The White Hotel Study Guide

The White Hotel by D. M. Thomas

BOOKRAGS

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Plot Summary

Frau Lisa Erdman, a young opera singer of Polish Catholic and Ukrainian Jewish descent living in Vienna, Austria, has been suffering from severe pain in her left breast and ovary for several years. When conventional doctors are unable to help her, she seeks the treatment of Professor Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis. Freud interviews her, gathering information about her past to try to understand what is ailing her in the present. He learns she suffers from intense, psychosexual hallucinations, and asks her to write something to explain what they are like. The result is Chapter 1 of *The White Hotel*, "Don Giovanni." It's so named, because it is written between the staves of the opera's score.

The poem is a vivid, outrageous tale of a young woman who meets a young soldier on a train and immediately has a sexual relationship with him. They stay together at the white hotel, a mystical and mysterious place where orange groves fall from the sky, and there are no consequences for the couple's actions. During the couple's time at the white hotel, four disasters kill nearly every guest: a flood, a fire, a landslide, and a cable car accident. While the couple is not involved in any of the incidents, they watch them all as they make love. Freud, struck but confused by "Don Giovanni," asks Lisa to write an analysis of her hallucinations. Instead, she gives him "The Gastein Journal," Chapter 2 of *The White Hotel*. The journal is a retelling of "Don Giovanni," though in a third-person, expanded form.

To share his experiences with Lisa with his colleagues, Freud writes a case study of her therapy, "Frau Anna G.," Chapter 3 of *The White Hotel*. In it, he details Lisa's life and therapy. When Lisa was a girl, her mother died in a hotel fire while on vacation. At 17, Lisa left her family home in Odessa, Ukraine, to attend ballet school in St. Petersburg. There, she had a relationship with a fiery young revolutionary named Alexei. Though she became pregnant with Alexei's child, he left her to pursue his politics and she miscarried the baby. After being kicked out of school, Lisa lived with her mentor, Madame Kedrova, but when Madame Kedrova got married, Lisa went to live with her mother's twin sister, Aunt Magda, in Vienna. In Vienna she became an opera singer and married a barrister, but her marriage failed and her career was cut short by her illness. Through therapy, Freud explores Lisa's childhood and tries to find a root to her pain and a reason behind her hysteria. He discovers that her hallucinations spring from sexual encounters, and declares Lisa bisexual. He also discovers her uncanny ability to sense when someone is going to die. After Lisa recalls a repressed memory of her mother and uncle having an affair and confirms that they died together in the fire, her pain subsides and she and Freud end her therapy.

Lisa's life after Freud is chronicled in Chapters 4 and 5 of *The White Hotel*. She returns to her opera career and is called to Milan, Italy, to fill in for the Ukrainian soprano Vera Serebryakova-Berenstein, who is injured. In Milan, Lisa befriends Vera and her husband, Victor, who sings the opera's male part. Though Lisa leaves the opera early, she leaves as a lifelong friend to Vera and Victor. Not long after, however, Vera dies in childbirth and Lisa's old friend Madame Kedrova dies of cancer. Lisa's pains return in

full force. Not long after, she receives a letter from Freud asking for her permission to publish her writings along with his case study. This begins a correspondence in which Lisa reveals several lies she told Freud, including the true nature of her relationship with Alexei and her conflicts with her father. After Lisa tells Freud she disagrees with parts of his analysis, they stop writing to each other. Lisa feels better for awhile, having come to terms with her life and herself. One day, she receives a letter from Victor asking her to come to Kiev, Ukraine, to marry him and be mother to Vera's son, Kolya. Lisa eventually agrees, and for a while things go well.

About ten years after her marriage to Victor, Lisa is living in a slum with Kolya and Victor has been taken in the night by the government. A sign appears in the city one day instructing all the city's Jews to meet at the Jewish cemetery the next morning, and Lisa and Kolya pack and follow the orders. As they and the crowd move slowly down the street, they are unsure where they are going. One rumor says they are being shipped to a ghetto, while another says the Germans are evacuating them to Palestine, to the Holy Land. As Lisa and Kolya near the enclosure where they are supposedly to board a train, Lisa realizes there is something else going on. They are herded into the enclosure, beaten, and stripped naked. Lisa manages to get herself and Kolya freed for a while, because she has a Ukrainian identification card. Unfortunately, their liberation is short-lived. Like thousands of other Jews, Lisa and Kolya are murdered at the Babi Yar ravine. The final chapter of *The White Hotel* follows Lisa in the afterlife. The white hotel reappears, now a camp for immigrants to the Holy Land. Lisa meets her mother and reunites with Alexei and Vera. Though things are not perfect in this land and there are thousands of new immigrants overwhelming it, Lisa finds herself finally truly happy.

Prologue

Prologue Summary

The prologue consists of a series of fictional letters between Sigmund Freud, his colleagues, and their friends. While several of the letters discuss current events, the main focus of most is the unusual psychosexual writings of one of Freud's young patients.

The first letter, written September 8, 1909, is from Freud's contemporary Sandor Ferenczi to his lover, Gisela, discussing a conference he, Freud and Jung are attending. He discusses the tensions between Freud and Jung and the closeness between Freud and himself, focusing on a time in which they shared their dreams and analyzed them together. Freud has no trouble analyzing Ferenczi's dream, which is about Gisela. It is revealed that Gisela is married and does not wish to leave her husband until her daughters are grown, and Ferenczi fears this means she does not want to marry him.

Freud writes to Ferenczi in the next letter, written February 9, 1920. The letter is an obvious reply to a letter not included, in which Ferenczi offers his condolences to Freud on the loss of his daughter. Freud tells of his disgust with the shock treatment of soldiers in Vienna General Hospital, then moves on to his more important part: the writings of the young woman. He tells Ferenczi the woman "gave birth" to the writings, which are inspiring Freud to examine the death instinct as well as sexual behavior.

On March 4, 1920, Freud writes to Sachs, giving him the young woman's writings as a "parting gift" for Sachs' travels. Freud gives a more detailed background on the young woman than before. He explains that when she left his company in Vienna she was ill and thin, but upon returning from the health resort of Gastein and writing the journal, she was in much better condition. She is a respectable, shy woman who had been a gifted musician before her illness, Freud explains, but in the writings uses "gross expressions." Though Freud is sending only a copy to Sachs, he adds that the woman originally wrote her fantasy on a score of "Don Giovanni." Freud then briefly shares some gossip about Ferenczi and a few others before closing with a lament for his daughter.

Sachs replies with a postcard March 14, 1920, thanking Freud for his gift of the journal. He makes passing references to the writings, and shares his interpretation of her fantasy of being "like Eden before the fall."

The final letter is from Freud to Herr Kuhn, secretary of the Goethe Centenary Committee in Frankfurt, Germany, on May 18, 1931. Freud apologizes for the lateness of his reply due to illness, but has enclosed his paper (presumably regarding the death instinct discussed in earlier letters) along with the young woman's writings. He apologizes, as to Sachs, for the obscenities in the "poor verses" and pornography in "the expansion of her phantasy."

Prologue Analysis

As in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, opening the book with a series of letters grants a sense of reality to the story. This effect is enhanced in *The White Hotel*. Though the letters from Freud, Ferenczi, etc. are fictional, the characters writing them are not, so readers familiar with Freud or his contemporaries have an immediate sense that the story could actually happen.

The main subject of the letters is the young woman's writings. Each letter reveals gradually more about either the character of the woman or the content of her writings, though it is never revealed exactly who she is or what her fantasies are. These hints serve to both prepare readers for the following two chapters and draw them in. For instance, in the letter to Herr Kuhn, Freud's apologies for the woman's vulgar writings prepare readers for those writings, which are printed after. Freud's comment to Sachs that the woman has never *actually* met his sons helps readers to realize that the young soldier in the next chapter is, in the woman's fantasy, Freud's son.

Freud's noting of his research into the Death Drive foreshadows several things in the book. While the young woman's writings reveal an obvious obsession with death, later chapters describe the actual circumstances of her death. Other events are foreshadowed more subtly. Later in the book, for instance, readers will discover what happens between Ferenczi and Gisela.

Chapter 1, Don Giovanni, Section 1

Chapter 1, Don Giovanni, Section 1 Summary

A poem, addressing a "you" named Professor, begins with a brief description of a dream where the dreamer is trying to escape something through a trap door but cannot open it. This brief scene segues into the story of a woman, the poet, who meets a man, the Professor's son, on a train. The man initiates sexual contact then takes the woman to a white hotel by an emerald lake, where the two spend the day having sex. The next day there is a storm and several hotel guests drown in the lake, but the young couple continues to obsess over each other even when the victims are buried. The woman describes various sexual acts between two, focusing on nipples and fingers. Intense images of fallings stars and lightning accompany the woman's descriptions.

The story skips ahead, and the couple has been at the hotel for an unknown number of days. During this time, one of the hotel guests finds a black cat that survived the flood by climbing to the top of a pine tree, and the woman begins to menstruate. The couple decides to leave their room and join the rest of the guests at this point. They eat and dance, but the young man can't stop touching the young woman, so they retreat outside before returning again to their room.

Chapter 1, Don Giovanni, Section 1 Analysis

These scenes open the writings that Freud describes in his letters - the psychosexual hallucinations of an ill young woman, written between the music on a score of the opera "Don Giovanni." The young man in the poem is Freud's son and the Professor addressed is Freud.

As Freud warned in the letters, much of the language used in this section can be considered vulgar. The terms used to describe sexual acts and organs are particularly shocking for the time in which the woman wrote the poem (the early 20th century) and the woman's sophistication and background as explained by Freud.

The use of imagery is intense in this section and in the poem as a whole. The most prominent images are the storm, the shooting stars, and blood. The storm is both frightening and beautiful. It destroys a pagoda, sinks a boat, and causes a flood that kills several of the hotel guests, but the man and women are practically oblivious to this destruction. Instead, the woman compares the wind and lightning to the intensity of sex with the man. The shooting stars serve a similar purpose, showing up when the woman is particularly ecstatic. When the woman begins to menstruate it does not seem to embarrass or deter her or the man, and blood, too, is depicted as a beautiful thing.

The woman uses poetic devices that reveal her character. The verse is occasionally in iambic pentameter, which shows she is educated. The verse is less consistent, however, when she is describing sex, implying her loss of inhibitions and tradition. She

also uses some rhyme and word play (ending one line with "blue" and the next with "blew," for instance) that show she is not completely dedicated to form and considers the writing somewhat playful.

Chapter 1, Don Giovanni, Section 2

Chapter 1, Don Giovanni, Section 2 Summary

The man and woman take a trip on a yacht on the lake, and while they are sailing, one wing of the hotel catches fire. While they and the other passengers on the yacht watch burning guests flinging themselves out of upper windows, the couple has sex. That night, while the other guests are mourning, the couple makes love.

The woman dreams she is a figurehead on a ship, the *Magdalen*, which is impaled on a swordfish, partially sinks and is coated in ice. Whales sing to the woman and things seem peaceful, but then a storm begins. Ice cuts off one of the woman's breasts, she gives birth to a "wooden embryo" that is taken by the wind, and the force of the weather tears her womb out.

When the woman wakes up in the hotel she is relieved at how warm and peaceful the room is, and how no part of her body is missing. The man watches her, and they go out on the balcony and have sex.

Chapter 1, Don Giovanni, Section 2 Analysis

While readers discover the meaning of the fire and other disasters later through Freud's analysis, it becomes obvious at this point that the woman is obsessed with sex and death. Though sex distracts her from death, the two are intertwined through the horrible events the woman witnesses while having sex with the man.

The dream is filled with symbols that do not have clear meaning yet, but are important to note at this point. The breast, the embryo, and the womb point to the woman's fear of pregnancy and her own sexuality, but are given greater meaning later in the book.

At the end of the section readers are introduced to the flower, another sexual/beautiful image that appears throughout the poem. The woman often associates flowers and flowering with ecstasy.

Chapter 1, Don Giovanni, Section 3

Chapter 1, Don Giovanni, Section 3 Summary

In this section, readers are introduced to a few of the white hotel's other guests, who the woman says died while they were at the hotel: a corset maker, a priest and a chef. The corsetiere is a friendly woman who seems lonely. The priest is old, kind, and joins the couple for dinner. The chef runs the kitchen at the white hotel.

One night as the woman and man are having sex, they watch as stars, roses, and orange trees fall into the lake. That night, the woman begins to produce milk. First the man drinks from her breast, but later in the dining room the priest joins in, because the milk reminds him of his dying mother. There is so much milk that the chef enters and fills a glass with it, and soon many other guests and the hotel band are drinking the woman's milk.

The couple returns to their room filled with desire. They bring the corsetiere with them, and the three have sex together. Meanwhile outside, some other guests (including the priest) hold a funeral for those who died in the flood and fire. A landslide comes and buries them all.

Chapter 1, Don Giovanni, Section 3 Analysis

Milk is the central image in this section. It is nourishing to the woman, who gets to act as a mother although she has never been one. It is nourishing also to the guests at the hotel. The old priest is comforted by it, the chef is able to cook better than ever because of it, and the rest of the guests celebrate with it. This section is particularly joyful, because the woman, who so often simply watches things, starts making things happen when she begins producing milk. The milk is also a reference to the bounty (and color) of the white hotel, a place literally flowing with milk and honey.

The corsetiere serves as the next step of the woman's breaking out of her routine. She is already being sexually deviant with the man, and now adds a woman into the mix. This foreshadows Freud's later assertions about the woman's sexuality.

The landslide further enforces the mixing of sex and death at the white hotel. Once again, a disaster occurs while the woman is having a particularly intense sexual experience.

Chapter 1, Don Giovanni, Section 4

Chapter 1, Don Giovanni, Section 4 Summary

The man and woman take a walk up the mountainside near the white hotel. They stop to have sex by a stream and are interrupted by a nun, who tells them they can continue unembarrassed, because the steam removes all sin. As they make love, the woman believes the stars are gone, and then realizes they are falling in the form of snow.

From the mountain the man points out what he believes to be parachutists, but what the couple discovers to be several hotel guests falling from a broken cable car high above the mountains. The woman spots the corsetiere first, and this excites the man so much that they start having sex again as the guests fall into the lake and trees.

The couple returns to the hotel, which remains lively. The burned wing is rebuilt, and there are so many guests that they have to turn people away. One night, a young woman is let in, because she is going to have a baby. The poet listens to the woman screaming. One day, the chef appears outside the couple's window, painting the trim. They invite him in, and they all have sex together.

In this final section, the woman addresses the professor again, asking if she is too sexual. She acknowledges that the son changed her normal sexual behaviors, and relates this to how wonderful the hotel is.

Chapter 1, Don Giovanni, Section 4 Analysis

The key element in this section is the woman's analysis of her own behavior. She is not defensive, but rather accepting of the sexual changes she has made since coming to the white hotel. There is an implied nervousness, still, which is revealed by the scene with the nun. In order to justify her fantasies and avoiding feeling guilty, the woman works in the magical stream that removes sin.

The stars/snow in this scene are images that show how immersed the woman is in the world of her fantasy. While her earlier visions of stars and flowers were in the distance, the snow lands on her and around her. She also begins to note the details of death more intimately in this section, comparing the bodies falling from the cable car to ballerinas.

Chapter 2, The Gastein Journal, Section 1

Chapter 2, The Gastein Journal, Section 1 Summary

Though "The Gastein Journal" is written in third-person prose rather than first-person poetry, it tells essentially the same story as "Don Giovanni" and expands on it. The chapter begins with a woman running through the forest from unknown pursuers. She finds a trapdoor with an iron handle, but it won't open so she can escape. A small boy appears, telling her not to be frightened, because he is alive too. As she feels bullets hitting her, the woman wakes up. It is all a dream. She is on a train, sitting next to a young soldier. As the woman looks out the window, the soldier admires her. They begin to talk, and the woman continues to question the soldier to distract herself from the visions she is having of him in his coffin. She tells him she is a widowed opera singer on the way home to her 4-year-old son, who is staying with his grandmother. The soldier has been a prisoner of war, and now is going home to his family, the Freuds of Vienna.

