

Rich Man, Poor Man Study Guide

Rich Man, Poor Man by Irwin Shaw

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Plot Summary

Rich Man, Poor Man is the epic tale of one family; a tale that takes place from the turmoil of World War II to the beginning of Vietnam. There are three children in the Jordache family: Gretchen, the oldest, Rudolph, the responsible one, and Thomas, the troublemaker. The novel follows the lives of each member of the family, through happiness and turmoil, separation and reunions, and takes the reader on an emotional roller coaster that they will not soon forget.

Rudolph Jordache has a crush on his French teacher. When he is not writing love letters to her in French, he is drawing naked pictures of what he imagines he will see when he finally convinces her of the depth of his love. However, when the French teacher confiscates one of Rudolph's drawings, he is forced to reveal to his father his fantasies. To Rudolph's surprise and amazement, his father stands up for him, revealing the true character of the woman Rudolph thought he loved.

Gretchen is caught out on a country road about to rendezvous with two patients from the VA hospital where she volunteers. The man who has caught her, Teddy Boylan, takes her to lunch and quickly becomes her lover. Gretchen enjoys her time with Boylan, but does not want a commitment to a man who is cruel and much older than she. Little does Gretchen know, however, her secret affair has been discovered by her brother Thomas one night after a friend of Thomas's spots Gretchen and Teddy together. Thomas, enraged by the defamation of his sister, burns a cross on Teddy's lawn the night of VE day.

When Axel Jordache, the patriarch of the family, learns of Thomas's actions, Thomas is sent away to live with an uncle in Ohio. Gretchen takes this opportunity to run away, taking what little money she has and moving to New York. In New York, Gretchen meets the man of her dreams and marries him despite Teddy Boylan's continued affections. Rudolph, who has become a friend of Boylan's, is the bearer of bad news. Teddy does not take his jealousy out on Rudolph. In fact, Boylan pays Rudolph's way through college after Axel is forced to use the money he saved for Rudolph in order to rescue Thomas from jail.

Rudolph puts his education to good use, becoming manager of Calderwood's Department Store. After Rudolph meets Johnny Heath, a Wall Street broker at a party at Gretchen's house, the two put their heads together and come up with a business plan to create a multimillion-dollar company with Duncan Calderwood, the owner of Calderwood's Department Store. The plan is so successful that Rudolph becomes a millionaire. However, the work has occupied his time for so long that Rudolph has no personal life until he meets Jean.

Jean is a photographer who was hired to take Rudolph's picture at the opening of a new strip mall. Rudolph falls madly in love with her and after some stops and starts, manages to coax her to marry him. Meanwhile, Thomas has reappeared in New York as a headlining boxer. When Gretchen and Rudolph visit him after the fight, they learn he is



married and has a son, Wesley. Gretchen, too, has divorced her first husband and has married a movie director. However, while in New York to settle her son in boarding school, Gretchen's second husband is killed in a car accident.

Thomas's boxing career is short lived, however, after a fight in London. Thomas had taken his earnings from this fight and had blown them on an English girl on the beaches of France. This indulgence causes Thomas to fall out of shape and lose a major fight, effectively ruining his career. While in Las Vegas working as a sparring partner for another boxer, Thomas gets into a fight with the other boxer, breaking the man's jaw. Afraid that the mob will want revenge, Thomas flees to New York where he takes work on board a cargo ship. It is during this time that Thomas discovers his true love, the sea.

Thomas schemes with a man he met on board the cargo ship to buy a boat of their own, but they need money. Shortly after his mother's death, Thomas is surprised to learn that Rudolph has taken some money Thomas has given him to replace his college fund and has invested it. There is now more than enough capital for Thomas to buy his boat.

Gretchen has found a new career, cutting film for the movie industry, and a new love, another director. Although Gretchen's son, now in college, does not approve of her boyfriend, Gretchen has found contentment. Rudolph has become mayor of the small town where he has lived since college. However, his political career is cut short due to a bad end to a standoff at the local college. Rudolph's wife, Jean, has also succumbed to alcoholism after the tragic end to her second pregnancy.

Thomas has the life everyone dreams of, a boat, good friends, his son, and a new love. Thomas invites Gretchen and Rudolph to visit him on his boat for his wedding. After the wedding, Thomas is awakened in the middle of the night and told that Jean is in trouble. Thomas goes to the bar where Jean snuck off to and finds her being assaulted by a local pimp. Thomas fights the man off and takes Jean home. However, the pimp finds Thomas several days later and Thomas dies from the injuries he sustains from the resulting fight.



Part 1, Chapter 1

Part 1, Chapter 1 Summary

1945. Rudolph goes home early from track practice because one of his teammates has just learned that his brother has died in the war. Rudolph relieves his mother in the family bakery. Later, the family has dinner together before Gretchen, Rudolph's older sister, runs off to the VA hospital where she volunteers, and Thomas, his younger brother, just runs off. Rudolph goes to his room and writes a letter to his French teacher in her native language. Rudolph is in love with the teacher and would love to tell her all he says in his letters. However, Rudolph always tears them up as well as the drawings he often makes of his beloved. Rudolph quietly goes to bed when he is finished because he has to get up early to deliver his father's rolls.

Thomas has gone to the movie house and sneaks in to an Errol Flynn movie with his friend, Claude. Thomas and Claude watch the other patrons for a while before picking out a soldier and his girl. Then, they move behind the two and begin to harass them, asking the soldier to remove his cap and baiting him when he refuses. Finally, the harassment turns into an argument and Claude and Thomas are thrown out of the theatre. Thomas tricks the usher into giving them the price of the movie by threatening to accuse him of abuse. With the money, Thomas and Claude go across the street to a diner for pie and coffee.

When the movie lets out, Claude and Thomas are waiting for the soldier. Thomas once more goads the soldier into fighting him. At first, it seems clear who will win because the soldier is much bigger than Thomas. However, Thomas is brutal and manages to beat the larger man. Thomas goes home afterward, nearly running into Gretchen when he reaches the house. Thomas waits for Gretchen to go in before he slips up to his bedroom. Rudolph and Thomas share a bed and Rudolph is not happy by the way his brother smells, and tells Thomas that he smells like a wild animal. Thomas is offended by this and decides if that is what everyone expects of him, that is what they will get.

Gretchen sits in front of her dressing table and thinks about what has happened to her that night. Gretchen was at the VA hospital cleaning up the common room as she always does before going home when one of the soldiers came in. The soldier was a black man by the name of Arnold. At first, Gretchen was comfortable with Arnold since they had struck up a sort of friendship during his time at the hospital. However, things turned sour when Arnold told her that he and another black soldier had leave that weekend and wanted her to share it with them. Arnold told her that if she came to a remote house and had lunch with them, entertaining them, they would pay her eight hundred dollars. Understanding too well what Arnold meant, Gretchen became very upset. However, safe at home, Gretchen finds herself unable to stop thinking about the proposal.



Mary Jordache, the mother, stands alone in the living room of their small apartment above the bakery, thinking about her life. Mary was an orphan who was raised in a Catholic orphanage in Buffalo. When Mary married Axel, she had believed him a good man. However, shortly after the wedding it became clear to Mary that Axel was a man with sinful passions. Mary stayed with Axel, though, because she had dreams about her future. Mary planned to expand the bakery and add a restaurant to their business. However, the neighborhood had deteriorated over the years and Mary's dreams had died. Mary now lives day to day, praying her husband will not take his God given rights that night, fighting with him for the little money she needs to care for her children. The only bright spot in Mary's life is Rudolph, her golden child, the only child she has the energy to love.

Part 1, Chapter 1 Analysis

This chapter introduces each of the five members of the Jordache family, paying special attention to the three children, Rudolph, Gretchen, and Thomas. These characters are the most important for the reader to make note of since the majority of the novel will deal with these characters. Rudolph is introduced as the shining star of the family, the one who helps without being asked, and who has a potentially bright future ahead of him. These ideas present the reader with several character elements as relate to Rudolph that include his sense of responsibility as he goes out of his way to help other members of the family. This is important because it foreshadows Rudolph's behavior throughout the remainder of the novel.

Gretchen is introduced as the lone female child of the family, older than the other boys. Gretchen is faced with an uncomfortable situation in this chapter in which she is propositioned by a black patient at the hospital where she volunteers. Although shamed by the situation, Gretchen is also curious, revealing a side to her personality that is not the virtuous woman that may have been implied in the opening section of the chapter. This foreshadows Gretchen's future behavior as well.

Thomas is a violent boy who beats up a soldier for no obvious reason. Thomas is clearly the outcast in this family, the one who has been lost in all the attention given to the two older children. This goes toward Thomas's behavior, shaping his emotions and foreshadowing his behavior throughout the novel as well. Also important to note in this chapter is the attitude and behaviors of the parents. Although there is little about the father in this chapter, it is clear that he is heavy handed with all his children and that Rudolph is his favorite. This is also clear with the mother. There is more revealed about the mother, especially about her past and her attitudes toward sex. This is important because it foreshadows her relationship with her children as well as her behaviors and attitudes later in the novel.



Part 1, Chapter 2

Part 1, Chapter 2 Summary

Gretchen is at work on a Saturday, dragging out the work past quitting time in order to keep from having to leave. Gretchen worries that she will lose her job when the war ends, a fact she discussed with her father the night before. Gretchen wants to go to New York to get a job, but her father refused the idea. Now Gretchen is scheming for another way to get to New York. A part of Gretchen hopes that something will happen to keep her from her scheme, but she manages to get on a bus for King's Landing, a remote part of the county, without incident.

Gretchen buys a coke at the general store and takes her time drinking it, wondering what people would think if they knew why she was out here in the middle of nowhere. Gretchen intends to meet with the black soldiers from the VA hospital and earn her eight hundred dollars. However, that does not mean she needs to rush, so she sits there and enjoys her coke.

When Gretchen is finally ready to begin her journey, she walks down the road toward the bus stop. Gretchen pauses, gathering her courage. Before she can begin walking again, a car pulls up beside Gretchen. Inside is Teddy Boylan, whose family owns Boylan's Brick and Tile Works where Gretchen is a secretary. Gretchen tells Mr. Boylan she is waiting for the bus. Mr. Boylan invites Gretchen to lunch with him.

Gretchen and Boylan go to The Farmer's Inn, an exclusive restaurant in the countryside. Boylan orders them both drinks at the bar while they wait for their table. Gretchen has never drunk before and quickly feels the effects of the alcohol. Over lunch, Boylan offers Gretchen wine. Gretchen feels out of place in the fancy restaurant, but the alcohol quickly puts her at ease. Gretchen flirts with Boylan, charmed by his refined behavior and palpable loneliness.

Boylan drives Gretchen back to the bus stop, asking her when they arrive why she was really out in the middle of nowhere. Gretchen confesses her true mission and Boylan attempts to goad her into completing the mission, offering to wait for her. Gretchen climbs out of the car and cries. Finally, Boylan has mercy on her and invites her back into the car. Boylan drives Gretchen to his house and makes love to her before taking her home. On Monday morning, Gretchen finds an envelope with eight hundred dollars from Boylan.

Part 1, Chapter 2 Analysis

Gretchen has decided to spend the afternoon with the soldiers despite her outrage at the original invitation. This reveals a great deal about Gretchen's personality, especially when added to the fact that she has requested to move to New York and has been denied the opportunity. Gretchen is a woman with more ambition than virtue. Gretchen



was willing to prostitute herself in order to gain the money that would take her out of her father's home and to the adventure of New York City.

When Gretchen meets Teddy Boylan, she is not immediately overwhelmed by him, but does find his charm amusing. Gretchen drinks too much and tells Teddy Boylan her original mission, ending up fulfilling this mission with him and gaining the money she had wanted. This situation not only introduces the character of Teddy Boylan, a rich, bored, and lonely man, but it also illustrates a momentous meeting because this episode foreshadows a future relationship between the two, and the relationship is one that will shape the future for not only Gretchen but for her brothers as well. This chapter also opens up the theme of action and reaction. Gretchen is on this road in order to meet with two soldiers from the hospital where she volunteers, but instead she meets up with Teddy Boylan. If she had not been intent on meeting the soldiers, Gretchen would not have been on the road and she would not have begun a relationship that will affect the lives of all the people around her, including Rudolph and Thomas.



Part 1, Chapter 3

Part 1, Chapter 3 Summary

Rudolph is in French class where he is supposed to be writing a composition. However, Rudolph finished quickly and is now entertaining himself by drawing a picture of Ms. Lenaut, the teacher. Rudolph is such a good student in the French class that the teacher once accused him of having French-speaking parents and other students often ask him for the answers. Even now, a student interrupts Rudolph's drawing to ask for a conjugation of a verb.

Rudolph draws Ms. Lenaut at the chalkboard, naked, writing a phrase of love on the board. Rudolph is so absorbed by his drawing that he does not see Ms. Lenaut approach his desk. Ms. Lenaut confiscates the drawing and tells Rudolph after class that he must return that afternoon with a parent. She forces him to sign the work. Rudolph does not want his mother to see the drawing, so he locates his father at the river where he is working on his small boat. Rudolph asks his father to come talk to his teacher but does not tell him why. Mr. Jordache is amused that it is Rudolph who is in trouble when normally it is Thomas.

Ms. Lenaut shows Mr. Jordache the drawing Rudolph made of her, expressing her outrage at having been drawn in such an erotic way. Axel, rather than being angry with Rudolph, is impressed with the drawing and is confused as to what the trouble is. Miss Lenaut tells Mr. Jordache that she intends to take the drawing to the principal and suggest that Rudolph be suspended. Mr. Jordache does not return the drawing to Ms. Lenaut, however, saying that it is Rudolph's property. Without the drawing, Ms. Lenaut has no proof with which to have Rudolph suspended. Ms. Lenaut becomes angry and orders Mr. Jordache and Rudolph from the room. Mr. Jordache becomes angry in return and slaps the teacher. Mr. Jordache then tells Ms. Lenaut of a Frenchman he killed during the First World War and that if she should chose to take out her anger on Rudolph that he will come back and do the same to her.

On the way home, Mr. Jordache tells Rudolph he should not fall in love with a single woman but should love many women. Rudolph feels his father is wrong: wrong about women and wrong about Ms. Lenaut. Rudolph wishes his father had not hit the teacher and tells him so. However, Rudolph passes French that term with an A.

Part 1, Chapter 3 Analysis

Rudolph gets caught doing something wrong for the first time in his school career and it happens to be by the teacher with whom he is in love. Rudolph's motivation is to make this woman fall in love with him; however, he ends up offending her and putting himself in a very difficult position. Rudolph goes to his father simply because he does not want his mother to see the drawing. Rudolph does not expect his father to stand up for him.



Rudolph expects a beating. Instead, Mr. Jordache stands up for his son, going so far as to strike the teacher when she curses him and calls him unkind names. This deeply offends Rudolph, and changes his opinion of his father on two levels. First, Rudolph is impressed that his father cares enough to stand up for him and thinks more kindly on his father. However, Rudolph is embarrassed by his father's harsh behavior and is ashamed of him. This last is important because Rudolph has high expectations for himself, hoping to one day be an important man. This not only goes to Rudolph's basic character elements, but it also foreshadows a change in Rudolph's behavior, as he begins to move further from what his father is to become something he feels is better.



Part 1, Chapter 4

Part 1, Chapter 4 Summary

Thomas hangs out at the elementary school gym most weeknights, playing basketball, hanging with the guys, or playing craps. Thomas is the youngest boy allowed into the craps game and that is because he bullied his way into it. There is no game tonight, but there is a soldier back from the war showing off his samurai sword. The soldier claims that he took the sword from a Japanese soldier and then cut off another Japanese soldier's head with it. Thomas's friend Claude called the soldier's story untrue, which were fighting words to the soldier. Thomas, as Claude's friend, had to intervene, offering to fight for Claude. The soldier backed off and left.

Claude tells Thomas a few minutes later that he saw Gretchen get into Boylan's car. Thomas does not believe him, but takes Claude's motorcycle, one he borrowed on the sly from his brother, up to Boylan's house anyway to check it out. Thomas and Claude sneak up to Boylan's living room windows and peek in. Thomas wants to leave when they do not see anything right away, but does not want to look like a chicken. Finally, Boylan comes into the room. Boylan is naked. Boylan makes a couple of drinks and then calls up the stairs, using Gretchen's name. The implication is clear and Thomas wants to leave immediately, but stops long enough to threaten Claude into silence.

Gretchen lays in the bed, content, thinking about the past few weeks with Teddy Boylan. Teddy has taught Gretchen a lot, taking her to dinners and to New York, and has even bought her a red dress, but she does not love him and cannot imagine spending her life with him. Teddy comes back upstairs and begins a seduction that Gretchen cuts short with a comment referring to the soldiers she was to meet that day she and Teddy met. Boylan marches out of the room and returns a few minutes later, demanding that Gretchen get up and dress. Teddy takes her to New York, making it impossible for her to sneak into her parents' house before dawn. However, Gretchen does not argue, if only to avoid giving Teddy an upper hand.

Teddy takes Gretchen to an upscale brothel in New York City and has arranged for a show. Teddy and Gretchen are led to a bedroom with a two-way mirror. On the other side of the mirror is another bedroom in which a white prostitute and a black man begin to have sex for Gretchen and Teddy's viewing pleasure. Gretchen finds the show as exciting as she does offensive. Gretchen thinks it would be more interesting to her without Teddy in the room. Gretchen runs out of the house and waits for Teddy in his car.

Teddy stays for the entire show before meeting Gretchen at the car, then tells her she missed a good show. Teddy takes her home and Gretchen leaves him with the words that she needs to find a younger man. Mary is awake and waiting when Gretchen reaches the upstairs hallway. Mary sends her to bed, promising to call the office and say she is sick. However, it is clear Mary is not happy. When Gretchen gets into her

bedroom, she discovers that her eight hundred dollars has been moved within the pages of the book where she has hidden it.

Part 1, Chapter 4 Analysis

Thomas has a quick temper, but he is also a loyal friend, a fact that will come back to bite him later in the novel. Thomas's discovery of Gretchen's affair foreshadows events later in the book when Thomas seeks revenge for what he sees as the disgrace of his sister. Thomas is clearly a caring brother who has just discovered his sister is not what she had seemed and he is upset and confused by this, and with his history of causing fights for no reason, this is a dangerous emotional state. It is also important to note Claude's part in this episode. Claude is a friend to Thomas, one he expects loyalty from. This also foreshadows later events within the novel in which Claude's loyalty is put to the test.

Gretchen, to whose point of view the narration has switched, enjoys her time with Teddy Boylan but she admits to herself she is not in love with him. Although Teddy is a generous lover, he is not the kind of man that Gretchen can see herself loving and marrying. These thoughts at the beginning of this passage foreshadow events later within this chapter and later chapters. When Teddy takes Gretchen to watch the show at the brothel, Gretchen is both ashamed and excited by what she sees, which suggests that Gretchen is more sexually mature than a woman her age might have been during this period. Teddy takes Gretchen to this place to humiliate her, using the black man as a symbol of the two soldiers he rescued Gretchen from the day they met. However, Gretchen did not want to be rescued then and she does not want to be humiliated now. Her comment when he drops her off, saying she needs to find a younger man, is also suggestive of the future of this relationship. When Gretchen goes home and finds her mother awake, unhappy with Gretchen for being out all night, and her money moved, this foreshadows the next few chapters in which Mary confronts her daughter about the money and her late night activities.



