

Joyland Study Guide

Joyland by Stephen King

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

Joyland Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Pages 1-65.....	5
Pages 66-128.....	8
Pages 129-178.....	11
Pages 179- 229.....	14
Pages 230-282.....	16
Characters.....	19
Symbols and Symbolism.....	21
Settings.....	22
Themes and Motifs.....	24
Styles.....	26
Quotes.....	28



Plot Summary

Joyland by Stephen King begins with Devin Jones' first time at the amusement park. Devin takes a summer job at Joyland to make money and keep his mind off the fact that his girlfriend Wendy is spending the summer in Boston working with a friend. Devin is upset that Wendy would choose to work in Boston rather than be with him.

Devin travels to North Carolina to visit the park for the first time. After taking a ride on one of the park's main feature rides, Devin decides to take the job. Devin quickly becomes fully immersed in the culture of Joyland. He enjoys the quirky characters and lingo.

Devin meets fellow employees Erin Cook and Tom Kennedy. They become fast friends and spend time together on and off the clock. All stay at Mrs. Shoplaw's boarding house located close to Heaven's Bay Beach, a favorite place for Devin to walk.

It is a sign of things to come as it is not long before Wendy begins to avoid Devin and eventually breaks up with him. Devin is devastated and inconsolable for a time. This heartbreak leads Devin to take time off from school to stay at Joyland.

Devin cannot eat or sleep. It is obvious to those around him that something is wrong. It does not take a professional to know that Devin is suffering from a broken heart. Devin is finally confronted by Lane Hardy and Madame Fortuna who are concerned about Devin's health, particularly in the brutal summer heat. Devin promises to try to eat and sleep, although he does not know how it will be possible.

Devin's attention is shifted when he learns that Horror House is haunted by the ghost of a young girl named Linda Gray. Linda was murdered inside the Horror House by her boyfriend, a man that continues to elude police more than a decade later. Tom refuses to be involved in any kind of discussion about ghosts and is especially resistant after he sees the ghost of Linda Gray. Erin and Devin however, are intrigued and want to find out the identity of the killer.

There are many characters in the story that play an important part in Devin's carnival life including the carnival's owner Mr. Bradley Easterbrook, Fred Dean in administration, old timers Pops Allen and Eddie Parks, supervisor Land Hardy, and the carnival fortune teller Madame Fortuna. Madame Fortuna spends her off time as Rozzie Gold, a Jewish mother from New Jersey.

Erin and Tom decide to leave Joyland to return to school while Devin stays behind. Erin is concerned about Devin. The friends agree to stay in touch. Erin promises to continue to work on the Linda Gray case.

After his friends are gone, Devin embraces his loneliness and the work at Joyland. It is not long before he meets Annie and Mike Ross, a mother and son that live on the beach. Mike is eager to make friends with Devin, but Annie is distant and cold. Soon



Annie cannot resist Devin's charms, and the three become close friends. Annie is very protective of young Mike who has a terminal disease and must spend most of his days in a wheelchair. Mike does not seem to mind as much as Annie. Mike is mature for his age and uses his sixth sense to predict what will happen. Mike is comfortable with knowing that he will die.

Erin calls Devin and tells him she has uncovered something big in the Linda Gray case. After viewing photos brought to him by Erin, Devin uncovers the identity of the killer. The killer, Lane Hardy, confronts Devin on a stormy night at Joyland and intends to kill him. Mike's sixth sense, aided by the ghost of Eddie Parks, sends Annie to Devin's rescue. The case of Linda Gray has been solved and Lane Hardy is dead.

The story is mainly chronological with flashes forward into Devin's future life as a writer. Devin details Tom's death and his ongoing relationship with Erin, Annie, and Mike. The story ends with Mike's death and the release of his ashes over Heaven's Bay.



Pages 1-65

Summary

The story opens in the town of Heaven's Bay. It is early September, 1973. Heaven Beach is deserted which is fine by Devin Jones, a young man nursing a serious heartache.

Devin had been involved with Wendy Keegan for two years. Both had been students at the University of New Hampshire and had been inseparable. In the summer of 1973, Wendy had decided to take a job in Boston rather than stay at her usual summer job. As the summer progressed, Wendy became more distant and unavailable to Devin, eventually breaking off their relationship.

Wendy's job in Boston that summer encouraged Devin to take a job at Joyland, an amusement park in North Carolina. Devin had taken the train and then a bus to meet with the park's employment officer. Devin got the job.

Devin meets Lane Hardy, operator of Thunderball, a Ferris wheel. Hardy tells Devin to take a spin and see how it feels. Devin views the park from above. Devin feels good about being at Joyland and takes the job.

Devin describes Joyland as being a park that had a bit of everything. There were two roller coasters, a water slide, a concert hall, and a kiddie village.

Madame Fortuna tells Devin that he has a shadow hanging over him. She talks about Wendy. Fortuna also tells Devin that he will come across a little girl in a red hat holding a doll and a boy with a dog. Devin does not take these predictions seriously.

Devin meets with Mr. Dean and has orientation. Afterward, Devin goes to meet Lane Hardy, his supervisor. Hardy is a seasoned professional. Hardy gives Devin some information on the ins and outs of the business. He also discusses Madame Fortuna. Hardy says that 90% of what she says is nonsense, but the other 10% can knock someone off his feet. Hardy also tells Devin about Horror House.