The train stops and all the passengers get off except for the soldier and young woman. After the soldier changes into civilian clothes, he sits by the woman and begins rubbing her thighs. He lights her hair on fire with his cigar, which ruins the mood for a moment, but then the man returns to fondling her. The soldier invites the woman to stay with him at a hotel his knows of instead of going directly home. They switch to the train that will take them up into the mountains to the hotel, and are joined by other passengers including a baker and his family. When they leave the train they check in at the peaceful, almost sleepy hotel, and rush immediately to their room to make love.

On the second night a storm comes with winds so forceful a large rock flies through the couple's window. The maid tells them this caused a small boat to sink, killing some of the hotel guests. As the storm rages outside, the couple has sex. When the weather improves, they go out to the balcony and watch the Leonid meteor shower while people bring in drowned bodies below. Two days later, the hotel is still feeling the affects of the storm, which has flooded the basement and billiard room. A British major rescues a black cat that had been stranded in a tree by the flood. As the woman watches, she realizes she is menstruating and asks the maid for some toiletries, because she left her suitcase on the train.

The couple looks at photographs of the soldier's family, and while the woman is drawn to Freud, the soldier seems concerned about his little sister. Later, to get out of their room, the couple goes to the lobby for dancing and dinner. The soldier cannot control himself, though, and they return to make love upstairs.

Chapter 2, The Gastein Journal, Section 1 Analysis

The change in structure and point of view are vital to "The Gastein Journal." Moving away from the poetic form makes the narrative clearer, and in this section it is difficult to tell the story is a hallucination. The third-person voices takes readers out of the woman's head, so the details are less focused on imagery and more on what is "actually" happening.

There is a distinct shift in language in this section as well. Rather than slangy vulgarities, this narrator uses technical names for sexual acts and organs, as well as euphemisms such as "make love." Since this is later revealed to be Freud's young patient's second draft of her hallucinations, this change could be because she is embarrassed by the language used in the poem. The language shift also reflects the change in point of view, because the vulgarities were the thoughts of the woman, and the story here is filtered through an omniscient narrator.

There are also some important moments of foreshadowing in this section. The boy in the dream reappears later in the book, when the woman is much older and facing terrifying circumstances. The soldier's sad glances at his sister in the pictures are also a sort of foreshadowing. In the world of the book, this chapter was written *before* Freud's letters in which he talks of his daughter's death, hence the woman in her fantasies has anticipated that event in this writing. This hints to readers that the woman has some sort of prophetic perception.

The reappearance of the black cat in this section shows that it is and will be an important symbol throughout the book. Traditionally, black cats symbolize bad luck, and this cat is certainly surrounded by luck. While he has the good luck of being able to escape the flood, his appearance follows one horrific event and comes before several others.

Chapter 2, The Gastein Journal, Section 2

Chapter 2, The Gastein Journal, Section 2 Summary

This section comprises several postcards from guests at the hotel, describing what they have experienced so far. The first several post cards describe an afternoon on a yacht. An old nurse describes a young paralyzed couple that sits together on the yacht. A priest writes to his mother, pointing out religious imagery on the yacht and mentioning a girl who drowned in his arms. The Japanese maid describes a "moon couple" who is out on a yacht for the day, leaving her to finally rest without changing their sheets. A corsetiere brazenly comments on what the young couple on the yacht near her is doing, then mentions trying to enjoy the holiday without her husband. The major complains about the crowding on the yacht, adding he didn't think the flood got rid of enough people.

The next few postcards describe a fire that occurs while the yacht passengers are out on the lake. A botanist mourns over his rare specimen of edelweiss, which was burned in the fire. A banker's wife tells of her disgust that a young man "pulled his girl on to his lap" on the yacht while everyone else was panicking. An insurance broker describes watching people throw themselves out windows, noting he's glad he brought his wife on the yacht with him. His wife, in turn, writes that she is glad she convinced her husband not to stay at the hotel all day. A pastor comforts himself in that the dead will be raised. The baker's wife writes that she lost her mother in the fire, but is trying to stay cheerful for her children. The mistress of a salesman assumes the fire was caused by one of the maids smoking. A retired couple passes on the rumor that the sun reflecting off snow on the mountains somehow caused the fire.

The final postcards describe more general events at the hotel. An opera singer tells her family she's resting in the mountains, is enjoying things, and will be home soon. A seamstress mourns her dead daughter, then promises to be home as soon as the girl is buried. A lawyer complains that all the people wailing over dead people are keeping him up at night. A retired prostitute tells how someone complimented her figure, and is thankful that her unnamed illness doesn't show.

Chapter 2, The Gastein Journal, Section 2 Analysis

These postcards advance the plot while introducing and reintroducing several of the important guests at the white hotel. The woman and soldier are strangely central to many of the postcards, implying that the events at the hotel somehow revolve around them. The different writers' reactions to their actions can be read as Freud's patient's own reactions to her writings - at times disgusted, other times amused, other times accepting.

The second set of postcards describes the same fire that occurred in the poem section of the book, though from different angles. This disaster hints there are more disasters to come, as in the poem, and the seamstress' comment about burying her daughter suggests that the next disaster will be a landslide during the funeral, as it is in the poem.

A few of the final postcards are particularly important. The opera singer is the young woman, and her postcard is the most unspecific of them all. A second postcard, the one from the retired prostitute, is equally vague and does not explain what is ailing the woman. This foreshadows what readers learn later about Freud's patient's mysterious pains.

Chapter 2, The Gastein Journal, Section 3

Chapter 2, The Gastein Journal, Section 3 Summary

The guests gather in dining room of the hotel, weighed down by the disasters. The army major, Lionheart, announces that he would like to meet with everyone in the billiard room to discuss something urgent. Everyone gathers in the room, accompanied by the black cat, which was singed in the fire but survive.

Lionheart begins by telling them that death happens all the time, there are things happening at the hotel are not so common. He is challenged by the German lawyer, Vogel, to explain what he means, and Lionheart mentions the unusual brightness and number of falling stars. A watchmaker points out the elm trees' leaves have all turned red. While some of the guests acknowledge these strange things, others are nervous. The major excuses them to get drinks before continuing the discussion.

While the guests are gone, Vogel confronts Lionheart about panicking the ladies with his ideas. Lionheart replies that it is best for everyone's safety if they realize that things are not quite right at the white hotel. When the guests return, Lionheart reminds them it is important to be honest about what they have seen so they can try to explain them. He asks if anyone else has seen the remarkable lightning striking the lake, and this begins a string of admissions from the guests. The secretary says she's seen a school of whales, and Bolotnikov-Leskov, a politician, explains the whales could have been "called" by Madame Cottin, a corsetiere, because she uses whale bones in her work.

This inspires other guests to tell their strange stories. The Lutheran pastor says he saw a breast flying through the trees, and a woman explains she recently had a breast removed. Vogel, breaking down, admits he saw a petrified embryo floating in the lake, and his sister confesses to an abortion 10 years earlier. Due to her sobbing the pastor escorts her out, and as they leave, the baker admits he saw a womb in the lake. Everyone is amused by the baker's lower-class accent, and the conversation moves on.

No one is able to explain the stars, lightning, or red leaves, nor the glaciers that top the mountains. Lionheart decides to close the meeting, and Bolotnikov-Leskov asks that anyone who seems anything else strange should report to them immediately. As everyone leaves, the old nurse stops the baker to tell him that she believes he saw a womb, because her young niece whom she is nursing recently had hers removed.

Chapter 2, The Gastein Journal, Section 3 Analysis

This section gives names to several of the characters who wrote the postcards and, more importantly, brings back the symbols from "Don Giovanni." while the stars, lightning, leaves, etc. are not yet explained, the items from the woman's dream are.

The whales, breast, embryo, and womb all appear here outside of the woman's dream and are explained by things that happened to people in the hotel. Either the woman's clairvoyance brought her these images in the dream or all the people who tell stories to explain the strange happenings are actually the woman. Later, in Freud's analysis of the hallucinations, he shares his interpretations of this event and the symbols within.

Chapter 2, The Gastein Journal, Section 4

Chapter 2, The Gastein Journal, Section 4 Summary

Several days later, the young couple returns to the dining room. They discover their usual table is taken up, so they sit with Madame Cottin. She tells them how her husband died in the flood, and although her heart is broken, she is getting better. As she amuses the couple with stories, they fall in love with her. After dinner they escort her to her room and from their room listen to her cry, as they have for many nights.

That night the couple argues over another magnificent event. The woman believes there are white roses falling into the lake and the soldier believes they are stars. When a grove of oranges falls from the sky, they stop arguing. On the balcony next door, Madame Cottin is also watching the lake, though she sees lanterns on the water. The couple and Madame Cottin return to their rooms, listening to the silence on either side of the wall. The soldier tells the woman about his childhood, then tells her about his father's theory that there are four people in the room whenever two are in bed, and the woman sees Freud and his wife standing in the room.

The soldier and woman remain in their room for the next few days, while Madame Cottin and the priest become friends. Cottin and the priest walk through the woods one day and stop at an inn, where they encounter Vogel and Bolotnikov-Leskov discussing politics. Meanwhile, the couple is having an argument, because the soldier demands to know the woman's sexual history with her dead husband and the woman believes it is irrelevant. They make up, and the woman performs oral sex for the first time in her life.

Suddenly the woman's breasts are full of milk, and to celebrate, the couple goes to the dining room. They sit with the priest (Father Marek) and Madame Cottin, but the woman's breasts are so full she opens her dress. The soldier drinks from one, and the woman offers the other to Father Marek, because he looks lonely. This makes the whole room excited, and when the chef enters, Madame Cottin insists he fill his wine glass with some milk. Soon nearly everyone joins in.

The sun sets and everyone calms down except the couple and Madame Cottin. While they go upstairs to the couple's room, the funeral procession for those who died in the fire and flood leaves. Madame Cottin, the woman, and the soldier all begin kissing and touching each other, because it makes Madame Cottin forget her sadness. Soon Madame Cottin and the soldier have sex.

At the funeral, Father Marek and the Lutheran pastor bond over faith and Lionheart remembers all the people he has buried. He thinks of his nephew, a lieutenant, who will be arriving at the white hotel the next day to go skiing. Bolotnikov-Leskov thinks about his political philosophy, as he stands over the coffin of the young woman revolutionary

he came to the hotel with. As Father Marek preaches about Jesus' burial shroud and the pastor closes the service, a violinist watches as the hotel's resident black cat springs from the retired prostitute's arms and tears off down the path. A few women faint, and suddenly Lionheart hears what he believes is thunder, then realizes is a landslide coming down the mountain toward them.

The woman watches out her window as the mourners are buried in the landslide, but then returns to bed with Madame Cottin and the soldier. The maid is shocked to see all three of them, but brings them wine anyway. As they drink, the woman considers how the experience has made her relationship with the young man stronger. The wine makes her breasts fill with milk again, and they all begin to drink. The soldier surprises Madam Cottin and she bites the woman's breast, making her bleed. Downstairs, the two survivors of the landslide, Bolotnikov-Leskov and Vogel, come into the hotel.

Chapter 2, The Gastein Journal, Section 4 Analysis

Much of this section feels scattered, because it jumps from person to person several times. This shows the interconnectedness of everyone at the hotel, as does the scene where the woman shares her milk with the other guests in the dining room. As it was in the poem, the milk is an image of nourishment and bonding.

Other symbolic liquids in this section are semen, wine, and blood. The woman performs oral sex on the soldier just before her breasts fill, as if his semen somehow transfers itself into her milk. Wine, too, precedes her breasts filling in the scene with Madame Cottin. The scene where they drink wine, the woman's breasts fill, and Madame Cottin bites the woman, causing her to bleed, coincides with Father Marek's sermon. In Catholic Communion, wine transubstantiates into blood. Blood is also significant here, because people just outside the couple's hotel room are dying in the landslide.

The woman's mixed feelings about sexual acts in this chapter are important to notice. While she is reluctant to perform oral sex on the soldier at first, she later enjoys it. Her inhibitions weakened, she is later willing to bring Madame Cottin into their bed.

The black cat once again foreshadows disaster to come, and his continued presence at the hotel suggests the tragedy is not over. Another small but significant moment of foreshadowing is when Lionheart's mind drifts to his nephew during the funeral. This young lieutenant does appear at the white hotel, though much later.

Chapter 2, The Gastein Journal, Section 5

Chapter 2, The Gastein Journal, Section 5 Summary

The next evening the couple decides to take a walk, though they want to have tea first. When the Japanese maid enters, the woman notices she has been crying and asks why. The maid explains that she had become friends with Lionheart, who died in the landslide. She shows the couple a book of Lionheart's poems, in which he had included a translation of one of the maid's poems.

On their walk, the couple stops by a spring near a convent to make love. A nun comes to the spring to wash linens for Father Marek and other Catholics' burials, and the woman is embarrassed. The nun explains they have nothing to fear, because the water washes away sins. She finishes her washing, as the couple has sex.

The couple continues on to the top of the mountain, and as they walk they discuss the woman's missing luggage. All she really wants, she says, is a toothbrush. They reach their destination, an observatory, but there is no telescope and it is too late and cold to hike back to the hotel. As they make love on the floor, snow falls in through the slit where the telescope should be and the woman fears she may become pregnant.

The next morning there is snow covering the mountain and the lake. The couple ventures down the mountain a ways and then stops at a small platform with a telescope. They find the hotel through the lens, and look at the things in their room. The soldier begins to play with the telescope, swinging it to look at different things, until he sees something familiar, which is Madame Cottin's corset. At the sight of Madame Cottin falling through the air from a broken cable car in the distance, the soldier is overcome by lust.

As the couple has sex on the mountainside, the other hotel guests fall from the broken cable car. The baker's son holds tight to the black cat, and as he hits a pine tree and snaps his back, he twists to keep the cat safe. Madame Cottin feels freed by the fall and watches as the men hit first while she and the women plummet to their death more slowly, held up by their skirts.

The couple walks through the graveyard outside the convent and then continues to the hotel. As they come closer to the lake, the woman watches the fish swimming in the water, which reminds her of sperm. When they get back to the hotel, only Vogel, Bolotnikov-Leskov, and the ill young woman with her nurse remain, while new guests have moved in.

Over dinner, the woman and the soldier discuss the poetry of the Japanese maid, who died in the cable car accident. The soldier finds it funny, but the woman is upset by its

eroticism. She admits to the soldier that she fears becoming obsessed with sex, and thinks vulgar things about it. She mentions that when she isn't thinking about sex she's thinking about death, though often she thinks of both at once. What she does not say out loud is that she can foresee death.

To cheer the woman up, the soldier buys her a drink. They sit and visit with some of the newcomers, who are fascinated by the cable car accident. Drunken Vogel says the accident was not as bad as it could have been, because several of the people who died were "Yids" (a derogatory term for Jews). Bolotnikov-Leskov apologizes for his friend. A Belgian doctor asks him if perhaps the accident was a result of political terrorism, and their discussion upsets the other guests, who leave.

Back in their room, the young couple considers how busy the white hotel is. The phone rings all night, and even though so many guests have died, there are always more to take their places. Recently, a young couple came to the hotel, and although there was no room, they let them in, because the woman was going to have a baby.

The staff and visitors at the white hotel band together to restore the burned wing, and soon routine is back to normal. One day, while the couple is busy in their room having anal sex, the chef stops by their window, paintbrush in hand. They invite him to join them, and the woman enjoys being "occupied" by someone new. The couple remains in the white hotel as the chapter ends, and while the woman misses her friends and sometimes feels closed in, she sees a peaceful vision of swans diving at the lake.

Chapter 2, The Gastein Journal, Section 5 Analysis

Pregnancy is a central element in this section. Though the woman has a child at home, it is obvious she fears becoming pregnant, and asks the soldier for reassurance that she will not conceive. Her preoccupation with pregnancy is reflected in images. The woman watches snow drifting in the slit in the observatory's ceiling, and this can symbolize sperm entering the vagina. The woman later sees fish in the lake, and immediately thinks of sperm. Toward the end of the scene, the pregnancy theme is further enforced by the young woman who has her baby in the hotel.

An element of foreshadowing in this section is when the woman mentions she wishes she had her luggage. Later in her life, the woman will have her luggage taken from her. The black cat again foreshadows something, though this time not immediately. Though this chapter of the story is completed, the black cat is still alive, suggesting that the tragedy in the woman's life is not over.

