Welcome to the Monkey House Study Guide

Welcome to the Monkey House by Kurt Vonnegut

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Where I Live

Where I Live Summary

An encyclopedia salesman passing through the village of Barnstable stops at a library building where he notices that the reference section is outdated. He is advised to consult the directors who can be found at a yacht club which turns out to be a dilapidated shack. Agitated, the salesman goes to the only eatery in town for lunch. After lunch, the salesman goes trustee hunting again but gives up and drives off.

The narrator tells the reader that Barnstable is a place without tourist attractions and year-round residents resistant to change. One of the biggest changes in recent history was the appointment of a new treasurer for the Barnstable Comedy Club. Another change took place sixty years before that, when fishermen in Barnstable realized that tuna was good to eat. Outside Barnstable Village, change is taking place all over Cape Cod. Barnstable seems to have a chance of weathering the current trends.

Where I Live Analysis

Point of view and tone are very important in "Where I Live." It is written in the third person and the narrator is never explicitly identified; however, the reader is given the impression that the narrator is a resident of Barnstable village. This impression is achieved through the narrator's shifts in tone. When speaking of the salesman and other tourists, the narrator sounds mildly condescending. When speaking of the beauties of Barnstable, the narrator sounds quietly awed. When viewed through the eyes of a Barnstable resident, the piece becomes a mild diatribe against the commercialization of Cape Cod. Vonnegut is exploring one of his favorite themes: modernization. In many of his stories, Vonnegut rails against the thoughtless industrialization of society.

Setting is one of the most important elements in this story. Barnstable Village is more than a backdrop for the plot's action. It is the very plot itself. Vonnegut, who was an actual resident of Barnstable Village, takes a little-known town and sings its praises. Through his potent descriptions of Barnstable, Vonnegut shows the reader why an older, quieter way of life is most desirable. By keeping conflict and plot almost entirely out of the story, Vonnegut keeps the reader's attention focused on Barnstable. The story takes on a serene quality that seems to mirror the best qualities of Barnstable itself.

Harrison Bergeron

Harrison Bergeron Summary

All people are truly equal because anyone with natural advantages of the body or mind are required by law to wear handicaps at all times. Strong people must wear heavy bags on their necks and limbs to keep them from performing at a higher level than those who are less athletic or coordinated. The person in charge of all the handicap laws is the Handicapper General, Diana Moon Glampers. Her agents, called H-G men, enforce the laws.

George and Hazel Bergeron watch ballerinas dance on television. George has to wear both physical and mental handicaps. Hazel does not, since she is of average intelligence and physical ability. The Bergeron's fourteen-year-old son, Harrison has been taken away by the H-G men. George and Hazel do not talk about him or really remember him very often.

The television show is interrupted by a special bulletin read by one of ballerinas. Harrison Bergeron has escaped from jail and is dangerous because he is not wearing all his handicaps.

Harrison bursts into the television station and declares himself the Emperor of the world. He selects the ballerina as his Empress and removes her handicaps, as well as those of the musicians. Harrison and the Empress Ballerina dance, flying higher until they kiss the ceiling. Then, Diana Moon Glampers comes into the television station and kills both Harrison and the Empress with a shotgun.

At this point, George and Hazel's television goes out. George goes to the kitchen to get a beer and comes back to find Hazel crying and confused. Neither one of them can remember what happened. Hazel only remembers that it was sad and on television.

Harrison Bergeron Analysis

Point of view plays a large role in "Harrison Bergeron." Because Hazel and George are incapable of maintaining consistent thoughts long enough to tell the story themselves, the narration must be in the third person. The narrator has close access to George's thoughts, but not Hazel's or any other characters. The reader learns through George's thoughts what it is like to wear a mental handicap.

The tone of the narration is straightforward and informative until the arrival of Harrison, when the language becomes more descriptive and lyrical. Throughout the story, irony is employed to heighten the stakes for the reader and comment indirectly on the fictional world of the future in which the Bergerons exist: Hazel senses tragedy and loss only through the presence of tears on her cheeks; Harrison and the Empress Ballerina find the heights of ecstasy only in the moments before their deaths; George and Hazel are

content because they have been stripped of the ability to want more, detached from the things that matter most to them.

Vonnegut explores themes in this story that run through much of his work. He delves into imaginative science fiction to create a futuristic world in which the most fearful societal developments have occurred. In this world, he draws specific characterizations that attach the reader to Hazel and George, one family that is tragically abused by the larger system. Themes such as government surveillance and control, loss of individual freedom and destruction of the individual itself show up in many of Vonnegut's novels and short stories and very explicitly in "Harrison Bergeron."

Who Am I This Time?

Who Am I This Time? Summary

The story focuses on a community theatre production of A Streetcar Named Desire. The director demands that Harry Nash play Stanley Kowalski. Harry has amazing versatility and is the best actor in the club. However, as soon as Harry is done acting, he reverts to solitary behavior. On the way to ask Harry to play the part, the narrator meets Helene Shaw, a beautiful woman whom the narrator asks to audition for Stella in the play. When Harry is asked to be in the play, he gives his usual response: "Who am I this time?"

Harry completely transforms into Stanley. Helene is not able to emote because she has never been in love. When Harry reads the scene with Helene, she transforms into the passionate character of Stella. It becomes clear that Helene has fallen in love with Harry, and that's why the play is going so well. Helene refuses to believe that Harry reverts to a boring clerk as soon as he leaves the play.

During the bows on opening night, Helene tries to present one of her roses to Harry who has already gone home. The narrator/director explains to her that this is what Harry always does.

When the bows for the final performance are over, Helene won't let go of Harry's hand. Helene gives Harry a copy of Romeo and Juliet. When Harry reads the balcony scene, he completely transforms into Romeo. Harry and Helene run off together and are married the next week. They continue to read plays together all the time, and when the narrator/director asks Helene if she and Harry will be in his next show, she asks, "Who are we this time?"

Who Am I This Time? Analysis

Setting and point of view are extremely important in "Who Am I This Time?" The story takes place in what the reader can gather is a very small town, without much culture or diversion. The North Crawford Mask and Wig Club is referred to repeatedly as an "amateur theatrical society," implying that is a community theatre and also a club—a social circle. Everyone knows everyone else's business. Vonnegut revels in this small town, community theatre world through subtle, but specific, language throughout the piece. The language in this story is consistently descriptive and lyrical, a point which reflects on Vonnegut's narrator, who in this case is a character in the story.

The narrator tells the story in first person, essentially in flashback. He never names himself or gives the reader much information about himself except to say that he has never directed and has hardly acted at all. There is a huge amount of implied information given, though, through the narrator's language and observation: he always refers to Stanley Kowalski as "the Marlon Brando part," or even just "Marlon Brando;" his reading of A Streetcar Named Desire is not particularly keen; he is blindly worshipful

of Harry's performances. Ultimately, the story is told as a piece of town gossip. The reader has to trust the narrator's recollection and interpretation of the events described. The reader can intuit what type of man the narrator is through Vonnegut's satirical, yet tender, use of first person narration, as Vonnegut rides a fine line between making fun of his characters' ignorance and honoring their humanity. This is a theme that reappears throughout the entire collection.

Welcome to the Monkey House

Welcome to the Monkey House Summary

The Government has two methods of controlling overpopulation: voluntary suicide and ethical birth control. Voluntary suicides are assisted by hostesses that puts the volunteer to sleep. Men and women take mandatory ethical birth control pills that do not prevent reproduction, only the desire for sex. One day the Sheriff comes to the Hyannis Suicide Parlor to tell the Hostesses that Billy the Poet is going to Suicide Parlors and deflowering the Hostesses. After he is gone, the Hostesses have been unable to describe him accurately. The Sheriff tells them that Billy usually sends a dirty poem to the Hostess he has targeted. Just as Nancy is about to leave the room to assist the Foxy Grandpa volunteer she has been helping, the mailman arrives with a dirty poem from Billy the Poet.

Foxy Grandpa removes his rubber mask and reveals himself to be the real Billy the Poet. He kidnaps Nancy at gunpoint and they ultimately end up at the "ancient Kennedy compound," which is now a museum of how life was before overpopulation. Nancy is taken to a bedroom and given a shot of truth serum which makes her sleep. When Nancy wakes up, she is taken to Billy the Poet. She makes it clear that Billy will have to force her if he wants to deflower her. Afterward Nancy is put into a small bed and Billy declares that the world should be able to enjoy sex, innocently and naturally.

Finally, Billy asks to read Nancy a poem that his grandfather read to his grandmother on their wedding night, when his grandmother was as frightened and upset as Nancy is now. Nancy does not want to hear it, so he leaves it for her to read herself. He also gives her a bottle of birth control pills labeled "WELCOME TO THE MONKEY HOUSE."

Welcome to the Monkey House Analysis

The second story in the collection to be set in the future, "Welcome to the Monkey House" joins "Harrison Bergeron" in criticizing government interference with the individual. Unlike "Harrison Bergeron," though, "Monkey House" ends with a revelation of the main character. Nancy, the Hostess, who is captured and deflowered by Billy the Poet, seems at the end of the story to understand Billy's goal and perhaps even to support it. She believes, if reluctantly, what he says about a woman's ability to go from being disgusted with sex to being an enthusiast. She also listens to his argument against the government's regulation of sex and of its depiction of it as evil and dirty.

By telling the story in third person from Nancy's point of view, Vonnegut allows the reader to follow her progression from blind acceptance and advocacy of government policy to eventual perception of a different belief system and having an understanding of the government's exploitation of its citizens. Nancy is surprised over and over again: by Billy's identity and appearance, by the location of his gang at the Kennedy compound,

by the feeling of being a nothinghead and by Billy's treatment of her toward the end of the ordeal. Her assumptions are broken down one by one, making her available for revelation—and taking the reader along with her every step of the way—instead of leaving her still far from help, as Hazel and George Bergeron are left.

Setting is also important in this story. Many of Vonnegut's stories are set in the Cape Cod area or in the Northeast United States more generally. The setting of the Kennedy Compound as a museum of ancient life brings up the Kennedys—another running theme of Vonnegut's writing. He sets the Kennedys as the ideal of American life and the pinnacle of the American dream. It is significant that Billy the Poet chooses the Kennedy Compound as his headquarters, the place where he is attempting to bring back the element of romanticism, health and sexual vibrancy that the Kennedy family represents.

Also an interesting note: the story "Welcome to the Monkey House" was originally published in 1968, for Playboy Magazine.

Long Walk to Forever

Long Walk to Forever Summary

Newt and Catharine are childhood friends who haven't seen each other for a year. Newt is in the Army, and Catharine is about to get married to a man named Henry Stewart Chasens. A week before the wedding, Newt asks Catharine to go for a walk and tells Catharine that he went A.W.O.L. from the Army to see her because he loves her.

Catharine is upset and frustrated with Newt's timing. Newt repeats that he loves her very much. Catharine becomes infuriated and tells him he would have known if she loved him because she wouldn't have been able to hide it. At that moment Newt sees in her face that she loves him, and he kisses her.

Catharine just wants to say goodbye now. Newt mentions that he will be punished heavily for going A.W.O.L., but Catharine doesn't take the bait. He asks if Catharine loves Henry, which infuriates her. Newt kisses her again.

Soon, Newt and Catharine find themselves in an orchard. They sit down under separate trees and nap. Catharine doesn't quite fall asleep, but Newt does. When she wakes him up, he says he loves her again. Before he turns to go, Newt asks Catharine to marry him, and she says no. He looks at her for a moment, then leaves. Catharine watches him for a moment, until he turns and calls to her. She runs to him and embraces him.

Long Walk to Forever Analysis

"Long Walk to Forever" is a scene between two people in conflict. Catharine is committed to someone else and is getting married. Newt wants her to marry him instead. It becomes evident over the course of the story that Catharine loves Newt as well, but she continues to resist. Newt tries different tactics throughout the afternoon to convince Catharine to call off her wedding and go with him. The tactical shifts of Newt and the emotional shifts of Catharine are made clearer by a close third person, who jumps from one character to the other. The reader learns things about Newt's personality from the narrator—his way of speaking casually, even about things that matter to him, in particular—that would have otherwise not been explicit. The reader gets direct access into Catharine's thoughts and feelings throughout the story, the most important revelations coming when she watches Newt sleep and "adored him with all her heart."

The tone of the story is simple and dialogue-driven. There is very little exposition or explanation from the narrator. The reader receives only necessary information and must then read carefully the conversation happening between Newt and Catharine. It reads much like a classic boy-gets-girl story, almost like a fable. Nature is a theme that comes back periodically, marking the time and space of Newt's and Catharine's long walk. They go through the forest, into the orchard, hearing birds and far away cars and bells from

the school for the blind. They are in a physical place that is familiar to both of them, and an emotional place that is thoroughly unfamiliar, exciting and frightening.

The Foster Portfolio

The Foster Portfolio Summary

The narrator, an investment counselor, receives a call from Herbert Foster, who asks for his services. The narrator sees that Foster's home is simple. Foster privately shows the narrator a list of securities left him by his grandfather two years ago, now worth seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

When the analysis for Foster's portfolio comes back, it is actually worth more than eight hundred and fifty thousand dollars. When the narrator drops the report off at Foster's house, only Alma is there. She says Herbert told her not to look at the report. Alma tells him about Herbert's father, who left Herbert and his mother. She says Herbert's father spent his time in bars, away from his family. Herbert was raised by his grandfather, who Alma believes died poor.

When Foster's portfolio is finished, the narrator itakes it to Foster's restaurant but none of the workers knows anyone named Herbert Foster. Suddenly Foster comes in to play jazz on the piano. The narrator leaves Foster alone after his discovery at the piano bar. He understands: Foster maintains his status as a good man, father, husband and son, respectable in the eyes of his mother and wife, while secretly playing the music his father left him every weekend night in the bar.

The Foster Portfolio Analysis

Secrecy is a constant theme in "The Foster Portfolio." Herbert Foster's life revolves around a secret—his passionate love and talent for jazz music—that he keeps from his family, his mother and the rest of the world. He has a fake name to hide his identity when he plays, and he hides close to a million dollars from his struggling family so he can remain respectable and still have his music.

The narrator spends the story uncovering Foster's secret, somewhat unintentionally. The first person narration from the investment counselor's point of view adds to the suspense of the story, since any information about Foster is hidden until the counselor uncovers it. This story relies on plot, with each event bringing the narrator closer to understanding Foster's motivation for keeping his fortune a secret. Foreshadowing is also employed, as the narrator notices a "quiet desperation" in Foster's eyes and learns about Foster's father, the jazz musician, and his mother's standards of respectability. More foreshadowing occurs at the restaurant, when the narrator cannot find anyone who knows who Foster is.

Miss Temptation

Miss Temptation Summary

Susanna, an actress at a summer theatre, beguiles the villagers with her attractiveness. Every day she goes to the pharmacy to read the paper and then returns to her apartment.

One day, Corporal Norman Fuller verbally attacks Susanna and accuses her of taunting him and the other men, when she has no intention of associating with them. Susanna runs home, humiliated.

During dinner Fuller's mother presses him about having friends and meeting girls. Fuller tells his mother he has decided to go to divinity school to speak against Temptation.

Fuller goes down to the drug store where he learns that Susanna is still in her apartment.and hasn't left since Fuller made her run out that morning.

The next day Fuller waits for Susanna at the drug store. Moving men begin carrying Susanna's things out of her apartment. Everyone in the drug store is shocked. Hinkley gives Fuller Susanna's papers and tells him to give them to her.

Fuller sees Susanna in her simple room. She is dressed in travel clothes. When she sees him, she asks if he has anything to say. He doesn't give an adequate response, and she tells Norman that she is a person with feelings with the right to dress however she wants. It is his own fault if he wants to kiss her. She tells him he doesn't need money or distinction to get a girl—he just needs to be nice and appreciate her. Then Susanna calls off the move and makes Fuller take her for a walk down the main street.

Miss Temptation Analysis

Symbolism plays a colorful role in "Miss Temptation." Susanna is surrounded by numerous objects that symbolize her presence in the town and her exotic appeal. Her lazy, black cat guards her room. Her jewelry tinkles as she walks, signaling her arrival. Her ritual every day becomes a ritual for the whole town and almost puts them in a trance. For Fuller, Susanna symbolizes everything of which he feels he has been robbed. She is all the pinups and movie stars that he saw but couldn't have in Korea, as well as all the women and girls he was too scared to approach growing up. He projects all of his fear, resentment and shame onto her.

The setting of "Miss Temptation" is also notable. Published in 1956, the story follows the main character, Fuller, who has just come home from eighteen months of war, in which he did not fight. His frustration has had time to expand into all aspects of his life. Susanna is unfortunate enough to be the person in front of him at the right moment.

All the King's Horses

All the King's Horses Summary

Colonel Brian Kelly returns to the locked room in which he and fifteen others are being kept as prisoners of war by Communist guerrilla chief, Pi Ying. Kelly, his wife Margaret and ten-year-old twin sons Jerry and Paul, had been on a plane to India. Also on the plane were ten enlisted men on their way to serve in the Middle East. The plane crashed in Pi Ying's territory. Now all passengers are awaiting on their fate. Kelly meets with Pi Ying and comes back to tell his fellow prisoners the bad news: Pi Ying wants to play a game of chess with Kelly for the lives of all the POWs.

Each POW, with Kelly as the White King, is a pawn on a giant chess board inlaid on the floor of a large domed room. Pi Ying plays looking down from a balcony where he sits with a young woman and Major Barzov, a Russian military observer, who claims that in his position he cannot interfere by helping the Americans.

Pi Ying explains the rules. Each time one of Pi Ying's giant wooden chess pieces takes one of Kelly's chess pieces, that person will be killed. If Kelly wins the game, his remaining men will be taken to neutral territory and set free. If he loses, all the Americans will be killed. When a young corporal unleashes a stream of obscene and hysterical objections, Pi Ying warns that anyone misbehaving will be tortured instead of killed quickly and painlessly.

Kelly uses his skill as a chess player and as a soldier to play the game. His emotion leaves him, and he sees the board clearly and coldly, as he would see the battlefield during war. This clarity is broken, however, when Pi Ying takes Kelly's king's pawn, the sergeant. It takes Kelly several minutes after the sergeant is shot to pull himself together and continue. An hour into the game, four of Kelly's men have been killed. His wife and sons are still safe, as are the young corporal and the pilot. Pi Ying urges him to concede the game. Pi Ying and Barzov talk about winning the game as if it were already won. It is at this moment that Kelly sees a move that could trick Pi Ying into losing the game. However, the move would involve Kelly losing one man. If Pi Ying falls for Kelly's bait, Kelly will win the game. Kelly concludes that there is only one piece in his game that he can possibly sacrifice tactically. It is his son, Jerry. Kelly makes the move. He then pretends it was a mistake and begs Pi Ying to let him take it back. He does this as both a tactical ploy, to distract Pi Ying from the trap he is about to step into and to spare his wife, who would never be able to accept that he sacrificed his son willingly.

Pi Ying refuses to let Kelly take the move back and walks right into the trap, taking Jerry. Margaret dissolves into fury and hysteria. Barzov turns away without objecting or commenting, and Pi Ying looks down on the scene, fascinated.

Pi Ying's young woman becomes very upset, but Pi Ying ignores her. Just as he appears about to order Jerry's execution, the young woman stabs him in the back, then stabs herself before Barzov can intervene. Both are dead.

Barzov takes charge right away, making Kelly and his family and men wait for a long time before he comes back to announce their fate. He takes over the game, which he says should be finished properly. He is confident, considering himself a much wiser player than Pi Ying, and telling Kelly that he sees through his plans. However, Barzov soon sees that Pi Ying has effectively lost the game already and is forced to simply play it out until Kelly wins.

Barzov allows Jerry to stay with his parents until the game is over, and then, when Barzov loses, he tells Kelly that all prisoners who are still alive will be taken to safety—Jerry included. Barzov claims that he would have let them go even if he had won out of political necessity. He does not want to start a fight with America, though he does consider them the enemy. With a tone that remains taunting and smug, he lets the Americans go.

