

Watchers Study Guide

Watchers by Dean Koontz

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Contents

Watchers Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Part 1: Chapter 1.....	5
Part 1: Chapter 2.....	7
Part 1: Chapter 3.....	9
Part 1: Chapter 4.....	12
Part 1: Chapter 5.....	15
Part 1: Chapter 6.....	18
Part 1: Chapter 7.....	22
Part 2: Chapter 8.....	26
Part 2: Chapter 9.....	28
Part 2: Chapter 10.....	30
Part 2: Chapter 11.....	32
Characters.....	33
Objects/Places.....	37
Themes.....	39
Style.....	41
Quotes.....	43
Topics for Discussion.....	45



Plot Summary

Watchers by Dean Koontz is a poignant story that explores a secret wish of every dog owner throughout the world, having a dog that is as intelligent as a human. Travis Cornell goes out into the woods to recapture some of the joy of life he once knew as a small child. He finds a dog who, with his intelligence and warmth, gives him a new reason to embrace life. Einstein literally and figuratively saves Travis's life within minutes of meeting him and soon Travis finds himself in a position to return the favor. Watchers is about loyalty, love, and morality, a novel that will leave even cat lovers with a smile on their faces.

Travis Cornell is walking through the woods where he once spent time when he was a child, hoping to recapture that feeling of joy at simply being alive. Just as Travis is about to enter a dark part of the woods, a dog suddenly appears. This dog does not want Travis to continue into the darkness. After fighting the dog, Travis suddenly realizes there is something sinister in the woods, and he decides to call it a day. Travis takes the dog with him, assuming that because it has no tags, the dog has no owner. Travis notices odd things about the dog throughout the day. That night, he finally realizes the dog is as intelligent as he is.

A few days later, Travis and the dog, Einstein, are walking through the park. Einstein breaks away from Travis to the side of a strange woman. At first, Travis thinks Einstein is reacting to the woman in a way any normal dog might, but then realizes the woman is upset. Travis and Einstein's presence scares off the woman's companion, and she tells them she is okay. Travis takes Einstein home. However, Einstein disagrees with Travis's assessment of the situation and coaxes Travis into going to the woman's home. Travis and Einstein arrive at the home just in time to catch the woman's companion attacking her. Einstein saves the day by trapping the man in the kitchen while Travis calls the police.

Travis and this woman, Nora, become friends, spending a great deal of time together over the next few months. Travis lets Einstein show his intelligence to Nora at his own pace. When Nora knows, she decides they need to find a way to communicate with the dog. Nora shows the dog a lot of pictures and has him choose some that have meaning to him. In order to answer questions about the pictures, Nora has the dog wag his tail for yes and bark once for no. Soon, Nora and Travis learn that Einstein once lived in a lab and that he escaped somehow. They also learn that some other creature, one that Einstein is afraid of, also escaped.

This other creature, The Outsider, is a creature that was designed to kill. The Outsider is loose and intent on finding the dog in order to kill him. Lem Johnson, a member of the NSA, is searching for both animals. When a man is killed in the canyons near where Travis found Einstein, Lem is called in. Immediately, Lem knows the killer is The Outsider. Several other attacks take place over the next few months, leading Lem to the Santa Barbara area. Lem is frustrated with his inability to catch the creature.



Another man, Vince Nasco, also is looking for Einstein. Vince is a hired killer who was hired to kill all the scientists from Banodyne who helped create both Einstein and The Outsider. Vince is psychotic, believing that every person he kills leads him closer to immortality. Vince has decided that having the dog will help him make a large amount of money from the government. Both Vince and Lem hear about an attack on Travis's landlord that reveals to them that Travis has the dog. Now Travis and Nora, as well as Einstein, have gone on the run.

Travis and Nora change their names and move around for a short time. However, they decide they need to stay in one place and make a stand against The Outsider or else they will be running all their lives. Immediately after settling down outside of Carmel, Travis and Nora learn they are having a baby. This joyous news is tarnished when Einstein, who never had his shots, comes down with distemper. Travis is afraid that Einstein will suffer brain damage and lose his intelligence. However, Einstein survives with no lasting effects.

Shortly after Einstein's illness, Vince locates Nora and Travis. Vince kidnaps Nora outside her doctor's office and forces her to drive him back to the house she shares with Travis and Einstein. Once there, Nora manages to get a gun and shoot Vince, but he is wearing a vest and not injured. Travis chases Vince and manages to kill him before he can hurt Einstein. However, while Nora is treating Travis's wounds, The Outsider arrives. The Outsider manages to get Einstein, but Travis wounds him and is able to corner him in the barn. Travis kills him.

Shortly after the fight with The Outsider, Lem finds Travis and Nora. Travis tries to convince Lem that Einstein was killed by The Outsider, but Lem knows this is not true. However, Lem decides to keep this knowledge to himself and report to his bosses that Einstein and The Outsider are both gone. Everything is resolved happily, even for Einstein who takes a mate and has puppies that are also intelligent.



Part 1: Chapter 1

Part 1: Chapter 1 Summary

Watchers by Dean Koontz is a poignant story that explores a secret wish of every dog owner throughout the world, having a dog that is as intelligent as a human. Travis Cornell goes out into the woods to recapture some of the joy of life he once knew as a small child. He finds a dog who, with his intelligence and warmth, gives him a new reason to embrace life. Einstein literally and figuratively saves Travis's life within minutes of meeting him and soon Travis finds himself in a position to return the favor. Watchers is about loyalty, love, and morality, a novel that will leave even cat lovers with a smile on their faces.

Travis Cornell has come to the Santiago Canyon in order to try to recapture some of the joy of life that he knew as a small boy when he would come here with his family. Travis is hiking down a familiar trail when he comes to a spot where the sun is completely blocked by large shade trees. A dog suddenly appears and barks at Travis until he steps back. Travis admonishes the dog, trying to get it to move out of his way, but the dog positions itself between Travis and the head of the trail and will not move. When Travis tries to walk past the dog, it grabs his pant leg in its mouth and pulls him away. Travis is annoyed and decides he is going to go down that trail whether the dog wants him to or not. However, coupled with the dog's obvious fear and a strange sound in the woods, Travis is overcome with an irrational fear that causes him to give up his attempts to outsmart the dog. Travis follows the dog down the trail and leads it to his truck where the two of them rush out of the park as if the devil himself is on their trail.

When they are safely away from the menace in the woods, Travis stops the truck and goes to the back to see the dog. Travis pets him, noting his disheveled appearance, wondering where its owners might be. Travis thinks maybe he should leave the dog since its owners most likely live nearby. However, the dog's still obvious fear makes him change his mind. Travis allows the dog into the cab of his truck and tells him there is chocolate in the glove box that will hold him over until they can get something to eat at a local fast food restaurant. To Travis's surprise, the dog seems to have understood his words. The dog opens the glove box and pulls out the chocolate, offering it to Travis in order to have it opened. Travis opens the treat, offering it to the dog in small pieces. When there is only one piece left, Travis holds it close to his body and tells the dog to take it, testing the dog's comprehension. Once again, the dog takes the candy as if he has understood what Travis has said. It is this knowledge of the dog's intelligence that leads Travis to decide to keep the dog.

At the same time Travis is escaping the woods with the dog, Vince Nasco is at the home of Dr. Davis Weatherby. Nasco kills Weatherby with a single shot to the face. Nasco then takes the man's life force into himself and thanks the dead man for his gift. Afterward, Nasco puts the doctor's body into the trunk of his car, because his employers do not want the body found until the following day.



Part 1: Chapter 1 Analysis

Travis is in the woods trying to remember why he once felt joy in life. Travis has lost his reason to live and would commit suicide if he believed it would save his soul. Travis cannot commit such a sin, however, and is left trying to find some sort of reason to continue living. Travis does not recapture the feelings of childhood, but instead runs into a dog who does not want him to walk down a dark trail in the woods. Travis thinks the dog is simply playing with him. However, after a time, Travis begins to see the dog's fear and feel the presence of something malicious in the woods. Travis becomes afraid even though he cannot give a specific reason for his fear. Travis leaves the woods with the dog, feeling foolish as he does, because his fear is so unreasonable.

Travis and the dog escape the woods and pull over to the side of the road to recover their sanity. Travis believes the dog belongs to someone and has just become lost in the woods. The dog has clearly been in the woods for some time due to its dirty appearance. Travis agrees to take it home and bathe and feed it. The dog climbs into the cab of the truck, and Travis mentions some candy in the glove box, just talking out loud, not really expecting the dog to understand. However, this dog does understand. The dog opens the glove box and takes the candy out. Amazed by this feat, Travis tests the dog by telling it to take the final piece of candy with words only, careful to keep the candy close to his body in such a way that a normal dog would think he was withholding the piece. This dog understands Travis's words and takes the candy. Travis is so amazed, he decides he has to keep the dog.

At the same time, a man is killing a doctor of some sort. The reader has no idea who this man is outside of his name, but the fact that the writer has presented it at the same time as his introduction of the dog, the reader must have guessed he has something to do with this dog and his extraordinary intelligence. However, this guess does not tell the reader why someone would want this man dead. Also important in this passage is the killer's acceptance of the man's life force. The killer appears to be convinced that killing a person allows him a gift of some sort. The killer's acceptance of this gift appears a little strange to the reader and gives the impression of insanity. It is this impression of Nasco that will dominate narration later in the novel that also deals with Nasco.



Part 1: Chapter 2

Part 1: Chapter 2 Summary

Nora Devon invites Art Streck, the television repairman, into her house even though her instincts tell her that he is trouble. The man flirts with Nora and asks intimate questions about her life despite the obvious discomfort this causes Nora. Nora makes up a husband to discourage Streck. Finally, Streck leaves, and Nora feels relief. She tells herself that he was harmless, and she simply mistook his friendliness for maliciousness because of a lifetime of isolation. Nora was raised by her aunt who distrusted everyone, but men in particular, and left Nora with her same fears after her death the year before. However, later that day, Streck calls Nora and tells her he checked up on her story about the husband and discovered the man did not exist. Now, Nora is beginning to believe that her initial instincts were correct.

After stopping at a fast food restaurant to get some hamburgers for the dog, Travis makes the long drive back to Santa Barbara. On the way home, he stops at a store and buys some supplies for the dog, including a large washtub to bathe him. Once home, Travis fills the bathtub with boiling water from the kitchen. Then Travis goes inside the house to collect the shampoo and first aid equipment to treat the dog's many cuts from wandering in the woods. When Travis returns, he finds the dog has somehow turned on the water hose and is filling the tub with cool water. Since the dog had not shown any more intelligence on the way home, Travis had begun to think he imagined the episode with the chocolate. However, this latest trick makes Travis think there is more to this dog than meets the eye. Travis tries to get the dog to show him how he managed to turn the facet, but the dog pretends to not understand. Travis gives up and bathes the dog, promising to give it a name later, explaining that this dog's name would take some special consideration.

