

The Shipping News Study Guide

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Plot Summary

The Shipping News is a story about Quoyale, a thirty-six-year-old man with low self-esteem and little self-motivation. Not knowing what he wants to do with his life, he accepts a job as a newspaper journalist in his small hometown of Mockingburg in upstate New York. Quoyale marries the first woman to give him any attention and goes on to have a very destructive marriage. His wife Petal hates herself, hates Quoyale, and even hates their two daughters. She spends most of her time drinking and looking for love in the beds of various men. Quoyale loves her endlessly and maintains his devotion to her, their marriage, and their daughters. He is finally freed from the relationship when she dies in a tragic car accident with one of her lovers.

Quoyale's aunt comes to help out with the children following Petal's death and talks Quoyale into moving away for a fresh start. They move to the family's ancestral home in Killick-Claw, Newfoundland. Quoyale arrives at their new home a grieving, isolated, beaten down man whose never done much with his life because he's always been told he can't do anything right. He's able to get a job at the local newspaper and ironically is assigned to cover car crashes. The family's home needs a great deal of work, having been vacant for over forty years and Quoyale is forced to learn and accomplish home improvement projects right away. His first task is to finish roofing the house. Having never been up on a roof, on a ladder that high, or worked with shingles, Quoyale feels some pride and accomplishment when he finishes the roof. At work he begins to become friends with his colleagues and makes friends with Dennis, the son of his boss and carpenter that helps him ready his home to live in.

In New York Quoyale had only one friend, who moved away, so having a handful of friends becomes very meaningful to him. As time goes on, Quoyale is assigned to cover the shipping news, by reporting what ships are in port. He comes up with the idea to write profiles of some of the noteworthy ships; he gets a great response and is assigned a regular column. He also meets a local woman, Wavey, whom he is attracted to but both he and she have been widowed by cheating spouses. The ghosts of relationships past prevent them from any true closeness, although they enjoy each other's company. Quoyale begins his internal struggle wondering what love is and if he can ever experience it again after what happened with Petal.

Quoyale, his Aunt, and his two daughters make friends, become a part of the community and for the first time in his life Quoyale feels acceptance, contentment, and even small periods of joy. He learns to fish, drive a boat, and various other new things that help him become more and more a Newfoundlander. After the departure of the managing editor at the paper, Quoyale is promoted to the position, much to his surprise. However, he is haunted by the past, both by his heartbreaking personal one and by the generations of Quoyale's who lived in Killick-Claw before him, who pillaged all they could until they were driven from the town. Not until Quoyale confronts his past and his heritage is he truly able to make a future for himself and his daughters. Once he sees the past and his relationship with Petal for what it really was, he is able to move on and declare his love

to Wavey and marry her. He discovers that loving again is possible and that it does not have to include pain and destruction.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

Quoye is a thirty-six-year-old man who's had a life difficult enough to result in his being adrift within it. This story tells about a few years in his life. He decides to move to Newfoundland, where his ancestors came from to start a new life. All of his life Quoye had been considered a failure. He was a failure according to his father and his brother. He had a large round figure and felt like he had failed at looking normal. He had red hair, clear "plastic" eyes, and a large protruding chin.

By chance and dumb luck Quoye ends up getting a job as a writer for the local newspaper thanks to the help of his friend Partridge, who happened to work there. Quoye's first assignment was to cover a planning board meeting, which he did. After a few months Quoye got fired from the paper and went to work driving a cab. After a while his boss at the paper wanted him back and he returned. He inspired others to tell him their life stories. Then his best and only friend, Partridge told him that he and his wife were moving to California and Quoye had a hard time saying good-bye. His life went on, he wrote for the paper, lived his daily life, and occasionally thought of love.

Chapter 1 Analysis

From the outset of this story the author has filled it with symbolism and foreshadowing. To begin with, Quoye's name is the name of a knot that is a coil of rope in a single layer and made on deck, "so that it may be walked on if necessary." From what the reader learns in the first chapter alone, his name is a symbol of Quoye's life, which has consisted of him being walked on and foreshadows what is to come.

Quoye lives a rather uninspiring life and once his best friend moves away to California, Quoye is lonely and continues living a very plain existence. His friend Partridge represents hope, vitality, and taking risks, which have now left town. At the end of the chapter, however, the author foreshadows love for Quoye.

Quoye is characterized in this chapter as an unattractive, insecure, overweight, thirty-six-year-old man adrift in his life. He's a journalist for the local paper but not a good one, and he is quite myopic reading only his local newspaper and letting the news of the rest of the world escape him.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Quoye met Petal Bear at a meeting and she came on to him quite quickly. She joked with him about wanting to marry her. He was serious and said that "yes" he wanted to marry her. She asked him to leave with her. That began a heated romance that lasted a month, followed by six years of terminal suffering. Even after they were married, Petal continued her promiscuous ways and marriage was nothing like Quoye imagined. He had admired Partridge's marriage and thought his would be the same. Quoye and Petal had two daughters, Bunny and then Sunshine. Petal resented both of them and most of the time, when she showed up at the house, pretended she didn't know who they were.

Quoye loved his wife and wanted her to stay but she told him to go find another girlfriend. One night she even brought a man home with her and had her way with him on the couch in the home she shared with Quoye while he and the children were in the house. Quoye was heartbroken but thought her behavior was just a test of their love.

Chapter 2 Analysis

Quoye finally finds love and gets married but ends up having his heart walked over again. His wife is a disrespectful, cheating spouse who doesn't value Quoye or their daughters. At the beginning of the chapter the author foreshadows that the relationship goes on this way for six years. The author further characterizes Quoye as a loyal yet overly forgiving man. His life seems to be defined by turmoil, hardship, and heartbreak.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

During the same year Quoye's parents committed suicide together after falling ill, he got fired again, and he became a widower. When his parents died, almost no one came to pay their respects, not even his brother.

Quoye knew Petal was now spending most nights with an unemployed real estate agent and once when she came home to get some clothes he tried to talk to her. She told him to leave her alone and that their marriage was just a joke, a mistake. Then one day her boss called Quoye and said she didn't come to work. Before he left work that day he was fired. When he arrived home the babysitter was there, who said Petal had come home a few hours before, packed some stuff, and took the kids and ran off with the real estate agent.

Quoye called the police. He wanted his children back and he knew that she didn't want them and never had. His aunt happened to be visiting to pay her respects to his dead parents and tried to comfort him. Then they received the call that the car Petal and the girls left in had veered off the road and Petal and her lover were killed. The children were not in the car but had been sold to a Bruce Cudd.

When the children were found the child pornographer was on the phone and the girls just playing on the floor. After a doctor's exam it was proven that they were unharmed. When they were returned to Quoye all three held on to each other like a dying man to his life. Quoye begged his aunt to stay and help him. She said she would.

Chapter 3 Analysis

In the span of one year, Quoye loses just about everything of any meaning to him. The one glimmer of good news is that he has his children, whom he loves more than life itself. The universe has handed Quoye a gift with the death of Petal, however his heart was still broken and he loved her to the end of her life. The author seems to be setting the stage for Quoye to make the foreshadowed move to his native homeland. There is nothing left for him in Mockingburg, including a job.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Now that Quoye's wife was gone, his parents were dead, and there was no job for him, there was nothing keeping him from leaving Mockingburg. His aunt told him it was time for a new beginning for him and his family. Quoye had little motivation to make any decisions due to his lingering, heavy grief. But the more he thought about it he knew his aunt was right. It was time to get out.

Quoye called his friend Partridge to catch up and tell him of his plan. It so happened that Partridge knew of a paper in Newfoundland and even knew that they were looking for a reporter to cover the shipping news. So, Quoye, his girls, and his aunt drove across upstate New York, then through Vermont, Maine, and into Canada. They drove aboard a ferry for the final leg to Newfoundland.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Quoye's aunt's longing to return to her homeland turns into the impetus they all need to move through the inaction of grief and start a new life. Thus a return to the past becomes a new beginning. Quoye is still stuck in his grief over the loss of his wife and marriage and his aunt becomes stuck in memories from the past as they make their way to their new home. Newfoundland becomes a symbol for new beginnings as well as a connection to a heritage.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

After disembarking from the ferry Quoyle drove their station wagon toward their new home. The aunt continued to tell them about their family home and was buoyed by the fact that The Point, where the house was, was still on the map. Once they got closer they found the road that went out to Quoyle's Point. It was an extremely rough road and Quoyle questioned whether their station wagon could survive this last leg of their journey. He could now see the headline "Car Disintegrates on Remote Goatpath."

During the drive they encountered a moose and thick fog. Not long after, the aunt shouted that she saw the house. They were astonished that the home that had been vacant for forty-four years could still be standing. When they got to the house Quoyle used a crow bar to pry open the front door to a dusty, empty home.

Bunny asked her father if Petal would be joining them at their new home. Quoyle had to again explain to her that Petal had gone to sleep and would not be waking up. She then reminded her daddy that he had cried but she had not because she thought her mother was coming back. Their family home was isolated on its own point, very run down, and haunted by the generations past. The aunt felt determined that they would not ever leave there again.

Chapter 5 Analysis

The house seems to be a symbol of Quoyle and his family, they are worn down, isolated, and in need of repair. But Quoyle and the home are embarking upon a new beginning. Quoyle's aunt symbolizes the wisdom and determination of an older generation. She is closely connected to their heritage and is determined that the Quoyle family will succeed in their home this time around.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

After they spent some time with their new home and the children had a chance to play on the rocks by the water, they decided to head back to town. They knew the house needed much work before they could live there. The aunt countered that they could live there but it would be very difficult. Plus, Quoye didn't want to have to drive his car on the goat path everyday to get to work. His aunt told him he'd have to get a boat and avoid the road by going on the water. Quoye said he preferred the road.

As they talked about the entire repair the house would need, Quoye thought it might just be best to build a new house from the ground but somewhere else. Then the snow began to fall and they packed up and began their drive, through a blizzard back to the town, Killick-Claw.

The family finally made it to a hotel in town, the Tickle Motel & Restaurant. There was only one room left, so they took it. The place was a dump and once inside the doorknob fell off and Quoye had to fix it. It wasn't much better than sleeping in the car, except for the heat. Quoye complied with his girls' wishes to tell a story and he made one up about a poor, thin lonely moose that lived on a hill and one day a red sports car came by driven by a gypsy dog wearing a gold earring. The storm raged for another day and the family remained in the hotel room, partly because the doorknob broke and they could not get out.

