

Survivor Study Guide

Survivor by Chuck Palahniuk

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Plot Summary

Survivor: A Novel was written by Chuck Palahniuk, the author of the popular book *Fight Club*. *Survivor* is the story of Tender Branson, who becomes the last surviving member of what the media calls the Creedish Death Cult. The novel begins with Tender on a plane as he records his life story into the flight recorder of Flight 2039. The entire book is structured like a countdown - the chapters are in descending order and so are the page numbers. Tender is on a race against the clock to tell the reader his story.

As the novel begins, Tender explains that he is a house cleaner. While he thinks his job is okay, he has another job at night that he enjoys much more. Accidentally, a newspaper printed a Suicide Hotline's phone number as Tender's phone number. Every night, Tender gets calls from desperate people who are on the verge of committing suicide. He loves the rush that he gets from talking to these people. He feels as if he can control whether they live or die. One night, a man named Trevor Hollis calls into the hotline. He asks Tender if there is any point of him living. Tender tells Trevor to kill himself.

The next day, Tender goes to the cemetery to find Trevor's grave. There, he meets Fertility Hollis, Trevor's sister. Tender is instantly stricken by Fertility and wants to see her again. Later that night, Fertility calls in Tender's hotline. She tells him about the guy she met at the cemetery. She also tells him that she thinks Tender is disgusting. She only agreed to meet him again next week as she felt so sorry for him. Fertility also reveals that she can see the future. Trevor also had this gift, and it is why he killed himself.

As the novel progresses, Tender explains that ten years ago, his entire family and the Creedish community commit a mass suicide. They do it, because they believe they are delivering themselves to God. Tender does not hear about the Deliverance until 3 months after it happens. After the suicides, he is given a caseworker and joins the Survivor Retention Program. After ten years of treatment, Tender has still not recovered from his issues and is barely coping with the deaths. His problems get even worse when the caseworker informs him that someone has begun killing other survivors and making it look like they committed suicide. This spikes the suicide rate of other survivors, finally leaving Tender to be the last Creedish survivor. Tender is certain that his twin brother, Adam, is the one who is doing the killing and is coming after Tender next.

One day, when Tender comes back to work, he finds the caseworker dead at his employer's house. As Tender is the last surviving Creedish, many agents and publicists want to represent him. He chooses one, and Tender decides to leave his old life behind and go to New York. He is sad to leave Fertility, but not sad to leave his old life behind.

Once in the hands of the agent, Tender is turned over to a media team. The team physically transforms Tender through a regiment of workouts, steroids and drugs. He becomes a religious superstar, but it is all fake. Nothing of what he says is sincere or



truthful as a media team has prepared it. Sadly, as Tender becomes a bigger celebrity, he forgets who he is and sells out his religion as well as his friendship with Fertility.

Tender is told by his agent that he will have to begin making miracles happen. The biggest request the agent has is for a large prediction to be made at the Super Bowl halftime show in New Orleans. Tender begs Fertility for help. When he goes to meet her, his brother Adam also shows up. The two inform him that Adam has set him up for the murder of the caseworker and the upcoming murder of his agent. They then tell him that they have decided to save him.

At the Super Bowl, Tender announces that the Colts will beat the Cardinals, thereby causing complete pandemonium. He, Fertility and Adam escape and begin to make their way to Nebraska, where the old Church colony was located. On the way there, they get in a car accident. Adam is injured in the eye. He asks Tender to deliver him to Heaven, but Tender refuses. Adam then tells Tender to hit him in the face with a rock so that no one can recognize him and send him to prison for the murders. Adam tells Tender to keep hitting him until he dies.

Fertility and Tender then make their way back home, but they are still hiding from the police. Once there, Fertility reveals to Tender that she is pregnant. It is strange, because she was not able to predict that this would happen. She tells Tender that she is going to Australia. She also tells him that her flight will be hijacked and crash and that she needs to be on it. Tender chases Fertility to the airport. He is frantic to make her stop. As the police approach him, he grabs Fertility and drags her onto the plane.

This is what brings Tender to the present. He is finishing up his story. The last engine of the plane has burned out. Now, he must figure out how to get off the plane and start his life all over again.



Chapters 47 & 46

Chapters 47 & 46 Summary

The book begins with the the main character, Tender Branson, voicing his life story into the flight recorder of Flight 2039. Tender tells his readers that if they are listening to his speech, they know that he is alone on Flight 2039, because he deplaned all the passengers in the New Hebrides Islands. He wants everyone to know that he is not a murderer. The pilot has parachuted off of the plane and now Tender is the only person left on a plane that's on autopilot until the fuel runs out. Before the pilot parachuted out of the plane, he gave Tender a very detailed account of what will happen as each engine fails. While Tender is thankful, he wonders how someone can be so helpful after they have had a gun held to their head and are told to jump out of a plane. The pilot even lets Tender know that the Auxillary Power Unit will stay on until the plane crashes. Tender will have air conditioning and stereo music for as long as he can feel anything.

Tender tells the pilot that its been a long time since he has felt anything. He also tells the pilot that his number one priority is getting him off the plane. He explains that sadly, when you hijack a plane all by yourself, you might have to neglect your hostages long enough to put your gun down so that you can use the bathroom. He has been clenching the gun for so long that he has lost all feeling in his hand - and he really needs to use the bathroom. Before he let the passengers off the plane, he ran around serving everyone dinner as food service is his only specialty.

After the pilot jumps out of the plane, Tender leans over the edge of the plane and goes to the bathroom. Hopefully, this wasn't a problem for the pilot. Before the pilot jumped, he let Tender know that he only has a few hours to record his story. Tender wants everyone to know the true story of what happened on Flight 2039 and his life. After explaining this, he realizes he has already wasted 10 minutes and starts his story.

As Tender breads a veal cutlet in his apartment, a girl calls him from a loud dance club. He can't hear her, and she can't hear him. He asks her if she is tired of hurting. Is she tired of living? Tender gets fed up as she isn't responding, so he tells her to kill herself - use barbiturates and alcohol and put her head in a dry cleaning bag. He tells her that she is going to die sooner or later, but he doesn't have all night and hangs up.

Tender says that the calls used to be a lot of fun. People who were on the verge of suicide would just call him in the middle of the night - women or men. He would listen to their prayers and concerns while breadding a veal cutlet or pork chop. One night, one guy calls and tells Tender that he has a gun underneath his chin. He wants Tender to give him one reason not to kill himself. He can't live with knowing the future. Tender, half awake, tells him to go ahead and do it before he falls asleep. Tender has decided that this is so much better than his normal job as a housecleaner - he is also a part-time god.



Tender says that he has learned to pull the phone away from his ear so that he does not hear the gunshot. The next day, he looks for the obituary. Tender needs the obituary to prove that the person he talked to existed. The guy with the gun was Trevor Hollis. When Tender sees his obituary, he feels wonderful.

It all started when the newspaper did a feature on a crisis hotline. The phone number in the paper had a typo, and people began calling Tender's number. People began calling him day and night with their problems. Tender says that he is not doing this to save lives, but to instead talk to girls. He once tried to get a job working at McDonald's so that he could meet girls. The McDonald's application also asks applicants if they have Hepatitis A, Salmonella, Shigella, Staphylococcus, Giarda and so on. So, Tender figures that girls at McDonald's are cleaner than girls on the street. He explains that he could not actually get a job at McDonald's, so he went around town putting up signs that read, "Give Yourself, You Life, Just One More Chance. Call Me for help, " and then his phone number.

The phone begins ringing again, and Tender answers. To calm the girl down, he begins telling her about his goldfish that his parents bought him so that he could learn to love. The goldfish that Tender currently has is number six hundred and forty. He says that soon enough, everything you love dies.

Chapters 47 & 46 Analysis

The main character of the book, Tender Branson is introduced in Chapter 47. Tender is very frantic as he tries to tell his life story. The reader is immediately struck by Palahniuk's brisk, scattered language. Tender's thoughts are constantly all over the place. As he has a limited amount of time to get his story out, his thoughts are rushed. This aids in the overall effect of letting the reader know that the plane he is on will crash very soon. Another interesting note is that the chapter numbers are in descending order. This also aids in alerting the reader that Tender's countdown has begun. Also in this chapter, Trevor Hollis is introduced. Tender's phone call with Trevor causes a long list of interesting events to occur in Tender's life. Trevor's end is like the new beginning for Tender's life.

Lastly, in this section of the book, the reader begins to learn of Tender's great frustration with sex and his desire for power. Tender loves it when desperate women call into his hotline. It gives him the ability to exert power on them. He does not usually have this in his day-to-day life of being a housecleaner. It also introduces the theme of sex and power which continues throughout the entire novel. This section foreshadows the problems Tender will have with sex and his own sexuality later on in the novel.



Chapters 45 & 44

Chapters 45 & 44 Summary

Tender reveals that when he was seventeen, the only thing he knew about the "outside" world was what his older brother Adam told him. The night before Tender was to venture into the outside world, he says that his brother cut his hair and told him about the outside world. As the oldest son, Adam had been allowed to go outside of the Creedish Church community. He tells Tender that women can change the color of their eyes and lips; people were visited in their house by spirits called televisions; and that people kept birds in their houses.

After Adam had married Bidy Gleason, he and his new wife went into town to obtain a marriage license. A church elder accompanied them. Church doctrine dictated that only the first born would get married. The rest of the children in the family were taught the Church doctrine and prepared to go out into the world to work after their baptism. Tender was 17-years-old when he left home. Since he left, he has been placed as a housecleaner in various, rich households.

Currently, to make a living, Tender cleans a large house. Everyday, there is a large daily planner that dictates Tender's entire day. A large portion of his job involves teaching his wealthy employers how to eat meals at very high-end dinner parties. He had to track down the party chef and then ask what courses can be served. At tonight's dinner party, lobster will be served.

Tender does not only clean the house and teach his employees how to eat lobster, he also takes on more personal issues for his employees - like rewinding their pornographic tapes. After working for the same people for six years, Tender has learned many useful things. This includes knowing how to get blood stains out of a fur coat, piano keys, wallpaper or mattress. He also knows how to get urine out of drapes. Repairing bullet holes or stab holes in a nightgown are other valuable skills he has. Tender reveals that the hardest part is keeping his mouth shut. Strangely, Tender has never met the people he works for. Tender reflects that he feels by cleaning someone's house everyday, he likes to think that the world is getting better. He is slowly realizing that all that gets better is his skill of denying what's wrong.

