

# **The Great and Secret Show: The First Book of the Art Study Guide**

**The Great and Secret Show: The First Book of the Art  
by Clive Barker**

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# Contents

<a href="#">The Great and Secret Show: The First Book of the Art Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Part One.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Part Two.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Part Three.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">Part Four, Chapters 1-6.....</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Part 4, Chapters 7-11.....</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Part 5.....</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">Part 6, Chapters 1-6.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Part 6, Chapters 7-11.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Part 7, Chapters 1-4.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Part 7, Chapters 5-8.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">32</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">35</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">37</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">39</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">44</a>



## Plot Summary

"The Great and Secret Show: The First Book of the Art" is a novel about human desires at extremes, following two great men as they battle against one another for the future of humanity. Jaffe has recently become a postal worker, having, in thirty-seven years of life, never held a job for more than a year and a half. He has always wanted great power and understanding, and discovers, in a mail sorting room in Omaha, that the occasional lost letter holds a profound secret about the world. He gathers these letters to learn more about them, just as his boss, Homer, becomes suspicious of him and confronts Jaffe over his activities. Jaffe kills Homer and sets fire to the sorting room. Escaping unharmed and unpursued, he wanders the country aimlessly, until finally he wanders into the New Mexico desert and finds Kissoon, a shaman who offers to teach him about the Quiddity—the dream sea—in exchange for use of Jaffe's body. Finding the old man repugnant and untrustworthy, Jaffe escapes him and resumes his quest in a new approach. He enlists the help of a Biologist named Fletcher, who uncovers the secret fluid responsible for evolution. Fearing his employers' designs on the substance, Fletcher plans to destroy all of his work, but Jaffe stops him just in time to discover that Fletcher has accidentally broken open on the vials. Jaffe breaks one open himself, and the two evolve into godlike beings who use physical manifestations of good and evil, nightmares and dreams, to battle on another over the course of the next several years, until they crash into the small California town of Palomo Grove, where they enter a series of caves and keep each other from escaping. Soon, four girls encounter a body of water mysteriously arisen overnight, situated just above the caves. Each of them nearly drowns in the waters as Fletcher and the Jaff, as he has come to think of himself, pull them under. Over the next several months, one of the girls goes insane and is discovered to be barren, while the other three give birth to strange children. Three of the children survive, Tommy-Ray and Jo-Beth, who are twins, and Howard Katz, whose mother moved to Chicago to protect him from the truth. However, Howard grows old enough to have questions about his origins, and when he returns to Palomo Grove, he meets Jo-Beth, and falls instantly in love with her. Their romance sparks revulsion in Fletcher and the Jaff, who soon break loose from their prison and attempt to enlist their children's support in their continued battle. Jo-Beth and Howie both refuse to take part in their fight, but Tommy-Ray agrees, and the Jaff soon collects an army of living nightmares to help him enter the Quiddity. Investigative reporter Grillo soon arrives in Palomo Grove to report on the death of famous comedian Buddy Vance, who fell into the cave when it was broken open, and soon learns that stranger things are happening in the town than anyone could imagine. He enlists the help of his friend, a screenwriter named Tesla, who arrives in town with just enough time to see Howie Katz wounded by one of the Jaff's creations. The two of them, alongside Grillo, rush to the mall at the center of town, to discover that Fletcher has soaked the grocery store in gasoline. The Jaff arrives and tries to stop Fletcher from setting himself on fire, but Tesla intervenes and ignites the flames, causing Fletcher to turn into a fountain of light that touches all the townspeople who have gathered there. The Jaff and Tommy-Ray flee the mall, but the evil incarnation has plans of his own. He sends Tommy-Ray to retrieve the last vial of Nuncio, still at the mission, just as Fletcher has sent Tesla to recover the same. The



next morning, people in Palomo Grove discover that their dreams and fantasies have come to life, as celebrities prepare to gather at Buddy's former mansion for a memorial party in his honor. At the mission, Tesla meets Raul, who tries to help her defeat Tommy-Ray, but she is seriously wounded as Tommy-Ray breaks open the vial of Nuncio and uses most of it to become Death-Boy. In an attempt to save her life, Raul uses the rest of the Nuncio on her, and her spirit is immediately transported to Kissoon's loop in time, where he warns her of the coming lad Uroburos, and implores her to allow him to use her body. Her spirit goes back to Raul, and they make their way to apartment in West Hollywood, where Kissoon again takes her to his loop. This time, she escapes and takes a wounded old woman with her. The old woman explains that she is one of the Shoal and that Kissoon murdered the others, but suddenly they are attacked by the Lix, servants of Kissoon. The old woman is killed and Raul disappears, leaving Tesla no choice but to return to Palomo Grove alone, where she confronts the Jaff with the others, just in time to see him tear a hole open into the Quiddity. Tommy-Ray, Jo-Beth, and Howie are pulled into the dreamsea. The Jaff realizes something dangerous is on the other side, and flees Buddy's mansion, leaving Tesla, Grillo, and Hotchkiss, a father of one of the other girls, to determine what needs to be done next. Tesla realizes they must retrieve the Jaff from the cave he fled back to. The group does so, and takes the Jaff back to the now badly ruined mansion. The Jaff tries to close the rift, but the lad Uroburos grow very close and force it to stay open. Tesla realizes her one chance is to use the power the Nuncio gave her to move the whole area into Kissoon's Loop, where the Jaff kills the evil shaman just in time to release the Loop before the atomic bomb goes off, for Kissoon chose Trinity, New Mexico, to create the loop in time.

# Part One

## Part One Summary

"The Great and Secret Show: The First Book of the Art" is a novel about human desires at an extreme, following two great men as they battle against one another for the future of humanity. In chapter one, Jaffe has begun working at the post office and goes to see Homer, who wants him to sort through a giant pile of lost mail and search for money. Jaffe has always wanted to be King of the World, but hasn't managed to hold a job for more than a year and a half, and he is thirty-seven years old. He begins to open the mail and search through it, and the job lasts for months as more mail is constantly added to the pile. He realizes that he's in the crossroads of America. Every thousandth or so letter has a secret, and suggests that the world is not at all what it appears to be. The letters are about fishes in the Sea of Seas, and about the Art. Homer begins to suspect that Jaffe is hiding something, because he hasn't been spending time with the other employees. He confronts Jaffe and takes him off of the job. Later, Jaffe returns to the sorting room to burn the letters, but finds Homer waiting for him. He kills Homer to keep his discovery a secret, then sets fire to the room and goes home to pack his things.

In chapter two, Jaffe spends some time traveling across America. He wanders, meets people, who almost always worship or admire him, and he changes their lives in dark ways. One morning, in a motel room in Los Alamos, New Mexico, he rises and walks into the desert to a stone hut in an abandoned town.

In chapter three, Jaffe has entered the hut, and a Mr. Kissoon tells him they are in a loop in time, and offers to teach him about the Quiddity—the Sea of Seas—in exchange for being allowed to occupy his body. Jaffe becomes angry at him and grabs his knife, but Kissoon breathes something at him. Jaffe is suddenly afraid and wants to leave, but the old man begs him to stay as he runs away.

In chapter four, Jaffe chooses a companion to help him understand the Art, an evolutionary biologist named Richard Wesley Fletcher. Fletcher is a brilliant scientist, but developed a mescaline addiction earlier in his career. Fletcher believes that he has almost isolated the Nuncio, or messenger, which causes life to evolve. At first, Fletcher dislikes Jaffe's occult approach, but Jaffe offers him all the resources he could want. Eleven months later, Fletcher discovers the Nuncio, but begins to destroy his work with Raul, an ape he has partially evolved towards a human, who serves as his assistant. As he grabs the vials of Nuncio, one of the containers shatters, and splashes his palm.

In chapter five, Jaffe is on his way to the mission where Fletcher has completed the Nuncio in order to stop him from destroying the work. He arrives to find the lab already destroyed, and Fletcher sitting in wait for him. He tells Jaffe that the Nuncio is inside of him. Jaffe grabs at Fletcher, but Fletcher simply flies apart. Jaffe sees the remaining vials and grabs one, despite Fletcher's warnings. The vial breaks open, and the Nuncio



transforms him instantly into a creature of Darkness who wants nothing but power. He becomes known as the Jaff. Fletcher tries to stop him and the two immediately begin to fight. Raul re-enters the mission and sees the men fighting, and Fletcher orders him out. Raul flees and the mission explodes. He sees the two fighting in the sky as they fly away.

In chapter six, as the Jaff and Fletcher's battle continues, a strange war breaks out across America. Fears and fantasies take physical form and wreak havoc on the natural order. Finally, the Jaff breaks the fight and retreats back to the mission for the last vial. Fletcher catches up to him and the two fall to the earth in the Californian city of Palomo Grove.

## Part One Analysis

This section is about the unconscious struggle inside Jaffe, a man who is almost totally powerless and not a little pathetic before he stumbles across the Art in his job at the post office. But, if Jaffe is somewhat pathetic before he discovers the letters, he is transformed into evil afterwards. It is safe to assume that Jaffe is somewhat mentally unstable, as are some of the letter-writers, which would explain why he so readily identifies with them, when other mail-sorters have not done so. When he murders Homer and runs away, his journey across America is one of self-discovery and exploration, and many of the people he meets can tell that something unusual has happened to him. This journey ends with his encounter with Kissoon, who is so crude in his mannerisms that he reminds Jaffe of Homer. Kissoon clearly understands the Art, but he is too unpleasant for Jaffe to be able to stand. Whatever else is true about Jaffe, he is very determined to enter the Quiddity, which has so far only been described as a dream sea, and he does not exactly know why he wants to enter it at first. He clearly desires power, but cannot explain why this is the case, and then manages to find Fletcher, who is contrasted against Jaffe's evil as a "Good Man." Unfortunately, Fletcher's goodness does not manifest powerfully, as evidenced by his weakness in the form of his mescaline addiction, and he quickly regrets his decision to work for Jaffe, because he fears what the other man plans to use the Nuncio for. The Nuncio forces things to evolve, and so once Fletcher and Jaffe's bodies come into contact with the fluid, their essences are magnified and they engage in an outright battle for the fate of humanity and the Quiddity.