Chapter 6 Analysis

The aunt is very tied to the old family home and wants to stay there even though it is run down and practically unlivable. Quoye is surrounded by water on his point, and is afraid of having a boat and would rather remain on land and drive his car than get a boat. Quoye and the aunt are finally seeing what their future could be, however there is a great deal of work that must be done before they can inhabit their family home. Quoye is fine with just leaving it and starting over in a new home, but not the aunt.

As the snow begins to fall and we find out that it's May, it becomes apparent how difficult living is in the area they have chosen to begin anew. Again, the great deal of work that the house needs symbolizes the internal struggles that Quoye and his aunt must go through in order to see a better future.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Quoye makes his way to the newspaper office to start his new job. The *Gammy Bird* is the name of the paper and when he arrives he's greeted by Tert Card, who introduces himself as the "so-called managing editor." He introduces Quoye to the rest of the staff, Nutbeem, Billy Pretty, and the missing owner, Mr. Jack Buggit who was out sick.

Card pointed Quoye the way to his corner, which included a desk, half a file cabinet, an Ontario, Canada phonebook, and a chair missing an arm. For the remainder of the week Quoye spent time at his desk, as instructed, reading back issues of the paper and leafing through the phonebook. He was waiting to receive his assignments from Mr. Buggit who had been out sick.

On the Monday following Mr. Buggit motioned Quoye into his office. Quoye didn't think he looked like the typical newspaperman, which Buggit must have felt because he gave Quoye the full story of how he came to be a newspaperman. His family had all been fisherman and he followed in their footsteps. After the career fishermen became fewer, he decided to work in industry and when a plant that was supposed to open didn't, Buggit got the idea to start a newspaper in a town that didn't have one. Had there been one, he figured, he would've known that the plant wasn't going to open. Buggit assigned Quoye to cover car accidents and the shipping news. The very two things he had the least desire to be involved with.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Quoye finally gets started at his new job and tries to settle in. Ironically he gets assigned to cover car accidents, which just happen to be the way his wife died. He is also assigned the shipping news which he knows nothing about and has an aversion to boats. As much as Quoye would like to remain in his own little world, his new home is stretching him, forcing him to go beyond what he thinks himself capable of.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Quoye confides to his aunt that he doesn't think he will be any good at his job. He can't believe he's been assigned to cover car wrecks after what has happened. The aunt, however, has something else on her mind and begins to talk about the children. They are bored to death of being in the hotel room and everyone needs to get out and go somewhere. Quoye continues on about his job.

The aunt is anxious to get her business started up again and get the house going but the weight of grief still has its choke hold on Quoye and his aunt asks him when he's planning to get over his dead wife who treated him so miserably. She also tells him that they need to get a boat to cross the bay. Quoye's only reaction to all that she's telling him is that he doesn't want a boat and lists his objections: cost, safety, comfort, and he doesn't know anything about them.

The next day, Quoye discusses his boat predicament with Nutbeem and gets an earful of advice and stories about owning a boat and his love for boats and what it means for a man to have a boat. Their conversation was interrupted by Tert Card who reminded Quoye to make a trip over to the harbormaster's office to get the day's shipping news. Quoye was relieved it wasn't another car crash.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Quoye seems to be quite self-centered and more worried about how he will fail at his job rather than paying attention to the needs of his children and aunt, who have been holed up in a hotel room for days and days. Quoye's grief still has hold of him and he is still stuck in the past with Petal and not able to move forward. Luckily, his aunt has taken charge and made plans to remodel the old family home so they can get settled and get on with their lives. She too wants to get her business going again.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Quoyle makes his way to the harbormasters office. Diddy Shovel is his name and he watches Quoyle as he makes his way in the pouring rain from the parking lot to the office. His impression is of a large and clumsy man. Quoyle's impression of Shovel is an old, weathered man. The headline in his head is "Man Imitates Alligator."

Shovel tells Quoyle that he's been working on the water since age thirteen and is being forced to retire next year at the age of seventy. Quoyle points out a boat by the name of the *Polar Grinder* and asks about it. Shovel tells him the story of how that boat is the reason that Jack Buggit (Quoyle's boss), and his son Dennis (Quoyle's contractor), don't speak anymore. Coming from a family where most members have been claimed by the sea, Jack forbade his children to work on the water. Dennis didn't heed the order and worked as a fisherman on the *Polar Grinder* until once it was almost lost in a storm at sea. Twenty-seven men were lost. Before Shovel could finish the story the phone rang and he asked Quoyle to come back the next day.

Quoyle left and was walking along the wharf trying to get a better look at the ship when he spotted a small boat for sale. The owner's son had built it and he told Quoyle it was a speed boat. For fifty dollars Quoyle figured he couldn't go wrong and bought it. With a rented trailer he hauled it back to the *Gammy Bird* office and went back to work. When Billy and Jack returned they asked him why he'd buy such a horrid boat. He didn't know any better and felt very stupid.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Quoyle gets his first chance to report the shipping news and after getting the listing of boats in and out, takes the time to chat with the harbormaster. He hears a story about his boss Jack and his son Dennis who's renovating Quoyle's home. The story is about how Dennis was almost lost at sea. He didn't get to hear the end of the story, however.

As might be expected, many of the characters, stories, and lives in Killick-Claw revolve around the sea. The ocean, boats, and fishing seem to be central to all the characters and are characters themselves. The water in particular holds a symbolic place in the story.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Quoyle returned to the hotel one day to find his aunt putting on her coat, a large bundle at her feet. The children were at Dennis and his wife Beety's house. The aunt's dog Warren had died but she was ready to give Quoyle some good news. Dennis said it would take him just two weeks to get the house ready and she had negotiated the bachelor room next door as an additional room for them at no additional cost. Quoyle still felt hesitant about living way out on the point in the family home.

As they were talking, Nutbeem knocked on the door. He wanted to finish his boating stories and the aunt suggested they go down to the restaurant and eat. Nutbeem started in about boating and went on and on, told of his dream to sail around the world and that he was just waylaid in Newfoundland.

Then he told the rest of the story about Dennis Buggit that the harbormaster didn't get to. He told about the week long search for Dennis and Jack going out to find him, knowing he was alive. Jack found his son with two broken arms and rescued him. He also told him that he was forbidden to ever set foot on a boat again, but as soon as Dennis had healed from his injuries he went out "squid jigging" with Beety, and his father has not spoken to him since. At some point in the evening, the aunt left to go give Warren a proper sea burial. She watched her dog's body float out to sea, into the sunset.

Chapter 10 Analysis

The author continues to show through the townspeople like Nutbeem the importance that the sea and a man's boat to the story. Nutbeem tells of his passion for his boat and how he became a seaman. He tells Quoyle about his adventure sailing around the world and that he is just temporarily stopped in Newfoundland while he earns some money and repairs his boat.

Nutbeem also tells Quoyle the rest of the miraculous rescue of Dennis Buggit by his father Jack, who lost his favorite son to the sea. The aunt gives her dog to the sea by giving it a water burial. The water symbolizes a greater power with the ability to give life and livelihood as well as take lives.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

The house was now ready for them to move in and on a Friday morning, the aunt set out in her new truck. She was very excited to get there and leave the disgusting motel for good. Once at the house she took a good look around in each room. In one room she found the ashes of her late brother. She took the ashes to the outhouse, dumped them down the hole, lifted up her skirts, sat down and urinated on them.

The next morning, Quoye and the girls arrived and spent the day working on the house and settling in. Very early the next morning, Quoye awoke to the sound of hammering. As he was trying to identify the source of the pounding, he got distracted and ended up going to the water's edge where, wedged in the rock, he found a brooch made from the human hair of a dead family member. He was disgusted and threw the pin into the sea.

When he returned to the house the family had awakened and was having some breakfast. The aunt told Quoye that Dennis wasn't going to be able to finish the roof and Quoye would have to do it before impending weather arrived. Quoye had never been on a roof and knew nothing about how to roof a house. It took him a while to muster the courage to climb the aluminum ladder but he finally got up on the roof and followed what Dennis had done. Before he could finish, Bunny's head appeared over the edge of the roof. He was terrified and helped her down, afraid they both would fall to their deaths.

Chapter 11 Analysis

Finally, Quoye and his family can move into their newly remodeled home and get out of the motel. As horrible as the motel is, Quoye still feels some reluctance to go live in the old house that's so far out on point. Within the first day of being at the new house both he and his aunt encounter remnants of their dead family. The aunt finds her brother's ashes and Quoye finds a brooch of hair from a dead relative. Both of these scenes are symbols and foreshadowing of the family past they will have to deal with because of their return to this ancestral place. The aunt, although often reminiscent of the past and trying to recover parts of it, such as playing card games after dinner, also is ready to build her own future in the old house. Quoye is finally showing signs of moving on as well when he faces his fears and successfully roofs his home.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Quoye decided it was time to launch his boat. After quite a few tries of backing up and seeing his trailer in the mirror go this way and that, he finally got the trailer backed into the water. After launching the boat and installing the motor he figured he'd take it for a ride. The motor started and he put it in gear, like he'd seen Dennis do. He set off, up and down the shoreline laughing like a tickled child. He noticed that when he let off the throttle, water would pour over the stern.

At work he asked Nutbeem, who told him exactly why he was getting a stern wave. So on Saturday, Dennis told Quoye he would help him with his boat. Dennis warned him about the boat and told him he should get one made when he could afford it. He also asked that Quoye tell no one that Dennis touched that poorly constructed boat. Quoye's daughter Bunny has begun to take notice of her world when she tells her aunt that she has identified the sky as the biggest thing in the world and a grain of sand as the smallest.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Quoye faces another fear, that of boats; he launches his little boat, installs the motor himself, and takes himself for a ride. He wonders why he feared boats and feels great joy being on the water. Each day, he is maturing and becoming more independent and learning more about himself and his surroundings. His experiences are helping him become more self-confident and actually feel successful in his pursuits.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Quoye gets a call from the harbormaster to bring his camera and hurry down to the wharf. A boat built personally for Hitler was docked. Quoye told Billy and they headed for the harbor. On the way there they passed a woman walking with her child in the rain. Billy told Quoye he knew her and to pull over and pick them up. Her name was Wavey Prowse and her husband had been lost at sea. He'd never met his son. After they dropped her off, Quoye stumbled over the words to describe her, "good posture," then "good stride," then "tall."

The two arrived at the harbor and went straight to the yacht. A man greeted them and after they introduced themselves as from the local paper he began with the story of the boat like he had told it a thousand times. After they were all soaked from standing in the rain, the man invited them in to see the interior. Quoye smelled liquor on him. Once inside they met the man's wife. She wore a loosely tied bathrobe and called her husband a "wretched bastard" before knowing they had guests. She seemed drunk, too. It turned out that they were in town to have the boat reupholstered by Quoye's aunt.

