

Heart-Shaped Box Study Guide

Heart-Shaped Box by Joe Hill

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Plot Summary

Heart-Shaped Box is the debut novel by Joe Hill. In the novel, 54-year-old heavy metal music legend Judas Coyne buys a ghost (and the suit it supposedly inhabits) online as an addition to his collection of macabre items. After the suit and the ghost are delivered, Jude learns that it is the spirit of Craddock McDermott, the stepfather of one of Jude's ex-girlfriends named Anna McDermott, who supposedly committed suicide shortly after Jude broke up with her. Craddock has sworn to kill Jude and anyone who helps him; he makes Jude's personal assistant hang himself, and is almost able to make Jude kill his live-in girlfriend Georgia and then himself. They are able to contact the spirit of Jude's ex-girlfriend Anna who eventually helps them to destroy Craddock, but not before Jude and Georgia learn how much they love and need each other.

One day Judas Coyne's personal assistant Danny stops him as he is walking past his office in Jude's large farmhouse in New York. He asks Jude if he wants to buy a ghost on the Internet. Jude, who has been a superstar in the heavy metal rock and roll world for over three decades and has been in semi-retirement for the last few years, has a large collection of macabre items and has Danny buy the ghost – and the old-fashioned suit that it supposedly inhabits – on the spot. The suit is delivered a few days later and Jude's 23-year-old live-in girlfriend Georgia removes it from the black heart-shaped box it arrives in. She is immediately pricked in the thumb by what she thinks is a pin in the fabric, although Jude can find no pins when he searches the suit.

Jude is awakened by a noise at 3:00 the next morning and finds the ghost of an old man sitting in the hallway outside his bedroom, wearing the suit. When Danny arrives at his office Jude has him find out who sold him the ghost on the Internet and get her on the telephone. The woman is named Jessica Price and she tells Jude that the ghost is the spirit of her stepfather Craddock McDermott, who had also been the stepfather of Jude's previous girlfriend Anna McDermott. Jessica says that Anna killed herself after Jude threw her out and that she (Jessica) had tricked Jude into buying her stepfather Craddock's ghost on the Internet. Before he died Craddock - who had been a hypnotist and spiritualist - swore to kill Jude and anyone who helped him, and now that Jude has bought and paid for the ghost and the suit they are his forever.

Later that day Georgia tells Jude that he needs to get rid of the suit because it stinks. As they are walking to their bedroom Jude sees the dead man in the hallway again, although Georgia doesn't see him. Jude finds the reeking suit laid out on the bed next to where Georgia had been sleeping, even though neither of them had taken it out of the heart-shaped box. When Jude goes through the pockets to see if something has crawled in and died, he finds a picture of himself and Anna that hadn't been there before. He tells Georgia about the ghost and his conversation with Jessica Price, then sees that Georgia's thumb looks to be seriously infected and says he will have Danny make a doctor's appointment for her.

Danny is not in his office when Jude reaches it, but he finds a frightening email that appears to have been written to him by the dead man on Danny's computer. He then



sees Danny sitting in his car in the driveway looking dazed, and when Jude goes to him Danny says that he saw the ghost and that he won't be coming back. Jude plays with his German shepherds Bon and Angus for a while after Danny leaves, then goes into the barn/garage. He sits in the 1965 Mustang he'd restored while Anna lived with him and turns on the radio. As he drifts off to sleep he sees Craddock's ghost sitting next to him smiling, and a short time later Georgia pulls him out of the car and tells him that she thought he was dead; he'd fallen asleep with the car running and the barn door closed. Jude has no memory of starting the Mustang, and realizes that Craddock's ghost had almost made him kill himself without realizing he was doing it. As Jude is recovering Georgia burns the suit thinking it will get rid of the ghost, although Jude believes that Craddock makes her burn it so that he could not sell it – and Craddock's ghost – to someone else.

Jude awakens just after 3:00 the next morning, realizes that Georgia is not in bed, and sees a blue Chevy pickup that he is certain belongs to the dead man idling in his driveway. The telephone rings and when he answers it Danny tells him that he is dead; Danny says that the ghost made him hang himself, and that he will do the same to Jude because it is impossible not to listen to the ghost's voice. After he hangs up Jude looks for Georgia and finds her in his studio. Georgia is holding a gun and seems to be in a trance. Jude takes the gun from her and throws it across the room, but Craddock's ghost speaks to him softly from inside his head and forces him to walk to where the gun landed. Craddock tells Jude to pick the gun up, shoot Georgia, and then shoot himself. As he bends to pick the gun up Jude hears his dogs Bon and Angus barking in their pen outside, and the sound breaks Craddock's spell over him. He runs outside to the dogs' pen and opens it just as Craddock catches up to him; as soon as they are free Angus and Bon – and a pair of ghostly 'shadow-dogs' that appear to be attached to them – attack Craddock. The shadow-dogs are able to hurt Craddock and eventually the dead man drives away in the blue pickup, and Jude realizes that Angus and Bon can help protect him and Georgia from the ghost. Jude packs the Mustang and a few hours later he, Georgia, and the dogs leave the farmhouse and head south towards Jessica Price's house in Florida.

Jude spots the blue pickup following them near dusk. He stops at a motel outside Fredericksburg, Virginia. When he awakens the next morning there is a tune running through Jude's head and he spends an hour writing a song in the bathroom so as not to wake Georgia. Jude and Georgia walk across the motel parking lot a short time later and have breakfast at a Denny's restaurant. After the waitress pours hot coffee on Georgia's hand – which is bandaged because of the infection in her thumb – she heads to the ladies room. Jude sees the blue pickup idling in the parking lot and rushes to the ladies room where he sees Georgia smash a mirror with her fist, then try to cut her throat with a shard of the glass. Jude rushes her out of the Denny's and as they make their way back to the motel Jude sees Craddock's pickup coming toward them. He pulls Georgia out of the way just as it crashes into a wall beside them. When looks back, Jude sees that the pickup has been replaced with a Jeep and that a dazed looking stranger is sitting behind the wheel.



Later that afternoon they stop at the home of Georgia's grandmother. While they are there Georgia finds an Ouija board and she and Jude are able to contact the spirit of Jude's ex-girlfriend, Anna McDermott. Anna says that she will try and help them stop Craddock, and Georgia promises that she will bring Anna through the Golden Door into the world of the living if she can. They leave the house after dinner and as they are driving Jude remembers letters Anna wrote to him after she'd left, and things she'd said via the Ouija board, and realizes that Anna didn't kill herself as everyone believed but had actually been murdered by Craddock McDermott.

They reach Jessica Price's house in the early hours of the morning and confront Jessica in her kitchen after her 12-year-old daughter Reese leaves for school. Jessica refuses to help them get rid of Craddock's ghost and as they are talking and fighting with her it becomes clear that she and Anna had both had sex with Craddock starting when they were children – Jessica willingly and Anna while under hypnosis – and that prior to his death Jessica had allowed Craddock to have sex with her own daughter, Reese. Reese returns home unexpectedly and comes into the kitchen with a gun. She shoots and kills Bon, then fires again accidentally and takes Jude's index finger off. As Georgia (who Jude calls Marybeth – her real name – for the rest of the novel) gets Jude and Angus back to the car, Jessica slams into the Mustang with her car and crushes Angus' back legs. The car still runs, and Jude tells Marybeth that they are going to his father's house in Louisiana. As Marybeth drives Jude has a vision of the last day Anna was alive and sees that Craddock murdered her after she threatened to expose what he had been doing to Reese.

They reach Jude's father's hog farm in Louisiana a few hours later and discover that Angus died of his injuries while they'd been driving. Jude has not been home in over thirty years, but he has never forgotten how his father Martin abused him and his mother when he'd been a child. Martin is now dying and rarely conscious and is being cared for Jude's aunt, Arlene Wade, a registered nurse. Jude is weak from the loss of blood, and the infection in Marybeth's thumb has somehow spread to both of her hands. Arlene sends Marybeth to rest in her room and takes Jude into the room where she is nursing his father and stitches up his wounded finger. Arlene leaves the house after Craddock shows her a news report on TV in which she is being wheeled out of the house on a coroner's stretcher, and a short time later Craddock appears in the room with Jude and his comatose father. Craddock tries to get Jude to kill Marybeth, but Jude is able to keep the dead man's voice out of his head by humming the tune he'd written in the motel. Craddock then possesses his father Martin's body and uses him to attack Jude with a straight razor.

Jude escapes into the kitchen where Marybeth is able to kill Martin, but not before he cuts her throat severely. Marybeth tells Jude to make the Golden Door and Jude draws a doorway in Marybeth's blood on the kitchen floor. After Marybeth climbs onto it the Golden Door opens and Anna comes up through a blindingly bright light and enters Marybeth's body. Together, Marybeth and Anna's spirit get hold of Craddock – who has left Martin's dead body – and pull him down through the Golden Door, which destroys him. Realizing that Marybeth wasn't dead when he'd last looked at her and finally understanding how much he loves and needs her, Jude goes through the Golden Door



after her. He finds himself in his Mustang with both Anna and Marybeth driving on the “night road” in the world of the dead, and Jude manages to pull Marybeth back into the world of the living. When Jude comes to Arlene Wade has returned and he and Marybeth are taken to the hospital, where they both make a full recovery.

Marybeth and Jude are married a year later and live a relatively quiet life at the farmhouse in New York. Shortly after their fifth anniversary Reese Price comes by the house. Now 18, Reese apologizes for shooting Jude, and says that her mother was sent to prison after police found pornographic pictures of Reese and her stepfather in the house on the day Jude and Marybeth had been there. She says that she sometimes dreams she is riding in a black car with her Aunt Anna, and Anna tells her that Jude had just been trying to help her that day. She then says that Anna is finally happy for the first time in her life and that she hopes Jude is happy, too.



Black Dog: Chapters 1 - 9

Summary

Heart-Shaped Box is a 2007 horror novel by Joe Hill. Soon after aging heavy metal rock legend Judas Coyne buys a ghost on the Internet he learns that what he has bought is actually the spirit of an ex-girlfriend's stepfather named Craddock McDermott who has sworn to kill him. In a very short period of time Craddock is able to make Jude's personal assistant commit suicide and almost make Jude kill his girlfriend Georgia and then himself. Realizing that Craddock has the power to take control of the minds of the living using just his voice, Jude and Georgia head south from Jude's home in New York to confront the woman who sold him the ghost and get her to make him stop chasing them. As they run from Craddock's malevolent spirit, Jude and Georgia discover a love for each other that is deeper than anything they could have imagined and which will eventually extend from this world into the world of the dead. Heart-Shaped Box won the 2007 Bram Stoker Award for Best First Novel.

Black Dog: Chapter 1

One day as he is coming in from feeding his dogs Angus and Bon, Jude Coyne's personal assistant Danny Wooten stops him as he is walking past his office and asks if Jude is interested in buying a "ghost" that is being offered for sale on the Internet. Danny's office is located in Jude's home, a 110-year-old farmhouse in Piecliff, New York; although Jude has not recorded a heavy metal album in years there is still a steady demand for his time and the business of running Judas Coyne Incorporated requires that he have a full-time personal assistant. Jude has a collection of macabre items which range from sketches of the Seven Dwarfs done by John Wayne Gacy to a used hangman's noose, and so the idea of someone selling a ghost interests him. The ghost has been offered for sale on an online auction site; the woman who placed the ad claims that the ghost is her stepfather – a lifelong spiritualist – who died six weeks earlier and is attached to his "Sunday suit," which is also included. When Jude says he wants to buy it Danny tells him that the high bid thus far is \$80. Jude tells him to bid \$1,000 and seal the deal. As he is leaving Jude asks Danny how he found the "ghost" and Danny says that they got an email from the auction site about it, although he doesn't remember ever having done business with that site before.

Black Dog: Chapter 2

The suit is delivered early Saturday morning while Jude is outside with his dogs. He takes the UPS box into the kitchen and sets it on the counter while he starts cooking breakfast. Georgia, Jude's 23-year-old live-in "Goth" girlfriend, wanders into the kitchen complaining that the dogs woke her up, then notices the UPS box on the counter and opens it. Inside is a heart-shaped box and when she opens that she finds an old-fashioned black suit inside, and after a moment Jude remembers the online auction. He tells Georgia that he bought a ghost on the Internet and the person who sold it believed



that it was attached the suit. Georgia asks if Jude is planning to wear the suit and when he says no she says she might wear it herself, then grimaces and shouts as her right thumb is stuck by a pin. After Georgia leaves the kitchen Jude carefully feels around the suit but can't find any pins in it, then folds it and puts it back in the heart-shaped box.

Black Dog: Chapter 3

Jude puts the box in his closet and decides not to think about it.

Black Dog: Chapter 4

That evening around 6:00, Jude hears noise coming from Danny's office and finds the radio is on, even though he is certain that it had been off when Danny left for the day an hour before. The radio is tuned to a heavy metal station that plays Jude's music constantly and as he hits the power button to switch it off he hears the station's weatherman say, "The dead pull the living down. Down into the cold." He turns the radio back on, but the weatherman is gone and the DJ is introducing a song. Jude switches the radio off and is wondering what the weatherman had been talking about when the phone rings. He checks the caller ID and sees the call is from his father's phone, although he knows it's not his father. When he answers his aunt Arlene, who has been caring for Martin Cowzynski – his 85-year-old father – for several years, updates him on Martin's condition: Martin hasn't said a word in two months, he stares off into space whenever he is awake, and in the last few days he has stopped eating. The doctor visited yesterday and said that it looked like Martin had another small stroke. Arlene says that they can put a feeding tube in if Jude wants, but that she thinks he's ready to let go and die. Jude tells her not to put a tube in if she thinks that's best. Arlene then asks if Jude will be coming home to Louisiana to see Martin before he dies, and Jude says no. He then asks if it will be hard for his father and Arlene says no, he probably won't suffer, and then asks Jude if he is disappointed.

Black Dog: Chapter 5

A short time later Jude goes into the bathroom to soak his feet and finds Georgia leaning over the sink, sucking the thumb that had been pricked by the pin in the suit. When Jude looks at it he sees the tip of the thumb is swollen and has a soft-looking white sore on it. Jude tells her that she ought to put something on it before it festers and rots, and then says that there is less work for pole dancers who are visibly disfigured. Georgia leaves, and while part of Jude is sorry he said it, he doesn't go after her to apologize.

Black Dog: Chapter 6

Jude is awakened at 3:00 AM. At first he thinks that one of the dogs is in the house, but when he gets up and looks out the bedroom window he sees them in their indoor/outdoor pen attached to the heated barn. Jude hears a floorboard creak in the hallway outside the bedroom followed by what he thinks is a sigh and grabs a Dobro guitar for protection, but when he opens the bedroom door the hallway is empty. Jude searches all the rooms upstairs and finds nothing, then searches the downstairs with



the same result. He heads back upstairs and when he is almost to the bedroom Jude sees the ghost of an old man sitting in an antique Shaker chair against the wall in the hallway. He looks away quickly, trying to convince himself that he has not seen the ghost, but when Jude looks back the ghost is still there. The old man's head is bowed, and he is wearing the suit that had come earlier in the heart-shaped box. Jude hurries towards the bedroom and as he passes the Shaker chair his leg brushes against the old man's knee, and the ghost lifts his head. Jude continues to the bedroom quickly, closes the door behind him, and gets into bed. He stares at the ceiling as Georgia sleeps restlessly beside him.

Black Dog: Chapter 7

Jude heads downstairs in his bathrobe just after 9:00 the next morning and finds Danny already in his office. Jude tells him that the 'ghost came' and asks Danny to track down the phone number of the woman who sold the ghost on the Internet. Jude then heads outside, lets Angus and Bon out of their pen, and watches them play for a few moments. When he gets back to the office Danny has Jessica Price from Florida on the phone. After identifying himself Jude asks the woman what her stepfather looked like. Jessica asks if Jude saw her stepfather's ghost, and then tells him to describe what he saw and she will confirm whether he is right or not. Jude senses that the woman is messing with him and tells her that he is going to send the suit back. Jessica says that there are no refunds or returns, and that just because he sends the suit back doesn't mean her stepfather will come with it. Jessica then says cryptically that after Jude was done with her, her sister had come home and killed herself and it had been their stepfather who had found her body. She then tells Jude that her stepfather is now going to deal with him.

As Jessica is speaking, Jude realizes that she is talking about an ex live-in girlfriend named Anna May McDermott – who he had always called Florida – and remembers that she had once told him her stepfather made a living as a hypnotist and fortuneteller. Jessica says that before he died her stepfather had told her exactly what to do and she'd followed his instructions to the letter. After his death she'd set up a fake online auction site and sent Jude an email. He had been the only bidder for her stepfather's ghost– she had made the other bids herself – and once Jude had paid for it the ghost belonged to him forever. She tells Jude that the ghost will follow him wherever he goes and that when it is time, her stepfather will kill him and anyone who tries to help him. She says that Jude will die alone and Jude finally becomes angry; he says that if he is going to die he'll want some company and so he might come down to Florida and pay her a visit, and then slams the phone down.

Black Dog: Chapter 8

Danny nervously asks what is going on, but Jude doesn't answer him right away. Jude remembers Jessica Price's sister, who he had called Florida, and finds it hard to believe that she is dead. She'd been 26 when he'd sent her away and Danny had been her friend – as he had been a friend and confidant to all of Jude's girls over the years. Jude finally tells Danny that Florida killed herself, and that Jessica Price is her sister. He says



that Jessica tricked him into buying the suit, and that she sees it as a kind of symbolic death threat. Danny asks if he should call the police and tell them a threat has been made on his life, but Jude says that he will deal with it himself and then asks Danny to locate a couple of letters that Florida sent after she'd gone back home. Danny asks if he needs to be worried and Jude tells him that he does not, but that Jessica Price might need to worry.

Black Dog: Chapter 9

Jude goes to his home studio to clear his head and as he is looking for something he finds a yellow heart-shaped box that contains his bullet collection – a bullet collection he left behind in Louisiana more than thirty years before, and which cannot possibly be there. He'd started the collection when he was eight and still Justin Cowzynski – years before he became Judas Coyne. Jude opens the box and spills the bullets out onto the floor. His entire collection is there, including a 2-inch bullet that his high school principle had confiscated and never given back. Jude thinks that finding the bullet collection that can't be there might be a warning that he should arm himself, but he knows that bullets will be useless against a ghost.

After putting the bullets back into the heart-shaped box he goes to the back of his studio where he has a collection of books about the supernatural and the occult – many of them sent to him by fans who were Satanists and spiritualists. He spends time going through them, but finds them all worthless. Frustrated, Jude starts grabbing books from the shelves and throwing them around the studio. He finally finds himself holding an old video tape that is hidden behind the books; the video is a “snuff film” that a cop had given him years before. One day four years ago he had walked into the studio and found his wife Shannon watching it. She'd asked him if it was real and when he'd said yes, she'd left the studio. Jude left on a business trip and when he returned Shannon was gone; they divorced a short time later. Jude considers crushing the tape under his foot, but returns it to the shelf instead. As he is doing so he hears Georgia say, “Get rid of it,” from the doorway.

