

Odd Thomas Study Guide

Odd Thomas by Dean Koontz

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Plot Summary

Odd Thomas by Dean Koontz is the story of a young man, who, through circumstances out of his control, finds himself in a position to save the lives of hundreds of his friends and neighbors. Odd Thomas is a fry cook who can see dead people and shadow-like forms he calls bodachs. When Odd sees these bodachs around a stranger, he knows that trouble is coming to his hometown of Pico Mundo, California. Odd feels a sense of responsibility to stop whatever tragic events are about to unfold, so he puts aside personal concerns in order to uncover the coming darkness and stop it. Odd puts himself in danger to save the innocent. Odd never wanted to be a hero, especially not at the high price he is forced to pay. Odd Thomas is a novel that is at once humorous and filled with terror that will leave even readers new to Koontz's unique style begging for more.

Odd Thomas wakes on a normal Tuesday morning ready to enjoy the challenge of making pancakes for the many customers of the Pico Mundo Grille. Odd is sidetracked by Penny Kallisto, a beautiful young girl, who was tragically murdered. Penny wants Odd to stop her killer. Odd communicates with Penny, not through speech, but through some sort of telepathic communication that leaves him aching for the horror young Penny experienced before her death. Odd sees her killer coming his way, a young man his own age with whom he went to school. Odd meets the killer on the street and tells him that he knows about Penny, about the cloth with Penny's blood on it that he keeps in his pocket to remember their time together.

The killer takes off and Odd chases him through his neighbors' backyards until finally the killer breaks into a family home and hides in their child's bedroom. Odd fights with the young man and keeps him restrained until the police arrive. Police chief Wyatt Porter arrives and speaks to Odd, getting the whole story, including Odd's communication with Penny. Porter knows about Odd's strange gift and has often taken his word in order to solve cases he might not otherwise have been able to solve. However, Porter also knows how important it is to Odd that his secret remain a secret, so, like in the other cases, Porter agrees to write his report in such a way as to protect Odd.

Odd goes in to work, late but satisfied with the morning's events. While working the grill at the Pico Mundo Grille, Odd notices a stranger enter the diner. This stranger, a greasy looking guy Odd dubs Fungus Man, has in his company several shadow-like entities that only Odd can see. Odd calls these entities bodachs, using the term that he once heard another young man use. This other young man is the only other person Odd knows could see the bodachs. However, when this young man spoke the bodachs' name, he was killed in a freak accident minutes later. Odd is careful not to let these creatures know he can see them.

Odd watches Fungus Man and his dark companions. Bodachs only appear when something catastrophic is about to happen, so Odd finds himself wondering who this stranger is. Odd borrows his boss's car and finds Fungus Man at the mall where he



appears to be on a shopping spree. Later Odd follows Fungus Man to his home. Odd waits for Fungus Man to leave again before he breaks into his house, hoping to uncover some evidence that will tell Odd what the man is planning that has the bodachs interested in him. Odd has never seen so many bodachs concentrated in one place before, not even when an earthquake destroyed a nursing home and killed dozens of its residents.

While in Fungus Man's house, Odd notices that the house is unusually cold despite the lack of air conditioning and the dry heat of the summer afternoon. While checking out the rooms, Odd comes across a bedroom that is strangely dark. Odd enters this room and sees a red light at a distance. Odd walks toward the light, walking much further than seems possible in the small room, until suddenly he finds himself in the living room of the house. Odd returns to the hallway and catches sight of himself entering the black room. It seems Odd has been transported back in time. Odd reenters the room and this time he finds himself outside the house, seemingly thrown forward in time.

Odd reenters the home just in time to see hundreds of bodachs leaving the dark room. Odd watches, beginning to suspect that the black room is some sort of portal between our time and that of the bodachs, or perhaps a portal between their dimension and ours. When all the bodachs are gone, Odd goes back to the black room and discovers it has been returned to a normal bedroom that Fungus Man uses as some sort of office. Odd searches the office and discovers Fungus Man has a fascination with serial and spree killers. Odd also finds evidence that Fungus Man aspires to be a serial or spree killer himself and that whatever he intends to do will begin the following day.

Odd goes to Porter's house and tells him what he has found. Porter recruits one of his men, who happens to be at his house for a barbecue, and together they put together a report on Fungus Man and put out word to their officers to watch out for him. Odd then goes to his friend Ozzie's house where he sees Fungus Man watching the house. Later, when Odd goes to have dinner with his girlfriend, Stormy, he discovers that Fungus Man has followed him there as well. Stormy and Odd run from Fungus Man only to hear him destroying rooms in their wake.

Odd calls Porter to inform him of Fungus Man's antics, then he and Stormy go to the bowling alley. Odd has been having dreams in which he sees employees of the bowling alley dead of gunshot wounds. Odd worries that Fungus Man intends to shoot up the bowling alley and would like to warn the employees, but cannot figure out how to do it without causing a panic. Later, Odd takes Stormy home and then returns home himself, only to discover that Fungus Man is dead and was left in Odd's apartment in an apparent attempt to set him up for murder. Odd takes Fungus Man out of his apartment and hides his body in order to give Odd more time to figure out what Fungus Man was planning. It is clear to Odd that the plan is still in action because bodachs still swarm the town.

Eventually, Odd realizes that Fungus Man had a fascination with Satan and that one of Porter's officers has a tattoo similar to one Fungus Man sported. Odd uses his psychic gifts to find this cop. Odd is directed to the mall, where he follows his instincts and



happens upon a masked gunman coming out of a security office. Odd stops this gunman, but knows there are more. Odd goes into the mall, where he finds a gunman shooting randomly at shoppers on the promenade. Despite a dislike for guns, Odd uses one to stop this madman. Moments later, Odd's psychic gifts tell him that the massacre is not over. Odd goes into a loading dock where he finds a truck loaded with enough explosives to take down an entire corner of the three-story mall. Odd manages to disarm the bomb, but not before a third gunman fires several bullets into his back.

Odd is taken to the hospital where he recovers from his injuries. Stormy is at his side the entire time. When he is released from the hospital, Odd hides out in Stormy's apartment with her, trying to avoid the reporters who want an interview with the hero. After a few days, Odd's closest friends come to Stormy's to force him to face reality. Stormy was killed in the shootings at the mall. Odd says goodbye to Stormy and watches as she crosses over to the other side.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

Odd Thomas by Dean Koontz is the story of a young man who, through circumstances out of his control, finds himself in a position to save the lives of hundreds of his friends and neighbors. Odd Thomas is a fry cook who can see dead people and shadow-like forms he calls bodachs. When Odd sees these bodachs around a stranger, he knows that trouble is coming to his hometown of Pico Mundo, California. Odd feels a sense of responsibility to stop whatever tragic events are about to unfold, so he puts aside personal concerns in order to uncover the coming darkness and stop it. Odd puts himself in danger to save the innocent. Odd never wanted to be a hero, especially not at the high price he is forced to pay. Odd Thomas is a novel that is at once humorous and filled with terror that will leave even readers new to Koontz's unique style begging for more.

Odd Thomas is an ordinary, everyday man, who just happens to have the ability to see dead people. Odd does not aspire to anything bigger than working in a tire store. However, a friend of Odd's, Little Ozzie, has advised him to write down this story as a sort of catharsis, a way to deal with a difficult experience. Odd does not want money for his story. In fact, Odd has no intention of publishing this book in his lifetime for fear that public knowledge of his special gift will make his life more complicated than he can handle.

Odd's story begins on an ordinary Tuesday morning. Odd wakes in his apartment from a recurring dream in which he sees employees of a bowling alley shot in a horrific bloodbath. Odd has often worried over this dream, sure it will some day come true. However, he does not know when or where, and this causes Odd undue stress as he worries over how he might stop it. Shaking the dream, Odd dresses for his job at the Pico Mundo Grille, where he is very proud to be a fry cook; however, work will have to wait today. As Odd leaves his apartment, he encounters Penny Kallisto, a young girl who was murdered some time before. Penny picks up a sea shell and hands it to Odd. When Odd holds the shell to his ear, he can hear the horrific cry of a monster. Penny then points to a car that is coming toward them on the street.

Odd recognizes the driver as Harlo Landerson, a young man with whom Odd went to high school. Harlo had a difficult childhood with an abusive father, so he spent a great deal of his time rebuilding his prize possession, a 1968 Pontiac Firebird 400. Harlo is driving that car right now as he delivers papers to the still sleeping residents of Pico Mundo. When Harlo stops his car in front of Odd, he is polite and seems pleased to see an old acquaintance. As Odd looks at him, however, he is filled with visions of Penny's terrible death. Odd accuses Harlo, telling him that he knows about the piece of cloth in Harlo's pocket that has Penny's blood on it. Harlo becomes frightened and jumps out of his car, taking off at a sprint away from Odd.



Chapter 1 Analysis

Odd begins his story by talking directly to the reader and explaining his reasons for writing this book. Odd has a story to tell, but his reasons for writing it down are deeply personal. Odd wants to find a way to deal with something terrible, a loss he does not know how to handle. Odd tells his reader that he does not intend to publish his story during his lifetime because he does not want his special gifts to be known by the public due to the stress this might bring into his life. This writing is deeply personal. Odd also warns that he will be an unreliable narrator in this story, hiding a truth from the reader until the end of the novel that if known at the beginning would change the tone of the story. All of this combines to give the reader an impression of Odd's personality, creating a character that is at once lovable and a man who elicits the reader's deepest empathy.

Odd Thomas can see dead people. Odd illustrates this fact by showing the reader how his Tuesday morning began with a chance meeting with Penny Kallisto, a young Pico Mundo girl who was murdered. Penny has unfinished business in the living world and reaches out to Odd for help. Penny cannot speak for reasons Odd does not know, but she is able to communicate to him both the horror of her death and the identity of the man who committed the heinous act. Penny wants Odd to bring this man to justice. Odd is saddened to learn the killer is someone he knows; however, Odd confronts the man on his own, without any sort of protection. This again illustrates Odd's personality, his bravery, and his desire to help anyone who needs it, including the dead.

Odd also mentions a dream in this chapter. The dream is of a group of bowling alley employees who are shot to death. Odd does not know where this bowling alley is located or when this tragedy will take place, but he has been having this dream for a long time. This dream seems to be just a dream to the reader, but Odd is troubled by it. Odd believes this dream has real world meaning and that it might come true. Odd has had other dreams of this type that have come true. Therefore, this dream could possibly foreshadow an event that will take place later in the novel, warning the reader of a darkness waiting as the plot continues to develop.