Hardy gives Devin advice on where to find a room while he works at Joyland. Devin goes off to Mrs. Shoplaw's Beachside Accommodations. Devin meets Mrs. Shoplaw. Devin rents a room for the summer. Mrs. Shoplaw makes lunch for Devin and tells him about the murder of Linda Gray. It is Gray's ghost that is said to haunt Horror House. Gray had been with her boyfriend and part way through their ride in the Horror House, the boyfriend had cut Linda's throat and had thrown her out of the car. The police ran photos of the boyfriend but no one had been arrested. There were four girls murdered in the summer of 1961, three of which had their throats cut, just like Linda Gray.

Devin heads north and calls Wendy on the way. Wendy is not at home. Devin calls again. When he finally reaches Wendy, she is too busy to see him.



Devin recalls all of the time they spent together in Professor Nako's office. The "office" was a room in a basement decorated with papers, fake seating charts, and student art. Professor Nako did not exist. It was simply a place for students to hang out. Devin and Wendy spent a lot of time there, talking and making out although they never did "it."

Devin's mother had died four years earlier. He and his dad are very close, and Devin feels guilty about leaving him for the summer.

At Joyland, Devin meets Tom Kennedy and Erin Cook. The three become fast friends and manage to get on the same team – Team Beagle. Tom and Devin work as Happy Helpers while Erin is a Hollywood Girl, responsible for taking photos of families. The group gathers at Mrs. Shoplaw's and make plans for the summer.

As the trio walks to work on their first day, they note the expensive houses lining the beach. Tom jokes that he will own one by June 1, 1987.

At the park, Mr. Easterbrook, the owner of Joyland, gives a welcoming speech to his employees.

Several of the new employees are introduced. Each must go through orientation at Joyland to learn the ins and outs of carnival life.

Analysis

The story begins with Devin lamenting his broken heart. Devin's girlfriend Wendy had left him a broken man. Devin tries desperately to get Wendy back. As with all first loves that end badly, Devin feels that he will never heal from the devastation. The end of the relationship seems to take a much bigger toll on Devin than Wendy, a fact which makes the entire situation even more intolerable to Devin.

Devin's first stint at Joyland occurs during a summer vacation from the University of New Hampshire where he attends school with Wendy. Wendy has gone to Boston for the summer to work with a friend, leaving Devin behind. Wendy talks Devin into taking a summer job at Joyland which is located in North Carolina. With nothing else to do for the summer, Devin takes the job.

Devin is intrigued by Joyland and is eager to be a part of the park culture. There is a great deal to learn, and Devin hopes that the job will help to take his mind off of his confusing relationship with Wendy.

Discussion Question 1

What causes the breakup between Devin and Wendy? What is Devin's reaction?



Discussion Question 2

What urged Devin to travel to North Carolina? What were Devin's plans for the summer?

Discussion Question 3

What does Madame Fortuna see in Devin's past? What does she see in his future?

Vocabulary

beachside, accommodations, deserted, suited, mend, visible, croissants, waver, hula, sea grass, boardwalk, terrier, embargo, literary, aspirations, possessed, clunker, ideations, occasional, conclusion, inseparable, togetherness, knell



Pages 66-128

Summary

Devin gets his first taste of the Carolina Spin under the careful watch of Lane Hardy. Hardy requests that Devin take a ride on the Carolina Spin to ensure that he wants the job. Devin takes the ride and accepts the job.

Devin meets Erin and Tom Kennedy, two fellow employees at Joyland. The trio hits it off immediately, and it is obvious that they will become life-long friends.

Devin begins work and is amazed at the number of people that walk through Joyland's gate. The day is long and Devin is very hesitant about putting the lives of patrons in his hands as he operates the Carolina Spin for the first time. Throughout the day, Devin becomes more comfortable but still cautious and wary.

Devin gets his first try at "wearing the fur." In carny talk, wearing the fur means donning the large and heavy fur suit that turns a carny into Howie the Happy Hound. Devin is assisted by the costume lady, Dottie Lassen. Dottie is a skinny, impatient woman that talks non-stop. She speaks almost entirely in "the talk" which confuses Devin. Devin was given no information and has no idea what to do once inside the heavy suit.

Dottie tells Devin to drink as much water as he can stand so he will not get dehydrated while wearing the suit. Devin asks what he is supposed to do at Wiggle Waggle Village. Dottie simply tells him to find his inner dog.

Devin details his first time acting as Howie the Happy Hound. Devin discovers that Dottie was right. Once inside the village, Devin quickly found his inner dog. He danced and played with the children who immediately fell in love with the mascot. Devin finds that he enjoys the job although the suit is unbearably hot. Fortunately, the heat dictates that each "Howie" only spends a certain amount of time inside the suit to prevent heat stroke.

Devin moves forward to the future. Devin had stayed friends with Tom and Erin after their jobs at Joyland were finished. They stayed in touch mainly through email and later, through Facebook.

In 1992, Tom was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Devin is devastated over the news and cannot imagine how it can be true.

Unfortunately for Tom, there was no chance, and he died in the prime of his life. Erin, who had married Tom, was by his side when he took his last breath. For the first time, Devin felt a pain even stronger than the ones he felt after the end of his relationship with Wendy.



The story returns to Devin's first summer at Joyland. Devin receives his one and only letter from Wendy. It is filled with apologies about their relationship. Wendy had met a guy from Dartmouth and could not fight the attraction. Wendy assures Devin that he is a nice guy. Wendy says she hopes they can be friends.

The "Dear John" letter breaks Devin's heart. The pain is unbearable. Tom and Erin try to console Devin, but Devin remains inconsolable. It is the first time Devin has ever been rejected in his entire life. Devin is certain he will not survive.

