

Stories: All-New Tales Study Guide

Stories: All-New Tales by Neil Gaiman

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Blood and Fossil-Figures

Blood and Fossil-Figures Summary

He lives in Dublin, and is nearly eighteen years of age before he notices the plaque that identifies Dracula's home. His wife Vera can't understand how he can be so oblivious. Oddly, he can't seem to suppress his recent desire to drink blood. The urge grows in him until he can no longer deny it. His first slip occurs when Vera purchases steaks for dinner, leaving them on the counter. Home alone, he devours one, chewing the meat until the taste of blood is gone and then spitting out the remains. When Vera returns, he has thrown both steaks into the garbage and tells her the meat was off. She argues and wants to return it to the butcher, but he convinces her not to. The incidents continue, and after each one, he convinces himself he is normal, though the excuses he finds to do so become increasingly lame. Finally, in a state of need one evening, he hops the fence into the neighbor's yard and bites the head off one of their chickens. When Vera discovers the head, which for reasons he cannot explain he had hidden in his sock drawer, she asks him if a fox dropped it in the garden but he is unable to lie to her. He tells her he bit it off. After thinking about it for a moment, she simply asks him what it was like. "Great," he tells her.

Inside their mother, twins are nestled in a womb. Edgar is larger than his brother, and has no desire beyond taking all of the nourishment his mother has to provide, thereby sucking the life from his fraternal twin. Edward is smaller, embraced by Edgar spine to belly with Edgar's forehead pressed against his neck. Edgar is born first, healthy and strong and Edward is born with a curved spine and a chest that caves in on itself. His respiratory system is weak and often full of fluid, and at birth, many believe he won't survive. He surprises them all, especially Edgar who strives to distance himself more and more from his weaker and sickly twin. Edgar graduates from law school and dabbles in politics while Edward's pain level increases and most days are spent wheelchair bound. He thinks about his brother, and yearns for the day he returns. When his father leaves them, the house falls into disrepair and his mother's health fails. Each year, on their birthday of January 26th, the brothers cannot help but think of each other. By their fortieth birthday, Edward is creating artwork that is on display in a gallery, and Edgar is indicted on charges of bribe taking. Disgraced, he returns home, welcomed by Edward who knew all along that he would return. When the end came, no one can say, but the brothers are found on the couch in much the same position they were in before their birth.

Blood and Fossil-Figures Analysis

Vera's husband feels the need for blood creep up on him slowly - so slowly that at first he doesn't recognize it. He had never shown much of an interest in Dracula or the hype that surrounding him. When the need first overcomes him, he is at home and though he fears being discovered, he cannot resist the blood on the plate with the steaks set out



by Vera for dinner. Once he has had his fill and is temporarily sated, he convinces himself that he was motivated by a lack of iron. He almost buys some, but the pharmacist wants to see a physician's prescription. Ashamed of himself, but unable to deny the growing need, he satisfies himself with raw chicken, which leaves him sick and retching for some time afterward, convinced that he will never succumb again, but of course he does. He goes from lamb to biting the head off of the neighbor's chicken. Finally, he is discovered. Vera finds the head that for some reason he had been unable to part with, and she gives him a graceful way to lie to her, but he finally admits the truth expecting revulsion or disgust. Instead, to his surprise, she simply asks him about his experience.

Edgar and Edward are born as different as day is to night. Edgar excels in all ways while Edward is sickly and weak. Edgar does well in school and goes on to further his education while Edward continues to deteriorate physically. Edgar wants nothing more than to distance himself from the freak show he thinks his family is while Edward can only wonder why his brother is so distant. Edgar continues to excel in life, marrying into money, and enjoys political success. All of this comes to a halt when he is indicted on charges of bribe taking and perjury. Disgraced, he finds his way back to the home of his childhood where he is welcomed by his brother. They die there, frozen in the cold and locked in the same embrace they shared in the womb eighty-seven years previously.



Wildfire in Manhattan and The Truth is a Cave in the Black Mountains

Wildfire in Manhattan and The Truth is a Cave in the Black Mountains Summary

Lukas (Lucky) Wilde is the lead singer in a rock band called Wildfire. Late one night Lucky runs into his twin brother Brendan who is a Hearth Fire and owns a restaurant called the Flying Pizza. Lucky greets him and is immediately shushed as Brendan points out the two men in overcoats. They are hunters, hunting the gods left over from the last End of the World. They survive that attack only because the Shadow's minions are after another god. Lukas and Brendan watch as he is absorbed into Chaos. The next day, Lukas goes to the restaurant, arriving to see it fully engulfed in flames. Arthur, another of their kind, tells Lukas that an Aspect of Sol lives in Manhattan and he feels obligated to protect her. Arthur enlists the aid of Lukas to that end and they both go to Sunny with the intention of lending their protection to her. She is not nearly as helpless as they thought however, saving Lukas herself by opening an umbrella and letting her light shine. Lukas entertains the idea of putting the band back together - gods on tour.

A dwarf arrives at the home of Calum MacInnes and asks the former reaver to act as a guide to the cave on the Misty Isle. He agrees, bids his wife and son goodbye and leaves with the dwarf. They encounter few obstacles and Calum makes it clear that he doesn't trust the dwarf, but still warns him of the negative effects of entering the cave and removing gold. The dwarf makes conversation on the way, and Calum tells him a story of his youth in which he stole cattle from a young girl, leaving her tied to a thorn bush by her own hair. With help from the spirit in the cave, the dwarf manages to avoid the death planned for him by Calum. In the struggle, Calum breaks a leg and is unable to use his right arm after the dwarf stabs him as they struggle. They tumble in a struggling embrace off the edge of a cliff and land on a ledge below. The dwarf promises to return to help Calum get out, but as he climbs up himself, tells him it will be a year before he returns. It is the same length of time his daughter's body remained entangled in the thorn bush.

Wildfire in Manhattan and The Truth is a Cave in the Black Mountains Analysis

Lukas (Lucky) Wilde is an old god and his element is fire which is an element that never goes out of style. In this Aspect he doesn't get as many sacrifices as he did at one time, but is still able to command obeisance if he desires. He is just one of the gods that are in this Aspect, being chased by the Shadow and his minions, the wolves. In this Aspect, they appear as men in trench coats who are faster and more graceful than any man. Lukas runs into his twin brother in this Aspect, Brendan, who is absorbed the next day



by the same two wolves. Lukas arrives in time to see the restaurant his brother owned fully engulfed in flames. Another god, Thor, enlists Lukas to help him protect the god of Sol, Sunny from the Shadow and his minions. She has an innocence that is immediately evident, and when the wolves arrive, Lukas finds himself engaging Chaos. Just when all seems lost, Sunny offers to help. She simply puts up an umbrella and smiles. The light emanating from her is enough to send the wolves back to Shadow. Now Chaos knows about them, and in an effort to avoid further incidents, Lukas suggests a revival of the band combining their talents. Though it might be a bit risky, Lukas thinks it would be a hell of a show.

Calum MacInnes is asked to act as a guide to the cave on the Misty Isle and agrees to do so for a price. While he leads the dwarf, he warns him of the consequences of taking gold from the cave on the Misty Isle, but the dwarf is confident. Lacking trust, Calum intends to wait until the dwarf brings the gold out of the cave, and then rob and kill him, but the dwarf knows of his plan. When the dwarf emerges from the cave, he has no gold. In fact, he never sought gold to begin with. This was the story he told Calum to get him to take him into the wilderness where he could exact the revenge he desired against the man who left his daughter to die, tangled in a thorn tree by her hair. This is the most important of three secrets and one he has told no man. The other two secrets involve his ability to run all day without trouble and the other is remarkable strength for a small man. He doesn't kill Calum, but leaves him on a ledge with a useless arm and a broken leg. The dwarf climbs up easily, and promises to return but not before a year has passed to equal the time his daughter spent tangled in the thorns.



Unbelief and The Stars are Falling

Unbelief and The Stars are Falling Summary

A man sits by himself in Bryant Park at just after six in the evening. Kane watches from a distance, knowing he would be there, and checks the surrounding area for signs of security, but sees none. He finally approaches the man and sits across from him. The man already knows who he is and why he is there. He stalls, trying to avoid the inevitable, and Kane enjoys the fact that he can finish this job up close and personal. He allows the man to finish his coffee before calmly shooting him twice in the head and going home. The next morning is Christmas and he wakes to the sound of his son going downstairs. His wife rises and follows, but when Kane joins them he finds his stocking is empty. His greetings to his wife and son go unnoticed and he walks out the back door, standing in the fresh snow, knowing they neither saw nor heard him speak.

Deel can hardly remember the joy of his wife, and his son no longer remembers him. When he arrives home from the war, Mary Lou can hardly believe it is him. She tells him how helpful Tom has been and asks him if he's been with another woman. Deel is honest, although the encounter was strictly for release and she seems to forgive him. He makes an effort to bond with Winston, taking him into the forest to find the perfect wood for a bow and arrows, but all interest in the subject wanes as Tom arrives and he can see the animation return to Mary Lou's face as well. Tom stays for dinner and convinces Deel to take him hunting like he used to. When they go hunting, Tom confesses that he has been living in Deel's home for some time and after apologizing, shoots Deel in the head. It is getting dark and the shot Tom fires only grazes his head. He wakes in a shallow grave, picks up his gun, left behind in Tom's haste, and goes home where he finds Tom and Mary Lou in his bed. He shoots and kills Mary Lou first and then Tom. The only one to escape is Winston who goes directly to the Sheriff. Sheriff Lobo finds Deel soon after, but Deel is not prepared to surrender. In fact, he makes it impossible for the Sheriff to arrest him, and the Sheriff finally shoots him in the chest. Lobo, having been Deel's friend, feels bad about shooting him, but Deel wants his life to end. The last thing he says to Lobo is that the stars are falling.

Unbelief and The Stars are Falling Analysis

Kane is a hired killer. He carefully stalks the man he is going to kill, finding him in Bryant Park as he was told he would. Instead of simply shooting him, Kane feels the need to do this contract up close and personal. He walks up and sits with his target, waiting for exactly the right moment. When his target finishes his coffee, he shoots him twice in the head and returns to his family in time to wake with them on Christmas morning. What Kane doesn't realize is that he is no more able to share this holiday with his family than his target was since he is just as dead.



Deel Arrowsmith returns from the war in France a lifeless husk. Mary Lou feeds him and they sit at the table, stiff and informal, unable to relax and be what they once were. Winston looks at his father through the eyes of a stranger and Deel feels a great yearning to repair the void that yawns between them. After a couple of days and nights, Mary Lou seems as cold to him as the day he arrived. Deel remembers the face of the man who died in his arms, and the letter he'd hoped Deel would deliver but couldn't. He often thinks about the last words the man spoke to him, telling him that the stars are falling. Tom visits often but Deel wants to bond again with his family and would prefer that he stay away for a while. When Tom asks Deel to take him hunting like he used to, Deel cannot refuse. They go into the woods like they used to, but Tom has another agenda. As soon as he has the upper hand, he points his gun at Deel. He realizes in that instant that Winston is not his son, and that Tom and Mary Lou have been enjoying each other for years. Tom tries to explain that though he feels bad about the whole thing, he can't deny Mary Lou, so he shoots Deel in the head, but only grazes him in the dark. He buries him in a shallow grave and goes back to Mary Lou. When Deel regains consciousness, he sits up and realizes what Tom had done. He gathers his rifle and goes home. It no longer holds any special meaning for him now, and neither does Mary Lou or her son Winston. They have become the enemy, and his intention is to kill all three. Winston manages to escape and goes straight to Sheriff Lobo, who is quick to return. By now, Deel no longer cares. Lobo tries to bring him in, but Deel is done. He gestures as though he plans to shoot Lobo, who returns fire as he was trained to do. Moments later, it is Deel's turn to see that the stars are falling.



