

Hideaway Study Guide

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Plot Summary

Hatch Harrison and his wife, Lindsay, are returning from a weekend at Big Bear resort in California when they encounter a semi-truck jackknifed on an icy road. Unable to stop, Hatch slides and the car lands in a river where Hatch is knocked unconscious. The couple is struggling to get past the grief of losing their son, Jimmy, to cancer, and Lindsay finds herself about to drown. She considers that it would be easy to move from this world, but knows that if she lets go of Hatch, he'll die and isn't willing to make that decision for him. They are taken to Orange County General Hospital where Dr. Jonas Nyebern has a resuscitation unit. Hatch, having been dead at least eighty-one minutes, is still a candidate and is successfully revived with no apparent side effects. He and Lindsay begin to heal after this close call and agree to adopt a girl named Regina.

Dr. Nyebern had successfully resuscitated others, including his son, Jeremy, who had killed his mother and sister before attempting suicide. Now living again but declaring that he'd been to Hell and using the name Vassago - a demon - Jeremy feels he must provide an acceptable offering of dead bodies in order to regain his place in Hell.

There's never an explanation for why, but soon a connection between Jeremy and Hatch is evident and the two see things through the eyes of the other. When Hatch sees what Jeremy sees, it's as if he himself is performing the deed. He watches, as it seems his hand pulls the trigger on a gun and kills a young woman in his car. Then the scene melts away and Hatch is again in his own kitchen. The next morning, he hears on the news that the young woman was killed, just as he'd "seen" in own mind. As he and Lindsay worry that Hatch might have developed some brain damage due to the resuscitation, Hatch continues to "dream" of Jeremy's life. Meanwhile, Jeremy occasionally sees Lindsay, as she would appear through Hatch's eyes. He has heard himself say the name "Lindsay," though it takes him some time to put together all the clues to find her.

It's through this connection that Hatch learns of Jeremy's evil and that Jeremy becomes fixated first on Lindsay and then on Regina. Jeremy eventually learns the address of the Harrisons and takes Regina hostage. Hatch, seeing what Jeremy sees, figures out the location of his "hideaway" and follows. Though Jeremy almost gets the upper hand, Hatch kills the boy, freeing Hatch and Lindsay to live with their newly adopted daughter, Regina, without the killer stalking them or haunting Hatch's dreams.



Chapters 1 and 2

Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

Hatch Harrison and his wife, Lindsay, are returning from a weekend at Big Bear resort in California when they encounter a semi-truck jackknifed on an icy road. Unable to stop, Hatch slides and the car lands in a river where Hatch is knocked unconscious. Lindsay is relieved to find that he isn't dead. Meanwhile, Bill Cooper - the driver of the semi-truck - radios for help on his CB. Cooper is worried about the accident, more so than normal because he has been drinking heavily since his wife, Myra, left him. He says he deserves to die for causing the wreck but that if he isn't going to die he hopes that he doesn't lose his job. He rushes to where the Harrison's car went over the cliff and discovers that they went into the river. The car sinks to the bottom with only an air pocket against the roof. Lindsay gasps for breath, frees Hatch from his safety harness and fears again that Hatch is dead. She finally pulls him through the broken windshield and up to the surface of the river where the two are soon wedged against a formation of rocks. Lindsay hears rescuers and cries out for help. Lee Reedman, a deputy with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Office, knows he can't wait for rescuers in water gear and wades into the river. Lindsay urges him to take Hatch first but he takes them both, knowing that none of them can remain in the cold water much longer.

Lindsay passes in and out of consciousness as they prepare to transport her. She and Hatch are placed in the same ambulance though the paramedics spend all their time and energy tending her. This reassures her because she believes that unless Hatch had responded to the CPR they would still be working on him. Lindsay says that Hatch needs to be warmed up and they assure her that he's just how he's "supposed to be," though they don't elaborate to Lindsay. Then they arrive at a helipad and she realizes that they are to be transported by medical flight, prompting the understanding that either she or Hatch is in serious condition. Someone mentions that Lindsay is "in bad shape," and one of the medics on the copter says that they were "expecting a stiff," and are told it's "the husband." All this conveys to Lindsay that Hatch is clinically dead and she allows herself to lapse into waking nightmares rather than face it.

Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

During her time in the water, Lindsay's thoughts turn to their son, Jimmy. Jimmy was five when he died of cancer. Lindsay and Hatch have taken his death hard and neither has managed to move on with their lives since that time. The two have also grown distant from each other. Though there's really no talk of divorce, they simply aren't connecting. As Lindsay is in the water, she considers that it would be easy to just allow herself to slip under and put an end to this life. She goes so far as to say that the next life might be a more welcoming place for her than this one without Jimmy. She says that she doesn't feel she has the right to make that decision for Hatch and that without her support he would certainly drown. When Lindsay tells the rescue worker to take Hatch



first, it seems possible that she had planned to allow herself to drown once he was safely away. She doesn't have the opportunity. She asks herself if she really wanted to die, saying the words out loud. A paramedic hears her and assures her that she isn't going to die.

In the emergency room, Lindsay tells a nurse that Hatch is dead. The nurse nods but then says, "this may not be the end of it." It's Lindsay's first inkling that there's something more being done for Hatch though she doesn't yet have any of the details.



Chapter3, sections 1 through 13

Chapter3, sections 1 through 13 Summary

At Orange County General Hospital, Hatch is taken to the Resuscitation Medicine Project overseen by Dr. Jonas Nyebern. The other members of the resuscitation team are Helga Dorner, a circulating nurse, Gina Delilo, an RN and surgical tech, and Dr. Ken Nakamura and Dr. Kari Dovell. They work together whenever there's a victim who qualifies for the resuscitation procedure. In Hatch's case, the fact that he drowns in very cold water and had few other injuries makes him a prime candidate, better than the typical victim who has suffered some trauma. There is a pause in the action as Dr. Nyebern debates whether Hatch is likely to be resuscitated with no ill effects, having been clinically dead for almost an hour. Nyebern finally makes the decision to go forward. Over the next hours, the team works to revive Hatch, dealing with the problem of his lack of warmth by adding heating pads, though Nyebern warns that he can't be warmed too quickly.

The scene switches to Jeremy, though he is only introduced at this point as Vassago. He is trapped in the land of the living, to which he was born, but feels he lives "in the borderland." He hates those who claim to love. He says that for many years, he wondered why some felt emotions that he didn't, but then learned that those who claimed love and affection for another were liars. Jeremy claims to have been to "the catacombs of Hell," and now can hardly stand any light at all. He wears sunshades even at night and never ventures out during the day. He leaves the open air where he's been standing and heads down into the tunnels beneath the amusement park he now calls home to a place where he keeps his "collection" of dead people - seven women and three men, all posed in a way Jeremy saw as fit punishment for their individual weaknesses.

One of his victims is a twenty-two-year-old-waitress named Jenny Purcell. Jeremy says that she'd asked his name, seemed impressed by the fact that he said "Vassago" was the first and last, and by his all black attire - sufficiently impressed to leave with him. He says she was immoral and so posed her sitting with her body bent double so that she was staring between her legs. He notes that she has been dead nine months, so long that she no longer interests him. He is most proud of Margaret Ann Campion, a young woman he describes as "wholesome." He was drawn to her because of her vitality and wanted to break her. Though he tortured her, she continued to pray, for her family and even for Jeremy. He says that she did eventually scream out, but it wasn't in terror but only in pain. He has posed her on her knees as if in prayer, a crucifix in her hands. However, he cut off her head and reattached it backwards so that she has turned her face away from the crucifix and toward a giant statue of Satan - the center of what was once a horror ride in the amusement park. Jeremy is not interested in sex but sexuality in others makes him angry, though it's not because he's jealous. He claims to be glad he's no longer tied to lust and never rapes the women he's about to kill.



It takes a shot of epinephrine to induce Hatch's heart into a steady rhythm and though his body begins to respond, he doesn't wake. As the team disperses, Dr. Nyebern settles into Hatch's room so that he'll be nearby if there are complications. There's a storm raging outside as Hatch's increased heart rate attracts the attention of Nyebern and a nurse. Hatch whispers the words, barely audible to Nyebern, "Something's out there."