When the woman mentions her obsession with death, she thinks about her ability to foresee death, and earlier foreshadowing is fulfilled. This scene also reinforces the theme of death that has been in the book since Freud mentioned the death drive, each person's need for death, in his letters. Another element that is introduced in this section ties in with death. Vogel's prejudice against Jews and Bolotnikov-Leskov's attempts to

excuse his friend reflect the German and Russian roles in the Holocaust, which play an important part later in the book.

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 1

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 1 Summary

Freud writes a case study of a 29-year-old woman he calls "Frau Anna G.," whom he treated in 1919. Anna has been suffering from severe pains in her left breast and ovary, eats very little, and suffers breathing problems. While Freud treats her, he discovers she also suffers from intense hallucinations.

Freud gives a brief overview of Anna's history for his readers. Her father was a Russian Jewish man and her mother was a Polish Catholic woman, and their marriage estranged them from their families, with the exception of her mother's twin sister and her husband. Anna had one brother, five years older, to whom she was not close. They lived in Odessa, Ukraine, where her father, an energetic but workaholic man, owned a grain-exporting business. While her mother was always sweet and indulging, her father was only really relaxed when he was on the family yacht. Each summer, her aunt and uncle would visit from Vienna, her father would take some time off work, and Anna would enjoy weeks of spending time wither her doting family.

Freud writes that although Anna's childhood seems idyllic, there is one horrible stain. Her mother often went on trips to Moscow, Russia, to shop and go to the theater, and on one of these trips, she died in a hotel fire. Anna learned of her death from a maid on the night of a terrible storm. Freud immediately relates the first two disasters in Anna's hallucinations, a flood and a hotel fire, to this incident.

In the wake of Anna's mother's death, her father grew increasingly distant, leaving Anna to her nurse and governess. Her uncle died shortly after her mother, and her aunt could not afford to visit. Feeling abandoned by her family, Anna focused on her studies and was talented at learning languages, music, and ballet. Her remaining attachments to her father were ruined when she was 15 and ventured to her father's docks to witness a political disturbance. A group of men there verbally harassed her and her friends, and her father punished her instead of comforting her. At this time, Anna experienced her first breathing problems.

At 17, Anna was accepted for a ballet school in St. Petersburg and left home. She lived in a poor corner of the city, where she befriended a young revolutionary, who Freud calls "A." They had an emotional affair rather than a physical one, and A. eventually left Anna for his causes. At the same time, Anna was gaining weight unsuitable for a prima ballerina, and had to leave the school. She was taken in by Madame R., a young widow who had been her teacher at the school. Freud writes that Anna's times living with Madame R. are her happiest memories.

One day, after Madame R. had unexpectedly remarried, Anna's aunt wrote to ask if Anna would come live with her in Vienna. Anna agreed, and formed an immediate bond

with her aunt, because she looked so much like her mother. In Vienna, she embraced her aunt's

Catholic faith and became a virtuoso cello player (Freud uses cello rather than voice to keep Anna's true identity hidden). Soon she met a young barrister, and they were married. Anna's husband was later called to serve in the army's legal department, and while he was away, Anna became an even more talented musician.

During this time, however, Anna also began having periods of breathlessness and her first pains in her breast and ovary. She gave up her music and decided she couldn't make her husband happy, so she left him and moved back in with her aunt. For the four years before Freud meets with her, she sought treatment but found none.

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 1 Analysis

The structure of "Frau Anna G." is as one of Freud's case studies. This adds authenticity to the story in a similar way the letters in the prologue do. The case study structure also allows the author to tell the same story as chapters 1 and 2 in a manner removed from the mind of the subject. Here readers have Freud's authoritative voice telling them what happened to Anna and how to interpret it. It is important to keep in mind, though, that what Freud knows is only what Anna has told him, and may not be completely accurate.

In this section, readers also begin to see some explanations for references in Anna's poem and journal. Anna's problems with her breast and ovary relate to the hallucination's references to breasts and pregnancy. The kind but not entirely trustworthy character of Bolotnikov-Leskov, a Russian revolutionary, reflects Anna's ambivalent relationship with Russian people. While some, such as Madame R, were very kind to her, those with political aspirations (A. and the men on the docks) were not, and neither was her father.

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 2

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 2 Summary

Freud writes that Frau Anna's childhood is not sufficient to explain her severe hysteria, so he knows she is hiding something deeper. He believes her breast and ovary pain is a clue to what is really harming her. Questioning Anna, however, is difficult. As it is cold, she often is too sick to come to sessions, and she is always reluctant to answer his questions, particularly sexual ones. Freud solves this problem by realizing she touches her crucifix necklace whenever she withholds the truth, and so he accuses her of things when he knows she is lying. To defend herself, Anna tells the truth.

One anecdote Freud shares in the case study is his convincing Anna to tell the truth about A., her friend during ballet school. While Anna claimed at first she and A never had sex, Freud convinces her to reveal that they did. He then accuses her of becoming pregnant, losing the ballet scholarship and then losing the baby in a fall down the stairs. Anna reveals that she was pregnant, but lost the baby in a fall in the ballet studio.

One day, Anna comes to Freud with a dream, which is rare. In the dream, she is being bothered by a man on a train. She gets off a train at a platform that says Budapest and goes to a house numbered 29 and tries to unlock it, but can't. She goes to house 34 and it opens. Inside, she finds her mother's umbrella and meets a man who tells her the house is empty and his daughter is dead. The dream made Anna feel like she didn't exist to the man. To Freud, this means Anna could kill herself. He asks her to try interpreting the dream further, and she tells how a man bothered her on the train to St. Petersburg when she was young. Freud also brings up that Anna's brother recently immigrated to America, and suggests that house 34 represents her brother, because he is 34 years old and the house is empty. The old man, then, is Anna's father, who was left alone when his son moved.

Freud's final interpretation is that Anna wishes she could be her brother so that her father would love her. The train represents her life and getting off means a new destiny. The white room in the house is her mother's womb, when Anna is reentering to be born as a boy.

Freud questions her further about the young man on the train, but she remembers more of the dream instead. In the dream, she tells the man on the train that she's going to Moscow to visit relatives and will have to sleep in the summer house, and he replies that she'll have to take all her clothes off to stay cool. Freud interprets this as Anna's wish to be young again, when her mother was alive. This conversation inspires Anna to tell another story about her childhood. Her family's house in Odessa had a small summer house, and one day Anna found her uncle and aunt carousing in it. When Anna went to tell her mother, she found her asleep and decided not to disturb her. Freud is unsure how to interpret this memory, other than that it is Anna's first experience of adult sexuality.

For a while, Anna's therapy with Freud does not progress. She claims her symptoms are getting worse so she can't come to their meetings, and decides to have her breast and ovary removed. Freud finds her impenetrable, because all though she is in pain, he has still not found the source of her hysteria.

Freud then finds out that his daughter Sophie died unexpectedly, and breaks off Anna's treatment. When he returns to work, he finds a letter from Anna, who is visiting a health resort at Gastein with her aunt. She says she believes the man in her dream was Freud, and she knew his daughter was going to die. Anna shares that she believes she has some psychic powers, but Freud does not take her seriously.

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 2 Analysis

This section, like the rest of the chapter, is fairly straightforward, because it is basically Freud's summary of Anna's life and treatment. The most significant themes in this section are death and predicting death. Freud senses a desire for death in Anna that is reflected in her earlier writings. His daughter's death expands the books death themes outside of just Anna. Based on Anna's writings, this is not the first time she predicts someone's death, and chances are it will not be the last.

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 3

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 3 Summary

When Anna returns from Gastein, she appears to be changed. She is happy and healthy, but Freud senses her hysteria is only manifesting itself differently. He asks her to write down what she is feeling, and she produces "Don Giovanni." Freud decides she includes his son in her fantasy, because she wants to take the place of his daughter. He is confused and upset by her writings, so he asks her to go home and write an interpretation of her hallucination. Instead, she returns with "The Gastein Journal," which Freud decides will explain everything if they study it.

Freud interprets the white hotel as the mother's womb. It's a place where there is no sin or guilt. He says the focus on orality ("sucking, biting, eating, gorging, taking in") reflects a baby's first years, and the hallucinations are a way of returning to this safe time. The disasters, however, reflect how Anna's time with her mother was cut short.

Anna believes she is cured, is embarrassed by the writings, and wants to destroy them. Freud convinces her to go through them with him, though, and tell him whenever something inspires a memory or explanation. She tells him she stayed at a white hotel in Gastein, and there was a pool she wished were a lake. She explains that several of the characters were based on real people. There was a British major at Gastein, but he had been shell shocked and was convinced his dead nephew was coming to see him. He called a meeting once to tell everyone they were under attack, and Anna decided to write a scene around it. She included the Japanese maid she had had as a child. She thought the maid would get along with the major. Bolotnikov-Leskov is how Anna imagines A. grown up. The band, the baker, and the pastor were all at Gastein. Finally, Anna reveals that the retired prostitute is herself, because of her "unruly thoughts."

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 3 Analysis

This is a significant part of "Frau Anna G.," because it explains the origins of "Don Giovanni" and "The Gastein Journal." Rather than assuming the writings are a direct translation of Anna's hallucinations, readers now understand that they are influenced by real events and more rational parts of Anna's mind.

Freud's analysis also brings out several aspects of Anna's writings that readers may not have caught on to without background in Freudian analysis, such as the white hotel being Anna's mother's womb. This is a tool of the author to make the book more accessible to readers without this knowledge while still applying Freudian ideas to Anna's problem. For more examples of Freud's case studies, D.M. Thomas suggests in his author's note that readers refer to volumes 3, 8, and 9 of the Pelican Freud Library, 1979.

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 4

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 4 Summary

A few weeks after resuming Anna's treatment, her symptoms return. In rereading her writings, Freud decides Anna's sexual history is a root of her hysteria. She tells him her only relationships have been with A. and her estranged husband. Since she believed having a baby would bring trouble, she and her husband practiced *coitus interruptus.* Therefore, their marriage was annulled when she left him. Freud asks who the couple in her hallucination is supposed to be, and Anna says they are based on some honeymooners at Gastein. The woman is partly herself, as well. The couple caught her attention, because she foresaw the husband's death.

Anna turns the conversation to the corsetiere Madame Cottin, who she believes to be Madame R. from her days in St. Petersburg. Corset-fitting was an appropriate job for Madame R., because she stressed discipline in her ballet studio. Anna implies some discomfort with Madame R.'s marriage, which Freud relates to Madame Cottin's intrusion into the young lover's bed. Anna then changes subjects to her relationship with her husband, but she seems to be holding something back. Freud threatens to quit her therapy, and she eventually admits that she feared sexual contact with him, because it would trigger her hallucinations. Anna believes the hallucinations appeared to prevent her from having a baby. At Gastein Anna had come to terms with never having children, but returning to Vienna made her breast and ovary symptoms return.

Freud decides that the couple in Anna's dreams could not represent her marriage. Anna tells him the character closest to her husband is Vogel, the German lawyer. Her husband's family held some anti-Semitic views, and did not know of Anna's Jewish background.

Later, Freud gives Anna a case study of a man obsessed with anal intercourse, because it related to the incident with the chef in Anna's writings. Anna reveals with difficulty that she and A. had once had a fight over politics while on a yacht, and A. went into a rage. He burned her hair with his cigar, verbally abused her, and had sex with another woman in front of her. He apologized later, resulting in her moving in and becoming pregnant. Anna tells Freud that had she not miscarried, she would probably have killed herself.

Anna's symptoms grow worse, and she begins to starve herself again. She asks Freud how they will heal her if her hysteria is based on forgotten past events. He replies that reliving the memories should lead to healing.

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 4 Analysis

In this section, Anna repeatedly hides things from Freud before he forces confessions out of her. Her halting answers and tendency to change the subject suggest that she is still not telling him the whole truth, foreshadowing later revelations in the book.

Freud makes a passing reference to Anna's "Cassandra-like abilities" to foretell death. In Greek mythology, Cassandra was the daughter of the king and queen of Troy and could see the future. Apollo fell in love with her and she rejected him, so he cursed her so no one would believe her predictions. This gives added insight to Anna's troubles. She did not tell Freud she dreamed about his daughter's death, because she was afraid, perhaps that he would not believe her. Even after her prediction comes true, Freud doubts her. His use of "Cassandra" suggests that *he* does not believe the deaths she predicts or sees in her hallucinations will happen in real life.

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 5

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 5 Summary

At this point, Freud begins relating Anna's troubles to his theory of the death instinct. He thinks of the paradoxes in Anna's life, when she stops herself from things that would make her happy. For instance, she wants children but refuses to have one, because she thinks bad things would happen. He finds her compulsion to constantly relive the hotel fire and storm strange, but decides her hysteria causes an exaggeration of the normal human conflict between life instinct (libido) and death. For examples of this conflict, he cites children's tendencies to build things then destroy them, and Goethe's struggles with being weary of life. Freud continues to struggle in the root of Anna's hysteria. He is puzzled that her pains and hallucinations occurred during a time in her life when she was happy and successful.

Anna arrives one day in a wonderful mood, because she has received a letter from Madame R., who now has a 3-year-old son and wants Anna to being his godmother. During her joy, however, Anna's pains increase, and Freud suspects she is jealous of Madame R. Anna denies it, but she touches her crucifix so Freud knows she's lying. Anna quickly changes the subject, and tells Freud about the onset of her pains. While her husband was in the military, he met an acquaintance of Madame R. and passed the news to Anna that she was pregnant. Anna tried to decide what to send the baby and her aunt suggests a crucifix. Satisfied, Anna returned home and wrote a happy letter to her husband.

During her story, Freud notices Anna touching her crucifix, and tells her how important it is that she explains that gesture to him. Anna nervously tells him that the night she and her aunt discussed the gift for Madame R.'s baby, her aunt told Anna about the crucifix she wore. Anna's mother had had it, but she ripped it off on her wedding day. It was put in a box and later given to Anna. The aunt felt bad for criticizing her sister, so she told some happy stories to Anna for awhile. She shows Anna some pictures of herself and Anna's mother, remarking the only way to tell them apart was who wore a cross and who didn't.

Thinking of her aunt triggers another memory in Anna. It is the memory of the summer house again, though slightly different. Anna realizes the woman sleeping on the rock was wearing a crucifix, and so must have been her aunt. Therefore, the woman cavorting with her uncle in the summer house must have been Anna's mother. Though Anna managed to repress this realization as a child, it upsets her greatly as an adult, because it scars her perfect memory of her mother.

Anna gets more upset, because she realizes that, unlike her mother, she is alone and has no one to share her life with. She decides she would travel to go see Madame R., but wouldn't make her happy, because Madame R. is pregnant. Freud decides that Anna is jealous not of Madame R. having a baby, but that she wants to have Madame

R.'s baby. Freud writes that Anna must have homosexual tendencies, because her hallucinations appear when she has sexual contact with men, and her only good relationships have been with women. He suggests that Madame Cottin's role in the hallucinatory writings agrees with this, because Madame Cottin has more life and personality than the soldier.

Anna refuses to accept this, until Freud tells her that her pains result from her rejecting the homosexual part of herself because of her moral character. Anna weakens her resistance, but instead of talking about sexuality wants to talk about her mother's affair with her uncle. Anna realizes that her mother's frequent trips were not to shop, but rather to see the uncle. She remembers the sailors who assaulted her insinuating her mother was meeting a lover when she died at the hotel. Freud encourages Anna to follow up on these theories, because he thinks she is wrong and wants her to realize it. Anna visits her uncle's grave and discovers that her mother and uncle did, in fact, die on the same day.

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 5 Analysis

The repeating image of the crucifix in this chapter should lead readers to further examine the meaning of this symbol and the role of religion in Frau Anna's life. Crucifixes traditionally symbolize Christ's suffering, and Anna has a tendency to touch her crucifix when she is suffering, deciding how much of the truth to disclose. This also foreshadows Anna struggle with her religious identity later in life, and the suffering she faces when she chooses.

There is an extension of the Cassandra reference in this section. Anna believes her memory of the summer house means her mother and uncle had an affair, and when Freud does not believe her, she proves herself right. This puts Freud's reliability into question, and readers should wonder whether his assumptions ever cut short or distort Anna's revelations about her past.

This section also casts light on the fear of pregnancy exhibited in Anna's writings. Readers understand that her alter-ego's fears stem from Anna's real-life struggles with wanting a baby. The brief mentions of a 4-year-old son in the hallucinations could also relate back to this. Anna learned of this godson when he was three, and the son in the hallucination could be Anna's transferring Madame R.'s son to herself.