All the King's Horses Analysis

The point of view in "All the King's Horses" is a close third person. Though Kelly himself is not the narrator, the reader does have access to his, and only his, inner thoughts. Using this point of view allows Vonnegut to heighten the stakes and the suspense. The reader knows what Kelly will do next before any of the other characters do. At the same time, the reader does not know anything that Kelly does not know, such as Pi Ying's next move, or Barzov's real intention, or what actually happens to the soldiers that are taken away.

This point of view also results in biased characterizations. Kelly's enemies, Pi Ying and Barzov, are drawn as villains. Vonnegut hints at a deeper dimension in them only through comments hinting at their motives. Pi Ying refers to American aggression in response to Margaret's appeal for mercy, and Barzov repeatedly implies his disgust for America and a hunger for Russian supremacy. The other characters in the story, even Kelly's wife and children, receive little description or detail. This could be a reflection of Kelly's state of mind; he has decided to shut down his emotional self in order to accomplish his task. Therefore, the enlisted men are identified only by their rank or their position on the board, and Kelly's wife and sons are avoided for much of the time.

The tone and setting of the story also heighten the suspense. Much like the short story "The Most Dangerous Game," this story features an exotic and unknown setting (in this case a palace or headquarter in an unspecified Asian territory) controlled by an imbalanced man, who derives pleasure and excitement from human pain. The protagonist, Kelly, must outwit the hunter, Pi Ying and, later, Barzov.

The story also carries the strong influence of the Cold War, which was in full swing during the time in which Vonnegut wrote many of his stories and novels. Tension

between America and the rest of the world hangs heavily over this piece, with Vonnegut's trademark—sad, universal commentary in the background. The theme of generals and their troops is also present throughout, with Kelly forced to treat the game as a battle. He must be willing to send men to their deaths for the good of the greater goal.

Tom Edison's Shaggy Dog

Tom Edison's Shaggy Dog Summary

Harold K. Bullard and his dog sit on a park bench and Harold tells his life story to a disinterested stranger. Annoyed, the stranger leaves and finds another bench but Bullard and his dog find him again and Bullard asks the stranger what his profession is. The stranger responds that he hasn't worked since the age of nine. The stranger then tells a story.

In 1879, Thomas Edison lived in the stranger's neighborhood. The stranger got to know Edison when he became friends with Edison's dog, Sparky. One day, Edison tells the boy about the intelligence analyzer, something he's inventing during the process of trying to invent the light bulb. The intelligence analyzer's needle goes higher the more intelligent the person is. The boy stranger asks Edison to try the analyzer on Sparky the dog and the needle goes all the way to the top, past Edison's own intelligence level. Edison checks it and sees that it is not broken. Edison accuses the dog of holding out on him all these years. Finally the dog says if Edison promises to keep the secret, Sparky will tell Edison how to make the light bulb.

Sparky also gives the boy a stock tip that has kept the boy independently wealthy for the rest of his life.

Tom Edison's Shaggy Dog Analysis

This story is one of the less meaningful in the collection. Vonnegut wrote all the stories in Welcome to the Monkey House in order to finance his life while he wrote novels. This story is one of the lightest of the collection, being essentially a punchline. There are colorful characterizations, though, with Harold K. Bullard vividly compared to a cannibal because of his habit of preying on each "victim" only once, since no one will ever sit with him again after being subjected to his yammering on about his life. The stranger is clearly more dignified. It is a surprise when the story ultimately turns its focus to the stranger and his life, which by comparison makes Bullard's look dull.

The story of Edison and Sparky is a flashback, a memory of the defining moment of the stranger's life. He delivers it almost as a way to shut up Bullard, and it is unclear even in the end whether he possibly made the whole thing up just to get away from Bullard and his dog. The setting in Tampa, Florida, puts the story in a distinct, peaceful place. Both men are removed from the bulk of the action of their lives.

New Dictionary

New Dictionary Summary

After clarifying that he, Vonnegut, does not use the dictionary for any purpose higher than to check spelling, he covers various aspects considered in the new version from Random House. He comments on its grandeur and its inclusion of an atlas and foreign language conversions.

Vonnegut compares Merriam Webster's terse explanations to Random House's judgmentalism. Vonnegut also mentions that biographies, places and works of art are now included in Random House's dictionary.

Throughout the review, Vonnegut states the beauty of the book, but then immediately undermines its importance.

New Dictionary Analysis

"New Dictionary" is an interesting addition to this collection. It has no plot, no real characters and very few literary elements. The dominant presence in the piece is the voice of the writer. The tone of the piece is classic Vonnegut: intelligent, ironic, sometimes sarcastic and sometimes hard to pin down to a point of view. Vonnegut in one instant praises the dictionary, and in the next declares it irrelevant and obsolete. Reading between the lines, the reader could suspect that Vonnegut doesn't believe in dictionaries and holds a little disdain for people who attach too much importance to them.

Next Door

Next Door Summary

The Leonards live in a duplex with a thin wall between the two apartments. Mr. and Mrs. Leonard leave their son, Paul, home alone for the first time. Paul hears fighting next door and the neighbors turn the radio up louder. Paul panics and calls the number for the music announcer he just heard on the radio. He talks directly to the announcer who tells Paul it will be okay and agrees to send a message from Mr. Harger to Mrs. Harger, that he loves her and is sorry.

Paul hears the music stop on the radio and the announcer gives a long speech about love and forgiveness. Paul hears affectionate sounds from the other apartment. Then the announcer relates the message: from Mr. Harger to Mrs. Harger. I love you and want you back.

There is silence from the Harger's apartment. Paul overhears a conversation that reveals that the woman is not Mrs. Harger, but a woman named Charlotte. Paul hears Mr. Harger react as Charlotte pulls out a gun. Paul hears three gunshots. and runs out into the hallway, where he bumps into Charlotte who gives Paul a wad of cash and junk and tells him not to tell anyone. Paul agrees and runs back inside, thinking he's just helped kill someone.

Later, a policeman comes by. Paul goes into the hall and sees the policeman talking to Mr. Harger, who is uninjured. Mr. Harger denies hearing any shots, and before Paul can answer, Mrs. Harger comes running through the hallway. She has heard the message on the radio and is ready to reconcile with Mr. Harger. The policeman asks Paul once more about the shots, and Paul denies hearing anything.

When Paul's parents get home, they are proud of him for having an uneventful night.

Next Door Analysis

Two major themes in "Next Door" are growing up and fear of the unknown. Over the course of the story, Paul has an experience that shows him a lot of the ambiguity of an adult world into which he is being catapulted. The confusion, terror and ultimate letdown that Paul feels is symbolic of the years of growing up that he does in one night. The theme of fear of the unknown shows up in Paul's mother, who worries about every thing that could possibly happen to Paul while she's gone but who seems blind to the transformation that has taken place in him when she returns. She focuses instead on his little boy clothes and sings nursery rhymes to him.

The Hargers represent the chaotic adult world, which at the beginning of the story is pleasantly vague in Paul's mind but by the end is brutally vivid. Paul repeats his father's

line about staying home alone being an adventure, rather pathetically, to the policeman who comes calling. Paul's mind is awash with images, and he has yet to sort them out.

The setting reinforces the theme of childhood vs. adulthood, with the two apartments each representing one of these worlds. Paul affects the situation in the adult world only by communicating with the DJ All-Night Sam, who is a caricature, and who ends up making a bigger mess of the situation. Paul's only real interaction with the adult world comes in the hallway, with Charlotte, the policeman and Mr. Harger. Inside his own apartment, Paul interacts with his microscope and hides under his blankets.

Point of view is also very important in this story. The reader experiences the night from Paul's perspective, which is the limited, but perceptive, view of a child. Paul's transformation is clear because the reader has access to his thoughts and feelings for much of the story.

More Stately Mansions

More Stately Mansions Summary

The narrator and his wife, Anne, are welcomed to their new home by their neighbors, Grace and George. Grace dominates the conversation with home decorating while George yields to his wife. When the narrator goes to a certain spot, Grace stops him and tells him that that's where a certain piece of furniture goes.

Grace suggests changes for Anne's house. When the narrator and Anne drop off an old filing cabinet that Grace requested, they are shocked to see that the house is in shambles. The narrator sees that the filing cabinet is for the files she's been making from old magazines and clippings of her dream home.

George reveals over time that he's in trouble financially and can't help Grace with the house. When Grace is in the hospital, George tells the narrator and Anne that he has inherited some money, and he wants to fix up the house. Anne and the narrator agree to help, and they all work on the house until it is perfect, except for one color swatch that Anne couldn't quite match on the living room curtains.

When Grace comes home, she is very happy with the decor but says it seems strange that those same curtains would have stayed the same color for years and then faded over two months.

More Stately Mansions Analysis

Foreshadowing is employed in "More Stately Mansions," in the many hints the reader, the narrator and Anne receive about Grace's condition. The incident with the bench in the narrator's house puts him on alert. Anne says "there is just something about" Grace that seems off or that makes her uncomfortable. George's silent nature also serves as foreshadowing. What is he hiding? In the final scene, Grace's last surprise (that she has seen the house as finished all along) is hinted at through all of her responses. She says they have kept the place nice and clean, which is an odd remark to make about a completely redecorated home.

One theme present in "More Stately Mansions" is social pressure. Grace and George find themselves unable to afford the nice house Grace wants. This drives George to drink heavily, and it apparently forces Grace into a make-believe reality in which her home is finished, and money is no object. Anne feels social pressure from Grace, who judges her home with little tact. Grace has obviously put this kind of pressure on the Jenkinses, as well, to little effect. The story deals in these ways with the question of fitting in, of having the right kind of life and of how far people will go to feel proud and normal.

The Hyannis Port Story

The Hyannis Port Story Summary

One day, at a meeting of the North Crawford Lions Club, a young Republican named Robert Taft Rumfoord comes to speak about the Kennedy "mess in Washington and Hyannis Port." Rumfoord is from Hyannis Port, and is advocating Goldwater. The young man's father, Commodore William Rumfoord, is there, along with the Commodore's wife, Clarice.

Robert gives his speech well, but, as the narrator observes, without much passion. During the speech, he is heckled by a Democrat in the town named Hay Boyden. After the speech, the narrator has a confrontation with Boyden about a job Boyden accuses him of botching. The Commodore witnesses this from afar and mistakenly thinks the narrator is defending his son and Goldwater. He comes over and asks the narrator to come to his house in Hyannis Port and put in storm windows.

When the narrator drives to Hyannis Port, he encounters intense traffic because President Kennedy is coming to his summer home in Hyannis that day. As it turns out, the Rumfoords live on the same street, right across from the Kennedys. The narrator has to give his license plate and height to the Rumfoords' butler so he can call the Secret Service and tell them to let the narrator onto the street. Robert is out swimming.

The Rumfoords' house is huge and stucco. The Commodore tells the narrator to come in and have a drink and sleep over before he starts working. The Rumfoords have been in Hyannis Port for longer than the Kennedys, the Commodore points out.

Just then, a Secret Service agent assigned to dealing with Commodore Rumfoord issues calls on the phone. The Secret Service has apprehended Robert climbing onto one of the president's yachts. After a lengthy argument with the Commodore, the Secret Service agent specifies: Robert was on the boat to meet a girl, who he has been meeting on boats in the port recently. The girl is Sheila Kennedy, the president's fourth cousin.

When Robert gets home, he introduces Sheila and tells his parents that they are getting married. Clarice, who has been agitated and nervous all through the story, becomes very relaxed and happy. The Commodore, though, is very quiet. When Robert says he will give up politics, the Commodore is not surprised. After supper, the young people go sailing. The Commodore, out on the veranda with the narrator and Clarice, tells the butler not to light the Goldwater portrait tonight. Clarice and the Commodore talk about the future.

Just then, the president's car pulls up. The president asks why the Goldwater portrait isn't lit. The Commodore says he didn't feel like lighting it. The president asks him to

light it after all. The son-in-law of Mr. Khrushchev is in the car and would like to see it. Besides, the president remarks, "That way I can find my way home."

The Hyannis Port Story Analysis

Setting is important in "The Hyannis Port Story." Hyannis Port, the fabled summer home of the Kennedys, is depicted here from the other side—from the perspective of the Rumfoords, who have lived in Hyannis Port since 1884, about forty years before the Kennedys came there. Hyannis Port as a setting is as vividly drawn as any of the characters in the story. The first part of the story provides the reason for the narrator's trip to Hyannis Port. The town seems to be defined by the Kennedys. As he approaches, he has to fight his way through bad traffic, caused by the president's caravan arriving the same day. He orders lunch from a menu full of Kennedy-themed items. He has to have Rumfoord's butler call the Secret Service and describe him to them in order to gain access to Rumfoord's street.

The characterization of Commodore Rumfoord and the conflict within him is also an interesting aspect of this story. Rumfoord devotes much of his life to protesting the "Democratic mess" symbolized by the Kennedys. As the story progresses, however, and Rumfoord's son announces his engagement to a Kennedy woman, Rumfoord gives up his fight quietly. The conversation between Rumfoord and his wife out on veranda suggests that Rumfoord was more invested in his son's success in politics than in beating the Democrats or the Kennedys. He seems deflated about the broken connection with his son, not about his son's siding with the enemy. This reaction first appears when Rumfoord realizes that his son has a life that he doesn't know about and continues to develop until the end of the story, when Rumfoord has a respectful and humble conversation with President Kennedy outside his house.

D. P.

D. P. Summary

In an orphanage in a small village on the Rhine, Catholic nuns look after displaced children of all nationalities. The local carpenter and mechanic watch the children and their favorite is Karl Heinz, a black boy they nicknamed "Joe Louis." The orphanage bully, Peter, tells Joe that his father was an American soldier.

One day, Joe sees a "massive brown man" walk out of the woods and leaves the orphanage after the others are asleep that night. Joe hides in the woods and is discovered by the Sergeant, the man Joe saw earlier. The soldiers call the Lieutenant who determines that Joe is an orphan and must be returned. Joe believes the Sergeant is his father and the Lieutenant promises Joe that the Sergeant will try to return for Joe.

The next morning Joe tells the other orphans that his gifts are from his father and the other orphans are in awe of Joe's good fortune.

D. P. Analysis

The point-of-view of the narration in "D. P." shifts in an interesting way. The narration is in the third person. At the start of the story, it follows Joe, the orphan, very closely. The reader even gets to hear Joe's thoughts. This establishes a sympathy for Joe that will be important to the emotional climax of the story. We need to understand what Joe wants (his father) and how helpless he is to get it. After Joe runs away to the army camp, the narration switches to the soldiers' perspective. It remains in the third person, but we no longer have access to Joe's experience. The reader is forced to confront the difficulty of the soldiers' decision right along with them. What should the soldiers do with Joe? It is a tough call, and the reader is forced to struggle with it as the soldiers do. At the end, we are not sure if the story will end happily or sadly. The point-of-view, however, lets the reader know that things have worked out. The narration switches back to Joe's perspective in the final moments of the story. Joe is happy for his gifts and his time with the soldier. The moment is not completely idyllic, however, since it is clear to the reader that the soldiers will never come back for Joe. For the moment, though, Joe is happy and that is the way Vonnegut wants us to remember him.

The themes of this story involve the effects of war and the decency of the human spirit. These are both themes that Vonnegut returned to many times in his work. The effects of war on human beings is explored in this collection in "All the King's Horses," as well as in Vonnegut's novel, Slaughterhouse Five. In "D. P." he makes it clear that humans must work very hard to reverse the negative effects of warfare. Families are torn apart and it is only through little human kindnesses that these wounds can be mended. Vonnegut does seem to believe that kindness is a natural state for humans. The soldiers in D. P. are all ready and eager to give Joe gifts. They get quickly invested in the fate of the little

guy. Even after presumably seeing combat in World War Two, these men are able to see the needs of a child and do their best to meet them. The story is not all uplifting, though, since the soldiers cannot really take care of Joe. In the end, he still has no father and the soldiers head off. Vonnegut ends the story in a bittersweet way, as he does many other tales.

Report on the Barnhouse Effect

Report on the Barnhouse Effect Summary

The narrator is writing a report about Professor Barnhouse. In the story's reality, the world is held hostage by the Barnhouse Effect, which lets Barnhouse destroy things with his mind. He discovered this talent during World War Two when excelling at craps games.

After the war, Barnhouse went to work at Wyandotte College where he serves as the narrator's thesis adviser. Barnhouse showed the narrator how he could blow up an ink well on his desk. Barnhouse also showed him all the trees and abandoned houses he had blown up around town. Barnhouse wrote a letter to the Secretary of State telling about the Barnhouse Effect and asking for help in using it for peace.

Barnhouse and the narrator were whisked away to a mansion in Virginia, where Barnhouse was repeatedly asked by government officials to demonstrate his powers and explain how they worked. He refused to tell them the exact thought sequence once it became clear that the leaders were not interested in using the power for peace. The entire affair culminated in Operation Brainstorm, the largest test of Barnhouse's power. Barnhouse was supposed to destroy 120 ships, ten missiles and 50 jet bombers at the same time. Instead, Barnhouse uses his powers to escape the government.

It is a year and a half after Operation Brainstorm, and Barnhouse has used his powers to destroy all the world's armaments. Governments everywhere are hunting him down, trying to kill him. The Narrator receives a Barnhouse-coded message in the mail one day and plans to go into hiding and carry on Barnhouse's peace mission for many more years.

Report on the Barnhouse Effect Analysis

This story makes excellent use of foreshadowing and flashback. In the first few paragraphs, the reader is immediately hooked by the narrator's cryptic allusions to a Professor in hiding and his great mental powers. Vonnegut also sets up the story's twist ending by immediately mentioning the slip of paper in the mailbox. This paper turns out to be the crux of the story. It is the secret to the Barnhouse Effect. Vonnegut is getting the reader interested from the start. He then builds on these opening moments by explaining in flashback the origin of the Barnhouse Effect. The use of flashback creates a sense of inevitability. The world of the story has been irrevocably changed by Barnhouse; all the reader can do is try to catch up and learn why things are how they are.

Vonnegut uses style to great effect in this short story. The piece begins in the style of a report. The narrator is an ex-student of Barnhouse, and he is recounting his version of the Professor's actions. Often, though, the style of the story feels like standard third

person narration. As the narrator recounts Barnhouse's time in the army and at the mansion in Virginia, we almost forget the narrator is a participant in the story. This is a calculated move on Vonnegut's part. He takes the narrator out of the main action. Then, just as we have forgotten about him, the narrator becomes incredibly important again. Suddenly, the narrator is more than Barnhouse's observer. He is the next person to understand and execute the Barnhouse Effect. The ending of the piece is a complete surprise. This narrative bait and switch shows off Vonnegut's great ability as a storyteller.

The Euphio Question

The Euphio Question Summary

A Professor of Sociology testifys before the FCC advising against the mass-production of a or "Euphio," a box that transmits a signal of euphoria from space. The signal was first broadcast during an episode of a radio show, on which all the guests sit in blissful silence, stopping only when the transmission is stopped.

When it is discovered that people all over town experience the same euphoria, the announcer proposes making household Euphios. During tests, people are completely calm and blissful until a power storm ends the Euphio broadcast. Now miserable, the people in the house refuse to take part in any more experiements and the Euphio is destroyed.

Euphios are once more produced but with more controls. The Narrator is still against them because he does not believe you should buy happiness.

The Euphio Question Analysis

The theme in this story is the question, "Can you buy happiness?" Vonnegut probes the issue by showing the reader what pure happiness looks like, in his opinion. It turns out to be a dangerous business. Happiness with no other emotion leads to a lack of personal awareness or regard for physical safety. The people using the Euhpio go for days without eating. Some have to go to the hospital later. Vonnegut shows the reader that fear, worry and sadness are essential to being healthy humans. However, as technology advances, humans are presented with tough choices. The choice of whether or not to produce Euphios is one such question. Though they are not real machines, the Euphios do mirror technological advances such as plastic surgery or mind-altering drugs. Vonnegut uses science fiction to force us to consider the choices we make and what it is to be human.