Chapters 2-4

Chapters 2-4 Summary

Harlo runs through the backyards of some of the neighboring houses. Odd catches up to him, grabs him from behind, and they tumble into a swimming pool. Harlo jumps out of the pool and continues to run. Harlo goes into the house where the swimming pool is, disappearing before Odd can follow. When Odd does, the female owner of the house is in the kitchen yelling to someone to lock their door. Odd runs to the stairs to find Harlo in the hallway holding a small child. Harlo begins throwing furniture down the stairs to slow Odd down. The little boy gets free of Harlo and runs into his bedroom. Harlo follows, trying to get the child out from under the bed where he has gone to hide, but is unable to pull him out. Odd reaches the bedroom and begins to struggle with Harlo. Seconds later, they hear police sirens in the distance. Harlo turns to the bedroom door, but the female owner of the house is standing there with a knife. Harlo seems to know he is trapped and sits in the corner of the bedroom, awaiting his fate.

The police arrive and take Harlo away. Odd is left alone in the small boy's bedroom with Penny, who seems to express her gratitude before disappearing. Chief of police, Wyatt Porter, comes into the room. Porter is one of a few people who know about Odd's unique gifts. Porter tries to help Odd protect his secret at times like these by keeping his involvement in the apprehension of a criminal as minimal as possible in his reports. This time it seems they will get a full confession from Harlo, so there is no reason for Odd's involvement to be mentioned in the police reports. Odd returns to his apartment and changes his clothes. Odd then goes to visit his landlady so he can tell her she is still visible. Mrs. Sanchez lost her husband to a heart attack in the middle of the night a few years ago. Just a few short months after his death, Mrs. Sanchez was supposed to take a trip with her three sisters and their families to New England but decided not to go because she was still grieving. Mrs. Sanchez's three sisters and their families were on board a plane that was flown into one of the towers at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. In her grief, Mrs. Sanchez believes her family to simply be invisible and that they will one day become visible again. In the meantime, Mrs. Sanchez is afraid that she will become invisible and her family will not be able to see her.

Odd leaves Mrs. Sanchez and begins to make his way to work. While walking in the street, Odd sees several entities that he calls bodachs. Bodachs are shadow-like beings that are as big as men but move with the grace of a cat. The bodachs are evil, attracted to dark events where a great number of lives are changed or lost. Odd does not understand what these entities are, but the only other person he ever knew who could see them lost his life seconds after speaking their name out loud. Odd is very careful to make sure these entities do not learn he can see them.



Chapters 2-4 Analysis

Odd follows Harlo as he runs through neighboring yards, tackling him once so they fall into a pool. Odd continues after Harlo even when he breaks into a house and tries to take a child hostage. Odd seems very brave, but the reader can tell by the way he presents the story that he does not feel he is a hero or that he is very brave. Odd is cautious in his movements and regretful that he has no choice but to follow Harlo. It seems to Odd that chasing Harlo is a moral issue, touching on the theme of morality, and that he feels that he has no choice in the matter. Odd's approach to catching Harlo underscores his sense of right and wrong as well as proving that he takes his gift and the responsibility that comes with it seriously. Another person might have ignored Penny's cries for help, but Odd acted on them, and this makes him an honorable, if slightly eccentric, person.

Chief Porter is introduced here. Porter knows about Odd's gift and chooses to help Odd hide it from the public so his life is not turned upside down. Porter also does his best to keep people in the police department from knowing about the help Odd often offers, protecting him from the public learning his secret. Odd is concerned that if people know he can see the dead, he will never have peace. Peace is important to Odd, as the reader can guess from the fact that this is not the first time he has voiced concerns over his secret becoming public.

Mrs. Sanchez is introduced here as well. Mrs. Sanchez is Odd's landlady. Mrs. Sanchez has suffered through the horrible deaths of her husband, her three sisters, and their families. As a result, Mrs. Sanchez has convinced herself that her family is simply invisible and they will one day be visible to her again. Mrs. Sanchez fears, however, that she will become invisible before they return and they will not be able to see her. Odd reassures her every morning that she is still visible. This introduces a minor theme of the novel, death and grieving. It also further illustrates Odd's kind heart as he takes the responsibility of assuring Mrs. Sanchez that she is still visible every morning very seriously, despite the fact that others might believe Mrs. Sanchez is mentally imbalanced or a silly old woman.

Finally, Odd sees bodachs on his way to work. Bodachs are explained to be dark shadow-like creatures that seem to be evil. Odd tells the reader how the only other person he has ever known who could see these entities was killed seconds after speaking this fact out loud. The reader sees Odd's fear, which adds tension to the plot. The bodachs also change the tone of the novel slightly as Odd explains what they are and why he fears them. The reader suspects these bodachs are not a good thing and wonders how the bodachs will affect the next few chapters.



Chapters 5-7

Chapters 5-7 Summary

Odd is working the grill at the Pico Mundo Grille when a stranger comes in. The man orders enough food for two people. As Odd works on the large order, he notices a group of bodachs have followed the stranger into the diner. Odd studies the stranger, dubbing him Fungus Man in his mind, based on cheesy color of his hair and the waxy appearance of his skin. Odd feels uneasy about the man. Odd knows from experience that when bodachs are attracted to a specific person, it is usually because that person is about to commit some tragic crime, like the young man who murdered his entire family.

When his shift ends, Odd has lunch with the owner of the Pico Mundo Grille, Terri Stambaugh. Terri is a widow, who has a fascination with Elvis that borders on obsession. Terri can take any date within Elvis's lifetime and say exactly what he was doing that day. Odd tests her because it seems to make her happy. When the waitress, Viola, brings them their meal she tells Odd about a strange dream she has been having, since more people in Pico Mundo seem to think Odd has some sort of clairvoyant ability. In this dream, Viola sees herself being shot. Odd assures her that she will not die anytime soon, that it is simply a dream. However, Odd cannot know this for sure since he does not have clairvoyant ability. Odd only wants to put Viola at peace. Odd then tells Terri about Fungus Man and asks to borrow her car. Odd feels that he should investigate this stranger just in case he is planning some sort of mass murder.

Odd drives out to the Green Moon Mall and stops at Tire World, a shop that stands in the parking lot of the mall. Odd aspires to being a tire salesman, but is not quite ready to make the switch. However, Odd likes to walk around the tire shop because it offers him a measure of peace. Unfortunately, Odd does not find peace there today. A local man who died in a car accident haunts Tire World for reasons Odd does not know. The man is there today, carrying around his severed arm as though it is some sort of toy. The man uses the arm to pick his nose when he knows Odd is looking. Odd decides to leave. When Odd glances back at the store, he can see the man waving goodbye with his severed arm. Odd continues on to the mall, where he goes to visit his girlfriend, Stormy, at the ice cream store where she works. Stormy instructs Odd to sit in the promenade, where she brings him an ice cream cone. Odd tells Stormy about Fungus Man. As they speak, Fungus Man walks toward them down the promenade. The sight of him causes a chill to run down Odd's spine.

Chapters 5-7 Analysis

Fungus Man makes his first appearance in these chapters. Fungus Man seems to be a mild stranger with a voracious appetite. However, when Odd tells the reader how he sees bodachs sniffing around the man, this mild stranger suddenly becomes sinister. Odd further explains bodachs by telling how he once saw bodachs sniffing around a



young man just days before he murdered his entire family. With this information and the idea that bodachs are attracted to Fungus Man, not to mention the name Odd has assigned to him, the reader suddenly feels the same chills that Odd feels when he looks at Fungus Man. The appearance of this man injects tension into the plot, belying the light tone Odd tries to keep, foreshadowing something dark coming as the plot continues to develop.

Odd has lunch with Terri, his boss. Terri has a fascination with Elvis, which describes her personality as that of someone who has a lot of time on her hands and loves music. Terri is also introduced as a widow, touching again on the theme of death and grieving that entered the novel in a previous chapter. Terri knows about Odd's gift, showing the reader that she must be a close friend to Odd, someone he can trust with a secret he guards very carefully. Viola, a waitress, is also introduced here. Viola believes Odd has some sort of clairvoyant ability. Odd does not, but allows Viola to believe it in order to protect his real secret. Viola, as nice as she is, is not a member of Odd's circle of trusted friends. Viola tells Odd about a dream in which she saw herself shot in the head. Odd assures Viola she is not destined to die anytime soon and then dismisses her dream as simply a dream. However, the reader wonders if it is just a dream when taken in context with the dream Odd had at the beginning of the novel of bowling alley employees who are shot. The reader suspects Viola's dream might take on deeper meaning later in the novel.

Odd goes to Tire World, a place he aspires to work. This aspiration underscores Odd's simple life and his desire to keep his life simple. Odd then goes to the mall to meet his girlfriend. The dialogue here is quick and snappy, showing the deep affection between these two characters. As they talk, Odd sees Fungus Man walking toward them down the mall promenade. The very sight of this stranger gives Odd a chill. The idea of Odd, a person who sees dead people picking their noses with severed arms, being chilled by the sight of this living being causes the reader a great deal of fright.



Chapters 8-12

Chapters 8-12 Summary

Fungus Man goes into Burke and Bailey's, Stormy's ice cream shop. Stormy steps back into the store to see what the man wants. A minute later she returns and tells Odd that the man ordered two gallons of ice cream to take home. When Fungus Man comes back out of the shop, Odd says goodbye to Stormy, promising to meet her later for dinner; Odd follows Fungus Man. Odd watches Fungus Man get into his car and then follows him to Camp's End, a lower-class neighborhood of Pico Mundo. Odd parks outside Fungus Man's house and waits for a short time. When Fungus Man leaves again, instead of following, Odd decides to search his house. Odd lets himself in through a kitchen door. Immediately, Odd notices how cold it is in the small house despite a lack of air conditioners.

Odd walks through the kitchen and living room, noting the sloppy housekeeping and interesting reading material. In the master bedroom, Odd finds even more disorder—clothes scattered on the floor and trash piled up near a waste basket. Odd also notices an odd smell in the house. Odd goes back into the hallway and approaches the second bedroom. The door is closed. When Odd touches the doorknob, he finds it extremely cold. When Odd opens the door, he finds a room that is extremely dark. Odd sticks his arm into the room and watches as it appears to disappear. Odd hesitates to enter the room but feels compelled. Odd seems to walk for a long time and does not come to the other side of the room. Then suddenly, Odd finds himself back in the living room of the small house. Odd looks at his watch and realizes he has moved back in time. Odd returns to the hallway and catches a glimpse of himself standing at the doorway to the black room. Odd waits a few minutes, then reenters the black room.

Odd once again walks into the room toward a faint red light he can see in the distance. Once again Odd finds himself moved out of the room; however, this time Odd finds himself outside the house. Odd looks at his watch and realizes this time he has moved forward in time. Odd goes back inside the house and enters the living room. The strange cold and smell have disappeared. Odd has a sense he should leave, quickly. Odd retreats to the kitchen and stands at the door, watching the living room. Odd sees bodachs swarm into the living room. The bodachs appear to be coming from the black room. There are hundreds of bodachs, more than Odd has ever seen before. Odd believes these bodachs are coming from the black room, as though the room is a portal of some sort from their dimension to ours. One bodach seems to be interested in the kitchen. Odd stands very still, afraid of being found. The bodach loses interest, however, and moves on. When all the bodachs are gone, Odd returns to the black room. The room is no longer black, but appears to be a normal room once again.