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 6

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 6 Summary

To summarize his case report, Freud relates Anna's history to the Oedipus complex. Like all young girls, Freud says, Anna wished her mother dead so she could be with her father. However, when this wish came true, everything backfired and her father became even more distant. Anna supported herself by relying on kind women, and rejected the notion that her mother had an affair and was not perfect. Freud concludes that Anna's rejecting the truth about her mother as a child manifests itself in her breathing problems, possibly reflecting difficulty breathing in a fire.

Freud writes he is not surprised that Anna had a relationship with someone like A., because Anna had already begun a pattern of destructive relationships with men. To recover, Anna went, naturally, to a woman, Madame R. When that relationship also failed, she found relief in her aunt, who looked just like her mother. Freud says that Anna married in a desperate attempt to prove herself normal, but when she was reminded of Madame R., she escaped the hypocritical marriage. Freud attributes her hysteria to denying the real reason she left her husband. He is still puzzled why it caused pains in her left breast and ovary, but concludes that psychoanalysis is never fully completed and it might be revealed later.

Feeling better, Anna leaves Freud's care to pursue her musical career again. Freud believes she is healed of everything but a natural libido, though she is still in denial about her sexuality. He explains to his readers how "Don Giovanni" and "The Gastein Journal" were written to pave the way for Anna's dredging up childhood memories. Freud asks those who read Anna's writings to realize that the soldier is an amalgamation of many men in Anna's life (though her uncle is more likely the chef) and that the women in the hotel are different sides of Anna. The writings, Freud says, allowed Anna to come to terms with her mother's faults and her own. Freud sticks by his earlier statement that the white hotel is the mother's womb, where everything was perfect for Anna.

About a year after Freud treats Anna, he encounters her again during a trip to Gastein. She is successful in her musical career again and although she still feels her pains sometimes, she is far healthier. Freud concludes with telling his readers that Anna is performing in Vienna and living with her aunt.

Chapter 3, Frau Anna G., Section 6 Analysis

The main goal of this section is to show Freud's opinions and analyses of Anna's history and hysteria. Freud makes bold assumptions here that he does not share with Anna about what her writings mean. Later, readers will discover that Anna left some things out of her treatment that change or nullify Freud's assumptions. By undermining Freud's

assumptions later, the author tells readers that Freud's analysis should not be considered the definitive interpretation of Anna's writings, though it does add great insight.

Chapter 4, The Health Resort, Section 1

Chapter 4, The Health Resort, Section 1 Summary

It's 1929, and an opera singer named Frau Elisabeth (Lisa) Erdman is traveling from Vienna to Milan to perform in a show. The train stops at small station, and Lisa is surprised when many travelers pile on. Feeling claustrophobic, she leaves her seat and tries to find the bathroom, but the train is too crowded. She finds an open spot by a window next to a young man and sits there. She casually mentions she's a singer and the young man begins asking about her role in the show and admiring her abilities, since she will perform at La Scala, a famous theater. Lisa reveals that she is merely filling in for the master soprano Vera Serebryakova, who has hurt herself. She ask the young man where he is going, and the he tells her that he is on his way to Rome to get married after a hiking vacation in the mountains. They realize they have nothing more to say, and Lisa leaves to find another seat.

At the next stop another car is added to the train and the crowd spreads out. Lisa is still nervous, now about her performance, because she feels too old to sing the part of a young girl. She is greeted in Milan by Signor Fontini, the opera's artistic director. After sending someone back to the train to retrieve a piece of luggage Lisa forgot, the party leaves for the hotel. Lisa is amazed by her luxury suite and tries to relax, still fearing that her performance will not go well. She writes a short letter to her aunt, then leaves for dinner.

At dinner Lisa meets Serebryakova, who broke her arm falling down the steps in La Scala. Serebryakova is witty and kind, laughing, as she tells the disaster of her fall and her understudy's subsequent terrible performances. Everyone flatters Lisa and she begins to feel less nervous, particularly when she is introduced to her leading man, Victor Berenstein, who is far older than she is. Lisa likes Victor, though is not attracted to him, and she soon becomes friends with him and Vera (as Serebryakova insists on being called). She learns the two are in the Kiev Opera, and shares that she was born in Ukraine, though she does not feel like it is home. As the evening progresses, Lisa realizes that Victor and Vera are in love, and believes they are having an affair.

Signor Fontini greets Lisa the next morning and takes her to La Scala. She is amazed by the star treatment she receives, and meets the rest of the singers before rehearsal. Lisa struggles a bit with the part, but Vera and Victor praise her. During the next scene Lisa distracts herself by thinking of a young man she used to love in St. Petersburg, but quickly refocuses.

Opening night is a success, and Victor and Vera throw a party in their suite to celebrate. During the party, Vera tells Lisa she's going to have a baby, and though Lisa is unsure about the couple's morality, she celebrates with them and agrees to travel to Kiev to visit.

For a farewell, Vera agrees to sing a few pieces. Lisa is amazed by her voice, and realizes she may be a bit in love with her. Suddenly Lisa has breathing difficulties, which scares her. She thanks Vera and rushes out of the party. That night she dreams of rows of coffins, one of them Vera's. She is awakened by a phone call from Vera, who says goodbye and assures her it was just a bad dream. Vera and Victor invite her to breakfast and to go over reviews of the performance. Lisa is shocked and embarrassed when, from one of the reviews, she realizes she has jumped to conclusions about Vera and Victor, who are, in fact, married.

Lisa, a Catholic, wanders the city pondering her faith. She is unnerved by the symmetry in "The Last Supper," and feels blasphemous but more comfortable imagining two homeless men as Jesus and Judas. She decides to visit the Shroud of Turin, and does so on her next day off with her understudy, Lucia. Lisa, feeling bad about Lucia's earlier disaster onstage, has been giving her voice lessons. After seeing the Shroud, Lisa confesses to a priest that she no longer believes in the resurrection, because the man on the Shroud appears so dead. She confesses later in a different way, telling Lucia about her difficult and lonely life. As they talk about marriage, Lisa has a fleeting thought that the Church would not have displayed the Shroud had the image's hands not covered his genitals.

Back in Milan, Lisa and Victor have lunch and talk. Letters from Vera confirm she is doing well in her pregnancy. Victor is excited about the birth of his child, but is also somewhat sad, because his first wife and their son died during a war. For the rest of the day, Lisa and Victor take a train ride and decide to stay in a luxury hotel. After getting their toothbrushes and luggage, they settle into their rooms and have dinner. That night, watching the stars, Lisa's earlier doubt of her faith goes away. She and Victor continue to bond over the weekend, and Victor even gives her a friendly kiss.

A week before the end of the opera, Lisa hatches her secret plan to go home. She fakes a migraine, requiring Lucia to sing her part. Everyone is amazed by Lucia's improvement, and Lisa continues to fake illness so Lucia can take over her role.

Chapter 4, The Health Resort, Section 1 Analysis

This section of the chapter is unusual, because readers can't be entirely sure what is going on. At first, the chapter seems to be yet another retelling of the story in the first three chapters - there is a musician on a train who meets a young man and strikes up a conversation. The story then turns in a different direction when Lisa gets to Milan and meets Vera and Victor. It is apparent that Lisa is Frau Anna G. from chapter 3, grown older and doing well. Though the story takes place years after her hallucinations, there are many echoes of them throughout, including the images of stars and the repeated motifs of train rides and pregnancy.

There is a bit of foreshadowing in the dinner scene with Vera and Victor. The narrator mentions briefly that they are concerned with the political unrest in their country and Europe, but quickly move on to talking about music. The date the scene takes place

alone (1929) suggests that political strife could play a larger role later in the book, but this conversation combined with characters in the hallucinations make it seem extremely likely.

The continuing theme of religious struggle appears in the scenes with "The Last Supper" and the Shroud of Turin. Lisa's unease with the organization of "The Last Supper" reflects her knowledge that religious identity is never easy. The root of her problems with the Shroud is revealed in her remark about the figure's covering his genitals. Issues of sex are a constant burden to Lisa's mind, and seeing a religious icon so connected to sexuality throws her off balance. It is significant that stars restore her faith, as stars represent the "good" side of sex she experiences in her hallucinations.

Chapter 4, The Health Resort, Section 2

Chapter 4, The Health Resort, Section 2 Summary

The opera is over and Victor escorts Lisa to her Aunt Magda's house in Vienna before returning to Kiev. In the following months, Lisa finds her sexual hungers reawakened, and even allows a friend of the family to have sex with her several times, despite feeling degraded. Lisa thinks back over her sexual partners. They include her ex-husband; Alexei, the student in Petersburg, a young man on a train (when she was 17), and an orchestra member right after husband left for the army. Lisa feels guilty, and decides it's more peaceful when she ignores her desires.

Lisa receives a letter from Victor and Vera, inviting her to visit them in Kiev. She declines, because she doesn't want to leave her ill aunt. Two weeks later, she receives another letter saying Vera has died in childbirth, Victor is miserable, and the baby has been sent away with his grandmother. Lisa is distraught, and mourns for months. That winter, she learns that Ludmila Kedrova, Madame R., has also died. Lisa falls ill again with pains in her breast and ovary. She feels old and useless, and her voice begins to fail.

Lisa learns of a serial killer is D'sseldorf, and is tortured by thought of him and murdered children. She finds herself strangely upset when the murderer is executed. Aunt Magda thinks Lisa's still mourning for Ludmila and Vera, and scolds her for living in the past, but Lisa is actually upset, because she knows that out in the world, people are being murdered.

One day, Lisa receives a surprise letter from Freud, telling her he's written a case study about her and would like to publish it along with her hallucinatory writings. Freud includes some personal notes, mainly on his deteriorating jaw, and Lisa sympathizes with him, because her own dental plate has killed her singing ability. Lisa replies to his letter, reminiscing on her therapy sessions with him. She inquires about his family, because she had a premonition during her therapy that one of his grandchildren would die. She moves on to discussing the case study, which she will allow him to publish. However, she is reluctant to allow her writings to be published, because she is ashamed of them. She confesses that she actually wrote the verses before Freud asked her to, at the urging of the British major at Gastein. She comments on Freud's interpretation of her writings, both agreeing with and expanding upon his ideas.

Lisa then confesses several things she left out of her therapy and things she lied about. First, she reveals a memory of discovering her mother, aunt, and uncle having sex together on the family yacht. When Lisa's father died, Aunt Magda confirmed that this memory was the beginning of the affair between Lisa's mother and uncle. Then, she reveals that she lied about Alexei (A.). Their first lovemaking experience was pleasant, though Lisa hallucinated a bit about a fire, and he never had sex with another woman to punish her. He left her to pursue his politics, and she made up the yacht scene to

punish him. Next, Lisa explains that though Alexei never burned her hair with his cigar, the sailors at the docks in Odessa did. She confesses that the incident was far worse than she told Freud, and that the men forced her to perform oral sex on them, because she was of Jewish descent.

Since then, she has struggled with the Jewish side of herself and hated her father for giving it to her. She has also struggled with remembering what happened on the docks, and shocked herself growing up by re-imagining it and enjoying it. She confesses next to kissing her Japanese maid when she was a girl in an effort to get closer to her father, because she knew her father often had sex with the maid and other household workers. She tells Freud she was too hard on her father during the therapy, and blamed too much on him.

Finally, she reveals that her husband and his family were far more anti-Semitic than she let on. She always felt he would hate her if he knew, and never felt at peace living with him, which is why she left him. Lisa admits her sexual hang ups were connected to a fear of enjoying herself when she knew others were suffering.

Lisa then addresses Freud's analysis directly. She writes she believes her pain in her breast and ovary doesn't stem from hysteria. She tells Freud that while she's had a difficult life full of secrets, everyone does, and she doesn't believe that her mother's secrets had anything to do with her pain. She admits also that she may have some bisexual tendencies, but they have never been a problem for her. She tells Freud that what troubles her more is the nature of good and evil. Lisa then closes the letter, apologizing to Freud for her deceit and thanking him for helping her.

Lisa is relieved that she confessed everything to Freud. Everything, that is, but the incident with the man on the train to Odessa, which was her first sexual experience and the first time she hallucinated. She decided not to include it in the letter, because she was afraid of all the lies she had already confessed to. Though Lisa is relieved for awhile more, she becomes terrified when Freud's reply does not come. She fears he is angry with her for lying, and has breathing troubles and nightmares of Freud turning into a wolf and chasing her.

Freud's letter finally arrives. He thanks her for her confessions, adding has decided to publish the case study as he originally wrote it. He also informs her plainly that her prediction was correct, and his grandson Heinz had died. Lisa is upset and sends him a short note, blaming herself for somehow causing Heinz' death. Freud sends a swift reply telling her it's not her fault, and he believes she has the power to foresee death. He reminds her of a dream she told him that was not in the case report of a man and woman being married. During the ceremony, the bride's former husband stands up in the audience and shoots himself.

Freud tells Lisa that this death actually happened. When his friend Ferenczi got married to his mistress, the woman's husband committed suicide. Freud analyzes Lisa's role as a "misty figure" in the dream, saying it revealed the groom's ambivalent relationship with

one of the bride's daughters, a patient of Freud's. He tells Lisa that this proves her gift is unconscious and there's nothing she can do about it, so she must live with it.

Lisa is glad to hear Freud admit her gift is real, though she does not remember being a "misty figure" in the dream. She decides it's Freud's way of reaching out to her and asking to be her friend, so she writes whim another letter. She analyzes herself once more, telling him that she believes her pains may have stemmed from not being able to handle her husband, who was both sweet but also a torturer in the military. She tells him the pains don't have anything to do with suppressing knowledge, because she does it without trouble all the time. She sends the letter expecting no reply, and there is none.

Later, Lisa's brother Yury, now called George, visits her and Aunt Magda with his wife. Lisa is shocked at how American he's become, and realizes he's there to take her and Aunt Magda to the United States. Lisa refuses, but Aunt Magda decides to go. Lisa sees them off at the train, feeling both saddened and free.

In the spring of 1934, she receives a letter from Victor saying things are better in Kiev and he wishes her to sing in an opera there. He also asks her to come and marry him and care for his son, Kolya, because he is lonely and Kolya needs a mother. This surprises Lisa, and she spends the day hallucinating and day dreaming. Lisa delays her reply, making herself sick trying to decide. Her pains come back and she stops eating, and she wishes she could go to Freud for an easy answer. She finally writes a reply one evening, in the form of part of the opera she and Victor were in, agreeing not to come and sing, but to come and marry him.

Chapter 4, The Health Resort, Section 2 Analysis

Once again, the themes of sex and death intertwine themselves in Lisa's life. At the same time she begins to feel sexual urges again, two of her best friends die. Two other recurring themes, lies and pregnancy, appear in this section in the form of paradoxes. During Freud's therapy with Lisa, he struggled to make her tell the truth so he could heal her, and it turns out that her healing causes her to confess freely. Lisa still has a tendency to lie by omission, leaving out the incident with the young man on the train, which is clearly a springboard for her hallucinations. Vera's death in childbirth seems to confirm Lisa's fear that motherhood will bring no good, when in fact it actually allows Lisa to become a mother.

Lisa's relationship with Freud is also important here. While she thanks him for curing her, her self-analysis shows that much of the healing comes from herself. It is no surprise that Freud does not reply to her final letter. His self-assured analyses of Lisa are officially undermined when Lisa makes her confessions and rejects some of Freud's assumptions. The situation is completely reversed when Lisa switches their roles and analyzes Freud. Perhaps, Freud ends their correspondence, because he fears Lisa will predict more deaths. Maybe, he is just offended that she does not take his analysis seriously.

The political struggle foreshadowed throughout the book finally rises to the surface in this section. While Lisa is considering Victor's offer, she listens to the violence in the city. Lisa knows about the political movements that target Jews, and perhaps this is a subconscious motive to go where she believes she'll be safe.