When Nasco calls to let his employers know he has finished the job, he is given another assignment. This time Nasco is to kill a scientist and her husband. Nasco tricks the husband into letting him into the house by claiming to be with the FBI. Once inside, Nasco kills the husband. The wife comes into the room. Shocked by the sight of her husband, she is silent when Nasco turns to her. Nasco grabs her and drags her into the bedroom. The woman believes she is about to be raped, but instead Nasco is only interested in killing her in the most painful way possible. Nasco uses a hammer to prolong the death. When it is over, Nasco takes both life forces, cleans up his fingerprints, showers and leaves.

Part 1: Chapter 2 Analysis

Nora Devon is afraid of the television repairman, but believes that this fear stems from her aunt's deep fear of men that kept she and Nora isolated in their home. However, the man flirts with Nora a little too aggressively, making her nervous enough that she makes



up a husband to scare him away. At first, the reader is not sure if Streck's attentions are malicious or if Nora is misinterpreting his attentions due to her childhood. Nora grew up very isolated, touching on the theme of loneliness and despair, as she now lives in fear of the world at large even though her aunt has been dead for a year. Later, however, Streck calls and tells Nora that he checked on her story about her husband and found it to be untrue. Now, the reader begins to suspect that Nora might have been right about this man and that he might have intentions that are not benign.

Travis has decided that the dog's display of intelligence was just hunger. Travis wants to keep the dog anyway, however, because he has been alone for so long it is nice having someone else to care about, even if it is just a dog. Travis buys supplies and takes the dog home and proceeds to bathe him. However, before Travis can add cool water to the bath, the dog does it for him. Travis is shocked, because the water facet is difficult for a dog to turn. Travis wants the dog to show him how to do it, but the dog pretends to not understand what Travis is asking. Travis gives up again, focusing on giving the dog a bath. Afterward, Travis promises to name the dog, wanting to take time to think on it to give the dog an appropriate name.

Nasco has been given orders to kill another person. Nasco waltzes in to these people's house without any difficulty, using the FBI as his cover. Nasco then kills the husband in cold blood before turning his attention on the wife. Nasco is brutal, but careful, proving to the reader that he is a formidable enemy. The reader does not know how this man is connected to the plot just yet, but is confident this connection will show up later. Anticipation of a connection between the four characters presented in this chapter adds tension to the plot, giving the reader something to look forward to in the following chapters.



Part 1: Chapter 3

Part 1: Chapter 3 Summary

Travis spends the evening trying to decide if he is losing his mind. Suddenly, the dog becomes interested in the books on Travis's shelves, sniffing at them. Travis gets up and begins pulling out the books the dog appears to be interested in and giving him a brief synopsis of their plots. After a while, it appears the dog is not finding what he wants and is frustrated. Suddenly, he just stops. Travis becomes frustrated and expresses this to the dog. The dog jumps up and disappears into the kitchen, reappearing a moment later with a beer in his mouth. Travis takes the dog back to the kitchen and insists he does it again. The dog does. Travis tells himself this could simply be a trick the dog's previous owner had taught him, but the way the dog picked the beer out of the soft drinks also in the refrigerator puzzled Travis.

After a while, Travis began talking to the dog, first trying to work out the dog's behavior, and then telling the dog about himself. Travis tells the dog that he has been lonely for a long time and that he was depressed when he went to the woods that morning. The dog pulls a bag of doggie treats out of the cupboard under the sink and spills a bunch of treats onto the floor. The dog then began to push the treats into a shape on the floor. After a time, Travis realizes the dog has made a question mark. Travis destroys the shape and tells the dog to do it again. Once again, the dog makes a question mark. Travis tells the dog how his mother died giving birth to him, his brother died while they were swimming in the ocean together, and his father died in an accident while driving him to tennis camp. Later, Travis was a member of a Delta Force squad that was entirely massacred in battle, leaving him the sole survivor. After returning to civilization and opening a real estate company, Travis met and fell in love. However, less than a year after their wedding, Travis's wife died of cancer. Ever since, Travis has isolated himself from the world, afraid that if he loves anyone again, that person will die.

That night, Nora is home alone trying to enjoy some quiet time in her sanctuary, her bedroom. However, Streck calls again, saying vulgar things that leave Nora feeling dirty. Streck calls several times during the evening and into the night. Nora finds it impossible to hang up on him, but she does not want to talk to him either. Nora becomes so frightened that she gets a knife from the kitchen and hides it under her pillow.

Nasco is given yet another assignment, the murder of another scientist. This time Nasco is also given permission to kill the man's wife and child. Nasco finds this unusual as family members are usually spared unless they pose a danger to his safety. Not only this, but the fact that this target is also a scientist makes Nasco think all these targets are related somehow. Breaking the rules for the first time, Nasco takes the scientist into the bathroom and interrogates him after killing his wife and son. Nasco learns about the project the scientist worked on with the earlier hits, details that leave Nasco wondering how this information can prove profitable to him.



Wes Dalberg lives alone in the canyons near where Travis found the dog. It is late. Wes has just finished a novel and decides to get some wood before going to bed. While Wes is outside, he hears noises, but does not think twice about it as he is used to the animals that live in the area. However, a sinister growl fills the night, and Wes realizes the other animal sounds, insects and night birds, have gone quiet. An irrational fear begins to grip Wes. Wes begins to walk back to his cabin, determined not to show his fear. However, the sounds of this animal are like nothing he has ever heard before. Wes throws his load of wood at the sound and rushes to his cabin, locking the doors for the first time since his first year in the canyon. Wes believes he is safe. However, something breaks through the large window in the living room, attacking Wes without provocation.

Travis wakes in the middle of the night to find the dog, who he has decided to call Einstein, looking out the window. Travis calls the dog to the bed and tells him to settle down. Einstein lies with Travis and both go to sleep. However, when Travis wakes later in the morning, he finds Einstein once again looking out the windows.

Part 1: Chapter 3 Analysis

Travis thinks he is crazy. The reader might also believe Travis is crazy since dogs are not intelligent enough to turn on a water facet. However, the dog tries to communicate with Travis by using his books, but becomes frustrated when he cannot find a book that fits his needs. Then the dog sees that Travis is also frustrated, so he brings him a beer. Travis puts this down to a trick his owners taught him until the dog makes a question mark with his doggie treats. Travis is thrown by this, but also touched that the dog is interested in him that he would want to ask questions. Travis tells the dog about his past, about how all the people he loves were killed or otherwise died. Travis believes he is cursed, so he has isolated himself to protect everyone. Travis's isolation touches on the theme of loneliness and despair, creating a parallel between him and Nora Devon. This parallel suggests to the reader that perhaps these two characters need each other and will somehow find each other later in the novel. Finally, Travis goes to bed and wakes several times in the night to find the dog staring out the window. The reader must wonder if this behavior is simply doggie behavior, or, perhaps remembering the deep fear the dog showed in the woods, if this has something to do with some danger the dog feels is following him.

Nora is home alone, trying to find some peace of mind, when Streck begins to call. Streck calls many times, causing Nora a great deal of fear. Nora gets a knife and sleeps with it under her pillow. At the same time, Nasco is killing another family. Again, the main target is a scientist. Nasco has become curious and believes that these scientists are all related somehow. Nasco interrogates the man, learning something that is not revealed to the reader at this time. Nasco believes this information, something about a research project, will bring him reward should he use it in the proper way, suggesting that Nasco will become a bigger part of the plot as the reader begins to suspect these murders have something to do with Einstein.



Wes Dalberg is murdered by some animal that breaks through a window in his cabin. Wes is an experienced woodsman who is not afraid of big animals, aware that they are more afraid of him than he is of them. However, something about this animal scares Wes. Wes runs into his home and locks the door, acting on irrational fear. This fear proves to not be so irrational as the animal breaks through the window, something a normal, healthy animal would not do. Again, the reader will remember the animal in the woods on the day Travis and the dog met and will wonder if this animal is the same one that killed Wes. If so, the reader must wonder what this animal is and what it will mean for Travis and Einstein.



Part 1: Chapter 4

Part 1: Chapter 4 Summary

Nora goes for a long walk the next day, refusing to allow her fear of Streck to stop her determination to move out of the isolation her aunt imposed on her. Nora goes to the courthouse and Santa Barbara Mission, both places she lived close to but had never seen. At lunch, Nora stops in a park to eat a lunch she packed for herself. As Nora is sitting on a bench enjoying her food, Streck appears. Streck has been following her and now he sits close to her, leaving no doubt in her mind what he wants from her. Nora is horrified, but somehow finds the strength to spit a mouthful of cookie in Streck's face, hoping it will make him leave. However, this does not frighten Streck off, but appears to make him more determined to dominate her. Then, just as suddenly as Streck appeared, a dog appears and jumps into Nora's lap.

Travis and Einstein had been walking in the park when Einstein suddenly pulled free of Travis and jumped onto a bench with some strange woman. Travis follows and apologizes to the woman. Travis notices the pained look on the woman's face and the way she is stroking the dog and realizes that she is upset. Einstein clearly knows this too, because he refuses to move out of her lap. Einstein growls at the woman's companion. The man, clearly uncomfortable around the dog, leaves. Travis asks the woman if the man had been bothering her, but she assures him she is fine. They introduce themselves to each other and then the woman, clearly reluctant to say goodbye to Einstein, excuses herself and leaves.

Nasco is in Acapulco, Mexico. Nasco's secret employers, the ones he suspects are Russians, have sent him here to kill another scientist. Nasco follows the man for several hours and discovers that he apparently has two girlfriends who clearly do not know about each other. This makes Nasco sick to his stomach, because he has difficulty with the dirtiness of sex. Nasco follows the scientist to a highway overlook where he stops to meet one of these women. Nasco walks up and throws the girl over the railing before forcing the scientist into his car at gunpoint. Nasco takes the man into the woods and ties him to a tree before interrogating him. Nasco learns the same things about the research project that he learned from the other scientist, satisfying him that the story was true. Nasco then kills the scientist and accepts his life force, though he does not kiss him since his sex life proves his body is unclean.

Nora goes straight home from the park, still shaken by Streck's boldness. Nora sits in her kitchen and nurses a glass of brandy for several hours while she thinks about the situation and tries to decide what to do. Nora's thoughts turn to Travis and Einstein during this time. Nora really enjoyed the dog and wonders if Travis would be willing to sell him to her. Nora looks up Travis's number and calls, but she becomes frightened that by inviting Travis into her life, she might have another Streck on her hands. Nora hangs up without speaking. On the other end of the phone, Travis is annoyed by the hang up. Einstein becomes agitated. Einstein gets the phone book and brings it to



Travis repeatedly. Travis knows Einstein wants him to call someone, but it takes him some time to realize Einstein wants him to call Nora. When Travis finally understands Einstein's intention, he gives Nora a call. Nora does not answer. Travis is ready to give up, but Einstein wants Travis to go to her house. Einstein drags Travis to the door and goes to his truck, then returns to Travis and pulls him to the truck by taking his jeans in his mouth. When Travis refuses, Einstein goes to the flowerbed and proceeds to ruin it. Finally, Travis agrees to go.

