

Library of Souls Study Guide

Library of Souls by Ransom Riggs

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Plot Summary

“Library of Souls” is a young adult fantasy novel by Ransom Riggs, and is the third installment in his “Miss Peregrine’s Peculiar Children” trilogy. When the novel begins, Jacob, Emma, and Addison are fighting off Hollows and Wights that have attacked Miss Wren’s secret hideout where dozens of peculiar children have taken refuge. The Hollows and Wights, under the command of the evil Caul, have kidnapped the peculiar children and many ymbrynes, mother-like protectors, guardians, and guides of the peculiar world. Among them is Miss Peregrine. Jacob, Emma, and Addison aspire to get them back. They cross into present-day London to chase Caul’s forces. Under the London docks, they meet Sharon, a boat man who agrees to take them into Peculiar London.

In Peculiar London is an area best by criminals of the worst kind, called Devil’s Acre. There, Jacob, Emma, and Addison try to figure out how to break into Caul’s fortress. Addison attempts to sneak in, but is captured. Jacob and Emma then meet Myron Bentham, an intelligent explorer and inventor who knew Jacob’s father. Bentham reveals many startling things to Jacob and Emma. Among these are that he, Caul, and Miss Peregrine are siblings. Bentham also explains it was his fault that Hollowgasts and Wights exist at all.

Seeking power by feeding on the souls of peculiar children, Caul sought to find the legendary Library of Souls, where the souls of peculiars are kept and stored after death. They give the consumer immense power. Caul’s goal has always been to find the library and use it to take over the world. Bentham then sought to kill Caul and all his followers by closing the time loop they travel through, but only partially succeeds. In their place come Hollowgasts, essentially corpse-like versions of their former selves with no souls. When a Hollowgast has consumed enough peculiar souls, they are nearly restored to their former human state and become a Wight.

However, only a librarian can actually see the soul jars in the Library of Souls. Jacob’s grandfather was one such man. Bentham explains he and Jacob’s grandfather were experimenting with fracturing his grandfather’s soul to see if that particular power could be given to others rather than just being born with it. As a result, Jacob’s grandfather lost all his peculiar powers, and left the peculiar world. He was later hunted down and killed by a Hollowgast. Jacob now has the same librarian power, which is why Caul is seeking to capture him. Emma does not trust Bentham, thinking he took Jacob’s grandfather’s powers rather than his grandfather surrendering them voluntarily.

Nevertheless, Jacob and Emma rely on Bentham to use his home –a central point for loops –to get them inside Caul’s fortress in Devil’s Acre. Once there, Caul springs a trap on Jacob and Emma to capture them with Bentham’s help. Jacob, Emma, Miss Peregrine, Caul, Bentham, and a handful of Wights then venture through a loop to the Library of Souls. They come across a throne room with a fountain and pool for the consumption of souls. Caul begins the process by transforming himself into a hideous, gigantic beast. Bentham, who is power-hungry but not evil, sacrifices himself by giving

Miss Peregrine the spell to shut down the loop as Bentham did once before. He then transforms himself into a hideous monster by consuming souls and attacking Caul. Miss Peregrine and her fellow ymbrynes successfully shut down the loop, ending Caul's reign of terror.



Chapters 1 – 3

Summary

Chapter 1 – 16 year-old Jacob Portman and his friends, Emma Bloom and Addison MacHenry, face down a Hollow, short for Hollowgast. Hollows are twisted and evil peculiars who feed on the souls of peculiars like Jacob, Emma, and Addison. Jacob has the power of detecting and controlling Hollows, Emma can summon fire with her fingers, and Addison has an incredible sense of smell. Jacob is able to subdue the Hollow, but they know more will be coming. The dark forces of Caul have attacked Miss Wren's frozen hideout, kidnapping many. Jacob, Emma, and Addison know they must go and help their friends. They head into the train tunnels beneath the hideout where they find an injured Sergei, who has been recruiting peculiars to help track down his family. He asks to be left to die, but Jacob brings Sergei along. They are confronted by two Wights, Hollows who have consumed enough peculiar souls to take on human form. One of the Wights is hit by a train, but the other scrambles away.

Jacob and his friends go into an empty train car. Emma uses her fire to cauterize Sergei's wound, but he may still die. Addison can smell the trail of the kidnapped children, thinking that perhaps Miss Wren pushed open a window on their train to make the scent stronger for Addison to follow. Addison also reveals the Wights have been using gas to root out peculiars, and have captured Claire. They know they must save their friends, including Miss Wren, who is an ymbryne, a shape-shifting female protector of peculiars who can transform into a bird. As Jacob and the others come to a London station, they run, having no choice but to leave Sergei behind. They rush into a comic convention where their old-fashioned clothes fit right in. They realize it is a perfect place to have taken their fellow peculiars through. They discover a Wight headed back to his unit, and decide to follow him. They lose him soon after.

With Addison smelling the way, they decide to follow the trail of peculiars to a touristy port on the Thames River. Addison smells that many peculiars have been brought this way before. Under a pier they find a giant boatman named Sharon who they hire to bring them to Oozing Street in Devil's Acre in the heart of Peculiar London. They discuss how the Wights what to recreate the "1908 event." Sharon says he will not charge them now, but later for his services.

Chapter 2 – Sharon launches his boat and motors up the Thames. Jacob, Emma, and Addison wonder how they have managed to come back to the present time in the 2010s when before only Miss Peregrine could send people around in time. They theorize she may have been in the tunnels. Sharon orders Jacob, Emma, and Addison to hide beneath a tarp as they enter the Acre. It is a hideous, rotting, and dirty slum of a place. Sharon then points out important landmarks, such as Saint Rutledge's Foundlings' Prison; Saint Barnabus's Asylum for Lunatics, Mountebanks, and the Crminally Mischievous; and Smoking Street, beneath which a fire has raged for 80-some years.



He tells them to trust no one as fog-like manmade murk begins drifting in around the boat.

Vultures—essentially criminal peculiars—will murk an area to conceal their activities, Sharon explains. Two vultures approach on a boat. They demand to see what is beneath the tarp. Addison bites the hand of one vulture, while Emma uses fire to throw the other into the water. Sharon speeds their boat away as more vultures approach. Using mind control, Jacob compels a Hollow to attack the vultures. Jacob then injures the Hollow by throwing it into a bridge. With holes in his boat and two vultures dead, Sharon knows he can never again return to Devil's Acre. He thinks Jacob and his friends are bad luck. He agrees to help them on condition they'll pay for boat repairs. He wants to bring them to a lawyer first to sign an agreement stating such. He warns them not to touch anything and that he'll deny knowing them when vultures come after them.

Chapter 3 – Sharon begins to guide Jacob, Emma, and Addison through Devil's Acre. They purchase shabby clothes to blend in. They head to Louche Lane, which looks deceptively charming. Sharon goes into the law offices of Munday, Dyson, and Strype. The street is full of peculiars selling themselves and their special talents. Emma speaks with one such peculiar named Lorraine, who wants to see the selection of peculiars she advertises. A boy with the label of "13" can make his facial hair move like a snake to do things, such as picking locks. A young girl who drinks grape soda can fly. Emma suspects the peculiars are being kept and sold against their will. The force Lorraine into her office and tie her up. Lorraine denies she is a slaver but confesses she rents the peculiars out, including to Wights. She reveals that more truckloads than normal of peculiars have been passing through to Smoking Street lately. Emma, Jacob, and Addison escape, but are unable to bring the peculiars with them since the peculiars have all been drugged. They watch as Sharon leaves the law office and sneaks away. They decide they are better off without him.