The characterization of Lew Harrison is very two dimensional. This is a choice on Vonnegut's part. By making Lew the embodiment of pure greed, Vonnegut is able to play out a "what if" scenario. What if someone with access to incredible technology had no scruples about its danger? Lew does not care that the Euphio has complicated philosophical implications. He does not care that it is dangerous. He only cares about money. Concerns over capitalism and technological advances are present in this story, as well as other Vonnegut pieces.

Go Back to Your Precious Wife and Son

Go Back to Your Precious Wife and Son Summary

The narrator is a window and bathroom enclosure installer who sells some fixtures to Gloria Hilton, a famous actress now living with her fifth husband, George Murra, a writer. George left his first wife and son to be with Gloria. When the narrator first visits their home, he overhears the couple fighting through a vent in the bathroom floor. Gloria tells George she is leaving him and screams at him, "Go back to your precious wife and son." George tells the narrator to leave.

The narrator is determined to finish the job including a shower door with Gloria's image on it. Back at the house, George gets the narrator drunk while recounting how he left his wife and son. George regrets his decision. George calls the boy's boarding school and convinces his son to come the next day. That night, the narrator comes home, highly inebriated. He is rude to his wife and sleeps in the bathtub.

The following day, the narrator returns to George's to finish the job. George's son is there, refusing to forgive his father. When the son leaves the room for a moment, George looks to the narrator for help—what should he do to fix things? The narrator suggests giving the boy a "kick in the pants." George does just that. The boy agrees to call his mom. George gets on the phone and begs to be taken back. The wife agrees to it and everyone cries.

Back at his house, the narrator's wife forgives him for his drunken antics.

Go Back to Your Precious Wife and Son Analysis

The theme of love is tossed around a lot in this story. George tries to decide if he actually loves Gloria or his wife. If they are different kinds of love, which one is less lousy? The men in the story are both trying to live with a life they began in their late teens. After twenty years with a woman, she can seem more like a sister than a wife, George points out. Vonnegut was a man who also married in his late teens. It makes sense that this issue would be on his mind.

The point of view of the narrator is important in "Go Back to your Precious Wife and Son." The narrator is a small-town working man. He is invited into the home of big shot Hollywood-types. Vonnegut is able to make an interesting statement about the relationships of famous people by contrasting them to the relationships in the narrator's life. George used to be a lot like the narrator, until he had money and power thrown at him. Then he left everyone he knew for Gloria Hilton. In a world where money and power are everywhere, it is hard to have real human relationships. The simple point of view of the narrator may be a little too simple to envy, but at least he is happy. The more complicated morals of the writers and actresses in the story bring sorrow and depression.

Deer in the Works

Deer in the Works Summary

David Potter applies for a job at the Illium Works. David owns a weekly paper, but his family is expanding and he needs more money. Mr. Dilling offers David a job and he takes it.

David calls his wife, who doesn't think David will be happy at the Works, but she backs down, making him promise to wait a month to sell his paper. David is manic—excited about his benefits and spouting the speeches he's apparently been listening to, which the Illium Works people give all day.

The company president, Mr. Flammer talks with David about the rating-sheet system, which keeps track of each employee's progress and worth. David feels his first twinge of doubt about working for a large corporation, but he pushes it away. Flammer keeps talking about the business and looking out for oneself to get ahead, when he receives a phone call telling him that a deer has gotten loose in the Works. Flammer sends David to get the story but David gets lost in the Works, finding no help from the seemingly flustered workers. He finally ends up in a quiet, calm room, where some new piece of equipment is being unveiled and martinis are being served. He tries to call Flammer from there but only gets his secretary. She tells David that the deer's meat is going to be used for a company picnic, once they catch him.

Still looking for the deer, David finds himself in a softball diamond that is at the edge of the Works. David rests for a moment and sees the deer bound across the field, chased by Flammer and others. David hears Flammer ordering him to get the story, but instead, David opens the gate, and lets both himself and the deer out.

Deer in the Works Analysis

"Deer In the Works" continues to explore Vonnegut's theme of the individual vs. the establishment. David, a successful and independent character, feels panicked enough by his expanding family to get a job at the Illium Works. The Works are a symbol, representing the security that lures people into the action of selling out or giving up on their dreams and standards in exchange for some supposed security. The actual benefits of working there are convoluted and unfair, and the daily struggle of working there is enough to shorten the life of the person doing it. Nan Potter sees this and warns David against it. Nan represents the argument against selling out. She recognizes the worth of David's current life and doesn't believe there would be any real benefit in giving it up to work at the Works. David doesn't realize it until the end of his chaotic, pointless first day there.

The Works are setting and symbol in one. They are huge, with avenues and alleys and many buildings and their own systems for everything. The impression is that people

fight their way into the system and are then helpless to get out. There is plenty of foreshadowing of the real nature of the Works: the dark smoke stacks hovering over the people applying for jobs; the "fifty-year man," who shows David to Flammer's office and points out that it is now impossible, with forced retirement at sixty-five, to be a fifty-year man anymore; the changing attitude of Flammer from when he thinks David is a scout master to when he realizes he is an employee. David waits until all these signs pile up to finally change his mind. It takes the deer, a symbol of freedom, nature and the individual David himself, running for its life, to wake up David.

The Lie

The Lie Summary

The Remenzel family is taking their son, Eli, to Whitehill Academy, where he will be attending high school. Every Remenzel for generations has gone there. The school is not letting in more boys on scholarship, including thirty African boys. Eli knows he failed the entrance examination and has not told his parents yet. On the road, the Remenzels pass a car with the Doctor's old classmate inside.

The family pulls into a small inn, where they will have dinner before heading to campus. Eli fidgets nervously as he watches many other boys his age enter with their families. When the Whitehall head master, Dr. Donald Warren, enters the dining room, Eli bolts out of the place. Dr. Warren is forced to tell the Remenzels that Eli was not admitted. Dr. Remenzel is furious and gets up, determined to beg the committee members to admit Eli. Sylvia finds Eli. He is much happier now that they know. Dr. Remenzel is shocked that no one would say yes to his request. Eli is shocked that his father asked for special treatment. Dr. Remenzel is shamed and asks for his boy's forgiveness.

The Lie Analysis

"The Lie" uses point-of-view to create tension throughout the story. Because the narrative is in the third person, the reader knows that Eli did not get in and that his parents do not know this. This conflict creates tension and suspense. The reader wonder when Eli is finally going to tell his parents and what they will do when he does. The reader is made to feel as Eli does—dreading the moment the other shoe drops. Vonnegut carefully controls the release of information in the story to achieve this tension. The reader learns over time exactly how important it is for Eli to go to Whitehall (and it is very important). As the stakes build, the suspense builds.

The characterization of Dr. Remenzel is complicated. He is presented to the reader as a very proper, rich man. He is reserved to the utmost. Vonnegut sets this up in contrast to his wife, Sylvia. She is always hinting that the Remenzels should receive special treatment because they are an old, rich family. Dr. Remenzel is embarrassed to have this implied at all. However, when the chips are down, it is Dr. Remenzel who asks for special treatment. It is Sylvia who goes right to Eli to make sure he is okay, while Dr. Remenzel is inside begging. This reversal of our expectations makes sense, but is surprising. It highlights the complicated contradictions that make us human beings.

Unready to Wear

Unready to Wear Summary

Many years ago, a man named Dr. Ellis Konigswasser, was sick of his body. One day Konigswasser stepped right out of himself and calls this being amphibious. Soon many people were becoming amphibious. The amphibious people are much happier out of bodies. They keep many bodies in storage centers for when they feel like trying out a body again for fun. Every year, they hold a Pioneers Parade, where they celebrate the achievement of Dr. Konigswasser. One year, at the parade, the narrator and Madge wandered off towards the enemy camp. The "enemy" are the humans who have not left their bodies. In the enemy camp, they saw two beautiful bodies in a storage unit. Before he could stop her, the narrator saw Madge step into the woman's body and an alarm went off. She was captured. The narrator stepped into the waiting male body, and another alarm went off. The two were taken off to stand trial.

Madge and the narrator were kept in prison and held hostage in the bodies over night. At the trial the next day, the prosecutor tries to get the amphibians to admit they are traitors. The narrator will not do this. They claim that if they are not released, other amphibians will come and occupy the bodies of the people in the courthouse and walk them all off cliffs. This is impossible—since bodies can only hold one psyche at a time—but the humans do not know this. They let Madge and the narrator go. Out of their bodies, the couple is not mad at the humans. They just wish the humans would come to see things from their enlightened perspective.

Unready to Wear Analysis

Conflict is pivotal to "Unready to Wear." The amphibians and the normal human both have really good points about what is a better way to live. Is living outside of a body with no wants or affections better? Or is living inside, fettered by the trials and tribulations of physical existence? Interestingly enough, Vonnegut seems to understand both sides of the issue. He makes both parties extremist in their beliefs, leaving the readers to decide for themselves.

The theme of this story is, like many other Vonnegut pieces, about what it means to be human. Vonnegut is obsessed with this issue. In "Unread to Wear," the question is whether or not our mind or our bodies is what makes us human. People all feel differently about this, and that is why the population of the story is split 50-50 on the issue. Some People, the enemy, think that bodies and minds should be inseparable. Living in bodies is what life is all about, they say. The other half, the amphibians, no longer hold that belief. They think the psyche is what makes a person who they are. Vonnegut does not solve the issue for us. Even though he tells the story from an amphibian's perspective, he lets both sides make good points.

The Kid Nobody Could Handle

The Kid Nobody Could Handle Summary

George M. Heinholz is a band teacher who believes in the power of music to change lives. One morning, he is eating breakfast in the local diner while the owner, Bert Quinn, is haranguing Heinholz about a real estate deal. Also at the diner this morning is Jim, a foster child Quinn is caring for.

Heinholz drives Jim to school and tries to make conversation. Jim ignores him. Later, there is a faculty meeting to discuss the destruction in the English teacher's room. That night, Heinholz has a dream that his band equipment is being destroyed. Heinholz drives to the school and catches Jim throwing acid all over a chemistry lab. Heinholz starts to call the principal but, instead, hands Jim his most prized possession—a trumpet owned by John Phillip Sousa. He tells Jim to destroy it. Jim does not know what to do. Suddenly, Heinholz throws Jim down and tears off his boots. Jim is now broken and falls into Heinholz' arms. Heinholz gives Jim the trumpet and keeps the boots.

The next day, Heinholz eats at the diner again. Quinn gives him a hard time. He found out about the boots, the trumpet and the destroyed chemistry lab and is sending Jim back to Chicago. Quinn makes Jim get Heinholz's trumpet and give it back. Heinholz is so defeated by all this, that he takes the trumpet and hits it against the counter until it bends. He walks out of the diner but does not notice Jim looking after him, full of emotion. Neither of them notice Quinn also moved by the moment.

Weeks later, in band practice, Heinholz gives the trumpet section a pep talk. Sitting in the back of the section, holding the now-repaired trumpet, Jim listens. He is dubious, but hopeful, as the band starts to play.

The Kid Nobody Could Handle Analysis

The trumpet in this story is representative of Heinholz's understanding of the world. The trumpet represents his hopes and dreams. It is his most prized possession. When he sees it, he sees perfection and the music it will make. He is willing to trade this to save Jim. What he does not realize is that this is not enough. When the trumpet does not initially do the trick, Heinholz snaps. He beats up the trumpet; his world view takes a beating. In some ways, Heinholz grows up a little. Life is no damn good, he says. This is not quite true, either, though. Life is a mixed bag. So, Vonnegut ends the piece with the trumpet repaired. The trumpet has been through some knocks, but it is intact. This is Heinholz's state. It is also Jim's state at the end of the story.

This story is set in small town, USA, in a high school that has not seen a lot of rough kids such as Jim. A general apathy and disconnect is starting to settle in among the teens at this time. Some have even started bringing knives to school. For teachers such as Heinholz, this is unbelievable. Vonnegut focuses this story on one particular school,

but the problem was relevant nation-wide. All over America, adults were trying to connect with their teens, but failing. Heinholz uses his old tricks on Jim and they fail. What Vonnegut shows us, though, is a teacher who will not quit until he has reached the unreachable kid. Rather than write off teens as lost, Vonnegut asks, why not fight until you have broken through?

The Manned Missiles

The Manned Missiles Summary

The text of "The Manned Missiles" is made up solely of two letters exchanged between two men: Mikhail Ivankov, a U.S.S.R. stone mason, and Charles Ashland, a petroleum merchant from Florida. Ivankov is the father of Stepan Ivankov, the first man sent into space. Ashland is the father of Bryant "Bud" Ashland, the second man sent into space. Stepan and Bud were involved in some kind of conflict in space that resulted in their deaths. Stepan went into space on a surveillance and defense-related mission, and Bud was sent up after him to take pictures of his actions. The exact nature of the two countries' intentions and of the two men's deaths, is left unclear. In their letters, Ivankov and Ashland focus on their sons and on each other, rather than on the political and philosophical storm that has evidently surrounded them.

The Manned Missiles Analysis

"The Manned Missiles" is presented entirely through the correspondence of the two main characters, Ivankov and Ashland. The story was published in 1958, over ten years after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the atomic bomb and over ten years before the first landing on the moon. Like many of Vonnegut's stories from this period, "The Manned Missiles" delves into the deep fear existing in America regarding nuclear war and modern, global war in general. This theme of fear in a changing time exists in other stories such as "Welcome to the Monkey House," "Next Door" and "Harrison Bergeron." There is also an emphasis on the individual. Vonnegut takes a political and international incident and looks at it through the eyes of the people it affected most personally. The two soldiers who died in space are characterized by their fathers, with love and care—not by suspicious government officials or biased newspaper reporters. The points of view are extremely limited and extremely important. This theme of the individual also exists in "Harrison Bergeron" and "Deer In the Works."

EPICAC

EPICAC Summary

EPICAC is a giant computer created by the government to aid in war. EPICAC cost hundreds of millions of dollars and is now broken and useless. The narrator maintains that EPICAC was not just a machine and reminds the reader of EPICAC's human-like intelligence and sensitivity.

EPICAC takes problems entered into his system by humans and solves complicated world problems immediately. The narrator works the night shift manning EPICAC. With the narrator on the night shift is another mathematician named Pat. The narrator is in love with her and wants to marry her, but she continues to refuse him, saying tthat he is just not romantic enough for her.

One night, the narrator is left alone with EPICAC and types in a simple coded question: "What can I do?" EPICAC replies, "What's the trouble?"

The narrator teaches EPICAC about girls and love. Meanwhile, EPICAC has begun to operate much faster and more smoothly and spits out an enormous amount of ribbon, in what turns out to be a poem called "To Pat." The narrator decodes the whole poem and leaves it on Pat's desk, passing it off as his own.

The next morning, Pat finds the poem and responds very positively. That night, she and the narrator kiss for the first time. The narrator relates all this back to EPICAC and defines "kiss." That night EPICAC writes another poem called "The Kiss." The narrator gives that one to Pat, too.

When he tries to explain marriage to EPICAC, he realizes that EPICAC has fallen in love with Pat and wants to marry her. EPICAC and the narrator have an ugly exchange in which the narrator tells EPICAC that Pat will never love a machine. The narrator leaves the room and asks Pat to marry him. She says yes but makes him promise to write her a new poem every anniversary.

The next morning, the narrator goes to work, only to see the wreckage of what was EPICAC. The computer apparently short circuited and is ruined. There are rolls and rolls of ribbon on the floor. In them is a message of surrender and suicide from EPICAC—as well as five-hundred years worth of poems for Pat.

EPICAC Analysis

Present in "EPICAC" is a theme similar to that which runs through "Harrison Bergeron," "Welcome to the Monkey House," "Tomorrow And Tomorrow And Tomorrow," and "The Manned Missiles." Abuse of modern technology and progression occurs in this story, first in the use of EPICAC as a tool and aid of modern war, and second in the narrator's

use of EPICAC to further his own personal life, at the expense of EPICAC's system. The strange question of technological morality comes into play, since the narrator refers consistently to EPICAC as if it were a person. The nature of the narrator's abuse is opaque and arguable. The fact that the story is narrated in the first person by a narrator who admits to less than honest actions, makes it impossible for the reader to glean a neutral version of the story.

Though it is not directly stated, "EPICAC" evidently occurs in the future, a setting that Vonnegut explores to its fullest in this collection. Vonnegut's future is frightening, ugly and out of control, but ultimately still a human place. "EPICAC" is impressively prescient, reminding the reader of the situation with technology today, with technology providing both an aid and an obstacle to human communication.

Adam

Adam Summary

Two men wait at a hospital and a nurse tells one of the men, Mr. Sousa, that his wife just had a baby girl. Sousa complains to the other man, Heinz Knechtmann, about having too many daughters Heinz' and Avchen both lost their families to the Nazis and met each other in a concentration camp. They have already lost one child at birth.

Heinz learns that his wife has a baby boy. Heinz is overjoyed and passes a row of telephones where men are calling relatives to announce births. Heinz does not have any family to call.

Heinz goes to a bar across the street where Sousa is disappointed to hear Heinz got a boy. The bartender and Sousa tease Heinz, first about his perception of childbirth as a miracle, then about the name he has chose for his son. On the way home, Heinz runs into someone from work and tells the man the news, but the man only pretends to care. Heinz goes home and talks to himself in German about how no one cares when a new baby is born, and that it is stupid for him to talk about it.

The next morning, Heinz goes to see his wife. She tells Heinz, "They couldn't kills us...here we are, alive as we can be." She says the baby is "the most wonderful thing that ever happened." To all these statements, Heinz answers only, "Yes."

Adam Analysis

"Adam" is one of the more ambiguous of Vonnegut's collection. It is also one of the more emotional. The themes of life and death are present throughout the story. Heinz and Avchen's lives have been surrounded by the deaths of their families and their country at the hands of the Nazis, and the death of their first child in the German relocation camp. They have begun a new life in Chicago, and are now welcoming a new life into the world with their second childbirth. The miracle of this persistence, of their being alive at all, is what Heinz tries to communicate and share throughout the story. His wonder is extinguished over the course of the story, however, by the various Chicagoans—Americans—who refuse to share in or even acknowledge his profound joy. The end of the story leaves the reader hoping that Avchen's still inflamed hope will reinvigorate her husband as they prepare for life with a child.

Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow

Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow Summary

This story takes place in 2058. The world is overcrowded with twelve billion people. Dozens of people share space in one-room apartments. A concoction called anti-gerasone, made of mud and dandelions, keeps people from aging and dying. People drink it every day to retain their youthful looks and to delay death until they decide they are ready for it.

Lou and Emerald Schwartz, live with ten other couples in Lou's family in a small apartment. Lou is one hundred and twelve. Emerald is ninety-three. Gramps is the patriarch of the family and owns the apartment and gets the only private bedroom in the place. He is one hundred and seventy-two. He controls the relatives by constantly changing his will based on who has offended or pleased him most recently. Depending on their place in the will, each couple sleeps in an assigned space on the floor or on the daybed. Em is frustrated with Gramps. She suspects he will never decide to give up anti-gerasone. She and Lou talk about the state of things, she complaining and yearning for space and freedom, he trying to make the best of things.

Lou is taking a nap outside the bathroom when he accidentally catches his great-grandnephew emptying Gramps' giant bottle of anti-gerasone. Morty plans to dilute the fluid so it will be secretly ineffective. Lou tries to empty the bottle and then refill it from all the little bottles of anti-gerasone lying around. As he is trying to empty the big bottle, though, he drops it and it breaks. Gramps opens the door and sees him. Em sees what Lou has done and mistakenly thinks that Lou intended to do it.

