

Murder as a Fine Art Study Guide

Murder as a Fine Art by David Morrell

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Plot Summary

"Murder as a Fine Art" by David Morrell is a story about a writer named Thomas De Quincey who writes essays to document his struggle with an addiction to laudanum. In addition to chronicling events in his personal life, De Quincey shares details about some of the most heinous murders in history.

At the beginning of the novel, a crime is being committed. The thoughts and acts of a ruthless killer, called the "artist of death," are revealed as he plans and carries out the murders of a shopkeeper and his family. After committing the crime, the murderer's senses savor the crime scene until he hears a knock at the door. He escapes and takes a taxi to the other side of town where he blends in with theater goers.

The murders of the shop keeper and his family seem to be copycat crimes of previous killings which De Quincey had detailed in his essays. As a result, Scotland Yard becomes interested in De Quincey as a possible suspect. To heighten Scotland Yard's suspicions, De Quincey makes connections from the past to the recent murders in ways that others miss.

Lord Palmerston is the Home Secretary for the British Empire. Although he is an official, he is promoting his own kind of crime by hiring six men to destabilize all of Europe while Britain remains strong. He supplies the men with funding for weapons, ammunition, explosives, and even alcohol as they create chaos. Given that Lord Palmerston's goal is to keep Britain's power and peace intact at any cost, it comes as no surprise when he decides to quieten the fears of the public by having Thomas De Quincey arrested for the murders. He is not concerned that the real killer may still be on the loose. Sean Ryan, the lead detective in the case, soon realizes that De Quincey is not the killer. However, he also recognizes that De Quincey may be able to provide insight and direction.

De Quincey's daughter, Emily, has been her father's constant day to day companion before his arrest. He has shared his stories with her, and she has kept notes on their conversations. When he is arrested, she insists on staying in the building with him. De Quincey is sure that an attempt will be made on his life, even though he is in a locked cell. His thinking is correct. A killer checks his cell, but he is able to hide behind a mattress that is against the wall. The killer moves on and checks the rest of the cell block. Then, he returns to find De Quincey's hiding place and tries to kill him. De Quincey defends himself long enough so that Joseph Becker, the constable, arrives.

Shortly after Becker saves De Quincey, Detective Ryan arrives to tell them that more murders have been committed since De Quincey's arrest. As such, Lord Palmerston no longer has any reason to keep De Quincey locked up. Palmerston is not pleased with the detective's reasoning. Palmerston's security guard, Robert Brookline, lists convincing reasons that De Quincey could still be linked to the murders. Becker is ordered to put De Quincey in cuffs. Detective Ryan slips Emily the universal handcuff



key which she puts in her father's pocket as she hugs him goodbye. De Quincey gives Emily a clue as to how to find him. Soon after, he escapes and disappears.

Detective Ryan, Emily, and Becker go back to Scotland Yard and discover Margaret Jewell. She has been waiting for hours to see Ryan. She suffers from such guilt and remorse that she will speak to no one else. When she finally sits down with Ryan, she tells him she is harboring information that might have prevented the most recent murders. She finally tells him about the man who was responsible for the Ratcliffe Highway murders, admitting that he fathered her son. She gives information about the man whom she lived with afterward and how he cared for her son Robert. Robert took the man's last name – Brookline.

Finally, the pieces fall into place. Brookline worked in India where he was paid to kill people. He had learned about opium while working for the British East India Company. He became obsessed with 'fixing' the British Empire by beginning a revolution sparked by fires, explosions, thefts, and chaos. He had tried to use De Quincey by setting him up as a likely suspect because of the articles and books he has written in the past. By studying De Quincey, he had learned how to manipulate the situation.

In the end, Brookline is unsuccessful. By coincidence, he dies on the same spot where his father is buried.



Chapter 1: The Artist of Death

Summary

Chapter 1 reveals the details of the murders of a shopkeeper and his family. The murder is similar to historical ones which the main character, Tom De Quincey, has chronicled in his essays. The murderer is described as an artist of death. He prepares himself for his 'craft' much in the same way as artists such as Rubens, Van Dyke, and Titian had by dressing in evening clothes, packing items such as a wig and beard, a mallet, and an ivory-handled razor. He meditates coming events. Then, he hails a cab to the Adelphi Theater in the Strand. He goes into the theater dressed in evening clothes, already knowledgeable enough about "The Corsican Brothers" play that he can use it as his alibi and slips out of a side door shortly before the curtain rises. He stands for ten minutes to ensure he isn't being followed. He then hires a second cab two blocks away to take him to another part of town. There he finds a public privy and changes out of his theater clothes into a sailor's coat, wig, and beard. He has gone from a clean shaven, light brown haired man to a bearded blonde.

He walks to the clothing shop that supplies merchant sailors. He'd previously scouted out the shop. He waits for the policeman who patrols the area to pass on schedule at 10:15 p.m. He watches as the shop owner swings the shutters closed. The door still hasn't been locked, so the artist enters. He tells the owner that he is interested in buying four pairs of socks. The cost is a shilling a piece. For that price, the shopkeeper throws in an extra pair. When he reaches for the socks from an upper shelf, the artist swings the mallet and strikes his skull hard enough to make a cracking sound. The shopkeeper sinks to the ground, and the artist hits him again. This time there is a liquid sound on contact. He cuts the man's throat just as the shopkeeper's wife calls out to him, telling him dinner is ready. When the artist comes face to face with her, he pushes through the inner door. He swings the mallet upwards, knocking her backwards. Once she is on the floor, he delivers several punishing blows. He continues, caving in the servant's skull and the skull of a young girl of about seven. Then, he cuts their throats. The cry of a child draws him to a cradle where he continues his tableau of death. He admires his handiwork afterward, enjoying the sights and smells until a knock at the door disturbs him.

Richard, the shopkeeper's brother, is at the door. He draws the attention of the Constable on patrol, who then goes around to the back door to investigate. As he circles the building, the artist makes his escape, going into a public washroom to once again alter his appearance. The Constable soon discovers the bodies and sounds his clacker. The artist makes his way back to a better area of town by taking a cab back to a West End music hall where he establishes himself as part of the post theater crowd.



Analysis

The artist of death enjoys his preparations for the evening's coming events. He carefully packs the props he will use and tucks a razor into his pocket. Each item is selected with care, much like a painter selects the colors and canvas he will use. He is dressed for the theater and has no problem hailing a cab to the Adelphi where "The Corsican Brothers" play is advertised on the marquee. The artist has no intention of staying for the show, however. He already has enough knowledge of the performance that he can use it as his alibi without risk or fear. He leaves through a side door and stands against the wall in the alley until he is convinced that he hasn't been followed. He walks a short way and hails another cab to take him to a lower class area of town. Taking his time, he enters a public restroom clean-shaven. He exits two hours later dressed in a tattered sailor's coat. He is wearing a blonde wig and beard. He loves this preparation, enjoying the attention to detail required, and the opportunity it affords him to reflect on the coming tasks. Little is left to chance. He already knows the schedules of the local Constabulary and of the shopkeeper he is planning to visit. He has even calculated the degree of sympathy that his target will engender, knowing that a person of low means – especially one with a loving wife and children – will garner more pity and tears. These he recognizes as the requirements for fine art. He watches the Constable make his rounds on time and hesitates until the shopkeeper closes his shutters. Then the artist approaches. He feigns interest in socks, clubbing the man when his back is turned. He cuts the man's throat afterward, continuing to do the same to the man's wife, his children, and their servant.

There is added tension when the shopkeeper's brother knocks on the door. He summons a passing Constable who discovers the bodies a very short time after the artist escapes. He can hear the summons for help as he leaves the area, pleased with his version of artistic expression. He makes his way back to the theater district and blends in with the after performance crowd, establishing himself there and replaying the events in his mind with pleasure.

Discussion Question 1

What are the requirements for fine art as understood by the artist of death?

Discussion Question 2

What steps does the artist of death take to create an alibi for himself?

Discussion Question 3

How is the artist of death almost caught in the act? Who almost catches the artist of death?

Vocabulary

Immortalizing, symbolically, copious, simultaneously, mediocre, impoverished, distinctive.



Chapter 2: The Man Who Concealed His Red Hair

Summary

Sean Ryan, a Detective Inspector for Scotland Yard, is awakened when a patrolman tells him that a multiple murder has occurred in the Wapping district of the East End. Multiple murders are uncommon, and a crowd has already gathered by the time Sean and the other ten Constables arrive forty minutes later. The crowd is ready to blame multiple sources. Ryan is acutely aware that he is not a native to the area. He asks a Constable to make a path. Together, they clear the way as he works his way forward. Outside the shop, Ryan recognizes Becker standing guard. He updates the death toll to five. Ryan steels his emotions as Becker describes the scene as he found it. Becker also assures him that he hasn't moved or touched anything.

Ryan walks through the scene. He immediately begins to employ the criminology tactics learned from Eugene Francois Vidocq who pioneered them. He notes the closed doors, the untouched cash box, and the obvious overkill of the degree of damage done to the victims. There is a boot print left in a victim's blood. Behind the house on the other side of the fence, Ryan discovers clean prints that he can make plaster casts of in the mud. Becker, hoping to improve his odds of promotion to detective, offers to guard the prints in the dark against destruction. Ryan takes the lantern and follows the prints forward. While Becker battles two wild pigs that are intent on making a meal of him, Ryan finds the killer's razor that has been thrown in the alley's garbage. The lantern is almost out of oil, so Ryan works his way back toward the front of the crime scene where a mob still gathers. When he tries to push his way through, he is stopped by the crowd that wants revenge. They encircle him, finding the bloody razor in his pocket. When his hat is dislodged, his red hair makes the mob more angry. Convinced that he is the guilty one, they close in. Hearing the commotion, another Constable appears and recognizes Ryan. Together, they get back into the shop. Ryan gets another lantern and returns to Becker who has managed to not only kill both pigs, but to preserve the prints he was charged with protecting.

Analysis

London's population surged to one and a half million in the early 1800's, and Sir Robert Peel created the police force of thirty-five hundred bobbies to keep the peace. By 1854, the population had doubled again, and the police force of seven thousand couldn't keep up. A detective bureau was then created, and eight officers began roaming the city, disguised and in plain clothes. While some complained that their privacy was invaded, these detectives were able to see trouble or anomalies before they got out of hand. Detective Inspector Sean Ryan is one of these elite members. He is called to the scene of the multiple murders that December day in 1854. He wears anonymous clothing and



covers his red hair, knowing that the general public opinion of the Irish is negative. He follows the bobbies into the crime scene, keeping his head down. Ryan recognizes one of the bobbies, Constable Becker, who warns him that the scene is gruesome.

Though Ryan has seen his share of death, he must steady himself more than once as he is taken through the shop and home of the victims. He notes the anomalies and begins immediately to employ the tactics he has been trained to use. With twenty years in law enforcement, Ryan believes he has seen the worst humanity has to offer, but he soon learns that he has not. Behind the building and over the fence, Ryan and Becker discover the murderer's footprints in the mud. They can hear a wild pig, rooting around in the nearby excrement filled ditch. Becker offers to guard the evidence as Ryan follows the prints into the night. Ryan follows the prints to the alley where he discovers the bloodied razor just as the lantern runs out of oil. He heads back to the scene, this time going to the front again, but the crowd is unwilling to let him pass. In the ensuing fracas, his hat is removed, and his Irish heritage revealed. To the crowd, he immediately becomes the killer, and the razor in his pocket only fortifies the mob's rage. Luckily, another Constable who recognizes him appears and helps him clear a way to the shop's door again. Meanwhile, Becker is battling two wild pigs who seem intent on trampling the evidence he is guarding. He fights them off despite his fear of them, knowing that if he is to become a detective, he must act with distinction. When Ryan catches up with him, both pigs are dead, and Becker is lying in the filth. The prints remain undisturbed.

Discussion Question 1

What are known as 'particulars'? Why are they unique to London?

Discussion Question 2

What does Ryan observe as he walks through the crime scene that he deems unusual?

Discussion Question 3

What challenges confront Becker as he guards the prints in the mud? What challenges confront Ryan as he tries to return to the crime scene using the front entrance?

Vocabulary

Allusions, consequence, allegedly, anonymity, emigrated, truncheon, revulsion, notoriously.



Chapter 3: The Opium-Eater

Summary

In the 1850's, laudanum was widely used for any ailment because its addictive properties were, virtually, unrealized. Many Victorians used it on a daily basis to cure or control a wide variety of illnesses from stomach issues to headaches. Thomas De Quincey has used laudanum since he was a student at Oxford. He is addicted to the drug.

Emily helps with her father's care and documents their ongoing adventure together. He insists on returning to London from his home in Edinburgh, and their arrival spurs memories of his younger years. On one of their walks, he tells Emily stories of living on the streets of London as he retraces the steps and places of his memories. Though he reveals the existence of a woman named Ann while walking, it will be quite awhile before Emily learns that she and her father have come to London based on a note that he received. The note promised him information about Ann, a place to stay, and a housekeeper/cook for his convenience and care if he decided to come to London.

After their walk, they return to the home provided for them. They are confronted outside by two rough looking men. At first, Thomas is convinced they intend him harm. He pleads for the safety of his daughter, but then Detective Inspector Ryan introduces himself and Constable Becker to him. Ryan asks Thomas to accompany them to Scotland Yard.

Analysis

Thomas De Quincey is a well-known and respected writer who has been addicted to laudanum since his days as a student at Oxford University when he was just nineteen. For several decades, he has continued to take the drug, increasing the dosage until he had a consumption rate that had increased from the initial third of a teaspoon to a daily requirement of a sixteen ounce decanter. His youngest daughter Emily, still unattached, helps with his care. She accompanies him to London after he receives a note telling him that if he returns, he will learn the fate of his first love, Ann. As a further enticement, he will be provided with a place to stay and a housekeeper/cook at his disposal. At this point, Emily is unaware of the note.

