

The Son Study Guide

The Son by Philipp Meyer

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Plot Summary

The rise and fall of a Texas family made rich in the oil and cattle businesses is detailed in the novel "The Son" by Philipp Meyer. The story spans six generations of the McCullough family from the time it claimed its first headright in Texas through its rise to great wealth to its tragic end. A myriad of themes wind their way through the novel. These include discrimination, family life, cultural relationships, religion, sexuality, death and dying, and wealth and morality.

The bulk of the story is told through the voices of three key members of the family. These include Eli "The Colonel" McCullough, Peter McCullough and Jeanne Anne McCullough. The Colonel is the patriarch of the family. He survived a raid by Comanche Indians on his family's homestead and lived three years with the tribe. Upon his return to civilization, he survived many years as a Texas Ranger. During his time back in "civilization" he saw the way rich cotton men manipulated their circumstances to get what they wanted. Eli decides he is capable of this as well and does not discourage his fellow Rangers from attacking a band of Union soldiers whom they believe are hauling gold. Eli takes his portion of the loot and buys land for a cattle ranch. His early days on the ranch are made difficult by his Mexican neighbor, Arturo Garcia, whom he believes raids his ranch just a few days after he and his men have returned from their first cattle drive. Eli tries to talk to Arturo but he denies any involvement in the theft though Eli knows the man is responsible because livestock tracks led from his ranch through Arturo's land. Eli later arranges for Arturo's family to be killed and Arturo to be shot.

The second narrative voice is that of Peter McCullough, The Colonel's middle son. The Colonel calls Peter the "son of my disgrace" because Peter ran off to Mexico to live with Maria Garcia, a member of the family that The Colonel considers the family's mortal enemy. Peter does not have the combative spirit of his father and stands against The Colonel the night that a group of men ride to the Garcia home because they believe the sons-in-law of Pedro Garcia, nephew of Arturo, are responsible for wounding Peter's son, Glenn. Although Peter tells his father he does not want a war against the Garcias, his father and the men begin shooting anyway. All of the Garcia family, with the exception of Maria, is killed. Maria later comes to the McCullough home seeking help. Peter takes her in despite his father's wishes.

The third narrator in the novel is Jeanne McCullough, the great-granddaughter of The Colonel. She spends a good deal of time in her formative years with her great-grandfather and while she inherits his drive to make the ranch profitable, the fact that she is female is a mark against her. After the death of her husband, she struggles to get her employees to take her seriously as a boss. Her drive to succeed at her job overshadows her family life, however. As Jeanne lies dying she wonders who might take over the ranch. Her daughter is spoiled and addicted to drugs. Her son is a homosexual who has done little with his life but spend his mother's money. Her grandchildren seem to have no interest in the ranch.



Ulises Garcia, who is a relative of the McCulloughs through the union of Peter and Maria, exhibits the same drive as The Colonel and Jeanne. He gets a job at the McCullough ranch in hopes that he can earn Jeanne's good graces and be accepted. Instead, when he goes to introduce himself to her, she stumbles and falls backward causing what Ulises believes is a fatal injury. Knowing he will be blamed for the old lady's death, Ulises covers up the accident by unscrewing the gas line in the kitchen, which he knows will eventually cause an explosion as the fireplace in the living room is lit. He rides away swearing that he will make a name for himself that no one will ever forget.



Chapters 1 – 3

Summary

The rise and fall of a Texas family made rich in the oil and cattle business is detailed in the novel “The Son” by Phillipp Meyer. The story spans six generations of the McCullough family from its first headright in Texas, to its rise to great wealth, and through its tragic end. A myriad of themes wind their way through the novel. These include discrimination, family life, cultural relationships, religion, sexuality, death and dying, and wealth and morality.

On his deathbed, 100-year-old Eli McCullough recounts the early years of his life in Chapter One. He was born the same day as the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence. His father was one of the earliest American settlers in Texas, living first in Matagorda then being pushed into Pedernales, Comanche hunting territory.

Chapter Two details the thoughts of Jeanne Anne McCullough as she lies on the floor of a huge Spanish style house. She thinks that she will die alone, as she had always suspected, but also vaguely believes someone else is responsible for her death. At the conclusion of the chapter she remembers some papers she has that she was never able to destroy. She is concerned they will be found.

In Chapter Three, an entry from Peter McCullough’s journal on his forty-fifth birthday indicates he believes his life has been worthless. He writes about conditions causing stress on the ranch. Cattle continuously disappear. A fence was found cut on the McCullough ranch recently with nearly half their stock missing. Peter seems afraid Pedro Garcia and his family will be accused of the crime even if they are not responsible. Peter likes Pedro and notes he has been more of a father figure to him than his own father. For a while Peter considered marrying Maria, one of Pedro’s daughters, but did not pursue the idea because he knew the Colonel was against it. In his journal entry on the following day, Peter writes how his father arranges a ride to the Garcia ranch after Peter’s son is injured by a gunshot. The Colonel has decided the injury was caused by Pedro Garcia’s sons-in-law.

Analysis

Of most interest so far in the novel is that the first three chapters have three different narrators. Each of these characters lives and narrates his story from his own time period. The Colonel Eli McCullough appears to be the patriarch of the family. He lives to be 100 years old. The first chapter, which is written in his voice, is noted that it was taken from a WPA, or Works Progress Administration, recording. McCullough talks about his birth, which happens on the same day as Texas earns its independence from Mexico. This information about the McCulloughs’ early years may help to explain why he hates the Mexicans so much, as is evidenced in Peter McCullough’s journal, where



he notes his father has decided it is Mexicans responsible for stealing their cattle. The Colonel tells that his father was one of first settlers in Texas. Though they claimed their land early, the McCullough family is pushed out of their original headright by the rich Americans once Texas begins to become more settled and less of a risky place to live. Note, however, the McCulloughs are pushed into territory once used by Indians as their hunting grounds.

It appears the racism will be a significant theme in this novel. In this case, it is the Mexicans who are hated by the Texans. When cattle are stolen from the McCullough ranch, the Colonel immediately assumes it is his neighbors, the Garcias, who have stolen his cows. Worse, when Peter's son is shot by some people riding horses in the dark, the Colonel again assumes it is the Garcias who have done the shooting. He forces his son, Peter, to ride with him to confront the Garcias even though Peter likes the Garcias and isn't sure they are responsible for the injury.

In his journal, Peter writes about how he has viewed Pedro Garcia as more of a father figure than his own father. He enjoys spending time on the Garcia ranch and even considers marrying one of Pedro's daughters. He does not do so, however, because he knows that his father does not approve of the idea of Texans and Mexicans marrying. Although Peter does not carry his father's hatred of Mexicans, it appears that the Colonel's great-granddaughter Jeanne Anne, has picked up the Colonel's dislike of Mexicans, as she makes several references as to how she might be treated differently, in most cases worse, if she were Mexican.

One of the references that Jeanne makes to Mexicans is a statement made by the Colonel that religion was best left to Mexicans and Negros. This reference picks up another theme that may prove to be important in the novel, the theme of religion. The Colonel admits he is not a religious man. His dislike of religion has been passed down to his family members, particularly his great granddaughter. She does not want to go to church when requested to do so by her father, but her father insists that she go. He reminds her that he made a promise to God that if he survived the war he would start going to church. At first he'd kept the promise, but stopped because he'd gotten busy. He blames Jeanne's mother's death on his act of breaking his promise to God. Despite her father's fear of God as a punishing dictator, Jeanne shares the Colonel's opinions about religion. She believes she would rather go to hell and act like her great-grandfather than bow to her father's god.

Note in the Colonel's recollections in Chapter One that he refers to the "son of his disgrace." In his journals Peter indicates that he is his father's least favorite son. It appears the rift between Peter and his father will become a major theme as the story progresses.

Notice also the way that author Phillip Meyer gives each of the three narrators he has introduced so far their own individual voices. Eli McCullough has a no nonsense way of presenting his story. He isn't afraid to tell his story as if his view of the circumstances were fact. Despite his age, the Colonel tells his story with a quirky sense of humor that is sometimes biting in its irony. Peter McCullough, however, is as different from his



father as one could possibly be. While the Colonel appears to have no self-doubt or lack of confidence in the way he thinks things should be, Peter is full of self-doubt and lacking in self-confidence. He believes his father does not deserve the respect that he gets, yet Phillip seems unable, or unwilling, to stand up to his father and speak his mind. The third narrator for the novel thus far is Jeanne Anne. She seems to be highly influenced by her great-grandfather, his beliefs and his way of living. Jeanne seems to have inherited her self-confidence from the Colonel but her inability to relate to other people from her grandfather, Peter. At this point in the novel, her memories are fuzzy as she has apparently been assaulted by someone. She thinks back on her life as she tries to remember what happened to her. Her mind is still active even though she is unable to move.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the way that Meyer has developed voices for each of his three narrators. In what ways is each unique?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss religion as it has been presented so far in the novel.

Discussion Question 3

The time periods in which each of the narrators lives are defined by turmoil. Describe the turmoil or problems faced by each of the three characters thus far.

Vocabulary

partaking, tyranny, ratified, conquistadors, papal, vanquished, octoroon, sultry, lionized, insurgents, libel, catamount, furlough



Chapter 4

Summary

In Chapter Four, Eli's father has left him and his brother alone to guard their homestead while he helps a neighbor try to locate his stolen horses. Eli describes himself as a man of the woods, able to track and kill an animal as well as his father. Martin, Eli's brother, can shoot as well, but prefers books and cities. Eli suspects there is some sort of unusual love between his brother and sister, but never sees anything unacceptable. His sister, however, treats him like a dog.

Eli indicates as he looks back that his mother had known what would happen on that day. He remembers being ordered by his sister to get all the butter and grape preserves from the family's springhouse. When he brings these items, his mother asks him to catch some fish and a pheasant if possible. Eli asks about Indians but his mother makes light of the question. He comes back from his hunting and fishing with a catfish and a turkey but while out, he sees Venus in the daytime sky, a sighting that he believes is a sign of bad luck.

It is late when the family sits down to eat. Eli knows the special supper is a ploy on his mother's part to anger his father for agreeing to help chase the stolen horses. After eating, Eli goes outside and locks the horses in the stable. The horses seem calm which he believes is a sign there are no Indians near. When he returns to the cabin, the other members of the family have gone to sleep. Eli joins them but is awakened at midnight by the dogs barking. When he looks out, he sees men in the yard. Eli orders everyone in the house up.

Eli knows the Indians will set fire to the house when they find they are unable to get inside. He hopes he and his brother can hold them off with their guns but instead, his mother unbars the door, intending to let them in. Two men tackle Eli's mother, Eli hits a third with a shot from his gun. The two Indians run out and Eli tries to shut the door but is unable to do so quickly enough because the injured Indian kicks him in the jaw and knocks him out.

When he regains consciousness, Eli hears his sister say she believes she has been shot. He fights against the Indians but a big one grabs him and signals that if he doesn't behave, he will cut his head off. Eli's hands are tied. He watches the Indians. One kicks Eli in the head when he realizes the boy is studying their actions. When he wakes, the Indians are raping his mother. He tries to get up but passes out. When he wakes again, he hears his sister crying and knows they are raping her.

His mother tries to crawl back to the house but the Indians shoot arrows at her, and then scalp her. Eli later sees what is left of his sister. The Indians have cut off her breasts and disemboweled her. He crawls up to his brother, who is still alive. They watch as the Indians go through their belongings, making a pile in the yard of the things they don't



want. They set fire to this pile and to the house, and then load Eli and his brother onto ponies.

They ride hard, changing horses before light and going what Eli believes is a whole day's journey in just a few hours. During a break from riding, Martin insists on telling Eli what had happened the previous night. Meanwhile the Indians seem to be debating whether or not to kill the brothers. Eli begs his brother to stop talking. The Indians don't kill the boys, but they beat them badly. When they are finished, they put them back up on the horses.

Later, the Indians attack some western bound wagons. Eli and Martin are held away from the ambush, but are taken back to the main group in time to watch them combing through the wagons for anything useful and scalping their victims. Martin continues to cry and fuss. Eli begs him to try harder not to anger the Indians. He believes they should be able to stand the same conditions as the Indians, but his brother doesn't see the logic in his reasoning. Later that same day, another homestead is ambushed and two German women taken as captives. The Indians kill a buffalo and the boys are given meat but Martin refuses to eat. He tells Eli he'd rather be dead than be turned into an Indian. When the Indians prepare to leave, Tshaway and another Indian tie him up and drag him away from Martin. When he looks back several Indians and taunting Martin to run but he will not do so. The Indians knock him down again and again but Martin gets up each time. When they finally kill him, Tshaway tells Eli that Martin died in such a brave manner that Urwat, the Indian who killed him, is now considered to be cursed. They do not scalp Martin but instead bury him, wrapped in calico stolen from the wagon train. Buffalo meat, a knife and a tomahawk are left in the boy's grave.

Analysis

This chapter is set in 1849. Eli is thirteen, his brother, Martin, is fifteen and his sister, Elizabeth, is seventeen. Notice that even though Eli is the youngest in the family, he seems to be the one to try to take charge of situations even though he is sometimes outnumbered. Eli recognizes the danger in the family being left alone even though his mother does not heed his warning. In fact, note that at the beginning of the chapter, Eli suggests that his mother knows all along what will happen to the family that day. It is almost as if she is hoping to draw trouble their way so that she can make her husband feel as guilty as possible about leaving them alone.

Remember that when Eli and his family settled in Texas, they were pushed into a part of the land that was originally Indian hunting grounds. The Indians ambush the homesteaders, steal what they find useful and burn the rest. They believe these actions are acceptable as the white people have run them out of their homes and hunting grounds. Note that one of the things that the Indians take from the house to keep is Martin's books. Eli indicates it is not because the Indians want to read, but because they use the pages from the books to line their shields, making them strong enough to repel bullets. Before leaving, the Indians rape both Eli's mother and his sister. They scalp his



mother and cut off his sister's breasts, acts that show their disrespect to the American women.

Although they are in the same situation, Eli and Martin react in completely different ways to their capture by the Indians. Eli believes that because the Indians are surviving the hard ride, with little food and little water, he and Martin should be able to do the same. Eli works hard to keep his composure but Martin does not even try to keep himself together. He refuses to eat food he is offered, defecates on himself and cries often. Eli recognizes that these actions make the Indians angry but cannot convince Martin it would be in his best interests to try to keep from angering the Indians any further. In the end, the Indians decide to kill Martin, but Martin gets the upper hand as he dies so honorably that the Indian who kills him is not allowed to take his scalp as a trophy. In fact, Urwat is considered to be cursed for killing Martin.

Discussion Question 1

What is the significance of the Indian's act of scalping and mutilating the bodies of their victims?

Discussion Question 2

What does Martin do that causes his killer to be considered cursed?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Eli believe that his mother somehow set the family up to be ambushed by Indians? What might have been her reasoning?

Vocabulary

aborigine, incessantly, ruination, issuance, concur, aborted, remuda, poultice, degrade, catamount, vanquished



Chapters 5 - 8

Summary

In Chapter Five Jeanne thinks to herself that she should not leave any money at all to her children. She remembers her own childhood as she grew up with her great-grandfather. Her mother died giving birth to Jeanne so she spent much of her time with her elderly great-grandfather. The Colonel taught Jeanne how to interpret the tracks of animals and encouraged her to take part in work on the cattle ranch. He showed Jeanne how to scrape the sap from cottonwood buds, the smell of which she still equates with her grandfather. She remembers working hard to help her family earn their fortune. As she considers the vitality of her oil wells, she wonders how she got on the floor.

Her children have no constitution, a fact she blamed on Hank, their schools, their friends and their teachers. She is embarrassed that Susan had passed out in the heat that she had felt was only uncomfortable. Jeanne thinks that she should give her money away instead of leaving it to her children, but knows that she has already ruined her children. She also wonders what heaven will be like.