Analysis

The first several chapters serve to set up the main plot of the story, as well as introduce the reader to the main character in the novel, Judas (Jude) Coyne. For more than thirty years Jude has been a superstar in the heavy metal music world and prior to disbanding (due to the death of two of its members) his band – Jude's Hammer – had been every bit as revered and loved by hard core heavy metal fans as Nirvana, Anthrax, Black Sabbath, and Metallica. Now fifty-four years of age Jude lives in a large, rambling farmhouse in Piecliff – a small town in upper New York State located about 40 minutes from Poughkeepsie. Jude shares his house with a 23-year-old live-in “Goth” girlfriend that he calls Georgia – whose real name is Marybeth Kimball – and his two German shepherds, Angus and Bon. Even though he has not toured in three years and it has been even longer since he recorded any new music, being Judas Coyne is still big business and there are a myriad of contracts, commitments, and requests for his time



that need to be organized and dealt with on a daily basis. To handle this his personal assistant Danny Wooten – who has been with Jude for 8 years – has an office in Jude’s home, and is responsible for managing a great deal of Jude’s professional and private life. It is Danny who first runs across the post on the Internet offering a ghost for sale, and it is Danny who actually finalizes the arrangements for the sale.

Although he was famous for his excessively wild lifestyle when he was younger, Jude now leads a fairly quiet existence. He is up early most mornings and usually in bed by 9:00 most nights. He rarely drinks and no longer takes drugs, and for the most part he has given up his former lifestyle and withdrawn from much of the world in the few years leading up to the start of the story. He finds his assistant Danny’s constant chattering and almost servile, ingratiating behavior towards him increasingly aggravating, and he has lately started to notice irritating habits in Georgia – who he met while she was a stripper and pole dancer in a Goth club nine months before working under the name Morphine. Georgia is the latest in a succession of short, temporary relationships Jude has had since his ex-wife Shannon left him four- plus years prior to the start of the novel after she found a “snuff film” that had been given to him by a cop-fan in his studio and watched it. While it is obvious that Jude has some feelings for her, Jude views Georgia as a temporary companion and really knows very little about her. He believes that she is just one more in a long line of meaningless relationships that he will end when he is ready, and as the novel opens it is obvious that Jude is already beginning to grow tired of her. The depth of Georgia’s affection for Jude – and, eventually, his affection and love for her – is a theme that is developed throughout the course of the novel, and is central to the overall plotline.

Prior to becoming Judas Coyne and taking the heavy metal world by storm, Jude had been named Justin Cowzynski and had grown up on his father’s hog farm in the tiny town of Moore’s Corner, Louisiana. Throughout his childhood Jude’s father, Martin Cowzynski, had treated the hogs on his farm and the family dogs better than he had treated Justin or his mother, and Jude had left home as soon as he had been able to. Shortly after the heart-shaped box containing the old suit arrives, Jude gets a call from Arlene Wade – his aunt by marriage who has been taking care of his ailing father for the last few years – who tells him that his father is close to death. Although Jude has been paying his father’s medical bills and other expenses for years, he tells Arlene that he has no intention of coming home to see him before his father passes away. The psychological wounds that his father inflicted on him while he was growing up have never fully healed and he can see no reason why he should put himself through seeing him again. Throughout the novel Jude will find himself confronting his own past – including his relationship with his father – which is something that is not normally in his nature to do.

After he sees the ghost and has Danny call the woman who sold it and the old suit to him, Jude learns that it was not just a random series of events that caused him to buy the ghost on the Internet. Jessica Price is the sister of Anna May McDermott – one of Jude’s earlier live-in Goth girlfriends – and the ghost is that of Anna May’s (and Jessica’s) stepfather. Anna May slashed her wrists and killed herself just a short time after he ended their relationship, and Jessica and her stepfather blame Jude for her



death. A lifelong spiritualist and student of the occult, Jessica's stepfather had given her instructions as to what to do after he died to ensure that his spirit would find its way to Jude – including making certain that Jude bought and paid for his ghost. Although at this point the author does not go into much detail regarding exactly what her stepfather instructed Jessica to do, the reader understands that the ghost is a malevolent being that is intent on killing Jude and anyone who tries to help him. Because he has bought and paid for the ghost, Jessica tells him that even if he returns the suit the spirit of her stepfather will stay with him and follow him wherever he might try to run; the only way that Jude will be able to escape it is by dying.

Discussion Question 1

Why is Judas Coyne immediately interested when his personal assistant Danny Wooten tells him that there is a ghost for sale on the Internet? Why does he bid \$1,000 for it even though the next highest bid is just \$80? After the heart-shaped box arrives, what is Jude's reaction when Georgia asks him if he is planning on wearing the suit inside it, and why do you think he feels this way?

Discussion Question 2

How does Jude react when Arlene Wade, his aunt by marriage, tells him that his father has stopped eating and seems to her as though he is ready to “let go” and die? What does Arlene ask Jude after she tells him that she doubts his father will suffer when he dies? What do you think causes her to ask this?

Discussion Question 3

After Jessica Price explains who the ghost is and why he is there, what does Jude threaten to do? Why do you think Jude is able to almost immediately make the connection between what Jessica is saying and his ex-girlfriend Anna May McDermott even though Jessica Price never mentions her sister's name? What do you think the significance of Jude finding a heart-shaped box filled with a bullet collection he'd had as a child is?

Vocabulary

collection, sketches, confession, noose, rambling, relatively, cranium, microscope, ankhs, condensed, components, disappointed, burrowed, trigger, dreadful, antique, moaned, hypnotism, depressed, drumbeat, conversation, psychologist, perversion, paranoid, intensely, experimentally



Black Dog: Chapters 10 - 16

Summary

Black Dog: Chapter 10

Jude sees Georgia standing in the studio doorway shivering and looking very pale, and she says “Get rid of it” again. Jude asks what she wants him to get rid of and Georgia says the dead man’s suit, because it smells bad. She says that when she woke up the suit was spread out on the bed next to her. Jude says that she needs to go back to bed, but when they reach the hallway outside the bedroom Jude again sees the ghost sitting in the Shaker chair and quickly looks away. As they walk down the hallway Georgia asks why Jude trashed his studio and Jude looks back at the old man; the ghost does not seem to hear Georgia and she does not see him. Georgia says that she is not going back into the bedroom until Jude gets rid of the suit, but Jude grabs her wrist and tells her to keep walking. Realizing he spoke, Jude looks at the ghost and sees him looking back at him with something that looks like black scribbles where his eyes should be. When they reach the bedroom Jude looks back and sees that the ghost is standing; he holds out his hand palm down, and a curved razor on a gold chain attached to a ring on his finger dangles down. Jude shoves Georgia through the door and slams it behind them. The hallway is empty when he checks a moment later. He starts to wipe sweat from his face and sees that he is holding the dead man’s razor. He throws it down, but it disappears before it reaches the ground.

Black Dog: Chapter 11

As Jude backs away from the door Georgia asks what is wrong with him, and Jude tells her about the ghost in the hallway. Jude then walks over to where the suit is spread out on the bed and smells a foul odor of decay. Holding his breath, Jude searches the suit and finds a photograph of himself and Anna May McDermott that Danny had taken shortly before they split up; Jude sees that his eyes have been scribbled over in the photo. Georgia asks Jude what the ghost looks like and then asks if he just sat there, and Jude tells her about the razor on the chain. He then tells Georgia about most of his phone call with Jessica Price, leaving out that Anna May had been his live-in girlfriend. Jude folds the suit and places it back in the heart-shaped box, and then notices that Georgia’s thumb is swollen and infected. He says he will have Danny book her an appointment with the doctor. As he is about to leave Georgia tells him that she once saw a ghost when she was a kid living with her grandmother, and that what she remembers most is how the eyes had seemed to be blackened out. She then tells Jude that the next time he sees the old man he should talk to him and find out what he wants, but Jude tells her that the ghost isn’t there to talk.

Black Dog: Chapter 12



Jude heads down to the kitchen and as he makes tea he finds himself remembering the letters Anna May McDermott had written to him after he'd made her leave. Thinking back on them he can see that she'd been trying to tell him what she intended to do to herself and that he had missed it, or perhaps even willfully ignored it. After he makes his tea Jude heads to Danny's office, but Danny isn't there. Jude sits behind Danny's desk and does a web search for "McDermott hypnotist dead" and finds an obituary for Craddock James McDermott in the Pensacola News Journal. When he clicks on the link there is a photograph of a younger version of the old man Jude saw in his hallway. Reading the obituary, Jude learns that Craddock had discovered his true calling when he learned about hypnosis while serving in Vietnam in the army's psychological operations division and after his discharge made his living as a hypnotist; his practice was taken over by his stepdaughter Jessica Price after his death. When he finishes reading the obituary Danny's computer pings indicating a new email and Jude sees that it is addressed to him. When he opens it he finds a long, rambling message which says that Jude will die just like the email's writer is dead and that Jude should sing for them all at his own grave. Determined to remain in control Jude closes the email and goes back to the obituary. The picture of Craddock McDermott has changed; he is now old and grinning, and his eyes have been scribbled over. The words in the obituary are also different and read much like the email. Jude stands up, grabs the computer monitor, and smashes it onto the floor. Jude then looks out the window and sees Danny sitting in his car looking straight ahead, his face ashen and blank.

Black Dog: Chapter 13

Still in his bathrobe, Jude walks out to Danny's car and knocks on the driver's side window. Danny lowers the window without looking at him. When Jude asks what Danny is doing in his car, Danny says that he needs to go home. Jude asks if Danny has seen the dead man, and Danny finally says that he'd looked right at him and that his eyes were just black scribbles. Jude puts his hand on Danny's shoulder, but Danny shrugs it off and says that Jude's eyes are just like the dead man's. Danny then says that he can't help Jude, and that he is not coming back. Danny backs the car down the driveway, and drives away.

Black Dog: Chapter 14

Not ready to go back inside the house Jude lets his dogs out of the pen and plays with them for a moment, then goes in the barn and walks over to the black 1965 Mustang GT that he had restored during the time Anna May lived with him. Anna May had sat in the backseat with the dogs while he worked, singing along with the radio and asking him an endless string of questions. Jude sits behind the wheel of the Mustang, sees the keys are in it and clicks the ignition over to "battery," and turns on the radio. After a short time he hears his dogs barking from what seems a long way off, and turns the volume up to drown them out. Jude closes his eyes as the music blasts, and when he opens them again he sees Craddock McDermott sitting in the passenger seat smiling at him. Jude closes his eyes again. He is vaguely aware of someone calling his name from what seems like miles away as he dozes off, and a moment later feels Georgia grab him by the arm and pull him out of the car onto the floor of the barn.



Jude opens his eyes and sees that the roll-up door of the barn is open, then gets up on all fours and vomits. When his dizziness passes Georgia asks why he tried to kill himself by sitting in the car with the engine running and the barn door closed. He tells her that he never started the car – that it must have been the dead man, the ghost from the hallway – but Georgia says that he sounds crazy. She then helps him to his feet and as they are about to leave they see Angus staring down the driveway through the open barn door. When they reach the door Jude sees the dead man standing at the end of the driveway. Craddock tips his black fedora to Jude, winks at him, and then disappears. Georgia asks if there is anything there and Jude says no.

Black Dog: Chapter 15

Georgia helps Jude get back to the house and takes him to the music library where he falls asleep almost as soon as he lays down on the sofa. He wakes up briefly and sees Georgia standing in the doorway watching him, and then sees Craddock standing behind her. Jude sees Craddock swing his curved razor in front of Georgia's eyes, and then whisper in her ear. He tries to call out to her but he can't. He falls back into a restless sleep, and dreams. In the dream he is watching Craddock hypnotize a Vietnamese POW. After Craddock puts him under, he hands him a knife and tells the POW that his fingers are snakes that are going to kill him; the POW quickly hacks his own fingers off. Jude turns away and walks through a door that takes him into the dusty yard behind his father's farm in Louisiana. His father is sitting on a rock with his back to him, sharpening a straight razor. He hears his father ask him why he's dressed like that and Jude sees that he's wearing the dead man's suit. Jude walks around the back of the house and finds the Mustang. He gets in it, turns on the radio, and immediately hears a southern preacher talking about something called "nightfall", and he realizes it is really Craddock using someone else's voice. Jude smells something that reminds him of burning wool, and feels like he is burning himself. He screams and is soon driving down a back road with the Mustang's gas pedal down to the floor.

Jude lurches awake and finds that he still smells something burning. As he sits up he has the idea that if he can sell the suit – maybe to one of his fans – the ghost would have to leave with it. He walks unsteadily to the kitchen, and sees Georgia standing out on the patio in front of the grill holding a pair of tongs. When he reaches her Georgia tells him that she figured out how to make the ghost go away, and then tells him that she burned the suit.

Black Dog: Chapter 16

An hour later, Georgia comes into the study where Jude is sitting and says that she is sure the ghost won't be coming back. She asks Jude what he thinks, but he remains silent. She then says that they should leave and get a room in the city, but Jude says he doubts it would do any good. He asks Georgia if she thinks she should take off, but she says that after what happened earlier in the barn she isn't letting Jude out of her sight. She asks Jude to tell her about the woman who sent the ghost and why she blames him for her sister killing herself. Jude tells her that the girl had lived with him for a while, like Georgia, and then says that she had been acting crazy and was a "natural psycho" so



he threw her out after eight months. Georgia says that she has been with him for nine months and asks if she is reaching her expiration date. Jude says that that if Georgia thinks their relationship is going to end with “and they lived happily ever after” then she is dead wrong. Georgia tells him that she is not going to let him drive her away by saying things like that, and then says they should go to bed.

Analysis

As the day goes on Jude learns more about the ghost and how much it is actually capable of doing. After Georgia tells him that she found the suit spread out on the bed next to her when she woke up the two of them head back towards the bedroom and Jude sees the ghost sitting where he had seen him the night before, in a Shaker chair in the hallway. Jude soon realizes that the ghost does not appear to be able to see or hear Georgia, and that she cannot see it; the dead man only reacts after Jude says something to Georgia. When Jude sees the ghost looking at him, he realizes that the old man’s eyes seem like they have been scribbled over with a black Magic Marker. When he finds the picture of himself and Anna May McDermott in one of the pockets of the suit after he and Georgia reach the bedroom, he sees that his eyes have been scribbled over in the same way. Later, after Danny says that he saw the old man’s ghost, he tells Jude that the ghost’s eyes looked exactly like Jude’s eyes, and the reader understands that only those who are dead – or about to die – have eyes that look like that.

When Jude sees the dead man in the hallway for the second time the ghost is holding a 3-inch curved razor that is attached by a gold chain to a ring on his finger. Back when she had lived with him Anna May had told Jude that her stepfather had used the razor on the gold chain to hypnotize his clients, as well as to find water by “dousing,” and that he always carried it with him. Jude later sees the old man swinging the curved razor in front of Georgia’s eyes as he is falling asleep in the music room after she rescues him from the Mustang in the barn, and then using it to hypnotize a Vietnamese POW in his nightmare. This curved razor on the gold chain will appear again and again throughout the story, and will play an important part in later scenes.

As the dead man becomes more active throughout the course of the day Jude comes to understand that, apart from being able to manifest himself in the hallway outside his bedroom (and later in the passenger seat of Jude’s restored Mustang, and at the end of his driveway), the ghost of Craddock James McDermott is also able to manipulate “real” objects – or at the very least cause the living to manipulate them for him. Along with spreading the suit out beside Georgia while she is sleeping, the ghost manages to send Jude an email while he is reading Craddock’s obituary on Danny’s computer, and just a few moments later changes the picture and the words in the obituary when Jude clicks back to it. Most importantly, Craddock almost manages to kill Jude when he goes to the barn after talking to Danny. Whether Craddock somehow managed to start the Mustang’s engine himself or was able to get Jude to do it without his even realizing it, Jude – and the reader – understand after this incident that the threat to Jude is very real, and that he and possibly Georgia are in a great deal of danger.



These chapters also provide the first real insight into the other living “main” character in the novel, Georgia. As opposed to the whiny, spoiled girl she seems to be in the first few scenes in which she appears, in these chapters she is presented – for the most part – as a relatively mature, capable, and caring young woman who manages to save Jude’s life and tries to understand what is going on with him. Although when Jude first tells her about the ghost she says that he sounds as though he is crazy, it is not long before Georgia begins to accept the idea. She tells Jude that when she was a child she had seen the ghost of her grandmother’s twin sister in the backyard of their home in Georgia. The girl had disappeared when she was a child and had never been found, and Georgia says that she’d known it was a ghost because she’d had eyes that looked as though they had been scribbled over with a marker. She later tells Jude (after he asks her if he seems like the type who would kill himself, which she is afraid he tried to do in the Mustang) that she had tried to kill herself when she was 13 years old. She’d been having sex regularly with a friend of her father’s whose daughter had been her best friend, and her friend had found out. With these stories – which are both very personal and intensely painful for her to recall – Georgia is trying to show Jude that she empathizes with him and that she wants to understand what is happening to him. Even though Jude tells her that there will be no “they lived happily ever after” ending to their relationship – something he does to try and get her to leave him at least for a while so that she will be out of danger – it is obvious that Georgia loves Jude and is willing to stick with him no matter what kind of danger it might put her in.

When he wakes up following the nightmare in which he sees the Vietnamese POW cut off his fingers after Craddock puts him under hypnosis and later finds himself in his father’s backyard wearing the dead man’s suit, Jude is convinced that the suit itself is the key to getting rid of the ghost. If he can sell the suit to someone like it had been sold to him, the ghost will go with it. He knows that selling the suit will be no problem. Thousands of his fans would love to own an old suit containing a ghost that had once been owned by Judas Coyne. But, when he gets to the kitchen, he finds that Georgia has already burned the suit in the patio grill. Although he doesn’t say anything to Georgia, Jude is certain that Craddock McDermott made her burn the suit without her even realizing that she was being manipulated.

Discussion Question 1

When Jude searches the dead man’s suit to find out what is making it smell so bad, he finds a picture of himself and Anna May McDermott in one of the pockets. Why is this picture important to Jude? What is the significance of someone having scribbled over his eyes in the picture with a marker? Why do you think he didn’t find the picture when he searched through the suit for the pin that stuck Georgia’s thumb earlier?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the nightmare that Jude has after Georgia takes him to the music library. What is the significance of the part of the nightmare in which Craddock hypnotizes the



Vietnamese soldier? Why do you think Jude finds himself wearing the dead man's suit when he is back at his father's farm? Do you think that Craddock is in total control of the dream, or do you think some – or all – of it is coming from Jude's own mind?

Discussion Question 3

Why do you think Jude suddenly comes to the conclusion that if he sells the suit, Craddock McDermott's ghost will leave with it? Do you think it might have worked? Why does Georgia tell Jude that she burned the suit? Why does Jude think she burned it? Why do you think Georgia says that she is going to stick with Jude no matter what? If it were you, would you do the same or would you leave? Explain your answer.