Nora decides to call it a night. Nora makes herself a cold dinner and carries it up to her bedroom. When Nora walks into the room, she finds Streck waiting for her on the bed. Nora manages to get away from Streck and run down the stairs, but he quickly catches up to her. About the same time Nora is fighting Streck off at the bottom of the stairs, Travis and Einstein arrive. Einstein rushes the door and rings the doorbell several times. Travis comes up behind, trying to decide how he is going to explain all this to Nora, when he sees the struggle taking place inside. Travis breaks a window beside the door and unlocks it. Before Travis can step inside, Einstein rushes in. Streck runs from Einstein, only to find himself trapped in the kitchen by the angry dog, suffering from at least one bite. Travis checks on Nora and calls the police.

Part 1: Chapter 4 Analysis

Nora has decided that she is not going to let the memory of her aunt or Streck keep her from joining the real world. Nora does something she has never done before. Nora goes for a walk through Santa Barbara. However, this first step into her new life is ruined when Streck comes up on her in a park. Streck has been following her. Now, Streck tells her that he wants to take her back to his house and have sex. Nora is terrified, but retains enough spirit to spit a wad of cookie on Streck's face. Nora's reaction shows the reader that despite her meek exterior, Nora is a tough woman who will defend herself if pushed far enough.

Einstein and Travis are walking in the park. Einstein sees Nora and runs to her, jumping on her lap. The reader assumes, by Nora's reaction, that Einstein has never met her before but he somehow knows she is in trouble. Travis can sense this as well. However, Nora refuses to admit that Streck is attempting to victimize her. Nora introduces herself to Travis and then leaves. Nora spends the rest of the afternoon trying to decide what to do with Streck. Nora, given the chance to think it out, decides there is nothing she can do since Streck has not technically done anything illegal. However, Nora was taken with Einstein and decides to call Travis and see if she can buy him. Unfortunately, Nora's timid habits come back to her. She hangs up before saying a word, afraid that Travis will turn out to be just like Streck.

Einstein knows that Nora is in trouble. Einstein also somehow knows that the phone call is from Nora and that she needs their help. Einstein convinces Travis to call Nora, once again showing his incredible intelligence. However, Nora does not answer. Einstein then convinces Travis to go to Nora's house after doing some very strange things, first dragging Travis to the car and then digging in the flowerbed in order to irritate Travis



enough to agree. Einstein's behavior shows an amazing amount of intelligence that is far beyond what he has shown the reader and Travis, thus far. Einstein's behavior is miraculous and causes the reader to begin to see a connection between the dog and the scientists Nasco has been killing.

When Travis and Einstein arrive at Nora's house, they discover Streck there attempting to assault Nora. Once again, Nora fights Streck, refusing to be an easy victim. Travis lets himself and Einstein into the house. Einstein immediately takes control of the situation by chasing Streck into the kitchen and pinning him up against the counter until the police can arrive. Einstein has saved Nora's life, just like he saved Travis's life in the woods.

Nasco is in Acapulco, Mexico in order to kill another scientist. Nasco follows him around for a long period of time, discovering that this scientist has many girlfriends. Nasco is repelled by this behavior, showing the reader a side of his personality that has not yet been clear. Nasco does not like sex, he finds it dirty, and is obsessed with staying clean. Nasco's distaste of being dirty is ironic if the reader considers the fact that the way he likes to kill his victims is often quite messy. Despite his distaste of the scientist's behavior, he uses it to his advantage, overpowering the scientist while he is rendezvousing with one of his women. Nasco again interrogates the man before he kills him, getting the same information about the research project he had gotten from the other scientist. At this point, the reader is curious why Nasco is curious about this information and what he plans to do with it.



Part 1: Chapter 5

Part 1: Chapter 5 Summary

When Vince returns home, he learns that Banodyne, the company all the scientists worked for, suffered a fire. Vince knows this must be related to the project that prompted the deaths of all the scientists. Vince also suspects that the Russians are behind both the fire and the deaths. Vince wonders how much money he could get if he went to the American government with the information he now has. However, Vince does not believe that his knowledge alone is enough to get him what he wants. Vince knows he must have possession of the dog that is the center of the research project both scientists told him about. A few days later, Vince visits a member of the mob for which he has done work in the past. This man is a computer hacker. Vince asks him to watch several government computers for unusually heinous or strange murders or reports that include mention of a golden retriever.

Travis and Nora begin spending time with each other. First Travis takes Nora to a restaurant where they eat out on the porch. Nora has never eaten in a restaurant before and this is a strange new experience for her. Nora loves spending time with Einstein. She finds Travis pleasant to be with, but she is still afraid of him. This fear does not keep Nora from going with Travis to Solvang, however. They spend the whole day touring the quaint Danish town. Nora has a brief moment of panic when she becomes overwhelmed by the number of people around them, but overcomes it successfully. Late in the afternoon, while they were passing a drug store, Einstein suddenly began pulling bridal magazines off the rack and bringing them to Nora. Travis realizes what Einstein is doing, but cannot make Einstein stop. Nora simply believes it is the dog trying to be cute. However, Einstein does not leave it just at magazines. Einstein takes Nora's hand and leads her to a couple who have an infant. Einstein's intentions are clear to Travis, but again Nora seems to think the dog is simply being cute.

Lemuel Johnson arrives at Wes Dalberg's cabin in a helicopter only to find his closest friend, Sheriff Walt Gaines, already on scene. Lem immediately regrets the presence of his friend, because he knows he will have to lie to him. Lem walks through the scene with Walt, reviewing the dead body. The animal that killed Wes decapitated him and left his head on the kitchen table with the eyes removed. Walt is terribly upset by this scene and already suspects that it was not an ordinary animal that killed Wes. Walt also knows the Lem, who is with the NSA, would not be present if there was not something extraordinary involved. Walt asks Lem to tell him what killed Wes, but Lem refuses. Walt presses the issue, telling Lem he is aware that the NSA sent out a bulletin to organize a massive search a few days before, but then retracted it a few hours later. Walt knows something bad, something that is a threat to national security, is loose. He wants to know what it is. Lem continues to refuse to answer any questions. A few days later, Lem is called to a petting zoo a few miles from Wes's cabin. Many of the animals have been ravaged, and all of them are missing their eyes. Lem knows that the same creature that killed Wes has killed these animals, as well. Later that afternoon, Lem briefs the



marines who have been assigned to search the hills for the creature, praying they can find the creature before it kills anyone else.

The next night, a young girl cannot sleep, because she is excited about the horse her parents just bought for her. The girl, Tracy, decides to go outside to check the horse. Before the girl is halfway across the yard, she becomes aware of something in the bushes. The girl becomes frightened as she heard rumors about animals killed at the petting zoo and is afraid whatever did that has come to get her horse. Tracy can hear her horse kicking at his stall door and decides rather than returning to the house and safety, she will continue to the stable to be sure the horse is okay. Before Tracy can reach the stable, however, something attacks her. Tracy tries to fight the creature off, but is unsuccessful until the horse breaks out of his stall and rushes the creature. Tracy runs to the stable and hides in one of the stalls. Moments later, awakened by the noise, Tracy's father comes out of the house and fires his shotgun, scaring the creature away.

Lem arrives at the hospital to interview Tracy and finds Walt already there. They both talk the doctor into allowing them to interview the girl. Lem leads the girl through her story, listening closely to every detail. Then Lem coaxes the girl into giving a description of the creature. The girl hesitates, because she does not think anyone will believe her. Finally, Tracy tells Lem that all she saw was the creature's face. Tracy says the animal was large, almost as tall as a man, and that his face was lumpy, misshapen, and he had jaws like an alligator. Afterward, Walt again demands to know what is going on and what this creature is. Walt has already guessed that it must have something to do with the fire at Banodyne. Walt knows Banodyne was doing research on recombinant DNA and wants to know if something escaped their labs, something not natural. However, Lem again refuses to tell Walt anything.

Part 1: Chapter 5 Analysis

Nasco knows what the scientists were working on and now he knows there has been a fire at Banodyne. Nasco takes all this information together and realizes there might be something for him in it. Nasco thinks about the dog, which now the reader knows has something to do with the scientists, and decides the best way for him to make a profit off the information he has gathered is to find the dog. Nasco asks a friend in the mob to keep an eye out for police reports referencing either the dog or unusual murders. The reader understands the dog, but the question about the unusual murders is a little puzzling until the reader remembers the creature in the woods that scared Travis and Einstein, as well as the creature that killed Wes Dalberg in an earlier chapter.

Travis and Nora are beginning to see each other. Travis first takes Nora to a restaurant. Nora has never eaten in a restaurant before and is like a child all through the meal. Later Travis takes her to a small Danish town where she has a panic attack because of all the people there, but recovers with Travis's help. Nora's reaction is important as it goes back to her childhood and the fear that her aunt put in her with her own fear of men. However, Nora is clearly working her way out of that isolation and fear that once ruled her life. Also during this trip, Einstein makes it clear to Travis and tries to make it



clear to Nora that he wants them to get married and have children. Nora does not see anything unusual in Einstein's behavior, but the reader must be curious if Travis will eventually tell her about Einstein's unique intelligence.

Lem Johnson is introduced in this chapter as he arrives at Wes Dalberg's cabin to investigate his death. Lem is a no-nonsense, by-the-book cop who happens to work for the NSA. The fact that the NSA is involved in this murder alerts both the reader and his friend, Walt, to the fact that there is something more here than just an animal attack. Later, Lem investigates two other incidences that prove to be frighteningly similar to the Wes Dalberg case. The reader can assume from these attacks that something else was created by those scientists and escaped the lab the same time the dog did. What this creature is is still unclear. However, it is frightening, if Tracy's story is true, and it is headed east, toward Santa Barbara.



Part 1: Chapter 6

Part 1: Chapter 6 Summary

Travis and Nora continue to spend time together as spring becomes summer. Travis pays for Nora to have her hair cut, but she is so convinced that she is not an attractive woman, she combs out the style. Later, when Travis buys her an expensive dress, Nora refuses to wear it as she feels that she will be laughed at. Travis insists, and Nora slowly comes to realize she is an attractive woman who deserves such luxury. Travis can see the hold Violet Devon has over Nora, and he decides to do something about it. Travis takes Nora to see her lawyer, Garrison Dilworth. Garrison tells Nora that her aunt was once married. The marriage was an unhappy one that nearly ended in divorce when Violet learned her husband was having multiple affairs behind her back. However, the husband died before he could finalize the divorce or change his will. Violet ended up inheriting a great deal of money, which made it possible for her to isolate herself from the possibility of being hurt again. When Violet took in Nora, she imposed her own fears and insecurities on Nora. Nora takes this information and uses it to empower herself, to allow her to begin life with a new outlook.

A few days later, Nora shows her artwork to Travis. Nora is a self-taught artist who has never shared her work with another person. Travis is so impressed with her paintings that he suggests Nora take them to a gallery. Nora agrees, but decides to wait a little while until she can wrap her mind around all these changes in her life. Also, Nora wants to concentrate on Einstein. Travis has told Nora about Einstein's unique behavior. Nora decides they should find a way to communicate with Einstein in order to learn about his past. Nora collects millions of pictures from magazines and books and lays them out in Travis's living room. Nora tells Einstein to pick out pictures that remind him of things from his past. Before long, Einstein has picked out hundreds of pictures. However, none of the pictures alone can tell Nora or Travis anything about Einstein. Nora then tries to get the dog to group together pictures that have common meanings. Again, this does not help clarify anything. Finally, Nora tells Einstein they are going to ask him questions, and he should wag his tail for yes and bark once for no.