Chapter 13 Analysis

For the first time since becoming a widower himself, Quoye is attracted to a woman, Wavey Prowse. In the same chapter, he gets the opportunity to see a dream boat that has a sordid past. The yacht was built for Hitler, who never even boarded it, then was passed around to various owners that didn't take very good care of it. The current owners, an older drunk couple, look to have it all but seem to fight and drink too much.

The author seems to use the boats as symbols for their owners and a reflection of the self image of the owner. In the case of the Hitler yacht, it may symbolize the relationship between the husband and wife owners. For example, it is owned by a tyrant, the wife. It's a spacious and beautiful craft, however, it's been often neglected and under appreciated, which represents the husband. The craft is strong and has weathered strong hurricanes, which may represent their relationship.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

The next morning Quoye questioned the aunt about her yacht upholstery business. He had realized that he had no idea what kind of work she did and hadn't ever wondered before. She told him that she had gotten into the business on Long Island, New York, and it was all due to her "significant other" Warren, who had passed away. What she didn't tell him was that Warren was actually Irene Warren. She didn't think he'd understand. They had lived on a houseboat traveling around the Long Island shore. Warren had encouraged her to take a class in upholstery, which she did. After arriving home from being away for eight weeks, Warren revealed she had cancer. She died just months later.

Through it all, Aunt Agnis had discovered her talent for yacht upholstery and eventually opened her own shop. She invited Quoye to come visit her new shop. The following week, Quoye was on his way to meet his aunt and he thought of Wavey. He looked down the road to see if he could find her and saw her over a rise. He went out of his way to give her a ride and got the chance to talk to her alone. He told her about his daughters. After she was gone he wondered why he didn't ask her for tea sometime and compared her to Petal.

Chapter 14 Analysis

In this chapter Quoye and the reader learn more about Quoye's aunt Agnis. She is a well-known yacht upholsterer and became so after being encouraged by her lesbian life partner, Warren. Agnis becomes a deeper character with a recent past full of heartbreak and success.

Quoye is thinking more about the mysterious woman, Wavey. He finally gets the chance to ride and chat with her one on one. He wants to ask her on a date but is shy and awkward about it. His interest in her is a symbol of his moving forward in his life and his openness to the possibility of having another woman and love in his life again. Maybe there is hope for the clumsy, hopeless, low self-esteem main character.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Quoyle took his aunt up on her offer and visited her upholstery shop down near the wharf. The aunt introduced him to her two staff members, showed him around, and then they left to get some dinner together. As they were leaving Quoyle heard one female staffer say to the other, "Not what you thought, is he?"

While at dinner at Skipper Will's Quoyle asked her about Bunny and whether she had noticed some of the things he'd seen. She had been having temper tantrums and bad dreams. Her school teacher had also reported that she had shown some aggressive behaviors. His aunt reminded Quoyle of all that the young girl has been through recently with being kidnapped, the death of her mother, and moving to a new place. She told Quoyle to give it some time. He continued to tell her of his daughter seeing and hearing imaginary dogs and other examples of her troubled mind.

Quoyle felt that perhaps he had failed her and not loved her enough. His aunt reminded him that Bunny was still young, which reminded the aunt of when she was a little girl and how her youth had not stopped Guy. She had been the same age as Bunny the first time.

Chapter 15 Analysis

Quoyle continues to get to know his aunt better and visits her shop one day. He's impressed with what he sees. They go out to dinner together and he begins to question her about what she thinks of Bunny. She tells him not to worry and with the reaction she gives; it's almost as if she's referring to some other little girl from some other time. Proof of this comes later in the chapter when she thinks to herself that she was the same age as Bunny when Guy, an unidentified character, did an unidentified something to her for the first time. The author seems to be foreshadowing a future revelation regarding the aunt and her childhood.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

The best part of Quoye's day was when he went to Beety and Dennis's house to pick up his daughters. He loved the fulfillment of fatherhood and loved the smell of baking bread in their home. He lingered, sitting down at the kitchen table and talking to Dennis, Beety, and Bunny. They talked about Dennis's father Jack and the death of Dennis's brother.

While they were chatting, Skipper Alfred came by to see Bunny. He was an older man and told a story he remembered of the Quoyles of old. One story consisted of the Quoyles nailing a man to a tree by his ears and cutting off his nose. He also said there was one Quoye named Nolan left in town. For Bunny the Skipper had brought a carpentry square so she could make straight cuts and lines. He had heard about her desire to help her father work on the house. After that Quoye took his girls home, hoping Bunny didn't hear the story about the Quoyles of old.

Chapter 16 Analysis

Quoye seems to be at his best when he's with his children. He also is beginning to feel more joy in his life and enjoy the people and places around him. He is now noticing the feeling of warmth and safety when he's at Dennis and Beety's home. Hearing the stories about the Quoye's of old makes him uncomfortable; he doesn't seem to relate to them at all and he's hoping his daughters do not relate to them either. Interestingly, Skipper Alfred informs Quoye of the existence of Nolan, one of the Quoyles of old that still lives in town. Quoye had no idea and doesn't think much of it at the time. However, the author may be foreshadowing here. Nolan may symbolize a ghost of Quoyles past that will haunt Quoye and his family.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Quoye wrote up the story about the Hitler ship. He entitled it "Killer Yacht at Killick-Claw." He felt that he had actually written it well and turned it in to Tert Card. Tert was upset that Quoye turned in a profile of a boat that Jack had not requested and he'd failed to write a story about an ATV accident. Boy, was Quoye going to get it, he hoped. Quoye was worried that he'd done the wrong thing.

The next day, Jack came into the office and asked to speak with Quoye. Tert Card reminded him that he was going to get ripped to shreds by the boss. Opposite of what he had expected, Jack liked the ship profile and told Quoye from now on he would be writing a regular column. Luckily, Tert Card heard the whole conversation over the cubicle wall. Quoye was a bit shaken up, this was the first time in his thirty-six years that anyone had said that he'd done something right.

Chapter 17 Analysis

For the first time in his life Quoye is experiencing a small measure of success in his career. He took the chance at writing a ship profile and his work was received so well that his boss gave him a regular column. Quoye didn't quite know how to react, never having experienced the feeling of success before.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Quoyle drove Wavey to the library on Tuesdays and Fridays, which were the only days it was open. During these drives he learned that her son, Herry, had Down syndrome and that Wavey loved him dearly. In the morning of the day he drove Wavey he would clean his shoes and pick out a nice shirt. Driving her excited him even though he didn't want it to.

On one Friday he went into the library with her and Herry. He picked out an armful of books. On the way home they stopped to pick up Quoyle's girls at Beety's. They met Wavey for the first time. When they arrived at her house she invited all of them in for tea and cakes but Bunny and Sunshine were fighting so they decided to do it another time.

That weekend Quoyle, the aunt, and Dennis worked on the house. Quoyle took his boat out to go get lobsters and later took his daughters for a boat ride as he'd promised. Bunny saw an imaginary dog in the water and was convinced the dog was mad at her and wanted to bite her and make her bleed. Quoyle tried to comfort her.

Later that evening Quoyle helped the aunt make lobster pies. She had invited Dawn, her assistant, for dinner. While eating dinner Dawn revealed that the couple that owned the Hitler boat had left without paying Agnis for the upholstery work done on their boat. She said they left in the middle of the night. The aunt didn't seem too concerned and said she'd wait awhile; however, she couldn't wait to get her whiskey bottle.

Chapter 18 Analysis

Life looks to be getting slightly sweeter for Quoyle as his secret love interest, Wavey, is now letting him drive her to the library twice a week. His feelings are progressing as he feels genuine excitement on the days he gets to drive her. He tries to remain coy, however and has not asked her on a date or spent any other time with her.

Quoyle and his family seem to be settling into their lives, working on their home, having people over for dinner, and taking the children for rides in the boat. The rhythm of life has taken hold for Quoyle.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

Sometimes Billy, Nutbeem, and Quoye just had to get away from Tert Card and on this day they went for lunch at the Fisherman's Chance for some fish, chips, and conversation. Nutbeem complained about all the sexual abuse stories he had to write that week. Billy told them he would be heading out to Gaze Island to tend his departed father's grave. Quoye was very interested in Gaze Island and asked Billy some questions. He'd never seen it or been there before and Billy invited him to go along.

Quoye had been writing a story about a boat named Buddy that had burned at sea. *Buddy* had exploded when its captain, Sam Nolly, had screwed in a light bulb with a propane tank leaking nearby. He showed his draft to the other two and they liked it.

Chapter 19 Analysis

Quoye had formed a good friendship with Billy and Nutbeem, who are quirky and eccentric like he is. Billy is an older man who's been around Killick-Claw his entire life. Nutbeem is more of a transient, just in town earning enough money to get back on his boat and sail away.

Billy offers to take Quoye on an adventure with him to Gaze Island, which Quoye looks forward to. The symbolism at the end of the chapter includes Quoye looking out to sea and the author creates the simile of the movement of the water "like a swinging door opening, closing, opening. The characters lives rely on the water and it also symbolizes their lives. In this case it's the door of Quoye's past opening, closing, and opening.



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

That weekend Billy took Quoyle out on his boat to go over to Gaze Island pointing out all the major rocks and their names. Billy asked him whether he had seen the distant relative Nolan yet. He told Quoyle that he heard that Nolan thinks the old house is his. Quoyle had never heard that before and he thought the man should've come to them to talk about it. Billy agreed and said that the Quoyles were "wild and inbred, half-wits and murderers." Quoyle had never heard this before and had not heard the stories that Billy alluded to. Billy said he was better off.

Gaze Island came into view and Billy revealed that he had grown up and lived there until age forty. The island had been abandoned since 1960, when the government moved everyone off. There had been five families on the island, all intermarried to each other. They found the cemetery and Billy talked about his poor father that had died when Billy was just fifteen. He told the story of how his father landed on Gaze Island after being in a shipwreck. Quoyle asked Billy what he meant when he'd said something about Wavey being the tall, quiet woman. Billy told him that his father used to say, "there were four women in every man's heart. The Maid in the Meadow, the Demon Lover, the Stouthearted Woman, the Tall and Quiet Woman."

After tending his father's grave, Billy took Quoyle to a very old cemetery, the cemetery of the Quoyles. He told Quoyle that long ago the island was their pirate lair where they lured ships and robbed them. He also told him the story about how the house they now live in was dragged across the frozen water to Quoyle's point. Quoyle was mortified at the stories Billy told and surprised that his aunt had never told him. No wonder, he thought.