Part 1, Chapter 5

Part 1, Chapter 5 Summary

The night of VE day, the whole town of Port Philip is celebrating. Thomas and Claude take advantage of the chaos to create a little mischief. Thomas and Claude go up to Teddy Boylan's estate and build a cross out of some abandoned wood on Teddy's property. Thomas digs a hole and they wrap the cross in old rags before soaking the rags with gasoline. Claude lights the cross on fire and accidentally lights his arm as well. Claude runs across the property with Thomas chasing him. Finally, Thomas grabs Claude and throws him to the ground to put out the fire.

Axel Jordache paddles his boat out into the middle of the lake to celebrate the defeat of his home country. Jordache has no fond feelings for his home country because he feels as though Germany disabled him, exiled him, and left him with a cynicism for all people in positions of power. Jordache is drinking and when he sees the cross burning, he raises a toast to it, thinking he would like to shake the hand of the man who did it.

At the high school, Rudolph plays his trumpet to celebrate with his classmates. Rudolph plays optimistic, patriotic songs and begins to march around the high school lawn. Everyone begins to follow Rudolph and soon they form a parade marching through town. When they reach the street where he lives, Rudolph plays "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" for his mother. Rudolph then leads the parade to the street where Ms. Lenaut lives, playing "Marseillaise" with the hope that the teacher will come to the window, but she never does. There is a girl across the street who runs out and kisses him, though.

Mary, alone in the house, goes into her bedroom and checks to see if Gretchen's money is still where she left it. It is. Mary returns the book without bothering to turn off the lights and goes into the kitchen. Mary thinks about putting her head in the oven to end her misery, but decides to write a suicide letter first. Mary writes to Gretchen, telling the girl that she is a sinner and that there is a curse on the family. Then Mary tells her daughter for the first time about her upbringing in the orphanage and the shame of her father's sexual appetites. Just as Mary finishes the letter and prepares herself for death, she hears Rudolph playing music outside the window. Mary burns the letter.

The soldiers at the VA hospital are drunk, celebrating the victory. A nurse sends Gretchen home. Outside the hospital, Gretchen runs into the black soldier who made the eight hundred dollar proposal that Gretchen nearly accepted. The soldier tells Gretchen he is to be discharged the next day. The soldier also tells her that he had truly hoped she would visit him that Saturday and was sorry she had not. The soldier goes inside then, leaving Gretchen alone for a moment. However, it only last a moment. Teddy Boylan drives up in his car and asks Gretchen if she has gotten his letters. Teddy is apologetic for the brothel and wants to make it up to Gretchen. When she refuses to get in his car, Teddy asks Gretchen to marry him. Gretchen refuses, though she is sure if the bus had not arrived just then, she might have said yes.



Thomas drives Claude to Claude's uncle, the doctor's house. Thomas leaves him at the door, making him promise that he will not tell anyone how he got burned or that Thomas was involved. Claude agrees, but Thomas has a feeling Claude will let him down just the same.

Part 1, Chapter 5 Analysis

The chapter begins in Thomas's point of view and ends there. Thomas and Claude decide to burn a cross on Teddy Boylan's lawn the night of VE day. For Thomas, this is clearly revenge for Teddy sleeping with his sister. Thomas is not an emotional boy, but he is a violent boy and violence is the only way he seems capable of showing emotion at this point in his life; therefore, he shows his disappointment in Gretchen and his outrage at Teddy by lighting a cross on fire on Teddy's lawn. This also goes to the theme of action and reaction. Gretchen has brought Teddy into their lives by having an affair with him. Thomas has discovered the affair, a discovery that leads him to burning a cross on Teddy's lawn. Later, when Claude is burned, Thomas does the right thing by taking him to a doctor, Claude's own uncle. However, even though Thomas has made Claude promise to keep his name out of things, Thomas is sure that Claude will tell. This foreshadows the consequences Thomas will face for his actions.

The point of view switches to Axel, the father, who is celebrating the loss of his home country by sailing in his small rowboat out on the river. Axel is a bitter man who no longer feels any love for his county, which shows the reader some of his character motivation. This chapter also foreshadows a later point within the novel in which Axel is once more on the river in his boat, though he will not be celebrating the next time.

The point of view switches again to Rudolph. Rudolph plays his trumpet as the head of a parade to celebrate the war victory. This parade symbolizes Rudolph's future in which he will be a leader of men. This section also reveals his slowly forming cynicism toward the teacher he once loved and introduces a new character, the girl across the street, who will become an important figure in Rudolph's life. Rudolph's mother takes the next section of narrative and threatens to kill herself due to her unhappiness with her husband's attentions and the knowledge that her daughter has lost her virtue. However, Rudolph's serenade stops Mary from acting, which symbolizes her dependence on her middle child and foreshadows their relationship later in the plot.

Gretchen is at the hospital this night of celebration and she runs into the black soldier who had made the proposal to her. This ends this section of the plot, completing it with the soldier's regret that Gretchen did not fulfill her end of the deal. When Teddy shows up, the reader learns that Gretchen no longer sees Teddy. Teddy asks Gretchen to marry him but she refuses. However, the reader is allowed to see her thoughts and know that she might have said yes if given the opportunity. This foreshadows Gretchen's behavior later within the novel and it also foreshadows Teddy's behavior in the following chapters.



Part 1, Chapter 6

Part 1, Chapter 6 Summary

It is Rudolph's birthday and Axel has made a huge, German-based dinner. Mary does not like the food. She wishes her husband was more American and that their family was more like the normal families the nuns at the orphanage had taught her about. Axel toasts his son, hoping he will rise to the top and forget his family when he gets there.

Rudolph tries not to eat too much because he does not want to develop pimples from the fatty goose. Rudolph has a date later with Julie, the girl who lives across the street from Ms. Lenaut, and he is looking forward to it. Rudolph thinks about what his father has said in his toast and does not know how he is expected to rise to the top. The only talent Rudolph feels he has is the power to be liked by people. However, Rudolph is awkward with girls and feels the pressure his family places on him like a burden, and is envious of Thomas because he does not bear a similar burden.

Gretchen has lost her job but she has yet to tell her father. Gretchen was the best secretary at the works, but with the war coming to an end, the budget required the company to cut back. Gretchen suspects it was Boylan who had her fired. It does not matter, however, since Gretchen is hoping to use this situation to persuade her father into letting her go to New York.

Just as Axel brings out the birthday cake he baked for Rudolph, there is a knock at the door. Gretchen opens it and finds Mr. Tinker and Father Tinker, Claude's father and uncle. The men ask to speak to Axel immediately. When Axel comes downstairs, the men suggest that they move to the bakery in order to speak in privacy. Mary thinks that maybe the problem is with Gretchen because she works with Mr. Tinker, but when Axel returns he calls Thomas downstairs.

The Tinkers have told Axel that Claude confessed to burning the cross on Boylan's lawn and that he told them Thomas was a part of it. Due to the fact that the boys could be prosecuted and the families responsible for the damages, the Tinkers have sent Claude out of town and they suggest that Axel do the same with Thomas. When the Tinkers leave, Axel hits Thomas and Thomas hits him back. Thomas steps back, drops his hands, and allows his father to hit him one more time without fighting back. Then Axel tells him to wait while he gets Rudolph to take him to the train station.

Axel sends Thomas and a disappointed Rudolph, who will have to miss his date, to the train station with instructions that Rudolph is to put Thomas on a train to Albany. From there, Thomas is to buy a ticket to Cleveland where their uncle lives so no one in town will know where he has gone. While they wait for the train, Thomas tells Rudolph about Gretchen and Teddy Boylan rather than discuss his sudden departure. Rudolph does not want to believe what Thomas has told him, but Thomas tells him not to worry about



it because he has already done something to get revenge on Teddy. When Rudolph asks what, Thomas tells him to ask their father. Thomas leaves a few minutes later.

Gretchen packs a bag carefully since she is not able to take everything she might want. It takes her a few minutes to find her money because her mother has moved it into another book. Gretchen says goodbye to her mother, but Mary is drunk and she begins to hurl insults at her daughter. Gretchen leaves and runs into Rudolph in the street. Rudolph agrees to escort his sister to the train station, so they get a taxi. At the station, Gretchen suggests they go to a local bar for a drink since her train will not come for half an hour. Gretchen asks why Axel sent Thomas away, but Rudolph does not know. Then Rudolph asks about Teddy Boylan, telling her that Thomas saw Boylan naked through his window. Gretchen remembers the night. Gretchen tells Rudolph that if she stays, she will marry Boylan and that is not what she wants with her life. Gretchen tells Rudolph he is an emotional cripple and he needs to change. Rudolph becomes angry and storms out of the bar. At home, a drunken Mary prays for the death of her husband.

Part 1, Chapter 6 Analysis

This chapter begins as a happy family celebration, although it is clear that not all the participants are happy. Mary thinks the whole thing is ridiculous because the cuisine is German, Rudolph is uncomfortable because the food could give him pimples and because of the toast his father makes, putting pressure on the boy to succeed, and Gretchen is only counting the minutes until she can tell her father that she has lost her job. It quickly becomes ironic to the reader that this should be the final meal spent together as a family for the Jordache's.

When Axel learns about Thomas's misdeed at Boylan's on VE day, he is angry, as any father would be. However, when he begins to beat his son, Thomas beats back, a symbol that Thomas has not only grown too big to be punished by his father, but that he has come to be the same sort of person his father is. Thomas is a lot like Axel and this resemblance will become clearer as Thomas ages and finds his place in the world. Thomas is then sent to live with an obscure uncle who has barely been mentioned thus far in order to hide from the consequences of his actions. This foreshadows a new beginning, a transition in the plot, for Thomas and for the entire Jordache family.

Gretchen also decides to take the opportunity to leave. Gretchen feels that she cannot survive in this town anymore and if she stays she will end up married to Boylan, a fate she does not want. Gretchen says goodbye to her mother and is insulted, foreshadowing the future of their relationship. Gretchen also says goodbye to Rudolph, but not without telling him her take on his life, which offends Rudolph. It is ironic that Gretchen should seem to know so much about Rudolph's life when her own is in such disarray. Rudolph seems to feel the same, running out on her without waiting on her train. No one has stopped to wish Rudolph a happy birthday, which is foreshadowing of how the family will continue to treat Rudolph throughout the rest of the novel. Mary's wish that her husband should die at the end of the novel also foreshadows a climactic event later in this part of the novel.



Part 1, Chapter 7

Part 1, Chapter 7 Summary

Thomas works in his uncle's garage as a service attendant. Although he no longer attends school, Thomas is making good money and is happy with this turn in his life. There are also perks to working in the garage in the shape of two beautiful twin girls who enjoy Thomas's attentions. Thomas's uncle is not an unkind man and he provides well for his family: a wife and two little girls. Part of this generosity is a maid named Clothilde, a French Canadian who lives with the family. Clothilde makes Thomas's lunch every day and every day it is fancier and better than the day before. Today Thomas finds a napkin in the lunch on which Clothilde has declared her love.

Rudolph has formed a band and they are currently playing at a local roadhouse. Tonight Julie is watching from the audience. Rudolph and Julie have been dating for a while. When the band takes a break, Rudolph and Julie slip outside and into someone's car in order to have a few minutes alone. Just as they begin to enjoy their embrace, someone opens the car door and tells them to get out. When they do, Rudolph recognizes Teddy Boylan. Boylan apologizes for interrupting them and asks them to join him at the bar when they return. Rudolph and Julie cannot rekindle the magic, however, and decide to go back inside.

Rudolph does not meet Boylan for a drink, but finishes his engagement. Afterward, Boylan finds him and offers Rudolph and Julie a ride home. Although Rudolph is reluctant, Boylan is insistent. Boylan drops Julie off first. When Rudolph walks her to the door, she accuses him of showing off for Boylan. Rudolph returns to the car, disappointed at not getting a goodnight kiss. Finally, Boylan reveals his true reason for picking up Rudolph. Boylan wants to know if Gretchen has an address where he can reach her because he has something she might like to have returned to her. Rudolph refuses to give Boylan an address but promises to tell Gretchen he asked. Boylan then tells Rudolph that if he likes to fish, he should feel free to fish in the stream on his property.

Gretchen is in the office of a talent agent in New York, hoping to find work as an actress. The waiting room is crowded with other hopefuls and Gretchen is not expecting much. Gretchen is staying at the Y.W.C.A. and enjoying the freedom of being away from home. When the door of the agent's office opens, the man comes out with a short soldier in uniform. Gretchen is immediately drawn to the soldier and pleased when her friend appears to know him and introduces them. Gretchen learns his name is Willie Abbott and is disappointed that it appears he will be leaving with her friend.

The agent calls Gretchen into his office and offers her an audition for a part in a play in which she will dress in a swimsuit and simply walk across the stage. Gretchen is thrilled because it is her first part in a play. When Gretchen leaves the building, she finds her friend and Willie Abbott waiting for her. They all go to lunch before Gretchen has to go to



her audition. Gretchen gets the job and Willie decides they must all go out to celebrate. However, Gretchen's friend has gone off on a date so it will just be the two of them.

Gretchen and Willie exchange personal facts. Gretchen learns that Willie is married, but it is not a happy marriage and they are currently separated. Willie tells her that he worked in the theatre as a publicist, a job he hated, and in public relations in the army. Gretchen also learns that Willie has a back injury and wears a brace for it. That is why he is in uniform because he has to wear it when he goes to the VA so everyone will believe he is old enough due to his short stature and young appearance.

Gretchen and Willie decide to go to a party that Gretchen's friend told them about, but change their minds on the way. They go to another bar and drink more, then go to dinner. Gretchen has the impression that Willie is rich due to the amount of the dinner bill, but he assures her he is not. Later, Willie and Gretchen go back to his room for a little alone time, but they are interrupted when the hotel manager threatens to throw them both out if Gretchen does not leave right away. The hotel has a policy against non-married couples sharing a room. Willie then takes Gretchen home.

Part 1, Chapter 7 Analysis

Thomas is happy in Ohio despite not going to school or perhaps because of it. He has a good job and the attentions of twin teenagers. It appears Thomas has also caught the attention of his uncle's maid, who professes her love to him in his lunchbox. This foreshadows the beginning of a relationship between the two. Rudolph also appears to be doing well in the relationship department as he is now dating Julie, the young girl who lives across the street from Ms. Lenaut. Rudolph's meeting with Teddy touches on the theme of action and reaction since Teddy would not have taken an interest in Rudolph if it had not been for his relationship with Gretchen. There are also two pieces of foreshadowing in this section, one being the item Teddy wants to return to Gretchen, the other being Teddy's invitation to Rudolph to fish in his stream.

Gretchen also has found happiness in New York. Gretchen wants to become an actress and she gets her first job the same day she meets an interesting soldier. Gretchen spends the majority of the night with this soldier, first drinking in several bars and sharing two meals, then attempting to consummate the relationship but failing. This foreshadows the future of this relationship as the reader wonders if Gretchen will ever sleep with this man and how important he will be to her future. The reader must also note the irony of these three characters, how they have found happiness so quickly after being separated from one another and their parents.



Part 1, Chapter 8

Part 1, Chapter 8 Summary

Thomas and Clothilde are taking a bath together in Thomas's uncle's bathroom. They have been having an affair for several weeks and are now enjoying a few days alone while Thomas's uncle and his family are away on vacation. Clothilde bathes Thomas and then they make love in the master bedroom. Later, Thomas eats the feast that Clothilde has prepared for him. Through the course of their love affair, Thomas has learned that Clothilde is in America to hide from an abusive husband. Clothilde compared Thomas to St. Sebastian, so the next afternoon after work, Thomas goes to the library to learn about St. Sebastian. The librarian is not impressed with Thomas's work clothes, but he ignores her snobbery and finds the information he had wanted. In the process, Thomas learns where Clothilde's name came from, and impresses her with the knowledge when he returns home. Thomas also gets a library card.

Rudolph is fishing in Boylan's stream when Boylan himself appears. Rudolph is uncomfortable at first, afraid Boylan has forgotten the invitation. However, Boylan seems pleased to see Rudolph and invites him up to the house with the promise of giving him some waders that Boylan no longer uses. Once in the house, Boylan invites Rudolph to dinner. Rudolph calls Julie to break their date and joins Boylan in the library. After drinks, Boylan takes Rudolph on a tour of the house and then excuses himself to change.

Rudolph is overwhelmed by the magnificence of Boylan's house although he is still uncomfortable in Boylan's presence. When Boylan returns, the two men discuss school, women, and loneliness while sharing a nice meal and more wine. After dinner, Boylan insists that Rudolph borrow a pair of moccasins for the ride home since his boots are still wet from fishing. Boylan drives Rudolph home and promises to make sure his butler has the waders repaired since they had discovered a hole in them, and send them to him soon. Boylan also gives Rudolph a package and asks that he sees that Gretchen gets it. After Boylan leaves, Rudolph takes the package, which contains a red dress, to hold so that Mary would not find it in Rudolph's room.

Thomas's uncle has returned from vacation and Thomas is sneaking out of Clothilde's room in the middle of the night. When Thomas gets to his bedroom, he finds his uncle waiting for him on the bed. Thomas tries to lie to his uncle by telling him he has been out around town, but his uncle knows where he has been. Thomas's uncle tells him that if he does not stop seeing Clothilde he will have her arrested for statutory rape and sent back to Canada, to the arms of her abusive husband. The next morning, Thomas tries to talk to Clothilde, but his uncle is already there before him. Later that afternoon Thomas sneaks home when he knows that his uncle's wife and daughters will not be home. Clothilde refuses to talk to him, however. Clothilde tells him that the uncle has wanted to share her bed for several years and that now she must let him because she does not want to go back to Canada nor does she want to find another job.



Part 1, Chapter 8 Analysis

The chapter begins from Thomas's point of view, satisfying some previous foreshadowing by showing the reader that Thomas and Clothilde, the uncle's maid, have become lovers. This affair marks a change in Thomas's character as he finds love for the first time in his life. Thomas relishes Clothilde's attentions, soaking up attention he has never had before. However, it is not to last. At the end of the chapter, Thomas is caught coming out of Clothilde's room and forced to stop seeing her due to the fact that the uncle now has the power to send her back to Canada. Thomas must accept the end of the affair as well as accept that the uncle will now use this newfound power to take Thomas's place in Clothilde's bed. This is a transition point for Thomas that will cause him to grow and mature quickly due to the pain of losing his first love. This affair will remain with him and affect him for the remainder of his life, foreshadowing a point later in the novel when Clothilde will once again enter the plot to a degree.

Rudolph has taken Boylan up on his offer to fish in his stream and finds himself invited to dinner in exchange for receiving a free pair of waders. Rudolph accepts although Boylan makes him uncomfortable and he has to break a date with Julie. This appears to be the beginning of a relationship between Rudolph and Boylan with Boylan using the younger man in order to stay close to Gretchen and to abate his loneliness. Loneliness is a major theme in Boylan's life. Boylan has been exiled by his family to this small town and has lost a wife and a lover. It is because of this loneliness and everything he can learn from Boylan that Rudolph spends time with him. Rudolph has aspirations of becoming a powerful man someday, a rich man as well, and Boylan has the sophistication that Rudolph will need in order to succeed. Therefore, this relationship foreshadows a great deal of Rudolph's future within the plot development of this novel. The package Boylan gives Rudolph also foreshadows the next chapter in which Rudolph finds Gretchen and returns it to her.



Part 1, Chapter 9

Part 1, Chapter 9 Summary

Gretchen and Willie have moved in together. Gretchen returns home one afternoon and finds Rudolph and Willie waiting for her in the apartment. Gretchen has not told her family she was living with a man so she is a little ashamed that Rudolph has found out this way, but does not apologize. Gretchen and Rudolph talk about home for a few minutes before Rudolph gives her the package Boylan wanted Gretchen to have. Rudolph then leaves Gretchen and Willie admiring the dress.