Vocabulary

twitched, reflexive, articulate, razor, eyeball, strained, huddled, photograph, infection, dandelions, spooning, shuddered, insomnia, travelers, surging, cheekbone, whisking, actualities, disconcerting, commercials, abdominal, gruel, breastbone, scribbles, periphery



Black Dog: Chapters 17 - 20, Ride On: Chapters 21 - 23

Summary

Black Dog: Chapter 17

It is still dark when Jude awakens, and he realizes that Georgia is not in bed. As he sits up he hears the rumble of an engine and his dogs barking frantically, and Jude looks out the window. He sees an old, faded blue Chevy pickup truck sitting empty in the driveway, and knows it belongs to the dead man; he also sees Bon and Angus throwing themselves against their chain-link pen while they bark. The phone next to the bed rings and Jude sees that it's 3:12 AM. The call is from Danny, who apologizes for leaving the way he did, and then says that he is walking outside on a dark road and doesn't know where he is. Jude says that Danny must be drunk to call him this late and hangs up.

Jude opens the bedroom door; the ghost is not in the hallway, but his black fedora is on the Shaker chair. Jude goes downstairs to his studio where he finds Georgia watching the snuff film; she doesn't respond when he calls her name. He starts towards her but the phone on the desk rings. It is Danny again, who says that he figured out how he got lost and then says that he'd killed himself a few hours before. Danny says that the dead man made him do it, and that he'll also try to get Jude to kill himself. After Danny hangs up Jude goes to Georgia and speaks to her again, but she seems hypnotized. Jude turns the TV off and sees that Georgia is holding his gun. He takes it from her and then sees his reflection in one of the room's windows; in the reflection the dead man is standing beside him and Jude has the gun pointed at Georgia's head. He looks down at his hand and sees that it is true. Though he tries, he can't keep himself from squeezing the trigger, but the safety is on and the gun doesn't fire. Jude throws the pistol away, grabs Georgia's wrist, and tells her they are leaving while there is still time. Georgia stays in the chair and tells him there is no more time. Then the television comes back on by itself.

Black Dog: Chapter 18

The evening news is on, and the newscaster reports that rock star Judas Coyne shot and killed his girlfriend and then turned the gun on himself. He says that police also believe Coyne played a role in the death of his assistant, Danny Wooten, who had been found hanged in his home earlier that day. Jude switches the television off, and Georgia asks him if it is true – if that is what is going to happen. Jude says no, but the TV comes back on and the newscaster says yes, Jude will kill her and then himself. Jude turns the TV off again, and kicks the flat-screen over. When he turns back to Georgia he sees that Craddock's ghost has Georgia's head cupped between his hands. Jude says that Craddock did not come for her. Craddock speaks directly to his mind saying that if Jude



wants it all to end he only has to listen to his voice, and Jude realizes that he can hear nothing else.

As Craddock speaks he takes out the curved razor on the gold chain and starts to hypnotize Jude. When Jude looks away, Craddock says that he is already in Jude's mind and doesn't need to use the razor, then tells Jude to get the gun and kill Georgia. Jude starts for where he threw the gun and Georgia gets up and bolts for the door. Craddock tells Jude to stop her and Jude catches her by the hair, pulls her back, then throws her down and kicks her. He walks over to the gun but as he is reaching for it he hears Bon and Angus barking wildly outside. His gaze shifts to a wastebasket where the shards of a platinum record – which he'd broken the day before – are sticking up like knife blades. Jude reaches past the gun and pushes down on the longest of the shards, sending it into his hand. Craddock's ghost asks him what he is doing, but Jude is no longer listening to it and realizes that he has to get to his dogs, although he doesn't know why. He pulls his hand off the shard, ignores the pain in his hand and Craddock's voice telling him to stay, and makes his way through the hallway into Danny's office.

Black Dog: Chapter 19

It is pitch black in Danny's office, and he pauses to get his bearings. He moves through the office slowly, knowing that Craddock will try to keep him from getting outside; as he passes it the stereo switches on, but no sound comes from it. He finally reaches the door and when he opens it finds himself staring into the high-beam headlights of the dead man's pickup. He suddenly hears his father's voice come from the stereo's speakers and ask if he thinks he is special because he can play the guitar. Jude listens as an event which he recognizes from his past comes through the speakers in which his father chases him, followed by his own younger 'Justin' voice shouting, "No, Dad, not my hand," followed by the slamming of a door, followed by Justin screaming. Jude forces himself through the door to the outside. He stumbles and falls, and sees Craddock standing in the doorway. Jude gets up and runs towards the dog pen as Craddock follows him. Craddock catches up to Jude as he reaches the pen, and Jude opens the pen's gate.

Angus is through the gate immediately and leaps at the dead man, and Bon follows him a moment later. It seems to Jude as though there are two Anguses and two Bons – one real, and the other a shadow attached to the real dog. The dogs attack Craddock and although the dead man seems to wound the "shadow" Bon with his curved razor, they eventually back him up against his pickup. Craddock gets in the truck and it disappears just as the two dogs jump at it. A moment later, Jude sees that the dogs' "shadows" have also vanished.

Black Dog: Chapter 20

Jude returns to the studio with Angus as it starts to get light outside and finds Georgia where he left her. She asks him what she is doing on the floor, and then covers her eyes as she remembers what happened. She stands up and sees that Jude is dressed, and



then sees the Mustang idling in the driveway; it is already packed and Bon is in the backseat. She asks where they are going, and Jude says “South.”

Ride On: Chapter 21

Near dusk, when they are just north of Fredericksburg, Jude sees the dead man’s pickup following about a quarter of a mile behind them. Jude takes the next exit off the Interstate and pulls into a motel. After they get a room Jude walks Bon, and then comes back and leaves her with Georgia and walks Angus – making sure that each of them always has one of the dogs with them. Before they go to bed they both change the bandages on their injured hands; the infection in Georgia’s thumb is worse, and the gash Jude put in his own hand needs stitches. When they are in bed Georgia asks him where they are headed and Jude says they are going to see the woman who sold him the ghost and find out if she knows how to get rid of it. Jude tells her everything he learned about Craddock from the Internet, and then says that he seems to have the ability to make the living do what he wants them to do.

Georgia then asks Jude if he’d loved Anna May and when he answers, “For about three weeks,” she asks if Anna had loved him, and he nods. She then asks about the letters Anna had written to him after she left, and then gets angry and asks if he’d even read them. Jude says he had and that sometimes they were emotional, and sometimes scary because their lack of emotion. Georgia asks if Jude thinks she still loved him even after he threw her out, and Jude says he supposed she had. Georgia says that she feels bad for Anna, because it isn’t easy being in love with Jude. When Jude doesn’t answer she says that they will be passing through Georgia tomorrow and she wants them to stop and visit Bammy – her grandmother. Jude suggests that they visit her on the way back, but Georgia says that she doesn’t think it is a sure thing that they will be coming back, and Jude agrees to stop there the next day. Georgia then tells him that she has a Ouija board at Bammy’s and when Jude says that he doesn’t need to contact Craddock, she says that she was thinking that they should try to contact Anna and get her to call the dead man off.

Ride On: Chapter 22

That night Jude dreams of Anna May. She’d always asked him questions – an endless stream of them – about anything and everything, and it had been both her most endearing and most infuriating habit. He’d met her backstage at a Trent Reznor concert and she’d moved in three days later. One cold October evening near the end of their relationship he’d looked out the kitchen window and seen her walking towards the barn wearing only her underwear. By the time he caught up with her she was wallowing in the mud in the dog pen. Her behavior had been becoming steadily more erratic for the last two months – she would laugh or cry for no reason, and she had stopped bathing and brushing her teeth. When he reached her in the dog pen she’d had a needle in her hand and she began pricking her thumb with it. Jude had grabbed her wrist and she’d dropped the needle, and then she’d told him that someone was going to try to hurt him, someone he couldn’t fight, and that she would be more useful to him when she was gone. When he’d asked her why she was pricking herself, she said that she’d done it



since she was a girl and that sometimes it made the bad thoughts go away, but not always. She then started asking him a string of questions and Jude had asked her again why she asked so many questions. She'd said that she would rather ask questions than answer them.

Chapter 23

Jude awakens shortly after 9:00 AM with a tune going through his head. Still in his boxers Jude goes outside to the Mustang and pulls a battered guitar case out of the trunk. Georgia is still asleep, and Jude takes the guitar into the bathroom. He strums a few chords, which hurts his injured left hand – the hand that held the pick – but he plays through it and picks out the tune that had been in his head. The title “Drink to the Dead” comes to him; he goes back in the bedroom and gets a pen and pad from the small desk. He writes down the title, scribbles the chords down underneath it, then plays the tune again. Twenty minutes later there are spots of blood on the bandage on his left hand. Georgia steps into the bathroom and tells him she likes the tune, then throws him out so she can use the toilet. Jude goes back into the bathroom a short time later and sees Georgia's thumb; the thumb is even more red and swollen, and the redness has started to spread into her hand. Jude says that they should get her to an ER, but she says that she thinks her thumb will heal on its own if they can make the dead man go away. Jude then remembers that Anna used to stick her thumb with pins and wonders if that means anything. Georgia says that she feels connected to Anna somehow and that it doesn't frighten her.

Analysis

Jude is confronted by Craddock's ghost almost immediately after he wakes up at three in the morning – first when he sees the dead man's truck sitting empty in his driveway and next by the two phone calls Danny Wooten makes to him from beyond the grave. In the second phone call Danny tells Jude that Craddock had known exactly what to say get him to hang himself; the ghost had somehow known that years before Danny had bought the heroin his younger sister had overdosed on, and that was why his mother had hanged herself a short time later. The ghost told him that it should have been him and not his mother who hanged, and then even showed him how to tie a noose. Danny tells Jude that it was easy to listen to the dead man's voice and do what he told him to do, and he had been unable to fight it. Danny then says that the dead man will try to get Jude to kill himself and that he, too, will be unable to resist.

A few moments later, after Jude finds Georgia watching the snuff film, Craddock comes to Jude in the music room and speaks directly into his mind – just as he had with Danny. Jude is aware that he is being manipulated – as Craddock had already manipulated both he and Georgia into seeing the fake newscast on television – but he is unable to stop himself from doing what the dead man wants him to do. As Craddock speaks to him everything else fades away and Jude is unable to hear anything other than the dead man's voice, or even think for himself. He sees what he is doing from what seems to be somewhere outside of himself and he knows that he should resist what Craddock



tells him to do, but he is unable to do so. It is only when he hears Bon and Angus barking that Craddock's spell over Jude is penetrated and he is able to find the strength to cut his hand on a shard from a broken platinum record. The pain from the cut, and the dogs' continued barking, is enough to allow him to totally free himself from the dead man's control.

As soon as he is able to think for himself, Jude somehow understands that he has to get to Bon and Angus if he and Georgia are going to survive this attack – that it is just possible that the dogs will have some kind of power over the dead man. Jude is proven to be right as soon as he opens the gate to the pen; as they attack Craddock Jude sees that both of the German shepherds seem to have another – shadow dog – attached to them. While the “real” dogs do not inflict any damage on the dead man, these shadow dogs are able to hurt him – and be hurt by him – and are eventually able to drive him away. Even though the shadow dogs disappear as soon as Craddock drives off in his faded blue pickup truck, Jude understands that they are a part of Bon and Angus that will come out whenever they confront the ghost, and that keeping the dogs close to them is the best chance that he and Georgia have to survive.

As he is making his way through Danny's office on his way to the dogs, the stereo comes on and Jude hears a totally accurate soundtrack of something that happened to him years before while he still lived on his father's hog farm. Although the reader does not understand most of what the words and sounds really mean at this point, the author presents the reader with the entire incident during the chapter in which Jude dreams of Anna. In the dream Jude tells her that when he was fifteen years old he'd stolen a hundred dollars from the family cashbox and went to New Orleans with his band to play in a Battle of the Bands show. Jude figured to pay the money back with the \$500 first prize, but the band had come in third. When he got home his father had dragged him over to the basement door while Jude (Justin) had fought and begged and smashed his left hand – his chord-making hand – in it; he'd had to learn to make chords with his right hand after that. Although there have been several references to his father's cruelty previously in the book, this is the first scene in which this cruelty is vividly portrayed, and helps to explain the animosity that Jude still has for his father.

After the dogs drive the dead man away Jude decides that it is time to leave and he and Georgia – along with Angus and Bon – head south. Jude's plan is to confront Craddock's other stepdaughter Jessica Price at her home in Florida and make her – by force, if necessary – undo whatever it was that she did to bring Craddock back after he died. Near the end of that first day on the road Jude spots Craddock's old pickup truck following them on the Interstate and stops at a motel for the night. He is careful to make certain that one of the dogs is with him and Georgia all the times, and Craddock leaves them along during the night. When he wakes up the next morning there is a tune running through his head and for the next hour he works quietly in the bathroom – so as not to wake Georgia – to get it down on paper. Later, as he is walking Angus, Jude realizes he hadn't thought of Craddock, or the suit, or the nightmare that his life had become since the heart-shaped box arrived while he was writing and playing the tune, almost as if the song itself had somehow shielded him from the dead man's power.



Discussion Question 1

How is the dead man able to get into Jude's head – as he presumably had gotten into Danny Wooten's head earlier – to get Jude to do what he wants him to do? Why is Jude unable to resist the dead man even though he does not want to kill Georgia or himself? Why do you think hearing his dogs bark brings Jude to his senses? What do you think the “shadow dogs” are, and why are they able to fight Craddock?

Discussion Question 2

When Jude wakes up in the hotel room there is a song in his head, and he spends the next hour working the song out on his guitar and getting it down on paper. Why do you think Jude is able to forget all about the dead man while he is working on the song? Why do you think it is so important to him that he gets it down on paper? Is there anything like this in your life that helps you forget your troubles, even if it is only for a little while? Explain your answer.

Discussion Question 3

Why does Georgia say that she wants to visit her “Bammy's” house before they go to Florida? What does Georgia tell Jude that she wants to do there? Why do you think Georgia believes that there is a connection between her and Anna, and what do you think this connection might be? Why do you think that Georgia believes that her thumb will be all right if they can somehow get rid of the dead man?

Vocabulary

exhaled, shivering, tiptoeing, prickling, unstuck, flickering, reflexively, uncooperative, bifocals, haphazardly, iridescent, explosion, visible, protruding, desperation, platinum, rational, constriction, deranged, fedora, crescent, furiously, lightning, wastebasket, impatience



Ride On: Chapters 24 - 29

Summary

Ride On: Chapter 24

Jude walks the dogs while Georgia is in the bathroom and on his way back gets her laptop from the back of the Mustang. When he returns to the room he switches it on and Googles Anna's obituary. The obituary is short and says nothing about her having committed suicide. He then types "Craddock McDermott dousing" into the search engine and clicks on a nine-year-old story from the Tampa Tribune titled "Dousing for the Dead." In 1991 a pilot named Roy Hayes' plane went down somewhere in the Everglades and three years after the disappearance his family hired Craddock McDermott to locate the body. Craddock had swung a silver pendulum over a map and announced that he knew where the body was, and that he would call on the spirit of Roy Hayes himself to lead him to the exact place; five weeks later police divers found Hayes' body where Craddock told them to dive. There are two photographs with the story; the first is of Craddock and his two stepdaughters and the second is of Craddock when he was in Vietnam. In this second picture Jude sees that Craddock is standing next to the Vietnamese POW Jude had seen in his dream, and that the fingers are missing from the man's right hand. Georgia comes out of the bathroom and Jude closes the laptop. After she dresses Jude and Georgia walk to a Denny's just down the road. As they reach the end of the motel parking lot Jude looks back at the room and sees both dogs watching them through the window, looking nervous.

Ride On: Chapter 25

Denny's is crowded. An old couple is seated at the table next to them, and the man uses a loud electro-larynx that he holds under his chin to talk. The waitress takes their order and as they are eating Georgia asks Jude why he hadn't had children with his wife, and Jude tells her that he was worried that he had too much of his father in him. The waitress returns to refill their coffee cups and pours just as Georgia moves her cup, spilling scalding coffee on her bandaged hand. Georgia screams in pain, shouts and swears at the waitress, then pushes past her headed for the bathroom. After the waitress makes a rude comment about Georgia, Jude gets angry and demands the check; the old man at the table next to him stares at him and when Jude asks him if he has something to say the old man shakes his head. An instant later the old man's electro-larynx comes to life on the table and says, "You will die" and then tells Jude that he will kill Georgia and then himself.

Jude starts for the restrooms to find Georgia and sees the dead man's blue pickup idling out in the parking lot. Jude walks into the women's restroom just in time to see Georgia – who appears to be in a trance – drive her injured hand into the mirror over the sink, take an 8-inch shard of the broken glass, and put it to her throat. Jude catches her wrist and twists it until she drops the shard, then leads her out the door. The dead man is



waiting in the hallway and tips his fedora as they pass him. Jude leads Georgia through the crowded restaurant and out into the parking lot. As they pass Craddock's pickup they hear a preacher's voice on the radio say "choke that bitch, then step in front of a semi..." They hurry through the parking lot and into a short tunnel that runs under the overpass between Denny's and the motel. Georgia stops halfway through the tunnel and is sick, and Jude sees Craddock's pickup heading into the tunnel with the dead man grinning behind the wheel. Jude gets an arm around Georgia and pulls her the rest of the way through the tunnel just as the pickup crashes into the tunnel wall where they'd been standing. When Jude looks back, however, he sees that what crashed into the tunnel wall is actually a Jeep and there is a black man sitting behind the wheel, looking dazed. A moment later Georgia asks what happened and Jude says that the ghost missed them.

Ride On: Chapter 26

After they load up the Mustang, Georgia drives and asks Jude a series of questions. He doesn't know the answers. He finally asks her to lay off for a moment. He accidentally calls her Florida and is silent as she starts to cry softly. Jude slumps down in the passenger seat and starts thinking about the end of his relationship with Anna. He'd gone out alone one night. As he was driving home he had seen Anna running in the road wearing nothing but an over-sized tee-shirt. After Jude got her into his car, Anna had screamed at him, demanding to know where he'd been. She told him that when she couldn't find him she got scared and ran out into the road looking for him. A few days later Jude told her that he thought it would be a good idea if she went to stay with her family in Florida for a while. He offered to call her stepfather, but she told him to call her sister Jessie instead because she knew that her stepfather didn't approve of her living with Jude. He would say something to make Jude think badly of her as he had done with many of her friends when she was a kid.

When Jude called Jessica, however, Craddock answered the phone and the two men had spoken for a while. Jude recalls that Craddock had been friendly and thanked him for taking care of Anna, and that he'd always known she would find herself a rock star. After they hang up Jude realizes that Craddock had done exactly what Anna said he would in the course of just a few minutes and had managed to make Jude think less of her by intimating that if she hadn't ended up with him Anna would have ended up with some other heavy metal musician. He'd taken her to Penn Station a short time later and then stayed in the city through the weekend. On one of those nights he'd gone to a strip club and was fascinated by a stripper from Georgia who did an act with a knife and who called herself Morphine. He paid his waitress \$100 to get her phone number and another hundred to find out that her real name was Marybeth.

Ride On: Chapter 27

Jude takes the wheel just before they cross the Georgia state line and a short time later Georgia tells him to take the next exit. Jude follows her instructions and drives through the town of Crickets, Georgia until they reach a neatly kept Cape Code house with yellow rose bushes on the side and Georgia tells him to turn in the driveway. Bammy



looks to be in her in her mid-50s and immediately hugs Georgia (who she calls M.B.) and feels how hot she is with fever. She then looks at Jude and asks if he is the rock star. Jude says yes and Bammy notices that they each have bandages on their hands. Georgia says that they are only stopping for a few minutes and that they need to get to Florida, but Bammy tells Georgia that the only place she has to get to is either bed or a hospital, then invites them both inside.