Chapter3, sections 1 through 13 Analysis

Dr. Nyebern faces moral dilemmas with regard to his work. There is the possibility that some who are resuscitated will have suffered brain damage or will have other debilitating problems, and that they might have to live with those for years. He also worries whether it's his right to bring people back to life. As an example, he considers the person who is purely evil and whether the world is simply better off without that person. It will be some time before the details are revealed, but Nyebern is actually thinking about the resuscitation of his own son, Jeremy.

There is little focus now on Lindsay as Jeremy is being more fully introduced and Hatch's resuscitation becomes a key element of the story. At this point, Jeremy is known only as "Vassago," though he says it's what he became known as after his return from Hell. It will be some time before his connection to Dr. Nyebern is revealed. It's also fitting that Jeremy chooses to stay in the amusement park since this is where he committed his first murders.



Chapter 3, Sections 14 through 19

Chapter 3, Sections 14 through 19 Summary

Jeremy goes looking for a woman who might be suitable for his collection. As he is sitting in his car outside a nightclub with a thunderstorm raging, he hears the words, "Something's out there." He doesn't know where it came from or what it is, and he listens to see if it will happen again. Jeremy isn't certain whether it's a threat but says that he isn't afraid, even if it is. He has been to Hell, as he often says, and being in the world of the living is, to him, a temporary state.

Lindsay is on the same floor in the hospital as Hatch but at the opposite end of the corridor. Dr. Nyebern goes into her room, says that he wants to tell her about Hatch, and asks to hold her hand while he does so. Nyebern knows Lindsay has not yet come to terms with her loss, but is on her way to that, and that the shock of being told he's actually alive could be just as devastating as the news that he was dead. As she begins to understand that he's telling her Hatch is alive, her grip tightens. Hatch's nightmares continue, often seen through Jeremy's eyes. At one point, he cries out for Lindsay. At that exact moment, Jeremy is sitting in a bar and says the word, "Lindsay." In the moments leading up to that, Jeremy has been watching a girl he now calls "Bambi" and is weighing the possibility that she will be an adequate addition to his collection. As he says the word Lindsay twice, he loses interest in Bambi, figures the bar is "a magical place for him," and settles in with another drink. By the time he leaves the bar, it's two in the morning, not enough time before daylight to continue his hunt. He wonders about Lindsay and knows that he has the patience to wait until the time is right for him to discover her identity.

On Tuesday morning, Lindsay goes to Hatch's room where she finds Dr. Nyebern looking ruffled as if he'd spent the night in Hatch's room - which he had. Hatch has a bruise and a cut that's been stitched, both on his forehead, and a tear falls down her cheek at the sight of him. She notes that she has not cried since soon after Jimmy was diagnosed with cancer. She says that anytime she cried, he was concerned. Her desire to have him take a positive attitude meant she couldn't cry - and she didn't. After he died, she'd simply forgotten how to cry and couldn't be bothered with anything else. Her hair was often unwashed and she seldom ate so that she lost a lot of weight. Hatch says her name and Nyebern hands her a tissue, and she cries harder. Hatch and Lindsay hold hands through the bed's railing and they exchange "I love you."

As Hatch and Lindsay were waking on the day after the accident, Jeremy was preparing for sleep. He always slept through the daylight hours in the bottom of an elevator shaft that is the lowest point of the amusement park and notes that even in the dry region of California, the concrete walls at this depth seem damp. There he has a dirty mattress and a cooler with junk food and root beer. Jeremy had expected to find rats in these tunnels and says that he wouldn't have minded that, but there is apparently nothing here for them to eat and there is none. He says that he expects they'll eventually find their



way to the place where he keeps his dead. He eats a couple of Oreos before going to sleep, wishes he were "fully dead" and goes to sleep to dream of a woman crying beside a hospital bed. He focuses on the woman.

Chapter 3, Sections 14 through 19 Analysis

The first time the connection between Hatch and Jeremy is revealed is when Hatch says, "Something's out there" and Jeremy hears it. It will soon become evident that Jeremy is intrigued by this connection while Hatch is horrified. Jeremy takes the attitude that he will understand when he's "meant to understand." When Hatch comes to realize the connection exists, he wants it to end and finally goes to the doctor looking for a physical problem associated with his resuscitation. When he can't find that, he refuses to admit to anyone other than Lindsay that the connection exists, for fear of what others would think.

While Lindsay is learning of Hatch's situation, Hatch is dealing with nightmares. He dreams of a woman clutching a crucifix with her head on backwards, but he is seeing it all through the eyes of someone else - Jeremy's eyes, though Hatch won't know that for some time. Then the nightmare becomes a mixture of what Jeremy sees and what Hatch fears. Lindsay is on a ride at the amusement park while a man - Jeremy - is in the car behind her. Hatch cries out to warn her but she doesn't hear. As Hatch deals with these nightmares, his heart rate soars but Dr. Nyebern decides that it's only nightmares and that it is not a reflection of some physical problem associated with the resuscitation.

As Hatch and Lindsay hold hands on Tuesday morning after the accident, Hatch tells Lindsay that the worst is behind them. He's referring to their grief for Jimmy, realizing that his death experience has done some healing for both of them and for their relationship. That will come to be a catch phrase for everything that goes wrong throughout this story and it will often be repeated.

The details of Jeremy's hideaway are slowly being revealed. The place where the corpses are kept is part of a ride. The huge statue of Satan was meant to scare children on the ride and Jeremy is rather derisive of the statue, but chooses it as the place suitable for his offerings. It's also here that the reader begins to learn more about Jeremy - that he keeps an array of junk food in the elevator shaft, including Mars bars, Reese's peanut butter cups, Clark Barks, chips, snack crackers with peanut butter and cheese, Mallomars and Oreos, and that these are all things he liked as a child. As he eats an Oreo, he pulls the two cookies apart to see where the icing sticks. Playing a childhood game, he notes that if the icing sticks to the cookie on the left, he'll be "rich and famous; to the right meant just famous but "not necessarily rich," which could mean a rock-and-roll star or a presidential assassin. He says that if icing sticks to both, you "have to eat another cookie or risk having no future at all." He can eat anything without weight gain and attributes this to a change of metabolism after his return to Hell, and he wishes he were "fully dead." That will not be explained for some time yet, but Jeremy

killed both his mother and father and tried to commit suicide. It's ironic that his father is Dr. Jonas Nyebern and that his father will resuscitate him, foiling his suicide attempt.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Some time has passed and Hatch and Lindsay are in the office of their attorney where they are about to meet the girl who is their potential adopted daughter. Hatch notes that he feels as if he is an "accused infidel" during the Inquisition as he sits in the room with Father Duran, Father Jiminez and nuns Sister Immaculata and another whose name he can't remember. Hatch notes that they had been "right to mourn Jimmy," but that it's now right to move on with their lives - bringing them to the point of this adoption. Hatch and Lindsay, after Hatch's resuscitation, had decided they wanted to share their lives with a child. Lindsay had a difficult labor and was told she couldn't have another child so they are now looking to adopt. Toward that end, they've decided on a child with disabilities because the waiting list and time is much shorter. Hatch is doing well except for nightmares, which he doesn't admit to on the adoption forms or to the priests as they wait.

The attorney, Salvatore Gujilio arrives. He's huge and seems to dwarf the office. He volunteers some hours each week to the St. Thomas orphanage, where they are now waiting. The little girl, Regina, is not yet in the room but is in the restroom where she is composing herself for the meeting and Gujilio urges everyone to give her the time she needs to get ready to meet the Harrisons. Then they hear a "thud" followed by a scraping noise, repeated and growing louder by the second until they realize that it's Regina. She has a leg brace and a limp that she is greatly exaggerating as she comes into the room where Hatch, Lindsay and the adoption committee wait.

