aziraphale have back-and-forth conversations. A prisoner in her own body, she agrees to help him and Shadwell get to Tadfield to do what they need. Once Armageddon is averted and they go back to their everyday lives, Madame Tracy and Shadwell become a couple.

Sister Mary Loquacious (a.k.a. Mary Hodges)

Sister Mary has been a devout Satanist since birth. She is also a complete scatterbrain. When Crowley shows up at the hospital with the baby Antichrist, she coos over it and almost forgets with whom she is dealing. Easily confused, Sister Mary leaves the room to fetch a cup of tea for an expectant father. As a result, the wrong babies are switched. Eleven years after the baby switch, she is no longer a member of the Chattering Order of nuns. Since she has decided to stay with the building, she encounters Crowley and Aziraphale as they come back to find out where the other infant went so they can find it to thwart Armageddon.

Dog

Dog is Adam's pet that arrives on his eleventh birthday. Originally a hell hound, Dog is sent from hell to go to Adam's side and do whatever Adam commands. As Crowley tells



it, it is up to the Antichrist to name the dog. The naming of the dog is highly important. The name that the dog receives, and Crowley thinks it will be Killer, Terror, or Stalks-by-Night, determines the kind of dog that it will be. On Adam's eleventh birthday, the hell hound approaches at the sound of Adam's voice and hears Adam name it Dog. Although this confuses the animal somewhat, as it knows that it is a creature from Hell, it does as his master says, and becomes a scruffy little dog that befits its name. As a result of the ordinary name, the hell hound becomes an ordinary house pet.

Agnes Nutter

Agnes is the author of *The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter*. She was a witch in the seventeenth century. One of the early entries in her book is about her own death. She was burned at the stake for being a witch. According to the prophecy, she was waiting for the authorities when they arrived to take her. When she stood burning, people came in close and the gunpowder that was hidden in her skirts exploded, along with nails.



Objects/Places

Eden

This is the place where Aziraphale and Crowley meet at the beginning of time, as rain makes its first appearance on the planet.

The Bentley

Crowley's car.

Chattering Order of Saint Beryl

This is a Satanic order of nuns that run the hospital where the babies are switched at the beginning of the story.

Aziraphale's Book Store

Aziraphale's bookstore specializes in rare books. It merely provides a front for Aziraphale as a second-hand book dealer. He has a personal interest in certain books.

Four Horsemen/Bikers of the Apocalypse

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are War, Pollution, Famine, and Death. In *Good Omens*, they appear as bikers rather than typical horsemen.

Kumbolaland

An African nation that was peaceful until Scarlett/War of the Four Horsemen/Bikers of the Apocalypse arrives.

Phaeton

This is Anathema's bicycle that she is riding when she gets hit by Crowley's Bentley.

Tadfield Manor

Tadfield Manor was formerly the hospital where the babies were switched. After the fire and renovation, the nuns leave and it becomes a retreat center.



The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter

This is a book of prophecies handed down to Anathema Device. It was first published in 1655 and written by Agnes Nutter, a witch.

The Them

Adam and his friends. Also known as the Adam Young Squad, Adam and Co., The Hole-in-the-Chalk Gang, among many others.

Greasy Johnson and the Johnsonites

The bully who heads up the rival gang to Adam and The Them.

New Aquarian Digest

These are magazines that Anathema gives to Adam to read. The articles that he reads about Atlantis, rainforests, and whales, create strange phenomena around the world and give rise to Adam's dormant power.

CHOW

CHOW is the ultimate in diet food. It consists of almost nothing nutritionally. It sold well to people, and regardless of who took it, people steadily lost weight.

SNACKS

Junk food made from real junk.

MEALS

MEALS is CHOW with added sugar and fat so regardless of who eats it, people will gain weight.

The Quarry

This is a hangout for Adam and the Them.

Atlantis

After Adam reads about it in *New Aquarian* magazine, the lost continent reappears.



Witchfinder Army

The Witchfinder Army is an army of soldiers bent on discovering supernatural phenomena. Shadwell currently is the Sergeant of the Army.