Chapter 20 Analysis

Quoyle accompanies Billy to Gaze Island because he thinks he is going to explore a new place, but soon finds out that he is revisiting the past and the heritage of his family. Billy tells him the stories about how the old Quoyles ruled the island as pirates. They used their women to lure unsuspecting ships to stop there, where the pirates robbed them of their loot and did away with the crews. Quoyle is shocked by the stories and surprised that his aunt has never shared any of these stories with him. More and more it is occurring to him that there is more to know and learn about his heritage and his aunt. At the end of the chapter the fog rolls in and the two men have to leave quickly. For Quoyle the fog symbolizes the confusion and mystery of his heritage, his family, and ultimately his identity.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

Billy and Quoye try and make their way back to Killick-Claw in the thick fog. As they're making their way, Quoye spots a suitcase floating near them and pulls it into the boat. The case was locked and they decided to wait until they got to shore to pick the lock. While they crept along slowly Quoye was thinking about the Quoyes before him that Billy had told him about and how horrible they had been. He couldn't believe the same blood was in his veins.

After being lost in the fog for an hour they finally began to hear the sounds of shore. They heard water lapping against the rocks and car doors and engines in motion. They brought the boat to shore and crossed the street to a restaurant for some dinner and to call for a ride back to Killick-Claw. While they waited for Tert Card to come pick them up they had some dinner, but all Quoye could think of was the suitcase. He dragged the luggage under a streetlight and found a piece of pipe to break the lock. He broke the lock off and the suitcase fell open. In the suitcase was the head of Bayonet Melville from the Hitler boat laying on a bed of seaweed.

Chapter 21 Analysis

The fog that overtakes Gaze Island and forces Quoye and Billy to depart is further symbolism of Quoye's confusion over his and his family's past. Just as he and Billy made their way slowly through the fog seeing many rocks which could've been dangerous but also served as markers of their progress so is Quoye's journey in his new life. He has been in a fog most of his life and although he has sustained many emotional injuries, those hazards have also served as markers of his progress out of the fog.

As for Quoye's finding of Melville's head, it begins to give resolution to the plot line about the aunt not getting payment for her upholstery work on Mr. and Mrs. Melville's yacht.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

When Aunt Agnis was out of the shop, her two employees, Mavis and Dawn, discussed the finding of Melville's head. They couldn't believe that Agnis took it so well while Quoyle couldn't function for two days. All the while Dawn was sending out her resume and typing letters of introduction. Mavis wondered if it was Mrs. Melville who had caused Mr. Melville's head to be severed and placed in a suitcase. She blamed this sort of wickedness on all the foreigners moving to the area.

Meanwhile, Quoyle was giving Wavey and her son Herry a ride home. When they arrived at her home her brother was there and approached the car to shake Quoyle's hand. Wavey invited Quoyle in for some tea but he declined, and said he had to get back to work. Quoyle talked briefly with Ken, Wavey's brother, and he asked Quoyle if he could give him a ride back to his fishing net. Quoyle complied and the men drove off and the brother told him he should come by anytime he wanted to see Wavey.

Chapter 22 Analysis

Even though the reader does not see directly what happened following the discovery of the head in the suitcase, the author gives a synopsis through Mavis and Dawn's discussion of the incident. The aunt seemed to be very calm and cool about the whole ordeal, which Dawn and Mavis found strange. Quoyle, on the other hand, was devastated. Quoyle also gets the chance to meet Ken, Wavey's brother. This event is significant because the brother gives Quoyle his blessing and encourages him to keep seeing her.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

As time went on and the fixing up and painting of the old house continued, Quoye still thought it looked old and frail. The aunt grew less interested in working on the house and spent more time on her own pursuits. One day while they were working outside the aunt saw an unfamiliar man walking toward them. By the time Quoye turned to look he saw no one. Quoye suggested that it may be the old man who was a "fork kin" of the Quoyes. He told her how Billy had said the man still believe the house was his. The aunt was surprised to hear the story, although she had certainly heard the stories of the Quoyes of old.

That night Quoye was awakened by a flashlight beam shining across is ceiling. It quickly disappeared, but he got up and took a look around, seeing nothing. In the morning he told his aunt they should go down the road and find this old relative and talk to him. The aunt said she wanted nothing to do with it and they didn't go.

Chapter 23 Analysis

In another symbol of their heritage and family history coming back to haunt them, the aunt believes she sees the distant relative who thinks he has claim on their house. Quoye believes that it was the relative shining his flashlight into the house that night. In an interesting turn of methods in dealing with difficulty, this time the aunt doesn't want to face the distant relative but Quoye is ready to seek the man out and deal with him race to face.



Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

In September Bunny started school. After her first day, Quoye asked her how it went and she told him it was fine, that she liked it. She had learned how to write her name and Quoye was impressed and relieved that she was so different than he. The aunt had suggested that they take the girls berry picking and then make jam. She also suggested he asked Wavey and her son to join them. Quoye liked the idea and that weekend the lot of them walked to the berry picking grounds that the aunt remembered going to when she was younger.

Quoye picked near Wavey and when his aunt asked him to retrieve the lunch basket back near the glove factory, he asked Wavey to go with him. During the walk back Wavey stopped to look at an iceberg. They admired an iceberg that appeared like two towers but came together under water. Then Quoye asked her to come down where he was and he made love to her. Afterward she burst out about how her husband died at sea and that she couldn't look at it without thinking of him. They both wondered to themselves how to get over the grief that separated them. As they walked back toward the rest of their party they again fell to the ground, and rolled in berry bushes together. Wavey couldn't escape her grief and got up and ran back to the aunt and the children as Quoye watched her run.

Chapter 24 Analysis

In this chapter the romance between Quoye and Wavey goes from secret desire to outward passion. The author uses the symbolism of the two icebergs that appear separate above water but joined together below the surface. However, as Quoye and Wavey's affair begins on land she cannot escape the memories of the ending of her marriage in the water where her husband perished. Quoye, too, must explore how he can escape the grief over losing Petal that lies just below the surface in his heart. He knows that these developments with Wavey are momentous but elusive.



Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

One morning Quoye was ready to leave for work and saw that the bay was too rough and decided to drive. He stopped at the Bawk's Nest for breakfast and sat down at a table with Billy and Tert Card. They were talking about how they thought oil would save the local economy when the oil started pumping out of a nearby oil field. The fishing industry had not been very healthy in recent years with too many fisherman and not enough fish.

When they all arrived at the office, Quoye handed in his shipping column to Tert Card. It was about how oil tankers were a more common sight in their harbor than fishing schooners. He also wrote about the harm done to the environment by oil spills. Tert Card did not approve of his views at all and edited the piece so that nothing was left of Quoye's writing except the title. After seeing it in print, Quoye shouted at Tert Card and argued with him that it was his column to express whatever he wanted to.

Card stormed out and Quoye was impressed that he had stood up for himself. Billy said that he would address the subject with Jack. The next day Jack called for Quoye and told him to keep writing and his work would not be changed in the future. Then he asked Quoye to put Tert Card on the phone.

Chapter 25 Analysis

After writing a piece for his column that Tert Card edited too heavily, Quoye behaves very unlike himself and stands up to Card defending his views and his column. The confrontation ends with Card storming out of the office. In the end Card's boss backs up Quoye and orders Card not to edit Quoye's pieces.

This scene shows the growth in maturity and self-confidence that Quoye is experiencing. His reaction to Card's editing would not have been typical in the past and is evidence of his character's transformation.



Chapter 26

Chapter 26 Summary

One weekend toward the end of September Quoyle spent it alone in their green house. His aunt was away and his daughters spending the night at Dennis and Beety's. He worked on an upcoming story, drank beer, and cooked himself a shrimp dinner. After dinner he ventured out to his dock to watch the day wane and have another beer. That night he had terrible nightmares about Petal and not being able to save her.

The next day he decided to venture out to the end of the point. Once there he felt like he was at the end of the earth with no human, animal or bird in sight. He thought about all that lay beneath the surface of the water, of lost ships and fisherman. He noticed a body in a yellow suit floating face down in the water. From where he was the body was not reachable so he decided to head home and get help. As he made his way he decided the fastest way to get help would be to take his boat rather than drive.

As he set out in his boat he noticed that the water was too rough but still forged ahead. The strong seas ended up capsizing and destroying his little boat. Quoyle was in the frigid waters. Soon he couldn't feel his legs and dusk was approaching. He was very tired and wanted to sleep. He closed his eyes and what seemed like a moment later a light was shining in his eyes. Jack Buggit fished him out of the water and took him back to his house and presented him to Mrs. Buggit, where they tended to Quoyle's freezing body.

Once Quoyle could speak again he told them of the man in the yellow suit and the Coast Guard was called. Mrs. Buggit got Quoyle settled in the guest room and told him that next time he should buy a boat from Alvin Yark. The next day memories of her son lost to the sea flooded her world once again as she struggled to go about her day.

Chapter 26 Analysis

As Quoyle tries to quickly get word to others about a dead man floating in the water, he almost becomes a dead man himself. This is Quoyle's first experience being in the water as the sea tries to take him. He doesn't know how to swim but learns quickly in order to save his life. He clings to pieces of his broken boat in order to remain afloat until Jack Buggit rescues him.

Somehow, Buggit has a sixth sense about when people are in the water and in trouble. He's very sensitive to his sense, having lost one son to the water he keeps fishing others from the jaws of the sea.



Chapter 27

Chapter 27 Summary

A couple of days after his boat wreck Quoyle found out from Billy that Search and Rescue had recovered the body he saw. It was a headless man cut into five pieces. Immediately Quoyle thought of the head he found in the suitcase and Billy confirmed that it was in fact Mr. Melville in the yellow suit.

Quoyle and Billy were in the newsroom and Nutbeem began complaining that the only stories he got assigned were the horrid sexual assaults. Card reminded all of them that sordid stories such as those sold more papers. Quoyle turned in his story about a fisherman who could no longer make a living so he decided to sell his boat. The same day he put it in the paper the boat sank and was not insured. They all talked about how ironic it was that Jack seemed to assign them stories that related to their inner tragedies such as Quoyle getting assigned the car wrecks.

Later on Quoyle went to pick up Wavey. They were spending more time together. He drove her, stacked her wood and sat for tea with her. She cut his hair and watched his daughters when he worked late. Sometimes he ate dinner at her house.