When ten-year-old Regina steps into the room, Sister Immaculata asks her to explain "the theatrics," and Regina immediately launches into a story that some days are more difficult for her. Her hand is also deformed and Hatch, knowing he couldn't have withheld his true feelings from her probing gaze, is relieved to find that he isn't horrified by her appearance. He believes that she's trying to be tough to protect herself but that she's really fragile. When Regina is introduced to Lindsay, she says that she's sorry to be a disappointment and that she knows most "baby starved women" want a smaller child to cuddle. She emphasizes her deformities, promises that she'll break everything in the Harrison house with her clumsiness and says that her parents were "dope fiends" which resulted in "mutant genes." She also says that she's smart-mouthed, doesn't like TV, and is almost a genius meaning some people find her opinionated and that she doesn't yet "have boobs." The nuns and priests are intent on apologizing and chastising her behavior but Lindsay and Hatch wisely refuse to let the situation pit the adults against the child.

As Hatch explains that he is an antique dealer, Regina asks if he has a lot of money, adding that it "would be a consideration" in her decision whether to accept the adoption. Hatch winks at Lindsay and says they might have "a little gold digger." After learning that Lindsay is a painter and earning a promise that she won't have to display any of the



paintings in her room, Regina stands abruptly, announces that she has a weak bladder and has to pee, and leaves the room with the same exaggerated limp. Sister Immaculata promises to search for another child for the Harrisons and they leave, fulfilling their own promise that they wouldn't talk about their impressions until the evening when they'd had time to think. Hatch looks at Lindsay and the image becomes part of Jeremy's dream. At Harrison's Antiques, Hatch's assistant Gloria Dockridge and Lindsay dust, a chore Lindsay enjoys today as she thinks about Regina.

That evening, Hatch and Lindsay agree that they loved Regina on sight, including her tough act, and that they want to proceed with the adoption. The one unhappy point of the conversation is whether Regina will agree to the adoption. Hatch, insisting that she will, says that the "worst is behind us now." Meanwhile, Regina hates the way she acted because she realizes that the Harrisons are different than other couples and that she might have been happy with them. Regina had a bad adoption experience and put on that act to scare off this couple so that she couldn't be hurt. She notes that there should be a "Museum of Famous Screwups" to house her colossal mistakes, and that her action with the Harrisons should be among them. She berates herself as "an asshole," and knows that she'll have to do penance for using that word.

That same night, Jeremy checks into the Blue Skies motel as he does a couple of times each week to get a shower. Other times, he washes using bottled water at the amusement park. On this night, he sees a man he'd seen before, a private investigator named Morton Redlow. Jeremy checks in, goes to his room and then slips out the back window and creeps up on the back of Redlow's car, jerking open the car door. Jeremy beats Redlow unconscious, shoves him over and takes the wheel. He drives a distance from the motel, searches Redlow to find out his name and address, takes his gun and drives to Redlow's house. When Redlow regains consciousness, he can barely see Jeremy in the darkened house. Redlow tells Jeremy that he wasn't interested in him, but is working for a woman who believes her husband is cheating. Jeremy seems to accept the explanation and says that Redlow, the burned out private investigator, hasn't enough life to be suitable for his "collection." At Jeremy's insistence, Redlow tells where his money is hidden and Jeremy says that he hadn't really believed that Redlow was working on a cheating husband case, kills him with an electric knife, hiding the body and taking the money with him as he leaves.

Hatch and Lindsay live in Laguna Niguel, in a different house than where they lived when Jimmy was alive. That night, they spend time together, making love. Jeremy returns to the Blue Skies in Redlow's car, knowing he'll never go there again for fear of being detected. He then goes in search of another victim for his collection and finds a woman at a club called Rip It. He notes that there are many here who are searching for something other than violence or sex and that Jeremy could have shown them what they were looking for. The woman reminds Jeremy of another of his victims, a girl he calls "Neon." As he looks at this new woman, he decides that he will cut out her eyes and reinsert them backwards, a statement of her lack of ability to see herself. Meanwhile, Hatch sees the woman in his own dreams, and then finds himself producing a switchblade knife and cutting out her eyes. He wakes, fearing he'd done something to Lindsay but finds she's only sleeping.



Jeremy convinces the woman that he'll kill someone for her, that violence is a great precursor to sex, and they leave together. He knows he'll have difficulty controlling her and so decides to kill her before she figures out she's in danger. As they drive along, he shoots her and the shot striking her door causes it to fly open. Her body falls out and Jeremy wants to return to pick her up but there are other cars behind him and he is forced to speed off. Hatch has gotten out of bed and is standing in the kitchen at this point. The kitchen fades away and he lives through Jeremy's actions, including seeing the girl say her name is Lisa and later falling out of the car and onto the highway. Lindsay reassures him that he was sleepwalking and that it was a dream. The following morning, Hatch sees the report of the woman's death on the news. Hatch and Lindsay drive past the scene and Hatch can cite many of Jeremy's actions at the time of the murder, though he doesn't know Jeremy's identity or where he went afterward. Lindsay believes they should go to the police but Hatch fears it would create a media sensation bigger than what followed his resuscitation, and would jeopardize the adoption. He promises that if he comes into any information that would actually help find Jeremy or identify him, he'll go to the police. He also agrees to go to Nyebern for a complete checkup. As Hatch goes through the next day with Lindsay, Jeremy sees her in his dreams. He wants to reach out to her, but can't.

Chapter 4 Analysis

While Redlow is Jeremy's captive, the reader learns that the private investigator has been searching for Jeremy for the past three months. It will soon be revealed that Dr. Nyebern, Jeremy's father, had hired Redlow and that he was the most recent of several private investigators, though Redlow is the only one who has gotten close to finding Jeremy. Now Redlow is certain that Jeremy is - as he had already suspected - somehow different. Jeremy's cold calculation of the situation sends off warning bells and Redlow knows he is not likely to escape this situation alive. The details of Redlow's death aren't included, except that Jeremy has an electric knife in his hand before he kills the man. The story will then switch back to Hatch and Lindsay, but it will much later be revealed that Jeremy put Redlow's head in his father's freezer.

The first inkling of Jeremy's reasons for killing people and positioning them in the amusement park comes as he is trying to decide what to do with Lisa. As it turns out, he is seeking Satan's favor so that he can again gain his way to Hell. Jeremy is certain that he's been sent back from Hell because he was unworthy and is working to make certain that he will be admitted when he dies again. This is the reason he hasn't simply committed suicide. He claims to have no interest in living, but isn't certain he'll be accepted into Hell. He does say that he isn't afraid of anything, but it seems that he does fear dying before he has completed his collection of sacrifices. He'll eventually come to decide that Lindsay and Regina - a mother and daughter - will complete the collection.



Chapter 5, Sections 1 through 6

Chapter 5, Sections 1 through 6 Summary

Regina moves in with Hatch and Lindsay and would have thought she'd gone to Heaven except that she's certain there would be no bathrooms in Heaven and at the Harrison house, she has her own. She fears breaking the pretty things in the house, as she'd predicted during their interview. They'd offered to convert a downstairs room to a bedroom so that she didn't have to manage the stairs, but she loves the upstairs bedroom and chooses it. Her few pitiful belongings take up only a fraction of the closet and Lindsay suggests they go shopping. Regina revels in the new possessions but fears the amount of money they've spent will mean they can't afford to keep her.

Hatch is reading the paper as Lindsay prepares for bed when he finds an article about Bill Cooper, the truck driver who'd caused their wreck. The charges of driving while intoxicated had been dropped because of a technicality. Cooper had written an apology letter to Hatch soon after the accident and Hatch had responded briefly, saying that he wasn't interested in suing the man. Cooper had then written asking for Hatch's endorsement to get his job back, cited the publicity Hatch had gotten after the accident and resuscitation and that he'd probably gotten more business for the antique store while Cooper was now without a job. Hatch hadn't responded to that. Now, reading the news article, Hatch finds that Cooper is no longer facing any charges but is also suing his employer for wrongful discharge. Hatch is furious and for a moment, his temper rages completely out of control, saying that he'd like to pitch Cooper into the river, until Lindsay reminds him that he'll wake Regina. Lindsay thinks her words stopped Hatch but in reality, he'd seen himself in the mirror, only it was Jeremy's reflection that he saw.