As Tender begins to cook a lobster, the phone rings. After several rings, Tender finally picks up the phone. His employers begin yelling at him from the speaker phone. They have been frantic and worried about the lobster course all day. Tender makes them calm down and begins to walk them through the meal. Step by step, he leads them through the course. It seems as though whether he is cleaning a stain, a fish, a house - he wants to think he is in some way making the world better. He cynically realizes that one day, you realize too much time has gone by. You're old, and you'll be dead soon. Nothing is better.



As Tender describes how to eat the lobster to his employers, he snaps away the tail, eats the tail meat, unhinges the back shell, eats the meat of each leg, and then stops. He checks his daily planner - his life schedule - which says that he should be happily digging up the flowers in the front yard. He ignores the screaming speaker phone and notices that even though he has already eaten most of the lobster, he could have sworn he saw its heart beat.

Chapters 45 & 44 Analysis

It is in this section where the reader first hears about the Creedish Church district. While he does let the reader know a little about his relationship with his brother and gives a little background on the Church, he is tight-lipped about the experience. When Tender talks about sex, his employers, or anything else, he is always very open and truthful. This is not how it is when he talks about the Creedish. The reader can sense that something is wrong or different about Tender's childhood. He is not freely giving information as he has done in previous chapters.

Tender does reveal that the church sent him out to work in the world when he was seventeen. For twenty-three years, Tender has been a house cleaner for various employers. His current employers are quite a handful. In some ways, they are the complete opposite of what life was like in the Creedish Church colony. Instead of a simple life, they have a large house, attend grand parties and dinners, and are so busy that they have never met their house cleaner. Yet the employers do have some things in common with the Creedish. As Tender describes, they have every minute of his entire day planned. Tender feels that he has no life. Every minute of every day is planned according to someone else's needs. This is how it has been since he was a child in the Creedish colony. He was told what to do and when to do it. All day, he learned about Church doctrine and rules in school and knew that they planned to have him work for the rest of his life. The Creedish and his employers have Tender's life completely planned out.



Chapters 43, 42 & 41

Chapters 43, 42 & 41 Summary

Tender goes to the cemetery to find Trevor Hollis' grave. As he looks for the grave, he collects flowers that have been left at the cemetery. Trevor is supposed to grow flowers in his employers' garden, but he is horrible at gardening. Trevor feels that the flowers at the cemetery are usually the most beautiful. As they are fake, they last forever. Trevor climbs up crypts to gather flowers. He steals the flowers from the cemetery and then plants them in his employers yard. When people ask him what he is doing, he says that he is doing research on the evolution of artificial flowers for his class Nature and Design 456.

In front of Crypt 678, he finds Trevor Hollis' grave. From the sixth tier of crypts, Tender sees a woman dressed in a black dress. The girl looks up at Tender. He is startled by her pale face. For a second, he doesn't know if she is dead or alive. The girl looks up at him and says, "You brought flowers." She introduces herself as Fertility and asks Tender how he knew her brother.

The next day, Tender is with her caseworker at his employers' house. One hour a week, Tender meets with a caseworker in exchange for government housing, food stamps, and free job placement. Every Tuesday, she comes to listen to his problems. Today, she is sitting in the kitchen drinking daquiris and eating tortilla chips. She tells Tender that there are only 24 survivors left - there were just 26 last week. One woman hung herself with an extension cord while another man drank some kind of herbicide. The caseworker tries to ask Tender questions about his life. Do the suicides make him remember his family? Does he ever remember what it was like before the suicides? Does he think his mother felt anything when she killed herself? Tender refuses to answer any of the questions. What he really wants to talk about is Fertility Hollis. He never wants to share about his dead family.

Tender continues to obsess over her name. When he met Fertility, he told her to call him Tender Branson. It is the only thing he has that is close to a real name. Fertility told him that she would be at the crypt next Wednesday. He is excited about seeing her next week.

Tender interrupts his own story to say that, before the plane crashes, Tender wants to explain where his name actually came from. Tender Branson is not really a name. It is more of a rank. In Creedish culture, the only name people had was a family name. Tender is the lowest rank in a family. All girls are named Bidy. As the lowest members of the family, the Tenders and Biddies are sent out into the world to work. "Tenders are workers who tend. Biddies do your bidding."

Adam, is the name given to the firstborn son. His brother was actually only born 3 minutes before Tender. In Creedish culture, there are no twins. Adam was simply the



oldest brother, because he was born first. When and if a Creedish girl gets married, her rank in the Creedish community changes. She becomes an Arthor. Tender explains that in the culture, your name explained everything other people needed to know about you. It told you how your life would go.

People always ask Tender if he is angry that he was cheated out of property and wealth, but he is not. He almost feels bad that while he was getting to explore the outside world, his brother was trapped marrying a Biddy he hardly knew. As a tender, he only watched others get married or inherit land, he and other tenders were not allowed to have dreams.

Chapters 43, 42 & 41 Analysis

This section of the book is very important as it is when Tender meets Fertility Hollis, and the reader is introduced to the caseworker. Throughout the rest of the book, Fertility will greatly effect the happenings in Tender's life. Their meeting is symbolic, because it will begin a whole new section of his life. Tender's time with the caseworker, whom he has spent the last 10 years with, is about to end. This foreshadows an impending shift in Tender's life that will develop as the novel progresses.

In this section, the caseworker keeps prodding Tender to open up about his family. It is here that the reader learns that Tender may have an obsession with suicide. He listens to people who want to commit suicide and somehow his family is connected to suicides that have happened. The reader still does not know how this is all connected to Tender's family. Tender does open up a little more about the Creedish Church. Slowly, he is revealing details about his childhood. He also beginning to showing some feelings he has toward the Church. His name is not a name at all, but symbolic of the work that he will be forced to do for the rest of his life. He has no rank or privilege in a society that he was bound to serve. He is secretly bitter that they sent him out into the world to do mindless work for the rest of his life. Since his brother was born just three minutes before him, Tender inherits nothing, while Adam gets everything. Tender is also sentenced to a life of service. This is only just the beginning of the injustices that the Creedish Church has done to Tender.



Chapters 40 & 39

Chapters 40 & 39 Summary

After work, Tender is at home, answering calls that come into his suicide hotline. Call after call, he tells people to kill themselves. To his surprise, Fertility Hollis calls in on the line. She calls in and asks, "Does it hurt very much to die?" He immediately notices her voice. Fertility explains that she wants to know, because her brother killed himself last week. Tender decides to disguise his voice, to ensure that Fertility won't recognize him as the guy from the cemetery.

Tender asks Fertility to describe how she is feeling. She says that now is probably the best time to kill herself as spring term is almost over, her lease on her apartment is almost up, and her tags on her car will expire in a week. Tender tells Fertility there is so much to live for. He asks her if she had anyone to share her grief with. Fertility says that there was one really weird guy at the cemetery. She begins to wonder if the guy she saw at the cemetery was Trevor's lover. She also says that he reminds her of the cult people who all killed themselves ten years ago. Tender is shocked by her observations. He begins to tell her that she should give the guy from the cemetery a chance. Fertility tells him that she could never date the guy, because she thinks he is really ugly. She also thinks he is really needy and pathetic, and also gay. Fertility then tells Tender that he is a really good listener. She wants to know what he looks like and possibly get to know him better in a more physical sense. She promises to meet the guy from the cemetery if he will continue to talk to her and meet her in real life.

Tender's new feelings for Fertility stir many memories in him. Ten years ago, Tender had his first meeting with his caseworker. Ten years ago, he worked at his first employer's house. He was 23 and so happy to finally have a job in the outside world. His whole life, he had been studying to go out in the real world and clean people's houses. After his first month of work, his employer's donated his entire check to the Creedish Church. Tender was ecstatic and felt like he was making a difference in the world.

People would always make fun of how Tender dressed. He wore thick, wool brown pants and potato brown shoes. Tender comments that it was nice to also see someone else in the same outfit. Whenever he saw someone else who was Creedish, there were only a few phrases between one another. The exchange would happen as follows:

May you be a complete service in your lifetime.

Praise and glory to the Lord for this day through which we labor.

May our efforts bring all those around us to Heaven.

May you die with all your work complete.



Church members were not allowed to hug or shake hands - there was no touching. They could only speak these four sentences to each other. Tender further explains that while he was in school, he mostly learned about Church Doctrine and service. Once in the outside world, the tenders and biddies were bound to serve. They were also not allowed to eat candy, dance, sing, drink or have sex. The most important rule that every Church member was taught was to rejoice if God finally called them. This was called the Deliverance - God was saving the Creedish from the approaching apocalypse. When it was time, the Creedish had to commit suicide in order to deliver themselves to God. This was what every Creedish member had to do - whether they were inside Church grounds or out in the world working.

This is why, ten years ago, a caseworker and two policemen showed up at Tender's employer's house. Tender had missed the boat. He had missed the Deliverance, and the caseworker and police officers wanted to make sure that he would not try to commit suicide. The caseworker tells Tender that he has been the victim of a horrible cult. He was a survivor. Since then, the government has created the Survivor Retention Program to watch and protect other Creedish "cult" members from committing suicide. Tender says that he should have found a way to kill himself immediately after leaving the police station. Now, whenever he sees a fellow Church member, they both hang their heads in disgrace. They are ashamed of themselves for not carrying through with what they had been taught.

Today, Tender's caseworker is over at his employers' house again. She is talking about her newest ex-boyfriend and helping Tender clean the bathroom. Tender is barely listening to her. He only begins to pay attention to her when she asks if he has received any threatening phone calls lately. Tender says, no, but is intrigued. She tells him that, recently, there have been more survivor suicides. While most of the suicides are normal, there are some that are very suspicious. She says that she thinks there is someone trying to kill the remaining survivors. If this person makes the murders look like suicides, this may cause a spike in suicides again.

Chapters 40 & 39 Analysis

Two very important themes are dealt with in these chapters. The first is sex and power, and the second is suicide. Throughout the entire novel, Tender struggles with the fact that he has never had sex. Meeting Fertility and talking to her on the phone has him completely obsessed with her. He used to steal to get over his need for a sexual release, but it does not help anymore. He does not know how to release this new sexual energy, because he has never been taught about his sexuality or how to express it. When Tender speaks to Fertility over the phone, the sexual power she has over him is evident. As she tells him that the guy she met at the cemetery is ugly, gross and fat, Tender feels helpless and powerless.

The reader also gains insight to the fact that Tender was told he can never have sex by the Creedish. He was never taught how to appreciate his sexuality. He was never

allowed to touch another man or woman Church member. Their only exchanges could be a few words on the street. Not even a hug is acceptable.