# Part Two

## Part Two Summary

In chapter one, four girls in Palomo Grove go down to the water to play in it. Joyce, Carolyn, Trudi, and Arleen are all friends, and bored with their quiet lives. Joyce asks Arleen if she is in love with a boy named Randy, because she has strong feelings for him and wants him to notice her. They go to the mall before their stop at the water, and Arleen admits that she plans to move to New York soon. Joyce is very interested in Randy and continues to ask her questions about him. The group continues to wander, and they find themselves in Deerdell Village. Trudi's brother, Sam, has been in a car accident and now suffers from catatonia, and the girls miss him all in their own way. They arrive at the water source, that appears to have developed the night before from the rain. Trudi wades out into it, and discovers that the water is cold. Joyce joins her. A William Witt watches them undress and enter the water. He has been following them for about an hour now. Trudi wades out into the newly formed lake, and it gets deeper at the center. Suddenly, the water around her grows warm and begins to bubble and thrash around her. Something grabs at her in the water. Joyce suddenly goes under and Arleen goes to rescue her, but she goes under as well. Carolyn watches as her friends drown, and though she cannot swim, she goes to rescue them, and is pulled under as well. She feels her mind separated from her body, and senses the rest of her friends drowning, as Fletcher and Jaff fight each other at the bottom of the lake. Suddenly, the force that pushed her under shoves her to the surface, along with her friends. They make it to the shore and begin vomiting. Witt swears to himself never to spy on anyone again. He leaves, but Joyce hears him go. Trudi tries to insist that it was just current from the underground caves that pulled them under, but Arleen knows that she felt something more than just current. They decide never to talk about what happened in the flood water to anyone.

In chapter two, Joyce tells Randy that she is in love with him, and the two begin seeing each other. Carolyn takes interest in an Edgar Loft, who is in his fifties, but she leaves him once she becomes pregnant. Arleen begins visiting a Biker Bar named the Slick and begins seeing whoever is interested in her. Her father follows her one night and discovers what she is doing. He is beaten badly and dumped out of the bar as he tries to take Arleen out, and when she exits the bar hours later, she pretends as though nothing has happened. He tries to stop her the next night, but she escapes back to The Slick, which is raided that night, and Arleen's activities are made known publicly. Trudi seduces a Ralph Contreras as she pretends to become very religious. Arleen's story continues to grow in the public eye as she is committed to a mental institute. One of her nurses tells her story, including what happened at the lake, to the newspapers during an interview. All of the girls, except for Arleen, have become pregnant.

In chapter three, Witt continues to keep quiet about what he saw at the lake as the town of Palomo Grove begins to deteriorate under the weight of the scandal. Trudi gives birth prematurely to her child first. Joyce then gives birth to twins. Carolyn also gives birth to



twins, but the boy is delivered dead. Trudi Katz's family decides to move, and several weeks later Carolyn smothers her baby daughter Linda to death, then takes her own life. The town asks Joyce for answers. Finally, she tells the story, and Father Farrell raises enough money to have the cave entrances sealed, with Jaff and Fletcher inside of them.

## Part Two Analysis

The "forces" discovered by the four girls who decide to go swimming in the flood waters are, naturally, Jaff and Fletcher, who essentially crash-landed in Palomo Grove while fighting each other during the last section of the novel, as they were on their way back to the mission to reclaim the last vial of Nuncio. It is not expressly stated what the two have done to the girls, but it is very likely that Jaffe and Fletcher, having been totally transformed by the Nuncio, used the girls as a means of passing on their evolutionary power, even though very few of the children born from the girls managed to survive. The scandal devastates the town, even as it becomes national news and generates record-breaking tourism in the area. Jaffe and Fletcher have probably been responsible for similarly terrifying incidents in the number of years that they fought each other across the country. Witt is wise in his decision to remain silent about what he saw the day at the flood water, and is almost certainly correct that he would be completely blamed for the incident if he were to come forward. The girls' calm attitude in the middle of the scandal seems to confirm that they are possessed by some force originating from either Jaffe or Fletcher, but the reader presently has no idea which one is responsible for which of the births.





# Part Three

## Part Three Summary

In chapter one, Witt remains in Palomo Grove and becomes a real estate agent. The market does well in the town, and he still follows the lives of the women he saw in the flood water. Joyce McGuire is very religious and has brought up both of her twins without a father. Arleen moved to Louisiana with her family.

In chapter two, Howard Katz returns from Chicago to Palomo Grove. He is looking for the truth about who his father is and who he really is. His mother recently died in Chicago.

Meanwhile, Joyce calls to her daughter in their home, Jo-Beth. Joyce always feels sick now, and she wants Jo-Beth to have the pastor call on her. She agrees, and leaves the house for work. She speaks with her brother, Tommy-Ray, briefly before she goes to work. He asks her if she feels strange, as though everything were ending. She does, and admits it is as though she's waiting for something to happen.

Howard, also known as Howie, is eating at the steakhouse where Jo-Beth works. When they see each other, they are drawn together immediately. Beneath Palomo Grove, Fletcher and Jaff still cling to each other to keep the other from escaping. It was the Jaff's idea to create the children, and Fletcher had to do the same in order to keep himself from being defeated. Fletcher can see through his son Howie's eyes, and he knows that he has met Jo-Beth, who is the Jaff's daughter. They had expected their children to continue their war. Instead, Jo-Beth and Howie take to each other instantly, feeling a deep connection. She agrees to talk with Howie after her shift. They kiss when they meet up with one another again, and Fletcher and the Jaff are so disgusted with it that the earth begins to shake and their cave is unsealed.

In chapter three, Buddy Vance is an aging star who has moved to Palomo Grove. His doctor, Dr. Tharp, insists that he begin taking care of himself, and agrees to draw up a health plan. On his morning run, he suddenly hears young girls laughing, and runs towards the sound. He sees the four girls, but knows that they are not real. He enters the water to touch them, but does not feel the water. He trips, and then realizes that the girls are ghosts, and that he is most likely watching them die. Nevertheless, he goes to try to help them, but the concrete sealing over the cave begins to crack and he falls in.

Howie and Jo-Beth have planned to meet again. Jo-Beth's brother, Tommy-Ray, can tell that something has happened to her. She doesn't want to tell him, because she knows he will be jealous. She goes to work, but he insists on driving her. Tommy-Ray feels afraid, but doesn't know why. She gets out of the car and tells Tommy-Ray to go home, but he sees Howie and gets out of the car to meet him. He is very fearful of Howie, then turns and leaves suddenly. Jo-Beth introduces Howie to Lois, the owner of the bookstore she also works at, but the older woman acts strangely when she learns his



last name is Katz. They agree to meet later. Jo-Beth learns that Katz is the last name of one of the other four girls who was attacked in the flood water.

Buddy's driver, Jose, is waiting for Buddy to finish his morning jog, but Buddy is nowhere to be seen. Jose drives back to his house. As Buddy lies semi-conscious in the fissure, Jose continues to look for him, and the road to East Grove has been blocked off because of a crack in the road. He tells police that Buddy went running there earlier. Meanwhile, at the bottom of the fissure, the Jaff attacks Buddy's mind to make Terata, which are inner fears given physical form, then rides the monster out into the open. Fletcher explains what they are to Buddy, and that he needs Buddy's greatest dream to continue to fight the Jaff. Buddy remembers his greatest moment, and begins laughing, and dies before Fletcher can make use of his thoughts.

Howie hears someone whispering his name and follows the voice into some trees. A woman tells him that Buddy Vance has been swallowed by the earth nearby.

In chapter four, Grillo is told by his boss, Abernethy, to cover the story of Buddy Vance's death. He calls Tesla when he arrives in Palomo Grove to ask what she knows about Buddy Vance. She wants to meet him for dinner tomorrow.

In chapter five, Jo-Beth asks her mother about Howard Katz, Trudi's son. Joyce warns her daughter to stay away from him. Jo-Beth goes to Howie immediately afterwards. She tells him that their mothers used to be best friends and that something terrible happened to them, and that there is a possibility they are brother and sister. They are both tired, and decide to sleep. They fall asleep next to one another.

Grillo arrives at the site of Buddy's death, but the police can't tell him very much about what has happened. He meets Hotchkiss, Carolyn's father, who was responsible for sealing the caverns in the first place. Grillo goes to witness Buddy's body being taken out of the earth. Men are lowered into the cavern, but something violent happens suddenly and the men begin to scream that the cave is opening even more. Rescuers begin to get pulled into the crevice. He calls to Hotchkiss, but the ground opens up around them both. They move to escape, but suddenly there is water everywhere, and they can see shapes moving in the flood.

Howie and Jo-Beth awaken from having the exact same dream. Beth feels guilty, especially at the fact that he might be her half-brother, and believes she's fallen victim to the Devil's work.

## Part Three Analysis

Witt, having remained in Palomo Grove ever since the incident over the cave, has been waiting for something to happen again, related to the first disaster. Having witnessed it firsthand, he is somewhat closer to the events than the other townsfolk involved, but everyone seems to have understood that what happened to Joyce, Trudi, Arleen, and Carolyn, was more than just a small-town scandal. Unknowingly, Howard Katz has come to Palomo Grove in search of this story, for even though he is Fletcher's spiritual



children, the story of how he was born was kept a complete secret from him. Joyce has dealt with the trauma by remaining very faithful to the Mormon church. Her children seem to be well-adjusted enough, even though they are very strongly attached to one another, as demonstrated by Tommy-Ray's instant jealousy of Howie. It is clear that Tommy-Ray will soon look for a way to rid Howard from the town of Palomo Grove, and it is implied that he, along with Jo-Beth, are children of the Jaff, where Howie is Fletcher's son. This is surprising, since the two spirits are engaged in a constant war, but at the moment, Howard and Jo-Beth have no way of known that they aren't related. Since her mother does not talk about her father or the incident in the flood water, Jo-Beth is making a reasonable decision in keeping her distance from Howie, since neither of them has ever know their father. Buddy Vance and Grillo are both interesting characters as additions to the story, though Buddy's time has clearly been spent. As an investigative reporter who wants to cover more than just celebrity dirt, it is very likely that he will be drawn to the story of the League of Virgins and investigate it further. Fletcher and the Jaff, having both escaped the cave, will not most likely assume greater importance once again in the novel, as their children, at least the children they helped to create, become more familiar with each other. The story of Arleen seems to have disappeared from the novel, and does not seem likely to play any significant role in the remainder of the story, though Buddy's death was very significant, and will almost certainly draw attention to the city of Palomo Grove.



## Part Four, Chapters 1-6

### Part Four, Chapters 1-6 Summary

In chapter one, Grillo tells Abernethy over the phone about the chaos that struck the scene of Buddy Vance's death. Abernethy instructs him to get a room at a hotel and follow the story. Grillo goes to investigate at Buddy's mansion. He asks to speak to Rochelle Vance, and is stunned by her beauty when she comes down the staircase to see him. She tells him that the police have given up the search for Buddy's body. On his way out, the housekeeper, Ellen, gives him a piece of paper. It has her full name and address on it.

In chapter two, Jo-Beth has promised her mother that she will not see Howard again, but she is very confused, mostly because the tragedy at the cave was part of what she saw happening in the dream that she shared with him. Tommy-Ray awakens to the sound of his window rattling. The rattle draws him outside to a place in the yard where the fence has fallen into disrepair. Jo-Beth goes to check on Tommy-Ray, who has told her that he suffers from the same pain, as he hobbles towards the broken fence across the yard.

