

Skeleton Crew Study Guide

Skeleton Crew by Stephen King

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Introduction & The Mist

Introduction & The Mist Summary

Stephen King introduces the book with a tale about his friend and of how his writing comes to him, as well as how his creative process progresses. He covers the practice of using what he calls the I Guy. The I Guy is the main character with which King begins his tale and builds his characters and plot around. King also advises that he starts his tales with the "wouldn't it be funny if" beginning, which is how he builds the plot of the story. The entire introduction is based on a conversation with a friend who analyzes the pay King receives for his short story, "Word Processor of the Gods" and his friend's comparison to the payment that a New York Plumber would make.

When a severe thunderstorm rolls off the Long Lake, bringing behind it a thick fog, David initially does not pay any attention. The post storm clean-up spurs a reluctant neighbor to hitch a ride to town with David and his son, Billy, to the grocery store. The store becomes the central setting for the several of the townspeople as the dense fog rolls further inland and envelops the town, trapping the people inside from the creatures hiding within the fog.

Among the locals trapped in the store is Mrs. Carmody, an eccentric woman whom it is often whispered is a witch. Mrs. Carmody's ranting about the end of the world affects several of the survivors in different ways. Some, including two soldiers of the mysterious Arrowhead Project, commit suicide while trapped inside, while others, like the belligerent neighbor, Brent Norton and his group of "Flat Earth Society", deny any evidence of anything supernatural. Mrs. Carmody, however, seems to gain strength as the others around her begin to mentally break, and she takes advantage of this. She suggests that a sacrifice would bring an end to the situation. As the story progresses, she targets Billy, David's five-year-old son, as a potential sacrifice, along with Amanda Dumfries.

The creatures first come to true light in the story by the death of a cocky, young bag boy named Norm. In an attempt to clear the clogged generator exhaust, Norm opens the heavy rolling door to the loading area and is attacked by large gray tentacles that burrow into his limbs, causing his death. It becomes clear that the tentacled creature is not the only thing that is hiding under the cover of the fog. Soon the store attracts the attention of flying creatures that appear to swarm mostly at night. These are occasionally eaten by what is described as pterodactyl-like birds, with red eyes and albino skin.

The creatures outside the store seem to be held at bay by what David believes to be their limited sense of sight and hearing but are guided by their sense of smell. Using this theory, David and a group consisting of Amanda Dumfries, Billy, Mrs. Reppler, and Ollie attempt to escape, during which Ollie is killed. The others make their way to the south and escape from the town. After discovering that most of the town is destroyed, they



flee and encounter a creature which David compares in size to being a trout next to Blue Whale. There is no description of this creature, other than its height being so tall that they are unable to see it and that it is covered in the bug-like creatures they encountered at the store. The group eventually comes to an abandoned hotel, where David writes the story out and leaves the writing on the counter where another survivor might find it. David leaves a whispered word as hope for this person: Hartford.

Introduction & The Mist Analysis

In the Introduction, the brief tale that Stephen King tells of how he created the Word Processor of the Gods and that his friend, called Wyatt for anonymity's sake, was convinced that the process of writing short stories was not lucrative enough for King to pursue. King recounts the conversation that he and his friend had and how he now has made the collection of short stories worth what his friend considers monetarily worthwhile. While briefly covering his creative process, King also adds a justification to being paid for what, for him, is a constant series of "what if" moments that spill into pages for the masses, while clarifying that his friends concern of payment for services rendered are indeed not that of a plumber.

In "The Mist", David's internal struggle to keep a protective barrier between the impending chaos and his son becomes the main focus of the story. As one of the only survivors in the tale, David tells the story in first person and the interior prospective of one living through the ordeal, giving the tale length in the thoughts that plague the mind when the mind may not be able to accept what is being presented. While David fights to keep the surroundings as calm as can be when there are horrific creatures killing people who leave and traumatize others into killing themselves, Mrs. Carmody feeds the chaos. She gains strength in her near worship of the Armageddon, trapping the others in the store. It is as if she stokes the fears of those around her, much as Brent Norton blocks out the obvious situation with denial that eventually gets him, along with a small group of followers, killed.

Myron LaFluer and Jim Grondin, who participated in sending the young clerk, Norm, outside, and therefore to his death, have decided to join a few others in drinking the alcohol contained in the store to avoid facing the monsters awaiting outside.

There are suppositions as to what opened the doorway to this bedlam, with the Arrowhead Project being the main suspect, but Mrs. Carmody maintains the religious end of the world theory. Her theory foreshadows the accounts of the multiple deaths that occur, touching on the vanity of Norm, the gluttony of Myron and Jim, the Wrath of Mrs. Carmody, and the internal greed that had previously surrounded Brent Norton. There are virtues shown as well, by the ones who survive in David's protection, Hilda Reppler's bravery, Amanda's caring and nurturing, and of course Billy's innocence. There is no real conclusion to the story as this is written as a first person account by David, left behind for another survivor, so the reader is left to approach the story as if they are that person, finding the tale of the accounts in an abandoned motel.



Here There Be Tygers & The Monkey

Here There Be Tygers & The Monkey Summary

"Here There Be Tygers" is a story of a young boy named Charles who has a quirk of calling the bathroom the basement. Miss Bird, his teacher, frequently corrects him in front of the classroom. His journey to the bathroom causes him to encounter a tiger in the lavatory. He leaves, frightened to reenter the restroom, but needs to use it. Eventually, another student, Kenny, is sent to retrieve him. He tells Kenny that there is a tiger in the bathroom, but Kenny does not believe him. Kenny enters the bathroom in order to tease Charles, but the tiger eats him. Charles finally gets the courage and enters the lavatory, hoping the tiger has been satisfied; he urinates in the sink, where Miss Bird catches him. As the teacher checks the stalls for the other boy, Charles leaves, and the teacher is also eaten. Charles returns to the classroom and reads a book as if nothing has happened.

In "The Monkey", Hal's aunt has died, and Hal and his family gather to clean up the family home. He and his family are cleaning the attic when his oldest son comes across a box with a stuffed monkey. The boy is amused by the toy whereas Hal's younger son is frightened of it. So is Hal. Hal has seen the monkey before and he was sure that he had disposed of the thing thirty years before by throwing it down a well. Hal's apprehension shortens his temper with his wife and children. Hal remembers the story of the monkey when it was in his possession thirty years ago. Hal tells this part of the story through his own memory as a child which includes his childhood torture by the deaths of his friends and mother at the hands of the monkey while it banged its cymbals. The reappearance of the monkey into Hal's life has him terrified of which family member he may lose at the whim of the monkey. The monkey torments him as to which member, possibly even him, will die. Hal decides that the best course of action is to throw the monkey into the lake. He takes his youngest son to the lake with him, along with the monkey. Hal rows out into the lake and throws the monkey into the deepest part. The monkey begins to bang its cymbals, and Hal almost does not make it back to shore. Hal is not sure that he has gotten rid of the monkey permanently; however, since it had taken thirty years to resurface, he feels that he will at least get a long break from the monkey. The story ends with a newspaper article which makes note of all the fish dying in the lake.

Here There Be Tygers & The Monkey Analysis

Both characters in "Here There Be Tygers", Miss Bird and Kenny, are bullies in the perception of the main character, Charles, a young, eccentric boy in third grade. The tiger could be his inner desire to have the strength to overcome those whom embarrass him or make him feel weak. Charles bravely enters the bathroom after Kenny meets his demise with the tiger. When Charles returns to the classroom he behaves as though nothing had happened in his absence and proceeds to read a book. This may indicate



that this entire narrative was a daydream of the boy or simply that he felt their demise was justified.

In "The Monkey", upon the reappearance of the monkey, Hal is faced with several fears: that he may have no escape, that he may suffer the loss of another loved one, and that his youngest son, Petey, may be forced to live with the horrors that he had endured during his own childhood. Hal and his brother, Bill, had grown up abandoned by their father, in whose belongings they had discovered the monkey in the first place. There is an insinuation that the boys' father may not have abandoned them after all. As Hal relives the traumatic events of his childhood that center around the monkey, he accepts that he may not be able to destroy it or even really keep it from resurfacing in his life, but he decides that anytime that he is able to keep it away from his children is worthwhile, and so he sets out to defeat it by sinking it in the lake. This scene shows a showdown between Hal and the monkey where good triumphs over evil.



Cain Rose Up & Mrs. Todd's Shortcut

Cain Rose Up & Mrs. Todd's Shortcut Summary

In "Cain Rose Up", a young man named Curt Garrish has just finished his finals at college. As he makes his way back to his dorm room, several of his peers request last-minute advice on the finals. With each boy that delays him, he internally thinks of some version of death that awaits them. At first, it appears that his internal monologue is his intellect making a guess as to what their futures may hold; however, once he enters his room, his internal thoughts become darker and focus on a gun that he has hidden. Garrish has only a poster of Humphrey Bogart on his wall. He begins to have a conversation with the poster, telling it his own version of the story of Cain and Abel. The story consists of Cain believing that God is a vegetarian and Abel telling him that God made man in his image, suggesting that man was made to eat meat. Cain then kills Able and serves him as food to God. As Curt tells this tale to the poster, he opens fire on the people outside with joy in his words.