In Chapter Six, Peter McCullough writes in his journal what he claims is the true account of the family's encounter with the Garcias. The people of the town have come out in force to support the Colonel as he rides to the Garcias to confront them about Glenn's shooting and the missing cattle. Peter tries to circumvent the murders he knows are coming by trying to talk to Pedro. Even as Peter is standing between the Garcias and his people, shots are fired from the McCullough side. Peter watches from the ground as the Garcia's house is shot to pieces. When there are no return shots from the Garcias, Peter and the others search the house. All of the inhabitants of the house — including women and children — with the exception of Pedro's daughter Maria, are dead. The men are proud of themselves as they have their pictures taken with the dead men. Some of the men begin looting the house. Peter is upset as he thinks of the way the Garcias had believed they would leave some mark on the world.

In Chapter Seven, Toshaway and Urwat divide the spoils and go their separate ways. Eli sees his mother's scalp go with Urwat so he decides it was Urwat's men who killed his mother and sister. The younger girl goes with Toshaway's group. Eli indicates the Indians treat her like an expensive horse. After several more days of riding, the Indians clean themselves, the scalps they have taken and repaint themselves. Eli is given the job of washing the horses. He and the German girl are tied to their horses as they ride into the village. The people slap and pinch him. The family of the dead Indian wants Eli killed but Toshaway defends him. The family of the dead Indian come back and Eli is tied to a post with brush piled around him. The pile is set on fire but Toshaway kicks the fire away. Then the celebration party begins. After Eli is forced to parade around with the scalps, he wakes in a tipi, warm and peaceful.



In Chapter Eight, as Jeanne lays on the floor, she considers her life. She believes she has done right by pursuing oil even though the liberals complain about people like her. She thinks about the way she has created wealth from nothing while those who complain about her, the industrialists, have done nothing but move jobs overseas. Jeanne thinks of how the oil business, the wars and the Texas landscape were hard on her family. She thinks how she had once considered retiring to spend more time with the family she had left, but didn't because she didn't want to sell out with oil at a low. After the terrorist attacks of 2001, oil skyrocketed, making her believe she'd have time later for family.

Analysis

The narration pattern set up in the first three chapters of the novel continues with a chapter being narrated from Eli McCullough's point of view, followed by one from Jeanne's point of view and then one taken from Peter McCullough's diaries. Eli's story started with the first chapter narrated by him taking place at the end of his life. The next chapters jump back in time to when he was a teenager and his family was attacked by Indians. Jeanne's chapters are narrated from the most recent time. She is laying on the floor, believing that she is dying and thinking back over her life. Her memories come in jumbled fits and spurts as if she is wavering between being conscious and unconscious.

In Chapter Five, it is learned that Jeanne's mother died giving birth to her. Jeanne has never known much about her mother and has never even had a clear photograph of her. Jeanne's father has told her he believes her mother's death was God's punishment for him not going to church. In Jeanne's life, however, she had just begun to be active in church when her husband died. She figures that church participation has no effect on whether relatives live or die, so she stopped going after her husband's death. She believes, however, that she has regained her faith as she has gotten older.

One of the things that seems to consume Jeanne's mind is the amount of money she will be leaving to her children, whom she believes she has ruined. From the beginning she believed her children had bad constitutions, with none of them willing to work the way she did as a child. Her own children additionally seem to have no honor or desire to prove themselves more admirable than others, a trait she believes those who had wealth once possessed.

Chapter Six, which includes information taken from Peter McCullough's diaries, begins to explain the division between the Colonel and his son, Peter. At this point, it is known that the Colonel grew up in the time when the land was ruled by the laws of the frontier. If a horse was stolen, the neighbors would gang up and go after the ones they believed were responsible. In the more modern instance over which the Colonel and Peter do not see eye-to-eye, Peter's son has been shot. Although his wound is not life threatening, the Colonel and neighbors take it upon themselves to confront the Garcias, a local family of Mexicans whom it is also believed have been taking cattle from the McCulloughs. Peter tries to stand up for the Garcias, with whom he is a personal friend, but his father and the other men will not listen. The entire family is executed, with the



exception of Pedro Garcia's daughter, Maria. In his diary, Peter attempts to give the real version of the story, portraying his father and neighbors as men bent on destroying a family who wasn't necessarily guilty of the crimes of which they were accused. He indicates the newspapers of that day glorified the Colonel and the other men as heroes, giving the story only as the Colonel has reported it.

Notice in this section comments are also made about liberals who don't want the Colonel included in history textbooks. In her dying thoughts, Jeanne also thinks about these "liberals" who have cursed her for the millions she has made in oil, yet don't mind taking advantage of the conveniences the commodity offers.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you think Toshiway is so protective of Eli? Why might this be significant?

Discussion Question 2

Were the McCulloughs and the townspeople justified in their ambush of the Garcias? What do you think was the main prompt for the attack? Why will they not listen to Peter and settle the conflict peacefully?

Discussion Question 3

Consider Jeanne's attitude toward herself as a person who has earned her riches in oil. Does her claim that oil has lengthened the lifespan of the average person make sense? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

caliche, incarnate, infuriating, profligate, constitution, penance, askew, palatial, scotched, deferring, brevet, bastion, abattoir, queue, plundered, mirage, beauing, awl, baubles, connubiate, obliterating, derision



Chapters 9 - 13

Summary

In Chapter Nine, Peter describes in his diary the chaotic state of the area following the killing of the Garcias. Against his family's wishes, he allows the Mexicans in the area to move to his ranch where they will be safe from more violence.

In Chapter Ten, Toshaway talks to Eli about the Indians' anger toward the white men who took over their territory even when treaties were signed saying no more homesteads would be built west of Austin. He explains he'd gotten familiar with the McCullough family and had often watched Eli. He says it was the smoke from the family's meal that caught the attention of Urwat and the others. Toshaway tried to stop the raid but was unable to do so.

Eli, who is given the name Tiehteti by the Indians, begins his time with the Indians as a slave. He does what the women tell him to do including hauling water, fetching firewood and preparing hides. It is not until Nuukaru encourages Eli to stop doing the women's chores that Eli stands up for himself. Toshaway additionally stands up for Eli against the women. From this point forward, Eli is considered a member of the tribe, but is sent out to play with the children as they learn to shoot with bows. At the conclusion of the chapter, Eli encounters the German girl who was captured at the same time he was. She seems resentful of the status he has earned in the tribe. Eli notices she has not bathed recently and learns it is because she believes the smell will keep the Indians from raping her. She asks Eli to help her kill herself.

In Chapter Eleven, Jeanne remembers the time when the house was full of visitors, even Indians, who came to the house in carloads. Now the house is silent. She remembers her great-grandfather telling her she would be something. Her grandmother is the only member of the family that Jeanne remembers paying any attention to her. Her grandmother visits her and tells stories that Jeanne thinks are boring. The Colonel, in Jeanne's opinion, does not tell any stories she considers boring. He warns her that she must put her name on things in order for them to be any good to her.

In Chapter Twelve, Peter writes about how the men of the town come to the farm intending to clear out the Mexicans. He and his brother, Charles, shoot over their heads, chasing them away. Homes in the city are burned in protest of the Mexicans staying at the ranch. Peter writes that half of the Mexicans pack up and move away the following day. Others that they don't know are asked to leave. A few days later, Peter suggests at a city meeting that the train station be named after Bill Hollis, who was killed at the Garcias' ranch. The idea is approved but Peter wonders later why he didn't suggest the station be named after one of the Mexicans killed in the ambush. Peter continues to have nightmares about the Mexicans. He learns Maria, the survivor, has run away.



It is noted in Chapter Thirteen that after one year, Eli has basically become a member of the Indian tribe, though the Indians still keep a close eye on him. Toshaway teaches Eli the proper use of an Indian shield. The Indians kill a Tonk during a buffalo hunting trip. Eli is allowed the killing shot but is not allowed to keep the scalp. The next day, the Indians smell a rotten stench and find a village of tipis where all of the residents have died. Later, while he is with Toshaway and Pizon, Eli chases down and kills a Delaware. He is allowed to scalp the man and keep the scalp. The Indians celebrate this sign of Eli's manhood. Fat Wolf sends his wife, Hates Work, to Eli's tipi as a reward. Eli loses his virginity to her.

Analysis

Ethnic differences and biases are a major topic for several of these chapters as well as the novel as a whole. Both the way the McCulloughs treat the Mexicans as well as the way the Indians treat Eli and the German girl are examples of the way biases can make people treat others differently. In the case of the McCulloughs, Peter gives the Mexicans in town permission to take refuge on his ranch. Even on the ranch, however, the Mexicans are not safe from those who want to drive them out of town. The townspeople burn and loot homes and buildings in town and try to ambush the McCullough ranch in an effort to run the Mexicans away.

In the Indian tribe, it is Eli and the German girl who are considered inferior. Because he is a man, however, Eli has the chance to prove himself as a warrior and hunter. In Chapter Thirteen he takes his first scalp and is granted the position of full manhood in the tribe. Meanwhile, the German girl is still worked from sun up to sun down. She knows she will never have any opportunities because she is a female. In fact, although she is attractive and the men often take turns raping her, none of the Indians will even marry her because she is not an Indian. The German girl is not the only woman in the tribe who feels the injustice of sexual discrimination. All the women are expected to work hard while the men spend their time doing as they like when they are not raiding or hunting. Hates Work gets her name because she does the work of only ten men, she tells Eli, instead of fifty men.

Women in the Indian tribe additionally are often used as sexual toys and traded as favors. In Chapter Thirteen, for instance, Fat Wolf allows his wife, Hates Work, to sleep with Eli as a reward for Eli becoming a man. Toshaway's sons, Escute and Nuukaru, warn Eli that a woman can choose on her own to sleep around before she is married. After she is married, however, if she goes to another man without her husband giving her permission or sending her of his own free will, she is punished by having her face mutilated. Indian women often have their noses and ears cut off and their faces slashed if they are found to be unfaithful without the husband's permission.

One additional thing of which to take note in this section is the way that Toshaway takes Eli under his wing even though Eli is an outsider. During one of their earlier conversations, Toshaway tells Eli he had watched him while he was still on the homestead with his parents. He had noticed the way the boy had a talent for tracking



and killing animals even before he was captured by the Indians. Now, it seems that Toshaway has decided to try to turn Eli into an Indian warrior. Instead of making Eli continue to do the women's work, Toshaway makes it possible for him to break away from the women and begin training with the children. Even though Eli isn't native Indian, it is he that Toshaway picks to begin training to go on raids and hunting trips. It appears that Toshaway has taken Eli as his own son, giving him as much opportunity as Escute and Nuukaru.

Discussion Question 1

Why is it significant for Eli that Toshaway takes such an interest in him?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss sexual discrimination among the Indians.

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the upheaval after the killing of the Garcias. How does Peter try to help the Mexicans? Why is he frustrated by their ideas it is the Colonel who is responsible for helping them?

Vocabulary

annihilation, insurgents, affinity, expound, augur, jacal, rankles, derelict, contorted, periphery, impales



Chapters 14 - 17

Summary

In Chapter Fourteen, it is said Williams Blount and his two sons are killed when they enter McCullough land to kill a deer. Public opinion of the McCullough family has continued to decline as the family blocks the building of a highway through their land. The people congregate at the ranch's main gate until Rangers are sent and the sheriff is allowed to search the ranch for bodies. Nothing is found. Jeanne remembers being her great-grandfather's favorite even though her father seems jealous. When she isn't with her great-grandfather, Jeanne spends her time raising the calves that have been abandoned by their mothers. At the age of twelve she has earned \$10,000 from these calves.

Jeanne also spends time at the old Garcia home place. Her father has told her the version of the story about the death of the Garcias in which the Garcias are responsible for shooting at the McCulloughs and Rangers first instead of vice versa. Charles has indicated to her that Pedro Garcia's main mistake was in having only female children. When she has the opportunity, she goes to the ruins of the Garcia house, climbs up in the observation tower and tries to imagine the land as it once was. She thinks briefly that it is strange that people who were poor cattle thieves could have built such an elaborate house, but doesn't think about it long. One day while exploring the grounds with her brothers Paul and Clint, they find the buried skeleton of a girl. Clint later brings her the necklace the skeleton was wearing. Although Jeanne thinks Clint is mean, she feels sorry for him because she knows their father loves Jonas, who is a failure on the ranch, more than Clint, who excels in working with animals.

At the age of twelve, Jeanne is the only female in the house when she gets her period. Her father rings for the maid. He is embarrassed as he tries to explain what is happening to her. It is at this point that Jeanne realizes her father is not telling her the truth and that the Colonel was right in telling her she could trust only herself.

In Chapter Fifteen, Peter thinks of the things he could have done differently to change the tragic ending of the Garcia family. He considers he might have married Maria instead of Sally. He additionally thinks he should have shot at the presumed Mexicans the night Glenn was injured with the intent to kill instead of just for show. If he'd killed them first, Glenn might never have been shot. Although Peter respects and feels empathy for the Mexicans, he believes they despise him for his respect. Several days later, Judge Poole comes to tell Peter that the Garcias were eight years behind on their taxes. The judge indicates the tax sale has been posted, but is hidden. He believes the land should go to the McCulloughs. Before the judge leaves, he asks Peter for money in exchange for helping him get the land. The McCulloughs wind up paying just less than \$104,000 for the land, what it was worth when the Indians lived there. Twenty-three days after he is approached by the judge about the Garcia land, Peter's father makes



him ride to the Garcia home with him. The Colonel burns the house, including important family papers and birth certificates.

In Chapter Sixteen, Eli describes the way the Indians would kill buffalo. He describes the preparation and use of almost every part of the animal except for its heart. This organ is left where the buffalo was killed as proof to their creator that the people were not greedy. The Indians additionally believed leaving the heart would ensure buffalo would continue to reproduce.

In Chapter Seventeen, Jeanne is lonely on the ranch after her grandfather dies and Jonas leaves for college. Just after she finishes the eighth grade Jeanne's grandmother tells her Jeanne will be sent to the Greenfield boarding school in Connecticut. Jeanne decides very quickly she doesn't like the city. Jonas is an hour late picking her up from the train station and during her wait she encounters a man and woman having sex in a bathroom. At school, Jeanne's first roommate leaves after only a week and Jeanne is moved to a room with Corkie. Jeanne notices the other girls make fun of Corkie behind her back but are friendly to her face-to-face.

Corkie invites all of the girls to a sleep over at her house. During the car trip there, the girls spend most of the time questioning Jeanne and making fun of her. They even make fun of the way she rides a horse, a skill she felt she'd mastered. She tries to visit Jonas but he spends the time drinking with his friends and ignoring her. When she returns to school, Corkie tells her about an upcoming dance. Knowing the dance will be a disaster, Jeanne packs a bag on the pretense of visiting Jonas overnight. She sells her pearls at a pawnshop for one thousand dollars and buys a train ticket back to Texas. Looking back on the experience, Jeanne realizes it was a turning point in her life. She could probably have been comfortable up north if she'd wanted that kind of life. She cries when she thinks of the one grandson to whom she will pass the results of her life's work. She is now certain she smells gas.

Analysis

Most significant in this section is the development in Jeanne's thoughts about her place in the world. She has already decided that the Garcias were bad people based on her great-grandfather's opinion of them. In fact, in the story that he tells Jeanne of what happened to the Garcias, he says the McCulloughs and the Rangers went to talk to the Garcias but the Mexicans began shooting first. This story contrasts the one in Peter's journals, which says he was the only one of the group who went the Garcias who wanted to talk. He indicates the shooting started from the McCullough side while he was still standing in the open, trying to talk to Pedro. Even though Jeanne has explored the ruins of casa mayor and realizes it was built by intelligent and sophisticated people, she chooses not to consider this factor. She only blindly believes what her great-grandfather has told her about the people.

Discrimination against women is a topic addressed in these chapters. Although the Colonel tells Jeanne that she will do great things, her father is open in his opinion that



women are worthless. Jeanne has heard him openly telling others that a man who has only female children is cursed. Meanwhile, Jeanne's grandmother seems determined to make a lady of Jeanne. Each time she visits the ranch, she has Jeanne fitted for nice clothes, manicures her nails and cleans her hands, and tries to teach her the ways of ladies. Jeanne's grandmother even has Jeanne sent to a boarding school for girls. It seems to be this experience that molds in Jeanne's mind that she wants to be more than just someone's wife. She thinks the other girls, who are malicious back biters, are silly for spending their time preparing for dances, fixing their hair and learning to dance. Even Jonas' friends realize that the only thing the girls who attend Greenfield will be good for is getting married. Realizing that she wants a different life, Jeanne finds her own way back home.