When they arrive, Thomas regales his daughter with tales of his younger days in London – days of hunger, homelessness, and desperation. He finally tells her the entire truth about Ann, revealing the depth of his feelings for her and how he felt after losing her. Emily understands, listening to his stories with interest and concern, but without judgement. When they return to the home provided for their use by their mysterious benefactor, they are approached by two rough looking men outside. At first, Thomas fears they are being robbed, and he pleads for the safety of his daughter. However, the



men introduce themselves as Detective Inspector Ryan and Constable Becker. They ask Thomas to accompany them to Scotland Yard.

Discussion Question 1

What is unknown about laudanum in the 1850's? What is the result of this lack of knowledge?

Discussion Question 2

What lures Thomas De Quincey back to London?

Discussion Question 3

What is the connection between Ann and Thomas?

Vocabulary

Alchemist, laudanum, fortitude, exertion, disparagingly, peripatetic, rendezvous.



Chapter 4: Among Us Are Monsters

Summary

Detective Ryan had helped Dr. Snow during his cholera investigation during the summer of 1854, and as such he knows exactly where Constable Becker needs to be taken when he finds him lying in the filth near the excrement ditch. The Constable is taken to Dr. Snow's home on Frith Street in Soho. After reading a note from Ryan, the forty-one year old physician immediately takes charge. Becker is cleaned and then closely examined for injuries. While Becker is looked at, Ryan makes plaster casts of the footprints that Becker so carefully protected. At the same time, Ryan asks that the nearby privy be excavated for possible evidence. A police wagon arrives with a sketch artist, and Ryan sends him into the scene to begin. The Commissioner arrives and talks with Ryan about the case. He is particularly disturbed when he learns that the initials found on the mallet are 'J.P.'

Before Ryan can explore Sir Richard Mayne's cause for concern, they hear voices in the fog that announce they've caught the murderer. Lanterns show a man being pulled along by an angry group, insisting he had been sleeping and that the blood on his coat is his own. Ryan orders the mob to leave the captive alone, but they continue to punch and beat him until he lurches backwards and falls. In the confusion, Ryan turns and is stunned to see Becker at his side again, wearing a clean uniform and ready to work. Someone yells about a broken bottle, screaming that his eyes were slashed. Becker helps Ryan to yank men out of the way, and manage to drag the fugitive into a nearby tavern. They try to question him, but his intoxicated state makes that impossible. They go back to the Commissioner who tells them about the murders that occurred when he was just barely fifteen.

The Ratcliffe Highway murders, so named for the red sandstone cliff that towered over the Thames, occurred on a Saturday on December the 7th, 1811. Commissioner describes the events in detail to Ryan and Becker. He tells them about the man who had been arrested at the time, and the fact that he was killed in prison before his guilt or innocence had been established. Deciding that his 'suicide' was tantamount to a confession, authorities paraded his corpse past the locations of the murders and then buried his body under the paving stones at the crossroads of Cannon and Cable streets along with the mallet he used at the time. The sketch artist returns and tells them that he read about the 1811 murders recently in Thomas De Quincey's book 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts.' He adds that De Quincey had so many details in his book that it seemed as though he had really been there.

Analysis

Ryan ensures that Becker goes directly to Dr. Snow's for treatment. Becker refuses the chloroform gas offered to put him out while his wounds are stitched, concerned only



with returning to Ryan's side. He knows that this is his best chance of not only learning from one of the best, but perhaps putting himself in a position to advance as well. Dr. Snow, having been a surgeon previously, has no issues with laying his hands on his patient, and examines the bites on his arms and legs. He disinfects them, and tells Becker he has to stitch the worst ones at least. Dr. Snow tries to administer chloroform in order to have Becker sleep while he stitches his wounds, but Becker refuses, afraid that if he is put out, he will miss his opportunity to aid Ryan further. The doctor's assurance that even the Queen trusted him to administer this type of treatment does nothing to change Becker's mind. As soon as the doctor is finished, Becker returns to Ryan's side. Surprised to see Becker, Ryan includes him in the briefing that Commissioner Mayne gives regarding the Ratcliffe Highway murders in 1811. Ryan refers to Becker as his assistant.

Surprised by Ryan's introduction, Becker listens while Mayne describes the panic and fear that took hold of London during the time of the murders, and the way the person accused of the crime was found in his cell before anything could be confirmed. He describes how John Williams's apparent suicide sparked the next set of horrors which led to his burial at the crossroads. Becker ignores protocol, asking if the mallet could be the same one used by Williams, and the answer is waylaid when the sketch artist enters. He is asked how long the newspapers keep old issues, and learns that there are none dating back to 1811, but that the entire event is gruesomely described in Thomas De Quincey's book 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts'. He tells them that the 'Opium-Eater' as he is known is in London promoting his work.

Discussion Question 1

Why is Becker unwilling to submit himself to the sleep of chloroform so that Dr. Snow can stitch the worst of his bites?

Discussion Question 2

What are the similarities between the Ratcliffe Highway murders and the recent murders that Detective Ryan and Constable Becker are investigating?

Discussion Question 3

What happened to the person who was detained for questioning regarding the murders in 1811 after New Year's?

Vocabulary

Excrement, controversial, vestibule, proportion, excavators, miasma, ferocity, protocol.



Chapter 5: The Sublimity of Murder

Summary

Detective Ryan and Constable Becker are knocking on doors on Paternoster Row, hoping to find someone in the publishing district that lives on site. An elderly man is able to provide them with books written by Thomas De Quincey and informs them that De Quincey actually wrote three essays about murder and promised his next work would be titled 'Confessions of a Murderer.' Instead, the essays were produced. Both are stunned by the fact that De Quincey praises the murders, calling them sublime and superb. He also seems to be aware of details that only the police and the killer could have known.

The details of the most recent murders also mesh with the Ratcliffe Highway murders in many ways, although in the most recent killers, the murderer has gone a little further and the original murders happened in two parts. The second part of the earlier murders involved a tavern owner with a last name that almost had the same name as the killer. In that regard, they could almost have been father and son, Becker observes. When they discover that De Quincey lives and uses a publisher in Edinburgh, they head immediately to the Waterloo Bridge train station where Ryan sends messages to both De Quincey's publisher and to the Edinburgh police department insisting the need to speak with De Quincey at once. At the murder scene, locals are questioned and a prostitute remembers seeing a stranger whose very look was enough to warn her away. She describes him as tall and broad shouldered. He was wearing a sailor's cap and coat and sporting a yellow beard.

Emily continues to document events in her journal. Detective Ryan asks De Quincey and Emily to come to Scotland Yard. After hearing how close the new murders paralleled those of forty-three years earlier, Thomas De Quincey refuses, insisting instead that they discuss the matter further at the scene of the murders.

Analysis

An elderly man responds when Becker and Ryan knock on doors in the publishing district. He is willing to talk to Becker because Becker is in a uniform; however, he ignores the more tattered looking Ryan in his undercover street clothes. He provides them with Thomas De Quincey's book in which De Quincey praises the murders, calling them sublime and superb. Becker and Ryan are both stunned with the degree of detail and accuracy of De Quincey's account. Ryan learns of the second set of killings that happened shortly after the first so many years ago. Becker gives him the details, and they read De Quincey's account. The account is so accurate that they are both left with the impression that they'd just observed the killings themselves.

When Ryan learns that De Quincey lives in Edinburgh and his publisher is located there, he and Becker hurry to the Waterloo Bridge train station to send messages which



will hopefully prompt quick contact. Back at the murder scene, it isn't long before a boy comes with a telegram giving him the London address for De Quincey. Emily, De Quincey's daughter, describes the events in her journal as another first with her father – getting arrested, although he does manage to argue their way out of being taken to Scotland Yard in favor of continuing their questioning at the newest murder scene instead.

Discussion Question 1

What strikes both Becker and Ryan as improbable and somewhat damning as they read De Quincey's accounts of the Ratcliffe Highway murders?

Discussion Question 2

What single thing made keeping time a necessity in England? How was the measurement of time determined and kept?

Discussion Question 3

What is the reason that De Quincey originally began consuming Laudanum? What is unusual about the dosage he takes now?

Vocabulary

Scabbard, surpassed, consternation, reconnoiter, requisite, prostrated, miscreant, disparaging.



Chapter 6: The Patron of Gravediggers

Summary

At the murder scene, the crowd is still large. Many are carrying rifles, clubs, and sword. They demand to know if the police will protect them. Emily surprises and exasperates Ryan when she refuses to be left outside at the murder scene, noting that she seems more curious than horrified by what they see.

Mr. Hayworth, the shop keeper's brother, comes upstairs. He has set up planks and trestles in the basement to hold his family. He is still unable to discuss anything related to the murders without crying. The undertaker informed him that it will cost sixteen pounds for him to handle the funeral – a sum Mr. Hayworth doesn't have. Emily suggests that he return to his family and try to rest, assuring him she will talk to him again. She tells him that she is sure that something will happen which will enable the grieving man to bury his family.

De Quincey goes through the house, observing the various murder sites and appreciating the artistry in which they were committed. He finds the imperfection on the mallet's surface which indicates that it is the same one used in the Ratcliffe Highway murders. He is convinced that the killer is luring him there. The killer is also choosing his victims in a way that connects them. A Malay man arrives unexpectedly at the door. Though he speaks no English, he manages to convey that he has a message for De Quincey. The message tells him that if he wants to find out what happened to Ann, he should be at Vauxhall Gardens the following morning at 11 o'clock.

Analysis

In the mid 1850's in London, a deceased person was not buried for a few days while visitations occurred. A hearse was then used to take the deceased to the cemetery. The cemeteries were designed to hold up to 3,000 bodies. Then the city grew. The cemeteries were forced to accommodate up to 80,000. Often, caskets were piled on top of each other, sometimes as high as 15 caskets. When the deceased was taken to a cemetery outside of London, it could take an entire day for the procession to arrive until the construction of London's Necropolis Railway Station – a special train to take mourners and the deceased to the cemetery and return in just an afternoon.

Ryan, Becker and the De Quincey's arrive at the murder scene and find that a nervous crowd is still there. The mob is anxious to know how the police will protect them from the murderer. When a Constable can't promise their presence for more than another night or so, the crowd realizes that they will have to find the killer themselves.

Ryan has to admit to himself that he finds Emily attractive in more ways than one, including her independent style of dress and attitude. Going inside, she again surprises Ryan by being more curious than horrified by the surroundings. The bodies have



already been moved, but the smell persists. De Quincey questions Ryan as to the condition of the bodies when they were found. He looks at the sketches that have been rendered. Footsteps coming upstairs draw their attention to Mr. Hayworth, the brother of the deceased shopkeeper, who has been trying to properly display his family for viewing before the funeral. He is barely able to contain himself as he describes the circumstances he is faced with and the funeral director's request for money. Emily empathizes with him and gently insists that he return to his family to protect them. She tells him to get some sleep and to eat a decent meal. He promises to do so, and he leaves after Emily promises that they will give some thought to how his funeral costs can be alleviated.

Ryan questions De Quincey about the essays he wrote about the Ratcliffe Highway murders, and De Quincey begins to see patterns in the manner in which the killer selected his victims. Ryan thinks his associations are a bit farfetched, but De Quincey assures him that often we don't see things as they are because our perspective is skewed. De Quincey walks the house, noting the care the killer took to stage the scene. A Malay man arrives with a note for De Quincey telling him that if he wants to know what happened to Ann, he should be at Vauxhall Gardens the following day at 11 o'clock. De Quincey is stunned that the Malay should find him now. He tells Ryan about his last encounter with the man and about Ann and their history. Then, he tells Ryan that the killer chose this shop owner because of a connection between himself and the murder victims; but, Ryan thinks the relationship is coincidental at best.

Discussion Question 1

What story does De Quincey tell Ryan to explain how the mind can sometimes trick us into seeing things in a way that they are not?

Discussion Question 2

What tells De Quincey that the mallet used in the current murders is the same one that was used in the 1811 Ratcliffe Highway murders?

Discussion Question 3

What is significant about the arrival of the man who makes Emily scream? What does he give to De Quincey?

Vocabulary

Dissuade, innovation, apprehension, alleviating, perspective, preferable, imperfection.



Chapter 7: A Garden of Pleasures

Summary

Ryan sits in Lord Palmerston's Westminster office next to Police Commissioner Mayne. Palmerston's male secretary is taking notes. Retired Colonel Robert Brookline, who is there for the protection of Palmerston, stands off to one side watching. Ryan tells them the Malay man, although still in custody, is not the killer based on shoe size. He makes his case by supporting the theory that the killer is not a laborer. He explains that the killer is exaggerating the Ratcliff Highway murders and the second set of killings may be much worse. Then they head to Vauxhall Gardens. Ryan joins them, and announces that he's been ordered to arrest De Quincey.

Meanwhile, De Quincey hears a woman's voice calling his name. When he turns, he sees a woman with open sores on her face. She accuses him of not returning for her, and holds her arms out to him. He realizes that she can't be Ann as the woman raises her ragged skirt and invites him to enjoy her. Then another woman reveals herself, exposing herself nakedly as well. She calls herself his sister Jane, and yet another one comes forward. This one calls herself his sister Elizabeth, and each woman reminds him of events in the past. The last woman to come forward and expose herself calls herself Catherine, reminding him of Woodsworth's daughter – a young girl he had loved like a daughter and who had died suddenly.