The Jaff greets Tommy-Ray there from inside an overgrown thicket. He tells Tommy-Ray to get Jo-Beth, but Tommy-Ray wants to see him first. Tommy-Ray goes back into the house to get his sister, who refuses at first, but Tommy-Ray promises not to hurt her. She goes to the Jaff, but suddenly her mother cries at her not to let it touch her. Joyce comes outside and tells her children to get away from the Jaff, slapping Tommy-Ray across the face. Jo-Beth runs away with her mother back to the house. Joyce has Jo-Beth pull the key out of her bedroom door. The Jaff is already inside, and when Jo-Beth retreats to her mother's bedroom, Joyce gets a knife out and holds it to Jo-Beth's throat and threatens to kill her if the Jaff comes inside. Joyce lowers the knife once the Jaff is gone. Jo-Beth wants to try to rescue Tommy-Ray, but Joyce is convinced he's already lost. Joyce says that if the Jaff had come inside, she would have killed Jo-Beth for certain.

In chapter three, the Jaff still wants to swim in the Quiddity, and asks Tommy-Ray to serve him. Tommy-Ray agrees, and offers to kill Howie for him. The Jaff shows him the terata he created from Buddy Vance. He wants to create more, and has Tommy-Ray take him to find desperate souls in order to make more. Together they visit a man named Ted, who is pathologically frightened of nuclear armageddon, and lost his wife and daughter as a result of mental illness. The Jaff takes his fear from him and turns it into a terata. They do this several times to many others through the night, then the Jaff sends Tommy-Ray back home and goes to rest.

In chapter four, Howie goes to the bookstore where Jo-Beth works, and finds that she has not arrived yet. He peruses the religious books about the Mormon faith, and Lois discourages him from waiting any longer.



In Chapter five, Tesla calls Grillo to tell him that she is on her way to Palomo Grove. Grillo decides to visit Ellen Nguyen, who tells him that she was also Buddy's mistress for five years. Grillo also speaks to her son, Philip, who shows him a picture of the Balloon Man. Ellen shows Grillo to the door. On his way back to the hotel, he tries to arrange everything he's learned about the story in the past twenty-four hours. As he begins writing, he realizes that he's become sick with the flu.

In chapter six, Howie goes to the McGuire residence to talk to Jo-Beth, and Joyce finally comes to the door to tell him that he is unwelcome, but Howie wants to hear it from Jo-Beth, who appears in the doorway. She tells him that bad things will happen if he keeps trying to see her, then she closes the door in his face. Howie goes into the forested area where Buddy Vance disappeared, and sees Fletcher for the first time. Fletcher tells Howie that Howie is his son. Believing that he is in a dream, Howie tries to wake up by punching a tree very hard, but that causes him real pain and Fletcher's image becomes no less substantial. He finally understands that he's not in a dream and passes out from seeing his own blood. Fletcher holds him and tells Howie that Jo-Beth is not his sister. To explain things more quickly, Fletcher opens his mind to Howie and shows him the Island in the Quiddity called Ephemeris, and Howie insists that he saw the island the night he slept next to Jo-Beth. Howard awakens and rejects Fletcher's insistence that his son help him, and he goes back to the road. Fletcher is left to find dreams to turn real in order to help him fight against the Jaff.

## Part Four, Chapters 1-6 Analysis

Grillo's responsibilities to Abernethy and his newspaper go far beyond simple employment. For some reason, he is truly fascinated by Buddy Vance, and sees a link between his secret, private life and the way that he died that is not obvious to most people, even if Ellen and, to a lesser extent, Rochelle, seem to understand it to some degree. Philip's drawing of the balloon man is bound to become one of the images that the Jaff and Fletcher use to do battle with one another, and Philip himself even suggests that the creature might come after Grillo at some point. On the other side of the story, Jo-Beth has great doubts about rejecting Howie, even if everything that has happened to her suggests that she must stay completely away from him. It is her close connection with her mother and attraction to Howie which kept her away from the Jaff in the first place, where Tommy-Ray agreed to serve him almost instantly. Joyce's hatred of the Jaff gave her the strength to save Jo-Beth from the Jaff, but not out of a desire to save her daughter's life. She made it absolutely clear that she would rather kill her own daughter than let her daughter serve the Jaff. Howie, meanwhile, is still obsessed with Jo-Beth and winning her over, and his determination leads him to reject his own father. His refusal to serve Fletcher puts the forces of good at something of a disadvantage, as Tommy-Ray happily works for the Jaff now, but Howie is far too involved with his attempts to recover the affections of Jo-Beth because, ironically, Fletcher only served to prove to Howie that he was meant to spend his life with Jo-Beth. Fletcher can do nothing to persuade his son away from her, but it remains to be seen how Howie will accomplish winning her back.



## Part 4, Chapters 7-11

### Part 4, Chapters 7-11 Summary

In chapter seven, Witt is measuring a pool when something ripples on the surface. He goes back into the house and hears a noise upstairs. He sees what he thinks is a white wind-up centipede toy, and goes to pick it up. He realizes too late that it is not a toy at all, but a creature. He throws it to the ground, and Tommy-Ray appears, inviting him to come into the room. Inside, the Jaff is covered with his terata. Witt pretends to be very curious about the one in the pool, and Tommy-Ray takes him back outside to see it. Witt suddenly pushes Tommy-Ray in the pool and runs away. The Jaff scolds Tommy-Ray for letting him go, but decides to send him back to the mission for the last vial of Nuncio.

In chapter eight, Grillo wakes up as Tesla knocks on his hotel room door. He's glad to see her, but still feels very sick. Tesla tells him that both Abernethy and Ellen called, and Ellen says that it's urgent. He tells her what he saw as the rescuers tried to recover Buddy Vance's body. Tesla goes to see Ellen on Grillo's behalf. Ellen tells her that Rochelle, Buddy's wife is throwing a memorial party for Buddy the next evening..

In chapter nine, Tommy-Ray wants to get his sister, and the Jaff refuses to allow him at first, but Tommy-Ray insists it's important to retrieve her. Fletcher continues to look for people with strong dreams to use in Palomo Grove.

In chapter ten, Howie watches the pastor enter Joyce's house. Jo-Beth sees him in the backyard and tells him to go upstairs and wait for her in her room. There, she tells him about the Jaff, and she realizes that the two of them being together has caused all of this by breaking open the cave's seal. She kisses him and takes him to bed.

Pastor John decides to speak to Jo-Beth downstairs. He calls to her, and she leaves Howie to speak with him, but then realizes that the Jaff is talking to her. The pastor sees something moving in the backyard. Terata attack the pastor and Tommy-Ray asks his mom to let him inside. She refuses and he kicks the door in. Jo-Beth comes downstairs and agrees to go with Tommy-Ray if he leaves their mother alone. Howie comes out of her room and goes downstairs to rescue her, but Jo-Beth, Tommy-Ray, and the Jaff have all left. Howie runs after them, and is stopped by Tommy-Ray. The Jaff wants to give Howie a chance to escape, and is bitten by a terata.

Fletcher senses his son's pain and fear, and finally calls to him. He wonders about Kissoon's role in the story, and resolves to pass his knowledge on to Howie.

In chapter eleven, Tesla tries to convince a very sick Grillo to return to Los Angeles, and he finally agrees to return for a day in order to rest and recover. They drive past Howie with the terata still attached to his neck, who warns them that the other monsters are coming. They are suddenly swarmed by the terata, and the Jaff decides to follow them in order to find Fletcher. Grillo drives to get Hotchkiss, and they hear alarms in the



direction of the mall. Fletcher is setting them off to warn Palomo Grove of the upcoming conflict. Tesla and Howie meet Fletcher, who takes the terata off of Howie and asks Tesla to help him. Grillo and Hotchkiss arrive at the mall together. Many townsfolk are there already, and Grillo sees Tesla inside the supermarket. The Jaff appears and speaks briefly with Fletcher. Howie realizes the Jaff is going to kill Jo-Beth, and shouts at Tommy-Ray, telling him to let Jo-Beth go. The Jaff grabs her and Tommy-Ray knocks Howie over. Fletcher brings out a matchbook to set fire to the mall, but the Jaff stops him. Tesla fires a gun, and sparks the gasoline that Fletcher has poured everywhere. Fletcher catches fire. Everyone stays to watch as light pours out of Fletcher. Tesla realizes that Fletcher is somehow giving himself away through the fire. When he vanishes completely, the Jaff, Tommy-Ray, and the terata have all disappeared. Jo-Beth remains, standing next to Howie.

## Part 4, Chapters 7-11 Analysis

The people of Palomo Grove can sense on some level that a great battle is about to occur. Witt's encounter with the Jaff at the house, alongside Tommy-Ray, gives a good idea of just how many terata the Jaff has already collected, and he has made clear that his intentions are to destroy Fletcher and Howie. Tesla's introduction into the story is one of unexpected importance, as she immediately jumps to the aid of the protagonists in the story and sets off to accomplish what was meant for Howie to do, namely, to assist Fletcher. She is clearly intelligent, and many passages in this section of the novel indicate that the people of Palomo Grove are a poor choice for people to use against the Jaff. Tesla is a screenwriter by trade, she is well-cultured and full of imagination. Her appearance is doubly important because Howie is clearly not interested in continuing his father's battle against the Jaff. Instead, he is hopelessly in love with Jo-Beth, and his blindness to the greater events around him nearly lead to his own death at the hands of the Jaff and the terata. Howie is thus unsuitable to lead any kind of fight against evil. Fletcher's biggest desire is to become sky, and it is clear between him and the Jaff, that Fletcher lacks ambition towards power, and is only acting to preserve the lives of innocent people in his fight against the Jaff. In this context, Fletcher's sacrifice of himself is used both as a wake-up call to the citizens of Palomo Grove and an empowerment of their imaginations, since those touched by his dying light will never be the same again. The new war will be between their greatest dreams and fantasies and the Jaff, who makes a hasty retreat once he realizes what Fletcher has done.



## Part 5

### Part 5 Summary

The town wakes the next day and tries to pretend that nothing happened. All across town, people are preparing themselves for miracles they have suddenly come to expect. Their fantasies are beginning to come to life. Tesla has been directed by Fletcher to retrieve the last vial on Nuncio, and she leaves for the mission at noon. Meanwhile, the Jaff sends Tommy-Ray to reclaim the last vial of Nuncio as well.

In chapter two, Joyce has told Howie the story of what happened above the cave in the flood water. Joyce says that Tommy-Ray is completely lost. Jo-Beth goes outside and Howie follows her, promising to save Tommy-Ray with her, since that is what she feels she needs to do.

In chapter three, Abernethy wants Grillo to cover the party at Buddy's house, since Rochelle is planning a large memorial in his honor. Grillo goes to visit Ellen for more information on the party and to find a way to get invited. He talks briefly about the party with Ellen, and she offers to take him to bed. Philip leaves his room to get cookies for the Balloon Man and thinks that he hears something in the house, but when he gets his mother to investigate, she finds that nothing is there.

In chapter four, Lamar, Buddy's old comedic partner, arrives at the party, and Rochelle tells him that the party was Buddy's idea, and that he is still alive. Lamar finds Buddy after looking through the house briefly, though he doesn't seem to remember Lamar at all. Buddy is actually the Jaff in disguise.