Chapter 4, The Health Resort, Section 3

Chapter 4, The Health Resort, Section 3 Summary

Lisa arrives in Kiev with great joy. She meets Victor, Kolya, and Kolya's grandmother, and they travel to take the grandmother home. Victor is sad and overwhelmed at leaving his mother, who he knows will likely die soon, so they leave quickly. They take a trip on a passenger ship to allow Kolya time to adjust to his new mother, but the two bond immediately. Kolya reminds Lisa of Vera, and while Kolya refuses to call Lisa "Mom," he seems comfortable and happy with her. Victor warns Lisa that Kolya is troublesome and will go wild at any moment, but he doesn't. Victor and Lisa entertain their shipmates by singing, and go to bed. They make love very quietly, because Kolya is nearby, and for the first time, Lisa has no hallucinations or unpleasant thoughts.

Lisa feels odd in Kiev, because the city has changed so much since her childhood. They visit her old house, which has become a health resort. They tour the grounds, and Lisa is surprised to see many people splashing in the water, because she remembers so well it just being her family. She, Victor, and Kolya play for a while, then she takes a walk on her own. Lisa feels like a ghost because of how different the place is from her memories. Finally, she leans against a pine tree and smelling it, she realizes that it is the same place and she is the same person, though both have aged 40 years. She has a moment of clarity, realizing that she has always been herself and will always be until her death. Happy, Lisa returns to the beach to gather her family, and they spend the rest of the day touring the city. That night Kolya shows his true colors and is a terror, but the next morning all is well again.

In a Christmas letter to Aunt Magda, Lisa shares stories of her family. Everything seems peaceful, but there are hints of unrest. Victor is feeling his age, and his mother recently passed away. Overall, Lisa seems to love her new life.

Chapter 4, The Health Resort, Section 3 Analysis

The title of this chapter finally makes a solid connection in this section. It is at her old house, now a health resort, that Lisa finally feels comfortable with herself and her life. It is not the health resort, however, that cures her. It is the fruition of a series of events spanning from the start of the chapter. Lisa has healed herself, moved on, progressed over the hurdles of her friends' death, and finally has the child and happy relationship she has always wanted. The book does not end here, though, and while things seem perfect and resolved, there are more things to come.

The pine tree is an important symbol in this section. Though pines trees are noted as background objects several times at the white hotel, they come to the foreground here, when one brings Lisa to a point of peace in her life. While pine trees can be seen as

phallic symbols or symbols of long life, the smell is most significant here. The scent of pine is sharp, clear, and refreshing, as is Lisa's realization.

Chapter 5, The Sleeping Carriage, Section 1

Chapter 5, The Sleeping Carriage, Section 1 Summary

Kolya wakes up in the middle of the night, thinking of how things are soon to change. He will have to leave his friends and his life, but he does not seem too upset. Instead, he regrets having an old woman for a mother. He listens to her coughing on the other side of the curtain that separates their room and tries to imagine the place they are going. He knows they are going on a train, and thinks about the trips he's taken in his life, the sound of the train wheels. These good memories remind him of the worst memory in his life, when his father had to leave in the middle of the night. In the weeks after, other boys beat Kolya up, saying his father was a traitor, but Kolya knows his fathers only crime was traveling abroad to perform.

Lisa wakes up, thinking of all she must do to prepare them for the train trip. She lights their last candle and quietly goes outside to the bathroom, breathing in the disgusting air of the neighborhood. Back insides she can hear the upstairs neighbors, the Shchadenkos moving around, and decides to make breakfast. As her son is old enough to insist on privacy, she calls through the curtain for him to wake up. As they eat, Kolya questions her about where they are going. She is unsure, but tells him what she remembers the Bible says about the Holy Land and assures him they'll be happy there. He expresses his fear that his father will not be able to find him, and while Lisa tells him Victor will find them for sure, she touches the crucifix on her next, revealing she's lying. She will tell him later, when they are safe, that Victor is never coming home.

They finish packing their suitcase, put on their coats and go to see if the Shchadenkos are ready to go. The widow Liuba and her family are in total chaos, because her youngest daughter refuses to leave the cat, and she asks Lisa to go on ahead and save seats for them on the train. When they get to the street, Lisa and Kolya are shocked to see the surging mass of people. They join the crowd, struggling with the suitcase, until it is stolen from them. Lisa spots a woman they know, the daughter of the cellist in the Kiev Opera, Sonia. She approaches Sonia, though she is nervous, because Victor sold out many of his friends at the opera in order to save his family. Sonia is relieved to find someone she knows, though, and they continue on with the crowd.

No one in the crowd is sure of where they're going. There had been a sign posted on the fence the day before, announcing that all "Yids" in Kiev were to report to a street corner by the Jewish cemetery with all their belongings or they would be shot. At first, many people thought they were blamed for the fires in the city and were being sent to a ghetto in Poland by the Germans who occupy the city. When they first saw the poster, Liuba had offered to take Kolya and let Lisa stay, because she is not a Jew, but Lisa could not leave her son. Soon, the rumor changed that everyone was being evacuated

to safety, and the Germans were letting the Jews go first. The latest rumor was that everyone was going to Palestine.

Chapter 5, The Sleeping Carriage, Section 1 Analysis

There is dramatic irony in this scene, because readers familiar with the Holocaust know that the Jews in Kiev are not going to Palestine or anywhere pleasant. The author sets up this tension well, drawing out Kolya and Lisa's journey down the street and emphasizing the people's confusion about where they're going and how quickly they must leave. This is also the moment where foreshadowing throughout the book that the horrors of the Holocaust would somehow come into play in the story is realized.

The scene where Kolya and Lisa's suitcase is stolen is both an echo back to the white hotel and ominous foreshadowing of what's to come. In her hallucinations of the white hotel, Lisa left her luggage on the train but was hopeful it would get back to her someday. Here, readers know that her luggage will never get back to her.

Chapter 5, The Sleeping Carriage, Section 2

Chapter 5, The Sleeping Carriage, Section 2 Summary

After hours, Kolya and Lisa are still not to the front of the line. There is something creating a bottleneck, but they are not sure what it is. Everyone around them is frightened, and Lisa tries to help those she can. She encourages bored and restless Kolya to entertain Sonia to pass the time. Soon, they can see a fence with German soldiers and Ukrainian police standing by. They get a message that one train has left, packed full, and another is coming soon. Finally, they make it through the barrier and realize there is no train, only the same crowd standing and waiting.

A soldier comes and takes their coats, and they stop to eat. Lisa hears the sounds of machine gun fire, and although she convinces herself it's distant, she senses the panic growing in the crowd. It hits her suddenly that they are going to be shot, and she grabs Kolya and runs for the barrier. She tells the soldier that she's not Jewish, and confirms it with an old ID card. She tells them Kolya is not Jewish either, but the soldier finds Kolya's ration card with the last name Berenstein and shoves him back in. Lisa tries to get back to him, and the soldier holds her back, until she recites Hebrew for him and he believes she is a Jew. Back inside the enclosure, Lisa is desperate to get them both out. She hears a soldier tell a young woman that he will let her out if she sleeps with him, and Lisa offers to do so but is rejected. Trying to ease Kolya's fears, she tells him they are still going to the train.

They are shoved through two lines of soldiers, who beat them, laughing. Lisa tries to protect Kolya, but they are both hit savagely as they are forced to trample on the bodies of those who have fallen. After the line, they are told by Ukrainian police to take all their clothes off, and obey to avoid being beaten. As one group of people is being led off, Lisa tries again to escape. She shows a soldier her ID card, and he allows her and Kolya to put on their clothes and go wait on a hillside. They watch as more people are beaten and undressed, then forced behind a sandstone wall and onto the edge of a ravine, Babi Yar. Lisa realizes that the naked people are covering their genitals, and is reminded of the Shroud of Turin.

Lisa tries to hold herself together, praying even, as she watches Liuba's daughter thrown over the wall like a rag doll. She begins to convince herself that it's not real, that it's too terrible to be real so it must somehow be a joke. Her defenses crack when she hears a police officer say the soldiers will release the people on the hill after they shoot the Jews. Lisa spots an actress she knows, Dina Pronicheva, sitting farther down on the hill but does not attempt to greet her. She tries to pray and make everything go away, but it fails her. She knows she cannot help Kolya, and prays selfishly that everyone will be killed quickly so they can go. She realizes that this is why she felt she should never have children, but still is glad she can be there with Kolya.

A car arrives with a German officer. He tells the police officer to kill everyone on the hillside, because if they are let out they will tell people what happened and no Jews would show up the next day. Lisa and Kolya are among the last led down the hill and are led along a ledge. Below them, they see piles of bodies. She holds Kolya's hand and tells him everything will be okay soon, when they are in heaven. As they hear the bullets coming, they jump into the ravine.

Lisa is knocked unconscious, and when she awakes she is lying on the pile of bodies. She decides to lie still until dark, and then find Kolya and escape. Around her, she hears soldiers walking across the bodies, shooting anyone who is still alive. A soldier finds her, pulls off her crucifix and kicks her hard in the left breast. When she moves, he kicks her in the pelvis. Still alive, Lisa screams as the soldiers begin to shovel dirt on the bodies. Two soldiers realize she's alive, and one recognizes her as the woman who offered to sleep with him if he released her. They rape her with a bayonet, and she dies.

During the night, the bodies settle. The narrator reflects how everyone in that pit had a complex life and history, just like Lisa. A woman, Dina Pronicheva, manages to scramble up the ravine side, where she meets a little boy. He whispers the words from his mother's dream years before: "Don't be scared, lady! I'm alive too." The little boy is shot, but Dina escapes at the only witness of what happened at Babi Yar.

The bodies are raided for their clothes and valuables, then blown up or burned. The final scene describes continuing horrors as more people are killed at Babi Yar. Time passes, and a dam is built across the ravine, creating a putrid lake. The dam bursts, burying part of Kiev in mud. Later, instead of a memorial, a road and buildings are built above the pit.

Chapter 5, The Sleeping Carriage, Section 2 Analysis

In this chapter, readers realize that neither Freud nor Lisa's analysis of her pains was complete. Her gift of foresight, it seems, manifested Lisa's death at Babi Yar in the pains she suffered throughout her life, as well as some hints in her dreams and hallucinations. Like all of Lisa's other predictions, she can sense something is coming but has no way to be sure or prevent disaster. The final two disasters in Lisa's hallucinatory writings, which neither she nor Freud was able to interpret, also are lived here. Lisa and Kolya fall from a great height into the ravine Babi Yar, as do many other people. The people at the bottom of the ravine are buried by a landslide of other bodies, and the soldiers attempt to bury the masses. Note that the landslide buries those already dead, as the landslide in Lisa's writings buried both the funeral-goers and the victims of earlier disasters in their coffins.

Though the characters in this chapter are fictional, the poster described is the exact one posted around Kiev on September 28, 1941. Many of the people who reported to the cemetery that morning did believe they were being deported. The beating and humiliation Kolya and Lisa go through are based on actual accounts of the massacre. In

all, more than 33,700 Jews were killed over two days at Babi Yar, and more than 60,000 people were shot there later.

Chapter 6, The Camp

Chapter 6, The Camp Summary

In this chapter, instead of being shot at Babi Yar, Lisa and Kolya get off a train on a platform in the middle of nowhere. They cross a bridge and find a line of buses. A young lieutenant greets them on their bus, checking to make sure everyone's there. He is sympathetic to Lisa's struggles on the train, and tells them they will be able to rest at the camp. He asks what she did in her previous life, and when she tells him she was a singer, he asks if she would take part in concerts at the camp. The lieutenant then formally introduces himself as Richard Lyons, and Lisa realizes she knew his uncle from a trip long before. They chat for a bit, and before Lyons leaves Lisa gives him Victor's name so they can reunite later.

They arrive at the camp, a lush oasis with a beautiful hotel. Lisa awakens Kolya, who is soon out playing with the Shchadenko boy. That night, as Lisa sleeps in her room, she hears a knock on her door. Thinking it's Kolya, she answers naked, but it's Lyons. Embarrassed, he tells her he hasn't found Victor, but has found Vera and Lisa's mother.

The days at the camp flies by as Lisa sees more people she knows. She thinks she sees Freud once, and realizes he was the priest in her writings. She sees him again and he looks ill and unhappy, and she decides not to talk to him, because she's worried it will upset him. She hopes the doctors will help him as they helped her, diagnosing her with "Anagnorisis" and giving her medicine to ease her pain. Lisa begins taking language classes with Kolya, finally learning Hebrew. All she had known before was how to say "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it," which Madame Kedrova had taught her. One evening, Lyons asks Lisa to dance, and they go for a walk on the beautiful grounds among the lilies.

Another day, a miracle happens. A small black cat arrives at the camp and finds its owners, the Shchadenkos. The cat, Vaska, is soon the camp's mascot and the center of the many celebrations. One night when she is watching a film about a prison hospital that cures criminals, Lisa realizes one of the men in the video is the serial killer she had obsessed over. She is about to tell Liuba when Vaska jumps in front of the projector, causing the whole audience to burst into laughter. Later, Vaska performs another miracle, giving birth to four kittens.

One day Lisa receives a letter with a passage from Song of Solomon in it and realizes it's from her long-lost love, Alexei. He tells her he's changed and still loves her, and wants her to come be with him. She replies that she loves him too, but can't live with him, because they'd be haunted by the image of the child Lisa miscarried. Soon, Lisa talks to Vera, who wants to come see her and Kolya. It is difficult for Lisa, because she feels like Kolya's real mother, but she knows it is the right thing to do.

Lisa continues to help the man she thinks is Freud, looking up his daughter Sophie and grandson Heinz and inviting them to visit. When she's looking them up, she finds information on her friend Madame Kedrova. In a strange coincidence, a letter from Madame Kedrova arrives that day, saying that after treatments for her breast cancer, she'll visit. Lisa is glad, but puzzled, because she thought Madame Kedrova had had her breast removed.

Lisa finally meets her mother, whose face is half burned. Lisa's mother says she deserves it, and it doesn't matter because of the wonderful healing in Judaea, the land where the camps are. The women's conversation is awkward, but they manage to talk about their camps. Lisa's mother tells her that her brother and her aunt are coming soon, and asks her to get to know her brother better. She then reveals that Lisa's father is in the land, though under isolation. Lisa wants to ask her mother about the fire, but decides its not the right time. Lisa's mother senses her curiosity, however. She confirms the affair with Lisa's uncle, and reveals that Aunt Magda was a lesbian and Lisa's father knew all about the affair. Lisa starts to feel sick, drained by the confession. To refresh her, her mother offers her breast to drink from. Lisa returns the favor afterward.

They continue to talk, and Lisa shares her memory of the summer house. Lisa's mother takes awhile to remember, then does so fondly. She admits the affair was entirely sexual, and Lisa says she understands. The conversation turns to the fire that killed Lisa's mother. She says she didn't hear or smell it, until it was too late, because she was so occupied with her lover. Lisa assures her it's all over, and that where there is love in the heart, there is salvation. They walk along together, until they see the Jordan River, and find a small tavern to have drinks. When the old landlord spills wine at their table, they find connection in laughing together. Lisa decides it's time to call her father, and they have a short and formal chat that Lisa believes is the start to a better relationship.

When Lisa returns to camp, there are tents being put up all over the grounds. Lyons greets her, telling her more than a dozen trainloads had come in during the day. Though there is little room, no one will be turned away. The new immigrants are listless and skeletal, though patient. Lisa is frustrated that people have to be this way, and Lyons suggests she should work as a nurse. She runs to help, and realizes that her breast and pelvis have not hurt all day. She smells the scent of a pine tree, and while she can't remember why she knows it, it makes her happy.

Chapter 6, The Camp Analysis

This vision of the afterlife is both an end and a new beginning for Lisa. Though loneliness, confusion, and pain are not absent in this place, they are gradually going away. It is a place of hope and healing where the bad things in Lisa's life are reversed. Her friend who died of breast cancer gets treatment, her mother is able to come clean and explain her actions, and her lost lover Alexei can finally apologize. There is an atmosphere of sadness when the Holocaust victims nearly overwhelm the camp, but the hope of the place remains. These miserable people will, like Lisa, heal and start their lives anew.

This land, the Holy Land shared by both Jews and Catholics, brings Lisa's religious histories into harmony. The land flows with milk, as in her hallucinations. It is a place where she is surrounded by family and friends, as she had been at the happiest times in her life. The land also reconciles Lisa's concepts of sexuality. Here, she is able to find happiness in a platonic, motherly relationship with Lyons, decide not to return to Alexei, because she does not want "what could have been" to haunt her, and learns of her aunt's own ambiguous sexuality. In this world, she accepts the issues she could not handle in the old world with maturity and grace.