Devin cannot eat or sleep. After a while of being so depressed that he is little more than a zombie, Devin is confronted by Lane Hardy, his supervisor, and Rozzie Gold, the Jewish mother who is the alter-ego of Madame Fortuna the fortune teller. Lane is not terribly sympathetic but somewhat concerned. It is Rozzie that talks to Devin about his weight loss and how he must eat. She tells him that the pain will ease in time. Meanwhile, Devin must get his strength back or else he will certainly collapse on the midway or underneath the bulk of Howie's fur. Rozzie, as Madame Fortuna, tells Devin that two children will change his life. One is a little girl in a red hat; the other is a boy with a dog. No one, including Devin, takes the prophecy seriously.

One afternoon a little girl in a red hat enters Wiggle Waggle Village while Devin is wearing the fur. Devin sees the girl choke on her Pup-a-licious hot dog. Devin springs into action and performs the yet-to-be named Heimlich maneuver he had learned in earlier life-saving training. The girl recovers, and Devin becomes a hero.

Devin meets with the little girl's family. The father offers Devin money, but Devin refuses it. He knows that the man's business is just starting out and there is a baby on the way. Tom tells Devin he is crazy for refusing the money.

Devin tells Erin and Tom about Madame Fortuna's predictions. He also shares the story from Lane Hardy about Horror House being haunted. Tom wants no part of it and believes that ghosts are bunk.

On a rare day off, Devin, Erin, and Tom go to Joyland to take a ride through the Horror House. After the ride, Devin and Erin chat amiably about the ride while Tom remains quiet. Tom eventually reveals that he has seen Linda Gray.

Analysis

Devin throws himself into the life of a carnny. The more Devin works at Joyland, the easier it becomes. Devin becomes capable of operating many rides, talking the talk, and catering to the rubes. Devin's best skill is playing Howie the Happy Hound.

Devin is surprised to learn that Madame Fortuna's prediction about the little girl in the red hat is true. Some argue that it was no more than a guess, that there are many little girls in red hats at Joyland. Still, Devin believes that the incident with the girl adds weight to Madame Fortuna's skill.



Tom is much less adventurous than Erin and Devin. Tom is more serious than his friends and staunchly refuses to believe there are such things as ghosts and UFOs. Seeing Linda Gray in Horror House shakes Tom to his foundation and changes him in some elemental way. Devin is envious because he wants to see the girl's ghost.

Madame Fortuna has more information than she is willing to share. She gives Devin a sealed envelope saying there is something he must know.

Discussion Question 1

Which of Madame Fortuna's predictions is the first to come true for Devin?

Discussion Question 2

Why is Tom so skeptical about ghosts? What is Tom's reaction when he sees Linda Gray?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the relationship between Mr. Easterbrook and his employees.

Vocabulary

tipsed, alternate, boomie, d-note, kiddo, carnies, conies, tutorial, rawhide, pitch, whirly, untangled, spree, plushies, wiggle, waggle, sprouts, flappers, madhouse, malfunction



Pages 129-178

Summary

The end of summer arrives, and Tom and Erin prepare to leave to return to school. Erin has transferred to Rutgers to be with Tom. Devin is sad to see his friends go but feels that he has made the right decision in choosing to stay at Joyland throughout the winter. Tom went on ahead to Wilmington while Erin stayed to say goodbye to Devin. Erin tells Devin that Tom worries about him. Tom continues to refuse to discuss what happened in Horror House.

Devin drives Erin to the Wilmington bus station where they say goodbye and promise to keep in touch.

Devin resumes working long days at Joyland, winterizing the park and preparing for the following year. Each day Devin walks to and from work, enjoying the solitude of the empty beach. Every day Devin sees a mother and son outside. The boy, who is in a wheelchair, always waves. Although the kid seemed to be friendly enough, the mother seemed to be wary of strangers. Devin always waves back.

Devin spends a great deal of time alone when not working at Joyland. He refers to that year as his year a loneliness, a time to reflect, read, and write poetry.

One day Devin stops to feed Milo, the boy's dog. Devin is chastised by Annie, the boy's mother. Devin apologizes but says he couldn't resist the friendly creature. Devin tries to be polite but is rebuffed by the woman.

As the season goes on, many of the members of the Joyland team head south. These include Mr. Easterbrook and Pops Allen. It would be the last time Devin would see the elderly owner – Mr. Easterbrook dies while in Florida.

Devin must deal with Eddie Parks, a mean and curmudgeonly old man. Eddie will do anything to make Devin's life miserable. Devin cannot stand to be around Eddie but does not want to give in and go to his supervisor, Lane. Devin is determined to meet Eddie one on one, no matter what terrible tasks he assigns to Devin.

Devin puts up with the menial tasks that face him daily. Eddie continues to harass and annoy Devin but Devin is determined to make the best of it. One afternoon, Lane asks Devin if Eddie is giving him a hard time. Lane tells Devin that if it gets too bad, Lane will handle it. For some reason, Eddie is afraid of Lane.

Erin calls Devin and offers to do research on Linda Gray. The case arouses their curiosity and Erin can't seem to stop thinking about it. At school Erin has much better resources than Devin would have at the local library. Erin uncovers information and is eager to visit Devin to share what she has found.



Devin begins to develop a relationship with Annie and Mike Ross. Devin enjoys Mike's company. Mike is open about everything, including his illness which is terminal. Annie is still relatively cool toward Devin but Devin feels that he is making progress.