Although it is not a prevalent theme, Jeanne's emerging sexuality is another topic in the novel. She is alone, the only female in the house, when her period starts. Her father stumbles through trying to tell her what is happening, but his open lies only make Jeanne mistrust him more. It is one of the maids who explains to Jeanne what is happening and takes her to town for supplies. Although Jeanne knows some of the basics of sexual contact between a man and woman, she is surprised and disgusted when she sees a man and woman having sex in the bathroom at the train station.

It appears that the Colonel and Charles, Jeanne's father, had differing ideas on how the ranch would be most profitable. The Colonel dislikes cattle. He believes them to be a drain on money and waste of time. He believes that the installation of oil wells is the way the family should go in order to earn their wealth. Charles, however, has always lived as a cattleman and disagrees with his great-grandfather's ideas that oil is the future. Jeanne, however, appears to be more receptive to the idea of oil as she spends time riding around the ranch with her uncle, Phineas, and a geologist. She indicates that it seems to please Phineas that she shows an interest in the oil.

Meanwhile, in his journal, Peter continues to struggle with what might have happened if he had somehow done something differently in his interactions with the Garcias. To add to his feelings of guilt, the judge comes to the ranch to offer the McCulloughs the Garcia land at a ridiculously reduced price. The judge claims the family was behind on its tax payments, a statement that Peter believes is a lie. To make matters worse, the Colonel takes Peter with him when he goes to burn what is left of the Garcia house. He says he does not intend to leave it there so that others can take up residence. He sees the entire situation as a type of circle of life. In his reasoning, the Garcias took the land from the Indians, now the McCulloughs have taken the land from the Garcias, someday, he believes, someone will come along and take the land from them. Note, however, the Colonel's act of burning the Garcia family's important paperwork, including birth certificates.

Discussion Question 1

What does Jeanne learn from her time at Greenfield? Why does she call this a turning point in her life?



Discussion Question 2

What does Peter's distress about what has happened to the Garcias say about him? Why is he unwilling, or unable, to take a stand against his father?

Discussion Question 3

Consider Eli's description of the way the Indians kill and process the buffalo. What is significant about the way they use almost every part of the animal with no waste? How is this different from modern hunting?

Vocabulary

compulsory, mural, copse, premonition, deferential, quirt, delinquent, mercenary, coup, assuage, ominously, resignation, ubiquitous, loupe



Chapters 18 - 20

Summary

In Chapter Eighteen, Phineas tries to convince Peter that oil really is the answer to the family's financial troubles, as the Colonel says. Once the McCullough family takes over the Garcia land, many of the people in town are hired to clean up the neglected land, a move that Peter believes makes the family look like benevolent kings. He is depressed because the family appears to have clean hands despite Peter's recollection of what happened. Additionally, Sally is angry with Peter because he goes to the Garcia property so often, seeming to be more interested in that family than his own sons.

In Chapter Nineteen, a small pox and cholera epidemic is wiping out the Indian tribes. The plains are crowded with displaced Indians and buffalo are scarce. Eli's band plans a raid in Mexico. Although Hates Work never returns to Eli's tipi, Prairie Flower, her sister, does. When the raiding group finally returns, the only good news is that Toshaway, Escute and Nuukaru are still alive. During its first ambush, the group was attacked by Mexicans and Rangers. Nearly half the warriors were killed. Meanwhile, those back at the warriors' camp were attacked and killed or carried off as captives. More than 260 Indians plus nearly a thousand horses are lost during the raid. Prairie Flower's fiancé is among those killed in the raid.

In Chapter Twenty, Jeanne's Uncle Phineas calls her to visit him in Austin after she has finished high school. Three soldiers watch Jeanne from across the train car. She is overcome with sentimentality at what they are about to do and thinks of offering her virginity, but decides against it. Meanwhile, in the present, lying on the floor in her childhood home, Jeanne is unable to move any part of her body. She considers how she could ever have thought she would have escaped death.

Back in 1942, Jeanne thinks about how her uncle controls all of the oil that is pumped in the entire state of Texas. During that meeting with her great-uncle, Phineas tells her that the ranch is losing money. He shows her the ledger books to prove that her father is spending nearly twice what the ranch is earning. She suddenly realizes Phineas has called her to betray her father. He tells her about the depletion allowance where those who drill for oil can count a portion of the proceeds as a loss. Although she knows what her uncle wants her to do, she doesn't think she has it in her to ruin her father's dream of being a cattleman, a representative from another generation. On the train ride home, she thinks about how her father loved horses and cattle more than she, had taken her brothers to a brothel to lose their virginity but would be angry with her if she had sex with a Mexican.

When she gets home, her grandmother is there. She senses something is wrong. She learns her grandmother has gotten a place for her at Southwestern in Georgetown. Jeanne tells her father and grandmother that Phineas had showed her the ranch ledger. She argues with her father when he tells her she has no say in the matter. When he



walks out of the room, Jeanne's grandmother tells her that her act of speaking up was stupid. She tells her that during her time on the ranch she learned she could be loved but not respected or respected, but not loved. Jeanne has the same future, she says.

Analysis

Most significant in this section of chapters is Jeanne's decision to side with Phineas and try to take control of the ranch. It seems that much of what prompts her decision is that her father and grandmother are waiting for her when she returns from Austin to tell her she has been accepted into college. Jeanne doesn't want a life where she will just be a man's wife or secretary. Although she feels like her uncle is using her as a pawn to get what he wants out of the ranch, she feels her father isn't being fair with her either. She knows it has always been her father's dream to be considered a relic from another age, like the Colonel, but also realizes that his ideas are antiquated and are putting the family's ranch in jeopardy. When she confronts him about his unwise spending in an attempt to keep the cattle portion of the ranch going, her father becomes angry with her and walks away. Jeanne's grandmother tells her she's being stupid. Although Jeanne had always wanted her grandmother to talk to her in this type of confidential manner about her own life, Jeanne is frustrated by the woman's claims that Jeanne will be disliked for her work to make the ranch profitable again. She warns Jeanne that she will end up just like she did.

Death emerges as a theme in this section of chapters, and it is mentioned in both Chapters Nineteen and Twenty. In Chapter Nineteen, the Indian tribe deals with the knowledge that the white men's diseases as well as the white men themselves are killing the Indian population. It is depressing to the tribe as they see evidence of the Indian decline. Additionally, the Mexicans and Americans have teamed up together against the Indians. It is this combination that is responsible for the deaths of nearly three hundred of Eli's tribe members. Meanwhile, Jeanne struggles with the realization that she has reached the end of her own life. As she thinks about what might be in store for her, Jeanne realizes that she has outlived some of the countries included on a globe of the world that is the same age as she.

Discussion Question 1

Is Phineas manipulating Jeanne into confronting her father for his own benefit? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Consider Jeanne's thoughts of giving her virginity up to the Mexican soldiers she sees on the train. Why is this significant?



Discussion Question 3

Explain the factors that have caused the Indian population to begin to die out. Why does this scare the members of Eli's tribe so badly?

Vocabulary

pinnacle, scrivener, chicanery, contrary, sepulcher, patronizing, insurgents, benevolent, maverick, germinate, decamped, hieroglyphs, forage, desecrated, entity, maudlin, escarpment, askew, verge, dandy, depletion, intangibles, emissary, caliche, confidante



Chapters 21 – 23

Summary

In Chapter Twenty-one, in his journal, Peter reports that his brother, Charles, shot Dutch Hollis in the face after Dutch accused the family of various crimes of which Peter knows they are guilty. Charles heads for Mexico, but Peter and the Colonel convince him to come back. The sheriff is waiting at the house when they return. He takes Charles to Carrizo to spend a night in jail for looks. The judge, sheriff and Colonel pay visits to the people who are likely to be on the jury panel that might indict Charles. As expected, the jury refuses to indict Charles. Sally asks to move away from the ranch saying she has lost all of the sons she wants to lose. Peter refuses to go with her.

In Chapter Twenty-two, Eli reports the tribe is starving by February. They are saved only by a buffalo herd they discover moving north. In the raids planned for May, Eli is to be sent in Escute's place. On their journey, they find a Comanche camp that has been raided. They spend a day burying the bodies. Eli is ashamed as they believe it was white men who attacked the defenseless women and children while the men were gone on a raid. Afterward, they raid a Mexican village where they take a thousand horses. Although Eli thinks he has done well in the raid, he tribe mates make fun of him. The fun lasts until the Indians realize they have been followed. The Indians split up but the group that includes Eli and Toshaway is attacked. Eli's horse is shot and Toahaway is hit in the leg. They ride the horse until it has given out, then they walk. Toshaway tells Eli that Lipan Indians had been leading the white men. Toshaway and Eli reach a creek. While hunting, Eli shoots a man on a horse. He thinks about riding the horse back to white civilization but instead goes back to Toshaway. The two return to camp two weeks later.

In Chapter Twenty-three, three years after Jeanne confronts her father, Charles dies while riding his horse in a quick, severe storm. Her grandmother, Paul and Clint have already died. She finally finds her father's will and discovers she is sole inheritor of his portion of the will. Jonas doesn't make it home in time for the funeral, but does leave Germany. Once they are together, he suggests Jeanne come to Berlin with him. She realizes Jonas has separated himself from their home and legacy. Jonas only stays a few weeks to help Jeanne get the estate in order before he goes back east.

After mourning for some time, Jeanne is met by a man from Southern Minerals. She refuses to let him into the house. She has to threaten to call the sheriff to make him leave. After this experience, she loads several guns and distributes them around the house. When the vaqueros come back to the bunkhouse, she heads out to tell them what has happened so they can do whatever is necessary to make the man stay away.



Analysis

Peter is distressed when his son, Charles, shoots Dutch Hollis after the man confronts Charles about crimes committed by the McCullough family. While Peter doesn't want to see his son punished, he also knows that the family is guilty of the crimes of which Hollis accused Charles. Peter goes with the Colonel to bring Charles back after he tries to run away to Mexico. In a power play, the judge, sheriff and the Colonel visit the homes of people likely to be on the jury pool for Charles' court hearing. Through the thoughts Peter has recorded in his journal, it appears he knows Charles is guilty and believes he should be punished, but doesn't stand up to his father and let the law run its course. Peter's wife, Sally, believes the answer is for the family to leave the area but Peter refuses to go with her. It is almost as if Peter is so rooted by his guilt, unhappiness and cowardice that he is unable to make a move in any direction.

In 1945, a chapter focusing on Jeanne tells the circumstances of Charles' death. While Peter, Charles' father, describes Charles as being a foolhardy man who killed Hollis for speaking badly of the McCullough family, Jeanne describes her father as being stupid. She believes that he died in a stupid way as he refused to go to safety with the other workers even though a storm was coming. Even though Jeanne believes her father's death was stupid and senseless, she finds herself defending his actions to those who try to speak badly of him. She is frustrated with her father for leaving her in the position in which she finds herself and angry with herself for being unable to speak her mind about her father and his actions. Notice that Jeanne seems to be following in the steps of the McCulloughs as she goes to the vaqueros after she feels threatened by a man looking to buy her land. Being a lone female it is understandable that she should be nervous that a man would be able to force her to do something she didn't want to, she seems to be a little too paranoid in her severe reaction to the man.

Meanwhile, back in 1851, conditions have become dire for the tribe of Indians with whom Eli lives. They are near starvation and unable to find buffalo, the animals on which their existence relies, easily. During a raiding trip, Eli and the group with whom he is traveling comes upon a Comanche camp it is believed has been raided by white men. Eli is embarrassed by the insinuations of the other Indians because he is white. After this experience, Toshaway shares with Eli that he knew it was Eli who had shot Skulking Bear on the night Eli's family and his home was attacked. Toshaway had already taken a liking to the boy and did not tell others Eli was responsible for Skulking Bear because he knew it would make the others want to kill Eli. He tries to comfort Eli in his distress about what the white men have done to the Indian camp by reminding him that the tribe of which he is a part is made up of captives from a variety of nationalities. In fact, Toshaway shares with Eli that his own grandfather was a captured Mexican. Later, Eli has the chance to run away from Toshaway but chooses not to do so because he has developed such a strong bond with the man who has become his Indian "father."



Discussion Question 1

Consider Peter's question about the common belief that the Garcias got what they deserved because they had injured Glenn. Do you believe this way of thinking is correct? Is a death the same as a near death?

Discussion Question 2

Describe the relationship between Toshaway and Eli. How does Toshaway help Eli to procure a position of importance in the tribe?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss Jeanne's reaction to her father's death. How is it different from the Colonel's death? What will life be like for her now?

Vocabulary

impotence, inexorable, indictment, empaneled, vestige, howitzer, ululating, melee, obliterated, flotsam, entourage, condolences, deferentially, indisposed, accosting



Chapters 24 – 29

Summary

In Chapter Twenty-four, Peter notes the way the land is being ruined by the people. The green grass and trees he remembers from his childhood are gone. The president has declared war on Germany. Both of Peter's sons want to go and join the fighting. Peter believes it is an ominous sign that the Lewis gun arrives on the same day that he sees his sons off to war, but that doesn't stop him from trying out the gun with his father. He kills wild pigs nearly 400 yards away. The Colonel's horse runs off and Peter's is bug-eyed because of the noise of the gun. The next day, Peter's wife comes to him asking for honest conversation. She reminds him he promised her a place in the city when the boys left. He argues he is worried about his father and that the ranch would fall apart without him. Two days later she leaves. Peter is distressed by the empty house.

In Chapter Twenty-five, Peter tells about capturing a young man who was caught hunting buffalo in Indian territory. He is captured alive and taken to the camp to be tortured. The man begs Eli to help him because he recognizes he is also a captive. Several women are chosen to torture the new captive. They tie him spread-eagle just above the ground and start small fires at his hands and feet. At the end of the day, the captive begs Eli to kill him. Toshaway has warned Eli that if he were to help the man, everyone would know who had done it. The following morning, they cut off the captive's hands and feet, then set the fires under his stumps. Eli goes out to hunt, looking for snakes. After dark he takes the snake's head to the captive and milks the venom into a small cut in his throat. Later, he asks Prairie Flower if the way the man is being treated bothers her. She tells him he shouldn't talk about the captive, that he will be chief one day. The next morning, the buffalo hunter is dead. The men are disappointed their fun is over, but don't notice the man's face and neck are bloated. Eli continues to gain ground in the tribe. He is given his own tipi and buffalo robe. Toshaway offers to loan him horses to offer as a bride-price for Prairie Flower. Not too long after the buffalo hunter dies, people in the tribe begin to get sick.

In Chapter Twenty-six, Jeanne considers briefly going to Berlin with Jonas, but decides something will happen to change her circumstances. A manager from Humble Oil calls Jeanne for a lunch meeting. He offers her \$4 million plus 25 percent in royalties. She asks for the company to clear the land around each well as well. When the man says he cannot give her what she asks, she suggests she just connect to his pipeline. When he tells her she will go bankrupt, Jeanne walks out. When she tells Phineas what has happened, he tells her not to worry, but he wants her to come to Austin to meet someone.

In Chapter Twenty-seven, Peter can not stay in the house and listen to his father talk to the northerners about farming. The Pinkards sell their ranch and move to Dallas. Peter notices the man seems happy to be moving. Several days later the Colonel brings home a used oil drilling rig along with several drunks to run it. They decide to start drilling in a



spot about half a mile from the house. Because funding has been approved for more Rangers, many Mexicans are leaving to go back to Mexico. In late June, however, a Mexican woman comes to the house. She introduces herself to Peter as Maria Garcia.

In Chapter Twenty-eight, Eli's tribe is struck with small pox. Prairie Flower and Toshaway are among the first to get sick. A raiding party, including Nuukara and Escute, returns but Toshaway threatens to kill them if they come too close. Prairie Flower suffers boils all over her face and body. Finally one night after her boils have begun to scab and shrink, her fever breaks. When Eli wakes the next morning, however, Prairie Flower has died. Eli buries Prairie Flower, then makes his job burying the other tribe members as they die.

In Chapter Twenty-nine, at Phineas' office, he introduces Jeanne to Hank, a driller who is looking for work. He tells her Hank will be heading down to the ranch with her that day. In the truck, she thinks to herself that Hank is like the Colonel.