Jeremy feels Hatch's rage and sees the newspaper and the letters from Bill Cooper that Hatch sees, including Bill Cooper's name and address. He now hears himself say, "I'm sorry Lindsay," as Hatch has done. Jeremy somehow knows that Bill Cooper will take him a step nearer Lindsay and has a driving need to do so. He parks a couple of blocks from Cooper's apartment and finds the back door unlocked. Hatch continues to think about Cooper and his rage escalates again. That anger is quickly transferred to Jeremy, who finds Cooper asleep in a recliner, grabs a Jack Daniel bottle and kills the man in a fit of rage. Jeremy suddenly realizes that he's yelling with savage glee and runs from the building. Hatch wakes to realize that he'd blacked out and fears that he might have harmed Lindsay or Regina.

It's here that Jeremy talks of his own escape from the slavery of the rules of society into the freedom of self-gratification. He says that he was twelve when he'd been at this very same amusement park he now calls his hideaway that was then called Fantasy World. On the birthday of Tod Ledderback, the two boys had spent the evening at the amusement park. Jeremy hated that Tod was so superficial, claiming that Jeremy was his best friend while Jeremy knew that friendship, love and affection were all false emotions that people only pretended. That evening, Jeremy had decided he would kill



Tod - the only question was when. He challenged Tod to ride the Millipede "daredevil" - which meant the boys would wiggle out of the restraints and stand during the ride. Tod almost backed out but Jeremy goaded him into it and during a dark corner pushed Tod to his death, directly in the path of the car behind them. At the end of the ride, Tod's mangled body was in that car and the ride was closed. The attendants hadn't realized Jeremy had been on the car with Tod. He later went to the bathroom where he stole a lighter from a man and set fire in the haunted house, causing several additional deaths. The park had closed, undergone some renovations and reopened, but never recovered and soon went bankrupt, leaving it completely vacant for Jeremy's use now. He says he enjoys remembering that night, though eight years have passed.

Hatch takes Regina to school at St. Thomas's, in keeping with the adoption agreement that she would continue to attend there. Lindsay, at home alone, worries about Hatch's nightmares and wonders if a more complete psychic ability might eventually form, but knows in her heart that the situation can't be explained as a psychic phenomenon. She worries that the killer might also be aware of Hatch and therefore might track Hatch to his home or work. She's back at work when Hatch and Regina arrive home, Hatch having teased Regina so that she found she was soon less shy and was talking to him about her dreams of being a writer. Regina walks around to look at Lindsay's canvass - something Lindsay never allows until the painting is complete - and Hatch takes his cue from the child and goes to look as well. It's a transparent rendering of Jimmy, looking upward while a beautiful black rose appears in the foreground. The symbolism is that Jimmy isn't willing to look at the perfect rose because his eye is on Heaven. Hatch, crying, has to leave the room and recalls picking up Jimmy's wasted body in the last moments before his death, and holding him close as he stopped breathing. He finds himself healing a little more as he stands in the rose garden of their home with his wife and new daughter upstairs. Jeremy dreams of the screams from the burning haunted house but then a vision of a single black rose comes into focus, soon giving way to Lindsay and Regina.

A man named S. Steven Honell has written a scathing article about Lindsay and Hatch grows increasingly angry as he reads it. Jeremy is walking through the haunted house that had once been lit by flames, including people on fire. That anger opens the door between Hatch and Jeremy, and Jeremy sees the article as well, now knowing that Lindsay's last name is Sparling, but not knowing this is her maiden name and the name she uses to sign her paintings. He also sees Honell's name. Hatch finds his anger cooling and then notes that the magazine is charred around the edges. Jeremy quickly locates Honell who is at first disgruntled by the interruption then invites Jeremy inside, thinking him a fan of his writing.

Chapter 5, Sections 1 through 6 Analysis

The first night Regina spends with the Harrisons, they both come in and give her a goodnight hug but Regina, unused to this, doesn't hug them back. She then imagines that they might be talking about her, allowing her thoughts to run from their fear that she's "a cold fish" to that she might be a "demon child" and that they'll sleep in shifts



and return her to the orphanage. She curses then prays, promising God that if she can only stay here she'll never again say "shit" and will always eat beans - a staple at the orphanage that she'd hated - without complaint. She'll later tell Hatch of the deal and he says that he believes God is impressed.

After Jeremy kills Bill Cooper, he has a sudden inspiration - that his return to the land of the living wasn't the result of being thrown out, but that he'd actually been returned to accomplish as much destruction as possible. While he considers this, he also knows that he has to have patience and to avoid another scene in which he is so completely out of control.

When Hatch visits Nyebern to discuss his latest check up, he confides that he's having horrific nightmares but doesn't detail the full extent that what he's seeing has come true. Nyebern collects valuable Christian art, completes a collection and donates it to some particular cause or museum. He says that it's at least partly atonement and then tells the story of his decision to go into resuscitative medicine. He says that his father had a psychotic break when Nyebern was only seven that his father killed Nyebern's mother and brother, shot Nyebern and his sister, and then committed suicide. Nyebern and the sister lived. Nyebern says he saw the same psychotic tendencies in his own son but did nothing about it, and that the boy - Jeremy - killed first his sister and then his mother, Nyebern's daughter and wife, before attempting suicide. Nyebern says his collections of art are his way of trying to buy his way into Heaven because he fears that's his only option. When Hatch leaves his office, Nyebern tries again to call Morton Redlow but again gets only his answering machine though the man had promised to check in days earlier.



Chapter 5, Sections 7 and 8

Chapter 5, Sections 7 and 8 Summary

Hatch, Lindsay and Regina are having dinner, though Hatch is having trouble eating for his worry. Lindsay has told Regina that Hatch would really appreciate being called "dad," though she urged the girl to do so when she felt the time was right. After supper, Hatch goes in to tell her goodnight and she does call him dad. Hatch doesn't make a big deal of it with Regina, knowing she's not comfortable with scenes, but as soon as he's in the bedroom he tells Lindsay, "She called me Dad." Lindsay immediately says, "Who did?" Hatch knows she's teasing him but replies that it was Regina, to which Lindsay asks how much Hatch had to pay her to get the little girl to say it. She doesn't let on that she had a hand in it. Hatch says that Lindsay is just jealous because Regina hasn't called her mom. Lindsay says that it will happen soon because Regina is no longer so terribly afraid of being hurt.

Hatch goes downstairs and discovers that the answering machine light is blinking. There are calls from several people, all with the news that Bill Cooper had been murdered. Hatch thinks back to the moment of his intense rage over the story that the charges against Cooper had been dropped and knows that he has somehow led the killer to Cooper. Though he had been hiding the truth about his connection from Lindsay, he now tells all of it and shows her the scorched magazine as proof that there's more going on than a simple psychic connection of some sort. While Lindsay is concerned, her fear doesn't run as deeply as Hatch's, then he admits that when he was so angry over the charges against Cooper being dropped he'd seen a reflection in the mirror of a young man wearing sunglasses. The reports in the paper indicate that a witness saw a young man, dressed all in black and wearing sunglasses, fleeing the scene. Lindsay now has all the facts of Hatch's connection with Jeremy, though neither Hatch nor Lindsay know his identity or why the connection exists. For now, Lindsay is worried but is also disappointed that Hatch had kept the full truth from her. She makes him promise that there will be no more secrets between them.

With the knowledge of Cooper's death, Hatch's thoughts now turn to the possibility that the killer will zero in on Honell, based on the fact that Hatch was angry with him earlier. He says that while he can accept that he didn't cause Cooper's death and has no reason to believe he could have prevented it, he does feel an obligation to try to warn Honell. They call Honell's number but no one answers. At the Honell house, Jeremy apologizes for mistreating Honell after Honell had invited Jeremy into his home. Honell's face is swollen and he's relieved to find that Jeremy wants information - Lindsay's home address - and that it's something he can provide. He seems to believe that his life will be spared if he gives Jeremy what he wants. Hatch is relieved that Honell doesn't answer because it saves him from trying to explain the warning and knowing that his warning will sound like a threat of retaliation for the article about Lindsay. However, his relief is short-lived as he sees a series of images and knows that Honell is already in the hands of the killer. Hatch goes to a convenience store and calls the police, not calling from



home so that the warning can't be traced back to him. He tells them that the same person who killed the blond on the freeway killed Cooper and is now headed to Honell's house, then hangs up and drives home where Lindsay is waiting with coffee. The warning is too late, Honell is dead and Jeremy leaving the area when the police arrive.