Travis and Nora begin holding up pictures and asking Einstein questions. From Einstein's answers, Nora and Travis figure out that he was in a lab once, that the scientists played music for him, and that he somehow escaped from the lab. Einstein also reacted violently to the picture of a demon in an ad for a movie. Travis pushes Einstein to answer questions about this picture. Finally, Travis asks Einstein if this creature really exists, if maybe it was in the same lab. Einstein says it was. Einstein also manages to tell them that the creature also escaped the lab and is the same creature that was after Travis and Einstein in the woods. Einstein also manages to get across that he believes the creature is still looking for him.

In a new housing development east of the petting zoo, a couple of sheriff's deputies are called to check out screaming among the homes still under construction. The deputies



arrive and quickly find the dead body of the construction foreman. The deputies begin searching the homes under the assumption that the killer is most likely still around. The deputies hear a noise in one house in particular. One deputy goes through the back door while the other goes around to the front. The one who enters through the back goes through the living room and into a laundry room. Satisfied the room is empty, the deputy turns to go and is attacked by a dark form that was hiding behind the door. The other deputy enters through the front door and begins to make a sweep through the kitchen and the living room. When this deputy makes his way to the laundry room and finds his partner dead, he heads straight for the front door. However, the front door is locked and a wire has been twisted around the doorknobs. The deputy makes his way toward the back door, aware that something is stalking him in the dark house. The deputy fires his gun and manages to get out of the house. The deputy quickly runs to his squad car to call for backup.

Lem Johnson gets to the scene an hour or so later. Walt is angry this time and his demands to know the truth are no longer laced with friendly humor. Walt's deputy has been killed, a kid who is the son of a friend of Walt's. Lem knows that Walt is not going to be satisfied with lies and secrecy oaths this time. Lem and Walt go sit in Walt's car with the doors closed so they will not be overheard. Lem quietly tells Walt about a project called the Francis Project. The project had two parts. The first was to create a dog that would look like an ordinary dog, but would have the intelligence of a human. The idea was to have a dog that could be presented to a foreign leader as a gift and then be able to report back to his handlers with information that could be important to government officials. The project presented some difficult obstacles, but the scientists finally succeeded. The dog, a golden retriever, looked exactly like a normal dog, but had an intelligence that was as great as, or perhaps greater than, any man's.

The other part of the project was to create a creature that would have incredible killing capability, but would be controllable. This animal would need to have incredible strength, but also intelligence. The scientist took DNA from humans, apes, and various other animals and created a creature that was capable of killing a grown man. After many failures, the scientist managed to create an ape-like creature that is as tall as a man and self-aware. This animal is filled with rage and capable of killing on command. However, the animal is also self-conscious, filled with self hatred, and aware that when people look at him they are horrified by his appearance. The creature, known as The Outsider, also has an obsession for the dog, wanting nothing better than to be able to tear the dog to pieces. The Outsider and the dog also seem to have some telepathic awareness of each other. Lem is convinced that The Outsider is traveling the direction it is, because it is looking for the dog.

Walt is shocked and frightened by what Lem has told. Walt agrees to stay out of the investigation despite the death of his deputy. Lem and Walt step out of the squad car as the investigation is ending and watch as all the other cars drive away. Lem then returns to his car with his partner. When Lem's partner climbs into the car, he immediately jumps back out with a yell. Lem looks inside and finds the head of the murdered deputy sitting on the seat. The Outsider clearly had stayed around in order to wait for Lem. Walt and Lem hear a shriek in the distance then, aware that it is The Outsider calling them



out. Lem decides they cannot search for it now, in the dark. When The Outsider realizes they are not taking his bait, it leaves.

Part 1: Chapter 6 Analysis

Nora and Travis have grown close enough that Travis feels safe buying her clothes. When Nora refuses to wear the dress at first, Travis realizes the hold her aunt still has on her and decides to take her to see her lawyer. Travis thinks that the lawyer is the only person who knew Violet Devon and can help Nora see her as a person with flaws. Nora does see this when she learns that her aunt was once married. Nora had not known this before, and this information helps her see that her aunt was indeed an unhappy woman overreacting to a difficult marriage. Now, Nora can focus on making her life different, on moving past her aunt's fears and experiencing life in a way she never has before.

Travis also tells Nora about Einstein. It is Nora who decides they need to find a way to communicate with Einstein. Nora begins with pictures, but when this does not help, she devises a way in which they can ask Einstein questions and get answers. Einstein, in his own way, tells them about being in the lab and escaping. Einstein also tells them about The Outsider in his limited way, trying to warn them of the danger coming their way. However, Travis does not take this warning seriously, believing that Einstein does not realize how far they have come from the canyons. The reader knows this creature is very dangerous and wonders if maybe Travis might be just a little naive.

A couple of sheriff's deputies get a call about some screams in a housing development under construction. The deputies immediately find a dead body and begin to search for the killer. In the search, one of the deputies is killed. Lem comes to the scene and finds his friend, Walt, very upset. Lem has already refused on two occasions to tell Walt what has committed these murders. However, this is one of Walt's deputies, the son of a friend, and he is not going to be put off this time. Lem decides his loyalty to his friend is more important than his loyalty to his country and decides to tell the truth. Lem's decision explores the theme of loyalty and companionship, opening the plot development to the ideas of moral dilemmas as Lem makes a decision that puts his personal needs ahead of his professional needs.

Lem tells Walt about the Francis Project. Now, the reader knows how the dog came to be and why it has intelligence. In fact, the reader now suspects the dog is much more intelligent than has been suggested thus far. Lem also talks about The Outsider. This creature was built in order to be a perfect killing machine. However, the creature is self-aware, making it a dangerous creature to its creators and others. The Outsider's self-awareness and its hatred of its appearance explains why the eyes of all its victims have been gouged out. Lem also explains the creature's hatred of the dog, explaining why Einstein is so afraid of it. Einstein knows The Outsider can sense it and that no matter where he goes, the creature will eventually find him. The reader is positive that Travis has underestimated the danger he and Einstein are in.



Finally, The Outsider taunts Lem by leaving the head of the murdered deputy in his car. Lem refuses to play The Outsider's game, a game that also proves the creature's intelligence, and allows it to get away. However, Lem has an idea which direction the creature is headed and has confidence that he will be able to catch it. The reader has his doubts, however, due to the creature's overwhelming intelligence.



Part 1: Chapter 7

Part 1: Chapter 7 Summary

All through June, Nora takes it upon herself to teach Einstein to read. Nora starts with a homemade primer, pasting pictures from magazines to one page and writing the word on the other. Einstein learns quickly, graduating from the primer to Dr. Seuss-type books in just a few weeks. Travis watches this progress and is secretly happy. However, Travis teases Nora, insisting the dog cannot learn as it knows it will keep Nora going even when she gets frustrated. Eventually, Einstein can read adult novels. Nora and Travis buy a page-turning machine designed for disabled people for Einstein so they do not have to sit and hold his books for him.

Two months after the dog and The Outsider escaped Banodyne, Lem has lost their trail. Lem is under a great deal of pressure to solve this case, but can do little without some sort of clue to either creatures' whereabouts. Just as Lem is convinced The Outsider is dead, he learns of another set of murders, the first since the murder of Walt's deputy. Lem flies to Bordeaux Ridge where local police are investigating the deaths of two hikers. The hikers have been mutilated and their eyes are missing. Lem knows right away what killed them. The local police then lead him to a cave deep in the canyons. Inside they found blankets, a flashlight, candy wrappers, and a Mickey Mouse bank. It is clear The Outsider has made a home here for some time. Lem looks over his belongings and begins to feel a small amount of sympathy for the creature, especially when he looks at the flashlight and the Mickey Mouse bank. The flashlight is not something the creature would need, because it has excellent night vision. However, Lem thinks that maybe the creature is afraid of the dark anyway. The Mickey Mouse bank is connected to a set of videos the scientist would show both the dog and The Outsider in order to test their ability to differentiate between reality and fantasy. Both creatures got a great deal of pleasure from the Mickey Mouse cartoons.

In August, Nora sells all the furniture in her aunt's house and puts it on the market, ready to find a home of her own. About the same time, Travis suggests they get married. Nora is thrilled with his unconventional proposal, and they begin planning their wedding. Travis makes arrangements at a chapel in Las Vegas, sparing no expense. Travis then arranges to buy a travel trailer so that Einstein can stay with them the entire trip rather than being rejected in the many hotels they would be required to stay in otherwise. Travis wants to take Einstein to the vet before they leave, assuming he has never had his shots since it would be unnecessary in a sterile environment like a lab. Einstein is frightened by the suggestion. Einstein fights Travis, going so far as urinating on Travis's bed to make his point. Travis finally recognizes the dog's fear as something deeper than a fear of needles and questions him. Using yes or no questions, Travis learns that Einstein is afraid of being found by Banodyne due to a tattoo in his ear.

At the same time Travis and Nora are planning their wedding, Nasco is performing a hit for the mob. Nasco kills the guy in a restaurant while he is surrounded by federal agents



assigned the task of protecting the man. Afterward, Nasco goes to the beach and swims for a while. Nasco thinks about the dog and the other creature. Nasco has not heard any news about either in several weeks, just like the feds, and is beginning to wonder about the fate of the other creature. However, Nasco knows that the feds are still searching for the dog, because he learned they have been sending notices to vets all over the state since the disappearance. He continues to keep an ear to the ground.

Travis, Nora and Einstein load up the travel trailer and set out for Vegas. The first night, they stay in a trailer park and find themselves parked next to an older couple who have a dog. Einstein spends the evening playing with the dog, pretending like he is just a normal dog. The next day, Travis and Nora are married in a quiet ceremony with Einstein walking Nora down the aisle. Later that day, Travis and Nora make love for the first time and find the experience to be as spiritual as it is physical. Travis, Nora and Einstein travel through Nevada into Lake Tahoe, taking their time in order to enjoy their honeymoon.

When Travis, Nora and Einstein are almost home, Einstein begins to act strange. Travis is concerned and begins to ask questions. Einstein communicates that the other, the creature from the woods, is in Travis's house. Travis insists on going into the house to confront the creature. Einstein insists on going with him despite his great fear. When they walk into the house, they immediately find the dead body of Travis's landlord. Not only this, but the house has been destroyed. Books lay torn and shredded all over the floor, furniture overturned and ripped, excrement wiped on the floor and across the walls. Travis becomes aware that the creature is in the kitchen. Travis goes after it, but realizes that he cannot fight the creature in this situation. Travis backs away and gets both Nora and Einstein out of the house. Aware that the approaching police will want to talk to him, and might realize who Einstein is, Travis decides they must run. Travis, Nora and Einstein ditch the travel trailer and make their way to Garrison Dilworth's house. Garrison agrees to help them after they show him Einstein's intelligence. Garrison gives them a car and arranges to send them some money as soon as the banks open the following Monday.