In "Mrs. Todd's Shortcut", Homer and the narrator sit at the gas station, sharing stories. On this day, Homer sees the new Mrs. Todd drive by and tells the narrator of his adventures with Ophelia Todd before her disappearance a few years before. Homer works as a handyman for the Todds, and Mrs. Todd tells him of her fascination with finding shortcuts on the map. She regales him with several ways to get to Bangor and as to which is the fastest. Mrs. Todd's theory is that "if you save enough miles, you save time". Mrs. Todd challenges him to discredit her theory which is based on traveling in a straight line instead of going around the location obstacles. She invites Homer on a trip to prove her shortcuts really are the fastest. One day, Homer takes Mrs. Todd up on her offer to drive to Bangor, and along the way, he sees several things that unnerve him. The trees' branches rip off his hat, and Homer fears the wild look that comes over Mrs. Todd, though he admits that he is taken with her beauty in this wild state. Later, Mrs. Todd calls Homer to ask him to open her home for her arrival, but when he arrives, he finds her car in the driveway covered with mud and a strange animal stuck in the grill. He also notes that Mrs. Todd looks younger. When Homer asks her how she was able to get there so quickly, she tells him that she has found the shortest way possible; Mrs. Todd tells Homer that the quickest way is to fold the map. While Homer ponders over this trick, he thinks over the strange things he had seen on his trip with Ophelia and worries for her. Shortly after, Mrs. Todd disappears. At the end of the story, Homer shows up at the gas station, looking ten years younger. He is preparing to leave his quiet town to go with a woman that the narrator indicates is Mrs. Todd, though she looks even younger.

Cain Rose Up & Mrs. Todd's Shortcut Analysis

In "Cain Rose Up", Curt's intelligence may be the catalyst for his break in sanity. For each other character that he encounters, Curt imagines the ways that they are going to



die from their own actions. His inner thoughts occasionally mention that he can assist them to this end. His entire episode is coupled with his telling of the story of Cain killing and cooking up Able for God's supper.

In "Mrs. Todd's Shortcut", Homer is open regarding his thoughts of Mrs. Todd's beauty, as well as his fears of her wild side which is revealed on her trips in her Go-devil. His comparison to Diana chasing the moon across the sky is an apt one as he is enamored by her, yet he simultaneously fears her gaze. There is also the correlation between Ophelia constantly hunting for a shortcut and Diana being the goddess of the hunt, suggesting that Ophelia may be an embodiment of the goddess. The idea of her increasing youth due to her shortcuts is another desirable attribute of her trips. Ophelia Todd represents the freedom that most desire during the later years of life as everyone is confined within a cage of compromises through the years that make them long for an imagined freedom that they tend to feel was lost to their youth. The fact that Mrs. Todd looks even younger at the end of the story suggests that Mrs. Todd's theory, "if you save enough miles, you save time", is enough to give time back to those who save enough.



The Jaunt

The Jaunt Summary

In "The Jaunt", Mark prepares his family for a journey to Mars by way of the jaunt, a type of teleportation from one place to another. In order to calm his family's anxiety of the trip and the knock-out gas that would be used, he tells his wife and children the story of the jaunt's glorious invention. His son, Ricky, and his daughter, Patty, are fascinated by the story of the invention. It had started during the late 1980s when the world was in an oil crisis, causing Victor Carune to research other forms of transportation. Mark's children are astounded when they learn about Carune's discovery and how he had the entire project set up in a barn, as well as how he jaunted two of his own fingers to the other side of the room. One of the splinters he received is on display in the Smithsonian Annex. In an abridged version of the story, Mark explains that the determined young inventor discovered that the test mice needed to be unconscious to survive the experience; otherwise, they were effected in unexplainable ways. What Mark does not mention are the details of the first person having been through the jaunt and how the man lived for only a moment and died after uttering "its eternity in there." In Mark's attempt to placate his wife and children, he also does not tell them that thirty people had undergone the experience in a conscious state and did not survive, at least not with their sanity.

By the time the attendants reach his aisle to dispense the gas to the passengers in his row, Mark is pretty confident that his wife and children are more prepared for the experience of being rendered unconscious for the journey. Mark volunteers to take the gas mask first so that he can show his children how it is done and that there is nothing to fear. Mark awakes from his induced slumber to a dark view of the domed ceiling and a disturbance in the waiting room. Then, he hears his wife's screams. As he fights the effects of the gas, Mark realizes that the attendants are rushing toward his son. Mark is horrified to see Ricky cackling and twitching; his son's hair is stark white, his eyes are yellow, and his hands are curved into claws. He is "Screaming longer than you think, dad. Longer than you think." Mark realizes that though his wife and daughter were apprehensive about being unconscious and taking the jaunt, Ricky had not been afraid. He had been excited and his father's pre-jaunt tale had only peaked his interest about experiencing the whole trip, so he had held his breath while the attendants had given him the mask. Mark is left with this horror as his son claws out his own eyes and is taken away, screaming, by the attendants.

The Jaunt Analysis

"The Jaunt" shows the greatest fear of any parent: inadvertently harming their own children. Mark Oates' decision to temper the historical tale of the creation of the jaunt and its nefarious past and uses is made with concern. Mark's omissions from the tale also lead to his son's demise and raises the question of whether Ricky's sanity could



have been saved if Mark had told his son the entire truth. It is a decision that the reader can relate to and possibly accept as one that they, themselves, would have made. Unfortunately, he awakens to the realization that he has caused the psychotic lunacy of his son in doing so. The story ends with Mark screaming in the agony of what has happened to Ricky, but Mark's journey to insanity has just begun, leaving the reader feeling empathetic and vulnerable.



The Wedding Gig

The Wedding Gig Summary

In "The Wedding Gig", a man remembers back to his younger days in a Jazz band in Morgan Illinois in 1927. He recalls a night that he and his band were playing in a speakeasy when Mike Scollay, a small-time racketeer from Chicago, enters and offers the band two hundred dollars to play at his sister's wedding; since this is over twice what the band normally receives, the narrator suspects a hidden agenda. Mike tells him that his sister, Maureen, is a very large woman who is marrying an Italian. He mentions that he is being bothered by a rival named the Greek. The day of the wedding comes, and the reception is off to a great start. As the reception moves into full swing, a small man enters with a message for Mike. He says the Greek has sent him to tell Mike that Maureen is a fat pig and that everyone is laughing at her. Mike becomes enraged at her humiliation on her wedding day and tears outside to be shot down in the street by the Greek's men. Ten days later, the bride comes into the speakeasy and talks to the narrator. Though he feels sorry for the woman, he never really says so. The woman's guilt over her brother's death is evident. The narrator never really says anything comforting and returns to his band, retrospectively acknowledging that he should have attempted to comfort her. The narrator later reveals that Maureen took over her brother's organization and built a bootleg empire to rival that of Capone's. She eventually killed the Greek, and her husband served as her lieutenant. The narrator comes around to saying that he followed her exploits up until her death and thinks of her from time to time. He shrugs it off by claiming that it is probably because he is older and does not sleep too well; he appeals to the reader to confirm his hypothesis.

The Wedding Gig Analysis

In "The Wedding Gig", the narrator's last lines indicate that he has regret over his actions and reactions to Maureen, Mike's sister. He tries to justify that he should not feel so guilty since there are people that were treated worse during those times, like his bandmate Billy-Boy, who was an African American. However, at the very end, the narrator looks to the reader for confirmation that his age is the reason for his lack of sleep over the recent years. This may indicate that the regret is eating at him and the "What If's" are something that he may lay awake thinking about. There are several moments within this story that the narrator judges another character without thinking much of doing so at the time. He makes a reference to Mike as being criminal in the way that the bands playing can cover up a shooting. He makes several mental comments and even pats himself on the back for not commenting out loud over the size of Mike's sister Maureen. He even makes an off-the-cuff comment about the race of his friend Billy-Boy, and although he apologizes for this comment, he still justifies it. So now, he is late in his years, and the reader must wonder as they are left to judge him and what may really keep him awake at night.



Paranoid: A Chant & The Raft

Paranoid: A Chant & The Raft Summary

"Paranoid: A Chant" is written from the pages of a diary by a paranoid narrator who believes that there is a conspiracy against him. The opening to the narration states that there is a man outside the door, smoking a cigarette. It then shifts to random moments of hypertensive hallucinations. The narrator believes that the CIA and FBI want him dead. He packs himself in ice to avoid infrared cameras. He concludes the excerpt by returning to the man in the trench coat outside and reiterating that he is not able to go outside.

In "The Raft", four college students decide to relive their summer moments by going for a swim in October to the raft in the middle of Cascade Lake where they spent most of their younger days. Deke, Randy, Rachel and LaVerne dive into the water. Deke reaches the raft first, but as Deke encourages the others, Randy notices a dark shape in the water that resembles an oil slick. As the girls approach the raft, Randy panics as the dark spot moves toward them. Once both girls are clear of the water, Randy brings the group's attention to the black, round phenomenon. Deke and LaVerne laugh at Randy only for a short moment. Mesmerized by the colors, Rachel leans over the edge of the raft to take a closer look, and when she reaches out her hand and touches the water, the blackness covers her arm and pulls her in, eating away at her like acid. The thing flows under the raft, and Deke decides that this is the best chance to make a break for it. Deke nears the edge, prepares to dive in, and stops cold. The thing has curled up through the boards of the raft and taken hold of Deke's foot and is pulling him through. Slowly, Deke is dissolved through the boards and only his rings remain. The sight of Deke's demise causes LaVerne to black out, and Randy bites her ear to revive her. LaVerne and Randy start off taking fifteen minute shifts to watch out for the thing, then decide to sit together to keep warm. Eventually, they have sex while Randy keeps watch. Randy becomes hypnotized by the colors while watching it, and it grabs hold of LaVerne's hair through the cracks. Randy pushes her over the edge as the thing engulfs her head. After twenty-four hours alone, unable to sit, Randy decides to stare into the abyss and watches the colors go by.

Paranoid: A Chant & The Raft Analysis

In "Paranoid: A Chant", the fears that the narrator demonstrates are those of nothing tangible but are harmful just the same. The narrator states that he is unable to go outside and that there is someone trying to kill him, but he packs himself in ice to avoid the infrared and places himself in tangible harm's way by doing so. The narrator's inability to distinguish the imagined threat of harm is in essence killing him slowly.

In "The Raft", the story gives some background to Randy and Deke's friendship, including a buried jealousy Randy has concerning Deke. Deke is the local football hero,



the guy who always gets the girl. In the end, however, it is Randy who faces his inevitable fate head-on. The creature in the water eats his friends one by one, externally like acid, but Randy, who is the studious one of the group, is eaten away mentally before he accepts death externally. He is also the one that had suggested the outing to begin with, so it is appropriate that he is the one to suffer by watching the effects of his suggestion devour his friends before he meets his end.