In chapter five, Tesla arrives at the mission to find countless offerings have collected around its ruins. She enters, and feels the presence of someone inside, and encounters Raul. She tells him that Fletcher is dead, and that she has returned to destroy the last vial of Nuncio. Raul shows her a picture of Jaff and Fletcher that he made himself.

Tommy-Ray has fallen behind Tesla, even though he left much earlier than she did. He stopped to entertain himself a little south of Ensenada and nearly makes it all the way to the mission before he realizes that someone stole the money out of his pockets at the bar he visited briefly. He approaches the mission with a gun.

Raul and Tesla talk briefly before Raul realizes someone else has entered the mission. They go to investigate, discovering Tommy-Ray has set a fire. He has the Nuncio, and when Tesla tries to convince him to throw it out, he shoots her.

In chapter six, Hotchkiss calls Grillo and suggests that they meet up. Hotchkiss wants to go back to the cave to find a way to kill the Jaff.

Meanwhile, Howie stays with Joyce and Jo-Beth, who goes to see Lois at her house, and finds that it is filled with people in costumes. Lois says that they simply appeared,





and Jo-Beth realizes that they are all people from television shows, but not the actors. Instead, the characters have all somehow come to life. Howie wakes and finds that Jo-Beth hasn't returned yet, so he goes to look for her. He finds her at Lois' house and is baffled by the part of television characters. Jo-Beth tells him that it is the result of Fletcher's actions at the mall the night before. She mentions the Jaff and suddenly everyone in the room stares at her. He explains that he's Fletcher's son, and a cowboy asks him if he knows what they are supposed to do. Jo-Beth runs away, but the hallucigenia—the things Fletcher brings to life out of imagination—force Howard to stay. He ducks under them to run after her, but she is frightened and escapes.

In chapter seven, Tesla goes down as she is shot. Raul leaps at Tommy-Ray, but the man escapes with the Nuncio. Raul tells several women outside the mission to look after Tesla, then races after Tommy-Ray. Tommy-Ray stumbles as he makes his escape, and he loses his grip on the vial on Nuncio, which breaks out of the vial and splashes onto him. He becomes Death-Boy, and leaves in his vehicle. Raul gathers up some of the remaining Nuncio in the hopes that it will help Tesla recover. He puts her body next to it in hopes that it will give her the strength to survive.

Tesla suddenly finds herself in a desert, and comes across a stone hut. An old man inside tells her that she's alive, but that her body is still at the mission, and he wants it here in order to use it. He is Kissoon, and he explains the Shoal to her, and says that the other members have been murdered by enemies. He tells her about the Metacosm, which is the world on the other side of the Quiddity from them. The Shoal have stood guard on the Quiddity to prevent an invasion from the lad Uroburos, creatures of terrible evil. Kissoon says that he needs her body in order to help stop the attack. He says that she will be safe inside Trinity, but she is suddenly flung back to Raul.

## Part 5 Analysis

The story has changed dramatically since Fletcher's actions at the mall, adding and changing several elements. Tesla and Tommy-Ray have both been affected by the Nuncio as a result of their journey to the Mission, and Tommy-Ray has once again proven himself to be an unreliable servant to his father the Jaff. Raul has been reincorporated into the story, having played a critical role in saving Tesla's life, in addition to helping support the idea that Fletcher is, in fact, not dead, as he states to Tesla. Raul has been treated like a holy man at the mission by the women who protect him outside of it, and they are responsible for the offerings given to him that have piled up inside of the mission and outside of it. Howie continues to pursue Jo-Beth, but his identity as Fletcher's son has once again prevented him from being reunited with her, and while Joyce may have come around to liking him a great deal, she is also almost certainly right that Jo-Beth has been changed by her evil father's reappearance, especially after the hallucigenia discover that she is the Jaff's child. It is no surprise that the two, Howie and Jo-Beth, are divided once again by their father's war. Their ill-fortune has been a recurring theme since they met, and when Jo-Beth flees Lois' party, it seems possible that the Jaff's hold on her has strengthened. This occurs at the same time Tommy-Ray proves himself to be unreliable yet again. Not only did he delay his arrival



at the mission needlessly and allow Tesla to reach the mission first, but he also managed to shatter the last vial of Nuncio, making it useless to his father, as he had intended to use it on himself. When Tommy-Ray becomes Death-Boy, it is possible that he will challenge his father's power. Tesla, on the other hand, is called directly to Kissoon, and the fact that the cosm might be threatened by the metacosm is a completely new idea introduced to the novel. Stopping the Jaff's ambitions has now become only the second-most important objective, the first being to prevent an invasion from the lad Uroburos, if Kissoon is to be believed. Tesla is likely returning to Kissoon in order to allow him use of her body, but he still hasn't made clear what he intends to do with it, nor is it clear who the attacker was at the hut, and as a result, Tesla finds it just as difficult to trust the man as the Jaff once did.



## Part 6, Chapters 1-6

### Part 6, Chapters 1-6 Summary

In chapter one, Tommy-Ray visits a cemetery on his return to Palomo Grove. The dead there rise to greet him. They turn into sand and wind, then follow him as he gets back into his car. Souls other cemeteries join him on his way back. He stops at the bar where his wallet was stolen and attacks the bartender with the spirits he's collected.

In chapter two, Witt finally leaves his home the next morning, as Jo-Beth wakes up with a hangover from the party at Lois' house the night before. She forces Joyce to come with her to ask Lois about what happened. They run into Witt at the mall in the grocery story, and he greets them, and is very surprised to see Joyce because she almost never leaves the house.

In chapter three, Buddy's memorial party begins. The Jaff wants Lamar to bring the guests up to see him one at a time. Ellen brings an invitation to Grillo but tells him that she will not be at the party. She is surprisingly cold to him, and that fact confuses Grillo.

In chapter four, Tesla drives back towards Palomo Grove. She and Raul stop at her apartment in West Hollywood. Tesla falls asleep, and Raul hears her begin to shout. When he checks on her, she is being pulled back into Kissoon's loop. She tells Raul that Kissoon wants her back, and is once again in the desert. She smells something rotting, and tries to go to the building where the smell is coming from, but Kissoon pulls her away, towards his hut. She draws nearer to him, and encounters a woman that Kissoon has told her to avoid. Kissoon pulls her away from the woman as she begins to speak. Tesla discovers the desert around them is covered with Lix, snakelike creatures who attacked her earlier. Kissoon again pulls her towards his hut. She refuses to loan him her body, but considers Raul briefly. As she leaves Kissoon's hut, she sees the woman again, and she appears to be in pain. She is suddenly swarmed by the lix, and Tesla fights them off and takes herself and the other woman back to her apartment.

In chapter five, the party for Buddy's memorial continues, and Lamar begins to take the guests up to see the Jaff, after the Jaff insists that he's not interested in killing any of them.

In chapter six, Howie goes back to where he met his father. He sees Jo-Beth on the other side of the fissure, who apologizes for not trusting him the night before.

### Part 6, Chapters 1-6 Analysis

Tesla's role in the story has expanded to one of the utmost importance, but not even she suspects the Jaff's large scale creation of more terata at Coney Eye, even if she is intelligent and strong-willed enough to defy Kissoon, whose story has worn thin. It is almost certain that Kissoon has been hiding something from Tesla, even if much of what



he has told her remains true. The rescue of the old woman near his hut is sure to provide additional information on Kisson's true nature, as there is something very untrustworthy about the way he treats Tesla. Both Jaffe and Tesla responded to him in very much the same way, and the so-called last of the Shoal is constantly changing his story in a way that suggests he is lying about important things, though whether he is simply mistaken about the old woman's nature or actively deceptive about her presence is difficult to say. He does, however, coerce Tesla back to his hut against her will. His justification for doing so seems plausible enough, but he could just as easily be hiding his own secrets from Tesla. Tommy-Ray's new role as the Death-Boy is dangerous for him, as the spirits of the dead seem only to tolerate his leadership, and do not completely obey or respect their master. The Jaff, however, seems confident that his son will continue to help him regardless of his newfound power.



## Part 6, Chapters 7-11

### Part 6, Chapters 7-11 Summary

In chapter seven, Tesla realizes the woman she has rescued is a Shoal. The woman, Mary, says that Kissoon murdered the rest of the Shoal. The bodies of the other Shoal are buried in the town she saw. Suddenly, Raul screams in the next room. Tesla goes to him and sees that he is being attack by a lix. They manage to kill it, but Raul discovers other Lix have appeared and killed Mary. Raul goes to wash himself and Kissoon pulls him into the loop. Tesla finds him missing and goes to look for him, but discovers he is totally gone and leaves for Palomo Grove.

In chapter eight, Grillo is in Buddy's memorial party, and meets a woman named Evelyn Quayle. Lamar comes to them and offers to take them on a tour. Halfway up the staircase, Grillo knows that something is wrong because Rochelle spots him and doesn't confront him about being present at the party. Grillo stops and tries to stop Eve from continuing onwards. Tommy-Ray and his dust-cloud of spirits arrive. The guards stop him, so he gets back into his vehicle and speeds away. The cloud of spirits follows him. Lamar knocks on the Jaff's door. Eve and Grillo enter with Lamar, and Lamar strikes Grillo in the face in front of the Jaff, who admits that what he's doing is very dangerous and could destroy all of them. At this revelation, Lamar lets Eve go and confronts the Jaff, who kills him with one of his terata.

In chapter nine, Jo-Beth awakens in the forest next to Howie, and knows that someone else is there. Howie wakes up and searches for a moment, but finds no one, but as they ready to go, Howie spots Benny Patterson, a television character. Howie discovers that he is surrounded by his father's hallucigenia. They tell him that the Jaff is on Coney Eye, getting ready to use the Art. Reluctantly, he agrees to lead them in a fight against the Jaff.

In chapter ten, Eve rushes downstairs to try and warn the guests about the Jaff, but most of them have gone completely passive. Many of the guests have begun to leave, and no one will assist her. She gets the attention of a young Rick Lobo, but Sam Sanansky, who has already been affected by the Jaff, interrupts and promises to take care of her. She goes to the piano player, a man named Doug Frankl, and convinces him to help. Sam tries to separate the two, and Eve manages to get outside and winds up in Lobo's limo, where she loses consciousness.

Tommy-Ray has begun attacking people with his spirits. They have become very difficult to control, and are destroying the town, but Death-Boy wants to find Jo-Beth. He goes to his mother's house, but she refuses to tell him anything about his sister's whereabouts, and the spirits kill her and destroy the house. Tommy-Ray flees gets into his car and drives past Witt, who asks where his dreams have all gone, and gets into the car with Tommy-Ray,



In chapter eleven, Grillo leads the Jaff back downstairs. They go into the lounge, and the Jaff has Grillo turn on the lights. As he puts his hand to the wall, Tesla, who has nearly reached the party, feels as though the entire world were tilting. The hallucigenia march toward the house, but they are too late. The Jaff tears reality away and opens a hole into the Quiddity, but suddenly becomes afraid and tears his hand away from the Gap, fleeing. Tommy-Ray, Witt, and the ghost-cloud arrive. Howie pulls Tesla and Grillo away from the rift, but Jo-Beth and Tommy-Ray are pulled inside and Howard jumps after them.