Juvenal Nyx

Juvenal Nyx Summary

He is named Juvenal Nyx by a woman who calls herself Julia and makes him a child of the night. She takes him to bed and when he wakes later, he finds himself chained to it. He hollers and screams to no avail. Finally, Julia returns, drops her robe and naked, walks over to him and bites his forearm. Suddenly, he wants to bleed for her, even more than having sex with her. The next time Julia comes, he asks her about others she has bitten and she tells him that she let them all go, but somehow, his blood sings to her. For four days, she drinks from his arms, legs and stomach while he lies in ecstasy. The next day, the chains are gone and so is Julia. A note left tells him that he is now hers and one day they will be together again. Meanwhile, the room is his to use. He leaves, never intending to return but soon finds that there is little of his old self left, and what was important no longer holds any meaning. He spends several days on the roof at night, eavesdropping on his friends and during the day he falls into a coma like state. On the fourth day, he feeds. Twenty-three years pass and during that time, he lives in the underground chamber Julia gave him, learning about the limitations of his new life.

Juvenal hears a voice which sends him to the Brooklyn Bridge where he finds Iridia Lamone who is intending to commit suicide. He talks her off the ledge, realizing there is something different about her. She tells him about her husband and their unhappy relationship, and Juvenal begins to feel again. He decides to open a business, and begins to go against the fate he had so easily accepted from Julia. His business operates from dusk till dawn and Juvenal will accept almost any challenge. One such challenge comes from Mahey X Demola who asks Juvenal to help her find her pet - a rare, large and vicious breed, and he is a carnivore. Mahey and Juvenal are confronted by Iridia's husband, Tarver, but Mahey makes it clear by breaking Tarver's arm that he is not to attempt to harm Juvenal. The gesture Mahey makes leaves Tarver with a broken arm, and Juvenal realizes that Mahey is likely part of his hidden lineage. He finds her pet after it has killed several and, using the knife given to him by Mahey, he kills it. Then, he goes to Iridia and tells her the story of how he became a child of the night..

Juvenal Nyx Analysis

The woman who calls herself Julia approaches him in a bookstore and for reasons he can't explain, he is drawn to her and unable to refuse her. Once she gets him back to the room where she stays, he discovers a feeling he had never before known. He wakes, bound to the bed, but his anxiety dissipates as soon as he sees her again. This time, she bites him and the pleasure is more than exquisite. He is in the beginning of the change. His old life is already slipping away. Julia keeps him for four days and then he wakes one day and is free. A note from Julia invites him to continue using her space. He quickly learns that his old life is gone, and he doesn't really care. He eavesdrops on those whom he used to consider his friends at night, and by day becomes all but



comatose. He soon learns the sun is not his friend. He doesn't feed for four days, and then one night his control is overwhelmed by his need. More than twenty years pass in the blink of an eye. Along with a sensitivity to sunlight, is a lunar allergy. He discovers a full moon can incapacitate him for a week. He also has a new relationship with multiple coronas in all colors and all nature of intention which occasionally speak to him. One day, a corona voice sends him to the Brooklyn Bridge where he discovers Iridia Lamone - despondent and ready to take her own life. He grabs her, saving her from her intentions and begins a journey back to the light. It is a battle.

He holds himself back, and won't allow the venomous tooth to surface when he is with her. He opens a business that operates from dusk until dawn, helping anyone in need. His change in behavior does not go unnoticed, and one day a woman named Mahey X. Demola showed up at his office. She gives him a knife, carefully wrapped to avoid direct contact and asks him to find her pet, Reynard who is rare, huge and vicious. He manages to slay the beast in the tunnels of Grand Central Station. He sleeps for more than sixty hours, and wakes with the certain knowledge that Demola was part of his complicated lineage. Iridia arrives, now calling herself Eerie and he lets her in, deciding in that moment to tell her the story of Julia.



Weights and Measures and Goblin Lake

Weights and Measures and Goblin Lake Summary

When Abe and Sarah's daughter died, it was the worst day of their lives. Soon afterward Sarah discovers her sweater is inches too small. Believing it had shrunk, she dons another to find the same situation. She can reach things she never could before, but it doesn't seem important enough to mention to Abe. Abe is getting a lesson in minutia. While Sarah grows, he shrinks. Smaller and smaller he gets until even the most intimate moments with Sarah feel wrong. When she suggests some time apart, he agrees, although his heart screams out against it. She packs a bag, and no longer able to see over the window ledge, Abe pulls up a chair to watch her put it in the car. He is too small to work, or drive, and since there is nothing more for him to do, he goes up to his daughter's room. There he crawls into the dollhouse he made for her the previous Christmas and closes the door behind him.

Goblin Lake, also known as Mummelsee is a bottomless lake that has properties which enable it to alter anything thrown into it. Jack, an officer with the Hessian cavalrymen, asks the peasant who reveals its strange properties to guide them to it. He picks a handful of cherries along the way, and when they get there, he tosses them into the lake one at a time, but nothing happens. The peasant tells them more of its history when Jack finally confronts him as the cherry pits are unchanged. He lunges at the peasant who sidesteps him and Jack joins the cherry pits in Mummelsee. He sinks deeper and deeper, noticing other creatures very much like human beings that guide him to the very bottom where the King greets him by name. Jack is surprised, and the King tells Jack he has been reading his story. He introduces Jack to his daughter Poseidonia and their attraction is immediate. Time flies by until one day he asks where they are and she is amazed that he truly does not understand. The King takes him to Dr. Vandermast's garden in Zayana where it is always afternoon and tells Jack to make a choice. He can either be a character in this book, and enjoy whatever comes next or he can return to the other side and live out his life. The King shows him what his life would be like on the other side, but warns that if he chooses 'reality' he can never return. Jack watches and the most telling difference is the authenticity he feels on the other side. Jack leaves the confines of literature to live out the remainder of his life in reality.

Weights and Measures and Goblin Lake Analysis

Abe and Sarah are devastated after the loss of their daughter. Sarah can hardly function, and leaves Abe to make most of the arrangements, so consumed with grief that she is unable to function as yet. Their lives have become a series of memories, and a list of seemingly impossible tasks that must be accomplished. Abe closes himself in the bathroom and runs the shower, hoping she won't hear him as he cries, but she does. Choosing their daughter's coffin nearly unmans him, his sorrow is so profound. The funeral service is held in a church that they never attended and Sarah is



determined to be the last one to see her daughter. At the end of the service, she rises and walks to her daughter, lying so peacefully that Sarah could almost convince herself that she was merely sleeping. She pulls out her daughter's favorite book and reads it to her, missing her even more intensely when her responses are not there. They try to behave normally, but even grocery shopping is difficult and filled with reminders of her. Both are consumed with memories and while they are both aware of the changes occurring, they both decide not to burden the other with it. Sarah finds herself getting bigger, and soon outgrows her sweaters and skirts while Abe becomes ever smaller. Unable to find common ground, Sarah tells him she is going to spend some time at her mother's. Abe is so small now that he can't see over the sill to watch her load her suitcase in the car. He is unable to work, too short to drive or fill prescriptions. After Sarah leaves, Abe goes up to his daughter's room, and tidies up, lining up her stuffed animals before going into the dollhouse he made for her the previous Christmas and closing the door behind him. He climbs the stairs to the bedroom where the view from the window is perfect.

Goblin Lake, also known as Mummelsee, has properties that no man can truly explain, a peasant tells the soldiers. An officer whose name is Jack is a skeptic and asks the peasant to lead them to the lake capable of changing whatever is thrown in. He picks cherries on the way, using the pits to test the peasant's story, but as far as Jack can see, there are no changes. He argues with the peasant, his disbelief evident, and lunges at him. The peasant sidesteps him and momentum carries Jack into the lake where he sinks. He soon becomes aware of an under water community complete with city, King and Princess but fears not as they seem to be of unending good humor and attitude. For a while, time doesn't exist. He spends his time with the Princess Poseidonia who is as enamored with him as he is with her. One question nags at him though. He can't understand the precept that he is nothing more than a character in a book. When he questions the King, he is taken to a garden where it is always afternoon and is given one chance to go back to 'reality'. Once the King allows him to glimpse what his life is like on the other side, the choice is simple, even though he knows he can never return to Poseidonia. He leaves his place in literature, exchanging everlasting life in a book for short term reality.



Mallon The Guru and Catch and Release

Mallon The Guru and Catch and Release Summary

Spencer Mallon spends four months in India, traveling with his spiritual leader, Urdang. After three months, they are granted an audience with a great holy man but as they reach the village, a crow falls out of the sky and lands, dead at their feet. Villagers crowd around them and lead them to a hut where a young boy lies ailing. They want Mallon to touch the boy and as soon as he does, the father is beside himself with gratitude though Mallon has no idea what they think he has done. They continue down a narrow lane and Mallon runs his fingers along the wall and neon blue streaks of light are left in his wake. It dissipates and the crowd following urges them forward to meet the great holy man who tells Urdang that his student greatly distresses him. Mallon asks the holy man for his blessing, but the holy man asks for his instead. He moves forward and touches his forehead as he had the boy. He tells them to leave Sankwal immediately and not return, and recommends that Urdang distance himself from Mallon as soon as possible. Then he advises Mallon to take great care in everything he does or simply do nothing at all. The villagers are nowhere to be seen as they leave hearing the cries of the man who was the father of the boy Mallon touched.

A man cruises the interstate, hunting for just the right passenger. He finds a single woman who gets in and he tells her he is a fisherman. He takes her all the way home, despite her protests, and warns her that not everyone is a catch and release fisherman before driving away. He goes home and thinks about what could have been but wasn't. At the Toddle Inn later, he buys several drinks for a woman alone at the bar. Drunk, she keeps repeating that her name is Marni 'with an i' and he takes her home, leaving her alive and well, but headed for a hangover. He spends a day fishing and then a few days around the house thinking about the many women he killed in the past, and how lucky he is that he has not been caught. He knows if they ever pick him up, DNA would tell the whole story. When the weather clears, he goes shopping and sees a woman who is truly beautiful. Although he hadn't been fishing at the time, he couldn't ignore a fish that hopped right in his boat. He quickly rids himself of his groceries and when she comes out, he offers to help her with hers. When she turns her back, he clubs her unconscious. When she wakes, he tells her he is a fisherman, and explains the catch and release concept to her. He drives her down a lonely road, takes her out of the car and smashes her kneecaps with a tire iron before unbinding her. He cuts off her clothing, and then undresses himself, folding his clothes neatly as he does. Later, at home, he washes his clothes and considers his departure from the catch and release program.

Mallon The Guru and Catch and Release Analysis

Spencer Mallon travels through India with his spiritual leader, Urdang. When they have been granted an audience with a great holy man in Sankwal, something unusual occurs. As they approach the village, a carrion crow falls from the sky, and lands at their feet,



dead. The villagers crowd around them, speaking a language they don't understand, and urging them forward. They are led to a residence where a young boy is near death. Mallon touches the boy's forehead and feels a transfer of energy he cannot explain, and the father falls to his knees in gratitude. As they make their way to see the village holy man, Mallon tells him that he seeks his blessing, but the holy man tells Mallon that he wants his blessing instead. In fact, he would like Mallon to do to him what he did to the child he cured in the village. Mallon does, somewhat irritated by the unusual request, and then demands the holy man's opinion of his touch. The holy man is not enthralled and asks that they leave immediately. He warns Urdang that he should disassociate himself from Mallon as soon as possible. They leave, confused by the sounds that issue from the living quarters of the boy Mallon healed.