Jacob, Emma, and Addison journey to Smoke Street. It is hot, full of smoke, ash, and burned wrecks. The worst of the worst criminals who commit unforgivable sins live on Smoke Street. A lunatic tells Jacob they've been waiting a long time for him, that a big show is coming. Journeying on, Jacob, Emma, and Addison find the Wight Fortress, white and clean, across a bridge. It is decided Addison will sneak in first to gather information. However, everything seems unguarded. Addison confirms by scent that the peculiars and Wren have gone across the bridge. Some locals laugh about having drippings in a few days. Severed heads on pikes warn Jacob and his friends to turn back. They do not, and are grabbed by the bridge's tentacles. Jacob uses his power to order the bridge to put them back down, which the bridge does by throwing them back the way they came. The locals angrily close in on Jacob and his friends demanding a vial, but prison trucks suddenly appear from over the bridge. The locals line up for vials from the trucks, but Addison attacks the guards, causing the trucks to retreat. Addison goes along with them by clinging to the underside of a truck. Jacob is beaten up by an angry mob. Sharon and some gallows-riggers arrive, sending away a growing mob by giving them vials. Jacob and Emma are saved, but Jacob passes out.



Analysis

“Library of Souls” is a young adult fantasy novel by Ransom Riggs, and is the third installment in his “Miss Peregrine’s Peculiar Children” trilogy. Immediately, the reader is plunged into an ongoing war between good and evil. The war between Good and Evil will serve as a major theme through the novel as the evil Caul seeks to overcome Jacob, Emma, Addison, Miss Peregrine, and the forces of good. Caul has kidnapped not only Miss Peregrine and the ymbrynes, but all of Jacob’s peculiar friends as well. No good can come of this, and Jacob, Emma, and Addison take off in pursuit in order to free their friends. What the end game is for Caul’s attack and kidnapping scheme is not currently known.

What is known, however, is that Hollowgasts feed on the souls of peculiars, especially peculiar children. When a Hollowgast has consumed enough souls, the Hollowgast becomes a Wight, a nearly-human being. At the very minimum, the captured peculiar children stand to be killed by way of having their souls consumed. Time is of the essence. In order to rescue their friends, Jacob and Emma end up hiring Sharon to guide them into Devil’s Acre. The reader should find it strange that Sharon, a man who lives on the periphery of questionable business practices, should—for free—bring Jacob, Emma, and Addison along on his boat, and that he should remain by their side on foot as well.

The reader should note that Jacob does not stand alone. Apart from Addison, Jacob is supported by Emma. While Emma certainly wants to rescue the others, her romantic feelings for Jacob (also seen in previous novels) help propel her to stay by Jacob’s side. Through Jacob and Emma, the theme of Love emerges. The love that is between them is a good thing, and is a clear representation of the highest form of good. This helps to align Jacob and Emma with the side of good.

The journey to retrieve their friends will bring Jacob, Emma, and Addison into the darkest reaches of peculiardom, into the heart of peculiar London, and into Devil’s Acre. Devil’s Acre is a place full of the worst criminals and some of the most evil people in peculiardom. The physical representation of evil is apparent in drug addiction, decay, rot, and criminal activity in the area, all surrounding the fortress of Caul. The reader should note that Caul maintains his control in the area by way of the distribution of ambrosia, a drug whose properties have yet to be revealed.

Discussion Question 1

Emma doesn’t have to remain beside Jacob through the battle at Miss Wrens, and through the attempts to get into the fortress in Devil’s Acre. Why does she remain beside Jacob?



Discussion Question 2

What are Hollowgasts and Wights? Why do they normally hunt down peculiar children? Do Jacob and Emma have any idea about what the Hollowgasts and Wights want?

Discussion Question 3

How does Addison get into the fortress? What is his objective in doing so? Why does Addison go instead of Jacob or Emma?

Vocabulary

afterimage, berth, tantalizing, envoy, chivalrous, caromed, cauterize, finite, menagerie, perfunctorily, soused, impassively, abattoir, unsavory, acute, imperiously, gratuity, facile, fetid, attenuated, warbling, indomitable, intrepid, lolling, natter, gourmand



Chapters 4 – 5

Summary

Chapter 4 – When Jacob awakens, he is greeted by a man named Nim and told he is in the house of Mr. Bentham. Jacob is tended to by a doctor and Emma. He has suffered a double concussion, a broken rib, and torn shoulder. Sharon arrives, seemingly relieved that Jacob is alright. Jacob thinks Sharon and the doctor can't be trusted, but Emma thanks the doctor for his help. Emma makes Jacob promise her that he won't ever die. He makes her promise as well. Sharon then explains he has no dealings with anyone who trades in peculiar flesh, and resents any such suggestion. Sharon reveals, however, that he has been waiting to bring Jacob to see Mr. Bentham for forty years, based on a deal that Sharon is given safe travel in and out of the Acre, and in thanks for owing his life to Bentham.

While waiting on Bentham, Jacob and Emma decide to look around the house. There are rooms full of strange objects and artifacts relating to peculiars, such as housewares used by peculiars on Espiritu Sancto Island in 1750. In one room full of snow, they discover a loop to Siberia. They then see a man staring down at them from a snowy crevasse. The man and a bear begin chasing Jacob and Emma, who rush back to Bentham's house. They end up meeting the bear, who licks them in a friendly way. Myron Bentham then appears and says the bear, named PT, is his bodyguard. Bentham reveals the man in Siberia is his assistant. He explains he is famous for his peculiarium, a museum of sorts. They all go to the library. Sharon joins them, and they are served sandwiches and tea by Nim. Bentham explains the bear is a grimbear, with peculiar powers. They are often protectors of ymbrynes.

Bentham tells Jacob he is the spitting image of his grandfather. He goes on to explain that he calls his house and collection the Panloopticon. He explains that what makes peculiars weak is geography. Being able to bring together thousands of peculiars in a single place at any given time can make them strong, for they can stand together in everything from trade to knowledge to defense. The Panloopticon is a central point for loops to distant places, and for all loops everywhere. Bentham and his brother created it, but his brother had different motives in mind: the Library of Souls in the lost city of Abaton where peculiar souls go to be stored when the body dies so that the souls can be used by others.

Bentham explains that Abaton has been broken into in the past. He explains that knowledge has spread that whoever controls Abaton controls all of peculiardom. Wars have been waged over controlling it, Bentham says. But, he reveals, one night the loop to the library disappeared. Many now believe Abaton to only be a legend, but Bentham's brother became obsessed with finishing the work of Perplexus the explorer and finding Abaton through the Panloopticon. Bentham reveals that when he tried to stop his brother, his brother turned on him and turned others against Bentham as well. Bentham then reveals his brother's name is Jack, now known as Caul. This means that Bentham



is Miss Peregrine's brother. Bentham explains that years ago, Caul began to build a violent political movement to gain control of peculiar society over the ymbrynes. Bentham then shockingly reveals he himself is responsible for the creation of the Hollowgast. Imprisoned by Caul, Bentham explains he tricked Caul into entering a self-destructing loop to Siberia. But rather than dying, Caul and his followers were transformed into Hollows, named for their hollow souls. After consuming enough peculiar souls, the Hollow souls are filled enough to resume human form to some degree and become Wights.

Bentham goes on to explain that the loop to Abaton was supposedly closed by 12 ymbrynes, and that they, or their successors, are needed to reopen the loop. Caul is hunting them down. Bentham notes that even if Caul manages to open the loop and get to the library, only a librarian could actually handle the souls. A librarian has not been born for a thousand years. Bentham then reveals that Caul's fortress is a copy of the Panloopticon, and that Bentham's Panloopticon could be used to enter Caul's. To do this, Bentham needs a Hollowgast. Jacob and Emma decide to bring Bentham the Hollowgast Jacob injured during the boat trip, now being held by pirates. Sharon will accompany them, with Jacob and Emma pretending to be his slaves.

Chapter 5 – As Jacob, Emma, and Sharon move through the Acre to Oozing Street. Ambrosia is a major drug in the area, and is used to keep enslaved peculiars docile. Many locals are addicted to it as well. Caul distributes it to keep control in the area. Ambrosia is taken by being poured in the eyes. Sustained use over time melts the face leading to horrible disfigurement. Ambrosia contains the souls of peculiars. Jacob, Emma, and Sharon go to an ambrosia den. The den owner, organizing fights between volunteers and the wounded Hollow, gives Jacob a vial of ambrosia to enhance his fighting abilities. Jacob refuses to use it. Sharon reveals he himself once was an addict, but Bentham saved him.