Willie asks Gretchen to put the dress on for him. Willie likes the dress, but Gretchen feels it is too sexy, too grown up. They make love before discussing their day. Gretchen is still working in the theatre and Willie has a job writing for a magazine. Willie also hopes to be a successful playwright. Gretchen tells Willie that a man at the theatre hit on her that day during rehearsals and Willie does not become jealous, as Gretchen has hoped he would. Instead, Willie complements the man on having good taste. Gretchen then announces that she is pregnant. Willie promises to marry her when his divorce is final.

Rudolph meets Boylan at a bar after leaving Gretchen's. Boylan is jealous when he learns that Gretchen has a new love, but not surprised. Boylan drinks too much and hits a man who suggests that they have a drink with him. They leave the bar and have dinner before going to a nightclub where Boylan suggests Rudolph might get some ideas for his band. The trumpeter mesmerizes Rudolph. A woman comes to their table and suggests that Boylan and Rudolph might be lovers, causing Boylan to be rude and leave the club. Boylan suggests next time they bring Julie along.

Thomas has begun getting into fights around town, upsetting his uncle. However, the uncle has not said anything to Thomas about it. Thomas has also begun spending time with many of the women around town, including a married woman with whom he has an appointment to meet that afternoon. Thomas does not make it to the appointment, however, because he is arrested for statutory rape while eating lunch at a local diner. Thomas's uncle calls Axel Jordache, who gets the next train to Ohio with every penny of his savings, money that was supposed to pay for Rudolph's college education. It turns out that the twins Thomas has been spending time with are both pregnant and both claim that Thomas is the father.

Thomas is released from jail after Axel Jordache pays the girls' father five thousand dollars to drop the charges. Axel tells Thomas that he only did this in order to protect Rudolph so that he would not have to spend his life with a convict for a brother. Axel tells Thomas that as far as he is concerned, Thomas is no longer his son. Axel then goes home without another word. Thomas is also kicked out of his uncle's house and deprived the opportunity to say goodbye to Clothilde. Thomas takes a train as far from Ohio as his money can take him.



Part 1, Chapter 9 Analysis

Gretchen has moved in with Willie and she is expecting their child, foreshadowing not only the birth of the child but a change in the carefree relationship Gretchen and Willie have enjoyed up to this point. This pregnancy also changes Gretchen's occupation because she cannot take acting jobs while she is pregnant and then taking care of an infant. This also marks a moment of character growth for both Gretchen and Willie because having a child and getting married are two life-changing events.

Rudolph and Boylan have an interesting relationship that appears to be a homosexual one to outsiders as they are twice accused in this chapter. This is interesting because Rudolph's sexual experience will become a major focus in later chapters. Rudolph knows that Boylan is only using him to get to Gretchen, but Rudolph is using Boylan as well. Rudolph is learning what it means to be a rich man from Boylan, learning how to handle ones self in many situations and how to act with sophistication. Boylan has become symbolically a teacher and surrogate father to Rudolph, teaching him all the things that his own father is not capable of teaching him.

Thomas has become violent, getting into many fights, and sleeping with a lot of women. This is characteristic of Thomas, to turn violent and reckless when something hurts him or something does not go his way. However, this behavior catches up with him here when he is arrested for statutory rape of twin girls. Now Thomas has been forced to move on, foreshadowing his future in a different town without friends or family. Thomas is now truly on his own. Axel's decision to pay off the father of the girls and save Thomas is a complicated one. Axel is a complicated man who appears to care for his family although his wife and children paint him as a villain. Axel's decision to help Thomas in order to protect Rudolph appears to be very selfless, going to Axel's character. However, the reader must keep in mind that the same money that was used to save Thomas was also money that has been intended to send Rudolph to college. Perhaps Axel's motivations were more for Thomas than he would like his son to know. Anyway, this is important foreshadowing because Thomas is a proud person and he will not allow this debt to hang over his head for very long.



Part 1, Chapter 10

Part 1, Chapter 10 Summary

While Axel is in Ohio, Rudolph takes up the slack in the bakery, making the rolls and keeping the books. Rudolph has discovered that the bakery makes very little money after the rent, expenses, and the salary of the woman who runs the shop now that Mary is ill. Rudolph lies down for a nap and wakes to hear his parents fighting in the hallway below him. Mary is moving into Gretchen's room, no longer interested in her husband's sexual appetites. Mary is also upset to have discovered that her husband had five thousand dollars and he wasted it on Thomas, who should have been in jail anyway. Mary also tells Axel about their daughter, how she made eight hundred dollars selling herself. Then Mary locks herself in Gretchen's room. Rudolph comes down to help his father in the bakery. Axel apologizes that Rudolph had to hear their argument and tells him to sleep, that he does not belong in the bakery.

Part 1, Chapter 10 Analysis

Rudolph has discovered what a big difference there is between his family's income and Boylan's income, making an impression on him that will last the rest of his life, foreshadowing his future. Mary moves out of her husband's bedroom, enraged that her husband hid so much money from her and then used it to save their son whom she does not believe should have been saved. Mary is a miserable woman with many thoughts and opinions that will come to shape her future and change Rudolph's life as well. This also foreshadows the future for the Jordache family, especially Mary, Axel, and Rudolph.



Part 1, Chapter 11

Part 1, Chapter 11 Summary

1946. Rudolph and Julie are at a party, but Rudolph is not feeling well and uncomfortable with the teenage scene. Axel and Mary have continued to argue, with Mary demanding thirty thousand dollars from Axel before she will allow him to share her bed again, thinking that this is the amount of money she has earned over the years working in the bakery. Rudolph is afraid his future will end just like his father's, working in the bakery, now that his opportunity to go to college has passed. This adds to Rudolph's stress and makes him envious of the kids around him who are looking forward to college and a prosperous future.

Rudolph and Julie argue as they leave the party, mostly about Boylan. Rudolph believes that if they could make love it would ease the tension between them, but Rudolph does not want to make love to Julie until he can make it special. When he reaches home, Rudolph goes down into the bakery to see his father. Rudolph has felt sorry for his father since he and Mary had begun fighting so much and wants to reach out to him. They talk about the party before Axel tells Rudolph that the landlord informed him that day that the building is going to be torn down to make room for a large apartment building. They have until October to get out.

Axel says that he might go back to Germany. Then he tells Rudolph how he killed an Englishman in order to make passage to America all those years ago. Axel tells his son that life is going to be hard for him from now on, and that he is sorry, he tried his best. Axel asks about Gretchen and when Rudolph refuses to answer his questions, he says that he has messed up and surely God is keeping a tab on him. Then Axel sends Rudolph upstairs so he can finish his work.

Axel is drunk and depressed. Axel poisons one of the rolls he is making, puts it in the oven and allows it to bake. When they are done, they all look the same. Axel then turns off the ovens and goes down to the river where he keeps his small boat. It is raining and there are high waves on the river, but Axel paddles out anyway. The boat is found the next day but Axel Jordache's body is never found.

Part 1, Chapter 11 Analysis

Rudolph is depressed by the fact that his family is too poor to send him to college. Rudolph watches all his friends prepare for their futures and feels sick by the idea that he will have to stay and work in his family's bakery. Rudolph is also frustrated that he and Julie have not had a chance to make love yet although they have been dating for nearly a year. All of these things culminate into tension that will motivate Rudolph in the years to come.



Axel is depressed, partly because two of his children have disappeared from his life, partly due to his wife's dissatisfaction with their lives, and partly because his bakery is about to be forced into closure. All of these things have added up to cause Axel despair, motivating him to take his boat out on the river in stormy weather, an act that leads to his death. This death will affect Rudolph and Mary, foreshadowing the next few chapters in which the readers will find out what happens to them as a result of this sudden death. It also affects Thomas and Gretchen although they are not around to experience it first hand. The reader must also wonder what will happen when Thomas finds out that his father, the man who has disowned him, is dead.



Part 2, Chapter 1

Part 2, Chapter 1 Summary

1949. Thomas is in Boston when he reads an article in the paper about an ex-boxer who works at the Revere Club, an exclusive men's club. Thomas goes there and asks for a job, taking a pay cut but getting a place to sleep. The boxer, Dominic, teaches Thomas how to work the bag while he works as an assistant, keeping the gym clean and the equipment in working order. Thomas is happy in Boston, happy with his new job. However, it is no surprise to him that when someone begins stealing from the patrons, the fingers point in his direction. One patron in particular complains about Thomas: Mr. Greening, a stockbroker who once fought lightweight in school and works out with Dominic at the club.

A few days later, Thomas catches another patron stealing money out of a locker during a squash match. The patron, a lawyer named Sinclair, drops the wallet when Thomas grabs his wrist then promises not to do it again. Thomas also makes Sinclair write an IOU for five thousand dollars. Thomas arranges to meet Sinclair in a local bar late Thursday night for the payoff. Sinclair shows, explaining to Thomas that he has a compulsion he cannot control which is why he steals. Thomas does not care as long as Sinclair does not do it again.

Thomas calls in at work, telling Dominic he has family business in New York, and then takes a train to Port Philip. Thomas walks down the old street where he once lived, but he does not recognize any of it. The bakery is gone and has been replaced by a supermarket and an apartment building. The only business on the street Thomas recognizes is the Jardino's Fruits and Vegetables. Thomas goes inside, asks Mrs. Jardino what happened to his family's bakery, and learns about his father's death. Thomas leaves, stopping by a bank on the way to the train station to deposit the five thousand dollars in a safe deposit box. Then Thomas leaves town without attempting to find his brother or his mother since it was his father he had come to see.

Part 2, Chapter 1 Analysis

It has been three years since Thomas left his uncle's home and he has done well, though he is still getting into fights. Thomas has befriended an old boxer, foreshadowing a time when he might use boxing to his advantage. Thomas is also accused of stealing because he is new and unknown, although Thomas has never stolen before and has never been accused. Thomas finds the thief and instead of turning him in and risking no one believing him, Thomas blackmails him in order to get enough money to repay his father for the debt he owes, satisfying foreshadowing from an earlier chapter. However, Thomas learns that his father is dead. There is little remorse in Thomas for his father, which goes to the relationship the two men had at the time of Axel's death. There is irony in the fact that Thomas received this money as a bribe when the money he is

trying to replace was also used to pay a bribe. This money has become a symbol of everything that is wrong between Thomas and his family. Thomas chooses not to keep the money but to put it in the bank instead. Perhaps this is also symbolic of Thomas's wish to leave his family locked in the past and behind him.



Part 2, Chapter 2

Part 2, Chapter 2 Summary

1950. Rudolph is graduating from college thanks to the tuition money Teddy Boylan gave him. No one is at the ceremony for Rudolph. His sister could not come but is throwing a party for him in New York City. His mother, living in a small apartment they share above a store, is too ill to attend. Julie has her own graduation that day and will meet up with him later. Rudolph does not mind, however, as he prefers his solitude. Rudolph listens to the speaker, some cabinet member, and watches his Economics professor squirm on the podium. Denton had offered Rudolph a teaching position at the school after graduation, but Rudolph turned him down.

After the ceremony, Rudolph and his friend, Bradford Knight, jump into Brad's car and go to Calderwood's Department Store where he has worked part time and where the owner, Duncan Calderwood, has requested Rudolph stop by after the ceremony. Calderwood gives Rudolph a Swiss watch for a graduation present and then offers him an assistant manager's job. Rudolph agrees.

Rudolph goes to his apartment next to visit with his mother. Mary feels a little sad that she did not make a big deal of her son's graduation, but she decides Rudolph understands how difficult it is for her to do things these days. When Rudolph comes into the apartment, Mary congratulates him, saying that she would like to tell his father if only she knew his address. Rudolph gently reminds her that Axel is dead, but Mary holds on to the idea that her husband has simply run away. Rudolph then tells his mother he is on his way to New York to the party that Gretchen is throwing for him. Mary rants about Gretchen's behaviors, still upset with her daughter's promiscuity. Rudolph kisses her on the cheek and runs off before she can say anything else, leaving her all alone in the apartment.

Rudolph and Brad go to Teddy Boylan's next. Boylan has just returned from vacation where he had a facelift, although Rudolph does not realize that this is what has happened at first. They talk about their futures, with Boylan once again urging Rudolph to go to law school. When Rudolph tells him that he has decided to work full time at Calderwood's, Boylan is upset. Boylan then offers Rudolph his graduation gift, a trip to Europe. This Rudolph also refuses since he has to begin work immediately. Boylan argues with him, saying Calderwood's will be there in a month and all proper young men must experience Europe before beginning their lives. Rudolph stands firm.

Gretchen looks around her living room; unhappy with the number of people packed into the tiny room and the spills that she can see she will have to spend the next morning trying to get out. There are people there that Gretchen does not even know and a few old friends, including Mary Jane, the woman who introduced her to Willie five years ago, nursing a broken heart and looking for a one night stand. Gretchen sneaks out of the



room and goes upstairs to check on her son, Billy. Billy is just like his father, from his looks to his personality.

Gretchen stopped being an actress after Billy was born, and turned instead to writing almost by accident. Gretchen began helping Willie with his article for the magazine and soon began writing them completely on her own. Gretchen works in Billy's room so she can be close to him during the day. There is an article on her desk that she glances at, unhappy with what she has already written. Willie comes in to persuade Gretchen to come back to the party. They argue, accusing each other of not paying attention to the other. Back at the party, they get into a conversation with a TV advertising executive, who warns Gretchen that her article about television in a recent magazine was too crass. Gretchen blows it off and watches the man storm from her house.

Gretchen talks to Rudolph and Julie and learns about Rudolph's job plans. Julie is clearly not happy with the idea and is also disappointed that Rudolph turned down the trip to Europe. Rudolph and Julie leave the party a little later and Julie accuses Rudolph of having a girl in Whitby. Rudolph denies it, so Julie invites him to spend the night with her at her hotel. Rudolph refuses, saying he wants to marry her first, that he will marry her next week. Julie says she does not want to live in Whitby, that she will only marry him if he takes the trip to Europe and goes to law school. Julie catches a cab and leaves Rudolph on the street alone.

Rudolph later finds himself in bed with Mary Jane. Rudolph has drunk too much and now he is making love to Mary Jane. Mary Jane teases him when she realizes he is a virgin, causing Rudolph to leave her bed. Mary Jane becomes upset, begging Rudolph to stay, even telling him how Willie cheats on Gretchen, even sleeping with her. Mary Jane then begins to cry, saying she cannot sleep alone. Finally, Mary becomes angry, throwing a glass at Rudolph as he ducks out of the room. Rudolph goes to Julie's hotel, intent on making it up to her. Rudolph has the front desk ring her room, but there is no answer. Rudolph goes back to Whitby and reports to work a few short hours later.

Part 2, Chapter 2 Analysis

Rudolph has graduated from college thanks to the help of Teddy Boylan. However, Rudolph can only take so much generosity from one person and he refuses the offer of law school tuition and a trip to Europe. This marks the end of Rudolph's relationship with Boylan. Rudolph has taken all he is willing to take from the older man and now sees Boylan as a pathetic old man hanging on to him for his youth and the small possibility that Gretchen will one day come back to him. Rudolph shows character growth in this chapter, with his future planned out in front of him and his choices made. Although it ruins his relationship with Julie, Rudolph is happy with the choices he has made.

Mary Jordache shares a home with Rudolph now that her husband has passed away and her home has been leveled to make room for a supermarket and an apartment building. Mary appears to have become frail in her health, refusing to leave the apartment even for her son's graduation. Mary also believes her husband is still alive



since they never found a body, although Rudolph believes him to be dead. Mary's health and her reliance on Rudolph foreshadow future plot developments that focus on Rudolph's personal life and Mary's quality of life.

Gretchen does not appear to be as content as she once was. Gretchen is working as a writer now instead of as an actress, but her articles are mean and dark, angering people around her including friends of her husband's. Gretchen and her husband also do not appear to be getting along like they once did, although they now have a beautiful little boy that they both clearly love. Like Rudolph, Gretchen has experienced some growth in the past few years. There are also changes in Gretchen's life that foreshadow future developments in the plot, including her restlessness and the tension within her marriage.

Rudolph has a fight with his girlfriend and quickly finds himself in bed with Gretchen's divorcee girlfriend. This is a pathetic scene in which Rudolph not only learns about sex, but he also learns about the complex emotions of a woman and all the things he wants to avoid in the future, including his father's advice not to fall in love with one woman. This advice was given with love, but Rudolph believed it to be wrong when it was first offered. This experience has deepened that belief, foreshadowing a time when Rudolph will fall in love with a single woman who will become his complete focus. However, it clearly will not be Julie since she would not answer the phone when he arrived at her hotel in the middle of the night. Despite a lack of sleep, Rudolph arrives at work the next morning, showing how deep responsibility is ingrained in his personality. This, too, foreshadows Rudolph's behavior in later chapters.



Part 2, Chapter 3

Part 2, Chapter 3 Summary

1950. Thomas teaches calisthenics classes now. After class one day, he goes into the locker room where Dominic and Mr. Greening are sparring. Dominic has a cold and a hangover, so he is not up to par. Greening does not seem to care and he is rough with Dominic. Thomas watches, getting angry at Greening. Greening knocks Dominic down and quits, telling Greening he is not up to it. Annoyed, Greening asks Thomas to work out with him. Thomas gives Greening a tough workout, releasing all the aggression he has held inside for months, although he knows he may lose his job over this. Greening gets a few good hits, but Thomas gets more, coming close to knocking Greening out before Dominic ends the fight. Four days later Thomas is fired.

Part 2, Chapter 3 Analysis

Thomas fights with the rich man who pointed fingers at him during the theft scandal. Thomas knows that he will more than likely lose his job if he fights the man like he wants to, but he fights him anyway because he feels that it is worth it. Thomas does lose his job. This shapes Thomas's opinion of rich people, which foreshadows later events in the development of the plot when Thomas is forced to deal with rich people again.



Part 2, Chapter 4

Part 2, Chapter 4 Summary

Rudolph has gotten into the habit of running with a neighborhood kid, Quentin McGovern, whose father works at Calderwood. Quentin is black, which causes many people to raise an eyebrow when they see them running together, but Rudolph likes the company and Quentin is training for the track team at the high school and also likes the company. Afterward, Rudolph returns home to shower and dress for work. Then Rudolph joins his mother for breakfast. Mary asks Rudolph about Thomas, if he might know where the boy is. Rudolph does not. Rudolph promises to make his mother dinner that night and then he leaves for work.

Rudolph lets himself into the store early. In his office, Rudolph reads through the papers and then begins the crossword puzzle, hoping to finish before everyone begins arriving. Halfway through, however, Rudolph gets a call from Professor Denton. Denton asks Rudolph to meet him at a local bar that day for lunch, and sounds very nervous and upset. Rudolph agrees. Rudolph then makes a tour of the store, making special note of the departments that had been added under his suggestion such as the boutique, the fountain and tea shop, the ski shop, and the record counter. Rudolph watches the pretty girls and thinks about Calderwood attempting to subtly push his daughters on him. Rudolph has no intention of getting involved with another girl and he is very sure he will not ask another girl to marry him unless he is positive she will say yes.

Later that morning, Calderwood calls Rudolph to his office. Rudolph has left on Calderwood's desk earlier that morning a proposal to open a strip mall near the lake, to take the company public, and to become chairman of the board that he. Calderwood wants to know who else knows about the proposal and how Rudolph learned all he did about the land Calderwood owns out by the lake. Rudolph does not tell him about Johnny Heath, a stockbroker Rudolph met at his sister's party. Calderwood is clearly unhappy with the proposal but he promises to consider it and get back to Rudolph.