Chapters 8-12 Analysis

Odd follows Fungus Man out of the mall and to his house in Camp's End. Odd then watches Fungus Man leave and sneaks into his house. Odd knows that breaking into this man's house is wrong, touching on the theme of morality, but also believes that finding out why the bodachs are interested in Fungus Man is more important than breaking the law. Odd enters the house and finds it to be a mess. As Odd explores the rooms of this house, he discovers a bedroom that is blacker than anything in Odd's experience. Odd walks into the room and discovers his perception of distance has either been altered or the room itself has found a way to defy the dimensions of the house. Before reaching the end of the room, Odd is thrown back into the living room, actually moving back in time.

Odd returns to the room, proving himself to be somewhat reckless and full of curiosity that could place him in danger. Odd reenters the room and this time finds himself thrown forward in time. Odd is outside the house now. The reader might see this as a gift and suggest Odd leave. However, Odd proves himself to be stubborn. Odd reenters the house. Seconds later, the house is filled with fleeing bodachs. The bodachs appear to be coming from the black room. Odd begins to think this strange room is a portal between our world or dimension and that of the bodachs. Odd still does not understand what the bodachs are, but now has confirmed that they are not from our world. This episode does not only prove Odd's theory, but it also suggests something big is about to happen in Pico Mundo. Odd has never seen more than a few bodachs at once. Now he has witnessed hundreds of bodachs entering town. An urgency enters the novel now as Odd continues to investigate Fungus Man.



Chapters 13-15

Chapters 13-15 Summary

Odd reenters the second bedroom and finds that Fungus Man uses this room as an office. Odd is struck by the neatness of this room as compared to the mess of the rest of the house. Odd searches through the desk drawers, finding several bank books that show that Fungus Man, aka Bob Robertson, is very wealthy despite his modest living quarters. Odd also notices posters on the wall that depict Charles Manson, Timothy McVeigh, and Mohammed Atta, one of the September 11 terrorists. Odd looks through the file cabinet and discovers that Fungus Man has created dossiers on dozens of serial and spree killers. Included in the file cabinet is a folder with Robertson's own name. However, the only thing included in this file is a calendar page. The date on the page is the fifteenth, tomorrow.

Odd slips out of the house, disturbed by what he has seen. Odd returns to Terri's car and discovers that Elvis is waiting for him. Although Elvis never visited Pico Mundo in his lifetime, he has chosen to haunt the town, and Odd. Elvis is different from other dead people that Odd sees in that he can change his clothes. Most dead people appear to Odd in the clothing they were wearing when they died. Elvis appears to Odd in the various outfits he wore during his movie and stage career. Today, Elvis is dressed in a Hawaiian shirt. Elvis and Odd drive over to Chief Porter's house. The Porter's are preparing for a barbecue and invite Odd to stay. Odd politely declines.

Odd and Chief Porter discuss what Odd has learned about Fungus Man. Porter decides to create a profile on Robertson and have his officers keep an eye on him. When Officer Eckles arrives, a new hire to the Pico Mundo police force, Porter enlists his help. Odd makes a polite exit from the Porter's and drives downtown. Elvis is openly crying now and seems concerned for Odd. Elvis makes a silent request to be dropped off at a church. Odd leaves him and makes a call to his friend, Little Ozzie. Ozzie is upset because someone has blown up the large cow that adorned the front of his home. Odd drives over to Ozzie's for a visit and is appalled at the destroyed remnants of the plastic cow. Odd offers to clean up the mess, but Ozzie wants to leave the mess to irritate the neighbors he believes blew up the statue. Inside the house, Odd sits in the living room while Ozzie gets refreshments. Ozzie's cat, Chester, dislikes Odd. Odd watches the cat, afraid of antagonizing it. Suddenly the cat begins to hiss. Odd realizes the cat is agitated by something outside the window. Odd looks and sees Fungus Man standing in the front yard.

Chapters 13-15 Analysis

Odd checks out Fungus Man's office and discovers not only is the man wealthy, but that he has a fascination with serial and spree killers. Odd is frightened by this man's hobby even as it confirms his instincts about the stranger. Odd then checks out the file cabinet



and discovers that Fungus Man has created a file for himself as well. Inside is only a page from a calendar, showing the date for the following day. Odd assumes this means that whatever Fungus Man is planning, he is planning to do it tomorrow. Odd realizes that this means he is on a tight schedule and needs to do something to stop whatever Fungus Man is planning.

Odd goes to Chief Porter and tells him all he knows. Porter takes Odd's concern seriously and has one of his officers help him create a profile on Fungus Man. Odd appreciates this help because it makes him feel as though he is not alone. However, when Odd leaves Porter's, Odd becomes aware that Elvis is deeply concerned for him. Odd has no idea why Elvis would be concerned. However, the reader wonders if since Elvis is dead he might not have some insight into what is about to happen in Odd's hometown. If so, Elvis's concern suggests that whatever is going to happen, it is not going to have a good result for Odd. After dropping off Elvis at a local church, Odd goes to his friend Ozzie's house. Within a few minutes of arriving, Odd sees Fungus Man standing in Ozzie's front yard. The reader wonders how Fungus Man knew where he could find Odd and why he would be interested in finding Odd. It could be possible Fungus Man somehow learned that Odd was in his house. If this is true, the reader expects some sort of confrontation between these two in the following chapters.



Chapters 16-21

Chapters 16-21 Summary

Odd is frightened by Fungus Man's appearance. However, Fungus Man disappears when Ozzie comes back into the room. Odd and Ozzie talk for a short time. Ozzie, a writer, talks to Odd about how Odd is wasting his writing talent. Ozzie and Odd became acquainted when Ozzie judged an essay contest at the high school and Odd wrote the winning essay. Ever since, Ozzie has mentored Odd, encouraging him to use his God given gift. However, Odd is not interested in being a writer. When they run out of refreshments, Odd goes into the kitchen to retrieve more. When Odd enters the kitchen, he discovers the kitchen door is open. Odd goes to close it and sees Fungus Man out in the yard. Odd chases after him, but loses him in the woods behind the house. Odd returns to Ozzie and warns him about Fungus Man, asking him to be careful.

Odd leaves Ozzie's and goes to the local Catholic Church to meet Stormy for dinner. Stormy's uncle is the priest at the church and has given Stormy a key to the bell tower. Stormy likes to have picnics in the bell tower where she can look out over Pico Mundo and watch the sun set. As Odd and Stormy settle down to their feast, Odd catches sight of Fungus Man in the cemetery below. Odd becomes concerned because of the anger with which Fungus Man flashes him his middle finger. Odd grabs Stormy and drags her down the bell tower stairs. Odd and Stormy make their way through the church and lock themselves in the sacristy. Odd considers leaving the sacristy through a side door but becomes concerned that Fungus Man might have predicted this move and is waiting for them in the yard. Instead, Odd decides to leave the way they came. Odd carefully opens the door while Stormy waits at the back door. When it appears all is clear in the church, Odd and Stormy race toward the main doors. Halfway there, Odd and Stormy can hear Fungus Man in the sacristy, apparently throwing furniture around the room.

Odd calls Porter as soon as he and Stormy are safe in Terri's car. While waiting for a return call from Porter, Odd and Stormy go through the drive thru at a local Mexican restaurant. As they eat, Odd and Stormy talk. Porter calls back and confirms that someone destroyed the sacristy at the church, but was gone before the police arrived. Odd tells Porter he intends to look for Fungus Man himself, and Stormy insists on going with him. As they drive around, Stormy asks Odd why he is afraid of guns, the subject having come up when Porter suggested Odd pick up a gun for protection. When Stormy pushes, Odd lashes out, asking why she is afraid of sex. Odd immediately feels bad because he knows why Stormy is afraid of sex. Stormy was adopted after her parents died in an accident. Stormy's adoptive father sexually abused her for several months before she was able to tell a social worker. Stormy was taken from that home and placed with her uncle, the priest. Ever since, Stormy has been independent and cautious, refusing to let anyone too close, including Odd.



Chapters 16-21 Analysis

Fungus Man's appearance at Ozzie's house frightens Odd; however, before he can do anything about it, Fungus Man is gone. Odd wonders if maybe Fungus Man's appearance is simply a coincidence, but when Odd finds Fungus Man in the backyard, he knows it is not. Odd is left wondering how Fungus Man found out about him, which is something the reader is left wondering as well. It is a mystery that the reader hopes will be solved in a later chapter. The mystery only deepens when Fungus Man finds Odd and Stormy at the Catholic Church. Odd is frightened and runs from Fungus Man, only to trap himself and Stormy in the sacristy. Odd decides to get out of the church the way he came, grabbing Stormy and running for it. As they leave, they can hear Fungus Man in the sacristy, destroying furniture. Odd cannot figure out how Fungus Man got past them because both doors to the sacristy were locked. The mystery deepens and the reader begins to wonder if maybe there is not more to Fungus Man's story.

Odd calls Porter to inform him about Fungus Man's attack at the church. Odd and Stormy then share a dinner and discuss the situation. Later, when Porter calls back, Odd tells him he intends to go after Fungus Man. Porter suggests Odd come get a gun to protect himself, but Odd refuses, confessing to a deep dislike of guns. Stormy wonders why Odd is so afraid of guns, since this is the only thing Odd has never shared with Stormy. In an act of self protection, Odd lashes out at Stormy. Odd immediately feels regret, once again showing the depth of his character to the reader. Odd knows all Stormy's deep secrets, including the abuse she suffered as a child that has prevented her from being intimate with Odd.



Chapters 22-28

Chapters 22-28 Summary

Based on the details of his recurrent dream, Odd decides to go check out one of the local bowling alleys, thinking it might be possible that whatever Fungus Man is planning will take place there. Odd always sees the bowling alley employees in clothes he does not recognize. However, Odd walks into the bowling alley today and discovers they have changed their uniforms and are now wearing the outfits he sees in his dream. Not only this, but Odd recognizes a young woman in the bowling alley who appears prominently in his dream. When Odd tells Stormy this, she begs him to warn the young woman; however, Odd tells Stormy if he warns the woman, he might alter the future in such a way that someone else might die who was not originally supposed to die. When Odd and Stormy leave, they run into Officer Varner, one of Pico Mundo police department's newest officers. Varner wants to know what Odd has to do with Bob Robertson. Odd lies and says that Robertson made a pass at Stormy. As they talk, Stormy notices a tattoo on Varner's wrist and asks him about it. Varner says it is a remnant from his troubled childhood.

Odd and Stormy leave the bowling alley and go to Viola's home. Viola's dream has taken on new significance to Odd and he wants to hear more details. After Viola describes the dream in which she is in a place where there appears to be a large crowd; she is running and is suddenly shot in the head. Odd asks where she plans to go the next day. Viola, a single mother, says she intended to take her daughters to a movie and dinner at the diner to celebrate the birthday of one of the girls. Odd advises Viola to change her plans. Odd then asks to peek in on the girls. Odd finds bodachs in the bedroom with the girls, sniffing and caressing the little girls. Odd is disturbed by this, but there is nothing he can do. Odd again makes Viola promise to change her plans. In fact, Odd promises to drive her to her sister's house the next morning and makes her promise to spend the entire day there.