The second theme of the suicides is explored here. The reader finally learns why Tender is so obsessed with suicide. His entire family committed suicide, and he works with people on the suicide hotline every night. He constantly feels the pressure to Deliver himself as his other family members did but cannot. Suicide is the only thing he thinks about besides sex and cleaning. He feels that pressure from his dead family as well as the caseworker who is afraid he will kill himself at any moment, just like the other survivors. Tender is obsessed with it as he is so ashamed of himself for not committing suicide.



Chapters 38 & 37

Chapters 38 & 37 Summary

It is finally next Wednesday, and Tender has his "date" with Fertility Hollis. He thinks that if he can look really ugly, Fertility will see him as untapped potential. She'll see him as something she can improve. Instead of getting dressed up, he goes into his employers' garden and gets his hands, face, and clothes smudged with dirt. He has also not been answering his phone, out of fear that it will be Fertility. He doesn't want her to fall more in love with his "phone self."

He then goes to the cemetery to meet Fertility. The entire way there, he is hoping that Fertility will actually show up. When he sees her at the cemetery, she asks him if he misses Trevor a lot. At first, Tender couldn't even remember who Trevor is. Fertility then asks if Trevor ever told him about the cruise he took her on. She says that Trevor took her on a cruise, and they danced as the ship began to sink. Fertility then asks Tender to waltz with her. She grabs Tender and forces him to dance.

As the two dance through the cemetery, Fertility tells Tender that Trevor planned the whole trip. Trevor used to have dreams in which he could see the future. Trevor saw the ship sinking in one of his dreams like he could see plane crashes. Trevor would try to tell people about his dreams but they only thought he was crazy or he had some involvement in the crash. Fertility tells Tender that her mother had the same sorts of dreams. Her mother could not deal with them and killed herself, just as Trevor did. Tender asks her if she has the dreams. She says that she didn't used to, but now they are more and more frequent. Tender asks is she is going to kill herself. She says that it all depends on how bad the dreams get. She would never shoot herself - she would probably use pills.

That night, Tender goes downtown. He has this intense need to steal. His caseworker has told him that this is because its his form of sexual release. As a lot of Creedish church members have issues with sex and masturbation, his caseworker tells Tender that he has become a kleptomaniac. Yet Tender finds that stealing doesn't give him the rush he normally feels. Is it because of Fertility?

Originally, Tender was not a kleptomaniac. When he and his caseworker first began, he had obsessive compulsive disorder. Then, he had post-traumatic stress disorder, then agoraphobia, then a panic disorder. Since the caseworker couldn't figure out what was "wrong" with Tender, she told him what was wrong. As he wouldn't tell her about his childhood, he was a dissociative identity disorder. After he wouldn't join her weekly therapy group, she labeled him as having a schizophrenic personality disorder.

The caseworker gave Tender many of her old textbooks to read. Every week, he would flip through the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and choose a disorder to be for the week. Tender didn't want his real problems fixed. He did



not want to be cured. He wanted his secrets about his past and childhood to remain secrets. As long as the caseworker could cure him of hundreds of over diseases, she felt proud, and Tender could keep his secrets.

Tender continues to walk around downtown, but can't steal anything. He goes back home. As he enters his apartment, his phone begins ringing. Hoping it will be Fertility, he answers the phone. A man's voice says to him, " May you be of complete service in your lifetime." Without thinking, Tender responds, "Praise and Glory to the Lord for this day through which we labor." The voice then says, "May our efforts bring all of those around us to Heaven." Tender demands to know who is on the phone. The voice responds with "May you die when your work is complete, " and hangs up the phone.

Chapters 38 & 37 Analysis

Tender and the caseworker have had a very interesting relationship for the past ten years. While she tried to help and did not want him to die, she only diagnosed him with problems so that she could feel better about herself. Although Tender bought into this plan, after ten years, he still has issues with sex and has not learned how to cope with what happened to his family so long ago. The caseworker simply gave Tender a quick fix to his problems and obsessions. The other mental disorders and diseases that Tender pretends to have just make the pain and confusion of what happened to his family worse. Tender also buries all the painful memories of what the Creedish did to him as a child, instead of facing them.

Tender's date with Fertility continues the transition of his shift from depending on the caseworker to depending on Fertility. Slowly, he will come to depend on Fertility for many things. He also learns about her ability to see into the future. Tender does not know yet, but her gift will greatly shape and influence the rest of his life. The caseworker's news that there might be a Creedish serial killer is also very important. It foreshadows the impending return of Tender's brother, Adam.



Chapters 36, 35 & 34

Chapters 36, 35 & 34 Summary

Tender is convinced that the killer called him last night. He is completely terrified. The next day at work, he continuously calls his caseworker, but keeps getting her answering machine. Once he gets home, he continues to call the caseworker. In the middle of all his calls, Fertility calls. She wants to know if they are allowed to meet. Tender asks her about the other guy she was supposed to meet last Wednesday at the cemetery. She says that he smells, is a terrible dancer, has bad teeth, and is really fat.

Fertility then tells him that she thinks he is mysterious and sexy. Tender tells her that if she will have sex with the man from the cemetery, he will meet her in person. At first, she refuses. Tender tells her that if she takes the guy on a date he will definitely meet her. Fertility finally agrees.

The next day, the caseworker is over again, helping Tender clean. She is scrubbing the floors with a strong mixture of bleach and ammonia. Tender tells her that he tried calling her repeatedly yesterday and that the killer contacted him. The caseworker tells him not to worry. Even if there was a killer, the suicide rates are back up. Last night, eleven more people died. That means only five Creedish survivors are still alive. Now, the killer has no reason to murder anyone as other Creedish are killing themselves on their own. The caseworker then tells Tender that she can't hold his hand anymore. He is either going to kill himself or not. She is going to move on with her life.

As the novel progresses, Tender reveals that right after a Church member was baptized, they had to leave the colony. There was already an assignment lined up for him and other tenders and biddies. Before baptism, members were expected to get themselves perfect. They had to learn their Bible, etiquette, and cleaning lessons, and also lose weight. To inspire the tenders and biddies to be even more attentive to their lessons, they were told that good jobs included working as gardeners in amusement parks and hotels. Bad jobs were pumping cesspools and cleaning asbestos. The tenders and biddies were so worried about getting a bad job that they never worried or thought about what it would be like to clean up after someone all day. They never guessed how boring that life could be. As long as there was a good assignment waiting for you, how could you want anything more?

Chapters 36, 35 & 34 Analysis

It is becoming clear that the caseworker is relinquishing her role in Tender's life. She no longer cares if he lives or die, she wants to make things better for herself. The reader begins to wonder if the caseworker ever cared about keeping Tender alive. Was she just doing it so she did not look incompetent? Does she even care about Tender? How in ten years has she not gotten him to talk about his past?



As Tender tells his story into the flight recorder, the reader can see how much his past has hurt him. While he tries to move on in chronological order of what happened to him from day to day, he frequently breaks the chain to inform the reader of his childhood in the Church community. Each time, he gives a little bit more detail of what happened to him, but repeats information also. This scattered-brain style of story telling shows how disturbing his childhood was. Tender continues to bring it up, but refuses to give all of the details right away. He hides only this part of his life from the reader. Slowly, Tender is revealing that he was not okay with everything the Church taught. He is not okay with his menial job. He was not okay with never getting paid and that all of his hard earned money went to the Creedish.



Chapters 33 & 32

Chapters 33 & 32 Summary

The next Wednesday, Fertility and Tender go on their third date. For transportation, they take the bus. While on the bus, someone begins to make Creedish jokes. Tender tries to fit in by laughing at the jokes along with everyone else on the bus. Fertility tells the joker to shut up. She does not think it is funny that he is joking about people who committed suicide.

When the bus stops, people begin to exit. As the joker leaves the bus, Tender realizes that he recognizes him. He is staring at a very familiar face - his own face. The joker asks Tender if they know one another, but Tender vehemently refuses. He then asks if Tender is his brother, and Tender again refuses to acknowledge him.

Fertility is mad that Tender was laughing at the Creedish with the others on the bus. She ignores him for the rest of their ride. When they arrive at their stop, she tells Tender to hurry. They rush into a nearby department store and go up to the fifth floor. A few minutes after they arrive, they smell smoke. The fire alarms begin to ring, and the sprinkler system goes off. Fertility tells Tender that she wants to dance. In the middle of a sprinkler downpour and inflamed mannequins, the two do the Cha-Cha. Fertility tells Tender that she saw this happen in her dream. She also tells him that next week a bakery will explode and asks him if he wants to watch. He agrees. The two continue to dance until the firemen find them.

Fertility continues to dream about things that will happen in the future. She tells Tender about a gas station that is going to explode, a crystal chandelier that will fall in a hotel lobby, hundreds of canaries that will escape from a pet store, and so on. Fertility has also started keeping a calendar of what will happen. She also shows this to Tender.

Tender wants to know why she won't call anyone and tell them what's going to happen. Fertility explains that Trevor tried to warn people, but then people thought he was a terrorist. No one ever believed that he was simply having visions. Fertility feels that the people who didn't believe Trevor are the ones who killed him. While Fertility explains all this, Tender feels guilty, because he is the one who told Trevor to kill himself. Fertility then tells Tender to pick a disaster from the calendar, and they'll go watch it together.

Tender thinks about the people that will die in the gas station explosion and the chandelier accident. He thinks about how everyone will eventually die. Telling them so, will just frighten or piss them off. People never believe you until it's too late.

Later that night, Fertility calls Tender (his phone personality). She tells him that the weird guy from the cemetery is not so bad. She tells him that Trevor's boyfriend really needs somebody. Fertility also reveals that she knows Tender is a Creedish. She also tells him that Trevor's boyfriend pathetically refused to admit that his brother was on the



bus. Fertility says that she wants to help him embrace his past, because she is sure he is headed for some hard times.

Fertility then tells him that they still have to get together, but she has to go. Her job is getting really bad. She tells Tender that if anyone named Dr. Ambrose calls asking for Gwen, tell him that they have never met. Also, Dr. Ambrose isn't a doctor, he is more so her booking agent. What she does for him isn't too illegal. She attempts to tell him, but Tender has a breakdown and cannot bear to listen.

At the end of Chapter 32, Tender breaks into his story to tell the reader that the first engine has just flamed out.

Chapters 33 & 32 Analysis

All Tender wants to do is be normal. He wants to fit in, but because of his past that he is constantly trying to escape, he cannot. He does not even realize that he still looks like a Creedish Church member. He is trying so hard to deny who he is, that he is blind to the obvious. His own brother is standing on the bus, and he still cannot admit where he has come from. This is why Fertility thinks he is so pathetic.