Analysis

Situations seem to go from bad to worse for all three of the narrators. Peter's sons have decided they want to fight in the war that has just been declared against Germany. The members of Eli's tribe are struck with smallpox and his fiancé, Prairie Flower, dies. Jeanne, who is trying to be a businesswoman in a man's world, believes she has just made a fool of herself in front of a prospective buyer for her oil.

Peter seems to sink into an even deeper depression in this section of the novel. His sons leave for the war and his wife leaves him to go back to Dallas. He is so depressed by his empty house that he goes to his father for company. Even though Peter claims to detest the Colonel's ways, it seems there is some small part of him that desperately wants his father to accept him and be proud of him. For instance, although it seems to go against Peter's nature, he goes with his father to try out the new gun. Though his description of the gun and the way it shoots is one of the few shots of humor in Peter's recent journal entries, killing and guns don't seem to be Peter's idea of fun, as it is for the Colonel. The Colonel seems to recognize that his son is very different from him even though he doesn't fully appreciate the difference. He tells Peter that Peter was like his brother, Martin. The Colonel tells Peter he'd always hoped Peter would get away from the ranch as he really didn't belong there.

Back with the Indian tribe, times for the Indians get very bad when a white man, caught and tortured for killing buffalo, gives many of the tribe members small pox. One of those to die is Eli's fiancé, Prairie Flower. Hauntingly, Eli was responsible for giving Prairie Flower the deadly disease as he had touched the white man just before being with her. Eli had helped the man die, by giving him snake venom, to keep him from suffering any more at the hands of the Indians. Had anyone known that Eli had put the man out of his misery, he would be tortured and killed just as the Indians had been doing to the new captive. Knowing the man has asked Eli for help, Toshaway warns him to stay away from the captive. Prairie Flower does the same when Eli tries to talk to her about how



deeply the man's pain is affecting him. She tells him how her family was killed by white men. Eli considers telling her about the way his mother, sister and brother was killed by the Indians, but knows this topic is forbidden.

Discussion Question 1

The hatred harbored between the white men and the Indians comes as a result of one group trying to displace the other. The white men have pushed the Indians out of their hunting grounds and disturbed their ways of life. As a result, the Indians have taken to raiding the white men to make a living. How is this circle of violence perpetuated?

Discussion Question 2

Consider Jeanne's meeting with the oilman. Do you believe her meeting was useless? What might she have done differently?

Discussion Question 3

At the conclusion of Chapter Twenty-seven Maria Garcia reappears. What do you think this will mean for Peter?

Vocabulary

ostentatious, ominous, salvage, looted, variolating, escarpment



Chapters 30 – 32

Summary

In Chapter Thirty, Maria tells Peter she has come looking for her birth certificate, as her nationality is questioned every time she tries to cross the border. He takes her to the kitchen when she tells him she is hungry and leaves her there to eat. Peter contemplates what he should do. He tells her she may stay the night, an offer she accepts. Peter tries to sleep in his study, finally falling asleep in the early morning. He wakes to the sound of Maria playing the piano. He leaves for work without speaking to Maria. He tells Conseula to give Maria whatever she asks for. He returns after dark. Maria seems to think Peter wants to kill her, but all he really wants is for her to go away. She admits she has thought about killing him. He asks her to stay. She replies he doesn't know what he's asking.

The next day, Peter eats supper with Maria. They try again to talk about what happened to her family. She is angry with herself for hiding in her closet and wishes she had died with the others. She indicates Peter and his family must think the score is even as her family, eleven members, were killed in exchange for Glenn being wounded. She describes walking back to her house and finding it burned. Although the important family papers had been in a fireproof box, these papers are gone. She realizes the destruction was intentional.

In Chapter Thirty-one, the fifty members left in Eli's tribe begin their search for buffalo. The tribe crosses paths with a group of Comanchero traders but the Indians have nothing to offer in trade for supplies. The chief, Mountain of Rocks, asks Eli to allow himself to be given to the traders in exchange for supplies. The Comancheros will be paid by the government for returning Eli and the German girl. During their time with the Comancheros, Eli keeps the German girl from being raped. She admits the Eli she got pregnant three times by the Indians, but made herself miscarry each time by hitting herself in the stomach with rocks and refusing to eat.

At the state capitol, Eli learns Yellow Hair's real name is Ingrid Goetz. Several wealthy women adopt Ingrid, and she has been cleaned up and is well dressed the next time Eli sees her. He, however, stays in his Indian clothes. Ingrid tells everyone that Eli protected her honor while they were with the Indians. The judge doesn't seem to believe the story, but a reporter from The New York Times buys the story. Eli reports that Ingrid winds up going back to New York with this reporter. Meanwhile, Judge Black has told Eli his father is dead, but he has a stepmother who wants him to come live with her. After Eli refuses to go to school and abide by the rules. He then has his scalps found by some Negro slaves.

In Chapter Thirty-two, when Jeanne and Hank go out to look over the ranch the following day, Jeanne takes makings for mint juleps. They eat lunch at the ruins of the Garcia house. Jeanne tries to entice Hank to have sex with her, but he doesn't respond



as she'd hoped. He voices the fear that Phineas will kill him if he finds out Hank slept with Jeanne. The next afternoon, they do sleep together. Six months later, the first drilling rig is running on the old Garcia property. The mud pumps malfunction one day and Jeanne is offended when Hank orders her to get off the rig. She gets off the rig, but refuses to leave the area. She is determined not to be alone again.

Analysis

For all of the guilt that Peter has felt concerning what happened to the Garcias, he seems unable to reach out to Maria with any sort of compassion when she comes to his house looking for help. In his writing, he admits that he just wants the woman to go away, but at the same time cannot bring himself to tell her to leave. Peter is aware of all of the things that his family has done to her family. When she describes walking up the ruins of her house and finding it burned, he must have known what she was thinking. She knows it was some member of the McCullough family that burned the house, as well as all of the papers, including her birth certificate. She tells Peter that in retrospect, she wishes she had not hidden in her closet but instead had been killed with the rest of the family. She indicates to Peter that she realizes the McCulloughs must think the score is even as all of her family was killed in exchange for the injury of one McCullough. Now, the McCulloughs have even taken over her family's land. Maria confirms Peter's belief that Pedro had not been behind in his taxes. The treatment that Maria and her family have received at the hands of the McCulloughs is an example of the way the Mexicans were treated by the Texans. Even though Maria's family members were American citizens, and land owners, they still did not rate the same stature as native-born Americans.

The way Maria is treated by the McCulloughs and other Texans is somewhat like the way Eli is treated by the members of the Indian tribe that took him captive. It doesn't matter how much he does to assimilate himself into the tribe, he will always be considered an outsider. In fact, when the tribe is about to starve to death, Eli is given to some traders in exchange for supplies. The trade works because the government is paying for American captives who are returned from Indians. Although the two haven't had much interaction while they were with the Indian tribe, Eli protects the German girl, who is also traded for supplies, from being raped by the traders. When they are back in society, Eli tells those who ask that the girl was not touched by the Indians, but instead treated as a princess. In this way, he ensures that she will have some type of life in normal society. Although the judge with whom Eli lives at first knows that Eli is lying about the way the Indians treated the girl, a reporter from The New York Times who comes to cover the story does not realize that Eli is lying. He winds up taking the German girl back to New York with him. It is assumed the two get married.

Once Jeanne meets Hank, it seems she is determined that he is the man for her. One of the reasons it seems that she is attracted to him is because he reminds her of the Colonel. In the back of her mind, Jeanne seems to think that Phineas has introduced the two with the intent they would get married. Hank, however, is hesitant to start a physical relationship with Jeanne because he thinks that Phineas will have him killed.



Jeanne does, however, lose the virginity that she felt was such a black mark against her, to Hank. She is surprised that her first time does not hurt as people had always told her that it would.

Discussion Question 1

Do you think Phineas introduced Hank and Jeanne with the hope they would pair up?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the different forms of racism as presented in these chapters.

Discussion Question 3

Why do you think Eli chooses to lie to cover up the fact that the German girl was raped by the Indians?

Vocabulary

procure, decrepit, cataclysm, assignation, exterminated, fatalistic, decimated, feral, divots, deduce, renounce, larcenies, endearingly



Chapters 33 – 37

Summary

In Chapter Thirty-three, Maria meets Peter in his office. She asks about the Mexicans she had known when she lived in the area. Peter runs down the list of those who have been killed and those who have left the area. Maria is impressed Peter has kept up with them all. She tells him she will leave when her presence becomes inconvenient. Peter does not tell her that his father has already demanded that she leave. The follow day, Peter tries to discuss the matter further with his father who tells him to give Maria some money and make her be on her way. Consuela tells Peter that the Colonel has told her not to cook for Maria but Consuela lets Peter know she will be making extra food for him. Peter tells Maria a story about his father hanging some men whom he believed had killed some of his cattle. Peter is terrified by the idea that some of his father's cruelty exists in him.

In Chapter Thirty-four, Eli goes to live with his stepmother and two stepbrothers. Eli is supposed to go to school, but runs away when the teacher comes after him with a paddle for not doing as he's told. When he returns home, someone has put his bow, arrows, moccasins and loincloth into the fireplace. Eli is angry and leaves the home. He returns later and kills all of the family's hogs. He stays away from his stepmother's house for a month. During this time he takes to following Judge Wilbarger's wife around. A Sheriff's Deputy takes Eli to the jail for some questions. While he is there, the Judge gives him a lecture in morality. Eli messes with the judge by speaking to him only in Comanche. Shortly after he is set free from jail, Eli is caught by the Judge's wife in their house. She is not angry and they strike up a friendship.

In Chapter Thirty-five, a future senator visits the area. Jeanne gives the man four checks for five thousand dollars each which gets her a moment alone with the man they called Bullshit Johnson. A few minutes later, the aid tells her she should pay cash next time. The man is elected senator. In the years that followed, Jeanne and Hank got enough oil wells drilled on the property to give them plenty of money. She is surprised at Hank's abilities. Hank, however, will not put up with foolishness, and leaves town when Jeanne is called upon to talk to a writer. The writer later comes out with a movie that the oilmen like, but Jeanne believes make them all look like dumb millionaires.

Back in the present, Jeanne thinks how she will soon be gone, just like all of the others before her. She does not believe there will be anything after her life, but hopes she is proven wrong. Her mind goes back in time to a visit with Jonas. She is away from her children and the man they are with is flirting with her. He suddenly suggests things may change in the oil business. She doesn't push for specifics as Hank might have done. The big oil is overseas.

In Chapter Thirty-six, Peter stays in the house hoping to run into Maria. He is falling in love with her. Peter allows Maria to stay past the first deadline his father has set for her



to leave, so the Colonel sets another deadline. He warns Peter that Maria could cost them the ranch. Maria later tells Peter that Consuela has been telling her about the Colonel's desire for her to leave. Peter tells her will take care of his father. He steps close to kiss her.

In Chapter Thirty-seven, Eli and the judge's wife become so friendly with one another that they begin lying unclothed together. He notices a boy, Tom Whipple, has been following him. The boy asks Eli to show him how to steal a horse. Meanwhile, Ellen and Eli begin sneaking out of the house to make love. He takes Whipple with him and they steal one of the judge's thoroughbreds. The next day, the boy is caught trying to steal his neighbor's horse and he tells on Eli. In jail, Eli asks the sheriff why Ellen hasn't been there. The sheriff tells him she is the worst person he could have had an affair with. When Eli asks if there will be a trial, the sheriff says it will be the shortest one ever.

Analysis

One of the most significant issues in this section of chapters is Peter's developing affection for Maria. Although his father insists that Maria leave, Peter does not mention to Maria that the Colonel is putting pressure on him to get rid of her. One must wonder why the Colonel is so intent that Maria must leave, as he believes he has done nothing wrong in executing her family. It may be that the Colonel believes that by giving Maria refuge in their house, it appears the family is trying to appease for some wrong they have done. He may also think that Maria will refuse to go away until they give her some recompense for the death of her family and destruction of her home. On the other hand, there may be some small part of Eli that still has enough human compassion that knowing that Maria is around reminds him of what he has done to her family and causes guilt. Knowing Eli's past, however, it is very unlikely that he feels guilt for any of the things he has done to the Garcia family. He feels he did what had to be done to the Garcia's to protect his own family. As he was taught by Toshway, Eli believes that family is the only thing that is worth fighting and killing for.

Interesting as well is the relationship that develops between Ellen and Eli. Both are lonely and out of their element, in a way, but neither really have anything in common. Eli has been spying on Ellen for quite a while and having fantasies about her. It is not until Eli breaks into her house and accidentally falls asleep that she discovers him. Surprisingly, she is not afraid of him. The two strike up a friendship, then an intimate relationship. One comment that Ellen makes to Eli that indicates how different her opinion of people of different color and race are from her husbands is her statement to Eli that she feels bad that Henry, the negro that works for them, is so scared of her that he won't even look at her. It appears, however, that it is the judge that has put most of this fear in Henry, as he appears to be highly racially biased. In fact, when the judge learns that Eli has been sleeping with his wife, even though it is from a small boy, the judge takes the child's word at face value and has Eli put away. It is believed Eli will be hung without even the courtesy of a trial.



Discussion Question 1

Why is the Colonel so insistent that Maria leave?

Discussion Question 2

What is Jeanne's attitude toward her children? Do you understand her frustrations with motherhood? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

Compare and contrast Eli and Ellen Wilbarger. What attracts them to each other?

Vocabulary

arrears, tryst, conciliatory, ambushing, queer, attributed, connoisseur, import, morality, carbuncles, caste, ponderous, purgatory, vantage, absquatulation, adjunctive



Chapters 38 – 43

Summary

In Chapter Thirty-eight, Jeanne feels stifled by her children. She packs up Susan and takes her to the office where she hands the baby off to the secretaries and falls asleep in her office. When Hank gets back from Canada, Jeanne asks if they can get an additional nanny. Hank tells her she's being ridiculous. Jeanne feels as if she is being asked to stay at home and kept out of society and away from intelligent people. Because it is her money that has paid for the drilling that has made them rich, Jeanne gets her way. They hire nannies and she returns to work although she feels the women there hate her for doing so.

In Chapter Thirty-nine, Peter reports an accident on the drilling rig. Oil pours from the open spot, a find that Peter knows separates the family even more from the commoners. However, the townspeople who gather to see the mess seem to think it is their good fortune as well. The Colonel returns, hugging Peter. He says nothing about Maria. Peter is glad the oil was found on their land, not the Garcia's. He and Maria go to Carrizo together. They stay in a hotel room that night where they make love to each other.

In Chapter Forty, Judge Black in Austin keeps Eli from being hung for sleeping with Judge Wilbarger's wife. Wilbarger instead has Eli signed up to join the Rangers. After two years of working with the Rangers, Eli tries to repay Judge Black for the horse and pistol with which he was outfitted when he started the job. During his break, a man comes to visit Eli who says he knew Eli's father. He gives Eli a wallet with a vest made of scalps inside. The man tells Eli that his father did go after him when the Indians took him, trailing them clear to Llano. Eli asks what happened to his father but the man never answers.

In Chapter Forty-one, as Jeanne lays on the floor of her home, she begins to hallucinate. She imagines Hank reacting to the death of President Kennedy when in reality he died before the president. She is not surprised about the murder of the president. She thinks through a laundry list of the different groups of people through the history of the world who have been lived violent lives and killed out others in the process.

In Chapter Forty-two, Peter tries to convince his father to sell some leases for oil as their neighbors are doing. The Colonel is worried only about whether Maria has left yet. Peter does not tell him that he and Maria have been inseparable. Maria asks about his journal. She tells him she has a story she wants him to write down about his father and the dead men. Maria tells him about a curse put on their family because his uncle killed an Indian seer. Her family inherited the uncle's land. Her mother did not want anything to do with the land and asked her father to sell it. Pedro insisted, however, they live there. Maria believes the family was killed because of the curse.



In Chapter Forty-three, it is the mid-1850's and Eli is still working for the Rangers. He and his companions find a house set on fire by the Indians. They believe the Indians have taken a teenaged girl who is still alive. As they are chasing the Indians, Eli recognizes one of them as Escute. Eli points out a diversionary trail instead of leading the Rangers down the real trail.