When Devin tells Mrs. Shoplaw and Tina about Annie and Mike, both women are shocked. Tina refers to Annie as the "Ice Queen." The ladies tell Devin that Annie's father is Buddy Ross, a world renowned televangelist. Annie had been a wild child and there had been a falling out between father and daughter when Annie left the church.

Devin and Erin talk often about the Linda Gray case. Erin believes she has uncovered important information. The pair had deduced that the killer must be related to the carnival circuit. Devin begins to suspect certain people at the park, including Eddie Parks. Eddie was never without gloves. This could mean that he is trying to cover the tell-tale tattoo that identifies the killer.

One day at the park Eddie has a heart attack. Devin is nearby and performs CPR on the older man. Eddie survives and is taken to a local hospital.

Analysis

Devin refers to the post-season at Joyland as being his year of loneliness. Although Devin is around people all day, he often spends his time off listening to records, reading Tolkien, and writing poetry. In his later years, Devin sees this behavior as self-indulgent. At the time, Devin's actions were necessary to help him grow into the person he would eventually become. Devin spends some time with Mrs. Shoplaw and Tina Ackerly but often prefers to be alone.

Devin's interest in the Rosses causes him to take bold actions. Devin first befriends Mike, a young boy with a terminal illness. Mike's mother, Annie, is overprotective and suspicious. Part of Annie's icy treatment stems from her youth in the limelight as well as the motherly effort necessary to protect her son in his weakened condition. Devin is determined however, to make friends with the Rosses.

Erin becomes increasingly intrigued with the Linda Gray case. One of the four murders attributed to Linda's killer does not fit. Erin researches old newspapers, police reports and photographs. The intensity of Erin's research leads Devin to begin to suspect someone at Joyland of being the killer. Although Eddie Parks is too old to be the killer, Devin suspects him first because he always wears gloves. Eddie claims it is due to his severe psoriasis but Devin is unsure. Even when Devin is busy saving Eddie's life, he feels the need to look under Eddie's gloves to disprove the theory.

Despite Eddie's behavior, Devin cannot help feeling bad for the man who apparently has no one to care for him.



Discussion Question 1

Why does Devin begin to suspect Eddie as being Linda Gray's killer?

Discussion Question 2

What is the background of Annie Ross? Why do you think she is so unfriendly?

Discussion Question 3

What is wrong with Mike Ross? What do you think will become of the relationship between Devin and Mike?

Vocabulary

cuss, upstream, red team, chant, punch-clock, shriveled-up, ten-forty-two, transition, sassy, scarlet, A-line, Victorian, fun house, philosophy



Pages 179- 229

Summary

Devin goes into Eddie's quarters, known as the doghouse. Devin had seen a photograph of a woman hanging on the wall and thought Eddie might like to have it. Devin also takes Eddie's gloves.

Eddie is asleep when Devin arrives. Devin attempts to leave the things he brought and sneak out. Eddie wakes and asks Devin what he is doing. Devin learns that the woman in the photo is Eddie's ex-wife. Eddie also says that he had a daughter who was killed in a car accident at age three.

Devin tells Eddie to take care of himself. Eddie, bitter, snaps that there is no way he can take care of himself. Eddie tells Devin he should have let him die. Not long after, Eddie has another heart attack and dies in the elevator.

Annie and Devin take Mike to the hospital for one of his routine appointments. Mike is insistent that Annie allow him to go to Joyland. Annie continues to refuse. Mike becomes angry and says it is the one thing he wants before he dies. Annie relents. Devin promises to make the arrangements for Mike's special day even though the park is closed for the season.

Fred Dean is the next to have a heart attack. Devin tries to save him but to no avail. Fred manages to be revived at the hospital.

Mike calls Devin at the boarding house. Mike had told Devin that he sometimes knows things he shouldn't be able to know. The things almost always come true. Mike tells Devin, "It's not white." Devin says he doesn't understand. Mike says he does not know what it means but that he knows it is important.

Devin approaches Lane Hardy about taking Mike to the park. Lane devises a plan so that Devin will be able to keep his promise.

Erin and Tom arrive in North Carolina to visit Devin. There is a joyful reunion. Erin lays out all of the work she has done regarding Linda Gray's case. Erin's big find is a series of photographs of the supposed killer. Erin has discovered that the killer's tattoo is not real. The killer changes tattoos to throw off the police. Erin has not uncovered the identity of the killer yet but knows she is close.

Annie and Devin take Mike to Joyland for a private tour of the park.



Analysis

Devin shows that he is coming out of his depression by doing things for others. First, Devin visits Eddie Parks in the hospital. The biggest change in Devin comes when he meets Mike and Annie. Devin feels an attraction for the closed-off Annie, but it is Mike that truly makes a difference in Devin. Devin feels a kinship with Mike. Mike is a very mature, very sick child who has visions. The former brings out Devin's caring side while the latter intrigues Devin, particularly since he and Erin have been investigating the Horror House murderer.

Everyone at the park also takes a liking to Mike and makes the day the best of his entire life. Annie had been hesitant and worried about Mike being at the park. Keeping Mike from going also ensured that the trip would not be the last fun thing they ever did together. Once again, Mike shows his maturity by saying it doesn't have to be the last fun thing. Mike is certain he will die while Annie still clings to one shred of hope.

Discussion Question 1

What does Erin uncover about Linda Gray's killer?

Discussion Question 2

What is Mike's final wish before he dies? Who grants the wish?