## Part 6, Chapters 7-11 Analysis

Tesla's rescue of the Shoal woman outside Kisson's hut does seem to confirm that he is at least an agent of the lad Uroburos, but its not well understood why he would help, or pretend to help, Tesla and the others against the Jaff. The Jaff himself becomes a very interesting character as he begins to suffer from major doubts concerning his life's quest, and the question that has been plaguing him, the "why" of his actions, becomes very important, as he prepares to enter the Quiddity. Much of his power and determination have been spent fighting Fletcher and his minions, and he is not only hesitant in his purpose, he ultimately realizes he's made a terrible mistake and flees from the disaster, badly injuring himself during his escape. The party did allow him to create a large number of terata, which fended off the hallucinogenia just long enough to open the way, losing both of his children to the rift, along with Fletcher's son Howie. It is interesting that while the Jaff fled from the Quiddity, all three of the Nuncio-created children entered it. Why Jo-Beth was next to the Jaff in the first place remains a mystery, but does suggest she was ultimately drawn to her father. Much like the Jaff, Tommy-Ray becomes plagued by self-doubt, especially after his transformation into Death-Boy, and his consistent failure to control the dead he has summoned. Tommy-Ray was portrayed as a weak character throughout the novel, and typified many of his father's least desirable traits, which the Nuncio is only able to magnify, not improve upon. Hence, Tommy-Ray's powerlessness to control his own army, as well as his desire to possess his sister, which ultimately led to the destruction of his mother and the home where he grew up. Grillo's new position in the story is somewhat unclear. The Jaff was taking guests up to draw terata from them, but its not known if one was pulled from Grillo, or if the Jaff had left him unharmed. Kisson has managed to take Raul's body into the loop, and will be very likely to make an appearance in the ape-man's body soon, but as with much that has occurred through this section of the novel, it's not clear what his role is. Each of the characters has gone through an important change that will have a significant outcome on the story itself, and as with the comedian Buddy Vance's house, chaos seems to be the new rule in Palomo Grove, so that many of the characters have new, unpredictable agendas, most notably the Jaff, who disappears quickly after he creates the disaster in the first place.



## Part 7, Chapters 1-4

### Part 7, Chapters 1-4 Summary

The three characters Howie, Tommy-Ray, and Jo-Beth enter the Quiddity. Tommy-Ray thinks that he is dying, but Jo-Beth reassures him until he admits to killing Joyce. At this, she swims away, abandoning him in a rage that changes her as a result of the Quiddity. She begins to search for Howie.

In chapter two, Abernethy asks Grillo to cover the story of what happened on Coney Eye, but Tesla wants to find the Jaff and discover a way to heal the Quiddity and the rift that he opened the night before. Witt joins them and offers to take them to the last place he saw them, in the house on Cherry Tree lane, but Grillo realizes that he probably went back down into the cave to hide. They check the entrance and see a dying terata next to it. Tesla and Witt go to get Hotchkiss in order to help them enter the cave, and Grillo decides to check on Ellen to make sure that she has left.

In chapter three, Tesla and Howie drift toward the Ephemaris, an extraordinary island on the Quiddity, separately. The middle has large plumes of smoke billowing out of it. Both of them sense that the Quiddity is changing somehow, and Howie meets an entertainment lawyer named Garret Byrne. The two of them climb the large central mountain, Howie does so in the hopes that a higher vantage point will more easily allow him to search for Jo-Beth.

Tommy-Ray feels the Quiddity's effect on him, then sense the lad Uroburos approaching from the other shore. From high on the mountain, Howie spots Jo-Beth, and descends, only to find that Garret has fallen to the ground. Garret tells him that the lad Uroburos are approaching. Howie retrieves Jo-Beth, and realizes the Quiddity has horribly deformed her, and that it is no longer the tranquil sea that it was. They make their way back into the ocean towards the rift.

In chapter four, Philip answers the door when Grillo visits Ellen. He tells Grillo that his mom only comes out at night now. Buddy is inside her room, only he is a hallucigenia. He returns to the others. Hotchkiss tells Tesla to call a man named D'Amour, who knows of the lad Uroburos. The two talk briefly, and while D'Amour knows a great deal about what's happening, he can do nothing to help her at present. She feels that the Jaff is their strongest bet for survival.

### Part 7, Chapters 1-4 Analysis

Despite the fact that the Quiddity has been discussed by many characters up to now, it still holds surprises and wonders for the reader. Its effects on those who enter it was unexpected, and it is written in such a way that gives the world a very miniaturized feeling, as though it is not very large in size, even if it is vastly important. It takes none of the characters very long to reach the Ephemaris, after all, and Howie and Tommy-



Ray can both feel the lad Uroburos approaching rapidly, very shortly after they enter the dream-sea. Tommy-Ray is all but destroyed as a human being, and it does not seem as though he will recover from his pettiness. Howie, however, has finally come to understand that the battle against the lad Uroburos is one that must be won if he is ever to enjoy a life with Jo-Beth. This presents another interesting problem for him, as Jo-Beth has become horribly deformed by her emotions while in the Quiddity. Howard's insistence that she allow herself to be saved seem based on guilt now rather than the true feelings of love he once had for her. He also seems to have struck on a similar idea to Grillo and Tesla's, that is, the Jaff will be an important character in the fight against the lad Uroburos, whom the Jaff never even knew existed until he readied his entry into the Quiddity, and even then, he only had the vaguest of fears, and a sudden loss of purpose. But, as Grillo Observed about him, he was clearly a man of greatness, capable of changing the world. The end of this story seems set to establish an unusual alliance between the Jaff and elements of the now deceased Fletcher in the forms of Grillo, Tesla, and Howie.





## Part 7, Chapters 5-8

### Part 7, Chapters 5-8 Summary

In chapter five, authorities arrive in Palomo Grove to find it almost completely deserted. Tesla, Hotchkiss, and Grillo enter the cave with Witt, even though Hotchkiss insists that the journey will be very dangerous. Grillo suffers from claustrophobia on the way down. They discover Buddy's corpse in front of a section of caverns flooded by water and Hotchkiss wants to turn back but Tesla insists they continue. They are suddenly caught by the current and Witt is killed, but as they escape the water, the Jaff emerges, now once more just Jaffe. He asks why they have come, and Tesla convinces him to come back with them to the surface to try and stop the lad Uroburos from invading to cosm.

In chapter six, a massive earthquake strikes Palomo Grove as the group exits the fissures. They reach a motel and regroup. Tesla explains that Kissoon is afraid of something called Trinity, and Hotchkiss goes to Lois' old bookstore to discover anything he can about the word. The rest make their way past the authorities into the house, finding it badly warped from the Jaff's actions. Tesla leads them past the police. Hotchkiss encounters Raul at the bookstore, who tells him that he must find Tesla. Meanwhile, Tesla and the Jaff enter the rift, and the Jaff tries to close it, but fails as the lad Uroburos grow nearer.

In chapter seven, Hotchkiss discovers that Trinity is the name of the location where the first atom-bomb was dropped. He goes to the parking lot, but instead heads to the pet-store when he discovers animals roaming free in the parking lot. There he discovers the stores owner, Elizando, dead on the floor, and is himself attacked and killed by lix as he hears Raul laughing from the back of the store.

Tesla comes out of the house and tells Grillo that the hole is opening again. Grillo leaves to give Abernethy the story, but Tesla stays behind to find a way to destroy the rift. Grillo goes to the mall and finds Hotchkiss dying. He tells him the importance of Trinity, and Grillo returns to Tesla to give her the information, which Tesla realizes she can use to destroy the rift. Raul's body appears, possessed by Kissoon. He begins to fight Tesla, but stops long enough to taunt Jaffe in order to wake him, and Jaffe suddenly stabs him with the knife he once used to kill Homer. Tesla manages to pull the house into Kissoon's loop, and tells Grillo, Howie, and Jo-Beth to make their escape. With Kissoon dead, she waits for the atom bomb to go off, but it doesn't and she can now see the lad Uroburos, terrible creatures, approaching through the rift. She realizes that Raul's spirit is still keeping the loop open, and convinces him to let go and join her in her body. The atom bomb destroys the rift and the lad Uroburos just as they reach the edge of the Cosm.

In chapter eight, Grillo and the others escape back into real time. They head back to Palomo Grove, but it is completely sealed off by authorities. They stay nearby to observe, but the town continues to suffer from aftershocks. Grillo ignores many calls



from Abernethy, believing Tesla dead and grieving for her loss, but is stunned one afternoon by her reappearance. She tells him that Raul is inside her body now, and that the lad are far from finished. She is going with D'Amour back to Omaha, where Jaffe received the mail that first made him aware of the Quiddity.

## **Part 7, Chapters 5-8 Analysis**

The conclusion of the novel does little more than establish that this will be a series of books, likely focusing on the characters of Grillo and Tesla/Raul as they join D'Amour in his search for knowledge in Omaha. Jaffe is almost certainly destroyed, as he opted to remain with his son Tommy-Ray, in the first act of genuine humanity he exhibited in the entire novel. It is interesting to note that it is this act which almost certainly led to his demise, though he did a great to to help fight against Kissoon and the lad Uroburos before the end. Jo-Beth and Howie leave for Chicago at the end, which suggests they are going to make an attempt to lead a normal life as the damage done to both of them by the Quiddity subsides the longer they spend in reality. In essence, this section, and especially the final chapter, does more to open new possibilities than it does to conclude the entire progression of the story, and for the most part, much of the narrative is left open-ended in an attempt to continue the story in later works.



# Characters

## Jaffe/The Jaff

Randolph Jaffe is a man of little ambition and less in the way of prospects until he discovers great secrets in letters that find their way into the dead letter room in Omaha, Nebraska. From these letters, he understands great secrets written in them, and comes to understand that the world everyone knows is false, and that there is a deeper world behind it all. He murders his boss, Homer, who becomes suspicious of his activities. From there Jaffe embarks on a journey across America that leads him to the ancient Shaman Kissoon, a man who promises to teach him the secrets of the Quiddity, but Jaffe immediately dislikes the man and sets about to entering the dream sea in his own way. He employs an evolutionary biologist named Fletcher, who uncovers the secrets of a fluid he calls the Nuncio, that automatically evolves whatever living tissue it comes into contact with. Jaffe manages to capture a vial of the substance, and turns into the Jaff, a creature of darkness who seeks nothing but power and the ability to enter the Quiddity. The two battle each other and wind up in Palomo Grove, where they inspire several children to be born. The Jaff fathers Tommy-Ray and Jo-Beth, and attempts to use them in his battle against Fletcher. Eventually, he succeeds in opening a path to the Quiddity, only to realize too late that he has invited a great disaster upon the world by doing so. In the end battle to protect the earth, he kills Kissoon and stays with his son, Tommy-Ray, as the atomic bomb goes off, destroying the rift.