Analysis

Jeanne's feelings about her children are important in this section of the novel. Although she loves her kids, she feels stifled by them. She feels as if the description of motherhood that other women follow does not apply to her. She longs to be out among people. When she approaches Hank about her unhappiness, he doesn't want to try to understand her struggle. However, he gives in because it is her money that is funding their business. Jeanne stresses about her decision, believing the women at work think she is a bad mother and wife. In hopes of keeping these women from attracting Hank, Jeanne insists on hiring only ugly secretaries.

Eli's humor continues to shine through in this section of the novel. It is almost in a joking way that he describes the "necktie social" or hanging that the judge is trying to arrange. With tongue in cheek, he indicates he believes his youthful ignorance may get his crime expunged. It is unlikely, he says, since all of the townspeople are suddenly talking about all of the bad they've seen Eli doing with the judge's wife, a fitting description of the way that gossip can expound on situations.

Note that Judge Black's wife will not have anything to do with Eli when he first leaves to work with the Rangers. However, when he returns after his first two years with the group, it appears the judge's wife has warmed to him. She sees his job with the Rangers as a step up from his days with the Indians. She somehow believes that now that he bears the title of a ranger, he is a worthwhile person. It is with humor that Eli thinks to himself that he's doing the same thing with the Rangers that he was doing when he was with the Indians, he is just working for a different group.

It appears that Maria is trying to absolve Peter of some of his guilt when she tells him the story of the curse that her uncle received from the elderly Indian. She not only tells him the story verbally, she also instructs him to write it in his journal, alongside his own interpretation of what happened. By referring to the curse, it appears that Maria is trying to tell Peter that what happened to the Garcias would have happened regardless of what he had done to try to stop it. She tells him that she believes it was her father's thirst for land that made him decide to take over his uncle's property despite the risk he knew was involved. Although she explains to Peter all of the things that her father did in an attempt to quell the curse, she tells him his best intentions did not save the family.

Discussion Question 1

What is the significance of the story that Maria tells Peter about the Indian cursing Arturo? What does she seem to be trying to tell Peter through this story?



Discussion Question 2

Compare and contrast the raiding that Eli does with the Rangers to what he did with the Indians. Why does Judge Black's wife believe Eli is a more civilized person now that he is working with the Rangers? Why does he not tell her any differently?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss Jeanne's opinion of motherhood. Do you think her feelings of suffocation are normal? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

broach, malevolent, morass, inextricably, provocation, immolated, porcine, viscous, carbine, remuneration, forage, vagabond, accouterments, pilferage, sheer, perversity, scrivener, deciduous, transcendence, lineage, mustered



Chapters 44 – 50

Summary

In Chapter Forty-four, Jeanne remembers the truck speeding to the house. Feeling that something is wrong, Jeanne calls the doctor. Hank is in the bed of the truck. He dies as Jeanne tries to talk to him. Hank's dog refuses to leave Jeanne's side. When it dies eight years later, she feels as if she has lost her husband again.

In Chapter Forty-five, although it irks Peter, the entire town is acting as if the discovery of oil will benefit them as much as the rich landowners. Peter continues to spend time with Maria.

In Chapter Forty-six, Eli reports the burning of Dallas to force Texas into the Civil War. It is during this series of events that he becomes interested in acquiring wealth and power. In the war, Eli signs with the Mounted Rifles. He stays at Judge Black's house often. Madeline comes to him one night. Although Eli is afraid of her, he makes love to her. A few weeks later when Eli and his troop are to go Kansas, the Judge asks Eli if he has slept with Madeline. Although the judge doesn't approve of the relationship, he insists that Eli marry Madeline.

Chapter Forty-seven focuses on Jeanne's insecurity in the business world after Hank's death. Everyone is stealing from her through double billing or simply not working. She finally asks Milton Bryce point blank who is stealing from her. She takes his advice, has the locks at the office changed and fires everyone except one secretary. While Jeanne's sons Tom and Ben bear up well under their mother's devotion to work, Susan turns into an impossible princess.

In Chapter Forty-eight, Peter is depressed because the oil leases ensure the family will have no money issues for years to come. Sullivan is concerned he will lose his job if the Colonel decides to get rid of the cattle. Peter says he won't let that happen.

In Chapter Forty-nine, Eli is sent to work with the Indians in 1864. The group's only order is to disturb the enemy's rear. He heads for Austin during a few days leave, then wonders why when he sees the Judge's house. His son, Everett, looks like he might cry and Madeline appears to have aged ten years.

In Chapter Fifty, Jeanne's almost doesn't visit the ranch because she has a new pilot with whom she is not familiar. She has a feeling something is going to go wrong. A long-time employee, Frank Mabry, approaches her to ask if she's made any arrangements for the people who work for her in the case of her death. At the house, she is irked because she finds signs that Dolores, the housekeeper, has had a party without Jeanne's permission. Ted had become part of Jeanne's life only a few years after Hank died. They never married. Jeanne's boys like Ted but Susan begins staying the summers in



Maine with Jonas. When Susan requests to be sent to boarding school, Jeanne is almost relieved, as Susan has become a spoiled princess.

Analysis

One interesting aspect of these chapters is Peter's frustration with the townspeople's reaction to the McCullough family's discovery of oil. Peter knows this oil will make them rich. He does not want the family to be rich. He believes the riches will be their undoing. What seems to surprise Peter the most is that the common people in their town are happy about the discovery of oil on McCullough land. They don't seem to understand that this discovery will only make the McCullough's more rich and more powerful and the common people comparatively poorer in the process.

Curiously, it is the acts that take place to force Texas into the Civil War that make Eli decide that he also has the ability to manipulate circumstances to benefit himself. Also interesting, especially based on his background, is Eli's opinion of slavery. He believes that slavery is the natural state of things and sees nothing particularly wrong with one person owning another. This is unusual since Eli was "owned" for a short while by the Indians. He did not like the labor he was forced to do and was relieved when he found a way to get out of his position of slavery, yet he sees nothing wrong with slavery now. In a way Eli was sort of bigoted as he believed Indians, blacks and Mexicans could be used as slaves, but white people were above this occupation.

Jeanne is traumatized when Hank is killed in a hunting accident. Hank's death takes her even further away from her children because Jeanne believes she can run her business on her own. She spends more hours at the office and even puts away the pictures of the children she has displayed in her office because she believes other don't take her seriously because they know she is a single mother. Meanwhile, Susan is becoming more and more of a spoiled brat. Jeanne is almost relieved when the girl starts spending her summers with Jonas' children, and then requests to be sent to a boarding school.

Jeanne's most traumatic time comes right after Hank's death when she realizes the people who work for her are stealing from her. She has a private meeting with her lawyer to try to find out who is stealing from her. When Milton Bryce won't answer her questions freely, she at first believes she has made a mistake in asking his opinion. Finally, however, he suggests to her that she fire her entire staff and change the locks, but keep at least one secretary. It is at this point that she realizes how important Bryce will be to her. In order to entice him to continue to work on her side, Jeanne makes herself a note to have Bryce's salary increased.

Discussion Question 1

Consider Peter's statement that the family's money worries are over. Why does this idea depress him?



Discussion Question 2

Might Jeanne's children have turned out differently if she'd spent more time with them? Why or why not? Also, compare and contrast Jeanne's struggles with motherhood with those faced by Madeline.

Discussion Question 3

Discuss Eli's opinions of those who push Texas to become involved in the Civil War. What does he learn from these people? Why is it at this point he becomes acquisitive?

Vocabulary

incapacitated, gallant, hypocrite, abolished, amalgamation, agee, impeccable, appendage, bulwark, chaste, notorious, decapitate, plunder, benevolent, matriarch, obliterated, aura, saboteur



Chapters 51 – 56

Summary

In Chapter Fifty-one, Sally calls to tell Peter she is coming back. Peter asks his father to keep Sally away. He refuses. Maria knows Sally is returning. She is upset but says she will be fine. The following day Sally arrives. Peter goes out fencing and when he returns, Maria is gone. He learns his wife, father and uncle have given Maria ten thousand dollars and sent her away.

In Chapter Fifty-two, Eli and his group of Indian troops runs into a small regiment of Federal soldiers. Eli knows they are carrying gold and does not see any difference in attacking the wagons than the raids he attended with Toshaway. He gets the other colonel to agree to attack the wagons. They wait until the soldiers have bedded down before they begin their attack. The Union soldiers, however, have an automatic gun they use against the Indians. The Indians finally shoot arrows straight up and kill the Union soldiers. A salesman who had been traveling with the soldiers survives, but then Indians kill him when they discover he knows how to work the gun. They additionally destroy the gun. Eli gets a great deal of gold out of the raid.

In Chapter Fifty-three, Jeanne struggles with the double standard for men and women in the business world. As Jeanne helps the men she works with become rich, she notices they begin to accept her more. She is invited to and attends a Honey Hunt planned by one of the men although Ted advises her not to go. Jeanne tries to fit in by drinking. As the night progresses, one of the men has a prostitute give Jeanne a lap dance. As she walks back to her cabin, she realizes that Hank must have slept with other women at get-togethers like this one. She stays the night, goes out hunting the following morning, then gets in her car and leaves. She has realized Ted was right, she should not have gone.

In Chapter Fifty-four, Jorge and Sullivan help Peter try to locate Maria. Peter is afraid his family has hurt her but Jorge and Sullivan don't think so. They believe she was hoping to get paid to leave because she needed the money so badly. They find a hotel they believe is safe, but their car is stolen overnight. Phineas and the Colonel apparently contact the police, as they are offered a car and a police escort out of town. After he returns home, Peter pays a private investigator more than \$80,000 to find Maria. Sally suggests to him that they start over with their marriage. He refuses and she tells him it is time to grow up.

In Chapter Fifty-five, Eli moves in with his father-in-law, determined his best years are behind him. The judge is shot after he decides to run for Senate on the Republican ticket. Madeline talks Eli out of going on a killing spree. They sell the house and live on the farm in Georgetown. As Eli doesn't want to be an overseer the rest of his life, so he buys land on the Nueces strip and decides to rope and sell cattle. On the day that Eli meets Arturo Garcia, the man tries to outbid Eli on a critical piece of property. The



commissioners sell to Eli as they tell him they are trying to move Garcia out of the area because he associates with known thieves.

In Chapter Fifty-six, although others think she is crazy, Jeanne is happy for once in her life. Susan is in California and seems happy. Thomas is still at home but while he's there, she can keep his "eccentricity" hidden. She is undiversifying, putting all her money into domestic oil even though it is losing money. When her hunch does pay off, Jeanne is disturbed because she gets no credit but is happy because her children are happy. However, Ben is killed in a car wreck and Jeanne blames herself. Thomas moves to California without telling his mother. She sells the house and moves in with Ted. She considers selling the ranch, keeping only the house. It is at this point that she is visited by Adelina Garcia, her aunt. Jeanne is brusque and the woman leaves. Ted advises her to call Milton Bryce. She decides it is not important.

Analysis

The most important aspect of this section of the novel is Eli's belief that he crossed a line in an attempt to make his fortune. It appears he has set his entire regiment up for destruction in hopes of getting gold to fund his own ambitions. The only aspect that makes Eli's actions forgivable is that he doesn't appear to know that the soldiers had the new gun with them. He wonders why the Union soldiers don't run when they are first attacked. He understands their unusual behavior when they begin firing the gun.

Although Eli will be able to take the gold and use it for his own purposes, the Indians are not as lucky. Flying Jacket explains to Eli that he and the Indians cannot use the gold for their own purposes as Eli can. Although they need the gold to buy food and supplies, they will be punished if it is found they stole from the Union army.

Discussion Question 1

Do you believe Maria had come to the McCullough home hoping for a pay off? Do you think she really loved Peter?

Discussion Question 2

Do you approve of Eli's actions when he led the raid on the Union soldiers? Was he being fair to the entire group or only thinking of himself?

Discussion Question 3

How does Jeanne react to Ben's death? How is her reaction different from that she had when her husband died?

Vocabulary

absquatulate, chassed, stiver, solidarity, refuted, eccentricity, embargo, preposterous, frugal, imperious



Chapters 57 – 69

Summary

In Chapter Fifty-seven, Ulises Garcia always heard he descended from wealthy Americans but didn't know for certain until he found his grandmother's birth certificate with his father's name, Peter McCullough, in English. He knows both his father and grandmother had tried to get in contact with the McCulloughs but were turned away. He decides that if he shows the family he knows cattle and is worth their interest, they will accept him as one of their own. The foreman at the ranch agrees to hire him but tells him he should not plan to stay if he has other prospects as they don't believe the ranch will be around for much longer. Eli learns Jeanne is dying and has no one to take over her ranch.

In Chapter Fifty-eight, the shadow that followed Peter before he reunited with Maria has returned. He remembers his father saying that things would have been better if Maria had not survived the massacre. He thinks about killing his father. His father comes to him and tries to smooth things over, but Peter will not speak to him. He is sure Maria is dead. Sally also continues to try to talk to Peter. He cannot understand why she doesn't see what she has done wrong.

In Chapter Fifty-nine, when Eli first begins his cattle ranch, he gathers together some men from the area to help him. He notes that they all hate Arturo Garcia, but doesn't think anything of it. When he sells his first herd of cattle, he visits his family, promising Madeline the biggest house in Austin. Madeline, however, remembers the time when they were all together as her happiest time, even though they were poor. He returns to his ranch to find three of his hands shot dead. Sullivan was injured. He thinks the Garcias were responsible for the raid. After he buries the dead, Eli pays a visit to the Garcias. Arturo denies any knowledge of the attack on Eli's land and people. Eli and his men murder Arturo. A year later, Pedro and his family take Arturo's place.

In Chapter Sixty, Jeanne realized oil was no longer sure money, so she went into the savings and loans business. She feels guilty when the real estate market crashes and her business is bailed out by the government. She's glad she didn't have to pay the money back herself and didn't have to go to Washington to testify. Meanwhile, Thomas announces plans to come out of the closet with his sexual orientation. Susan has two sons from different fathers. They spend some time with their grandmother at the ranch, but she sees them as being soft. She tries to teach them about animals and the woods as the Colonel did her when she was small.

In Chapter Sixty-one, because he still does not have a work permit, it is not safe for Ulises to leave the ranch. He rides to the old Garcia place one day and meets the writer Jeanne has hired. He learns from this writer that the Garcia family was killed by the McCulloughs.



In Chapter Sixty-two, Peter learns that Pinkerton has found three Maria Garcias living in Guadalajara. He writes letters to all three of the women.

In Chapter Sixty-three, Eli has all who trespass on his property shot. Madeline and the children live in Austin even though Madeline wants to move to the ranch so they will all be together. When the last of the Comanches surrender, Eli feels responsible. When he goes back home and looks at his securities, Eli feels better.

In Chapter Sixty-four, Ted has gotten involved with a younger woman and asks to be released from Jeanne. Thomas' partner dies of AIDS. She stays with Thomas at the hospital, she helps him clean out the condo where he lived with Richard. She thinks of the cottonwoods she and Hank planted. The smell of the sap reminds her of Hank and the Colonel. She feels they are waiting for her.

In Chapter Sixty-five, Ulises watches as Jeanne disembarks from this large plane by herself. He notes the plane is the same type that is preferred by drug traffickers. He'd spoken to her as she sat on her porch later that day. That evening he decides to work up the courage to talk to her.

In Chapter Sixty-six, Peter gets a letter from Maria. He chooses not to have her come back to Texas and instead packs a bag, withdraws \$250,000 from his father's account, and goes to Mexico.

In Chapter Sixty-seven, Eli continues to stress over his cattle ranch and worry if he will make a profit. He knows that he thinks and cares more for the ranch than his own family. He swears to Madeline he will sell out of the cow business in three years, but she insists she will take their children to Washington with her if he doesn't build her a house on the ranch.

In Chapter Sixty-Eight, Jeanne remembers finding her father in the living room, reading a journal, tearing out pages and throwing them into the fire. He tells her that her grandfather was a liar. He threw all of Peter's journals into the fire but Jeanne rescues them, showing them to no one.