A serial killer cruises the interstate, looking for a suitable candidate. He thinks of himself as a fisherman, and his new approach to fishing is to catch and release. He finds this method most satisfying. He is happy to experience the thrill of the catch, and release without killing the fish. In this frame of mind, he also hunts his prey. He finds them in all manner of places, ensures that he will be successful, and then lets his quarry go, unaware how close to death they were. In the spirit of a catch and release fisherman, he picks up a hitchhiker, telling her as he leaves that she should be more careful since not everyone is a catch and release fisherman. He goes home feeling fulfilled. At the Toddle Inn he picks up a girl named Marni and leaves her unharmed but unconscious. Then, while shopping for groceries, he stumbles across a perfect target. He hadn't been fishing, but couldn't turn down the offering. He waits for her in the parking lot, and after clubbing her unconscious, he takes her to a remote place. This woman is not released. In fact, in previous deviations from his catch and release program, he had experienced some guilt, but now, he reconciles his departure from the plan as easily as telling himself that a man must be true to his nature now and then.



Polka Dots and Moonbeams; Loser; and Samantha's Diary

Polka Dots and Moonbeams; Loser; and Samantha's Diary Summary

Dex picks Adeline up in a Belvedere convertible. They drive to the Ice Garden where they are greeted by name and welcomed by everyone from the valet to the maitre d'. Dex and Adeline dance until Killheffer comes in. He talks to Dex, offering him a way out in the way of a hypodermic needle filled with green fluid. Killheffer tells him that if he kills Mondrian, he can have the syringe. He claims that Mondrian is a computational loop. Dex goes up to the room Mondrian is in, but Mondrian gets the better of him and the only thing that saves him is the arrival of Adeline who shoots but then discovers that Mondrian isn't the victim. Killheffer is dead. They quickly depart and drive out to the desert where they sit on a blanket to watch the stars. Mondrian arrives and delivers the syringe that Killheffer promised before leaving them again. The stars begin to fall and Dex promises Adeline that he will pick her up at seven as usual, just before the falling stars reach them and leave nothing but dust in their wake.

Rush Week is under way and pledges are vying for position at Zeta Delt. As is tradition, the pledges are taken by bus to a TV studio where they will watch the taping of a game show. All Zeta Delt members wear red t-shirts and are given a small Hello Kitty stamp of blotter acid. It's the tradition. The game show host calls one of the pledges down to play and the game begins. The pledge makes it to the final round and then intentionally throws the game, allowing the old lady who is the opposition to win. The woman is so excited that she repeatedly thanks the pledge until her heart gives out.

Samantha's diary is found in a skip in London and contains entries that begin on December 25th, 2233. The first entry describes how Samantha is planning to enjoy a home Christmas alone and in peace. Her Housebot is instructed to tell all that she is not at home but when the doorbell rings, the Housebot answers. A gift is delivered. There is a tree with a brown bird in a wicker cage tied to a branch. She lets it out and feeds it tinned, sweet corn which seems to settle it down, but her problems are just beginning. From that day forward, each day brings a new delivery. The diary reveals that on the following day, another tree with a partridge and two white pigeons arrives. The third day, a tree, a partridge, two white pigeons and a coop with three strange hens. Each day brings a repeat of the previous day along with another offering. Day four is four parrots, day five is five golden rings, day six is six geese and on it goes. She calls her boyfriend Liam, who she at first blamed for this 'gift'. He tells her what her next gift will be, revealing that she is being given the gifts from the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas." By New Years, Samantha is buried under birds, feathers, bird poop and seed bills. She knows now who is sending them, but can't get him to cease. Finally, in desperation, she agrees to marry Liam immediately if he is willing to come and get her



out of the zoo she is in. He agrees once she assures him that her acceptance is strictly based on escape. She happily leaves behind flocks of partridges, geese, hens, and parrots along with a small herd of cows and much more. The last entry reveals that having taken only the five golden rings sent each day from the fifth forward, she offers them to Liam as a dowry of sorts and he immediately stops her from recording another word for fear that her admirer finds her there.

Polka Dots and Moonbeams; Loser; and Samantha's Diary Analysis

Polka dots and moonbeams is a story that looks at time. Dex and Adeline go out on a date, having not seen each other for some time. They are planning to go out for drinks and dancing before going out to the desert to watch the stars. Dex and Adeline are well known at the Ice Garden. After being greeted and seated, they are made aware that Killheffer has arrived. Killheffer claims the world is made of numbers and that when the stars fall, everything is being divided by itself. It makes little sense to anyone. Killheffer approaches Dex and offers him a permanent way out of the loop he is stuck in. A syringe of green liquid will release him and all he has to do to earn it is to kill Mondrian, the maitre d'. Dex goes up to the room Mondrian is supposed to be in, and is in a physical struggle with its occupant when Adeline shoots him for Dex. Then they realize that they have killed Killheffer - not Mondrian. They leave quickly, and head to the desert to watch the stars fall. Mondrian shows up and drops off the syringe payment to Dex before leaving. Dex and Adeline debate who will use the syringe, but before either can, the stars begin to fall and they are turned to dust by a direct hit right after Dex promises to pick her up at seven as usual.

Loser depicts a group of pledges who are going through initiation rites for entry into Zeta Delts. This initiation includes the wearing of identical red t-shirts, taking a blotter of acid and attending a game show similar in style and components to "Let's Make A Deal." One of the pledges is chosen and manages to make it all the way to the final round, but then, deciding everything being bid on is junk, she bids a million trillion and by doing so, hands the old woman who is her opponent the win. The old woman is so excited, and so grateful that she gets caught up in the moment, and while saying thank you she has a heart attack. The winner becomes the loser.

Samantha's diary is found in London and contains entries that span the time from December 25th, 2233 to January 3rd, 2234. It documents the unusual gifts sent to her by a well to do admirer who uses the poem "The Twelve Days of Christmas" as his shopping list. Beginning on December 25th, Samantha receives a tree with a partridge. Each day thereafter, she receives another 'gift' which duplicates the gift from the day before along with one more offering. To make matters worse, each offering increases in numbers. After several days, her life is a zoo and she is desperate to get out. She calls her boyfriend and agrees to marry him if he will take her away from the secret admirer's gifts from hell. The last entry shows Liam's fear that her admirer will track her to her new place with him and he insists that the diary entries stop.



Land Of The Lost and Leif In The Wind

Land Of The Lost and Leif In The Wind Summary

From the beginning, the cashier at a Bilo store in Perry paid close attention to the mystery of the James Wade case in which he confesses to burying the young girl he kidnapped in the desert. She becomes obsessed with helping the parents of this girl, and begins to hunt for the unmarked grave in which Wade claims he left her. She uses all of her spare time to hunt with her companion, Ollie - even training him to find cadavers. She calls the FBI after finding what she believes is the grave site only to have the FBI confirm nothing is there. Feeling foolish, she resolves not to make the same mistake again. It takes until the following August before one afternoon Ollie lies down in a drainage ditch and refuses to move. When she begins digging, she discovers a bit of fabric and the smell is strong of mildew, but she is determined to be sure this time.

Leif is part of a team sent to collect samples and cores from a planet to determine its habitability. There is no life, but with seeding, a colony could be established in two hundred years or so. Leif is in a suit outside the space craft, having completed minor repairs, but reluctant to return to the craft. He claims to see birds and then tells Ena and Brennan that he is a tree and the birds are living and nesting in him. He also claims that as the birds get closer to him, they get smaller. Finally, Brennan suits up and goes out to reel Leif back in. Ena sedates him and they begin the fifteen year journey home. After the third jump, the ship is recharging when Ena hears a bird. She confirms an alien bird aboard the space craft and tells Brennan that Leif's birds are real. Brennan traps one, returning more than a day later to tell Ena that he captured one and has it contained in an empty ration locker. Ena and Brennan return to the locker, leaving Leif on the bridge alone. While they are gone, Leif reprograms the ship's course and the next jump is made heading back in the direction they had just come from. Leif claims to want to return to Beta Andromedae to die. While a trial and prosecution are warranted under the circumstances, since Leif had sabotaged the mission and potentially risked the life of the crew members, both Brennan and Ena agree to return him to the planet with one condition. Before he leaves the space craft, he is to find a way to call all of the alien lifeforms to him. He does so, and they send him out into the solar winds of the planet. Later, Ena prepares for an evening alone with Brennan and a bird sings in her right wrist.

Land Of The Lost and Leif In The Wind Analysis

A cashier watches the news and hears about a young girl who was taken and has not yet been found. Identifying with the family who lost their little girl, she decides to help look for her. On her own, and with no companionship other than her German shepherd, Ollie, she begins to spend her free time searching for the grave site as described by the killer who is now in jail. She finds one site that she is sure contains the girl's body and reluctant to leave the site unattended over night, she calls the FBI in. They search the



site and come up empty, leaving her feeling foolish. She continues to search on her own the following spring and in August she is led to a site by Ollie. She begins digging and unearths a small amount of cloth, but rather than make herself look foolish a second time, she continues to unearth the small body.

Leif is in a state of wonder as he watches the sunrise over Beta Andromedae. His crew mates are convinced that he is losing his mind when he claims to feel the solar wind, hear and see birds, and especially when he insists he is a tree and the birds are nesting in him. Brennan is forced to suit up and bring Leif back into the craft, and Ena sedates him even though he seems calm. It doesn't take long before they have the ship headed for home, and Ena sees the first alien bird on board. She tells Brennan that Leif was right. Brennan manages to capture one, but they change size depending on whether they are approaching you or you are approaching them. Leif wants only to return to Beta Andromedae and while Ena and Brennan are busy with one of the birds, he turns the ship around. When Brennan and Ena realize what he has done, they accuse him of mission sabotage and endangering their lives. They hold a trial during which Leif maintains his innocence and insists that a sentence of death is unnecessary. All they have to do is take him back to the planet and he will disembark and stay there. An agreement is reached, provided that he take all of the birds back as well. Once he is gone, Ena and Brennan head for home again. It isn't long before Ena hears the first bird song coming from her right wrist.



Unwell; A Life In Fictions and Let The Past Begin

Unwell; A Life In Fictions and Let The Past Begin Summary

Arlette calls her sister Yvonne to come and sit with her when she is unwell and Yvonne is less than enthusiastic since she is getting ready for her wedding on Saturday. Arlette is unsympathetic and Yvonne gives in. They had met Arthur together on a senior's cruise and Arlette is still bristling from the fact that he chose Yvonne over her. Once home, Arlette realizes that in all of the photos, Arthur avoids having his face photographed. Arlette goes to the America's Most Wanted website and discovers that Arthur is actually Martin Edward Jaffe and is wanted for questioning in a woman's disappearance in Denver. Arlette waits for the right moment to bring the situation to Yvonne's attention, and decides on a more subtle approach. She uses the page with Arthur/Edward's face on it to wrap one of the Christmas decorations she is giving her sister, deciding that if Yvonne's eyes are sharp, she will see them then.