Ride On: Chapter 28

Jude and Georgia – along with Bon and Angus – follow Bammy into the kitchen, and Bammy suggests they let the dogs out back so they can run. Jude and Georgia exchange a look that Bammy sees, and Georgia says they will dig up her rose bushes if they are outside unattended. Georgia takes Bon and heads upstairs to her old bedroom to take a shower while Bammy fixes Jude something to eat. As they are chatting Bammy asks Jude how the two of them got to look so beat up, and he tells her that they'd almost been hit by a car outside a Denny's in Virginia. Just as Bammy asks Jude what kind of trouble they are really in Georgia calls down from upstairs and tells Jude to come up and get some rest before they get back on the road. Bammy says that they are welcome to stay the night but Jude says they can't although he does agree to stay for dinner. Georgia is waiting for Jude at the top of the stairs holding a flat white box. Jude asks what it is and she turns it so he can read: QUIJA – PARKER BROS. – TALKING BOARD.

Ride On: Chapter 29

Georgia leads Jude to her bedroom and as Jude looks around she finds a book of matches in her desk and lights some candles. Georgia and Jude sit on the floor and Jude places the Ouija board between them. Georgia says that after she'd seen the ghost of Bammy's twin sister Ruth in the backyard she'd bought the Ouija board and she and a girlfriend had played around with it. Usually Georgia would push the pointer around and pretend that the spirits were doing it, but one time she is certain that the pointer had started working for real. Jude asks what to do, and Georgia says that they each put a hand on the pointer. She reaches out with her right hand and Jude catches her by the wrist; she had taken her bandages off while she showered and he sees that her entire hand looks pale and wrinkly and that her thumb is almost crimson with a wide circle of infection where the thumbprint should have been. Jude says that she will lose the hand and maybe die of blood poisoning if he doesn't get her to a doctor, but Georgia says that what they are doing now is more important than going to a hospital, and tells him to put his hand on the Ouija board's pointer.

Analysis

After he Googles Anna's obituary and finds that she had died less than three months before her stepfather, Jude runs across a story on the Internet about Craddock McDermott finding the body of a pilot three years after he had crashed his plane in the Everglades. While the story is marginally interesting, Jude finds himself fascinated by



the two pictures that accompany it. The first picture shows Craddock with his stepdaughters Jessica and Anna May – who looked to be 15 and 12 respectively – and Jude can see immediately that there is something wrong with the scene. Jessica's smile seemed too wide and enthusiastic, a "sell-sell-sell" grin that was totally out of place on such a young girl's face. Anna, on the other hand, looked dazed – almost like a sleepwalker. Anna had told him that she'd had "bad spells" starting when she was 12 – terrible depression and hallucinations of little girls with coals for eyes watching her – and Craddock had treated her himself with hypnotherapy. Jude recognizes her look in the picture as the one she would get when she went into one of her depressed periods while she was living with him, and wonders if she'd been under hypnosis when it had been taken. In the second picture Jude sees the Vietnamese POW he'd seen cut off his fingers in his dream; the man is identified as Nguyen Trung, and Jude recalls having just read in the article that Craddock had claimed to have learned how to see ghosts from this same man. Jude has the uncomfortable feeling that after Craddock had finished learning all he could from Trung he had killed him, and then brought him back in the dream to show Jude just how powerful he was.

Although the article and pictures disturb him, they do not change supernaturally as Craddock's obituary had on Danny's computer back at his home, and Jude believes that the song he wrote is still protecting him and keeping the dead man away. He still feels this way when he and Georgia leave Bon and Angus behind when they go to the Denny's for breakfast, but Craddock attacks him and Georgia in the Denny's and almost kills them as they run back to the motel. For the first time since he has been stalking them Craddock uses a living human being who is not connected to either of them – a black man driving a Jeep – to try and kill them. The reader understands that Craddock is not only able to manipulate Jude and Georgia to do themselves and each other harm, but he is also powerful enough to make other people try and kill them, which adds yet another level to the threat that he poses to them.

After they get back on the road Georgia starts to pester him with questions in the same way as Anna used to and he accidentally calls her Florida – the name he'd had for Anna. Jude finds himself remembering the end of his relationship with Anna and the one time he'd talked with her stepfather Craddock McDermott while the old man had been alive. Anna hadn't wanted Jude to talk with him because she knew that her stepfather would be able to manipulate Jude into thinking badly of her without his even knowing it, but Craddock had answered the phone when he'd called Jessica to tell her that he was sending Anna back to Florida. Craddock had been polite and even friendly as they'd spoken on the phone and had put Jude at ease. After he hung up, however, Jude was able to see that Craddock had skillfully manipulated the entire conversation, telling him about the other bands Anna had followed before she met him and how she had gotten to know their roadies really well, and somehow making him feel that if she hadn't ended up with him she would have gone with someone like him. Craddock had managed to do exactly what Anna had warned him he would try to do even though he'd been on guard for it and both Jude and the reader understand that Craddock had possessed the ability to manipulate others with just his words long before he'd begun stalking Jude as a ghost.



Discussion Question 1

What does Jude see in the picture of Craddock, Anna May, and Jessica McDermott in the story he finds on the Internet about Craddock that disturbs him? What significance do you think Jude seeing the Vietnamese POW from his dream standing next to Craddock in the other picture used in the story has? Why does Jude think it is safe to leave Angus and Bon behind when he goes to the Denny's with Georgia for breakfast?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Jude call Georgia "Florida" – the name he had called Anna – after they get back on the road? What was the final straw that caused Jude to decide that Anna needed to go back to her sister and stepfather in Florida? Do you think that sending her back home was a selfish act on his part, or do you think he was trying to help her by sending her back to her family? Explain your answer.

Discussion Question 3

How does Bammy feel when Georgia and Jude show up at her door? How does she act towards Jude when they are alone? Why does Georgia think that using the Ouija board will help her and Jude escape from Craddock? Why is she willing to all but ignore what is now a dangerously serious infection in her thumb?

Vocabulary

geographically, vampire, environmental, injuries, thoughtlessly, apprehension, intent, articulation, prostitute, glittering, yanked, fearless, twisted, curved, idling, tumbled, fractured, bandage, infections, trance, broadcast, throat, fetish, Ouija, peeling, rehearsing, chuck



Ride On: Chapters 30 - 34, Hurt: Chapters 35 - 38

Summary

Ride On: Chapter 30

Jude and Georgia place their fingers on the Ouija board pointer – called a planchette. Georgia introduces herself as Marybeth Kimball and then has Jude introduce himself as Justin Cowzynski. Jude feels foolish but follows Georgia's directions and asks if Anna is there. When nothing happens Jude asks if Florida is there, and the planchette jumps beneath their fingers and spells out WHAT KEPT YOU on the board. Georgia asks how they can know it is her and not Craddock; the planchette spells out WHY IS THE SKY BLUE, and Jude knows it is Anna. Jude says that he is sorry he sent her away and when the planchette spells out ARE YOU ANGRY Jude says yes, she shouldn't have killed herself. The planchette immediately goes to NO, and then spells out IS HE AFTER YOU. Jude says yes, Craddock thinks it's his fault that she killed herself, and the planchette goes to NO again. It then spells out WHY ARE YOU SO DUMB, and Jude suddenly understands.

Jude asks if Anna can help them and the planchette goes to YES. A moment later Georgia whispers "the Golden Door" and Jude sees her eyes roll back in her head. The planchette spells out WHO WILL BE THE GOLDEN DOOR. Georgia says she will be the door and swears to bring Anna through if she can. The planchette spells out DO YOU HAVE A MIRROR; Georgia starts to answer and then screams. The mirror on her dresser has tilted downwards and Jude sees Georgia sitting across from him in the mirror's reflection, but her eyes are covered with a black blindfold and her throat has been slashed. Bon snarls and crushes the planchette between her teeth while Angus hurls himself against the dresser, causing the mirror to swing up towards the ceiling and then back to its original position. When they can see Georgia's reflection again, the blood and blindfold are gone.

Ride On: Chapter 31

Jude and Georgia stretch out in her bed, and a few moments later Bammy knocks on the door and asks if they're all right. When Georgia leans up and calls that they're fine, Jude sees that she's been crying. Bammy says that she heard banging and asks if they've been fighting, and when Georgia says no Bammy asks if they need anything. Georgia says fresh sheets, and she and Jude collapse with laughter as Bammy moves quickly away.

Ride On: Chapter 32



After dinner, Jude says he needs to make some calls and goes into the kitchen. He dials his office number to pick up his messages and finds there are five waiting for him. The first three are from his business manager, the Piecliff police, and his lawyer, all asking him to call them. The fourth message is from Jerome Presley – the keyboard player of Jude’s Hammer – who had killed himself four years before. Jude listens to the long message in which Jerome accuses him of getting him hooked on cocaine, and refusing to lend him money when he was losing everything. Jerome finally says that it won’t be long before Jude rides the nightroad and they are singing together again, only where he is the singing sounds like screaming. The message ends with the sound of thousands of inhuman voices screaming in agony. The final message is from Arlene Wade who says that his father’s heartbeat is irregular and that he hasn’t been conscious in 36 hours.

When Jude hangs up he looks out the kitchen window and sees a little girl of about six playing in the yard; her eyes have black scribble marks over them. Jude remembers Georgia telling him that her name was Ruth, and that she was Bammy’s twin sister. Ruth stops singing and then waves to someone Jude can’t see in the alley behind the house. Ruth starts walking towards the person and Jude yells for her to get away from the alley and run to the house. Ruth seems to hear him and takes one step towards the house, but an instant later something pulls her off her feet and drags her away. Georgia and Bammy come in the kitchen and when Jude says that he couldn’t save Ruth, Bammy says of course he couldn’t.

Ride On: Chapter 33

Bammy tells Jude that no one saw when her sister Ruth was taken and that that she believes she comes back to make sure people know what happened to her. She tells Jude that by shouting her name and letting her know that he’d seen her he might have set her free. Nothing can undo what happened to her. Bammy says that Jude and Georgia should stay the night, but Jude says they can’t because it isn’t safe. Bammy asks if she can help them but Jude says no and thanks her for letting them stay as long as she has. Bammy then tells Georgia to stay and let Jude go on alone, but Georgia says that she can’t. Bammy says she will pray for them.

Ride On: Chapter 34

As they are driving back towards the Interstate Georgia points to a used car dealership and Jude remembers she’d told him that she’d had an affair with a man who had sold used cars when she was thirteen. Jude pulls over and asks what the man’s name is, and when Georgia refuses to tell him he remembers that his name is Ruger. He gets out of the car and walks towards the lot with Angus at his side. Georgia follows, grabbing his arm and begging him to stop. Angus runs into the used car lot and disappears behind a car. When Jude and Georgia catch up to Angus a bald man wearing a nameplate that says RUGER is petting him. Ruger recognizes Georgia and asks if she’s down visiting, and then recognizes Jude and says that his son plays his records all the time. Jude drives his fist into Ruger’s face and breaks his nose, then hits him in the stomach. As Jude is beating him, Angus tears off one of Ruger’s shoes. Georgia is



finally able to drag Jude back to the Mustang, and then kisses him all over his face. Angus still has Ruger's shoe, and she hangs it from the rearview mirror.

Hurt: Chapter 35

Jessica McDermott Price's house is in a new development in the town of Testament, Florida and Jude parks the Mustang in the driveway of an unfinished house at 1:00 that morning. Jude says that they are not going into the house tonight because Jessica has a daughter; it's a school day, and he wants Jessica to be alone when he and Georgia talk to her. Georgia asks what they are going to do to Jessica, and Jude says whatever they have to. Georgia dozes off and has a nightmare, and after Jude gently wakes her up by calling her Marybeth she tells him that she doesn't want to kill anyone. She asks him if he will call her Marybeth instead of Georgia from now on, and a short time later tells him that if she dies she will try to stop Craddock from the other side with Anna. Marybeth says that Anna is part of her somehow, and that Anna wants Marybeth to bring her back into their world so that she can stop Craddock.

Hurt: Chapter 36

Jude awakens to the sound of the dogs barking, and sees a carpenter standing in front of the Mustang. Jude sees that it's 7:00 AM and drives into town, walks the dogs in the town square, then buys tea and donuts for breakfast. It is after 7:30 when Jude parks the Mustang down the block and across the street from Jessica Price's house. Soon the garage door opens and a girl of about 12 who looks like Anna comes out of the Price house and walks past them. When the little girl is out of sight Jude goes to the back of the Mustang and grabs the tire iron, then walks across the street with the dogs running ahead and Marybeth beside him. Marybeth says that they should just talk to Jessica and tell her that Jude never wanted Anna to kill herself, and Jude says that when they'd been using the Ouija board he'd realized that Anna hadn't killed herself and that her sister knows it. As they reach the door inside the garage it opens and Jessica Price walks through it, but Jude shoves her back into the kitchen. Jessica grabs a plate and breaks it over Jude's head. Jude hits her in the leg with the tire iron and she goes down. Jessica says that she isn't afraid of dying because she knows her stepfather will be waiting for her, and Jude says that he bets she's looking forward to that since they had been very close before Craddock had started having sex with Anna instead of her.

Hurt: Chapter 37

Jessica says that Jude isn't fit to say her stepfather's name, and Jude asks her if she'd helped him kill Anna. Jessica says that her sister was already dead by the time Jude had sent her back. Jude says that while Anna had never actually told him that Craddock had molested her as a child the signs had been in front of him all along, and he guesses that Craddock had killed her when she'd threatened to tell what he'd done to her. Jessica says that Anna's last night had been terrible, that Anna had tried to kill Craddock and had threatened to take her daughter Reese away. Jessica then says that Craddock had been a great man and she had understood that he deserved anything he asked of his stepdaughters, and that Reese had understood it too. Jude says he has



heard enough, and asks her how to make Craddock's ghost go away. Jessica says that there is no way to make him stop until he and Marybeth are dead, and then says that she can already see the death marks across his eye. Jude puts the tire iron across her throat and starts to choke her, but Marybeth makes him ease the pressure off. When he does Jessica screams, and then starts to laugh. Bon begins to bark and Jude hears Marybeth call his name. When he turns he sees Jessica Price's daughter Reese standing there holding a revolver and hears her say "Get away from my mother."

Hurt: Chapter 38

Marybeth tells Reese that they will leave and walks into the garage holding Angus. Jude calls Bon, but she stays between him and Reese. Jessica gets to her feet and throws herself on Jude's back, jabbing a piece of broken plate into his cheek. Jude hits Jessica in the neck with the tire iron and then ducks as Reese fires the gun. Bon jumps at Reese as the gun goes off again. The bullet hits Bon in the abdomen and Jude sees the shadow-dog exit through her mouth and disappear as Bon dies. When Jude looks back at Reese he sees she is pointing the gun at him and he hears a voice come on the kitchen radio and say, "Shoot him, Reese. Shoot him." Jude starts to turn towards the radio but slips in Bon's blood and lunges forward towards Reese; Reese fires the gun and the bullet takes his index finger off the hand holding the tire iron.

Jude begins to feel lightheaded from the loss of blood, but Marybeth takes him by the arm and gets him back to the Mustang. She wants to take him to the hospital, but Jude manages to say no, he can stop the bleeding. She gets him into the passenger seat and as she is pulling Angus around to the driver's side she sees Craddock's pickup and manages to throw herself up onto the hood of the Mustang as it crashes into the side. When Jude looks around he sees Jessica Price sitting behind the wheel of the red convertible she had just crashed into his car holding her head in both hands. Marybeth walks unsteadily around to the driver's side from where she landed on the ground carrying Angus, whose rear legs have been smashed, and puts him in the backseat. She again says that they need to get to a hospital, but Jude tells her to get on the highway and go west. When she asks what is west he says Louisiana, his home.

Analysis

Jude feels ridiculous at first when he and Georgia start using the Ouija board, but Georgia gently makes him take it seriously. After a couple of unsuccessful false starts they are able to contact the spirit of Anna McDermott when Jude calls her Florida instead of Anna – the only name that he had ever called her when she was alive. Jude mentions her suicide several times while he is in contact with her, and each time he does the planchette beneath his and Georgia's fingers moves sharply to the NO space on the Ouija board. Finally, Jude is able to figure out that Anna is trying to tell them that she had not actually killed herself, but that it had been Craddock McDermott who had killed her. Everything that he has been remembering about Anna since the suit arrived in the heart-shaped box comes together and he is able to see that even though the clues had been right in front of him, he had never taken the time to look at them closely



enough to understand. During the journey to Jessica Price's house in Testament, Florida he is able to piece together what had actually happened. Craddock McDermott had been sexually molesting first Jessica and then Anna since they were children – in Anna's case having sex with her after he put her in a hypnotic trance so that she wouldn't know. When she returned home, Jude guesses that Craddock had tried to take up with her where he'd left off and Anna had remembered being abused as a child. When she threatened to tell the authorities about what Craddock had done to her, he had killed her to shut her up and then made it look like a suicide.

The connection that Georgia feels to Anna has been getting steadily stronger as time goes on, and while they were using the Ouija board Georgia had felt as though she knew exactly what Anna's answer would be even before Jude finished asking a question. She tells Jude that she doesn't remember most of what happened up until she had seen herself in the mirror with the blindfold over her eyes and her throat cut, but that she did understand that Anna had been telling her that if Craddock could come back then she could too. Georgia also knows that it is going to be up to her to "be the door" that helps bring Anna back into this world so that she can fight her stepfather. Although she isn't certain exactly what she will need to do, she does understand that it might be necessary for her to die to make this happen, but if that is what it takes to save Jude she is willing to do it.

Throughout their ordeal Jude has found himself becoming closer to Georgia than he has ever been before, and is actually a little surprised by how strong his feelings for her really are. Part of it is the fact that even though he had asked her if she wanted to leave shortly after the dead man had shown up she had chosen to stay because she believed that he needed her, but part of it is also that fact that Jude finds himself seeing what kind of a person she really is for the first time. Since his wife walked out on him, Jude had been through a series of temporary relationships – including the one he'd had with Anna – and had never really bothered to make much of an effort to keep any of these relationships going. Prior to buying Craddock McDermott's ghost on the Internet he had assumed that his time with Georgia would be coming to an end sooner rather than later given the number of arguments they'd been having, but this had changed since the dead man started stalking them. Jude sees that his future is intertwined with hers, and when she asks him to call her Marybeth instead of Georgia he doesn't hesitate because it feels right to him. Georgia had been a fake name for a Goth girl in a fake relationship; Marybeth is the name of the woman that he has come to care deeply about.

When Jude confronts Jessica McDermott Price at her home in Testament, Florida more pieces of the mystery surrounding Anna's life – as well as her death – become clear to Jude. As he is talking to her Jude comes to realize that while Craddock had needed to put Anna under hypnosis to have sex with her, Jessica had given herself to Craddock willingly and had been jealous of her sister when Craddock had started paying more attention to Anna than to her. Even more horrifying is the fact that Jessica had allowed Craddock to have sex with her own young daughter, Reese. Although Jude threatens to kill Jessica if she doesn't make her stepfather's ghost leave them alone she is either unable or unwilling to help him, and tells Jude that Craddock will never stop until both



he and Georgia are dead. She also says she doesn't mind dying because it will reunite her with Craddock, and Jude realizes that the woman is crazy.