It is also ironic that Tender thinks Fertility is wrong for not warning people about their death, when he tells people to commit suicide every night. Fertility does not tell people what she knows because of what happened to Trevor. No one ever believed him, and no one would believe her if she told them they were going to die. Fertility does not want to get that involved in other people's lives. Tender could help the people who call into the hotline every night instead of telling them to kill themselves. He is very hypocritical for being mad with Fertility for not telling people about her gift.



Chapters 31, 30 & 29

Chapters 31, 30 & 29 Summary

The next day at work, Tender is bombarded with calls from agents and producers. They all want to know if he is really the last surviving Creedish. Tender's caseworker is terrified that he will commit suicide. She is doing anything she can to appease him, even if this includes making gin and tonics. On the television, a reporter is saying the last surviving Creedish is on a suicide watch.

The agents and producers who are calling Tender tell him that he can have his own TV show, exercise video, People magazine cover, his own religious program, his own line of autographed bibles, and product endorsements. He could be a Celebrity Superstar.

While Tender is on the phone, he and his caseworker examine other survivors' files. Last night, the second to last survivor ate dirt in order to kill herself. The girl before that died with her head in an oven. Despite all the work of the Survivor Retention Program, everyone else has killed themselves, but Tender. After Tender heard about these deaths, he began smoking and drinking.

Tender reveals to the reader that ten years ago, someone leaked to the FBI that the Creedish were preparing children for labor. The FBI went out to the colony to do head counts of all the children in the church. They discovered there were many children at the colony in Nebraska without birth certificates. When the FBI returned to make arrests, they found that the entire colony had killed itself. The whole colony has died together, holding hands. The media labeled the Creedish as the Child Slave Cult.

Tender realizes that he is finally free from the Church. Yet he does not feel any relief. He feels how he felt ten years ago. Minute by minute, he is moving farther away from what he feels he should do. He cannot kill himself.

The next day, Tender comes into work to find his caseworker dead. Tender has gone to the store to get paper cups and coffee. When he returned, he entered through the basement window to avoid the press that was outside the front door. Upon entering the house, he found the caseworker in front of the fireplace with the stench of deadly chlorine gas all around her. When he discovers the body, he stands over it for a long time, sipping on a strawberry daiquiri. Tender then calls the cops, tells them not to rush and makes a batch of strawberry daiquiris while he waits for the police. Then, he called an agent.

When the police arrive, he locks himself in the bathroom. He tells them that he did not steal her case files or her copy of the DSM. Tender swears that he did not kill the caseworker, but he does not tell the police that he is glad someone did. He finally feels free of the past ten years. She knew everything that linked him to his past: the suicides; his problems with sex and masturbation; his innermost thoughts.



Tender finally decides to leave the bathroom. He gives the police the rest of his statement and heads outside where the agent has arranged for a limo to pick him up. Over the phone, the agent tells Tender that the limo will be there in five minutes to pick him up. Tender tells one of the police officers to add more rum to the next batch of daiquiris and leaves the house.

On the plane, Tender realizes he forgot his goldfish. He calls Fertility to ask her to take care of it. He says that he will not be able to talk to her or dance with her anymore, because he is going to become a big star. Fertility says she doubts this. She knows that Tender is on fish six hundred forty-one. She also knows that he is the last surviving member of the Creedish. She tells him that she is having so many dreams that nothing surprises her anymore.

Chapters 31, 30 & 29 Analysis

The caseworker's death should symbolize a time of rebirth for Tender. As he has just found out that he is the last surviving Creedish, he has so many opportunities for his new life. He says he is happy that she is dead as she is the only one who knew about all his problems and his past. Now, he feels like he can escape and become someone new. This is not true, however, because Tender never really worked through anything with the caseworker. He is still carrying around emotional baggage. Also, the reason that the agent and media want Tender is because of his past. They want him, because he is the last surviving Creedish, not because he has a special talent or message to get out to people. They want to exploit his childhood to make money.

When Tender realizes that he forgot his goldfish, he is sad. It's the only thing he was ever allowed to keep and love. Even though it is by no means his first fish, it's special as it was the only thing the Church allowed him to have. The fish, like his emotions, still tie Tender to his past.



Chapters 28, 27, 26 & 25

Chapters 28, 27, 26 & 25 Summary

On the way home from the airport, Tender gets his first lesson on the inner workings of the PR company he has decided to work with. One of the company's many ventures is to create and trademark drug names. While in the limo, the agent beings taking ChemoSolv, a cure for cancer. ChemoSolv has not actually been invented yet, but when it is, the PR and marketing team already have a name and brand image for the drug. The agent is really only taking sugar pills.

The agency does not only do this with drugs. They have also done this for Tender's career. Before they even knew Tender would be the last Creedish, they began creating the marketing for the last survivor. His company has been tracking who the last Creedish would be for the last 6 months. He says that this is because new things never happen. There have been mass suicides dating back to 1653. It was just a matter of time until the Creedish mass suicide occurred. Since nothing new ever happens, the company has to make things look interesting.

Tender then tells the agent if there might be a possibility that there might be one other Creddish still living who was killing off other church members. The agent is seriously alarmed by this. If there is another Creedish alive, then Tender is just wasting his time.

While in New York, Tender is forced to make dramatic changes to his life. His agents and PR team want to reinvent him. He must be thinner and more handsome. They tell him that no one would have worshiped an overweight Jesus. Tender concludes that the only way to obtain "salvation" is to have a press following and exposure. Basically, if no one is watching you, then you do not exist. People do so much work to maintain a certain body or image. Yet, Tender realizes that at some point, it does not matter. Everyone loses their body, because they die. Tender explains that this is why he agrees to the steroids, electrolysis, tooth capping, dermabrasion, and chemical peels that his agent suggests. Everyone loses everything. Why not bet it all now?

As Tender becomes a huge spiritual celebrity, his life gets more and more ridiculous. To please his fans, and be the spiritual savior they are seeking, he cannot only lead them in prayer, but must also look the part. On top of losing weight, he begins taking all sorts of steroids. He takes steroids that make him skinnier, but also have horrible side affects. They make his heart speed; he constantly sweats and has insomnia, but he looks amazing. While the steroids fix some problems, the side affects only cause more problems. When Tender's hair began to fall out, his team prescribed Rogaine. When he got acne from the steroid Laurabolin, they gave him Retin-A to clear it up.

Tender also realizes that the masses do not want to worship anyone who is less than perfect. No one wants to see the regular person he is. He can't have hang nails, bad breath or messy hair. All his speeches and hymns are written by a marketing team.



Every church ceremony he performs is planned. Before Tender was under contract, the media team had written his autobiography. They had also written press releases and acquired merchandising licenses to sell his entire personality. The agent tells Tender that he is the new diet cola. The people he is "saving" are his target market. When Tender looks at himself in the mirror, he cannot even recognize who he is. Tender also realizes that all the drugs, money and time, all the effort was so that when he kills himself, everyone will be watching.

Before one of his shows, Tender decides he will kill himself in front of everyone in the auditorium. He is backstage with the agent with a loaded gun in his robes. Backstage, he and his agent are smoking and watching the show.

Tender misses his cue and goes onto stage. As he begins his sermon, the entire crowd hangs on his every word. He reads everything that was already written for him from the teleprompter. The speech that he spews out is related to how precious the gift of life is. He also says that God's only gift greater than life is the gift of death. In all of this, the lesson is for people who commit murder and suicide. After Tender gives the speech, he feels that he cannot kill himself - it would just look stupid. The rest of the evening went on as planned.

Chapters 28, 27, 26 & 25 Analysis

From this point on in the book, the celebrity theme is prevalent. The cultural obsession with celebrities in today's society has gotten completely out of hand. There are television shows and magazines solely responsible for letting the public know what other celebrities are up to. Tender explains how the media team completely changes him. If he wants to be famous, he must basically be perfect. Regular people do not want spiritual leaders with normal problems and ugly looks, they want perfection. He is this new hero who preaches to the masses, but behind the stage, he is taking illegal drugs. He is thin, waxed, wigged and fake.

Tender surrenders to the torture that the agent, trainer, and media team put his body through. He only does this because of his very cynical view that he is going to die one day, so why not abuse his body so he can live his life to the best of his ability. This is the same thought that many people have. With all the quick fixes that are available for losing weight, improving skin and changing moods, people can become the person they want immediately. The problem with a quick fix is that it usually is not permanent, and the original problem comes back in full force. This is the same thing that happened to Tender when he was working with the caseworker. Although she thought she was fixing him by constantly diagnosing and "curing" him, she was prolonging his anguish and depression concerning what happened with his family and childhood.



Chapters 24, 23 & 22

Chapters 24, 23 & 22 Summary

Before the plane crashes, Tender wants everyone to know that the Book of Very Common Prayer was not his idea. While the book did sell two hundred million copies, it was all the agents' idea. Tender never actually even read the book until the second press run. He does not see the book until someone asks for his autograph.

The book contains prayers such as: the Prayer to Delay Orgasm, the Prayer to Loose Weight, the Prayer to Stop Smoking, the Prayer to Prevent Hair loss, the Prayer for a Parking Space, etc. Tender maintains that a lot of people actually used the book but began to get angry when the prayers would not work. For example, people stuck in traffic would say the Prayer to Make Traffic Move. Attendance at Tender's tours was down. His popularity had peaked. Tender was ready to end it all when his agent called. The agent finally booked a thirty-second slot between a tennis show commercial and a taco restaurant spot. In that time, he has to perform a miracle.

After Tender learns that he has to perform a miracle, he invites Fertility to meet him for lunch in Spokane, Washington. She happens to be there on business for her job. Tender forgets that Fertility knows everything. She knows that the waitress in the restaurant has cancer and that somewhere in China, a movie theater will burn down. She already knows that Tender needs a miracle. According to Fertility, everything happens in a pattern. If you watch closely, nothing is new. You can always figure things out. Every night in her dreams, Fertility sees patterns - she only pays attention to them now.

She asks Tender to give her a time window for the miracle. She then rattles off many different disasters that will be going on next week (An oil tanker capsizes, shark attack, a tanning salon explosion). She finally mentions that a zillion killer bees will swarm in Dallas, Texas. Tender chooses that to reveal. Fertility curses and says that she knew he would pick that one all along.