Word Processor of the Gods

Word Processor of the Gods Summary

In "Word Processor of the Gods", Richard Hagstrom is a stereotypical nice guy, with a sardonic, overweight wife named Lina, and an estranged son, Seth. When Richard's good-hearted, fifteen-year-old nephew, Jonathan, is killed in a drunken driving accident by his own father, he inherits a handmade word processor that has had some interesting home adjustments. With the help of Mr. Nordoff, Jon's neighbor, Richard hauls the sad looking piece of equipment into his study where he writes short stories and articles for extra income, in comparison to the full-time profession he dreams of. When Richard turns on the machine, he finds that this was to be his birthday present from the boy. The thing that stands out to him the most is that there is a key marked EXECUTE. Richard tries out the haphazard machine, and when he hits the delete key, a photo of his wife disappears as had the phrase that he had written about it being there. He soon discovers that he can add as well as delete things into and out of existence. Unfortunately, the machine is clearly overworked and will quit soon, so Richard uses it one last time. He deletes his ungrateful son, Seth, and his nagging wife, Lina, and adds his nephew, Jonathan, and his mother, Belinda, in their stead just before the word processor dies.

Word Processor of the Gods Analysis

In "Word Processor of the Gods", like everyone else has at some time or another, Richard has a moment when he thinks to himself, "How did I get here?" When his mean older brother, Roger, gets into a fatal accident with his family, Richard is left in despair. Not just for the sweet, intelligent nephew he has lost but also for himself. Richard knows that he is a nice guy, but isn't it said that nice guys finish last? In this case, the saying fits. Richard starts thinking back about his life and realizes that he has been pushed, bullied, and degraded by the very people who should love him the most: his family. So Richard uses this amazing machine for one moment in time to delete the wife and child who belittle him and replace them with the gentle, quiet wife of his deceased brother and his forlorn, brilliant nephew Jonathan.



The Man Who Would Not Shake Hands

The Man Who Would Not Shake Hands Summary

In "The Man Who Would Not Shake Hands", an elderly man, George Gregson, is sitting in the parlor with his gentlemen friends enjoying a round of drinks and story telling. George starts his tale about a man that had been killed in the same room approximately sixty-five years prior. He tells of how he and four friends were to play poker that night and as one player was unable to attend, they added their fifth man from a group in the room. The man's name was Henry Brower, and he had an odd eccentricity of not shaking hands, blaming it on his travels to Bombay where illness ran rapid. The men began playing a high stakes game of poker for their last hand of the evening, exceeding the customary limit on raising the stakes. Despite having poor hands of cards all evening, Brower miraculously had won the pot due to his skill at bluffing, but when Davidson took the man's hand into a grip to show what a gracious loser he was, Brower howled furiously and ran for the door, claiming that the "switch was left in the motor car". George followed the man to apologize and to try convincing him to come back in for his winnings, but Brower would not return inside. He began ranting that he was a cur dog, and called a mangy street dog over to him, shook its paw and mentioned taking it home. Brower had said he would wait for George to return outside with the money, but when he returned outside, the street had been deserted except for the corpse of the dog that Brower had touched.

The remaining men from the game decide to locate Henry Brower to return his winnings. Davidson is horribly depressed over his actions having caused Brower's sudden hysterics and cannot seem to be consoled. On the following day, George tries to track down Brower and, in doing so, seeks the counsel of a man named Raymond Greer. Greer says that he feared that Brower was headed for a breakdown and tells George about how Henry Brower had traveled to seek consignments of trades and how he had left his automobile switch on. As the children in Bombay had not seen the vehicle up close, the holy man's son had gotten in the vehicle and started it. In doing so, he became panicked, the speed increased and crashed into a wall where it exploded. Interrupted by the visit with Greer, George is summoned to Davidson's home where he learns that Davidson is dead. George spends two weeks searching for Henry Brower in less desirable areas where men go when they are so down on their luck that they no longer go by their given names. When George finally finds the residence of Henry Brower, he finds that the man is dead, found shaking hands with himself.

The Man Who Would Not Shake Hands Analysis

When starting the tale of "The Man Who Would Not Shake Hands", George had said that it was a tale of murder. He claims that it is a murder that no jury would have convicted for and one that was avenged by the killer taking his own life, but the question would have to rise: was it murder? George's recounting of the tale is one that clarifies



that the man whom he and his friends had played cards with that night had been very clear that he did not wish to shake hands with anyone. He clearly had a phobia in the eyes of the quartet of friends. This raises the question of whether Davidson caused his own death by shaking hands with Henry Brower. Throughout the story, there are several foreshadowing moments that could lead the reader to the conclusion, in addition to the original statement that he would be telling a tale of murder. Brower's reaction to Davidson is the most telling moment as he did not argue; he acted as a man who had just encountered the single most traumatic experience a man could. The fact that the group of friends had chosen to track down Brower to return his winnings could very well be the reason for his reaction. Although it is nearly impossible to imagine anyone in this day and age doing such an honorable thing, Brower is more concerned with the injury he causes than his winnings. Additionally, the guilt that Brower already carried over the death of the boy in Bombay and his suicide was understandable and shows that even though this is tale of death, Brower's honorable side is what makes the tale a truly tragic one.



Beachworld & The Reaper's Image

Beachworld & The Reaper's Image Summary

In "Beachworld," Rand and Shapiro are the only two survivors after their plane crashes into a desert-like planet. Rand compares the planet to a never ending beach with no sea. While Shapiro sets up the beacon, Rand continues to stare out across the open sands, mesmerized by their beauty. Occasionally, Shapiro gets the sense that the sands have the voice of an old woman and can hear what he is thinking. Shapiro realizes that he can see this world as it had been, and although it should frighten him, it calms him instead. Rand sits silently, watching the never ending sand. He refuses water, and when Rand mentions "treating" him for shock, he threatens the other man. Rand only mentions things about the beach, making an odd comment that he thinks it is alive. Without food or water, Shapiro also starts to see hear and smell the beach that Rand has been watching for days, nearly missing the arrival of their rescue ship. When the android from the ship attempts to retrieve him, Rand fights to stay, so the Captain of the ship orders a tranquilizer dart. As soon as the dart nears Rand, a hand rises up from the sands and catches it. Shapiro realizes that Rand is right; the sand is alive. The ship narrowly escapes as the sand tries to keep it in its grasp. Rand sits on his dune, watching the ship leave the sky. Still watching his dunes, he starts cramming in sand in his mouth.

In "The Reaper's Image", behind a locked door within a tour museum is the famous, treasured and feared Delvers Looking glass, meticulously made during the Elizabethan period and said to have a dark past. Mr. Carlin acts as Johnson Spangler's tour guide as they view the mirror. When Johnson Spangler comes to view the mirror, Mr. Carlin obliges but shows a transparent unease of the object. It was purchased years before, but it is being kept hidden in the upper floor gables room. Carlin takes Spangler through the halls and up several staircases but becomes agitated the closer he comes in proximity to the relic. Mr. Carlin shies away from direct view of the piece. When Mr. Carlin voices his concerns, Spangler practically laughs in his face at the other man's discord. Carlin admits to the fear that the mirror would see something it did not like in him, that he would become part of its legend, like the English Duchess, Pennsylvania rug merchant, and recently, the Bates boy. Spangler is more distracted by the fact that the mirror is not protected by a dustcover and has been poorly taken care of. Carlin states that he thinks of the object as an eye: "If it's left open, always open, perhaps it will go blind." Seeing what he believes to be masking tape, Spangler becomes enraged that the mirror is damaged. Carlin advises that the mirror is in perfect condition and that Spangler is seeing the Reaper. Spangler instantly discredits the notion, while Carlin banters on about the story of the young Bates boy. This includes how the boy thought he had seen an image of a hooded man and how he went to fetch some water but never returned. Spangler, on the other hand, is no longer listening to the man going on about the boy. He is not feeling well and interrupts to go to the restroom, leaving Carlin alone with the mirror. Carlin feels a force pulling him to look into its depths and find out what it sees in him, as he waits for Spangler to return.



Beachworld & The Reaper's Image Analysis

In "Beachworld", from the moment Rand sees the eternal beach, he is ensnared by its charm. He and this world see in each other what they want to see. Shapiro mentions the voice echoing in his head, reading his thoughts and shifting them to a serene beach memory, hallucination, and adaptation. Since Rand has been catatonically fixed on watching the dunes, when he mentions that they are alive, Shapiro chalks it up to shock; however, the reader soon realizes that the voice he hears in his head is one that he has been conversing with and it has been keeping him company, working through his mind as well as his body. It is only when the hand rises out of the sand to protect him from the tranquilizer dart that Shapiro realizes that Rand has not been in shock but has known the truth and accepts his demise to be part of this place.

In "The Reaper's Image", Carlin hides his uneasiness with the mirror by attempting to show off other objects within the collection, and although Spangler comments that the collection was not that great, it suggests that Mr. Carlin is more comfortable with these other items. Spangler, on the other hand, is not a superstitious man and holds no fear of the mirror or its mysterious past. Spangler is confident in his knowledge of the craftsmanship of the piece. Oddly, Spangler thinks very little of Mr. Carlin and is later a victim of the Reaper that Mr. Carlin is so afraid of encountering. Eventually, Carlin does look into the looking glass, as if by compulsion, and he is relieved to have seen nothing other than a reflection looking back at him. Spangler, however, is not so lucky, and although Carlin waits for his companion's return, he knows that it is in vain. Spangler will not return, just like the boy, the Duchess or the rug merchant.