Many of the symbols that appear in Lisa's hallucinations and life reappear in this section. The black cat, a symbol of both survival and coming death, changes its nature in this scene. Rather than foreshadowing death, she miraculously produces life. A train ride, which for so long meant the beginning of both friendly and sexual relationships for Lisa, finally brings her to a place where she will be happy. There is also the final image of a pine tree. In the moment of clarity brought on by the scent of pine in her old life, Lisa realized that she was the same person all throughout her life. In this new life, she is unsure what the scent means, showing her distance from her old life, but it still brings her joy, showing that she will continue to progress in this new world.

There is an interesting, small bit of word play in this section that adds to the joyful tone. Visiting the doctor, Lisa says she has a case of "Anagnorisis." The doctor who agrees with her is finally able to cure the pain that has plagued Lisa for so long. The uncommon word "anagnorisis" means, quite appropriately, the denouement, the final resolution, or the end.

Characters

Frau Elisabeth Morozova-Erdman-Berenstein/Frau Anna G./The Young Woman

Lisa Erdman is born Elisabeth Morozova to a Polish Catholic mother and a Ukrainian Jewish father. She grows up in Odessa, Ukraine. When her mothered dies in a hotel fire, she is left in the care of her wealthy but distant father and a number of maids and governesses. Lisa is able to attend a prestigious school, but at 15, is scarred when a group of men harass her on the docks in Odessa and forces her to perform oral sex on them because she is Jewish. At 17, she leaves home for good and travels to St. Petersburg to attend ballet school. On the way there, she is raped by a young soldier on the train. In the city, she meets and falls in love with a young revolutionary named Alexei, and becomes pregnant with his child. Alexei later leaves her, and she loses the baby in a fall in the ballet studio.

Due to the weight she gained while pregnant, she is kicked out of the school, but is taken in by a kind teacher, Madame Kedrova. Madame Kedrova gets married, though, and when Lisa's Aunt Magda invites her to come live with her in Vienna, she agrees. In Vienna, Lisa becomes a talented opera singer and marries a barrister, Willi Erdman. She is terrified of having a child and has horrific hallucinations during sex, so she makes her husband practice *coitus interruptus*. After he leaves to work for the military, Lisa decides to leave him, have their marriage annulled, and move back in with her aunt. Around the same time, she begins experiencing terrible pains in her left breast and ovary. After doctors are unable to help, she seeks therapy from Sigmund Freud. He suggests she write poetry to sort out her hallucinations, and she gives him a lyrical, often vulgar poem written on the score of "Don Giovanni."

Freud asks her to rewrite the piece and try to interpret it, and she produces the equally shocking "Gastein Journal" while on vacation at a health resort in Gastein. The writings chronicle a young woman's sexual relationship with a young man whom she meets on a train and stays at white hotel with. At the white hotel, there are two disasters that reflect Lisa's life. There's a hotel fire like the one in which her mother died, and a terrible storm, like the one raging outside when Lisa learned of her mother's death. Two other disasters, a landslide and a great fall, are premonitions of Lisa's death. During her therapy with Freud, Lisa recalls many jarring memories and learns much about her family and herself, as well as realizes her power to predict people's deaths. After she feels cured by Freud, she returns to the world of opera and performs at La Scala in Milan, Italy, filling in for the great Vera Serebryakova and singing opposite Victor Berenstein. She befriends the two, but trains her understudy and leaves the opera early.

Back in Vienna, Lisa lives with her aunt, until Aunt Magda leaves for America with Lisa's brother, Yury. She begins feeling sick again after learning of Vera and Madame Kedrova's deaths. Later, when Victor asks her to move to Kiev and be his husband and a mother to Vera's son Kolya, she agrees. Their life is wonderful for a while. Then, war

breaks out. Victor is imprisoned, and Kolya and Lisa are forced into a slum. One day, they follow an order sending all Jews to meet at a street corner, where they believe they are being evacuated or deported. Instead, they are taken to the ravine Babi Yar and shot. Due to the fact that Lisa is only part Jewish and has information identifying her as Ukrainian, she manages to get herself and Kolya out of the enclosure and sent to a hill to wait. However, they are later murdered, anyway, because of what they've seen. As Lisa dies in Babi Yar, soldier rape her with a bayonet and the pain she's had all her life finally makes sense. In the book's final scene, Lisa is taken to a beautiful camp with, of course, a white hotel. There, she and Kolya are happy, and she is reunited with many of her family and friends.

The Soldier

In her hallucinations, Lisa, the young woman, meets a mysterious, handsome, green-eyed young soldier on a train ride. The soldier is the son of Sigmund Freud, a man whom the young woman admires. The soldier is attracted to the young woman, and makes sexual advances to her. When he invites her to stay with him at the white hotel, she accepts. They spend many glorious days together, mostly making love, but also hiking and dining and dancing at the white hotel.

The soldier is sexually adventurous, and convinces the young woman to do things she normally wouldn't. He is turned on easily, even by seeing Madame Cottin falling to her death. He has an insatiable sexual appetite and often cannot control his urges in public. He is also willing to invite others to join with him and the young woman, and invites Madame Cottin and the chef into their bed. In his analysis, Freud says the soldier does not represent one person in particular. Instead, he is an embodiment of all the sexual feelings trapped inside Lisa that she does not wish to admit. With the soldier, sex is wild and passionate and free, though it carries along the disasters and possibility of pregnancy that Lisa fears in real life.

Freud assumes Lisa made the soldier Freud's son in her writings, because she would like to see herself as Freud's daughter, replacing his daughter who has died. It is also briefly revealed to readers, though not to Freud, that Lisa was raped by a young soldier on the train to St. Petersburg when she was 17, and that this first sexual experience was the start of her hallucinations. After "Don Giovanni" and "The Gastein Journal," the soldier does not appear as a character in the book. There are, however, many kind men who Lisa meets or travels with on trains, including Victor and Lieutenant Lyons.

Lisa's Mother

Lisa's mother, Marya Konopnicka-Morozova, died in a hotel fire when Lisa was very young, leaving her to a cold and unfriendly father. Lisa has a few fond memories of her mother, a talented watercolor painter, but with Freud's help, she discovers many more during her therapy. Lisa remembers her mother as always happy, giving, and loving. She had little contact with her family other than her twin sister, because she enraged

them by marrying a Jew and forsaking her Catholic Polish upbringing. Lisa's mother was also known for taking long trips to go shopping and sightseeing, then returning with lots of presents for her children. Lisa has a memory of discovering her aunt, Marya's twin, and uncle embracing in her family's summer house, but later realizes the woman in the summer house was actually her mother. This leads Lisa on a road of discovery. She recalls another memory of walking in on her mother, uncle, and aunt having sex on the family yacht. She eventually concludes that her mother and uncle were having an affair and died together in the fire, but Freud does not believe her. To prove her theory correct, she checks the dates on both their tombstones, which match. Lisa's aunt Magda eventually confirms this, and tells Lisa of her mother and uncle's long and loving affair.

Freud believes Lisa's hysteria is caused by repressing painful memories of her mother's affair, which is affecting Lisa by ruining her perfect image of her mother. Freud believes the white hotel in Lisa hallucinations is representative of the mother's womb, and that Lisa wishes to return both to the last perfect place and to be reborn as a boy so her father will love her. At the camp in the final scene, Lisa and her mother joyfully reunite after Lieutenant Lyons finds Marya's name on a list of people in the Holy Land and tells Lisa. Their reunion is awkward at first, but they soon bond by discussing their family history and the things Lisa has discovered about her mother's past.

Victor Berenstein

Lisa first meets Victor at the opera in Milan, where he is starring opposite her. She is fascinated with his joy, friendliness and gentleness, and is glad he is older than her, because she fears appearing too old onstage. Though Lisa is appalled at Victor's familiarity with Vera at first, she changes when she discovers they are married. Victor is a baritone singer and member of the Kiev opera who always seems to insist that every show is his last. He is passionate about his work and his family, and also writes operas back at home in Kiev. After Vera leaves Milan, Victor and Lisa spend a platonic day together taking a train ride and staying at a fancy hotel in Italy. Though Victor is married to Vera, he clearly adores and respects Lisa.

After Vera dies, Victor cannot handle Kolya alone, so he gives him to his aging mother. However, Victor becomes lonely and decides he would like a wife for himself and a mother for Kolya. He has kept up friendly letters with Lisa since their time in Milan, and one day writes her, asking if she will marry him and come to Kiev. After an intense period of indecision, Lisa agrees. They spend their honeymoon taking Victor's mother home, on a boat, and visiting Lisa's childhood home in Odessa. When Victor and Lisa have sex, it is the first time she does not hallucinate, and she feels at peace in their union. However, when unrest and war break out in Kiev, Victor is taken away in the night, and Lisa is sure he is either dead or permanently imprisoned. To save his family, Victor is forced to sell out several of his friends at the Kiev orchestra and opera. Lisa searches for Victor at the camp in the final scene, but is unable to find him, which likely means he is still alive somewhere.

Kolya Berenstein

The child of Victor Berenstein and Vera Serebryakova, Kolya is adopted by Lisa after his mother dies in childbirth. As a toddler, Kolya is both angelic and difficult to control. When Lisa first marries Victor, Kolya refuses to call her "mother," though they bond quickly. As a young boy, Kolya is flighty and imaginative. Unlike his parents, he has no interest in music. When Kolya and Lisa are forced into the slum, Kolya is growing up and changing his habits. While he still loves playing with his friends and relies on his mother, he wants privacy. He is somewhat ashamed of his mother, who is older than his friends' mothers, and fears that his father won't be coming home, though he holds on to a belief that he will. On the way to Babi Yar, Kolya is terrified and humiliated. He is so frightened when the soldiers come to take them down the hill that he urinates on himself. Though he leaps into the pit with Lisa, Kolya is killed at Babi Yar. At the camp in the final scene, Kolya is a happy, bright child again, and enjoys adventures around the grounds with his best friend, Pavel Shchadenko.

Professor Sigmund Freud

Professor Freud, the real-world father of analytic psychology, lived in Austria from 1856 to 1939. For the purposes of this book, he is Lisa's psychologist. He is called in to help her figure out the root of her breast and ovary pain after doctors are unable to help. Through his case study of Lisa, readers see him to be an opinionated, self-assured, and highly intelligent man. When he cannot explain something, he gets frustrated and often brushes it off as insignificant. From his letters to others, readers see Freud's great love for his family and his enthusiasm for his work. From his letters to Lisa, readers see his difficulty admitting he has been fooled or made a mistake. Lisa believes she sees Freud at the camp in the final scene, because she sees an old man with a jaw injury similar to Freud's. The old man, however, does not respond to her.

Madame Cottin

Madame Cottin is the central character at the white hotel other than the young woman and the soldier. She is a corsetiere (someone who fits people with corsets) and is a plump, jolly woman. Her husband dies in the fire at the white hotel, and while she pretends to be okay during the day, she cries every night in her hotel room. The young woman and the soldier can hear her through the wall. They sit with her in the dining room one day, and both fall in love with her. They invite her to their room that night and they all have sex together. In a way, this liberates Madame Cottin from her grief. Later, the couple watches as Madame Cottin falls from the broken cable car to her death. Freud says Madame Cottin is represents Madame Kedrova, with whom Lisa lives after being kicked out of ballet school. The relationship between the young woman and Madame Cottin show that Lisa is a lesbian or bisexual, to Freud.

Alexei/A.

Alexei, known as "A." in Freud's case study, is Lisa's lover during her days as a ballerina in St. Petersburg. While they did not have a physical relationship for much of the time, Lisa eventually allows Alexei to sleep with her, and she has hallucinations during sex. Alexei is a fierce revolutionary, and his political views often interfere with their relationship. Lisa tells Freud several lies about Alexei, including that he burned her hair with a cigar and had sex with another woman in front of her to punish her. She later reveals that this was a lie, and Alexei was always kind to her, but left her to pursue his political vision. Lisa is also pregnant with Alexei's child for awhile, but miscarries when she falls in the ballet studio. At the camp in the final scene, Alexei writes Lisa a letter asking her to forgive him, telling her he still loves her and would like to marry her. She accepts his friendship but refuses the relationship, because she knows the child she miscarried would haunt them.

Aunt Magda

Lisa's aunt Magda is her mother's identical twin sister. The twins remain close even when the rest of the family rejects Lisa's mother for marrying a Jewish man. After Lisa is kicked out of ballet school and Madame Kedrova gets married, Aunt Magda invites Lisa to come live with her in Vienna. Aunt Magda is devoutly Catholic, and influences Lisa in her beliefs. She is also a consistent friend to Lisa throughout her life. Aunt Magda reveals many things to Lisa, including the affair between Lisa's mother and Magda's husband. When Aunt Magda is old, Lisa's brother Yury comes and takes her to live in America with his family. At the camp in the final scene, Lisa's mother discusses her affair with Magda's husband, and implies Magda couldn't be satisfied with her husband, because she was a lesbian.

Lisa's Father, Morozova

Lisa always felt distant from her father, a workaholic, philandering man who owned a grain business in Odessa. After Lisa's mother died, her father poured most of his attention and affection into her brother, Yury, leaving Lisa feeling abandoned. When Lisa is harassed on her father's docks by a group of sailors, Lisa's father scolds her instead of comforting her, and she withdraws from him completely. At 17, she leaves Odessa and cuts off contact with him. At the camp in the final scene, she has a curt and formal phone conversation with him, and decides she'd like to reunite. In her therapy with Freud, Lisa is very hard on her father, but later decides she has blamed too much on him.

Lisa's Uncle

Lisa's uncle, married to her Aunt Magda, had an affair for years with Lisa's mother. The affair was initiated by Magda, but continued after she had withdrawn her graces. Lisa's

mother often met with the uncle under the guise of taking trips to go shopping or sightsee. The two died together in a hotel fire during one of their rendezvous.

Madame Ludmila Kedrova/Madame R.

When Lisa is kicked out of ballet school in St. Petersburg, her former teacher Madame Kedrova takes her in. They have a wonderful relationship, and Lisa feels comfortable and happy living with her. When Madame Kedrova unexpectedly gets married, Lisa is uncomfortable and soon decides to move in with Aunt Magda. Lisa later finds out that Madame Kedrova has had a baby and wishes Lisa to be his godmother. Later, around the same time Vera dies, Lisa receives a letter informing her of Madame Kedrova's death from breast cancer. Freud suspects that Lisa was in love with Madame Kedrova, and that Lisa's symptoms are from jealously over Madame Kedrova's husband and child. Lisa denies this, but remains attached to Madame Kedrova. In the final scene at the camp, she receives a postcard from Madame Kedrova, who is being treated for her cancer and doing well.

Vera (Serebryakova) Berenstein

Lisa fills in for Vera at the opera in Milan after Vera breaks her arm in a fall down the steps. Vera decides to stay and watch the performance, and she and Lisa become fast friends. Vera confides in Lisa that she is expecting a baby with Victor, and Lisa is shocked, because she doesn't realize Victor and Vera are married. Later, she figures it out and stops being nervous about them. When Vera leaves Milan, she invites Lisa to come visit in Kiev. However, Vera dies giving birth to her son, Kolya. Though Lisa only knew Vera for a few days, she is very attached to her, perhaps even loves her, and is distraught when she dies. At the camp in the final scene, Lisa talks to Vera over the phone, and Lisa reluctantly agrees to introduce Kolya to his birthmother.

Major Lionheart

Major Lionheart is a leader of sorts at the white hotel. He calls everyone together to discuss the strange things they've seen there, such as the shooting stars and the whales in the lake. He also befriends the Japanese maid, shows her his poetry, and translates some of hers. Lionheart is also slightly crazy, and is based on a shell-shocked British major who wrote poetry who Lisa met at Gastein. Lionheart always talks about a nephew that is coming soon, and the real major had a nephew who had died who he insisted was still alive. At the white hotel, Lionheart dies in the landslide.

Lieutenant Richard Lyons

Lyons is Lisa's friendly, young guide at the camp. They develop a sort of mother/son relationship there, and Lyons helps Lisa find many friends and family members in the

Holy Land. Lyons has a scar on his face, and is likely the nephew Lionheart speaks of at the white hotel.