Discussion Question 3

Why is Tom unhappy that Erin is back at Joyland?

Vocabulary

pneumonia, lingering, angrier, widened, distant, radiology, calmly, muffled, conscious, intuitions, furious, approached, adjacent, peering, struggle, slumped, sobs, adrenaline



Pages 230-282

Summary

During his time at Joyland, Mike has to be careful not to get too excited or overtired because of his condition. Still, Devin manages to show the boy a great time, ending it with a surprise appearance from Howie. Mike is thrilled.

Annie gives in to Mike's wishes to shoot at the shooting gallery. Annie had been an award winning sharp shooter in her youth but had given it up. Annie shows that she still has the skill and breaks the park's record for the most hits.

Just as Devin, Annie and Mike were ready to leave, an eerie sound came from the Horror House. Milo stands close by, watching and will not come when called. Mike says he should be the one to get Milo. Just then, the padlock on the Horror House falls and one of the carts goes into motion.

The group leaves and returns to Annie's house. Annie puts Mike to bed. Mike asks to see Devin before he goes to sleep. Mike tells Devin that he saw Linda Gray. Devin did not see the ghost. All Mike could say was that he saw her but did not know who killed the girl. Mike and Devin talk for a while before Mike says he has to nap. Naps always make Mike feel better.

Devin joins Annie in the kitchen. She has changed into loose fitting clothes that manage to be suggestive. Annie tells Devin about her youth, her father, and Mike. Mike is Annie's entire life. Annie tells Devin about the rift between her and her father and how it makes her sad only because it means Mike does not get to see his grandfather.

Annie tells Devin that he will get over Wendy. Devin is surprised she knows. Annie says he may as well be wearing a sandwich board announcing his broken heart. Aside from that, Mike had told Annie the details. Although Devin knows about Mike's gifts, he is still astonished at what the boy sees and knows.

Annie asks Devin to follow her upstairs to her bedroom. Devin confesses to being a virgin. Devin and Annie make love.

Devin goes home and prepares for the next day at work. A tropical storm is on the horizon and there is a great deal to be done.

Devin works a long shift and then stops by to see Mike and Annie. After a while, Devin goes home. Late in the evening, Devin returns to thinking about Linda Gray's killer. The realization of the killer's identity shocks Devin. Devin realizes, with the help of Mike's clue, that Lane Hardy is the killer.



Lane calls Devin and says to meet him at the park. If Devin does not come, Lane will kill Annie and Mike. The tropical storm has moved in and it is raining hard. Devin has no choice but to go. Devin leaves a note for Mrs. Shoplaw in case he does not return.

Devin meets Lane at the park. During the drive, Devin tries to think of ways to outsmart Lane.

Lane insists that they ride on the Carolina Spin even though the weather has turned violent. It is clear that Lane intends to kill Devin. Lane confesses to the murders of Linda Gray and the others. Devin keeps Lane talking while he tries to devise a plan. Devin spots Annie's car. While the men talk, Annie gets into position. Lane has a gun trained on Devin. Annie takes a shot and kills Lane.

Annie stops the ride and Devin gets down. Annie tells Devin that Mike had told her that he was in trouble and that she needed to get to the park or Devin would die. Annie, knowing her son's abilities, ran to the park. Annie and Devin devise a plausible story for the police.

Devin asks Mike how he knew about Lane Hardy. Mike said that an old white haired man sat on his bed and told him about the danger. Even before Mike mentioned the name used by the ghost, Devin knew it had been Eddie Parks. Eddie Parks had returned the favor and saved Devin's life.

Devin decides to return to school for the next semester. Annie and Mike had made plans to go to Chicago. Annie wanted to at least make the attempt to reunite with her father for Mike's sake. Annie and Devin make plans to visit and to stay in touch.

Devin is planning a visit to Chicago when he gets a call from Annie to say that Mike has died. Mike's final wish is to have his ashes floated up into the sky on the Jesus kite and to be spread over the ocean. On a cool spring day, Annie and Devin carry out Mike's last wishes.

Analysis

Mike shows immense maturity in this section. Although Mike is a child, his sixth sense is such an ingrained part of him that he does not seem to be afraid when he knows something about the future, or in Devin's case, is visited by an entity with a message. Annie struggles greatly with Mike's illness as any mother might. Mike simply sees death as a certainty even though he has lived longer than projected. Devin cherishes Mike and knows that their friendship will be short-lived but filled with love and respect. There are glimpses of Mike as a child, such as when they visit Joyland and Mike throws himself into the furry arms of Howie the Happy Hound.

Devin figures out that Lane Hardy is the killer. Mike's clue "it isn't white," refers to Lane's dyed hair. Devin had thought Lane's hair was going white when in fact, his natural blonde was showing through the black hair dye he used to conceal his identity. Fortunately for Devin, Annie believes in her son's abilities and does not question when



he tells her to go to Joyland to save Devin. In that moment, Annie also rediscovers herself as she picks up her gun and uses the skills taught to her by her father.

The death of Mike is devastating to Annie and Devin; but, being able to fulfill Mike's final wishes brings them peace.

Discussion Question 1

How does Mike know Devin is in trouble at the park?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the relationship between Devin and Annie.

Discussion Question 3

What are Mike's final wishes?