Nona & For Owen

Nona & For Owen Summary

In "Nona", a man is trying to figure out his reasons for committing murders that he is unsure whether or why he did. As he sits in his prison cell, he thinks back to the first moment he met Nona. He believes that he falls in love at first sight. They meet in a diner where there are four truckers who had been giving Nona a hard time, when he walks in and their attentions are focused on him. One trucker picks a fight with him, and he suddenly is filled with a remarkable rage and nearly kills the trucker in the fight. When the narrator leaves, Nona follows along. She seems oddly content that he had almost killed the trucker. The driver that picks them up is not going all the way to Castle Rock but agrees to take them as far as he can. For some reason, this angers Nona and scares the narrator. Soon the anger bleeds into the narrator, and he is overcome with hate for the driver. Just then, Nona places a nail file in his hand. The narrator kills the driver and then a young motorist who stops to see if there is anything he can do to assist with the troubled vehicle. He even kills a cop and takes the cruiser. He and Nona take off in the cruiser and have sex to the sound of the police radio. All the while, he has these random flashbacks to moments where he has encountered rats. Nona leads the narrator to a cemetery where fear grips him. She takes him to a vault where he finds his lost love, dead and filled with rats and then turns to back to Nona, who turns into a rat herself. The last comments are that he was found in the graveyard alone. This is where the narrator leaves off his tale, with only the added note that he is about to commit suicide because he wants to be with Nona and because he can hear things in the walls.

"For Owen" is written in the form a poem, and this is the tale of Stephen King walking his son to school and passing Fruit Street. The child compares the children at the school to various fruits. The small children are blueberries, the patrol boys are bananas, and the fat children are watermelons. Someday, the narrator thinks, he and his son will revisit this moment.

Nona & For Owen Analysis

In "Nona", the narrator feels an instant connection to the woman in the diner and becomes protective of her. When the trucker starts a fight with the narrator, the reader begins to believe it is this protectiveness that causes the narrator's sudden aggressiveness. The fear of Nona's anger causes the narrator to think twice about how far he should travel with her, but he does not listen to that inner voice; instead, it is overcome with a rage that is not his own. The narrator is fed the rage by Nona and becomes her weapon. Several times the narrator makes the connection between her and a rat or to rats in general. The foreshadowing is built up to when Nona leads him to the cemetery, and he is overcome with fear. When he encounters the dead body of his ex-girlfriend and does not scream, he takes it as a right of passage, that he passed some test. When Nona turns into a rat, the narrator overcomes his fear and embraces



her. The narrator ends the tale with the statement that true love never dies and that Nona has been with him the entire time, but the reader is left to conclude for themselves if the narrator was insane or lead by some supernatural force.

"For Owen" is a short insight into a touching moment for the narrator who states that he wishes he could steal the child's face and wear it in order to be able to once again experience the open imaginings of something like passing Fruit Street and imagining a background for it.



Survivor Type & Uncle Otto's Truck

Survivor Type & Uncle Otto's Truck Summary

"Survivor Type" appears as the diary of Richard Pine, formerly Richard Pinzetti, and details the accounts of a disgraced surgeon who is stranded on a small island with no food, water, or shelter. Richard writes the diary to keep his mind off his hunger pains, telling the tale of his childhood growing up in the projects. As he writes about the trials of his past, the reader learns that Richard considers himself a survivor. He tells of smuggling drugs out of the hospital to sell and how he came to be on the cruise ship that sank and stranded him on this island. He now has two kilos of heroin but no food or shelter. He breaks his ankle while trying to flag down a plane seen overhead. He has to amputate his foot using the heroin as anesthesia, and then, he eats it for nourishment. As time on the island passes and Richard becomes more malnourished and addicted to the heroin he has used for anesthesia, the diary becomes more and more disjointed. Richard eventually amputates and eats everything below his groin, along with his earlobes.

In "Uncle Otto's Truck", Quentin tells the account of his Uncle Otto who set out in his life to purchase a large sum of land, rumored to be four thousand acres. In order to swing the purchase, Otto Schenck sells his home and takes on a partner, George McCutchson. After purchasing the acreage, the two men often survey their purchase in McCutchson's old truck. One evening when the two men are out on one of their surveying jaunts, the truck overheats and the engine explodes. McCutchson finds the view so beautiful that he decides to build his retirement home in the location. In order to look at the view, McCutchson turns the truck around, but he dies beneath the truck. The story that Quentin passes along is that the truck no longer had any wheels and rolled off the blocks it was on and crushed McCutchson. Beginning then, Otto becomes fixated on the truck, which Quentin believes is because Otto used it to kill McCutchson over a land deal that they were at odds over. Otto builds a small schoolhouse in the town, moves into the building and uses it for his home. It is one room, across from the truck. Eventually, Otto begins making comments to his nephew that the truck is creeping across the road to get him. When Quentin asks him why he does not leave and move back to town then, Otto replies "Sometimes a man just has stay in one place and wait for it to come to him", referring to fate. For some time following, Otto tells his nephew that the truck is not on its side of the road and that it is outside his window, but Quentin sees his uncle's ranting as lunacy until one Wednesday evening, he takes groceries to his uncle and, for a moment, he swears that the truck was across the street in Otto's front yard. He immediately dismisses the incident as a hallucination. As he enters the home, Quentin finds his uncle dead and completely full of oil, a spark plug in his throat, with his eyes rolled toward the window where he had seen the truck.



Survivor Type & Uncle Otto's Truck Analysis

In "Survivor Type", Richard has always felt as though he was destined to be a survivor and feels as though he has proved that he is, by having endured growing up in the projects and procuring an athletic scholarship to go to college so that he could join pre-med. Oddly, Richard's primary occupation after getting his internship was pushing drugs, which he was caught for and was forced to leave the hospital. He frequently repeats a phrase from his medical professor, "How much shock-trauma can a patient take? How much does the patient want to live?" Richard's determination to live becomes his death as he literally eats himself up.

"Uncle Otto's Truck" is written in the first person as Quentin tells events that started before his birth and continued after. He opens the story by telling that he thinks he has lost his mind and would be grateful if he did not have a reminder that this is not true. As he tells the tale of his Uncle Otto and George McCutcheon, he quickly states his childhood fear of the big, red truck that had once belonged to George McCutcheon, then to his uncle. The reader can only assume that the object that is bothering him is part of the truck, so when he reveals that it is a spark plug that was found in his dead uncle's throat, the reader is well prepared. Primarily the reader is told the suspicions that Quentin had of his uncle having killed his partner, using the truck. His proof is the words of old gossips at the barber shop and, later, the fixation Otto had taken with the truck. Otto had told him that the truck was creeping toward the house and Quentin had not believed him; no one had. Quentin's suspicion that Otto had used the truck to kill McCutcheon is how he justifies the fact that he still has the spark plug from his uncle. If Otto had used the truck to kill McCutcheon, then the truck would have a reason for killing Otto and then the truck would have no reason to kill again, so there would be nothing for Quentin to fear in the future from the truck.



Morning Deliveries (Milkman #1) and Big Wheels: A Tale of the Laundry Game (Milkman #2)

Morning Deliveries (Milkman #1) and Big Wheels: A Tale of the Laundry Game (Milkman #2) Summary

In "Morning Deliveries (Milkman #1)", a milkman, whose uniform has the name Spike stitched on it, is making his morning deliveries. His stop at Mackenzie's home seems normal enough, until he retrieves a bottle of orange juice from behind the deadly nightshade. Spike returns to his deliveries and thinks of checking in on his friend Randy with a radio that hangs in his truck on a blood-covered meat hook.

He then delivers to the McCarthy's home where he places a tarantula on an empty chocolate milk container for the delivery. Spike continues on with his deliveries adding acid gel, belladonna, and cyanide gas. He comes to one home where the note reads "Cancel". When he enters the home, he discovers that a murder had taken place. Happy with his day, Spike leaves to go about the rest of his day, whistling.

In "Big Wheels: A Tale of the Laundry Game (Milkman #2)", Rocky and Leo are two buddies out for a drunken joyride, blowing off steam, when Rocky realizes that the inspection sticker on his Chrysler is about to run out, in four hours to be precise. The pair set out to find an inspection station. They happen upon the inspection station of Rocky's friend, Bobby, whom Rocky calls Stiff Socks. Rocky quickly flatters and bulldozes Bobby into taking a look at the car, and Bobby learns that there are several things wrong with the vehicle. As Bobby looks the car over, he is mentally distracted by the fact that his wife is waiting with supper. Bobby's mind wanders off for a moment to thoughts of killing his wife and mailing her out in pieces to various locations. Rocky brings Bobby back to the present, and the two chat over old times, laughing and sharing old jokes while Leo sporadically interrupts with random commentaries about working at the laundry. As the two leave the garage, the milk truck begins to follow them. Traveling at too high of a speed, they wreck the car and die in the flames. Spike then decides to go to the garage to pay Bobby a visit.

Morning Deliveries (Milkman #1) and Big Wheels: A Tale of the Laundry Game (Milkman #2) Analysis

In "Morning Deliveries (Milkman #1)", Spike looks at his days as happy moments as he does not appear to have any issues about his actions. His main concern for his day is seeing his friend Randy, which leaves the reader to wonder what he has in store for Randy.



In "Big Wheels: A Tale of the Laundry Game (Milkman #2)", Rocky's inebriated state is partially due to a recent stint in jail for carrying a concealed weapon, which it is revealed is due to his wife having become pregnant by the milkman, Spike. Once he realizes that the car inspection is about to run out, he drives all over to get the inspection taken care of. He is devoted to his car as a result of his recent divorce; he may have a rather unhealthy attachment to keeping something close as he has lost his wife and children. Oddly, he has lost his wife to a homicidal milkman, referenced in the prior story in this collection, and has taken his car to another man who is thinking of killing his wife. As the two leave the garage, Spike appears and chases them at high speed. A crash ensues, and both Rocky and Leo are killed in what appears to be a drunken driving accident. Spike is left to carry on his homicidal activities and targets Bobby, which is ironic since Bobby also seems to have homicidal tendencies.