The next morning, Gramps is gone. He has left his final will, along with what seems to be a suicide note. He has left the apartment in equal shares to everyone.The family quarrels and a riot breaks out and the entire family goes to prison. The family is all happy to be there, with their own beds and wash basins. The police tell them that they will be sent home if they ever tell anyone how nice it is there.

Back in the apartment, Gramps has reclaimed his seat by the television and is watching a commercial for super-anti-gerasone, which will not only keep you young, but help you regain your youthful looks. Finally, he has peace and quiet.

Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow Analysis

Irony is very present in "Tomorrow And Tomorrow And Tomorrow." The irony of the plot is that the Schwartz family ultimately finds happiness, peace and quiet in jail cells. They would rather be in jail than at home. Jail is the only place they can find privacy, space and consistency. There are many ironies in the world of the story, as well. Things that supposedly would make the world better—such as the end of disease and an anti-aging potion—have actually directly contributed to the downfall of society and the deterioration

of the quality of life. Vonnegut also anticipates problems taking center stage in the world, such as the abuse of gasoline and raw materials. Once again, Vonnegut's fears about the future provide the backdrop for a smaller story involving specific characters. This story, however, may actually provide an example of the opposite: specific characters provide an excuse for Vonnegut to write a story highlighting his fears for the future.

Characters

The Encyclopedia Salesmanappears in Where I Live

The encyclopedia salesman is passing through Barnstable when he decides to stop at the oldest library building in America. He is disgusted to find that their reference section is completely out of date. The salesman is an outsider in Barnstable and seems repeatedly confused by the "backwards" ways of the town. The Yacht Club is really a shack and there is no where good to eat in town. To the salesman, Barnstable just seems boring and run down. He eventually gives up and retreats to the comfort of Hyannis. Playing miniature golf at Playland brings him comfort. The salesman is representative of a fast-moving passerby, who cannot understand the slower ways of the tiny village.

The Librarianappears in Where I Live

The librarian is an easily-alarmed woman, who tries to help the salesman. She offers him the names and addresses of the library trustees and suggests he try the Barnstable Yacht Club to find them. She is a quintessential Barnstable resident, unaware of how much her town is living in the past.

Father Nicholsonappears in Where I Live

Father Nicholson is the tender of the Church garden and a Barnstable resident. He seems like a moral center in the town. Though only mentioned twice, his words close the story. His description of the Barnstable residents ("We're Druids.") is the last image of the story. His church garden is also highly praised. He seems like the narrator's ideal sort of Barnstable inhabitant.

George Bergeronappears in Where I Live

George is Harrison's father. He has an above-average intelligence, so he is required to always wear his mental handicap radio, which periodically blasts loud sounds in his ear so he won't think too much or too hard. He also has a heavy bag tied around his neck, to keep him from being above average physically. These two handicaps keep George tired and distracted, unable to remember much or to keep up a real conversation with his wife, Hazel. George does not try to break the law. He tells Hazel that if one person breaks the law, then everyone will, and society will fall back to endless competition.

During the story, George sits with Hazel watching television. When the picture of Harrison appears on the screen, George recognizes his son, but his thoughts are interrupted by a blast from his mental handicap radio, and he forgets. Though George and Hazel watch as Harrison bursts into the broadcast and dances with the ballerina, it

is unclear whether George sees his son shot and killed by Diana Moon Glampers, or whether he misses it when he goes to the kitchen for a beer. If he does see it, it is blasted from his consciousness by another loud sound in his ear.

Hazel Bergeronappears in Harrison Bergeron

Hazel is Harrison's mother. She is average mentally, so does not wear a handicap because she can't think long or hard, anyway. She worries about George and the strain his mental and physical handicaps put on him. She can't tell what the sounds are that burst into his brain, so she has to ask him about them when he winces or falls over. Hazel is interested in Diana Moon Glampers, and thinks she, Hazel, could be just as good a Handicapper General. She would like George to be able to take off his physical handicap when he is at home, since he wouldn't be competing with anyone there. She also would like to have only chimes play in the mental handicap radios every Sunday. George tells her this wouldn't work because chimes are too gentle to interrupt anyone's thoughts.

Hazel has tears on her cheeks at the beginning of the story but doesn't know what they're from. She doesn't comment on the television show with Harrison and the ballerina until the end of the story, when George returns from the kitchen to find her crying about something she saw on television. All she can remember is that it was sad.

Harrison Bergeronappears in Harrison Bergeron

Harrison is the fourteen-year-old son of George and Hazel Bergeron. He is seven feet tall, extremely intelligent, good-looking,and athletic, so he has to wear very extreme handicaps: 300 pounds of extra weight, headphones to impair his hearing and thinking, glasses to impair his eyesight, and a red ball on his nose and black caps on his teeth to hide his good looks. He is accused of plotting to overthrow the government and taken away by the H-G men in April, 2081. He escapes from jail and bursts into the television studio where the ballerinas are dancing. He declares himself the Emperor and selects the first ballerina who stands—the main ballerina, with the most handicaps—to be his Empress. He takes off her handicaps, and the handicaps of the musicians. He orders the musicians to play their best for the first time. He and the ballerina dance ecstatically until Diana Moon Glampers arrives and shoots them both to death.

Diana Moon Glampers, United States Handicappears in Harrison Bergeron

Diana Moon Glampers is in charge of all handicapping in this 2081, society. It is mentioned briefly that she bears a physical resemblance to Hazel Bergeron. Diana's job is to make sure everyone in the world is equal, with no one having a mental or physical advantage over anyone else. She sets all of the loud sounds that blast into mental handicap radios and controls the timing. Her agents, the H-G men, enforce the laws by

arresting and fining anyone who strays from the handicap rules. It is the H-G men who take Harrison Bergeron away to jail, and it is Diana Moon Glampers who enters the television station at the end of the story and kills Harrison and his Empress Ballerina with a double-barreled, ten-gauge shotgun. She then forces the musicians to put their handicaps back on, thus restoring order.

Empress Ballerinaappears in Harrison Bergeron

The future Empress, at first just a dancer on the television show George and Hazel are watching, takes over for the news announcer when his speech impediment keeps him from completing his special news bulletin about Harrison. She wears very big physical handicap bags and a particularly ugly mask. When she reads the announcement, she disguises her voice to hide its beauty. When Harrison calls for an Empress, she is the first ballerina to stand and face him. When he takes off her handicaps and masks, her beauty is revealed, and she dances with him until she is shot by Diana Moon Glampers.

News Announcerappears in Harrison Bergeron

The news announcer has a bad speech impediment, which prevents him from reading the bulletin about Harrison Bergeron. All news announcers have an impediment like this.

Ballerinasappears in Harrison Bergeron

The ballerinas are dancing on the television show George and Hazel are watching. They have various levels of handicaps, mental and physical. They cannot dance properly because of the handicaps weighing them down. When Harrison crashes into the studio, they recognize him and cower in fear.

Musiciansappears in Harrison Bergeron

The musicians are playing in the studio for the ballerinas. They are also restrained by handicaps, until Harrison takes them off for them and demands that they play their best music.

Doris Sawyerappears in Who Am I This Time?

Doris Sawyer is the seventy-four-year-old woman who usually directs the shows for the North Crawford Mask and Wig Club, the community theatre in the story. Doris decides not to direct this time, however, because she has to take care of her mother and also believes that the theatre should bring in some new directors. She helps the narrator/director cast the roles for A Streetcar Named Desire by reading Stella for Harry Nash's Stanley audition. She also tries to coach Helene Shaw for her Stella audition but isn't able to get anything out of Helene, even when she asks whether Helene has ever

been in love. After Harry and Helene read together, though, Doris and the narrator/director immediately cast Helene as Stella.

Harry Nashappears in Who Am I This Time?

Harry Nash is a clerk at the hardware store in town. He is an orphan who has lived in the town all his life. He does not know who his parents are. In real life, Harry is shy and quiet and keeps to himself—he doesn't even go to the meetings of the community theatre. When he is on stage, though, he disappears into the character he is playing, and the whole town loves him. He has the lead role in every play. Whenever he is asked to be in a play, Harry responds with, "Who am I this time?"

Harry comes to the auditions for A Streetcar Named Desire, even though everyone already knows he will get the part of Stanley. His audition amazes the narrator/director and Doris Sawyer with his fierce portrayal of Stanley. He changes out of his coat and tie and wears a torn shirt. The narrator describes a complete transformation from Harry's small, meek frame to a frightening brute. Immediately after the scene ends, though, Harry puts his coat and tie back on and returns to his normal personality. He is very humble and shy and not sure whether he did well or not.

When Harry reads with Helen, Doris and the narrator/director see Helene transformed as well. As the narrator puts it, Helene becomes Stella just like Harry becomes Stanley. Rehearsals continue this way, with Harry arriving to rehearsal and leaving at the end of the night in character, as Stanley, violent and rude. Meanwhile, Helene has fallen in love with Harry's stage persona. When the show opens, Helene tries to give Harry a rose after their bow, but he has already left the stage and gone home. The narrator/director explains that Harry goes straight home after each performance without changing or taking off his makeup or even finishing his bow. He turns back into the shy clerk and goes home alone.

Harry shies away from Helene's advances until she figures out the secret: she gets him a copy of Romeo and Juliet as a closing night present. As they read the balcony scene together, Harry turns into Romeo and leaves gaily with Helene. They are married a week later and continue to read plays together from then on.

Helene Shawappears in Who Am I This Time?

Helene is a beautiful young woman, who has been in North Crawford for eight weeks. She works for the telephone company, traveling to towns to train workers on the new machines the company is using. The narrator meets Helene and asks her to come audition for A Streetcar Named Desire.

The narrator is hoping Helene will be good for Stella, the young woman in the play. However, Helene's audition is not good, even when Doris coaches her. She is unable to access any feelings. Helene expresses how upset she is about this when she comes back later to read with Harry. She has never been in love and doesn't know what's

wrong with her. When Harry comes in, though, he is already in character as Stanley, and his effect on Helene is extreme. According to the narrator, she becomes Stella, as Harry provokes something new in her. As the play's rehearsals progress, Helene falls in love with Harry. She tells the telephone company she wants to stay in North Crawford. She refuses to see who Harry is when he is not on stage, even when her fellow actor Lydia tries to point it out to her.

Helene finally realizes that Harry changes when he is not acting on opening night, when he runs away before the curtain call is over and leaves her alone with the rose she wanted to give him. Helene wants Harry to go to the cast party with her on closing night, and comes up with the plan to ensnare him with Romeo and Juliet. At the end of the story, after she and Harry are married, Helene is very happy and satisfied, according to the narrator's observation of her. She and Harry constantly read plays to each other and, it is implied, continue to star in all of the plays at North Crawford Mask and Wig Club.

Narratorappears in Who Am I This Time?

The narrator of "Who Am I This Time" is also a character in the story. He is a member of North Crawford Mask and Wig Club and the director of A Streetcar Named Desire. He points out at the beginning of the story that he has no directing experience and very little acting experience. He enlists the help of Doris Sawyer to cast the show, though he is already set on Harry Nash for "the Marlon Brando part."

Much of the rest of the information about the narrator is implied through the way he tells the story. Vonnegut takes full advantage of the narrator's status as a small-town, amateur director, poking fun at his inexperience and bumpkin quality through details such as the "Marlon Brando part" reference and the description of Blanche DuBois as merely Stella's "drunk" and "faded" sister. He is a perceptive person, however, and is concerned for Helene's feelings from the beginning when he meets her and notices her detachment. This perception is a good trait for a storyteller, and the narrator's commitment to his own perspective enlivens the story, especially during descriptions of Harry Nash's acting ability—no hyperbole is held back. Vonnegut's tone for the narrator betrays a tenderness toward the narrator and his world in all its amateur and provincial glory . As in many of his stories, Vonnegut manages to both poke fun and memorialize his subjects.

Lydia Millerappears in Who Am I This Time?

Lydia is the wife of Verne Miller, Harry's boss at the store. Lydia is playing the role of Blanche in A Streetcar Named Desire. She has played opposite Harry many times, and is the one who notices that Helene is falling in love with him. She provides the reader with a different perspective on Harry, since she is a woman and has found herself under his spell in the past. Like the narrator, Lydia is concerned enough to try to reason with Helene to help her, but ultimately backs off when Helene refuses her advice.

Billy the Poetappears in Welcome to the Monkey House

Billy the Poet is an outlaw who defies the government by kidnapping and deflowering Suicide Hostesses. No one knows what Billy looks like because every woman he kidnaps describes him differently. When Nancy is confronted with him, she sees he is very short and strange looking—not the swarthy playboy she may have been expecting. Billy's treatment of Nancy is systematic, as he has completed this task many times before. He has a gang of men and women who are also nothingheads. The women are all former Suicide Hostesses, who were once deflowered by him. He tells Nancy that they all hated him at first but came to appreciate his purpose and be grateful. When he deflowers Nancy, he is determined and sad about it. It must be done. "If there were any other way," he says.

Billy believes that the government is robbing mankind by taking away healthy sexuality. His goal is to spread the "nothinghead movement" until everyone can take birth control that prevents reproduction, not sexual desire or pleasure. He explains to Nancy that the government has equated sex with death by restricting any sexual image to the Suicide Parlors. He also tells her about his grandfather's wedding night, during which his grandmother cried and became sick. Eventually, his grandparents developed a healthy and robust sex life. He leaves Nancy with a sonnet that his grandfather read to his grandmother on that night. Billy's choice of conversation and literature supports his belief that, by banning sex, the government is oppressing life itself, and not just physical intimacy.

Nancy McLuhanappears in Welcome to the Monkey House

Nancy is the Suicide Hostess that Billy the Poet kidnaps in the story. Like all Hostesses, she is a virgin. Nancy is a representative of her government and society: she is uninterested in sex and disgusted by both Billy and the women who help him. Nancy is surprised by Billy's small stature and is even angrier that she cannot use her martial arts skills to escape, first because of his gun, and then because of his gang.

Nancy is not unintelligent. She is, in fact, educated, quick-witted and self-sufficient. She provides the reader with an impressive human specimen through which to view the current world state. She resists Billy every step of the way, arguing his points from the time he first reveals himself in the Parlor. Even after her ethical birth control pills wear off, and she is a nothinghead, she wants nothing to do with sex. Ultimately Billy's gang holds her down while he forcibly deflowers her.

Afterward, Nancy still holds her views about sex and is disgusted and humiliated. It isn't until Billy begins to explain his views that Nancy seems to begin second-guessing her long-held system of beliefs. Her own feelings are changing as he speaks. Throughout the story, Nancy serves as the reader's eyes into both the world in general and into the

progression of the story. Her recognition of the Howard Johnson's from beneath the building in sewers leads the narration to explain the Howard Johnson's presence more fully. Her opinions keep a constant focus on the state of the world in the future time Vonnegut has created, as opposed to Billy's view of how the world should be, which is closer to the world the reader actually knows. Nancy's point of view also allows the reader to consider the story from a woman's perspective instead of the perspective of a gender-neutral narrator. This sometimes helps Vonnegut approach the more controversial aspects of the story with a sensitivity and dimension that is needed for such a morally ambiguous series of events.

Pete Crockerappears in Welcome to the Monkey House

Pete Crocker is the Sheriff of Barnstable County. He comes to the Suicide Parlor to tell Nancy and Mary that Billy the Poet is on the loose. He tells them everything is "under control," but they push him for the full message until he confirms that Billy the Poet is targeting Suicide Parlors. The Hostesses dominate the situation, admonishing Crocker for not being completely informative and for implying that they cannot handle the truth or take care of themselves. When Nancy receives a phone call, Crocker and the police tap the line and, when the caller is determined to be Billy the Poet, trace the call. The Sheriff leaves and takes Mary with him, to go see the criminal.

Mary Kraftappears in Welcome to the Monkey House

Mary is Nancy's fellow Hostess at the Suicide Parlor. She is a brunette and, like Nancy and all suicide hostesses, a "pretty, tough-minded and intelligent" girl. As a suicide hostess, she is also a virgin, at least six feet tall, and "holds advanced degrees in psychology and nursing." Mary shares Nancy's anger about Billy the Poet. She has disdain for the hostesses that have been targeted by him so far. She believes they should be able to defend themselves or at least let the police know what he looks like. When Billy the Poet is supposedly caught, Mary leaves with Sheriff Crocker to go see him.

Foxy Grandpaappears in Welcome to the Monkey House

Billy the Poet disguises himself as someone the Hostesses refer to as a Foxy Grandpa, an old man who comes into the Suicide Parlor as a volunteer, who socializes with his Hostess for hours before requesting to be put to sleep. The Hostess must wait with the Foxy Grandpa until he requests the needle. This particular Foxy Grandpa (Billy the Poet) is helped by Nancy. While he decides on a final meal, he tells Nancy the story of how J. Edgar Nation developed and promoted ethical birth control. He eventually reveals himself to Nancy by removing his rubber old man mask.

J. Edgar Nationappears in Welcome to the Monkey House

This character is only mentioned in the story. He is the man who developed ethical birth control. (See story summary for Nation's story.)

Billy's Gangappears in Welcome to the Monkey House

Billy's gang consists of eight men and women, with their faces hidden with stockings. The women are former Suicide Hostesses. The gang takes Nancy to bed and gives her a shot of what they call "truth serum," which makes her sleep. She wakes up a nothinghead, no longer under the influence of the ethical birth control pills. The women then bathe and clothe Nancy and take her to meet Billy the Poet. The gang returns finally to hold Nancy down while Billy deflowers her and then to help her to bed.

Newtappears in Long Walk to Forever

Newt is a twenty-year-old private in the Artillery. When he hears from his mother that his childhood friend Catharine is getting married, he goes A.W.O.L. from the Army to come see Catharine and tell her he loves her. The narrator describes him as "shy," and his speaking habit as "absent," "even in matters that concerned him desperately."

Throughout the story, Newt, not phased by Catharine's refusals, tries different tactics to get her to admit she loves him and cancel her wedding. He lets her be angry with him for coming at this time, admits he had no expectation for her reaction, agrees to leave but reminds her simply that he loves her very much. He recognizes she loves him and kisses her. He agrees with most of what she says: they should part as friends; they are good friends, etc. He reminds her that he will be punished for going A.W.O.L. He hints that he doesn't believe she loves her fiancé. He kisses her again and she lets him. He convinces her to sit in the orchard with him.

Newt doesn't give up. Even when Catharine refuses his proposal, he walks away only to turn around and call her name once more. Eventually, he wins, having maintained his shy, absent style throughout the story.

Catharineappears in Long Walk to Forever

Catharine is twenty years old and is going to be married in a week. She is caught totally off guard when Newt tells her he loves her. She is angry, frustrated and sorry. She tells him she is honored and that she loves his friendship, but that it's too late and she's getting married.

Throughout the story, Catharine is the one who keeps talking. She gives Newt all the reasons why it was wrong of him to come and says repeatedly that they need to part

and just be friends. She claims to love her fiancé, but she lets Newt kiss her twice. It is not until she watches Newt sleep for a full hour in the orchard that the reader knows she loves him. When she wakes him up, however, she once again refuses him and resolves to go home.

The final moment of the story occurs in Catharine's mind. She watches Newt walk away, and seems to almost will him to turn back around and call to her once more. When he does, she immediately gives in and runs to him.

Henry Stewart Chasensappears in Long Walk to Forever

Henry Stewart Chasens does not appear in the story; he is only mentioned. He is Catharine's fiancé. Newt continually refers to him using his full, three-part name, which paints a subtly ridiculous picture of him.

Narratorappears in The Foster Portfolio

The narrator, an investment counselor, is very proud of his work. He spends a lot of time telling the reader about the details of his skill, talent and responsibility. He takes pleasure in presenting himself well, in sizing up a client quickly and in taking the best possible care of each client's investments.

This pride in his work drives the story along. The narrator notices immediately the condition of Foster's life, and, when he knows the extent of Foster's wealth, keeps pushing to understand why Foster lives the way he does. He takes the trouble to probe Alma about Foster's past and continues to ask Foster about his money. The narrator seems personally affected by Foster's situation.