Vocabulary

facade, festooned, excitements, advance, reproachfully, chump, popguns, crossly, hauled, sequence, ride-car, padlock, rumble, shackle, mechanism, chamber, greenies, collision, nicknamed, gales, semicircle, surge, stalled, mandated



Characters

Devin Jones

Devin Jones is the main character and narrator of Stephen King's *Joyland*. As the narrator, Jones is an elderly gentleman who has been through a great deal in his life, including prostate cancer. Young Jones is a college student who has recently had his heartbroken by his first real love, Wendy Keegan. The couple had gone their separate ways for the college summer break – Wendy to Boston and Jones to work at Joyland amusement park in North Carolina. Even though Jones the narrator is an old man, he still pines for the love he lost with Wendy. There are many incidents he recalls with stunning clarity.

Jones is generally an all around nice guy. An aspiring writer, Jones is putting himself through college. Jones' mother died four years previous and his father does the best he can to support and nurture his only son. Jones takes with him a good sense of morality and curiosity. Jones is also more capable than he gives himself credit for, something that allows him to succeed at operating carnival rides.

Jones, like many of the other carnies, becomes fascinated with the story of Linda Gray, the girl who was allegedly murdered at Joyland. The tale has many twists and turns but through it all Jones develops lasting friendships and a sense of maturity that was unexpected by the former greenhorn.

Lane Hardy

Lane Hardy is Devin's supervisor at Joyland. Devin describes Hardy as being "a tightly muscled" with coal black hair and faded jeans. When Hardy put one of his filterless cigarettes behind one ear Devin thought he looked like a carny from an old-time cartoon.

Lane had been around the carnival circuit for many years. He and Devin become friendly. Hardy even offers to stick up for Devin when Eddie Parks gives him a hard time in the off season. Although Hardy is friendly there is a coldness to him when it comes to personal feelings.

It is not until the end of the book that the reader learns Hardy is Linda Gray's killer. Hardy believes he never would have been caught if it weren't for Devin and Erin. Erin had found the photos of Hardy and although his face could not clearly be seen, Erin figured out that Hardy's tattoos were fake.

Hardy is merciless at the end. As with most villains, Hardy has the compulsion to tell his victim about the murders and his plans. Hardy intends to kill Devin but is killed by Annie first.



Mr. Easterbrook

Mr. Easterbrook is the elderly owner of Joyland.

Linda Gray

Linda Gray is the name of the young woman who was murdered at Joyland.

Annie

Annie is the woman Devin meets on the beach. Annie is Mikey's mother.

Mikey

Mikey is the chronically ill young boy Devin meets on the beach.

Erin Cook

Erin Cook is a fellow employee at Joyland and a good friend to Devin. Erin also did the research on Linda Gray's killer.

Tom Kennedy

Tom Kennedy is a fellow employee at Joyland and a good friend to Devin.

Mrs. Emmalina Shoplaw

Mrs. Emmalina Shoplaw is the owner of the boarding house where Devin lives.

Wendy Keegan

Wendy Keegan is the love of Devin's life and the reason behind his heartbreak and choice to stay at Joyland.



Symbols and Symbolism

Carts

The carts at the Horror House move on their own and are thought to be haunted by Linda Gray.

Howie the Happy Hound

Howie the Happy Hound is the mascot for Joyland. Devin often has to dress up as Howie to entertain children.

Carolina Spin

The Carolina Spin is the most popular ride at Joyland.

Beach

Devin walks along the beach every day to get to and from work. Devin meets Mikey and Annie on the beach.

Mike's Illness

Mike is afflicted with a terminal illness that requires him to be in a wheelchair.

Photographs

Photographs are an important item in catching Linda Gray's killer. The park hires photographers to take pictures of happy families in the park.

Devin's Car

Devin often uses his car to take friends places and to return home when on break from working at Joyland.

Jesus Kite

Devin teaches Mikey how to fly the Jesus kite on the beach. The kite is the start of their friendship.



Settings

Joyland

Joyland is located in Heaven's Bay, North Carolina. The coastal region is the perfect spot for an amusement park. Joyland is not a theme park, which gives it freedom to have any kind of amenities the owner desires. Among the attractions are the Carolina Spin, a roller coaster named the Delirium Shaker, a water slide named Captain Nemo's Splash & Crash, Annie Oakley's Shooting Gallery, Horror House, and other amusements and games. The far side of the park contains a children's annex known as Wiggle-Waggle Village. There is also a concert hall that features minor and formerly famous musical acts.

The main attraction to the reader is the Horror House. This is the place where Linda Gray was murdered by her mystery boyfriend who later turns out to be Lane Hardy. Gray and Hardy had visited Joyland before Hardy was an employee. Once inside the Horror House, Hardy slit Gray's throat and left her for dead. The crime goes unsolved for years which prompts Linda Gray to haunt Horror House with the hope of getting some peace.

Devin, the narrator, discusses how Joyland closed in 1976 despite the efforts of Fred Dean and Brenda Rafferty.

Horror House

Linda Gray was a young girl who was murdered in 1961 at Joyland. It is Gray's ghost that is said to haunt Horror House. Gray had been with her boyfriend and part way through their ride in the Horror House, the boyfriend had cut Linda's throat and had thrown her out of the car. The police ran photos of the boyfriend but no one had been arrested. There were four girls murdered in the summer of 1961, three of which had their throats cut, just like Linda Gray.

Devin and Erin become fascinated with Horror House especially after Devin sees proof of Linda Gray's ghost. Many eerie things happen at Horror House but only during the hours the park is closed. One incident included the carts moving by themselves in and out of Horror House. Some thought that it was simply a trick being played by one of the conies. Devin knew Linda Gray's ghost was trying to get someone's attention. There was another incident when the girl's voice was heard; yet another when a bloody short appeared in one of the carts.