After Reese Price enters the kitchen with a gun and kills Bon – and then shoots Jude's finger off – Craddock makes an attempt to kill them by having Jessica try to hit them with her car, but fails. However, the incident does manage to crush Angus' back legs. With Bon already dead (and her shadow-dog lost to them) and Angus seriously injured the protection that the German shepherds have afforded them thus far is greatly diminished. Although Marybeth wants to get Jude to a hospital, he somehow knows that the only chance they have to survive is to get to his father's hog farm in Louisiana. Jude understands that all of the memories and dreams and guilt that he has been feeling since Craddock started stalking him have been leading him back home.

Discussion Question 1

During the session with the Ouija board at Bammy's house why is Anna unable to answer any of Jude's questions directly? What does Anna ask Georgia to promise to do, and why does Anna swear to try? Why does Jude see the ghost of Bammy's twin sister Ruth in the backyard? Do you think his calling out to her did any good? Explain your answer.

Discussion Question 2

Even though they are in a hurry to get to Florida, Jude stops at a used car lot and beats up a salesman named Ruger who'd had slept with Georgia regularly when she was only thirteen. Why do you think he decided to stop and beat the man up, even though Georgia begs him not to? Do you think Jude would have done something like this before his troubles with Craddock started? What do you think this incident says about Jude's relationship with Georgia?

Discussion Question 3

What was Jessica Price's relationship with her stepfather? How does she feel about him and what he is trying to do to Jude? What does Jessica Price tell Jude after he threatens to kill her if she doesn't make her stepfather's ghost leave him and Marybeth alone? Do you think there is anything Jessica could have done to stop Craddock if she'd wanted to?

Vocabulary

churning, reluctance, dimple, planchette, commence, withdrawing, alphabet, furiously, clattered, translucence, compressed, pivoting, blindfold, strangled, satisfied, toneless, inhale, acquaintance, nonsensical, tugging, unrelated, fuzzy, shepherds, dwindling, unmistakable



Hurt: Chapters 39 - 45

Summary

Hurt: Chapter 39

Jude cleans and bandages his hand with supplies from the first aid kit in the Mustang, and tells Georgia that they should reach his father's farm in Moore's Corner, Louisiana in less than three hours. He says that his aunt, who is a registered nurse, is there taking care of his father and that his father has two German shepherds. When Marybeth asks if his aunt will call the police on them Jude says that she won't, because they won't let her.

Hurt : Chapter 40

Jude closes his eyes as Marybeth drives and when he opens them he is sitting in a wicker chair in the upstairs hallway of Jessica Price's house. Jude sees Anna coming up the staircase followed closely by Jessica. Jessica is telling Anna that she is hysterical and imagining things. Anna holds up an envelope, pulls pictures out of it and starts throwing them at Jessica, and shouts that they are of Jessica's 11-year-old daughter Reese. Jessica calls for Craddock, and Anna says she is leaving but that she will be back with Jude's lawyers to get Reese. Anna says she will make sure everything comes out and that she hopes Craddock will go to jail. Jessica screams for her stepfather again and a moment later Craddock comes out of one of the doors in the hallway and Jessica tells him what Anna she said she would do. Craddock walks towards Anna and says he can calm her down, and Anna says if he comes any closer she will kill him. Craddock tells Anna that she hasn't been the same since she came home and that he hates to see her so miserable and mixed up. Anna says that she is going to have Jude make sure that he and Jessica go to prison. Craddock continues to talk soothingly to Anna as he walks towards her, and when he gets too close Anna shoves him and he falls backwards. Jessica rushes over and kneels by Craddock's side.

Jude stands up and sees that he is wearing the dead man's suit as Anna walks past him into her room and closes the door. Jude hears Jessica whisper "nightfall at last" and then tells Craddock that she has hypnotized Anna a couple of times to help her sleep and planted a suggestion that nightfall is a good time for a drink. Jessica says that she laced the bottle of gin in Anna's top drawer were Phenobarbital, and then tells Craddock that he has to make her forget the pictures, but Craddock says he can't. He says that they will have to make it look like she killed herself after drinking and taking pills. At first Jessica resists but Craddock is able to convince her that it is the only way. He says that everything is Judas Coyne's fault for destroying Anna, and that he will pay. He tells Jessica to draw a bath and then get his razor – he will need it for Anna's wrists. Jude follows Craddock into Anna's room, and sees him talking to her. The dream starts to dissolve and Jude tells Florida that he loves her, and Anna says "Love you, Jude"



without seeing him. Craddock pulls the shades down over the windows, plunging the room into darkness.

Hurt: Chapter 41

Jude awakens in the passenger seat of the car. Marybeth tells him she has been shaking him for five minutes and was about to find a hospital. Jude says to keep going and flicks on the radio. Craddock's voice comes over loud and clear. He tells Jude that he's impressed by how long he has lasted but that it's almost over and he is going to die like a dog. Marybeth switches the radio off but it comes on and Craddock's voice asks if Jude really thought he could turn his little girl against him. Jude kicks the radio in with his boot and it falls silent. Half an hour later they exit the Interstate and follow a two-lane road into the countryside. They arrive at Jude's childhood home – a large, rambling farmhouse – and as soon as Marybeth pulls in the driveway they see Craddock's pickup coming up the road. Jude reaches in the backseat for Angus, but Angus is dead. Craddock's pickup pulls in the driveway as Marybeth helps Jude towards the house. Craddock calls out that Jude is going to cut Marybeth's throat, and then he and the truck disappear. They enter the house and walk down a dark hallway towards a light coming from the kitchen. Arlene Wade appears in the kitchen doorway; she immediately recognizes Jude and asks what happened to him as he and Georgia step into the kitchen.

Jude falls into a chair while Marybeth tells Arlene that he lost part of his finger and then asks her where the dogs are. Arlene points to a fat old dog in the corner and says that's her dog. Jude asks where his father's German shepherds are and Arlene says she gave them to another family. Arlene gets a good look at Jude's hand for the first time, says she will call an ambulance, and leaves the room but returns a moment later and says that there is something wrong with the phone. Arlene looks at Marybeth and sees that the infection from her thumb has now spread to both hands, and says that she is burning up when she feels her forehead. She says Marybeth can rest in her room next to the kitchen and that she'll put Jude in with his father, where she will give him morphine for the pain.

Hurt: Chapter 42

Arlene guides Jude to his old bedroom, where she had put Jude's father months before. As he waits in the doorway while Arlene clears her sewing things from a small bed Jude sees his father lying in an identical bed across the room. Martin Cowzynski weighs less than 100 pounds and looks as though he is already dead, although raspy breathing comes from his throat. Jude asks Arlene if his father knows he's there and Arlene says she doubts it, then guides him over to the empty bed. She undoes the bandages he'd put on his hand then injects him with morphine, stitches the end of his missing finger up, and bandages the gouge in his face. Jude asks her to check on Marybeth when she is finished, and Arlene clicks off the lights as she leaves. He sees his father staring at him and hears him say that Jude isn't there. His father's eyes then shut, and a moment later Jude's do as well.



Hurt: Chapter 43

Arlene is standing at the foot of Jude's bed when he wakes up; she is wearing a rain coat and tells him that they have lost power. She says that she went outside and saw a blue pickup parked in the driveway and it had scared her. When she came back in the power was off, but somehow the TV in the living room was working. She says the news was on and the story was about how the three of them had been found dead in the farmhouse, and there had been pictures. Arlene says that she is leaving and taking her dog, and that she will call an ambulance from a neighbor's house. After she leaves Jude hears a tapping sound to his right and sees the big yellow heart-shaped box on the floor. The lid opens a crack, four fingers come out, and a moment later Craddock has pulled himself out of the box, scribbles dancing in front of his eyes. Jude asks what kept him.

Hurt: Chapter 44

Craddock says that Jude is going to choke Marybeth to death and then tells Jude to repeat it. Although he tries to resist, Jude repeats it. Craddock tells him to get up, but Jude suddenly remembers the new song he'd written at the motel and finds that he can ignore the dead man when it runs through his head. Craddock tells him to get up again and Jude starts to move, then stops himself and starts humming the new song. Craddock puts his hands on Martin Cowzynski's face and then places his mouth over Martin's. Martin draws a long breath and sucks the dead man completely into him. Martin gags and bucks a few times, then goes still and stops breathing. Jude gets up and walks over to him and Martin suddenly sneers at him and tells Jude to put his arms around him. Jude realizes that Craddock has taken over his father's body and backs away as Martin sits up, grabs his old straight razor from the night table, then lunges at Jude. Martin cuts Jude on the arm and Jude trips over his cot and falls. Jude crawls into the hallway and Martin catches him at the screen door leading into the pigpen. Jude hits Martin in the jaw with his bandaged hand, and Martin falls through the screen door. Jude gets to his feet after resting a moment and looks out the wrecked screen door. Martin grabs for Jude's ankle, then pulls himself back inside as Jude makes his way to the kitchen and falls again.

Martin reaches Jude and cuts him again with the razor. Jude manages to get up and hold Martin and the razor away from him, and a moment later a kitchen knife slams into Martin's neck. Marybeth is ten feet away standing by the knife rack and throws a second knife into Martin's back, then takes a third knife and walks to Martin. Jude tells her to get back but she slashes at Martin then slips in his blood and falls, and Martin slashes her throat with his razor. As her hand goes to her throat Martin starts to crawl away and then collapses and dies again. Jude reaches Marybeth and she says weakly that Craddock is not finished and that Anna is calling for her to make the Golden Door. Jude tells her to stop talking and places a dishtowel over the wound on her throat, but Marybeth says that he can't save her or Anna but they can save him. Not sure what he is doing, Jude dips his finger in her blood and draws a long line on the floor and then another, and sees Craddock slowly pulling himself out of his father's body. Jude finishes drawing the doorframe and adds a doorknob, and as he kneels on it he feels something slam



against it from the other side. Jude falls to his side and rolls off the door. Craddock pulls free of Martin's body and comes forward; he stops when he sees the door and something slams into it again from the other side. Marybeth manages to pull herself over onto the door and it falls open. Marybeth floats on the bright white light coming up from beneath the door and an instant later she isn't Marybeth anymore, but Anna. She looks at Craddock and asks him why, and Craddock covers his face and tells her to get back. Anna gets to her feet and Craddock slashes her with the razor, but more light pours out from her wound and Craddock begins to smoke. She gathers Craddock into her arms and he screams as the shadow-dogs leap out of the doorway. Anna pulls Craddock with her as she falls backwards through the open door and Jude sees the back of Craddock's head come off and be replaced by a shaft of white light as they disappear.

Hurt: Chapter 45

Jude hears and feels a low throbbing sound coming from the Golden Door, and wonders why Marybeth had gone through it when she hadn't been dead the last time he looked at her. Jude crawls on his hands and knees towards the door, feeling intense pain from his wounds and the bright light. As he gets nearer the door he finds that he can't look into the light, and turns his head. Jude crawls over the edge of the door, and plummets into the light below.

Analysis

As Marybeth drives towards Jude's childhood home in Moore's Corner Jude falls asleep and has a dream – or a vision – that puts the final pieces of the puzzle surrounding Anna's death into place. Watching the events from the outside without being able to effect or change them in any way, he sees that on the last afternoon of her life Anna had come across pornographic pictures of Jessica Price's eleven year old daughter Reese and Craddock McDermott. Whether Anna had already started remembering Craddock abusing her as a child or the pictures had awakened the terrible memory of those times is not clear, but it is obvious that Anna intends to put Craddock and Jessica in jail if she can and get Reese safely away. She tells her sister and stepfather that she will go to Jude and tell him what has been going on, and he will have his lawyers stop them both. Although Craddock tries to calm her down using his amazing powers of persuasion and tells her that Jude threw her away and won't believe her, Anna's faith that Jude will help her is unshakable. In the end, with no other options available to him, Craddock convinces Jessica to help him make preparations, and the vision ends just before Craddock places Anna in a tub of warm water and slits her wrists.

Along with learning the truth about the circumstances surrounding Anna's death, Jude also learns exactly how much Anna had loved him right up to the end of her life, as well as how much Craddock McDermott had hated him while he was alive. Throughout the vision, Anna had told both her sister and Craddock that she knew Jude would help her, and that he would be proud when he learned that she had figured out what to do. Far from being depressed and angry with him for having made her leave, it is obvious that



Jude is the person that she trusts most in the world, and she has absolute faith that he will help her if she asks him to. While Jude can't change anything that happens he does manage to tell Anna that he loves her near the end of the vision and for a moment it seems as though she hears him and answers that she loves him too.

Jessica and Craddock, on the other hand, both try to paint Jude as an unfeeling monster who had thrown Anna out without a thought and didn't care whether she lived or died. Although they are unsuccessful, Jude and the reader get an insight into Craddock's madness as well as his blind hatred of Jude as he talks first to Jessica and then to Anna. Craddock blames Jude for destroying Anna – for changing her and making her turn against both him and Jessica – never once acknowledging that there was anything wrong with what Craddock had done to Anna, and what he was then doing to Reese. In Craddock's mind Judas Coyne had killed Anna long before he had sent her back to Florida, and he was simply finishing the job. As Craddock is preparing to kill Anna he tells her that it won't be long until he puts her and Jude back together again, and Jude understands that Craddock had planned to kill him months before he'd died.

When Jude and Georgia finally reach the farmhouse in Moore's Corner, Louisiana, they are both in terrible shape, and they are not even out of the car before Craddock's blue pickup follows them into the driveway. Angus dies almost as soon as Marybeth shuts the Mustang off, and with neither dog left alive – and Jude's father's dogs long gone – they have no protection against Craddock and it isn't long before the dead man attacks. Arlene Wade – who has been taking care of Jude's father – has Marybeth rest in her room while she puts Jude in his old bedroom with his father, and although he doesn't like the idea of being separated from her Jude is too weak from the loss of blood to argue. After he awakens from a short nap Arlene tells Jude that they have lost the power but the television still works and had a news report on it about all of them – including her – being killed. She tells Jude that she had seen herself being wheeled out of the house on a coroner's stretcher, and tells him that she has to leave. As soon as she is gone, the yellow heart-shaped box that had contained his bullet collection appears on the floor next to Jude's bed and Craddock McDermott pulls himself out of it.

Craddock tries to get into Jude's mind as he has done several times before. At first he is successful; even though he tries to resist, Craddock makes Jude say that he will choke Marybeth to death while Craddock watches. However, as Craddock tries to get him to actually go to Marybeth's room and do it, Jude recalls the new song he'd written in the motel and finds that if he hums it he is able to block out the sound of Craddock's voice. Because he is dead Craddock cannot physically attack Jude himself, but he manages to take over Jude's father's body and use it and his father's straight razor as weapons. He comes close to killing Jude but Marybeth – who had been taught how to throw knives by Bammy when she was a little girl – manages to kill Martin Cowzynski for a second time, but not before he is able to cut her throat badly. She tells Jude that he cannot save her and to make the Golden Door so that she can bring Anna through. Although Jude isn't certain how he knows what to do, he draws a door on the kitchen floor in Marybeth's blood, and soon Anna and Marybeth are together in Marybeth's body. With the help of Bon and Angus' shadow-spirits they are able to get hold of Craddock and take him into the bright light through the Golden Door. Jude sees that along with Craddock,



Marybeth's body is gone and he remembers someone having said that the dead claim their own, but he also remembers that Marybeth had been alive when he'd last looked at her. Jude cannot accept that Marybeth could simply be gone from the world without a trace, and goes through the Golden Door into the light after her.

Discussion Question 1

In Jude's vision of the day Anna died, why does Craddock tell Jessica that they will have to kill Anna? Why do you think Jessica finally agrees to help him even though at first she had resisted the idea? What does Jude learn about the feelings Anna had for him all the way up to the end of her life? How does Jude feel after he learns this?

Discussion Question 2

What does Craddock McDermott say has impressed him about Jude, first over the radio in the Mustang and then a short time later when he appears in Jude's bedroom? What does Jude do that allows him to ignore Craddock's voice? Why doesn't this same thing work after Craddock takes over his father's body?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Marybeth tell Jude to make the Golden Door? Why do you think that Jude somehow knows how to make it, even though he appears not to know what it is? After Anna comes through and becomes one with Marybeth, why do you think that Craddock is unable to get away from her as she takes him down through the Golden Door? Why do you think Jude goes through the Golden Door after Marybeth?

Vocabulary

wordless, unarmed, pivoted, abdomen, somersault, genie, distorted, picket, collision, consciousness, hypnotic, rattle, hysterical, cynical, sidelong, curvature, buoyant, dreadful, avid, wobbled, static, crunched, spectacles, wheelbarrow, thimbles, groggy



Hurt: Chapters 46 - 47, Alive: Chapters 48 - 57

Summary

Hurt: Chapter 46

As Jude falls the light becomes less bright and he finds himself in the passenger seat of his black 1965 Mustang. Anna is driving along a road he recognizes from when he was a kid. When Anna asks him where he wants to go Jude suggests a spot he knows where they can sit, listen to the radio, and look at the view. Jude points to the turnoff and sees that Marybeth is now driving. Marybeth tells him that he has two girls for the price of one, then says that after everything she'd heard about the nightroad she'd expected worse. As they approach a lake Jude looks up at the sky; it is a blinding white and he has to shield his eyes. When Jude comments that he can't look at it Anna's voice comes from Marybeth's mouth and says that it's the same for her in Jude's world; that is why the dead have scribbles over their eyes, which act like sunglasses.

Marybeth parks the Mustang near the lake and puts her head on Jude's shoulder. Marybeth says that she wishes she was driving back with him, and Jude says that she is staying with him. Marybeth asks him to put on some music and Jude puts on a tape he finds in the glove compartment; the first song is 'Drink for the Dead.' It is now Anna sitting next to him and she says that that when Jude sings she is singing with him. As Anna puts the car into drive Marybeth leans forward from the backseat and kisses him, then tells Jude that this is where he gets out. Jude grabs her wrist and tells her that it is where they get out. The Mustang rolls forward and is bathed in intense light. Jude is still holding Marybeth's hand and he squeezes it, and feels her squeeze back weakly. Anna shimmers with light, and Jude sees her reach out and put her hand over his and Marybeth's.

Hurt: Chapter 47

When Jude opens his eyes he is looking into the bright light of an ophthalmoscope and when it is removed someone says that the person they are working on is Judas Coyne. A man with a goatee leans over Jude and tells him that he has lost a lot of blood and they are going to lift him onto a gurney. Jude says "Anna" weakly, and the man asks if that was her name. Arlene Wade says that Jude said her name was Marybeth, and then tells Jude to lie still. Jude turns his head and sees a gurney with an IV bag attached to it being wheeled out. Jude asks "Marybeth?" weakly, and Arlene tells him that they can't do anymore for her. Jude doesn't understand, and Arlene says there's another ambulance coming for him.