In the distance, Emily hears the women calling to her father. They find him wailing, while the women continue chanting the names of the women from his past. The women see the truncheon in Becker's hand and fade into the woods. Ryan orders the gardens closed, and the women found. Constables bring the women in, handcuffed in a line together. They are all disease ravaged and one shouts that they won't get her money. They soon discover that each woman has exactly two gold coins on them. Further questioning reveals that the women were paid to wait for De Quincey to show up, and then each had a role to play. If done well, they would receive another coin later. The gentleman they describe matches the gentleman the prostitute outside the murder scene described to them – yellow hair and beard.

De Quincey had listened quietly but echoes the description 'yellow-like' that Doris used to describe the man. The color is the same one De Quincey describes in 'Murder as a Fine Art'. In that offering, he had suggested that the killer was in disguise, and it appears this man was, too. Ryan wants to know about the girls these women posed as, but De Quincey doesn't want to talk about them. The prostitutes fill him in on the basics as they were told for each name and De Quincey leaves. There is no forgetting, De Quincey knows only too well. Finally, he reveals all to Ryan and swears that he will make the killer pay for perverting the work of his essays in such a way.



Analysis

Lord Palmerston is determined to name someone as the killer to ensure people do not descend into panic, and when the Malay is ruled out, he puts De Quincey's name to Ryan, telling him to arrest him and to make sure the papers know about it. Becker takes De Quincey and Emily by taxi first to the undertakers where she convinces him that he should conduct funeral services for the Hayworth family and accept term payments and then to Vauxhall Gardens where De Quincey was promised he would learn about Ann. Becker is in plain clothes for this assignment and De Quincey describes how things were when he frequented the Gardens in his youth. Emily tells Becker about her youth and how her father had depended on her to run errands without being seen by creditors. De Quincey continues down the path ahead of them, opium blending reality with nightmares he has had. He thinks about Ann, and wishes for just one more chance to walk with her, kiss her, and listen to the street organ playing again. One by one, women begin revealing themselves to De Quincey, claiming to be women from his past, loves lost, opportunities lost. They all call out to him and he sinks to his knees sobbing with grief. Emily and Becker discover him sobbing and Becker spins his clacker, sounding the alarm as the last of the women disappear. Ryan orders the women found and arrested. Emily's journal reveals her distress at seeing her father weep so uncontrollably, having seen him do so only twice in all her life. Once was when she lost her mother, and once at the death of her brother Horace. Becker carries De Quincey through the trees, Emily writes in her journal, and describes how she is unable to comfort her father, despite her best efforts. Ryan questions De Quincey about the women and the roles they were playing and De Quincey reveals who they were and what the significance of each woman was. He vows to make the killer pay for such a perversion of his work, using it to kill and to punish.

Discussion Question 1

What does Lord Palmerston want Ryan to do? Why is Ryan so reluctant to do so?

Discussion Question 2

Whom are the women portraying in the Gardens? What is the significance of each?

Discussion Question 3

What effect do the events in the Gardens have on both Emily and Thomas De Quincey?

Vocabulary

Accumulating, convulsions, comprehend, crudity, reverberated, solicitous, sovereigns.



Chapter 8: The Year of Revolution

Summary

As many as four hundred gentleman clubs are located on Pall Mall, catering to a variety of interests. Some are so exclusive that curtained tunnels are erected from the entrance to the street so that customers who want to remain anonymous can enter without being seen. A coach pulls up to one such club called the Royal Agricultural Club, despite the 'Closed for Renovations' sign out front. In the tunnel, Lord Palmerston, Colonel Brookline, and one of Brookline's men approach the man at the door who is also a security member. Palmerston knocks in a specific pattern on a door which is opened by a young woman. As Palmerston has a reputation for enjoying female companionship – a reputation he cultivates – no one has any idea that he isn't there to see her. They chat for only a moment or two before he continues through an inside door to a room where six men sit waiting. All are disguised as workmen. They had arrived separately earlier in the day. Palmerston quickly establishes that although they only meet twice a year, he is always paying attention to their lives by naming the new girlfriend one is involved with and her history.

The "workmen" all submit reports, and Palmerston refers to each in turn by their aliases which identify the country they are working in for him. He reaffirms the necessity to continue with their efforts to destabilize Europe, citing that it is the only way in which to protect the empire as they know it. Only a small handful of people are aware that Palmerston has used his progression from war secretary to home secretary to establish a network whose sole purpose is to destabilize Europe in order to keep the Empire at its current state of glory and dominance. At one point, Palmerston had almost taken it too far when his team inspired revolutions that had inadvertently affected England as well. Palmerston was forced to hire 150,000 men to keep order. The labor group called 'Chartists' eventually returned to their homes.

Brookline tries to ensure Palmerston's safety by changing vehicles and altering the route they take. But, the precautions do nothing to stop the man with the gun who approaches his coach as they return to Palmerston's home. He tells Brookline that he knows what Palmerston is doing in Germany, and he won't stand for it any more. Brookline fights the man as Palmerston is taken inside safely. The man runs into the park. Brookline gives chase. As he nears the man, a rocket comes at him, exploding too close for comfort. Second and third explosions follow. Finally, it is over. Unable to find the attacker, Brookline returns to Palmerston and reports his conversation. Lord Palmerston assures Brookline that the man was delusional and asks him to increase his protection.



Analysis

It isn't difficult to remain anonymous or avoid the attention of neighbors if you go to any of the gentleman clubs that are on Pall Mall. Most have a tunnel so patrons can enter privately from a coach to the door. It is at one such entrance that Lord Palmerston arrives at. The woman upstairs is there for his pleasure, and his fondness for young females is well known. So, no one thinks any further about it when Lord Palmerston joins her in a room. When the door is closed however, he has only a brief, polite conversation with her before continuing through another door to head a meeting where six men are waiting. He addresses them as their commander, assuring them he is not only all knowing but all wise as well. When they are ready to leave, all are convinced that his desire to destabilize Europe in order to keep the Empire strong is the correct course of action. Each is prepared to go to the country they were assigned to and continue the mission, some requesting additional funding, weapons, or resources of other kinds. By 1848, the division between those with wealth and those without is so extreme that revolutions are widespread. Though in most cases the effects of these uprisings are short lived, they still strike fear in the hearts of those of the upper class. Though Great Britain did not experience a revolution exactly, a group called the Chartists assembled in London with the intention of marching on Parliament to ensure the rights of those who were less fortunate. Palmerston had to commission a show of force to preserve order, knowing that he had almost gone too far. On the way home from this meeting, despite the extra efforts made by Brookline to secure his safety, a man manages to come close to shooting Palmerston. Though Brookline could alter much about their routes and methods of conveyance, he is unable to change the destination – Palmerston's home. As such, he is a target despite Brookline's best efforts. They get Palmerston inside safely, but they are unable to catch the man with the gun. He did linger long enough to tell Brookline that he knew about Palmerston's activities in Germany and wouldn't stand for them. Palmerston brushes this comment aside as crazy and asks that his security be doubled.

Discussion Question 1

For what purpose does Lord Palmerston use a gentleman club?

Discussion Question 2

How are meetings between Lord Palmerston and his group kept secret?

Discussion Question 3

What is the purpose of Lord Palmerston's group? How did the group almost backfire on him?

Vocabulary

Reputation, luxurious, exclusive, destabilizing, revolution, methodical, provocateurs, assumption.



Chapter 9: The Separate System

Summary

Ryan tells De Quincey that the rental of the house he and Emily are staying in traces back to someone named Edward Symons. De Quincey explains that Symons died thirty years ago after committing a series of murders in Hoddesdon in Middlesex. Edward Symons was hanged. De Quincey tells them how Edward's psyche had split while he killed the women, believing his shadow was someone else keeping pace with him. Ryan thanks him for the information and insight he has provided and tells him he is being placed under arrest.

Meanwhile, an elderly woman named Margaret, who seldom leaves the bake house where she works and sleeps, is startled when she hears that everyone is talking about the Ratcliffe Highway murders again and that they are being repeated. When she finally is done with customers for the day, she heads directly to Scotland Yard. There, she asks to speak to whoever is in charge of the investigation and insists on waiting until they get there.

At the same time, the police wagon is taking De Quincey to Coldbath Fields Prison as per Lord Palmerston's insistence. When they arrive, they find reporters waiting, having announced that the 'killer' had been caught. They pepper him with questions about the current murders and those that happened years ago. Ryan corrects the staff inside as soon as the gates are closed, telling them that De Quincey is a consultant and is being kept there to guarantee his safety. The governor tries unsuccessfully to keep Emily out, and Emily immediately begins asking questions about his responsibilities and ideas on prison reform, stroking his ego. A guard takes De Quincey's tie and suspenders, and De Quincey asks Emily to refill his laudanum. Emily converses with the Governor and is horrified to learn how the prison works. De Quincey insists that since the killer is following him, he will not be safe in the prison. Despite that, Ryan tells him he has to stay, and Emily insists on staying with him.

The artist of death carries a ripping chisel up his sleeve, just like the one used in the second set of Ratcliffe Highway murders. Just like in the past, he plans to demonstrate his skills in a tavern, but he is determined to improve on the murders of the past just as he had in the first set of murders. Instead of waiting twelve days as the killer originally had, the artist of death is ready in just two days to continue. Dressed as a constable, he is part of the scenery. The eight occupants of the tavern give him little more than a glance. He kills them all. Then, he smears blood on himself and staggers outside, falling at the feet of a constable moaning about murder. He spins his clacker, sending out an alarm heard far and wide. While waiting for a wagon to take him to a surgeon, the artist of death tells the police that the killer was dressed as a sailor. He is taken to a surgeon's house where he tells the police to wait outside after calling for his wife. The artist of death opens his eyes long enough to kill the surgeon, his wife, and the constable who remained behind. Then he washes himself, removes the sergeant's uniform and leaves



by way of the back door dressed as a common beggar. He leaves just as one of the policemen checks in.

A German sailor who arrived that morning cleans up in the rooming house he'd found and looks forward to finding a woman and a tavern. He drinks himself half way to a stupor and then heads back to his rooming house. A commotion at the end of the street includes shouts of murder and sailors so nervously he ducks into an alley. His bladder complains, but he waits until he is far enough in the alley before he pees. Someone hears him and he stops mid-stream until they leave. Then, he continues. Finally, he steps out of the alley, and a man grabs him. He tries to tell them they are mistaken, but his accent only fuels them. He feels pain in his stomach and looks down to see a sword sticking out. He topples over as the man who stuck him tells him that was for Peter and Martha.

Analysis

Ryan is uncomfortable dealing with De Quincey, finding even coping with the prostitutes and their demands easier by comparison. Ryan tells Becker that he wishes he could be sure that laudanum hasn't 'unhinged' De Quincey's mind. Emily asks what will be done with the women and Becker reveals that they'll likely be dropped back on Oxford Street. Emily argues that more could be done. Ryan is forced to arrest De Quincey as per Lord Palmerston's orders. He reluctantly does so, but he refrains from using handcuffs. As they ride to Coldbath Fields Prison, Margaret is hearing about the murders for the first time. She mostly keeps to herself, staying in the bake house where she works, but news of the murders and their similarity to the Ratcliffe Highway murders spurs her to go to Scotland Yard as soon as the last customer is gone. She asks to speak to the agent in charge and is told to wait.

At the prison, reporters are already waiting, having been told by Lord Palmerston that the killer is caught. They pepper him with questions as Ryan tries to keep them at bay. Emily manages to redirect the Governor's attempts to keep her out of the prison by questioning him about his role and his opinions on reform. The more she learns, the more horrified she becomes. Ryan tells the Governor that De Quincey is there for protection, and is a consultant to the police, but the guards and the Governor all insist that Lord Palmerston might have other ideas. As such, De Quincey will be kept in a cell and treated like any other prisoner.

At the same time, the artist of death is already on his way to the tavern where he will complete the second stage of murders, mimicking the Ratcliffe Highway murders to a degree, but accelerating the schedule considerably. No one pays him any attention as he is dressed in a Sergeant's uniform. He enters the tavern and has no difficulty killing the eight people inside. Then, he smears himself with blood and staggers out, pretending to be a victim. He tells the police that a sailor committed the murders, knowing that only a short distance from the docks it won't be hard to find a large pool of suspects. He is taken to a surgeons' house where he kills the surgeon, his wife, and another constable. The killer slips outside after washing up and dressing like a beggar.



Meanwhile, the public is out for blood, and a German sailor is killed for nothing more than being out on the street that night.

Discussion Question 1

What methods of reform are in place in the prison, according to the Governor's explanations to Emily? What are the prisoners expected to do daily?

Discussion Question 2

What methods of reform are suggested by the author Jeremy Bentham? What is significantly different from the methods actually in place in Coldbath Fields Prison?

Discussion Question 3

How does the artist of death manage to walk the streets without problems? What methods of concealment does he use to blend in for the rest of the evening?

Vocabulary

Charitable, preposterous, obligated, insignificant, notorious, sufficiently.



Chapter 10: In the Realm of Shadows

Summary

The artist of death, dressed like a beggar makes his way unchallenged to a livery stable in London's east end. He knocks, revealing his face in the window, and the door is opened just enough to admit him. The door is secured behind him, and he joins the three men inside. Though he has completed his mission, he expresses his wish to also do Anthony's part at the prison. He asks whether horses have been arranged, and he is told that they have been arranged. Two hearses await their use as well.

At the prison, De Quincey is settled into a cell. Emily refuses to leave her father's, citing that the killer appears to be following her and her father, and she would feel perfectly safe in the prison's office. Becker agrees to stay with her. They are given a meal of a single potato in an inch of the water it was cooked in. De Quincey sits in his cell, convinced that the killer will come for him. Emily had slipped an iron spoon into his pocket, telling him quietly that it was the best she could do. He sits listening to them delivering supper to the prisoners. His stomach balks at the potato served for dinner, the need for laudanum causing him pain. He wonders how he can hide from the killer and decides that he needs to find a way to disguise the fact that he is there. He dumps his dinner into the slop bucket and tries to think of a place to hide.