Denton is waiting for Rudolph when he arrives at the bar. They order lunch and then Denton tells Rudolph that he is being accused of being a communist. There will be a hearing at the school in a couple of days and he wants Rudolph to testify as a character witness. Rudolph agrees, although later at his desk he finds himself regretting the promise. Rudolph is afraid that if he testifies for Denton it will reflect badly on himself. Not only that, but Rudolph hates to insult people who he sees as his elders and is afraid that he will not be able to avoid doing just that at this hearing.

Rudolph is having trouble sleeping by Sunday and decides he cannot stay in the apartment with his mother. Rudolph rides his motorcycle out to a shed that Larsen, the man who runs the ski shop at Calderwood's, says can be used to rent skis to skiers at the local ski slopes. Rudolph is surprised to find Larsen at the bottom of the hill with his fiancée and the record counter girl, Miss Soames. Rudolph has Larsen show him the



shed and then Larsen invites him to lunch. Rudolph agrees because of something Miss Soames has said about his aloof behavior at the store.

Everyone drinks too much at lunch, including Miss Soames, who goes out of her way to touch Rudolph in intimate ways. After lunch, Miss Soames maneuvers her way onto Rudolph's bike, forcing him to take her home. Miss Soames again touches Rudolph in intimate ways, suggesting her desire to deepen their relationship. Rudolph refuses to enter her home, however, and considers firing her on the way home so he will not have to face her at the store on Monday morning. However, Rudolph cannot think of a way to do it without being accused of discrimination.

On Monday morning, Calderwood tells Rudolph that he has decided to consider his proposal and that they will be going to New York the next day to meet with his lawyers. Rudolph realizes this will interrupt his testimony on Denton's behalf and decides to arrange to testify outside of the hearing in a letter or some other manner. However, Denton calls and asks to meet him again at the same bar. Denton announces that he has decided to retire so Rudolph does not need to testify. Denton has taken a job at the International School of Geneva. Although it is only a high school, Denton has decided it is best to leave the country and please his wife than fight the accusations and live with the shadow over his head for the rest of his life.

Part 2, Chapter 4 Analysis

Rudolph has pretty much settled into his new life and he is making positive changes to the store. Now Rudolph wants to continue these changes by taking Calderwood into a bigger arena, creating a corporation that will revolve around a strip mall built on some property Calderwood already owns. This is foreshadowing of great things to come for Rudolph, especially when Calderwood agrees to pursue the proposal further.

Rudolph's experiences with Denton underline the time in which he is now living--the McCarthy era that turned everyone into a communist or a friend of one. This adds tension to the narrative as well as explores Rudolph's depth of character. The fact that Rudolph is willing to stand up for his old professor is brave if also a little naive. Rudolph may be making great strides in his career, but it is clear by his underestimation of how serious this situation is that Rudolph still harbors innocence in regard to his country, which may not be a bad thing. This also foreshadows a time later in the plot development when this episode may come back to cause Rudolph trouble in his professional life.

Rudolph's attitude in regard to women is a contrast to his innocence in regard to Denton. Rudolph has become cynical toward women, deciding he will not get involved with another one until he has healed from losing Julie, and that he will not propose again until he is sure of the answer, an idea that may come back to haunt Rudolph later down the road. When one of the girls from the store becomes flirty with Rudolph in an attempt to seduce him, Rudolph refuses her advances, but not before allowing himself to be offended by her description of him and being persuaded to have lunch with her.



Rudolph has a reputation of being aloof, one he does not mind until this beautiful girl calls him cold. This, too, will become important later in the plot development when Rudolph is once again faced with a girl who is more spirited than he can control.



Part 2, Chapter 5

Part 2, Chapter 5 Summary

1955. Gretchen walks Billy home. He is a precocious nine-year-old now who does not like his mother's overprotective behavior. Gretchen worries about her parenting skills, but refuses to relent. Rudolph and Johnny are waiting outside the building when Gretchen and Billy approach. They have a bottle of champagne and tell her that they are there to celebrate the final formation of Dee Cee Corporation; the corporation Rudolph's proposal five years ago was expected to create.

In the apartment, Gretchen sends Billy up to do his homework and settles to visit with her brother. The phone rings and the man on the other end asks for Mr. Jordache. Rudolph takes the call but it is clearly not for him because the man on the other end confirms a bet placed, but Rudolph does not gamble. When they decide the call could not have been meant for Willie, Rudolph gets out the phone book and looks up the Jordaches listed. There is a T. Jordache listed. Rudolph thinks it might be Thomas, so he calls and is told that Thomas cannot come to the phone because he has a fight that night. Rudolph finds the newspaper and there is an advertisement inside announcing a fight between Tommy Jordache and Virgil Walters.

Rudolph suggests they go, but Johnny has a dinner date and Gretchen does not want to go. However, after Willie calls to say he will be late, Gretchen agrees to go. When the fighters come into the ring, Rudolph and Gretchen recognize their brother right off. The fight is mediocre and Tommy is victorious. The sight of the two men beating each other sickens Gretchen, but Rudolph finds it fascinating. Afterward, Gretchen and Rudolph go to the dressing rooms to meet with Tommy. Rudolph has to drag Gretchen into the room where they find Tommy fresh out of the shower having his wounds tended by a doctor.

Tommy is surprised but not unhappy to see his siblings. Tommy introduces his trainer, his manager, and his wife, Teresa. Everyone leaves except for the siblings and Teresa. Tommy sends the ladies out of the room and is left alone with Rudolph. Teresa is garish and loud, upset that Tommy would send her out of the room. Tommy tells Rudolph he married her because she became pregnant. They have been married two years. Rudolph catches Tommy up on his life and Gretchen's, telling him about Gretchen's son and about their mother.

Tommy invites Gretchen and Rudolph to have dinner with him and Teresa, but Rudolph says they have to get back to Gretchen's to relieve the babysitter. Before they leave together, Tommy stops by the other fighter's dressing room to check on him and make sure there are no hard feelings. They all get a taxi together then, riding in silence. Rudolph rolls down the window because Teresa's perfume is overwhelming; a fact the woman does not miss. They drop Rudolph and Gretchen at her place after Tommy and Rudolph makes plans to meet at Rudolph's hotel the next day. Gretchen begins to cry as soon as the taxi is out of sight.



Rudolph and Gretchen go to her apartment, send the sitter home, and talk about the fight. Gretchen is saddened by Thomas's profession, and is struck by the brutality of the sport. Gretchen turns her frustration on Rudolph, calling him a monk, and asking when he is ever going to get married. Then she turns her anger on Willie, where it really belongs, and complains about his drinking, his philandering, and his overall disregard for his wife and son. Gretchen wants a divorce but she is afraid Willie will take Billy from her. Willie himself comes home a few minutes later, contrite for not coming home for dinner. Rudolph is uncomfortable with Willie now because he has promised to help Gretchen get a divorce.

Part 2, Chapter 5 Analysis

Rudolph has made his dream come true by forming Dee Cee Corporation and becoming its chairman of the board. Flying high on his accomplishment, Rudolph discovers that Thomas is in town and decides to go see him. Thomas is a boxer now, which fulfils some foreshadowing from previous chapters, and is married with a child. Thomas and Rudolph talk for the first time in more than ten years, happy to see each other, but both cautious, opening the theme of brotherhood. Their relationship is a complicated one and Rudolph's reaction to Teresa, Thomas's wife, foreshadows complications that will enter the relationship very soon.

Gretchen's marriage is falling apart as was foreshadowed in a previous chapter. Gretchen wants a divorce, but her son is important to her and she does not want to risk losing the child. Gretchen's character once again shows growth in this chapter in that she has put her child before her own desires, a character element that she has not shown before. However, her old vices may come back to haunt her as suggested by the fact that she tells Rudolph in this chapter that she has had affairs on Willie even as he has had them on her.

Ironic in this chapter is that Rudolph and Thomas seemed to have found success in their lives-- Rudolph with his business proposal and Thomas with his boxing--although Rudolph seems to feel that Thomas's boxing talents are mediocre. Gretchen, on the other hand, seems to have reached a crisis point in her life, which adds tension to the plot development. When Rudolph agrees to help Gretchen get a divorce, it adds more tension to the plot and ruins Rudolph's relationship with Willie, although they have never been extremely close. Rudolph and Thomas's agreement to meet the next day is more foreshadowing in which the reader must wonder if the brothers will mend old wounds or will these wounds be torn open once more.



Part 2, Chapter 6

Part 2, Chapter 6 Summary

Thomas takes a train to Port Philip the next morning to retrieve the money he left in a bank's safe deposit box there. Thomas has seven hundred dollars in his pocket he won betting on himself the night before and hopes that Teresa will allow him to keep at least five hundred of it. Teresa is angry with him for not telling her about his brother and sister and angry that they seemed to look down on her. The more Thomas thinks about it, the more he feels that Rudolph did look down on his wife. Thomas's life is looking up, though. His manager called him that morning and told him that he had a fight in London, a fight that could make his whole career. Briefly, Thomas thinks about going to Ohio to find Clothilde because it is all too overwhelming, but he does not.

Gretchen rushes Billy through his lunch so that she can take him back to school with enough time to spare to have a bath. Billy has a field trip that day so Gretchen has arranged to spend the afternoon with her lover, Colin Burke. Gretchen has to rush through her bath, though, because Billy dragged his feet about lunch since he did not want to attend the field trip. The phone rings several times, but Gretchen ignores it in her rush. At Colin's, Gretchen learns that he has an appointment that afternoon and cannot be with her. Colin tried to call, but Gretchen did not answer. Colin is a play director and he has been offered the chance to direct a movie in Hollywood. Gretchen asks what will happen to their relationship should he accept, but Colin does not answer.

Rudolph has spent the entire afternoon talking to lawyers and architects connected to the strip mall project. Rudolph is tired and wishes he could take a nap but he is expecting Thomas. While waiting, Rudolph takes a call from Johnny with the name and number of a private detective in order to help Gretchen with her divorce. Rudolph thinks about Gretchen and all she said the night before and thinks that she is too obsessed with sex; a problem Rudolph will not allow himself to experience.

Thomas arrives. Rudolph offers him a drink, expecting to leave for dinner shortly. Thomas dumps the five thousand dollars on Rudolph's bed, telling Rudolph that now they are even. Rudolph does not want to take the money and tried to talk Thomas into taking it, but Thomas refuses. The brothers argue until Rudolph finally agrees to keep the money. Then Rudolph gives Thomas his address in Whitby so Thomas can visit their mother. Rudolph decides he will invest the money in Dee Cee Corporation stock for Thomas until he can convince him to take it back.

Part 2, Chapter 6 Analysis

Thomas has done well for himself but he feels trapped by the pressures placed on him by his wife and from his career's sudden success. Thomas briefly thinks about going to Ohio to find the only woman who ever loved him, but decides he must face his



responsibilities, which shows character growth for Thomas. This foreshadows the future of his marriage, however, in that his wife is so disagreeable and avaricious, eager for all the money Thomas can make. The reader must wonder how long this marriage, based on the birth of a child, will last.

Thomas gives Rudolph back all the money that Axel spent on him to get him out of jail ten years ago. Rudolph does not want the money, and feels as though Thomas is more deserving of it than he is. When Rudolph cannot talk Thomas into taking the money, he decides to invest it, which foreshadows a moment in the future when Thomas will come into possession of money that has become much more than it began as. It also foreshadows the question of whether Thomas takes the money the second time. This chapter also touches on the theme of brotherhood once more. Thomas seems reluctant to trust his brother after having been emotionally abused as a child and is unable to trust Rudolph. Rudolph, on the other hand, only seems to have good intentions when it comes to his brother.

Rudolph's decision to help Gretchen begins a cycle of protection for his sister that will shape Rudolph's relationship with Gretchen. Gretchen's affair, if Rudolph had known about it, might have changed his decision to help, but he does not know about it. Rudolph has decided to hire a private detective, as suggested by his receiving a name and number from Johnny. This foreshadows a divorce that seems imminent. Gretchen's affair and her lover's decision to move to Hollywood also foreshadow more plot developments as the reader wonders if Gretchen will remain with this new man or if she will move to Las Angeles with him.



Part 2, Chapter 7

Part 2, Chapter 7 Summary

Thomas receives a letter from his mother in which she attempts to apologize for all the hurts of his childhood and requests that he come visit her. Teresa is not happy with the letter. Teresa is jealous and angry that Thomas did not tell her about his family. Thomas decides to go visit his mother that Sunday so he might be able to escort her to church.

Rudolph receives a report from the private detective detailing Willie's activities outside his home. Rudolph decides to show Willie the report and suggest to him that he give Gretchen a divorce without too much of a fight. Willie agrees so Rudolph throws the report away.

Thomas is not impressed with the apartment where Rudolph and Mary live and is less impressed with the neglect Rudolph appears to treat his mother with. Mary is thrilled to see him and even more thrilled to learn about her grandson, Wesley. Thomas gives Mary a picture of his son. In return, Mary gives him a picture of herself when she was young. Thomas spends the day with his mother, taking her around town in the car he borrowed, surprised that she seems to know so little about the town. Rudolph has not taken her out much since he does not have a car. On the way home, Thomas thinks about his mother, the woman she once was and the woman she is now, and feels he has won some small victory by finally receiving her affections.

Part 2, Chapter 7 Analysis

Rudolph does as he has promised, achieved a simple divorce for Gretchen by blackmailing Willie with a report of his activities outside the house. This is the first in a large number of favors Rudolph will do for his sister and it foreshadows the growth and change of their relationship in degrees of the changes in her life.

Thomas goes to visit his mother and finds her a weak, frail old woman who appears to have been neglected by Rudolph, the golden son. Thomas feels good that he can give his mother something that Rudolph clearly has not, a tour of the town where she now lives. Thomas has also given her a grandson, something that seems to mean a great deal to the woman. Thomas finally feels vindicated, as though he has won some prize that has been denied him all his life. This is important for two reasons. One, Thomas is beginning to grow and mature as a man and having his mother's affections will go a long way to helping that growth. Second, it presents to Thomas a poor picture of his brother, whom he has always believed to be perfect. This will add tension to their already difficult relationship and it foreshadows a difficult period between the two brothers.



Part 3, Chapter 1

Part 3, Chapter 1 Summary

1960. Gretchen wakes in her home in Las Angeles, anxious to wake both her son and her husband, Colin Burke, but knowing that it is too early. Instead, Gretchen goes out to get the paper and reads it at the desk in the living room. In the sports section, Gretchen sees an article about a boxer that mentions Tommy Jordache as his sparring partner. Even with as little as she knows about the sport, Gretchen is aware that this means Tommy's career has taken a turn for the worse.

Gretchen wakes Billy and makes sure he is packed and ready for their flight to New York later that day. Then Gretchen wakes Colin. Gretchen and Colin discuss the screening of Colin's latest movie that they saw the night before. There is a scene in the movie that Gretchen did not like and she discusses it with him, and he finally agrees that the scene should be cut from the movie. Later, they all go to the airport together. Gretchen is flying with Billy to New York so that she and Willie can take him to his new boarding school there, a school that Colin is forced to pay for since Willie cannot afford it. Colin wishes them both a safe trip and says his goodbye, anxious to get to work at the studio. Colin will fly out and join Gretchen in two weeks.

Billy has air sickness during the flight but will not allow his mother to comfort him. Billy is concerned about appearing to be a baby. Willie, who smells of alcohol, meets them at the airport. Willie drives Gretchen to her hotel, which happens to be one of the places where she and Willie spent time their first night together. Billy wants to spend the night with his father and Gretchen agrees, although she is concerned about Willie's ability to stay sober.

Rudolph was supposed to come to New York and have dinner with Gretchen that night, but he is not able to. Gretchen is lonesome and restless alone, wanting to call Willie or Colin, but talking herself out of both. Finally, she decides to go down to the hotel restaurant by herself, but is stopped by a phone call from Johnny. Johnny takes Gretchen to a discreet French restaurant. At first they make small talk, but then Johnny launches into a speech about Gretchen's poor relationship record, her choice in men, and his disappointment that she never showed any interest in him. Johnny is disappointed that Gretchen gave up her writing and seems to be a pampered housewife now. Gretchen is offended by his dialogue and marches out of the restaurant.

Gretchen writes Colin a note telling him how crazy she feels alone in New York and how much she misses him. Gretchen mails the letter without reading it and then she goes to the bar for a few drinks before going to bed. The next morning, Willie and Billy pick her up early. Much to Gretchen's relief, Willie is sober. At the school, Billy is assigned an older boy to show him around campus. Gretchen and Willie accompany the boys to Billy's room. They are invited to lunch, but they both decline. Gretchen and Willie say goodbye to Billy in front of the main building. Gretchen cries at her son's stoic



demeanor. Willie drives them out of the courtyard, but is forced to pull over because he too is crying. They hold each other, crying for every mistake they have made with each other and the one thing they did right.

Gretchen goes to Port Philip to visit Rudolph during the opening of a new strip mall there. Rudolph seems to be the king of the party--everyone knows who he is and wants to shake his hand. A photographer, Jean, follows his every move, trying to capture his every angle on film. Rudolph introduces Gretchen to Virginia Calderwood and reintroduces her to Bradford Knight, whom Rudolph has induced to return to Whitby in order to be an assistant manager. They also run into Ms. Lenaut, who has gotten older and heavy-set. Rudolph speaks to her in French and then confides to Gretchen when the woman is gone that he once had a crush on her. Gretchen comments that there are many things that Rudolph must sit down and tell her one day.

Rudolph shows Gretchen the theatre in the strip mall that he had designed and believes is the only thing in the whole place that will impress his sister. Gretchen briefly regrets giving up acting for a moment. Rudolph intends to have six theatres just like it around the country in order to put on productions of their own plays for two-week runs. Rudolph even suggests that perhaps Colin could come direct a play for them. Rudolph then suggests that they go for a drink, but Gretchen is anxious to get back to her hotel before Colin calls. Just as Gretchen reaches her room the phone rings. However, it is not Colin. It is the head of the studio informing Gretchen that her husband was killed earlier that afternoon in a car accident.

Part 3, Chapter 1 Analysis

Five years have passed and Gretchen is now married to the man she was having an affair with while married to Willie. Her husband is a movie director, which will be an important detail later in the development of the plot as the reader keeps in mind the help Colin took from his wife in the development of his latest movie. Also important in this chapter is the relationship between Colin and Billy. Although Billy is clearly still attached to his father, which will be evident later in this chapter, it is Colin who is there every day for him and it is Colin who is paying for his schooling. This relationship between Colin and Billy foreshadows Billy's reaction when Gretchen takes a new lover after Colin.

Johnny explodes at Gretchen for not taking him as a lover and instead moving clear across the country to be a housewife to a movie director. Johnny clearly thinks lowly of Gretchen's new life and is jealous that she did not choose to be with him. This is important because it shows the depth of Gretchen's growth. Gretchen has taken many men for lovers, including Johnny, but she seems to have found true love with Colin. This also foreshadows the end of the chapter in which Gretchen is faced with the loss of the man she loves.

When Willie and Gretchen drop Billy off at school, they become close for a few minutes as together they face the maturation of their child. Billy is a teenager now, fourteen years old, and off to boarding school for the first time. Billy is also reluctant to be treated



as a child, another reason for Gretchen and Willie to grieve. However, they also grieve for all the hurt they have given each other over the years and this is a sort of cathartic moment in which they end the circle that has been their relationship.

Rudolph introduces several characters in this chapter including Jean and Virginia Calderwood, and reintroduces Brad Knight. These characters foreshadow another set of plot developments in which each of these characters will play an important role in Rudolph's life. Also here Rudolph meets his old French teacher once again, the woman he had such a deep crush on when the novel begins. This meeting is also cathartic, ending Rudolph's childhood and moving him forward, showing his character growth in that he is no longer fantasizing about women he cannot have.