Odd and Stormy take Terri's car back to her. Before they get out of the car, Stormy suggests they get back on the road, go to Las Vegas, and get married. Odd, who has been proposing to Stormy for years and receiving a negative answer each time, considers this idea. However, Odd cannot fathom the idea of going to Las Vegas because of the large number of dead he expects to be there. Odd also cannot leave with the mystery of Fungus Man's planned bad deeds left undiscovered. Instead, Odd suggests that they wait until the weekend and do it in Pico Mundo with all their friends in attendance. Stormy reluctantly agrees to wait. Odd and Stormy go inside and share a few drinks with Terri. Terri, a widow, often spends her nights awake, listening to Elvis, still lost in grief over her husband. Odd, Stormy, and Terri discuss Fungus Man and the mystery massacre he is planning. Odd makes comments that make Stormy worry about his safety. Odd laughs her concern away, assuring her he intends to live long enough to marry her that weekend. Odd says he has waited too long to marry her, he does not plan on missing it. Stormy does not find this amusing.



Chapters 22-28 Analysis

Odd has come to believe that his recurring dream might have something to do with Fungus Man's dark plans for the following day. Odd thinks that maybe Fungus Man plans to shoot up the bowling alley. Odd and Stormy go to one of two bowling alleys in town and discover that the bowling alley has changed their uniforms and now the employees are wearing the clothing Odd sees in his dream. This seems to confirm that something is going to happen either at the bowling alley or in a place where the employees will be gathered. Stormy wants Odd to warn the employees, but Odd refuses, afraid he might change someone else's destiny. Odd's refusal again touches on the theme of morality as Odd proves that he has a deep sense of responsibility when it comes to his gift.

Odd and Stormy encounter a police officer in the parking lot, who is suspicious of Odd's connection to Bob Robertson, aka Fungus Man. The cop's curiosity is strange, but Odd puts it down to the curiosity of the police force about Odd's connection to Chief Porter. The reader, on the other hand, may come back to this curiosity and wonder at Varner's questions. Stormy also notices a tattoo on Varner's wrist. This tattoo seems innocuous at the moment but will prove to be of importance later in the novel.

Odd and Stormy go visit Viola. In light of the significance of his own dream, Odd is beginning to wonder if there might be more to Viola's dream. Odd questions Viola about her plans for the next day, surprised she is not planning to go bowling, but still not ruling out a possible connection between the two dreams, especially when Odd sees bodachs in the room where Viola's children sleep. Odd does not believe the children are planning anything evil, but believes they might be the intended victims of something dark. Odd makes Viola promise to change her plans, hoping this will change her fate and the fate of her children.

Stormy is becoming very concerned for Odd's safety. Despite having denied Odd's marriage proposals in the past, Stormy suggests they get married immediately. Odd is excited at Stormy's change of heart and wants to take her up on it. However, again touching on the theme of morality, Odd refuses to leave until he has solved the mystery of Fungus Man. Odd feels that it is his responsibility to stop Fungus Man and hopefully save the lives of the innocent people of Pico Mundo. Stormy becomes more and more agitated, however, as Odd seems to take the possibility of his death lightly. Terri is also concerned for Odd, joining forces with Stormy in asking him to be careful. This deep concern for Odd is touching, but it also seems somewhat ironic since the reader knows Odd will survive the following day since he is writing this story. Perhaps the irony is intentional and the narrator is trying to tell his reader that one of these ladies will not survive. The reader should recall, after all, that Odd has already confessed to being unreliable.



Chapters 29-35

Chapters 29-35 Summary

Odd walks Stormy home, waits for her to prepare for bed, and then lies with her until she falls asleep. Above Stormy's bed is a framed fortune from a fortune telling machine that says, you are destined to be together forever. Stormy and Odd received the fortune at a county fair some years before. They waited in line behind a couple who clearly wanted to receive such a fortune but did not, even after trying almost a dozen times. Tied together with the birthmarks they have that seem to complete each other, Odd feels that he and Stormy are destined to be together forever.

Odd slips out of the apartment and makes his way to the front door. There, Odd sees one of the police department's surveillance vans. Odd believes the van is there on orders from Chief Porter to offer Odd protection. Odd decides to sneak out the back door so the cops will unwittingly be protecting Stormy. As Odd walks home, he notices bodachs swarming from house to house, possibly checking out the victims of whatever massacre is sure to happen the following day. This bothers Odd, but the bodachs will not harm these people tonight, so there is nothing to be done. Odd arrives at his apartment, opens the door, and finds a gun lying on the floor. Odd is careful not to pick up the gun. Instead, Odd searches his apartment to see what else the intruder has left behind. Odd finds a body in his bathtub. When he turns the body over, Odd discovers it is the body of Fungus Man.

Odd immediately considers calling Chief Porter but decides it is a bad idea. Although Porter would most likely believe Odd when he claims to have not killed Fungus Man, there are others in the police department who will want Odd arrested. Porter can only protect Odd so far, so Odd decides he must hide the body. Odd cannot leave the body where it can be discovered by someone else. Odd needs to be free to try to protect the people of Pico Mundo when whatever Fungus Man had planned comes to fruition. Due to the number of bodachs in town, Odd knows something is still going to happen. Perhaps Fungus Man had a partner. Odd returns to the bathroom and searches the body. Due to the lividity, Odd knows the man has been dead several hours. Odd begins to wonder if perhaps Fungus Man had already been dead when he attacked Odd and Stormy at the church. Odd then inspects the bullet wound that killed Fungus Man and notices something strange about it, but cannot imagine what it is.

Odd wraps the body in a sheet and scrubs out the bathtub to get rid of any blood or other evidence. Odd then drops the body out a window because he knows he cannot carry it down the steps to the garage below without falling and breaking his neck. Odd thinks about Mrs. Sanchez, his landlady, afraid that the man who broke into his apartment and left Fungus Man might have harmed her; however, Odd does not have time to deal with that possibility now. Odd needs to get rid of the body. Odd lets himself into the garage and puts Fungus Man in the backseat of Mrs. Sanchez's car. Odd then



hot wires the car and drives aimlessly into town, trying to think of a place to hide the body.

Chapters 29-35 Analysis

The theme of love and faith is illustrated in this chapter. Odd takes Stormy home and lies with her while she falls asleep. As he lies there, Odd thinks about their relationship. Odd firmly believes that he and Stormy are meant to be together forever. Odd and Stormy once visited a county fair where they got a fortune that says just that. Stormy also has a birth mark that matches Odd's, so when they are put side by side they make a completed shape. All these things combine to make Odd optimistic about the future, about their marriage, and about their chances for survival the following day.

Odd leaves Stormy and sees a police van parked outside. Odd assumes the van is there to watch him and decides to sneak out the back so the van will protect Stormy. This choice leaves Odd free to return home without witnesses, which proves to be a good thing when Odd arrives home to a corpse in his bathtub. It turns out that Fungus Man has been dead all afternoon and that when Odd saw him, first at Ozzie's and later at the church, that he was already dead. It seems Odd should have known Fungus Man was dead, but sometimes Odd cannot tell the difference between a living being and dead one unless someone else is with him and cannot see the person.

The death of Fungus Man leaves the arrival of the bodachs without explanation. The reader wonders why the bodachs are still in town if the master mind of the massacre scheduled to take place the following day is dead. Then the reader reaches the same conclusion that Odd does. Fungus Man had a partner. However, Odd has no clue who that partner might be. Now Odd is without clues on how to solve the mystery before people start dying. Right now, Odd has pressing problems—Odd needs to get rid of Fungus Man. Clearly someone has set Odd up for Fungus Man's murder, which means someone knows Odd is on to something and needs to get rid of Odd. This injects a great deal of fear into the story because it is clear that Odd is now the target of some unknown individual. Not only this, but it is possible Odd's landlady is dead.



Chapters 36-41

Chapters 36-41 Summary

Odd decides to take Fungus Man to the Church of the Whispering Comet. The church was built outside town many years ago by a man who claimed he received messages from aliens traveling toward Earth in a comet. It turned out that the church was actually a cover for a drug ring. When the cultists were all arrested, the buildings were taken over by an outfit that ran a topless bar, an adult bookstore, and a burger joint out of the buildings, as well as a prostitution ring. After a customer shot up several of the young prostitutes, the place was shut down and has been vacant ever since. Odd decides to put Fungus Man into one of the bungalows that were used first to house the cult devotees and later for the prostitutes to ply their trade. Odd drags the body into one of these rooms and leaves him on the floor, careful to close the door so that the wild animals would not get to him too quickly.

On his way out of the building, Odd finds several coyotes waiting for him. Odd tries to make his way to the car, but there is a coyote he did not see that moves between him and the car door. Odd finds himself trapped. Suddenly, a young woman appears. The young woman's appearance causes the coyotes to shy away. Odd studies the young woman and realizes she must be one of the prostitutes who died here. The sadness in the woman's eyes touches Odd, and he realizes she must be too ashamed to cross over. Odd assures her that all her sins will be forgiven once she goes to the other side. Odd feels he has made little impression on the young woman. Odd returns to town and sees dozens of bodachs moving from home to home. Odd is unsettled by the sight and decides to drive by Chief Porter's house, perhaps to speak to him about Fungus Man's death.

When Odd arrives at Porter's house, he finds police and emergency vehicles there. Odd runs up to the front yard and demands to know what has happened. One of the local cops tells Odd that Porter has been shot. Odd rushes to the hospital and is allowed into the waiting room where Mrs. Porter is waiting news of her husband. Mrs. Porter tells Odd that her husband got a call from someone and went downstairs, possibly to meet someone. Mrs. Porter went back to sleep and was wakened by the sound of gunshots. Mrs. Porter ran downstairs and found her husband on the doorstep, shot four times. As they are talking, a surgical nurse comes toward them. The Chief has suffered severe internal injuries, but the doctors believe he will make it through surgery. The biggest concern at this point is postoperative complications. Odd asks to use a shower while he waits for more news. The nurses allow Odd to use one of the private rooms on the surgical floor. Odd showers, then sits down to take a look at Fungus Man's wallet. Inside the wallet, Odd finds a black card that has something written on it in Braille. Odd has no clue what this might be. Odd sits on the bed and falls asleep.



Chapters 36-41 Analysis

Odd hides the body of Fungus Man in an abandoned building on the outskirts of town. When Odd tries to go back to his car, he is trapped by several hungry coyotes. A dead woman appears and scares off the coyotes. In an ironic twist, a ghost turns the tables on Odd and helps him out. Odd tries to help the girl, feeling as though she has not crossed over because she is ashamed of her career choice, but Odd leaves with the impression that the girl will continue to haunt the scene of her death. Odd feels guilty for this, though he should not. This further shows Odd's character—his desire to help everyone, and his sense of morality.