At ten past eight on Sunday evening of that week, killer bees do invade Dallas. Tender is booked again, but this time he is booked for an entire minute. The agent has decided to call it Tender Branson's Miracle Minute. Tender has new miracles to report, thanks to Fertility. He says that he feels like a television newscaster. The only difference is that he lets people know about what's going on before it happens. As long as Fertility keeps giving him miracles, he could tape a whole season. Then, he can be free to go on press tours and book signings. With all this going on, Tender questions if he will ever have time to commit suicide. Tender says that if the publicist put killing himself into the schedule, Tender would actually have time to do it.

Tender has not seen Fertility. She is nowhere to be found. Right now, Tender is in the men's bathroom in Miami reading all the writings on the stall wall. Suddenly, he hears a whisper. It is a woman's voice - Fertility's. All he can see is her mouth through a hole in



the stall wall. She says that she is there on assignment for her job. She asks Tender if he needs another disaster. She tells him he is greedy, just like all the other guys she has dated.

Tender is upset, because he thinks she is telling him this so that he will commit suicide. However, Fertility does not want Tender dead. She explains that she needs him. He is the only thing left that surprises her. Everything else is a pattern. As he was brought up in a different world, he is her only hope of seeing anything new. Tender insists that he is not all that different, but Fertility knows he is. She says that she will not give him predictions right now because if she does, he will never see her again. She will only give him one a week. She also tells him that she will know where to find him.

Chapters 24, 23 & 22 Analysis

It is interesting to note that Tender never takes responsibility for any of the things the agent does in his name. Although he is just as responsible because he signed contracts, he seems to be caught up in a whirlwind. Tender always tries to justify the things that were done in his name, by saying he had nothing to do with them. He could have stopped the books, TV shows, and so forth. As he lacks his own sense of power, he cannot figure out a way to end the chaos that surrounds him.

It is interesting to note that Fertility talks about patterns, just as the agent did. Fertility says she can predict the future, because she looks at patterns that are in her dreams. This is also what the agent said the media team did for predicting the Creedish Death Cult's suicides. The agent and his team simply tracked the patterns of events that have happened before. This leads the reader to suspect Fertility's gift. How can she know what is going to happen, simply from patterns? So far, she has given Tender specific events that will happen. Both the agent and Fertility tell Tender that nothing is new anymore, it's just a repeat of what's already happened some time before.

The reader also begins to wonder if Fertility has feelings for Tender. Although she says he is the only thing that still surprises her, she is always there to help him and does not want him to kill himself. She must want to keep him around for more than just entertainment. Whether the feelings are sisterly or romantic, she seems to really care about what happens to Tender.



Chapters 21, 20, 19 & 18

Chapters 21, 20, 19 & 18 Summary

As a part of his new weekly television show, Tender sits down with a well-known journalist for an interview. The show is called Peace of Mind. It was actually Fertility who told him that he would one day be famous and have a show. She also made him promise that he would never sell her out. Although he will betray his religion and family, she does not want him to betray her. On this particular taping, the journalist is asking Tender about his childhood. For every question she poses to him, Tender reads the answer off of the teleprompter. The screen is prompting him to say that his childhood was terrible. It says that he was sexually abused and humiliated. He reads that church elders then killed children. On full moons, they only wore their children's bare skins and danced by firelight. The whole time that Tender recites what's on the teleprompter, he feels dead inside. Because of all the drugs and steroids, he cannot feel his face. He feels completely detached from the interview.

People also call into the show. They ask for Tender's help and advice. As a surprise, Fertility calls into the show. She says she likes a guy who is avoiding her as he hates her job. She reveals that she has a booking agent - Dr. Ambrose, but he is not a real doctor. Couples who want to have babies contact him. The couples are looking for surrogate mothers. Fertility then goes to live with the couple for one week. She and the husband have sex. Each time they have sex, Fertility and Dr. Ambrose are paid five thousand dollars. The worst part of the whole scheme is that Fertility is infertile. Fertility did tell Tender this over the phone, but he refused to listen. She also revealed to him that her real name is Gwen Hollis. She uses Fertility as a stage name. Fertility wants to know what Tender thinks. As he cannot think of what to say, he reads what is on the teleprompter. It calls Fertility a tramp and says she is beyond redemption. Fertility then hangs up on the call.

Before the plane crashes, Tender also wants everyone to know that the PornFill was not his idea. The agent came to him with a contract and told him to sign on the "x." Tender obeyed, and the PornFill was born. Since Tender is the last surviving Creedish, he inherited all the Creedish land in Nebraska. The agent thought it would be a good idea to turn this into a place where people could drop off pornographic materials they no longer wanted with no questions asked. The agent would charge collectors a ton to drop off the materials, and the collectors would then pass this on to their customers. That way, everyone would make money. The PornFill idea finally drove Tender's brother, Adam, out of hiding. Adam finds Fertility and forces her, by gunpoint, to tell him where Tender is.

Again, in Chapter 19, Tender wants to reiterate that he was not responsible for certain things that were published, made or marketed in his name. He wants everyone to know before the flight recorder runs out of time, that the Peace of Mind Television Show, the



Tender Branson Dashboard Statuette, the Bible Diet, Money Making Secrets of the Bible, the Bible Trivia board game, and the Genesis Campaign were not his ideas.

Like everything else in Tender's new life, the Genesis Campaign was a quick fix. To Tender, everything was becoming a quick fix, so much so that he was beginning to forget what the original problem was. Fans and the media would always question him about his virginity. They were disturbed by the fact that a man in his 30's could still be a virgin.

To remedy the problem, the agent decides that Tender will get married. In a limo on the way to another show, the agent tells Tender that there will be a contest. Women across the country will fill out a questionnaire and see if they qualify to marry Tender. The agent reveals that this is actually all a hoax Tender's wife has already been picked out. She is the event manager's new assistant. The agent and event planner have already planned the wedding. It will take place during the Super Bowl halftime show, and the wedding colors will depend on what teams are playing. They also tell them that he will have to make a miracle happen.

While in a hotel, Tender receives a package in the mail. It is a copy of the DSM. This copy looks really familiar. It turns out it is the caseworker's missing DSM. Minutes later, the agent enters the room. He yells at Tender for having the manual. He asks Tender if he realizes that the police are very close to arresting him. If they found the manual, they would take him into custody immediately. The agent wants to know who sent the book. Tender tells him that it was probably his brother, Adam. The agent is furious. If anyone finds out that there is another living Creedish, they will rip Tender apart. There will be a huge public backlash, because people will be so angry that they were lied to. The agent tells Tender that he needs to remember: He has no brother, he misses his family and deeply misses the caseworker. He needs to get rid of the DSM immediately.

Chapters 21, 20, 19 & 18 Analysis

In this section, the reader finally finds out what Fertility's job is. Tender already knew from when she attempted to tell him on the phone, but he blocked out the memory. There is also the question as to whether Fertility really likes Tender. Did she just say that because she was on TV? Or does she really have feelings for him? Tender only says those things to Fertility, because the teleprompter tells him to. He is so messed up from the drugs and lifestyle, that he is forgetting who really cares about him. He is turning into a true, snobby celebrity.

Tender is still battling with his problems with sex. He is still a virgin, and people are wondering why. They do not think it is normal that someone his age is still a virgin. Tender might be getting married, but he is not actually going to have sex with his new bride. He still will not be able to free himself from his sexual problems, thus never giving him power over his own life.



When Tender receives the missing DSM manual. He knows it will be bad news. He realizes that it has to be from his brother Adam. Although Adam has not yet made an appearance in the book, Tender always feels his presence weighing him down. The agent is only mad with Tender as he is endangering their enterprise. The agent is a key element in the celebrity theme - always pressuring Tender to be something he is not for the sake of sales and more media coverage. He does not care about the real Tender - he probably does not even know anything about Tender's true feelings.



Chapters 17, 16, & 15

Chapters 17, 16, & 15 Summary

In the New Orleans airport, Tender is in another bathroom stall waiting for Fertility. It is the Super Bowl, and she still has not given him his miracle. He has been waiting in the bathroom stall for over two hours, while his agent, bride, and media team wait outside. Finally, Fertility shows up. She tells Tender that she knew he would betray her, but she was upset that he called her a harlot on national TV. She then tells him that Adam is here. Tender looks over to the left stall. In the hole in the wall, there is a gun pointed at him. Adam tells him from the other side that he had a loaded gun with six bullets, and one will definitely find him. Fertility assures Tender that Adam will not kill him.

Fertility then tells Tender that she knows that she had a dream the night before. She knows what the Creedish did to Tender as a child. Tender insists that it was not that bad. Adam interjects and says that what the Creedish did to the tenders and biddies was horrible. They did it to make them never want to have sex. Adam says that what they did made him sick. Tender wants his miracle now. Fertility tells him that he is going to need more than a miracle. Before the game, the police will find the agent dead. He is going to be found with a bottle of Tender's new perfume "Truth." The perfume will be a deadly mixture of bleach and ammonia - just like the caseworker.

From the other stall, Adam says that he killed the caseworker and planted the deadly mixture on the agent. He also stole the caseworker's files and DSM, which he sent to Tender. He did all of this so that Tender would be blamed for the murders. Fertility also reveals that the police are going to suspect that Tender committed all of the Creedish murders. He went from being a nobody to a somebody. They will think he did it to become famous. Yet, Fertility says that they have a plan. She has a huge miracle that Tender will need to reveal to the crowd. After he tells everyone, he will have just enough time to escape to the parking lot, where Fertility and Adam will be waiting for him in a red car.

At six o'clock, the Super Bowl begins. When it is finally half-time, Tender and his people take the field. When Tender and his bride begin the ceremony, they mouth the words that are being blasted over the loud speaker. After they have finished speaking, they fake the kiss. Just as the justice-of-the-peace is handing over the mic for Tender's big miracle, the police begin advancing towards the field. They must have found the agent. Tender grabs the mic and yells that the Colts will beat the Cardinals by 3 points. Complete pandemonium breaks out.

Tender escapes, because the police have to keep angry fans from storming the field. The massive crowd wanted to kill Tender for revealing the result of the game. Tender, Fertility and Adam make their way to a local Ronald McDonald house to hide out. They tell the housemother that their daughter is in a local hospital receiving treatment for a



deadly disease. Because of this, they are allowed to stay at the house. Tender reveals that this plan was Adam's idea.

Chapters 17, 16, & 15 Analysis

Finally, Adam makes his appearance in the book. Although he has been pressuring with his memory, he is less intimidating to Tender as Fertility is reassuring Tender that Adam will not hurt him. It is also no surprise that Adam killed the caseworker and is going to kill the agent. Tender always suspected that Adam was behind every murder.