Colin's death at the end of the chapter foreshadows many things for Gretchen. Gretchen not only has lost the love of her life, but she has also lost her financial support. Gretchen is a housewife, as Johnny pointed out, with no other means of support. This foreshadows her struggles in the next few chapters in which she is forced to deal with the darker side of her husband's death.



Part 3, Chapter 2

Part 3, Chapter 2 Summary

Thomas is a sparring partner for his manager's next hopeful fighter, having lost his own chance at a career in Europe. Thomas took the fight in London and won. Afterward, he went to France with an English girl, drinking and eating too much, causing him to lose another big fight in Paris. This loss was a major one and it essentially ruined Thomas's career. Now he is a sparring partner to a man he cannot stand and is sleeping with the man's wife.

Thomas gets his pay, fifty bucks, and goes to a casino for a beer. Instead of going back to the hotel, Thomas decides to try his luck at the craps table and walks away with ten dollars in his pocket. Back at the hotel, Thomas gets a call from the fighter's wife and finds out that the fighter has learned about their affair. Thomas prepares for the man to come see him, taking the advantage. Thomas manages to break the bigger man's jaw and knock him unconscious. The manager gets there too late to stop the fight. The fighter was backed by the mob, so now the manager is afraid Thomas's life is in danger. The manager gives Thomas one hundred and fifty dollars, tells him to go to New York to a hotel where the manager owes him a favor, and says that he cannot contact his wife or son. Then he tells Thomas he had best get a job on a ship because nowhere in the States will be safe for him now.

Part 3, Chapter 2 Analysis

Thomas's career has ended and now he finds himself in trouble. Thomas runs away with the hope of outrunning the mob, something he will have to do for quite a while. The manager's instructions foreshadow a turn in the plot for Thomas. Thomas will have to get a job on a ship, something he has never done before. The reader will have to wonder now what this new turn in his life will bring to Thomas. More foreshadowing also reminds the reader that Thomas has a child and wonders what will happen to his child now.



Part 3, Chapter 3

Part 3, Chapter 3 Summary

Rudolph is at his apartment in New York, an apartment he keeps for when he has appointments in the city. Rudolph is waiting for Jean, the photographer, because they have a date that morning. Rudolph, concerned about Gretchen, puts in a call to her. Gretchen has been embroiled in a legal battle with Colin's ex-wife since his death. The ex-wife is trying to get control of Colin's assets and his house, the same house that Gretchen is currently still living in. Rudolph has been giving Gretchen money to survive since Colin's death, which is the only thing that keeps Gretchen financially afloat. When Rudolph connects with Gretchen, she tells him she got a letter from Billy that worries her and asks that he drive up to see the boy the following morning. Rudolph agrees.

Jean arrives a few minutes later and they prepare to go on a tour of the galleries, a habit they have developed over the past few months they have been seeing each other. As they start out the door the phone rings. Jean insists Rudolph answers it. It is Mary. Rudolph is annoyed by the interruption, especially since it is a simple problem; the heat has gone out in the old farmhouse Rudolph has bought them in Whitby. Rudolph tells her to have the live-in aid relight it, but Mary is not speaking to Martha today. Rudolph tells her to call the store and have the engineers come out to look at it. Then Rudolph promises to be home after his meeting with Calderwood the following night.

Jean and Rudolph spend the day together and then come back to the apartment and make love. Rudolph is very happy in this relationship even though Jean had never allowed him to come to her apartment and is often difficult to make dates with. Jean will also never spend the night. Despite all these things, Rudolph announces that he loves her and asks her to marry him. It is unexpected, even to Rudolph. Jean climbs out of bed and waits for him in the living room. Rudolph demands an answer and Jean suggests they go to a movie. Jean tells Rudolph that she has been seeing someone else and that he, too, wants to marry her. Jean will not tell him any more, so Rudolph goes with her to the movies.

The next day, Rudolph is obsessed with the idea of Jean with another man as he drives to visit Billy at his school. Rudolph cannot stop thinking about it. Rudolph wants to break up with Jean, but he cannot bring himself to do it. At the school, Rudolph meets the housemaster's wife and discusses Billy's behavior with her. Billy refuses to interact with the other kids and seems unhappy at the school, the woman tells Rudolph. Rudolph takes Billy to lunch and learns that boy does not feel as though he fits in at the school. Billy feels uncomfortable because of his father's drinking habits and Colin's death. Billy is also not afraid to tell Rudolph that he feels that only the children of rich people, not unlike Rudolph, would fit there better than he does.

Rudolph decides to take Billy out of the school that day. Rudolph and Billy drive down to Whitby where he leaves the boy in Martha and his mother's care. Rudolph has to



threaten his mother in order to get her to behave civilly to Gretchen's child, whom Mary still believes is a promiscuous woman. Mary had come to life now that she knows that Rudolph has large sums of money. Mary has had several operations to improve her health, has begun going to church again, and spends money like it is going out of fashion. Rudolph threatens to cut her off if she does not act nice with Billy.

Rudolph goes to Calderwood's that evening for their meeting after he talks to Gretchen about returning her son to her. Calderwood accuses Rudolph of seducing his daughter behind everyone's backs and tells him he must marry the girl. Rudolph argues the point, telling Calderwood he has never shown any special affection to his daughter and if the girl is in love with him, it is one sided. Rudolph tells Calderwood that he is in love with another woman and hopes to marry her soon. Calderwood is disappointed since he has always hoped Rudolph would marry one of his daughters.

Rudolph returns to his home and finds his mother entertaining Billy as though her were always a part of her life. Billy seems much more relaxed in Rudolph's house than he himself ever was. Rudolph watches the scene quietly for a while before he tells Billy that he will be returning home in a few days. Billy is grateful, though disappointed. Mary makes him promise he will visit often.

Part 3, Chapter 3 Analysis

Rudolph, after years of being alone, has fallen in love. When Rudolph attempts to ask Jean to marry him, the reader should remember back when he swore he would not ask another woman to marry him unless he knew the answer would be yes. Rudolph should have taken his own advice as Jean not only refused to answer the question, but also announced that she has been seeing someone else. This foreshadows the future for this relationship as the reader wonders if Jean will marry Rudolph or if he is destined to be alone forever.

Rudolph goes to Billy's school to rescue him after Gretchen tells him about a letter that worries her. Rudolph finds the boy uncomfortable with his life at the school and decides to remove him immediately and send him home. First, Rudolph takes the boy to his mother. This introduces the changes in Mary. Now that Rudolph is making more money, Mary has blossomed. Mary no longer sits around the house and mopes about her life, but now spends lots of money and makes the live-in aide, Martha, take her all over town. This change in Mary is significant and it foreshadows her future within the novel.

Rudolph is accused of seducing Calderwood's youngest daughter in this chapter as well. Rudolph is outraged at the accusation and makes his position clear to Calderwood. Rudolph has no interest in the girl, but the girl clearly has interest in him. This foreshadows an interesting turn in the novel. First, the reader must wonder about the depth of the girl's affections for Rudolph and what Jean might do to upset these affections. Second, the relationship between Calderwood and Rudolph has clearly changed, as symbolized by Rudolph's lack of concern with regard to upsetting Calderwood, which foreshadows a larger change in their relationship down the line.

There are a lot of changes taking place in this chapter, foreshadowing more change down the line, and adding tension to the plot.



Part 3, Chapter 4

Part 3, Chapter 4 Summary

Gretchen is struggling with the death of her husband, with her own behavior, and is struggling to not allow her grief to take over her life. Gretchen visits her lawyer to learn the latest in her struggle against Colin's ex-wife. The lawyer tells her that for the moment everything must stay the way it is. Since Colin did not leave a will, Colin's ex-wife may have some legal right to his assets, though the lawyer is sure that eventually everything will go to Gretchen. Gretchen is anxious to move out of the house, but she will not be allowed to sell it until the legal battle ends.

Part 3, Chapter 4 Analysis

This chapter simply allows the reader to see how difficult Gretchen's life has become. Gretchen has no assets and no husband, two things that have left her in a sort of limbo. This also foreshadows her future as she continues to fight with Colin's ex-wife.



Part 3, Chapter 5

Part 3, Chapter 5 Summary

Thomas's old manager sends him to a man named Pappy who manages to get Thomas on a ship a week after he arrived in New York. Thomas likes the ship, likes to be on the bow of the ship. Thomas has refused to get involved in fights or to even socialize with his shipmates, and avoids the poker game like the plague. There is one man on the ship who has befriended Thomas, however. His name is Dwyer and the other men on board think he is homosexual because of his slight build and feminine voice. Dwyer, however, is a serious sailor who hopes to get to be an officer one day. Thomas becomes interested in the idea of promotion and talks Dwyer into preparing him for the test that will get him his third mate papers.

The ship docks at Marseilles one day and Thomas and Dwyer spend shore leave moving from bar to bar. In the middle of the night, Thomas remembers the English girl in France and decides he wants to go to Cannes again. Thomas talks Dwyer into going with him. In Cannes, they see numerous pleasure boats. It gives Thomas the idea of how nice it would be to be a part of the crew on one of these ships. However, Thomas quickly learns it would be better to own the boat outright. Thomas hatches a plan in which he and Dwyer become owners of one of these boats, but he is unsure how they will come up with the money. Thomas and Dwyer catch their ship again in Genoa, after first stopping in Monte Carlo where Thomas just misses seeing his brother.

Part 3, Chapter 5 Analysis

Thomas has found his love of the sea on board a cargo ship where he has gotten a job in order to hide from the mob. It is ironic that Thomas should love the sea since his father was also a sea lover, the same father to whom Thomas felt no love lost. Thomas makes friends with a man named Dwyer who will become an important figure in Thomas's life. With Dwyer, Thomas begins to dream for the first time in his life. Thomas wants to own a pleasure boat in order to live the symbolic life of a rich man without the money and other complications. This foreshadows a transition in Thomas's life. The reader will wonder now if Thomas will fulfill his dream or if trouble will catch up with him.



Part 3, Chapter 6

Part 3, Chapter 6 Summary

Rudolph and Jean have married. Rudolph was finally invited to Jean's apartment where he found pictures of himself wallpapered all over her room, her answer to his proposal. They argued over the wedding but finally agreed on a small ceremony without the complication of family. Jean is not close to her father and brother and wants little to do with them. Jean also wants to continue to live in New York City rather than move to Whitby and live with Rudolph's mother. Calderwood is not happy when he learns of the wedding, mostly because of the amount of time Rudolph will be away from the office. Virginia also is not happy. Rudolph has caught Virginia outside his apartment many times over the past few months, a fact that Jean finds amusing and Rudolph finds annoying and a little scary.

They honeymoon in Monte Carlo, living out all the fantasies Rudolph had as a teenager while infatuated with his French teacher. They move on to Italy, touring all the historic cities, spending more than a month in their travels. In Portofino Jean tells Rudolph that she is very rich, having inherited from her mother shares in her father's drug company. Rudolph finds this revelation amusing and promises to help Jean manage the inheritance when her father is forced to turn it over to her on her twenty-fifth birthday. When they return to their hotel room in Rome that night, there is a message waiting from Brad Knight saying that Mary is in the hospital and it seems her death is imminent. Rudolph decides to spend one more night in Italy before returning home.

Part 3, Chapter 6 Analysis

Rudolph has convinced Jean to marry him despite the other man's interest in her, and now they are on their honeymoon in Europe. Rudolph is glad he waited to see Europe because now he can enjoy it in a way he would not have been able to do on Teddy's dime. This touches on the theme of action and reaction since this trip to Europe seems to be in direct defiance of Teddy's invitation all those years ago.

Rudolph learns that his bride is wealthier than he and is amused to find himself with such luck. Rudolph is on top of the world now, rich in every way imaginable, with a beautiful wife and the whole world lying at his feet. This is the success that Axel saw for his son all those years ago that Rudolph himself could not see. It is ironic that Rudolph accomplished so many things with the boring, small town job that his first love, Julie, left him over. Mary is attempting to take Rudolph's happiness away as she has done before. This time, Mary is dying in the hospital, a surprise and a twist of irony since Mary recently had several operations to prolong her life and has finally found some sort of happiness in her own life.



Part 3, Chapter 7

Part 3, Chapter 7 Summary

Once Thomas and Dwyer return to the ship in Genoa, they begin to have trouble with the ship bully. This man, Falconetti, has bullied everyone on board since the beginning of their voyage, making the lone black sailor stay out of the mess whenever Falconetti was in there and teasing Dwyer about his feminine voice. Now Falconetti has added Thomas to his list of victims, suggesting that he and Dwyer were AWOL to be alone together. Thomas lets the teasing go at first, but soon it begins to bother him. Finally, Thomas invites Falconetti to fight him on deck. Thomas gets the upper hand right away, knocking Falconetti to the ground. However, when Falconetti pulls a knife, Thomas is forced to beat him severely. After this, Thomas becomes the bully, forcing Falconetti to behave. One day, Thomas invites the black sailor into the mess hall and forces Falconetti to sit with him. When Thomas lets Falconetti go, he throws himself overboard. Although Thomas did not murder him, he leaves the ship feeling as though he has.

When the ship docks in New York, Thomas drops Dwyer at the Y.M.C.A. and then he goes back to the hotel where Pappy works. Pappy hides Thomas for a week, providing him with a gun and several bottles of bourbon. Pappy tells Thomas that his brother is looking for him. When Rudolph returns, Thomas allows Pappy to show him up. Rudolph tells Thomas that their mother is dying and is asking for him. Thomas agrees to go with Rudolph, but he is so afraid of the mob that he makes Rudolph pick him up several blocks from the hotel.

On the way to Whitby, Rudolph is pulled over for speeding. Since Thomas has a bottle of alcohol in the car, the officer takes them both back to the station for a sobriety test. Thomas hides the gun under the seat before leaving the car. Thomas is given a urine test, but the cops eventually allow them to leave. When they reach the hospital, they learn that Mary died an hour ago.

Late that night Rudolph, Gretchen, and Thomas sit in Rudolph's living room and talk about Mary. Gretchen tells them that her last words were to tell Axel Mary forgave him. Gretchen and her mother were also able to make amends before Mary's death. Thomas feels closer to Gretchen now that in her grief she no longer seems snooty to him. Thomas gives Gretchen the scarf he bought in France for his mother. Thomas then goes to the bedroom he is to share with Billy. Thomas looks at him and thinks of his own son, hoping the mob will get off him soon so he can go visit Wesley.

Teddy shows up at the funeral, still clearly in love with Gretchen. Rudolph talks to him for a few minutes before they leave the cemetery. Back at Rudolph's they share drinks. Gretchen asks Rudolph what he plans to do with the house. Rudolph says he will keep it and then invites Thomas to move in with him, to find a job in the area. Thomas is offended at an implication he sees in Rudolph's words. Thomas then tells them that he



was the one who burned the cross on Boylan's lawn all those years ago. Gretchen is embarrassed when Thomas tells her why he did it. Then Thomas leaves the room.

Gretchen mentions how strange it is that her relationship with Teddy seems to have affected them all so profoundly. Gretchen tells Rudolph then that she plans to go back to school, to get a master's degree in psychology. Rudolph is surprised and tells her he does not think she will finish. The atmosphere is very tense over lunch.

In New York City, Rudolph drops Gretchen and Billy at their hotel before he invites Thomas for a drink. Rudolph tells Thomas that he invested the five thousand dollars in his company and that as of that morning it is worth sixty thousand dollars. Thomas becomes excited at this news and wants to know how to get the money. At first, Rudolph tries to talk him into keeping it invested, but finally promises to arrange for Thomas to get the money. Thomas finds a phone and makes plans for he and Dwyer to fly to Paris the next day.

Part 3, Chapter 7 Analysis

Thomas had decided not to fight on board the ship because he did not want someone to figure out who he was and tell the mob how to find him, but finds himself forced to fight in order to stop a bully from hurting Dwyer. This fight leads Thomas into becoming a bully himself, degrading the man until he kills himself. This man's death has a profound affect on Thomas that foreshadows a moment of choice Thomas will have later in the novel.

Mary dies while Thomas is peeing into a bottle for a sobriety test, a fact that makes him very upset. However, in grief, Gretchen appears to be more vulnerable to Thomas, easier to approach, which is ironic because Rudolph finds this same behavior in Gretchen disturbing. Thomas is very angry and hurt at his mother's funeral and he appears to take it out on Rudolph, becoming offended when Rudolph invites him to come live with him, although it seems to be a nice offer meant with affection. This goes to the theme of brotherhood. Thomas still remembers Rudolph as the boy who called him a wild animal when they were kids. Thomas blames Rudolph for everything bad that has happened in the family because Rudolph was the golden child, the responsible one who should take the blame. Therefore, Rudolph continues to be the person Thomas focuses his anger on, although in truth, none of Thomas's problems are Rudolph's fault. This makes it doubly ironic that Thomas should find Gretchen easier to approach now.

When Thomas learns what Rudolph has done with the money he tried to return in order to replace Rudolph's college money, Thomas takes it without a fight. Thomas needs the money now and he is no longer so full of pride that he cannot take money from his brother. Thomas has a dream that he wants to see come true and this money could make that happen. This shows character growth in Thomas as well as motivation that will take Thomas through the final transition in his life as the novel moves toward its conclusion.



Part 4, Chapter 1

Part 4, Chapter 1 Summary

1963. It is raining in California. Gretchen has just returned home from school and she is reading a letter from Rudolph. Rudolph is in Vienna with Jean and he is considering retiring from his job with Dee Cee Corporation. Rudolph wants to take his life in a new direction and he hopes to get Jean pregnant soon. Gretchen recalls another letter she received from Thomas. Thomas has bought a boat and he and Dwyer are refinishing it themselves. Thomas is happier than he has ever been, though he reminds Gretchen of her promise not to tell Rudolph where he is. While reading these letters, Gretchen gets a call from a friend, Sam. Sam is a cutter with the studio who has befriended her during her time of grief. Sam wanted to train Gretchen to be a cutter too, but she is determined to finish her studies.

Gretchen has two classes with an exchange student from Ghana and he is coming over that night to help her study. Kosi is always so thin that Gretchen makes a point of feeding him every time he helps her study. They share a meal that night before they begin to study. This night, however, Gretchen becomes frustrated with the work and argues with Kosi. Kosi tries to leave, but Gretchen stops him, allowing him to kiss her. They have rough sex on the couch and afterward Gretchen is ashamed and suffering discomfort. Kosi threatens her for the way she spoke to him and leaves. Gretchen calls Sam at the studio, giving up on her studies.

Part 4, Chapter 1 Analysis

Gretchen allows the reader to see what has been happening to Rudolph and Thomas in the three years that have passed between chapters. Rudolph has decided he would like a life of leisure while Thomas has bought a boat and is fixing it up himself. It seems everyone in the family is content in their lives now, foreshadowing the suggestion that something bad is about to happen to someone. Gretchen is also content in her life until she has a fight with the young man who has been helping her with her studies. Gretchen is practically raped, an incident that causes her to change her thinking about her career choices. The reader might also note the parallel between this attack by a black student and the proposal Gretchen nearly accepted by the two black soldiers from whom Teddy saved her. Gretchen decides to become a cutter at a studio rather than go back to the school with this man who hurt her. This foreshadows a future for Gretchen that will take her in a new and hopefully better direction.