Devin attempts to investigate Horror House on his own but came up empty handed.

Tom Kennedy is terrified of Horror House. He refuses to go near it or even speak about it to Devin and Erin.

Mrs. Shoplaw's Boarding House

Mrs. Emmalina Shoplaw owns and operates a boarding house on Heaven's Bay. It is the home for Devin, Tom, and Erin during their stint at Joyland. Devin stays on after Tom and Erin leave. Tina Ackerly, a librarian, also lives in the house.



Themes and Motifs

Fear

Stephen King is well known for being able to create fear in the reader through his masterful storytelling skills. “Joyland,” unlike most King novels, is more about the coming of age of a young man than about fear. Fear does play a large part in the story when it comes to uncovering a killer’s identity.

The first real example of fear can be seen in Tom Kennedy’s experience involving the ghost of Linda Gray. Linda Gray had never shown herself to anyone but the employees at Joyland. Tom, a non-believer, is scared when he sees Linda Gray’s ghost during a ride in Horror House. Devin and Erin, the two that most wanted to see the ghost, are left empty handed.

The most fearful experience in the entire book involves Devin being confronted by Lane Hardy, the killer of Linda Gray and three or four other girls during a spree in the 1960s. Devin is scared, as much for the lives of his friends as his own, when Lane demands that Devin meet him at Joyland. Devin knows Lane’s intentions are to kill him but he has no choice but to meet Lane unless he wants harm to come to Annie and Mike. Lane shows a crazy side when he forces Devin onto the Carolina Spin during a tropical storm. Annie is afraid for Devin’s life and manages to shoot Lane before anything happens to Devin.

Amusement Parks

Joyland is not a theme park which gives it freedom to have any kind of amenities the owner desires. Bradley Easterbrook develops his own stamp on an amusement park, creating a semi-theme park dedicated to Howie the Happy Hound. Howie’s likeness is on everything in the park from t-shirts to hats. An employee often dresses up as Howie to entertain the children. Among the attractions are the Carolina Spin, a roller coaster named the Delirium Shaker, a water slide named Captain Nemo’s Splash & Crash, Annie Oakley’s Shooting Gallery, Horror House, and other amusements and games. The far side of the park contains a children’s annex known as Wiggle-Waggle Village. There is also a concert hall that features minor and formerly famous musical acts.

The main attraction to the reader is the Horror House. This is the place where Linda Gray was murdered by her mystery boyfriend who later turns out to be Lane Hardy. Gray and Hardy had visited Joyland before Hardy was an employee. Once inside the Horror House, Hardy slit Gray’s throat and left her for dead. The crime goes unsolved for years which prompts Linda Gray to haunt Horror House with the hope of getting some peace.

Devin, the narrator, discusses how Joyland closed in 1976 despite the efforts of Fred Dean and Brenda Rafferty.



Murder

The crux of the story about Joyland is the murder of Linda Gray. Linda was a young girl from Florence, South Carolina who had gone to the park with her new mystery boyfriend. Partway through their day, the couple decided to take a spooky ride through Horror House, a common make out spot. Only this time, the boyfriend came out alone. During the ride the man had cut Linda's throat, cast her out of the car, tossed aside his bloody shirt, and exited the ride. Eleven years later the crime remained unsolved.

The man who murdered Linda Gray was also suspected of killing four other girls. One girl, in Erin's mind, did not fit the pattern. Each murder was in some way linked to an amusement park. This lead Erin to suspect that the killer may have been – or might still be – at Joyland.

Erin provides photos of the murderer to Devin. Erin notices that the man's tattoos are most likely fakes because they keep changing; probably with the hope of throwing off the police. It worked.

Through the work of Erin and Devin, the murder of Linda Gray is solved.

Styles

Point of View

Joyland by Stephen King is the first in a series of “Hard Case” criminal books by the best-selling author. Joyland is written from the first person point of view, through the eyes of the main character, Devin Jones aka Jonesy. The use of first person in the story works well in that the reader is able to understand the world of carnies and carnival life through the eyes of one of its own. The reader is taken on a journey along with Devin and is enabled to see inside the mind of the carnies as they spend a summer on the shore in North Carolina and also get to experience meeting face to face with a serial killer.

The use of first person makes the story seem slightly less alien to the point that the reader can grasp what it might be like for an ordinary person to work at a carnival for the first time. The reader gets an inside view of what it would be like to be introduced to each unusual character and their ways.

While third person, omniscient may enable the reader to get a broader view of the life of a carny worker in the 1970s, the use of first person lends an air of authenticity to the story and allows the character of Devin Jones to become real.

Language and Meaning

The language used in Joyland tends to be relatively informal and the oft-used jargon in the carny world is shown mostly through dialogue between the characters.

It is clear by the use of specific language that Devin is a newcomer to the world of carnivals.

The language used by Devin and the other characters is very descriptive and is used in such a way that the person she is speaking to can fully understand the meaning and context of what is being said. There are some cases early on when Devin is introduced to the jargon known as “the Talk” where it does not make any sense to him whatsoever. A good example can be seen in Devin’s first conversation with Dottie the costume lady.

Devin addresses learning about the Talk: “I learned the Talk; I learned the geography, both above and below ground; I learned how to run a joint, take over a shy, and award plushies to good-looking points. It took a week or so to get most of it down, and it was two weeks before I started getting comfortable.” (p.70)

King’s use of language is masterful and adds color to an already colorful atmosphere and story.