Dick Turpin

This is Newt's Japanese Wasabi car.

Jasmine Cottage

Anathema Device's home in Tadfield is called Jasmine Cottage.

The Metatron

The Metatron is the plural voice of God. The Metatron talk to Aziraphale when he alerts them to the Antichrist's whereabouts.

Tadfield Air Base

This is the old military base where Armageddon is slated to begin.

R.P. Tyler

Mr. Tyler is the head of the Lower Tadfield Residents' Association. He gives directions to the Four Horsemen/Bikers of the Apocalypse and has a run-in with Adam and The Them.

Hastur

Hastur is a tall demon and Duke of Hell.

Ligur

Ligur is also a demon and Duke of Hell.



Themes

Preconceptions of Good and Evil

The relationship and ensuing friendship between Aziraphale and Crowley suggests that, although the forces of good and evil are prevalent, it is not always clear who is good and who is evil. For example, since Aziraphale is an angel, it is automatically assumed that he is nothing but good. If he is from Heaven, then it is inherent to his nature to only do good. However, in his quest to thwart evil, he sometimes does evil in turn. At one point, when Crowley and Aziraphale are leaving in the Bentley and are receiving a ticket from a traffic warden, the warden's notebook incinerates. Crowley does not recall having done this little trick, but Aziraphale blushes as he accepts responsibility. His excuse is that he thought traffic wardens are from "the other side", while Crowley thinks they are from Aziraphale's side.

While it is assumed that angels can only do good, some of Aziraphale's actions suggest otherwise. In the big picture, he tends to interfere when he should not. Is it really good when Aziraphale tries to avert Armageddon? Similarly, is it a good act that Crowley does by also attempting to prevent Armageddon? Crowley, although he boasts about a commendation he received for the Spanish Inquisition, claims that he successfully tempts people to do evil things. However, he mentions that he does not tempt them into destruction. If this is the case, he is probably not as evil as he is cracked up to be. Another example of this is when he and Aziraphale go to the hospital in Tadfield and disrupt the paintball game. Crowley replaces the paint guns with real weapons and live ammunition; however, he tells Aziraphale that no one will be hurt, and that they will have "miraculous escapes".

Ineffability and the Existence of a Divine Plan

It is suggested throughout the story that there is an ineffable plan that cannot be altered. Ineffability is the inability to express something in words. If there is a divine plan, it is not something meant for human-or angelic and demonic-understanding. Due to ineffability, neither Aziraphale nor Crowley is able to have a direct hand in earthly events. They can only influence or tempt people to do what is needed. Aziraphale cannot directly thwart evil, but he encourages humans to do the actual thwarting, just like when Crowley suggests that he and Aziraphale intervene in the Antichrist's upbringing. Since Crowley will be an immediate influence, Aziraphale can also be an influence. However, as they discover, the divine plan is destined to play out as it is intended. Regardless of whether or not it is good or evil, both sides are a part of the ineffable divine plan.

Later on, as the characters converge at the Tadfield Air Base, both Aziraphale and Crowley attempt to involve themselves directly in averting Armageddon. To their surprise, and to the surprise of the Metatron and Beelzebub, Adam is the one to put an end to events before they really start. Adam's decision throws everyone off and leaves



Aziraphale and Crowley wondering if those events were truly part of the ineffable plan. As they are debating the issue, a voice tells them that it is ineffable, and they quickly forget what they are talking about. This can mean either that there is a divine plan, since the voice said ineffable, or the voice could be saying that as a way of forcing them to move on.

Facing Total World Destruction Changes Lives

By the end of the story, each character's life path has brought them to the Tadfield Air Base. They each go there with the intention of putting a stop to impending doom, regardless of how they think they are going to accomplish the feat. Due to the events that ensue, the challenge leaves each individual forever changed. For everyone, the changes come very quickly. Adam is living the life of an ordinary boy when he notices that strange things are happening. Even though he cannot explain the strange occurrences,, he understands it all once he is faced with his power. At the end of the story, he goes back to living the life of an ordinary boy, but with the awareness of the power he possesses. This is evident when he tells his friends he is punished and they need to go on without him, but then creates a hole in the backyard fence big enough for him and Dog to get through so that he has an excuse to go out and play.