They head to the ring that has been set up, where hundreds have gathered to see people try to fight the Hollow. Jacob enters the ring, and forces the Hollow to play dead after a brief fight during which Jacob must stab the Hollow to gain more control over it. The den owner, however, accuses Jacob of trying to steal customers away to another opium den by proving he could fight the Hollow without relying on the den owner's brand of ambrosia. Jacob commands the Hollow to take the owner hostage until they can leave safely. They take the den owner's baby grimbear cubs with them, so that the bears will not be forced to fight one another for the entertainment of audiences later on. They steal a dirty laundry cart to hide the Hollow and the bear cubs in. They return to Bentham's.

Analysis

The battle between good and evil is manifested through the theme of History in this section of the novel. Jacob and Emma are taken in by Bentham with Sharon's assistance. Jacob and Emma learn that Bentham is inadvertently responsible for the current battle between good and evil as he accidentally created the Hollowgasts. The



accidental creation of the Hollows came about as Bentham was trying to stop the evil, power-hungry obsession of his brother, Caul. Caul is only the latest successor in a long line of evil rulers in a long line of battles between good and evil for control of the Library of Souls.

Whereas the love shared between Jacob and Emma on the side of good is pure and whole, the love that Caul has is selfish and evil. Caul is wholly self-serving. He seeks to find the Library of Souls. He seeks to control the Library of Souls so that he may rule all of peculiardom. To access the souls, he will need a librarian. Bentham explains that a librarian has not been born in a thousand years, so that even if Caul managed to find the Library of Souls, it would be useless without a librarian. Beyond control, the specifics of why Caul wishes to access the Library of Souls are unknown.

Much about the history between Sharon and Bentham is also revealed. Sharon is formerly a drug addict, having been cleaned up by Bentham. As a result for his drug addiction and criminal past, Sharon is seeking redemption. Here, Redemption becomes an important theme in the novel. Sharon's protection of Jacob, Emma, and Addison through Devil's Acre and the troubles that they encounter is physical proof of his desire to atone for his past and to pay back Bentham for his kindness.

The struggle between good and evil can also be seen in Sharon and Bentham and their identities. Identity becomes an important theme here as Sharon alternates between his evil past as an addict and criminal, and his present identity as a force for good through Bentham. Bentham himself has been seeking a form of redemption for the Hollowgast creation that he is responsible for. Although he did not intend to create the Hollowgasts, they were an unintended consequence of his struggle to stop his brother. Now, he supposedly endeavors to help Jacob and Emma to defeat Caul as a matter of redemption.

Discussion Question 1

Where did the Hollowgasts and Wights come from? Was their creation intentional? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Why are Bentham and Sharon both seeking redemption? How do they plan on doing this?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Caul seek to find the Library of Souls? Why does Bentham argue that this would be a very bad thing?

Vocabulary

tersely, addled, impugning, sartorial, crevasse, redundantly, monolith, rictus, extolled, battalion, precludes, cursory, impenetrable, magnanimously



Chapters 6 – 7

Summary

Chapter 6 – Jacob, Emma, Sharon, the Hollow, and the cubs arrive back at Bentham's. Bentham has already prepared the machine, and all that it is needed now is the Hollow. Mother Dust, a healer, and her assistant, Reynaldo, arrive to treat and prepare the Hollow. To heal others, Mother Dust's body is reduced through her use of dust. It hurts her, but she explains she does it anyways because she was chosen to serve. The Hollow will take the night to heal enough to be used. Jacob and Emma discuss how they have ended up where they are. Jacob wonders about how Hollows have only existed for the last hundred years, both he and Emma were born right when they were needed. Emma considers that maybe people like her and Jacob existed before, but that simply didn't know who they truly were. Reynaldo, translating for Mother Dust, says that it is often a case of nurturing natural talents in the right direction. Mother Dust can see that Jacob is a reader of hearts and souls, and is very forgiving. This is important in light of what Bentham did to Jacob's grandfather, she explains. This catches Jacob's attention.

Bentham then explains that he and Jacob's grandfather wanted to give his grandfather's talent for controlling Hollows to others. He explains their experiments left Jacob's grandfather weakened. Humiliated and feeling like a failure, it is revealed that Jacob's grandfather then left Peculiardom, only to be killed by a Hollow. Bentham reveals that the process for sharing powers was a liquid substance—the precursor to ambrosia. He is now seeking redemption. Jacob and Emma worry if they can trust Bentham. Even if they can, they worry about his track record of failures and mistakes. As the Hollow awakens, Jacob, Emma, and Bentham go to the machinery room of the Panloopticon, run by Kim, Bentham's assistant who Jacob last saw in Siberia. The Hollow is ordered into the battery chamber. Jacob worries if the Hollow will be alright. Jacob has come to understand that even in Hollows, there is a tiny trace of human soul still there. Jacob cannot bear to watch as the machine whirs to life, using energy from the Hollow.

The Panloopticon becomes fully operational. Bentham is thrilled. A loop can now also be opened to Caul's fortress. A plan is decided on. Jacob and Emma will focus on bringing ymbrynes back first, since they are most important to Caul. Bentham will set a trap in Siberia for any enemies that follow. Emma worries that Bentham is too confident. A message arrives from Miss Peregrine through a parrot. Jacob and Emma are to give themselves up to Caul and no harm will come to them. They are to avoid any rescue attempts. The sound of ticking is heard, and they realize the parrot is also an incapacitation bomb. They rush to safety as it explodes. They realize the parrot is not actually from Miss Peregrine, and that Caul must have caught Addison to know their location to send a parrot. Bentham then realizes that Caul must believe that Jacob is a librarian, since the parrot bomb was intended to hurt, not kill. Jacob and Emma are given Mother Dust's finger, crushed up into a powder.



Chapter 7 – Bentham’s assistant leads Jacob and Emma to the right loop for them to pass through into the Wights’ tower fortress. They encounter some workmen below the fortress, and use some Dust powder and Emma’s fire to make a smoke which puts most of them to sleep. The others yell angrily. Jacob and Emma then run, moving through the fortress into terrifying laboratories. They save a peculiar child who has been strung up to collect drips of his soul and ask him to direct them to the others. They find some of their friends strapped down to tables, their souls being drained. A man in shackles tells Jacob and Emma the rest of their friends are being kept below. Jacob and Emma go downstairs through a hatch in the lab floor. There, they find Bronwyn, Horace, Enoch, Hugh, Claire, Olive, and others being kept in dungeon-like cells.

Hugh directs them to where the ymbrynes are being kept, down the hall behind a large door. There, they find a man named Warren whose lips have been stitched and through whom Caul is speaking. Caul reveals that he has already taken some of the soul of one of the ymbranes, Miss Glassbill. The others, including Addison, are tied up in chairs. Jacob and Emma are horrified. Caul reveals that everyone else will be safe if Jacob gives up a part of his own soul. He will recover in a few days. Caul reveals he has found Abaton, that he will rule over everything like a king, and that peculiars in particular will rule over the rest of humankind. Jacob has the choice of giving Caul what he wants, or having it forcibly taken. Jacob refuses to cooperate.

Caul sends up a Hollow. While Jacob distracts the Hollow, he tells Emma to free the ymbrynes. Just as Jacob is about to use a vial of ambrosia on himself to intensify his power, Miss Peregrine orders him not to do it. She tells him everything he needs is inside already. As the Hollow begins to eat him, he uses the rest of the Dust finger to destroy the Hollow. He then sees more Hollows advancing, all of whom are knocked out by the Dust.

Analysis

With the Panloopticon operational, Jacob and Emma now have the ability to get into Caul’s fortress of evil. In the attempt to defeat evil, the reader should note that Jacob himself does not wish to succumb to evil or its attributes. In capturing the Hollowgast, Jacob did not rely on ambrosia. In bringing the Hollowgast to the battery chamber, Jacob is concerned with the welfare of the Hollowgast. He doesn’t want it to feel any pain. Despite the Hollowgast’s soulless nature, Jacob believes the Hollowgast is entitled to humane treatment. It is a distinction between the side of good and evil. Good will always concern itself with the welfare of even its enemies, while evil will hurt anyone needed in order to win. Jacob’s identity is wholly based in his good and moral nature as a peculiar human being.