A messenger bangs on the prison entrance saying he has a message from the Home Secretary that the Governor must see. The message concerns De Quincey. He adds that Lord Palmerston is awaiting an answer and is finally let in. He is escorted to the governor's office and while the governor reads the letter, the messenger uses the letter opener to open the governor's throat. As the governor dies, the messenger looks at a diagram of the prison and tells the guard outside the door that the governor asked him to speak with De Quincey. The guard takes him to the jailer, asking what the noise at the river is. The messenger tells them that the riots are a result of the killer's most recent victims that night. The jailer realizes that De Quincey is not the killer. The messenger prepares to kill the guard if necessary, but the guard takes his suggestion to return to the front gate in case the mob approaches.

The messenger proceeds to the cell De Quincey is supposed to occupy, past the guards who are drugged and unconscious. He finds that De Quincey's cell is empty. Cursing, the messenger begins searching other cells while De Quincey hides behind the mattress that is hooked up against the wall. Hearing the amount of noise the killer is making, De Quincey realizes that everyone must have been drugged. The killer returns and finds De Quincey who kicks and bites, tearing flesh from his hand. The killer grabs the blanket and sitting on De Quincey he shoves the corner of the blanket into his mouth. De Quincey manages to ram the spoon Emily gave him into the eye of his attacker, and runs from the cell. The killer catches up with him. By then, Becker has come to his senses and to De Quincey's aid. When the killer tries to stab Becker, De



Quincey grabs his legs and the killer falls forward, ramming the spoon in his eye through his brain and killing him.

Ryan arrives to tell them about the murders and release De Quincey who wants to go to the newest murder scenes. Everyone is surprised, but De Quincey explains that the dead man is but one of the people involved in these killings and if they don't find the person or people who instructed him to kill De Quincey, the killer will be free to 'create his own masterpieces.'

Analysis

Dressed as a beggar, the killer has no trouble making his way to the livery stable where the rest of his group are waiting, but wishes he could continue with the next part of their plan. He has done his part however, and he now waits with the others while someone else breaks into the prison to eliminate De Quincey.

Inside the prison's office Emily tells Becker that he should be glad that she doesn't wear the traditional style of dress, opting instead for bloomers. Becker is stunned to discover that the hoops worn by most women actually weigh thirty-seven pounds. To make matters worse, someone decided that the ideal waist size is eighteen inches she adds. Such women wear corsets which are strangling at best. Becker is embarrassed, but he enjoys listening to Emily speak. Also, he loves her smile. What Emily doesn't tell Becker is that she slipped her father a spoon as she was saying goodnight to him which she feels is better than nothing.

De Quincey knows that the killer is so obsessed with him that he will come for him and that the prison will present little or no obstacle to him. The guards bring him food, but without his regular laudanum doses. He is unable to eat. Instead, he concentrates his efforts on eluding the killer when he comes, hiding the food bowl, hanging the mattress on the wall where it had been before, and squeezing himself behind it.

De Quincey is one of the few in the prison not drugged by the food served at dinner, and he is able to fight off the attempt on his life long enough for Becker to reach him and help out. The spoon given to him by Emily deals the killing blow. Ryan arrives to free De Quincey, telling him about the murders that occurred the night before, and De Quincey reluctantly informs them that the dead man is not the only one responsible. In fact, there may be more killings yet and De Quincey needs to examine the most recent site as soon as possible.

Discussion Question 1

What are the methods by which an estimated fifty thousand individuals make their living on the streets of London in 1854 as discussed in the study 'London Labour and the London Poor'?



Discussion Question 2

Why is the traditional hoop style of dresses so heavy? What is the ideal waist size for a woman? How does Becker react to Emily's facts about hoop skirts and women's waist sizes?

Discussion Question 3

How does the killer manage to get inside the prison? How is he defeated?

Vocabulary

Compulsion, alleviate, labyrinth, immodest, impeded, askance, officious, arbitrarily, apertures.



Chapter 11: The Dark Interpreter

Summary

Ryan, Becker, De Quincey, and Emily are driven to the tavern by a constable. Hearing noises outside, the driver calls to Ryan. When Ryan emerges, he sees a group of men with knives, swords, rifles, and clubs, demanding to know their business. Ryan explains that they are police officers. However, they are not dressed as such. So, even though they are being chauffeured by a uniformed constable, the men don't believe them. When they notice the blood on Becker's coat, the situation deteriorates further. When Ryan tries to show them his badge, the crowd thinks he is going for a knife and attack. A woman shrieks for help claiming to have been attacked, the top of her dress ripped. She claims it was a policeman and he ran down an alley. As the mob races in that direction, they hop into the wagon and leave the area quickly.

Ryan and Becker are amazed at the resourcefulness of both Emily and her father. The crowd outside the tavern is not friendly or receptive to the police either. De Quincey realizes how smart the plan to pose as a policeman was, insisting the killer is brilliant. With eight bodies inside, Ryan is reluctant to let Emily in, but the mood outside is volatile. He realizes he has no choice.

Becker takes Emily to a table while Ryan and De Quincey survey the scene. De Quincey searches frantically until he finds the bottle of laudanum behind the counter and downs a wineglass full. Ryan is shocked, knowing that the amount De Quincey just consumed would kill most people. De Quincey examines the bodies, determining that the chisel on the counter is similar to the weapon used in the second Ratcliffe Highway murders. Looking at how the killer staged the bodies, and the time in which he had to complete his tasks, De Quincey is sure that he has had a great deal of practice in the past. Ryan has trouble following the logic presented, but De Quincey explains that the killer is competent, uses disguises, is able to converse with the Malay, and is a man of means. Finally Ryan understands. The killer is likely a former soldier from the Orient who had duties that made disguises necessary.

Analysis

On the way to the tavern where the murders occurred, Ryan can see the De Quincey is struggling and asks him if he is alright. De Quincey assures him that he has faced this issue before. Misunderstanding, Ryan asks if he's had to fight for his life before. De Quincey, confused, asks him if the attack on him really happened. Ryan assures him it did. They discuss the effects of laudanum, and De Quincey explains how his mind demands the medicine more than his body now, but its control is more than he can master.



The wagon is stopped by a mob of men who are hunting the killer. They take in the appearance of Becker, his bloodstained coat, and Ryan's red hair and jump to conclusions that they are somehow involved in the killings. Just before they can get too carried away, Emily provides a distraction, tearing her dress and insisting a man dressed as a constable did it and ran down the alley. The men immediately run down the alley, giving Ryan and his group a chance to escape.

Ryan is suitably impressed and asks what they would have done had that ruse not worked. De Quincey grabs the lantern and confesses that had Emily's ploy failed, he would have thrown the lantern to give Ryan and Becker a chance to escape. He and Emily could have claimed that they were Ryan's prisoners, he adds. Besides, who would believe that they were a threat? Ryan assures De Quincey that he and his daughter are among the most dangerous people he has ever met. They get to the tavern where De Quincey manages to find a bottle of laudanum. He takes a dose that is more than liberal. Then, he begins to examine the bodies around him. Eight victims have been posed to look as though they merely fell asleep. De Quincey observes that the killer is skilled, adept at disguising himself, and is a man of means. He is or was likely a soldier who worked in the Orient. Ryan feels as though his world is being turned upside down.

Discussion Question 1

How does De Quincey explain the effects of laudanum on him?

Discussion Question 2

What confrontation do they face on the way to the tavern? How do they manage to overcome the issue?

Discussion Question 3

What conclusions does De Quincey draw from the crime scene? How does he come to the conclusions?

Vocabulary

Deranged, discordant, incoherent, preposterous, atrocities, elaborated, metaphorically.



Chapter 12: The Education of an Artist

Summary

The artist of death joined the army when he was just twelve years of age, passing for fourteen, at which age he is able to enlist for boy service. When news came that the regiment was going to India he goes, ingratiating himself with his sergeant who tells them how the British East India Company works by trading opium to China in return for Chinese tea despite the fact that opium is illegal in China. He is quickly promoted to Corporal and his first assignment is to guard the bricks of opium. When three privates try to grab a brick, he insists that they put it back, and they lunge at him. He shoots the first man and drives his bayonet into the second. When the third man tries to tackle him, he elbows him in the throat.

The sergeant arrives, impressed and takes him to a major who invites him to join a special unit of warriors he is creating. The major tells him about the opium caravans and how many have been lost to Thugs, asking the artist to join the next caravan to protect it. Twenty wagons are pulled by oxen, managed by forty natives. The artist and two others from his unit step back into the darkness, listening and watching for signs of subversion. Forty members of cavalry act as escort, with riders sent ahead to scout for signs of ambush. With only three days left in the mountain crossing, the scouts return alarmed. Atop a plateau the remains of the previous caravan are circled by ravens and vultures, bones scattered everywhere by predators. Of the oxen, horses, goats, wagons and contents there is no sign. The artist concludes from the remains that all eighty three people had been strangled and struggles to understand how that is possible.

After dark, the artist and two of his men slip from camp with canteens and biscuits. The camp settles and soon after the artist is attacked by a man who intends to put a rope over the artist's throat. The artist stabs him, and the man with him, having the sense that something terrible has happened in the camp. He crawls toward it quietly, hugging the ground to avoid being seen. The oxen bell clangs three times, and soon there are many figures moving around the wagons, bending and tugging until the artist realizes that they are stripping the clothes from corpses. They hitch the oxen, herd the goats and the remaining horses and tie them to the backs of the wagons. He counts at least twenty figures, and knows that at least one of his men is dead along with all of the others in the caravan. There is little he can do but determine how this happened and pass the information on to the next caravan in two weeks.

In the barren landscape, hiding is difficult until he comes to the place where the last caravan was ambushed. He makes a tunnel in the pile of bones and conceals himself therein. The smell is so strong that he is unable to stop himself from vomiting. Soon he hears horses and angry voices. It sounds like they leave, but still the artist remains in hiding. He remembers the one legged man who joined them and the grandmother with a little girl. Again the enemy returns, even angrier now and the artist vows to learn as many of the foreign languages as he can. Morning turns to evening. He crawls out of



hiding and returns to where the caravan was left. Including the three who joined their caravan, there should be eighty five corpses, but he finds only eighty two. The three who had joined must have been Thugs. All at once he realizes that they must all have been drugged. He creeps away, running in a crouch for several miles before straightening.

It takes seven days before he reaches the next caravan. He discovers the same three stragglers have joined this caravan and once they have revealed all, he shoots them. When the caravan reaches the point of ambush, the camp settles in and the artist rings the oxen bell. When twenty Thugs arrive, he kills five of them himself, and keeps one alive until he learns all he can from him before shooting him as well. Later, he leads the cavalry to several Thug camps, killing all they found. He is promoted again and again. The Chinese Emperor, in an effort to keep opium away, begins a war that lasts from 1839 to 1842. The artist had many opportunities to kill. Much later, a knock at the door wakes him from yet another dream of India. A man standing on his stoop tells him he's been summoned.

Analysis

The artist joined the army at just twelve, passing for fourteen and entering boy service. He went from courier to hospital helper, preferring the latter for the ability it gave him to study the way injured soldiers dealt with pain. When he heard of India, he feigned concern for the plight of those with yellow fever, and for helping to control the murderous natives so that he could go. By paying attention, and answering the Sergeant's questions correctly, the artist of death finds himself promoted to Corporal. After he kills three men while guarding the opium, his Sergeant is surprised and takes him to see a Major who questions him about his family history, wondering if somehow he inherited the ability to overcome fear. The Major offers to train him as a warrior, and the artist thrives, learning to kill, hide in plain sight, and adapt to any given situation. His first assignment afterward is to guard the caravan carrying the opium over the mountains. He proves himself worthy of his next few promotions, determining how the caravans are overpowered, and helping to eliminate several marauders' camps. The artist remains in service throughout the four year war with China, killing for the army before returning to London where he is awakened from a troubled sleep to find that he has been summoned.

Discussion Question 1

At what age did the artist of death join the army? How long was his enlistment?

Discussion Question 2

Why was the British Empire so interested in establishing a foothold in India?



Discussion Question 3

How are the caravans being so easily overpowered and by whom?

Vocabulary

Cynical, saltpeter, degenerates, imperceptible, indistinct, marauders.



Chapter 13: The Inquisition

Summary

Margaret still waits in the police station for Detective Ryan. She refuses to talk to anyone else. Emily's journal reveals how the mob outside makes it impossible to leave the tavern. So, they settle into the beds of the recently deceased. A pounding at the door wakes them; they have been summoned to Lord Palmerston immediately. They arrive in time to learn that there was an attack on Palmerston and he relieves Becker of authority because his coat is in tatters and there is blood on it. Palmerston hears the explanation but insists that Becker was rescuing De Quincey along with Ryan whom he summarily dismisses as well because he was unable to quell the crisis as per his instructions. He continues to insist that he now believes De Quincey is responsible. Brookline recites the 'facts' as he's assembled them supporting the likelihood of De Quincey's guilt, arguing that he could have had an accomplice, left Oxford before his final exams, spent time in the company of radicals and with the notorious atheist Rachel Lee. He adds that De Quincey's friendship with Coleridge and Wordsworth were suspect at best. He notes that the writer has frequently been sought by the law and has had as many as six addresses at one time. One at a time, none of these 'facts' are damning, but together Brookline makes it look as though De Quincey is public enemy number one.