He wrote her into the story again, despite her having insisted that he stop. The first time was flattering. She was so enthusiastic in her response that he wrote her into an erotic novella next. The next time, she finds herself slipping away while he is writing. It's as though he gains control of her and her life, and as long as the writing is going well, her life is lived only in the novel. Her real life becomes inconsequential. At first, she loses her job, having disappeared for too long. Then she begins to forget details of her life. It is as though by writing her story, her history becomes his. She isn't even sure the name she remembers is hers and not a character. She pumps the friends she can remember for information about herself with little success. Then, a whole week of her life disappears. Meanwhile, the stories are a hit, and he is gaining recognition. She forbids him to write about her, but he can't help incorporating details, which she loses in the process. Finally, he approaches her about writing an epic novel with her as the central character. After thinking about it, she agrees under one condition. He is to leave her in the story when he is done.

Ava Malcolm is pregnant. The father might be Eamon Reilly, but could just as easily be someone else. She remembers what an Azerbaijan sage or yit named Lamiya told her. Lamiya reveals that Ava will have a 'silent child', which is a child that is half alive and half dead, with one foot in each world. It will never age or require food. Lamiya has a silent child and grants Ava two questions of her choice. She tells Ava that she is part of a curse and that her child will be cursed to live exactly the same life as its father. The father would carry the curse as well. Ava claims everything Lamiya told her came true. To learn the identity of the father, Ava has the DNA tested but it belongs to neither man. Eamon wants nothing to do with fatherhood, but although the DNA test rules out his competition as well, he still wants to be her partner for life. While he waits for Ava to



return, he pages through a book of photos called Freeze Frame, containing photos of all manner of frozen animals. One page is marked and depicts a woman with a child that appears to be dead. No photographer is listed, but the photo was taken in Azerbaijan.

Unwell; A Life In Fictions and Let The Past Begin Analysis

Arlette has always been in competition with her younger sister Yvonne, especially where men are concerned. Arlette has always felt that in any family with more than one girl, the older one should marry first. The fact that Yvonne seems to outshine Arlette aggravates her. In fact, it was Yvonne who brought home Arlette's first husband Stephen. They were dating until one night when she brought him home for dinner and Arlette decided to save Stephen from Yvonne who always appeared to be happiest on her own. It took time and whiskey, but Arlette manages to capture Stephen by claiming she is pregnant. By the time the truth comes out, they are married. It is some time before Yvonne forgives her. After Stephen's death, the sisters go on a senior's cruise together where they meet Arthur. Though at first enamored with Arlette, he ends up with Yvonne which exacerbates the way Arlette feels about her sister. She gets even by discovering Arthur is actually one of America's Most Wanted, and rather than tell her sister before the wedding, she wraps a decoration with the wanted poster of him and gives it to Yvonne along with the rest of the Christmas decorations from their mother that Yvonne so coveted. Yvonne is so grateful for the gift that she believes her sister gave her love for a wedding gift.

He is a writer and when they first meet, he is so enamored with her that he writes his next story around her. The story is of Marah, and the finished draft is inspiring. The next time he writes her into a story, she loses her job. It seems as though whenever he wrote 'Nora' she would just disappear - sometimes for days and sometimes for weeks. He claims she was always in his head during these times which isn't much consolation. When his writing is going well, her life becomes less and less real. It's as though the more he writes, the more of the character she becomes. Until he pens 'the end', her real life is in limbo. Finally, she leaves him, insisting that he stop writing about her. His work, now famous, no longer centers on her, but bits and pieces still find their way into his book and out of her life. When his mind goes blank, she goes into limbo. Finally, he meets with her to ask her if she will consent to the saga he wants to write around her. She agrees, but only if he promises to leave her in the book this time.

Ava Malcolm is a reporter - the kind that goes into danger zones fearlessly. He has known her for a dozen years and loved her for most of it. When she discovers she is pregnant, she is not sure who the father is, but has a DNA test which rules him out. Despite this, he wants to be a father to her baby, and live the rest of his life with her. He has no fear of the curse she assures him she carries, as does her unborn child. In fact, she tells him that a sage told her that she would have a 'silent child'. Still, he isn't willing to give up. He struggles with the sense of a sage's prophesy, even after he sees the book on the coffee table showing a woman standing serenely with what appears to be a dead baby.



The Therapist

The Therapist Summary

Martin Kobel meets Annabelle Young by chance in a Starbucks, but knows immediately that he must try to help her. He manages to introduce himself, already aware she is a teacher and as such can affect the minds of many, and finds an excuse to leave her his card. She is polite, but throws the card away on her way out. Knowing that she is definitely under the influence of a neme, Dr. Kobel researches her and discovers that she works in Wetherby County and is a widow. He follows her to Wetherby and checks into a motel. Then he follows her into a bar and grill at the end of the day and sits down near enough to get her attention. Annie recognizes him, and her reaction is volatile. Her son arrives and she leaves with him. The next day, Kobel makes his way to her home and rings the doorbell. When she answers, he give her no chance to argue, scream or slam the door. Instead, he ensures that the children she teaches will be safe. He stabs her three times in the chest and then cuts her throat to ensure no suffering.

Glenn Hollow, the prosecutor for Wetherby County is tasked with the case against Kobel and while the evidence is insurmountable for Kobel, what remains is to decide whether he goes to jail or an institution for the mentally insane. Hollow wants a conviction, but the case turns on him when evidence of the existence of nemes is entered. Hollow knows how difficult it will be to convict this man but takes a chance. He publicly admits that nemes exist, and suggests that as a trained professional, Kobel should have found a way to help her, not kill her. The jury didn't buy it. They reject Hollow's closing and find Martin not guilty by reason of insanity. He is sent to the Butler State Hospital and follows the public reaction to his case. Hollow had been poised for a career as the attorney general, but the loss of Kobel's case ruins his career. He loses his job and has difficulty getting work anywhere. Then it hits Kobel. Nemes communicate! They managed in one set up to remove two threats to their existence. Kobel is grateful that the nemes didn't see him as such a large threat that he had to be eliminated. Then Jack enters the library, and Kobel knows by his eyes that Jack is affected by a neme but by then it is too late. Jack stabs him with a sharpened spoon.

The Therapist Analysis

Dr. Kobel has dedicated his career to the rehabilitation and/or elimination of those who are affected by a neme - a negative and discrete body of intangible energy that causes extreme and volatile behavior in the host it inhabits. Kobel is somewhat of an expert on the subject, having written books on the subject. He considers himself to be one of the last lines of defense against nemes, willing to do whatever it takes to eliminate them. He is only too aware of the damage a single neme can do. He watched a man who was under the influence of a neme create an upheaval at a ball game when Kobel was a child, and when his father stepped in to diffuse the situation, the man caused their car to



crash, killing both of Kobel's parents. It is at that moment he makes up his mind to dedicate his life to stopping nemes at any cost.

He recognizes the neme in Annabelle by her eyes - a giveaway they can't seem to mask and when he can't arrange counseling for her, he has no choice but to kill her. A jury finds him not guilty by way of insanity, and he is placed in an asylum. He watches as the prosecutor in his case loses his career and future as a result. Then he realizes the truth. Nemes communicate! It is something he always wondered about but now had confirmation. They had set him up, knowing that he would be unable to let Annabelle go once he realized she was affected. His insanity conviction eliminated one of their biggest problems - a prosecutor who had the highest conviction rate until they found a way to stop him permanently. Kobel has enough time to absorb this new information and thank god that he is not considered to be such a threat when another inmate comes in and stabs him, ending his threat as well.



Parallel Lines and The Cult Of The Nose

Parallel Lines and The Cult Of The Nose Summary

Caroleen wonders how to celebrate her seventy third birthday without BeeVee, hardly able to believe her twin is gone. Her right hand twitches uncontrollably, and when a pen is in her hand, she discovers that her hand is writing on its own. The first words scrawled are "Ineedyourhelpplease." Caroleen immediately recognizes BeeVee's handwriting. Her hand continues to communicate as BeeVee, asking for forgiveness and begging for her to invite BeeVee into her body. Amber, the teenager who usually helped with shopping, knocks on the door and asks to have a memento of BeeVee - her hairbrush. Caroleen gives it to her to get rid of her before seeing the newest message which tells her to get it back. Caroleen goes across the street and manages to exchange the hair brushes, but it appears as though BeeVee is communicating with Amber as well. The same messages appear for her, and Caroleen realizes that BeeVee wants to share Amber's body, not hers. She resolves to put a stop to it all, and burns all of BeeVee's personal belongings. She asks Amber for the return of her car keys - realizing that her life is far from over.

The cult of the nose first comes to his attention during the last days of the Vietnam War. He is a special attache with a covert branch of Intelligence and is tasked with examining photographs taken by insurgents and spies. He begins to notice that in many key photographs there is at least one and often several people with false noses. He puts these photos aside, not aware of their significance but sensing there is one. He is gone so long, and so often that his wife finds another man and becomes pregnant. After the war, he devotes his life to investigating these photos and finds hundreds depicting men, women and children wearing the nose and most in photographs that are taken of death. He digs deeper and deeper, finding more and seeing them on the street. Obsessed, he follows each lead until he finds himself in a hotel room. A man, woman and child, all wearing the nose come up to the room. He lights a fire and leaves. When the room is fully engulfed in flames, he realizes that he left his briefcase behind. He runs back in, but badly burned, he is unable to recover any of the information he so carefully collected and is put on trial for the deaths of the man, woman and child at the hotel. The jury sentences him to death for the murders of his ex wife, child and new husband.

Parallel Lines and The Cult Of The Nose Analysis

Caroleen isn't sure how to live without BeeVee. BeeVee is the one who had handled everything from dealing with the mail to paying for the groceries for which Amber shopped. Now, with BeeVee gone, Caroleen is feeling a little lost. BeeVee was always the aggressive one, demanding and unforgiving. Despite that, Caroleen misses her company for some reason. When the automatic writing begins, Caroleen almost believes that her sister is truly remorseful and wants to live again. She communicates with Caroleen, telling her that all she has to do is accept her into her body and they can



share the rest of their lives together. When Caroleen becomes aware that BeeVee actually wants to join with Amber's young body, not hers, she realizes that her sister intends to live life to the fullest, without her. Caroleen finds her strength in that moment, and burns any direct link to her sister and begins to live her life for the first time in years.

The cult of the nose goes deeper than anyone realizes. As a special attache with American intelligence, he is tasked with sorting through photos taken by spies and insurgents, and begins to notice that many photographs depict images of death and destruction. His young wife leaves him for a man who is around more often and bears him a son. Afterward, he has only his work and he throws himself into it. He finds more and more evidence, connecting the nose to death. He sees the nose everywhere, and is determined to get to the bottom of it.

Human Intelligence and Stories

Human Intelligence and Stories Summary

Nicholas Walker spent most of his life as a spy and has been doing it for so long that he is bored. He is a Vrzhongilian - alien to this planet and is no longer even sure if his mission or even headquarters still exists. With increasing technology such as internet and television, his job has become easier and easier over the years and he continues to maintain the four directives that are his mission - stay at the last position reported to headquarters; maintain discretion and secrecy; chronicle the people and their society; and wait for retrieval. For the first time since he arrived, on September 16, 2007, the light came on. Its color indicates that sensors on the outside of the station are now exposed to sunlight. Any moment it will be found and inside it, his location. Nancy Zuckerman is an explorer attached to two projects that allow her to go to places as yet unspoiled by mankind. She is out by herself in a dinghy, hoping to get some decent photographs when she gets caught on the top of the station. She uses an oar to explore the surface and inadvertently opens the station. What she finds leads her to Nicholas, who still can't believe the discovery isn't being broadcast on the news. He confirms that he is from another world, tells her how long he has been on Earth, and that he has likely been left behind. He admits his mission and agrees to release the video and written chronicles he created. Nicholas is glad that his days of loneliness are over and Nancy can't believe that he will allow her to tell his story in entirety.