Identity continues to be a core theme in this section of the novel as Emma and Jacob wonder if Bentham is truly aligned with the side of good. Emma worries about Bentham’s creation of the Hollowgasts, and about his track record. Although Bentham’s identity is up in the air, Jacob and Emma do not worry about themselves. Their love for one another has kept them together, and their alignment with the side of



good is unquestionable. They come to have three major focuses: rescuing their friends, rescuing ymbrynes, and stopping Caul.

However, Jacob's own identity beyond his being on the side of good, and being a peculiar, comes into question through the parrot bomb. Caul clearly intended to incapacitate Jacob, not kill him. Bentham believes that Caul is trying to take Jacob alive because Jacob is a librarian. While there is little evidence to support this, the assertion makes sense. Bentham's own identity also comes into clearer focus through this section of the novel as he reveals that what happened to Jacob's grandfather was accidental but that he feels horrible about it. This still does not help Jacob and Emma in their determination as to whether or not Bentham is on their side.

Identity is very important when it comes to Caul. Much more about Caul is discovered as Jacob and Emma break into his fortress to effect the release of their friends and the ymbrynes. Jacob confirms suspicions that Caul wants to make himself king of all creation through use of the Library of Souls, though Caul's other desires for the Library remain unknown. Likewise, the reader should not that the confrontation between Jacob and the Hollows at Caul's behest is not one in which Jacob is intended to be destroyed, but tested. Jacob has had far more difficulty with Hollows elsewhere. These particular Hollows are not as deadly as other Hollows encountered before. As the reader correctly suspects, Caul is testing Jacob to see how strong Jacob truly is, and just what his talents are. This will be revealed in coming chapters.

Discussion Question 1

Why do Jacob and Emma doubt whether or not they can trust Bentham? Why does Bentham insist he can be trusted? Do you believe Bentham can be trusted? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

What is striking about Jacob's insistence on the treatment of the Hollowgast in the battery chamber? Why? What does this say about his character as a person?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Jacob consider taking a vial of ambrosia to fight the Hollow? Why does Peregrine tell him not to?

Vocabulary

fetal, instantaneous, inoculate, precursor, dismal, nonchalant, incapacitate, nepotistic, favoritism, sidled



Chapters 8 – 9

Summary

Chapter 8 – Jacob and some of the Hollows awaken. Jacob realizes he can now control Hollows to such an extent that he can possess them. He can control them all at once. Emma, Addison, and all their friends are amazed that Jacob can control the Hollowgasts. While Jacob, Emma, and Miss Peregrine take account of everyone, Wights begin hammering at the door to get in. Among the prisoners is Perplexus himself, captured by Caul in a fourteenth century loop. As they prepare to head into battle against the Wights, Jacob tells them they have all become family since the death of his grandfather. Horace gives Jacob a scarf he knitted for him for luck. The battle begins as Jacob unleashes his Hollows against the Wights. The Wights are quickly pushed back. Emma declares they must burn the place down. They advance up and into the courtyard of the fortress. The Wights regroup and counterattack. Jacob rallies his Hollows, friends, and ymbrynes, and advance again.

Bentham suddenly arrives with PT to join the battle against the Wights. The Wights are defeated. After the battle, Miss Peregrine reminds Jacob that they can't be certain if what happened to his grandfather was an accident, or intentional on Bentham's part. She explains that Bentham always does what is most convenient for him. Bentham angrily returns home. A cloud of ash then rises and settles. When it does, PT is holding Miss Peregrine captive, while Caul and Bentham stand side by side. Jacob and Emma realize Bentham has betrayed them. Caul then orders Jacob, Emma, and Miss Peregrine on to the Library of Souls.

Chapter 9 – Miss Peregrine tells Caul that the library's power is cursed, but Caul will hear none of it. Through a loop, they arrive in the dusty, dry land of Abaton. As they journey toward the library, Jacob worries about whether or not he truly is a librarian. The ymbrynes reveal they all knew the library to be real, but made it out to be a legend and a fantasy to avoid people like Caul and Bentham seeking to use it for their own evil ends. They approach the library, the entrance shaped like a face. The entire building appears empty. Jacob begins to see the soul jars as he concentrates. The labels on the jars mean the souls contained within will do different things, such as shrinking. They push further into the library, finding more and more rooms with thousands and thousands of jars. Strange sounds can be heard. Caul becomes the only one who insists on pushing ahead.

They finally come to the throne room with a soul-water-fountain. Caul is thrilled. It is exactly what he has been seeking. Miss Peregrine warns him the place is sacred. They test out a soul jar on one of the Wight guards. He tries to take it like ambrosia, but it freezes and shatters his skull. They then notice a walled-in pool at the end of the fountain. Bentham explains it is a spirit pool where the dead are communed with, and their souls are absorbed if the living enter the pool while summoning. Caul begins to wonder whether or not he will allow Bentham to absorb a soul as well, but Bentham



insists he must. Caul then shoots Jacob. Caul begins absorbing souls, becoming a massive, large, twisted monstrous creature with telekinetic powers. Addison, the peculiars, and the ymbrynes then arrive to do battle with Caul. It is then that Jacob realizes the scarf Horace has given him has stopped the bullet.

Bentham then takes a vial of a soul belonging to Jacob's grandfather. It is then that Jacob realizes Bentham took his grandfather's soul forcibly. Bentham begins scanning the shelves, now able to see the soul jars himself. He then gives Jacob a piece of paper written in Old Peculiar, which is to be given to the ymbrynes. Miss Peregrine studies it. Bentham leaps into the pool with his chosen soul, and grows as large as Caul. Jacob, Emma, and Miss Peregrine rush away while Bentham attacks Caul. The page given to Miss Peregrine is the spell used to trick Caul and his followers back in 1908. Miss Peregrine and the ymbrynes begin the procedure (singing key phrases) to shut down the loop. They are successful, and Caul is overcome.

Analysis

Jacob's identity as a peculiar is firmly established in this section of the novel. As Jacob prepares to lead his friends into what they believe will be their final battle against the forces of Caul, he inspires them by telling them they have become his family. Here, he fully embraces his identity as a peculiar whereas in the past he wasn't sure whether he belonged in the normal world or the peculiar world. Instead, he feels now as if he more peculiar than normal, just as his grandfather was before him. Jacob will live or die as a peculiar and vows to fight alongside his peculiar family. This serves to be inspirational to his fellow peculiars, who all rally around Jacob on the side of good.

However, things do not go as planned as Jacob, Emma, and Miss Peregrine are taken by Caul, Bentham, and some Wights to the Library of Souls. Bentham's betrayal at first seems proof that Bentham is on the side of evil, though Miss Peregrine contends that Bentham is merely on his own side. Bentham, however, confounds Jacob, Emma, and Miss Peregrine alike when he turns from the side of evil to attack Caul. Bentham is still seeking redemption, and the only way he could actually cause Caul defeat is by acting as a double agent. He is not on his own side, but truly on the side of good. His sacrificing of himself proves that he is not only out for himself. Here, the theme of Redemption is at its most powerful.

History proves to be incredibly important in this section of the novel as well as Bentham seeks to defeat Caul. History is learned from as Bentham not only enacts the 1908 plan all over again but transforms himself into a monster in order to distract and subdue Caul. He will take no chances that the plan will not be successful this time. His sacrifice ensures the effective closing of the loop, and victory for the side of good. This particular battle between good and evil thus comes to a close, bringing the theme of the war between good and evil to an end.

The reader should also pay careful attention to the theme of good and evil as it relates to love and to Caul, who is clearly and firmly on the side of evil. His love for power is



evil, and therefore, his sense of love is corrupted. The consumption of the souls of other people can be seen to be akin to cannibalism, the eating of other human beings. For the peculiars, the most human thing about people resides in their souls. The consumption of these souls destroys that which is human about both the person being eaten, and the person doing the eating. This is not a question of survival, but a question of evil on the part of Caul. His defeat is instrumental for the advancement of good in the world, made possible by Bentham's sacrifice in the name of good.

Discussion Question 1

On whose side is Bentham truly on? Why? Provide evidence from the novel to support your position.