Odd learns that Porter has been shot when he goes to his house to enlist his help. Odd is devastated because Porter is like a father to him. When Odd mentions this, the reader begins to wonder what Odd's relationship is like with his real father. Odd has not really mentioned his parents up to this point, but he has mentioned how Porter, Ozzie, and Terri are like substitute parents. The reader is curious why Odd would need substitute parents. This suggestion seems like a little foreshadowing, warning the reader that Odd will introduce his real parents at a later point, and they will not be the kind of people a person like Odd talks about a great deal.

At the hospital, Odd learns that Porter is expected to survive surgery. Odd then finds some time alone to search Fungus Man's wallet. Inside, Odd finds a black card with Braille written on it. This card is curious since Fungus Man was not blind—Odd believes it might be a clue. The reader hopes that it is a clue, since Odd seems to have no idea where to go now that Fungus Man is dead. The bodachs are still out in force around town, meaning that something bad is still going to happen. Because Odd is the only one who knows about the bodachs, it seems Odd is the only one who can save the town.



Chapters 42-47

Chapters 42-47 Summary

Odd's is wakened by a nurse, who tells him Porter has been moved to ICU. Odd is told that Porter is expected to sleep till morning. Odd turns to leave, but stops at the nurse's desk to ask if anyone recognizes the card he found in Fungus Man's wallet. A nurse tells Odd that the card is a meditation card, but the nurse cannot tell Odd what it says. Odd goes to a local radio station to visit a friend. This friend, a radio DJ, likes to play big band music from the 1930s and 40s and is blind. Odd gives him the card and asks what it says. The friend tells Odd that the card says Father of Lies, a phrase used to refer to Satan. The friend advises Odd to get rid of the card.

At dawn, Odd returns Mrs. Sanchez's car to her house and goes inside to check on her. Mrs. Sanchez is very much alive and visible. A couple cops arrived before Odd and insisted on checking his apartment, claiming to have gotten a phone call reporting a gunshot from Odd's apartment. Odd believes the person who set him up for Fungus Man's murder must have made that phone call. Odd asks Mrs. Sanchez if he can borrow her car, taking the keys this time. Odd goes to Stormy's apartment and tells her what took place during the night, skipping the part about Fungus Man. Odd asks Stormy to stay home from work that day, but she refuses when Odd refuses to stay with her. From there, Odd visits the home of a local college professor, an acquaintance of Odd's and the owner of one of the homes where Odd saw the bodachs. Under the guise of wanting to take some college courses, Odd asks the man what his plans for the day are. The professor tells Odd he had intended to take the afternoon off so he could take his kids to the movies. Odd remembers that Viola wanted to take her daughter's to a movie as well and wonders what the connection might be. Odd then drives Viola to her sister's, once again forcing her to promise that she will not go anywhere else that day.

Chapters 42-47 Analysis

Odd discovers that the black card in Fungus Man's wallet is a mediation with another name used for Satan written on it in Braille. Odd does not know what this might mean, but the idea that Fungus Man was a Satan worshiper chills him and confirms what he has already suspected, that Fungus Man and his partner are bad people who intend to commit some sort of horror that will leave Pico Mundo in a state of shock. More than ever, Odd wants to stop this event from taking place, touching on the theme of morality, and he wants to do it before anyone gets hurt.

Odd visits Mrs. Sanchez and discovers that someone called the police to report the sound of gun fire in his apartment. Odd knows that since no guns were fired in his apartment, this call had to have come from Fungus Man's real killer. It seems the set up was not good enough; someone needs Odd to be in jail today. This adds tension to the novel, reminding both Odd and the reader that time is quickly running out. Odd visits



Stormy begs her to take the day off from work, but she refuses because she is strongly independent and does not want anyone controlling her life, even her well-meaning fiancée. Stormy worries about Odd, however, and promises to take the day off if he will, but again Odd refuses.

Odd then visits a man whose house was visited by bodachs the night before. Odd learns this man plans to spend the afternoon at the movies, making Odd wonder if the massacre will happen somewhere near a movie theater, since both this man and Viola were planning to do the same thing. However, Odd can not figure out how the bowling alley employees fit into this idea. Odd then takes Viola to her sister's house, hopefully changing her fate by making her promise not to go anywhere else.



Chapters 48-52

Chapters 48-52 Summary

Odd drives aimlessly through town, drinking caffeine and swallowing caffeine pills to stay awake. Eventually, Odd finds himself at Fungus Man's house. Odd searches the house more thoroughly than he did before. Odd finds a set of knives with words written on them in Latin. Odd also finds a pyx or communion box filled with black crackers with red flecks. Odd slowly begins to realize that these things are the required equipment for a Satan worshiper. As Odd is looking through these things, he hears a strange knocking. Odd is spooked. However, before he leaves, he decides to look in the refrigerator because he told Stormy he would. In the freezer, Odd finds several containers that hold various body parts, clearly labeled with the names of each victim. Odd tries to decide what he should do next. Suddenly a crash comes from the living room. Odd goes there and finds that a lamp has been pushed to the ground. Odd decides to leave. Odd goes back into the kitchen, intent on leaving the same way he came. However, Fungus Man is there waiting for him.

Some dead people have an energy from extreme emotion that they can use to move objects in the living world. Fungus Man uses his anger now to throw things at Odd. First Fungus Man throws silverware and dishes. However, when Odd is able to duck these projectiles, Fungus Man knocks over the refrigerator. Odd rushes from the house, leaving Fungus Man alone with his anger. After stopping at a convenience store for Band-Aids to fix a small cut on his head, Odd goes to his father's house. Odd's father is a trust fund baby, who likes to find get-rich-quick schemes and surround himself with young, angry women. Odd's father is currently living with a nineteen year old, who deeply dislikes Odd. Odd talks to the two of them for a few minutes, but it is clear he is not welcome. Odd announces he is getting married, though he does not invite his father to the wedding, and then leaves. Odd then finds himself at his mother's house. Odd realizes it was really his mother he needed to see. There was something about Fungus Man's bullet wound that has bothered Odd, who hopes that seeing his mother will help him figure out what it is.

Odd's mother suffers a mental disorder. When she was young, Odd's mother received treatment for her disease, but she disliked the drugs and decided to stop the treatment. Throughout Odd's childhood, his mother struggled to be alone. Whenever Odd would draw her out of her solitary world, she would react violently, often putting a gun to her head and cajoling Odd into forcing her to pull the trigger. It is because of this experience that Odd dislikes guns. Today, Odd finds his mother in a fine mood; however, the more he speaks to her, the more agitated she becomes. After a time, Odd's mother goes into the house and retrieves her gun.



Chapters 48-52 Analysis

Odd decides to go back to Fungus Man's house and do a little more searching. Odd finds many things that disturb him but also confirm that Fungus Man was a Satan worshiper and an all around bad guy. Not only that, but Odd finds body parts in the freezer. While Odd is in the house, he hears strange noises. The reader wonders what these noises might be and becomes afraid that Odd might be in danger. However, the noises turn out to be Fungus Man himself. Odd finds him in the kitchen and is suddenly pummeled with silverware and other objects that Fungus Man uses his extreme anger to move. Odd is able to escape easily because Fungus Man is a ghost, but not without a small injury.

Odd then goes to visit his parents. Ironically, Odd escapes one type of danger and enters another, even though visiting one's parents should be a safe thing to do, not a dangerous one. Odd's parents are different, however. Odd's father is a perpetual playboy, who does not openly dislike his son, but clearly cannot see past his own selfish needs to nurture and respect his son. Now the reader knows why Odd does not speak of his parents often and why he soaks up the affection he gets from other father figures in his life.

Odd then goes to his mother. The reader wonders at first why Odd would go visit his parents, but then Odd explains to the reader using the authorial voice. Odd explains that something about Fungus Man's bullet wound has bothered him and thinks visiting his mother will help him figure out what it is. It turns out that Odd's mother knows about guns as she has used one on many occasions to threaten suicide in front of her son. Odd's mother is mentally disturbed, and she has often suggested that Odd is causing her to desire to kill herself. The reader sees this emotionally abused child Odd once was experienced and is amazed that he survived to be the kind person he has become.



Chapters 53-58

Chapters 53-58 Summary

Odd's mother accuses her son of being a leech, of sucking her strength away. Odd's mother also informs him that she wanted to have an abortion when he was inside of her, and she wishes she had. Odd tells her he loves her, but this only makes her angrier, more determined to hurt him. Odd's mother holds the gun to her head and tells Odd that he is making her commit suicide with his needs. Odd leaves, trying not to dwell on the darkness of his childhood and trying not to blame his Grandma Sugars for not rescuing him from his dungeon. Grandma Sugars once wanted to take Odd on the road with her, but he refused to go. Now Odd wonders if he had gone if he would have discovered his Grandma Sugars suffered the same mental illness as his mother, only that it manifested itself in different ways.

Odd returns to the Church of the Whispering Comet in order to take a second look at Fungus Man's bullet wound. It is not a pleasant task removing the sheet and then the clothing that cover the wound, but Odd manages to get a closer look at it. It seems that Fungus Man was shot through a tattoo that says FOL, father of lies. Odd stares at the wound and recalls the tattoo Stormy noted on Officer Varner's wrist—POD, Prince of Darkness. Suddenly Odd knows who Fungus Man's partner is. Odd concentrates on Officer Varner, allowing his psychic magnetism, his ability to think about someone and arrive where they are, to take him to Varner. Odd finds himself at the Green Moon Mall at the beginning of a massive sale. The mall is packed.

Odd drives into the parking lot and finds Varner's patrol car almost immediately. Odd thinks about calling Stormy and telling her to leave Burkes and Bailey's, but decides he cannot do that. What if he calls Stormy, encouraging her to leave, and she walks into a place she should not have been and dies there? Odd decides his best option is to stop whatever Varner and Fungus Man had planned. Odd concentrates on his psychic magnetism and finds himself drawn to a loading dock. From there, Odd enters a back hallway of the mall where there are offices and a security room. It is to the security room that Odd is attracted. Odd waits outside the door with a baseball bat. Seconds later, the door opens and a masked gunman comes out. Odd hits the man with the bat and pushes him back into the room. There Odd discovers that the gunman has killed the security officers who were assigned to watch the monitors in this room. Odd removes the man's mask and discovers it is Officer Eckles.

Chapters 53-58 Analysis

Odd had an amazingly difficult childhood. Odd's mother is clearly disturbed and should have been committed to a psychiatric hospital. However, Odd survived and now has a sense of morality that goes deeper than any scares his mother left behind. Odd is a



good person, who only wants to help people; now the reader can see what motivates Odd the incredible growth of character Odd has experienced in his short life time.