Jeremy didn't get Lindsay's home address because Honell couldn't remember it, but he did get the address of the antique store and now knows Lindsay's married name is Harrison. Nothing about the store or the listing in the telephone book leads Jeremy to Lindsay's home address but he finds a Robert O. Loffman Antiques in the Yellow Pages and a home address and phone number listing for Robert O. Loffman's home. At seventy, Loffman was happiest in his dreams of being young but on this night, Jeremy interrupts that dream. He has a loaded pistol beside his bed and instinctively grabs for it when Jeremy wakes him, but Jeremy has already taken the gun and now turns it on Loffman. He demands the Harrison's address, which Loffman provides. Jeremy then says there's no reason for him to hurt Loffman, but that he's going to anyway because he gains pleasure from it.

Hatch is dreaming as Jeremy drives by their house, considering his options. He's not at all certain that he has time to kill Hatch, take Lindsay and Regina hostage and get back to his hideaway before daylight - a must because he can hardly stand the glare of streetlamps and couldn't see at all in full sun. He finally decides to go inside the house and remain there until the following night before making his move. Regina hears him enter the garage through a window, but puts it down to the strange noises often associated with an unfamiliar house. He climbs into the attic and prepares to sleep through the day until the following night.

Chapter 5, Sections 7 and 8 Analysis

Hatch knows that the police will want to talk to him at some point about Cooper's death. He says that he had nothing to do with it, but that guilt is "creeping up" on him like "the Millipede inching up the long tunnel." He immediately wonders where that image came from. It's actually the ride Jeremy was on when he pushed Tod from the car, causing his death.

Jeremy is driving away from Honell's home when he meets the police car. He knows that the fact that Honell didn't answer the phone is the reason the police are arriving, but can't figure out what triggered the caller to know something was wrong. As Jeremy heads into town in search of Lindsay, Hatch and Lindsay are talking. She asks the question they've been avoiding - whether the killer is as aware of Hatch as he is of the killer, and if they are in danger. At this point, Hatch suggests that he was "somewhere" other than on Earth when he was dead and that he somehow brought something back from where he'd been. Lindsay says she's certain he doesn't deserve Hell. Hatch listens to a storm brewing outside and wonders if Honell is still alive.

Hatch seems more in tune with Jeremy and Jeremy's actions than Jeremy is with Hatch. It appears that the only times Jeremy really sees what Hatch sees are when he's angry

or when he's seeing Lindsay or Regina. The exact cause of this connection is never explained other than the vague suggestion that the two have the resuscitation in common.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

On Wednesday, Lindsay drives Regina to school and returns home to find Hatch cleaning a pair of guns he'd bought years before for home protection. That same day, Dr. Nyebern has no regular office or surgeries scheduled. On this particular Wednesday, he's feeling introspective and spends some time thinking about his son, Jeremy. The extent of Nyebern's moral questions regarding his work in resuscitative medicine becomes clearer here. He questions whether he had the obligation to use his knowledge of resuscitation on Jeremy after he had killed his mother and sister. While he admits that his duty as a doctor is to save lives, Nyebern wonders whether he was obligated to save the person who murdered his beloved wife and daughter. On that point, he admits that his desire to save Jeremy was fueled at least partly by the need to ask him why he committed the acts.

Dr. Nyebern says that Jeremy survived the resuscitation but remained in a coma for months, and that he could have petitioned the courts for permission to stop the intravenous feeding during that time but didn't. When he finally awoke, he was childlike and won over all the staff members of the nursing home where he was living. He appeared to have suffered mental retardation and so was never questioned about his role in the murders. One day, he walked away from the nursing home and simply vanished. The police, only interested in Jeremy because he is listed as missing and not believing he's competent to be tried for his mother's and sister's murders. Most told Nyebern that the boy had likely been killed over the intervening time, but Nyebern felt the mental retardation was nothing more than an act and that Jeremy had probably survived. More importantly, he feared that the boy was a danger to others. Over those ten months, Dr. Nyebern has gone through a series of detectives and only Morton Redlow has seemed to make any headway at all. He's promised to have news by now and Nyebern has a nagging worry over the fact that the detective hasn't called and isn't answering his phone.

At home, Lindsay - armed with the knowledge that both Cooper and Honell are dead - is also armed with a gun at Hatch's insistence. He has planned to purchase a shotgun as well and some additional ammunition. They are considering the danger to Regina but also fear that she'll be emotionally hurt if they send her back to St. Thomas until they sort out the situation. Hatch is certain that the killer is coming for them, but doesn't know when. He also doesn't know that Jeremy is already in the house. Hatch makes his purchases at the gun shop and then returns to his car. His surroundings suddenly fade away so that he hears the sounds associated with the Millipede ride at the amusement park. He wants to get back out of his car but fears that he'll fall from the ride instead of stepping onto solid ground. Then the vision ends and Hatch is back in his car.

Jeremy meanwhile is remembering the details of additional murders he committed, saying he drew from the details of the amusement park for the next two years, though



he always knew he would kill again. He did so at summer camp when he was fourteen, by drowning a smaller boy. At sixteen, he killed two transients - one a predator himself who thought to use Jeremy. He became obsessed with Satanism a year later. When Hatch returns home, he resets the landscape lighting to remain on all night and wonders if Lindsay and Regina would be safe if he were to leave, but rejects the idea. That night he struggles to keep up a normal front for Regina and remembers that just three days earlier he had decided that the nightmares weren't important enough to delay having Regina come home with them. When he hears a noise in the kitchen, he takes the shotgun to investigate, careful not to let Regina see it. She still senses that there's something amiss and worries about what it could be. He goes into the garage, sees a dent in the hood of his car, puts it down to kids at school and never imagines that Jeremy stepped onto the car to gain access to the attic.

After dinner, Regina goes to her room to study for a history exam, Lindsay returns to her studio to work and Hatch remains downstairs, checking every entrance and knowing that if the waiting goes on for long he'll be crazy. In her room, Regina worries that the Harrisons' concern is over financial issues and romanticizes what might happen, ending with the idea that she'll care for them. She opens the closet door and is face-to-face with Jeremy. He holds her tight against him until she passes out and knows that she's vital for his collection. However, he also wants Lindsay and reluctantly leaves Regina behind to find her. He briefly wishes he had the gun he'd taken from Loffman but knows he shouldn't shoot Lindsay or Regina for fear that they'd die before he got them to his hideaway for a proper sacrifice.

He slips to the room where Lindsay is working and watches. Lindsay is looking out the window and sees Jeremy's reflection in the glass. She first thinks it isn't real then realizes that it is. Her next fear is that Hatch must be dead or the killer would not have been able to get past him. Without indicating that she is aware of his presence, she opens a drawer as if to get something and takes out the handgun Hatch insists she have. She whirls on him and orders him not to move, but in a flash, he's gone. She begins screaming for Hatch and carefully looks around the door, fearing Jeremy would be standing right outside ready to grab her, but he's already running into Regina's room.

Just before Lindsay's scream, Hatch begins to have another vision. He imagines a woman sitting in a chair knitting. He refers to her as mother but knows she isn't his mother. At that same moment, Jeremy is looking at Lindsay and noting that he's walking up to her just as he'd walked up on his own mother when he'd murdered her. Hatch's vision is ended by Lindsay's screams. As he rushes to the stairs, he sees the outside of the house through the killer's eyes and knows that he's headed back outside. Lindsay goes out one door and Hatch out the other, but the killer is already gone across a neighbor's fence, carrying the still-unconscious Regina.