## Fletcher

Fletcher is an evolutionary biologist originally employed by Jaffe in order to uncover the secrets of what makes life evolve. Though he agrees to the work, and discovers a great deal alongside Jaffe, he grows very suspicious of the other man's motives, and eventually attempts to destroy his discovery, called the Nuncio, which is a fluid that automatically evolves whatever life it touches. Unfortunately for Fletcher, the Nuncio has a will of its own, and shatters its vial to reach him and transform him into a godlike creature, who does battle with the Jaff after Jaffe undergoes a similar transformation. The two fight each other all across the country, finally crashing into a series of caves in a small California town named Palomo Grove. Fletcher has a son in the town, named Howard Katz, but Katz's family moves to Chicago to avoid scandal, and Fletcher is sealed under the earth alongside the Jaff for nearly twenty years until his son returns. Fletcher attempts to enlist Howie's help against the Jaff, but the young man has fallen in love with Jo-Beth and refuses to take part in the battle, leaving Fletcher no choice but to sacrifice himself in order to make the dreams and fantasies of the people of Palomo Grove a reality in order for them to do battle with the agents of the Jaff. Instead of Howie, Fletcher chooses Tesla to help him in the fight, and she carries on many of his intentions past his demise.



## Tesla

Tesla is a screenwriter and a good friend of Grillo. She is intelligent, willful, creative, and very capable. She arrives late in the story, but assumes great significance as she rapidly takes control of situations in need of positive direction. Fletcher senses her capabilities and sends her to retrieve the last vial of Nuncio, and even though she ultimately fails, she winds up with some of the Nuncio in her system and becomes even more powerful as a result. She distrusts Kissoon just the same as the Jaff, and it is through her leadership that the others manage to ultimately succeed in defeating the lad Uroburos invasion. She has a very close relationship with Grillo as their characters are introduced in the novel, and exhibits great empathy and understanding towards many of the other characters who are considered to be pathetic, for the most part. She even realizes that there is something still human in the Jaff, a fact which leads them to rescue him from the caves and allows him to redeem himself in a small way by killing Kissoon. At the end of the novel, Tesla is working with a man named Harry D'Amour, who is investigating the events and believes that the lad Uroburos are preparing for another attack on the cosm very soon. She also shares half of her body with Raul, who lost his in the fight with Kissoon.

## Howie

Howard Katz is the son of Trudi Katz, who returns to Palomo Grove to find out the truth about himself, as his mother never told him anything about his father. He is eighteen years old when he returns, and almost immediately meets and falls in love with Jo-Beth, Joyce's daughter, and also the daughter of the Jaff. Tommy-Ray is very jealous of his sister's feelings for Howie, but never makes any strong attempt to kill the boy. Howie is asked by his father, Fletcher, to help him in the fight against the Jaff, but Howie wants no part in their fight, and can think only of his feelings for Jo-Beth, who he tries to win over despite numerous obstacles. He is attacked by the Jaff and flees to his father, only to see Fletcher destroy himself in an attempt to battle the Jaff. Later, at the home of Buddy Vance, he enters the Quiddity with Jo-Beth and Tommy-Ray, only to be transformed by the sea until he is joined with his lover. After the incident, the two recover, but are separated by a newfound distance, despite the fact that they both still care for one another greatly.

## Jo-Beth

Jo-Beth is the daughter of Joyce and the Jaff, sister to Tommy-Ray. The two are very close to each other, but Tommy-Ray has a dark side that Jo-Beth often finds unsettling. She falls in love with Howie almost the instant that she meets him, but drives him off as she feels their love is in no small part to blame for the calamities that befall Palomo Grove. She also fears that they may be related. She later apologizes to Howie for not trusting him, but flees from him once again when the agents of Fletcher realize she is the Jaff's daughter and threaten to kill her. She enters the Quiddity with her brother and Howie, but abandons her brother when she discovers that he has killed their mother.



She is also horribly deformed by the negative emotions she experiences while inside the Quiddity, and even though she eventually heals, grows distant from Howie after the invasion of the lad Uroburos has been thwarted.

## Tommy-Ray

Tommy Ray is the son of Joyce and the Jaff. He takes to his father instantly, and hates Howie because of the feelings he and his sister share. Though he tries to please his father, he is commonly inept at doing so, and when he is sent to retrieve the Nuncio, he shoots Tesla, then falls and breaks the vial, becoming the Death-Boy. On his way back to Palomo Grove, the dead rise from cemeteries and follow him in a dust cloud, but he loses control of them and they kill his mother after she refuses to tell him where Jo-Beth has gone. He is abandoned in the Quiddity by his sister, and dies at the end of the novel with his father, who comes to comfort him over his loss.

## Grillo

Grillo is an investigative reporter who arrives in Palomo Grove to cover the death of Buddy Vance, but he soon discovers that something far more interesting and sinister is happening in the town. He is very close to Tesla, who arrives in Palomo Grove to help him cover the story, and he stays with her as she continues to fight against the Jaff and then the lad Uroburos.

## Kissoon

Kissoon was once a member of the order of the Shoal, a group of humans who guarded the shores of the Quiddity, but he murdered all other members except for one, and joined forces with the lad Uroburos as they sought to enter the cosm. Unfortunately, during his plot to kill the other Shoal, he accidentally shed blood in a loop he created in time, which caused him to become stuck in the loop until he could find a suitable and willing person to donate their live body. He first encounters Jaffe, who rejects him quickly, but nearly manages to convince Tesla to give him her body, but Tesla rescues Mary, the other surviving member of the Shoal, who tells her the truth about Kissoon. Ultimately, Kissoon takes control of Raul's body and leaves him in the loop in his place. Kissoon is killed in the final battle by Jaffe, with the same knife that was once used to kill Homer. He is described as incredibly ill-mannered, and can create creatures called lix through extremely foul practices.

## Hotchkiss

Hotchkiss is the father of Carolyn, the member of the League of Virgins who gave birth to twins with only one surviving birth. She killed the second child shortly thereafter, but Hotchkiss remained in the town of Palomo Grove, expecting events to resume that would give him answers about what happened to his daughter. He is killed by Kissoon



and his Lix while trying to discover the meaning of Trinity, but manages to tell Grillo the significance of the word before he dies.

## Raul

Raul is an ape-man that Fletcher evolved. He served as Fletcher's servant while the scientist was at the mission, then served Tesla in Fletcher's stead once she came to retrieve the last vial of Nuncio. He saves Tesla's life by placing her near the Nuncio's last dregs. Eventually, Kisson takes him into the loop and convinces him to allow him to use his body, which leaves him floating around the loop as a spirit. Tesla finds him there and pulls him into her body in order to save him, and the novel ends with the two in her.

## Joyce

Joyce is the mother of Tommy-Ray and Jo-Beth. She is very religious, and very secretive about their birth and the League of Virgins. She eventually warms up to Howie, but is killed by her son, Tommy Ray, when she refuses to tell him where Jo-Beth has gone.

## Carolyn

Carolyn is a member of the League of Virgins who gives birth to twins, but one of them dies in childbirth. She kills the other child and herself shortly thereafter. She is the daughter of Hotchkiss, who remains in Palomo Grove.

## Arleen

Arleen is another member of the League of Virgins. She cannot have children, and goes insane after the incident in the flood water.

## Trudi

Trudi is Howie's mother and a member of the League of Virgins. She moves to Chicago after Howie is born, and Howie returns to Palomo Grove after she dies.

## Witt

Witt is a young boy who follows the League of Virgins and witnesses what happens to them in the flood water. As an adult, he is a real estate agent and briefly encounters Tommy-Ray and the Jaff. He helps the main characters try to save Palomo Grove, but is killed in the cave as they search for Jaffe.



## **Buddy**

Buddy Vance is a somewhat famous comedian who dies in the cave after it breaks open. The Jaff uses this as a means of gathering celebrities at his house and using them to create his monsters.

## **Ellen Nguyen**

Ellen was Buddy's housekeeper and mistress for five years. She gives Grillo very useful information. She is also Philip's mother.

## **Philip**

Philip Nguyen is the son of Ellen and Buddy Vance. He shows Grillo a picture of something he calls the Balloon Man, which later helps fight Jaffe's monsters at Buddy's mansion.

## **Homer**

Homer was Jaffe's supervisor at the post office, who originally gave him the job of sorting through dead mail. Jaffe kills him after Homer takes him off the task.

## **Lois**

Lois is the owner of a bookstore and employes Jo-Beth. She gives Howard important information about his origins and Jo-Beth's.

## **D'Amour**

Harry D'Amour is a psychic who Hotchkiss refers to. He talks briefly to Tesla about the Shoal, and at the end of the novel is working with her to prevent another invasion from the lad Uroburos.



# Objects/Places

## Terata

The terata are monsters created by the Jaff to fight Fletcher. They are described as horrifying, and seem to take different shapes, as they are made from the worst fears of people.

## Hallucigenia

The hallucigenia are fantasies brought to life by Fletcher to fight the Jaff. They take whatever bodily forms of the thoughts used by Fletcher to create them.

## Letters

Jaffe discovers the secret show by reading dead letters in Nebraska, which causes him to embark on his quest in the first place.

## Lix

The lix are snakelike creatures created by Kissoon. The shaman uses them to bully and murder people who stand in his way.

## Nuncio

The Nuncio is a fluid discovered by Fletcher that causes living tissue to evolve.

## Cross Medallion

Jaffe also discovers a strange cross medallion in the dead letter room that he takes with him and eventually shows to Tesla.

## Knife

Jaffe kills both Homer and Kissoon with the same letter opener, having carried it with him the entire time he fought against Fletcher.

## Quiddity

The Quiddity is the sea of dreams, described as the center of all thought.





## **Ephemeris**

Ephemeris is an island on the Quiddity that hosts the Great and Secret Show, and is a place of immense power.

## **Iad Uroburos**

The Iad Uroburos are described as creatures of insufferable darkness. They are never seen, but their silhouettes are covered with pestilence, and they are gigantic in stature.

## **Trinity**

Trinity is the location of the first atomic bomb detonation and where Kisson decided to create his loop in time.

## **Omaha, Nebraska**

Omaha is roughly at the center of the United States, and is where Jaffe began to discover the secret letters.

## **Palomo, California**

Palomo is a small town in Southern California that is wracked by chaos from Fletcher and the Jaff.

## **Coney Eye**

Coney Eye is the hilltop on which rests Buddy Vance's house.

## **The Mission**

The mission is in Mexico, and houses the experiments of Fletcher as he sought out the Nuncio.

## **The Cave**

Fletcher and the Jaff fall into a cave and are sealed there almost twenty years.