Rex Fisch took his own life in September on a Sunday afternoon. His friends were unable to break through to the depths of his despair although his unhappiness was more than obvious. They had known each other for decades, this group of writers who devoted their lives to the improvement of the written word. They began writing for what was known as fantasy pulps. Though there were few short story magazines left by the year 1964, Mysterious became a success that was beyond their expectations. For years, a group of dedicated writers continued to contribute stories that were comparable to the earlier greats of pulp magazines such as Dashiell Hammett and Julie Mistral. With success came other issues. Relationships came and went, boundaries were pushed and in some cases broken. Rex meets and becomes involved with Chick Archer, and enjoys continued success with offerings such as the syndicated comic "Mary Stone." Age soon creeps up on the group and members begin dying off, but when Chick succumbs to cancer, Rex is lost. Just before Chick passes, he begs their friends to at the very least find the gun Rex keeps and steal his bullets and the remaining members promise to do so, and to help Rex keep up with life. It is a promise that is only partially kept and when Rex shoots himself dead on that Sunday afternoon, they are filled with regret and self recriminations. His stories continue to haunt them.

Human Intelligence and Stories Analysis

Nicholas Walker is a diligent spy, and has faithfully done his job for many of our lifetimes. He was dropped on Earth in 429CE and has chronicled the life on this planet for fifteen hundred and eighty one years, always keeping to the directives issued. Once each hundred years, a ship came to resupply him and to gather the intelligence he put together, but the visit from his home planet in 1229 did not occur. Undaunted, he continued his mission, and waited. Nicholas was lonely though. As the years continued to pass and no visit occurred, he began to worry, and yet still he kept to protocols, stayed where he was supposed to, and kept his secret. Lately however, it had begun to be more difficult. He found it increasingly difficult to lie about who he was and why he was there. As such, when the beacon lit up that notified him of the visibility of his Arctic station, he was excited instead of afraid. Nicholas is ready to tell the truth and to reveal himself. At least by doing so, he will be free. As far as he can determine, something very drastic had happened on his home planet. He has been cut adrift. Now, found by a young explorer quite by accident, he begins to tell his story. His biggest fear is that the world will not believe that he is not the forerunner to an invasion. Nancy Zuckerman is ecstatic. She always thought of herself as an explorer, despite the fact that there was little left on Earth that had not been explored. That was one of the reasons she was in the remote area where the station was located. When Nicholas reveals the differences between himself and human beings, she is sure that he will insist she keep his secret, and can't help but hug him when he tells her he is ready to make himself known to the world.

Rex Fisch is one of a group of writers who dedicated themselves to writing something other than what they referred to as Englit-fic, which they felt were little more than sad imitations of the great modernists. For a great many years, they were wildly successful. They lived well on the proceeds, had children, bought houses and generally enjoyed the success owed to them, but monetary success bred boredom in some, and they were unsatisfied with ordinary life. Rex Fisch was one such writer, who experimented wildly in life. He drank a great deal, had many sexual exploits that bordered on and sometimes crossed into deviant behavior, and still was unsatisfied. Finally, his partner Chick Archer died and Rex lost his compass entirely. Before Chick passes, he begs their friends to watch over Rex and especially to remove the bullets from his gun, but though promises are made, this one is not kept. Rex processes his grief in a bottle, isolates his friends and finally takes his own life just as Chick had predicted. The one story Rex never wrote was the story of himself and Chick, choosing suicide instead.



The Maiden Flight of McCauley's Bellerophon

The Maiden Flight of McCauley's Bellerophon Summary

When Emery gets the message that Maggie Blevin is suffering with advanced breast cancer, he shows it to Robbie who lost his wife Anna four years earlier to breast cancer and had been devastated by it. Emery announces that he intends to go see Leonard at the museum and Robbie joins him. They reminisce about Maggie and how she was the one who gave Leonard his start and led him to his current title of Museum Effects Specialist. Maggie's job was to organize the archives known as the Pre-Langley collection most commonly known as the Nut Files. It is in this collection that the seventeen seconds of the Maiden Flight of McCauley's Bellerophon is originally found and turned into an exhibit until the film was mostly destroyed. Maggie's job ended as a result although Emery insists they had been gunning for her before then. Leonard shows Robbie and Emery his exact miniature replica of the Bellerophon. It is his intention to refilm the maiden flight and reproduce the film that was destroyed. He even has what is left of the 1901 film footage stored in nitrate to the shocked surprise of the others. He announces his plan to go to Cowana Island. It is his tribute to the woman he loved.

They make the decision to go to Charleston for a week to stage the recreation in the exact same location as the original, and then watch the few seconds of nitrate film that still exist. The film is creepy ending with a strange flash of light that makes no sense. Robbie has to take his son Zach with him, and the only way to convince him was to allow his best friend Tyler to come as well. They arrive on Cowana Island which is still largely deserted, not yet rebuilt after the last hurricane demolished most everything in its path. Finally, after much preparation, they are ready, and the replication of the original flight is flawless. Everything is perfect and the Bellerophon miniature flies out over the water until almost out of sight before a green flare comes out of the water and engulfs it. Stunned, they look at the empty air. It was exactly what happened the first time. That night, no one sleeps. Leonard works until after 3am, and then presents the film. No one could tell the difference. Leonard is the first to go in to see Maggie who is reduced to a mere shadow of herself. As Robbie waits outside the room, he sees a book that Maggie wrote, dedicated to "Leonard, who never doubted." The book is about aliens and how we have reached equality to them and are ready to share in the glory of the future. She doesn't recognize Robbie. They go home and two days later she dies. Leonard invites Robbie and Emery to the museum where on the roof they scatter his ashes. Robbie can't tell if it's a trick of light, but the air appears to be filled with wings afterward.



The Maiden Flight of McCauley's Bellerophon Analysis

When news comes that Maggie Blevin is dying, those who worked with her at the museum reflect on her life and the times they shared at the museum. Maggie had been in charge of sorting out the Pre-Langley Collection and Leonard's specialty was aircraft that had never flown. He worked with Maggie, recreating these aircraft from drawings or plans found in the archives. He was also involved with her until an indiscretion on his part caused their separation and hard feelings. Maggie believed in UFO's and thought that they had some connection to flight on this planet. She was sure that we could earn our way into a partnership of knowledge with them and her radical views along with the burning of the original Bellerophon film is what is responsible for her losing her job. Now, with her death approaching, Leonard feels compelled to exact a grand gesture of some kind. He creates a miniature of Maggie in clothing worn in the early 1900's and uses it to fly his recreation of the Bellerophon. By doing this, he manages to recreate the original film footage as well, by duplicating the circumstances surrounding the original flight in 1901. With help from other museum employees who thought highly of Maggie as well, Leonard launches the Bellerophon miniature and it flies straight out over the ocean until a flare of green light comes out of the water and the Bellerophon is gone. This is the one factor they had no way of reproducing. When the film is put together, Leonard shows them the film and no one can tell it apart from the old one.

All that remains is to take the offering to Maggie, but sadly the Maggie they knew is already gone. She is not lucid enough to appreciate the gesture or the offering. She doesn't even recognize Robbie, and just two days later she is dead. By her own request, Leonard scatters her ashes from the roof of the museum with the help of Emery and Robbie. Robbie is sure the air is filled with wings afterward.



The Devil On The Staircase

The Devil On The Staircase Summary

Born to a common bricklayer, Quirinus lives in the village of Sulle Scale in the highest ridges above Positano. His father worked every day going up and down the staircases that make up the village. He is the one who repairs the stairs and he does his job with pride. One day, his father is lagging behind him and he leans on a red gate to rest when it swings open. Surprised, because the door has always been locked, he asks his father, but is assured the stairs go all the way to the bottom and crosses himself. After his father dies, Quirinus Calvino works for winemaker Don Carlotta. His daughter Lithadora is beautiful and Quirinus discovers that she is sneaking out at night to see an Arab trader who gave her an ankle bracelet with bells on it so he can hear her coming. In a fit of jealous rage, Quirinus goes up ahead of Dora and kills the Arab. When Dora arrives, Quirinus descends the stairs going through the red gate to hide. He meets Lucifer's son who offers him a gift but Quirinus refuses, knowing instinctively that it would be a problem. When he sees a tin bird that sings with uncommon beauty whenever its owner lies, he waffles. The child, hearing his father coming, flees one way while Quirinus runs up the stairs. The bird follows. He races up, telling himself how he will confess, and the bird sings. He runs into Dora who screams and flails at him until to stop her he ends her life as well. When authorities arrive, he insists that the Arab killed Dora because she refused him, and he killed the Arab for killing Dora. The tin bird sings and sings. He is believed however, and the Arab's ship and trading party are burned. Quirinus receives their money box as token for his heroism and uses the money to become the richest trader on the Amalfi coast. He never guessed he would be mayor, or be invited to an audience with the pope. The bird sings often through the years, but falls silent once Quirinus has so much money that it no longer matters if anyone believes him. He finally moves from the area, citing poor knees, but the truth is that he's developed a fear of heights.

The Devil On The Staircase Analysis

Quirinus was born to an honest man who lived in a small village that had been carved into the mountain. The entire village is connected by staircases that his father was responsible for keeping in good working order. Quirinus worked with his father, going up and down the stairs until he leans on a red gate one day that opens. His father is afraid, and crosses himself after explaining that the gate was not supposed to be unlocked. Quirinus had never been down that staircase and asks his father where it went. His father is convinced that this is the staircase to hell, but his son is skeptical. After his father's death, Quirinus has no intention of carrying on the family business. Instead, he secures employment with a winemaker named Don Carlotta and develops an infatuation for his daughter Lithadora. When he discovers that an Arab trader is spending time with her, he is angry, having seen Dora as pure and untouched, and certain that her father would not allow such shameful behavior. Drunk, he goes to Dora's only to find she is



already on her way to the Arab. He uses his knowledge of the staircases to get ahead of her, and reaches the Arab first. He is surprised to see Quirinus instead of Dora, but barely has time to register this before Quirinus hits him over the head with a rock, killing him. He sits there for a time, coming out of his stupor when he hears the bells approaching. Then he fearfully races past Dora and down the stairs. Quirinus goes to the only place he knows the police and Dora won't look - through the red gate. Part of him believes the stories that the stairs go to hell and knowing that is where he belongs, he begins to descend. It is warmer as he descends, and he sees a boy sitting on a landing with a collection of things on a blanket. Each item is curious in its own way. There is a wind up bird in a cage; a basket of white apples; a damaged gold lighter and a jar that contains a point of light. The boy offers him a gift, telling him that all who come down these stairs get a gift, but Quirinus has seen enough television to know that gifts from anyone here could lead to even bigger problems. Still, he is captivated by the mechanical bird who suddenly turns to him and watches. The boy sees his interest and takes the bird out of the cage telling Quirinus that it sings most beautifully once it chooses a master. It only sings when its owner tells a lie, and the more fantastic the lie, the sweeter the song. It flies over to Quirinus and lands on his shoulder, but before the conversation can continue, the boy fearfully announces that his father is coming. He runs down the stairs while Quirinus runs up the way he came. The bird follows him. Quirinus decides that he will face whatever punishment he deserves. The bird sings. He reaches the top of the stairs and goes out the gate. He can hear crying and as he approaches, he sees Dora and tries to comfort her, but she attacks him. All he wants to do is calm her, but he ends up killing her as he tries to keep her quiet. From there, the lies continue. He tells authorities that the Arab killed her and he avenged her by killing the Arab. Hailed a hero, he continues his life, the bird singing regularly for him. He soon becomes the richest trader on the Amalfi coast. He would never have imagined that he would be mayor one day, or that he would be invited to meet the pope. The bird finally falls silent, but not before creating a foil nest and hatching a group of eggs. Quirinus leaves the area of his birth, citing sore knees but in truth, he found he had developed a fear of heights.