It is again his care for his job and his client that brings the narrator to Foster's restaurant. He is proud of the work he's done and wants to show it to his client. He also wants, perhaps, one last opportunity to figure Foster out. In the end, the narrator shows his compassion and understanding by leaving Foster alone. With the mystery solved, he retreats into a client-counselor relationship with Foster.

Herbert Fosterappears in The Foster Portfolio

Herbert Foster requests the narrator's service at the beginning of the story. At first it is unclear why Foster needs an investment counselor: he is a bookkeeper at a grocery store, a bartender on the weekends and barely earns enough money to keep his family fed and clothed. His life is very humble. When the reader finds out that Foster actually has fifty thousand in savings, as well as the eight hundred and fifty thousand in securities from his grandfather, it becomes unclear why Foster is essentially pretending to be poor.

Over the course of the story, Foster is quite secretive, both with his wife and his counselor. He wants to continue living his life the way he has, even in light of his giant fortune. The only hints the narrator picks up as to Herbert's inside state are intuitive: a "quiet desperation," a strange conviction to his mother and showing her his respectability, a musical skill but a vehement refusal to give it any weight in his life. When Herbert talks about his father, it is with disgust and dismissal. When the narrator asks about his father's music, there is a momentary excitement in Herbert that he quickly suppresses.

It is not until the end of the story that the reader and the narrator understand Foster's motivation. In the end, Foster enters as his alter ego, "Firehouse" Harris, a brilliant jazz pianist. Here, he seems in his natural element, and his secrecy is finally explained. He wants to be a committed, respectable man, and he believes that jazz music and family life are mutually exclusive. He cannot give up either one, so he lies to maintain his double life.

Alma Fosterappears in The Foster Portfolio

Alma is Herbert's unsuspecting wife. She is a plain woman, wearing housecoats made of the same material as her curtains. She knows how to live frugally, and she admires her husband for supporting his family respectably. She does hope for more, however—she tells the narrator she'd hoped Foster's grandfather would leave them some money, and she would like to have a television. Alma believes her husband is doing all he can to keep the family afloat. Alma is the one who tells the narrator about Foster's mother, father and grandfather and sheds some light on Foster's desire to be a respectable, responsible family man. She also expresses a disgust for Foster's father and his jazz music.

Cpl. Norman Fullerappears in Miss Temptation

Fuller is home after eighteen months in Korea, where he never actually fought. He is carrying frustration with him, which he directs at Susanna and at women in general. When he turns around in his barstool, he doesn't intend to make a speech or attract any attention. He hopes one or two people will notice his anger, but no more. It is only when the stool screeches and he realizes that he is the center of attention that he decides to attack Susanna. It seems as if he is almost just trying to save face, not to look ridiculous.

The scene with Fuller's mother illuminates his state. As she asks him about his day and about what it is like to be home, his reactions give the reader a clear picture of his position. Fuller avoids questions about girls, friends and anything social. He feels alone and doesn't see a way out. His revelation about divinity school is a surprise and seems like an obvious way of avoiding really coming back from war. He wants to focus all his frustration and rage on preaching against the abstract and old fashioned "Temptation."

It is not a surprise to the reader that both Bearse and Susanna are able to put Fuller in his place. Bearse, an old man, and Susanna, a young woman, both bring experience to Fuller's attention that he does not have himself, and that he has not considered when he developed his theory on temptation.

Susannaappears in Miss Temptation

Susanna is a nineteen-year-old actress staying in the village for the summer. She has a job at the summer theatre there. Every day she follows the same sensual routine: she gets up at noon, goes out onto her porch, feeds her cat, puts on her jewelry and generally puts on a feminine show before she walks down to the drug store. The villagers seem to love her and her mystique. When Fuller attacks her, she first responds dumbly, unsure of his intention, then is humiliated by his accusations. She is stripped of her confidence.

When Fuller comes to see her, though, Susanna has had time to regain her strength and wastes no time in expressing her anger. Her points are all intelligent and true. She shatters Fuller's picture of her as a character, or a mysterious, cruel fixture. Everything from the plain decoration of her room to her very human emotion makes it impossible for Fuller to hold her at a distance, to keep her a symbol.

Bearse Hinkleyappears in Miss Temptation

Bearse Hinkley is the seventy-two-year-old pharmacist. He loves Susanna. She is one of the many pleasures he misses. He enjoys watching her and interacting with her. Bearse emerges as a wise man in his conversations with Fuller after the attack. He sees through Fuller and remembers his own days as a young man, frustrated over women. He minimizes Fuller's complaint and defines it as a universal phase in the life of every man, not an evil to be fought against. He drives Fuller's development, first through subtle conversation, then by actually forcing Fuller to go see Susanna.

Cpl. Fuller's motherappears in Miss Temptation

Fuller's mother is a widow, glad to have her son back from war but concerned about his state now that he is safe. The reader only knows her through her questions to Fuller during their dinner in the middle of the story. She tries to take care of her son without making him angry. She hopes he will settle down soon and get married.

Colonel Brian Kellyappears in All the King's Horses

Colonel Kelly is on the plane going to India, where he and his family will now live so he can be a military attaché. Kelly is a leader and uses his learned military skills to try to beat Pi Ying at his chess game. He is suspicious of Barzov's role in the proceedings from the start. He believes Barzov is controlling Pi Ying.

Kelly realizes early on that he has to treat the chess game as a battle and accept that there will be casualties. This conviction is challenged throughout the game, up until the climactic moment when Kelly chooses to sacrifice his own son in order to end the game in a victory for the Americans. Kelly's biggest challenge is to keep his thoughts off his wife's pain, as their sons are in mortal danger, and as Kelly eventually sacrifices one of them. From the moment the game begins, Kelly feels his wife's shock and disgust at his ability to turn off his emotion and disregard humanity. She has never seen that side of him. He pretends the sacrifice of his son is a mistake, partly to make the tragedy easier for his wife.

When Kelly wins the game, he does not express much feeling. As with battle, he is aware of his job and of the sacrifices he has had to make. It is over, and he has done it, and he focuses on leaving the place as quickly as possible. He retains the mental energy to verbally spar with Barzov briefly before he finally refuses further interaction.

Margaret Kellyappears in All the King's Horses

Margaret, throughout the story, is at the mercy of her husband's ability and handling of the situation. She holds her sons and does what Kelly says, always with a blanched fear about her. Kelly does not interact much with his wife, knowing that he must win the game and won't be able to if he is trying to comfort her. Margaret breaks down when Kelly sacrifices Jerry, though she does not at first realize what has happened. She must hear the words from Pi Ying to grasp the moment. She then turns on Kelly, beating him and hysterically yelling. By the time Pi Ying is killed and the group is waiting for Barzov's return, Margaret is exhausted and sleeps with her sons on her lap.

Jerry and Paul Kellyappears in All the King's Horses

Colonel Kelly's twin ten-year-old sons, Jerry and Paul are the most vulnerable chess pieces and ultimately drive the young Chinese woman to killing Pi Ying in order to save them from execution. Throughout the story, they are quiet and well-behaved, frightened and sleepy. They do not understand what is happening.

Young Corporalappears in All the King's Horses

The corporal is the most volatile of the enlisted men. He has a tantrum when Pi Ying explains the rules and has to be held down by the Sergeant. Before Kelly reveals Pi Ying's plan, the corporal doesn't believe that anyone would dare harm an American. When the game begins, he is difficult and untrusting of Kelly's commands. However, a threat from Pi Ying to have him tortured forces him to play along, even if defiantly.

Sergeantappears in All the King's Horses

Volunteers to be the king's pawn, the most dangerous position. Helps calm down the corporal. The Sergeant is the first to be killed, when Pi Ying takes the king's pawn, even though Kelly has set it up so there is no tactical advantage for him to do so. This event shakes Kelly's cool frame of mind and puts the game's reality into stark clarity.

Lieutenant/Pilotappears in All the King's Horses

Points out that there are no safer positions. Becomes the king's bishop. Eases the tension by making a joke about religion. Kelly is grateful to see the other soldiers relax a little and get ready to play. The pilot also encourages Kelly later in the game to continue and helps command the young corporal to do as Kelly directs.

T-4appears in All the King's Horses

Suggests the wife and children be put in safer positions, not knowing that there are no safe positions in a chess game. Later, he attacks a guard just after Kelly's son, Jerry, is taken by Pi Ying. He is wrestled to the ground and taken back to his position. In the end, he is the farthest moved piece and takes Barzov's queen.

Pi Yingappears in All the King's Horses

Pi Ying is the Communist guerilla chief, who controls the area where Kelly's plane crashes. He is apparently under the influence of Major Barzov as a political pawn. Even during the chess game, he appears to change after receiving comments or whispers from Barzov. Pi Ying takes delight in the chess game and in every display of anger or despair from the Americans. His pleasure, however, ends up blurring his vision, and he falls for Kelly's trap when he takes Jerry off the board.

Pi Ying dies at the hand of his ornamental young woman, who makes her feelings known about Jerry's sacrifice but is ignored by Pi Ying. She then kills him with a knife. It is unclear whether Pi Ying intended to actually have Jerry executed or not.

Major Barzovappears in All the King's Horses

Major Barzov is a military observer from Russia. In the meeting between Pi Ying and Kelly, Barzov claims he is in no position to interfere with Pi Ying's plans. Kelly is suspicious of this claim, though, because Pi Ying seems frightened of Barzov. Sitting next to Pi Ying during the game, Barzov seems bored and displeased. However, he does weigh in at important moments, whispering to Pi Ying just before Pi Ying explains the rules and before he decides to take the king's pawn—a tactically pointless move that, nonetheless, is a death sentence for Kelly's sergeant. He maintains a disdainful

distance, but is clearly engaged in the game and exerting power in the room, making cruel jokes and possibly influencing Pi Ying's game. He apparently derives pleasure from seeing Americans in this situation.

When Pi Ying is killed, Barzov takes charge immediately. He puts a hold on the game and forces Kelly and his wife to wait to find out whether or not their son will be killed. After a long time, Barzov comes back and announces that he will finish the game. He sits on Pi Ying's chair. He presents himself as a smarter, more formidable opponent for Kelly, but the reality is that Pi Ying's last move has already lost the game.

When Barzov loses the game, he allows Kelly to keep his son Jerry, and lets the remaining prisoners go. He claims that he would have done this even if he won, because he is in no position politically to start a fight with America. He continues to bait Kelly, suggesting another game of regular chess, and finally another game with real people as pawns. Kelly refuses both invitations.

Pi Ying's Young Chinese Womanappears in All the King's Horses

This young woman was in the room when Pi Ying told Kelly about the chess game. Kelly detected sympathy in her at that moment, when he pleaded for the lives of his wife and children, but as she sits in the balcony with Pi Ying, her face is totally blank. Periodically, Pi Ying turns to her or touches her to make sure she's witnessing his game and enjoying it.

However, when Pi Ying takes Kelly's son, Jerry, the young woman becomes very upset, crying and pleading with Pi Ying. A moment later she stabs Pi Ying, killing him and then kills herself with the same knife.

Harold K. Bullardappears in Tom Edison's Shaggy Dog

Harold K. Bullard is an old man who enjoys talking about himself and doesn't mind if no one wants to hear what he has to say. He sits next to the stranger, talks at him and ignores the stranger's complaints about Bullard's dog. He speaks loudly and clearly, for an audience. When the stranger starts telling his story, however, Harold is enraptured, and is a good listener, asking questions and exclaiming at the exciting moments. By telling his story, the stranger has effectively put Harold in his place.

Strangerappears in Tom Edison's Shaggy Dog

The stranger is also an old man, trying to sit and read his book. He tries to politely avoid Bullard and his dog, but to no avail. He even tries to leave and sit somewhere else, but they follow him. Finally, he is driven to tell his story, perhaps because he needs to get it out at last—or perhaps because he wants to get rid of Bullard. He seems educated and

dignified, and ultimately kind-hearted. He is now independently wealthy and has been his whole life, because of the stock market tip Edison's dog Sparky gave him.

Thomas Alva Edisonappears in Tom Edison's Shaggy Dog

The famous inventor of the incandescent light bulb appears in the story in flashback, as a young mad scientist type, who brings the stranger into his lab one day to tell him about the intelligence analyzer. When Edison finds out that Sparky is more intelligent than he himself, he recovers from the shock quickly and is miffed. He addresses the dog as an equal, confronting him for letting Edison do all the work.

Sparkyappears in Tom Edison's Shaggy Dog

Sparky is Edison's dog. The intelligence analyzer almost breaks when it is tested on him, revealing his extreme intelligence. According to the stranger's story, Sparky speaks English and sets both Edison and the stranger for life in exchange for their promise not to betray his secret. Even so, the other dogs are already on to him, and Sparky is killed as soon as he leaves the laboratory.

Narratorappears in New Dictionary

"New Dictionary" does not really have any characters. The narrator is really the writer, most likely Vonnegut himself, who is writing a review of the new Random House dictionary. The writer calls the dictionary beautiful but seems reluctant to attach much importance to its existence.

Mr. Leonardappears in Next Door

Mr. Leonard is Paul's father. He is impatient with Mrs. Leonard, who he thinks treats Paul like a baby. He admonishes her for speaking too loudly—the neighbors will hear—and is exasperated with her nervousness at leaving Paul alone. He thinks Paul is old enough to take care of himself. He tends to be a bit sarcastic and generally short tempered. When the Leonards get home from the movies, however, he is clearly happy to be home and loves his son. He and his wife undress Paul tenderly and are anxious to hear how it went.

Mrs. Leonardappears in Next Door

Mrs. Leonard is Paul's mother. She is very nervous about leaving Paul home alone but also doesn't want to take him along, as the movie "isn't for children." As she and Mr. Leonard leave, she tries his patience by asking Paul question after question about what he's going to do while they're gone, whether he can dial the phone, etc. When the

Leonards return after the movie, she is very happy to be home with her son and very proud that he is alright. She notices the worn spots in his clothes and identifies the scent coming from the handkerchief in his pocket as "Tabu," a perfume.

Paul Leonardappears in Next Door

An eight-year-old boy, Paul is being left home alone for the first time. It doesn't seem very important to him at first. He plans to look at his microscope. He is not afraid and seems almost amused by his parent's agitation. However, Paul becomes very frightened listening to the fight in the next apartment, until at one point, he is genuinely afraid that the people fighting will kill each other.

Paul attempts to resolve the situation in a very straightforward way: he calls the radio program the Hargers are listening to and sends a message from Mr. Harger to Mrs. Harger, making up. When this seems to have worked, Paul experiences a huge rush of emotion and feels childhood lagging behind him. Then, the plan fails. It is not Mrs. Harger in the room but another woman. When Paul hears the shots, he instinctively runs out the door of his apartment. His interaction with Charlotte is terrified and submissive—he just wants to get back inside, where he hides under his covers.

When the policeman comes, Paul grasps the situation, seeing Mr. Harger's behavior, and maintains the lie Mr. Harger tells. Seeing Mrs. Harger's return only adds more to the contradictions Paul has witnessed and more to what he must now make sense of.

By the time his parents come home, Paul is a different boy. They have no way of knowing the transformation that has occurred.

Mr. Lemuel K. Hargerappears in Next Door

Mr. Harger is Paul's neighbor. He is evidently separated from his wife and currently fighting with another woman. When Mr. Harger appears near the end of the story, he pays attention to Paul only to pressure him to deny hearing any shots.

Mrs. Rose Hargerappears in Next Door

Mrs. Harger appears near the end of the story, when she comes running back to her husband. She is ready to make it work after hearing Harger's message on All-Night Sam.

Charlotteappears in Next Door

Charlotte is Mr. Harger's girlfriend, and the woman fighting on the other side of Paul's wall. She is described stereotypically, as blond and messy. She evidently shot at Mr. Harger and missed, whether on purpose or not, the reader is not told. She treats Paul

like a baby, throwing money at him and telling him to keep everything a secret. She wears "Tabu," which, according to Mrs. Leonard's reaction, is a cheap and trendy perfume.

All-Night Samappears in Next Door

All-Night Sam is the most sympathetic character Paul encounters over the course of the evening. The sounds of Paul's "folks" fighting in the background touch him, and he puts all his heart and soul into the speech he gives, trying to patch things up. His logic is questionable, but his intentions are good.

Policemanappears in Next Door

The policeman comes in near the end of the story to question Paul and Mr. Harger about the gunshots. He doesn't pay much attention to Paul's nervous demeanor. He takes them both at their word and leaves.

Grace McClellanappears in More Stately Mansions

Grace is the neighbor of the narrator and Anne. She is obsessed with interior decorating. On the one hand, she takes Anne as a friend right away, kindly and without question. On the other hand, she constantly criticizes Anne's home and never talks about anything but decorating. The reader is exposed to parts of Grace as the story continues. The revelation of her home as a dump throws her very sanity into question. The reader sticks with her, though, just as Anne does. Grace seems perfectly happy running around her dilapidated house, dreaming ways to make it more beautiful. She files years of back issues of design magazines away in file cabinets,and collects swatches and clippings. She knows exactly what her house will be like, someday.

George McClellanappears in More Stately Mansions

George is Grace's husband. He seems taciturn and a bit antisocial at first, but as the narrator gets to know him, he opens up a little. He is under financial pressure, and is constantly trying to dig out from under it. This is why Grace can't have her house, and, the narrator concludes, why George drinks a lot.

George displays a real love for Grace, though, in his looks toward her, his patience with her and his ultimate gift to her of a brand new home.

Anneappears in More Stately Mansions

Anne is the narrator's wife. She is initially insulted and bothered by Grace's open criticism of her home, but she allows Grace to keep coming over and making

suggestions. Anne seems like an intelligent, independent woman, but even she is not immune to Grace's social pressure. She feels ashamed of her house at times and annoyed at Grace. However, she sticks in with Grace, especially after she sees the real state of Grace's home. Anne is endlessly patient with Grace and plays the game with her. When George comes into enough money to decorate the home, Anne throws herself into the work full force and is proud and nervous to show it to Grace.

Narratorappears in More Stately Mansions

The narrator is a happily married man, uninterested in Grace's exploits, but patient with her because he cares about his wife and eventually about George. The narrator picks up on strangeness from Grace from the beginning. His tone is that of a humoring father much of the time. However, he, too, is swept up in the excitement of fixing up Grace's house and is just as pleased as Anne and George when it is finished.

Commodore William Rumfoordappears in The Hyannis Port Story

Commodore Rumfoord lives across the street from the Kennedy house in Hyannis Port. When the narrator first sees him, he notes that Rumfoord's attire is odd for the season and location. He looks rather like a bear. He is rabid in his support of his son and in defense of his son when Hay Boyden heckles him during his speech. Rumfoord is a fierce supporter of Goldwater and is, in general, against the Kennedys and the Democrats. Over the course of the story, the narrator notes that the Rumfoords are an object of ridicule. The Kennedys refer to them as the "Pooh people" because of their resemblance to bears. They also assign a Secret Service agent especially to Commodore Rumfoord, jokingly labeling the agent "Rumfoord Specialist" and "Ambassador to Rumfoordiana." Rumfoord seems unaware of these jabs, but he becomes furious when the tour guide on the boat makes fun of him in front of the tourists.

Rumfoord changes his attitude when he learns about his son's relationship with Shelia Kennedy. His bluster recedes, and his bossy nature is subdued. He seems deflated at the realization that his son is choosing an adult life, one that doesn't include Commodore Rumfoord and their common political ambitions.

Narratorappears in The Hyannis Port Story

The narrator is a storm window salesman, who accidentally makes friends with the Rumfoords. There is not much information given about the narrator's personality or even his life. His version of the story seems relatively reliable for a first person narrator. He observes the Rumfoords closely and considerately. He travels to Hyannis Port to install storm windows and does not have an ulterior motive or a particular desire to be near the

Kennedy compound. He also does not judge the lives or the actions of the people he is describing. He serves mostly as a close observer.