Anathema Device lives lived her life by the Prophecies as laid out by Agnes Nutter in her book. An active witch, she knows with alarming accuracy exactly what is going to happen and where. Once she loses the book, she still has the cards to rely on. However, after Armageddon is averted and with the book forever gone, she is lost. She needs to learn how to live her life as everyone else does: without knowing what happens next. Newt Pulsifer is another good example of this. His life does not seem to have any particular direction to it prior to joining the Witchfinder Army. Once he puts the pieces together that lands him at Anathema's doorstep, his life is turned upside-down. The events that take place seem to give him a firm direction and a new life with Anathema at his side.



Style

Points of View

The story is told from the third person omniscient point of view. There are many characters in the overall story and their views are all told from the same perspective. The style and voice are very clearly British and are thus recounted in a prim and proper way. It is easy to differentiate the many characters and their experiences. All the voices, though British, are still distinctive from one another. Any accents, slang, or nuances in speech are specifically laid out.

The voice of the writer has a light and humorous tone. There are one-liner jokes and quips throughout. As the action unfolds, the tone and perspective remain constant; as the story has many humorous moments, it remains that way even as an event as daunting and serious as Armageddon takes place.

Setting

The story mainly takes place in England, although there are some brief segments that occur in other parts of the world, like Africa, the United States, and the Garden of Eden. The focal point of the story is Lower Tadfield, which is where the Antichrist, Adam, lives. It is literally the center of his universe, and Adam loves it above all places. As a result of his power and his love for this place, it is described as a kids' paradise. Newt Pulsifer, on the other hand, is interested in the area because of the weather. He says that it is an optimal microclimate; it has the perfect weather all year round.

Language and Meaning

Language and meaning plays a large role in the unfolding of this story. Although most characters are English, there is a large distinction between them. For Crowley, a former angel-turned-serpent who now serves Satan, it is noted that his speech is punctuated with hisses. Adam and the Them speak as children would, clearly separating them from others. The Four Horsemen/Bikers of the Apocalypse also have their own unique style of speaking. The things they say are unusual, and it is almost as though they are able to finish one another's thoughts. However, when they speak, there is something unusual about them that humans tend to pick up.

Witchfinder Sergeant Shadwell speaks with a Welsh accent, which is very evident in his dialogues with others. His words are spelled as they sound in order to punctuate the distinction in his speech. Hastur and Ligur are another unearthly pair that have large differences in their speech patterns from those of other characters. In a style similar to Crowley, they hiss as they talk; however, the cadence is slower and far more malevolent. In addition, all references to Agnes Nutter and her book of Prophecies are distinctive in their voice. The book is written in old English, which is deliberately meant



to stand out as a voice from long ago. Finally, there are footnotes at the bottom of many of the pages that serve as additional notes to the unfolding story. It is humorous in its tone and written in a simple style.

Structure

Rather than breaking the book down into traditional chapters, the book is broken out into different timeframes, and ultimately, days of the week. This is laid out in a way that is appropriate to the story. The beginning of the story is laid out as "In the Beginning", which refers to the beginning of time. The earth is newly created and good and evil have recently been discovered by humans. Time jumps forward several thousand years to when the Antichrist is born, in a section titled, "Eleven Years Ago". This is where the main action of the story begins, and where the foundation is laid.

The rest of the sections are laid out by days of the week, starting with Wednesday and going through Sunday. The largest section is Saturday. This format indicates that there is a sense of urgency in the action that unfolds in the sections labeled as days rather than the earlier sections. It is also important to note the many footnotes added to the bottom of many pages throughout the story. These are additional blurbs of information that are witty and humorous. Although this is done to keep the flow of the page running smoothly, these footnotes break up the otherwise smooth prose of the writing.