Discussion Question 2

What is so important about Jacob's declaration that the peculiars are his family? What does this mean to the peculiars and to Jacob's identity? Why?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Bentham attack Caul after he tells Miss Peregrine to close the loop? What does this mean for the side of good?

Vocabulary

collusion, collaboration, culminate, innovation, expropriation, ignominious, philistine, titanic, totemic, automaton, coalescing, telekinesis



Chapters 10 – 11

Summary

Chapter 10 – Jacob, Emma, Miss Peregrine, Addison, the peculiars, and the ymbrynes round up the Wights they come across. They free others peculiars still being held at the fortress. Jacob takes comfort from the fact that, though Bentham stole his grandfather's soul, it was his grandfather who saved them all in the end. Jacob also worries about what will become of the Hollow in the battery chamber of the machine. Miss Peregrine says they will figure something out and do their best. Jacob wonders what will become of him and Emma now, especially because Emma must remain living in peculiardom. Jacob will have to return to see his parents, at least for a while. He and Emma decide to only be friends for the time being. Miss Peregrine later warns Jacob not to fall in love with any other girls while he is gone. She agrees to visit Jacob's parents with him to selectively remove memories about peculiardom from their minds.

Chapter 11 – Jacob thanks and says goodbye to Sharon. Miss Peregrine works her magic of memory loss on Jacob's parents and police officers who have been looking for him. Jacob and Emma kiss and look forward to the future. Back at home, Jacob must see Dr. Spanger, a psychiatrist, and is watched constantly because he is considered a flight-risk. Jacob struggles to adjust to normal life, feeling lonely and bored. He and Emma begin writing letters to one another. His parents intercept the letters, and confront him about the letters with Dr. Spanger. They believe Jacob is imagining things, and writing himself the letters. Jacob then learns he will be committed to a psychiatric clinic for several weeks. He sends an e-mail to Emma. As Jacob's parents prepare to leave the house to take him to the clinic, Miss Peregrine and the peculiars block the car, exhibiting their talents. They have discovered how to temporarily stop the aging process, so they may leave the world of loops. Miss Peregrine has brought all the children to visit with Jacob on vacation. Miss Peregrine tells Jacob's parents they are all going to be friends. Emma kisses Jacob on the cheek, looking forward to being a normal kid for a while.

Analysis

As the novel comes to a close, the theme of love becomes especially important for Jacob and for Emma. The love they share has borne them through manage challenges, especially the most recent final confrontation with Caul. Their love has only grown stronger as it has been tested in ways they never could have expected. Yet, their love cannot keep them together as Jacob realizes that he is also a part of the normal world. He has a duty to his parents, a family loyalty that he must observe. He loves his parents, even if he doesn't get along with them all the time. Here, his identity is again called into question. Is he more normal, or more peculiar? It is a question that Jacob must confront once again as he is torn between his love for Emma and his love for his parents.



It is the one distance and obstacle that the love between Jacob and Emma cannot initially overcome. Only when the two worlds are brought together by Miss Peregrine, and through her directly speaking to Jacob's parents rather than attempting to alter their minds is the love between Jacob and Emma truly given the chance it deserves. They will be allowed to see one another whenever they wish, and will in the future have no issues with time, loops, or Jacob's parents. In the end, love conquers all. True, real, genuine love is firmly on the side of good especially when everything is done in goodness and in a right and moral way.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Miss Peregrine insist on selectively editing the memory of Jacob's parents rather than simply coming clean with them about Jacob's peculiar nature? Do you believe she is right in doing so? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Emma insist on being friends with Jacob at first rather than pursuing an actual relationship? What changes this? Why?

Discussion Question 3

Can Jacob's parents be faulted for not believing him about his writing to Emma, and their desire to put Jacob into a clinic? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

beset, myriad, problematically, pliable, inevitably



Characters

Jacob

Jacob Portman is the 16 year-old main character and principal protagonist of the novel “Library of Souls” by Ransom Riggs. Jacob is a peculiar with the ability to control Hollowgasts, and the as-of-yet unknown ability to handle the jars and souls in the Library of Souls. Jacob is still deeply hurt by the killing of his grandfather at the hands of a Hollowgast. Incredibly gentle, thoughtful, and morally-conscious, Jacob fights alongside Emma to free Miss Peregrine, Addison, the ymbrines, and the other peculiar children from the clutches of Caul. Jacob’s efforts to succeed are only helped by the unspoken romantic love he and Emma share for one another.

Furthermore, Jacob’s nature as a moral and good-hearted person can be found manifested in his desire not to hurt the Hollowgast he brings back for Bentham to use in his battery chamber. To be concerned even with the wellbeing of an enemy speaks volumes about Jacob’s goodness. When victory is achieved, Jacob must return to the normal world for a time to be with his parents and his family. They all believe he has gone crazy, but Jacob does not wish to hurt them with the truth or betray peculiardom by revealing everything to them. Only the arrival of Miss Peregrine sets things straight.

Emma

Emma Bloom is a peculiar girl of about 16 from the early 1900s who meets Jacob in the time loops and falls in love with him. She is incredibly thoughtful, highly intelligent, and has a gentle heart. Emma has the peculiar gift of summoning fire with her fingertips. She becomes Jacob’s closest ally through the fight to free Miss Peregrine, the ymbrynes, and the other peculiar children. After they are victorious, when Jacob must return to the normal world, Emma cannot go with him or she will age and die. She and Jacob determine they must remain friends until Jacob returns to the peculiar world. Only when Miss Peregrine discovers a way for peculiars to visit the normal world does Emma decide she can be more than just friends with Jacob.

Bentham

Myron Bentham is the brother of Caul and Miss Peregrine. Bentham lives in a massive home which has been designed to be a central location for all loops in the world. Bentham shelters Jacob and Emma in his home as they attempt to infiltrate Caul’s fortress. Bentham, too, is seeking to defeat Caul, and seeking redemption for his past. Bentham and Jacob’s grandfather engaged in experiments to share Jacob’s grandfather’s extraordinary capabilities, but ended up costing him his peculiar powers. Likewise, Bentham’s attempt to defeat Caul in the past led to the creation of Hollowgasts. Bentham now seeks to make up for his past, and sacrifices himself against Caul in the end to do so.



Sharon

Sharon is a boat tour guide who operates between normal and peculiar London. A former criminal and ambrosia addict treated by Bentham, Sharon now loyally assists Bentham whenever favors are needed. One such favor is to protect Jacob and Emma which Sharon does proficiently. He continues to remain by their side through the end of the novel, seeking redemption for his criminal past and his ambrosia addiction by helping Jacob and Emma.

Miss Peregrine

Miss Peregrine is a peculiar orphanage keeper and President Pro Tem of the Ymbryne Council. She is dedicated, compassionate, and courageous. She is the sister of Caul and Bentham. She has been taken prisoner by Caul and his forces of evil, and is imprisoned at Caul's fortress in Devil's Acre. She is freed when Jacob and Emma infiltrate the fortress of evil. She later works with the other ymbrynes to seal the loop to the Library of Souls permanently. Miss Peregrine then selectively edits the memories of Jacob's parents so Jacob may return to life in the normal world. When she discovers a way to allow peculiars to leave the loops without aging, she, Emma, and the other children head to the normal world to visit Jacob.

Caul

Caul is the primary antagonist and principal villain in the novel "Library of Souls" by Ransom Riggs. Caul is the brother of Miss Peregrine and Bentham. Cruel, selfish, and power-hungry, Caul is a Wight who is determined to find the Library of Souls so that he can use it to rule over all of creation as a king. After very nearly being killed by Bentham in the past, Caul is tricked into cooperating with Bentham by Bentham to find the Library of Souls. Upon its discovery, Caul consumes souls which transform him into a monstrous giant. He is betrayed and subdued by Bentham who distracts him while Miss Peregrine shuts down the loop.

Addison

Addison is a dog with an incredible sense of smell and a good and loyal friend to Jacob and Emma. Addison journeys with Jacob and Emma into peculiar London to free their friends. He attempts to infiltrate the evil fortress of Caul by hiding beneath a truck entering the compound. He is found, captured, and held prisoner until Jacob and Emma free him.