Odd goes back to Fungus Man in order to take a closer look at his gunshot wounds. Perhaps the visit with his mother has given Odd courage to look. At any rate, Odd takes a look and sees that Fungus Man was shot through a tattoo that is similar to one Stormy saw on Officer Varner's wrist. Odd realizes that Varner must be Fungus Man's partner. Using his psychic magnetism, illustrating the theme of paranormal perception, Odd finds Varner's car at the Green Moon Mall. Odd thinks first of Stormy and considers calling her, getting her out of the mall. However, Odd is afraid of changing her fate, so he does not. Odd then goes inside the mall and finds himself at the right place at the right time to stop a gunman. This gunman turns out not to be Varner, but rather, Officer Eckles. If the reader will recall the barbecue at Porter's house where Odd told Porter about his concerns over Fungus Man in the first place, the reader will realize that Eckles was there. Eckles knew Odd was worried about Fungus Man, and this gave Eckles the chance to either kill Fungus Man or to have Varner do it and set up Odd. Odd was clearly set up because he put into motion Porter's orders to watch Fungus Man. Now Odd needs to find Officer Varner and put a stop to whatever he, Eckles, and Fungus Man had planned at the mall that day.



Chapters 59-67

Chapters 59-67 Summary

Odd ties up Eckles, takes his gun, and makes his way into the department store behind which the security offices are located. Halfway through, Odd sees Viola. Viola has been buying roller blades for her daughter's birthday. Odd directs her to go back the way he has come as quickly as she can. Odd then makes his way out of the department store and into the mall's promenade. Almost immediately, Odd can hear gunfire. People begin screaming, running toward Odd or hiding in the stores that line the corridor. Odd keeps walking, looking for the gunman. Varner appears, walking calmly down the corridor, firing his gun with no clear purpose. As Odd watches, Varner fires his weapon at Burke and Bailey's, vaporizing the glass storefront. Odd tells himself not to worry, that he and Stormy are meant to be together forever. Stormy will not die.

Odd fires his weapon at Varner. Odd misses. Odd runs straight at Varner, aware that Varner is preparing to fire his gun. Odd fires his pistol and hits Varner in the head. Odd watches Varner go down before he falls down himself. Odd wants to go check on Stormy. Odd can see people coming out of Burke and Bailey's, but Stormy is not among them. However, Odd's psychic magnetism is telling him it is not over. Odd follows his instincts out to a loading dock. Sitting at the dock is a truck that seems too clean, too perfect. Odd uses a drill to open the padlock on the back door and discovers the truck is loaded with explosives. Odd studies the mechanism designed to set the explosives off, but before he can do anything, a man calls out to him to stop. The man has a gun. This man fires several shots at Odd before a dock worker runs him down with a fork lift. Odd is able to disarm the bomb.

Odd wakes in the hospital and asks for Stormy. Stormy arrives at his bedside. Odd is a hero. Porter comes to tell him how Varner, Eckles, and a third man were friends who wanted to destroy an entire town. These three met Fungus Man who agreed to fund their project if they would kill his mother. The men chose Pico Mundo because it was a small enough town to be contained, but big enough to make the result worth the effort. Odd leaves the hospital after a short time and goes to Stormy's apartment to avoid the press. Odd and Stormy spend a few days in solitude, enjoying each other. One morning, however, Odd's friends, Terri, Porter, and Ozzie, come to the apartment and tell him it is time to face reality. Stormy was killed when Varner fired his weapon at Burkes and Bailey's. Odd realizes he has known this all along. Odd says goodbye and watches as Stormy crosses over to the other side. Odd continues to live in Stormy's apartment, talking to her, and looking forward to a time when they will be together again.

Chapters 59-67 Analysis

Odd charges into the department store looking for Varner and finds Viola instead. Odd becomes angry at her for coming to the mall and instructs her to leave immediately.



When Viola is safe, Odd continues his search. Odd finds Varner on the promenade, firing a submachine gun nonchalantly at frightened shoppers. Odd faces Varner as though he believes himself to be immortal. Perhaps he is because Odd survives the face off unharmed, but Varner is killed. Odd is then called by his psychic magnetism, again touching on the theme of paranormal perception, and finds a truck loaded with explosives. Ironically, Odd is not injured when facing Varner's submachine gun, but takes several bullets in the back while trying to disarm the explosives in the truck.

Odd is a hero. The whole world knows it, even though they do not know about his gifts that led him to that position. Odd leaves the hospital with Stormy and spends some much needed recovery time with her. Exploring the theme of love and trust, Odd never warned Stormy about the coming massacre and never went to her, even though he knew she could be injured. Odd put innocent people in front of his own need to know Stormy was okay. Odd goes a little crazy when he realizes she is not okay. Stormy dies in Burke and Bailey's that day. Odd can see her and must be aware of her condition, but he denies it. Odd trusted so deeply in the fortune that he believed neither he nor Stormy could die. This belief made Odd strong, allowed him to face down Varner; however, the belief did not save Stormy's life. Now Odd is alone, but because of Stormy, he knows love exists and believes he will see her again.



Characters

Odd Thomas

Odd Thomas is the narrator of the book, writing it as a catharsis. Odd is telling the story of how he saw shadow-like beings he calls bodachs swarming around the people in his hometown of Pico Mundo, causing him to investigate the possibility of a future tragedy. Odd has the unique gift of not only being able to see these bodachs, but also being able to see dead people. Odd often helps dead people finish what they have left undone in the living world so they can cross over. When Odd sees bodachs, he knows something tragic is going to take place. He often attempts to find out what this tragedy will be so he can prevent it from happening. This time, Odd sees more bodachs than he has ever seen before and is concerned something huge is going to take place.

Odd follows the man around who was there when Odd first sees the bodachs, hoping a quick search of the man's home will give Odd some clue as to what might happen. Odd does not find any clues to a future tragedy but discovers that the strange man he has followed aspires to be a spree killer. Odd also discovers a strange portal in this man's house from which hundreds of bodachs enter Pico Mundo. Odd does not believe these bodachs have anything to do with the strange man, only that they are attracted to him because he is planning some sort of shooting or other massacre. However, this theory is destroyed when Odd finds this strange man dead in his apartment.

Odd gets rid of the body of this strange man and continues to investigate the bodachs. The bodachs are attracted to various families throughout Pico Mundo. Odd cautiously asks a few of these people what their plans are for the day, hoping to find a common link, but Odd cannot find such a link. Eventually, Odd allows another of his gifts, something he calls psychic magnetism, to guide him to the site of the tragedy. This gift leads Odd to the mall. Once there, Odd is able to disable one gunman and face another on the mall promenade. Odd stops the second gunman, but only after dozens of people have already been injured. Odd then allows his psychic magnetism to lead him to a truck that has been filled with explosives. By disarming this truck, Odd is able to save hundreds more lives.

Bronwyn

Stormy Llewellyn lost her parents when she was a small child. Shortly afterward, Stormy was adopted by a man who subjected her to the horrors of sexual abuse. Stormy told a social worker and was allowed to live with her uncle, a Catholic priest. In high school, Stormy met Odd Thomas. The two have been dating ever since. Despite believing that she and Odd are meant to be together forever, Stormy refuses to marry him or to share the intimacy of sex. Stormy is strongly independent, determined to take care of herself and to never rely on someone else. Stormy also believes in delayed gratification, believing that the longer she waits, the better it will be.



When Odd begins investigating the bodachs surrounding the man he calls Fungus Man, Stormy begins to worry for his safety. While they are having dinner at her uncle's church, Odd and Stormy are harassed by Fungus Man, increasing Stormy's concern for Odd. Stormy decides she wants to marry Odd sooner rather than later and suggests they go to Las Vegas that night. However, Odd feels a responsibility to the people of Pico Mundo and refuses to leave before he figures out what the bodachs are after. Odd and Stormy plan a wedding that weekend. Stormy will not make it to the weekend. During the shooting spree in the mall, Stormy is cut down at the ice cream store where she works. Stormy comes to Odd after her death and stays by his side while he recovers from injuries he suffered trying to stop the massacre. Odd makes himself believe she is still alive but soon learns the truth. Odd says goodbye to Stormy and allows her to cross over with hopes that he will see her again.

Wyatt Porter

Wyatt Porter is the chief of police in Pico Mundo. Porter is also one of the few people who know Odd's secret. Porter has received Odd's help on numerous occasions in catching killers, such as Penny Kallisto's killer, that he might not have been able to catch otherwise. Porter strives to help Odd keep his secret, however, by rewriting the reports in these cases to minimize Odd's help. Many of the cops in the Pico Mundo police force are curious about Odd's relationship with Porter but believe him to simply be a cop want-to-be.

Porter is in bed asleep the night before the massacre at the mall when he gets a phone call. Porter goes downstairs and opens the front door. There, Porter is shot several times in the chest and once in the head. Luckily Porter's head injury is superficial and he survives the assault. However, Porter's shooting fragments the police department, leaving them somewhat weak when the attack takes place on the mall, as was intended by his assailant. If not for Odd's interference, the massacre at the mall would most likely have been much larger, and the assailants would have escaped unnoticed.

Fungus Man aka Bob Robertson

Fungus Man is so dubbed by Odd Thomas because he has the appearance of being covered in fungus due to his sickly coloring. Fungus Man comes into the diner where Odd works for lunch the day before the shooting at the mall. Odd notices a number of bodachs swarming around Fungus Man. In Odd's experience, bodachs normally swarm around a person like Fungus Man when he is about to commit a catastrophic crime, such as mass murder. Odd decides to follow Fungus Man and attempt to learn more about him. Odd searches Fungus Man's house and finds a room where hundreds of bodachs somehow enter Pico Mundo through some sort of dark portal. Later, in the same room, Odd finds evidence that Fungus Man aspires to be a serial or spree killer.

Fungus Man begins to follow Odd Thomas as he spends time with his friends. First Odd sees Fungus Man at the home of Little Ozzie, his close friend and mentor. Later,



Fungus Man follows Odd to the Catholic Church, where Odd meets Stormy for dinner. Fungus Man follows Odd and Stormy through the church, causing a great deal of damage within the church. Later, Odd discovers Fungus Man's dead body in his apartment, clearly placed there to set him up for murder. Odd takes the body and hides it, later returning to it to clarify a suspicion. Odd is able to connect a police officer to Fungus Man and use this knowledge to find the site of the intended massacre.

Bern Eckles and Simon Varner

Bern Eckles and Simon Varner are officers with the Pico Mundo police department. Both Eckles and Varner are new officers who have been with the force for only a few, short months. When Odd goes to Chief Porter about his suspicions regarding Bob Robertson, Porter has Eckles help him develop a profile for Robertson. Varner is then one of the cops charged with keeping an eye out for Robertson. It is soon after this period that Robertson is killed and placed in Odd's apartment to make it look as though Odd killed him. Later, after seeing a tattoo on Varner's wrist and then realizing that Robertson's gunshot was placed to hide a similar tattoo, Odd connects the two as partners. Odd thinks about Varner and is guided to the mall through what he calls psychic magnetism. At the mall, Eckles and Varner are planning to work together to shoot as many of the innocent shoppers as possible. It turns out that they, and another man, are Satan worshipers, who intended to destroy Pico Mundo in a series of massacres such as the shootings at the mall. However, thanks to Odd, Varner is killed, and Eckles and his surviving partner are arrested.