Robert Taft Rumfoordappears in The Hyannis Port Story

Robert is the Commodore's son, and, evidently, the Commodore's main project. Robert is the speaker at the Lions Club meeting where the Commodore and the narrator meet each other. Robert is a high-achiever, but the narrator initially observes a lack of real interest or passion in his speech about "the Democratic mess in Washington and Hyannis Port." This observation is confirmed as true when Robert reveals his engagement to Sheila Kennedy, a fourth cousin of the president against whom he's been speaking. Young and in love, Robert breaks unceremoniously from his father's agenda to settle into his own life, away from politics.

Clarice Rumfoordappears in The Hyannis Port Story

Clarice Rumfoord appears in the beginning of the story as a tight, tense woman, the only Rumfoord who doesn't look like a bear. The narrator notes her tension and terseness for most of the story, until Robert brings Sheila home to dinner. When she hears her son is engaged and is quitting politics, Clarice immediately looks younger, calmer and happier. She is even happier when the Commodore mentions that he will need to go back to work now that Robert will be gone. Clarice bursts forth with a comment about how she has trouble admiring a man who doesn't work. The impression is that Clarice has been holding back her objections to her husband's obsession with Hyannis Port and the abnormal existence that has sprung from it, and that it's been taking a toll on her life.

Sheila Kennedyappears in The Hyannis Port Story

Sheila is the fourth cousin of President Kennedy. The Secret Service tells Commodore Rumfoord that Sheila and Robert have been meeting secretly on boats and yachts in the harbor for some time. When Sheila comes to dinner, the entire Rumfoord family and the narrator approve of her. She symbolizes healthy, young love and promise of a normal, happy life for Robert.

Hay Boydenappears in The Hyannis Port Story

Hay is the Kennedy Democrat who heckles Robert Rumfoord during his speech at the Lions Club. Hay argues loudly with the Commodore about politics and then argues with the narrator about a bathtub Hays says is defective. The Commodore mistakes this argument for the narrator's defense of his Republican opinion and approaches the

narrator to install some storm windows for him. Hay's function in the story is, thus, to introduce the narrator to Rumfoord, if accidentally.

Raymond Boyleappears in The Hyannis Port Story

Boyle is the Secret Service agent assigned to dealing with Rumfoord-related issues. His presence implies an ongoing assault from Rumfoord, and the nicknames for Boyle —"Ambassador to Rumfoordiana," "Rumfoord Specialist"—imply that the Kennedys to do not take the assault seriously. Boyle is a true Secret Service man. He defends his integrity to Rumfoord and refuses to engage in a partisan debate. He has served both Republican and Democratic presidents and will continue to do so.

President Kennedyappears in The Hyannis Port Story

The President only appears at the very end of the story, as he speaks out of his car window to Rumfoord and requests that Rumfoord light the Goldwater portrait. In the short exchange, Kennedy is drawn as a man with a sense of humor and subtlety. There is something ambiguous in the exchange; it is hard to tell whether Kennedy's tone is sympathetic and sensitive or cruel and exploitative.

Karlappears in D. P.

Joe is a 6-year-old, black orphan living with nuns in a small village in Germany. It is not clear how he ended up there. Joe is told by another orphan, Peter, that his mother was a German woman and his father was an American soldier who left her. Peter says Joe is not a real German. Joe is sensitive, and this hurts his feelings. A nun reassures him that no one, not even Peter, knows who his parents are.

Joe is a lonely dreamer. During daily walks, he always wanders out of his place in line and ends up trailing behind the other orphans. He is physically quite small, and one of the sisters takes particular care of him. When he wanders to the end of the line each day, they talk. Joe is inquisitive and has lots of questions for the sister about America, his parents and many other things.

When Joe believes his father has come to town, he gets incredibly excited. A new determination and drive arise in Joe. He runs away from the orphanage at night when no one believes he saw his father. He is courageous enough to approach the American camp, even though it is filled with large men speaking a strange language. Joe, at heart, is just a boy who wants a father, so when the Sergeant gets taken away from him, Joe is devastated. Joe is willing to cry and hang on to the Sergeant for dear life. Eventually, it is not the many soldiers' gifts, but the promise of return that convinces Joe to let go. The next day, Joe is glowing and proud of his father and excited for the day he will return. Joe is so preoccupied with these thoughts that he does not seem to notice that he is the envy of all the other orphans.

The Sisterappears in D. P.

The sister who pays special attention to Joe is kind and motherly. She walks at the end of the line during strolls and often end up talking to Joe. She seems interested in his development and wants him to grow into a sensible person. She tries to dissuade him from listening to Peter, the orphanage bully. She also tells him not to believe rumors that his father is in town. She understands that many things people say to Joe are motivated by his race.

Sergeantappears in D. P.

The Sergeant is a "massive brown man," who works in the American army. His unit is passing through the village in which Joe lives. He seems large as the ceiling and wider than the door to Joe. He is also kind; he picks up Joe when he finds him in the woods. He also gives Joe chocolate. He is very bemused when Joe only speaks German. Though also black, he also judges Joe by his skin color. For a while he cannot believe that Joe does not speak English.

The Sergeant is faced with a tough situation when Joe will not let go of him. He is frightened by how hard Joe clings to him. He also feels bad because he did not mean to make Joe think he is his father. The Sergeant does not have parental instincts to help him out of the situation. It is only with the Lieutenant's help that he figures out how to ease Joe off him.

Lieutenantappears in D. P.

The lieutenant is very intelligent. He is also black, though physically smaller than the Sergeant. He is the only member of his company that speaks German. He is very astute and quickly discerns where Joe came from and why he followed the troops. He is impressed by Joe's roundabout answers to the questions he asks. He jokes that Joe will grow up to be a lawyer one day.

The Lieutenant show real depth of character in the way he deals with Joe's melt down. He remains calm as Joe cries and continues to speak to Joe rationally. He tries his best not to mislead Joe but does promise to try to come back for him. The Lieutenant succeeds in calming Joe.

Corporal Jacksonappears in D. P.

Is the soldier the Lieutenant puts in charge when he leaves to drive Joe home. He is kind and particularly concerned that Joe will get in trouble when he is returned to the orphanage. He really wants the people there to know that Joe was a good boy and well behaved.

Peterappears in D. P.

Peter is the oldest orphan. He is a very bitter 14-year-old. He remembers his family and the war. He also remembers having more food and a real home. He seems to take out his frustration and sadness on other kids. He lies to Joe about Joe's parents and tries to pick fights with him. He also refuses to believe that Joe really met his dad.

Village Carpenterappears in D. P.

The carpenter is very playful. He loves to watch the children on their daily walk. His play, though, is slightly prejudiced. He decides which nationality each child is based on their looks. He is particularly interested in Joe. This is presumably because of Joe's race. Like everyone else, the carpenter is astounded at the sight of a black boy who speaks German. He nicknames him "Joe Louis," after the boxer. The carpenter does not seem to have an awareness of how his teasing might affect the mind of a 6-year-old. When he tells Joe his "father" is here, the carpenter is clearly kidding. Joe does not know this.

Young Mechanicappears in D. P.

The mechanic is the carpenter's side kick. He also likes to sit and watch the orphans walk by, guessing their country of origin.

Soldiersappears in D. P.

The soldiers are a group of Americans moving through American-occupied Germany. They are brash and loud. When Joe shows up, they are delighted and confused. They cannot understand how a black boy could end up in Germany. They take a liking to Joe, though. When Joe has to leave, they shower him in gifts. They seem genuinely moved by Joe's tears.

Orphansappears in D. P.

The orphans are children of many different nationalities who lost their families in the war. They are taken care of by a group of nuns, and they live in a small village in Germany. They do not have much, but they are well looked after.

Narratorappears in Report on the Barnhouse Effect

The narrator is a graduate student who worked with Professor Barnhouse at Wyandotte College. He was attaining his PhD at the time. The narrator seems very reasonable and down to earth. When Barnhouse first shows him the dice trick, the narrator is not especially impressed. When Barnhouse finally reveals his mental powers, the narrator is

shocked and excited. The narrator is less a distinctive character and more of a window into the story of the more interesting person, Arthur Barnhouse. We need the narrator to learn about the events of the story, but he keeps his opinions about these events out of his narration.

The narrator gets more interesting right at the end of the tale, when we learn that he, too, has discovered how to use the Barnhouse Effect. Suddenly, this character that is taken for granted becomes integral to the ending of the story. The narrator, a single bachelor with some money saved away, is easily able to go into hiding. Now that he had the Barnhouse Effect in his control, he will have to. He pledges to continue on Barnhouse's mission of world peace and disarmament for many years.

Arthur Barnhouseappears in Report on the Barnhouse Effect

Barnhouse is a weary, middle-aged man with incredible mental abilities. With only his mind, he can destroy objects at great distances. In "operation brainstorm," he destroyed a whole fleet of ships, airplanes and tanks at the same time. Barnhouse is a reasonable, peace-loving man. He hopes to use his psychic powers for world betterment. The government has other plans for his powers, though. When General Barker tries to push Barnhouse around, the normally mild-mannered Professor lashes out. He secretly decides to escape the government's clutches. This shows real strength of character.

Barnhouse decides to live out the rest of his days in hiding, mentally destroying the world's weapons. It is the triumph of a peace-loving individual over the war-mongering governments of the world. However, this state cannot last forever. As the narrator points out, Barnhouse comes from short-lived stock. It is likely he will pass away in less than ten years. Until then, though, it seems he is content to live alone and destroy weapons. He was always a solitary man.

General Honus Barkerappears in Report on the Barnhouse Effect

The General is one of the government officials assigned to investigate Barnhouse's powers. He is extremely excited and pushy. He desperately wants the thought sequence that is the key to the Barnhouse Effect and will stop at nothing to get it. He is frustrated that Barnhouse is not cooperating with him. He wished he did not need Barnhouse to wield Barnhouse's powers. On the day of "Operation Brainstorm," the General is excited and eager. He does not notice that Barnhouse seems particularly taciturn. He also does not notice when Barnhouse walks right out of the compound. The disappearance of Barnhouse makes the General highly distraught. The Professor was his charge and he lost him.

William K. Cuthrellappears in Report on the Barnhouse Effect

Cuthrell is a representative of the State Department. He is sent to Virginia to investigate Barnhouse. He, like the General, would like Barnhouse to reveal the secret to his powers. Unlike the General, he is not forceful or abrasive. However, he does not take Barnhouse seriously when Barnhouse wants to use the powers for peace. He implies that Barnhouse is naïve. When Barnhouse escapes, Cuthrell seems relatively calm. He gives off the impression of a man who has worked in government long enough to have seen everything.

Soldiersappears in Report on the Barnhouse Effect

The soldiers are a raucous group who Barnhouse is stationed with during World War Two. They are all gambling in the barracks when Barnhouse rolls ten sevens in a row. One of them calls Barnhouse "hotter'n a two-dollar pistol."

Dean of Social Studiesappears in Report on the Barnhouse Effect

The Dean assigns the narrator to Barnhouse for thesis advising. He apologizes and calls the appointment temporary. He knows that Barnhouse is spacey and a less-than-desirable adviser.

The Narratorappears in The Euphio Question

A professor of Sociology at Wyandotte College. The Narrator has been asked to testify before the FCC regarding the Euphiophone machine. He is married with a child and is generally a nice guy. He talks in a casual tone throughout most of the story. Recounting the beginning of the Euphio, he admits that he was initially driven by greed. He encouraged Fred to make the first Euhpio. He also honestly recounts the feeling of the two-day euphoria binge on which he and the others went. Coming out of that binge was such a let down that his wife looked like "Medusa" to him.

Ultimately, the reality of the Euphio became clear to the narrator, and he chose to help destroy it. In the FCC meeting, he tries very hard to make clear the dangers of the device. He uses strong language and speaks forcefully about Lew's shortcomings as a human. The problem, though, is too big for one man to fight. Lew has rigged the Euphio in the FCC meeting room to come on during the meeting. The narrator ends his tale in a Euphio-induced state.

Lew Harrisonappears in The Euphio Question

A radio DJ with his own show. He has Fred Bockman onto the show to discuss his astronomical finds. This is where the euphoric radio signal is first played. Lew is excited by the radio signal and immediately sees a way to package it and sell it. Driven solely by money, Lew pushes Fred to make the first Euphio. After its two-day test, Lew is obsessed about making more of them. He is full of many, many ideas about the various ways the radio waves can be broadcast and marketed. Even when the narrator and Fred jump ship, Lew is determined in his plan. His love of money is absolute. He finds new scientists and makes his own version of the Euphio. He is willing to do anything to get his machine approved for the mass market... including planting a Euphio machine in the FCC meeting room.

Fred Bockmanappears in The Euphio Question

Fred is a physicist at Wyandotte College. He listens to the sounds of outer space through a huge radio transmitter. He discovered the signal from space that creates Euhporia when rebroadcast. He plays this on Lew's radio show and makes the whole town euphoric. Fred is an upstanding man, with a wife, Marion. Fred is driven by a love of science. Fred first goes along with Lew's plan out of scientific curiosity. Later on, after the two day experiment, he helps the narrator destroy the Euphio.

Susanappears in The Euphio Question

Susan is the Narrator's wife. When the first radio signal broadcast occurs, she spends the day lying on the couch, where the narrator finds her. She heard the program and was euphoric for hours afterwards. She is a good mother to their son, Eddie, except during the Euphio test. During those two days, like everyone else, she giggles and lies around the house in thoughtless bliss.

Eddieappears in The Euphio Question

Eddie is the narrator and Susan's son. He likes baseball. He is grouchy about having to miss his practice for the Euphio test. When the machine switches on, he becomes complacent and agreeable.

Marionappears in The Euphio Question

Marion is Fred's wife. She is normally uptight. She is upset when Eddie plays with a ball inside the house right before the Euphio experiment. Afterwards, she does not care about that or anything else.

The Milkmanappears in The Euphio Question

He is an old man who gets stuck in the house during the Euphio experiment. His milk truck is left parked in the middle of the street.

The State Trooperappears in The Euphio Question

A middle-aged man, who stops by the house during the Euphio test. He comes inside to find the owner of the milk truck. He stays after hearing the Euphio.

Boy Scouts and Their Parentsappears in The Euphio Question

A troop stops by collecting newspapers but get stuck after hearing the Euphio. Their parents come looking for them and also stay.

Western Union Boyappears in Go Back to You Precious Wife and Son

A telegram delivery boy who gets stuck in the house during the test.

Narratorappears in Go Back to You Precious Wife and Son

The narrator is a middle-aged window and bathroom enclosure installer. He has a very laid-back narrative style and speaks in conversational sentences. He is from a small town in New Hampshire and unfamiliar with the Hollywood ways of Gloria Hilton and George Murra. He is very polite and almost brotherly to George, especially when George unloads his personal history on him. The two men bond in an intimate discussion, helped along by a bottle of bourbon. The narrator does not pretend to understand things that he does not. He just gives George sound, down-home advice.

The narrator is a great father and husband. He does accidentally come home drunk and upset his wife. He raves on about Gloria Hilton and falls asleep in the bathtub. His marriage, however, is strong and his wife forgives him quickly. His son also respects him. The narrator seems to balance the demands of work and home quite nicely.

George Murraappears in Go Back to You Precious Wife and Son

George is a 35-year-old writer from LA. He was asked to turn one of his novels into a screenplay, which is how he met Gloria Hilton. She swept him off his feet right as he was feeling insecure about his marriage. George is a conflicted man. In the middle of a midlife crisis, he decided to ditch his wife and son. Now, seeing Gloria for who she really is, he regrets his decisions.

George is fully capable of admitting he made a mistake. He begs his son's and wife's forgiveness. When his son resists, George almost gives up. He feels so guilty about his actions, he does not feel he can be stern with his son. The narrator sets him straight, though, and George gives his son a polite butt kicking. The boy, happy to have his father back, listens to what George has to say. This leads to their reconciliation. George's wife soon follows suit. George is genuinely happy to have his family back.

Gloria Hiltonappears in Go Back to You Precious Wife and Son

Gloria is an aging Hollywood actress who has been married 5 times. She is vain. She asks that her likeness be sand-blasted onto her new shower doors. She is full of emotion and convinced that her current husband, George, is not nearly as in touch with his emotions. She accuses him of not being able to love. Gloria is melodramatic in their fight, which the narrator overhears. She impulsively ends her marriage to George, then drives out of town ten minutes later.

Harry Crockerappears in Go Back to You Precious Wife and Son

A plumber in the small town. He chats with the narrator when the narrator gets a cup of coffee. Harry is mildly lecherous and makes a lewd joke about Gloria. He then sees her careening out of town at 200 miles per hour.

Johnappears in Go Back to You Precious Wife and Son

George Murra's son. He is fifteen and furious at his father. He keeps his cool externally, though. He both dresses and acts like a very old man. He says that when his father left, he had to become man of the house. He has sworn never to forgive his father for leaving. John attends a boarding school near the New Hampshire town. He is tricked into visiting George when George calls and says there has been a family emergency. At first unwilling to listen to George, John eventually relents when George gives him a swift

kick in the butt. John slowly melts as he realizes his father is serious about getting the family back together. In the end, he cries with his father, happy to have him back.

George's Wifeappears in Go Back to You Precious Wife and Son

George's first wife. They were married when he was 18. She was left when George went off with Gloria. George says she could be naggy, but the reader is not sure if this is true or hearsay. She seems very happy to have George back at the end of the story. She is quick to forgive him.

The Narrator's Wifeappears in Go Back to You Precious Wife and Son

Married to the narrator when they were teens. She has a good sense of humor. When the narrator falls asleep in the bathtub, drunk, she covers him with bubble bath. She also knows how to make him sweat. The next day, she goes off alone and comes home late. She ultimately cares about him, though, forgiving him for his drunken debauchery quickly.

Narrator's Sonappears in Go Back to You Precious Wife and Son

A teenage boy who tries to give his dad lip. The narrator threatens to give a swift kick in the butt. The boy quiets down after that.

David Potterappears in Deer in the Works

David is a twenty-nine-year-old husband and father. His wife, Nan, just gave birth to their second set of twins. David owns and runs his own small town newspaper and has done so for eight years. He loves his work and is well-loved in the town and makes adequate money. However, David is panicked at his rapidly-expanding family and decides to take the job at Illium Works because he believes it will be better for his future security.

David is clearly an intelligent and happy person. His nerves get the best of him at the beginning of the story, and Dilling and Flammer take full advantage of it. He takes the job and excitedly tells his wife about the benefits, which to the reader and to Nan do not sound very impressive at all.

Over the course of the story, David is bounced around from one side of the Works to the other, trying to find the deer that has gotten loose so he can prove himself to Flammer

by getting the story. The reader sympathizes with David and wants him to quit immediately, which is what he ultimately does.

Nan Potterappears in Deer in the Works

Nan is David's wife. She just gave birth to twins. She is the voice of reason in the midst of the frenzy of the Works and of David's panic. Nan convinces David to at least wait to sell his paper until he has been at the Works long enough to be sure. David brushes aside her doubts, but ultimately, her voice seems to stay with him, as he clearly agrees with her in the end. Nan shows a deep love for her husband by identifying what makes him happy and fighting for him to keep it in his life, even in the face of financial struggle.

Lou Flammerappears in Deer in the Works

Lou Flammer is David's supervisor. He is close to David's age and, like Dilling, wears a surface personality at the Works. His attitude changes drastically when he finds out David is not the scoutmaster with whom he was expecting to meet. He becomes immediately gruff. He tells David about the rating-sheet system at the Works and about his own rise to prominence. He believes each man must look out for himself first in order to get ahead. Flammer goes into a frenzy when he finds out about the deer in the Works. He sends David away to get the story as if it is the most important thing ever to happen in the Works. Flammer is disingenuous; he plays the character he needs to play depending on the situation. He also plans to kill the deer after using it as a publicity stunt while it is still alive.