Chapter 27 Analysis

Quoyle and his colleagues make some commentary on the journalistic profession in this chapter. Nutbeem complains about the pages of sexual assaults he must report on each day and Quoyle feels badly about reporting about the one man's total loss of livelihood by making it sound like the punch line of a stupid joke. Their editor Tert Card reminds them that all the tragedy is what sells papers and most people aren't interested in much else.

Quoyle's budding relationship with Wavey continues to proceed, but slowly. The author uses the analogy "like two ducks swimming at first on opposite sides of the water but who end in the middle, together."



Chapter 28

Chapter 28 Summary

The aunt had taken a walk to get some fresh air and time to herself. As she was out walking she came upon a pond that looked very familiar. She remembered an October long past when she was alone out on the ice and a man appeared on the ice wearing fishing boots and unbuttoning his pants. She tried to keep away from him as long as possible but knew what was inevitable. This time she did not go down to the pond. She knew her past had hardened her but she was a survivor and had made her own way.

Quoye and the aunt began discussing what they were going to do during the winter. Their home was too far for them to commute to town when the weather was bad and with snow the road to town would be impassable. Quoye had thought of a few solutions and the aunt was impressed. Usually it was she that came up with the solutions. They decided to sleep on it and the next morning awoke to five inches of snow.

The aunt made her way to her shop later in the morning and had a package waiting for her when she arrived. She opened it to find an envelope of American dollars tied with a blue cord and no note. However the cord was in fact a strip of pale, blue leather like that used on the Melville's yacht.

Chapter 28 Analysis

The author further characterizes the aunt by revealing a painful memory of assault. As a young girl she is assaulted while skating on a nearby pond by a yet unidentified man but likely a family member. The reader learns that she was hardened by these experiences. At the end of the chapter, her expectations of the Melvilles are proven true when she receives a wad of cash in an envelope bound by a strip of the leather she used on their yacht. The timing is eerie considering the husband's body was just floating near Killick-Claw cut to pieces and his head recovered in a suitcase. The aunt's package may be proof that Mrs. Melville is still alive and well and may have been the murderer.



Chapter 29

Chapter 29 Summary

It occurred to Quoyale that the green house did have one great benefit as he sat in the kitchen of Dennis and Beety. Tert Card walked in and helped himself to the coffee. As he stood before them telling Quoyale about a ship fire offshore he vigorously scratched at his crotch. Then Billy called to ask whether Quoyale had talked to Alvin Yark about building him a new boat. He also told him Yark was Wavey's uncle. Quoyale felt the arms of the small town squeezing him.

After leaving Dennis and Beety's he rushed to the harbor at the harbormasters insistence in order to see the burnt ship being towed into Killick-Claw. However, hours later the ship had not yet arrived. Quoyale left to pick up Wavey. They were growing more comfortable with each other and rode in silence. Then he told her he needed to talk to her uncle about a boat. She agreed and said she'd make plans for them to go over there for dinner.

That Saturday Wavey, Quoyale, and all the kids went to Mr. & Mrs. Yark's for dinner. Alvin told Quoyale all about how he builds the boats out of fresh cut, green wood because a boat build with dead wood will take on water.

Chapter 29 Analysis

Quoyale appears to be growing more and more comfortable with his neighbors, friends, and with Wavey. He has become such a regular at Dennis and Beety's house that he even takes phone calls there. However, he's glad that it's not his house that is so inundated with visitors all the time, especially when it's visitors like his crotch-scratching boss, Tert Card.

Quoyale and Wavey are becoming more comfortable, too. They talk little but have an unspoken affection for one another and it is not like the love that they each new in their former marriages that ended in pain and loss.



Chapter 30

Chapter 30 Summary

Quoyle picked up his daughters from Dennis and Beety's house and they walked to the local inn where the aunt was staying. They all sat down together for dinner at the hotel's restaurant. The aunt admitted that even though she was enjoying some peace and quiet that she missed them all. Then she announced that she had been hired to restore the big cargo ship, the *Rome*, which had burned. However, the job would take her to St. John's, a town nearby. The aunt then asked Quoyle whether he was planning on staying or moving back to New York. He had no intention of going back and thought of himself there, and barely knew that man that took whatever came to him. While he and his aunt talked Bunny was making Sun Clouded Over with string woven between her fingers and hands.

Chapter 30 Analysis

Quoyle and his girls find out that the aunt is moving away until spring for a job. On top of that, they're planning on not living in the green house over the winter because it's so hard to get back and forth to town. As soon as their life is coming together it also seems to be splintering a bit. The aunt asks Quoyle if he plans to stay in Killick-Claw, which gives Quoyle and the reader a moment to compare the Quoyle back in New York to the present-day Quoyle. He has made significant improvements in his life, in self-confidence and in finding his way in life. It's now obvious to Quoyle that he could never go back.



Chapter 31

Chapter 31 Summary

In November Quoyle is writing a story about the boat wreck of a vessel named the *Galactic Bizzard* that collided with a cliff of a small island while on its way to Montreal. "Sometimes you just lose it," is what the at fault officer said about the accident. Meanwhile at the paper, Tert Card had lost it as well. He was complaining about the foul weather and that it was too early for snow and ice storms. They were all fantasizing about tropical vacations. Of course, Billy said he'd never board a plane.

Billy tells the newsroom staff about a story he's covering where a crazy thief who was taken to the town lock up and in the middle of the night created a ruckus and tore off all his clothes. Nutbeem was reporting on the Canadian Minister of Health being upset about hair removal. Nutbeem shared another story about a man who set his boat on fire and was also taken to the town lock up and when they brought him to court the next morning he tore off his clothes.

The following Tuesday was to be Nutbeem's last day. He planned to sail away to the Caribbean. Billy says it's common for the town to begin to empty out as winter approaches. There are only few that stick it out and he's never known anyone like Quoyle to settle there. Quoyle reiterated that he was staying, his kids were in school, and he had friends, but he was looking for a place to live in town. Billy had no confidence that Quoyle could bring up his girls on his own.

Chapter 31 Analysis

In this chapter consisting mainly of newsroom banter, the author further characterizes and highlights the different characters that inhabit the newsroom. Tert Card is just a vile, grumpy, crotch-scratching boss. Nutbeem represents a free spirit, traveling the world in his sailboat. Fair weather, fair seas, and his boat are all he needs he is completely free from encumbrances. Billy Pretty on the other hand is completely tied to Killick-Claw and Newfoundland. He is an older man and has never been on airplane and probably not far out of Killick-Claw. He's a resilient, tough Newfoundlander. Then there's Quoyle, a simple, stable man that just wants to settle down and raise his children. All of their personalities reflect different, yet very relatable traits.



Chapter 32

Chapter 32 Summary

It was Friday afternoon and Tert Card was acting bizarre, answering the phones in a high voice and making frequent trips to the men's room. The others smelled rum on his breath. Finally he left the office and it was time for Quoye to pick up Bunny and take her to Beety's house where the girls would be staying for the night. Nutbeem's going away party was that evening and Quoye was going to help him set up and see the trailer that he may rent for the winter.

The two men picked up all the party supplies and liquor before heading out to Nutbeem's trailer. It was a typical looking trailer, thought Quoye, with bad carpet, small bedrooms, and small appliances.

Soon guests arrived and Quoye found himself having fun, letting go of his responsibilities for awhile and getting drunk. Later the party began to take a turn for the worse as a black-haired man talked the drunken crowd of men into destroying Nutbeem's boat so that he couldn't leave. In just minutes the boat was half sunk. Quoye left the party, checked in to the Inn and passed out.

Chapter 32 Analysis

Quoye finally gets the chance to witness the infamous Newfoundlanders party. He's heard that parties used to go on for days, so Nutbeem's was tame comparatively, only lasting one night. He actually allows himself to forget his responsibilities and even forget about Petal and Wavey, which is uncharacteristic of him.

Quoye reveals in this chapter that he's not been to many if any parties in his thirty-something years and begins to recognize and enjoy that he's just one of the guys. However, in a moment of self-pity, he fails to hear Nutbeem calling for his help to save the drunken mob from destroying his boat and all of his dreams with it.



Chapter 33

Chapter 33 Summary

By ten o'clock the next morning the housekeeping staff at the Inn began knocking on Quoye's door. He was awake but very ill, hunched over the toilet. He pulled himself together, got a cab to Nutbeem's, picked up his car and went to Beety and Dennis's house. Beety was disapproving, and didn't think he was the partying type. She told him Dennis was out with Nutbeem to help him fix his boat. All the kids had colds so Quoye left them with Beety.

He went out to the green house to pick up some items while the road was clear. While there he thought about how wrong the house was to him. It was special to the aunt but meant nothing to him. Upstairs he saw that sections of knotted rope had been laid at the threshold of each room. He became very angry that this is where his children slept. He knew it had to be the old cousin.

Quoye was now determined to put a stop to this nonsense once and for all. He found the hut where the man lived in the deserted Capsize Cove. He knocked and there was no answer but he could sense the man was inside so he opened the door. The man sat up from hiding in a pile of rags. Quoye saw some family resemblances, primarily the chin. He took the knotted twine from his pocket and dropped them on the floor and told the man not to do this and left.

Quoye went to Alvin Yark's where his boat was being built who talked to him about boats and how each one is different based on the tree it came from and that each tree is a little different. After visiting Yark's Quoye made his way to Nutbeem's to see if he could help with the boat, but when he got there he found the men sitting on the step drinking beer. They recounted that they tried to fix the boat but it broke in half and drifted out to sea. Nutbeem was in good spirits, said he wouldn't have been able to make it anyway and that he was planning to fly to Brazil and then drift around.

Chapter 33 Analysis

Quoye has to overcome his hangover quick as he has a full day planned. He pays a visit to the green house, discovers someone has been in it, and pays a visit to the distant cousin at his hut in Capsize Cove. The man is so poor and pitiful that not even Quoye can yell at him, but in this man he sees the family resemblance, especially the chin. The author may be foreshadowing a future vision of Quoye himself or contrasting the improvement that Quoye has made for himself and the entire family by seeing what it could've been. Quoye moves on about his day visiting his friends and finding out that Nutbeem's boat is a total loss and yet he still plans to leave town, go to Brazil and wander about.



Chapter 34

Chapter 34 Summary

One day during the winter Tert Card asked Quoye to join him at a bar around the corner for a drink. Quoye didn't want to, but rather wanted to go get his kids and go home to the Burkes' house, which he was renting for the winter. He gave in for one quick drink. Card talked about the bad weather and that he's seen worse. Then he told Quoye that he was leaving the paper, and moving to St. John's for another job. He said that Billy would be taking over for him.