Father Marek

Father Marek is a kind, old Catholic priest who stays at the white hotel. The young woman and the soldier befriend him, and the young woman lets him drink from her breast, because he is lonely and worried about his ailing mother. Father Marek is killed in the landslide when he is burying the victims of earlier white hotel disasters. Lisa decides later in her life that Father Marek represents Freud.

The Chef

The jolly chef at the white hotel is a wonderful cook. When Lisa begins producing milk, he helps himself to a glass. Just before the end of the white hotel writings, the chef appears at the window of the young woman and the soldier and they invite him in for sex. Lisa says the chef represents her uncle, who had an affair with her mother.

Vogel

Vogel is a German lawyer who stays at the white hotel. He has a tendency to be anti-Semetic and rude. He is also one of the only people to survive all the disasters at the white hotel. Lisa says he is a stand-in for her ex-husband, Willi, who was also anti-Semetic.

Bolotnikov-Leskov

Bolotnikov-Leskov is a sullen, often solitary young Russian revolutionary who stays at the white hotel. He befriends Vogel, and the two are some of the only people to survive all the white hotel disasters. According to Lisa, Bolotnikov-Leskov is her image of what Alexei would be like as an adult.

The Japanese Maid

At the white hotel, the young woman and the soldier are waited on by a young Japanese maid who is working for scholarship money. The maid is a poet, and calls the couple the "moon couple." She befriends Major Lionheart, who translates some of her poetry. In Lisa's real life, she had a Japanese maid as a young girl. She kissed the maid to get back/get closer to her father, who she knew was having an affair with the maid.

The Shchadenkos

The Shchadenkos, consisting of the widowed mother Liuba, her elderly mother-in-law, and her children, Nadia, Pavel, and Olga, all live above Lisa in the Podol slum. Liuba is a good friend to Lisa and rents her a room after Victor is taken away. At Babi Yar, the Shchadenkos are all murdered, and Lisa watches as soldiers throw lifeless Nadia over a wall. In the final scene at the camp, Kolya and Lisa are reunited with the Shchadenkos.

Willi

Willi is Lisa's husband, briefly, in Vienna. He is a barrister and called away by the military. Lisa leaves him shortly after, and has the marriage annulled. Due to his and his family's anti-Semitic views, Lisa keeps her Jewish heritage a secret, but feels it makes her husband hate her anyway.

Dina Pronicheva

An actress at the Kiev puppet theater, Dina is the only person who survives the massacre at Babi Yar. When she crawls out of the pit, she sees a young boy. Their encounter fulfills one of Lisa's prophetic dreams.

George Morris/Yury Morozova

George is Lisa's estranged brother, who has immigrated to America. He lives there with his wife, Natalie, and their children. He has an American name. George takes Aunt Magda to live with them toward the end of her life.

Objects/Places

Bad Gastein

Bad Gastein is a health resort in the Austrian Alps where Lisa goes to relax during her therapy and composes her hallucinatory writings.

The White Hotel

The white hotel is the center of Lisa's hallucinations. It is a resort by a lake, surrounded by beautiful scenery. Freud interprets it as a stand-in for Lisa's mother's womb.

The Black Cat

The black cat is first found stranded in a pine tree after the flood at the white hotel. It miraculously survives several other disasters, and reappears in Lisa's final fantasy as Vaska, the Shchadenko's cat.

The Left Breast

In her dream, ice cuts off the young woman's left breast. In "The Gastein Journal," a pastor sees a breast flying through the trees. In real life, Lisa has pains in her left breast and her friend Ludmila Kedrova dies of breast cancer.

The Wooden Embryo

In her dream, the young woman gives birth to a wooden embryo. In "The Gastein Journal" Vogel sees an embryo in the lake, and his sister believes this is a symbol of her abortion. In real life, Lisa has miscarried a baby.

The Womb

In her dream, the wind rips the young woman's womb out. In "The Gastein Journal" a baker sees a womb floating in the lake. There is another girl in the white hotel who has had her womb surgically removed. This is also a reference to Lisa's fear of childbirth.

The Shooting Stars

Guests at the white hotel see an oddly large number of shooting stars falling into the lake. They are often attributed to the Leonid meteor shower.

The Stream by the Convent

The young woman and the soldier have sex near a stream and are interrupted by a nun doing laundry. She tells them the stream removes sin.

The Trapdoor

At the beginning of Lisa's hallucinations, she dreams of a trapdoor with an iron handle that won't open.

The Whales

A secretary and a girl say they saw a school of whales in the white hotel's lake. They decide the whales are there because of Madame Cottin, who fits people with whalebone corsets.

The Lightning

Perfectly vertical strikes of lightning hit the lake outside the white hotel.

The Luggage

The young woman loses her luggage on the train before coming to the white hotel. In an echo of this, Lisa's luggage is stolen on the way to Babi Yar.

The Observatory

The young woman and the soldier spend the night in this observatory on the mountain by the white hotel. The telescope is missing in it.

The Telescope

There is a telescope down farther on the mountain, and the soldier uses it to see the people falling from the cable car.

The Crucifix Necklace

Lisa's mother tore this necklace off when she got married, as a symbol of leaving her old life behind. Lisa inherited it and wears it constantly. She has a habit of touching it whenever she lies. When she dies at Babi Yar, a soldier rips it off her.

The Summer House

As a child, Lisa stumbles upon her mother and uncle having a fling in the summer house by her family's house in Odessa.

The Yachts

In Lisa's hallucination, she is on a yacht the day of the fire at the white hotel. She tells Freud of an unfortunate incident on a yacht with her lover, Alexei, in St. Petersburg, but later reveals it's a lie. As a child, Lisa accidentally discovered her uncle, aunt, and mother having sex on the family's yacht. After she marries Victor, Lisa, Victor and Kolya spend some time traveling aboard a yacht.

La Scala

La Scale is the famous theater in Milan, Italy, where Lisa performs in an opera with Victor and meets Vera.

The Shroud of Turin and "The Last Supper"

Lisa views these religious artifacts while in Italy. She is disconcerted by the symmetry of "The Last Supper" and temporarily loses her faith in the resurrection after seeing the Shroud, because she believes the image shows someone too dead to rise again.

The Docks

As a young teenager, Lisa is harassed by a group of workers on the docks in Odessa, because she is Jewish.

The Shchadenko's House

During World War II, Lisa and Kolya live in a spare room at the Shchadenko's house in the Podol slums of Kiev.

The Sign

A sign posted around Kiev demands that all Jews in the city report to a street corner by the Jewish cemetery or they will be shot. After they report, they are led to Babi Yar and shot.

The Enclosure

The enclosure is the area before Babi Yar, where the Jews are herded, beaten, and forced to undress before they are shot by German soldiers.

Babi Yar

Babi Yar is the ravine in Kiev by which thousands of Jews and other people are murdered during the Holocaust.

The Bayonet

Soldiers rape Lisa's body with a bayonet at Babi Yar. The pains Lisa feels throughout her life are a premonition of this event.

The Camp

The camp is a place with a beautiful hotel and lush vegetation in the Holy Land, where Lisa, Kolya, and many others are taken after their death.

The Pine Trees

The scent of a pine tree at Lisa's childhood house in Odessa reminds her of how she is always herself. The same scent brings her happiness at the camp.

Social Sensitivity

The White Hotel takes place in central Europe in the years leading up to World War II, during a period when the well-established conventions of bourgeois social order were displaced by the irrational eruptions of national socialist ("nazi") movements. In this situation, the forces of change were felt at the personal as well as the societal level: people underwent severe conflicts between the repressive, conservative drives that resisted awareness of new conditions and the revolutionary, liberalizing impulses that urged them to fervently embrace radical transformation. Those who were unable to fully accept either alternative expressed their ambivalence in the form of psychological problems, for which the psychoanalytic profession offered the best hope of effective treatment.

Many observers of the central European scene during these years have commented upon the conditions which offered fertile soil for the growth of psychoanalysis, but it is Thomas's singular achievement to have turned them into the components of an accomplished novel. Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, is one of the major characters in The White Hotel, where he and the other members of his profession who appear are represented as explorers of the mind who sometimes discover valuable truths about human nature. Their social role is in many respects akin to that of the priests in an established religion: They interpret the secrets at the core of existence to their followers, and try to help the distressed apply such knowledge to their specific problems. Although Thomas takes pains to demonstrate the flaws of this new brand of belief — a particularly effective passage shows a Freudian analysis being undermined by the patient's untruths — he also presents it as one of the few beacons of hope in an otherwise uncaring universe.

Since the disintegrating psyches of many of the characters in The White Hotel can only be held together with a psychoanalyst's assistance, the cure for social ills by implication lies in the insights of Freud and his followers. The White Hotel describes a world where both religion and traditional social institutions are no longer capable of dealing with man's most serious difficulties; and it is now the heroic figure of the psychoanalyst who offers understanding of, and perhaps even remedies for, the ills that so sorely beset mankind.

Techniques

The White Hotel is a Chinese-box narrative whose successive sections present progressively more revealing perspectives upon its protagonist.

There are two principles at work here that operate so as to attract and intensify the reader's attention. The first, familiar from tales of mystery and suspense, involves the gradual revelation of truth over the course of time: As each piece of the puzzle falls into place, readers may begin to anticipate the climax by speculating as to the most likely conclusion. The second, of which the opening passages of William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury offer perhaps the best-known example, speaks to readers in the voice of an unreliable narrator, who is either incapable of or averse to being truthful.

Although the first of these is to some extent a component of almost any compelling story — the question of "What truths lie beneath the surface of appearances?" keeps readers interested in hard-boiled thrillers as well as Hamlet — it is Thomas's brilliant handling of the second that makes The White Hotel such a powerful and affecting novel.

The first three sections of The White Hotel proffer very different pictures of its protagonist's psyche, with their disparity emphasized by the respective literary genres each employs. The long poem, prose fantasy and psychoanalytic case study that develop Lisa Erdman's character exhibit a movement towards understanding as well as greater knowledge: The prose fantasy organizes and makes more explicit the events adumbrated in the long poem, and the psychoanalytic case study takes an objective, interpretive approach that offers insights into both.

The last three sections ground these revelations in more conventionally novelistic prose that rounds out the character of the mature Lisa Erdman: initially in her career as an opera singer, then in her sufferings as an elderly member of an oppressed minority, and finally in the new form of disembodied soul liberated from the travails of corporeal existence. Thomas's mastery of all of these varieties of narrative enables him to combine them into the complex but unified novel that is The White Hotel, which may be confidently said to display a sophistication of literary technique on a par with its ambitious portrait of philosophical, political, psychological, and poetic truths.

Themes

Themes

The pervasive thread that binds together the very disparate contents of The White Hotel is the eternal struggle between the life force and the death instinct. This conflict is played out within individual psyches and family and social groups as well as between nations, and is seen as essentially beyond the control of rational thought.

Although extremely perceptive observers can sometimes understand how it affects the actions of others, each person remains unconsciously susceptible to the influence of powers which operate at the deepest levels of human existence.

In the hands of a lesser writer, this dichotomy would probably be expressed in terms of a conventional battle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. But much of the fascination of The White Hotel stems from Thomas's refusal to engage in this kind of moral simplification. He shows a wide range of experiences and events, many of which are clearly basically good or intrinsically evil, but he does not equate life with good or death with evil: When life means only a continuation of suffering, for example, death can come as a welcome release, and where the death of individual cells accelerates the development of social organisms, the persistence of individual lives may be merely a synonym for collective decay and stagnation. There is also an aesthetic aspect to be considered in that death may produce displays of great beauty, whereas life sometimes creates exhibitions of dull uniformity.

Thomas does not offer these reflections in the spirit of devil's advocacy, but rather presents them as the inescapable consequence of seeing deeply into a world where intellectual abstractions pale beside the realities of living and dying. The White Hotel shows these inexorable forces at work in a variety of graphically realized and emotionally moving contexts, each incorporating a central symbol — the white hotel itselfwithin which the dramas of life and death are played out on a stage where the only certainty is the permanence of change.

Sex and Sexuality

Lisa's real and hallucinatory lives often revolve around sex. As a child, she is witness to the sexual experimentation of her mother, aunt, and uncle, and carries the memories with her, repressed, until they are revealed through therapy. In her teenage years, Lisa has unpleasant personal experiences with sex that shape her later attitudes. At 15, she is forced to perform oral sex on a group of sailors, who tell her it is all she is worthy to do. At 17, she is raped by a stranger on a train, and it causes terrible hallucinations. Even when she has sex with her first love, Alexei, she is uncomfortable and the experience is unpleasant. When she gets married, she cannot bring herself to complete the sex act with her husband. After she leaves him, she forces herself to ignore her

sexual desires. The few times she indulges, she feels terribly guilty and hallucinates. It is not, until she releases her sexual feelings in her hallucinatory writings and undergoes therapy to understand those feelings that she is able to enjoy sex, as a middle-aged woman, with Victor.

In her hallucinatory world, there is nothing to distract the Lisa-character from sex. She is able to do whatever she or her lover wants without fear, guilt, or punishment. Though terrible things happen at the white hotel, the young couple's love supercedes these horrors. In real life, however, Lisa's visions do the opposite, making it impossible for her to enjoy sex. On account of the pain sex causes her, which she extends into a fear of motherhood, Lisa fears any sort of intimacy for most of her life.

According to Freud, Lisa's fear stems from a repressed bisexual side. Freud cites Lisa's lifelong reliance on women and her ability to form close friendships only with women as evidence to Lisa's true sexual nature. While Lisa rejects Freud's interpretation and this side of herself most of the time, she seems to acknowledge, at least, that she forms closer bonds with women. At the end, it is revealed that another character, too, struggled with sexuality. Lisa's Aunt Magda married young, and afterward discovered her true sexuality. Since she was unable to satisfy or be satisfied by her husband, she gave her blessing to the sexual relationship between her sister, Lisa's mother, and her husband.

Mothers and Motherhood

Freud claims the root of Lisa's problems is her mother. He believes she is jealous of her mother for taking her father's affections (a form of the Oedipus complex), angry at her mother for dying and abandoning her, and hysterical, because she repressed her memories of her mother's infidelity. Freud says the white hotel is a representation of Lisa's mother's womb, the "last perfect place." Lisa denies this, eventually, saying that while she was happy to have the mysteries about her mother solved, they weren't causing her hysteria. Regardless, it is important to consider Lisa's relationship with her mother. Though her mother died young, Lisa spends much of her adult life thinking about her mother and trying to understand the circumstances of her mother's death. The circumstances even manifest themselves in Lisa's life, as hallucinations of a fire and coughing as if she were inhaling smoke.

Motherhood also has a significant affect on Lisa. After she miscarries a baby as a young woman, she becomes convinced that it will only bring bad things if she has a baby. She does everything in her power to prevent getting pregnant, and even in her hallucination talks about not wanting to get pregnant. Lisa has a hard time accepting it when her friend Madame Kedrova has a baby, and though she is happy when Vera reveals she is pregnant, her joy is crushed when Vera dies in childbirth. Later, when Lisa becomes adoptive mother to Kolya, she is very happy in motherhood for a time. However, her worst fears are realized and her and her son's lives end in terror and tragedy.

After death, Lisa must deal with her own mother and motherhood. She reunites with her mother, and it is incredibly freeing for Lisa to hear her mother's secrets from the source. As Vera is in the afterlife, Lisa must let her meet Kolya, though she struggles with this. She feels that although she didn't give birth to him, she *is* Kolya's mother, but she understands that he should meet his birth mother also.

Secrets and Lies

Lisa's therapy and her letters to Freud after reveal how wrapped up her life is in secrets and lies. As a child, she witnesses her mother's infidelity and forces herself to keep the secret to the point of repressing the memories. As an adult, she becomes obsessed with uncovering the truth behind the secret, and eventually discovers it, which makes her feel healed.

However, Lisa, too is guilty of keeping secrets and telling lies. Freud has difficulty getting her to open up to him, and eventually discovers that Lisa strokes her crucifix when she is lying. Freud uses this clue to get the truth from Lisa, but he does not realize that she often gives him incomplete truths or total lies. When Lisa writes Freud letters later in her life, she reveals that she lied about her relationship with Alexei, what really happened on the docks, and how she felt about her father. There are even more secrets and lies that are revealed to readers but never to Freud, such as Lisa's rape by the soldier on the train. Lisa's death at Babi Yar stems from another lie. From the misleading posters in Kiev, the Jews believe they are being taken somewhere safe or at least away from the city, not being taken to a ravine to be slaughtered.