## **The Shoal**

The Shoal are a group of shamans, now all dead, who once protected the Quiddity from the lad Uroburos.

## **Chicago**

Howie originally comes from Chicago, and returns to Palomo Grove to discover where he comes from.

## **The Cosm**

The cosm is the normal universe inhabited by humans.

## **The Metacosm**

The metacosm lies across the Quiddity from the cosm, and is the home of the evil lad Uroburos.



# Themes

## Crossroads

Much of the novel concerns itself with a crossroads of some kind or another, as when Jaffe realizes that he is at the crossroads of America while in Omaha, Nebraska, and realizes that the dead letter room is a great source of knowledge and understanding. In that same room, he obtains a medallion in the shape of a cross, and understands it to also be a representation of a kind of crossroads. The battle between Fletcher and the Jaff occurs when evil crosses paths with good, and continues for a great deal of time in this fashion, and it is interesting to note, that once Fletcher dies, the Jaff abandons his designs on the Quiddity shortly thereafter, becoming less evil and more humanized once he realizes he has made a terrible error. The Jaff explains the Medallion to Tesla near the end of the novel, and promises to help her if she can understand its meaning. She discovers, with a bit of thinking, that it represents evolution on one axis, and the Cosm and Metacosm on the other. At first she mistakes the central figure for humans, but quickly realizes instead that it is the Quiddity, which is itself a crossroads that represents the nexus of all things. Thus, in the novel, Crossroads represent centers of power and knowledge, and are sought out by both sides of the conflict, especially the lad Uroburos once the way to the cosm has been opened by the Jaff.

## Good and Evil

The idea of Good against Evil represents itself over and over again in the novel, in characters such as Jaffe and Fletcher, and their children, and finally Tesla and the others against the lad Uroburos. The two sides battle each other constantly, but are never present in absolutes, with the possible exception of the lad Uroburos. Jaffe is portrayed as primarily evil, but his primary goal, as he eventually states it, is to use whatever power he obtains to find answers about why things are the way that they are. Fletcher, portrayed as a good man, is afflicted by a mescaline addiction before Jaffe employs him, and is constantly portrayed as being weak and unable to stop the Jaff. He also engages in acts of evil in order to stop the Jaff from gaining the upper hand, and his creations shatter the lives of the people he gleans them from. At the same time, while the Jaff is evil, he prefers to leave people mostly intact after he creates his monsters from them, and after he opens the rift to the Quiddity, realizes that he is guilty of a terrible mistake in doing so. He also helps Tesla and the others as they fight against the lad Uroburos. These actions and character flaws all complicate the theme of good versus evil in ways that are typically left simple, and these complications add a great deal of depth and dimension to the novel that would otherwise be missing.



## Family

The bonds of family are strong in the novel, especially between Joyce, Jo-Beth, and Tommy-Ray. These bonds lead each of the characters to many of their actions, as when Howie returns to Palomo Grove in the first place to discover more about his past, or when Jo-Beth rejects him for fear of upsetting her mother greatly. Though Tommy-Ray eventually destroys his connection with his mother and then sister, his bond with the Jaff is very strong, and he commits many evil acts to convince the Jaff of his worthiness, going so far as to become the Death-Boy in an attempt to impress him. Hotchkiss remains in Palomo Grove in the hopes of one day better understanding what happened to his daughter. Fletcher expects Howie to follow his quest against the Jaff out of this family bond, and still protects his son after he is rejected by him. Most surprisingly of all, at the end of the novel, Jaffe decides to remain with his son, Tommy-Ray, in order to comfort him after Tommy-Ray has failed at everything. This deep parental instinct comes as something of a surprise, but Jaffe has once again become human, after all, and with that humanity comes a strengthening of the familial bonds.

# Style

## Point of View

The point of view is third person, and follows the thoughts and perceptions of almost every character in the book, at one point or another, sometimes going so far as to switch points of view in the middle of a chapter. This form of narration is usually difficult to follow, but Barker is a skilled writer who embeds subtle but effective cues into the narrative shifts that make them work splendidly for the most part. The narrative does remove itself from all character point of view several times in order to describe larger forces at play, and these are often the most stunning passages in the work, though they do tend to condense large periods of time. This technique works well, as the story is somewhat complicated and depends on the interactions between all kinds of characters and situations, and would have been far more difficult to do without its braided quality. There is a solid balance of internal thoughts, dialogue, and exposition, so that the reader is never left hanging for an explanation, nor is the reader unnecessarily bogged down by difficult passages that do little to progress the story. In many ways, it is one of the greatest strengths of the story itself, as Clive Barker is renowned for his abilities at this kind of storytelling. It is not something done successfully by many authors, but is made great use of here, and is used to arrange scenarios in ways that other forms of narration could not.

## Setting

The book begins in 1969, in Omaha, Nebraska, inside the dead letter room of the post office there. The employees of the post office are crass and immoral, and Jaffe finds solitude inside the room. He travels across the United States after his brief employment there, finding himself at one point near Los Alamos, New Mexico, a place described as desolate and abandoned. From there, he travels to a mission in Mexico, described as beautiful and in the middle of a jungle.

Palomo Grove is a city located in Southern California near Los Angeles. It is small, only slightly urbanized, and though it has a small tourism industry, in many ways it is typical of any small-town in the U.S. Its inhabitants all know each other at first, though this changes after the League of Virgins. After the massive scandal that draws national attention, many of the townsfolk leave for new places, and wealthy inhabitants crop up, including Buddy Vance, who comes to own a mansion on Coney Eye, a hilltop inside the town.

The Quiddity is described as glistening water, that changes the people who float in it. In the middle of this dream sea, is the isle of Ephemeris, home to a gigantic volcano and wondrous structures that aren't clearly natural or man-made.



At the end of the book, the characters enter Trinity together, which is a place of decay and desolation inhabited by Kissoon. Strange creatures called lix crawl in the sand there, and one of the buildings houses the corpses of the other members of the Shoal.

## Language and Meaning

The language of this novel tends to reflect whatever character is currently responsible for the narration. The dialogue and exposition is all written in a way that is easy to understand by the reader, with an important exception that occurs at times when an omniscient point of view is adopted. The language during these passages tends to remain simple, but the passage of time can be somewhat obscured, and it is not always clear through the language that events are being described in chronological order. At certain points, a conclusion is reached, then the narrative backs up to explain how this conclusion came about, and this can be confusing, especially when keeping track of the League of Virgins and their offspring. However, once the reader gets used to the style, it is not a hindrance to the comprehension of the novel. This language, does much to add to the horror and suspense of the novel.

The dialogue does subtly distinguish one character from another, as the characters' personality and background often come through clearly in their speech patterns. This helps to distinguish between a great number of important characters who would otherwise be complicated to follow in the presence of each other, such as Grillo and Howie, or Witt and Hotchkiss. The most easily distinguished characters or those of Fletcher and the Jaff, who have very distinctive patterns of speech, owing to their supernatural origins.

## Structure

The novel is divided into seven parts, each titled with the subject or event it describes. Each of the sections are further divided into a number of chapters, that can range to just a few pages to over thirty, depending on the events being described. Each of the chapters covers a distinct event, and ends naturally with the event's conclusion, and events are told in roughly chronological order, although large portions of time are given to pass in just a few sentences every now and then.

The novel has one major plot with a few plots of lesser importance, although the romance between Howie and Jo-Beth does play a significant role in the novel as a whole. The major plot involves the characters' attempts to stop the Jaff from opening a rift into the Quiddity, but is set into motion when Howie first meets Jo-Beth and the two kiss for the first time. This allows the Jaff and Fletcher to escape, and eventually allows the Jaff to gather enough strength to open the hole to the Quiddity. Other subplots include Witt's attempt to make sense of his life after the League of Virgins, and Kissoon's quest to find a suitable body to use that will allow him to leave the loop.

## Quotes

"Other men rose from nothing, didn't they? Messiahs, presidents, movie stars. They pulled themselves up out of the mud the way the fishes had done when they'd decided to go for a walk." Part One, Chap. 1, p.11

"There were mysteries to be unveiled, and powers to be seized, and when he was King of the World he'd pull down the suburbs (and the sun if he could) and make the world over in a hot darkness where a man might finally get to know the secrets of his own soul." Part One, Chap. 2, p. 22

"The old man's manner—his arrogant little smile, his shrugs, the way he half closed his lids as though using all his gaze on his guest would be a waste of eyesight—all of this made Jaffe think of Homer. They could have been two halves of a double-act; the lumpen boor and the wily old goat." Part One, Chap. 3, p. 27

"Fletcher was too well versed in the ambiguities of matter to believe that the total destruction of anything was possible. Things couldn't be undiscovered. But if the change that he and Raul wrought on the evidence was thorough enough it was his belief that nobody would easily reconstruct the experiment he'd conducted here in the wilds of Baja California." Part One, Chap. 4, p. 32

"He felt myriad tiny brushes against his skin as he stepped forward, as though he'd walked into a dense cloud of invisible gnats. The sensation should have warned him against tackling Fletcher, but he was too eager for the Nuncio to take notice." Part One, Chap. 5, p. 42

"Even the most crackpot prophets, the kind who annually predicted Armageddon, didn't know how to interpret the shaking of America's entrails. They knew something of consequence was afoot, and had Jaffe still been in the Dead Letter Room in the Omaha Post Office he would have discovered countless letters flying back and forth, filled with theories and suppositions." Part One, Chap. 6, p. 47

"Joyce felt the warmth next. It ran over her skin and inside her too, like a swallow of Christmas brandy, coating her innards. The sensation distracted her from Trudi's splashing, and indeed from her own jeopardy." Part Two, Chap. 1, p. 61

"The newspaper reports about the scandalous secret life of small-town beauty Arleen Farrell were as explicit as the legal departments of those journals would permit, but the details had to be left for rumor to supply." Part Two, Chap. 2, p. 74

"Whether he entirely believed Joyce's story or not Farrell was as good as his word. He and Hotchkiss rapidly raised sufficient donations from around town to have the entrance to the caves sealed up. Most of the contributors signed a check simply to get Farrell off their doorstep." Part Two, Chap. 3, p. 82



"The families were still very much a part of the Grove's history; yet though William was on nodding acquaintance with them all—the McGuires, Jim Hotchkiss, even Jocelyn Farrell—there was never a word exchanged between them" Part Three, Chap. 1, p. 85

"She took him in with a glance. His mouth was half open. He wore gold-rimmed spectacles. There was a book in his hand. It's owner's name she didn't know, couldn't know. She'd never set eyes on him before. Yet he watched her with the same recognition she knew was on her own face." Part Three, Chap. 2, p. 90

"Buddy was fifty-four. Jogging made him feel twice that. But too many of his contemporaries had died on him of late, his sometime agent Stanley Goldhammer being the most recent departure, and they'd all died of the same excesses that he was still thoroughly addicted to." Part Three, Chap. 3, p. 95