It was approaching Christmas, not Quoye's favorite time of year, and Bunny told him she was performing in a pageant with Dennis and Beety's daughter, Marty. Quoye and Sunshine were in attendance at the packed auditorium. Quoye tried to watch for Wavey but didn't see her. Bunny and Marty came on stage in their homemade costumes and sang a song together. Dennis and Quoye were proud. Then Wavey and Herry performed with Wavey playing the accordion as Herry danced. Quoye cheered loudly. Beety was the best performance of the night doing a comedic impression of Billy Pretty.

For Christmas Quoye gave Wavey a glass teapot and a silk scarf. She gave him a sweater. He couldn't stop thinking about Petal and how she always forgot to give him presents and one time gave him two eggs from the refrigerator. They had Christmas dinner at Dennis and Beety's and the aunt came to town for the occasion. The next day Dennis suggested that he and Quoye go check in with Nolan, Quoye's distant cousin and make sure he was doing well and had enough food and wood. They took some of Beety's bread, which he attacked and devoured. He was hungry and cold and Dennis suggested they place him in an old folks' home.

Chapter 34 Analysis

Quoye gets the news that Tert Card is moving but hardly reacts to the news. Card continues to throw in his pessimistic jabs that Quoye will probably not last at the paper or in Killick-Claw. However, the more time goes by, the more Quoye and his family become part of the community. Bunny and her best friend Marty perform a song in the annual Christmas pageant in front of all the townspeople. Quoye is very proud of her. Wavey and her son also perform and Quoye can't help but hoot and holler for them. Even though he doesn't really like Christmastime, he seems to be enjoying it this year with the warmth of family and friends around him. He is finally part of a supportive network of friends and family.



Chapter 35

Chapter 35 Summary

Jack called Quoye and told him that they needed to talk and he would pick him up in the morning. It was January and the winter so long already that it was difficult to remember what life was like when it wasn't winter. It snowed just about everyday, if even just a few flakes. The next morning Jack picked up Quoye and as they were driving to Misky Bay Jack told him that Billy wanted to continue on as a reporter, so he was giving Quoye Card's job as managing editor. He would continue writing the shipping news but also take care of managing the newsroom. Quoye was surprised and didn't know what to say. Jack continued talking about staff and his ideas for making changes to the paper.

Quoye sat at the managing editor's desk, now his, and asked his reporters about what they had for news this week. He asked the new guy Benny to talk first. Benny had taken over for Nutbeem and was trying to handle all the sexual assault stories with as much tact as Nutbeem did. Quoye gave him some pointers.

Chapter 35 Analysis

To his surprise and amazement, Jack appoints Quoye as managing editor of the *Gammy Bird* newspaper to replace Tert Card. He takes to it rather quickly and in no time is sitting at the managing editor's desk and giving writing advice to the new reporter Benny Fudge. This is a major move for Quoye and really shows how far he has come.



Chapter 36

Chapter 36 Summary

One Friday Jack picked Quoye up in his boat. Quoye had just talked to Partridge on the phone. He was telling Quoye about all the horrible riots in Los Angeles and that a former colleague was shot back in New York by a crazy person with a gun that stormed the newsroom. Then Quoye boarded Jack's boat to go fishing and conduct their editorial meeting. Quoye didn't mind it but thought it was a strange way to conduct a meeting. They talked about the rumor that one of the local plants was closing, as well as their ideas for putting more editorial content in the paper. Jack fished and Quoye cleaned his catch.

In February Quoye received the paperwork to sign to admit his distant cousin Nolan in an institution for good. He thought it best to go talk to Nolan in St. John's where he was currently staying and find out what he thought. The paper named Nolan's afflictions as delusional with dementia and schizophrenia. Not good. Quoye asked Wavey to come with him. Wavey spent the day shopping for her family and Quoye and his girls.

Quoye spent the day at the institution with Nolan. Nolan said it wasn't bad there, the food was good and the clothes clean. He said he never wanted to return to Capsize Cove, that he always wanted to be a pilot and never wanted to be there in the first place. He asked about Aunt Agnis and why she didn't visit and Quoye said he didn't know. He then told Quoye about how the aunt had an abortion at his house when she was young after being raped by her brother, Guy. Guy was Quoye's father. Quoye was astonished.

Quoye and Wavey spent the night together at a hotel and after making love Wavey told him that this was the hotel where she and her dead husband had honeymooned. When Quoye returned to the institution he was told he couldn't see Nolan and that he had attacked an attendant and was under sedation. Quoye had his answer.

Chapter 36 Analysis

The author draws an interesting contrast between the States and Newfoundland and between Quoye's life and his best friend Partridge's life. Just as Quoye is ready to leave for an editorial meeting on a fishing boat, Partridge calls to talk about the LA riots and how a mutual friend was gunned down at work.

Quoye and Wavey take a weekend away together to St. John's, but as much as they try to be intimate with each other, they both have the memories of their dead spouses preventing their relationship from going any further than physical passion.

Quoye finds he has to own his heritage and the history of his family by taking guardianship of distant cousin Nolan, who he finds out is not to distant when Nolan tells

of the aunt's abortion at his house due to being raped by Quoye's own father. With this revelation the reader can finally understand the author's allusions to the aunt's painful past.



Chapter 37

Chapter 37 Summary

When he arrived at the newspaper Quoyle had messages from Bunny's school principal. He returned the calls to hear from the principal that Bunny had shoved one of the substitute teachers to the ground and he should come pick her up, which he did. The principal was suspending Bunny until she could explain and apologize.

Quoyle spoke to her gently and took her to Beety's who knew Bunny must have a good explanation. Later Beety heard her story and relayed it to Quoyle. The substitute teacher had been harassing Herry, who had Down syndrome, making him stand against the wall of the school and mimicking him. Bunny saw what was happening and pushed the teacher down to get her to stop.

Quoyle and the aunt, who traveled back after hearing the story, gave the principal an earful and Quoyle smoothed everything over and Bunny was back at school. The next time Wavey saw Bunny she said all she wanted to without speaking by squeezing her hand and looking her in the eye.

The next time Quoyle and Wavey were at the Yark's house, Quoyle and Alvin were working on his boat and he asked Quoyle when he and Wavey were going to get married. Quoyle didn't know how to explain the complexities of their relationship to Alvin so he told him it was because her dead husband was always on her mind. Alvin told him that her husband had cheated on her openly and repeatedly and treated her horribly.

Later Quoyle thought about how much thought he invested in Petal even though she was horrible to him. The next chance he had he told Wavey that Petal had hated to cook and once gave him two raw eggs for a present. He told her about Petal's boyfriends and cheating. Then Wavey told him about Herold and his cheating.

Chapter 37 Analysis

Quoyle's greatest internal struggle at this point in the story is his conflict over whether he loves or even has the ability to love Wavey. To him, he spent all his love on Petal and love only meant pain and loss. He also had a problem with Wavey's obsession over her long lost husband. However, even though Quoyle and Wavey are keeping each other at arm's length in many ways, their families are meshing, as evidenced in Bunny's defending of Herry when he was being picked on by a substitute teacher. Bunny now sees Herry as someone she needs to take care of.

The idea of marrying Wavey entered Quoyle's consciousness when Alvin Yark, her uncle, asks when they will be getting married. However, Quoyle will have to define his feelings for Wavey and also resolve his questions about love and companionship and

where Wavey fits into that scheme. However, they seem to be making progress when they mutually discover that their past relationships were equally destructive.



Chapter 38

Chapter 38 Summary

Once again at Yark's, Quoyale helps Alvin build the boat and finds out his boat will be ready by the following Saturday. Seeing the curves in the wood he thinks of Wavey and if they were to marry whether Petal and her dead husband would be in bed with them. That night Quoyale had a party to celebrate the aunt's return to town. When Quoyale got home he found that Wavey had bought a husky puppy for Bunny and Sunshine. They named it Warren, after the aunt's dog. Quoyale greeted Wavey with a kiss and embrace in front of all their friends and family at the party. They all cheered. By nine that night all had gone home, and a very bad storm was blowing in.

The storm raged and blew all night long and the next issue of the *Gammy Bird* ran a special issue chronicling the damage. During the day Wavey came by and told Quoyale to go see her father, which he did. When he arrived, Wavey's father had his binoculars out and told Quoyale that the green house had blown away in the storm, it was no longer where it had been. Quoyale found Dennis and they went out to the sight and sure enough the house was completely gone. Quoyale knew the aunt would be the most upset; however, she was not as upset as he expected. She's gotten over many things in her life she said. Quoyale told her that he knew what his father did to her. She didn't know what to say but went on talking about her plans. She had insurance on the house so would use that to buy another house. Quoyale figured he would buy the Burkes' house he was renting.

Chapter 38 Analysis

In a huge storm the green house blows into the sea and with it, the only monument of the Quoyales of old. In literature, the wind often symbolizes cleansing and this scene symbolizes Quoyale and the aunt's cleansing of the past. Both of them have moved on from the past. The memory of the past and the curses of the family have been blown into the sea and buried.

Quoyale continues to try and reconcile his feelings for Wavey and for Petal and consider whether he could marry her. He wonders if their dead spouses will haunt their relationship.



Chapter 39

Chapter 39 Summary

Finally Quoye's new boat is done and just before the ice is broken up enough to put her in the water. One night Quoye and Wavey are dinner guests at Dennis and Beety's. Dennis is very agitated and frustrated because he has trouble finding work in the winter. That night Quoye went home and took a bath, during which he discovers that he's come to a point of general well being and even experiences small bursts of joy. After falling asleep he's awakened by a ringing phone. It's Dennis, his father is missing. At midnight he calls back again to say they found Jack drowned.

Jack had been out setting lobster traps when one of the ropes got tangled around his leg and when he threw the trap overboard he was dragged with it and trapped underwater. Quoye assured his employees that the paper would survive and they planned to go to press the next day with a special edition in honor of Jack. That night was the wake and Bunny begged to go since her best friend Marty would be there. Wavey thought it was a good idea for her to learn about death as a part of life.

The whole family attended the wake. To the shock and disbelief of all the guests Jack coughed during the wake while Dennis and his widow were looking on. An ambulance was called and he was rushed to the hospital. Later that night Wavey had a hard time trying to explain everything to Bunny, who still believed her mother was just asleep like Jack had been.

Jack finally recovered from his ordeal. Quoye and Wavey finally said their "I do's" and Quoye figured that if the miracle of Jack's resurrection was possible, it was possible that love could exist without grief and destruction.