P, Oswald

P. Oswald Boone is a writer who lives in Pico Mundo. Boone, or Little Ozzie, became friends with Odd while Odd was still in high school. Ozzie was a judge for an essay contest being run at the high school—Odd entered the contest and won. Ozzie was so impressed with Odd's essay that Ozzie made it his mission to encourage Odd to be a writer. It is to Ozzie's disappointment that Odd aspires no higher than to be a fry cook; however, this does not change their deep friendship. Odd looks to Ozzie as a father figure, taking his advice to heart, despite Odd's lack of desire to be a great novelist. After the events at the Green Moon Mall, Odd does take Ozzie's advice and, as a catharsis, writes down the details of the two days surrounding those events.

Terrible Chester is Little Ozzie's cat. Chester dislikes Odd. Every time Odd comes to visit Ozzie, Chester hisses at him and has at one time or another, bit or scratched Odd. Chester is also known to pee in Odd's shoes. On the day before the shootings at the mall, Odd goes to visit Ozzie. During this time, Fungus Man appears outside the house. Odd believes Fungus Man is still alive because Chester can clearly see him. However, Odd later learns that Fungus Man was already dead at this point and that Chester can see the dead.



Odd Thomas' Parents

Odd Thomas's father is a perpetual playboy. Odd's father likes to share his bed with young, damaged women. Once Odd's father told him that sex is better with an angry woman. Odd believes this is why his father married his mother. Odd's father is rich, having inherited a large trust fund when his parents died. Odd's father likes to spend a great deal of money and is inhibited in this by the legal parameters of his trust; therefore Odd's father is constantly indulging in get-rich-quick schemes. His current scheme is to sell land on the moon, believing the moon is not technically owned by anyone so he can make a claim to it and sell it off.

Odd's mother is an untreated bipolar, who often suffers dark moods.. As a teenager, Odd's mother was treated for her mental disorder but found the drugs to be unpleasant and stopped using them. Odd's mother has only gotten worse over the years. At nineteen, Odd's mother married his father and promptly got pregnant in order to get money from Odd's father in the event of a divorce. Odd's mother has difficulty dealing with interpersonal relationships and prefers to be alone. Odd's mother neglected him as a child. Whenever Odd made demands on his mother that were too great, she would take a gun and hold it to her own head, threatening suicide. This behavior left Odd with a deep fear of guns and a terrible guilt over the safety of other people.

Terri Stambaugh

Terri Stambaugh owns the Pico Mundo Grille. Terri is a good friend to Odd Thomas. Terri is a widow who suffered the slow death of her husband from cancer. As a result of her husband's death, Terri became obsessed with everything having to do with Elvis. Terri can tell Odd what Elvis was doing on any given time in his life. It thrills Terri to know that Elvis haunts Pico Mundo and is often with Odd when he works at her establishment as a fry cook. Terri is a motherly figure in Odd's life, often showing more concern for his welfare than his own mother ever did. Odd is very close to Terri and it is to Terri that Odd and Stormy choose to tell of their wedding plans first.

Rosalia Sanchez

Rosalia Sanchez is Odd's landlady. Mrs. Sanchez lost her husband to a heart attack that hit in the middle of the night just months before September 11, 2001. On September 11, 2001 Mrs. Sanchez's sisters and their families were on an airplane that was flown into one of the towers of the World Trade Center. Mrs. Sanchez was supposed to be with her family at the time, but was still grieving her husband and chose not to go. Now Mrs. Sanchez believes that her family has simply become invisible and that they will one day become visible again. Mrs. Sanchez is also fearful that she will become invisible as well. Mrs. Sanchez relies on Odd to come see her every morning and assure her that she is still visible.



Elvis Presley

Elvis Presley was a singer who died in the seventies. Elvis never visited Pico Mundo during his lifetime; however, Elvis chooses to haunt the small, California town. Odd often sees Elvis, never dressed as he was when he died unlike the other dead that Odd routinely sees. Elvis often appears to Odd in the various costumes from the movies he acted in during his career. Elvis cannot speak like the other dead Odd sees, but he often conveys emotion through tears or touches. Elvis seems to mourn his mother and desires to see her, but at the same time seems afraid to face his mother on the other side. Elvis also appears to feel sorry for Odd for some reason that Odd does not at first understand. Elvis is a benevolent spirit who appears to mean no harm to Odd and seems to also have a great deal of affection for Odd.



Objects/Places

Fortune

Stormy and Odd received a fortune from a fortune-telling machine that declares they are destined to be together forever. Stormy has framed the slip of paper and placed it beside her bed.

Bodachs

Bodachs are shadow-like beings that only Odd Thomas can see. These shadows seem to be attracted to large scale tragedy, such as the collapse of a building, where there is a large number of casualties. Odd Thomas is afraid to allow these creatures to know he can see them because the only other person he was ever aware who could see them was killed moments after naming them aloud.

The Black Room

While searching Fungus Man's house, Odd Thomas discovers a black room from which a large number of bodachs seem to cross from one dimension to another. Odd Thomas enters this room and finds himself first moved back in time, then forward in time.

Fungus Man's House

Odd Thomas breaks in to Fungus Man's house to try and find out why the bodachs are interested in him. Odd discovers that Fungus Man has a fascination with serial and spree killers and might be planning a large crime of his own.

Odd Thomas' Apartment

Odd Thomas rents a room above Mrs. Sanchez's garage. While Odd is investigating Fungus Man, someone has killed Fungus Man and hidden him in Odd's apartment, making it appear that Odd has committed the crime.

The Church of the Whispering Comet, Topless Bar, Adult Books

The Church of the Whispering Comet was a cult-type church that was a cover for a drug ring. Later, the church and its building became home to a pornographic business that included prostitution, a bookstore, and a hamburger stand. It is here that Odd decides to hide Fungus Man's body with the hopes that no one will find it in the deserted buildings.



Green Moon Mall

Fungus Man and his partners pick the Green Moon Mall as the site of their mass killings, hoping it will begin their attempt to destroy an entire town. Odd arrives in time to stop the first gunman, but not the second.

Burke and Bailey's

Burke and Bailey's is an ice cream store in Green Moon Mall where Stormy works. On the day of the massacre, Stormy is killed in this store when the gun man turns his machine gun on the store's windows.

Pico Mundo Grille

The Pico Mundo Grill is owned by Terri Stambaugh, and it is where Odd works as a fry cook.

Tire World

Tire World is a tire store that stands in the parking lot of the Green Moon Mall. Odd aspires to getting a job at Tire World, believing it to be a challenging but stress free job.

Camp's End

Camp's End is a neighborhood of Pico Mundo that began as a collection of shacks that housed prospectors. The neighborhood continues to be a neighborhood of Pico Mundo's lower-income families. This is the neighborhood where Fungus Man lived.

Pico Mundo

Pico Mundo is a small town in the desert of Southern California. This is where Odd Thomas lives and where he hopes to live all his life.



Themes

Paranormal Perception

Odd Thomas is a fry cook who happens to be able to see dead people. These people do not talk to Odd, but often they have unfinished business with the living world for which they need his help. Sometimes it is a murder victim who wants her killer caught, as with Penny Kallisto. Penny is the victim of a sexual predator. Penny is her killer's first victim. Penny wants her killer caught before he can hurt anyone else. Penny comes to Odd and gives him psychic impressions of her killer and then indicates who her killer is when he comes driving past Odd's house. With this information, Odd is able to accuse the killer of his crime and encourage him to turn himself in. When the killer runs, Odd chases after him and traps him until the police can arrest him.

Other dead people come to Odd simply because they know he can see them. There is a car crash victim who likes to play games with his severed arm, teasing Odd in ways that the dead man clearly finds humorous, although Odd does not. Then there is Elvis. Elvis is a strange case to Odd. In Odd's experience, most dead people appear to him because they died in Pico Mundo. Odd feels that most dead people stay in the places with which they are most familiar; however, as far as Odd knows, Elvis never set foot in Pico Mundo during his lifetime. Odd does not know why Elvis is in Pico Mundo. Elvis seems to be attached to Odd for some reason, often sitting with him like a companion or a friend. Elvis also has the ability to change his clothing, something Odd has not observed with other dead people. Odd believes Elvis still roams the living world because he is afraid to cross over and face his mother, afraid he has disappointed her.

Along with his ability to see the dead, Odd can also see what he calls bodachs. Bodachs are shadow-like creatures that are attracted to tragedy on a large scale. When Odd sees bodachs hanging around a place or a person, he knows that something bad is going to happen, such as an earthquake that hit a nursing home and killed dozens of its residents. Odd is afraid of these bodachs and tries not to allow them to know he can see them. Odd has only known one other person who could see bodachs. This person spoke aloud about the bodachs he could see and was killed moments later by a runaway semi-truck. Odd believes these beings could be people from another time or creatures from another dimension. Either way, Odd is afraid of these beings and is cautious whenever he sees them.

Love and Faith

Odd is deeply in love with Stormy Llewellyn, his high school sweetheart. Stormy is a troubled young woman, who lost her parents as a small child and suffered abuse at the hands of the man who adopted her shortly after the tragedy. Due to this difficult past, Stormy has developed into a strong, independent woman who does not trust easily. Despite this, Stormy adores Odd as much as he loves her. They have a very close



relationship. Stormy and Odd believe that their relationship is fate. Once, while at a carnival, Stormy and Odd got into line at a fortune telling machine behind a young couple who had recently become engaged. This couple asked the fortune telling machine multiple times if they would have a happy future. The machine constantly foretold unhappiness and separation. However, when Odd and Stormy asked the same question, the machine gave them a fortune that promised they were fated to be together for life.

Odd wants to marry Stormy, but Stormy is reluctant to take that final step in their relationship. Stormy suffered sexual abuse as a child and is afraid to become sexually active with Odd. However, when Odd begins to investigate Fungus Man due to the large number of bodachs he sees around him, Stormy changes her mind. Stormy worries that Odd's life is in danger. Stormy and Odd decide to get married that weekend. Before they can, Odd figures out why the bodachs are attracted to Pico Mundo—a group of Satan worshipers plan to massacre shoppers at the local mall. Stormy works at the mall. Odd's instinct is to call Stormy and tell her to get out of the mall, but he knows she would resent him if he put her safety ahead of the innocent shoppers in the mall. Odd trusts in the fortune teller's prediction that he and Stormy will be together forever, refraining from saving Stormy over the other possible victims. By doing this, Odd is able to stop one of the gun men from beginning his rampage. However, Odd does not stop the other gunman before he shoots up the ice cream shop where Stormy works.

Odd sees the damage to the ice cream shop and still refuses to go check on Stormy, once again trusting that they are destined to be together. Odd continues to follow his instincts and stops a bomb from taking out a large corner of the mall. While doing this, Odd suffers several gunshot wounds. While recovering in the hospital, Odd sees Stormy and believes they have many long, intimate conversations. However, Odd's friends bring him Stormy's ashes and explain that Stormy died in the shooting. Odd has been imagining Stormy's side of their conversations because he so desperately does not want to face the truth of her death. When Odd is forced to realize Stormy is dead, he is able to say a sweet goodbye to her before she crosses over to the other side.