"The Grove surprised him. It had all the distinguishing marks of a town created on paper—the central Mall, the cardinal point villages, the sheer order of the streets—but there was a welcome diversity in the styles of houses, and—perhaps because it was in part built on a hill—a sense that it might have secret reaches." Part Three, Chap. 4, p. 117

"It was no use listening to Momma, she wasn't going to provide anything but calls to prayer." Part Three, Chap. 5, p. 120

"As outside, so in: a temple to fun. Every inch of the hallway was hung with panels from all manner of Carnival rides: brilliantly colored advertisements for Tunnels of Love, Ghost Train Rides, Carousels, Freak Shows, Wrestling Shows, Gal Shows, Waltzes, Dippers, and Mystic Swings." Part Four, Chap. 1, p. 129

"The evening light had been smooth as apricot cream, but it had gone now. Darkness was very close. She could feel its approach—cancelling distance, silencing life—and it distressed her as it never had before." Part Four, Chap. 2, p. 134

"Tommy-Ray could have taken his father to literally hundreds of households, had he been able to read the minds behind the faces that he passed every day of his life." Part Four, Chap. 3, p. 146

"Her eyes went to the door, and he knew she was reciting a silent prayer to her Great White God that somebody open it and save her from this damn boy and his questions." Part Four, Chap. 4, p. 151

"The drawings, many of which had slipped from the comforter and were scattered underfoot, all seemed to picture the same bulbous character. Grillo went down on his haunches and picked on of them up." Part Four, Chap. 5, p. 155

"He stood like a fool at the closed door for several seconds, while the bolts and chains were put back in place on the opposite side. A more comprehensive defeat was scarcely imaginable." Part Four, Chap. 6, p. 158





"Rather than linger to measure the pool, he guessed at its dimensions, knowing his practiced eye was virtually as accurate as his tape. He was jotting the figures down when a ripple started in the center of the pool, crawling over the sluggish surface towards him." Part Four, Chap. 7, p. 170

"Tesla accepted a picture from the invalid to take back to Grillo, along with the best wishes of mother and son, then set out on the homeward journey, inventing stories as she went." Part Four, Chap. 8, p. 181

"Seeing Palomo Grove for the first time Fletcher had come close to despair. He had passed through towns like this aplenty in his months of warfare with the Jaff; planned communities that had every facility to feel; places that gave every impression of life but in truth had little or none." Part Four, Chap. 9, p. 182

"Sometimes a man was wrong. Born into ignorance, it was inevitable. But to perish for that ignorance, and brutally, seemed so unfair. Nursing his bloodied face, and half a dozen such complaints, Pastor John crawled across the kitchen to take refuge as far from the broken window—and what had broken it—as his trembling limbs could carry him." Part Four, Chap. 10, p. 190

"The Grove could have been a set for a post-holocaust movie, Tesla thought as she drove Grillo out towards the freeway: the streets were deserted in every direction." Part Four, Chap. 11, p. 198

"Any alcoholic would have recognized the behavior of the Grove the following morning. It was that of a man who'd been on a bender the night before and had to get up early the day after and pretend nothing untoward had happened." Part Five, Chap. 1, p. 213

"After years of attempting to hold the evil that had entered her house at bay, her failure, in the end, to do so, had somehow freed her. The worst had happened: what more was there to fear?" Part Five, Chap. 2, p. 218

"In the room they'd vacated the coffee cups trembled as though the mildest quake were underway. Dust crept across the table, disturbed by the motion of an almost invisible something which slid its wasted shoulders from the gloomiest corner of the room and drifted rather than walked towards the bedroom door." Part Five, Chap. 3, p. 225

"Upstairs, the Jaff turned this new and unexpected element in the game over, and judged it good. He had intended to pass himself off as Buddy—a trick all too easy, given that he'd drunk down the man's thoughts—to Rochelle only. In that form he'd come visiting two nights before, and found her drunk in her bed." Part Five, Chap. 4, p. 230

"The sun was slipping away now, but its deepening gold only served to enhance the sense that this was a haunted place. She negotiated the rubble as quietly as she could, for fear of disturbing its occupants, human or otherwise." Part Five, Chap. 5, p. 232

"Of all her friends in the Grove none represented the normality from which her life had departed more than Lois. For all her moral strictures she had a strong and simple faith



in what was good. In essence, she wanted the world a peaceful place, where children raised in love could in turn raise their children." Part Five, Chap. 6, p. 244

"His hands, touched by the Nuncio as it leapt, were clamped to his face, blocking eyes, nose, and mouth. It was like being screwed down in a coffin made for someone two sizes smaller than he." Part Five, Chap. 7, p. 253

"If he'd needed any further proof that what had happened at the Mission was not the invention of a crazyman, he got it when he pushed open the gate and wandered in. There was no wind to stir the grass, which grew to knee height in several places, where tombs had been left untended. But there was movement there nevertheless. He advanced a few more paces, and saw human figures rising into a view from a dozen places. They were dead." Part Six, Chap. 1, p. 272

"She spoke as she'd never spoken to Momma before, with a kind of rage in her tone which was in part response to Momma's calling her a liar, and in part against herself for not being able to think her way through the blur of the previous night." Part Six, Chap. 2, p. 281

"He was about to say no, he didn't know how this or any other thing worked any longer, but that after this conversation his self-esteem was enfeebled enough without beating it to its knees with further confessions." Part Six, Chap. 3, p. 289

"As they'd driven back up the coast she'd done her best to explain to him the vision she'd had while the Nuncio had been healing her, both as a way to fix its details in her head and to keep a recurrence at bay by coaxing the memories out of the sealed cell of her inner life and into shared experience." Part Six, Chap. 4, p. 292

"The passengers in the limos were aware of the absence of admirers. Even though many of them had no desire to be recognized it offended their egos being greeted with such indifference." Part Six, Chap. 5, p. 306

"Somewhere down there in the dark his father had waited and waited, holding on to his enemy like death itself. Now there was only the comedian down there, and from what he'd gathered the corpse would never be recovered." Part Six, Chap. 6, p. 309

"Mary Muralles had asked to be told Tesla's story before she told her own, and for all her quiet voice she spoke like a woman whose requests were seldom denied. This one certainly wasn't." Part Six, Chap. 7, p. 312

"Grillo found the atmosphere unnerving, and so, clearly, did Evelyn. She took his arm as they ran the gauntlet of whispers and followed Lamar out the other side to the stairs." Part Six, Chap. 8, p. 323

"The figure was that of Benny Patterson, whom Howie had last seen in the street outside Lois Knapp's house, calling him. There was no sunny smile on his face now. Indeed, his face was somehow blurred, his features like a picture taken by a palsied photographer." Part Six, Chap. 9, p. 333



"She tried to protest, but her mouth wouldn't make the words between gasps. She was half-carried to the door, trying to explain that she couldn't go, couldn't leave Grillo, but unable to make her point clear." Part Six, Chap. 10, p. 340

"The Jaff's fingers entered the solid wall, and clutched it. Now he took a step back, and a second step, pulling the substance of reality towards him as though it were made of sun-softened candy." Part Six, Chap. 11, p. 351

"Presidents, messiahs, shamans, popes, saints, and lunatics had attempted—over the passage of a millenium—to buy, murder, drug, and flagellate themselves into Quiddity." Part Seven, Chap. 1, p. 359

"Dawn showed them what William Witt had already described: a town practically deserted, its occupants fled. A pack of domestic dogs roved the streets, having either been turned loose or escaped from owners whose minds were on the business of panicked departure." Part Seven, Chap. 2, p. 373

"What's on Epheremis? He'd asked, imagining some paradise island. His father's reply hadn't been particularly illuminating. The Great and Secret Show, he'd said, an answer which begged a dozen more questions. Now, as the island came into view ahead of him, he wished he'd pursued his questions with more persistence." Part Seven, Chap. 3, p. 376

"At the sound of his name the man raised his head. Grillo hadn't seen more than the last remnants of Fletcher's army, but it had been enough to recognize the look they'd had when their half-life began to run out. He saw that look now." Part Seven, Chap. 4, p. 388

"When she'd first wandered through is streets, message-carrying for Grillo, she'd plotted its fictional overthrow." Part Seven, Chap. 5, p. 397

The facade of the house resembled a cake that had been left out all night in a heavy rain, the whole thing softened and thrown out of whack." Part Seven, Chap. 6, p. 424

"When she looked back towards the schism she understood what he meant by darkness. Clots of it were emerging, carried out on the waves like gobs of tar the size of boats, then rising up into the air above the desert." Part Seven, Chap. 7, p. 451

"There had been no paucity of witnesses to Tesla's relocation of a part of Coney Eye. Observers and photographers both parked on the Hill and hovering above it saw the facade grow smoky, become transparent and finally vanish entirely. With a portion of its structure summarily removed the entire house succumbed to gravity." Part Seven, Chap. 8, p. 460



## Topics for Discussion

What draws Jaffe to the Quiddity? Why does he want to enter it? Why does he want to control it? What does he mean when he says that he was originally interested in the crossroads?

Discuss Tesla and Grillo's relationship. Are they simply friends, or is it more complicated than that? Why does Tesla go to meet him in Palomo Grove?

What about Kisson reminds Jaffe of Homer? Do the two characters share any obvious similarities? If the Jaff has carried the knife he used to kill Homer all of this time, why didn't he try to use it against Fletcher?

Are Howie and Jo-Beth meant to be, romantically speaking? Discuss how their relationship evolves throughout the novel.

Consider Tommy-Ray and his transformation into the Death-Boy. What about this transformation makes it into such a disaster (consider the explanation of what the Nuncio does to people in the first place)?

Why does Howie consistently reject his father's cause? What causes him to lead the fight against the Jaff at Coney Eye? Consider Howie's character progression and how both his father and Jo-Beth change him throughout the course of the novel.

William Witt appears often throughout the novel, though he does very little to help the story progress. Discuss his possible importance in the narrative and explain his role with respect to the other protagonists.

What changes the Jaff's mind about entering the Quiddity? Does he ever explain why he ran away from it? Does he simply agree to help Tesla because she solves the mystery of the crucifix, or does something else drive him to help?

What makes Joyce change her mind about Howie? How does the way that she treats him differ through the book?

When Fletcher sacrifices himself, the people of Palomo Grove are said to all have changed. In what way does Fletcher's sacrifice change them? Is it for good or for bad? Explain.

Although he only makes a brief appearance in the novel, Buddy Vance is a character of great importance. Describe his significance and what the reader knows about him based on what characters observe about both him and his mansion on Coney Eye.

Why does Kisson choose Trinity, New Mexico, for the location of his loop in time? What is different about the way Jaffe meets him and the way that Tesla meets him?



Why does the Jaff use the party as a way to create his army? Is there something special about its attendees he might be drawn to? Explain.

How does the Quiddity effect the people in it, and what happens to Jo-Beth and Howie as a result of their time together, both physically and mentally?

Describe the island of Ephemeris. Who is on the island? Does Howie learn anything important from his time there?