Characters

Vera's Husband appears in Blood

Though he grew up in the same city as Dracula had lived, he felt never so much as a tingle on the many occasions he had walked by his home on the way to school. He had even fallen asleep in the theater on the occasion that he took his wife to see Frank Coppola's version of Dracula. Now, living in Dublin with his wife, no one was more surprised than he was when he began having cravings. The urge to consume blood came the first time when he saw steaks on the counter, waiting to be prepared for dinner. The blood on the plate drew him as surely as a magnet. Though certain he had it all under control, the next craving had him consuming the liquid gathering under chicken. That episode had left him weak and ill, and he punished himself by remembering it vividly until his stomach had emptied many times and nothing was left behind. Still, even though he was certain that was the last time, he found himself drawn to the lamb in the fridge next. None satisfied the hunger and need he felt however, and he soon began looking at the neighbors chickens. It wasn't long before he hopped the fence in the dark of night and caught one, biting its head off. When Vera found the head in his sock drawer, she gave him a way to explain himself, but unable to keep the secret any longer, he finally confesses his part in the chicken's death.

He wasn't sure how she'd react. Would she leave him? To his surprise, she appeared neither shocked nor revolted by the news that he was responsible, and after a moment's contemplation, simply inquired as to how it was.

Vera appears in Blood

Vera is an outgoing woman who discovers she is married to a man drawn to blood as surely as Dracula himself had been. Though he manages to conceal his need for some time, she eventually discovers the head of their neighbor's chicken in her husband's sock drawer. His honesty about the item inspires Vera to open up a little herself. Rather than be shocked or horrified, she simply inquires as to what the experience was like.

Edward Waldman appears in Fossil-Figures

Edward is the smaller of the twins born to their mother, and never enjoys the robust health of his brother Eddie. Edward was carried in the womb embraced by his brother from behind, and at birth was so small and sickly that his very survival was doubted by many. At only five pounds nine ounces, he was born with an over sized head, a caved in chest and curved spine. While his brother enjoyed strength and health, he lived with increasing and debilitating pain, eventually confining him to a wheelchair. He finds what solace he can in books and in art, but what he desires most is acceptance from his brother.



Caring for him is a strain for his parents and eventually results in his father leaving his mother to care for him alone. She does so until ill health takes her life. Alone, Edward continues to live in the house, creating artwork that is good enough to earn display in a local gallery. Edward remains a shut in until the day his brother returns, having had his life turned upside down by charges of bribe taking and perjury. Edward welcomes him, and they are eventually found together, having died in the same position they occupied in their mother's womb.

Edgar (Eddie) Waldman appears in Fossil-Figures

Eddie is the larger and stronger of the twins born to their mother and is the first at everything from that day forward. He excels in school, sports and in every other way, wondering why it was that his sickly brother was given the breath of life at all. He graduates university and enjoys success first in the legal profession and then in politics as a U.S. Congressman. He enjoys success at first, distancing himself from a family he is ashamed of, but he can't quite forget the brother who shares the day he was born.

When the indictments come, and he faces the end of his career in politics and returns to the one place where he knows acceptance is all but guaranteed. Edward accepts him, and he returns to the home he grew up in. Their bodies are found frozen in decay, preserved together on the sofa in the same position they had shared so many years before in their mother's womb.

Lukas (Lucky) Wilde appears in Wildfire in Manhattan

One of only two surviving members of the band Wildfire, Lukas Wilde still plays when he gets bored in a fetish bar known as the Red Room. On their only U.S. tour, their act played fifty venues and suffered thirty one direct lightening strikes. In only nine weeks, they lost four drummers, six roadies and a great deal of gear. Lukas is a twin in this 'aspect' or lifetime. He is Wildfire while his brother is Hearth Fire and though both brothers are considered fire gods, they have little in common.

Brendan Wilde appears in Wildfire in Manhattan

Brendan is a twin to Lukas and owns and operates a restaurant called the Flying Pizza which serves the best steaks in the business. He is the more sensitive of the two men, with hair the color of embers. He is tall, and quick, and has a slim build with eyes that are green and red which are the opposite of his brother's which are red and green.

Chaos appears in Wildfire in Manhattan

Chaos is the name given to the shadow men who stalk and absorb those gods who escaped the end of the world and now exist in this aspect. They glide rather than walk with incredible speed and have a rank smell that cannot be mistaken. They have



inhuman strength and appear to have no body beneath the clothing they wear. Instead, there is merely a shadow which is the blackness of Chaos. It is a blackness that has no color - a hole which devours all in its path. They are sent by the Shadow - his minions that in another lifetime would be wolves - boxed now in heavy overcoats.

Calum MacInnes appears in The Truth is a Cave in the Black Mountains

Calum MacInnes was a reaver in his youth and is comfortable traveling light. When asked to act as a guide to the cave on the Misty Isle, he takes only a rope and a dirk. He is married and has one son. He is a tall man, with a loping stride and eyes of gray. He has a face that is long and somehow wolfish in appearance and his hair is streaked with the gray of age. In good health, he is engaged as a guide to lead a wee man to the cave on the Misty Isle.

Dwarf appears in The Truth is a Cave in the Black Mountains

A dwarf arrives at the residence of Calum MacInnes and asks that he guide him to the cave on the Misty Isle. The man, formerly a reaver, agrees and they leave immediately. The dwarf is the size of a child, but much stronger, and much faster. He tells Calum that he seeks the gold within the cave to bring the King across the water to rule and bring about a land of prosperity and joy. In truth, he is but an honest man seeking to bring about the vengeance due for the death of his daughter, killed by Calum when Calum was just a young man.

Deel Arrowsmith appears in The Stars Are Falling

Deel Arrowsmith returns from France feeling like he is already dead. He had gone to France to do his part in the war, caught up in the adventure of it, and now is returning to his home, wife and son. Deel finds his way back, but life is not what he remembers. His wife and son are distant and seemingly more interested in the young man who helped them while Deel was gone. Deel is a decent man, but when he realizes that his wife is sleeping with Tom and his son is likely Tom's as well, he loses the will to come back. He shoots Tom and his wife dead, and is happy to allow Sheriff Lobo to take his life.

James Tremont (aka Juvenal Nyx) appears in Juvenal Nyx

James loses his identity in the beginning of this tale, renamed by the woman who calls herself Julia and inducts him as a child of the night. He spends more than twenty years following her example and living on the outside of humanity until he meets Iridia



Lamone. Then, Juvenal decides to buck the trend and return to the land of the living as much as is possible. After saving her life, her mere presence is enough to return him to some semblance of humanity.

He began life as James Tremont - a black man with a cause - part of the Amalgamation of Black Student Unions and met 'Julia' at one of their Saturday night meetings.

Julia appears in Juvenal Nyx

Julia tells James she is from Rumania. Her parents are dead, and she works as a freelance copy editor. She enjoys going to meetings at night, but lives alone, preferring the solitude. She claims to be young, but talks of escaping the Communists to Munich and tells James that she lived for a time with Gypsies.

She explains, after she has bitten him and he is under her control, that they are different from humans in that they cannot multiply the same. Their lovers are people who to them taste unusually sweet and this taste they carry with them as part of them. She leaves James after four days with a new name and a very different life.

Iridia Lamone appears in Juvenal Nyx

Juvenal Nyx is directed by one of the unseen voices to go to the Brooklyn Bridge and upon his arrival, he finds Iridia on the edge and about to take her own life. He grabs her just as her feet leave the girder. She was born in northern California and made her way to New York to study painting. She paints in watercolors and lives for the artwork she creates. She married her high school boyfriend, but admits that they do not get along, telling Juvenal that Tarver is always depressed. She didn't want to go home to him again.

Iridia believes in fate and since Juvenal saves her at the last possible moment, she believes he is meant to be in her life. Despite the love she feels for Juvenal, she refuses to leave Tarver, fearing that he will take his own life. She has a brother named Montrose.

Philip appears in The Knife

Philip is a young man who in 1938 finds a knife after an altercation with the head prefect of the house he lives in. Stafford has turned Philip into his principle victim, and after the first beating occurs, Philip is in no hurry to have it repeated. He takes the knife he found and later that night, he uses it to end Stafford's life. Philip is never caught, but many years later he confesses the truth to his godfather who advises him to keep his secret and assures him he will not tell a soul.



Abe appears in Weights and Measures

Abe has dark curls which are graying at the temples and is forty two years old. He met his wife Sarah at a cigar club in Los Angeles. They were married within six months. After his daughter dies, he begins to shrink at a rapid rate.

Johann (Jack) von Grimmelshausen appears in Goblin Lake

Jack is a young officer in a time period just shortly before the end of the Thirty Years War. He is part of a Hessian patrol who is using a local peasant as a guide in the Spessart region of Germany. He follows the peasant down to the Mummelsee after the peasant tells them stories of how the water changes things that are thrown in. He is faced with a choice of eternal life in the pages of a book, or a return to reality in which he has grown old, and his wife has become fat. Still, he loves her and she loves him, so the choice is relatively simple.

Spencer Mallon appears in Mallon The Guru

Spencer is an American Guru who spends four months in India with his spiritual leader, Urdang. They are granted an audience with a holy man in the village of Sankwal and upon their arrival, Spencer spontaneously heals a young village boy. The holy man seems to either fear or envy Mallon as he sends them on their way, advising Urdang to distance himself from Mallon at the first opportunity.

Urdang appears in Mallon The Guru

Urdang is a fearsome German who has a calm and deceptively gentle manner. He is the spiritual leader for Spencer Mallon.

The Fisherman appears in Catch and Release

A serial killer, the fisherman has adopted a catch and release program with his victims. He hunts, catches and then leaves them unharmed, going home to fantasize about what might have been. Occasionally however, he does slip up, and rather than release his prey, he reverts to the catch and kill format, but he does so without guilt. He feels that every man must be true to his own nature now and then.



Dex appears in Polka Dots and Moonbeams

Arriving in a Belvedere convertible, Dex picks Adeline up at exactly seven for a night of drinks, dancing and watching the stars fall. He is asked by Killheffer to kill Mondrian the maitre d'.

Adeline appears in Polka Dots and Moonbeams

Adeline is Dex's girlfriend and perpetual date to watch the stars fall.

Mondrian appears in Polka Dots and Moonbeams

The maitre d' for the Ice Garden is named Mondrian.

Killheffer appears in Polka Dots and Moonbeams

Killheffer claims the world is made of numbers and offers Dex a way out of the perpetual loop in which he is stuck. He dies in Mondrian's place.

Samantha appears in Samantha's Diary

Samantha is the one who is plagued by gifts from a secret admirer that follow the traditional poem of the Twelve Days of Christmas.

Franz Dodeca appears in Samantha's Diary

Samantha's secret admirer, Franz Dodeca, is rich and described as obsessive.

Ollie appears in Land Of The Lost

The German shepherd who is the sole companion of the woman who works as a cashier at Bilo in Perry

Leif appears in Leif In The Wind

Leif is part of a team sent to Beta Andromedae to collect rock samples and cores, and to determine whether life can exist there. He discovers an alien life form that joins with him and when he returns to the ship, they return with him. Leif's team members don't believe him at first, but the presence of birds on the ship supports his claim that he saw birds and became the tree in which they lived. Leif tries to return to Beta Andromedae and in the process almost sabotages their mission.