Part 4, Chapter 2

Part 4, Chapter 2 Summary

1964. Jean is pregnant and she and Rudolph have settled in Whitby. Jean likes the small town more than she had thought she would, especially since Rudolph has decided to retire that summer despite Calderwood's objections. Rudolph leaves for the college to attend a board meeting and runs into Quentin, now a college student, who tells him his father has died. At the college, Rudolph runs into Leon Harrison, the owner of the local paper and a man that Rudolph dislikes immensely. Leon is a member of the college board as well. At the meeting, it is discussed that Professor Denton is interested in taking a position with the college. Harrison immediately fights the vote since he remembers the accusations made against Denton, suggesting he was a communist. However, the vote passes. Just as the vote is done, Rudolph gets a call that his wife is in labor.

Jean is in labor for most of the day and Rudolph has trouble understanding how she can stand it. The child is finally born late that night. Rudolph visits Jean in her room where she insists he bring her camera the next day so she can photograph their daughter. Rudolph goes home and finds Virginia Calderwood waiting for him in the front yard. Virginia insists she is in love with him and wants to be his mistress. Rudolph sends her home.

Five weeks later Rudolph is in the bar of the country club reading an article in the paper about Professor Denton after having finished playing tennis with Jean. Rudolph decides to buy the paper to prevent Harrison from writing biased articles in the future. Brad comes in with a group of men and buys drinks for everyone. Brad has been generous since Enid's birth, and has started a savings account for the child. When the other men leave, Brad asks Rudolph when he will be retiring. Brad wants Rudolph's job and hopes he will recommend him to Calderwood. Brad then tells Rudolph that he has been dating Virginia secretly and that he plans to ask her to marry him. Rudolph tells Brad about Virginia's behavior toward him, but Brad does not believe him. Jean and Rudolph get an invitation to Brad and Virginia's wedding two weeks later.

At the wedding, Virginia seems normal, making Rudolph hope that she is over her obsession and will make Brad a happy man. At the reception, Rudolph talks with Brad's father who tells him that his oil business is doing well now. Then Rudolph talks to Sid Gossett, the ex-mayor, who suggests to Rudolph that he might consider being mayor himself. Rudolph is interested and makes plans to meet with Gossett at his office later. Rudolph finally decides to dance with the bride because he does not want to make people wonder why he did not. Virginia is fine at first, but then whispers in Rudolph's ear that she is still willing to be his lover. When the happy couple leaves for their honeymoon, Rudolph makes his recommendation to Calderwood. Instead of Brad, Rudolph suggests a lawyer in the legal department. Brad quits his job three months



after the wedding and moves back to Oklahoma. Rudolph invests in Brad's oil company and, on Rudolph's advice, Johnny does as well.

Part 4, Chapter 2 Analysis

Rudolph encourages the college board to allow Professor Denton to return to Whitby college, which finishes his obligation to the man he felt he let down at the beginning of his career. However, this leads to Rudolph's war with the local paper owner who remembers Denton's problems with the college and prints it on the front page of the paper. Rudolph decides to buy the paper in order to stop this from happening again, showing the reader the depth of his power and financial assets.

Rudolph's struggles with Virginia come to a head the night his daughter is born, causing Rudolph to become concerned about the danger associated with Virginia's obsession. This leads right into Brad telling Rudolph he intends to marry Virginia. Rudolph warns him away, but Brad marries her anyway, perhaps because he hopes it will encourage Calderwood to appoint him to Rudolph's position when Rudolph retires. Rudolph is disappointed that Brad did not listen to his warnings, which leads Rudolph to recommend another man for his position, thus causing Brad to go home to Oklahoma and the oil business. This touches on the theme of action and reaction again, as Brad reacts to what Rudolph has done. This also includes the decision Rudolph makes to invest in Brad's oil business, which foreshadows a development later in the plot in which there is trouble with this investment.

Rudolph also considers the possibility of a political career in this chapter, foreshadowing further plot developments where Rudolph becomes mayor and is embroiled in the problems of his small town. Again, Rudolph's life seems to be perfect with his luck continuing to lead him into a blissful future. However, the reader must realize the nature of this novel and be watching for foreshadowing that will create turmoil in Rudolph's life. The only question is where the turmoil will come from this time.



Part 4, Chapter 3

Part 4, Chapter 3 Summary

1965. Thomas and Dwyer's boat, the *Clothilde*, docked at Antibes, has been in operations for two seasons now, providing pleasure cruises for the rich. Thomas is happy with the boat and his work, and is more comfortable on the sea than anywhere else. Thomas has also made the conscious decision to avoid conflict whenever possible after what happened with Falconetti aboard the cargo ship. Now is the beginning of a new season and Thomas is waiting for Dwyer and Pinky, a mechanic for a neighboring boat, to finish work on the engine. When Pinky emerges from the engine room and tells him the boat is ready to go, Thomas tells him that they are still short-handed. Pinky immediately tells Thomas about a woman on board the ship he works on who would be perfect for them. Pinky invites the woman, Kate, over and she convinces Thomas that she is the perfect candidate for the job by making them all dinner. Thomas hires her and within a week, they are sharing a cabin.

The first charter of the season is a couple Thomas has worked with before. Mr. and Mrs. Goodhart are Americans who charter the boat during the day while staying at a local hotel. Mr. Goodhart is familiar with Rudolph and mentions him to Thomas. Thomas likes the couple because they are easy to get along with, not as demanding as some of their charters tend to be. However, the Goodharts tend to drink a lot. On the final day of their charter, a storm blows in, forcing Thomas to order the boat home early. The Goodharts are normally dropped off in the bay outside their hotel, but the seas are too high for the *Clothilde* to get close enough to the dock. The Goodharts, who are drunk, decide they want to swim, which Thomas knows is a dangerous idea, but allows anyway. Thomas and Kate swim with the couple and manage to get all of them on shore safely. When Goodhart visits Thomas on his boat later that night to settle the bill, he apologizes for the lapse in judgment and requests a longer charter the following year.

Thomas has asked Dwyer to write to his girl and find out if the heat is still on him in the States. The girl has written back and tells them that Pappy is dead so she is unable to get the information Thomas wants. The girl also tells Dwyer that she does not want to wait for him any longer and if he still wants to marry her, he should come home. Dwyer decides to stay with the *Clothilde*.

Their next charter takes them to Spain where two businessmen come aboard with two women who are not their wives. One of the women walks around without a top on, making Kate jealous and protective of Thomas. When they return to Antibes, there are two letters waiting for Thomas. One is from Rudolph saying that he met Mr. Goodhart and learned about Thomas's business. Rudolph has told his friend Johnny about it who might want to charter the boat for his honeymoon. The other letter is from Johnny. Thomas accepts the charter and then writes to Rudolph, asking that he track down his old manager and find out if the heat is still on him, not explaining what the heat was. Thomas also asks that Rudolph track down his son.



Part 4, Chapter 3 Analysis

Thomas has named his boat *Clothilde* to honor the only woman from whom he felt completely loved, thereby creating a symbol of his lost youth and his hope for a brighter future. Thomas seems happy and content in his life, especially after he begins a love affair with Kate. This relationship with Kate brings the reader back to Thomas's marriage to Teresa and the fact that it was never resolved. Clearly, Thomas no longer loves Teresa, if he ever did, and has no qualms about getting involved with another woman. However, this does foreshadow future developments in the plot, along with Thomas's letter to Rudolph asking for help to learn if the mob is still looking for Thomas. Thomas wants to see his son, but he is afraid to bring the mob's attention to the child, whom they might hurt in retaliation against Thomas.

The characters that Thomas takes in this chapter are used to show the reader the depth of character growth in Thomas. Thomas is a responsible person now who actively avoids confrontation and who is capable of taking care of all his client's needs without judgment or conflict. This is a new Thomas the reader has never seen before, a Thomas who does not hide behind his fears and his anger. This new Thomas also foreshadows plot developments where he is faced with a situation in which he must act forcefully and leaves some question in the reader's mind as to how he will react in the situation. This change also delves into the theme of brotherhood as Thomas asks his brother for help, something he has never done before. Thomas is definitely a new person and this change foreshadows the possibility of a change in the relationship between Thomas and Rudolph.



Part 4, Chapter 4

Part 4, Chapter 4 Summary

Rudolph tracks Thomas's old manager down to a seedy rooming house on West Fifty-Third Street. With the promise of one hundred and fifty dollars, the money he gave to Thomas the day he ran away, the manager tells Rudolph that the heat is off. Rudolph wires Thomas with the news and Thomas flies to New York City a few days later. By the time Thomas arrives, Rudolph has also tracked down Teresa and their son. It turns out that Teresa has been arrested several times for prostitution and the lawyer that Rudolph has consulted assures them that Thomas should have no trouble getting custody of his now fourteen-year-old son.

Armed with the police reports regarding Teresa's arrests, Thomas goes to the military school where his son is. The people at the school are surprised to see Thomas because they have been told he was dead. Thomas shows the principal Teresa's arrest records and tells him he wants to take the boy home with him. The principal tells him that Wesley has been getting into fights at the school. Thomas thinks this is because of the Jordache bloodline, but he will put a stop to it. Thomas takes the boy out of the school and back to Antibes with him.

Part 4, Chapter 4 Analysis

Rudolph has come through for Thomas in the beginning of the chapter, a section that is in Rudolph's point of view, and gets all the answers Thomas was hoping for. Rudolph has always been the responsible one, the one who steps up and protects his family, and this section shows that character element once more. Thomas, who becomes the point of view character in the latter part of the chapter, is not overly thankful for Rudolph's actions. Thomas is still wary of his brother, expecting to be hurt by Rudolph in some way even though that has never really happened before. This goes to the theme of brotherhood. Thomas was misunderstood as a child and therefore misunderstands the motivations of the people around him, especially his brother. However, Thomas is beginning to grow and change. Now that he has custody of his son, perhaps this growth will continue in a positive direction.



Part 4, Chapter 5

Part 4, Chapter 5 Summary

1966. It is Gretchen's fortieth birthday. Gretchen has become a cutter for the movie industry and is currently in New York working a film for her new lover, Evans Kinsella. It is a Friday night and Evans stops by to see if Gretchen is available for the weekend, not aware that it is her birthday. However, Gretchen has plans to visit Rudolph in Whitby so she can see her son where he is attending Whitby College. Billy has been distant with his mother ever since she began seeing Evans because the boy does not approve.

When Rudolph arrives to pick up Gretchen, they go to a bar where he presents her with a gold watch. Rudolph is the only one to remember her birthday. Then they go to Rudolph's apartment to pick up Jean. Jean has been depressed for a while due to a miscarriage with her second pregnancy. When they arrive at the apartment, Jean is drunk and destroying her camera equipment, equipment she has not used since the miscarriage. Gretchen discreetly leaves, assuming they will not be going to Whitby that night.

The next morning it is like nothing has happened. Gretchen, Jean, and Rudolph travel to Whitby. Once at the house, Gretchen pulls Rudolph aside and tells him that his wife is an alcoholic. Rudolph becomes angry and denies the idea. Later, due to the fact that Billy skipped lunch to play baseball, Gretchen goes to track him down on the athletic fields of the college. Billy is not a good student and has only gotten into the college due to Rudolph's influence. Billy tells his mother he is not happy at Whitby and is considering dropping out, an idea that scares Gretchen because of the draft. Billy is openly hostile to his mother when she expresses concern, reminding her that he is nineteen, an adult, and he can make his own choices. Gretchen returns to New York that night.

Part 4, Chapter 5 Analysis

Gretchen is content in her life now as well, working a good job she enjoys and spending time with a man who does not require more of her than she wants to give. Gretchen has experienced character growth since the last time the reader saw her, discovering a way to settle easily into middle age. However, not everything is good with Rudolph. Gretchen suspects Jean is an alcoholic due to her erratic behavior the night of Gretchen's birthday. Like most husbands, Rudolph is not happy to hear this idea, and rejects Gretchen's opinion. However, it is clear to the reader that Jean is emotionally scarred from her miscarriage and this foreshadows further plot developments dealing with the situation.

Gretchen's conversation with her son introduces tension into the plot. Billy is clearly unhappy with his mother's new lover and with his mother's continuing overprotective



style of parenting, something that has always bothered Billy. The reader also learns here that Rudolph has once again rescued a family member by getting Billy into Whitby College even though his test scores were low. This goes to Rudolph's character elements, his need to always help the members of his family. Billy's attitude toward his mother, his desire to drop out of school, and Gretchen's concern over the draft all add up to more foreshadowing. Vietnam has been brewing for several years by this time and many American soldiers have died over there. The reader must wonder what will happen if Billy is drafted and what Gretchen might ask of Rudolph to stop Billy's term of service.



Part 4, Chapter 6

Part 4, Chapter 6 Summary

1967. Rudolph is on a plan to Dallas with Johnny to investigate suspicions that Brad Knight is not using their investment money properly in his oil company. Rudolph, who is now mayor of Whitby, is working on a new budget for the city. When they land, they are met by Brad's assistant who takes them to a high-class hotel and a suite with every amenity they could possibly desire. Irritated at Johnny for assuming Brad is doing something wrong, Rudolph leaves the living room of the suite for the privacy of his bedroom and the phone. Rudolph calls Jean, worried about her because her drinking has become out of control, and has resulted in a car accident two months before. Jean is fine today, however.

Rudolph then calls his office and learns that the students at the college are upset due to an article Rudolph approved in the local paper, which he owns, that suggested the ROTC should remain at the college. The police chief is concerned about rumbles of a protest and rumors of drug use on campus. The police chief wants to run a raid at the college, but the president of the university has told him not to. Rudolph instructs him to get a warrant and to leave their clubs at home. Rudolph then instructs him to call with any more problems.

Rudolph then receives a call from Gretchen. Billy, who dropped out of school a month before, has been drafted. Gretchen wants Rudolph to get Billy assigned to a desk job somewhere out of harm's way. Rudolph does not want to use his influence to do this, but agrees after they exchange a few angry words.

Brad arrives at the hotel and tries to paint a pretty picture about his situation, but Rudolph is aware that his wife has left him and has spread the rumor that Brad is nearly bankrupt. Brad then tells them about his love affair with an actress that has bankrupted him. Brad has used his investor's money to cover his personal debts and hopes to be able to set things straight with the next big oil well. Brad also tells Johnny and Rudolph that he has enough money hidden away to cover what he owed the two of them, but not to pay back the other investors. Johnny wants to take the money and run, but Rudolph insists they must go through legal channels. The next day, Rudolph, Johnny and Brad put all Brad's assets in a new bank account under Johnny and Rudolph's name and visit lawyers in order to begin the legal process.

Rudolph flies to Washington on his way home to arrange for Billy's change of service when he gets a call from his secretary informing him that the raid on the college went terribly wrong the night before. The students protested the raid, throwing things at the cops and injuring the police chief. They then went to Rudolph's house, calling for him to come out and face them when Jean opened the door, roaring drunk and naked. One of the students took pictures.



Rudolph arrives at the college just in time to discover that the students have taken over the administration building and there is a blown up picture of Jean, naked and drunk, hanging from one of the windows. Rudolph orders that the police go in with tear gas and clubs but no guns. Most of the students escape out the back, but four students are wounded. Quentin, Rudolph's old running buddy, was in the building and Rudolph orders his arrest.

Part 4, Chapter 6 Analysis

Rudolph has his plate full with his duties as mayor of Whitby, his wife's alcoholism, and his friendship with Brad. This man, whom Rudolph gave a job and his generous friendship, has fallen in love and become bankrupt in the process, committing embezzlement to cover his debts. In a twist of irony, Rudolph, who made the man, is forced to ruin him with legal prosecution. This friendship has gone full circle and has experienced its climactic end.

Rudolph then learns about a protest at the college that occurs due to the overall attitude of American students at the time and police presence on campus. Rudolph encourages the gentle handling of the situation until a picture of his wife, naked, is hung from the administration building where everyone can see it. This motivates Rudolph to change his tactics of dealing with the situation and causes injury to several students that will more than likely end Rudolph's career. This scene not only touches on the theme of action and reaction, but it also foreshadows Rudolph's future with his wife. Jean has a problem and Rudolph is now aware of it. The only question now is how much worse will it get.

Gretchen, although she and Rudolph have been tense with each other ever since Gretchen pointed out Jean's obvious alcohol addiction the year before, calls Rudolph for help with her son who is being drafted. This was foreshadowed in the previous chapter and once again shows Rudolph's desire to protect his family and his family's reliance on him for this protection. Rudolph agrees despite his better judgment, although there is a moment in which he resists, showing character growth within Rudolph and foreshadowing a time when Rudolph will no longer be the helpful brother everyone has come to rely on.



Part 4, Chapter 7

Part 4, Chapter 7 Summary

1968. Thomas has had an accident on board his boat in which his retina became partially detached. Thomas flies to New York to have the eye repaired and spends three weeks in the hospital. Upon his discharge, Thomas visits Rudolph at his New York apartment. Rudolph and Jean have sold their house in Whitby after what happened the night of the protest. One student was blinded; therefore, Rudolph lost his mayoralship and the respect of the people in town. Jean is in rehab for a second time and Rudolph is alone with Enid.

Thomas asks Rudolph if he might not help him get a divorce from Teresa. Kate is pregnant and Thomas would like to marry her before the child is born. Rudolph calls Thomas three days later and tells him the Teresa is on her way to Nevada to get a quick divorce, although he does not tell Thomas that he had to pay her off in order to get her to agree. Thomas is very grateful, and suddenly realizes what a good man his brother really is. Thomas invites Rudolph and Jean to visit him on his boat any time he would like.

Several weeks later, Rudolph, Jean, Enid, and Gretchen attend Thomas's wedding in Antibes. After the reception, everyone goes back to the *Clothilde* where Thomas discovers that Rudolph has bought him a radar for the ship as a wedding present. The party sets sail for the coast of Italy that night with Kate making dinner despite Rudolph's offer to buy everyone dinner in Monte Carlo. Gretchen and Rudolph talk on the deck about Thomas and how happy he seems and how great his relationships are. Rudolph, who has promised Jean there would be no alcohol on the boat, encourages Kate to find him and Gretchen a bottle while Jean is putting Enid to bed. When Jean discovers the drinks, Rudolph allows her a sip, assuming it will not hurt anything.

Before dinner is served, the boat hits a log in the water, which damages the propeller. They are forced to turn the boat around and return to Antibes so that they can have the propeller repaired. That night Thomas is awakened by his friend Pinky, who saw Jean in Cannes at a bar in the company of a pimp. Thomas sends Pinky home and goes to the bar to find Jean. Jean and the pimp are in a room in the basement and the pimp is attempting to rape Jean. Thomas bursts in and fights the man, sustaining several injuries when the man grabs a hammer. Thomas gets the advantage and has a chance to kill the man, but remembering Falconetti, decides not to. Thomas and Jean go back to the boat where they tell everyone a made-up story to explain Thomas's injuries. Rudolph knows the truth and he thanks Thomas for his help. Rudolph feels guilty because of the drink he allowed Jean to have and because he felt as though he should be the one to rescue his own wife.

A few days later Thomas and Kate are alone on the boat while the others have gone sightseeing. They are still waiting for a replacement propeller for the *Clothilde*. Thomas



is alone on deck when a car pulls up to the dock. Thomas recognizes the pimp, but does not run because of Kate. Thomas is beaten and dies of his wounds a few days later. Rudolph, Gretchen, Jean, Kate, Dwyer, Wesley, and Enid sail out into the ocean and throw Thomas's ashes into the sea he loved so much.

Part 4, Chapter 7 Analysis

The theme of brotherhood is explored most deeply in this chapter. Thomas goes to Rudolph once more to ask for help in getting a divorce. When Rudolph does as asked despite his own personal problems, such as his dismissal from Whitby and his wife's alcoholism, Thomas finally realizes what a selfless man Rudolph truly is. Thomas has found his brother for the first time and allows himself to feel close to Rudolph. This goes not only to character growth in Thomas, but also Rudolph, who has gotten over his reluctance to continue helping his siblings and goes out on a limb to help a brother who has been nothing but curt to him for twenty years.