Quotes

"Well, Hell was worse, of course, by definition. But Crowley remembered what heaven was like, and it had quite a few things in common with Hell. You couldn't get a decent drink in either of them, for a start. And the boredom you got in Heaven was almost as bad as the excitement you got in Hell." Section 2, p. 20

"It may help to understand human affairs to be clear that most of the great triumphs and tragedies of history are caused, not by people being fundamentally good or fundamentally bad, but by people being fundamentally people." Section 2, p. 26

'Anyway, why're we talking about this good and evil? They're just names for sides. We know that.' Section 2, p. 52

"I told you. On his eleventh birthday. At three o'clock in the afternoon. It'll sort of home in on him. He's supposed to name it himself. It's very important that he names it himself. It gives it its purpose. It'll be Killer, or Terror, or Stalks-by-Night, I expect." Section 2, p. 64

"Anathema stared in horror at the things on the table. The maps. The homemade divinatory theodolite. The thermos that had contained hot Bovril. The torch. The rectangle of empty air where the Prophecies should have been. She'd lost it." Section 3, p. 86

"Aziraphale realized he wasn't sure if you could orbit a vacuum, and didn't care; *The Nice and Accurate Prophecies* made the Hitler Diaries look like, well, a bunch of forgeries." Section 3, p. 106

"The Them fell silent. Adam was always worth listening to. Deep in their hearts, the Them knew that they weren't a gang of four. They were a gang of three, which belonged to Adam." Section 4, p. 121

"Adam felt very pleased about the morning's work. He'd always known that the world was an interesting place, and his imagination had people in it with pirates and bandits and spies and astronauts and similar. But he'd also had a nagging suspicion that, when you seriously got right down to it, they were all just things in books and didn't properly exist any more." Section 5, p. 150

"Newt always tried to see the best in everyone, but it had occurred to him shortly after joining the WA that his superior and only fellow soldier was as well balanced as an upturned pyramid." Section 5, p. 165

"Something or someone loves this place. Loves every inch of it so powerfully that it shields and protects it. A deep-down, huge fierce love. How can anything bad start here? How can the end of the world start in a place like this? This is the kind of town you'd want to raise your kids in. It's a kids' paradise." Section 6, p. 210



"But even if you win, you can't really beat the other side, because you don't really want to. I mean, not for good. You'll just start all over again." Section 6, p. 334

"Maybe it's all part of a great big ineffable plan. All of it. You, me, him, everything. Some great big test to see if what you've built all works properly, eh? You start thinking: it can't be a great cosmic game of chess, it has to be just very complicated Solitaire." Section 7, p. 360



Topics for Discussion

Do you think that Aziraphale and Crowley are distinctly either good or evil? Why or why not?

It is suggested throughout the story that there is some divine plan that lays out every action and event in life. When Adam averts Armageddon at the Tadfield Air Base, it seems to surprise many that are present. Do you think that this surprise is part of the divine plan, or do you think that there was no divine plan in action? Explain.

Aziraphale and Crowley made concerted efforts to shape the upbringing of the Antichrist until they discovered that they had the wrong child. Do you suppose that Adam would have found his powers sooner had they been involved in his life? Why or why not? Is it possible that their involvement in Warlock's life made a difference?

Witchfinder Sergeant Shadwell is a gruff man and is particularly harsh with Madame Tracy. Yet, the experience at the Tadfield Air Base seems to have changed him and he softens to her. Why do you suppose this happens?

Anathema Device lived her entire life to the predictions of her ancestor Agnes Nutter, the witch. After Armageddon is thwarted, she seems a little lost. How do you think she will be able to go on living without the guidance of her witch ancestor? Do you think she will find happiness with this new direction? Explain.

Adam's friends rally around him when it comes time to face the music at the Tadfield Air Base. Do you think that Pepper, Wensleydale, or Brian somehow influenced his reactions, or not? Explain.

After Adam faces the Metatron, Beelzebub, and the Four Horsemen/Bikers of the Apocalypse, he tells them that burning the planet and blowing things up is unnecessary. He then goes back to the life of a normal eleven-year-old-boy but manages to use his newfound power to create some mischief. Do you think that Adam will one day use that power again to call up the forces of evil to commence Armageddon? Why or why not?