Gramma

Gramma Summary

In "Gramma", George Bruckner stays home to watch his Gramma while his mother goes to the hospital to see to his older brother Buddy, who has injured his leg in a baseball game. He remembers that when they had come to take care of her, she scared him at the age of six, but he is now fourteen. George tries to come up with something to do to occupy his time, while his Gramma sleeps and his mother is away. Several times, he picks up the phone to hear Henrietta and Cora gossiping during the Soap Operas, continues to pick up and put down his school books, and check the clock for the time when he can start to expect his mother home. He does not want to watch television for fear that he may wake his Gramma. With nothing to occupy his time other than thinking, George remembers back to hearing that his Gramma and Grandpa were thrown out of the church and that Gramma was fired over something to do with books. He remembers that he and his brother were listening through the vents and overheard only part of the tale and that he had wondered at the time what kind of books could get someone fired. He had confessed to his mother that he was eavesdropping and had overheard part of the story. His mother had told him how his Gramma was unable to carry a baby to term before she had gotten the books. She also told of how his grandfather had wanted to try without the books and that Gramma had refused. She revealed that people had begun to talk, but when George asked about what, she told him that it was nothing important, just that they were too lucky for ordinary folks.

As George prepares dinner for both himself and Gramma, he remembers back to that first day and realizes that his mother had held a note of fear in her voice. He remembers his Uncle George commenting that she was more dangerous now that she was senile. While George tries to place the puzzle together, he hears a strange gurgling noise coming from his Gramma's room. He goes to check in on her and finds her dead. He checks several times, checking her pulse and using a mirror to determine if she is breathing. Then, he goes to call the doctor and finds the line dead. He ponders over several things that he should do, knowing that he needs to do this right, so he decides to cover her with a sheet. As he does, she reaches up and grips his wrist. He hears the woman follow him; she orders him to come hug her, and he knows that he has no choice, though all the while he struggles internally knowing that if he touches her, he will be used for her survival. Just then the phone rings, and it is Aunt Flo, who tells him to order her to lie down in Hastur's name. He tries, but Gramma has hold of him by the throat. When George's mother, Ruth, returns home, George tells her that Gramma is dead, and she immediately asks if anything else happened. Ruth checks her mother's body and finds a piece of George's shirt, but he merely says that he does not want to talk about it and goes to bed, lying back thinking of how he will torment Buddy when he returns home.



Grammar Analysis

In "Grammar", George's hurried behavior with his time in the kitchen, with repeatedly checking the clock, the phone, and not watching television for not wanting to wake his Gramma, is indicative that though he may be fourteen, he is still terrified of his Gramma. When he thinks back to the story he and his brother had overheard about his Gramma being fired from teaching and thrown out of the church over books, he had no idea what people were so upset about, so he had asked his mother. His mother's tale of his Gramma's infertility before the books did not register with him too much as his mother did not tell him what kind of books they were. George has several other flashback moments where he realizes that he is not the only one afraid of Gramma, but that his mother and Aunt Flo are wary of her as well. He remembers his mother's ending to her tale that people had begun to talk; they were saying that his

grandparents were too lucky for ordinary folks, ordinary being the key word she used. George slowly remembers back to other instances and begins to add little pieces of each together, determining that his Gramma is a witch.

At Gramma's death, George checks several times to prove that she is in fact dead and then goes to call the doctor, but the dead line only adds to his dread. His determination to complete the tasks that would befit an adult in the situation takes precedence, and he returns to cover her with a sheet. It is then that she grabs him; he breaks free and makes it to the kitchen. George knows deep down that if she touches him that he will take on her habits, that she will use his body to continue her own life. He can remember the words he had thought of earlier that she was a she bear in hibernation, just waiting, and he now knows what she has been waiting for, to be alone with him, so she can die, so she can take over his body, so that she can live. Later on at the end of the tale, George is laying in bed thinking of what plans he can make as payback to his brother Buddy for all the years of torture Buddy has delay him; this insinuates that Gramma has indeed taken over George's body.



The Ballad of the Flexible Bullet

The Ballad of the Flexible Bullet Summary

In "The Ballad of the Flexible Bullet", a small group is celebrating the publication of a young writer's first story and how well it had been received by the public. They begin to talk of writers who have gone mad or committed suicide due to success. Henry is a fiction editor for Logan's magazine and is among the guests. He tells the group of a story that had not been published, not because the author went crazy and killed himself, but because the editor went crazy and almost killed himself. He then reveals that he was the editor. Henry tells the tale of a young writer named Reg Thorpe and his suicide that took others as well. Henry's tale begins with receiving unsolicited stories at Logan's from writers in the hopes of having them published. Reg Thorpe, who had already been published, had sent in a story about going crazy. Reg had believed in fairy-like creatures called Fornits that were good luck elves and claimed that one lived in his typewriter. Henry explains to the group that, on a drunken whim, he had copied a signature that had been on Thorpe's letter and that Thorpe had thought he had found a kindred soul that understood about the Fornits. Henry admits to his drinking problem at that point in his life and illustrates how that added to the madness that the two of them, Henry and Thorpe, were headed into. Henry had received a call from Thorpe's wife that she was scared by her husband's paranoia, and she advised Henry to humor Thorpe when it came to the Fornits. In Henry's drunken state, he had lied to the man and told him he had a Fornit of his own. With the story completed, Thorpe's attention returns to his usual delusions that the FBI, CIA, androids and other things are trying to get his Fornit, and therefore, he suspects his wife may be involved.

The Ballad of the Flexible Bullet Analysis

In "The Ballad of the Flexible Bullet", The young writer's success with his recent story provides the reason for the five within the group to gather and chat about what they clearly loved the most, stories. As the conversation turns dark regarding the tragic circumstances that some successful writers have encountered, his wife becomes uneasy. The story changes to a writer, or at least a work that she had enjoyed, but then comes back to the suicide topic that has her ill-at-ease. The writer becomes uneasy when the editor begins his tale and tells how unsolicited stories are returned or thrown away. For some reason he feels like he is in a tigers' pit and just has not yet seen the tigers but can sense that are close.

Henry's story about receiving a tale of a man going crazy was what had him fascinated in editing the piece. He explained that it was quite witty and the more nervous he became in reading it, the more humorous it became. The author's belief that a luck elf lives in his typewriter is an interesting twist to the typical "Man goes mad and kills himself" scenario, which is another reason Henry was so drawn to the piece. So when Henry's reply with a doodle regarding the Fornits is so well accepted by Thorpe, they



begin a bond. The odd thing is that Thorpe is so excited because he had met someone who knew about Fornits, but the story was about Fornits and as Henry was the editor, of course he had read it, so it makes sense that he knew about the Fornits. In Henry's drunken way he had attracted Thorpe's attention and seems to have accepted Thorpe's theory. Henry was in the middle of a divorce and a mid-life crisis, but now he had an insane, but brilliant, writer whose fantasy Fornits needed to be humored. Once the story is completed and the author returns to delusions of conspiracy, Henry must keep up with his original lie in regard to the Fornits which has snowballed into Henry in a drinking binge in his attempt to keep the author from harming anyone.



The Reach & Notes

The Reach & Notes Summary

In "The Reach", Stella Flanders is the oldest resident of Goat Island at the age of ninety-five, and she has never been to the mainland. She tells her great-grandchildren that the reach had been wider in her youth. When the children asks what she means, she does not clarify. There is a reach between Goat Island and Raccoon Head Island. Stella has a recurring question float about in her head, "Do you love?" As her birthday passes, Stella begins to hear voices in the winter wind. Her husband, Bill, appears to Stella, asking her to come across to the mainland. The Reach between has frozen over for the first time in over fifty years. Stella decides to walk the Reach just once as she has been spitting up blood for over five years and knows that it is cancer that is causing it. Stella finally takes her long walk across the Reach to her husband and stands before many people who had passed away during her lifetime. She is found frozen on the mainland, sitting on a natural rock chair, looking back at her island. Her son, Alden, thinks about what he will tell the children the next time that they visit. Alden hears the voices on the winds and asks himself, "do the dead love?"

In "Notes", King finishes the book with a few quick notes and tales of the creations of his stories found in the collection. He reveals that "The Mist" was based on a real storm that did have a water spout and that he had his family sleep downstairs that night, but his real neighbor was a likeable fellow that he got along with. His main character's wife in the story was Stephanie, which is his wife's sister's name. Mrs. Todd was also based on his wife, who is always looking for a shortcut to just about anywhere, and he finds that she at times does seem to be younger. King also tells the tale of a night spent picking up road cones that had damaged his car and being arrested for the incident. This is brought up as the paycheck for the short story The Raft arrived within the given seven day time limit for his fine and happened to be the same amount.

The Reach & Notes Analysis

In "The Reach", the question "Do You Love?" is whispered on the winds, plaguing Stella Flanders. Stella's memory trails back to moments when she was younger, when there was no mail ferry, no indoor toilets, and people traveled by lobster boats. When her dead husband begins to appear to her, she is at first panicked by his presence. The reader is led to believe she is afraid of the ghost due simply to its appearance; however, it is shortly revealed that Stella is aware that she has cancer and that the appearance of her dead husband is a symbol that her time is ending. So, she faces her death head on and walks the width of the Reach, where she is met by the ghosts of people who have passed away before her. Her son, Alden, is left closing the story with the mention that he can hear singing on the winds.



In "Notes", King personalizes several of the characters by basing them on his wife, Tabitha. In doing so, King gives a brief glimpse into his life. In "Notes", he admits to basing Mrs. Todd on his wife because she is crazy for a shortcut, but he also reveals how he feels about his wife. In the story, Homer finds Mrs. Todd frighteningly beautiful and compares her to Diana chasing the moon across the heavens. King also tells a story of being arrested for picking up traffic cones when one damaged his car and how the funds from "The Raft" were the exact amount of his fine and arrived exactly when needed. These anecdotes hint at his own internal superstitious nature that blends into many of his tales.