One day, Jeanne notices Jonas acting strangely. She follows him as he walks to the stables after dark. She sits in the dark and watches as he leads all of the horses out, then pours coal oil over a stack of hay bales. She asks what he is doing. He tells her he believes that costing his father real money is the only way he would ever let Jonas leave the ranch.

In Chapter Sixty-nine, Ulises goes to Jeanne's house and shows her the paperwork indicating that he was her relative. She reads parts of the papers, but then demands that he leave. When he doesn't, she calls on the phone for help. She does not even call him by the right name. When he tries to get his papers back, she believes he intends to hurt her and falls, hitting her head. He sees a ranch truck coming outside. He knows he will be held responsible for Jeanne's death, even though he did not intend to hurt her. In the kitchen, he gets a glass of water. He quickly decides to pull a gas stove away from



the wall and unscrews the line. He goes to the stables, chooses a horse, and rides away. As he is fleeing, the house explodes. He crosses the border to Mexico.

Since he had talked to the writer, he could not stop thinking about the way the McCulloughs had killed the Garcias. No one is even able to tell him the names of the dead men or identify them in a photograph. He feels an internal fight because both sides of the conflict are inside him. He declares that one day he will be someone that no one will forget.

Analysis

This is the first chapter in which one of the descendants of Peter and Maria appears in the novel. Ulises has grown up hearing stories that he was related to wealthy Americans. It was not until he was older that he learned the family's name and decided to try to reach out to them. Ulises knows two of his relatives have approached the McCulloughs before and been turned away. He has decided to take a different tactic and try to impress the old lady whom he knows is in charge of the fortune before he reveals his identity. Ulises' plan, however, does not go as he'd hoped. Jeanne orders him out of the house, and then in her distress steps backward and falls causing what Ulises believes to be a fatal injury.

In this section also, the reader learns some background information about Eli's relationship with the Garcias. Pedro Garcia and his sons-in-law were not the first members of the Garcia family with whom Eli has had trouble. Pedro's uncle, Arturo, caused problems for Eli when he first tried to make his mark as a cattle rancher. Just after Eli's hands have returned from their first cattle drive, the ranch is raided. Three of Eli's men are killed and another is badly wounded. A herd of Indian ponies that Eli has taken as part of his payment for the drive are taken. Eli can see tracks where they have been driven across the Garcia's land. When Eli goes to try to talk to Arturo about the raid, suggesting Arturo might have seen or heard something, Arturo denies any knowledge of the attack. In fact, several burly men come out of the Garcia home and seem to be threatening Eli to drop the subject. Although Eli does not pursue the matter further, he arranges for the Garcias to be killed. This isn't a problem, as none of the settlers in the area like the Garcia family and accuse them of being cattle thieves. Eli's dislike of the Garcias seems to stem from this incident. When Glenn is injured by gunfire and it is assumed the Garcias are involved, it isn't difficult for Eli to decide to get rid of the family that has caused him so much trouble once and for all.

Interesting also in this section is Eli's dislike of cattle. He indicates that while the life of the cowboy is described as the ultimate freedom, he felt tied to the cattle, which he referred to as slavery to a pack of dumb brutes. Eli puts up with the job only because he knows the cattle are his future. His feelings toward the cattle, however, help to explain why he pushes for opportunities to find oil on his property.



Discussion Question 1

After learning the entire story about past bad blood between the McCulloughs and the Garcias, do Eli's actions make any more sense? Are the murders any more justifiable?

Discussion Question 2

Jeanne had to have been too familiar with the Garcia name to forget what Ulises name was and call him by the wrong name. Do you think there is any meaning in her calling him by the wrong name on the phone when she is calling for help? If yes, what is its importance?

Discussion Question 3

Consider the position in which Ulises finds himself. What might you have done in this same situation? Do you think there is a better way he might have handled the problem?

Vocabulary

feral, pinnacle, liable, deregulated, ludicrous, pivotal, endeavor, laggards, irrelevant, mausoleum, spinster, compensated, lathyness



Chapters 70 – 72

Summary

In Chapter Seventy, Jeanne recognized Ulises when he entered her house. Despite her denial, she knew he was telling the truth about his lineage.

In Chapter Seventy-one, Peter finds Maria in Guadalajara. They move from place to place for awhile and have two children. They finally settle in Mexico City. Peter begins losing his memory.

In Chapter Seventy-two, Eli continues to stay away from home. Madeline has stopped expecting him. He looks for the graves of Toshiway, Prairie Flower, Single Bird and his brother, but cannot find them. When he finally returns home, he notices the men are waiting for him on the gallery. There are signs of gunfire. Madeline and Everett are dead, shot by renegade Indians. They were not scalped. Peter and Phineas were not hurt. Eli takes his twenty-three hands and they ride out after the Indians, whom he recognizes as Lipans. When they find the band, Eli and the others take out their anger and frustration. They shoot and kill the remaining Indians with the exception of one child. The boy follows them twenty miles with his bow and arrow ready. Eli wonders if the child is still looking for him.

Analysis

Some loose ends are tied up in these final chapters. The reader learns that Jeanne did recognize that Ulises was a relative, but still does not acknowledge him. One must wonder if the ranch would have had a different future if Jeanne had tried to work with Ulises instead of continuing to keep the tradition of hate alive in her family.

Also in this section, Eli finally acknowledges that he believes there is a creator. His belief is founded only on a rainstorm that happened just before the Indians who killed his wife and son rode out for their camp. When Eli first begins tracking his wife's killers, he notices the hoof prints of the ponies are clear because of the rain, then sudden dry spell that followed, preserving the tracks.

Meyer closes his book with the image of the Indian child continuing to search for Eli because Eli killed off his family and tribe. It is an image that no matter how civilized or how rich people become, they will still be seeking revenge and recompense for the wrongs done to them. Until someone steps forward to stop this circle of violence and revenge, it will most likely continue until the end of time.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you think Eli allows the one Indian child to live?



Discussion Question 2

Why do you think Jeanne does not acknowledge that Ulises is her relative? How might things have turned out differently if she had?

Discussion Question 3

After having finished reading the book, who in your opinion is the son to which the title of the novel refers? Give reasons for your answer.

Vocabulary

deposed, anarchists

Characters

Eli “The Colonel” McCullough

As the patriarch of the McCullough family, Eli has lived a very colorful life. He was born the same day that the Texas Declaration of Independence was signed. In his early teens, his family became the victims of the Comanche Indians. While his father was away helping a neighbor look for his stolen horses, a band of Indians came to their Texas homestead and killed and raped his mother and sister. They took Eli and his brother Martin captive but later killed Martin because he refused to eat. Eli lived with the Indians for three years before he was returned to civilization in trade for the price the American government agreed to pay for returned captives.

For a while, Eli bounces around, making trouble for himself and others until he is caught having an affair with the wife of a rich judge. He is saved from being hung but is assigned a spot with the Texas Rangers. During this time he marries the oldest daughter of Judge Black, a man who became his friend when he was first returned from the Indian tribe, then later saved him from the hanging. The two have several children together, but Eli doesn't stay home much, causing trouble for the couple. In his last assignment with the Rangers, the country is embroiled in the Civil War. Eli watches the way cotton farmers manipulate circumstances to help their cause and decides he can do the same. Although Eli knows a troop of Union soldiers may be carrying a gun that can kill them all, he doesn't discourage those in his group from attacking the soldiers because he believes they are carrying gold. Many, particularly Indians who had been assigned to his group, are killed in the fight but Eli walks off with a good deal of stolen loot. He uses this to buy his first plot of land on which to raise cattle.

Although Eli doesn't seem biased toward Mexicans at first, the Garcias, a family of Mexicans who own the neighboring ranch, soon prove themselves to be enemies. Just after Eli's first cattle drive, his ranch is raided and three of his men are killed. The raiders also take two hundred ponies from Eli's property. Eli traces the tracks through the Garcia land, but Arturo Garcia, the head of the house at that time, denies knowing anything about the raid or the missing ponies. It is rumored in town that Arturo is a cattle thief, so Eli takes matters into his own hands and arranges to have Arturo and his family killed. Later, Eli also has Pedro Garcia, the nephew of Arturo, and his family killed because he suspects members of the family have not only stolen cattle from him but have also shot and wounded his grandson.

While Eli makes his name in the cattle business, his wife continues to insist that he allow her and their children to move to the ranch with him. Eli refuses until she gives him an ultimatum, either she goes to the ranch or she will take the children and go up north. Eli concedes, but Madeline and the oldest child, Everett, are killed during an Indian raid. In his anger, Eli tracks down the Indian band responsible for their deaths and obliterates them all with the exception of one young boy. At the conclusion of the



novel, as he is on his deathbed as a 100-year-old man, Eli wonders if that boy is still looking for him.

Although Eli gets his start in cattle, he soon decides that oil is the way to go to make money. He strikes it rich, making enough money to support his family for years to come. His favorite member of the family is his great-granddaughter, Jeanne. He often tells her she will be something special. It is from her grandfather that Jeanne seems to inherit her desire to work hard and maintain the family heritage.

Jeanne Anne McCullough

Jeanne Anne McCullough is the great-granddaughter of the Colonel and the daughter of Charles and Ellen Shuff McCullough. She is bequeathed her father's portion of the ranch after his death, but had taken over running the ranch before that time. Her Uncle Phineas met with her in his office one day soon after she graduated from high school and convinced her that, if left to his own devices, Charles would spend the ranch into poverty. For this reason, Jeanne steps up and pushes her father to pursue oil. After his death, she tries to go into the oil business herself but doesn't have much luck until Phineas pairs her with Hank, a prospector who is looking for work. Jeanne and Hank marry and, working together, build on the fortune that Eli has already left for the family.

Jeanne's children soon become a problem for her as she feels trapped at home raising the children alone. She wants to be in the business world, a world in which women are not fully welcome at that point in time. Most women believe Jeanne is crazy for leaving her children to work in an office, but Jeanne ignores the chatter, demands more nannies be hired and goes back to the office with her husband. After Hank's death, Jeanne again must fight against the stereotype that women shouldn't be doing a man's business. She is forced to fire her entire staff as she learns they are cheating her and stealing from her. Through her hard business practices and constant devotion, Jeanne is able to keep the ranch that her great-grandfather loved so much intact.

Jeanne's devotion to her business and career instead of her family becomes a liability when Jeanne realizes she has no family members capable of managing the ranch to whom she can pass the business along. She is approached by one relative who would like to help on the ranch and might have been able to run it, but the encounter turns out deadly for Jeanne. Ulises Garcia, the child of Jeanne's great-uncle, Peter McCullough, and Maria Garcia gets a job on the ranch with the hopes of impressing Jeanne. He tries to introduce himself to her, but when he tells her they are related, she becomes defensive. Believing he means to hurt her, she steps backward and trips, causing what Ulises believes is a fatal injury. Knowing that he will be blamed for Jeanne's death, Ulises unscrews the gas line in the kitchen knowing that the leaking gas will eventually cause an explosion which will not only finish Jeanne off, but will also cover any evidence that what happened to her was his fault.



Peter McCullough

Peter McCullough is the youngest son of Eli and Madeline Black McCullough. He does not have the fiery business personality of either his father or Jeanne. Instead, he is more in touch with his emotions and his relationships with people. He would prefer to spend the day reading books in his office and writing in his journal to working with the cattle or drilling for oil. He is embarrassed by how rich his family is and depressed when they become even richer when his father finds oil on their property. Although he's content to live alone in his big house, he often bemoans how the common people must view the family. He feels pity for the Mexicans, but is angered because they seem to believe that any bit of help they receive from the McCulloughs is given to them from Eli. For instance, it is Peter who allows the Mexicans to take refuge on their property after the Garcia family is killed, but all of the credit seems to go to his father.

Peter's main role in the novel is his connection to the Garcia family. He had been friends with the Mexican neighbors and had even considered marrying Pedro's daughter, Maria, but did not because he knew his father did not approve. When Peter's son, Glenn, is shot and it is rumored that the Garcias are responsible, Peter tries to settle the conflict without bloodshed but is unable to do so. All of the Garcias, with the exception of Maria, are killed. Maria later comes to the McCullough house seeking refuge. Peter allows her to stay despite his father's insistence that she be forced to leave. Peter is angered when his father, his uncle and his wife gang up on Maria and force her out. He joins her in Mexico and the two begin a family together. It is from this union that Ulises Garcia, the man who prompts Jeanne's death when he tries to be accepted as part of the family, comes.

Eli refers to Peter as the son of his disgrace because Peter ran away with one of the people who had caused so much trouble for the family. It can be assumed that Eli thought Maria would have wanted some sort of compensation from him for the loss of her family and her home. As she was a witness to what really happened that day, she could have pushed for justice, a circumstance that seems to make Eli nervous. He tells Peter that Maria went willingly when she was offered money. Maria, however, winds up taking Peter, a loss that was much more personal to the Colonel.

Judge Black

Eli stays with Judge Black for a short time after he is brought back to civilization from the Indians. The Judge questions Eli's claims that the Indians did not rape Yellow Hair in front of the journalist from New York. Later, when the Judge and Eli are alone the Judge questions Eli's claims again and Eli admits that Yellow Hair was treated as he thought she was. The Judge admits he admires Eli for not losing his humanity with the Indians. It is the Judge who tells Eli that his father was killed during his third year with the Texas Rangers. The Judge tries to discourage Eli from going to Balstrap to live with his stepfamily but Eli goes any way. If it were not for Judge Black, Eli would have been hung when he was caught having an affair with Judge Wilbarger's wife. Later, when Eli



marries Judge Black's daughter, the judge is upset because he believes she is marrying below her level. He is afraid she will be killed by Indians and scalped. Eli promises the Judge he will take care of Madeline, but she is killed by Indians just as the Judge had feared. The Judge is killed before his daughter. He tries to run for Senate and is found killed by the river. Eli is so hurt by the murder that he wants to go on a killing spree but Madeline stops him.

Sally McCullough

Sally McCullough is the wife of Peter McCullough and the mother of Glenn, Charles and Peter Jr. McCullough. She and Peter get married because their fathers decide they are the proper match for one another. Peter describes Sally as being bitter when he first saw her step off the train. She loved her life in Dallas and wanted to return there, but Peter had told her he had no intention of ever moving off the ranch. Sally finally moves to Dallas alone. While she is away, Peter begins his affair with Maria. She returns to the ranch at the Colonel's request to help discourage the affair, then finally to make Maria leave. She tries to entice Peter to reignite their marriage, but he refuses. Later, Sally makes trips to the ranch to fit Jeanne with proper clothes and try to make a lady of her. She arranges for Jeanne to attend the Greenfield boarding school from which Jeanne runs away and returns home, then Southwestern in Georgetown, to which Jeanne refuses to go.

Ulises Garcia

Ulises Garcia is the great-grandchild of Peter and Maria Garcia. He has inherited the same enterprising spirit as Jeanne and the Colonel. Ulises believes that even though two of his relatives have approached the McCulloughs about being part of the family and have been turned away, he will have better luck. He hopes to impress Jeanne by showing how hard he is willing to work. Even though Jeanne recognizes the boy and knows his claims are true, Jeanne will not listen to what Ulises has to say. She orders him to leave her house. When he does not she calls for help on the phone. Thinking that Ulises means to hurt her, Jeanne tries to step backward and falls. Ulises knows the woman has been fatally injured and that because he is Mexican, he will be blamed for her death. He covers up the mistake by disconnecting the gas line in the kitchen which causes an explosion when the gas reaches the fire in the living room fireplace. Ulises is upset because Jeanne called him by the wrong name, referring to him as Martinez instead of Garcia. As he rides away from the explosion he swears to himself that he will make a name for himself that no one will ever forget.

Madeline Black

Madeline Black is the oldest daughter of Judge Black, the man who helps Eli several times after he is reintroduced to white society after having lived with the Indians. Madeline comes to Eli's room one night and convinces him to have sex with her. When



the judge discovers what is going on, he demands that Eli marry Madeline. He tells Eli he had high aspirations for his daughter and doesn't want her to end up scalped by Indians. Madeline is the mother of Everett, Phineas and Peter. Eli avoids being with his family as much as possible. He puts off building Madeline a house on the property where he has started his ranch until she threatens to move north with her parents and take the children with her. Madeline and the oldest son are killed by Indians during a raid at the ranch. Eli's anger causes him to track down the band of Indians that killed his wife and son. He and those with him kill every member of the band with the exception of one young boy.