Alive: Chapter 48



Jude is in and out of consciousness for the next 24 hours. One time when he awakens he sees his lawyer Nan Shreve standing next to someone who looks like Jackson Browne. The next time he wakes up his old band-mate Dizzy, who had died of AIDS years before, is holding his hand and says that Jude was always there for him. Later Jude sees Angus walk through the room and disappear beneath his bed. Finally Jude vaguely remembers being on the nightroad and asks his nurse if anyone has called Marybeth's grandmother Bammy, and when the nurse says no he says that he wants to be the one to tell her that Marybeth is dead. The nurse tells Jude that he needs to focus on the positive and that even though Marybeth's heart had stopped for several minutes she is stable now, and should fully recover.

Alive: Chapter 49

Jude walks through the hospital hallway with the IV drip still in his arm and begins calling Marybeth's name. As a doctor is telling him that neither of them is well enough yet Jude sees Bon race past him and slip through a pair of double doors marked ICU. Jude ignores a hospital cop as he walks past him and sees Bon disappear into a room. Bon is not there when Jude enters the room, but Marybeth is lying in the room's only bed with black stitches across her throat and an air-tube in her nostrils. Jude sits on the edge of her bed and kisses her, then whispers that he thought she was gone. Marybeth whispers that she is sick of cars and asks if they can fly home.

Alive: Chapter 50

Nan Shreve, Jude's lawyer, comes into Jude's room and tells him she snuck in. When he asks why she isn't supposed to be there she says that she'd agreed to meet Quinn – the detective investigating what happened – and he's late, so she came in to chat before he arrives. Jude asks what he's charged with and Nan says nothing. She tells him that his father had a break with reality and attacked him, and Marybeth had killed his father to save Jude; that is all that Quinn will need to hear. She says Quinn might also have questions about the accident in which he lost his finger and his dog was killed, which she tells him was a hit and run by the side of the road near his father's house. Jude asks if he will want to know what happened in Florida, and Nan asks if there is something she should know about. Detective Quinn – who looks like Jackson Browne – comes in the room and after greeting both of them tells Jude that he ought to place him under arrest. When Jude asks why, Quinn says that he has two daughters who play his albums at top volume and it drives him crazy. He then starts asking questions, and Jude responds the way Nan Shreve has coached him to.

Alive: Chapter 51

As she is leaving, Nan tells Jude that she spoke to Georgia and that she really does love him. Jude firmly says that her name is Marybeth.

Alive: Chapter 52

Two weeks later Jude and Marybeth are back in New York for Danny's memorial service, which seems to be attended by everyone Danny had ever met.



Alive: Chapter 53

In the spring Jude records an album of songs about the dead. Other people play the guitar parts. The album sells well, but he does not tour; he has a triple bypass instead.

Alive: Chapter 54

Marybeth finds an old Dodge Charger and buys it for \$300. Jude spends the next summer restoring it. When he comes in each night Marybeth is waiting for him with a glass of homemade lemonade.

Alive: Chapter 55

Near the end of August Jude talks with Nan Shreve who tells him that it doesn't appear George Ruger was involved in any criminal proceedings last year, which Jude knows means that Ruger hasn't filed a complaint against him. Nan then says that she found out that Jessica Price is under investigation for child endangerment and sexual abuse of her own daughter. The police had come to her home after Price had driven her car into another car – which had left the scene – and had found her daughter inside holding a gun, and a dead dog on the floor. Nan says that the police had found pornographic photos of the girl in the house, were able to establish that Jessica had taken them, and that she is facing ten years.

Alive: Chapter 56

In November, Jude and Marybeth are married in a church near Bammy's house in Georgia.

Alive: Chapter 57

On their fifth anniversary Jude and Marybeth stay home instead of traveling as they usually do; Jude has bought puppies and doesn't want to leave them. One day as he is getting the mail he thinks he sees Anna standing across the street, but quickly realizes that it is Reese Price. Jude brings her back to the house and as Marybeth makes them all lunch Reese tells them that she is going to hitchhike to Buffalo and meet some friends, then go on to Niagara to work on a houseboat her friend owns. Marybeth asks if Reese wants to call her family and when she says no, Marybeth asks about her mother. Reese says that Jessica is in prison and that she hopes she never gets out.

After lunch Jude drives Reese to the bus station. On the way she says that she is sorry about what she did to Jude's hand. She says that sometimes she dreams that she is riding in a car with her Aunt Anna. They listen to Jude's music on the radio, and Anna tells her that Jude came to her house that day to end what had been happening to her. When they reach the bus station, Jude buys her a ticket to Buffalo and slips \$200 and a note with his phone number on it into an envelope with the ticket. He slips it into her backpack. When he returns home, Jude says that he wishes he could have done something for her. Marybeth asks how much money he'd given Reese, and then says that he did all he could do. Jude says that he hopes Reese makes it and when



Marybeth asks if he means to Buffalo he says yes, but Jude isn't certain that's what he means at all.

Analysis

After falling through the Golden Door into the light Jude finds himself in the passenger seat of his black Mustang; the car is nothing like the wrecked mess parked outside his father's farmhouse but instead looks as though it has just come off the showroom floor. Anna and Marybeth have become almost interchangeable – both of them occupying the same body and switching back and forth – and Marybeth reminds Jude that she had once told him that since she could feel Anna inside of her he was getting two girls for the price of one. Even though Jude thinks that he recognizes the road as one that he used to take to one of his favorite places on Lake Pontchartrain, he soon comes to understand that they are on the night road, the road that can only be traveled by the dead. Rather than being the nightmarish place that Craddock – who is now gone forever – had painted it to be, the road is actually quite pleasant, but the sky above is so bright that Jude cannot stand to look at it. Jude is still alive and after she and Anna finally become two separate people, Marybeth tells Jude that he must go back because he does not belong on the night road yet. Having come so far to get her Jude refuses to leave without Marybeth and pulls her back into the world of the living with him. While they are in the hospital Jude learns that Marybeth had been dead for several minutes, which may have accounted for her believing that she belonged on the night road with Anna.

As he is recovering from his injuries Nan Shreve, his lawyer, sneaks into Jude's room. Although Nan had been his lawyer for ten years Jude has known her twice as long, and once upon a time had called her Tennessee. Like many of the women in his life Nan cares deeply about Jude and she sneaks into his room ahead of the detective who is in charge of trying to piece what actually happened together to coach Jude on what to say. Although she has no more idea of what really happened than Detective Quinn, Nan is determined to keep him out of trouble and so makes up a plausible story which – while it might not be the truth – will at least fit the facts closely enough to satisfy the detective. Knowing that no one would believe the truth even if he told it, Jude follows Nan's coaching to the letter. Later, after he and Marybeth are back home, he has Nan check to see whether George Rugar had filed a complaint against him and whether Jessica Price had mentioned him to the police. While neither Rugar nor Jessica had said anything about him – which means that he has no legal troubles to worry about – Nan does tell him that a carpenter who had been working in the development Jessica Price lived in had reported seeing someone who looked like the lead singer of Metallica driving past the Price home in a black Mustang on the day Jessica had been arrested.

For the next five years Jude and Marybeth live relatively quiet lives at the farmhouse in Piecliff, New York and do their best to forget about the past. Jude puts out a new album, and Marybeth teaches dance at a local gym. After they are married they travel some, but for the most part lead quiet, secluded lives. When Reese Price arrives at their home one afternoon she looks so much like Anna that at first Jude thinks he is seeing ghosts



again but quickly realizes who she is. After she tells him that she sometimes dreams that she is driving with her Aunt Anna in a black car and listening to Jude's music, she says that Anna isn't sad anymore and tells her that Jude had been trying to stop what was happening to Reese when he'd come to her house in Testament that day. Jude finds that he is unable to say anything when she is finished; the place they are in and the car Anna is driving in Reese's dream remind him of the last time he had been with Anna – on the night road – and the idea that Anna is still doing what she can for him touches Jude deeply.

Discussion Question 1

While they are on the nightroad, why isn't Jude able to see what Anna sees when he looks up at the sky? Why do you think that Marybeth believes that she is supposed to stay on the nightroad even though she tells Jude that he needs to go? Why do you think Jude is able to pull her back into the world of the living?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Nan Shreve sneak into Jude's hospital room and coach him on exactly what to say to Detective Quinn? How do you think Nan feels when Jude tells her firmly that Georgia's name is really Marybeth, and why do you think she feels this way? Why doesn't either George Ruger or Jessica Price tell the police about their run-ins with Jude?

Discussion Question 3

Why do you think Reese Price comes to the farmhouse in Piecliff to see Jude? What does Jude think when he first sees her standing across the street? How do you think Marybeth feels about her visiting them, and why? How would you feel if someone who had seriously injured someone you loved were to show up out of the blue? Why does Jude buy Reese a bus ticket and give her money?

Vocabulary

melodic, penetrating, eyeballs, embarrassed, hairy, temples, pregnant, jostled, exhalation, ceremony, holstered, focus, minimal, security, confusion, derelict, lemonade, preamble, churchyard, envelopes, composed, puddle, crescent, eyeless, interlocking, complicated, daunting



Characters

Jude (Judas) Coyne (Justin Cowzynski)

Judas Coyne – referred to as Jude throughout the story – is a 54 year old heavy metal music legend and the main character in the novel. Jude has been at the top of the heavy metal music world since leaving his abusive father's hog farm in Louisiana and changing his name from Justin Cowzynski to Judas Coyne over thirty years before the story begins. Jude has been in semi-retirement for the last several years following the death of two members of his band – Jude's Hammer – and the break-up of his marriage. Jude lives in a large farmhouse in Piecliff, New York with his 23-year-old girlfriend Georgia (whose real name is Marybeth Kimball) and his two German shepherds, Angus and Bon. Georgia is the latest in a succession of young "Goth" girlfriends, and at the start of the novel Jude views his relationship with her as temporary, like all of his other relationships have been. During the course of the story, however, Jude comes to learn that he loves Georgia deeply, and at the end risks his own life to bring her back from the world of the dead.

At the start of the novel Jude buys a ghost – and the suit the seller claims it inhabits – that his assistant Danny Wooten finds on the Internet to add to his collection of macabre items. Although it seems as though Danny located the ghost and the suit by accident, Jude soon learns that the entire deal had been a setup and that the ghost is actually the stepfather of one of Jude's ex live-in girlfriends named Anna McDermott, who he had called Florida and who had supposedly killed herself shortly after Jude asked her to leave. The ghost – Craddock McDermott – had been a hypnotist and spiritualist when he was alive and has sworn to kill Jude and anyone who helps him ostensibly because he blames Jude for his stepdaughter's death, although this is eventually shown to be a lie. Craddock gets into Jude's mind and almost makes him kill himself, and a short time later almost makes him kill Georgia. Jude and Georgia – along with the dogs – leave the farmhouse and head south, first confronting Jessica Price – Anna's sister and Craddock's other stepdaughter – in Florida, and finally ending up at Jude's father's house in Louisiana where they have their final confrontation with the dead man.

Throughout the novel, Jude is confronted by his past – a past that in some cases he has done everything he can to put out of his mind – and finds himself dealing with a wide range of emotions that include guilt, anger, hatred, and pity. As the danger from Craddock increases and the dead man makes several attempts to kill both him and Georgia, Jude finds himself remembering his time with Anna and slowly putting the pieces of the puzzle surrounding her death together. Throughout the ordeal Jude finds himself growing closer to Georgia – who he eventually begins calling Marybeth – and caring for her more than he had ever thought possible. At the end of the novel, after Anna's spirit and Marybeth destroy Craddock by taking him through the Golden Door, Jude brings Marybeth back to the world of the living. They marry and settle down. Jude is able to put the ghosts of his past to rest. It can be assumed that he goes on to live a happy life.



Georgia (Marybeth Kimball)

Georgia – whose real name is Marybeth Kimball – is Jude’s 23-year-old live-in girlfriend at the start of the novel. Jude met Georgia nine months earlier while she’d been working as a pole dancer at a strip club under the name Morphine, and like all of Jude’s other girlfriends since the break-up of his marriage dresses and acts like a “Goth.” Georgia was raised by her grandmother (who she calls “Bammy”) in a small town in Georgia, and had an ‘affair’ with a friend of her father’s when she was 13 years old, after which she had tried to kill herself. Although at first she appears to be a spoiled girl who gets on Jude’s nerves most of the time, Georgia proves herself to be a strong, responsible, and fiercely loyal young woman who loves Jude deeply. Even though Jude asks her if she wants to leave several times after the dead man starts to stalk him, Georgia chooses to stay with Jude because she believes that he needs her and is willing to die if that is what it takes to keep him safe.

When she and Jude stop at Bammy’s house on their way south they contact the spirit of Anna McDermott using Georgia’s old Ouija board and she promises Anna that she will help her return to the world of the living to fight Craddock. After this session with the Ouija board Georgia feels connected to Anna and tells Jude that there is a part of the dead girl inside her. During the final showdown with the dead man at Jude’s father’s house, Marybeth – as Jude is now calling Georgia – manages to save Jude from being killed by his father (whose body Craddock possesses) but not before Craddock is able to cut her throat with a razor. Marybeth tells Jude to make the Golden Door, which he draws on the floor in her blood, and then brings Anna through it and allows her to take over her body. Together with Anna, Marybeth brings Craddock through the Golden Door and disappears. Unwilling to let her go, Jude goes through the Golden Door after her, finds her on the night road, and pulls her back into the world of the living. Marybeth recovers from her wounds and eventually marries Jude.

Craddock James McDermott (the ghost)

Craddock James McDermott was the stepfather of Anna McDermott – Jude’s ex-girlfriend – and is the ghost that Jude buys over the Internet. While he was alive, Craddock had made his living as a hypnotist and as a ghost is able to get into people’s minds and manipulate their actions, as well as cause people to see and hear things that aren’t really there over the telephone, television, and radio. Craddock is able to convince Jude’s assistant Danny Wooten to kill himself, and on several occasions almost manipulates Jude and Georgia into doing the same. Although Craddock is very powerful and his voice is almost impossible to resist, Jude finds that his dogs – Angus and Bon – have ‘shadow-dogs’ inside them that are able to fight Craddock, and that a song that he wrote shortly after heading south with Georgia allows Jude to tune Craddock’s voice out when he hums it.

Although Craddock (and his living stepdaughter, Jessica Price) claim that he has come to kill Jude because he holds him responsible for Anna committing suicide, Jude is



eventually able to piece the truth together. Craddock had been having sex with Anna's older sister Jessica – who had been a willing participant – starting when she was a child, and started hypnotizing Anna when she was about 12 to help her overcome her trouble sleeping; during these sessions Craddock would have sex with Anna while she in a trance without her knowing it. After Jude sent her back to her family, Anna discovered that Craddock was having sex with Jessica's 11-year-old daughter Reese and threatened to expose him. Craddock had slit Anna's wrists while she was in a hypnotic trance and made it look like a suicide, but still blamed Jude for "ruining" his little girl and swore to get his revenge after he died. Craddock is a completely evil character who is destroyed by Anna and Marybeth – and their love for Jude – in the end.

Anna May McDermott (Florida)

Anna May McDermott was Jude's live-in girlfriend before Georgia, the stepdaughter of Craddock McDermott, and the sister of Jessica Price. Anna – who Jude called Florida – had been 26 when she moved in with Jude, and throughout their relationship had asked Jude a constant stream of mostly meaningless questions which Jude found to be both charming and irritating at the same time. Although Anna had always had spells of fairly severe depression, near the end of her relationship with Jude she had begun to act erratically – sometimes laughing or crying uncontrollably, and sometimes sticking herself with pins. When it became clear to Jude he couldn't help her he sent Anna back to her family in Florida. Soon after she arrives at her sister's house Anna discovers an envelope containing pornographic pictures of her 11-year-old niece Reese and her stepfather Craddock McDermott, and tells Craddock that she is going to call Jude and get his lawyers to make certain he goes to prison. Although both Craddock and Jessica tell her that Jude threw her out and doesn't care about her, Anna's faith that Jude would be proud of her and help her is unshakable. Craddock murders her to keep her quiet and makes it look like she committed suicide.

Jude and Georgia contact Anna's spirit using an Ouija board and she says that she will help them fight her stepfather. During the final confrontation with Craddock, Marybeth has Jude make the Golden Door and then brings Anna through it – allowing the dead woman to use her body – and Anna pulls Craddock down through the Golden Door and destroys him, saving Jude. Anna remains on the nightroad after saying her final goodbye to him just before Jude and Georgia return to the land of the living, and the reader understands that even in death she still loves him as much as she had when she was alive.

Reese Price

Reese Price is Jessica Price's daughter, Anna McDermott's niece, and the last victim of Craddock McDermott's sexual abuse. Reese is eleven years old when Anna comes back to live with her sister Jessica Price after Jude asks her to leave, and shortly after she arrives Anna finds pornographic pictures of Reese and Craddock which she



threatens to use to put both Craddock and Reese's mother Jessica into prison. When Reese is 13 Jude and Georgia arrive at Jessica Price's home in Testament, Florida to try and force Jessica to help get Craddock to stop stalking them; while they are there Reese shoots and kills Bon – one of Jude's German shepherds – and a moment later accidentally fires another shot that takes Jude's index finger off. At the end of the novel, when she is 18, Reese visits Jude and Georgia at their home in Piecliff, New York. She apologizes to Jude for shooting him, and tells him that sometimes she dreams that she is driving with her Aunt Anna in a black Mustang listening to Jude's music. In these dreams Anna is happy and tells her that Jude had only been trying to help her that day in Testament.

Jessica Price

Jessica Price is Anna McDermott's older sister, Craddock McDermott's stepdaughter, and Reese Price's mother. Jessica had adored her stepfather when he was alive, had willingly been having sex with him since she was a child, and had allowed him to have sex with her own young daughter, Reese. Just before he dies Craddock McDermott gives Jessica explicit instructions which she follows to the letter when he passes away, after which she sets up a fake auction site on the Internet and tricks Jude into buying Craddock's ghost. Although Jude threatens to kill her if she doesn't tell him how to get Craddock's ghost to leave him and Georgia alone, Jessica refuses to help him and later attempts to kill them by hitting them with her car (probably while being manipulated by Craddock). In the end Jessica is sent to prison after the police find pornographic pictures of her daughter and Craddock in her house and are able to establish that it was Jessica who had taken them.

Bammy (Alabama Fordham)

Bammy is Marybeth's grandmother, and raised her in her home in Crickets, Georgia after Marybeth's mother died when she was still a child. Bammy is in her late 50's – not much older than Jude – and although she loves Marybeth very much, she immediately suspects that the two of them are on drugs when they stop at house her without warning looking battered and hurt while on their way to Florida to see Jessica Price. Bammy knows that something is wrong and offers to help Marybeth and Jude in any way she can, but they refuse her help knowing that if they accepted her offer it would put Bammy in danger. Near the end of the novel Jude and Marybeth are married in a church near Bammy's home, and Bammy playfully blows "rude whistles" at the couple as they are driving away.

Martin Cowzynski

Martin Cowzynski is Jude's father. Throughout his childhood Martin had been violent and abused both Jude (Justin) and his mother – once breaking Justin's hand by slamming it in a door. At the start of the novel Jude is informed by his aunt Arlene Wade



– who has been caring for Martin for years – that his 85-year-old father does not have much longer to live. Although Jude has been paying the old man’s medical bills for years he still feels a burning hatred for his father. When he finally returns home, however, he is surprised by the pity and sadness he feels when he sees his unconscious, emaciated father. In their final confrontation Craddock kills Martin, possesses his body, and uses it to attack Jude, but Marybeth is able to kill Martin (for a second time) by throwing kitchen knives into him.