Chapter 39 Analysis

Quoye's boat, which is an extension of him and a symbol of how he sees himself, is finally completed. The author is signaling to the reader that Quoye has finally come to a complete and positive opinion of himself. His first boat was a cheap, poorly made boat not even worthy to float upon the water. As the story went on and Quoye matured, achieved some success and improved his self-image, his worthiness to commission and own a custom made boat increased. Quoye's boats were a symbol of his true self. In the beginning he was afraid of boats but finally bought one. As time went on and he learned more about his boat he began to enjoy it. But the boat wasn't sea worthy and fell apart. Then he commissioned a custom boat that was made out of living trees and like no other boat in its size, shape and appearance.

With the apparent drowning of the owner of the newspaper, Jack Buggit, Quoye finds himself in a position to have to stand up and defend his paper and assure the staff that the paper must continue. Surprisingly, Jack survives his drowning ordeal, coming back



to life during his own wake. By the end of the story Quoye and Wavey finally get married and Quoye decides to believe that love is possible without the horrible pain and destruction of the past.



Characters

Quoyle

Quoyle is a large, red-haired, thirty-six-year-old man with a protruding chin that he's been self-conscious of his entire life. He's quite clumsy and has a rather low opinion of himself. He had a horrible upbringing and was treated badly by his father and brother. As an adult he was adrift in his life with no real motivation to do anything different. Because he thought he was unlovable, he asked to marry the first woman that showed any interest in him. He didn't discover true love until his daughters were born. His marriage to a cheating, disrespectful woman was further destruction of his fragile soul, although he remained devoted to her until her death in a tragic car accident.

Following his aunt's advice to move with her to Newfoundland was the best decision Quoyle made and he finally began to enjoy some success in his life. He began achieving some success at his job with the newspaper and then began making friends and building successful friendships. He also met a woman but was less successful in building a relationship with her because of his past. Quoyle was firmly tethered to his past and had a difficult time leaving his past and looking toward the future. He could not believe that love could happen again for him and that it could happen without despair and destruction, so he resisted love with Wavey. As Quoyle matures, learns to love himself and even experiences periods of joy, he comes to grips with his past. Once he recognizes his relationship with his wife and its devastation, he's able to put the past behind him and move to a deeper relationship with Wavey.

Aunt Agnis

Agnis is a complex and mysterious character who helps pull Quoyle out of his despair while recovering and dealing with her own grief and ghosts from the past. The author reveals just little tidbits of the aunt's character at a time thus the reader does not really know or understand her character until the end of the story. She is a talented and well-known yacht upholsterer once located on Long Island, New York. Living in New York, she had a significant other that she refers to as Warren. Warren is actually her last name; the aunt had a lesbian partner until Warren's death. After the death of her lover she puts all of her energy into her work and becomes more and more well-known. Wanting a fresh start and to face her own past, she talks Quoyle into coming with her to Newfoundland. Once in Newfoundland, the author begins to reveal snippets of the aunt's memories of being raped as a young girl growing up there. Not until the end of the book is it revealed that the aunt was raped by Quoyle's father (her brother) and had to abort the child at her aunt and uncle's home.

Agnis is a survivor who is great at avoiding her feelings with whiskey, keeping herself moving, and hard work. However she is very devoted to Quoyle and his daughters and without her, Quoyle may not have survived after losing his wife. In the end, she builds a



successful marine upholstery business in Killick-Claw and is planning to live above her shop with her new girlfriend.

Petal

Petal was Quoye's first wife and the mother of his two daughters. She was a promiscuous, disrespectful, heartless woman who laughed at Quoye when he proposed to him and ridiculed him for the rest of their marriage. Quoye saw her as a tragic character looking for love in all the wrong places. During the story she is killed in a car accident that she's in with one of her lovers. The car accident came following her telling Quoye, through the babysitter, that she was running off with another man and taking the children with her. She sold the girls to a child pornographer to get money to run away.

Bunny

Bunny is Quoye and Petal's first daughter. She is a sensitive girl who has many visions, dreams and nightmares. Many of her dreams are used by the author as foreshadowing. For example, she dreams that their house blows into the sea the same night that it actually happens. Bunny grieves for a long time over the loss of her mother and even believes that she's still alive, just sleeping. To Quoye's delight, Bunny is very little like him, she's social, confident, and makes friends very easily in their new town. She's not afraid, like Quoye, and has a positive attitude about life.

Sunshine

Sunshine is Quoye and Petal's youngest daughter and plays a much lesser role in the story than her elder sister.

Wavey Prowse

Wavey could be considered the female version of Quoye in the story. She's also his love interest. Like Quoye she's awkward in appearance, she's quite tall. She also had a destructive first marriage. Her dead husband was a philanderer and like Petal committed his indiscretions in full view of Wavey, their family and the entire small town. Wavey remained devoted to him until his death at sea. Like Quoye, she too was haunted by the memory of her husband and her struggle to earn his love and faithfulness.

Wavey had one son, Herry, who had Down syndrome. She too faces her past and shares with Quoye about the way her husband treated her, but only after her told her about Petal's horrible treatment. Everything seems to remind her of her dead husband. For example, when she and Quoye make love at the water's edge, she says the water reminds her of him because that's where he died. When they go away for the weekend,



she tells him they are staying in the same hotel where she honeymooned with her husband. However, by the end of the story, she overcomes her demons and is able to marry Quoye.

Billy Pretty

Billy is one of Quoye's colleagues at the newspaper. He's an older man that's lived in Killick-Claw his entire life. He declares that he is a rarity as a resident that grew up and remained in the area even through the brutal winters. He helps Quoye not only at work but also helps him learn more about the horrifying heritage of the Quoye family. Billy is characterized as a loyal, steadfast, good hearted elder of the community.

Nutbeem

Nutbeem is a colleague of Quoye's at the newspaper. He's in charge of covering sexual assault cases and somehow finds a brilliant way to write his articles with tact and respectability. Nutbeem is a drifter having landed in Newfoundland on his way around the world in his sailboat. However, after a tragic night of partying, his boat is destroyed by partygoers that do not want him to move on. Being the adventurer that he is, he changes plans and decides to fly to Brazil and drift there for awhile.

Tert Card

Card was the groin scratching, eccentric, unsupportive managing editor of the *Gammy Bird* newspaper. He liked Quoye less and less after he began standing up for himself and defending his stories. Following Card's departure, Quoye is promoted to take his position of managing editor of the paper.

Jack Buggit

Jack was the owner of the newspaper and the father of Quoye's good friend Dennis. He's a devoted fisherman, born of a long line of fisherman. After he loses one son at sea and almost loses Dennis, he forbids Dennis from fishing for the rest of his life. Near the end of the story, Jack is lost at sea, retrieved and thought to be dead. However, he begins coughing at his own wake and survives the near death experience. At one point, he saves Quoye from drowning having a sixth sense to know when someone is in the water and in trouble. Tragically he wasn't able to save his own son.

Dennis Buggit

Dennis is Quoye's closest friend in Killick-Claw and like a brother to him. He's a carpenter and helped Quoye and the aunt renovate their green house. His daughter and Bunny are best friends, like sisters. Dennis is a loyal friend and willing to pitch in



and help anyone in need. As a carpenter he has trouble finding work and providing for his family during the winter and eventually plans to move away to a larger city, such as Toronto to find work.

Beety Buggit

Beety is Dennis's wife and a mother figure to Quoye's two girls. She is a wonderful mother and is famous for her homemade bread. She takes care of Quoye's girls while he is at work. Her door is always open and Quoye, his girls and friends seem to find themselves in her kitchen just about every day. She loves Quoye's daughters as if they were her own. She also has a theatrical side as evidenced in a show stopping performance for the Christmas pageant.

Partridge

Partridge was Quoye very closest friend and only friend when he lived in New York. He was Quoye's mentor and helped him get his first job as a journalist. Partridge often had Quoye over for dinner and Quoye idolizes Partridge's home life and marriage. Then Partridge moves away with his wife to chase her dream of becoming a truck driver. Quoye is heartbroken, however, throughout the rest of the story they keep in touch and Partridge is the one responsible for helping Quoye get the newspaper job when he moved to Newfoundland.



Objects/Places

Green House

The green house is the ancestral home of the Quoyles, located on a remote point. The home sat vacant for over forty years when Quoyles and Aunt Agnis moved back to Newfoundland.

Sea

The sea is an important part of life for Newfoundlanders. It is the source of income and life for the fisherman. It is also the burial grounds for many of them. The sea has its own colors, moods, shapes and emotions.

Killick-Claw

Killick-Claw is the small town in Newfoundland where Quoyles, his aunt, and his daughters settle.

Station Wagon

Quoyles' beat up station wagon is what he uses to commute to work when he can't take his boat. It's a rusty old beast with holes in the floor and also the setting for his early courtship with Wavey.

Gammy Bird

The *Gammy Bird* is the local newspaper where Quoyles works. It's owned by Jack Buggit.

Speed Boat

In his early days in Newfoundland, Quoyles buys a homemade boat from a man who was selling the boat his son built. He billed it as a speed boat but it ended up as an almost death trap for Quoyles when it fell to pieces in the water and he almost drowned.

Gaze Island

Gaze Island is where Billy Pretty grew up and where the Quoyles of old lived as well. The Quoyles used the island as their pirate trap to lure ships in and pillage them.



Beety's Kitchen

Beety's kitchen was a gathering place for Quoye, his friends and his daughters. The kitchen was always warm from the heat of the oven and smelled of Beety's famous fresh baked bread.

The Upholstery Shop

The aunt opened her own upholstery shop in town. At the end of the story she planned to buy the building it was in and live on the top floor.

St. John's

St. John's is a nearby town with more shopping and amenities than Killick-Claw. Some of the townspeople, including the aunt went there looking for work. Quoye went there to visit his distant cousin Nolan at the mental institution.

Burkes' House

During the winter, when it was too treacherous to drive back and forth to the green house, Quoye rented the Burkes' house for him and his daughters to live in. After the green house blew into the sea he planned to buy the house and live there permanently.



Themes

Coming of Age

For Quoye, this story is one of coming of age. Although he is an adult of thirty-six years when introduced to the reader, he is very immature. He has very little, if any self-esteem, he's drifting through his life. After becoming a father and living through the destructive marriage to Petal he begins to grow up a little. However, not until he leaves New York and arrives in Newfoundland does he really begin to experience some small successes in his life and mature. For example, when he finishes roofing his house, he had not done anything like that in the past but he was forced by his aunt to muster the courage to give it a try. He succeeded in roofing the house and gained some confidence. Then he launches his newly purchased boat and experiences driving his boat on the water, which was a completely new experience for him. He had to overcome his fear of boats and of the water, which he succeeded in doing.