Ena appears in Leif In The Wind

Ena is another team member who is sure Leif is hallucinating and later discovers that he told the truth. The alien birds are capable of inhabiting human beings.

Arlette appears in Unwell

Arlette is jealous of her younger sister Yvonne. Yvonne is in the middle of planning her wedding but Arlette feels that Yvonne is breaking an unwritten code that the oldest girl in the family should be married first. After some digging, she discovers that Yvonne's groom is living a lie and is not who he says he is.

Yvonne appears in Unwell

The younger sister to Arlette, Yvonne is planning her wedding to Arthur - a man she and Arlette met on a seniors cruise. She drops everything to attend to her sister who claims to be unwell, and when she arrives, her sister gives her a box of Christmas ornaments that once belonged to their mother. She doesn't know that Arlette has wrapped one of them in the America Most Wanted advertisement of her husband to be.

Ava Malcolm appears in Let The Past Begin

Ava is a journalist who enjoys assignments that take her to dangerous places in the world. She is fearless although somewhat impatient at times and filled with self confidence. She becomes pregnant which ends her time in armed outposts or barren villages. She is shot during a robbery in a corner store, but it is a shoulder wound so she survives.

Dr. Martin Kobel appears in The Therapist

A doctor of behavioral therapy who specializes in anger management and addiction, Dr. Martin Kobel is found not guilty by reason of insanity for killing Annabelle Young and insisting she was under the control of a neme.

Annabelle Young appears in The Therapist

Annabelle Young is a grade school teacher in Wetherby, North Carolina whom Dr. Martin Kobel believes is under the influence of a neme.



Glenn Hollowappears in The Therapist

The prosecuting attorney who fails to get a guilty verdict in Dr. Martin Kobel's trial, Glenn Hollow loses his bid to be the Attorney General as a result as well as his job/career.

Veronica (BeeVee) Erlichappears in Parallel Lines

Twin sister to Caroleen Ann Erlich, Veronica (BeeVee) Erlich dies just before they turn seventy-three. She tries to work her way back into life by entering the body of the woman who cleaned/shopped for them, but is foiled by Caroleen. Veronica has a strong personality and unforgiving demeanor.

Caroleen Ann Erlichappears in Parallel Lines

Twin sister to BeeVee Erlich, Caroleen Ann Erlich is lost behind her until her death just before their seventy-third birthdays. Caroleen learns what it is to live once she is out of the shadow of BeeVee.

Nancy Zuckermanappears in Human Intelligence

Nancy Zuckerman is an explorer who stumbles on the Arctic station used by Nicholas Walker who is an alien intelligence.

Nicholas Walkerappears in Human Intelligence

Nicholas Walker is an alien being who has been on earth since 429CE. He has been monitoring Earth for fifteen hundred and eighty-one of his eighteen hundred and seven years of age. He is grateful that he has been found and is ready to have the world know he exists. Based on his people's lack of contact, he is convinced that something catastrophic befell his home planet. He has recorded (and is willing to give Earth) 73,496 hours of video of round the world chronicles for the duration of his time on Earth.

Rex Fischappears in Stories

Rex is the writer who takes his own life in the Lake District Library on a Sunday in September. He was born and raised in Wrigley, Texas and wrote better than most in his league.

Chick Archerappears in Stories

Chick met Rex in an S&M bar in Paris, fell in love with him and spent the rest of his life with him. When Chick dies, Rex loses his way.



Leonard Scopes appears in The Maiden Flight of McCauley's Bellerophon

Leonard works for the Museum of American Aviation and Aerospace and holds the current job description of Museum Effects Specialist. For twenty years he has recreated all manner of aircraft that have never actually flown. He is also the one who recreates the Bellerophon.

Maggie Blevin appears in The Maiden Flight of McCauley's Bellerophon

Maggie was hired by the American Aviation and Aerospace Museum to organize the archives known as the Pre-Langley collection or more commonly as the Nut Files. She dies of advanced breast cancer.

Quirinus Calvino appears in The Devil on the Staircase

Quirinus was born in Sulle Scale to a bricklayer whose job it was to keep the many staircases that make up the village on the steep mountainside in good order. When he dies, Quirinus goes to work for a local winemaker. He jealously kills an Arab trader, meets the devil's son and then returns to kill the winemaker's daughter as well. He accepts a gift from Satan's son - a tin bird that sings whenever he lies, and the bird sings often, beginning when he lies to the police about the murders. He leaves Sulle Scale, having become as rich as any man needs to be by becoming one of the richest traders on the Amalfi coast and even achieving the title of mayor as a result of a new fear of heights.



Objects/Places

Wildfire appears in Wildfire in Manhattan

Wildfire is the name of a New York rock band operated by Lukas Wilde who is the lead singer.

Cave on the Misty Isle appears in The Truth is a Cave in the Black Mountains

Located in the Black Mountains, Cave on the Misty Isle is cursed and filled with gold for those who are brave enough to enter.

Bryant Park appears in Unbelief

Bryant Park is where Kane kills his most important contract.

Pancake Rocks appears in The Stars Are Falling

Pancake Rocks refers to a group of flat, rounded sandstone rocks that in a pile resemble pancakes and spans twenty feet from top to bottom.

The Telltale Bean appears in Juvenal Nyx

The Telltale Bean is a coffee shop in Brooklyn Heights to which Juvenal takes Iridia after saving her life.

Brooklyn Bridge appears in Juvenal Nyx

Iridia tries to take her own life on the Brooklyn Bridge.

Mummelsee (Goblin Lake) appears in Goblin Lake

A bottomless lake which is said to have a peculiar property, Mummelsee (Goblin Lake) changes whatever is thrown into it, making it something else.



Dr. Vandermast's garden in Zayana appears in Goblin Lake

Dr. Vandermast's garden in Zayana is at the bottom of the lake where it is always afternoon and in which Jack is given a choice as to whether he prefers to remain with Poseidonia in the pages of literature, or return to reality.

Sankwal appears in Mallon The Guru

Sankwal is the village that is the home of a yogi and great holy man who grants Mallon and Urdang an audience.

Toddle Inn appears in Catch and Release

A roadhouse that is also known as Roy's, Toddle Inn is frequented by the serial killer.

Ice Garden appears in Polka Dots and Moonbeams

A high class establishment with a live band that serves gin that is a house creation, Ice Garden includes valet service and a maitre d'.

Rush Week appears in Loser

The week where pledges to Zeta Delt are tested is called Rush Week.

Housebot appears in Samantha's Diary

The futuristic house maid/butler Samantha owns, Housebot is reprogrammed by her secret admirer.

Twelve Days of Christmas appears in Samantha's Diary

Twelve Days of Christmas is the poem used as a template to woo Samantha.

Fairport Harbor appears in Land of the Lost

Fairport Harbor is the area in which the body of the missing girl is found.



Beta Andromedae appears in Leif In The Wind

Beta Andromedae is the planet studied and returned to by Leif after he has an encounter with alien birds that inhabit him as though he were a tree.

Christmas ornaments appears in Unwell

Christmas ornaments are given as a gift to Arlette by her mother, and coveted by Yvonne. Later, Arlette wraps one of the angels in a piece of paper that shows that Yvonne's new husband Arthur is one of America's Most Wanted.

Baku appears in Let The Past Begin

Baku is the capital of Azerbaijan.

Djelloum (Yit) appears in Let The Past Begin

A Djelloum (Yit) is a version of a fortune teller but more along the lines of a shaman.

Starbucks appears in The Therapist

Dr. Martin Kobel meets Annabelle Young for the first time at Starbucks.

Neme appears in The Therapist

A neme is a discrete body of intangible energy that causes an extreme emotional response in any human it affects.

Ouiji Board appears in Parallel Lines

The method of communication used by Amber to communicate with BeeVee in the afterlife is a Ouiji Board.

86 degrees, 19 minutes, 27 seconds north appears in Human Intelligence

The address of Nicholas Walker, alien, is 86 degrees, 19 minutes, 27 seconds north.



Lake District Library appears in Stories

Rex Fisch took his own life at the Lake District Library.

Bellerophon appears in The Maiden Flight of McCauley's Bellerophon

The name given to the flying machine launched in 1901 by a man named McCauley is Bellerophon. It has a zeppelin shaped body, a sharp nose that is slightly tilted upward, bat shaped wings, bird shaped wings and box shaped wings. It has elevators and hollow cones of wire, and long tubes filled with baffles and flaps.

Tin Bird appears in The Devil on the Staircase

A Tin Bird is given to Quirinus by the boy on the stairs to hell.



Themes

Coping With Death

Many of the stories contained in this collection deal with the subject of death. Each one approaches the subject from a different angle. Each story has death as either a driving force or a motivating factor which spurs a character to action, or deals with a life lost and the survivor's methods of coping with the loss and sorrow that follows. In some cases, the death is by way of murder, in some it is suicidal. In yet others, homicide is the method by which death is met. In each case, death is examined and either celebrated or feared, endured or invited. The authors are all different, allowing for a myriad of examples of method, motive and reaction, but the common theme is carried throughout. In each story, life is examined anew, and the survivors find more meaning in theirs as a result, or resign themselves and are left as merely shadows. At first, the reader could be excused for thinking that the collection of stories is a collection of death but on reflection, the book could also be seen as a culmination of life in its many forms. Some of the short stories have their characters finding new meaning in their lives or correcting injustices long unpunished. Still others reveal their characters have only found life as a result of a brush with death.

The one thing we have no control over is the end of our lives. It can happen in a myriad of ways and the timing is something no one can foresee unless suicide is the method by which life ends. The message or symbolism could be interpreted to be that one should enjoy life and all of its complexities since life is short and one can never anticipate the ways in which it could end. The most precious part of life is in sharing it with others and understanding the finite parameters so that life is appreciated to its fullest while the opportunity exists.

Reality vs Fiction

In *Goblin Lake*, the main character finds himself thrown into the pages of a book where he is one of the characters and the life he is living is being read by others. At first he is content to spend his days enjoying the company of the King's daughter, living in a realm where little or nothing is expected of him, and pleasure is his for the asking. His feelings for the Princess feel genuine, as does her touch and conversation, but something isn't quite right. While the surroundings are beautiful, and his life seems easy, he needs to know how her father knew of him and what book he was reading that described him to the King before his arrival. While on one hand, all he wanted was peace and the love of a good woman, on the other hand he found that his life in this place lacked substance. Life didn't seem whole. He questions the King who shows him a garden where it is afternoon forever. In that garden, he is able to see the life he would have had in reality. The King is surprised that his lissome and energetic daughter is not enough to please Jack, but it is the unknown that nags at him. The King shows him what his alternative life in reality would have been. In that life, Jack has a wife and they are both already old



and feeling that age. Somehow though, the life he would have in reality is one of substance and while life with the King and Princess was happy, it lacked the authenticity of reality. Jack decides that living in Fiction is not for him and he returns to reality with its flaws and rewards.

The Human Equation

In all but a few of these stories, humanity and its many flaws are examined - some in more detail than others. They deal with revenge, infidelity, jealousy, greed, love and hate. It is a potpourri of human emotion and reaction. In a few of these stories however, the focal point becomes humanity itself. In Juvenal Nyx and in Blood, the life of a vampire or its victims is examined. In The Therapist an outside entity called a neme is said to be like a virus that is a malevolent energy responsible for the onset of aggression, rage, and crime. In Leif in the Wind, an encounter with an alien life form has one astronaut ready to give his life - happily - just to be with the beings that become part of him and use him as their host. Other encounters with life forms that are less than human as we define it include Goblin Lake where Jack falls into the water and finds himself living in the pages of a fiction, or A Life in Fictions where a woman gradually loses herself while an author uses her as his muse.