It is surprising that Adam does not want to see Tender fail. Instead of letting Tender take the fall for the murders as he originally planned, he decides to help Tender. The reader, and even Tender, are not sure why Adam has had this change of heart. It seems that throughout the entire book his goal has been to kill Tender. Now it seems as though he wants to fix their relationship. He feels horrible about what Tender went through as a child and is angry that Tender is unable to recognize what happened to him.



Chapters 14, 13, 12 & 11

Chapters 14, 13, 12 & 11 Summary

After staying at the Ronald McDonald house, the three need a way out of New Orleans. They decide to travel the way Adam has been traveling throughout the country unnoticed. He has been hopping on manufactured trailer houses. The houses are delivered from state to state. The three sneak into one of the houses while the driver eats at a gas station. They plan to jump on different houses and ride them all the way to Nebraska.

While on the trip, Tender begins to have panic attacks. His muscles are beginning to sag, his body is changing as he has not had his regular dosage of drugs and steroids. He cannot believe he is sleeping in a tracker trailer house instead of a four-star hotel. He cannot stand not being the center of attention. He begs Fertility to let them get caught. That way, he could go to prison and possibly get that electric chair and still be in the public eye. Tender finally passes out from his anxiety.

When he wakes up, they are in a different house. It is a top of the line house. Fertility has been applying lotion and moisturizer to his entire body. When they finally stop, Tender is still getting over his panic attack, and Adam is sleeping. He begs Fertility to get him some Chap Stick for his parched lips at the gas station. Fertility says that she will not always physically be with Tender, but she will always know where to find Tender.

When the truck begins to drive away from the train station, Fertility has not yet returned. Tender says that he knows she would not get back on the truck. She tries to run after the truck, but is not fast enough. Adam gets very mad at Tender for letting Fertility get away. Before Fertility is out of sight of the truck, Adam yells at her, telling her thank you for telling him everything that is about to happen.

Chapters 14, 13, 12 & 11 Analysis

While Tender always insisted that he was being forced to become a celebrity, a part of himself loved the attention he received. Once he is forced to travel in a trailer home, he completely panics. It proves that while Tender might not have liked being poked and prodded into becoming fake, he did not object to it. He liked being in the public eye, no matter how much of himself that he had to change. This is probably true for many other people who give up who they are to be in the public eye.

Fertility further proves how much she cares about Tender. Once again, she saves him and helps him gain his sanity. For some reason, she understands him. Is it because she needs him to constantly keep surprising her? Fertility has no reason to be kind to Tender, except for the fact that she has developed feelings for him.



Chapters 10, 9, 8 & 7

Chapters 10, 9, 8 & 7 Summary

One night before the brothers return to Nebraska, Tender tells Adam everything he remembers from his childhood. He says he remembers the beautiful orchids, people living simple lives, everything was peaceful, and always clean. Adam becomes very angry with Tender. He cannot believe how stupid his brother is. He finally tells Tender that he was the one who turned the Creedish into the FBI. He left home one night and called the police. He told them that there was only one birth certificate for every twenty Creedish child. That started the investigation.

Tender still believes that his childhood is great. Adam becomes enraged, because Tender is still the same little boy who the Creedish taught lies. They bred him and the other tenders and biddies to do nothing but work. They could never actually enjoy life. Adam says that they made him the ultimate slave. Tender will continue to be a slave until he finally has sex.

The two brothers finally steal a car and begin to drive it the rest of the way to Nebraska. On the dashboard of the car is the Tender Branson Dashboard Statuette. While they drive, Adam finally asks Tender if he remembers what the Creedish elders did to him. Tender still cannot recall anything. Adam tells him that he did not know what happened until the night his wife had their first child. In the birth room were Church elders, tenders and biddies. The Church elders told his wife to scream very loudly and look as though the birth was horribly painful. While she was in labor, they preached to the young tenders and biddies that sex was bad and caused terrible pain and horrible consequences. She screamed, and the baby died. Then, his wife died. After that, Adam left the colony for good and called the police. Adam explains that if the tenders and biddies never had sex, they never had power. Sex is the first rebellion of a young person. The tenders and biddies were denied this and were therefore locked into a lifetime of slavery. Adam also says that the Church elders were money hungry, power thirsty, racists.

When Tender finally wakes up, all he hears is screaming. Adam has crashed the car into a wall near the PornFill, their old home. Adam is clutching his face, and blood is pouring through his hands. Lodged in his eye is the Tender Branson Dashboard Statuette. Amongst all of the porn magazines and tapes, Adam lays down on the ground. His screams begin to turn into laughter. He tells Tender that this must be his punishment. Tender says he is going to find help, but Adam does not want Tender to leave him alone to be found by the cops. He wants Tender to "deliver" him. Tender refuses. Adam then wants him to mutilate his face so that no one can recognize him. He then tells Tender to find a rock and hit his face as hard as he can. As first, Tender refuses, but Adam tells him he will not let Tender kill him. Tender hits Adam once. Adam screams for him to do it again. Tender continues with Adam yelling at him to keep striking him. Finally, Adam is silent.



At the end of Chapter 8, Tender informs the reader that the third engine of Flight 2039 has just flamed out.

Tender decides to bury his brother. Underneath the piles of pornography, in the land he grew up in, he lays Adam to rest. To his surprise, a taxi pulls up to the PornFill. Fertility steps out of the car. She walks toward Tender and tells him to get into the taxi. In the car, Fertility assures Tender that he did not kill Trevor and Adam. Trevor was bored with life. He knew everything and could not bare the boredom. Adam killed himself because that was the only thing he knew to do. He always wanted to be delivered, because he is a Creedish. She also lets Tender know that the media is calling Tender the Antichrist. All his merchandise has gone through the roof. Tender asks if his goldfish is still alive. Fertility tells him that it just died one day. It was only a fish, but it is the only thing that Tender had to love. In the back of the cab, he starts to cry.

Chapters 10, 9, 8 & 7 Analysis

Finally, the reader learns what actually happened to Tender as a child. It explains why Tender has problems exerting himself sexually and aggressively. Until he has sex, he is trapped. He is still a boy and not a man. Once he has liberated himself from his identity as a virgin, he can embrace his own personal power. Adam realizes this and feels as though he must shake Tender out of his self denial, because he wants his brother to be able to lead his own life. Tender must have sex so that he can be in power of his own life.

The reader also begins to wonder is Tender is really as naive as he acts. Throughout the book, so many people lead him and tell him what to do. Tender even listens to Adam when he says to hit him in the face with a rock. Obviously, a reasonable person would know that this many blows to the face would kill someone. Tender, feeling that he needs Adam to tell him what to do, continually hits him until he is dead. This is what Adam wanted - he wanted to be Delivered. As much as he tried to escape from being Creedish, for so long it was all he ever knew. While he was bitter because of what they did to Tender and his wife, he was still a Creedish. He still wanted to be Delivered.



Chapters 6, 5 & 4

Chapters 6, 5 & 4 Summary

From Nebraska, Fertility and Tender begin their trip back home. They decide to stay at the Ronald McDonald houses in each city. Each night, they have a different child with a different disease. All those nights that they sleep together in the same bed, Tender never mentions that Adam's last wish was for him and Fertility to have sex. Of course, Fertility already knows that.

Finally, when the two reach home, Fertility arranges for them to stay the night at one of her client's homes. She tells Tender that she will have to sleep with the husband, but after that, she will be able to sneak him into the house. Tender is shocked to find out that the house they are going to belongs to his former employers.

Later that night, after Fertility has slept with the husband of the house, she lets Tender into the house. They stay together in the same bedroom. Fertility asks him if he is ready to have sex. He agrees. It only lasts half a minute, and Fertility does not give Tender another chance to try again.

The next morning when Tender wakes up, Fertility is making plane reservations. She tells him that she is going to Australia. Fertility tells Tender that she is pregnant. She was supposed to be barren, but she did not see this coming. She wants to go to Australia to have an abortion. As she says all of this, Fertility is moving very fast. Tender is trying to follow her. As they are exiting the house, the husband sees Tender. He recognizes him as the "Antichrist" and begins to call for his wife.

Tender begins to run out of the house, but grabs Fertility's daily planner that she left behind. He notices that she has an event scribbled down. It says that at 1:25 this afternoon, someone will hijack flight 2039.

At the end of Chapter 4, Tender informs the reader that the last engine has just flamed out.

Chapters 6, 5 & 4 Analysis

In this section, Tender finally has sex with Fertility. Finally, he is no longer a virgin - even if it was not all that he thought it might be cracked up to be. Although it is nothing earth shattering, he already begins to show his ability to stand up for himself. When Fertility tries to leave him, he refuses to let her go. He wants to know why she has had this change of heart and demands answers from her. He is finally asserting himself.

Fertility's feelings for Tender are still in question here. Does she only sleep with him, because Adam begged her? Fertility's character remains very guarded throughout the novel. It is very hard to tell what she is thinking or hiding. It is also very ironic that she



has become pregnant. After sleeping with so many different men, and being told she was sterile, Fertility does not even see her pregnancy coming. Could her being with Tender have finally surprised her? Finally, she will not be bored with life.



Chapters 3 & 2

Chapters 3 & 2 Summary

At the airport, FBI agents are looking for Tender Branson. Tender is following Fertility around. He notices that she has an urn and gun with her. She tells him that someone is going to hijack the plane, even if it has to be her. Tender does not understand why Fertility is doing this. She tells him that she knows this plane will crash. It is fate. As Tender tries to make sense of the situation, the FBI agents approach and order him to freeze. Without thinking, Tender grabs Fertility's gun and points it at her head. He holds her like a hostage and backs onto the plane.

As he and Fertility board the plane, he tells the passengers to stay calm. There is a hijacker on the plane, but everything will be fine. Behind him, Fertility begins to laugh. Tender continues to search for who the hijacker is. Fertility tells him that this whole situation is so funny, it is ironic. Tender tells everyone to get down until he finds the terrorist. People begin to pile their jewelry, cell phones, and computers in the aisle. As Tender continues to search, Fertility begins to rifle through people's belongings.

It finally starts to dawn on Tender that he is the hijacker. Tender begins to laugh. He asks Fertility if she set him up, and she admits she did a little. She also tells him that he will have to figure this out on his own. For the first time, he will do this without anyone else. It will be all him. He will record his life story and then leave it behind. Then she and him will start a new life together somewhere else with the baby.

So, this is what Tender has done. He has recorded his entire story, from beginning to end. Everything is over but now he just needs a way out. He does not know what to do. Fertility promised everything would be fine, but he feels stupid, because he cannot figure out what she meant. Tender says he is trapped in the plane, and the crash is imminent. Yet he feels good, because he has shared his story and can now walk away from being Tender Branson.