Lindsay wants to call the police but Hatch believes he can follow using the connection shared by the two men. Before they leave, Hatch rushes upstairs, guided entirely by instinct. He pauses, considers Regina's room, and then takes the crucifix from her wall before running back to get in the car with Lindsay driving. Hatch makes decisions each time they come to an intersection, knows that Jeremy plans to hold Regina's heart in his



hands as it stops beating, but also knows that she's still alive and so they have a chance to save her.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Wednesday morning, Lindsay and Hatch again discuss what's happening and Lindsay wants to let the "cops handle" the situation. Hatch says the killer is like "smoke," and that the cops can't catch him. They again consider the possibility that it's an "evil spirit" of some kind that has followed Hatch "back." Lindsay says that if he thinks that, the gun isn't going to do any good. Hatch says it's "all I have." Hatch purchased the guns after Jimmy was diagnosed with cancer. Lindsay says that Hatch really wanted an enemy he could face and that he purchased the guns hoping he would be prepared in the event there was a home invasion.

Jeremy reflects on the fact that his actions have had deep repercussions. Tod's mother had a nervous breakdown after his death. The owners of Fantasy World closed the park for a short period, made some changes and reopened, but there were never again as many visitors and the park eventually went bankrupt. Jeremy has also analyzed his actions and knows that he was out of control, which means he was careless. He knows that he continues to elude police by making certain his next move can't be predicted. He knows that he was out of control when he killed Bill Cooper and has pledged not to allow that to happen again. From his makeshift bed in the Harrison's attic, he makes certain that he's small and insignificant, not drawing attention to himself, and patiently waiting for the right moment for his next move.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

While Jeremy is kidnapping Regina, his father is having dinner with Kari Dovell. The two remain platonic though they see each other socially. On this particular evening, Dr. Nyebern is brooding over Jeremy and begins to talk about his own actions, saying that he saw those sociopath tendencies in Jeremy and that he should have done something. Kari argues that Jeremy can't take responsibility for Jeremy's actions and then says what most people think - that Jeremy is dead. Nyebern says that Jeremy is alive and that it's "because of me." A short time later, Kari becomes obviously uncomfortable at the turn of the conversation and asks Nyebern to join her for dinner out. He suggests they throw some steaks on to cook instead and goes to the freezer to collect them, where he finds Morton Redlow's body. There's a note in his hands addressed to "Dear Daddy," and indicating the Redlow's nose is "up his back end," and that Jeremy saw it as fitting repayment for Redlow's sticking his nose in Jeremy's business. He ends with, "I'm sorry, sir, if this behavior distresses you."

Meanwhile, Hatch and Lindsay continue to travel, Hatch giving directions and both hoping the tenuous connection Hatch has with Jeremy won't be lost altogether because it's the only hope they have of finding Regina alive. As Jeremy turns into the amusement park entrance, he suddenly has a vision of Lindsay driving the car, then catches sight of a crucifix, and knows that to be a fitting torture and death for Regina. Hatch sees Jeremy's plan and urges Lindsay to go faster as he calls the Orange County Sheriff's Department for help. Jeremy tries to lead Regina, now conscious, inside but her legs are numb from having been tied and she can't walk. He carries her, still planning how to pose her as the final achievement of his collection, and loving her vitality. Then Regina, seeking a way to cope with the horror of the events, finds herself in a safe place outside the situation and becomes catatonic, which enrages Jeremy.

Following Hatch's instincts, they follow Jeremy and Regina inside, stopping to turn on the flashlights Hatch had somehow sensed they'd need. Hatch, trying to carry flashlight, gun and crucifix, takes time to attach the crucifix to his flashlight. Jeremy, with his ability to see in the dark, knows they are coming long before they arrive. They smell the stench of the corpses from the entry of the tunnel but press onward, hoping to find Regina before he kills her. They follow Jeremy to the elevator shaft and though Hatch warns Lindsay to wait, she steps to the edge. Jeremy, holding Regina, fires up and one shot strikes Lindsay in the shoulder. She falls into the shaft and Jeremy follows her down with the barrel of his pistol. Hatch, knowing he can't possibly fire without hitting Regina, jumps. Jeremy fires upward at Hatch, but misses with every shot. Hatch seems to fall like a feather, slowly, and Jeremy notes that he sees the visage of a warrior. When Hatch is on the ground, Jeremy says, "I am Vassago," and Hatch responds that he is "Uriel." He then says that Vassago is now bound for Hell along with the "stupid boy," Jeremy. Hatch then strikes Jeremy/Vassago in the head with the crucifix.



Over the coming years, Dr. Nyebern losing interest in the resuscitation project which is taken on by others. He then loses interest in medicine and sells off all his art and becomes a veterinarian, never marries and is content with his life. Regina takes a few days to come out of her catatonic state and is changed, but all right. She continues to live with the Harrisons and doesn't disgrace herself by being clumsy. By fourteen, her writing is good enough to win her a prize. She continues to feel close to God but no longer feels the need for constant communication, such as she was doing when she promised to eat all kinds of beans. Lindsay's painting improves and Hatch's antique business thrives. He retains two mementos of the event, including the charred magazine. The other was the knowledge that Vassago was a demon of Hell and that Uriel was an archangel and person messenger of God. Hatch decides that if he had to bring something back with him from "Beyond" during the hour he was dead, God's personal archangel was a good choice.

Chapter 7 Analysis

It's here that Jeremy begins to contemplate on the manuscript that prompted his killing of his mother and sister. "The Hidden" was written by convicted killer Thomas Nicene who had killed his mother and brother. The pages were smuggled out of prison and copied, then distributed as a guide for those seeking entrance to Hell. Jeremy himself read the manuscript and has adhered by its codes. He also covets the details described by Nicene. Jeremy says that he had considered killing his father as a way to earn his way into Hell after his resuscitation, but admits that there's something larger than life about his father. The fact that Dr. Nyebern literally raised Jeremy from the dead makes him think that perhaps the doctor is himself untouchable and Jeremy decides not to risk it. Dr. Nyebern has also read the manuscript and sees it for what it is - a fake's rendition of Star Wars. He says that Satan, as described by Nicene, is nothing more than a giant Darth Vader.



Characters

Hatchford Harrison

Called "Hatch" by his family and friends, he is the wife of Lindsay Harrison and father of Jimmy, who died of cancer at age five. Hatch and Lindsay are returning from a vacation weekend when they slide over an embankment and Hatch drowns. He is dead when the rescuers arrive and is resuscitated after at least eighty-one minutes. As he begins to have visions and nightmares, he and Lindsay come to wonder if he has suffered some sort of brain damage. It takes some time for Hatch to come to the realization that he is seeing the world through the eyes of a psychotic killer - Jeremy Nyebern - who was also resuscitated using the same technique. Through this, Hatch has come to realize that he has a wonderful life and that he will always grieve the loss of his son but should be willing to go on with his life. With that, his determination to defeat this menace - whatever it is - is strong.

With their renewed strength and commitment, Hatch and Lindsay decide they want to adopt. They meet Regina who puts on a show of being a horrible child upon their first encounter. Hatch sees beyond the act to the loving girl underneath and the two soon begin to form a bond. Lindsay says that Hatch would put down his life for Regina and Hatch very nearly does that. Hatch's refusal to admit that there's a connection of some sort between him and the killer almost cost the family their lives. His determination to save his family results in the death of the killer. During the final confrontation between Hatch and Jeremy, Hatch calls himself Uriel - an archangel of Heaven.

Jeremy Nyebern

After his resuscitation, Jeremy calls himself Vassago - a demon of Hell. For the sake of continuity, the character is referred to as "Jeremy" throughout this summary. As a teenager, Jeremy kills his mother and sister because he has read the writings of a convicted killer who describes Hell and promises admission to this wonderful place if one kills a sibling and parent. Jeremy does so and then takes his own life by impaling himself on a knife. His father, a doctor who specializes in resuscitation, brings Jeremy back. Jeremy now believes that he had been to Hell, was rejected and that he must commit some specific deeds in order to again gain admittance. He comes to decide that killing Regina and Lindsay will serve that purpose.

Jeremy would likely have never encountered Lindsay and Regina except for an unexplained psychological link between Jeremy and Hatch. Jeremy is not nearly as disturbed by the visions as is Hatch. He wants only to find the woman he sees through Hatch's eyes and eventually follows Hatch's visions and emotions to find their home. Jeremy's current killing spree is not his first. At twelve, he killed a boy who called him his best friend. He then set fire to a fun house, killing several more.