The prison messenger who tried to kill De Quincey is the same man who tried to murder Lord Palmerston earlier that day. Brookline suggests that some more persuasive questioning might be in order. Brookline orders Becker to cuff De Quincey, and Ryan bumps into Emily and presses a handcuff key into Emily's hand that then slips it to her father. Brookline takes him away, but not before he tells Emily to look for him where he listened to the music. Brookline takes De Quincey's flask and throws it in the gutter as he forces him into the coach. The coach bumps along until De Quincey sees his opportunity and hops out. He uses the dark as cover, running into the park where he eludes them by climbing a tree. He doubles back to Lord Palmerston's home to retrieve his flask from the gutter, and though he craves it terribly, he saves it, knowing he has a more important use for it.

Analysis

Margaret tries to wait patiently for Inspector Ryan, her shame so great that she can only tell the story once. Ryan, Becker and the De Quincey's are stuck in the tavern meanwhile, held there by an angry mob outside who no longer has any faith in the word of the law. They settle in for the night only to be awakened later by a summons to see Lord Palmerston, who is not pleased. He immediately tells Becker that he is relieved of his authority, as is Inspector Ryan. Palmerston accuses Ryan of being inept, unable to manage the simple task of deflecting the media and public from widespread panic. Colonel Brookline has convinced him that De Quincey is responsible for the murders



both now and the first time they occurred, and Palmerston instructs him to arrest De Quincey and take him to the prison once more. Becker's handcuffs are used and Ryan slips Emily the key which she then slips to her father. De Quincey tells her he'll see her again where he listened to the music. Despite the fact that Brookline tosses his flask into the gutter, De Quincey bides his time and finally manages to hop out of the coach and elude his captors. He doubles back to pick the flask up again before continuing on, hoping to use the laudanum to prevent more people from dying.

Discussion Question 1

Who is summoned to appear before Lord Palmerston? Why?

Discussion Question 2

Who manages to convince Lord Palmerston that De Quincey is guilty? What evidence is given to Lord Palmerston?

Discussion Question 3

How does De Quincey manage to escape custody?

Vocabulary

Revulsion, disparaging, dismissive, indignantly, exonerated, collaborating, invectives, aristocracy.



Chapter 14: The Woman of Sorrows

Summary

De Quincey runs as fast as he can manage, taking a sip of laudanum now and then to soothe the strain on his body. He makes it to Oxford Street, down an alley, and through a hole in the fence before going down further still into a tunnel which leads him into another tunnel. Here, bodies sleep. He settles himself among the beggars, taking heat from them.

Emily, Ryan, and Becker return to Scotland Yard passing Margaret on the bench as they head in toward a room. Margaret wakes, and the Constable tells Ryan she's been waiting for him since the day before. She struggles with telling of her story until Ryan and Becker leave her alone with Emily. Then, she confesses all.

Afterward, Emily tells Ryan that Margaret needs a church. Ryan takes them to Westminster Abbey. Emily tells Ryan and Becker about how Margaret was pregnant out of wedlock, carrying John Williams's child. Her employer, Marr, was an angry and bitter man who found fault in everything. When Marr discovers she is expecting, he tells her he will find her replacement and puts her out on the street with 'the rest of her kind'.

Williams is furious and tries to talk to Marr, but that goes poorly. Marr gives Margaret heavy work for the rest of the day. Then, near midnight, he sends her on an errand, knowing how terrified she is of being out after dark. After she leaves, Williams again approaches Marr. Things get out of hand and he kills Marr. Afterward he is forced to kill anyone who might recognize him. In his drunken state, Williams decides that if Marr were to punish Margaret for her unborn child, he would punish Marr with his and kills his infant as well. After Margaret returns and finds Marr and the rest of the bodies, she confronts Williams who admits nothing. As time passes his drinking increases, and he is moody and withdrawn. Margaret leaves him.

In one of the bars where he goes to drink, the owner named John Williamson and people begin to joke that they could be related. The name and relativity gnaw at Williams until he is unable to bear it. He kills for the second time, later hanging himself in prison. Margaret delivers a son and later meets a soldier. They live together, and her son takes the soldier's name – Brookline.

De Quincey wakes to find a dozen people standing over him. He manages to convince them that fifty years previously this had been his home. He asks them for help. He gives them his handcuffs, with the key, to sell. He asks to switch clothes with someone his size and borrows the platform from the one who begs pretending to have no legs, offering the man his remaining laudanum in return. Then, he asks one more favor of the group. He asks them to pass the word that he is looking for information about Colonel Brookline and guarantees them all plentiful food arranged by Lord Palmerston.



De Quincey hopes that Emily will remember the street corner he showed her where he and Ann had listened to the music. He makes his way to the area where the linen lifters work and asks for Doris and Melinda – two of the ladies who approached him in the park. When he finds them, he tells them he can arrange for them to receive the sovereigns that they were promised and never paid if only they will agree to become his spies.

Analysis

De Quincey is compelled to sip from his flask as he runs through the night, just to keep the pace that he has set for himself. He didn't want to use too much, having other needs for it, so he uses only enough to keep his body going. He manages to make it to Oxford Street, all the while knowing that Brookline would be searching for him, and although he might consider looking on Oxford, he wouldn't know where on Oxford to begin searching.

De Quincey finally makes it to the right alley, and then down the steps and into the tunnels where the less fortunate huddle together in sleep to keep warm. He hides his flask and lies down amidst them. Ryan, Becker and Emily have few options, and need a place to rest so they return to Scotland Yard. Ryan is betting that they haven't yet heard that he's been relieved of duty, and he is correct. The elderly woman asleep on the bench wakes when they arrive and the Constable on staff soon brings her to Ryan. Margaret Jewell introduces herself, and Emily immediately recognizes her name and tells Ryan and Becker about her identity. She begins to tell her story, but it is obviously as painful to her now as the events were then. She tells them how she discovered the bodies, and that she knew why the killer behaved as he did, but her shame makes the story difficult to tell. Finally, Emily suggests that they speak alone – woman to woman, and Margaret reveals the details she's kept to herself for the decades since.

Half an hour later, Emily gets the news that her father managed to escape. Emily can't decipher his last words to her, unable to remember where he 'listened to the music.' She is still reeling from the news Margaret shared. They take Margaret to Westminster Abbey. While she kneels in prayer, tears still streaming quietly down her face, Emily tells Ryan and Becker the rest of the story. The revelation that Margaret's son is Colonel Brookline is a shock to all. De Quincey wakes to a dozen people standing around him. It takes him a few minutes to convince them that he is not a threat and he has never been one of them. He also has a way for them to profit from him. He barter his way into the rags that one is wearing; a platform to hide in plain sight; and information about where he can find the women that the artist used to torment him in the park. He goes to see them next and manages to convince them to act as his spies, promising them that Lord Palmerston himself will pay them for their service.

Discussion Question 1

Where does De Quincey go once he escapes? How is his presence there accepted?



Discussion Question 2

What information does Emily learn from Margaret that explains her feelings of shame and secrecy?

Discussion Question 3

How does De Quincey hide in plain sight, and what steps does he take to learn more about the man pursuing him?

Vocabulary

Dissipating, compulsively, revelation, transgressed, dismissive.



Chapter 15: An Effigy in Wax

Summary

Madame Tussaud's wax museum portrays everything from the dignified visages of those such as Sir Walter Scott, Voltaire, and Benjamin Franklin to the Chamber of Horrors where killers and their victims such as John Williams can be seen. Though Brookline has seen the display before, after the recent murders, Madame Tussaud's most popular exhibit is now reopened. Three men meet with Brookline and he tells them that Anthony was killed the night before at the prison and assures them they will pay tribute to him that night. Ryan, Becker and Emily take Margaret back to the bakeshop where business is brisk as people try to get food before nightfall. Then the trio heads to the corner that her father showed Emily. They notice Brookline's men but none of them recognize the beggar on the platform as De Quincey who tells Ryan to meet him on the next street over. Ryan asks Emily not to react when he tells her.

De Quincey goes into an alley where he gets off the platform and makes his way back into the tunnels. He returns the platform, and learns that Brookline frequents the wax museum. He is also given an address at which Brookline might be living. He hurries to where Emily, Becker and Ryan are waiting in the coach. Emily fills him in and De Quincey can hardly believe that Brookline is John Williams's son. Joey meets them and they exchange clothes again. De Quincey instructs Joey to approach the house to beg and when there is no answer, he asks Joey to enter for him. In return, Emily promises him schooling and food. Joey gets in and hurries downstairs, hearing a click as he steps on a particular stair. He hears a sound and feels a punching painful sensation in his back. Joey stumbles from the door in agony. Emily rushes to him and sees the crossbow bolt lodged in his shoulder. Becker tells them Dr. Snow lives one block over and he and Emily take Joey there while De Quincey continues to examine the house.

De Quincey has not been in this house in fifty two years and not much has changed. He sees a lamp and is about to light it when the sensation of freezing overcomes him and he stops. Black specks give away the truth that the lamp is a bomb. He backs out of the room, seeing the books on the shelves are all his, along with articles he'd done. De Quincey goes upstairs and discovers more surprises. He finds a whip, and blood stains on Brookline's mattress, as well as two sets of clothing matching the description of the killer's clothing exactly. He tears out a page of one of his books and leaves a note for Brookline telling him that he was there and regrets to have missed him.

Meanwhile, Dr. Snow treats Joey, but not before Emily asks the current patient to go home. The doctor manages to separate the barbed shaft just before De Quincey, Inspector Ryan, and Commissioner Mayne arrive. Sir Mayne is still unsure as to the legitimacy of Brookline's guilt, but there are certainly enough questions that require answers. A constable is left on his doorstep to escort him to Scotland Yard when he returns. Brookline sees him and goes in the back way to find that his home has been violated. He sees De Quincey's note and is livid. Upstairs, his wardrobe is open and his



bedding undone. He has made plans against such an eventuality. He is determined that no trace of who he really was will remain. He rigs the house to burn. Then, he pays a beggar to find De Quincey and tell him that he regrets he wasn't home when De Quincey came to visit. An explosion marks the site where Brookline's house had stood. From a block away, Brookline watches De Quincey's reaction.

They trace Brookline to the wax museum where they are shown the Chamber of Horrors. Standing at the exhibit of John Williams, they are struck by how similar Williams and Brookline appear. After leaving the museum, De Quincey asks the driver to pull up when he sees Doris and Melinda standing on the corner. He tells them he has work for them and suggests that Ryan send for police wagons again.

Analysis

Madame Tussaud would rather work with corpses than live models as they are less impatient than the living. What really strikes Brookline is the look on his father's face. In fact, Brookline has returned to this effigy again and again, unable to restrain himself once he'd seen it the first time. He wonders what kind of man he was. Robert learns the truth about his heritage after someone approaches his mother on the street and calls her Margaret Jewell. The frightened look on her face when she is confronted is enough to have him looking into it, and he is shocked when he learns the truth. When he confronted his mother, she screamed drawing his step-father's attention.

Samuel remembers how fearful everyone was, especially after the first set of murders, and with new information, Robert investigates the second set of murders committed by John Williams. He asks a man to help him read the poster in the tavern's window, and is offered the opportunity to learn how to read at weekly church services. He learns all he can; retracing the steps of his father until one day Samuel catches Robert under a dock with a muzzled cat with its back legs tied. Samuel takes the knife from Robert and frees the cat. When Robert asks his mother if John Williams is his father, she wails and Samuel runs in to see what is wrong. Samuel asks Robert to leave, but Robert wants answers from his mother. He turns, telling Samuel that he can't order him around, and plunges a knife into his mid-section. When Margaret accuses him of being the same monster as his father was, he stabs her as well, and then sets the shack on fire. Having sent a man ahead to secure his privacy, Brookline enters the wax museum and goes directly to the Chamber of Horrors. He stares at the Ratcliffe Highway murder scene again, knowing that it isn't portrayed correctly. The baby and cradle could not be seen from the shop as it is portrayed in this effigy.

Emily tells Margaret to stay at the bakeshop. Since no one knows her there, she'll be safe. When De Quincey learns that they have met Margaret Jewell, he is speechless. Seeing how hard De Quincey is shaking without his laudanum, Ryan orders the driver to stop and goes into a chemist. De Quincey sips prudently, aware of the financial cost of Ryan's gesture, and directs them to the address he feels confident Brookline is residing at - the same one that De Quincey wrote about in his Confessions at which he collapsed next to Ann at so many years ago. Seeing how hard De Quincey is shaking without his



laudanum, Ryan orders the driver to stop and goes into a chemist. De Quincey sips prudently, aware of the financial cost of Ryan's gesture, and directs them to the address he feels confident Brookline is residing at - the same one that De Quincey wrote about in his Confessions at which he collapsed next to Ann at so many years ago. He takes a deep pull of his laudanum before continuing. He finds a Lucifer match and lights it getting a sulfurous rotten egg smell. He lit a candle and quickly blew the match out again.

He looks around and it appears as though Brookline has a more complete collection of De Quincey's work than he has of his own. Some of it is underlined, comments made on the page where room permitted. De Quincey realizes that somehow Brookline connects with his father and with De Quincey himself. Wary of further traps, he goes upstairs and finds blood on the mattress and stepping to the side he opens the wardrobe from which another crossbow is shot. He looks inside and sees a colonel's uniform, evening clothes, a collapsible top hat and a colonel's hat. On top of the wardrobe, he discovers a whip with three strands covered in dried blood. Brookline flagellates himself, and it is likely that the candle stench is deliberate as well. De Quincey leaves him a note, taunting him with the fact that he'd been in Brookline's lair.

At Doctor Snow's residence, Emily uses her forceful personality to send the doctor's current patient home so that he can use his skills to save Joey's life. Since a surgeon is considered to have less prestige than a physician who does nothing beyond diagnosis and pill dispensing, Dr. Snow is reluctant to operate on Joey, but when Emily insists they will do it themselves if he simply instructs them, the doctor steps in. The Commissioner arrives and is unwilling to go upstairs as it is an invasion of Brookline's privacy, but he does agree that there are enough irregularities to warrant bringing him in for a conversation, so he leaves a constable at the door to wait for him. Brookline sees the constable from a distance and avoids contact with him by going through the rear door. He takes note of the fact that someone has been in his home, and is livid when he finds the note from De Quincey. Not only has the man invaded his personal space, but is advertising it.