Chapters 3 & 2 Analysis

It is almost unbelievable how easily Fertility tricks Tender into hijacking the plane. He is really trying to stop her from leaving, because he wants her in his life. He does not want her to go to Australia. While Fertility might not have seen herself getting pregnant, she knew Tender would hijack the plane. She knew he would have his time to confess everything and then be free of being Tender Branson.

Tender is excited that Fertility promises they could be together after he tells his story. His last task is to figure out how to get out of the plane. This is the ultimate test as to whether he has gained the power he needs to take over his own life. There is no agent, no caseworker, no Adam and no Fertility to tell him what to do. Finally, he can make his own decision. He can choose to live or die.



Characters

Tender Branson

Tender Branson is the main character of the novel. Tender tells his entire story as Flight 2039 to Australia is about to crash. He is recording everything into the flight recorder. In the novel, he reveals that he is a member of the Creedish Church, also known as the Creedish Death Cult. The cult prepared Tender for a life of service in the outside world. All the money he made working went back to the Church. When Tender was 23, the entire church committed suicide, so that they could be delivered back to Heaven. Tender was also supposed to commit suicide but does not.

Tender was brainwashed by the Creedish Church. He was taught that his entire life should only be to work and that he should never have sex, because it was terrible and wrong. This affects him for the rest of his life and causes him to have problems with sex and masturbation. He also always feels as if he needs to follow someone else instead of acting on his own accord.

At 33-years-old, he is a housecleaner for a very rich, successful couple. By mistake, Tender's phone number was listed as a Suicide Hotline number. Every night, people call him to talk about their problems and ask him if they should commit suicide. Tender loves the power that he gets from being able to choose if people will live or die. Every night, he lives for these calls.

As the novel progresses, Tender becomes the last surviving Church member. Because of this, he becomes a famous church leader. Being a celebrity changes Tender physically, but not mentally. He is still the same insecure, confused man that he was before he lost weight, began taking steroids, and became a media spectacle.

Fertility Hollis

Fertility Hollis is the sister of Trevor Hollis. She meets Tender in the cemetery when he is looking for Trevor's grave. Fertility's real name is actually Gwen. She uses the name Fertility Hollis as a stage name for her job. She works for a man named Dr. Ambrose, who is not a real doctor. Dr. Ambrose finds couples who wish to have a surrogate mother carry their child, and Fertility sleeps with the husband. Each time they have sex, the couple is charged five thousand dollars. The worst part of it all is that Fertility cannot get pregnant. This is what makes her stage name so ironic.

Just like her brother, Fertility has dreams that predict the future. She always knows what's going to happen, and it bores her. She likes to hang around Tender, because she thinks he is the only person that will surprise her anymore. Throughout the novel, she helps Tender in many ways. She gives him miracles to predict so that he can remain famous and helps him reunite with his brother, Adam. At times, it seems as though she is romantically interested in Tender. At first, she really likes his "phone personality," and



always puts down the guy that she met in the cemetery. Yet, because Fertility knows everything, she knows that Tender was both of those people.

At the end of the book, Fertility becomes pregnant, which finally surprises her. She also tricks Tender into hijacking the plane, which is the reason for Tender recording his life story on the flight recorder in the first place.

Adam Branson

Adam is Tender's older brother by three minutes. Because of this, he was allowed to get married. He will also inherit all of his family's land. Before the deliverance, Adam and his new wife went into the real world to get their marriage license. When Adam comes back, he tells Tender about everything he has witnessed. Back then, Adam did not like the outside world.

After Tender leaves the Church district to serve, Adam witnesses what the Church elders have been doing to the tenders and biddies. He is appalled and calls the FBI on the Creedish. Ten years after the suicides, Adam begins murdering all the remaining survivors. He also kills Tender's caseworker and agent. Ultimately, Adam wants to help Tender realize what happened to him when he was a child.

Trevor Hollis

Trevor Hollis is Fertility's brother. He killed himself while he was on the phone with Tender. Trevor had dreams like Fertility does. He got so bored with life that he could not stand living anymore.

The agent

Tender meets his agent after he finds out that he is the last surviving Creedish. The agent explains to Tender that his whole media team has been waiting to know how the last Creedish has been for a while. They have been developing licenses and products. The agent took Tender to New York, where he wants him to completely change. He molds Tender into the religious superstar that the masses want.

The caseworker

The caseworker was assigned to Tender 10 years ago, after the suicides occurred. As a part of the Survivor Retention Program, the caseworker had to check in on Tender once a week. For the first couple of years, she really tried to do her job. She tried to diagnose Tender and help him. After a long time of losing other survivors, she became bitter and resentful about her job. Year after year, survivors kept killing themselves. Most days, instead of talking with tender about his problems, she would come over to his employers' house and make martinis. She even begins to help Tender clean. The



caseworker is killed by Adam Branson. One day while cleaning, she inhales a deadly mix of ammonia and bleach. Tender is blamed for her murder.

The employers

Tender's employers are two very wealthy businesspeople. To make sure that Tender knows what to do, they have scheduled every minute of his life in a daily planner. Every day, they call him on a speaker phone and yell at him. They also depend on him to teach them how to eat certain meals at very fancy dinners. While Tender's employers talk to him every day, they have never met him.

Dr. Ambrose

Dr. Ambrose is Fertility's boss. He finds families that want to have babies and sends Fertility to stay with them. For every time Fertility sleeps with the husband of one of the families, the family pays Dr. Ambrose and Fertility five thousand dollars.

The pilot

The pilot of Flight 2039 instructs Tender on how to fly the plane. After all the other passengers have gotten off the plane, the pilot stays with Tender to give him a lesson on flying. After that, he parachutes out of the plane.

Tenders

Tenders are all the younger born boys of Creedish families. As children, they are trained in Church doctrine. At the age of seventeen, they are baptized and sent out into the real world to work. All of the money they make is sent to the Creedish Church. They are not allowed to have sex.

Biddies

Biddies are all girls in the Creedish Church. Biddies can one day get married if their parents arrange a marriage for them. All other biddies that are not married are baptized at the age of seventeen and sent into the real world to work. They are not allowed to have sex.



Objects/Places

The Deliverance

When the Creedish felt that God was calling them, they believed they would deliver themselves to Heaven.

New Orleans, Louisiana

The Super Bowl is held in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The Creedish Church District

The District is where Tender spent his childhood. It is located in Nebraska.

New York

New York is where the agent takes Tender to make him into a religious superstar.

Flight 2039

Flight 2039 is the flight that Tender hijacks. It was on its way to Australia.

The Genesis Campaign

The Genesis Campaign was the brainchild of the agent. It involved finding a bride for Tender and having them get married at the Super Bowl.

The Book of Very Common Prayer

The Book of Very Common Prayer is the book that was published by Tender's media group. He insists that he had nothing to do with the book.

The PornFill

When Tender inherited the Creedish land in Nebraska, the agent thought it would be a good idea to turn it into an area where people could drop off their old pornographic magazines and movies. They could do this with no questions asked.



Tender Branson Dashboard Statuette

When Tender and Adam are driving back to Nebraska, they get in an accident. A statuette depicting Tender's likeness gets lodged in Adam's eye.

Biddies

Biddies are all girls in the Creedish Church. Biddies can one day get married if their parents arrange a marriage for them. All other biddies that are not married are baptized at the age of seventeen and sent into the real world to work. They are also not allowed to have sex.

A Peace of Mind Television Show

A Peace of Mind is a television show where people call in and get advice from Tender. This is the show Fertility called into.

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)

DSM is a manual of psychological disorders. Tender and his caseworker would read the book together.

Tender Branson's Miracle Minute

Miracle Minds is a minute-long television show in which Tender reveals something that will happen in the future.

Themes

Sex and Power

Throughout a large part of the book, Tender is completely obsessed with sex. This is because, as a tender in the Creedish Church, he was told he could never have sex or think about it. To deter children from having sex, the Church elders would force them to watch women giving birth. As the woman was having a child, the Church elders would scream at the children about how evil sex was and how horrible the consequences of having sex were. Naturally, seeing this happen time after time had ill effects on Tender. The memory was so horrible that Tender has blocked it out for 33 years. It is not until Adam reminds him of what happens, does he actually remember. Tender's obsession with sex begins, because he has always been denied it. He has never known how to react to the changes that happened to his body during puberty or how to correctly carry out his sexual desires. This leaves him unable to masturbate or carry out a normal sexual relationship with a girl.

Tender's desire to have sex also relates to Tender's desire to gain power. As Adam points out to Tender, sex is a child's first chance to rebel. From there, teens and young adults know they have the power to do whatever they want. For his entire life, Tender is forced into a menial position cleaning. This position denies him any power or ability to make a real impact. He can never change anything that is going on in his life around him. This is why Tender finds such power in talking to desperate people who call him on the suicide hotline. He can control life and death over the phone. He loves the sense of power and sexual release he gets from guiding people through their darkest time.

Even after tender becomes a celebrity, he does not have the power he wants. Other people (the agent, Fertility, the media team) constantly tell him what he should do with his life. When he is in the public eye, sex becomes ever more of a problem as he retreats from his sexuality completely. This is because the media gives him such a hard time for being a virgin for so long. Therefore, sex becomes an even bigger obstacle for Tender.

Celebrity

Most of the novel seems to be a statement on our cultural obsession with celebrities. Today, people do not have role models who stand for something and know how to speak their own minds. Many people find pleasure in worshipping celebrities who stand for nothing. They are not influential political leaders, great actors or performers. They are insincere in the sense that they are a pre-packaged marketing campaign used to simply sell products. As a society, we follow every step they make and watch for mistakes and imperfections.



As Tender becomes famous, it is revealed to him that the media team did not care who he was or where he came from, he was simply a means to an end. They had an idea of what to market, and they needed the last Creedish Church member. It does not matter that the whole marketing package is a lie, it is what the media wants. The religious leader that Tender becomes is completely fake. Tender is no longer a real person. He is an injected, waxed, pill-popping facade. He is in no way a real person, but people worship him for it. Palahniuk wants to convey that people don't want to see other people like themselves in the spotlight. They want someone who is perfect and unattainable. They also want someone who is constantly dressed, groomed and skinny, rather than real. Palahniuk shows the extremes of what celebrities have to do to look and act the way the media wants them to.