Quoye came of age as a father as well, having to step up as his daughters' primary caregiver. Loving his daughters and fatherhood seemed to come easy to Quoye. However, Quoye also had to mature in his belief in love. After meeting his love interest Wavey, he held her at arm's length because he did not believe that he could love again. He also did not believe that love could happen without despair and destruction. With the passing time, Quoye matured in his beliefs about love and came to realize that love could happen for him again and that he deserved love. His opinion of himself matured as well and he finally came to the point of self-acceptance. For Quoye his coming of age was about discovering his talents and his desires. His coming of age was about learning to love himself and giving romantic love and marriage a second chance.

Love Conquers All

A common thread throughout the story is the resiliency of love. Quoye's love for Petal persists even though she mistreats him miserably. He learns how to receive unconditional love when his daughters are born. They are the most precious aspect of his life and he possesses undying love for them as well. Once his wife is dead Quoye believes that all of his romantic love was spent on his wife because of course he still adores his two little girls. However, life and love have other plans for Quoye. When he meets Wavey he is attracted to her, but just assumes that he could never love her let alone marry her. But as time goes on and their love plods along slowly Quoye discovers that it is possible for love to happen again for him. Little does he know that love was there all along and it was love that conquered his fear and doubt.

Wavey must go through a similar transformation as well because of her destructive, deceitful marriage. Although her husband died at sea she still idolized him and spoke of him and her memories of him often. She believed she would never marry again as well. After spending time with Quoye, however, and experiencing her love for him, she was



able to recognize her relationship with her husband for what it was and put it to rest in her life. Her love for Quoye conquered her fears and even conquered the control over her that her dead husband had.

The Importance of Community

When he lived in New York, Quoye didn't have much of a community. He had one friend, Partridge and that was it. Once he moved to Newfoundland, he became a part of his Killick-Claw community and within the support and kinship of that environment he discovered himself and discovered what it was like to have a real family. As a youngster, Quoye's family was verbally abusive and not at all supportive of him and he always felt out of place in the world around him. When he became a part of a welcoming, embracing, supportive community he began to thrive. His family began to thrive as well. Quoye watched as his daughter Bunny made friends, started school and even performed on stage during the Christmas pageant, all things that Quoye would've been terrified to attempt.

Throughout the story it is clear that Quoye recognized the importance of community in his and his family's life. He makes comments about the warmth of Dennis and Beety's home that goes beyond the baking bread and how he imagined that it was his family and they were his parents. His small community is made up of a group of people who instinctively look out for one another, so no one is giving or taking more than the others but all supporting each other and acting as family to one another. For Quoye it was the first family that he ever knew and the first environment in which he thrived.

Style

Points of View

The author chose to tell the story in third person omniscient point of view. It is the author's voice telling the story and the telling the reader the thoughts and feelings of the characters rather than hearing it from the characters themselves. The benefit to using the third person point of view is that in a story like this one with numerous characters and story lines, the story told in third person is easier to follow and easier for the author to change scenes without losing the reader. Third person also allows the author to let the reader see things in the story that the characters cannot see. For example, near the end of the story when the green house blows into the sea during a severe storm, the author lets the reader see it happen, however, the characters in the book do not find out until the next morning when Wavey's father looks with his binoculars to see the green house and sees nothing there.

Setting

The setting of the book begins in Mockingburg, New York, a small town upstate. Mockingburg is where Quoye was born and raised. However, his ancestral home is Killick-Claw, Newfoundland, where Quoye, his daughters and his aunt relocate to after the death of Quoye's wife. Killick-Claw is a small town on the coast that's primary industry is fishing. The town has fallen on hard times economically as the fishing industry is declining. Some of the townspeople believe that the future is in oil.

The importance of Killick-Claw as a setting has to do with the ocean, the close-knit community, and the harsh weather. The ocean and the water are integral parts of the story and play important roles in the lives of the characters. The ocean is a mysterious force that gives life and livelihood to the townspeople, but also takes lives as most of the town's untimely deaths are due to shipwrecks and various boating accidents. The weather is also an important part of the setting and the story. The harsh weather hardens the townspeople and only the most dedicated remain in the town during the winter. The weather can be very strong and unpredictable as in the severe storm that blew the green house into the sea.

The setting of Killick-Claw is full of history, both bad and good for Quoye and his family. He learns of the atrocities committed there by his ancestors. However, he learns that he is able to affect the future and build a positive family and reputation for his name in Killick-Claw.

Language and Meaning

The language used by the author in this story is at times simple and at other times very literary, with extensive poetic and descriptive language. The dialogue used is simplistic



and seems to be very true to the characterizations of the simple lives of Quoyle and the other characters. Often the language used in telling the story sounds as if one of the Newfoundlanders is telling the story in its straight forward, stripped down language.

At other times, the language is very descriptive and poetic, which harkens to the author's voice. In addition to being a novelist, the author is a widely published poet and thus the more poetic language seems to come naturally, especially when describing nature. It seems that the meaning in choosing the language the way she did that the author was playing off of the simplistic nature of the characters and their lives and telling their story in a beautiful poetic way. The author's descriptions of the Newfoundland landscape are magnificent in the choice of language. She gives life and emotion to the sea and the weather. However, the physical descriptions of the characters are less emphasized except for specific characteristics. For example, the author draws out Quoyle's chin and portly build; and Wavey's tallness. The author's best descriptions are of the personalities of each of the characters. Thus the author's language provides a detailed picture of the landscape of Newfoundland and a full description of the personalities.

Structure

The story is 337 pages long and divided into thirty-nine chapters, each numbered and with a different knot featured below the chapter title along with a description of the knot often quoted from *The Ashley Book of Knots*. Some chapters do not have a knot description but a quote from *The Mariners Dictionary* or an old song or some pertinent classic quote that relates to the mariners life. The significance of the quotes and pictures of knots seems to be to provide some history or descriptions that are pertinent to the story, but would not fit within the story. The title of each chapter relates to the content of the chapter but in a more symbolic and less apparent way. Within each chapter are various scenes denoted by a double space and drawing of a knot.



Quotes

"At thirty-six, bereft, brimming with grief and thwarted love, Quoyale steered away to Newfoundland, the rock that had generated his ancestors, a place he had never been nor thought to go." Chapter 1, pg. 1

"Petal Bear was crosshatched with longings, but not, after they were married, for Quoyale. Desire reversed to detestation like a rubber glove turned inside out." Chapter 2, pg. 13

"As you get older you find out the place where you started out pulls at you stronger and stronger. I never wanted to see Newfoundland again when I was young, but the last few years it's been like an ache, just a longing to go back. Probably some atavistic drive to finish up where you started." Chapter 4, pg. 29

"The old place of the Quoyales, have ruined, isolated, the walls and doors of it pumiced by stony lives of dead generations. The aunt felt a hot pang. Nothing would drive them out a second time." Chapter 5, pg. 47

"'I don't think I can handle this job,' said Quoyale. Who had swallowed to beers and eaten a bag of stale popcorn at the Sea Anchor in Killick-Claw wondering if he was strapped into a mistake like a passenger in a plane that briefly rises, then crashes on the runway." Chapter 7, pg. 71

"He worked the tiller, traced curves. Now faster. Quoyale laughed like a dog in the back of a pickup. Why had he feared boats?" Chapter 12, pg. 109

"'She has very good posture,' said Quoyale. Tried to cancel the stupid remark. 'What I mean is, she has a good stride. I mean, tall. She seems tall.' Man Sounds Like Fatuous Fool. In a way he could not explain she seized his attention; because she seemed sprung from wet stones, the stench of fish and tide." Chapter 13, pg. 115

"A fine part of Quoyale's day came when he picked up his daughters at Dennis and Beety's house. His part in life seemed richer, he became more of a father, at the same time could expose true feelings which were often of yearning." Chapter 16, pg. 136

"'Yis,' said the old man. 'I remembers the Quoyales and their trouble. They was a savage pack. In the olden days they say Quoyales nailed a man to a tree by 'is ears, cut off 'is nose for the scent of blood to draw the nippers and flies that devoured 'im alive. Gone no, except for the odd man, Nolan, down along Capsize Cove.'" Chapter 16, pg. 139

"Quoyale painted. But no matter what they did to the house, he thought, it kept its gaunt look, never altered from that first looming vision behind the scrim of fog. How had it looked, new and raw on Gaze Island, or sliding over the cracking ice?" Chapter 23, pg. 185



"Have you noticed Jack's uncanny sense about assignments? He gives you a beat that plays on your private inner fears. Look at you. Your wife was killed in an auto accident. What does Jack ask you to cover? Car wrecks, to get pictures while the upholstery is still on fire and the blood still hot." Chapter 27, pg. 221

"Quoyale was not going back to New York, either. If life was an arc of light that began in darkness, ended in darkness, the first part of his life had happened in ordinary glare. Here it was as though he had found a polarized lens that deepened and intensified all seen through it. Thought of his stupid self in Mockingburg, taking whatever came at him. No wonder love had shot him through the heart and lungs, caused internal bleeding." Chapter 30, pg. 241

"O.k. Quoyale, Billy wants to stay with the Home Page so you're the new managing editor. You'll do Tert Card's job, put it together, handle the phone, assignments, bills advertisers, printer." Chapter 35, pg. 285

"Quoyale experienced moments in all colors, uttered brilliancies, paid attention to the rich sound of waves counting stones, he laughed and wept, noticed sunsets, heard music in rain, said I do." Chapter 39, pg. 336



Topics for Discussion

Discuss Quoye's transformation from the beginning of the story to the end.

Once Quoye moves to Newfoundland, how does Quoye reconcile the way he is compared to the stories he hears of the Quoyes of old?

Discuss the significance of different quotes and knots as part of each chapter heading.

Discuss the role that the sea and the weather play in the story. How important are they to the story? Could this story be as effective if located in a different location?

Discuss the transformation of Quoye's aunt. What makes her character significant to the story?

Quoye is referred to as a third-rate newspaperman at the beginning of the story. What is it that leads him to transform the Shipping News and become the managing editor of the *Gammy Bird*?

Discuss the relationship between Quoye and Wavey. Their courtship seems to be a series of intimacy and isolation. How is it that they arrive at marriage by the end of the story?

How would Quoye's maturation differ had he not relocated to a small town like Killick-Claw? Discuss the importance of the community to Quoye and his family.