Danny Wooten

Danny Wooten is Jude’s personal assistant, and has an office in Jude’s home. Danny is 30, originally from Southern California, and loves to talk; at times he talks so much that he gets on Jude’s nerves. It is Danny who finds the ghost for sale on the Internet, and Danny who becomes the dead man’s first victim after Craddock McDermott gets into his head and talks him into hanging himself. While he was alive Danny was devoted to Jude, and shortly after he dies manages to call Jude on the phone from the nightroad and warn him about Craddock. Soon after Craddock is destroyed Jude and Marybeth attend a memorial service for Danny along with what seems to be everyone who had ever known him.

Angus and Bon

Angus and Bon are Jude’s large German shepherds. When Craddock McDermott’s ghost makes his first attempt to get Jude to kill Marybeth and then himself, Jude is able to resist the sound of Craddock’s voice by listening to Angus and Bon barking outside. A few minutes later Craddock is driven off by the ‘shadow-dogs’ that inhabit Angus and Bon’s bodies; these shadow dogs exist in the same state of being as Craddock’s ghost, and so can wound – and be wounded by – the dead man. Bon is shot and killed by Reese Price at Jessica Price’s home in Florida, and Angus dies from injuries he sustains when Jessica smashes her car into the Mustang. Both ‘shadow-dogs’ help Anna and Marybeth get Craddock through the Golden Door, and Jude sees them both one last time while he is recovering at the hospital.

Arlene Wade

Arlene Wade is Jude’s aunt by marriage. Arlene is a registered nurse and for several years prior to the opening of the novel has been taking care of Jude’s father, Martin Cowzynski. After Martin stops eating and seems to slip into a coma Arlene calls Jude and asks if he wants to see his father before he dies, but Jude says no. Arlene is surprised when Jude and Marybeth show up at Martin’s house in Louisiana a few days later, both of them seriously injured. Arlene treats Jude’s wounds as best she can, and then leaves after Craddock has the television show Arlene film of herself being wheeled out of the farmhouse on a coroner’s stretcher. She returns a short time later – after Craddock has been destroyed – with paramedics.



Nan Shreve (Tennessee)

Nan Shreve is Jude's lawyer and an ex-Goth girlfriend from twenty years before the story starts who he had called Tennessee. Like many of the women in Jude's life Nan cares about Jude and coaches him on exactly what to say to the police while he is recovering in the hospital. Later, Nan finds out that neither Jessica Price nor George Ruger had made complaints against Jude to the police.

George Ruger

George Ruger is a used car salesman in Crickets, Georgia. He had been a friend of Marybeth's father when she was growing up, and had an 'affair' with her when Marybeth was just 13. After they leave Bammy's house Jude stops by Ruger's dealership and beats the hell out of him for what he'd done to Marybeth in the past. Ruger does not call the police and report the incident, even though he recognizes Jude.

Jerome Presley/Dizzy

Jerome Presley was the rhythm and keyboard player for Jude's Hammer until he killed himself several years before the story opens. When Jude calls home to get his messages from Bammy's house he finds a message from Jerome telling him that it won't be long before they ride the nightroad together. Dizzy was the base player in Jude's Hammer and died of AIDS not long after Jerome passed away. Dizzy visits Jude while he is in a semi-conscious state in the hospital; he holds Jude's hand and thanks him for always being there for him.



Symbols and Symbolism

Heart-Shaped Boxes

There are two heart-shaped boxes in the novel. The first is a large, black heart-shaped box in which the suit that Jude buys from Jessica Price – which ‘contains’ the ghost of Craddock McDermott – is packed when it arrives at his house. The second is a yellow heart-shaped that contains a bullet collection Jude had when he was a teenager, and which he finds at his studio in his home in Piecliff even though he had left it at his father’s home in Louisiana 30 years before. Later, when he returns to his father’s house, Jude sees Craddock McDermott’s ghost climb out of this same yellow heart-shaped box while he is in his old bedroom with his father. Although heart-shaped boxes are usually used to deliver chocolates and other gifts to loved ones, the heart-shaped boxes in this story both deliver the malevolent spirit of Craddock McDermott, who had spent most of his adult life perverting love.

The Suit

When Jude buys a ghost from an online auction site, the seller (who turns out to be Craddock McDermott’s living stepdaughter Jessica Price) includes the ghost’s favorite suit in the bargain. The suit is old but in good condition and while Georgia thinks that either she or Jude should wear it, the idea of that makes Jude’s stomach turn. Later, Jessica tells Jude that since he bought and paid for them, both the suit and the ghost of her stepfather are now his and that all sales are final. Although Jude comes to believe that if he can sell the suit to someone else the dead man will go with it, Craddock manipulates Georgia into burning the suit in the grill so that it cannot be sold and Jude will always be the one who bought and owns it – and Craddock’s ghost.

The Pin

While Georgia is playing with the suit shortly after it is delivered to Jude’s home in the black heart-shaped box she is pricked in the thumb by what she thinks is a pin hidden in the suit, although when he searches the suit Jude cannot find any pins in it. The wound quickly becomes infected, and by the time Marybeth and Jude reach his father’s house in Louisiana the raging infection has spread throughout her right hand and somehow moved into her left. Although Jude, Bammy, and Arlene Wade all tell her that the infection is serious and that she needs a doctor, Marybeth believes that once Craddock’s ghost is destroyed the infection will disappear, and in the end she turns out to be right.



Curved Razor on a Gold Chain

The second time Jude sees Craddock McDermott's ghost in his hallway he is holding an old-fashioned curved razor attached by a gold chain to a ring on his finger. Later, Jude sees this same razor and gold chain in pictures of Craddock that he finds on the Internet. While he was alive Craddock – who had made his living as a hypnotist – used the curved razor on the chain to put his clients into a trance, and also used it as a pendulum in his spiritualist pursuits. In his vision/dream of the day Anna died, Jude finds out that Craddock had used the curved razor to cut Anna's wrists and make it look like she committed suicide.

Black 1965 Mustang

During the last few months that Anna had lived with him, Jude spent a great deal of his time restoring a black 1965 Mustang to near perfect condition; Anna sitting in the back seat of the car singing while he worked on the engine is one of the last good memories that Jude has of their relationship. After they leave the house in Piecliff and head south, Craddock manipulates his stepdaughter Jessica Price into slamming into the Mustang with her own car, which almost wrecks it – although it holds together long enough to get them to Jude's father's house in Louisiana. When Jude goes through the Golden Door, he winds up in the passenger seat of the Mustang with Anna driving along the nightroad; the Mustang is the symbol of their relationship that Anna has taken with her into the next life. Shortly after they are both released from the hospital, Marybeth buys Jude a derelict Dodge Charger to fix up, which the reader understands will become a symbol of their relationship.

Ouija Board

While they are at Bammy's house, Jude and Georgia use an old Ouija board that Marybeth had bought when she was a teenager to contact Anna's spirit. Although nothing happens at first, the pointer starts to move beneath their fingers after Jude asks if Florida – the only name he had ever called Anna while she was alive – can hear him. As Jude communicates with Anna he comes to realize from what she says – as well as his own memories of things she had said and written to him in the past – that Anna had not killed herself but had been murdered by Craddock McDermott. Although the session does not last long when it is over Marybeth feels an intense connection to Anna, almost as though Anna has become a part of her – something that actually happens just a short time later.

The Blue Chevy Pickup

When Jude and Georgia leave the house in Piecliff and head south in his '65 Mustang, Craddock pursues them in the old, faded blue Chevy pickup truck that Jude had first seen parked in his driveway on the night Craddock had almost manipulated him into



killing Georgia and then himself. The pickup is a working man's truck and symbolizes – at least to Craddock – the difference between him and the multimillionaire rock star Judas Coyne. Although Jude and Georgia see the blue pickup coming towards them to kill them – first in the Denny's parking lot and later outside Jessica Price's house – in both cases when the smoke clears it is another, real vehicle that has come close to killing them after Craddock manipulates the driver into doing what he wants them to do.

Drink to the Dead

Drink to the Dead is the name of a song that Jude writes over the course of about an hour in the bathroom of the Days Inn outside of Fredericksburg, Virginia. It is the first song that he has written in quite a while. Jude finds that he is able to forget about Craddock and the danger that he and Georgia are in and actually relax a little while he is writing the song. Later, when they are in his father's house, Jude finds that he is able to keep Craddock's voice out of his head and resist the dead man by humming the song softly to himself. For Jude, Drink to the Dead represents the important part that music has always played in his life and comes to be one of the most powerful weapons that he has against Craddock's evil.

The Golden Door

The Golden Door is a doorway between the world of the living and the world of the dead, where the night road is. During the final confrontation at Jude's father's house, Craddock is able to possess Martin Cowzynski's body and almost kills Jude. Marybeth is able to kill Martin (for the second time) but he cuts her throat before he dies and Marybeth tells Jude that he has to make the Golden Door so that she can bring Anna through to finish Craddock off. Although he doesn't know what he is doing, Jude draws a rough door on the floor of his father's kitchen in Marybeth's blood. When Marybeth crawls onto it, the door opens and she is able to bring Anna into her body. Together, they grab Craddock's spirit and pull him down through the Golden Door, destroying him.

Scribbles Over the Eyes

Every time Jude sees Craddock McDermott there are black scribbles over where his eyes should be. Later, when Jude sees the ghost of Bammy's twin sister Ruth in the backyard of Bammy's house, he sees that she has the same black scribbles over her eyes. Although he doesn't know why they are there, Jude understands that when they are in the world of the living the dead always have those strange scribbles over their eyes. When Jude is riding with Anna and Marybeth in the Mustang on the nightroad after he goes through the Golden Door to find Marybeth, he finds that he is unable to look at the sky because it is so intensely bright even though Anna tells him that she can see for miles. Anna tells Jude that his eyes are not meant to look on that world yet, just as the dead have trouble seeing in the world of the living. She tells him that the



scribbles he has seen over ghosts' eyes are really nothing more than sunglasses for the living dead.

The Night Road

The night road is the road that Craddock McDermott tells Jude he will be driving on as soon as Craddock has finished his business with him. Jude and the reader quickly come to understand that it exists in the world of the dead. Later, Craddock has Jude's dead band mate Jerome Presley tell Jude that they will be driving on the night road and singing together again soon, only all of the singing where Jerome is sounds like screaming. After they go through the Golden Door, Marybeth and Jude find themselves driving on the night road with Anna in Jude's Mustang and far from being the nightmarish place they have been told about, it is actually a very pleasant place that reminds Jude of a road he used to take to get to his favorite place on Lake Pontchartrain when he was a kid. Because Craddock had been a cruel and evil man, the night road he traveled was a terrible place, symbolizing hell; however, since Anna was a kind and decent person, her night road is a lovely, heavenly place where she will finally be happy.



Settings

Jude's Farmhouse: Piecliff, New York

Roughly the first third of the novel (as well as the last several chapters) takes place in Jude's large farmhouse, which is located in Piecliff, New York – a small town 40 minutes outside of Poughkeepsie and a two hour drive from New York City. The property is secluded and includes the main house and a large, heated barn that Bon and Angus' indoor/outdoor kennel is attached to, and which also serves as the garage. Several years prior to the start of the story, Jude had a large addition put on the already rambling house and Jude's personal assistant Danny Wooten's office is located in this addition.

Major scenes in the novel take place in Jude and Georgia's bedroom on the second floor; the hallway outside the bedroom, which is where Jude first sees the ghost of Craddock McDermott; the kitchen; the barn, where Craddock is almost able to kill Jude; Danny's office, which is where the dead man first communicates with Jude via the radio and a short time later via Danny's computer; and the studio, where Craddock is almost able to manipulate Jude into killing Georgia and then himself. After surviving this last attack, Jude and Georgia – along with Angus and Bon – head south towards Jessica Price's house in Jude's 1965 Mustang. When they have recovered from their wounds after Craddock is taken through the Golden Door and destroyed, Jude and Marybeth return to the farmhouse in Piecliff to live.

Days Inn/Denny's Restaurant: Fredericksburg, Virginia

After Jude spots Craddock McDermott following them in his blue Chevy pickup truck near the end of their first day on the road, Jude decides to stop at a Days Inn in Fredericksburg, Virginia. When he wakes up the next morning Jude spends about an hour composing a song that he titles 'Drink to the Dead' in the motel room's bathroom so as not to wake Georgia. The song seems to have a power over Craddock, and Jude is able to drown out the dead man's voice later by humming the song softly.

There is a Denny's Restaurant located across the parking lot from the Days Inn, and Jude and Georgia walk there and have breakfast before they leave Fredericksburg. While they are there Craddock attacks them – first by getting into Georgia's head and almost having her slit her own throat with a shard of glass, and a short time later by manipulating the driver of a Jeep into almost hitting them.



Bammy's House/Used Car Dealership: Crickets, Georgia

Shortly after they cross the Georgia state line, Jude and Georgia stop at the home of Georgia's grandmother – who she calls Bammy – in the small town of Crickets, Georgia. Georgia had been raised by Bammy in the small, comfortable Cape Cod house after her mother died and although Bammy can see that the two of them are in some kind of trouble, she welcomes both Jude and Georgia into her home. While they are there Jude and Georgia contact the spirit of Anna McDermott using an old Ouija board that Georgia had bought when she was a teenager. Later, after dinner, Jude sees the ghost of Bammy's twin sister Ruth – who had disappeared when she was a child – in the backyard of the house.

After they leave Bammy's house, Jude stops at a used car lot in the center of Crickets and beats up a used car salesman named George Ruger. Ruger had been a friend of Georgia's father and had slept with Georgia regularly when she was just thirteen. Although Georgia begs Jude not to do it, she covers his face with kisses after he beats Ruger within an inch of his life.

Jessica Price's House: Testament, Florida

Jessica Price's house is located in a new development in the suburban community of Testament, Florida. After waiting for Jessica's daughter Reese to leave for school Jude and Marybeth (as he now calls Georgia) confront Jessica in the kitchen of her home and demand that she helps them get rid of the ghost of her stepfather, Craddock McDermott. Jessica refuses to help them and as Jude is holding a crowbar to her throat, Reese comes back into the kitchen holding a gun. She shoots and kills Bon, and a moment later accidentally fires a shot that takes the index finger off of Jude's hand. As they are trying to leave, Craddock manipulates Jessica into crashing her car into the Mustang, which crushes Angus' hind legs and eventually kills him.

While Marybeth drives towards Jude's father's house, Jude has a dream/vision of the day that Anna died. The dream/vision starts in the hallway on the second floor of Jessica Price's house where Anna tells Craddock and Jessica that she has found pornographic pictures of Reese and is going to make certain they both go to jail, and ends in Anna's bedroom where Jude is able to tell Anna that he loves her just before Craddock slits her wrists with his straight razor and makes it look like suicide.

Martin Cowzynski's (Jude's father) House/Hog Farm: Moore's Corner, Louisiana

After leaving Jessica Price's house, Jude and Marybeth drive to Jude's father's hog farm, which is located about three hours west of the Louisiana state line in the small rural community of Moore's Corner, near Lake Pontchartrain. It is here that Jude has his



final confrontation with the ghost of Craddock McDermott, who possesses his father's body and uses it as a weapon after Jude is able to block Craddock's voice by humming the song he wrote back at the Days Inn. Following a long and bloody fight, Marybeth is able to kill Martin (for a second time) by throwing knives into his body, but not before he is able to cut her throat with a straight razor. Jude draws the Golden Door on the floor of the kitchen in Marybeth's blood; Marybeth is able to bring Anna's spirit into the world of the living, and Anna is able to take Craddock back through the Golden Door with her, which destroys him.

Along with this final confrontation, a number of the flashback/dream scenes involving Jude take place at the house in Moore's Corner. The most notable of these concerns the time that Martin Cowzynski smashed Jude's hand in the kitchen door of the house, breaking Jude's fingers and forcing him to learn how to finger guitar chords with his other hand. Although this is where Jude takes Marybeth when they have no place left to go to escape Craddock, Jude despises the place – and his father – and has almost all of his life.



Themes and Motifs

The Power of Love

Love's power to conquer hatred and evil is a theme that runs through the entire novel. As the novel opens it appears that Jude and Georgia's nine month old relationship may not last much longer. However, after Craddock makes his first attempt on Jude's life, Georgia refuses to leave him even though she quickly realizes that her life is also in danger. While Jude has looked at their relationship as temporary – as all of the relationships he's had since his divorce have been – it quickly becomes obvious that Georgia loves Jude far more deeply than he ever realized. Georgia's love for Jude is so intense that she is willing to do whatever it takes, including dying herself, to make certain he is safe. During the final confrontation with Craddock, Marybeth has Jude make the Golden Door and then brings Anna through from the land of the dead, allows Anna to possess her still living body, and then helps her take Craddock back through the Golden Door, appearing to willingly sacrifice her life for Jude.

Anna's love for Jude had been as intense as that felt for him by Georgia/Marybeth, although Anna hadn't been able to show it clearly or consistently during their time together because of the severe depression she suffered from – depression, it is revealed, that had been caused by Craddock's abuse of her while she was a child. However, Anna's love is so strong that she is able – with Marybeth's help – to come back from beyond the grave and together the power of their love for Jude is enough to allow them to drag Craddock back through the Golden Door, which destroys him and leaves Jude alive and safe.

Love is something that Jude has always had difficulty showing – in large part because there had been very little love in his home when he was a child – although he has loved many people throughout his life and has consistently tried to do the best he can for those he cares about. While Jude has viewed all of his relationships since the break-up of his marriage as temporary and disposable – including his relationship with Georgia – after Craddock McDermott's ghost enters their lives Jude starts to view Georgia differently. He begins calling her Marybeth as a way of showing how his feelings for her have changed; Georgia was what he called the "Goth" girl he had been living with on a temporary basis, while Marybeth was the name of the woman he loved deeply. Although Marybeth is willing to sacrifice her life when she helps Anna pull Craddock through the Golden Door, Jude's love for her is so strong that he follows her through the Golden Door and literally pulls her back into the land of the living. In the end the power of love to heal proves to be stronger than the power of hate to destroy, and Jude and Marybeth find the happiness they have both been looking for together.



Hatred and Guilt

Hatred – and the destructive force that it can be – plays an important part in the novel. It influences the actions of several of the main characters. Even though it is eventually discovered that he murdered his stepdaughter Anna and made it look like an accident, Craddock McDermott blamed Jude for destroying her while she lived with him and “turning his little girl” against him. Craddock’s hatred of Jude is so intense and all consuming that he is able to carry it with him beyond the grave and use it as fuel to power his relentless attacks on Jude and Georgia during the course of the story. Jessica Price shares her stepfather’s hatred of Jude and it blinds her to the point that she is unable to recognize the evil in her own actions – first helping Craddock kill Anna, and later tricking Jude into buying Craddock’s ghost. Jude is no stranger to hatred either, and has spent most of his life hating his father Martin, who had abused both Jude and his mother and who had once broken his fingers by slamming them in the kitchen door. Over the years his hatred of his father has influenced both his music and his personal life – specifically his decision not to father children because he feared that he had too much of his father in him – although he does find himself feeling pity and some sadness when he sees how frail and emaciated his dying father has become when he and Marybeth go to Louisiana. Throughout the novel hatred is shown as a malevolent force that destroys those who cannot find a way to overcome it.