Lem arrives at Travis Cornell's house and knows immediately that the dog has been here and that is why *The Outsider* targeted this home. Lem also knows that Travis is Delta Force, telling him that they will not find him until he wants to be found. Lem is discouraged by this fact, but encouraged that the dog is still alive. Not only this, but Lem finds the primer Nora was using to teach Einstein to read and knows that the fact that Travis knows about the dog's intelligence will make finding them that much more difficult. Lem arranges for the press to be told that Travis was wanted for questioning only and that he had owned a wild cat that was responsible for the death of his landlord. This story fools everyone, except Nasco, who suspects the truth.

Nora, Travis and Einstein drive all night to San Francisco. After a few hours sleep, they withdraw as much cash as they can from ATM machines and buy supplies. Later, they go to the seedier side of San Francisco. Travis leaves Einstein in the car and takes Nora with him on a tour of dozens of strip joints. Travis is looking for someone who makes fake IDs. It takes many hours, but they finally find a man, Van Dyne, who agrees



to make the papers for them. Van Dyne has his men search computer files for names that correspond with Travis and Nora's first names and years of birth. For Nora, they find an infant named Nora Aimes who died when still a baby. For Travis, however, they cannot find a baby with his name, so they give him the identity of Sam Hyatt. Fake credit histories are created, DMV files, and even a real estate license for Travis. Everything is well done, creating a history that will stand up to intense scrutiny.

Afterward, Travis and Nora return to the hotel where Travis presents Einstein with the tiles from a Scrabble game. Travis needs to ask questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no, so he wants the dog to spell the answers. Travis asks about the lab, wanting to know exactly the name of the place and the names of the scientists there. Einstein tells them that they will be looking for him as well as a man named Lemuel Johnson. Travis then asks about the creature they saw in his house. Einstein tells them about the other half of the Francis Project, explaining that The Outsider is designed to kill and that it wants to kill him. Einstein then tells them about the mental connection it has with the creature, allowing him to sense how close it is to him. Finally, Einstein suggests that he leave Nora and Travis in order to protect them from The Outsider. Travis and Nora both assure him that they are a family, and they will not let him go.

Part 1: Chapter 7 Analysis

Nora teaches the dog to read, further proving the depth of the dog's intelligence. Then Travis proposes to her, barely two months after meeting her. Both feel that they have been destined to find each other, touching on the theme of loneliness and despair for the final time. Nora and Travis were both lost souls, but Einstein brought them together and helped them both make their way out of despair. Einstein is a big part of their lives now, almost like a child. That is why Travis is so upset when he realizes he almost risked losing Einstein by insisting he go to the vet. Travis never thought that Einstein might be marked or that someone would be looking for him until Einstein showed his deep fear of this very fact. Travis agrees not to take the dog to the vet when he sees the tattoo in his ear. However, this will mean that Einstein will not have his shots, leaving him vulnerable to common dog diseases, especially after he plays with another dog during their vacation.

Nasco is still looking for the dog, following police reports on murders and searches for the dog. However, Nasco does not hear anything for a long stretch of time, just like Lem hears nothing. Lem finally gets information on another set of murders, hikers who have been mutilated and their eyes gouged out. Lem rushes to the scene and finds that the creature has been living in the area. Lem is touched by the things he finds in the creature's cave. The flashlight and the Mickey Mouse bank in particular surprise him and make him realize how lonely and scared The Outsider must be. However, this does not stop Lem from wanting to find the creature and make sure it dies rather than returning to the lab. Lem knows the creature is miserable and does not feel it is humane to allow it to continue living. Lem's opinion touches on the theme of morality in that he is beginning to question the morality of creating and allowing such a creature to live as The Outsider.



When Nora, Travis and Einstein arrive home from their wedding and honeymoon, Einstein alerts them to the fact that The Outsider is in the house. Travis insists on going inside anyway and is forced to see what a terrible creature they are up against. The house is totally destroyed, and the landlord is dead in the living room. Travis faces the creature anyway and gets a good enough look at it to know that God had nothing to do with this creature's creation. Travis decides they must run, that they cannot make a stand here. Travis gets his family out of the house and makes arrangements to run after telling Garrison about the dog. Garrison agrees to help, giving the reader reason to think that Travis and Nora have found a good friend in the lawyer, or a possible leak that will give away their location at an important time.

Lem arrives at Travis's house and discovers several truths that make him think he will have difficulty finding the dog. First, Travis is Delta Force. Second, Travis knows that the dog is intelligent. Lem knows Travis will not give the dog up without a fight and that his military training will give him an edge on Lem. Lem does not know about Nora at this point, only that Travis was seen leaving the house with a woman. This also gives Travis an edge. However, what none of them know is that Nasco is also on the trail and has just learned Travis's name.

Travis takes Nora to a seedy section of San Francisco and arranges for them to get new identities. Nora is impressed by Travis's actions, feeling as though he is taking care of her. Travis handles the whole thing with calm and knowledge, getting exactly what he wanted without placing himself or Nora in danger. Travis proves himself to be good under pressure. Later, Travis comes up with an idea to communicate with Einstein a little more efficiently than using yes or no questions. Travis sets out a group of scrabble tiles and has the dog spell out his answers to questions. Quickly, Travis and Nora learn the identities of the lab where Einstein was created, the scientists involved, and the NSA agent looking for them. Einstein also tells them about The Outsider, explaining his purpose and how they can sense each other over great distances. Einstein knows The Outsider wants to kill him, and he will not stop until he succeeds. Realizing he is putting Nora and Travis in danger, he offers to leave them. Travis and Nora refuse to allow him to leave, setting the tone for the final chapters of the novel.



Part 2: Chapter 8

Part 2: Chapter 8 Summary

Travis and Nora decided instead of staying on the run, they should make a stand and allow The Outsider to come to them in a place where they could get the better of it. Thanks to Garrison for forwarding money to them as well as a large sum for the sale of Violet Devon's house, they were able to buy a large house in a remote area outside Carmel. Travis has set several traps for The Outsider, including tanks of laughing gas in the garage, motion detectors around the house, and steel shutters on the windows. Travis and Einstein walk the perimeter once a week to make sure everything is in working order. Today, Travis and Einstein are waiting for Nora to come home from the doctor. Nora is a half hour late, but when she returns, it is with good news. They are having a baby. During the celebration, no one mentions the approaching trouble.

Vince Nasco goes to the don of the mob family he works with sometimes and asks for a favor. Nasco wants permission to speak to the people on the mobs payroll that make fake IDs about Travis Cornell. The don agrees to give Nasco a list of everyone who makes these IDs in San Francisco, where Nasco believes Travis went, but wants him to make a hit first. Nasco is ordered to assassinate a man who is about to turn state's evidence against the don.

Travis expected The Outsider to reach Carmel by the first week of November, but by Thanksgiving, the creature still has not appeared. Travis and Nora make a wonderful meal, and enjoy the day with Einstein. Einstein sneezes a few times, but assures Nora and Travis he is fine, using the tile machine they created for him and placed in the laundry room. In Santa Barbara, Garrison is approached by Lem. Lem has finally discovered Nora's identity. Using this information, he has figured out Garrison's connection to them. Lem asks Garrison a few questions about the couple, but Garrison gives him no information. However, Lem is sure that Garrison is in contact with the couple, so he has Garrison's home phone, business phone, and several pay phones near his home and office bugged in order to trace a call should Travis or Nora call or he should call them.

Garrison, aware that Lem is most likely bugging his phones, comes up with a scheme to get a call through to Travis. Garrison takes a lady friend out to his boat, fully aware that they are being followed. Garrison and his friend spend the day on board, reminiscing about the past. When dusk falls, Garrison has the friend pilot the boat into the harbor. Despite a Coast Guard escort, Garrison manages to jump from his boat and swim to shore. Lem figures out what Garrison is doing and sends his men to the beach to stop him. Garrison finds a group of teenagers and convinces them to sneak him off the beach to their home where he can use the phone. Garrison reaches Travis and Nora moments before they were going to call him in order to thank him for sending Nora her paintings. Lem knows that Garrison must have gotten through and that his last link to Travis and Nora is gone. Lem is disappointed, but is also impressed with the loyalty the



dog has inspired in these people. Lem begins to wonder if he has ever felt this kind of loyalty to anyone, and this thought causes Lem to do some soul searching that will change his life.

Part 2: Chapter 8 Analysis

Travis, Nora and Einstein have settled down outside of Carmel, intent on making a stand against *The Outsider*. Travis believes they are ready, because he has set up a number of security measures that will give them a leg up against *The Outsider*. In the midst of this military-like arrangement, Travis learns that Nora is pregnant. The news is joyous, and they take it as such, despite their circumstances. A happy ending seems to be in sight for this family, which only serves to add tension to the plot as the reader knows that they have yet to face their largest obstacle to happiness, *The Outsider*.

Lem learns about Nora and her connection to Travis, which brings him to Garrison. Lem questions Garrison and then puts a trace on any phone he might use to call Travis as well as using his men to follow him. Garrison is aware of Lem's attempts to catch Travis and comes up with an elaborate scheme to get around it. It seems Garrison will not succeed when Lem anticipates his actions, but Garrison enlists the help of a teenager who safely gets him off the beach and to a phone. Garrison wins, leaving Lem struggling with the reason why all these people are so willing to put their lives in turmoil for a dog. Lem thinks about loyalty, touching on the theme of companionship and loyalty, and it makes him do some soul searching that will help him change his life.



Part 2: Chapter 9

Part 2: Chapter 9 Summary

Einstein continues to sneeze over the next couple of days, and his appetite seems diminished. Travis is concerned and asks him if he is well. Einstein insists he feels fine other than being a little more thirsty than usual. Nora even buys a book to diagnose Einstein's symptoms, but finds that his symptoms are too general to be of help. Einstein appears to improve, so Travis tells Nora she should stop worrying. Then one morning, Travis gets up to find Einstein has left a message telling him that he is very sick, but they should not take him to the vet. After a hurried search of the house, Travis finds Einstein in the bathroom where he had been sick in the toilet. Travis tells Nora to get the truck, bundles Einstein into a blanket, and rushes him outside. They drive into Carmel and find a vet who runs his clinic out of his home. The vet examines Einstein and informs them that the dog has distemper.

The vet, Jim Keene, tells Nora and Travis that distemper has several stages. In the stage that Einstein is in, there is little neurological involvement, but that it is possible he will move to stage two. Stage two includes seizures and can leave the dog with some brain damage. Travis is devastated by this news, convinced that Einstein will lose his intelligence with the disease. Travis and Nora, so worried about Einstein, refuse to leave him. Keene allows them to stay in his living room during office hours. In the afternoon, Keene's assistant does not return to work, so Keene enlists Nora and Travis's help. Travis and Nora spend two days working in Keene's surgery during the day and sitting with Einstein at night. On the first night, Einstein begins to have seizures. However, by the second night, Einstein appears to be getting better.

Since Einstein is better, Keene decides to confront Nora and Travis with a flyer his office he has received every day for six months. The flyer describes Einstein in detail, as well as offering pictures of Nora and Travis. The flyer says that Einstein is a dog used in cancer research. Travis and Nora decide to tell Keene the truth about Einstein. Afterward, they take Keene into the surgery where Einstein, who has retained his intelligence, answers questions, proving his intelligence to Keene. Keene is so impressed that he agrees not to tell anyone about Einstein. Travis and Nora are so grateful, they embrace Keene as a friend and agree to allow him to visit Einstein whenever he likes.