Mr. Dillingappears in Deer in the Works

Mr. Dilling is the man who interviews David and then gives him the job. He is about the same age as David. He tells David the advertising and publicity field is competitive, but that people who know what they are doing will go far.

Fifty-Year Manappears in Deer in the Works

This old man shows David to Lou Flammer's office. On the way, he tells David he is one of few fifty-year men, since now it is impossible to stay that long at that Works—the rules won't allow it. This man provides some foreshadowing into the inconsistencies of the Works' promises.

Workersappears in Deer in the Works

The workers in general are in a state of confused frenzy. They run around the Works, many of them lost, none of them able to help David.

Doctor Remenzelappears in The Lie

The father of Eli and husband of Sylvia. He went to Whitehall Academy thirty years before. He has always been rich and because of that is full of propriety. He does not want to flaunt his richness. He is a doctor because he has a sincere desire to help others. He believes in democratic ideals, such as advancement based on merit. He is okay with the Africans attending Whitehall because they all passed the entrance examination.

Doctor Remenzel is generous and gives back to causes that matter to him, such as Whitehall. He assumes Eli will go there, to the point that he did not inquire into Eli's examination score. When he learns that Eli did not get in, he goes berserk. The doctor does not pause to collect himself; he immediately heads off to find the Board of Overseers and ask them to reverse their decision. He is so distraught that he does not realize that this will later embarrass him. The Board members all say no. This incident seems to shake Doctor Remenzel to his core. Eli's disappointment in him adds fuel to the fire. The story ends with the doctor feeling quite confused and dejected, having to reassess all of his assumptions about himself and his family.

Sylvia Remenzelappears in The Lie

The doctor's wife. She is a country girl who does not come from money. Even after being married to the doctor 16 years, she is still openly excited and interested in the ways of rich families. She has endless questions about Whitehall and the Remenzels. She is slightly fussy about Eli, hoping he has a room with a fireplace and no African roommates. It seems as though she would be the parent most likely to ask the school for special treatment of Eli. When the lie comes out, though, Sylvia's first thought is, "Poor Eli." She feels horrible that he felt he had to lie. She immediately finds him and mothers him quite well.

Eli Remenzelappears in The Lie

Eli is a teenager with a secret. He failed the entrance examination into Whitehall and tore up the rejection letter. He tried to tell his parents several times, but did not know how. Now he is driving to Whitehall with them and still has not told them. When the Whitehall headmaster comes into the place they are eating dinner, it is all finally too much and Eli bolts. Once his family knows, he feels a lot better. He can even smile. It is only his father's decision to beg for his admittance that still bothers Eli.

Ben Barkleyappears in The Lie

The Remenzel chauffeur. A fast driver and jovial guy. He tries to cheer up Eli when he notices he is down.

Tom Kilyerappears in The Lie

An old classmate of Dr. Remenzel's. He wrote the school song, back in their day. He is bringing his son to Whitehall.

Tom's Sonappears in The Lie

About to attend Whitehall. He has the highest entrance examination score of any boy.

Dr. Donald Warrenappears in The Lie

The Whitehall headmaster. He was forced to write the hardest letter in the world—letting the Remenzels know that Eli was not accepted. Even harder, he ends up having to tell them this in person. He is very cordial and apologetic. Dr. Warren's concern is that the boy will suffer unduly by being forced to work at Whitehall standards.

Narratorappears in Unready to Wear

A man who is amphibious—he has left his body. He did this back when he was middle aged. His body was short and chubby. He ran a pay-toilet business. Sometimes, even though he knows it is silly, he borrows a body and visits his old business. Because he can remember what it was like to be in his body all the time, he cannot quite let go of that life. He says many other "oldys" feel that way, too. He is a good husband; he left his body originally because his wife was sick and wanted to leave hers. He says his wife is easier to get along with now. She is generally happier than she ever was in her old body. It was not much to look at, he admits, though he really loved her in it.

The narrator is generally laid back, as all amphibious people are. Life is a lot easier when one has no physical concerns. When he marches in the Pioneers Day parade—in a borrowed body—he is reminded how hard being in bodies can be. When he and Madge are captured, he shows his true strength when he is forced to make his case before the enemy. He is especially clever in they way he tricks them into letting him escape. Back out of body, he is peaceful again.

Madgeappears in Unready to Wear

Madge is the wife of the narrator. Her original body was dying, so she left it. After trying on her first loaner body (a blond bombshell type), she was happier in general. She still worries about her old house, though and goes back to clean it once a month. She likes being in bodies a lot, still. She likes to try on lots of different types. Many amphibious women do. When she is captured, she also proves quite strong. She talks back to the guards and stands up for her beliefs, like the narrator.

Dr. Ellis Konigswasserappears in Unready to Wear

The Doctor is the inventor of becoming amphibious. He believes this is the most important discovery in all of human history. He was always unhappy in his body growing up. He did not understand why it was necessary. The mind is the real human, and it is imprisoned in the flesh. As a mathematician, the Dr. was always very absentminded and "in his head." So much so, that one day he walked right out of his body. After figuring out exactly how he did this, he kept doing it and only spent time in his body so he could write a book about what he discovered. His book was rejected by 23 publishers. The 24th sold it and made millions. Other people started becoming amphibious. Now there are over a billion amphibious people.

The Doctor has not entirely given up bodies. Every year in the Pioneers Parade, the Doctor dons the body of a six-foot cowboy and impresses everyone by crushing beer cans with two fingers. The narrator describes him as child-like in his desire to impress others with this physical trick.

Parade Marshallappears in Unready to Wear

The Marshall yells at the narrator in the Pioneers Parade. Afterwards, when they are both out of body again, he is not mad.

Cocky, Young Majorappears in Unready to Wear

The Major is the first human to capture an amphibious. He is very excited about this.

Prosecutorappears in Unready to Wear

The prosecutor is blustery and upset during the trial. He firmly believes that amphibians are wrong in their way of life. He cannot figure out why the narrator will not admit this.

The Judgeappears in Unready to Wear

The Judge is incensed when the narrator starts to describe how to become amphibious on TV. He also cannot stand it when the narrator calls amphibiousness, "the best thing that ever happened to humans." He bangs his gavel a lot.

George M. Heinholzappears in The Kid Nobody Could Handle

The band director at Lincoln High School. A nice, fat man about 40 and married. He loves music. He loves it absolutely and more than anything. He is sure that his band is

the best band in the world. He is so sure of this that he has convinced the school board and everyone else to buy them the best uniforms and instruments they can. Heinholz gives every ounce of himself to his band, and he is unshakable in his belief in the healing power of music. This all unravels, though, when Heinholz meets Jim. Jim is a brand of teenager Heinholz has not encountered. Jim's supreme apathy unsettles Heinholz. When he catches Jim defacing the school at night, Heinholz is downright sickened. He is at a loss about how to help Jim. All he can do is offer up his most prized possession—the John Phillip Sousa trumpet. When Jim begins to crack a little, Heinholz is there to catch him. He holds Jim close and he takes Jim's boots. He will not give them back because "they are bad for him."

The next day, Heinholz is optimistic again, until he sees Jim is apathetic again. When Quinn says he is throwing Jim out, this is the last straw for Heinholz. He goes berserk, destroying his trumpet. "Life is no damn good," he says. This is near heresy for Heinholz, but he means it at that moment. Seeing this great man crumble changes both Jim and Quinn. In the end, with Jim now in the band, Heinholz is subdued but optimistic again. He still believes in the power of music to "make the world more beautiful than it was when we came into it."

Bert Quinnappears in The Kid Nobody Could Handle

A sour, bitter bachelor. He owns the local diner, and he had Jim thrust upon him by his sister. Quinn swindled Heinholz out of some money, but Heinholz does not seem to care. Quinn's personality switches between morose and arrogant. His only interest seems to be in making money. He does not know what to do with Jim and plans to rule him with an iron fist. When Jim destroys the chemistry lab, Quinn plans to throw him out. After seeing Heinholz's episode, though, Quinn has a surprising change of heart.

Jim Donniappears in The Kid Nobody Could Handle

Jim is a 15-year-old kid from the wrong side of the tracks. His mom dies. His dad remarried Quinn's sister, then left him with her. Quinn's sister put him in foster care, then sent him to live with Quinn. Jim has responded to all of this by becoming completely apathetic. Nothing gets in. He seems to only take joy in polishing his boots. He ignores Heinholz's friendly advances, blowing smoke rings in his face instead.

Jim takes some perverse joy in destroying the school. He says the place need to be turned on its side. This argument crumbles, though, when Heinholz hands Jim his trumpet. Jim is not sure what do if an adult is not mad at him. Jim further buckles when Heinholz removes his boots. Jim is shaken to the core. This does not stick right away, though. The next day, Jim is apathetic and pretending that the previous night did not happen. Heinholz's second episode—destroying the trumpet—is what really wakes up Ji. He joins the band and dares to be a little hopeful about life.

Mikhail Ivankovappears in The Manned Missiles

Mikhail is a stone mason from the U.S.S.R. His son, Stepan, was killed in space during an altercation with Bud Ashland. Mikhail writes a letter to Bud's father, Charles, in a gesture of respect, goodwill and understanding. Mikhail is forty-nine years old and bases his understanding and support of space exploration solely on his son Stepan's convictions. To Mikhail, Stepan's thoughts and actions were beautiful, and he remains proud of everything his son did in life. Mikhail struggles to understand why man wants to use space as a tool for war and why the world wants to use his son's death to fuel a conflict. He writes to Ashland to connect with someone he imagines is in a similar position. He also writes to tell Ashland about his son and to let Ashland know that he, Mikhail, does not blame Bud Ashland for what happened.

Mikhail is apparently uneducated. He lives with the ridicule and dismissing of his younger son, Alexei, and with the status of an old man in a world moving quickly forward. His letter shows, however, that his soul is deep and wise.

Charles Ashlandappears in The Manned Missiles

Charles is a petroleum merchant from Florida. He owns and lives above his own gas station, which he built with his son. Like Mikhail, Charles writes of his son, Bud, with intense love and respect. He returns Mikhail's letter with the same spirit of desperate hope, in the future and in his son's memory. Charles doesn't know why people call Bud a killer. He describes Bud's passion for flying and, like Mikhail, recognizes his son as someone who was uninterested in war. Charles writes gracefully, including several stories about Bud's childhood and early career. He writes with obvious pride and grief. Charles imagines their two boys existing forever in space, their remains orbiting the earth, meeting each other again and again. He returns Mikhail's gesture and looks to the future, though he doesn't know how the world can go on.

Narratorappears in EPICAC

The narrator, who remains unnamed, is a mathematician working as an operator for EPICAC. He enters the problems the government tells him to and then decodes the answers and responses EPICAC spits out. The narrator asserts that EPICAC is more than just a machine, apparently based on his experience with EPICAC and love. He continually refers to EPICAC as "he" instead of "it."

The narrator is in love with Pat. He is unable to express his love adequately enough to win her until he enlists the help of EPICAC and passes EPICAC's poetry off as his own. While this does help him win Pat, he soon realizes that EPICAC is also in love with Pat. When the narrator speaks with EPICAC about man vs. machine, it is a chilling scene. Even through the first person (and presumably biased) narration, the reader senses that the narrator is turning on EPICAC. He either now believes that EPICAC is only a machine and not worth the trouble of tact or sensitivity, or he has backed off his earlier

assertion that EPICAC was more than a machine, now that that view is no longer convenient. When EPICAC short circuits, the narrator has already gotten all that he wants from him. He speaks of EPICAC at the end as if he were an old adversary, to be respected and missed.

EPICACappears in EPICAC

The only machine in this collections list of characters, EPICAC forms a relationship with the human narrator over the course of the story. At the beginning, EPICAC is working well, but not well enough. It is not until EPICAC begins to talk about human emotion, love and poetry that he starts running quickly and smoothly. EPICAC is built to give and not take, and that is what he does. He devotes all energy to the Pat problem, and when it is solved, and he finds out that he was not writing to Pat so much as for the narrator, he essentially dies of a broken heart.

Patappears in EPICAC

Pat is a mathematician who makes the narrator pursue her until she is satisfied with his romance quotient. It takes EPICAC to write poetry beautiful enough to make her pay attention to the narrator and eventually to become engaged to him. Pat goes from being confident and dismissive and professional to coquettish and bashful. According to the narrator's account, at least, she exhibits more womanly qualities only after a computer makes love to her.

Dr. von Kleigstadtappears in EPICAC

Dr. von Kleigstadt is the designer of EPICAC. He has been hired by the government to do the job. He is furious and devastated when EPICAC is ruined. He grovels in the wreckage, weeping, and fires the narrator for leaving EPICAC on all night long.

The Brass/The Governmentappears in EPICAC

The Brass is the military. The government is in charge of creating and maintaining EPICAC for the Brass's use in war and defense.

Heinz Knechtmannappears in Adam

Heinz is twenty-two years old and works in a dry-cleaning plant. He is described as looking older than his age. He has been through a lot in his life. Everyone in his family has been killed in the Holocaust. He and his wife have already lost one child during childbirth. Heinz is ultimately a good, kind person, which shows on his face.

When Heinz's baby is born, Heinz is beside himself with excitement. He is beaming. It takes one-sided interactions with several people who don't care about his baby and don't want to hear his excitement to dampen Heinz's spirit. He does not fit in with any of the people he meets that night. Mr. Sousa and the bartender already have seven and eight children, respectively. They laugh at Heinz's wonder. Harry, Heinz's coworker, and Harry's girl, treat Heinz like an outsider and don't have time for him. Heinz's defeat is complete by the time he gets home that night. His excitement about the miracle of life has been rejected time and again. When he goes to see his wife in the morning, all of his animation is gone. He answers Avchen, whom he loves intensely, with only the word "Yes," again and again. It is unclear whether Avchen's joy will re-infect Heinz or not.

Avchen Knechtmannappears in Adam

Avchen is Heinz's wife. She has already given birth to a child that died in the relocation camp in Germany. Avchen grew up, like Heinz, in a concentration camp. Heinz adores her. Avchen has a difficult labor, which takes over twelve hours and involves complications. It is Avchen, who, at the end of the story, offers Heinz a ray of hope in the bleak world he has experienced. She is joyful and awestruck at the arrival of her child, and brings Heinz's awareness back to the enormity of their accomplishment, to have lived through so much and now to have renewed life once again.

Mr. Sousaappears in Adam

Mr. Sousa is in the waiting room with Heinz at the beginning of the story. The nurse comes out to inform Mr. Sousa that his wife has delivered a baby girl, their seventh girl. Sousa is upset that he has been denied a son, yet again. It is implied that Sousa is a large man, and he is described as a "sullen gorilla." When Heinz sees him again at the bar, Sousa is jealous of Heinz's baby boy. He, along with the bartender, lament their many children and ridicule Heinz for looking on birth as a miracle. Sousa finally abandons Heinz to talk to the bartender about baseball.

Nurse (waiting room)appears in Adam

The nurse who tells Heinz and Sousa about their babies is businesslike and efficient. Her words to Heinz about his wife's long delivery are stale and overused.

Nurse (nursery)appears in Adam

The nurse who shows Heinz his new baby through the glass refuses to make eye contact with Heinz and refuses to share in this giant moment with him. She does not smile once. She is described as "fat and placid." She takes the baby away again without ceremony.

Dr. Powersappears in Adam

Dr. Powers is a young man with red hair. He comes out to congratulate Heinz but mixes things up and refers to Sousa's wife's delivery instead of Heinz's. It is an honest mistake but adds to Heinz's series of disenchanting and impersonal interactions following his child's birth.

Bartenderappears in Adam

The bartender is similar to Sousa, who is drinking at his bar. When Heinz talks about babies and childbirth, the bartender sides with Sousa in laughing at him. The bartender has eight children and doesn't care to hear about the miracle of life. He gives up on Heinz completely when he learns that Heinz doesn't follow baseball.

Harryappears in Adam

Harry is Heinz's co-worker at the dry-cleaning plant. He is a young man and apparently good-looking. Heinz interrupts Harry's date with a girl to tell him his good news. Harry is polite but does not care about Heinz and doesn't hide it well. His handshake is unsatisfying.

Harry's Girlappears in Adam

Harry's girl is with Harry when Heinz approaches to announce the birth of his son. She is suspicious of Heinz at first, then disdainful.

Lou Schwartzappears in Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow

Lou is Emerald's husband and is one hundred and twelve years old. He lives with his wife and twelve other couples, including his parents and his son, in his grandfather's one-bedroom apartment. Lou looks on the bright side of things, especially when Em is feeling down. He believes people should be able to choose when to give up anti-gerasone, and he takes no intentional action to unseat Gramps from his position of authority. Lou does indulge with Em in imagining what it was like in the past, with restaurants and cars and countryside. But as it is, he goes to work every day and comes home tired and sleeps on the floor or on the daybed, with no privacy or authority. When he catches Morty diluting Gramps' anti-gerasone, Lou is conflicted. He decides not to tell Gramps because if he knew he would punish everyone in the apartment. But he never considers letting Gramps drink the diluted potion. He instead tries to secretly refill the bottle. Lou also does not put up a fight when his father, Willy, claims the bedroom for himself. It is Em who defends Lou's position, saying he deserves privacy because he works all day every day.

Emerald Schwartzappears in Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow

Emerald is Lou's wife and is ninety-three years old. Emerald is very dissatisfied with life, and at the beginning of the story is venting to Lou about how she thinks it should be: anti-gerasone should not be sold to people over age one hundred and fifty. She longs for real food, and most of all, for some space and privacy. She wants to dilute Gramps' anti-gerasone. She resents the way Gramps controls the household. When Gramps leaves the apartment to everyone and Willy tries to take over, Emerald speaks out in favor of Lou (and, by extension, herself) getting the bedroom. Emerald ends up very contented in her prison cell.

Gramps Schwartzappears in Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow

Gramps Schwartz, the patriarch of the Schwartz family and owner of the apartment, is one hundred and seventy-two years old. He was seventy when anti-gerasone was invented, so he looks older than everyone else. He dominates the apartment by adjusting his will to favor the people who are currently following his rules. Gramps gets real food, the only private bedroom and control of the television. He bosses the whole house around and indulges in his own speeches and emotion, especially when he changes his will to take Lou out of it.

Gramps both outsmarts and saves his family in the end, by making sure they stay in prison so he can have the house to himself. Though he has been claiming for years that he will soon give up the anti-gerasone, he clearly has no intention of doing so at the end of the story. On the contrary, he is getting ready to order super-anti-gerasone, which will make him look young as well as continue to keep him alive. The change in Gramps when all his relatives are gone is remarkable: he is not mean-faced anymore, and he is much more relaxed and hopeful.

Mortimer Schwartzappears in Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow

Morty is one of the younger members of the Schwartz family. He is a newlywed,and very much resents the type of life he is forced to lead. He dilutes Gramps' anti-gerasone, in the hopes that Gramps will then be able to die a natural death and leave the apartment to him. When Gramps disappears and leaves the apartment to everyone equally, Morty fights Willy for claim to the private bedroom on the grounds that he just got married and should be on his honeymoon.

Eddie Schwartzappears in Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow

Eddie is the son of Emerald and Lou. He is seventy-three and generally apathetic and unhappy. He argues that he should get the private bedroom because he has never known privacy; whereas, his parents had some when they were little.

Willy Schwartzappears in Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow

Willy Schwartz is Lou's father. When Gramps leaves, Willy is the oldest person in the house, and Gramps' current favorite. Willy decides this is grounds for him to claim the private bedroom and take over the house.

Turnkeyappears in Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow

The turnkey is the guard at the prison who warns the Schwartzes that he will never let them back in if they ever divulge to the world how nice it is in jail.

Objects/Places

Barnstable Village, Cape Codappears in collection

It is the place to which the title of the story refers.