Suicide

Throughout the entire novel, people are continuously committing suicide. Suicide completely surrounds Tender's life. His entire family did it, the people he "counsels" over the phone do it, and Tender constantly contemplates committing suicide himself. After Tender becomes a celebrity, the ultimate goal of his media team is that he will commit suicide with the entire world watching. Since he was born, Tender knew that one day he would need to take his life, but cannot overcome his own fear of it. Every day in school, he was taught about the Deliverance, his last duty to the Church. This haunts him everyday that he remains alive. After the Deliverance, Tender feels as though he should have done it immediately, but he was too much of a coward.

Tender's obsession with suicide is ultimately linked to his conquest for power. He wants to in anyway effect other people and change something about the world. In many ways, suicide, like murder, is the ultimate kind of power. In Tender's eyes it is like taking power away from God. God is supposed to be the one who controls when people die, not humans. Because Tender cannot take that final step and commit suicide like the rest of his family, he must be a coward. If he could only take his life into his own hands and commit suicide, he could embrace his ultimate power. Although Tender cannot bring himself to do it, he empowers himself by telling other people to take their own lives.

Suicide is also what brings Fertility and Tender together. After Trevor's death, they are both in the cemetery looking for his grave. They are both haunted by what suicide has done to their families. Both characters say that they will not commit suicide, but desperately want to, so that they can escape their respective lives.



Style

Point of View

The book is told from Tender's point of view. It is a first person narrative. The entire novel is about Tender's journey. The view is not quite omniscient, because Tender is not always aware of what is going on in the novel. There are many times when he questions everything Fertility is doing. At the end of the book, Tender has no idea what is going to happen. Will the plane crash? Will he get out in time? Can he start over with Fertility and the baby? Fertility is the only one who always know what is going on or going to happen, because she can see the future. The point of view is very important for the book, because Tender is going on a personal journey. He offers a lot of insight to what he sees is being done to him to make him a celebrity.

The story is told through a mixture of dialogue and Tender's own personal thoughts. He often interrupts his own story, to update the reader on the status of the plane. Because of the point of view, he is able to shift the reader's attention between the present and past.

In the beginning of the book, many times people are simply telling Tender what to do, especially as he becomes a celebrity. This is because he becomes more and more of a follower. It is not until Fertility forces him to make his own decisions as the plane is crashing, that Tender finally does something for himself.

Setting

The book begins with Tender on Flight 2039, which is bound for Australia. There are leftover food trays and personal belongings scattered everywhere. Throughout a couple of the chapters, Tender interjects on his own story, and the reader is brought back to the status of the plane.

Tender spends a lot of time in his apartment and his employers' house. At his apartment, he enjoys cooking and talking on the phone to the desperate people who call in on the suicide help line. Tender compares his apartment to the large, beautiful house that he works in. His apartment is small and dingy, while their house is very large and ostentatious. From the way that Tender describes the house, it is nice, but always a mess as his employers get into conspicuous situations where blood is on the curtains.

Tender first meets Fertility in a cemetery. After that, they meet each other at the cemetery a couple more times. It is there where they dance together while Fertility is mourning Trevor's death. She also tells Tender about how she and Trevor danced together on the cruise ship as it sank.

After the caseworker is killed, Tender leaves for New York with his agent. There, he is exposed to a whole different kind of life. Palahniuk does not go into much detail about



Tender being in the city. Shortly after, Tender begins traveling all over the United States, to give speeches. He goes to huge stadiums like the Super Dome and Astro Dome.

When Tender begins to meet Fertility to get miracles from her, he meets her in bathroom stalls. The first is at a restaurant. The last time is at the Super Bowl in New Orleans, LA. It is here that Tender finds out that Adam has found him and is setting him up for the murder of the caseworker and the agent. After that, Tender, Fertility and Adam escape to go to Nebraska. Nebraska is where the old Creedish Church land is located. When Tender and Adam arrive, it is nothing like they remember. It has been turn into the PornFill. The place is full of pornographic materials instead of the lovely buildings that used to exist.

After Adam has died at the PornFill/Creedish Church lands, Fertility and Tender travel back to their home. In the book, Palahniuk never distinguishes where Fertility and Tender are actually from. After they return home, Fertility tricks Tender into going to the airport and getting on the plane.

Language and Meaning

Tender's language is very straight forward in the book. This causes him to be brutally honest and candid with the reader. From the very first page of the book, Tender bares his feelings and inner thoughts. This makes sense for the character because, while tender was growing up, he was not allowed to express any feelings or opinions. He was only allowed to think about how the Church wanted him to act.

The personal style, allows for no barriers between Tender and the reader. It almost feels like the reader is in his head, trying to help him sort out the madness that his life as become. Through all Tender's scattered thoughts, the reader is thrown into a whirl wind. This is also interesting because, although Tender can be brutally honest with the reader, he continues to lie to Fertility, Adam, and the media about who he is. He lets the media team completely change him, despite the fact that he knows it is wrong.

While this style of writing is very personal and particular, it can be confusing for the reader. Often the dialogue does not have quotes around it. Sometimes, Tender answers for other characters or puts in his own words what they are going to say. While the overall effect is successful, because it allows the reader to fully understand Tender's character, it can be confusing and also hurt the flow of the book.

Structure

The structure of the novel is very interesting. There are 47 chapters that are arranged in descending order. There is no Chapter 1. As the entire book is a countdown until the plane crashes, it makes sense for the chapter numbers to get lower and lower. Also, Palahniuk chooses to use very short chapters in the book. Most are only 4- 8 pages long. This adds in the urgency that is felt in Tender's story. He needs to get his story out

as fast as possible, because he has no idea how long he has before the plane's engines burn out.

The way Palahniuk structures Tender's thoughts is very scattered. He will begin with one thought and then switch to something else in the next line, and then go back to the previous thought. Many times in the book, events do not occur in chronological order. In one chapter, Tender will mention an event that has happened. In the next chapter, he will describe another event, but then say that it occurred before the first event that happened. Sometimes, this can become confusing for the reader. When Tender switches back and forth from describing what is currently going on in the place to one event and then another, the text becomes very unstructured. While this can be hard for the reader to understand, it does give Tender's character a frantic edge about him, which matches his character.

The plot also moves very fast. This is because Tender is on a very limited time line. He needs to rush through and get all of his details in so that the reader understands that he is not a killer. He was just misunderstood.



Quotes

"These victims call. These Chronic sufferers. They call. They break up my own little tedium. It's better than television. I tell him, go ahead. I'm only half awake. It's three in the morning and I have work tomorrow. I tell him, hurry before I fall back asleep, pull the trigger." (Chapter 46, pg 281).

"The craving inside of me is to be clutched at by some dead girl. To put my ear to her chest and be hearing nothing. Even getting munched on by zombies beats the idea that I'm only flesh and blood, skin and bone. Demon or angel or evil spirit, I just need something to show itself. Ghoulie or ghosty or long-legged beasties, I just want my hand held." (Chapter 43, pg 253)

"Even after sixteen years of cleaning other people's houses, I want to think the world is getting better, but really I know it's not. You want to be some improvement in people, but there won't be. Ane you want to think there's something you can get done." (Chapter 44, pg 268)

"God forbid that I should try to look good for Fertility. The worst strategy I could pursue is self-improvement. It would be a big mistake to dress up, make my best effort, comb my hair, maybe even borrow some swell clothes from the man I work for, something all-cotton and pastel shirtwise, brush my teeth, put on what they call deodorant." (Chapter 38, pg 220)

"Whatever my real problems might be, I didn't want them cured. None of the little secrets inside me wanted to be found and explained away. By myths. By my childhood. By chemistry. My fear was, what would be left? So none of my real grudges and dreads ever came out into the light of day. I didn't want to resolve any angst. I'd never talk about my dead family. Express my grief, she called it. Leave it behind." (Chapter 37, pg 207)

"The truth is, nobody laughs at these jokes except me, and I only laugh so I'll fit in. I laugh so I won't not fit in. The main thing I worry about in public is maybe people can tell I'm a survivor." (Chapter 33, pg 189).

"The risk of being famous is you have to take levothyroxine sodium to stay thin. Yes, you have your central nervous system to worry about. There's the insomnia. Your metabolism ramps up. Your heart pounds. You sweat. You're nervous all the time, but you look terrific." (Chapter 26, pg 136).

"Just to make sure I don't go south on her, the caseworker is eyeing me. Just to keep her out of my way, I her slicing a lime. Get me some cigarettes. Mix me a fresh drink, I say, or I'll kill myself. I swear. I'll go to the bathroom and hack all my veins open with a razor." (Chapter 31, pg 173).



"All along, you could have guessed this would happen. Someday it would happen to us all. Behaving myself just was not going to work anymore. It was time to make trouble. So I made another blender full of daiquiris and called the police and told them not to hurry, nobody was going anywhere." (Chapter 30, pg 160)

"The same way every generation reinvents Christ, the agent's giving me the same makeover. The agent says nobody is going to worship anybody with my role of flab around his middle. These days, people aren't going to fill stadiums to get preached at by somebody who isn't beautiful. This is why I'm going nowhere at the rate of seven hundred calories an hour." (Chapter 28, pg 153)

"There are only patterns, patterns on top of patterns, patterns that affect other patterns. Patterns hidden by patterns. Patterns within patterns. If you watch close, history does nothing but repeat itself. What we call chaos is just patterns we haven't recognized. What we can't understand we call nonsense. What we can't read we call gibberish. There is no free will. There are no variables. " (Chapter 23, pg 118)

"Do you have any idea how boring it is to be me? To know everything? To see everything coming from a million miles away? It's getting unbearable. And it's not just me." (Chapter 22, pg 111).

"Throughout history the most powerful rulers have been sex maniacs. And he asks, does their sex appetite come from having power, or does their will for power come from their sex appetite? And if you don't crave sex, will you crave power? No." (Chapter 9, 36)



Topics for Discussion

In the novel, Fertility and the agent both say that nothing new ever happens. If you look closely at patterns, you can predict what will happen. Do you think this is true?

Discuss the theme of sex and power. Do you think that powerful people have control as they can exert their sexuality?

Tender constantly struggles to fit in as a normal person, and then later as a celebrity. Why do you think that Tender desires to fit in so badly?

When Adam is finally introduced in the novel, it is expected that he will be vengeful and angry with Tender for not committing suicide. He originally wanted to have Tender blamed for all the murders. Why do you think he had the change of heart?

Explore the theme of celebrity. Do you think Palahniuk's effectively uses Tender's character to examine this phenomena in today's society?

While Fertilty helps Tender in many ways because she sees the future, she also impacts his life in other ways. Discuss Fertility's character. How does she shape and influence Tender's life?

The novel's structure was used to create a sense of urgency and franticness. Do you think the structure of the book was effective? Discuss using examples.