Horace

Horace is a peculiar child and friend of Jacob's. Horace has excellent skills with clothing, and knits Jacob a good-luck scarf. This scarf ends up saving Jacob's life by stopping a bullet during the final confrontation with Caul and Bentham.

Hollowgasts

Hollowgasts are zombie-like creatures who have only shells for souls. They feed on the souls of peculiars, especially peculiar children. When they consume enough souls, they become a Wight. Hollowgasts are strong, powerful, and invisible to most peculiars. They are difficult to control. Jacob has the ability to control them, as did his grandfather before, and uses the Hollowgasts in battle against Caul and his Wight henchmen.

Wights

Wights are Hollowgasts who have consumed enough peculiar souls to regain much of their former human form. They are visible to peculiars and normal humans and can only be distinguished by their white, pupil-less eyes. They can think, feel, and act of their own accord, but are cruel and without much emotion. When Caul is defeated, his Wights are rounded up and imprisoned.



Symbols and Symbolism

Souls

Souls are the central part of a person's humanity. Within the soul rests the essence and immortality of a human being, and is the part of the human being that lives on after death. A soul is vital to a human being, especially to peculiars. Peculiar souls are where peculiar power originates. As such, they are a high commodity for Hollowghasts, soulless creatures who feed on souls to become human again. Souls are also fragmented and mixed into a chemical drug called ambrosia, which is used by most in Devil's Acre. Fragmenting a soul has severe ill physical effects on a person. When a peculiar dies, their souls are taken to the Library of Souls. Corrupt men and women will consume these souls to increase their powers and strength. Such a man is Caul.

Ambrosia

Ambrosia is a chemical drug with the active ingredient of souls. Ambrosia is primarily a performance-enhancing drug due to the ingredient of souls, but it is highly addictive and damaging. It is taken through the eyes. Sustained use will lead to terrifying disfigurement, leading addicts to wear masks. Caul keeps his fortress safe by keeping the surrounding residents of Devil's Acre dependent on ambrosia and by supplying them with it as well.

Stone jars

Stone soul jars are stone jars in which souls are kept in the Library of Souls. They are invisible to everyone but librarians. When Jacob is forced into the library by Caul, he is the only person who can see the stone jars at first. The jars of souls are a source of immense powers and could be very dangerous if they fall into the wrong hands.

Gray scarf

A gray scarf is knitted for Jacob by Horace while Horace is imprisoned. The scarf is meant to bring good luck to Jacob. The scarf ends up being bullet-proof. Jacob's life is saved when the scarf stops a bullet fired by Caul into Jacob's chest.

Gurneys

Gurneys are normally used to strap down patients for medical procedures. In Caul's evil fortress, however, gurneys are used to strap down peculiars in order to forcibly extract their souls. When Jacob and Emma successfully infiltrate the labs in the fortress of Caul, they find many of their friends and other peculiars strapped down to gurneys



awaiting soul removal. The gurneys here are a symbol not of health and healing, but harm and pain.

Soul water

Soul water is sprouted in a fountain, channeled down a canal, and cycled in a soul pool. Soul water is a combination of water and the partial souls of the dead. Their voices can be heard in a whisper above the water. Souls poured into this water in the pool can be consumed by an individual who will then absorb the qualities and powers of that soul, while any unconsumed portion of the soul becomes part of the soul water.

Soul drips

Soul drips are fragments of souls squeezed or broken off of the whole souls of normally unwilling peculiars. Soul drips are mixed into ambrosia or are taken directly. The term “soul drips” and “drippings” are often used interchangeably by ambrosia addicts to describe ambrosia.

Loops

Loops are limited areas in existence where a single day is constantly repeated. This means that aging of any sort does not happen and allows peculiars and ymbrynes to live perpetually, though any time spent outside a loop leads to rapid aging. Loops also allow peculiars to travel to different times and places. All loops have been centralized in Caul’s evil fortress and in Bentham’s Panloopticon.

Parrot bombs

Parrot bombs are an evil method of harm utilized by Caul and his forces of evil. A parrot bomb delivers a message, then explodes. The recipient of the message can either be killed, wounded, or incapacitated. Caul sends a parrot bomb designed to incapacitate to Jacob. The attempt fails.

Letters

Letters are exchanged between Jacob and Emma when Jacob returns to the normal world. The letters provide a way for them to keep in touch. However, Jacob’s parents intercept the letters, and believe Jacob is writing them to himself. This in turns leads them to want to commit Jacob to a psychiatric clinic.



Settings

The Library of Souls

The Library of Souls is located in the hidden land of Abaton, and is a repository for peculiar souls following death. Hewn into rock and containing dozens and dozens of rooms with thousands upon thousands of souls kept in stone jars, the Library of Souls has not been accessed in decades. It has been the subject of numerous wars and has been the subject of such destruction that Bentham and the ymbrynes sealed it up. Since then, it has become a legend, and the ymbrynes have come to call it a myth to deter any would-be seekers. In the present time, Caul seeks the Library in order to tap into unlimited power to rule the world as its king. Bentham, having pretended to be on Caul's side, has Miss Peregrine and the ymbrynes permanently seal the loop to the Library as he attacks and distracts Caul.

Peculiar London

Peculiar London is a loop-hidden area of London, England, which serves as the peculiar capital of peculiardom in England. Peculiar London is where thousands of peculiars live and work. It is also where Devil's Acre is located. Peculiar London is visited by Jacob, Emma, and Addison as they travel to Devil's Acre in order to find Caul and rescue their friends.

Devil's Acre

Devil's Acre is a criminal-infested, rotting, disgusting, and evil section of peculiar London. It is full of peculiars selling their talents, drug-addicts, and criminals of various types. It is where Caul keeps his fortress and exerts control over the people by keeping them addicted to ambrosia. In Devil's Acre, Sharon protects Jacob and Emma while they attempt to infiltrate Caul's fortress. Devil's Acre is also the location of Bentham's loop-hidden Panloopticon. Devil's Acre is where Jacob battles and takes control of a Hollowgast to use to power the Panloopticon.

Caul's fortress

Caul's fortress is located in Devil's Acre in Peculiar London. The fortress is nearly impenetrable, and is guarded by a Hollowgast-possessed bridge. It is where Caul brings hundreds of peculiar adults and children, ymbrynes, and Miss Peregrine. There, they are operated on, have their souls dripped and destroyed, and are kept prisoner. The fortress also serves as a central hub for all of the loops in the world, enabling Caul to strike out at will. The fortress is where Jacob and Emma infiltrate using Bentham's Panloopticon and where Bentham supposedly betrays them. From the fortress, they journey to the Library of Souls.



Panloopticon

The Panloopticon is the mansion in which Bentham lives, and which doubles as a central operating loop for all loops in the world. It was created by Bentham in pursuit of the Library of Souls with Caul, but shut down following realization that Caul was purely self-interested. The Panloopticon is based on the idea of the Panopticon, a prison designed by philosopher Jeremy Bentham which gave prison guards a central bird's eye view of all prison cells and prison activities just as the Panloopticon is a central place for all loops to all times and all places. The Panloopticon comes to serve as a shelter to Jacob and Emma as they recover from injuries, and as they prepare to infiltrate Caul's fortress through the Panloopticon.



Themes and Motifs

Love

Love is an important theme in the novel “Library of Souls” by Ransom Riggs. Love in the novel appears in two primary forms, including genuine love and corrupted love. Both forms of love affect the novel in various ways as each form of love deals with specific characters.

Real, genuine, and romantic love are noted as being a part of the side of good. This sort of love includes a love for the good, and a love for others. Jacob and Emma love each other, not only as a matter of romantic feelings but also a matter of respecting one another as human beings fighting on the side of good. Both struggle to overcome Caul and save their friends, and both rely on one another for emotional and physical support through the novel. For example, Jacob’s control of a Hollowgast in the fortress protects Emma and the other peculiars from the Wights in a tremendous display of courage and physical protection borne of love on the part of Jacob.