Upstairs, he can see that all of his secrets have been laid bare. He resists the urge to rage against the invasion of his sanctum, and recognizes that he can't allow this to continue. He uses strips of his sheets to make a long wick that ends with his lamp beside the cot. He lights the flame and leaves watching the events unfold from a block away. He gives a beggar a shilling to go to De Quincey and tell him he was sorry he missed him. He can see the surprise on De Quincey's face when the explosion occurs.

Commissioner Mayne, Ryan, and De Quincey go to the wax museum where its proprietor tells them that Brookline had been there with three other men that morning. They follow her directions to the Chamber of Horrors, surprised to see the resemblance between John Williams and Brookline. De Quincey wonders if Brookline sees himself as the murderer when he looks at the wax figure of his father. They leave the museum and De Quincey gets another report from a beggar that Brookline and three constables went to the docks. Just ahead, Doris and Melinda wait. De Quincey tells them he has work for them. He also suggests they send for the wagons again.



Discussion Question 1

What is the most popular exhibit in the wax museum? Why is it so important?

Discussion Question 2

What is Brookline's connection to the wax museum?

Discussion Question 3

What things does De Quincey discover in Brookline's lair that are unusual and that make it more likely that he is the killer?

Vocabulary

Effigies, reconciliation, austerely, flagellated, malodorous, disruptive, vestibule.



Chapter 16: A Sigh from The Depths

Summary

Brookline and three men from his former regiment in India now dressed like constables head to the opium warehouse at the docks. They had come before under the pretense of checking, all the while concealing gunpowder kegs among the opium bricks. They add more and Brookline tells them he will be leaving that night. He tells his men to help themselves to any rewards they want, providing they burn the buildings behind them. He reminds them to dress as funeral directors when they leave town in the stolen hearses, and exposes a fuse hidden between the opium bricks. He lights a match and from on top of the opium bricks, someone orders him to stop. Ryan, and a group of constables try to stop Brookline who lights the fuse anyway.

Becker and Emily take Margaret to the linen shop owned by Timothy Marr in 1811. Across the street, De Quincey and Commissioner Mayne are already waiting. It is obvious that Brookline intends to blow up the Company docks. With the wind it is likely he will set fire to London in the process. When Ryan tries to pull the fuse out, Brookline slashes his arm and tells him he didn't bring enough help. Brookline gives the signal and bodies begin to fall while the flames rise. Ryan manages to shoot Brookline in the chest and one of the men with him, but the other two manage to escape. Ryan stands over him, hoping he survives to hang for his crimes when Brookline slashes upward quickly, catching Ryan in the stomach with his blade. Ryan shoots again but misses Brookline as more guards come in. Ryan tells them the fuse is lit and that Brookline and two of his men escaped.

Guards join Ryan in attempting to isolate the lit fuses. One is under a stack and can't be reached. They run for the door and someone shoves Ryan ahead and out as the explosion occurs. Brookline runs, ignoring the pain in his chest and telling himself that the wound is not deep. He raises the ladder used as a defensive mechanism by the British East India Company guards at the wall and after he shifts to the other side of the wall, he pushes the ladder away. Dangling from the top, he feels something pop in his chest. He drops to the ground and manages to get to his feet. Only one of the ten explosions has gone off. He runs, passing the landmarks of his youth. Then, he is outside the location where his father committed the second set of murders. The tavern is closed, so he continues on to the location where the first murders occurred. In the grocer's shop across the street, a group waits. They hear the single explosion and speculate as to Ryan's success at the docks.

The Commissioner is ready to leave just as Brookline arrives. De Quincey opens the door and calls out to John Williams. Brookline answers that he is confusing him with someone else, but then the prostitutes whose help De Quincey enlisted begin to call out the name John Williams as well. Finally, the voices change and acknowledge him John Williams' son. Next, Margaret steps out and calls to her son. She tells him how sorry she is that she and John brought him into the world. He justifies the killing he did for



years on behalf of the Company in India. Margaret asks him about the people he slaughtered; but, he continues to justify his behavior until Margaret reaches him. She begins pounding on his chest with her fists. Emily and Becker both work to stop her, and De Quincey begins asking him questions about the murders and how he felt afterward. Brookline admits to feeling guilty and remorseful, but rationalizes his behavior by reminding them all that in India he was paid and even promoted for killing men, women and children. Brookline is walking slowly down the road, De Quincey following, until he reaches the spot under which his father, John Williams is buried. It is there that he dies.

De Quincey passes his condolences on to Margaret, but he was dead to her years already. Becker excuses himself, having heard Brookline brag about how he made Ryan pay for his inability to kill, and hurries back to the docks. He asks about Ryan, and no one seems to know where he is.

Becker follows the blood track to the edge of the dock and off into the water. Half under water, Ryan is hanging by one arm and Becker calls for help, but when they begin to lift him out, his stomach wound separates, and Becker calls out to stop. Becker jumps in and begins to make his way towing Ryan to shore. The others all think Ryan is dead, but Becker sees his lips move, and getting closer he hears the word 'Snow'. Again Dr. Snow is called upon to use his talents as a surgeon. Ryan is cleaned up, and sewn up, surviving because of the cold water.

Becker is promoted to Detective and Lord Palmerston admits he made a mistake. He asks if there is anything he can do, and De Quincey immediately answers that accommodations would be nice. Emily adds that the undertaker should be paid sixteen pounds and the Oxford Street beggars were promised food for the year. In fact, Emily admits to having promised Joey tuition and board in a school. To complicate matters just a little further, she mentions her deal with the prostitutes to be taken to a farm somewhere where they could grow gardens and breathe clean air. Palmerston agrees providing they all agree to say that his office coordinated the arrest of Brookline.

Emily and her father visit with Ryan and tell him they've decided to remain in London for a little while to take in the sights. Becker volunteers to be their escort and Emily ensures that they all begin referring to each other by first names. She surreptitiously looks from Sean to Joseph and finds them both appealing, surprising herself with these thoughts. De Quincey is pleased with the making of a new memory.

Analysis

At the docks, the guard doesn't challenge Brookline, having seen him and his badge on many earlier occasions. He lets Brookline and his men, disguised as constables, in to 'inspect' the opium warehouse. Once there, they check the previous caches of gunpowder and add more. Brookline gives his men last minute instructions, telling them that it is time for him to make a strategic withdrawal. He is about to light a fuse leading to many other fuses in the opium warehouse when Ryan calls out for him to stop. Almost twenty constables enter the warehouse and Brookline tells him their numbers



are insufficient. At a signal from him, he and his three men attack and bodies fall. Ryan tries to get to the fuse Brookline lit, but Brookline slashes him. At the same time, Margaret, Emily, and Becker are arriving at the linen shop Timothy Marr owned in 1811. Margaret is clearly agitated as they join Commissioner Mayne and De Quincey across the street to wait. Ryan shoots Brookline and one of his men as they are trying to leave, and the other two get out. He stands over Brookline, hoping he doesn't die so that he can witness him hang for his crimes. Brookline is not done though, and with lightning speed he stabs Ryan in the stomach. Ryan tries to shoot him again but misses. Brookline escapes with two of his men, while Ryan and the guards attempt to snuff the fuses now spreading. They manage to stop all but one and barely get out of the door before it explodes. Brookline makes it to the fence, all the while convincing himself that his wounds aren't severe or he wouldn't be able to run. He ignores the popping sound in his chest, and his restricted breathing, barely making it over the wall and onto his feet again.

The sound of a single explosion instead of ten is irritating. The city should be starting to burn and instead he sees lanterns and hurries down the road he lived on as a child, past the house he set fire to with his mother and step father inside, and past the church where he learned to read. Clackers are sounding the alarm in the distance as Brookline continues west, heading right to an area of town that is familiar. Brookline can't help but visit the sights where his father murdered so many. He never considers that anyone might be waiting there for him. When he shows up, De Quincey begins, calling him out by his father's name. The prostitutes that De Quincey hired join in the perpetuation of the illusion that he is John Williams. Finally, they concede that he is John Williams' son.

Brookline begins to walk as his mother challenges him, finally facing the monster she bore, and still Brookline walks. De Quincey keeps pace, asking questions. Brookline answers many of his questions, admitting his guilt and feeling no remorse. He succumbs to his wounds on the very spot his father was buried at the crossroads.

Becker manages to locate Ryan and get him to Dr. Snow who, despite his assurances that he is not a surgeon anymore, he sews Ryan up after treating his wounds. Becker is promoted to Detective, and Ryan is reinstated. De Quincey and his daughter decide to remain in London for a while and Becker is happy to act as tour guide.

Discussion Question 1

What does Brookline hope to accomplish overall? What has he done to that end?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Brookline believe that his behavior is justified? What parts of his life can be considered as contributing factors for his behavior?



Discussion Question 3

What was the cost to Lord Palmerston for the investigation after it is complete and he offers his help?

Vocabulary

Obliterated, confiscate, compulsion, converged, voluminous, imperative, demarcation, procrastination.



Characters

Henry John Temple (aka Lord Palmerston)

Lord Palmerston is the Home Secretary in London and is Sir Richard Mayne's superior. He is a powerful man who is eager to settle the case of the recent murders as soon as possible. Beginning in 1807, he influenced the British government by first acting as a Member of Parliament. He then spent nineteen years as the Secretary at War, and a further fifteen years as the secretary for foreign affairs. Now, as the Home Secretary, he is in charge of most anything that occurs on domestic soil, and particularly where national security and police are concerned. Lord Palmerston is seventy years old and has thick, long, dyed brown sideburns that go all the way to his chin. He is a determined man with a strong character but is able to admit when he is wrong. He has De Quincey arrested on two separate occasions - the first to soothe the general public into thinking the killer has been caught, and the second time he orders De Quincey arrested after Brookline makes a strong case as to his possible involvement in the murders. He does not believe that Brookline is in any way responsible for the murders and ignores the clues presented to him by Ryan, allowing Brookline to continue his agenda. Despite not caring for De Quincey as a person, (largely because of his continued use of laudanum), he apologizes to him afterward and acknowledges his misjudgments. He offers De Quincey and De Quincey's daughter accommodations. He also apologizes to both Becker and Ryan, reinstating Ryan and promoting Becker to detective.

Margaret Jewell

Timothy Marr's servant, she had been sent to pay a bill at a bakery and bring back some fresh oysters. When she returned, she found everyone dead. She lives in obscurity for many years, until the murders begin again. Then she knows she no longer has any choice. She must tell the police everything, so she leaves the bakeshop after closing and goes to Scotland Yard to see Detective Ryan. She is there for an entire day before Ryan, Becker and Emily return to the station and then for the first time in over forty years, she tells the whole story. Thirty minutes later, the truth is out. She reveals that her son, Robert Brookline, was the product of her relationship with John Williams. Margaret seeks solace in Westminster Abbey after her conversation with Emily, embarrassed and ashamed of her years of silence. She has the opportunity to confront her son in the end. Finally, she tells him that she is sorry she ever brought him into the world, pounding on his chest and unable to understand how he could be as evil as his father.

Colonel Robert Brookline (aka The Artist of Death)

The artist of death was only eighteen years of age when he went to India. He'd enlisted in the army in London when he was just twelve. Since he was tall for his age he,



claimed he was fourteen years old. He began as a courier. He later graduated to hospital helper. He enjoyed the time he spent in the hospital, having the chance to study the pain the injured soldiers suffered. As an infant, the artist was carried on his mother's back as she gathered coal along the Thames. When he was four years old, his mother met a former soldier, and moved in with him. They both died in a fire. Afterward, at the age of nine, he worked collecting ashes for a dustman and later shoveled horse dropping for fertilizer. Every Sunday, he went to church where a teacher gave him a cookie if he read Bible verses. He lived a difficult life on the streets of London, but his new training took him far beyond anything he'd learned then about survival under difficult circumstances. Slowly, he was transformed into a warrior. He ate better, had better living conditions, and the respect of others. Then he is given a mission to guard the opium caravans from which tons of opium have been stolen. Many of the caravans just vanish. His effort to root out those responsible, along with determining how they accomplished their deeds qualifies him for his next promotion. When the artist of death finally leaves India behind, he returns to London and finds himself working directly in the capacity of security for Lord Palmerston. Still a tall man, he now is in his early forties and has the kind of harsh strong features that communicate a former military posture. Now he is in the unique position of being able to point the finger of accusation in any direction he wants, and he uses the opportunity to settle an old score with De Quincey as well for his articles espousing the use of opiates.

Thomas De Quincey (The Opium Eater)

Known as the author for *Confessions of an Opium-Eater*, Thomas De Quincey earned notoriety for his documentation of laudanum use after nine years of gradually increased use beginning in 1804. By 1813, it took great effort to control his dependency, his consumption rising from the usual dose of a third of a teaspoon to an entire sixteen ounce decanter. Despite his use, or perhaps partially as a result of it, he writes essays of brilliant content but seems unable to write with enough speed that he can support his wife and eight children. By 1854, at the age of sixty nine, Thomas has already survived his wife and three of his children. Only Emily remains unattached, and assumes the responsibility of his care. Thomas is less than five feet tall, and his frame is slight and his eyes are blue. He responds to a call that tells him he can find out what happened to Ann, a prostitute he loved before he met his wife and had children. Ann was the love of his life, and he travels to London to find out, and is instead led on a journey of regret and remorse. He helps Detective Sean Ryan in his investigation of the murders which occur after De Quincey arrives and which are uncomfortably similar to a former murder spree called the Ratcliffe Highway murders which he had written about extensively. His essays get him arrested, where he is almost killed and when he manages to secure his freedom, he is arrested again. He escapes, and enlists the help of a group of beggars and prostitutes to expose the real killer – Robert Brookline.