Lindsay Harrison

Lindsay is the wife of Hatch and mother of Jimmy. Lindsay continues to wallow in his grief after the death of Jimmy and admits that it would have been easy to simply drown. She doesn't because to have done so would have meant allowing Hatch to die. Throughout Hatch's connection with the killer, Lindsay supports him. When he goes into the Fantasy World building to face the killer and save Regina, Lindsay goes with him.

Dr. Jonas Nyebern

Dr. Nyebern is head of the resuscitation unit at Orange County General Hospital. He puts his knowledge to work when his son, Jeremy, attempts suicide, but says that the only reason he wanted to revive his son was to find out what had prompted Jeremy's actions - the killing of his sister and mother. Nyebern faces the moral dilemma as to whether it's right to revive those who are evil.

Jimmy Harrison

James Eugene Harrison was the son of Lindsay and Hatch Harrison. Jimmy died of cancer when he was five. After Hatch is resuscitated, both Hatch and Lindsay come to realize that they've allowed their grief to override their lives.

Bill Cooper

Cooper is the driver of the semi-truck who jack-knifed on the icy road causing Hatch and Lindsay's accident. Cooper was found to be drunk at the time of the accident and was prosecuted, but charges were dropped due to a technicality. When Hatch finds out that Bill has gotten off, he is angry. That anger transfers to Jeremy who kills Bill.

Regina

Regina is an orphan with a deformed hand and a limp. She has been seriously hurt by a previous adoption attempt in which the parents changed their minds before the adoption was completed. She therefore approaches the Harrisons with care, exaggerating her defects and pointing out innumerable flaws, including some that don't even exist. She is kidnapped by the killer but is saved by Hatch and Lindsay.

Dr. Kari Dovell

Dovell is Dr. Nyebern's colleague and love interest though the two never seem to get past the flirting stage. Nyebern appreciates Kari for her professional actions and also spends time with her socially. She is on staff at Orange County General Hospital and has a private medical practice.



Jenny Purcell

Jenny is the twenty-two-year-old waitress who is among the corpses in Jeremy's collection at the base of the statue of Satan. As Jeremy believed her to be promiscuous, he posed her in a position that bent her double at the waist so that she was staring into "the cleft between her legs."

Margaret Ann Champion

Champion is another of Jeremy's victims. He hates the fact that as he tortures her, she remains true to her faith, praying for her sisters, her family and even for Jeremy. He does finally make her scream but says it's not a "satisfying" scream of terror but only one of pain.

Morton Redlow

Morton is the private investigator hired by Dr. Nyebern to find Jeremy. He is waiting by the Blue Skies Motel where Jeremy goes to shower each day. He is sitting in his car when Jeremy finds him and takes him hostage but later kills him. Dr. Nyebern finds Morton Redlow's head in his freezer.

Tod Ledderbeck

Tod is Jeremy's best friend and the first of his victims. Tod was killed by Jeremy on a ride at the amusement park. Jeremy believes Tod is lying when he calls Jeremy his best friend, saying that no one really has those caring emotions because he himself doesn't. When Tod continues on the vein of their strong friendship, Jeremy decides to kill him and Tod, dared to stand up during a ride, is pushed to his death by Jeremy.



Objects/Places

Big Bear Lake

Big Bear Lake is where Lindsay and Hatch are returning from when they are involved in the accident.

Orange County General Hospital

OCGH is the facility where Dr. Nyebern works.

Resuscitation Medical Project

The Resuscitation Medical Project is Dr. Nyebern's medical endeavor. This is a special facility within the Orange County General Hospital that specializes in resuscitation of patients who have been declared officially dead.

The Hideaway

The Hideaway is what Jeremy calls the place where he goes to hide. It's actually the bottom of an elevator shaft at an abandoned amusement park, Fantasy World.

St. Thomas's Church

St. Thomas's Church sponsors and maintains the orphanage where Regina lives prior to be taken in by the Harrisons.

Harrison's Antiques

Harrison's Antiques is the store and livelihood of Hatch Harrison and the building where Lindsay sometimes painted in an upstairs studio.

Blue Skies

Blue Skies is the motel where Jeremy always went for a shower and where he takes Morton Redlow captive before killing him.

Laguna Niguel

Laguna Niguel is where the Harrisons live.



Rip It

Rip It is the nightclub where Jeremy finds the young blond woman. Pledging to kill someone for her, he lures her to his car, and Hatch "sees" the murder through Jeremy's eyes.

Fantasy World

Fantasy World is the abandoned amusement park where Jeremy makes his home after his resuscitation.

The Milipede

The Milipede is the ride Tod and Jeremy were on when Jeremy pushes Tod to his death.



Themes

Good versus Evil

The book is a classic "good versus evil" plot centered on a youngster who was simply evil with no real reason or driving force behind his evil deeds. Jeremy was only twelve years old when he killed the first time. His first victim was his twelve-year-old friend who claimed that Jeremy was his best friend. Jeremy believed that no one actually cared for others as they claimed and that all who said they loved another or held another as a friend were liars. In truth, Jeremy himself was never able to bond, though there's never a full explanation for this trait. In any case, he was evil long before he was resuscitated and claimed that he had returned to earth from Hell.

The "good" of this story are Hatch, Lindsay and Dr. Jonas Nyebern. Dr. Nyebern is Jeremy's father and he has dedicated his life to helping others through his medical research. In fact, it was Dr. Nyebern who resuscitated Jeremy and who developed the technology to do so. Hatch has absolutely no connection to Jeremy other than the fact that they'd both been clinically dead for an extended period. Nyebern and Hatch go about their quest for good in different ways, though it's at least partly Jeremy's interaction that drives each of them. Hatch become defensive at first, trying to ward off Jeremy's threats, but then takes the offensive and is responsible for Jeremy's death. Nyebern also takes a proactive approach to some degree, both in hiring detectives to try to find Jeremy and in resuscitating Jeremy - though he says he knew that Jeremy wasn't the same as other people and hints at the knowledge that Jeremy is evil.

The Need for Love

While hatred is absolutely driving Jeremy, love is the driving force behind the actions of Hatch and Lindsay. As the story begins, they are distant with each other. However, it's because their love for their son who died of cancer was so strong that neither can put that aside to move on with their lives. That kind of grief, to that depth, is not unbelievable for parents who have lost a child. While they are both undeniably sad over the loss of Jimmy, they also find themselves needing to love so that they are continuing to hold to each other, though it's a tenuous hold at best. This hold prompts Lindsay to continue to fight for her life when she considers slipping into the water and allowing herself to drown. She says that she could easily face the next life with the hope that it would be better than this, but that she can't make that decision for Hatch - a sign of her love for him. The fact that she needs him is evidenced by her tears upon finding that he's alive and her reaction when she first sees him.

A further sign of the importance of love is the reaction of Hatch and Lindsay after Hatch's resuscitation. They decide that they want to adopt and that they need to share their lives. That decision brings them in contact with Regina who has been terribly hurt during a previous adoption that fell through. Despite the fact that Regina is trying hard to



protect herself from hurt, she does want the Harrisons to care for her. She berates herself for her ridiculous behavior on her first meeting with the Harrisons because she fears it might have actually scared them off. At the time of her action, she had hoped it would, but then her need to be loved - and her instinct that the Harrisons would be the couple who could see past her deformity to do so - overrode her fears.

The Quest for Understanding

There is a connection between Hatch and Jeremy that is never fully explained. They seem to have nothing in common other than the fact that both men were declared clinically dead and were resuscitated by the same doctor through the same means. They both know of the connection and seek to find out about the other. This quest for an understanding is secondary to the event that set the entire chain of events in motion - Dr. Nyebern's need to understand why Jeremy killed his sister and mother. Dr. Nyebern had the skill to bring Jeremy back to life after his suicide attempt, but admits to himself that it might not have been a responsible action. In fact, he says that there are some evil people that the world is better off without. While Nyebern seems to understand that Jeremy is evil, he doesn't really understand why. He does say that Jeremy had not bonded with other people or shown affection as is typical of a child. Nevertheless, after the murders, Dr. Nyebern seems to have wanted to bring Jeremy back to life for one purpose - to ask him why he killed his mother and sister. That question was to go unanswered as Jeremy remained in a coma for some time and then feigned brain damage so that he was never questioned about the deaths.