Thomas's wedding to Kate is the climactic conclusion to Thomas's turbulent romantic life, beginning with Clothilde, the twins, Teresa, and the many women he has been involved with over the years. It also shows more character growth in Thomas, in that he can settle with one woman and allow himself to love and be loved. Gretchen notes this change in her brother, suggesting that Thomas has found some secret that they have all searched for through their entire adult life. This also goes to the theme of the definition of rich. From the title of the book, the reader is aware that one brother will be rich and one poor, on a literal level. However, on a more symbolic level, the reader has learned that there is more than one meaning to the idea of being a rich man, and that Thomas is as rich in love and happiness as Rudolph is in financial gains. In addition, along this symbolic line, Rudolph can perhaps be described as the poorer brother due to the collapse of his career, his many friendships, and his wife's alcohol addiction.

Finally, Thomas has sworn to not fight any more because of what happened on the cargo ship with Falconetti as well as his responsibilities to Kate, Wesley, and Dwyer. However, in order to save Jean, Thomas must do what he has sworn not to. Not only this, but he must make the choice not to kill the man, a decision that leads to his own death a few days later. This touches on the theme of action and reaction, with Thomas's death resulting directly from Jean's actions. However, it also shows in ultimate terms the depth of Thomas's growth. Thomas began his journey in this novel as a selfish, neglected boy who cared about no one but himself. In the end, Thomas is a selfless man who puts his life in harm's way in order to save the woman his brother loves. In his own way, Thomas has grown, loved, and lived to a greater level than anyone else in this novel.



Characters

Rudolph Jordache

Rudolph Jordache is the middle child of the Jordache family and the most beloved by the parents. Rudolph is a smart young man who has enough ambition to take him further than either of his parents ever dreamed of going. Rudolph is also conscious of appearances, careful not only with his own appearance but with his behavior as he knows that everything he does effects his future. In the beginning of the novel, Rudolph is a typical young boy who loves his mother and will go out of his way to help her. Rudolph also has a crush on his French teacher. However, Rudolph quickly learns that no matter how much he helps his mother, she will remain the bitter woman she has always been, and he also learns that some people are beyond affection.

Rudolph is the last remaining child in the household when his father disappears one night on the Hudson River. Rudolph, with the help of a rich friend, takes his mother to a nearby town and works his way through college. After college, Rudolph has proven himself such a reliable worker at the local department store that he is promoted to manager. It is only a matter of time from this point on before Rudolph manages to build this one, small town department store into a multi-million dollar franchise. However, although Rudolph is wildly successful in his professional life, his personal life leaves room for improvement. Rudolph dates his high school sweetheart through college with the expectation that they will marry someday. However, Rudolph's definition of someday and his fiancée's definition are quite different. Rudolph's fiancée ends up breaking off their engagement when Rudolph refuses to leave the small town where he has made his home and marry her immediately.

Rudolph finally finds love some years later. This new love nearly breaks Rudolph's heart when she reveals that he is not the only man she has been dating. However, Rudolph finally manages to break through her resolve and convince her to marry him. It seems a marriage made in heaven until Rudolph's wife miscarries their second child. Sent spiraling into a depression, Rudolph's wife becomes an alcoholic, putting her life and the lives of the people around her in danger.

Thomas Jordache

Thomas is the youngest of the Jordache children. Thomas is a young man filled with a rage he cannot control. Thomas gets into fights just to work out these aggressions, and is unapologetic about his actions. Everyone in the Jordache family knows that Rudolph is the favorite; the only one the parents hope will go to college or will ever make anything of his life. Faced with the idea that no one who is supposed to love him thinks he will amount to anything, Thomas decides he does not care about his own future.



Thomas burns a cross on Teddy Boylan's lawn and is forced to leave town. At first, this seems a brutal act, but Thomas finds love in the home of his uncle where he has been sent to live. Thomas falls in love with his uncle's maid, Clothilde. However, when his uncle learns of this affair, he threatens Thomas with the arrest of his lover for statutory rape, a situation that would send Clothilde back to her native Canada and to her abusive husband. The uncle then takes Thomas's place in Clothilde's bed. Faced with this betrayal, Thomas quickly finds himself in trouble again, this time being arrested himself for statutory rape, which forces his father to come and bail him out with Rudolph's college money.

Thomas continues to get into trouble everywhere he goes until he finds within himself a talent for boxing. Thomas wins quite a few fights and his career looks promising until he wins a big fight in London and goes to France with an English girl. This side trip causes Thomas to fall out of shape and lose another big fight, which essentially ends his career. Broke, depressed, and frustrated, Thomas gets into a fight with another boxer and ends up on the run from the mob. However, this is a blessing in disguise when Thomas begins working on cargo ships and discovers a love of the sea he never knew before. Thomas begins to dream again, and imagines himself the owner of a small ship, like a yacht, on which he can take charters. This dream comes true, thanks to some foresight by Rudolph, and Thomas lives out his dream, falls in love, and builds a life his brother cannot help but envy.

Gretchen Jordache

Gretchen is the oldest of the Jordache children. Gretchen appears to be a proper girl in the first few pages of the novel. However, it quickly becomes clear that Gretchen is a curious girl with dreams of her own. Gretchen wants out of her father's house, allowed to pursue her own dreams in her own way. When presented with a chance to make eight hundred dollars for just a few hours of her time, Gretchen jumps at the chance. However, Gretchen is delayed when the owner of the business she works with sees her. Instead, Gretchen goes to dinner with Teddy Boylan and becomes his lover.

Gretchen takes what she can from Teddy Boylan, learning many things from his experiences. However, Gretchen is not in love with the man and decides at the end that she is better off without him. Gretchen flees her family and her lover to live in New York City. Here, Gretchen meets the man of her dreams, a soldier just back from the war. Gretchen and Willie Abbott marry and have a child together, possibly the first of the Jordache clan to find real happiness. However, this happiness does not last long as Willie's drinking habit spirals out of control and Gretchen divorces him in favor of a second marriage to a Hollywood director. This marriage, though happier than the first, ends in tragedy when Gretchen's husband dies in a car accident.

Gretchen struggles after her husband's death, first with the legal maneuvers of her husband's first wife and then with all the possible career choices in her path. First Gretchen decides to return to school to get her master's degree in Psychology, but quickly realizes it is not the career for her. Gretchen then works as a cutter for the



movies, using the skills her husband taught her. This career works out well for Gretchen who finds much success in it. However, it also leads to another affair with another director, which causes a deep rift between Gretchen and her grown son, a rift that is never completely resolved.

Mary Jordache

Mary Jordache is the matriarch of the Jordache family. Mary was an orphan raised in a Catholic home for children. Due to this upbringing, Mary had little knowledge of the relationship between a husband and wife. Mary met Axel Jordache soon after matriculating out of the orphanage and had no clue to his sexual desires until the night of their wedding. Mary saw her new husband's desires as sinful and would spend the next twenty years in fear of them.

Mary loves Rudolph above all of her other children and is not afraid to show it. When Mary learns of Gretchen's sinful activities, Mary disowns her and refuses to even talk about her. All of Mary's children leave her, except for Rudolph. Rudolph takes the burden of caring for his mother completely to himself, staying after his siblings have left, after his father has died, and when he goes off to college. Rudolph rents a small apartment above a store for himself and his mother to live in and allows her to do nothing all day while he works for both of them. When Rudolph becomes more successful and is able to buy a house, his mother begins to enjoy the depth of his wealth. Mary has operations to improve her health and begins to spend Rudolph's money in a way her frugal husband would never have allowed.

When Rudolph finds Thomas again in New York, he gives Thomas his mother's address. Thomas visits the old woman and finds her pleased to see him and apologetic for her behavior toward him as a child. This pleases Thomas, and ends his deep-seated belief that his mother never loved him. On her deathbed years later, Mary asks for Thomas. Mary also forgives Gretchen, seeing her for the first time since Gretchen left home at nineteen.

Axel Jordache

Axel Jordache is the patriarch of the Jordache family. At first, Axel appears to be a hard man who has little or no affection for his family. Axel is a German immigrant who tends to be tough and harsh at times, breaking into German whenever he is angry. Axel runs his home with an iron fist, beating Thomas whenever he acts out and not allowing Gretchen to go to college or to even keep the majority of her paycheck.

Mary dislikes her husband with a passion due to his sexual appetite. Mary does not understand her husband's needs and feels that he is hurting her every time he comes to her bed. However, Axel sees it as affection and does not understand his wife's view. Axel loves his children and tries to raise them with good values, which is why he beats Thomas when he acts out. This is the only way Axel knows to control his son's behavior. When Rudolph is caught with a naked picture of his French teacher, Axel accompanies



Rudolph to the school and stands up for his son, fixing the situation so that Rudolph will not be punished.

When Thomas finds himself once more in trouble in Ohio, Axel immediately goes to his aid, paying a man all the money Axel frugally saved for Rudolph's education to keep his son out of jail. However, between this loss of Rudolph's education and Mary's constant insistence of her husband's cruelty, Axel becomes depressed. One night during a storm, Axel decides to go out in the lake on his small boat. Axel is lost and presumed dead.

Teddy Boylan

Teddy Boylan is a rich, bored man who lives in the same town as the Jordache's. Teddy Boylan comes across Gretchen on a country road one day and invites her to lunch. The two soon become lovers. Teddy is cruel to Gretchen because this is his nature. However, when Gretchen is cruel in return, Teddy is crushed. Teddy wants to marry Gretchen, but Gretchen has only used Teddy as a means to an end. Gretchen wants to learn about sex and the relationships between men and women. With this knowledge, Gretchen moves to New York City and falls in love with a soldier just home from the war.

Teddy befriends Rudolph in order to be close to Gretchen in an abstract way. Teddy hopes to use Rudolph to get to Gretchen, but this ploy does not work. Instead, Teddy teaches Rudolph how to behave as a man with means and education. Rudolph feels sorry for Teddy since he can see how lonely he is. However, this does not stop Rudolph from taking money from Teddy for his education. Rudolph and Gretchen meet Teddy again at Mary's funeral. Teddy is just as selfish and lonely as ever, and is still interested in pulling Gretchen back into his life.

Willie Abbott

Willie Abbott is a soldier who has just returned from the war when Gretchen meets him in a talent agent's office. Willie and Gretchen become lovers almost immediately and move in together shortly afterward. When Gretchen learns she is pregnant, she and Willie get married. It seems to be a happy marriage at first. However, Willie's drinking soon gets out of control and he begins to sleep with other women. Gretchen is saddened by this and continues to stay with Willie for many years despite her own affairs, afraid that if she leaves Willie he will take their son.

Finally, Gretchen does leave Willie and marries another man, taking her son and moving to Las Angeles. Willie becomes depressed by this and begins to drink even more, embarrassing his son every time he visits him at school. However, Willie's affections for Gretchen have not changed. When Gretchen's second husband dies in a car accident, Willie calls her, begging her to come back to him.



Jean Jordache

Jean is a photographer who meets Rudolph when she is hired to photograph him at the opening of the Port Philip Calderwood strip mall. Rudolph falls for Jean right away and they become lovers. Rudolph is put off by Jean's refusal to let him visit her at her apartment. When he learns that Jean has been seeing another man, Rudolph becomes enraged with jealousy, but he cannot make himself stop seeing Jean. Finally, Jean gives up the other man and agrees to marry Rudolph.

On their honeymoon, Jean reveals to Rudolph that she is very rich. Jean does not like her wealth, however, because it has driven a wedge between herself and her father and brother. Jean does not want to live the life of a rich woman, and is insistent on continuing her photography career, which means she will continue to live in New York City while Rudolph divides his time between there and Whitby, his business headquarters. However, Jean changes her mind upon the birth of their first child. Jean has found that Whitby has its good qualities.

When Jean miscarries their second child, she falls into a depression that leads to alcoholism. Jean controls it at first, hiding it from everyone, including Rudolph. However, the disease quickly spirals out of control until Jean is photographed in a rage and naked at her front door, an act that effectively ends her husband's political career. Jean goes into treatment, but she slips while in France visiting with Thomas. Jean goes into a bar and is nearly raped by a man until Thomas comes and rescues her. Thomas is later beaten and killed by the man who tried to rape Jean.

Johnny Heath

Johnny Heath is a Wall Street wiz kid when Rudolph meets him at Gretchen and Willie's. Together, Rudolph and Johnny design a business plan for Calderwood that will create Dee Cee Corporation and make them all rich. Johnny then becomes Rudolph's closest friend and financial advisor. Together, Rudolph and Johnny make many business deals together, including the decision to invest in the oil business of another friend. However, when they discover that the oil friend has been stealing from them, Johnny is the first to find the theft and decide to confront the friend. Rudolph accompanies him, stopping Johnny from taking compensation and dropping the whole deal in favor of Rudolph's desire to prosecute their friend. Johnny is left in charge of making sure the prosecution goes off without a hitch.

Duncan Calderwood

Duncan Calderwood is the owner of Calderwood department store where Rudolph has his first job and is promoted to manager after he graduates from college. Calderwood is a frugal man, much like Axel Jordache, and he is suspicious when Rudolph comes up with an idea to expand his empire by opening a strip mall. However, Calderwood,

though cautious, agrees to everything Rudolph plans since he thinks of Rudolph as the son he never had. Calderwood becomes a very rich man thanks to Rudolph.

Calderwood has three daughters and has long hoped that Rudolph would marry one. However, when Rudolph shows no interest in any of them and the first two are married off, Calderwood loses hope. When his youngest daughter, Virginia, comes to Calderwood and tells him she is in love with Rudolph, Calderwood insists that Rudolph marry the girl. However, Rudolph refuses, later to find out that Virginia is mentally unstable and has targeted him for her affections.



Objects/Places

The Bakery

The Jordache family owns a bakery in which the father, Axel, bakes the bread and his wife, Mary, staffs the front counter. Rudolph often takes over for his mother after school so she can rest before making the family's dinner. The family lives upstairs, above the bakery.

French Love Letters

Rudolph has a crush on his high school French teacher and spends many hours writing her explicit love letters in the French language, only to tear them up without allowing anyone to see them.

Explicit Drawing

Rudolph is caught drawing a naked picture of his French teacher that leads to Axel coming to his son's defense.

Burning Cross

On VE day, Thomas and a friend burn a cross on Teddy Boylan's lawn. Thomas's friend gets burned and quickly tells his uncle the truth about his burns. As a result, Thomas is sent to live with his uncle.

Gone With the Wind

Gone With the Wind is Mary Jordache's favorite book, one she keeps with her constantly.

Eight Hundred Dollars

Gretchen receives eight hundred dollars from Teddy Boylan for spending the afternoon with him.

The Works of Shakespeare

Gretchen hides eight hundred dollars in a book on the works of Shakespeare until her mother finds it and transfers it to an anthology of English poetry in order to allow Gretchen to know her mother knew about the money.



Clothilde

Clothilde is the name of Thomas's ship. Thomas takes the name from a French Canadian maid he knew while staying in the home of his uncle.

The Military Hospital

Gretchen volunteers at a military hospital on the outskirts of Port Philip where she meets two soldiers who make an inappropriate proposal to her.

Whitby College

Whitby College is where Rudolph gets his bachelor's degree, where he meets Brad, and where he is going to school when he begins working for Calderwood.

Calderwood's Department Store

Calderwood's Department Store is the store where Rudolph goes to work while he is in college and where he is offered a manager's position upon his graduation. Rudolph comes up with the proposals that eventually lead to the formation of the Dee Cee Corporation and his and Mr. Calderwood's amazing wealth.

Dee Cee Corporation

Dee Cee Corporation is the corporation Rudolph and Mr. Calderwood form together in order to begin what will be a string of strip malls.

Port Philip, New York

Port Philip is a small town where the Jordache family lives until after the death of the father, Axel.

Whitby, New York

Whitby is a small college town where Rudolph moves his mother while he attends college and where he continues to live while he works for Calderwood's Department Store and Dee Cee Corporation.

New York City, New York

New York City is where first Gretchen moves when she leaves home and where she meets and marries her first husband, Willie Abbott. Rudolph spends much of his time



here while working for Dee Cee Corporation and after his separation from the town of Whitby.

Los Angeles, California

Gretchen moves to Los Angeles after marrying Colin Burke, a film director. After Colin's death, Gretchen remains in Los Angeles and becomes a film cutter.

Antibes Bay

Antibes, outside of Cannes, is where Thomas has his ship docked.

Social Sensitivity

Chronologically, *Rich Man, Poor Man* follows *The Young Lions* (1948): its action begins in the last days of World War II. It tells how one American family, the Jordaches, are affected by the sexual, social, and economic changes in postwar America. Shaw approaches the story with many of the radical leftist sympathies that marked his plays and short stories in the 1930s and 1940s.

The novel is a unique blending of proletarian consciousness with the conventional saga tracing the rise of a family over several generations. Shaw's proletarian sympathy is summed up by one character's rule-of-thumb: "Never trust the rich." This wisdom is proved again and again in the plot. Yet the novel plainly shows how wise the Jordache children are to pursue material wealth.

Shaw's anti-capitalism is tempered by his awareness of capitalism's benefits.

Unlike other proletarian writers of the 1930s, Shaw cares little for social or economic philosophy. He does care passionately that the social system be fair to individuals. *Rich Man, Poor Man* turns the Horatio Alger myth on its head: conquering poverty and achieving the American Dream of financial success and social respectability results from change as much as from good character.



Techniques

Like *The Young Lions*, *Rich Man, Poor Man* tells the separate stories of three protagonists even as it gradually intersects those plots. Tom, Gretchen, and Rudolph are like bumper cars on long elastic bands. Their initial collision during Gretchen's affair with Teddy Boylan sends them recoiling in different directions until the elastic of sibling relationship brings them back together in another collision. In turn, the new head-on crash sends them outward again. This pattern is repeated in each of the novel's four books. With each collision, however, the impact is less violent, and the centripetal force bringing them together grows stronger.

Like *The Young Lions*, the novel ends with a fatal confrontation in which the best, the most humane spirit is killed.

This structure keeps taut the tension of the novel until the very last page.

The plot of *Rich Man, Poor Man* is composed of one intensive scene after another. The Jordaches battle to get ahead against forces larger than themselves. Gretchen's lovemaking, Tom's boxing, Rudolph's wheeling and dealing all have the tension of combat. The Jordaches approach each interaction as a contest in which one must lose because the other will win. Each chapter recounts a pitched battle in the ring, in bed, or in the board room. Repeated doses of melodramatic clashes over sex, glory, and money make this novel the archetypal best seller.



Themes

Themes

The central theme of the novel is that those who want to achieve the American Dream must make many moral compromises. Success in America involves the individual in sexual, economic, and social conflicts less violent but not less deadly than combat.

The American ethos is less humane than it seems. Sex is separated from love; the marketplace is a ruthless jungle of exploitation rather than an arena for honest competition; and social prominence causes others to be envious and become rivals. In most stories of upward mobility, the second generation becomes successful because of the first, immigrant generation's personal virtue and hard work. In *Rich Man, Poor Man* the opposite is true: Axel and Mary Jordache bestow upon Gretchen, Tom, and Rudolph a heritage of confused sexuality, physical violence, and a longing for material success. Such a legacy insures that their offspring have difficulty finding happiness commensurate with their worldly pleasure and success.