Toshaway

Toshaway is the Indian who owns Eli. Toshaway had taken to Eli even before the Indians raided Eli's family's house. Toshaway tried to discourage the raid but was not able to do so. He later tells Eli that he knew it was he that shot his fellow Indian but did not tell anyone because he knew it would get Eli killed. Toshaway takes Eli under his wing, treating him just like one of his sons. He arranges for Eli to stop doing women's chores, as most captives are stuck doing, and teaches him how to fight with a bow and arrows, and protect himself with a shield. Although Eli once has a chance to desert Toshaway, he is not able to do so because he has developed such a strong respect for the man. Like many others in the tribe, Toshaway dies when the group is infected with small pox.

Pedro Garcia

Pedro Garcia is the cattleman of Mexican descent who owns property adjacent to that of the McCulloughs. He is the nephew of Arturo Garcia, the man whom Eli believes led a raid on his ranch just after his first cattle drive. During the raid, two hundred ponies were taken and three of Eli's men were killed. The ranch is left to Pedro after his uncle is mysteriously killed. It is believed that Pedro's sons are involved in an incident in which Glenn, one of Sally and Peter's sons is shot. It is also suspected the Garcias have been stealing cattle from the McCulloughs. Eli leads a group of citizens to a confrontation at Pedro's home where all residents with the exception of Pedro's oldest daughter, Maria, are killed.

Arturo Garcia

Arturo Garcia is Maria Garcia's uncle. He is living on the Texas land that borders the McCullough property when Eli first buys that property. Eli is told by the whites who live there that Arturo is friends with people who are known horse thieves. Arturo is told by an Indian seer that his and his family will be killed by whites. He tries to send his family to Mexico City for protection but they are killed by militiamen during the journey. After their death, half of his lands are taken from him because it is claimed the title is flawed. Later, Eli shoots Arturo because he suspects the man had something to do with a raid on his



property just after Eli and his hands had returned from their first cattle drive. Arturo leaves the property to his nephew, Pedro.

Phineas

Phineas is the son of the Colonel and Madeline. He is the younger brother of Peter. He does not live on the ranch, but works as head of the railroad commission. As part of his job with the railroad commission, Phineas controls the price of oil by determining how much oil can be pumped. He invites Jeanne to his office in Austin to encourage her to take over control of the ranch from her father, Charles, and allow Phineas to help her look for oil. He shows her the ledger books to prove that Charles is losing money on the ranch. Phineas is instrumental in arranging for Maria to leave the McCullough ranch after she and Peter begin having an affair. Although it is never stated with any certainty, several family members suspect that Phineas is homosexual.

John Sullivan

John Sullivan is the man who works as foreman of the McCullough ranch from the time he is hired by the Colonel in 1865. He is the only one who survives the raid on the Colonel's property following the first cattle drive. Sullivan is the one who tells Eli about the deaths of Madeline and Eli, and goes with him to track down the Indians. Sullivan additionally tries to help Peter find Maria after she is forced to leave the ranch by the Colonel, Sally and Phineas. He later is the one to retrieve the clothes of Jeanne's father when he is found dead. When the Colonel begins drilling for oil on the property, Sullivan worries about his job but Peter tries to convince him there will always be cattle there.

Yellow Hair aka Ingrid Goetz

Yellow Hair is the German girl captured by the Indians just a short time after Eli is captured. Her position in the tribe, as a slave and sexual toy for the men, works in contrast with Eli's position. Even though he is a captive, Eli is able to earn a position of honor in the tribe because he is a man. Eli, however, does back up Yellow Hair's assertions that she was not raped by the Indians, helping her find a husband once the two are returned to society.

Glenn McCullough

Glenn McCullough is a son of Peter and Sally McCullough. He is shot when riding in the dark with his father, the Colonel and some others. Glenn survives his wound but it is this incident that ticks off the slaying of the Garcia family as Eli believes the Garcias were responsible for Glenn's injury. The Colonel blames himself because he had a chance to get rid of the Garcias years prior. Glenn later decides to join the army and is killed in World War II.



Nuukaru and Escute

Nuukaru and Escute are some of Toshaway's sons to which Eli becomes most close. Nuukaru is the one who encourages Eli to stop doing chores for the women. These two are saved from the small pox outbreak because they are among those who are out raiding when the others get sick. Eli last sees Escute when he and the Rangers are chasing a group of Indians that have just finished a raid. When Eli recognizes Escute, he purposefully leads the Rangers away from the real trail being made by the Indians.

Milton Bryce

Milton Bryce is the lawyer for the McCulloughs. It is to Bryce that Jeanne turns when she suspects her employees are stealing from her. He advises her that if she decides to fire everyone and start again, she needs to change the locks and keep at least one secretary. After Bryce's wife dies, the two talk about a relationship but nothing ever develops. Jeanne says he has no fire in him.

Adelina Garcia

Adelina Garcia is the daughter of Peter McCullough and Maria Garcia. She is the first relative to try to reach out to the McCullough side of her family. Although Jeanne must realize the woman is who she says she is because she has read Peter's journals, Jeanne turns her away.

William Blount

This man and his two boys are said to have disappeared after they went onto the McCullough land to kill a deer. It is believed that they were shot on the land. A search is conducted after men gather at the ranch gates but nothing is ever found.

Urwat

Urwat is the Indian who owns Martin, Eli's brother. Urwat kills Martin when Martin refuses to eat. Because Martin dies so bravely, the other Indians say that Urwat is cursed for killing Martin. For this reason, Urwat cannot take Martin's scalp.

Consuela

Consuela is the Mexican woman who is in charge of the McCullough home. Consuela is kind to Maria while she stays at the home.



Judge Roy Wilbarger

Judge Roy Wilbarger is the enemy of Judge Black, whom Eli meets when he returns to society. Eli has an affair with Wilbarger's wife. When the judge finds out about the affair, Judge Black has to pull strings to keep Eli from getting hung for his crime.

Ellen Wilbarger

Eli has a sexual relationship with Ellen Wilbarger, the lonely wife of an influential judge, after he is sent to live with his stepfamily.

Pizon

Pizon is a brave who initially dislikes Eli but eventually develops a respect for him. Pizon is with Eli when Eli earns his first scalp. Eli later buries Pizon after he dies of small pox.

Hates Work aka Single Bird

It is to Hates Work that Eli loses his virginity. An evening with her is given to Eli as a gift.

Prairie Flower

Prairie Flower is the Indian woman to whom Eli becomes engaged. She is the sister of Hates Work. Prairie Flower dies when the tribe is hit by an outbreak of small pox.



Symbols and Symbolism

The Papers

When Jeanne thinks in Chapter Two about these papers that she saved from the fire but never got around to destroying, it appears she is thinking about the journals written by her grandfather, Peter McCullough. She pulled these journals from the fireplace when she saw her father trying to destroy them. It is in these journals that Peter details his view of the McCullough actions against the Garcias, making his family members seem like murderers.

Venus

When Eli sees this planet during the daytime he believes it is a sign of bad luck. Coincidentally, it is that night that the Indians attack his family's home.

Balm of Gilead

This is the sap from the cottonwood tree that Jeanne's great-grandfather would scrape from the buds. Even as an adult, this smell would remind Jeanne of the Colonel.

Buckskin Vest

The Colonel wears this buckskin vest. It is rumored that it is made from Apache scalps. This vest came from a man who claimed to Eli that the vest had belonged to Eli's father. It was made of Indian scalps Eli's father had collected while trying to locate his sons after the Indians attacked their home.

Kotsoteka Comanche

The Kotsoteka Comanche is the tribe of Indians that took Eli hostage. This tribe of Indians is killed out almost entirely by a smallpox epidemic.

Mural in the School at McCullough Springs

Jeanne's father agrees to pay for this mural, which is supposed to depict Mexicans and Americans working together to build the town. Instead, the painting comes out appearing as if Jeanne's father is lording over starving Mexicans. Jeanne's father has the mural painted over and stops trying to mend fences with the community.



String of Pearls

Jeanne's grandmother gives her this string of pearls when Jeanne is sent away to a boarding school in Connecticut. The pearls are said to be worth twenty thousand dollars. Jeanne sells the pearls at a pawnshop for one thousand in order to fund her trip back home because she hates the school so much.

Bow and Arrows

This bow and arrows are made by Eli's Indian "Grandfather." The bow is destroyed by Eli's stepmother when she burns it in the fireplace.

Peter's Old Colt Revolver

Ulises Garcia had this revolver in his possession when he goes to talk to Jeanne about their relationship.

Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire

Ironically, it is a copy of this novel that is found stuffed in the shield of one of the Indian warriors that Eli kills after the murder of his wife and oldest son. Peter had often mourned the idea that modern cultures didn't seem to learn from the mistakes of other cultures that had been wiped out by war. The Indian is attempting to physically protect himself from weapons more advanced than his using a book that details a culture just like his, that collapsed, just as his is.

Jeanne's Gulfstream

Ulises watches as Jeanne disembarks from this large plane by herself. He notes the plane is the same type that is preferred by drug traffickers.



Settings

Casa Mayor

Casa Mayor is the name of the home where the Garcia family lived before they were wiped out by the McCulloughs. After all of the Garcias, with the exception of Maria, are dead, the Colonel burns what is left of the house. Peter often visits the old house site to pay his respects to the family. Later, Jeannie is also fascinated with the ruins of the house. It is during a lunch break with Hank at the destroyed house that she loses her virginity. Many years later, Ulises Garcia visits the ruins of the house and learns from a visiting writer that the McCulloughs were responsible for killing the Garcias.

McCullough Ranch

Eli uses the money he gets from the stolen gold dust to buy cheap land on which to start a cattle ranch. Later, Eli makes the family fortune by drilling for oil on the ranch.

Big, White Spanish Style House

It is in this house on the McCullough ranch that Jeanne and all her brothers are born and grow up. Jeanne has come back to the house to visit the ranch when she is confronted by Ulises Garcia. She is fatally injured when she falls. Ulises finishes her off when he unscrews the gas line in the kitchen, causing an explosion. This house is location where most of Peter's journals are written as well as where his affair with Maria takes place.

Matagorda

Matagorda is the place where Eli's father, Armstrong McCullough, settles when he first moves into Texas.

Pedernales

It is this area to which Eli's family is pushed when first settlers in Texas are uprooted. The headright is located in Comanche hunting grounds.

Greenfield

Greenfield is the school that Jeanne attends for a short time before she realizes that way of life is not for her.



Balstrap

Balstrap is the city to which Eli moves to live with his stepfamily after he is returned to civilization by the Indians.

Guadalajara

Guadalajara is the Mexican city where Peter finally locates Maria.



Themes and Motifs

Death, Dying and Loss of Loved Ones

Death, dying and the loss of loved ones is a major theme in this novel as it deals with the circle of life. The story tells of the rise and fall of civilizations, cultures and families as well as individuals. The Kotsoteka Comanche is one group whose decline is detailed in the novel. The story of Jeanne's death, as well as the way she sees her life in retrospect, is another important facet of this theme. Finally, the way characters in the novel, Eli in particular, react to the loss of loved ones is a final important aspect of this theme.

Although the Kotsoteka Comanche seem to be a viable group when they raid the homestead of Eli's family and take him captive, only three short years later, they have all but died out. Texas was once land that belonged to the Indians but when it became part of the United States, the land was doled out to settlers and the Indians pushed west, out of their hunting grounds. In order to continue to stay alive with less available hunting, the Indians took to raiding the homes of the white men whom they saw as their enemies. Through these raids, they'd get food, horses, cattle and supplies. Young people, like Eli and Ingrid, whom the Indians believe will make good laborers are taken captive. It is in this way that the Indians manage to stay alive even as their lands and the buffalo they had once depended on for food, clothing and tools, dwindle. As the white men become more alert to raiding Indians, more and more of the Indians are killed during the raids. It is the white man's disease, smallpox, that finally brings about the end of many of the Indians in Eli's tribe. He has been inoculated against the disease, but the Indians in the tribe have not. Only the men who were away from the tribe during the point of the infection are not killed. Eli winds up watching his fiancée, as well as Toshaway, the man who took him under his wing and treated him as his son, die of the disease.

In the chapters narrated by Jeanne, she looks back over her life as she lies at the point of death on the floor of her childhood home. Believing Ulises intended to hurt her, she stepped backward and fell, causing some sort of injury where her body is paralyzed but her mind stays sharp. As she thinks back over her life, she wonders if there really is something that will follow death and if she will see her brothers, son and husband there. Although she's fallen away from attending church, Jeanne believes she's regained her faith to the point she will be accepted into heaven if there is such a place. In one of her last moments, she sees her brothers as children. She decides to catch up to them. This sighting of her brothers and realization that she can join them appears to be a sign that she has discovered there really is some form of existence after death.

Finally, notice the way the characters who experience a death in their family react to the death. Eli's father, for instance, comes home to find his wife and daughter killed and his sons missing. A man who was with Eli's father tells Eli that his father never stopped looking for Eli and trying to get revenge for the death of his family. He has put together a



vest made of the scalps of apaches he has killed in his desire for revenge. Eli seems to have inherited this same vengeful spirit. It first surfaces when the Judge is killed after he announces his candidacy for Senate. Eli says it is only Madeline who keeps him from hunting down the person who killed the judge and getting his revenge. Later, when Madeline is killed during an Indian raid, Eli hunts down the Indian tribe that killed her and annihilates them. Contrast the way Madeline's death affects Peter, Madeline's son. Peter does not develop a vengeful spirit because of his mother's death; he only seems to blame his father for being away when the family was attacked.

Leaving Ones Mark on the World

The idea that it is important to leave one's mark on the world is another important theme in the novel. While each character seems to have big hopes and ambitions for what they can accomplish, it seems they get stuck in the natural cycle of rising and declining. It doesn't matter how hard they work, all they have worked for can be taken away in an instant. For instance, after the Garcia family is annihilated, Peter thinks about how Pedro had intended to make his mark on the world. Although the family was of Mexican descent, they were American citizens and many, like Maria, had attended American universities in the hopes of bettering themselves. In the instant that it takes the townspeople to start shooting, the Garcias hope for a better life is gone.

Similarly, the Colonel warns Jeanne that if she wants anything she does to mean anything, she must put her name on it. He uses the example of the person who discovered the way a flint can be struck to make a flame. It was not the person who discovered this phenomena but the person who put it down on paper with his name who got credit for the invention. Jeanne tries to follow her great-grandfather's advice but as an old lady she dies leaving no one capable of carrying on the McCullough legacy.

Ulises Garcia is another character in this novel who hopes to make a name for himself. He is still young and still ambitious when he appears in the novel. He tries to be accepted by Jeanne and help her with the ranch, but their meeting ends in disaster. Ulises tries to cover up his part in her death by unscrewing a gas line which he knows will cause a violent explosion. He seems most angered that Jeanne called him by the wrong name when she requested help in getting him out of her house. As he rides away, he swears that he will make a name for himself than no one will ever forget. Whether he goes on to make a name for himself in a positive nature or if he is connected with Jeanne's death and his name is known because of his misdeed is not known.

Morality and Success

"The white people are crazy. They all want to be rich, same as we do, but they do not admit to themselves that you only get rich by taking things from other people. They think that if you do not see the people you are stealing from, or if you do not know them, or if they do not look like you, it is not really stealing."



This statement by Toshiway on page 145 of the novel touches on a major theme in the story. Toshiway is talking to Eli about the anger felt by the Indians when their lands began to be taken over by the white men. He reasons that because the Indians didn't look or act like the white men, these white men felt no remorse in taking what belonged to the Indians. He indicates the white men are crazy because they seem surprised when the Indians come back to raid and steal and kill after the whites have taken so much from them. He indicates that if the circumstances were reversed, the white people would think they were justified in taking back property from those who had stolen from them.