Morality

Odd was raised by a woman who suffers a mental disease. As a result, Odd was neglected and emotionally abused. Odd survived this treatment and has become a responsible member of society. Due to this childhood, Odd has grown up with a unique sense of morality. Odd recognizes more so than the average person what is right and wrong and how thin the line between them can be. Odd strives to do the right thing at all times, even when it means doing something that could place him in a dangerous or difficult position. It is because of his childhood and because of the abuse he suffered that Odd has such a strong sense of morality. It is also because of this that Odd suffers a great deal of guilt when he is not able to stop something from happening.

Odd's morality is even stronger when it comes to Stormy. Odd desperately wants to marry Stormy, but when she suggests that he ignore the building storm of bodachs and



go to Las Vegas to marry her, Odd refuses. Odd does not want to leave when he knows some tragedy is about to take place. Odd also does not want to go to Las Vegas because he imagines there will be a large number of dead there who will need his help, and he does not want to be distracted at such an important time. Later, when Odd figures out why the bodachs are attracted to Pico Mundo, he chooses not to save Stormy because it will take time away from saving the innocent, intended victims of the Satan worshipers. Due to Odd's choice, many people are saved, but Stormy is not.



Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the first person point of view. The narrator is Odd Thomas, the namesake of the novel. Odd tells the reader in the first chapter that he is intentionally making himself an unreliable narrator because he believes it is necessary for him to hide certain facts in telling his story least he give away the ending. Odd has been advised as well to keep the tone of the novel light, interjecting humor as often as he can, because the story is inherently dark due to deadly actions of the men Odd sets out to stop. Odd does not use this light tone to make fun of his experiences, but to keep the story from becoming so depressing that the reader is too despondent to finish it.

The point of view of the novel is at times funny and quirky, while also dark and unbelievable. Odd Thomas narrates the novel as if he is the author, writing down a terrible event that happened to him in an attempt to deal with the events in a healthy, therapeutic way. Due to this approach to the narration, the point of view works because it gives the reader an intimate view to the main character and helps make a connection that is vital in order for the reader to become emotionally involved in the plot. If the novel had been written in the third person point of view, it would not have offered the intimacy that the first person point of view offers. The use of the unreliable narrator is also an interesting choice. Odd's attachment to Stormy is clear throughout the novel. Should Odd have been honest with the reader and confessed Stormy's death at the beginning of the novel, the tone would have been inappropriate and would have belied Odd's feelings for Stormy. This is why the unreliable narrator was necessary and why the point of view of the novel works.

Setting

The novel is set in a moderate-sized town called Pico Mundo, California. Pico Mundo is in the middle of the desert, so the temperatures tend to run very high. Pico Mundo is a typical, Southern California town, where the residents vary from the very rich to the desperately poor. There is a mall in Pico Mundo with all the name brand stores as any other mall. There are two bowling alleys, many restaurants, a tire store, and a good sized hospital. Odd has lived in Pico Mundo all his life and hopes to die there. Odd is close to many people in town and acquainted with still many others. Odd feels safe in Pico Mundo and feels that if he ever left Pico Mundo, he would be overwhelmed with the number of dead people in the world.

The setting of the novel is important in that it is home to Odd. Odd is comfortable in this town. Pico Mundo is a safe place for the families that live there, a place where tragedies just do not occur. However, Pico Mundo is also moderately size and somewhat isolated from its neighboring towns. It is this geographic location and size that makes Pico Mundo a target of a group of Satan worshipers who want to destroy an entire town with



a series of well-planned massacres. Odd is charged with saving his hometown because of his special gifts of paranormal sight. If Odd did not have a special attachment to Pico Mundo, he might choose to run off with Stormy to get married in Las Vegas rather than stay and stop two gunmen from destroying the local mall. It is because of this emotional attachment to his hometown that makes the setting of this novel work.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple, precise English. The author tends to use language that is simplistic in this novel, underscoring the narrator's high school education. The novel also includes some unusual words, such as the word *bodach*, to name unique creatures and situations contained in the novel. All these unusual words are explained within the text and do little to slow down the pace of the novel. Also included in the language of the novel is slang that is used in the dialogue to further enrich the characterization of the various people who populate the novel.

The language in this novel works because it is simple enough for its youngest readers, but complicated enough to keep the more educated readers entertained. The language also works to enrich the characterization of both the narrator and the other people who populate his world. When Odd Thomas speaks, the language is simple and precise. When Little Ozzie speaks, the language becomes more complicated, including words that might not appear in everyday dialogue, but this distinguishes Ozzie as the educated writer he is. The author uses language in a smart way to subtly develop his characters into three dimensional people rather than two dimensional sketches.

Structure

The novel is divided into sixty-seven chapters. Many of these chapters are less than two pages long. These short chapters keep the pace of the novel moving, often ending on a turning point in the plot development, encouraging the reader to continue to the next page. There is only one narrator in the novel, so there are no switches between narrators. There are also few transitions within each chapter that move a character from place to place with a space between paragraphs. Avoiding these techniques also serves to keep the pace of the novel quick, making the novel a page turner that is difficult for the reader to put down.

The novel has one main plot and several sub plots. The main plot follows Odd Thomas as he first notices *bodachs* swarming around a man he dubs as Fungus Man. Odd discovers that this man is a Satan worshiper who aspire to be a serial or spree killer. Odd is set up for this man's murder and later discovers that he had partners who plan to destroy Pico Mundo through a series of massacres. One of the subplots of the novel is the romance between Odd and his high school sweetheart, Stormy Llewellyn. Odd and Stormy have been together for several years and Odd hopes to one day marry Stormy. Another subplot involves Odd's relationship with his parents. Odd was neglected and emotionally abused as a child and these experiences have left him with an



overwhelming sense of guilt any time he finds he cannot help the dead who come to him. These subplots are interwoven among the main plot and come to a satisfying conclusion at the same time as the main plot.



Quotes

"My name is Odd Thomas, though in this age when fame is the altar at which most people worship, I am not sure why you should care who I am or that I exist." Chapter 1, pg. 1

"For reasons that will become obvious, this manuscript cannot be published during my lifetime, and my effort will not be repaid with royalties while I'm alive. Little Ozzie suggests that I should leave my literary estate to the loving maintenance of Terrible Chester, who, according to him, will outlive all of us. I will choose another charity. One that has not peed on me." Chapter 1, pgs. 2-3

"Understand, I am not a murderer. I have done nothing evil that I am concealing from you. My unreliability as a narrator has to do largely with the tense of certain verbs." Chapter 1, pg. 3

"You can con God and get away with it, Granny said, if you do so with charm and wit. If you live your life with imagination and verve, God will play along just to see what outrageously entertaining thing you'll do next." Chapter 1, pg. 5

"The dead don't talk. I don't know why." Chapter 3, pg. 21

"The dead are sensitive to the living. They have walked this path ahead of us and know our fears, our failings, our desperate hopes, and how much we cherish what cannot last. They pity us, I think, and no doubt they should." Chapter 3, pg. 23

"I see dead people. But then, by God, I do something about it. This proactive strategy is rewarding but dangerous. Some days it results in an unusual amount of laundry." Chapter 4, pg. 29

"When you think about it, a lot of fundamental physics is the solemn statement of the absurdly obvious. Any drunk who has tried to put his car where a lamppost stands is a self-educated physicist." Chapter 10, pg. 79

"I suspected that these spirit travelers, having come to Pico Mundo for ringside seats at a festival of blood, were entertaining themselves on the eve of the main event. Perhaps they took pleasure in studying the victims before the shots were fired; they might be amused and excited to watch innocent people progress all unknowing toward imminent death." Chapter 26, pg. 187

"I wanted to please her. Pleasing her pleases me, and then the birds sing sweeter than usual and the bees make better honey and the world is a place of rejoicing—or so it



seems from my perspective."
Chapter 28, pg. 203

"I drove from the Church of the Whispering Comet back into Pico Mundo, from the company of a gunshot stranger to the bad news about a gunshot friend." Chapter 38, pg. 257

"My uncertain declaration of love inspired her to turn the gun upon herself. She pressed the muzzle against her throat, angling it slightly toward her chin, the better to blow out her brains." Chapter 53, pg. 335

"We are not strangers to ourselves; we only try to be." Chapter 54, pg. 344

"No. I felt the subtle but unmistakable pull. Psychic magnetism. Drawing me. I'd assumed that I had finished the job. Evidently not." Chapter 61, pg. 374

"My name is Odd Thomas. I am a fry cook. I lead an unusual life, here in my pico mundo, my little world. I am at peace." Chapter 67, pg. 399



Topics for Discussion

Why is Odd Thomas writing this book? What is his intention? Why does Ozzie advise him to use the unreliable narrator? Why does Ozzie tell him to keep the tone light? What does Odd hope to achieve with this book? Why does Odd say he will never publish this book in his lifetime? Why is Odd afraid for people to learn what is written in this book?

Discuss Odd Thomas. Why is he called Odd? How did Odd's childhood shape him? Why does Odd suffer guilt associated with his mother's behavior? Is this emotion appropriate to the situation? Why is Odd afraid for people to learn about his gifts? Why did Odd never tell his parents? What might have happened if Odd had told his parents?

Discuss Stormy Llewellyn. Why is Stormy afraid to marry Odd? Does Stormy love Odd? Why does Stormy not want to sleep with Odd? Why does Stormy change her mind? Why does Odd not take her up on the opportunity? Why did Stormy get a tattoo to match Odd's birthmark? Why does Odd not save Stormy the day of the mall shootings? Why does Odd believe she will survive? Why does she not? What does this say about fate and destiny?

Discuss Grandma Sugars. Why does Odd talk about her a lot? What was her impact on his childhood? Why did Grandma Sugars travel so much? What was Odd's theory on Grandma Sugars? Why did Grandma Sugars not save Odd from his abusive mother? What would have happened if Odd had gone to travel with Grandma Sugars?

Who is Fungus Man? Why do the bodachs hang around him? Why do the bodachs not hang around Fungus Man's partners? Why does Fungus Man plan the massacre at the mall? What is Fungus Man's intentions? Why is Fungus Man fascinated with serial killers? What is the implication of the posters Fungus Man has on his wall?

Discuss the bodachs. What are bodachs? Where do they come from? Why are they attracted to massacres and tragedies? Why did the little boy die after he spoke aloud about the bodachs? Were the two connected? What was the black room? Why did walking into the room cause Odd to travel in time?

Discuss the tone of the novel. What is the tone? Why is the tone important to the novel? How is the tone affected by the story? Does the tone change as the story develops? Discuss the concept of an unreliable narrator. What is unreliable narrator? How does Odd utilize this type of narration? Why does Odd choose to use this type of narration? Does the unreliable narrator work in this novel?