Action and Reaction

The theme of action and reaction in the novel of *Rich Man, Poor Man* is based on the idea that by every action one member of the Jordache family makes, other members of the family are affected. This idea applies to the decision Gretchen makes that leads her to be out on a country road in the middle of the afternoon when Teddy Boylan came driving by. By being out on this road and by Teddy Boylan stopping to pick her up, Gretchen affects every member of her family. This chance meeting leads Gretchen to have an affair with Teddy Boylan. This affair is discovered by Thomas, who then decides to burn a cross on Teddy's lawn in an act that, after he is caught, causes Thomas to spend the next few years in exile from the rest of the family. This action causes Thomas to get in trouble with a man in the town in which he is sent, which in turn causes his father to spend Rudolph's college money to save him, which again causes Axel a guilt that leads to his death.

After Gretchen ends her relationship with Teddy, Teddy turns to Rudolph to keep his connection to Gretchen. Teddy teaches Rudolph how a rich man acts and pays for Rudolph to go to college. If Rudolph had not gone to Whitby College with Teddy's money, he might not have gone to work at Calderwood's or created the Dee Cee Corporation, something that eventually leads to his wealth and the opportunity to meet the woman that will be his wife. Rudolph's wife, in turn, becomes an alcoholic. When Rudolph and his wife, Jean, come to Antibes to attend Thomas's wedding, Jean sneaks off the boat in order to visit a bar and drink. Thomas goes to rescue Jean from this bar and ends up in a fight with a man who has been attempting to sexually assault Jean. Thomas can kill this man as he has the upper hand in the fight, but chooses not to because he feels he is responsible for the death of another man and does not want



another on his conscience. However, this man lives to take some friends to Thomas's boat and beat him severe enough to cause his death days later.

Action and reaction is an important theme in this novel because it shows how each character's life overlaps the others. What Gretchen, the eldest child, does directly affects the lives of those younger than her, just as their actions affect her. If not for Rudolph, for example, Gretchen's only child would have been deployed to Vietnam. The people in this novel affect each other no matter how personal and subtle their actions may seem, constantly bringing them back into the circle of each other's lives despite years of separation.

Definition of Rich

The Jordache family is a poor one at the beginning of the novel, suffering along under what they can make in their small bakery. They are also a very unhappy family. The mother feels as though her husband is a tyrant who takes sexual advantage of her every chance he gets. The youngest son feels he is unloved due to the affections showered on the older son. The only daughter feels like a second-class citizen, not allowed to attend college or to quit her job at will. This family splinters quickly at the beginning of the novel, with each child going off on his own in order to find his own fortunes.

Gretchen marries an alcoholic and quickly finds herself in a world of cynicism and deceit. When Gretchen's marriage falls apart, she turns to another man for comfort only to find herself a widow a few short years later. Gretchen survives on her own, however, with little help from Rudolph, working a career that is both self-satisfying and economically successful. Thomas, on the other hand, has grown up in a world of crime and knows no other. Thomas attempts to make himself a success with boxing, but finds himself unusable after a week-long indulgence. Thomas's attempt at legitimacy finds him on the run from dangerous criminals until a stroke of ambition and the thoughtfulness of his brother finds him set up on a nice boat of his own, working at something he loves with people who love him.

Rudolph is the one who has become the largest success of the entire family. Rudolph has worked long and hard in order to create a corporation that has made him a very rich man. Rudolph gave up love and lust for this dream, taking care of his mother and the rest of his family without complaint. When Rudolph finally marries, he is delighted to learn that his wife, too, is a multimillionaire. Rudolph has everything he wants. However, after his wife suffers a miscarriage, their world is turned on end by her alcoholism. Rudolph shares tension with his sister due to her observance of his wife's disease. While mayor of their small town, Rudolph's wife is photographed naked while in a drunken rage that leads Rudolph to make a major mistake, swiftly ending his political aspirations. Finally, a drinking binge that leads his wife to the arms of another man causes Thomas to put himself in danger to save her, leading to his death several days later.



The Jordache children believe from a young age that money can solve all their problems. While money does help, each learns in his or her own way that money is not the answer to everything. Gretchen has a comfortable lifestyle, but the death of her husband makes money a moot fact in her life. Rudolph has all the money in the world, but none of it can stop his wife's drinking binges. Thomas has little money to his name, just a little savings in the bank that will eventually go toward the repair and maintenance of his boat. Thomas seems to be the only rich man in this book. Thomas is not rich, by any means, but he has a wife who loves him, a son who adores him, and good friends who would do anything for him. Therefore, the definition of rich in this novel is two fold, one that includes happiness and one that does not.

Brotherhood

Another important theme to this novel is brotherhood. A major plot line within the novel is dependent on the relationship between Rudolph and his brother, Thomas. Thomas has always believed himself to be less than Rudolph; loved less and less able to achieve greatness. Due to this burden, Thomas often finds himself in situations of scandal for which he has no regret because he thinks no one would expect anything more of him. However, Thomas will eventually grow enough within himself to figure out that he is hurting no one but himself with his attitudes and beliefs. It is only at this point that Thomas will begin to change.

This quarrel between the two brothers is mostly one sided. Rudolph is unaware of the reasons why his brother acts as he does; unaware of the deep self doubt from which Thomas suffers. Rudolph has his own problems that include caring for their mother and rescuing his sister whenever the fates bring her to a difficult point in her life. Rudolph loves his brother and often goes out of his way to do things to help Thomas, including entering a boardinghouse in a bad neighborhood in order to pay off and question an old acquaintance of Thomas'.

Rudolph would go to the ends of the earth for his brother and eventually Thomas realizes this and attempts to do the same for Rudolph. However, it is by attempting to bond with and help Rudolph that leads to Thomas's death. Thomas learns that Rudolph's wife is in a bar where she does not belong with a man who could only mean trouble. Thomas goes to this bar and, against his better judgment, participates in a fight. Thomas wins the fight, though he is badly bruised and battered afterward. However, the man with whom he fought tracks him down and beats him into a coma that will lead to his death. Therefore, Thomas has given the ultimate sacrifice to his brother due to his own growth of character and his own decision to help those around him and to protect those he loves, just as Rudolph has taught him.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of this novel is third person, shifting narrative character among the members of the Jordache family, including Rudolph, Gretchen, and Thomas. This shifting of narrator allows the reader to follow the separate members of the family as they move physically and emotionally away from each other. This also allows the reader to dip into the emotional state of each family member when faced with similar situations, such as the death of their mother.

The story is about the children from the very beginning, but there are times early in the novel in which the narrator is Axel Jordache, the father, or Mary Jordache, the mother. This is a plus for the reader in these early chapters because it allows the reader to see the background of the main characters, to understand how their worlds have been shaped, and where their feelings toward their parents, both good and bad, come from. This also expands the first part of the book to encompass a fuller range of narration that is not present later in the novel where it is not needed as much.

Setting

The setting of the novel tends to move in an outward direction only to end up in a smaller location, symbolizing the movements of the family members both physically and emotionally. The novel begins in the small New York town of Port Philip. The entire Jordache family is together in this little town only for a short time. Thomas then moves to a similar town in Ohio while Gretchen moves on to the big, noisy city of New York. Rudolph moves unilaterally at first, going to school in the small town of Whitby. However, Rudolph soon follows Gretchen to New York as well, dividing his time between the big city and the smaller one.

Thomas continues to move around, spending time in one big city after another until he ends up in New York City as well. It is here that the siblings meet up again for a brief reunion. Soon after, however, Thomas moves on to Las Vegas while Gretchen embarks on her second marriage and moves to Los Angeles. After Thomas finds himself in trouble in Vegas, he moves to the ocean as a member of a ship's crew, and for the first time he finds a place where he feels as if he belongs. Finally, the entire family ends up outside of Cannes, vacationing on Thomas's boat.

The setting of this novel tends to shift with the lives of the main characters. Gretchen goes from her parents' poor home to her lover's mansion to her husband's shabby apartment. Finally, Gretchen ends up in a mountainside home of her own. Rudolph likewise moves from his parents' poor home to the mansion of a friend, then to his own upper-middle class home. Thomas moves from his parents' poor home to his uncle's middle class home to a boat he bought and paid for himself. The shifting setting of this



novel is as diverse and colorful as the characters of the novel, and serves to enhance the changes in their lives.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is proper for the period within which it is set. The novel takes place from the years 1945 to 1968, encompassing many years of significant change. The language includes the proper dialect of teenagers growing up in America during World War II and grows to encompass the language of a teenager living in the pre-Vietnam era. The dialogue of this novel changes with each decade, as do the attitudes of the characters living within the pages of the novel, each reflecting each other quite well.

The novel also includes many phrases in foreign languages, specifically French. In the early part of the novel, young Rudolph has a crush on his French teacher and writes to her in her native tongue. Later, Rudolph is caught with a drawing of the teacher on which he has written a French phrase. Many of these phrases are directly translated within the text of the novel, but are either explained later within the dialogue or left for the reader to decipher through the tone and usage of the phrase.

The novel is told in both dialogue and exposition with both used liberally throughout the novel. The writer at times tells lengthy stories through exposition or explanatory passages, while shorter scenes are most likely to be told through dialogue. The reader is normally made aware of the importance of a particular event through dialogue, though there are times within the novel that important events, such as Thomas's marriage to Teresa, take place without the benefit of a scene related to that specific event. This use of dialogue and exposition breaks up long passages that might become monotonous and keeps the reader glued to the page.

Structure

The novel is divided into four parts. The first part of the novel, the longest, has eleven chapters while the other three parts have seven each. Some of the chapters are many pages long and broken into numbered passages, which often denotes a change of narrator, while other chapters are short and have only one narrator.

There are many plot lines within the story. The main plot follows the lives of three siblings as they move in and out of each other's lives. Subplots include Rudolph's life as he moves from his mother's home to a home of his own, spending many years caring for his mother and then caring for each of his siblings. Another follows Thomas as he begins his life away from his parents' home, finds trouble, and grows to find a place where he belongs. Gretchen is the final subplot, her life with her different lovers and her child following her growth through turmoil and bliss. All of these subplots combine to begin and end the novel as one solid story, the story of one American family.

The story is told in a linear fashion, taking place over a period of twenty-three years, beginning in 1945 when each of the main characters is a teenager, and ending in 1968, when each character is an adult. The story follows the interaction of each character as well as their lives led separately, showing how conflict brings them together and also causes long periods of separation. In the end, the family is back together as it was in the beginning, with the exception of the parents, until a tragedy separates them all once more.

Quotes

"The baseball team was practicing on the diamond, but nobody on the baseball team had lost a brother that afternoon, so they kept on practicing." Part 1, Chap. 1, p. 3

"Her mother was constantly imploring her not to allow herself to decay, as she had done. Decay was the word her mother used. With marriage, her mother intimated, decay set in immediately." Part 1, Chap. 1, p. 15

"Thomas lived placidly enough in Uncle Harold's house, observing the rules, going his own way, occasionally annoyed at his uncle's reluctance to see him sitting down for a few minutes during the working day, but by and large more grateful than not for the sanctuary that was being offered him." Part 1, Chap. 7, p. 79

"When he had disappeared, she climbed the steps and went demurely into the Y.W.C.A. The old lady at the desk leered at her knowingly, but Gretchen took her key and said, 'Good night,' as though the dawn coming in through the windows was merely a clever optical illusion." Part 1, Chap. 7, p. 97

"Thomas threw his things into the bag quickly. There wasn't much. A few shirts and underwear and socks, an extra pair of shoes and a sweater. He took off the garage uniform that he had been arrested in and put on the new gray suit Tante Elsa had bought for him on his birthday." Part 1, Chap. 10, p. 135

"Gretchen knew this was true and that she was being a nervous parent, not faithful to Spock, and that she or Billy or both of them would have to pay for it later, but she couldn't bear the thought of the child wandering by himself around the doubtful traffic of Greenwich Village." Part 2, Chap. 5, p. 199

"He took out his wallet and stared at the young girl who had turned into his mother. He was glad he had come to see her. Perhaps her favor wasn't worth much, but in the long race for the meager trophy he had finally won." Part 2, Chap. 7, p. 229

"How happy she had been once to arrive in New York, how wide open and inviting the city had seemed to her. When she was young, poor, and alone, it had welcomed her, and she had moved about its streets freely and without fear. Now, wiser, older, richer, she felt a prisoner in the room." Part 3, Chap. 1, p. 237

"He settled back in the cab luxuriously, holding on to the paper bag with his belongings. When you had sixty thousand dollars everybody invited you to dinner. Even your brother." Part 3, Chap. 7, p. 305

"Family, he (Rudolph) thought. Without reasoning it out, he had always been the one to try to protect his family. He was the one who helped his father at the ovens and made the deliveries for the bakery; he was the one who had kept his mother alive. He was the one who had had the shabby dealings with detectives and the painful scene with Willie



Abbott and had helped Gretchen with her divorce and befriended her second husband. He was the one who had made the money for Tom, so that he could escape the savage life he had fallen into. He was the one who had gone to Colin Burke's funeral on the other edge of the continent to comfort his sister at the worst moments of her sorrow. He was the one who had taken the responsibility of taking Billy, ungrateful and derisive as he was, out of school when Billy was suffering there; he was the one who had gotten Billy into Whitby, when the boy's marks were hardly good enough to get him into a trade school. He was the one who had hunted down Tom at the Aegean Hotel, for his mother's sake, and had learned all about West Fifty-third Street and put up the money for Schultz and made the arrangements with the lawyer for Tom's reunion with his son and his divorce from a prostitute. . . .

He had not asked for gratitude and, he thought wryly, he had gotten damn little for it." Part 4, Chap. 6, p. 366

"Duties never end. It is their essential characteristic." Part 4, Chap. 6, p. 366

"Up in the bow, Dwyer stood in the little breeze of their passage, watching the coast line, white mansions, old walls, green pines, grow nearer in the brilliant light of the morning sun.

Rich man's weather, Dwyer remembered." Part 4, Chap. 7, p. 391

Shaw, Irwin, *Irwin Shaw, Four Complete Novels*, 1969. *Rich Man, Poor Man*. New York: Avenel Books, 1981. 1 - 391.

Adaptations

Rich Man, Poor Man became a television miniseries during the 1976-1977 television season. It aired in eight parts for twelve hours of prime time. The numerous cast members included many veteran performers: Edward Asner, Ray Milland, Peter Strauss, Nick Nolte, and Susan Blakely. Shaw's narrative method — stringing together discrete, subtly related scenes — is easily adapted to television's steady rhythm of commercial-episode, commercial-episode. Rich Man, Poor Man was repeated as a regular series in the 1977-78 season, and its success prompted a Rich Man, Poor Man Part II, which carried the story of Gretchen and Rudolph past the point where the novel stopped. The television version prompted a renewed interest in Shaw's earlier books. Several novels were reprinted and his short stories were published in a collected edition.



Key Questions

Rich Man Poor Man will appeal to readers who love family sagas or who are curious about the book that the film adaptations come from. Each of the questions below can be used to analyze the novel itself or to discuss differences between the book and the film.

1. How does Shaw divide the legacy of Mary and Axel Jordache among three offspring? A story about a son and a daughter would seem to have an easy and natural structure. Why three protagonists?

2. Does Shaw present each protagonist with equal sympathy? What is admirable and unadmirable about each?

3. Clearly Tom's best moment occurs at the end of the novel when he rescues Jean. He has transformed from thug to hero. What is Gretchen's best moment?

What is Rudolph's?

4. About three-quarters through the novel, Gretchen asserts that her affair with Teddy Boylan was the shaping event in all their lives. How accurate is Gretchen's assertion?

5. Tom's friend Dwyer gets the last line in the novel, "Rich man's weather, Dwyer remembered." What do you make of that comment? Are the Jordache's still short of being "rich?" Or is the weather a sign they have become "rich?" Does "rich" mean more than "wealthy?"

6. Shaw deftly portrays arguments, fights, lustful encounters, riots, and other confrontational moments. Which violent scenes in the novel are most memorable?

7. Tom's death is not dramatized; it is reported with great understatement.

Perhaps Shaw is afraid of seeming sentimental. Are there other occasions when Shaw avoids the depiction of positive emotions of friendship, affection, and love?

8. Do family saga novels appeal equally to male and female readers, or equally to younger and older readers?

If they do not, what makes them appeal differently?

9. How is Shaw's work typical or atypical of a family saga?



Topics for Discussion

Discuss actions and reactions. How many actions can you trace through this novel that have affected each of the characters? Why does one action affect so many people? Are these actions restricted to family members, or are other people affected? Why or why not?

Discuss family. What are the family dynamics of the Jordache family? Why do you suppose Rudolph is the one everyone comes to for help? Why not Gretchen, since she is the oldest? Why do you suppose Thomas resents Rudolph for so many years?

Discuss alcoholism. Both Willie and Jean are alcoholics in this novel. How does alcohol affect the people around Willie and Jean? Why do they drink? Why do they continue to drink knowing what damage their drinking has inflicted on those around them? Do you think Thomas's death will cure Jean of her disease? Why or why not?

Compare and contrast alcoholism, brutality, sexual compulsions, and workaholic behaviors. How are Willie and Jean's alcoholism, Thomas's habits of violence, Gretchen's sexual behaviors, and Rudolph's work behaviors similar? How are they different? Do these behaviors fairly represent normal behaviors in society? Why or why not?

Discuss motherhood. How was Mary as a mother? Was she a good mother or a poor mother? Did Mary's mothering skills improve with age? How? Was Gretchen a better mother than Mary? In what ways are Gretchen's mothering skills better than Mary's? Worse?

Discuss wealth. What do you think is the definition of wealth? Is it a monetary description or an emotional one? Which brother do you believe was the rich man? If Rudolph, why? If Thomas, why? Do you think they were both rich? How?

Discuss point of view. Were the various points of view within this novel clear or were they confusing? Why did the author tell his story from so many points of view? How would the novel be different if it had been told through the eyes of only one character? How would it be the same?

Literary Precedents

The family saga is a popular form of fiction that originated in Victorian England. In nineteenth-century England, as in twentieth-century America, the rapid growth of prosperity in society as a whole made possible a rapid rise of many individuals. William Makepeace Thackeray's *The Newcomers* (1855), Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1858), and Anthony Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* (1872) are just three early examples of fiction dealing with the effects of economic change on family life from generation to generation. In Victorian fiction the hero or heroine's challenge is to marry for love and for secure sufficient income to live comfortably. The family saga is the romance — or the fairy tale — of the middle class aspiration that children find more social success and acceptance than their parents. The modern progenitor of the family saga novel is John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* (1922), a trilogy about the Soames clan.

The family saga in contemporary American fiction often portrays a family's struggle for love and money against the backdrop of important historical events. Examples of some periods are the Colonial period, the Civil War, the settling of the West, and the World Wars. The connection between family fortune and historical events is sociologically sound; economic upsurge and political/social upheaval have gone hand-in-hand in United States history. The popularity of the saga is a testimony to the accuracy with which it speaks to the experience of many American families.



Related Titles

Beggarman, Thief (1977) tells of the third generation of Jordaches who come of age in the late 1960s. The protagonists are Gretchen's son Billy Abbott and Tom's son Wesley Jordache.

Like their parents, they must contend with a legacy. For Billy the legacy is jealousy: Billy is driven to alienation by Gretchen's love affairs, which he regards as insults to his father's memory. Billy grows so alienated that he joins a band of terrorists. Wesley bears the legacy of revenge: His determination to find the killers of his father leads him into danger from organized crime. Only half the length of its predecessor, *Beggarman, Thief*, does not develop the range of characters or the sweep of events that made the first novel noteworthy. The sequel also suffers from the lack of a strong female protagonist.

The sequel lacks the social commentary that Shaw's proletarian sympathies added to *Rich Man, Poor Man*. Neither protagonist is personally attractive to readers — Billy seems spoiled and shallow, Wesley naive — and both get into predicaments that seem contrived.



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