Part 2: Chapter 9 Analysis

Einstein appears to be coming down with some sort of illness, but the symptoms come and go so often that Travis is not worried. Even Einstein seems unconcerned with his own health. However, Einstein takes a turn for the worse one night. Travis wakes to find a message in the laundry room that tells him Einstein is sick but he should not take him to the vet. Travis ignores this warning, knowing it is more important for Einstein to have



medical care than to worry about the men searching for him. Travis and Nora rush him to the vet only to find out he has distemper, one of the many diseases made almost obsolete by vaccinations.

Travis and Nora are as hysterical as parents would be in a similar situation, especially when they learn that Einstein could suffer brain damage. Travis and Nora refuse to leave the dog, much to the doctor's chagrin, insisting on staying in the hospital with him. Keene agrees, putting them to work when his assistant goes home sick. Travis and Nora sit vigil with Einstein, sure he will come out of this with brain damage, especially when he begins having seizures. However, Einstein survives, intelligence intact.

Einstein's worst nightmare comes true, however, when Keene reveals a flyer he has been sent every week for six months looking for Einstein. Travis and Nora go out on a limb and decide to tell Keene the truth. After Keene sees Einstein in action, he is dutifully impressed. Keene agrees not to turn them in in exchange for being allowed to spend time with Einstein. Travis and Nora think of Keene as a friend and are more than happy to agree to his terms. Now, the reader can accept the satisfaction of this danger and anticipate the conclusion of the other two dangers that still await Einstein and his family.

Part 2: Chapter 10

Part 2: Chapter 10 Summary

Travis and Nora take Einstein home. Once there, they fall into a normal routine. Einstein, however, has lost his connection to The Outsider and cannot tell them how close it is. This worries Travis, but not enough for him to decide to pack up and move on. Christmas comes. Travis and Nora celebrate in a big way, because Nora never had a real holiday celebration before. They buy presents for each other and Einstein, spending the day with Keene and his dog. It is a wonderful family experience that leaves Nora full of expectations for the future. Einstein too is thinking of the future, contemplating the idea of getting a mate. The thought of having puppies makes Einstein wonder if he can pass on his intelligence. Travis and Nora promise to think about the situation and get back to him.

Vince Nasco spends an entire month on the hit the mob boss gave him. The man he was after was very careful about ever doing anything routine the same way more than once. This made it difficult for Nasco to get him alone. Finally, Nasco hit him on Christmas while he was barbecuing for his entire family. Several members of the man's family are also killed, leaving Nasco concerned about anger from the mob boss since killing a man's family in a hit goes against the code. However, the boss is thrilled with the kill and gives Nasco the names he asked for. Nasco immediately goes around to all the people making fake IDs in San Francisco and comes across Van Dyne. Van Dyne tells Nasco what he wants to know, showing him the file he kept on Travis and Nora. Nasco has him delete these files so no one else can trace Travis and Nora.

Nora goes to the doctor alone on December 29. When Nora attempts to get into her truck, Nasco is waiting for her. Nasco gets in the truck with her and makes her drive him to the house. On the way, Nasco tells Nora about his belief that all the life energies he has taken over the years will make him immortal. Nora believes he is insane. When they reach the house, Travis and Einstein are in the kitchen making cookies. Nasco makes Nora get out on the passenger side with him. Nora manages to grab the gun out of the glove box on her way and shoots Nasco three times in the chest. However, Nasco is wearing a vest. Nasco manages to shoot Travis in the shoulder before running toward the front of the house. Travis follows, but before he can reach Nasco, Einstein jumps out the front window and grabs Nasco's shoulder. Nasco begins to beat the dog to get it off him. Just as Nasco knocked the dog off him, Travis appeared and shot him.

While Nora is dressing Travis's wounds, Einstein tells them that The Outsider has arrived. Travis leads the three of them upstairs where The Outsider lets its presence be known by throwing paintings out of Nora's studio. Travis enters the room with gun drawn, but The Outsider is already gone. Before Travis can warn Nora, The Outsider appears from the nursery and grabs Einstein. The Outsider takes Einstein into the nursery and shuts the door. Travis fires his clip through the door. When he goes inside the room Einstein is lying on the floor, covered in blood, and The Outsider is gone.



Convinced the dog is dead, Travis goes in search of The Outsider. Travis finds him in the garage. The Outsider is mortally wounded. The Outsider asks Travis to kill him. Travis obliges him.

Part 2: Chapter 10 Analysis

Travis and Nora take Einstein home where he slowly recovers from his illness. Once home, Einstein reveals that the illness has somehow taken away his ability to sense The Outsider. This is a concern because Travis was counting on Einstein's connection to the creature to be their first warning. However, Travis is not concerned enough to move on or to change their plans. In fact, Travis and his family spend their first Christmas together in high style.

Nasco has finally finished the hit the mob boss gave him and is rewarded with the names he wanted. Nasco finds Van Dyne quickly and learns the names Travis and Nora are now using. This makes it easy for Nasco to track down the couple. Nasco kidnaps Nora and makes her drive him to her home. Nora does, but she also finds a way to get her gun and she shoots Nasco, proving the strength of character she showed when dealing with Streck is still alive and well. However, Nasco is wearing a vest despite his belief that he will soon be immortal. Nasco wounds Travis and then goes around the front of the house where Einstein attacks him. The Travis shoots him, proving that Nasco is not immortal after all.

While Nora is treating Travis's wounds, Einstein realizes The Outsider is in the house. Travis takes his family and goes searching for the creature. The creature gets the better of them and grabs Einstein. Travis fires blindly into the room and enters to find that his efforts have been too late. Einstein is on the floor, bloody and not moving. Travis goes in search of The Outsider, finding it in the garage where it is suffering from terrible wounds. The Outsider has somehow learned to talk and it begs Travis to kill it. Travis feels sorry for the monster, but knows he cannot let it live. Travis kills it, once again ending the tensions that have ruled the plot.



Part 2: Chapter 11

Part 2: Chapter 11 Summary

Lem used phone records to track down the teenager who helped Garrison call Travis. Lem arrives at the Cornell home days after the attack by The Outsider. Travis tells Lem about the attack, informing him that the dog was killed in the attack. However, Lem later tells Walt that he knew Travis was lying because there was dog hair all over the house. It turns out the teenager warned Garrison of Lem's arrival and Garrison was able to warn Travis. Lem is not bothered by this, however. Lem has quit the NSA and has decided to concentrate more on life than work.

Three years later, Travis and Nora are expecting their second child. Their first, a boy named James Garrison, is celebrating his birthday. At the party are friends from Travis's real estate office, Keene and his dogs, and Einstein's mate, Minnie. Einstein has a litter of puppies and each one is just as intelligent as him.

Part 2: Chapter 11 Analysis

Lem has finally found both the dog and The Outsider, thanks to the teenager who helped Garrison make his phone call to Travis and Nora. Travis tells Lem where The Outsider is buried and that the dog has been killed. However, Lem knows the dog is not dead, but decides to allow Travis to convince everyone otherwise. Lem has made some changes in his own life after the self discovery he went through during this case and no longer feels as though he has to win everything. Lem has grown as a character, showing the reader how this case has affected him and changed his life for the better.

Three years later, Travis and Nora are celebrating their son's birthday and expecting their second child. Travis has gone back to work in real estate, making friends with the many people in his office. The change in Travis and Nora is amazing. They have gone from isolation to open attachments, giving up the fear of relationships to embrace those around them. These characters have also grown, thanks to their love of Einstein and their love for each other.

Finally, Einstein has gotten a mate and has puppies. These puppies are as intelligent as their father. Travis imagines a world where these animals will eventually become common, pushing out their unintelligent counterparts. Travis's image explores the theme of morality as the reader is left with an image that will be either exciting or scary, depending on the reader's opinion on the subject. It is an interesting question that makes the reader wonder what would happen if it were the other way around, if it were The Outsider who had been allowed to procreate.



Characters

Travis Cornell/Sam Hyatt

Travis Cornell is a successful real estate agent who at one time owned his own business. However, after the death of his wife after less than a year of marriage, Travis sold his business and became a recluse. Travis's wife's death was the final string in a long line of tragedies that left Travis convinced he is cursed. Travis's brother died in a tragic accident when they were small children. A few years later, Travis's father died in a car accident. When Travis was in the Delta force, his entire regiment was killed, leaving him the only survivor. These things combined with his wife's death left Travis afraid to care about another person. However, when Travis meets Einstein, he finds a new reason to embrace life.

Einstein is not done saving Travis's life, however. Einstein manages to find love for Travis as well. While walking in the park, Einstein leads Travis to Nora Devon. Shortly after their romance begins, Einstein makes it clear that he believes Nora and Travis should get married and have children. By some miracle of romance, Travis and Nora do find love in each other and decide to make a life together. However, this life is disrupted when The Outsider finds Travis's home. Travis and Nora take Einstein and go on the run, trying not only to keep one step ahead of The Outsider, but also trying to keep the government from taking Einstein back to their labs. Eventually Travis and Nora decide to stop and make a stand, fortifying their home against The Outsider. However, The Outsider proves to be the least of their worries when tragedy strikes in the form of distemper. Einstein nearly dies, bringing Travis and Nora to the brink of despair.

Nora Devon/Nora Aimes

Nora Devon is a young woman who was raised by her aunt. Nora's aunt had a bad experience with a man, so she raised Nora to be afraid of all strangers, but especially men. Nora is isolated as a child and finds it difficult to shake this habit when she is older. This isolation makes Nora vulnerable to a man who attempts to make Nora a victim. However, Nora meets Travis and Einstein in the park and Einstein's instincts make it possible for Travis to save Nora from this trouble. Soon afterward, Nora begins seeing Travis on a regular basis, allowing him to pull her out of her shell and give her a life she never had before. By doing this, Travis also allows Nora to pull him out of his own isolation as well.

Nora and Travis fall in love and marry, hoping to make a life together. However, before they can do this they discover that danger is following Einstein. Nora comes up with a way to communicate with the dog and this method gives them information about The Outsider that warns them of the danger coming. However, Einstein cannot tell them how close The Outsider is until it is too late and they come home from their honeymoon to find it has already arrived. Nora and Travis go on the run, changing their names and



trying to keep one step ahead of the creature. However, they decide they must make a stand and they buy a house where they can stage a fight. While waiting for the creature to arrive, Nora learns she is pregnant. This pregnancy is put to the test when Vince Nasco shows up and tries to kill both Nora and Travis in order to take custody of the dog. However, Travis manages to stop Vince before Nora is injured.

Einstein

Einstein is a dog that was created and born in a laboratory. Einstein is intelligent, as intelligent as a man, and able to communicate and learn with amazing skill. Einstein escapes from the lab, but something else has escaped with him and is intent on killing him. Aware of this, Einstein tries to find a safe place to hide when he comes across Travis Cornell. Einstein forgets to hide his intelligence when he meets Travis because he needs to save Travis from The Outsider. Once they are safe and in Travis' truck, Einstein is hungry and again forgets to hide his intelligence in his quest to get food. Travis is blown away by the dog's gifts and decides to keep him.