Structure

Joyland by Stephen King is the first in a series of “Hard Case” criminal books by the best-selling author. Joyland is written in the first person point of view, through the eyes of the main character, Devin Jones aka Jonesy. Joyland is a work of fiction. The book is 281 pages in length. There are no chapters in the book.

The story begins with Devin Jones’ first time at Joyland. Devin had taken a summer job at the amusement park to make money and keep his mind off the fact that his girlfriend, Wendy, was spending the summer in Boston working with a friend.

Devin becomes fully immersed in the culture of Joyland quickly and enjoys the quirky characters and lingo.

The story is mainly chronological with flashes forward into Devin’s future life as a writer. Devin details Tom’s death and his ongoing relationship with Erin, Annie, and Mike. The story ends with Mike’s death and the release of his ashes over Heaven’s Bay.



Quotes

People think first love is sweet, and never sweeter than when that first bond snaps. You've heard a thousand pop and country songs that prove the point; some fool got his heart broke. Yet that first broken heart is always the most painful, the slowest to mend, and leaves the most visible scar. What's so sweet about that?

-- Devin Jones

Importance: This statement gives weight to the way Devin Jones is feeling when he first takes the job at Joyland.

It was Devin Jones's lost year. I was a twenty-one year old virgin with literary aspirations. I possessed three pairs of bluejeans, four pairs of Jockey shorts, a clunker Ford (with a good radio), occasional suicidal ideations, and a broken heart.

-- Devin Jones

Importance: This quote shows Devin's state of mind during his "lost year" of being in a depressed state. The break up with Wendy caused Devin to stay in North Carolina rather than return to school. This foreshadows events to come at Joyland.

But you are on the edge of great sorrow.' She paused, doing the old emphasis thing. 'And, perhaps, danger.

-- Madame Fortuna

Importance: This statement foretells the horror that Devin will encounter in the park.

We've got a spook palace called Horror House. The old Roz-ola won't go within fifty yards of it. She hates the pop-ups and the torture chamber and the recorded voices, but the real reason is that she's afraid it really might be haunted.

-- Lane Hardy

Importance: This is the first mention of the murder of Linda Gray that took place in the Horror House.

I never produced the books I dreamed of, those well-reviewed almost-best-sellers, but I do make a pretty good living as a writer, and I count my blessings; thousands are not so lucky.

-- Devin Jones

Importance: Devin tells the story in present time as well as in flashback. This quote shows that Devin did follow his literary dreams.

For you greenies, I hope this will be the best summer of your lives, the yardstick by which you judge all your future employment. That is no doubt an extravagant wish, but anyone who runs a place like this year in and year out must have a wide streak of extravagance. For certain you'll never have another job like it.



-- Mr. Easterbrook

Importance: Mr. Easterbrook shows his many years of experience at Joyland. Easterbrook knows working at the amusement park is not an extravagant job but hopes that each person will do his best. Easterbrook also states that it is a job one will always remember. This foreshadows events related to Horror House that are yet to come.

Waggle Village with the other members of Team Beagle to "Bird Dance Beat," "Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavor on the Bedpost Overnight," "Rippy-Rappy, Zippy-Zappy," and a dozen other nonsense songs.

-- Narrator

Importance: The quote shows some of the things the employees are expected to do. Devin is particularly good at dressing up as Howie the Hound and entertaining the children. This job leads to Devin's act of saving the life of a choking child.

Hey folks welcome in, time to take a little spin, hurry hurry, summer won't last forever, take a ride upstairs where the air is rare, this is where the fun begins, step over here and ride the Spin.

-- Lane Hardy

Importance: The quote shows the first reference to "the talk" which is spoken by the conies. At first, the talk makes Devin feel like he is in a foreign land but soon he learns the talk which makes him feel like a part of something. At this point in the story, Devin desperately needs to belong.

Annie and Mike were like that; one day they just became a real part of my world. I always waved, the kid in the wheelchair always waved back, and the dog sat watching me with his ears cocked and the wind ruffling his fur.

-- Narrator

Importance: Shortly after Tom and Erin leave Joyland, Devin meets Annie and Mike Ross, a mother and son that reside in a large green Victorian house. Annie and Mike quickly become an important part of Devin's life and his growth process.

That was my year to embrace loneliness. I sometimes went to the movies in Lumberton or Myrtle Beach with Mrs. Shoplaw and Tina Ackerley, the librarian with the goo-goo-googly eyes, but I spent most evenings in my room, re-reading *The Lord of the Rings* and writing letters to Erin, Tom, and my dad.

-- Narrator

Importance: This quote shows that Devin spent a great deal of time alone after Tom and Erin left Joyland. Devin used the time to read, to write poetry, and to explore his options for the future.

Eddie was an equal-opportunity disliker. I'd go to Lane if life with Eddie got too hard, but only as a last resort. My father had taught me-mostly by example-that if a man wanted



to be in charge of his life, he had to be in charge of his problems.
-- Narrator

Importance: Meeting Eddie one on one shows that Devin has strength of character.

I didn't like him, we're straight on that, right? He'd given me no reason to like him. He had, so far as I knew, given not one single Joyland employee a reason to like him. Even old-timers like Rozzie Gold and Pop Allen gave him a wide berth. Nevertheless, I found myself entering the Heaven's Bay Community Hospital that afternoon at four o'clock, and asking if Edward Parks could have a visitor.

-- Narrator

Importance: This quote shows that while Devin did not like Eddie at all, he still felt the need to visit the man in the hospital after saving his life. This act shows Devin's character.