Characters

David Drayton appears in The Mist

David Drayton is a commercial artist who lives in the small community of Brighton, Maine where he lives with his wife, Stephanie, and their five-year-old son, Billy. David is confident in his home, his neighbors, his community, and his place within it. He is also the narrator of the story and, as such, gives away his thoughts and fears, his insecurities and his determination to prevail. Once the original storm has hit full force, David has a premonition of danger to his wife and son which includes the picture window shattering inward and cutting them up. So when the window is broken, David's subsequent dream of God walking around the lake destroying the area leaves him with a forsworn quality.

Throughout the trials of being trapped in the store, David holds onto hope, instead of embracing the despair as the others do. His ability to work with what is thrown at him instead of fighting it is crucial to his survival, along with his sense of purpose in his thoughts of protecting his son as well as the others. It is his duty-minded direction that keeps himself and his son within a semblance of sanity despite the chaos that surrounds them. It is also this virtue that targets him as Mrs. Carmody's Achilles heel, drawing her vengeful wrath.

Mrs. Carmody appears in The Mist

Mrs. Carmody is an antique dealer in the local community that has captured the attention of David's wife, Stephanie, in an eerie manor. She is often referred to as the person to go to if one is having difficulties in life. Due to her old world remedies, she is whispered to be a witch, and when faced with the circumstances of the creatures, she rises forth as a dark figure instead of shrinking away in fear as the others do.

Mrs. Carmody is a classic, distracting, secondary evil. She represents misguided vengeance that becomes prevalent in King's stories as she is the logical bad guy that comes to life through fear and pain. She thrives through the caged sequence of events in *The Mist* within the grocery store. Initially, Mrs. Carmody is the lone voice that rants of the end of the world. As the events unfold, she gains believers, and as such, her violent nature gains strength. Through this, she channels a powerful direction for her inner darkness to project the evil outside her surroundings to the sins that she perceives within the people that she has always known. It is as if she is harboring these inner judgments and is now allowed to voice her disdain, especially for David. Ironically, David had previously stated that he did not care for her either for an unexplained reason. This proves justifiably so when Mrs. Carmody targets David's son Billy as her suggested sacrifice.



Stephen King appears in Introduction and Notes

Stephen King brings himself into this collection of stories by introducing them and then concluding the book with a few brief tales of how the stories came about in his head and the process he used to change them into the stories found in the book. His introduction gives the reader the basis for the I Guy, whom King uses for the beginning of his stories and places them in the "would it be funny if" scenario. He reveals that the majority of his work is based on the humor of a "what if" situation that he then changes into the complete work by adding and subtracting elements that lead the reader around a path in the story. King even admits to often completely changing the I Guy throughout the process by molding the characters based on their counterparts and surroundings.

Often, King is thought of as a master of the Horror genre, but if his work is read not for entertainment but through analysis, it becomes evident that the elements that make his work so frightening is its basis in human emotion. What the reader brings to the work is as important as what the work provides to the reader. He creates openings for the subconscious to avoid or walk through and face. Several of his works show this more humorous or reverent side to the creator than is often labeled on him.

Ophelia Todd appears in Mrs. Todd's Shortcut

Ophelia Todd is the young wife of Worth Todd and the driver of a champagne colored Mercedes convertible. She is said to be an extremely charitable and kind woman within the community where she and her husband vacation. Ophelia is taken with finding shortcuts through every back road she can find, including old logging trails. Her theory is that if one saves enough miles, one saves time. She imparts this theory to the handy man, Homer, and practically dares him to prove her wrong.

When she takes Homer on a joyride to prove that she has found the quickest way to Bangor, Ophelia Todd changes. Her demeanor becomes wild and ethereal. Homer compares her to the Goddess Diana chasing the moon across the sky. He also comments that he fears that she will turn her attentions to him and that he may feel her wrath, and although her beauty in those moments attracts him, he also fears it. Eventually the young woman disappears altogether, and the story begins based on that disappearance. However, the reader is reintroduced to her later on, where she appears even younger than before when she comes to collect Homer for their travels together. This appearance also is a tamer one, where she gives the impression that she is at home in her new place, content and not so wild.

Brent Norton appears in The Mist

Brent Norton is the estranged neighbor of David Drayton who has had past property issues, causing a rift between him and David. Brent's prized car is destroyed during the storm, which causes him to join David and Billy on their excursion to the grocery store.



Brent's legal background causes him to focus on facts, therefore denying the supernatural, which in essence leads to his death.

Homer Buckland appears in Mrs. Todd's Shortcut

Homer Buckland tells the story of Mrs. Todd to his friend outside of Bells. He tells the story of Ophelia Todd's disappearance and the mysterious joyride that she had taken him on. Homer's infatuation begins while grouting the bathroom floor when Ophelia interrupts to tell him of her shortcut conquests. By attending Mrs. Todd on her shortcuts, Homer begins to look younger.

Randy appears in The Raft

In "The Raft", Randy suggests taking an October swim to the raft in Cascade Lake. It is also Randy who first notices the dark, oily water is suspiciously round. Randy is also the last to die but the only one of the four friends who chooses to do so.

Maureen Scollay appears in The Wedding Gig

Maureen Scollay is the overweight sister of a bootlegger, Mike Scollay. She is marrying an Italian, but their wedding reception is ruined by Mike's death.

Hal Shelburn appears in The Monkey

Hal Shelburn is the man terrorized by the decrepit monkey. During his childhood, Hal finds the monkey which causes many deaths. Hal thought that he had rid himself of the monkey by throwing it down a well; however, it resurfaces in his attic thirty years later and is discovered by his son, Dennis. This reawakens Hal's torment.

Spike Milligan appears in Morning Deliveries and Big Wheels: A Tale of the Laundry Gam

Spike Milligan appears in two stories in this collection. He is a homicidal milkman who terrorizes the townspeople.



Objects/Places

Brighton, Maine appears in The Mist

Brighton, Maine is the town where David Drayton is from and where the storm occurs in "The Mist".

Hartford appears in The Mist

Hartford is the whispered word of hope that David Drayton offers at the end of the story in case another survivor finds his manuscript.

Bathroom appears in Here There Be Tygers

Charles calls the bathroom the basement, and when he obtains permission from his teacher to use the lavatory, Charles is frightened to enter because there is a tiger in one of the stalls which eats a bully in the school and the teacher.

Stuffed Monkey appears in The Monkey

Hal and his children find the stuffed monkey in his aunt's attic. Hal is terrified because he disposed of the monkey thirty years prior when it caused the deaths of his friends and his mother. At the end of the story, Hal throws the stuffed monkey into the lake, causing many dead fish to float to the top of the lake.

Poster of Humphrey Bogart appears in Cain Rose Up

Curt Garrish has a poster of Humphrey Bogart in his dormitory, and he tells the poster about the story of Cain and Abel before opening fire on the other students.

The Jaunt appears in The Jaunt

The jaunt is a type of teleportation from one place to another that requires the traveler to be given gas to make them unconscious for the journey because a vast amount of time passes mentally, causing insanity in travelers who remain awake for the experience.

Morgan, Illinois appears in The Wedding Gig

The wedding in "The Wedding Gig" occurs in Morgan, Illinois.



Cascade Lake appears in The Raft

Cascade Lake is the setting of "The Raft". This is where four college students decide to take a swim and are attacked by a dark shape in the water that resembled an oil slick.

Word Processor appears in Word Processor of the Gods

In "Word Processor of the Gods", Richard inherits a word processor from his nephew that include homemade adjustments that allows Richard to add and delete things from his life. Richard uses it to delete his wife and son and replace them with his nephew and his nephew's mother.

Desert appears in Beachworld

When their plane crashed in the desert, Rand and Shapiro are the only survivors on a strange planet which Rand compares to a beach without the sea.

Deliveries appears in Morning Deliveries (Milkman #1)

Spike makes his morning deliveries of milk to his clients but adds tarantulas, acid gel, belladonna and cyanide gas to his deliveries, causing the death of some of his clients.

Goat Island appears in The Reach

Goat Island is where Stella Flanders spends her entire life, never crossing the Reach, until the day of her death when she walks out to meet many of the people that have died before her.



Themes

Evil Objects

The archetypal evil object, as in "The Monkey", is a prevalent theme in Stephen King's works. In these stories, the "innocent" or the "disbeliever" is usually the target of the negativity of the object. As Hal tells his son, Petey, in "The Monkey", "Some bad things don't know that they are bad." These stories also tend to have a plotline that contains historical tales of the same object in a prior place and time, showing a repeating pattern. This is done to show an indestructible quality to the evil or the object that contains the evil within. This history to the item also is used in a way to bring an enduring sense of fear to the current presence of the item. Although the object is the same, the persons affected may also be the same as in "The Monkey", where the prior dread of the main character is shown in a memory of his own past causing the main character to endure sporadic flashbacks throughout the chronicle.

The theme is also evident when the main characters are advised of the inherent object's past by others characters, as in "The Reapers Image". The past of this object is passed from one character to the other and mostly in one continuous space of time. In the tale, there are two main characters, Mr. Carlin and Spangler. Spangler is a factual type, whereas Mr. Carlin is a superstitious man who hides behind a gloating exterior. When faced with the unbelievable stories of the Delver Looking glass, Spangler scoffs at the other man's trepidation. Although Mr. Carlin attempts to warn him, Spangler relies of the facts of the world and will not open his mind to what he considers the impossible. It is this arrogance that leads to his disappearance. In "Uncle Otto's Truck", the main character gives his theory about the vengeance that the truck had taken on Otto Scheck but does not give proof. Quentin believes that the truck's original owner was killed at the hands of his uncle and that is why he becomes the trucks target. But as this is a theory that Quentin had not verified with his uncle, this could be the beginning to a series of events, as it was in the story of Christine, a novel sharing similar qualities.