Guilt is one of the most powerful weapons that the ghost of Craddock McDermott has when it comes to attacking the living and he is able to use their own guilt against several of the main characters in the novel. He uses this weapon most successfully against Jude’s assistant Danny Wooten; Craddock uses the guilt Danny feels about his sister’s drug overdose – which he inadvertently caused – and his mother’s suicide as a result to make Danny hang himself. Craddock uses Georgia’s guilt about an ‘affair’ she’d had with the father of her best friend when she was just 13 to cause her to almost kill herself. In both of these cases, Craddock filled his victim’s head with his own voice and told them how easy it would be to escape their guilt by killing themselves, and in so doing is able to use the guilt they have struggled with all of their adult lives against them.

With Jude, Craddock is able to use several episodes in his life that he feels guilty about to work his way into his mind – including the extreme guilt that he feels over Anna having committed suicide just a few months after he had asked her to leave his house. When Jude discovers that it was actually Craddock who killed Anna and made it look like suicide, guilt is no longer a weapon that the dead man can use against him and Jude realizes that he is not the bad guy that he had been thinking of himself as after all.

Mind Control/Resistance

As Jude learns early on, the ghost of Craddock McDermott – who had been a hypnotist while he was alive – has the ability to get into the minds of the living and control what they see, hear, and in some cases do. On a number of occasions he is able to whisper



directly into the minds of the living and get them to do what he wants of them to do, such as when he makes Jessica Price run her car into the Mustang, when he almost causes Georgia to slit her wrists, and when he is able to talk Danny into killing himself. Another way in which he is able to influence and control (or at least frighten) the living is by manipulating the mind of a person to see or hear something totally fake on the radio or television, over the telephone, or on the computer. Both Jude and Georgia see a fake newscast on television while they are still at Jude's farmhouse in which a local anchorman reports their deaths, and later Arlene Wade sees a similar newscast down in Louisiana that includes her among the dead. Jude and Marybeth both hear the dead man's voice on the radio as they are driving to Louisiana, and Jude hears his dead band-mate's voice over the telephone telling him that they will soon be driving the night road together. Whether speaking directly into a person's head or using electronic means to get his point across, as a trained hypnotist Craddock knows exactly what to say to control his victims' minds and his soft, almost pleasant sounding voice is the most powerful weapon that he has.

Although Craddock's abilities make him extremely powerful and dangerous, Jude discovers that there are a couple of ways to combat the dead man's power to control his mind. When Craddock orders Jude to shoot Georgia while the two of them are in his studio, Jude discovers that he has the power to "tune out" Craddock's voice by listening to his German shepherds Bon and Angus barking outside. While Craddock is able to drown out every other sound and thought with his voice, the barking from the dogs comes through loud and clear and Jude is able to resist and – with the help of the 'spirit-dogs' inside Bon and Angus – temporarily drive Craddock away. Later, during the final confrontation at his father's house in Louisiana, Jude is able to drive Craddock's voice out of his mind and break the dead man's hold over him by humming 'Drink to the Dead,' the song Jude had written a short time earlier. In both of these cases, Jude is able to resist Craddock's power by concentrating on something that is beyond Craddock's control. With Angus and Bon, it is possible that Jude hears the shadow-dogs – who have the ability to wound Craddock – in their barking; with the song, it is the power of music – which has always been so important in Jude's life – that allows him to resist Craddock and keep his evil at bay for a while.



Styles

Point of View

Heart-Shaped Box is written in the third person, and the point of view throughout the novel is that of Judas (Jude) Coyne, a 54 year old semi-retired heavy metal music legend. Jude is present in every scene in the novel and all of the action and events that take place in the book are presented as they are seen, felt, and experienced by him. The point of view is reliable in as much as it accurately shows what Jude is seeing and experiencing at any given time; however, in several important scenes what Jude sees and experiences is not real, but rather is the result of the dead man, Craddock McDermott, exercising varying levels of control over Jude's mind. Throughout the narrative the author provides insights into what Jude is thinking and feeling, which helps the reader connect with the character and care about what happens to him. Using this single point of view is very effective as it helps to keep the reader engaged and involved with the story on an intensely personal level while also keeping them from becoming disoriented or confused by the fairly complex storyline – as could easily happen if the information was presented from multiple perspectives.

The novel is written using a combination of descriptive prose and dialogue. The dialogue, for the most part, is conversational and easy to read; there are very few long speeches, and the give and take between characters is very natural sounding. The exceptions are those times when the dead man, Craddock McDermott, uses a television, radio, or other electronic device to speak directly to Jude or another character while Jude is there; in several of these instances the dialogue is long, one-sided, rambling, and difficult to follow which helps to accentuate the frightening, nightmarish nature of these scenes. There are a considerable number of flashback and dream sequences used in the novel, as well as several “other worldly” scenes. While these vary in length, each of them helps to either develop one of the characters or explain parts of the storyline that could not be explained as effectively any other way. For the most part these scenes are very engaging – and often quite frightening – and serve to add to the horror fan's enjoyment of the novel.

Language and Meaning

While the novel is definitely written for an adult audience, the language that is used throughout the text is entertaining and easy to understand. For the most part, the language used in the dialogue is informal and fits the characters that use it quite well; for example, the language that 54 year old Jude uses when he is speaking differs from that which is used by 23 year old Georgia. The author very effectively gives each of the major – and several of the minor – characters in the novel their own unique voice, which helps them stand out as individuals and allows the reader to identify them quickly as the story goes on. A large number of the characters in the novel are from the South



including Jude, Georgia/Marybeth, Anna, and Craddock, and this fact is also reflected – to varying degrees – in the language and expressions they use.

As previously stated, the novel is intended for an adult audience. Profanity is used by a number of the characters throughout the course of the narrative. The amount of profanity is not excessive, however, and for the most part is confined to the dialogue, where it fits the circumstances in which it is used well. As this is a horror novel there are a number of scenes that some readers may find quite frightening on a psychological level, as well as a considerable amount of very graphically presented violence. Additionally, several scenes in the novel deal with the sexual abuse of young children and adolescents; while these sections are not graphic and are presented as tastefully as this sort of material can be, more sensitive readers may be offended by these scenes.

Structure

The novel is 374 pages long and is divided into four titled, unnumbered sections each of which contains a different number of pages and chapters. The novel contains 57 numbered, untitled chapters which vary in length. The longest chapter is 16 pages long, while the shortest chapter contains a single 20 word sentence. For the most part each chapter covers a single event or scene, although on a couple of occasions a single scene will take up multiple chapters. The novel is set in the present day, and the majority of the action takes place over the course of a week in the fall; the last 18 pages of the novel contain six chapters and cover a period of just over five years. The passage of time – particularly in the flashback and dream scenes – is not always definite, although the reader is kept up to date on the passage of time in the “real world” section of the novel in the narrative or through the dialogue.

The novel contains one main plotline and several subplots. The main plotline follows Jude and Georgia/Marybeth as they first try to escape from the ghost of Craddock McDermott – which Jude is tricked into buying on the Internet – and are finally forced to fight him in the end at Jude’s childhood home in Louisiana. One of the novel’s subplot deals with the guilt that Jude feels over the suicide of his ex-girlfriend Anna McDermott – the stepdaughter of the ghost – and his eventual realization that she had not killed herself but had been murdered by Craddock, who made her death look like a suicide. Another subplot revolves around the love that grows between Marybeth and Jude, and the extraordinary lengths which this love causes each of them to go to – both in this world and in the world of the dead – to save the other. The main plotline and all of the subplots are brought to a satisfying conclusion at the end of the novel.



Quotes

But when Danny Wooten, his personal assistant, told him that there was a ghost for sale on the Internet and asked did he want to buy it, Jude didn't even need to think.

-- Narrator (Chapter 1 paragraph Page 4, paragraph 1)

Importance: Heavy metal superstar Judas 'Jude' Coyne has been collecting things since he was a kid named Justin Cowzynski growing up on his father's hog farm in rural Louisiana. Since making it big in the heavy metal music world, the main focus of his collecting has been on macabre items, and his collection includes a used hangman's noose, a human skull, a snuff film, and a three-hundred-year-old confession a witch signed just before she was burned at the stake. After he receives an email from an online auction site, Jude's assistant Danny finds that someone is looking to sell the ghost of their stepfather online to the highest bidder. Jude immediately bids \$1,000 – even though the next highest bid is \$80 – to seal the deal.

And that was saying something. There wasn't much that Jude found too distasteful to contemplate. He was unused to feeling disgust. The profane didn't trouble him; it had made him a good living for thirty years.

-- Narrator (Chapter 2 paragraph Page 13, paragraph 2)

Importance: After the old suit which supposedly houses the ghost Jude bought on the Internet arrives at his house in a heart-shaped box, Jude's live-in girlfriend Georgia asks him if he is planning on wearing it. When he says no, she says that she might wear it herself since she looks hot in men's clothing. Although he isn't exactly certain why, the idea of either of them wearing the suit revolts him and makes his skin crawl – something that does not happen to Judas Coyne often.

Jude recognized the suit at a glance. He had last seen it folded in the black heart-shaped box that had gone into the rear of his closet. The old man's eyes were closed.

-- Narrator (Chapter 6 paragraph Page 30, paragraph 2)

Importance: Shortly after the heart-shaped box containing the old suit is delivered to his house, Jude is awakened by a noise at three in the morning. After searching the upstairs and downstairs of his large farmhouse and finding nothing, Jude sees the ghost of an old man sitting in a Shaker chair in the hallway leading to his bedroom. The old man is wearing the suit and does not appear to even be aware of Jude's presence. As he hurries past the ghost on his way to his bedroom, however, Jude's leg brushes against the old man's knee, and the ghost looks up at Jude just before he closes the bedroom door behind him.

Jude had an idea then, unformed, difficult to articulate. With his eyes closed and his head tilted just so, the ghost seemed not so much to be asleep as to be listening for something. Listening for him, Jude thought.

-- Narrator (Chapter 10 paragraph Page 55, paragraph 3)



Importance: As he and Georgia head back to the bedroom after Georgia tells him to get rid of the suit because it stinks, Jude sees the ghost in the hallway outside the bedroom for the second time, again sitting in the Shaker chair. Although Georgia talks to Jude as they walk past the dead man, the ghost gives no indication of hearing her – and it is obvious to Jude that Georgia does not see the ghost. When Jude says something a moment later, however, the ghost hears him; the ghost raises his head, and for the first time Jude sees that there are what appear to be black scribbles where the dead man's eyes should be.

Ever since he had seen the dead man that morning, he felt increasingly crowded by unnatural, bad dream ideas leaking into everyday life where they didn't belong. He needed a few hard actualities to hold on to, clamps to stop the bleeding.

-- Narrator (Chapter 14 paragraph Page 77, paragraph 2)

Importance: From the moment he wakes up Jude finds himself bombarded by the supernatural, starting with Jessica Price telling him that the ghost of her stepfather is going to kill him and ending – at this point at least – with Danny telling Jude that he has seen the ghost and that he is going to leave and not come back. Jude has had enough and heads out to the barn to play with his dogs and sit in the 1965 Mustang that he had lovingly restored while Anna May had been with him, listen to music, and get his head together. However, he is unable to get away from the ghost, who almost kills him with exhaust fumes by starting the Mustang in the closed barn.

The idea occurred to him that if he could sting her badly enough to make her leave – even if it was just for a while, a night, a few hours, it might be the last good thing he ever did for her.

-- Narrator (Chapter 16 paragraph Page 102, paragraph 8)

Importance: After seeing the dead man waving the curved razor on the gold chain in front of Georgia's face and then whispering in her ear – all without her knowing that it was happening – Jude remembers what Jessica Price had said about anyone who helped him dying along with him and realizes that Georgia might also be in danger from Craddock McDermott. As the two of them are talking after Georgia burns the suit Jude says something that he thinks will hurt her enough to make her leave him, but Georgia says that he can say anything he wants, she will be sticking with him no matter what.

It's hard not to listen to his voice. I couldn't fight it. He knew too much. He knew I gave my sister the heroin she OD'd on. He said that's why my mother killed herself, because she couldn't live knowing what I had done. He said I should have been the one to hang, not my mom.

-- Danny Wooten (Chapter 17 paragraph Page 110, paragraph 10)

Importance: Danny Wooten's spirit calls Jude on the telephone at 3:00 in the morning to tell him that he has hanged himself and that it was the dead man that had made him do it. The dead man had been able to get into Danny's mind and say exactly what it took to make him do what Craddock wanted him to do. Just a few minutes later, Jude learns



how powerful Craddock's ghost is when the dead man takes control of his mind and almost makes him kill Georgia, and then himself.

Bon launched herself at Craddock's other side. Bon was two dogs as well, had a wavering shadow twin of her own.

-- Narrator (Chapter 20 paragraph Page 127, paragraph 4)

Importance: After he is able to break free of the spell Craddock has him under in the studio, Jude goes outside to the dogs' pen and Craddock follows him. When Jude opens the gate the two German shepherds attack Craddock and Jude sees that both Angus and Bon appear to have "shadow dogs" attached to them. These shadow dogs are able to hurt Craddock – and be hurt by him – and eventually drive the dead man away. After Craddock leaves the shadow dogs disappear, and only Bon and Angus remain.

She'd given them up, the silver hoops and crosses and ankhs and glittering gems, the studs and fishhooks and rings she had stuck into her skin to make herself look dirty and tough and dangerous and crazy and beautiful. Some of it was true, too. She had been crazy and beautiful; dangerous, too. Dangerous to herself.

-- Narrator (Chapter 24 paragraph Page 161, paragraph 1)

Importance: As Jude is waiting for Georgia to get ready to leave the motel in Virginia he uses her laptop to Google Anna's obituary and sees that the photograph with the obit had been taken after she'd gone back home, close to the end of her life. In the picture she looks nothing like the tough, dangerous Goth girl she had been during most of the time they had lived together, but instead looks washed out, gaunt, and very vulnerable.

He'd find her in the bath, soaking in ice water, shivering helplessly, too confused and unhappy to get out. Thinking back on it now, it was as if she were rehearsing for her first day as a corpse, for the evening she would spend cooling and wrinkling in a tub full of cold water and blood.

-- Narrator (Chapter 26 paragraph Page 183, paragraph 5)

Importance: As they continue south after surviving Craddock's attack at the Denny's in Virginia, Jude remembers the days leading up to the end of his relationship with Anna. She had been sinking deeper into what he had come to realize was a clinical depression; she rarely slept more than three hours a day, no longer brushed her teeth or combed her hair, and would sometimes laugh or cry uncontrollably for no reason. Eventually, after finding her running in the road wearing only a tee-shirt and screaming his name, Jude had realized that he needed her to leave and sent her back to her stepfather and sister Jessica in Florida, where she had slit her wrists while sitting in a tub full of cold water a few months later.

The next thing he noticed was that Georgia wasn't looking at her hand on the pointer, or at him, or at anything. Her eyes had gone unfocused, fixed on the middle distance. Georgia went on reciting the letters aloud, as the planchette touched them, but she wasn't looking at the board anymore, couldn't see what it was doing.



-- Narrator (Chapter 30 paragraph Page 210, paragraph 17)

Importance: Shortly after they contact Anna's spirit using the planchette, Georgia goes into a kind of a trance and later tells Jude that it had seemed to her as though she knew what Anna was going to say even before Jude finished asking a question. The connection to Anna that Georgia had started to feel back while she and Jude were still at the farmhouse in Piecliff has grown stronger and near the end of the session with the Ouija board Georgia promises to act as the "Golden Door" and bring Anna back into the world of the living. After the session is over, Georgia tells Jude that she feels as though Anna has become a part of her.

Anna didn't kill herself, and her sister knows it. That's not what this is about." Jude glanced at Marybeth and saw she had fallen a few steps behind him, was regarding him with a look of unhappy shock. "There's always been more to this than we figured at first. I'm not so sure we're the bad guys in this story.

-- Jude (Chapter 36 paragraph Page 259, paragraph 1)

Importance: During the drive from Bammy's house down to Florida to see Jessica Price, Jude is able to put a number of things that he has been remembering about Anna together with what her spirit had said during the session with the Ouija board and realizes that Anna had not committed suicide as everyone had been led to believe. In reality Craddock McDermott, who had started sexually abusing her when she'd been a child, had killed Anna and Jude is certain that Jessica knew all about it. Although he isn't certain about all the details, for the first time since the suit arrived at his house in the heart-shaped box Jude knows that he is not responsible for Anna's death.

Not just any dogs will do. They have to be mine. You know how every witch has a black cat? Bon and Angus were like that for me. They can't be replaced.

-- Jude (Chapter 41 paragraph Page 302, paragraph 14)

Importance: Angus dies just after Jude and Marybeth reach Jude's father's house. With Bon having been shot and killed earlier that day by Jessica Price's daughter Reese, the protection that the two German shepherds' shadow-dogs had given Jude and Marybeth is now gone. Although Jude had hoped that they might be able to get the same kind of protection from his father's dogs, he realizes that only Bon and Angus had been able to fight Craddock McDermott's ghost for him, and that he and Marybeth are now on their own.

How did you make a door for the dead? Would it be enough to just draw one? He was trying to think what to draw with, when he saw the red handprints he was leaving on the linoleum. He dipped his finger in her blood and began to draw a line along the floor.

-- Narrator (Chapter 44 paragraph Page 325, paragraph 1)

Importance: While they are in Jude's father's house, Craddock McDermott possesses the body of Jude's father and is almost able to kill him. Jude is saved by Marybeth, who stops McDermott by throwing several knives into Jude's father, but not before he manages to cut her throat with a straight razor. As she is bleeding on the floor she tells



Jude that he can't save her or Anna, but that they might be able to save him and tells him to make the Golden Door. Although he has no idea if it will work he draws a door on the floor next to Marybeth using her blood, and she is able to bring Anna through it.

We have trouble lookin' back into your world, for whatever its worth. You maybe noticed the black lines over our eyes. Think of them as the sunglasses of the living dead.
-- Anna (Chapter 46 paragraph Page 335, paragraph 5)

Importance: While Jude is riding on the night road with Anna and Marybeth, he finds that the brightness of the sky hurts his eyes and that he can't look at it for more than a second or two. Anna tells him that he isn't meant to see what she can see yet, which the reader understands is because he is not yet dead. She tells him to shield his eyes, and later Jude pulls himself and Marybeth off the night road and back to the land of the living.

In the spring Jude recorded an album, stripped down, mostly acoustic. He sang about the dead. He sang about the roads at night.

-- Narrator (Chapter 53 paragraph Page 359, paragraph 1)

Importance: After he and Marybeth recover from their wounds they return to the house in Piecliff. As he has done all of his life, Jude puts what he has experienced to music. The songs are simpler and softer than the music he is known for and he has other musicians play the guitar parts because he cannot play well yet due to his injuries. The album sells well but he doesn't tour in support of it. Instead he has a triple bypass and a short time later marries Marybeth in a church near Bammy's house in Georgia.