Jacob and Emma love what is good, and through their opposition to Caul, fight what is bad and evil. Likewise, Jacob’s love for good itself is manifested in many ways through the novel. Most striking is when Jacob brings a Hollowgast back to the Panloopticon where Bentham uses the Hollowgast for energy to fire up the machine. Jacob’s gentle concern for the Hollowgast being hurt speak of a strong character and a definitive love of good. While Jacob may wish to defeat evil, he loves good and so does not want to commit evil—even against an agent of evil—in order to defeat evil.

Caul on the other hand is the representative of corrupted, warped love. Caul’s primary love interest in the novel is himself. He is self-absorbed, narcissistic, and a megalomaniac who wants to find the Library of Souls in order to rule the entire world. He recognizes no power other than himself, and his love for himself and for the side of evil means that he has no cares or concerns for who he harms or kills to get what he wants. He has no issue keeping thousands of people in Devil’s Acre addicted to ambrosia. He has no issue imprisoning peculiar children and forcibly extracting their souls. He has no issue shooting Jacob. He has no issue testing out a jar of soul from the Library on a guarding Wight. Caul’s love is misplaced and corruptive because love of himself means that he cannot see outside of himself, cannot consider or respect the thoughts and feelings of others and cannot recognize that what he is doing is indeed evil.

The Battle Between Good and Evil

The Battle between Good and Evil forms an important theme in the novel “Library of Souls” by Ransom Riggs. In the novel, the forces of evil under the command of Caul battle the forces of good, including Jacob, Emma, Miss Peregrine, and the peculiars.



Caul seeks to find and use the Library of Souls to establish control of the entire world by making himself king. The battle between good and evil is demonstrated not only in actual warfare, but in the motivations and effects of both sides.

When it comes to motivation, Caul is motivated primarily by love of himself and the twisted love of power. Caul's intentions in finding the Library of Souls are exactly the reason why the loop to the Library was shut down in the first place. Meanwhile, Jacob and Emma are motivated by a desire to stop Caul and to preserve the status quo. They do not want Caul and the forces of evil to succeed, and would rather have the forces of good emerge victorious. Their motivations are pure and selfless, while Caul's motivations are of greed and selfishness.

The conduct of the war between good and evil demonstrates some of the effects between both sides. Caul's cruelty and service to that which is evil is manifested in how he conducts his affairs. For example, he has no problem kidnapping children and forcibly extracting their souls or performing soul-fragmenting experiments on ymbrynes. Caul's cruelty is sharply and clearly contrasted with Jacob's concern for the Hollowgast he has taken prisoner. He doesn't want the Hollowgast to be ill-treated or harmed in the need to use it to power the Panloopticon.

In the battle between good and evil, Bentham provides a moral gray area between good and evil. Bentham's role in the loss of Jacob's grandfather's soul is still uncertain at the end of the novel. However, Bentham's role in accidentally creating the Hollowgasts is demonstrably true. Bentham seems to be working with Jacob and Emma only to turn against them to find the Library of Souls, only to turn against Caul in the very end to ensure Caul's defeat. Bentham ends being on the side of good, but only after a long and difficult journey of redemption.

History

History is an important theme in the novel "Library of Souls" by Ransom Riggs. History (essentially past events that have led up to the present) is incredibly important in understanding how things have played out as they have. History also matters tremendously to the characters in the novel, especially as it relates to the Library of Souls.

The death of Jacob's grandfather helped plunge Jacob into the world of peculiars. Jacob is still reeling from the death of his grandfather, a personal history that helps motivate him in the present to defeat Caul and the forces of evil. Bentham's own history and the search for redemption are what motivate him to ultimately move against the forces of evil. Miss Peregrine has always stood against the forces of evil, knowing full well the history of her brothers and the history of the Library of Souls.

It is through Bentham that much of the history especially relevant to Jacob and Emma is revealed. Bentham reveals a number of startling things. First, he reveals that the Library of Souls, whether it exists or not, has long motivated Caul, and that he, Caul, and Miss



Peregrine are siblings. Second, he reveals that the creation of the Hollowgasts, Wights, and the loss of Jacob's grandfather's soul were his fault. This is important because it helps Jacob, Emma, and the reader to understand that Bentham is motivated primarily by redemption, though whose side he is on is obscured by his apparent betrayal of Jacob prior to arriving at the Library of Souls.

The Library of Souls itself serves to be an important part of peculiar history though it is officially regarded as a myth. The subject of numerous wars, countless deaths, and inestimable bloodshed, the Library has been labeled a myth to prevent future violence. However, the hiding of history does not help as Caul comes to the truth of things anyways. History repeats itself when Bentham helps Miss Peregrine and the ymbrynes to spring the same trap he used on Caul decades before. Only with proper performance of the chanting is the loop permanently sealed, and Bentham and Caul become history themselves.

Identity

Identity is an important theme in the novel "Library of Souls" by Ransom Riggs. Identity is essential to human life. A person's identity in "Library of Souls" incorporates who someone is, what motivates them, what side they are on. Each of the characters in the novel have a clear-cut identity except Bentham, who appears vague and indecipherable until the crucial moments at the end of the novel.

Jacob's identity as a member of the side of good is clear, but Jacob struggles with whether he belongs more fully in the world of normals or the world of peculiars. He only truly comes into his own as a peculiar when he begins to exercise his powers to control the Hollows and to see the souls of jars in the Library of Souls. Jacob, leading his fellow peculiars into battle, says that he considers them all family. He feels as if he truly belongs among them, though not necessarily in peculiardom itself. As the novel ends, Jacob feels he must go back to be with his parents for a while as he struggles with his normal roots and his peculiar nature. However, Emma makes things easier when she comes to visit Jacob and when Miss Peregrine reveals a way has been discovered to live outside of loops without aging.

The identities of Caul and Miss Peregrine are clear well-defined. Caul is clearly on the side of evil while Miss Peregrine is clearly on the side of good. Caul is cruel, callous, selfish, and self-absorbed, while Miss Peregrine is kind, gentle, selfless, and compassionate. Caul is motivated by evil inclinations and twisted love for himself. Miss Peregrine is motivated by good desires and unconditional love for the side of good and for others.

While Jacob may struggle with his identity as to where he truly belongs, only Bentham presents a true enigma to the reader. On the surface, Bentham appears to be on the side of good, having originally tried to stop Caul though later betraying Jacob and Emma to side with Caul to find the library of souls, only ultimately to turn against Caul to ensure his defeat. While this may be confusing, when Bentham's actions are examined



in light of his motivating desire for redemption, everything makes better sense. Bentham, despite his actions, is on the side of good. He is seeking redemption in the eyes of the good, doing whatever he must in order to ensure the defeat of evil. If this means pretending to betray Jacob, or pretending to side with Caul, Bentham will do it. Bentham's identity as a member of the side of good is clearly established by the end of the novel.

Redemption

Redemption is an important theme in the novel "Library of Souls" by Ransom Riggs. Redemption is the seeking of atonement by word, action, and deed for past wrongs committed intentionally or unintentionally. In the novel, two characters in particular struggle with redemption, and seek to atone for the past. One is Sharon, and the other is Bentham.

Jacob, Emma, and Addison take on Sharon to bring them to peculiar London early in the novel. Sharon is a hard-edged character who always insists on payment up front, except from Jacob, Emma, and Addison. This strikes them as strange. When Sharon continues to watch over them through peculiar London, and continues to watch over them on land in Devil's Acre, Jacob, Emma, and Addison are further perplexed. When Sharon reveals he has pledged to deliver them safely to Bentham, they are intrigued. Sharon explains that he was formerly a criminal and drug addict who was put onto the right path and cleaned up by Bentham. As such, he owes Bentham his life and his existence. By helping Jacob and Emma, Sharon actively obtaining redemption.

Bentham's quest for redemption runs far deeper than Sharon's. Bentham's seeking of redemption is rooted in his checkered past. The ultimate demise of Jacob's grandfather came through the loss of his soul—either forcibly or voluntarily remains unclear—through experiments with Bentham. Regardless, Bentham blames himself for Jacob's grandfather's death. The attempt to stop Caul and his followers led to the creation of the Hollowgasts, the subsequent emergence of the Wights, and the current war between good and evil. Bentham blames himself for this as well.