The Alfred Hitchcock Ending

In the actual story "The Mist", the narrator states that you must not expect a conclusion as he is writing what his father called "an Alfred Hitchcock ending" which states that there is a conclusion in ambiguity that leaves the reader to determine the ending. This is a very appropriate statement in this collection of works. The story continues through a segment of the full story but then is stopped suddenly and left for the reader to fill in the blanks and the ending. This allows the reader to become more involved with the story as they become responsible for finishing the plot. This gives power to the reader in the after and compels the reader to revisit the entire plot and add in the "what would I do" or the based on this, I would take the character here. Stephen King's most terrifying moments are the ones where is allows the readers imagination to fill in blanks and add that which they are the most afraid of.



"Cain Rose Up" takes this Hitchcock ending to a new point as the story takes place in a short period of time within a single day and makes references to the future possibilities. Again, it is left to the reader to pick the pieces that end from the future happenings, as well as how the past may have led to the random homicidal thought of killing the other child in the story. Both Milkman stories, "Morning Deliveries" and "Big Wheels", are excerpts into the homicidal mind of Spike, the delivery man, and those of his victims, but there are no given explanations for his murderous expeditions, only the brief moments that are covered with each story. This leaves the reader to wonder why he is killing off the townspeople and what his next actions will be so, much like "Cain Rose Up," the reader must fill in the blanks of both the beginning and the upcoming end to the tales.

Knowing Is Terrifying

There is a saying, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." The knowledge that one has done something or failed to do something can be one of the most truthful fears that a human being can carry. The question of "What if" eats at you from inside and causes too many outside consequences. As in "The Jaunt", the conscious decision to omit the whole truth about the Jaunt applications, experiments, and ramifications was one of genuine concern for the trauma the story may cause his family for Mark Oates, but the realization that inadvertently caused his son's lunacy and possible death by not telling the whole truth is an excellent example of this.

Henry Brower is one of the best examples of the guilt that can eat at a man when he knows what can happen by one small error in judgment. In "The Man Who Would Not Shake Hands", Henry Brower has been cursed to walk the world as a pariah for a mistake he made years before. He knows the curse that has been laid on him will kill anyone he so much as touches. When his hand is taken at a friendly poker game, the others at the table believe he is quite out of his mind due to his hysterics, but Brower is plagued by the knowledge that Davidson will die by morning. Like Mark Oates, he is aware of the consequences of not sharing the knowledge that he has but is looking for a different outcome based on honest intentions.

This same guilt is echoed in "The Wedding Gig", where the end of the story gives a glimpse of the insecurities that the narrator carries. Although the tale itself seems to be about the events of a wedding reception and the murder that takes place, the catalyst of the entire story is that of a very fat woman who is often laughed at due to her exterior image. There is also a sideline reference to a member of the band being African American, and it is occasionally mentioned what the narrator feels for him, although he is often inconsiderate of his band mate. The end of the tale is what pulls this all to the forefront when it is revealed that the narrator is old, does not sleep well, and admits to thinking of these events and the people they affected. The last line of the story indicates that he suffers because he did nothing to ease his conscience. This is a much more subtle application of the knowledge theme but one that shows that even in slight failing can cling to someone their entire life. In the short poem, "For Owen", the narrator knows that growing up can destroy many things of the original views people have in this world in our youth, and there is a subtle sadness that is carried with the memory that this



moment will not last for young Owen and that someday he will need to be reminded that he carried such a fruitful imagination and wondrous view of the world.

Do you love?

This question is asked in several of the stories in this collection. In "Nona", the question is presented to the narrator who has a loose grasp of reality by a beautiful woman named Nona who has seduced him. She eventually turns into that which he fears the most, a rat, and he must prove his love for her is stronger than his fear, even if it is in his head. Stella Flanders is presented this question by her dead husband's ghost. She goes to her death with a calm acceptance as she will be with so many that she has known who have passed away in her life time, but where this can be frightening for some to know that their time has come, she faces her death with a quiet grace. The phrase is also repeated in "The Raft", where Randy is remembering the words to a song while making over to LaVerne just as the creature is coming for them, but he is too taken in the moment to do much more than replay the words of the song, thinking that he does not love the woman that he is with, but it is a distraction to the horror that they are facing.

Style

Point of View

In the "Introduction", the point of view is first person and limited. The point of view is reliable since King is talking about his thoughts pertaining to his work. The "Introduction" is written in the form of a monologue from the viewpoint of Stephen King. "The Mist" is written from a first person, limited point of view which appears to be reliable. It is approximately three-fifths exposition with the remainder being dialogue, and it is written from the viewpoint of David Drayton. "Here There Be Tygers" is written from a first person, limited point of view. It is unreliable as the reader may question if Charles imagined the scene in the bathroom. There is a fairly equal distribution of exposition and dialogue in this tale told by Charles, a young boy. "The Monkey" is told through a third person, limited point of view as the narrator only knows Hal's thoughts and feelings. It is approximately two-thirds exposition with the remainder of the story being told through dialogue through Hal Shelburn's point of view. "Cain Rose Up" is told through a third person, limited point of view that is unreliable. The story is an equal distribution of exposition and monologue/dialogue which is seen through the viewpoint of Curt Garrish.

"Mrs. Todd's Shortcut" is told through a third person, limited point of view. The reliability of the narrator is questionable since Homer obviously accepts Mrs. Todd's craziness. The story is comprised primarily of dialogue and is seen through the viewpoint of the narrator, Homer's friend, as well as Homer who tells the story of Mrs. Todd to his friend. "The Jaunt" is told through a third person, limited point of view. Mark Oates' viewpoint is reliable since the story tells about things that Mark does not reveal to his wife and children. "The Wedding Gig" is told through a reliable, first person, limited point of view by the bandleader. It is a fairly equal distribution of exposition and dialogue. "Paranoid: A Chant" is told through the first person, limited, unreliable viewpoint of a paranoid schizophrenic through a monologue in the form of a poem. The point of view of "The Raft" is third person and omniscient as the narrator knows the thoughts of all of the characters. The point of view is reliable, and the story is told with a nearly equal amount of exposition and dialogue, mainly through the viewpoint of Randy.

The narrator of "Word Processor of the Gods" is a third person, omniscient narrator who knows the past as well as Richard's thoughts. The story is equally exposition and dialogue, and it is told through the viewpoint of Richard Hagstrom. "The Man Who Would Not Shake Hands" is told through a first person, limited, unreliable point of view from the viewpoint of an aged, wealthy narrator, and about three-fourths of the story is written as dialogue with the remainder as exposition. The point of view in "Beachworld" is that of a reliable, third person, omniscient narrator, the viewpoint is that of Rand, and the division between exposition and dialogue is fairly equal. "The Reaper's Image" is told from the viewpoint of Mr. Carlin using a reliable, third person, limited point of view, and the division between exposition and dialogue is fairly equal. "Nona" is told using the viewpoint of the convict using a first person, limited point of view. The point of view is unreliable as the man is unsure if he committed the murders and why. The story is



written using three-fourths exposition and one-fourth dialogue. "For Owen" is a poem from the viewpoint of Stephen King written through the point of view of a first person, limited, reliable monologue.

"Survivor Type" is written as a diary in a first person, limited point of view from the perspective of Richard Pine, a disgraced surgeon. His diary is an unreliable monologue since he goes crazy. "Uncle Otto's Truck" is written from a first person, limited, unreliable point of view solely as a monologue in the viewpoint of Otto's guilt-ridden nephew. "Morning Deliveries" is written in the third person, limited, reliable point of view of Spike Milligan, and it is solely exposition. "Big Wheels: A Tale of the Laundry Game" is written from a third person, limited, reliable point of view in the viewpoint of Rocky and Leo at the beginning and Spike at the end. It is written through the use of a fairly equal distribution of exposition and dialogue. "Gramma" is written through a third person, limited reliable point of view in the viewpoint of George, and it is about two-thirds exposition. The point of view in "The Ballad of the Flexible Bullet" is third person, limited and reliable, through the viewpoint of Henry, and it is written mostly in dialogue. "The Reach" is written from the viewpoint of Stella Flanders in a third person, limited, unreliable point of view. There is a fairly equal distribution of exposition and dialogue as Stella recalls past conversations. "Notes" is written from the viewpoint of Stephen King as a monologue with a first person, omniscient, reliable point of view.

Setting

The setting in "Skeleton Crew" varies per story. In the "Introduction", the setting is the book itself which is a place in Stephen King's imagination in 1984. "The Mist" is set in Bridgton, Maine, a real place in a modern time. "Here There Be Tygers" is set in a realistic, modern school. "The Monkey" is set in the realistic location of an old farmhouse where Hal grew up and a nearby hotel in the 1960s. "Cain Rose Up" is set in a modern school which is realistic. "Mrs. Todd's Shortcut" is set in the real world in New England in the 1960s or 1970s. "The Jaunt" is set in the imaginary future in a New York terminal and on Mars. "The Wedding Gig" is set in real Morgan, Illinois in 1927. "Paranoid: A Chant" is set in the person's house and in their mind, which questions whether the setting is realistic or imaginary. It is set in a modern time. "The Raft" is set in the realistic Cascade Lake in the modern time, and "Word Processor of the Gods" is set in Richard's house in a modern time, which is also realistic. The setting of "The Man Who Would Not Shake Hands" is a card game and the narrator's search through the bad areas of town in the realistic past. "Beachworld" is set on an imaginary desert planet in the future.

"The Reaper's Image" is set in a real museum in a modern setting. The prison setting of "Nona" is realistic and modern. "For Owen" occurs on a modern street as Stephen King walks his son to school; while the walk is realistic, the school that Owen describes is imaginary. A deserted island is the setting "Survivor Type", and it is realistic and modern. "Uncle Otto's Truck" is realistically and modernly set in Castle Rock, Maine. Culver Street is the setting of "Morning Deliveries", and the setting is both realistic and modern. "Big Wheels: A Tale of the Laundry Game" is set on the road as Rocky and Leo search



for an auto-inspection station. "Grammar" is modernly and realistically set in George's house. "The Ballad of the Flexible Bullet" is set at a realistic barbeque on a patio in the 1970s. "The Reach" is set on Goat Island in New England, probably sometime in the 1960s; this setting is realistic. "Notes", like the "Introduction", is set in the book or in Stephen King's mind, making the setting somewhat imaginary, or at least abstract.