Einstein uses his intelligence to get Travis and Nora together, expressing to them his desire to see them married by showing Nora numerous bridal magazines on a trip to a nearby tourist trap. Once Nora is aware of Einstein's gifts, she begins trying to find ways to better communicate with the dog. At first Nora tries to get the dog to show them pictures that have something to do with his past. Later, Nora works out a system in which the dog can answer simple yes or no questions. Finally, Nora teaches the dog how to read which allows him to spell out words with the use of Scrabble tiles. Einstein gets to the point when he can communicate with Travis and Nora just as well as any other human being. However, this talent does not allow Einstein to communicate his illness when he comes down with distemper since he does not know what it means to be so ill. Travis worries that Einstein will lose his intelligence with this disease, however, Einstein recovers. However, Einstein does lose his connection to The Outsider and is unable to warn Travis about the creatures approach until it is already in the house.

The Outsider

The Outsider is a creature that was also created and born in a laboratory. The purpose for The Outsider was to create a perfect killing machine. The scientists took genetic material from apes, humans, alligators, and several other creatures in order to create a creature that would be very powerful and intelligent. This experiment is successful. However, the creature has feelings as well, and knows that people find it ugly. The Outsider does not like the way people react when they see him and wishes that he could blind everyone so they will not be unhappy around him.

The Outsider is filled with rage against the dog. When the dog escapes the lab, The Outsider follows with the hope of being able to kill the dog. The two creatures somehow have a mental link to each other and are capable of sensing each other even when they are out of sight of one another. Using this mental connection, The Outsider follows the



dog over hundreds of miles after the escape in order to kill the dog. However, when The Outsider finally finds the dog, he does not kill him.

Lemuel Johnson

Lemuel Johnson works for the NSA. Lem is called in when the dog and The Outsider escape, giving the difficult task of finding both creatures. When a man living alone in the canyon is found dead, Lem is called in due to the unusual violence of the death. Upon arriving, Lem discovers that one of his closest friends, a county sheriff, is already present. Lem is unhappy with this turn of events because it means he will have to lie to his good friend. However, after several more deaths, including the deaths of some of the sheriff's deputies, Lem finds himself breaking his secrecy oath and confessing all to his friend.

Lem has always worked hard at his job, pressing himself to always solve his cases no matter what the cost, because of the work ethic his father gave to him. However, as Lem continues to hunt The Outsider and search for Einstein, he realizes that there is more to life than work. Lem decides that he needs to slow down, to spend time with his wife, and try to make up for all the disappointments he laid at her door throughout their twenty year marriage. Not only this, but Lem comes to realize that there is no reason for a dog as intelligent as Einstein to live in a lab and decides to allow Travis and Nora to keep him.

Garrison Dilworth

Garrison Dilworth is Nora's lawyer. Garrison is an older man who has lived alone since the death of his wife several years before. Garrison is set in his ways and happy with his life. However, when Travis and Nora come to him with help when they decide they have no choice but to go on the run, Garrison welcomes the adventure. Garrison sends Nora and Travis money they need to survive. When the police figure out Garrison's connection to Travis and bug his phones in order to find Travis and Nora, Garrison finds a way to get around them in order to save Travis from giving away his location. Garrison is a kind gentleman who would do anything to help his friends, but is especially interested in keeping a unique dog like Einstein free. Garrison is successful in his attempts and saves Einstein from capture.

Jim Keene

Jim Keene is a veterinarian who works out of his home. Travis and Nora go to Keene when Einstein gets sick, hoping he can save them. However, Keene has been sent a notice every week since Einstein's disappearance that tells him Einstein is a research animal who holds the key to the cure for cancer. When Einstein appears to be recovering, Keene asks Nora and Travis about this notice. Nora and Travis explain the situation to Keene. Later in the evening, Einstein proves his intelligence to Keene by answering several questions with some Scrabble tiles that Nora bought. Keene is so



impressed with Einstein that he promises to keep their secret if allowed to remain in Einstein's life. Travis and Nora readily agree and they all become close friends.

Vince Nasco

Vince Nasco is a hired killer who works for both the mob and the Russians. Vince is giving the assignment of killing all the scientists involved in the Francis Project. Vince finds this string of killings interesting and decides to find out what these people all have in common. After interrogating several of his victims before killing them, Vince decides he could make a lot of money if he had possession of the dog. Vince begins looking for the dog.

Vince is insane. Vince believes that he takes a person's life force into himself every time he kills. Vince believes that if he kills enough people, he will become immortal. The most important factor in immortality, Vince believes, is killing the very young and killing a pregnant woman. When Vince learns that Nora is pregnant he becomes very excited because he believes the soul of Nora's unborn baby will be the soul he needs to achieve immortality. However, before Vince can test this theory, Travis shoots him. Vince dies instantly.

Art Streck

Art Streck is the television repair man who comes to Nora's home to fix her television. From the moment she opens the door, Nora is bothered by Streck's behavior. However, having been raised timid, Nora is afraid to send him away. Instead, Nora makes up a husband she does not have, hoping Streck will lose interest in her. This does not work. Streck becomes obsessed with Nora, calling her on the phone at all hours of the day and night, showing up where she is, coming to her house uninvited. Finally, Streck breaks into her house and intends to make Nora his sexual partner regardless of her feelings in the matter. However, Einstein convinces Travis to go to Nora's house and they arrive just in time to save Nora. Streck pleads guilty and goes to jail without having Nora testify in court.

Violet Devon

Violet Devon is Nora's aunt. Violet was once married to a very rich man. This man cheated on Violet. In her shame, Violet removed everything that reminded her of her husband from her home and filed for divorce. However, before the divorce could become final, the husband was killed in a car accident, leaving his fortune to his wife. Violet then became Nora's guardian. Violet never told Nora about her husband. However, Violet did raise Nora to shun all men, making her believe that no man is trustworthy. Nora lived with this belief her entire childhood and a great deal of her adult life. It is this upbringing that left Nora vulnerable to Streck. However, Travis came into her life and made Nora face her aunt's cruelty in such a way that she was able to move past her upbringing and start a new life.



Objects/Places

Chocolate Bar

Travis tells Einstein there is a chocolate bar in the glove box of his truck and Einstein manages to open the glove box and remove the chocolate.

Water Hose

Einstein turns on the water hose in the backyard of Travis' house in order to cool his bathwater.

Bridal Magazines

Einstein brings several bridal magazines to Nora to indicate that he believes Nora and Travis should get married.

Books

Einstein tries to use the books in Travis' house to explain to him why he is so intelligent. Later Nora uses books to communicate with Einstein and then teaches him to read the books.

Page Turning Machine

Travis and Nora buy a page turning machine for Einstein so they do not have to hold up the books when Einstein wants to read.

Scrabble Tiles

Travis uses the tiles from Scrabble games to help Einstein communicate with him and Nora.

Tile Machine

Nora and Travis create a tile machine that holds the letters of the alphabet for Einstein so that he can communicate with them whenever he wants.



Travel Trailer

Travis, Nora, and Einstein take a travel trailer to Las Vegas when Travis and Nora get married so that Einstein can remain with them during their trip.

Francis Project

The Francis Project is a scientific project designed to create an intelligent dog to use as reconnaissance in enemy governments and to create a perfect killing creature.

Santiago Canyon

Santiago Canyon is where Travis is hiking when he meets Einstein. Einstein stops Travis from continuing into the forest where he knew The Outsider waited and forces him to turn around, successfully saving his life.

Banodyne

Banodyne is a scientific laboratory where both Einstein and The Outsider were created.

Santa Barbara

Travis and Nora live in Santa Barbara. Travis and Nora meet in a park in Santa Barbara and this is where The Outsider comes in order to kill the dog.

Carmel

When Travis and Nora run away from The Outsider, they make their stand just outside of Carmel. This is also where they meet Jim Keene.



Themes

Loneliness and Despair

In the beginning of the novel Travis is a man who is convinced that anyone he loves is going to die. Travis's brother dies when he is very young in a tragic accident. A few years later, Travis' father dies in a car accident while taking Travis to tennis camp. Travis believes that these two incidents are his fault. Travis grows up a lonely boy and finds himself avoiding personal relationships for fear of tragedy striking again. Travis then joins the military and becomes a member of the elite Delta Force. As a member of this highly trained military group, Travis goes into a battle with his squad and comes out the sole survivor. Again Travis feels that he is cursed. When his wife dies less than a year after their wedding, Travis is convinced of his curse and swears to never love again. Travis isolates himself from the world, cutting off all personal relationships, until he comes to a point in his life when he feels there is nothing left to live for.

Nora grew up with a woman who believed that no one could be trusted. Nora was isolated from the world outside her home and taught to be afraid of anything outside of her control. When Nora calls the television repair man and ends up allowing into her home a sexual predator, she becomes convinced that her aunt's views of the world were correct. Nora is isolated, alone, and this causes her a great deal of despair.

When Travis meets Einstein, his world is suddenly opened up and he finds he has a reason to get out of bed in the morning. Shortly after, Travis and Einstein meet Nora in the park and Einstein becomes obsessed with the idea that Travis and Nora are meant to be together. Einstein convinces Travis to go to Nora's house the same night the television repair man is attempting to take advantage of Nora's isolation and victimize her. Travis saves Nora's life. Soon, Travis and Nora begin to spend time together, bringing them both out of their shells. Soon the loneliness and despair that defined their lives is gone and Nora and Travis have found a new life with each other and Einstein.

Companionship and Loyalty

Dogs are great companions to humans. Dogs are loyal and eager to please, often doing the most heroic things for the simplest of rewards. Einstein is first and foremost a dog, but he is a dog with the intelligence of a human. This intelligence gives Einstein a unique edge on normal dogs as he can anticipate his master's needs and understand the underlying reason for these needs. Due to his intelligence, Einstein is more than a pet and he has the free will to choose who he lives with and whether or not he will be loyal to that person. Einstein chooses Travis, giving back to him a reason for living that Travis had lost prior to meeting Einstein. However, the normal relationship between man and beast is flipped around in this novel when Einstein becomes ill. Einstein develops distemper because he was not able to get his normal dog shots. This illness is so severe that Travis and Nora fear he will suffer brain damage and lose the intelligence



that make him such a unique creature. Like a dog who refuses to leave his wounded master, Travis and Nora refuse to leave Einstein's side until he is well enough to go home.

Companionship and loyalty also comes with Travis and Nora. Both Travis and Nora were lonely, isolated people who had suffered in their past and were unable to find a way to relate to the world around them. Travis and Nora find each other and begin a relationship that will bring them both back to life. Travis helps Nora by convincing her that not all men are out to hurt her and that she is a beautiful woman who deserves to be loved. Nora helps Travis by proving to him that not everyone he loves is destined to meet an early death. It is their companionship that helps bring both back to life and it is part of what makes companionship and loyalty a major theme of the novel.