Sean Ryan

Detective Inspector Sean Ryan is forty years of age on December 10th, 1854. Ryan learns that the investigative methods he uses in London from Eugene Francois Vidocq who was a professional criminal who began working with the Paris police in 1811, are helping them to organize a detective unit. Ryan is five feet, ten inches tall, and is taller than most people around him. He has red hair and is of Irish descent. Both of these issues have caused him problems in London in the mid 1800's because in those days the British public believes that the Irish are slowly taking all of the jobs from British citizens who would otherwise have them. As such, crimes against the Irish are higher, and the Irish and immigrants in general are blamed for most crimes that occur. Ryan typically wears a hat to cover his red hair. He also dresses often as a beggar to blend in with and be ignored by most people. In that disguise, he is able to glean information that would otherwise be unavailable to him. Ryan takes on the aid of a zealous Constable Becker who is first on the scene of the murders committed by Robert Brookline. He allows Becker to investigate the case with him, suggesting he revert to plain clothes, and assigning him tasks otherwise given to Detectives. He is an intelligent man who is able to take in whatever information is available, and can discern that help can come from a myriad of sources, regardless of their history or reputation. Ryan is willing to defy his superiors in the name of justice if required, and even loses his badge at one point because of it. His face is lined with experience, and he has a confidence mixed with gruffness that is oddly appealing.

Joseph Becker

This Constable is the first on the scene at Jonathan's house after the artist leaves via the back door. He is a tall man and has a large physical presence that in itself is discouraging to most criminals. His badge is displayed prominently on his belt and his helmet has the golden initials 'VR' for Victoria Regina. His chin has a scar, acquired during a burglary case. Becker is determined to rise above the rank and file, hoping to become a detective in the elite force in London, and sees the time he spends with Detective Ryan as a once in a lifetime opportunity. He shows his strength and determination when he is left to guard the killer's footprints in the mud and is attacked by two wild pigs. Though he is found by Ryan in the ditch and requires immediate aid from Dr. Snow to avoid cholera, he manages to kill the attacking pigs and salvage the boot prints at the scene. He refuses to allow Dr. Snow to do anything that will compromise his ability to think, and insists on remaining conscious while the doctor tends to his wounds. Then, as soon as the doctor is finished, he hurries back to Inspector Ryan so that he doesn't blow the one chance he has to make an impression on him, and possibly work his way into the detective roster in the future. By making himself indispensable, he not only aids in the investigation, but his contributions earn him an official promotion to detective.



Emily De Quincey

Emily is one of eight children that Thomas De Quincey had with his wife, and in 1854, she is the only who is as yet unattached. She keeps a diary of the time spent with her father, describing her efforts to keep him from abusing laudanum, and documenting her growing concerns regarding his obsessive exercise. Emily is a progressive young woman who prefers to avoid the hoop style dresses of the day, and instead prefers to wear the long and comfortable pants that Amelia Bloomer advocates, with cuffs at the ankles worn under a dress which hangs naturally. Emily has blue eyes like her father, and her brown hair is worn pulled back from her face to behind her head. She is a determined woman who is extremely good at getting what she wants. During the investigation, she works alone to make sure that a group of prostitutes will be able to live on a farm and become healthy by enjoying clean air and growing vegetables. She sees that a young acrobatic beggar will be given tuition and board at a school that is commendable and the undertaker will be paid the sixteen pounds he requires for funeral services for the first set of Brookline's victims. She makes sure that her father's promise to the beggars that food will be provided in abundance for the next year is honored by Lord Palmerston and that she and her father have somewhere to stay other than the house arranged for them by Brookline. It is this kind of drive and determination that not only make her indispensable to her father, but they also make her attractive to both Becker and Ryan.

John Williams

John was a young merchant seaman who had only recently returned from an extended voyage, and was renting a room in a boardinghouse that was located near the area where the Ratcliffe Highway murders occurred in 1811. The former tenant, a ship's carpenter, had left behind a box of tools including a mallet with the initials J.P. stamped into the top. When an anonymous tip identified him as the Ratcliffe Highway murderer, he is detained and subsequently spends Christmas and Boxing Day in Coldbath Fields Prison waiting for questioning. During that time, he is found in his cell, hanging by his neck from a pole used to air out bedding. His suicide is seen as the equivalent of a confession. On New Year's Day, his body is driven by cart past the two murder scenes before his body is staked and buried at the crossroads of Cannon and Cable streets nearby.

Edward Symons

Edward was a servant on a farm. He became enamored with the farmer's wife and when he told her, she laughingly explained why he is just unsuitable. The woman's sisters also joined in humiliating Edward who of course was also dismissed. He stewes about the situation for some time before going to their farmhouse and killing the three women. He reveals to the chaplain later that there was something dark that urged him on and kept pace with him on the right. He is hanged for killing the three women.



Mrs. Warden

Mrs. Warden is a housekeeper who is employed to see to the needs of Thomas De Quincey and his daughter Emily. Mrs. Warden is a God fearing woman who goes to church on Sunday and dresses in a conservative and proper manner.

Sir Richard Mayne

Sir Richard is the Police Commissioner in London at the time of the murders in 1854. He is fifty-eight years of age and has thick gray sideburns that he has grown almost to his chin. He has an aristocratic air about him. Despite the gruesomeness of the scene, he manages to maintain a professional, impassive demeanor, though he is pale when he emerges. Sir Richard was raised in Dublin, and his father had been a judge. Like Ryan, he had endeavored to remove all traces of his Irish heritage.

Dr. John Snow

Dr. John Snow is the doctor who worked during the cholera epidemic. He determined that the disease originated from bad drinking water and was not airborne as previously believed. He is forty one years of age in 1854 and lives at 54 Frith Street in Soho, London where he also runs his office. Dr. Snow had been the doctor at the forefront of the cholera epidemic in September of that year, and had three months later treated Constable Becker after his heroic defence of the footprints found behind the first murder scene. His office holds a collection of live animals from frogs to mice which he uses to determine the correct dosages of a variety of drugs. Dr. Snow has a thin face with intense eyes and a narrow jawline framed by dark sideburns. He has a receding hairline which makes his forehead look unusually high. Once a surgeon, Dr. Snow is now a physician.

Eugene Francois Vidocq

A professional criminal who went to work for the Paris police in 1811, helping to organize a detective unit. He went on to form the first private detective agency when he stopped working with police 1843, having created a plainclothes unit that assumed the personae of drunkards infiltrate taverns and even become beggars if required.

Ann

Ann is a girl who took pity on Thomas De Quincey in his youth. She was sixteen years of age at the time and a streetwalker by necessity of her circumstances. De Quincey falls in love with her and vows to spend his life with her. However, fate keeps them from meeting again. De Quincey never stops loving her, but he never learns the truth about what happened to her.



Joey

Joey is a young beggar who is a skilled acrobat. He worked under a dustman for some time and knows his way around chimneys and tight spaces. De Quincey enlists his aid to enter the house where Brookline is staying. In doing so, Joey is shot by a crossbow in the shoulder which was set up by Brookline to catch intruders. Joey is taken to Dr. Snow who patches him up after removing the bolt. Emily sees to it that her promise to him of tuition and board in a commendable school is fulfilled.

Malay

A man who arrives at the crime scene in search of De Quincey to give him a message regarding Ann and what happened to her. The Malasian speaks no English and appeared to De Quincey once before at his home in the Lake District. After listening to De Quincey try one incomprehensible language after another in an effort to communicate with him, he finally falls asleep on the kitchen floor. An hour later he left. This time, he gives De Quincey a note that tells him he can learn what happened to Ann if he comes to Vauxhall Gardens the next morning.

Madame Tussaud

As the proprietor of the Wax Museum in London, Madame Tussaud prefers to create her wax impressions from models who are corpses as they never complain about having to spend so much time immobile, despite the finished product. During the French Revolution, she had toured the local morgue frequently, seeking well-known victims from which she could make death masks. She toured Europe with her collection, and finally settled in London. Her wax museum attracts a wide variety of customers. Despite their interest in notable people, most of them really want to view the Chamber of Horrors. This contains the wax effigies of the most notorious criminals and their crimes. Of course, John Williams and his murders are prominently shown there as well.

Samuel Brookline

A retired army sergeant, Samuel Brookline was a Battle of Waterloo veteran, and he later worked for a dustman, collecting coal ashes. Samuel adopts Margaret Jewel's son. Robert is soon thought of as Brookline's son, just as Margaret is thought of as his wife although they never married.



Symbols and Symbolism

Hansom Cab

The Hansom cab is a mode of transportation used in London during the 1800's. This is the kind of transportation taken by the artist of death to the Adelphi Theater.

The Corsican Brothers

This is the name of the performance held at the Adelphi Theater. The play is unique in that it has two first acts meant to take place simultaneously but occurring in sequence.

Clacker

This is an object carried by a Constable used to raise an alarm when necessary. It is made of wood and has a weighted blade on a handle that makes a snapping sort of sound when spun.

London Police Department

Established in 1829, it was the first of England's organized law enforcement agencies.

Bobbies or Peelers

This is the name given to the Metropolitan Police created by Sir Robert Peel.

Laudanum

This is a ruby colored liquid which consists of 10 percent opium and 90 percent alcohol. It was invented in the 1500's and refined in the 1600's. It was used as a medicinal aid for everything from headaches to nervous disorders. Addiction was not understood or appreciated. Laudanum could be purchased from any druggist without prescription. As such, a considerable number of the millions who used it daily suffered from a dependency.

Bloomers

These are a type of under trousers that are advocated by Amelia Bloomer in the 1800's. They were used in place of the traditional hoop skirt and worn by progressive women of the day. They are long, with cuffs at the bottom. They are usually worn under a naturally



hanging dress. Mocked and ridiculed, many women still wear them in order to avoid the restrictive clothing that is the norm of convention.

Chloroform

Dispensed via a mask from a metal container, chloroform is a gas based anesthetic which was developed in the 1850's. It was used by Queen Victoria during the birth of her eighth child.

Plaster of Paris

This substance was used by Detective Ryan to make a cast of the killer's footprints.

Crossroads

This is the corner of Cannon and Cable streets where John Williams is buried under a paving stone.

Pater Noster

This is another name for 'Our Father.'

Williams Lectures

This name was given to the lectures that were delivered about the great murders of history. The lectures were named for John Williams who was the man accused of the Ratcliffe Highway murders.

On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts

This is the title of the book that De Quincey wrote which chronicled the events of the Ratcliffe Highway multiple murders in great detail.

London Necropolis Railway

This is a special train used to transport mourners and the deceased to the Brookwood cemetery twenty-five miles away.



Pall Mall

This is a mallet and ball game popular in the Westminster district in the 1600's. It was so popular that a street was named for it north of St. James's Park.

Chartists

This is the name of the group of laborers who had assembled in London in 1848 intending to march on Parliament. The group demanded yearly elections, universal voting privileges, and the rights for all to vote regardless of property ownership.

Screws

This is the nickname given to guards in the prison. It came about because guards tightened the screws on the tread wheel to make prisoners turning it work harder.

Treadwheel

The turning of the treadwheel by prisoners powered the various machines in the prison's bakery and laundry. Each prisoner was required to 'power' the treadwheel with a minimum of eight thousand steps/feet each daily.

London Labour and the London Poor

This is a four volume study that looks at the methods by which an estimated fifty thousand individuals make their living on the streets of London in 1854.

British East India Company

This company was operating out of east India since 1830 when they first arrived in Calcutta. They claim their profits were garnered from the shipment of tea, spices, silk, and niter (the main ingredient in saltpeter).

Gunpowder

Gunpowder is created by mixing sulfur, saltpeter, and powdered charcoal.

Wax Effigy

This is a wax rendition of a person, an event, or both, displayed in the Wax Museum created by Madame Tussaud.



Settings

Strand

The strip of road where the Adelphi Theater is located.

Adelphi Theater

The theater in which a play, The Corsican Brothers, is performed. The artist of death uses this setting as his alibi.

Whitehall District

This is the district in London in which the Metropolitan Police and the detective bureau are located.

Great Scotland Yard

Great Scotland Yard is the name of the street on which the police department was located. The police department was later named after this street.

East End's Wapping District

The district in which the multiple murders occurred in December of 1854.

Edinburgh

This is where Thomas De Quincey lives until he receives information regarding a woman from his youth named Ann.

London

This is the city in which the murders referred to as the Ratcliff Murders in 1811 and the copycat murders in 1854 occurred.

Manchester Grammar School

Thomas De Quincey attended Manchester Grammar School.



Great Titchfield Street

This was the customary rendezvous spot for Ann and Thomas. It was the place where they were supposed to meet.

Frith Street, Soho

This is where Dr. Snow lived in London in 1854.

Red Sandstone Cliffs

Located above the Thames, the murders in 1811 are named after Red Sandstone Cliffs because of their locale.

Ratcliff Highway

This is the highway that runs beneath the red sandstone cliffs above the Thames.

Coldbath Fields Prison

This is the prison in which John Williams is held in 1811 from Christmas to New Years. He is discovered hanging in his cell. This is also where De Quincey is taken to be kept safe as Scotland Yard's consultant. He is almost killed there.

Paternoster Row

This is the street that is the center of London's publishing world,. It received its name in the 1300's because the monks in nearby St. Paul's Cathedral could be heard chanting the Pater Noster.

Edinburgh, Scotland

This is where De Quincey normally resides and where his publisher is also located.