In the present time, Bentham is seeking to stop Caul once and for all as a measure of redemption. He wishes to make up for his past by setting the present and the future right. To do this, Bentham emerges as a utilitarian antihero, doing everything he must in order to ensure Caul's downfall. This includes pretending to be on Caul's side for a duration of time. Bentham is so determined to defeat Caul that he gives his own life in pursuit of destroying Caul, sacrificing himself to save others in pursuit of redemption.



Styles

Point of View

Ransom Riggs tells his novel “Library of Souls” in the third-person limited-omniscient perspective. This is done for at least two reasons. First, the peculiar world in which Jacob and Emma pursue Caul is one of fantasy and things unknown to readers. The third-person narrator not only guides the plot, but also extends important information to readers. This allows the story and the information to flow succinctly through the objective standpoint of a third-person narrator. In the first-person, the story would have to be interrupted for the narrator to explain important information as an aside, but in the third-person in the novel, information and plot blend seamlessly. Second, the limited-omniscient aspect of the narrative adds a sense of realism and suspense to the plot as both characters and readers never know what is coming next. This creates depth and confusion as to the true identity of characters like Bentham, and causes readers to question whether or not Jacob and Emma will be victorious against Caul.

Language and Meaning

Ransom Riggs tells his novel “Library of Souls” in language that is simple and straightforward. This is done for at least two reasons. First, the novel’s plot primarily involves characters in their teens, so the language used is reflective not only of their age, but of their level of education and the time in which they exist in the novel. For Jacob, this is the 2010s. For Emma, it is the very early 1900s. The language used by these characters, and in telling the plot thus adds a level of realism and believability to the plot and the identity of these characters. Secondly, the target audience of the novel is that of young adults, so the language employed in the telling of the novel is also reflective of their age, level of education, and the time in which the novel itself was written (the 2010s).

Structure

Ransom Riggs divides his novel “Library of Souls” into eleven chronological, linear, and numbered chapters. Each of the chapters are interspersed with old photographs that are woven into the text. The simple and straightforward approach to the novel is reflective of the target audience of the novel—young adults—and allows the reader to stay focused on the plot. The inclusion of old photographs is reflective of Riggs’s hobby of collecting old photographs and incorporating them into his writing. For example, Chapter 6 contains an old photograph of a parrot in a cage which is worked into the text. In the writing of the chapter, Caul sends a parrot bomb to incapacitate Jacob.



Quotes

I loved Emma, and I'd told her so, and I wouldn't leave her behind for anything. And not because I was noble or brave or chivalrous. I'm not any of those things. I was afraid that leaving her behind would rip me in half.

-- Jacob (Chapter 1 paragraph 53)

Importance: As the novel opens, Jacob and Emma are in pursuit of Caul's Wights who have kidnapped their friends. The love that Jacob and Emma share for one another is clear as they come to depend on each other in their struggle. Jacob admits that not having Emma by his side would rip him in half, evidence of how the love between them completes him and motivates him. This is in keeping with the theme of Love in the novel.

Miracle. Curse. I hadn't quite worked out the difference.

-- Jacob (Chapter 1 paragraph 116)

Importance: Jacob's status as a peculiar with special powers has been the source of much consideration in his mind. Some tell him his powers are a miracle, but Jacob wonders if they are a curse. He wonders this because he reflects on how his grandfather ultimately died when robbed of his powers, and because he reflects on how an individual like Caul would seek to target children with miraculous powers, making them feel like a curse.

With each step and turn, we threaded deeper inside a knot, one I feared we'd never work apart.

-- Jacob (Chapter 3 paragraph 1)

Importance: Here, Jacob, Emma, and Addison journey into Devil's Acre. The place is as confusing as the situation in which they now find themselves. They are trying to get their friends back, but they barely know where to begin. Journeying through Devil's Acre, they feel as if they do not know where to truly begin to find their way. Additionally, as they draw closer to Caul and Caul's evil plot, they realize it may be too much to be undone, just like a knot.

You had me so frightened. I really thought I'd lost you.

-- Emma (Chapter 4 paragraph 68)

Importance: When Jacob is nearly killed following a failed attempt to break into the fortress of Caul, Emma is beside herself with grief and panic. This underscores just how much she has come to fall in love with Jacob. Whereas Jacob feels as if he would be ripped in half without Emma, it is clear that Emma feels the same way. This further reinforces the theme of Love that is found consistently throughout the novel between Jacob and Emma.



You, my boy. Mr. Bentham's been waiting a long time to speak to you.
-- Sharon (Chapter 4 paragraph 97)

Importance: Here, Sharon reveals that Jacob is to meet with Bentham. Sharon notes that he serves Bentham so well because Bentham saved him from a life of drug addiction and crime. Sharon is seeking redemption for his past in the present by doing good things through serving Bentham.

Whoever controlled the library could dominate all peculiardom, and before long more souls were stolen.
-- Bentham (Chapter 4 paragraph 401)

Importance: Here, Bentham reveals an important part of history, one which the ymbrynes have declared is nothing more than a myth. That is the Library of Souls. Whoever controls the Library of Souls, Bentham explains, can control the world. Caul is determined to find and control the Library of Souls in order to rule the world. Caul's evil and self-obsession is demonstrated through his pursuit of the Library.

I do it, because this is how I was chosen to serve.
-- Reynaldo translating for Mother Dust (Chapter 6 paragraph 36)

Importance: Duty, honor, and responsibility are an important thing for Mother Dust, and help Jacob to further understand his own powers. In the past, he has considered his powers a blessing and a curse. Mother Dust, in order to heal and help others, must actually break off parts of her body. She does not consider her state a curse, but a gift and a demonstration of how she was chosen to serve others. That is how she considers what she must do. It gives Jacob better perspective on his own powers and his own role in events that are unfolding.

I don't think I could ever prepare myself for those kinds of things.
-- Jacob (Chapter 6 paragraph 51)

Importance: Jacob proves himself to be the optimist to Emma's realism. Emma says she and Jacob must consider the fact that anything could become of them and their friends, but Jacob doesn't want to think about it. He does not want to imagine the worst that could happen because even then, he wouldn't be able to prepare himself for them. This demonstrates the depth of gentleness and caring in Jacob.

Hollows have existed for only the last hundred years or so, but it just so happens that we were both born now, right when we were needed. Why?
-- Jacob (Chapter 6 paragraph 63)

Importance: Jacob begins to wonder about how things have turned out the way they have. He imagines that, like Mother Dust was called to serve others through physically breaking apart her body, he and Emma might have an instrumental role in breaking apart Caul's efforts to conquer the world. It is possible that higher power is at work in making sure that Jacob and Emma are there at the right time to stop the success of evil.



Emma considers that they may just happened to have been in the right place at the right time coincidentally, but Jacob believes otherwise.

We'll finally live in peace and harmony with me as your king, your god.
-- Caul (Chapter 7 paragraph 182)

Importance: Caul reveals his true plans for taking over the Library of Souls, and that is to rule the world as king. Under Caul's rule, he believes there will be harmony because he will force people to bend to his will. However, Caul reveals his narcissism and megalomania when he compares himself to God, putting himself up in God's position through control of the Library of Souls. It demonstrates the true depth of evil Caul represents, and the true need there is to stop Caul.

Everything you need is inside you already.
-- Miss Peregrine (Chapter 7 paragraph 259)

Importance: When fighting Hollowgasts in the laboratory dungeons, Jacob considers taking a vial of ambrosia to better his chances. Miss Peregrine tells him not to, saying everything he needs is inside. This includes his strength and courage. Knowing that Miss Peregrine believes in him helps Jacob to find his way and to come to control the Hollowgasts, ensuring that his friends are saved.

What would happen next? What would become of us?
-- Jacob (Chapter 10 paragraph 19)

Importance: Perhaps the last great challenge of the novel is what is to become of Jacob and Emma. They are in love and have been inseparable. Jacob knows he has a duty to and love for his parents, so he must return to the normal world for a while. However, this will mean not being to be able to be with Emma. Until a way is found for Emma to visit the normal world at the end of the novel without risk to her own life, Jacob and Emma must live apart. However, it makes reuniting at the end of the novel all the more momentous.