Morality

In this novel, a group of scientists meddle with nature in order to make two new and unique creatures. The first is a dog who has the intelligence of a human being while continuing to look like a normal dog. The other is a mix between an ape and several other creatures, designed to kill. Both creatures are new and unique in their own way, but as different from each other as ice is to fire. Einstein retains all of his doggy-like behaviors, including a sense of loyalty and kindness. The Outsider does not retain any kindness, but is instead filled with a rage it cannot explain or control. Both creatures are intelligent enough to be aware of their uniqueness. While Einstein finds his situation lonely, but acceptable, The Outsider is embarrassed by his appearance and feels isolated by design. The Outsider hates the dog because he is loved where The Outsider could never find companionship due to his rage and ugliness.

The morality of creating these two creatures is an underlying theme in the novel. Several characters find the creation of Einstein to be a miracle of modern science that should be shared with the world. However, many of these same characters find the creation of The Outsider to be an atrocity that should never have taken place. These two creatures are exact opposites of each other, bringing to mind opposite opinions. However, the author seems to ask within his narration whether one could exist without the other and if society accepts one, should society not also accept the other? Another question that is posed to the reader in this novel is the question of whether or not a creature like Einstein should be allowed to procreate, thus eventually thinning out the traditional, less intelligent dogs with his dominate intelligence genes. Not only this, but should dogs be intelligent when this intelligence could lead to loneliness and emotional pain that a normal dog would not experience. The existence of Einstein and The Outsider open the reader to many questions of morality, making morality a major theme of the novel.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of this novel is third person omniscient. The narration of the novel moves from character to character, often changing several times in one chapter, each narrating character a major focus point of the novel. Travis and Nora are both narrating characters, as well as Lem Johnson, the federal agent searching for Einstein and The Outsider, and Vince Nasco, the psychotic killer also searching for Einstein. The point of view is omniscient, which allows the reader to not only see the actions of the narrating characters, but to also hear their thoughts and be privy to their emotions. By allowing the reader to see into the minds of so many characters, the author allows a depth to his narration that might not be available with any other type of narration.

This point of view works for many other reasons as well. The narration allows an intimacy between the characters and the readers that makes the reader care deeply about what will happen to the characters. This depth of emotion is important because the author places his characters in peril and if the reader did not care about the characters, this peril could not add tension to the plot or cause the reader to want to read the final pages in order to learn how this tension ended. The narration also allows the reader to get to know characters that might not be sympathetic, but are important to the overall plot. For example, by making Vince Nasco a narrating character, the author allows the reader to understand his motivations in going after Einstein. If Vince had simply shown up at the Cornell home without this explanation, the reader would have been confused and would not have felt the fear for Travis and Nora that this arrival brought with it. For these reasons, the point of view of this novel works well within the plot and works to enhance the overall experience.

Setting

The novel begins in the woods of Orange County, California. This area is somewhat remote and dark, a wooded area that can be either pleasurable or frightening, depending on the point of view of the person experiencing them. To Travis Cornell, these woods were a chance to find a reason to live again. Travis comes to the woods to get in touch with life again, with the feelings these woods opened up inside of him when he was a small child. However, while hiking, Travis runs into a dog that seems intent on stopping him from traveling deeper into the woods. The attentions of the dog cause a deep fear inside of Travis that he cannot explain or shake. Travis runs from the area, taking the dog with him.

The setting then changes to Santa Barbara. Santa Barbara is a large, beachfront town that is full of sun and pleasure. However, this town is a prison to both Travis and Nora because of their loneliness and self-imposed isolation. The setting is such contrasts to the characters that it helps emphasize their situations. When Travis and Nora find each



other, they move out of Santa Barbara to an isolated area outside Carmel. This isolation is similar to the self imposed isolation Travis and Nora placed on themselves, but now they have each other and are no longer isolated, so this setting is again a contrast to the feelings and behaviors of the main characters. The settings in this novel work, therefore, because they contrast the characters in such a way that the settings help emphasize these characters.

Language and Meaning

The language in this novel is common English. The language is simple and easy to read throughout the majority of the novel. There are a few sections of the novel when scientific jargon is used in order to express to the reader how the intelligent dog and fearsome Outsider came to exist. These sections are fairly short and fully explained in such a way that the scientific jargon is easy for the reader to comprehend. There is also some slang used in the dialogue throughout the novel, but this too is easy for the reader to read and comprehend.

The language of the novel is used in such a way to enhance the understanding of the novel and to give the dialogue within the novel a realistic feel. The language in this novel works well in this capacity because the author takes the time to explain to the reader what the more difficult language means while at the same time explaining the complicated existence of two animals that by nature should not exist. Not only this, but the author has one of his characters explain the animals in a section of dialogue that makes the explanation easy to understand. These techniques work well in this novel and make it easy to read.

Structure

The novel is written in eleven chapters. Each chapter is divided into sections that are noted by numbers. These sections mark changes in narration or in scenes. The chapters tend to be long, some of them as long as sixty or seventy pages each. However, the divisions within each chapter make them appear to be much shorter and give the reader a place to lay the book down should they feel the need. The novel is written with equal amounts of exposition and dialogue, using both to make explanations as well as move the plot forward.

The novel has one main plot, with several subplots. The main plot follows the dog, Einstein, from the time Travis finds him in the woods until the end when The Outsider is finally stopped. This plot brings together all the main characters, including Travis and Nora, Lem Johnson, and Vince Nasco. The subplots include Travis and Nora's romance and Johnson and Nasco's attempts to find Einstein. These plots intersect off and on throughout the novel, adding tension and excitement to the plot.



Quotes

"His face was narrow, with a patrician nose, high cheekbones, and a slightly pointed chin. It was an ascetic face that would have suited a monk in some holy order that still believed in self-flagellation, in the purification of the soul through suffering. God knows, he'd had his share of suffering. But it could be a pleasant face, too, warm and open. His smile had once charmed women, though not recently. He had not smiled in a long time."
Part One, Shattering the Past, Chapter 1, pg. 3

"Still not moving his hand, keeping it close to his own body in a way that implied he was withholding the chocolate, he said, 'If you want it, take it. Otherwise, I'll just throw it away.'

The retriever shifted on the seat, leaned close to him, and gently snatched the chocolate off his palm." Part One, Shattering the Past, Chapter 1, pg. 23

"Nora Devon was afraid of the television repairman. Although he appeared to be about thirty (her age), he had the offensive cockiness of a know-it-all teenager. When she answered the doorbell, he boldly looked her up and down as he identified himself—'Art Streck, Wadlow's TV'—and when he met her eyes again, he winked."

Part One, Shattering the Past, Chapter 2, pg. 25

Most people believe psychoanalysis is a cure for unhappiness. They are sure they could overcome all their problems and achieve peace of mind if only they could understand their own psychology, understand the reasons for their negative moods and self-destructive behavior. But Travis had learned this was not the case. For years, he engaged in unsparing self-analysis, and long ago he figured out why he had become a loner who was unable to make friends. However, in spite of that understanding, he had not been able to change."

Part One, Shattering the Past, Chapter 3, pg. 67

"Like a lot of bullies who'd had their way all their lives, this man was shocked to discover he could be hurt, beaten. Experience had taught him that people would always back down if he pressed them hard enough and if he kept a crazy-mean look in his eyes. He thought he could never lose. Now, his face was pale, and he looked as if he were in a state of shock."

Part One, Shattering the Past, Chapter 4, pg. 117

"'Something else escaped from Banodyne the same night that the dog got out,' Lem said. His euphoria was suddenly tempered by the need to admit that there had been a darker side to the Francis Project. 'They called it The Outsider.'"

Part One, Shattering the Past, Chapter 6, pg. 227



"In the distance, very far away now, something shrieked, something that was not of God's creation." Part One, Shattering the Past, Chapter 6, pg. 248

"A flashlight. This was on the same shelf that held the blanket. The Outsider had exceedingly good night vision. That was one of the design requirements with which Dr. Yarbeck had been working: in the dark, a good genetically engineered warrior would be able to see as well as a cat. So why would it want a flashlight? Unless...maybe even a creature of the night was sometimes afraid of darkness." Part One, Shattering the Past, Chapter 7, pg. 264

"He had loved and respected his father, had never said a word against him. Yet today he had admitted to Cliff that his dad had been 'impossible.' And now—crackpot vision. He still loved his dad and always would. But he was beginning to wonder if a son could love a father and, at the same time, completely reject his father's teachings." Part Two, Guardian, Chapter 8, pg. 387

"Somehow, in the very idea of a dog's personality and human intelligence combined in a single creature, one had a hope of a species at once as gifted as humankind but more noble and worthy. And what fantasy of adults was more common than that, one day, another intelligent species would be found to share the vast, cold universe and, by sharing it, would at last provide some relief from our race's unspeakable loneliness and sense of quiet desperation?" Part Two, Guardian, Chapter 9, pg. 413

"...you taught me that I'm your guardian, too, that I'm Travis's guardian, and that he is my guardian and yours. We have a responsibility to stand watch over one another, we are watchers, all of us, guarding against the darkness." Part Two, Guardians, Chapter 9, pg. 419

"Travis often wondered whether The Outsider had thrown Einstein against the nursery wall with great force and then had assumed he was dead. Or at that moment when it held the retriever's life in its hands, perhaps the thing had reached down within itself and found some drop of mercy that its makers had not designed into it but which had somehow been there anyway. Perhaps it remembered the one pleasure it and the dog had shared in the lab—the cartoons. And in remembering the sharing, perhaps it saw itself, for the first time, as having a dime potential to be like other living things." Part Two, Guardian, Chapter 11, pg. 482

Topics for Discussion

Why does Einstein save Travis's life in the woods? How does Einstein know Nora is in danger? Is this part of Einstein's instincts as a dog or does this have something to do with Einstein's intelligence? Does Einstein save their lives in more than one way? If so, explain.

Why does Nora not call the police when she first realizes Streck is dangerous? Why does Nora continue to live the way her aunt did even a full year after the woman's death? How does Travis help her to break these patterns? Why does the news that Violet Devon was once married change Nora's attitude so completely?

Discuss *The Outsider*. Why does it hate the dog so much? Why do Travis and Lem come to pity *The Outsider*? Is *The Outsider* a creature that deserves pity? Why or why not? Is the creation of a creature such as *The Outsider* ethical? Do the feelings of the creature matter when the creator plans its function? Why or why not?

Discuss Einstein. What would happen if such a race of dogs really existed? Should they be allowed to procreate and muddy the gene pool of normal, non-intelligent dogs? What would happen in a world full of intelligent dogs? Would this be a good world or could there be a down side to such a world?

Why does Vince Nasco want Einstein? Could Vince Nasco use Einstein for a criminal purpose? Do you think Einstein would obey a master like Vince Nasco? If dogs like Einstein really existed, what would happen if some were owned by men like Vince Nasco? Would this create a dangerous situation or would these dogs simply fail to obey their masters?

Why does Lem allow Travis and Nora to keep Einstein? Should Lem have done this or would it have been better for Einstein to return to a lab? Why? Why did Lem quit his job at the end of the novel?

How was Lem's father like Nora's aunt? Were both these people cruel to their children? How? What does this say about parenthood and a person's responsibility to another human being, or perhaps an intelligent dog?