One story stands out as different from the rest. In Human Intelligence, an alien life form waits to be discovered. He has spent over fifteen hundred years recording and cataloging humanity and their behavior. Each century is carefully chronicled so that his home planet can become familiar with the growth and evolution of the species. Once each century, a ship is sent to collect data and resupply. When the ship does not return at its designated time, he is unconcerned at first, and continues his mission to record life on the planet Earth. When several hundred years pass without contact, he becomes more concerned. Finally, he admits to himself that he has likely been abandoned for reasons unclear, and his focus changes. While still maintaining his mission, he begins to hope for discovery. The story makes clear that what makes life precious is being able to share it, and the value of life is only found when we are not alone. Loneliness drives this alien to welcome contact despite the risks associated with discovery. The most important question is answered - we are not alone in the universe.

Life vs Everlasting Life

A few of the stories contained in this collection deal with everlasting life. Whether the method is by way of alien hybridism such as in Leif in The Wind, or contact with a vampire such as in Blood or Juvenal Nyx, most human beings would like to extend their lives or have everlasting life. This is not without drawbacks. To live a life everlasting would imply that you would outlive all those you love, and distance yourself from humanity. A Life in Fictions and Goblin Lake reveal the truth. Life is only of value when shared with those we love and respect. In both of these stories, the central character becomes part of a fiction. In Goblin Lake, Jack is given a choice between life with a princess or living the end of his life with his wife in reality. He chooses reality. In A Life in



Fictions, the main character loses herself to fiction, unable to find enough of herself to stay in the real world. Instead, she opts to become a character full time in order to experience life again.

Everlasting life is only a bonus if all those you love and those who color your life with complexity are there with you. If that is not the case, a person with everlasting life rapidly loses touch with the reasons life should be extended.



Style

Point of View

Stories is a collection of tales by a variety of authors. Each story has a different perspective though it seems many are told in the first person narrative such as *Blood*, where the husband tells the story of his spiral into need and how he copes with it and *Wildfire In Manhattan* as well as the *Truth is a Cave in the Black Mountains*, *Unbelief*, *The Stars are Falling*, *Loser*, *Samantha's Diary* and *Juvenal Nyx*. *Fossil-Figures* is more an example of omniscient narrative as the author writes with knowledge of the feelings and thoughts of both characters as is *Leif in The Wind*, and *Weights and Measures* where the story is told from both the wife and the husband's perspectives. *The Knife* uses a third person narrative to describe how the character commits a murder as is the case in *Catch and Release* where the narrator is a witness to the actions of the characters but gives little to the thought involvement, or emotions. The range of writing styles continues with a protagonist's point of view such as in *The Therapist* or *Human Intelligence* where the leading role is based on heroic efforts and an antagonist's point of view such as in *The Devil on the Staircase* or *Catch and Release*.

Setting

This collection of stories is set in a myriad of situations and predicaments. Some of the tales are bound by reality where the earth and those who inhabit it are predictably normal and behave in ways that are for the most part expected or accepted. Some stories such as *Blood* and *Juvenal Nyx* examine the world of vampires and conversion from human to something less than earthly while others like *Polka Dots* and *Moonbeams* deal with time distortions. *Leif in The Wind* and *Human Intelligence* deal with alien encounters, both approaching the subject from unique perspectives - one encounter taking place in space and the other on earth. *Wildfire in Manhattan* is an offshoot from the mainstream where the characters are Gods that are being pursued and eliminated in an ultimate battle of good and evil. A few of the stories are plain fiction such as the escapism of *Goblin Lake* or *A Life in Fictions* but there are also traditional story types where there are heroes and villains such as is the case in *The Therapist*, or *Catch and Release* where the villain is portrayed as a simple fisherman who is trying so hard to reform but is still a killer nonetheless. There is also a myriad of locations in which these stories are set from *Mallon the Guru* set in India to *The Maiden Flight of McCauley's Bellerophon* which is partly set on Cowana Island and from *Leif in The Wind* set in space near Beta Andromedae to *The Devil On The Staircase* set in the mountain village of Sulle Scale.



Language and Meaning

The language and meaning of the collection of stories assembled changes from story to story. Each is unique in its own way, and is supported by the language used and descriptive phrasing employed. While most of these stories are clear and easy to follow, in collections such as this, there is always the chance of one or two that are almost too convoluted to follow. The Cult of the Nose and Stories are good examples of stories with scattered meanings and muddy plots. Most of the stories collected here are well supported in their narratives, clear in their plot lines and enjoyable to read, the authors able to weave a story that is believable despite being fiction. Such is clearly the case in stories such as Human Intelligence where an alien life form chronicles life on the planet for over fifteen hundred years, and The Maiden Flight of McCauley's Bellerophon. Both are well constructed tales that weave reality with science fiction as does Leif in The Wind and even Wildfire in Manhattan where the Gods roam among us. Use of the ever popular good vs evil theme is present in several stories as well.

Structure

Stories by Neil Gaiman is a collection of tales of fiction that range in length from three pages as is the case in The Knife to forty-eight pages as is the case in The Maiden Flight of McCauley's Bellerophon. Each contribution is made by a different author and as such, the story lines and plot lines are as varied as the writing styles are. The stories are a mix of method and point of view that vary from submission to submission. There appears to be a general theme of the stories collected in this book which centers on stories that involve and engage the reader, making them care about the outcome and make them want to know what the next page and the next story hold. The stories are meant to tell tales that while they might not be unique, show perspectives and insights that make them feel as though they are unique and original ideas. The introduction clearly identifies the desire to blend fiction with magic and create a series of stories that would make it difficult to put the book down. This kind of magic can easily be defined by the child who listens raptly to the story being told and responds with "...and then what happened?" The call to writers went out and with imagination and creativity, this is the collection submitted and is the culmination of their efforts.



Quotes

"Did you hear anything when you were looking at the shuttle?" Blood, pg 12
Wife to husband regarding the killing of a chicken next door the night before.

"Our only chance is to outrun them, to take your lady friend with you and to run like the blazes to another city, to another continent if we can, where the Shadow has less influence..." Wildfire in Manhattan, pg 41
Lucky to Arthur as they discuss keeping Sunny safe.

"Some people come out of the womb broken." Unbelief, Pg 72
Comment made by target when Kane is ready to fulfill his contract.

"There's got to be some purpose to all of it, son." Pg. 85 (The Stars are Falling)
The words an officer spoke in passing to Deel as he held the head of the body of the young man who had just died in the trenches with him.

"I want to tell you a story about a woman named Julia. She named me Juvenal Nyx and made me a child of the night." Juvenal Nyx, Pg 131
Juvenal as he finally confesses the truth to Eerie.

"So I shall see you in the library after prayers tomorrow night, and you've got no one to thank but yourself." The Knife, Pg. 132
Stafford to Phillip which precipitates his murder.

"Don't tell me food shopping is what passes for a date without the kids nowadays..."
Weights and Measures, Pg. 140
Cashier to Abe and Sarah the first time they go shopping after the death of their daughter.

"There was, I must concede, a certain authenticity to life on the other side of the gate. A validity and complexity which ours may be said to lack." Goblin Lake, Pg 160
Jack to the King after the King shows him what the reality of his life was and the choice he has.

"You would be wise to separate yourself from this student as soon as you can do so honorably." Mallon The Guru, Pg 166
The Yogi with whom Mallon and Urdang were granted an audience in the village of Sankwal.

"Not everyone is a catch-and-release fisherman. That's probably something you ought to keep in mind." Catch and Release, Pg. 171
Killer to one of the victims he enjoys releasing after picking her up hitchhiking on the freeway.

"My own special mixture of oblivion." Polka Dots and Moonbeams, Pg 190
Adeline to Dex, repeating what Killheffer told them at the Ice Garden.



"Then you have an admirer who is not only rich, but mindlessly romantic." Samantha's Diary, Pg 209
Liam to Samantha as he explains the song called the Twelve Days of Christmas to her.

"I know your heart was in the right place." Land of the Lost, Pg 218
FBI agent to woman searching for murdered girl.

"They're nesting in me, all the beautiful birds. Perching on nerve fibers, sipping from tiny veins, Ena." Leif In The Wind, Pg 222
Leif to Ena as he tries to describe his encounter with alien life forms in the region of Beta Andromedae.

"Whether it makes any difference to you or not now, I wasn't lying about Lamiya and the curse." Let the Past Begin, Pg 258
Ava to the man who wanted to be the father of her child, whether he was or not.

"You could call it an energy force. Malevolent energy. It attaches to your mind and it won't let go." The Therapist, Pg 282
Kobel to the judge as he tries to explain what a Neme is.

"You win - you'll do - we've always been a team, right?" Parallel Lines, Pg 303
BeeVee to Caroleen, hoping to sway her and regain a portion of her life through her sister.

"When the people of the north, the Nordics and the Lapps and the rest, saw me flying, cruising at low altitudes through their midwinter skies nine hundred years ago, eleven hundred years ago, what do you suppose they thought they were seeing?" Human Intelligence, Pg 326
Alien to Nancy as he explains how the people of the north saw him and his aircraft, and mistook him for a flying sleigh pulled by reindeer.

"The thing about Leonard is, I can never figure out if he's brilliant or potentially dangerous." The Maiden Flight of McCauley's Bellerophon, Pg 388
Emery to Robbie as they set up to recreate the flight of the Bellerophon.

"Lucifer is an awful old goat who has a pitchfork and hooves and makes people suffer." The Devil on The Staircase, Pg 416
Comment made to Quirinus when he asks the boy whether or not he is Lucifer.



Topics for Discussion

What is it that most of these stories have in common, if anything? What is the overall message or tone of these stories when considered as a group? Which story most completely exemplifies this message and why?

How many stories in this collection have an alien based character or theme? Which stories are not specifically alien, but could be construed to be? Which contribution involves possession and in which ways are the characters possessed? What tales could be construed as having characters that were possessed but are not in the strictest sense of the word?

In which story is the main character eager to reveal himself to the world and why? What is different about this character compared to others in this collection? What risks are associated with revealing himself and why?

According to one of the stories in this collection, how did the history of Santa Claus evolve and why? Who was responsible and in what way? How does this story exemplify how traditions can become reality?

Which story best explains the morality of murder? How does the murderer justify his crime or crimes? What is the result of these crimes? What twist surprises the murderer in the end, and what realization does he come to?

Which character or characters must choose between life in reality and life lived in fiction? How is the choice presented? What decisions are made by the character or characters involved and why?

Which stories concern themselves with time and how? What escape is offered and by whom? How is the loop in time presented? What could have been done to make the story more believable?

Which stories involve a celebration or holiday? Which celebration or holiday is involved in each case, and why are they important to the story?

Which story or stories involve jealousy? What makes the character jealous and why? How is the situation resolved, if at all? If not, what prevents the resolution?

What is the purpose of the recreation of an event in 1901? What was the event, why is it important and to whom? What circumstances recreate themselves? What is the end result? What is not resolved in this story?

Which story involves a dwarf? Where does he want to go? Why is he determined to go there, and who does he involve in his journey? What three things does he reveal as being important about himself? How do they affect the story?



How many of these stories involve a serial killer? How are the crimes defined? Who are the serial killers or killer and what is the typical target preferred? Why?

How many of these stories involve religion or our perception of religion? In which ways are the religious connotations revealed? Which characters have a basis in a religion of any kind? What religion is each affiliated with, loosely or by association?