Style

Point of View

The book is written in third person with an omniscient point of view. The majority of the book is written from the perspective of either Jeremy or Hatch, but the story also unfolds from the point of view of others as well. For example, while Hatch and Lindsay are in the water as the story begins, Hatch is unconscious. In this case, the story is told from Lindsay's point of view. She talks of her need to stay afloat in order to hold onto Hatch, and says that it would be easy for her to slip under the water and simply leave this world. She doesn't, and the story continues through her eyes until she and Hatch arrive at the hospital. There, the reader learns what is happening to Lindsay but the book flashes from scene to scene, including an account of Hatch's resuscitation from the perspective of Dr. Nyebern. In another section, Regina expresses her exasperation with herself for her attempt to scare off the Harrisons.

Setting

The story is set in California, and the region is real. For example, the Big Bear Resort, where Hatch and Lindsay had spent the weekend, is a real place. The amusement park, Fantasy World, is a figment of the author's imagination. However, he sets that against the idea of another popular California theme park and that makes Fantasy World an entirely believable place. The amount of detail lends additional credence to the setting of the book. For example, Koontz writes at length about the tunnels and service entrances beneath the surface of the park. These are something he likely could not have described so fully without first-hand knowledge of this kind of network. While there is not an "Orange County General Hospital," the name and description are vague enough to also be believable.

Language and Meaning

The story is a fictional account of what might happen if two men had been dead for extended periods, if there was some sort of connection between them because of this common factor, and if one were good and the other evil. Despite the fact that the story is unbelievable, the fact that the setting is a real place - California - and the people are so believable will likely entice some people to get caught up in the story. There is little doubt that the story has a "spooky" element that will grab the attention of many readers.

Overall, the book is written in an easy-to-read style and the story line flows well and quickly. There are some sections of detail but these are typically tied so intricately to the story that they aren't cumbersome. Most readers with an adequate vocabulary will have no trouble understanding the story, though there are some uncommon words thrown in. As a rule, the meanings can be determined by the context.



There are some details that some readers may find disturbing. The stories of the deaths and the death-poses of Jeremy's victims are told in graphic detail. For example, Jeremy kills one of his victims who he believes would have been a prolific producer of children and folds her in half, so that she's staring into the "cleft" between her legs. When he kills the private detective, he leaves the head in his father's freezer. He cuts off the head of one of his victims and reattaches it backwards. Some readers may find the violence detracts from the storyline but it's likely that most fans of this type of story will accept the author's depictions of the sheer evil of Jeremy Nyebern for what it is - Koontz at his best.

Structure

The book is divided into three sections that offer some insight into what can be expected. They are "Just Seconds From a Clean Getaway," "Alive Again," and "Down Among the Dead." These are divided into a total of seven chapters, each numbered but without any name to offer indications of what's to come in that chapter. The book is further divided into sections within the chapters. These sections are also numbered. Both chapters and sections vary greatly in length with no real average evident. There are also divisions within the sections. These range from just a few paragraphs to several pages in length and are distinguished by a small symbol at the top of each section. As a general rule, these sections are a single scene. Because the book is written from several points of view and the perspectives of several characters at a single moment in time are sometimes presented, these mini-sections are typically used to distinguish between the scene involving one character and a scene that occurs simultaneously to another character at another location or from another perspective.



Quotes

"The death of a five-year-old son had incalculable emotional weight. It pressed on the mind, quickly deflating every moment of buoyancy, crushing each new blossom of joy. Jimmy had been dead for more than four and a half years, nearly as long as he had lived, yet his death weighed as heavily on them now as on the day they had lost him, like some colossal moon looming in a low orbit overhead." Chapter One, Section One, Page 4

"She'd been ready to step out of this world in hope of setting foot into a better one. But she had not been able to make that decision for Hatch, and to surrender her own life under those circumstances would have meant forfeiting his as well." Chapter One, Section Seven, Page 25.

"Although a physician was morally committed and professionally obligated to saving lives wherever he could, were all lives worth saving? When Death took an evil man, wasn't it wiser - and more ethically correct - to let him stay dead?" Chapter Three, Section 13, Page 78

"He was incapable of fear. That was the best thing about having left the world of the living, even if he was temporarily stuck in the borderland this side of death: nothing in existence held any terror for him." Chapter Three, Section 14, Page 84

"'I belong in Hell,' the kid said. 'I was there for a while and I want to go back. What kind of life have you led, Mr. Redlow? Do you thin, when I go back to Hell, that maybe I'll see you over there?'" Chapter Four, Section Five, Page 147

"And he was convinced that her tremendous perverse energy would be the final offering that would win him readmission to Hell." Chapter Four, Section Six, Page 164.

"He was beginning to wonder if Hell had let him go willingly, returning him to the land of the living in order to use him to deal with certain people whom the god of darkness wanted dead. Perhaps he'd not been stolen from Hell, after all, but had been sent back to life on a mission of destruction that was only slowly becoming comprehensible." Chapter Five, Section Two, Page 212.

"Any game was a bore if you played by the rules - Monopoly, 500 rummy, baseball. But if you stole bases, filched cards without getting caught, or changed the numbers on the dice when the other guy was distracted, a dull game could be a kick. And in the game of



life, getting away with murder was the biggest kick of all." Chapter Five, Section Three, Page 221

"He sensed that the tragedy of Jonas Nyebern's death-haunted life had a direct bearing on his own current problems, but although he reached for the connection, he could not grasp it." Chapter Five, Section Five, Page 254

"You're the best man I've ever known. If housing in the afterlife includes a Heaven and Hell, you've earned the apartment with a better view." Chapter Five, Section Eight, Page 286

"Hatch was no less certain that ever about the inevitability of a confrontation. Call it a hunch, call it a premonition, call it Christmas turkey if you liked, but he knew that he could trust the small warning voice within him." Chapter Six, Section Two, Page 326

"To regain his place in Hell, he was expected to commit the same act that had won him damnation in the first place: the murder of a mother and her daughter." Chapter Six, Section Three, Page 336

"Good fences make good neighbors, make strangers for neighbors - and make it damn easy for an intruder to scramble over a single barrier and vanish from one part of the maze into another." Chapter Six, Section Three, Page 346

"Marion and Stephanie became his tickets to the exotic and enormously attractive netherworld where he belonged. He had punched those tickets with a butcher knife and delivered himself to that dark kingdom, encountering precisely what Nicene promised. He had never imagined that his own escape from the hateful world of the living would be undone not by paramedics but by his own father." Chapter Seven, Section One, Page 360

"They were wading hip deep in the big muddy river of the unknown, and in addition to the cross, she would have welcomed a necklace of garlic, a vial of holy water, a few silver bullets, and anything else that might have helped." Chapter Seven, Section Two, Page 381

Topics for Discussion

What happens to cause Hatch's death? Why doesn't Lindsay simply give up and allow herself to drown? What has happened to the couple in the past to make them grieve?

Who does Hatch blame for the accident? What is he charged with? What becomes of those charges? What eventually happens to him?

How is Hatch resuscitated? What does he have in common with Jeremy Nyebern? Is the connection ever explained?

When does Hatch first discover the connection between himself and Jeremy? When does Jeremy discover the connection? What chain of events are eventually set in motion because of this connection?

Who is Dr. Nyebern? What is his life's work? What moral dilemma does Dr. Nyebern face in his work? Is he correct to consider this? Why does he say he resuscitated his son, Jeremy?

Name at least five of Jeremy's victims. Why did he kill Tod? His mother? His sister? What was Jeremy's ultimate goal? Who does he blame for keeping him from that goal?

How does Jeremy gain entrance to the Harrison house? What does he do after he arrives? What are the sequence of events up to the time he dies?

Who is Regina? Who is Tod? Who is Jimmy? What does Regina do on the first meeting with the Harrisons? Why? What do Hatch and Lindsay think of her?