Despite Toshiway's lecture to Eli, Eli builds his wealth and his family heritage on things he has stolen from others. He, in essence, becomes one of the crazy white people of whom Toshiway speaks. Eli not only steals the gold dust that he uses to purchase the land on which he begins his cattle ranch, he additionally puts the lives of many of other men, mostly Indians, in danger in his attempt to steal the gold. When he suspects that it is Arturo Garcia who has attacked his ranch, stolen his horses and killed his men, Eli does go to try to talk to him first, but ultimately has the man and his whole family killed. Later, when he suspects Pedro Garcia is stealing from him and is responsible for hurting his grandson, Eli does not bother to try to talk, he gets rid of the family and burns their home. Later, he basically steals their land at a rigged tax sale. Although the McCullough family did purchase the land, it can be considered a theft because Garcia was neither behind on his taxes, nor did any one else have a chance to purchase the land.

Revenge

Revenge is a major theme in this novel as the McCullough family battles to keep its footing in the cattle business. There are several instances in which it appears that characters take matters into their own hands in order to get revenge on the people they believe have hurt them. One of these instances occurs in the relationship between the Colonel and the Garcias. Another instance of attempted revenge involves Eli's father and the Indians while a third example of a character's attempt to seek revenge is Eli's attack on the Indians after the death of his wife.

At first it appears that The Colonel is the aggressor in the destruction of the Garcia family, but as the novel progresses, it appears there is more to the story than Eli has told anyone, even his own family. When Eli first tries his hand at the cattle business, Arturo Garcia lives on the neighboring ranch. When his men return from their first cattle drive, the ranch is raided. All of the livestock the men brought back to McCullough land with them is taken. Several of Eli's men are additionally killed. Eli tries to talk to Garcia about the raid but Garcia will not talk, he instead has several men who come out of the house, appearing to threaten the Colonel. In exchange, Eli has Arturo and his family killed. Later, when Pedro and his family move onto the land, Eli is already carrying a grudge. When his grandson is shot and Eli thinks it is the Garcias who are responsible, he does not flinch at getting rid of the rest of the family. Peter believes his father is overstepping his grounds for Glenn's non-life threatening wound, but in reality Eli may still be trying to get revenge for the deaths of his original ranch hands.



It is not until much later in the novel, after he has already been released from the Indians, that Eli learns that his father did try to find him. A man meets Eli who gives him a vest made of the scalps of Apache Indians that Eli's father has killed in an attempt to get his revenge for the loss of his entire family. The man tells Eli that his father never stopped looking for him.

A third example of a character's attempt to get revenge done for a wrong is Eli's act of seeking out the Indian tribe that killed his wife and first born son, and obliterating them. Although it is never specified in the book, Eli must be thinking that he has allowed a disaster to happen that he'd never thought he'd be responsible for. He thought badly of his own father for leaving the family alone on the night they are attacked by Indians. As a young man, Eli must have thought to himself that he'd never leave his own family alone in possible danger. Similarly, when Eli and Madeline are married, the judge shares his worry with Eli that she will be killed by Indians and scalped. Eli tries to make a promise to the judge that he will not allow this to happen, but the judge stops him, telling him he can't make himself responsible for what others might do to Madeline. Almost as a self-fulfilling prophecy, not only Madeline, but also her first born son are killed by Indians while Eli is alone. Eli is so upset he is in the process of digging to bodies up because his men won't tell him if his wife was scalped or not. Even though his wife was not degraded in this fashion, Eli still gathers a group of men to search out the Indian tribe that killed his wife. He allows only one member of the tribe, a young boy, to survive. At the conclusion of the novel, Eli indicates he believes this young man still may be looking for him, trying to get his revenge for killing his entire tribe.

Styles

Point of View

The story of the McCullough family is told in two different points of view, the first person point of view and the third person point of view. Two of the characters, Eli McCullough and Peter McCullough, narrate their own chapters in the novel. Jeanne, the third main character, has her story told in the third person point of view. Ulises Garcia, a minor character, additionally has a few chapters that are told from the third person point of view from Ulises' perspective. As the chapters that tell Eli's story are taken from a WPA recording in which Eli talked about his life, it makes sense these recordings would be dictated in the first person point of view. As Peter writes his own story in his journal, it follows he would write in the first person point of view.

In the parts of the novel that are told in the first person point of view, the narrator is omniscient in relation to the character for whom he is telling the story. For instance, in the part of the story about Jeanne, the narrator tells Jeanne's motivations, thoughts and actions, but can only describe the way people react to Jeanne or how they treat her as observed by Jeanne. The narrator has no insight into the thoughts or motivations of any of the other characters in these sections that focus on Jeanne.

The story is told mostly through exposition with only scattered dialogue when the characters interact with one another. Most of the story is developed through the main characters' thoughts as they analyze the situations in which they find themselves or describe what their life has been like, in the instance of Eli. Since each chapter focuses on a different character, the time periods in which the stories take place transition rapidly. The book covers a time span from the end of the Texas revolution in 1836 to beyond the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in 2001. In fact, based on Jeanne being 86 when she died, the book ends with her death in 2012. That's a span of more than 175 years through which the story jumps back and forth.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is interesting, as Meyer gives each main character his own voice depending on his background and the period of time in which they lived. Eli's portions of the novel, for instance, use some words considered archaic now. For instance, several times during his family's attack by the Indians and afterwards Eli describes himself as getting "dauncy" a term that seems to refer to getting upset or nauseated. Oftentimes when Eli has a "dauncy" spell, he tells that "airs my paunch" referring to vomiting. He also refers to the act of sex as "rutting" a term usually reserved for the mating of animals. He additionally refers to alcohol as "nose paint" a reference not used often anymore. While Eli has much common sense and a biting sense of humor, he doesn't have the book learning that either Martin or Peter has. Eli is more



concerned with what is happening around him, what tracks he's seeing, what he's hearing, what he tastes, than what he thinks about these things.

In his journal entries, it is apparent that Peter is from a different type of lifestyle than his father. Although Peter is born when Eli was only 35 the two seem further removed from one another. While Peter grew up on a Texas homestead, then with the Indians, Peter grew up in the city with his mother and grandfather who was a judge. During this time, it is almost certain he was sent to good schools, something his father never had. Peter additionally seems to have a different mindset than his father. Although he loves the ranch and doesn't want to leave it, he much prefers reading books and writing down his thoughts in his journal than dealing with cattle. He words his thoughts clearly and with the language of a learned man.

The language in Jeanne's sections of the novel differs from those of Eli and Peter but the differences are not so much in the types of words used but in the way her thoughts roam in the moments before her death. In some points of her story, Jeanne's recollection is clear. In others, however, it appears marred and almost stream of consciousness in nature as she struggles to remain conscious.

Structure

The book "The Son" by Phillipp Meyer is 841 pages and is divided into 72 chapters. The longest of these chapters is Chapter Four at 57 pages. This is the chapter where Eli describes the Indian attack on his home. The shortest chapter is Chapter Seventy at one page. It is the final chapter telling the story of Jeanne's life. Because this book covers the stories of three different main characters and one minor character over the span of more than 175 years, the structure is complex. In Chapters One through Fifty-six, the chapters rotate between the three different main characters. The first chapter focuses on Eli, the second one on Jeanne and the third comes from Peter's journals. This pattern continues until Chapter Fifty-six, which is Jeanne's chapter. This chapter is followed by a chapter that focuses on Ulises Garcia. After this the chapters follow a pattern in which one focuses on Ulises, the next on Peter, followed by a chapter about Eli, then by a chapter about Jeanne. This pattern is interrupted at the end of the novel when an extra chapter about Jeanne is injected between Ulises and Peter's chapters. The book ends, like it begins, with a chapter about the Colonel.



Quotes

Should my son appear, I would prefer not to suffer his smile of victory. Seed of my destruction.

-- Eli McCullough (Chapter 1 paragraph 3)

Importance: In this quote, Eli refers to his son, Peter, who runs off to live with Maria Garcia, the only living relative of Pedro Garcia. Eli had earlier annihilated the family because they were stealing his cattle. When Peter leaves, he additionally takes with him \$250,000 of his father's money. The quote actually foreshadows the actual destruction of the McCullough family, as it is the grandson of Peter and Maria who accidentally causes Jeannie, the last family member interested in preserving the Colonel's legacy, to be fatally hurt.

The papers, she thought. She had saved them from the fire once and had not gotten around to destroying them. Now they would be found.

-- Jeanne McCullough (Chapter 2 paragraph 13)

Importance: As she lies dying, Jeanne is worried that her grandfather's journals, which she saved from the fire when her father tried to destroy them, will be found. Although she doesn't believe the stories written in the journal are true, she doesn't want there to be any questions raised about her family's morality.

This journal will be the only true record of this family.

-- Peter McCullough (Chapter 3 paragraph 2)

Importance: In his journal, Peter testifies that his recording of what happened at the Garcia home is true, contrary to what was written about the incident in the newspapers.

The human life span had doubled, you did not get to the hospital without oil, the medicines you took could not be made, the food you ate did not reach the store, the tractor did not leave the farmer's barn.

-- Jeanne Anne (Chapter 8 paragraph 6)

Importance: Although many want to complain about families like Jeanne's getting rich off oil, Jeanne reasons that the oil she provides has helped the very people who claim to hate it and has improved their lives in more ways than they realize.

I can hear the Colonel — no land was ever acquired honestly in the history of the earth — but it does not make me feel any better.

-- Peter McCullough (Chapter 15 paragraph 38)

Importance: Peter repeats the Colonel's quote in his journal. While the Colonel justifies his own actions by reasoning that there was never a point in time that land was acquired honestly, his reasoning does not ring true with Peter. Peter instead sees the massacre of the Garcias as a great injustice, done by people who are supposed to be civilized.



Pete, I love this land, and I love my family, but I do not love cattle.
-- Eli McCullough (Chapter 15 paragraph 57)

Importance: Although Peter wants the family's ranch to continue to be a working cattle ranch, his father has different ideas. Eli knows the money is in oil, not cattle, and does not mind going against his son's wishes to get his way.

She knew then why she had been called: he wanted her to betray her father.
-- Jeanne McCullough (Chapter 20 paragraph 28)

Importance: Phineas calls Jeanne to his office to discuss the financial state of the ranch with her. He hopes that she will side with him and steer her father in the direction of oil and away from cattle. Although Jeanne feels torn by the situation, she eventually decides to make a stand against her father.

Their lawyer tore his office apart but found nothing; around midnight Jeannie found the document in an old file cabinet. It had been updated several times: once for Clint and once for Paul, but the newest version, dated only a few months previous, which had doubtless caused her father much anxiety, named her sole inheritor of his share of the ranch. Jonas got a share of the minerals but that was all.
-- Narrator (Chapter 23 paragraph 12)

Importance: After her father dies, Jeanne is left in charge of his share of the ranch. Her brother gets none of the land, but it doesn't appear as if he is interested in it.

Most of the men she'd known were fools like her father and brothers, their lives shaped by a willful ignorance they mistook for pride.
-- Jeanne (Chapter 35 paragraph 18)

Importance: This quote sums up Jeanne's opinion of men, with the exception of the Colonel and Hank.

What he wanted, what everyone wanted, was that she stay at home and never have a meaningful thought again while they all kept doing exactly as they pleased.
-- Jeanne (Chapter 38 paragraph 48)

Importance: Although Jeanne loves her children, she feels suffocated by them and resents the idea that others expect her to stay home and take care of them instead of working.

The only thing that saved me was Judge Black in Austin, who got the statehouse involved, and accused Wilbarger of mentally abusing me, a helpless returned Indian captive, son of a martyred Ranger, and so the trial and hanging were put off until Wilbarger found a way to get rid of me, namely mustering me into a Ranger company.
-- Eli (Chapter 40 paragraph 2)

Importance: Judge Black keeps Eli from being put to death by Judge Wilbarger when it



is discovered that Eli is sleeping with Judge Wilbarger's wife. This shows that Judge Black has developed an affection for Eli. Wilbarger, however, gets Eli enlisted with the Rangers, an occupation in which men don't generally live very long.

The cotton men had burned their own buildings to bring us into the war and before the sun came up the next day, their newspapers were blaming escaped slaves and Yankees, whose next step would be to burn all of Texas, right after they got done raping all the white women.

-- Eli (Chapter 46 paragraph 2)

Importance: Eli believes the big cotton farmers manipulated circumstances to force the men of Texas into entering the Civil War in order to protect slavery upon which their farms depended. In order to further infuriate the people, Eli indicates news sources blamed Yankees and escaped slaves for the fires.

That was when the acquisitive spirit began to wake inside me. There was no point being a small man.

-- Eli (Chapter 46 paragraph 4)

Importance: It is when Eli watches the forces move together that bring Texas into the Civil War that he decides he also has the ability to manipulate circumstances so that he can be a man of stature.

They were in favor of the war as long as they did not have to fight it themselves, and I have always thought that is why California turned out the way it did.

-- Eli (Chapter 46 paragraph 5)

Importance: Eli writes about the men who leave Texas in order to keep from having to fight and possibly die in the Civil War.

But men who'd taken Hank's word would not take hers. They acted as if she'd landed from outer space or they sweetly ignored her attempts to talk business and turned the conversation toward her family and her health (she was under a lot of pressure); they did not trust that she could be relentless or focused when nature demanded she stay home with her babies.

-- Jeanne (Chapter 47 paragraph 36)

Importance: After Hank dies, Jeannie realizes that she is treated differently than he was in the business world. The other men expect her to be interested in her family and children, and try to avoid talking about any type of business with her.

Regardless, it appears that our money worries are over for the next ten or so generations. This depresses me enormously.

-- Peter (Chapter 48 paragraph 6)

Importance: Where monetary wealth would generally make a person happy, Peter realizes that monetary wealth is not the best thing that could happen to his family.



Three. I am sorry for your loss of two men, but when this war is over, you three will be able to do whatever you like. But I will be stuck on the reservation, along with my family, paying the price for supporting the wrong side. As will all my men. Who, when they are finished burying their brothers, will likely come to the conclusion that the best action is to kill the three of you. Both because you led us to this gun, which you did not bother to tell us about, and also because when whites steal something, it is no problem — whites can steal from each other — but if Indians steal something it is another matter.

-- Flying Jacket (Chapter 52 paragraph 94)

Importance: Flying Jacket tries to talk Eli out of stealing the gold from the Union troops. He says the gold would do he and his tribe no good as they will be punished for fighting on the Confederate side of the war to start with, no to mention the punishment they would face if it were discovered they'd stolen from the Union troops.

I could not shake the feeling I'd stepped over some line over which I would never return, but maybe I'd crossed it years earlier, or maybe it had never existed.

-- Eli (Chapter 52 paragraph 120)

Importance: Eli feels that with intentionally misrepresenting the threat the Union soldiers hold for the men with him in order to get the gold that he believes is stored in their wagons, he has crossed a moral line. It is the first time he has been willing to sacrifice lives of those with whom he works for his own greed.

I should have burned that house then, and salted the earth, because a year later, his nephew came and picked up where his uncle had left off.

-- Eli (Chapter 59 paragraph 67)

Importance: Eli voices his anger himself for not having gotten rid of the Garcia house when he first had Arturo killed. He believes he could have saved himself and his family a lot of trouble if he'd not left a house for other members of the Garcia family to take up residence.

Perhaps he had sown the seeds of his own ruination. He'd provided for all of them, and they'd become soft, they'd become people he never would have respected.

-- Jeanne (Chapter 60 paragraph 24)

Importance: As Jeanne thinks about her children, she wonders if her great-grandfather's act of leaving the family with such riches might have been the key to its downfall. The idea is similar to a quote in Peter's journal indicating he is depressed because he knows the family won't have to worry about money for several generations to come.

He was not some victim. One half of his family had killed the other. Both of those things were inside him.

-- Ulises (Chapter 69 paragraph 49)

Importance: Being the descendant of the final living member of the Garcia family and a



member of the McCullough family puts Ulises in an unusual and ironic position. He is both the cause of the McCullough undoing as he caused Jeanne's death but he also seems to carry in him the sheer willpower that could have carried the family legacy on if it had not been for the generations of hate and distrust between the two families.

He would go a few more miles and rest for the night. After that ... he didn't know. But he would be someone. No one would forget his name.

-- Ulises (Chapter 69 paragraph 54)

Importance: It seems that the same acquisitive spirit that lived in both the Colonel and Jeanne exists also in Ulises, their Mexican descendant. Though it is probably in his favor, Ulises is offended that Jeanne could not remember his name when she called for help to have him removed from her house. He vows he will make a name for himself that no one will forget.