Waterloo Bridge Train Station

This is where Becker and Ryan go after learning that De Quincey lives and publishes in Edinburgh. They go there so that they can send a message requesting immediate contact from De Quincey.



Royal Greenwich Observatory

This is the place where the measurement of time is taken that will be used by every railroad clock and every timepiece throughout England.

James Hogg, Publisher

He is Quincey's publisher. He lives in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Brookwood Cemetery

Brookwood Cemetery is located twenty-five miles outside of London. The London Necropolis Railway Station transported mourners and the deceased to this cemetery.

Lothian Street, Edinburgh

This is the location of one of the houses that De Quincey occupies. It is where he stores newspapers from the Ratcliffe Highway murders that he obtained while researching for his essay on the subject.

Vauxhall Gardens

This is the site that De Quincey is summoned to via a message from a mysterious Malay man who speaks no English.

France

This is where the original upheavals began with a revolution in 1789.

Hoddesdon, Middlesex

This is the location of a series of murders committed by Edward Symons.

Farrington Road

This is the road that runs on the north side of the Thames, and leads to Mount Pleasant Street on which Coldbath Fields Prison is located. Farrington Road is usually crowded with costermongers, dustmen, and street sweepers.



Wax Museum

This museum houses a collection of famous people who are captured in wax effigies by Madame Tussaud. It is complete with familiar faces and culminates in a Chamber of Horrors – an obvious favorite of most customers.

Chamber of Horrors

The section of Madame Tussaud's wax museum that depicts famous and infamous deaths including beheadings and multiple murders.

King's Arms Tavern

This is where John Williams committed his second set of murders. It is located on New Gravel Lane.

Cable and Cannon Streets

These streets form the crossroads under which John Williams was buried and on top of which Brookline dies.

Crystal Palace

This is a tall glass structure that is large enough for full grown elms to grow inside. After the Great Exhibition, it was taken apart at Hyde Park and reassembled at Sydenham Hill.



Themes and Motifs

Medicinal Opiate Relief vs Addiction

This novel touches on the difficulties faced by many in London and elsewhere in the 1800's when opiates were freely prescribed for everything from headaches to stomach maladies. Considered to be a virtual cure-all, opium was available in drug stores for medicinal uses, in taverns for recreation, and was a staple that no home should be without. The sector of the population that had wealth often sought relief from a variety of illnesses for which opium would be prescribed. The poor sector used what they could get to relieve pain and to ease the condition of their lives. In short, many people used opium on a regular basis in this time period. There was no discussion about the addictive properties of this 'medicine' and those who found that they suffered without the use of an ever increasing amount of opium mostly suffered in silence. An entire segment of the population hid behind closed curtains and suffered in silence as a result of the use of opium.

This issue was not confined to London. In India, opium is normal. It was used by the British East India Company as a commodity to facilitate the purchase of tea from China. The fact that it was illegal in China just made the exchange a little more challenging. The company dealt with constant theft, shipment ambushes and counseled their soldiers against using opium. They made the issues of addiction and lack of ability to function correctly something that they drilled into each new soldier, using De Quincey's book about his own struggles as a manual and required reading.

Nature vs Nurture

In this age old debate, the questions are posed, "Is a person predisposed to having psychological make up that mimics one parent or the other? Is a child predestined to behave in the same manner as their parents simply because of their DNA or could nurturing in an entirely opposite environment produce a child who has little or no similarities to their parents?" Robert Brookline is raised by his mother and the soldier named Samuel Brookline that she met after having Robert as a result of her relationship with John Williams. Samuel raised Robert, giving him his name, and trying to teach him how to be a good man. He helped him get work with him as he got older, and tried to correct him when to his horror, he caught him torturing defenseless animals.

Robert started out as though he might become a decent man, but from the time he first learned who his father was, he began to change. It was almost as though the knowledge alone opened the door inside him to another side of himself, in a way giving him permission to act in a deviant manner. Robert would visit the sites at which his father committed the murders and imagine the events unfolding before him. Questions remain. Would Robert have taken the road to murder if he hadn't discovered the truth



about his father? Could a nurturing home overcome the nature of the blood ties? Which is stronger - nature or nurture?

Expectations and Experience vs Reality

In this novel, Inspector Sean Ryan is tasked with the job of finding and stopping the person who murdered five people including a seven year old and a baby. The shopkeeper, his wife and a servant girl are also killed in this crime. When he is investigating, Ryan learns that the murders bear a striking similarity to the Ratcliffe Highway murders committed more than 40 years earlier, and the foremost expert on that subject is the man who wrote extensively about it - Thomas De Quincey. Ryan seeks out De Quincey who consults with him on the case despite Ryan being forced to arrest him at one point as the killer, and put him in jail.

De Quincey is released however, and at one time he explains how easy it is to misinterpret what your eyes are seeing based solely on the experiences that you have had or the information you've learned. To prove his point, De Quincey tells him about a gift once received by an Indian emperor. A British diplomat gave a coach to an Indian emperor as a gift and because the emperor enjoyed exalted status at home, he presumed that the driver's seat - the highest seat available - was supposed to be his. The driver, who had no status to speak of, remained hidden within the coach, holding the reins through holes, but unable to see. The coach was soon parked and never used again because of his lack of understanding of the gift.

De Quincey is trying to explain that the killer set the scene to achieve a particular result. He deliberately set the stage for a maximum of pity and fear. Under normal circumstances, he explains, the murders would have been discovered the following morning, one body at a time and with maximum horror effect reached by each new discovery. The motive in this case is not robbery, revenge or any of the usual motives a detective might find. Instead, it was a desired effect that he did not achieve.

The Benefits of Revolution

Lord Palmerston is an influential man in the British empire. He began as war secretary, then moved on to foreign secretary and then to home secretary. In each position, he cultivated the various operatives that he now meets with twice a year in secret so that they can describe their progress. He uses his reputation as a ladies' man to cover these meetings, and provides funding for the men and their mission. The mission itself is a simple one. It is an effort to keep the British empire strong while ensuring that other countries in Europe are weakened by revolutions and upheavals - most started by the men he has enlisted to his aid. Each man is referred to by an alias that identifies only the country in which he is working. Between meetings, he keeps careful tabs on each man in this group, knowing everything about them so that they are aware that they are truly always on his mind. Palmerston's contributions include supplying the funding for weapons, ammunition, printing presses, explosives and alcohol to fuel the mobs so that



they will use the weapons provided when the time is right. Of course, revolution can have a life of its own. In 1848, he'd been forced to commission 150,000 special constables to preserve order when as many 'Chartists' assembled in London intending to march on Parliament. In that case, he had almost gone too far.



Styles

Point of View

Murder As A Fine Art as written by David Morrell is a story told in singular narrative from a third person omniscient perspective. The story unfolds beginning with the preparations made by the artist of death as he readies himself to commit the first of two multiple murders. Copying and expanding on the manner in which the Ratcliffe Highway murders were committed, the artist of death not only honors his father's horrific display by repeating it, but also manages to improve on it by adding victims and increasing the element of public fear by disguising himself as first a sailor, and then a police sergeant. These details create an overall tableau of mistrust and anger in the public.

Along with these segments of third person omniscient narrative, there are segments included from Emily's journal which detail her experiences with her father while they are in London. As they are segments that are taken from her personal journal, they are all told in the first person perspective by Emily herself, and provide insights into De Quincey's history and lifestyle giving some clues as to why the artist of death finds it necessary to include De Quincey in his elaborate plans.

Language and Meaning

This story takes place in the mid 1800's in London, England. It is a time of great unrest throughout Europe, fueled by the secret machinations of Lord Palmerston and a handful of operatives that he supports financially and instructs in an effort to destabilize all but the British empire. In this time period, there are a great many people who rely on begging of one sort or another to survive. Up to fifty thousand beggars work the streets, dependant on the handouts of others, while still another great number work in a service capacity, providing either chimney sweeping, selling flowers or goods they grew or created, or serving the upper class in one form or another.

This is also a time in which criminology is in its infancy. Eugene Francios Vidocq - a professional criminal - instructs others in the methods of infiltration, disguise and detection which leads to the world's first private detective agency. Sean Ryan is one of the detectives who studied under Vidocq and is in charge of solving the recent murders which bear a remarkable resemblance to a series of murders committed in 1811 by John Williams.

The time period in which this novel takes place is one in which opiates were widely used by both upper and lower class. Since the addictive properties are not understood, there are a great number of the population who struggle with ongoing use and abuse of the drug. British government recognizes the addictive properties, and soldiers who are sent to India to work for the British East India Company are instructed not to partake of



opium in any form, despite the fact that opium is regularly traded with China for tea and other goods.

Structure

Murder as a Fine Art is a novel of two hundred and ninety seven pages, which are divided into sixteen chapters. Each chapter ranges in length from nine to twenty five pages and the average length is nineteen pages. The chapters are further separated by segments of the story as told by Emily De Quincey whose journal entries make up a portion of the content.

The novel begins with the artist of death and his preparations for murder. He uses the same mallet as was used in the Ratcliffe Highway murders that he emulates, but is determined to improve on. He uses elaborate disguises and sets up an alibi to cover his actions. The next chapter introduces London's Inspector Sean Ryan. He is a man who has studied the investigative techniques that are the new standard for detectives and he is assigned to investigate the murders. The next major character introduced is Thomas De Quincey who is the author of many books and essays on the subject of the Ratcliffe Highway murders, and more personal insights into his use and abuse of laudanum and other efforts of self examination. The third chapter is where Emily De Quincey's journal entries begin, allowing explanations and examinations of her father and his interaction in London.

The remaining chapters contain a mix of journal entries and third person omniscient narratives which culminate in the solution of not only the current crimes but reveal the reasons for the Ratcliffe Highway murders as well.



Quotes

Make sure the neighbors understand that even the slightest detail that seemed out of place can be important.

-- Sean Ryan (Chapter 2 paragraph 23)

Importance: This quote reveals the new methods by which Ryan now investigates any crime scene which are based on the techniques as taught by Eugene Francois Vidocq and are now standard policy.

What would I need to do to become a detective?

-- Constable Becker (Chapter 2 paragraph 85)

Importance: This question reveals Becker's interest in going from being a Constable to becoming a detective. It is this drive and ambition that keep him at Ryan's side as he investigates this high profile murder.

We need to clean him thoroughly before he comes into the office.

-- Dr. Snow (Chapter 4 paragraph 7)

Importance: After reading the note from Ryan, Dr. Snow recognizes the potential for disaster. Afraid to restart the cholera epidemic he'd only recently helped put an end to three months earlier, he takes extra precautions.

All other murders look pale by the deep crimson of his.

-- Thomas De Quincey (Chapter 5 paragraph 23)

Importance: De Quincey is referring to the murders committed by John Williams in his comments within the book "On Murder Considered One of The Fine Arts," and it is this offering that contributes to his arrest in the newest murders which were committed by Robert Brookline.

These killings were committed less for the pleasure of slaughtering the victims and more for the dramatic way they would be discovered.

-- De Quincey (Chapter 6 paragraph 101)

Importance: De Quincey's commentary regarding the newest murders committed by Robert Brookline and his comparison of them to those that were committed by his father in 1811.

If we put him in prison, the public will breathe easier, convinced that we're doing something.

-- Lord Palmerston. (Chapter 7 paragraph 32)

Importance: Lord Palmerston is trying to avoid further rioting and fear. Since De



Quincey is not only widely known to be addicted to opium but also to have written about the Ratcliffe Highway murders in great detail, he is an obvious suspect despite his age.

Destabilizing Europe is the only way to protect the empire.
-- Lord Palmerston (Chapter 8 paragraph 39)

Importance: Lord Palmerston meets in secret with a special group of individuals who are entrusted by him to help him destabilize Europe in order to keep the British empire strong. His efforts are a culmination of his methodical progression from war secretary to home secretary - an ascension that allowed him to establish the network by which he manages to incite the workers to keep Europe in upheaval.

But I know the truth about the ones that happened back then, and Lord help me, I'm afraid I know who killed those people on Saturday night.
-- Margaret Jewell (Chapter 9 paragraph 68)

Importance: Margaret tries to explain her relationship to the Ratcliffe Highway murders and how she believes they are related directly to the murders that have recently occurred.

Yes, the driver's wearin' a constable's uniform, but so was the killer when he slaughtered fifteen poor souls in a tavern.
-- A man in the crowd outside the tavern. (Chapter 11 paragraph 27)

Importance: This comment is made by one of the crowd outside the tavern where the most recent murders were committed. Since the killer used a constable's uniform to move about without impediment in the tavern and a sailor's uniform in the clothing store, the growing crowd now trusts neither.

All the empire's wars need financing, and we have the British East India Company to thank for making them possible.
-- Sergeant in the British East India Company. (Chapter 12 paragraph 23)

Importance: The Sergeant explains that the British East India Company loaned the British government a million pounds to help finance the Seven Years' War. In exchange, the British government gave the company the exclusive rights to trade with China and India. As such, he explains further, when the British East India Company is protected, the soldiers by extension are really protecting the British government.

The purpose of a prison is to isolate the offender and force him to meditate on his transgressions.
-- Governor of Coldbath Fields Prison. (Chapter 9 paragraph 135)

Importance: The Governor is trying to explain his theories on 'prison reform' in response to Emily's questions and observations, arguing against the views of Jeremy Bentham whom she quotes. It is apparent from his comments that in his prison,



prisoners are kept in isolation, hooded whenever removed from their cells and kept apart at all times. Conversation is forbidden.

Does reality exist objectively, or is it a subjective projection of our thoughts?

-- De Quincey (Chapter 11 paragraph 105)

Importance: De Quincey uses Immanuel Kant's quote to explain that reality is a matter of perspective and that Ryan's perspectives and preconceived notions are what prevent him from seeing the reality in front of him.