Language and Meaning

The language in the majority of "Skeleton Crew" is casual and informal with only a few exceptions. These exceptions are "The Man Who Would Not Shake Hands", "Beachworld" and "The Reaper's Image". In "The Man Who Would Not Shake Hands", the language is casual and semi-formal, which emphasizes the status and wealth of the narrator. In "Beachworld", the language is stiff and formal due to being set during a future time period, and the language in "The Reaper's Image" tends to be casual but also partially formal, showing the education and status of the characters. The language of each of the other stories emphasizes or characterizes certain aspects of the stories which will follow. In the "Introduction", the language characterizes Stephen King as friendly and confidential, while "The Mist" demonstrates Mrs. Carmody's prophetic nature. "Here There Be Tygers" emphasizes the difference between the young boy and the teacher who torments him, and the language in "The Monkey" serves to compare who Hal was as a child to who he has become as a man.

"Cain Rose Up" blatantly shows Curt's insanity. The language in several other stories in this collection also highlight the characters' insanity, such as the following: "Mrs. Todd's Shortcut", "Paranoid: A Chant", "Nona", "Survivor Type", "Uncle Otto's Truck" (which also shows Otto's nephew's guilt over not believing his uncle), "Morning Deliveries", "Big Wheels: A Tale of the Laundry Game", and "The Ballad of the Flexible Bullet". Meanwhile, the language in "The Jaunt" places the reader in the story's setting, and "The Wedding Gig" demonstrates the bigotry of the time. "The Raft" focuses on the fears of the characters as "Word Processor of the Gods" emphasizes Richard's discontent with his family and longing for a different family. "For Owen" shows the narrator's love for his son while emphasizing his son's creativity. The language of "Grammar" demonstrates George's fears and suspicions, "The Reach" shows Stella's class and age through her formal behavior, and "Notes" highlights King's writing style as well as characterizes King and his wife.

Structure

"Skeleton Crew" is comprised of an "Introduction" at the beginning and "Notes" at the end. Included in this book are twenty stories and two poems which range from two to 130 pages each. "Introduction" is seven pages long, quick paced and describes Stephen King's writing processes through flashbacks. "The Mist", the longest story, is 130 pages long with quick action and slow paced memories. Flashbacks are prevalent as David Drayton recalls his past while his town is enveloped in a mist which hides monsters. "Here There Be Tygers" is five pages long and quick paced. The plot details



how a young boy finds a tiger in the bathroom at school, and the tiger eats his teacher and a school bully. A flashback in this story explains why the boy refers to the bathroom as the basement. "The Monkey" is thirty-nine pages long, quick paced and contains many flashbacks to Hal's youth as Hal tries to get rid of the stuffed monkey that reappears in his life that wreaked havoc in his youth. "Cain Rose Up" is seven pages long, quick paced and linear with the exception of the story that Curt tells his poster about Cain and Abel. The plot of the story shows a crazed but intelligent college student tell his poster, the sole decoration in his dormitory room, a story about Cain killing Abel and serving him as dinner to God; this story is followed by Curt massacring his peers. "Mrs Todd's Shortcut" is twenty-six pages long and quick paced. The story of Mrs. Todd is told as Homer's flashback as he explains how Mrs. Todd reverses time by traveling through an alternate reality which causes her to grow younger. "The Jaunt" is twenty-six pages long, quick paced and contains flashbacks as Mark explains the history of the jaunt to his family. In this story, Mark and his family prepare to teleport to Mars, and Mark attempts to calm his family's fears by explaining the history of the jaunt and the reason that it is necessary to be unconscious during the experience.

"The Wedding Gig" is sixteen pages long, quick paced, and told as a flashback in which the narrator and his band play at a wedding reception where the bride's brother is murdered. "Paranoid: A Chant" is four pages long and quick paced as a paranoid person laments the fact that everyone plots his demise through flashbacks recalling his past afflictions. "The Raft" is twenty-nine pages, linear, quick paced and details the deaths of four college students due to an attack by a creature that appears to be an oil slick. "Word Processor of the Gods" is nineteen pages long, as is "The Man Who Would Not Shake Hands". The first deals with Richard's inheritance from his nephew of a word processor that allows him to alter his life, while the other focuses on a curse that causes a man to kill anyone he touches. "Beachworld" is eighteen pages long, linear, quick paced and discusses Rand and Shapiro being stranded on a desert planet which overtakes Rand's mind. "The Reaper's Image" is eight pages long, linear and focuses on an antique mirror where the Grim Reaper appears. "Nona" is thirty-four pages long and quick paced. Through flashbacks, the narrator examines the reason for his imprisonment which includes the unknown reason that he committed murder, which he suspects was caused by a supernatural influence.

"For Owen" is two pages long and fast paced. The plot shows Stephen King walking his son to school as Owen tells him about how he imagines school. The story is linear with the slight detour into Owen's story. "Survivor Type" is twenty pages long and quick paced. The plot centers around Richard being stranded on a deserted island and amputating his limbs to eat for survival. The story is full of flashbacks as Richard recalls his past as a medical student and then as a surgeon. "Uncle Otto's Truck" is seventeen pages long and quick paced. Flashbacks are present in the form of the nephew recalling the story of his uncle Otto, and the plot is focused on the homicidal truck that murders George and Otto. "Morning Deliveries" is five pages long, quick paced and linear. The plot involves Spike Milligan delivering milk with poisonous substances to his clientele. "Big Wheels: A Tale of the Laundry Game" is fifteen pages long, quick paced and linear. The plot focuses on Rocky and Leo's search for an auto-inspection station after work and ends with Spike Milligan causing their demise in a fatal car crash. "Gramma" is



thirty-one pages long and quick paced. The plot is centered around George being left with his creepy grandmother who he realizes is a witch; when she dies, she possesses George's body. Flashbacks are prevalent as the boy recalls childhood conversations that he overheard which lead him to the conclusion that his grandmother is a witch. "The Ballad of the Flexible Bullet" is fifty-one pages long, quick paced and is told as a flashback in which Henry recalls the past. In this story, Henry tells about the crazy author who is convinced that a good luck elf lives in his keyboard, an idea that Henry encourages due to his own alcoholism at the time. "The Reach" is twenty-three pages long and quick paced. The plot focuses on Stella Flanders, an old woman who has never left her island, who crosses the frozen reach where she sees deceased people from her past before dying. This story is full of flashbacks as Stella recalls her youth. "Notes" is six pages long and quick paced as Stephen King describes his process of writing some of the stories in this collection throughout flashbacks.



Quotes

"I have a real problem with bloat- I write like a fat lady diets." Stephen King, Introduction, p. 22

"I am going to leave these pages on the counter and perhaps someday someone will find them and read them. One word. If I only really heard it. If only. I'm going to bed now. But first I'm going to kiss my son and whisper two words in his ear. Against the dreams that may come, you know. Two words that sound a bit alike. One of them is Hartford. The other is hope." David Drayton, *The Mist*, pp. 153-154

"Very well, Charles. You may go to the bathroom and urinate. Is that what you need to do? Urinate?" Miss Bird, *Here There Be Tygers*, p. 156

"Save enough miles and soon enough you'll save time." Ophelia Todd, *Mrs. Todd's Shortcut*, p. 212

"He say- He say to tell you your sister is one fat pig. He say... He say... He say she got an itch. He say if a fat woman got an itch on her back, she buy a back-scratcher. He say if a woman got an itch in her pants, she buy a man." Demetrius Katzenos, *The Wedding Gig*, p. 268

"There's a man by the door in a raincoat." Narrator, *Paranoid: A Chant*, p. 274

"Some kid made an atom smasher out of two soup cans and five dollars worth of auto-electronical parts." Mr. Nordoff, *Word Processor of the Gods*, p. 310

"I once saw a man murdered right in this room, although no juror would have convicted the killer. Yet, at the end of business, he convicted himself- and served as his own executioner!" George Gregson, *The Man Who Would Not Shake Hands*, p. 327

"Would you care to see how one outcast responds to another? Watch then and see what I've learned in strange ports of call." Henry Brower, *The Man Who Would Not Shake Hands*, p. 336

"Sooner or later the question comes up in every medical student's career. How much shock-trauma can the patient stand? Different instructors answer the question in different ways, but cut to its base level, the answer is always another question: how badly does the patient want to survive?" Richard Pine, *Survivor Type*, p. 407

"If I hadn't taken it away from his little one-room house when I fled from it, I would begin persuading myself it was all only a hallucination—a figment of an overworked and over stimulated brain. But it is there. It has weight. It can be hefted in the hand." Quentin, *Uncle Otto's Truck*, p. 427

"Any tale of grue should have a provenance or a secret. Mine has both." Quentin, *Uncle Otto's Truck*, p. 427



Topics for Discussion

Have you ever encountered a moment where you thought you were doing the right thing and were not only proven wrong by your decision, but caused more harm?

When Mark Oates tells his children the story of the Jaunt; do you think he did the right thing to omit what he did? Please explain your reason for your answer.

What did you find to be the most frightening element in any of the stories in this collection and why?

In the tale of The Image of the Reaper, do you relate more to Mr. Carlin or Spangler and why?

In Cain Rose Up, main character took homicidal thoughts or actions. Do you feel that this is a common occurrence in the world you live in and why? Do you think that stories such as these influence the readers in a negative way?

Name an inanimate object that gave you a negative impression and explain what that impression was and what your reaction was.

In his notes, King reveals the inspirations behind some of the stories found in the collection. Choose one of these tales that you feel is relevant to your life and explain why.

Several of the stories in this collection contain the phrase "Do you love?" How do you think these stories compare to each other or differ?