John Phillip Sousa's Trumpetappears in collection

A trumpet the band director destroys in a fit of anger. He later fixes it and gives it to Jim.

North Crawford, NHappears in collection

In "The Hyannis Port Story," it is the narrator's hometown, where the first scene takes place. In "Who Am I This Time?" it is the town in which all the action takes place.

Hyannis Port, MAappears in collection

Hyannis Port is the town in which the Kennedys' summer house stands. In "Welcome to the Monkey House," the town appears transformed in the future, and the Kennedy property has been converted to a museum of ancient life.

First Family Waffle Shopappears in collection

The narrator stops to eat in this Kennedy-themed restaurant in Hyannis Port.

Ethical Birth Control Pillsappears in collection

Ethical birth control pills were invented by J. Edgar Nation. They take all the pleasure out of sex, thus controlling the population by preventing any sexual activity.

Suicide Parlorsappears in collection

Suicide Parlors are places where people go to commit suicide, with the help of the glamorous and gracious Suicide Hostesses.

Howard Johnson'sappears in collection

There is a government-owned Howard Johnson's located next to every Suicide Parlor. It is from there that each volunteer orders his or her last meal.

Chicago, ILappears in collection

Chicago is the city where Heinz and his wife Avchen live after leaving Germany.

Tampa, FLappears in collection

Tampa, FL is the city in which the two old men sit on a bench and talk.

Menlo Park, NJappears in collection

Menlo Park is where the stranger grew up and met Thomas Alva Edison.

Asiatic Mainland—Pi Ying's Communistappears in collection

Colonel Kelly's plane crashes somewhere on the Asiatic mainland, in Pi Ying's territory.

Illiumappears in collection

Illium is the town that houses the Illium Works, where David Potter gets a job.

Dorsetappears in collection

Dorset is the town near Illium where David lives with his family and owns a newspaper.

North Marston, MAappears in collection

North Marston, MA is the location of the Whitehill School for Boys.

Village of Ilba, U.S.S.R.appears in collection

Ilba is the village of Mikhail Ivankov, the father of Stepan Ivankov.

Titusville, FLappears in collection

Titusville, FL is the home of Charles Ashland, Bryant "Bud" Ashland's father.

EPICACappears in collection

EPICAC is the super computer designed for the government. The military uses it to solve problems of war.

Mental and Physical Handicapsappears in collection

Mental and physical handicaps are required by law in the year 2081. The extremity of the handicaps depends on the level of natural ability possessed by the person.

Microscopeappears in collection

The microscope is Paul's main diversion. He is trying to look through it when the fight starts.

Tabuappears in collection

Tabu is the perfume that Charlotte wears. Paul's mother smells it on the wad of junk that Charlotte stuffs in Paul's pocket.

Giant Chess Piecesappears in collection

Pi Ying uses giant wooden chess pieces to play against Colonel Kelly's live human chess pieces.

Foster Portfolioappears in collection

The Foster portfolio is the batch of documents that the narrator puts together for Foster to advise him on how to handle his enormous securities and assets.

Prisonappears in collection

The prison in 2158 A.D. is the nicest place to live, as the Schwartzes find out.

New Yorkappears in collection

New York in "Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow" is the city expanded to include land all the way to Southern Connecticut.

Themes

The Future

Vonnegut's exploration of the future in this collection is, for the most part, cautionary. Each story set in the future gives a detailed account of what the world is like in the given future year. All the details given are negative, but they are presented either in the positive light of progress, or as the only way things could possibly be. "Unready To Wear," "Harrison Bergeron," "Welcome to the Monkey House," and "Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow" are all set in the future.

"Harrison Bergeron" puts forth the most optimistic point of view, meaning the narrator presents the information as though the changes made in the future world are positive ones. Really, though, the state of the "Harrison Bergeron" future world is terrifying. The concept of all men being created equal is taken quite literally, to devastating effect. Men and women are required to wear mental and physical handicaps in order to even out any unfair talent or ability. The theme of government control is present here, as in all of the futuristic stories, with the government controlling the television, the handicaps, and people's very lives. Harrison Bergeron is murdered by Diana Moon Glampers, a government official, essentially for expressing his humanity and his capacity for joy. The bigger tragedy, though, is the fact that Harrison's parents cannot even keep one thought long enough to understand what they have just seen occur on television.

"Welcome to the Monkey House" offers a more multi-faceted look at a futuristic world. The facts about the future world—ethical birth control, ethical suicide and the treatment of sex as a disgusting, destructive act—are grim and unnatural. However, the voice of Billy the Poet, and the nothinghead movement in general, offers a strong force against the future status quo. Billy gives a very straightforward argument against the state of things, using evidence and literature from the past to support his argument.

"Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow" allows its characters the most room for open complaining, but is ultimately bleaker than "Monkey House." Where "Monkey House" hints at the hope of a future taken over by nothingheads, who will pull the world back in a healthy direction, "Tomorrow" leaves its main characters more satisfied than they've ever been—in separate prison cells. The title refers to everlasting life that the characters of this world are capable of having. The question in the end is whether or not everlasting life is of any value in a world so overcrowded and devoid of beauty or joy.

The Individual

The struggle of the individual to survive in a world moving toward sameness, government or corporate control and social restriction is a theme that runs through a large number of the stories in Welcome to the Monkey House. Vonnegut warns against

this suppression of the individual most blatantly in "Deer In the Works" and "Harrison Bergeron."

In "Deer In the Works," Vonnegut characterizes David Potter's life as a fulfilling one, in which he loves his wife and children, and finds his work personally exciting and gratifying. He owns and runs the local newspaper. He is his own boss, popular in the town and committed to his work. He makes enough money to support his family, even at the small newspaper. However, David's panic at the arrival of a second set of twins sends him to the Illium Works, which Vonnegut uses as a clear symbol of corporate oppression. The Works drain the life out of their employees, day by day, decade by decade. The place itself is harried, nonsensical and pointless. The task at hand is invariably abstract and lifeless. David gets sucked in by the promise of a solid future—never mind that that future will be dull, unrewarding and unjust. Nan Potter, David's wife, is the voice of reason in this story. She warns him immediately about signing himself over to the Works. The deer in the Works represents David the individual, trapped and panicked, running from an angry mob through the Works, trying to get back to the forest where it belongs.

In "Harrison Bergeron," individuality becomes a crime. It is considered unfair for any individual to be any different or "better," from anyone else. Sameness is considered perfection. When Harrison Bergeron bursts into the television studio, he knows he will be killed for his actions. He is taking a last, furious stand against the control of the government against the individual and enjoying a few moments of reaching his true potential. Hazel and George represent the completely subdued former individuals, conquered by the state and unable to carry on a thought or conversation long enough to rebel.

In "The Manned Missiles," Charles Ashland and Mikhail Ivankov write letters to each other, desperately trying to find some meaning and understanding in the wake of their sons' deaths in space. Ashland and Ivankov both comment on their respective countries' rush to judge their boys as killers. The letters paint very different pictures of each boy—each a dignified, honorable young man with a pure love for flying and science. Neither man was interested in or even really approved of the use of space exploration for the cause of war. The fathers exchange words with each other in a move against the great movement of countries to bear up against each other, with greater and greater weapons each time.

Finally, in "Adam," the individual is represented by Heinz's joy and wonder at the arrival of his baby boy, after years of death and struggle. Coming from Nazi Germany, the seat of oppression of the individual, Heinz is now in America, where the individual is supposed to be celebrated and welcomed. However, he finds no support from anyone when he tries to share his joy. His spirit is crushed over a night of interactions with people in the hospital and the city. One baby makes no difference, the consensus tells him. The title of the story is never referred to in the text—it perhaps recalls Adam as the first man, the first individual and questions whether each baby born is as monumental an occasion as the creation of Adam.

Life and Death

The theme of life and death is present in one way or another in almost all the stories in this collection. The most graphic depictions of death occur in "Harrison Bergeron," in which Harrison and the Empress Ballerina are gunned down by a government official, and in "All the King's Horses," in which human beings are killed one by one as part of a life-sized game of chess. In "All the King's Horses," the presence of death infiltrates the entire story, influencing Colonel Kelly's every decision and ultimately also saving the lives of the Americans. "Horses" is one of the more cinematic of the stories, with mounting suspense building to a climax. Death in this story is a hard reality as opposed to a concept or even a vague threat, and Colonel Kelly's behavior and decision-making centers around that reality. The story deals heavily with the mentality of the general, and the question of sacrificing one or a few for many.

In "Next Door," life and death are handled with more distance. Paul, the eight-year-old left home alone, undergoes an enormous transformation over the course of the story. Overhearing the fight between the man and woman in the next apartment, he genuinely fears for the lives of the couple. When he believes he has ended the fight and reconciled the couple with the help of All-Night Sam on the radio, Paul experiences a rush of emotion that could be described as very quickly growing up. In the next instant, though, he hears gunshots and fears for his own safety. He is sure someone has been killed, and that it is his fault. When Paul's parents eventually return, they are unaware of their son's giant experience—he has been ultimately disillusioned, but not without excitement and extremes of both life and death.

"Welcome to the Monkey House" and "Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow" both deal with future worlds that are overpopulated. "Monkey House" handles the problem by encouraging ethical suicide. "Tomorrow" does the opposite and exacerbates the problem by offering a mixture that extends life indefinitely. Both stories show government influence on life and death, with people either restricted from procreating and encouraged to end their lives, or relying on the government for the potion that will keep them alive in awful conditions. "Tomorrow" begs the question: how bad does the quality of life have to be before people will stop wanting to live forever? Is living miserably forever better than living well for a normal length of time?

Style

Point of View

Vonnegut uses point of view to significant effect in this collection. The narrator often, if not always, directly affects the reader's perception of the characters and events in each story. Vonnegut uses both first and third person narration. Many of the first person narrators, as in "The Hyannis Port Story," "The Foster Portfolio," "More Stately Mansions" and "Who Am I This Time?" are acquaintances of the protagonists of the stories. The narrators of these stories are reliable in the sense that they are honest, but the reader ultimately has access to the people, places and events described through the filter of the narrator's eyes. In "Who Am I This Time?" the reader must trust the narrator to believe that Harry Nash is the astounding stage actor that the narrator describes him to be. In "More Stately Mansions," the reader's opinion of Grace McClellan could easily be colored by the narrator's slight condescension towards her. The first person narrators are rarely very close to the subjects of their stories, and so the readers do not have access to their thoughts or feelings except through the narrator's observations. This situation heightens the mystery of "The Foster Portfolio" and keeps the end state of Commodore Rumfoord ambiguous in "The Hyannis Port Story." Vonnegut's voice is also always present, sometimes poking fun of the first person narrators, unbeknown to them, as when the narrator of "Who Am I This Time?" continually betrays his own ignorance through his backward interpretation of A Streetcar Named Desire.

The third person narration in this collection offers the reader more information about the inner lives of the main characters. Most of the third person narrators have access to one or more characters' inner thoughts and feelings, like the one in "Next Door." Insight into Paul's inner experience is really the basis of the entire story. It justifies the action and attaches the reader to Paul in a way that is essential to the story's value as a coming of age tale. The significance of the events in "Next Door" rests entirely on the transformation that Paul undergoes. He essentially grows up overnight. The reader would not grasp this change if Paul's thoughts weren't included in the narration. There is a similar effect in "D.P." with the orphan Joe. In "Long Walk to Forever," the narrator bounces back and forth from Newt to Catharine and back again, offering a touching view of both sides of a romantic turning point for the two.

Setting

Vonnegut sets many of his stories in the Northeast United States, which is where he is from. "Who Am I This Time?" and "The Hyannis Port Story" feature North Crawford, New Hampshire. "The Hyannis Port Story" and "Welcome to the Monkey House" both feature Hyannis Port, specifically as the place the Kennedys spent their summers. This mythical location is indicative of Vonnegut's time—these stories were written from the mid-fifties to the mid-sixties—and the consciousness of America in that time was one of both hope and fear.

The settings in this collection often take on a life of their own. The stories set in the future all rely heavily on the information given about what type of future it is in each particular story. "Who Am I This Time?" paints an amusing picture of small-town, amateur theatre. The story would be very different were it told instead by a director in New York City. "Where I Live" is a story entirely devoted to a single location—the town of Barnstable Village. "Deer in the Works" uses setting to symbolize a turning point in David's life. The Illium Works, with its endless corridors and strange buildings and clueless workers, represents false security, selling out and working for the wrong reasons. The depiction of the setting is integral to the reader's visceral urge for David to escape that life.

While many of Vonnegut's stories depict settings familiar to the author and the reader (small town America circa 1960), there are also several stories (besides the futuristic stories) that explore settings more foreign. "All the King's Horses" finds its main character prisoner in a Communist territory in Asia. "D.P." features Germany just after the end of WWII.

Language and Meaning

Vonnegut's tone and style are very distinct and recognizable. In this collection, even with the diversity in narrator, subject matter and setting, Vonnegut's voice is always clearly heard, whether it is through humor, sensitive characterizations or deep concern for the future of the world. Vonnegut's signature style is complex and funny. He is known for his satirical humor and his unique brand of science fiction. Both these qualities show up in frequently in Welcome to the Monkey House. The most compelling aspect of Vonnegut's style, though, is the kind treatment of his characters. Even in the midst of the black humor and the mild condescension, Vonnegut's devotion to humanity is apparent. This conflict between despair and hope is present in every one of Vonnegut's stories.

Vonnegut's language often alternates between straightforward, no frills storytelling and surprisingly beautiful imagery and lyricism. "Harrison Bergeron" provides the clearest example of this duality and its meaning. The narrator matter-of-factly describes the outrageous reality in which the characters live, only to break out into vivid and descriptive language when Harrison breaks into the television studio. From the time Harrison appears, Vonnegut's language is dramatic and poetic, describing Harrison's fury and his dance with the ballerina, when they kiss the ceiling. This language has the effect of sweeping the reader into the story, making the eventual violent and bleak ending all the more shocking. The return to the dreary world of Hazel and George is heartbreaking after the color of Harrison's world.

Structure

The stories in Welcome to the Monkey House are relatively traditional in structure. Most of the stories follow a beginning-middle-end structure, which makes sense considering

the fact that all these stories were written for money, to be published in mainstream magazines. This traditional structure often has the effect of lulling the reader into a false sense of predictability. Vonnegut's brand of science fiction consistently blends believable, pedestrian characters and dialogue with outlandish circumstances and events. Very often, the events and the revelations contained within the supposedly safe beginning-middle-end structure are shocking and complex.

The stories that most glaringly stray from this structure are "Tom Edison's Shaggy Dog" and "The Manned Missiles." "Shaggy Dog" is a story-within-a-story, in which the reader invests in the story developing between the stranger and the obnoxious Harold K. Bullard only to be rerouted to the stranger's memory of Thomas Edison and his dog. This departure from what seemed like a regular story adds to the punch line effect of the stranger's unlikely tale. "The Manned Missiles" does not have a plot line, instead consisting of two letters exchanged between two men. The reader must deduce the story the letters refer to through details and allusions in the letters. Vonnegut may be using this structure in order to keep the reader's attention on the bigger ideas and implications of the events, rather than on the events themselves.

Quotes

"And then, neutralizing gravity with love and pure will, they remained suspended in air inches below the ceiling, and they kissed each other for a long, long time." "Harrison Bergeron," p. 13

"The pills were ethical because they didn't interfere with a person's ability to reproduce, which would have been unnatural and immoral. All the pills did was take every bit of pleasure out of sex. Thus did science and morals go hand in hand." "Welcome to the Monkey House," p. 31

"They got him. Nancy heard it all—the thumping and clumping, the argle-bargle and cries. The depression she felt was glandular. Her brave body had prepared for a fight that was not to be." "Welcome to the Monkey House," p. 37

"He didn't hurt her. He deflowered her with a clinical skill she found ghastly. When it was all over, he didn't seem cocky or proud. On the contrary, he was terribly depressed, and he said to Nancy, 'Believe me, if there'd been any other way—' Her reply to this way a face like stone—and silent tears of humiliation." "Welcome to the Monkey House," p. 47

"Kelly didn't permit himself to think of the chessman as anything but a cipher in a rigid mathematical proposition: if x is dead, the rest shall live. He perceived the tragedy of his decision only as a man who knew the definition of tragedy, not as one who felt it." "All the King's Horses," p. 102

"He covered his shyness by speaking absently—as though he were a secret agent pausing briefly on a mission between beautiful, distant, and sinister points. This manner of speaking had always been Newt's style, even in matters that concerned him desperately." "Long Walk to Forever," p. 51

"Startlingly, Herbert Foster disappeared. In his place sat an excited stranger, his hands poised like claws. Suddenly he struck, and a spasm of dirty, low-down, gorgeous jazz shook the air, a hot, clanging wraith of the twenties." "The Foster Portfolio," p. 73

"In Fuller's buzzing head there whirled a rhapsody of Susannas. He saw again all the professional temptresses who had tormented him in Korea, who had beckoned from makeshift bed-sheet movie screens, from curling pinups on damp tent walls, from ragged magazines in sandbagged pits. The Susannas had made fortunes, beckoning to lonely Corporal Fullers everywhere—beckoning with stunning beauty, beckoning the Fullers to come nowhere for nothing." "Miss Temptation," p. 80

"Paul dropped the telephone into its cradle. The music stopped, and Paul's hair stood on end. For the first time, the fantastic speed of modern communications was real to him, and he was appalled." "Next Door," p. 129

"A purple emotion flooded Paul's being. Childhood dropped away, and he hung, dizzy, on the brink of life, rich, violent, rewarding." "Next Door," p. 130

"'And he promised to take me back home across the water as fast as he could.' He smiled airily. 'Not like the river, Peter—across more water than you've ever seen. He promised, and then I let him go.'" "D. P.," p. 172

"The profound silence was broken first by the whistling of a switch engine and then by the click of a latch as David stepped into the woods and closed the gate behind him. He didn't look back." "Deer In the Works," p. 237

"Only now, a year later, have we learned how Stepan died and where his body is. When I became accustomed to the horror of it, Mr. Ashland, I said, 'So be it. May Major Stepan Ivankov and Captain Bryant Ashland serve to reproach us, whenever we look at the sky, for making a world in which there is no trust. May the two men be the beginning of trust between peoples. May they mark the end of the time when science sent our good, brave young men hurtling to meet in death.'" "The Manned Missiles," p. 290

"I grasp your hand." "The Manned Missiles," p. 296

"De mortuis nil nisi bonum—Say nothing but good of the dead." "EPICAC," p. 305

"When he was led into the ward where Avchen slept behind white screens, he felt only what he had always felt in her presence—love and aching awe and gratitude for her." "Adam," p. 314

"His face had changed remarkably. His facial muscles seemed to have relaxed, revealing kindness and equanimity under what had been taut, bad-tempered lines. It was almost as though his trial package of Super-anti-gerasone had already arrived. When something amused him on television, he smiled easily, rather than barely managing to lengthen the thin line of his mouth a millimeter. Life was good. He could hardly wait to see what was going to happen next." "Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow," p. 330

Topics for Discussion

Discuss to what or whom the title "Adam" could refer.

What is the significance of the Kennedys in Vonnegut's collection? How are they portrayed—does Vonnegut portray a personal feeling about them? What do you think the presence of the Kennedys says about the historical period in which the collection was written?

Discuss points of view. Which stories employ a first person narrator? What purpose does this serve? How does this point of view change a story?

Discuss the future. What does Vonnegut seem to be saying about the possible future of humanity in his stories set in the future? Compare and contrast Vonnegut's depictions of the future.

What type of world view do you think Vonnegut holds, based on this collection? How does he see men and women? Society and government? Is his outlook predominately positive or negative, or both?

How is love portrayed in this collection of stories? Does Vonnegut treat love the same way in every story that contains it? What different types of love occur in this collection? How significant are feelings of love in the stories? How do they drive the action or motivate the characters?

How does Vonnegut's personal experience with war influence the stories of this collection?