The only place in the novel where there are no secrets and lies is the white hotel. There is cleansing from sin there, as the nun at the convent tells the young lovers. Everything is permissible at the white hotel so lies are unnecessary, because there is nothing to cover up and all secrets are eventually revealed.

Death

The author presents Freud's case study about Lisa as a driving force in his writings about the death instinct. Like all humans are driven by their libidos, their desire to live, Freud concludes that humans are also driven by a desire to eventually die. In Lisa, the death instinct is exaggerated, and she sees death repeatedly in her hallucinations. For Lisa, sex is related to death and life is filled by death.

Lisa also possesses an amazing power to sense death. She predicts the deaths of Freud's daughter and grandson, and of a man Freud knows. She has a prophetic dream of a young boy telling a woman he's still alive that occurs, word for word, at the edge of Babi Yar with the lone survivor and a young boy. Her mind experiences powerful echoes of her mother's death via her hallucinations.

Finally, Lisa unknowingly predicts the circumstances of her own death at Babi Yar. Neither she nor Freud understands why, in addition to drowning and fire deaths, people

die of a landslide and a great fall in Lisa's hallucinations. At Babi Yar, Lisa falls into a deep pit and is buried, just as the people in her fantasies. The other two disasters at the white hotel could also be seen as predictions of Babi Yar. Due to the volume of bodies, the soldiers burn many of them in piles. Later, after the massacre is over and a dam has been built over the ravine, the dam bursts, drowning many people in Kiev as well as burying them in mud.

Style

Points of View

The point of view shifts throughout the book, depending on the story being presented. Some chapters are meant to represent documents, so both point of view in the document and the writer of the document in the world of the story must be taken into account. In basic terms, the prologue consists of a series of letters. Chapter 1 is a first person poem, Chapter 2 is third-person omniscient narration, and Chapter 3 is first-person narration. Chapter 4 is third-person limited omniscient narration and first person letters, Chapter 5 is third-person omniscient narration, and Chapter 6 is third-person limited omniscient narration.

The letters in the prologue introduce readers to one main character, Freud, and give them a sense of authenticity to the story. These letters also place the book clearly in a time period (the early 20th century). The central point of most of these letters, the writings and illness of Freud's young patient, later revealed to be Lisa, prepare readers for Lisa's story and provide foreshadowing.

The poem in Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to Lisa's hallucinations. The first-person narration allows readers to see the images and chaos that are in Lisa's head. Like Lisa is confused by her writings, those who read them may also be confused and seek the expansion, clarification, and analysis in later chapters. Though readers aren't aware upon first reading that Lisa wrote this poem, they can put it into the context of her life while reading the rest of the book.

Though the narration of Chapter 2 explores the minds of several characters with an unknown, third-person narrator, readers of the chapter are later aware of its author. Using the third person, Lisa explores her hallucination in greater depth, adding in details from her surroundings at Gastein and memories of her life. Since they are aware of the author and her motivations as they continue in the book, readers should realize the third-person narration is far from unbiased. Rather, Lisa points readers toward moments of importance. Chapter 3 is also deliberately biased. It is presented not only as first-person narration, but also as Freud's written and published case study of Anna/Lisa's work. While he is telling a story, he is doing so less as a narrator and more as an analyst and commentator.

Chapter 4 is the simplest of the chapters in terms of narration. The majority of the chapter is in third person, focusing on the thoughts and actions of Lisa. This allows readers to draw back from the intimacy of the first three chapters and observe Lisa in a more passive manner. The letters that enter later in the chapter serve to give readers Lisa's full opinions of her life and Freud's work, and serve better as vessels of revealing the truth than third-person explanation. Chapter 5 also distances readers from the story, though it goes further by getting into several characters' heads. At one point, the narration is through the eyes of a soldier who doesn't know Lisa, and she is called "the

old woman." This distance allows readers to observe a dramatic and drastic scene from a larger perspective. The final chapter is again third-person, but goes back to limited omniscient, staying very close to Lisa's thoughts and feelings. While readers are not back in her head, they are far closer than in Chapter 5.

Setting

The time and place settings in the story are expansive, following one woman through her life, around Europe, and even into her fantasies. The real-world action takes place in early-20th century Vienna, Austria; Gastein, Austria; Milan, Italy; Turin, Italy; St. Petersburg, Russia; Kiev, Ukraine; and Odessa, Ukraine.

Freud lives and works in Berlin, and Lisa spends much of her adult life there, living with her aunt. It is also where she undergoes therapy. During her therapy, she takes a vacation to Gastein, a famous health resort in the Austrian Alps. There, she writes "Don Giovanni" and "The Gastein Journal." She travels to Milan at age 29 to perform in an opera at La Scala, a world-famous opera house in the city. While in Italy, she takes a brief trip to Turin, where the Shroud of Turin is displayed.

In Lisa's history, readers learn she was raised in Odessa, in a large house with expansive grounds along the ocean. She returns there as an adult with her husband and adopted son, and discovers her old house is now a resort. When Lisa was 17, she left Odessa for St. Petersburg, where she studied ballet, fell in love with a young revolutionary, and lived with a kind teacher. Lisa finishes her life in Kiev, where she moves to be with her second husband, Victor. Though they live in an upper-class area at first, Lisa is forced into the Podol slums during the early stages of the Holocaust. The most significant place in Kiev, and perhaps in the entire book, is Babi Yar, where Lisa and her son are slaughtered along with thousands of others.

The primary hallucinatory setting in the book is the white hotel. The hotel is by a green lake and is surrounded by mountains. There are a small tavern, a convent, and a church in the mountains. Most of the action in the white hotel takes place in the young couple's hotel room and on their balcony, but they also venture into the surrounding wilderness, the dining room of the hotel, and the billiard room. According to Freud, the white hotel symbolizes the mother's womb, but at the end of the book, the white hotel is at the Holy Land refugee camp where Lisa spends her afterlife.

Language and Meaning

As with point of view, the language of the novel changes depending on the chapter. The prologue is fairly straightforward. The language of each letter depends on who is writing to whom. For instance, Freud is friendly and quite casual in his letters to Ferenczi, but uses a formal, technical voice when discussing Lisa's writings with Herr Kuhn, who Freud hopes will publish his work and Lisa's writings. Other letters throughout the book share similar characteristics. Freud's letters to Lisa are generally casual, though he often seems condescending, because he is a doctor talking his patient and telling her

what believes is going on. Lisa's letters to Freud are very warm and open, because she grows to trust Freud and wants to confess to him. After Lisa contradicts Freud, however, Freud's letters gain a colder, more formal tone, and eventually disappear altogether.

In some sections, the language helps reveal the "author" of the text's personality. For instance, Chapter 1 is a poem written by Lisa to express her hallucinations. Her attempts at meter (mostly iambic pentameter) show she is well-educated and is familiar with poetry, while her occasional rhymes and plays on words reveal her ability to be charming and witty, even amidst unhappy times. The poem is written with more figurative language and imagery than other sections of the book, and the words often invoke vivid colors and scents. Much of the language employed in the poem's sexual moments, however, is slangy and obscene, which demonstrates Lisa's unbridled, uncensored hallucinatory mindset. The content of the poem is chaotic and strange, often skipping from one idea to the next, which reflects Lisa's hysteric state at the time of writing it. The rewrite of the poem in prose form keeps some of the chaotic skipping in narrative from one place or character to another, but controls and tones down the poems images and strong sexual language. In this section, Lisa tends to plainly describe incredible occurrences rather than use figurative language. However, the amazing things that happen read as if they were figurative. For instance, seeing an orange grove fall from the sky would be bizarre and incredible in the real world, but is commonplace, if slightly odd, in Lisa's hallucinations. The final chapter, though not written by Lisa, shares the language characteristics of Chapter 2.

The language in Freud's case analysis in Chapter 3 is mostly simple, formal, and straightforward. He includes some technical language related to psychoanalysis, such as "sublimation of her true desires" and "the idealizing pattern of maternal love," and gives Lisa and other characters pseudonyms to protect their identities. The chapters that are narrated in third-person limited are also simple, generally describing what a character is doing or saying in an uncomplicated manner.

Structure

The novel comprises a prologue and six chapters of varying length. Each chapter focuses on an aspect of Lisa Erdman's life in some way. Chapters 1 and 2 repeat the story of Lisa's hallucinations in different ways: Chapter 1 is a long, narrative poem, and Chapter 2 is an extended version of the poem in prose form. The basic plot of this story follows a young woman who meets a soldier on a train and agrees to go stay with him at a mysterious white hotel. At the hotel, they are sexually intimate in a variety of ways, in a variety of places, and with a variety of people. During their escapes, four disasters happen, killing most of the hotel's guests. There are a flood, fire, landslide, and cable car accident.

Chapter 3 is an analysis of the first two chapters, presented as a Freudian case study. The case study begins by giving background on Lisa, who is given the pseudonym "Frau Anna G." Freud then details the content of the patient's therapy, concluding with

the end of the therapy, his final analyses, and what the patient is doing at the time the case study is completed.

Chapter 4 follows Lisa Erdman for about 10 years after her therapy with Freud. The narrative is focused mainly on two times. The first is Lisa's performance in Milan, where she meets Vera and Victor, two of her closest friends. The second is a few years later, after Vera has died and Lisa goes to Kiev to marry Victor and be mother to his and Vera's son, Kolya. Chapter 5 takes place about 10 years later, during the Holocaust. It tells the story of one day, in which Lisa and Kolya are murdered at the Babi Yar Massacre. Chapter 6 follows Lisa into the afterlife, where she returns to the white hotel, which is now in the Holy Land. At this place, Lisa reunites with her family and friends, and becomes part of the new community, as she helps care for the influx of "guests" who have died in the Holocaust.

Quotes

"...her phantasy strikes me as like Eden before the Fall - not that love and death did not happen there, but there was no *time* in which they could have a meaning." Prologue, p. 10

"...I was split open/by your son, Professor, and now come back, a broken/woman, perhaps more broken, can/you do anything for me can you understand." Chapter 1, p. 16

"For nothing in the white hotel but love/is offered at a price we can afford," Chapter 1, p. 23

"Am I too sexual? I sometimes think/I am obsessed by it, it's not as if/God fills the waters with mad spawning shapes/or loads the vines with grapes, the palm with dates/or makes the bull dilate to take the peach/or the plum tremble at the ox's reek/or the sun cover the pale moon." Chapter 1, p. 27

"It was very peaceful and free, letting the young officer stroke her thighs in the dark. She had already, in a sense, slept with him, allowing him the much greater intimacy of watching her while she was asleep." Chapter 2, p. 37

"'The important thing' he said, 'is for us to share frankly what we have seen, or think we have seen; and if possible to find rational explanations. For instance, I don't know if I'm alone in having seen lightning strike the lake? A livid stroke, absolutely vertical.'" Chapter 2, p. 54

"Time, that had raced during the evening, now dragged for Madame Cottin, lying open-eyed in the dark; and did not exist, in different ways, for the sleeping guests, for the dead down in the cool store rooms, and for the lovers. Their souls, balancing on the edge of sleep, like someone oppressed by heat who makes his bed perilously on the balcony, attuned themselves to total silence." Chapter 2, p. 61

"Their skirts blown up around their waists by the motion of the air, the women fell more slowly than the men. Madame Cottin, her heart in her mouth, saw a handsome Dutch lad falling only a few feet away from her, quite vertical, as was she, and she had the strange impression that she was not falling to her death but being lifted high by his strong arms." Chapter 2, page 80.

"Her marriage was a hypocrisy; and her music was, at least in part, a sublimation of her true desires. The incompatible idea had to be suppressed, at whatever price; and the price was an hysteria." Chapter 3, p. 140

"I told her I thought she was cured of everything but life, so to speak." Chapter 3, p. 141

"She was not jealous; she knew she could not match that voice, which was as close to perfection as she ever hoped to hear, this side of paradise and perhaps even beyond.

She not only revered Serebryakova, she liked her - had perhaps fallen a little in love with her, in the space of a day." Chapter 4, p. 163

"Lisa was disturbed by the foolish thought that if Christ's hands had not been placed so tactfully, the Church would not have been able to display His image." Chapter 4, p. 169

"The corset as hypocrisy - yes! But also the restraints of manners, traditions, morality, art. In my indecent revelations I feel as though I were standing before you uncorseted, and I blush." Chapter 4, p. 184

"And didn't I feel better when you helped me 'dig out' my mother's affair simply because I felt excited at the way it cleared up mysteries? Clarification! Anagnorisis!" Chapter 4, p. 200

"But immediately came another insight, bringing almost unbearable joy. For as she looked back through the clear space to her childhood, there was no blank wall, only an endless extent, like an avenue, in which she was still herself, Lisa. She was still there, even at the beginning of all things. And when she looked in the opposite direction, towards the unknown future, death, the endless extent beyond death, she was there still. It all came from the scent of a pine tree." Chapter 4, p. 214

"She tried to make her voice and expression convincing, and briefly touched the crucifix at her throat. Never had it seemed the right time to tell him his father would not be coming back. She would tell him when they were settled somewhere safe, far away, where they could begin a new life." Chapter 5, p. 227

"His scream was only one strand in a universal scream, mixed with the happy shouts of the soldiers and the barking of dogs, but it was the one that stood out, even above her own." Chapter 5, p. 240

"In spite of the shouts, the screams and the patter of machine guns, Lisa heard nothing. As in a silent film, with the white cumulus drifting across the blue sky. She even started to believe that nothing terrible was happening beyond the wall of sand. For nothing could be worse than this, or as bad." Chapter 5, p. 244

"No one, however, saw fit to placate the ravine with a memorial. It was filled in with concrete, and above it were built a main road, a television centre, and a high-rise block of flats. The corpses had been buried, burned, drowned, and reburied under concrete and steel." Chapter 5, p. 253

"Lisa opened her mouth to ask a question; but thought better of it. It was much too early. Besides, it was really just curiosity; it wasn't important to know. The only important, terrible thing had been *death*, and now she knew that didn't apply, for her mother had not died, she had emigrated." Chapter 6, p. 267

"Many thousands of immigrants were waiting, standing by their pathetic wooden suitcases and holding their bundles of rags tied up in string. They looked, not sad - listless; not thing - skeletal; not angry - patient." Chapter 6, p. 274

Topics for Discussion

Discuss the use of repeating patterns throughout *The White Hotel*. How do these motifs connect different incidents? What do they reveal about the way Lisa senses time and the world around her?

Based on what else you learn of Lisa in the novel, do you agree with Freud's analysis of her? Why or why not? Consider how Freud's bias and Lisa's lies shape the analysis.

Compare and contrast the young soldier in Lisa's hallucinations with the other men in her life (e.g. her father, Alexei, Freud, Victor, etc.). In what ways does the soldier represent some of these men? In what ways does he provide things for Lisa that no other man can?

Discuss the author's use of Babi Yar in *The White Hotel*. How does connecting true events to fictional characters affect a story? How does the author tie the events of Babi Yar into the rest of the novel?

Relate Catholic and Jewish imagery and history to *The White Hotel*. What does the crucifix mean in Catholicism and in this book? What is the significance of the Holy Land? What other references and symbols are present in the novel? (You will need to include outside research.)

What role does dual and conflicting identity play in the novel? Consider the various characters in Lisa's hallucinations and their real-world counterparts. What happens between Lisa's mother and her twin, and Lisa's own inner conflicts?

Discuss the use of letters in the novel. How do they advance the story? What do they reveal about their writers? What is their affect on readers?

Literary Precedents

There are some obvious literary precedents that need to be mentioned with regard to The White Hotel, among which Anatoli Kuznetsov's Babi Yar is the most problematic. Thomas's reliance upon it in the fifth section of his book has occasioned accusations of plagiarism, and although this is too harsh a description of his use of the testimony Kuznetsov collected, there are those who feel that it seriously detracts from the originality of The White Hotel. A more charitable, and probably accurate, view is that Thomas has indulged in an acceptable degree of artistic license in making use of the historical raw material contained in Babi Yar and has transformed its straightforward factual account into the stuff of creative and highly imaginative fiction.

Thomas's imitation of Freud's case studies has occasioned less controversy and been much more warmly greeted.

He makes it clear that he admires Freud as a literary artist as well as a pioneer explorer of the psyche, and his account of Lisa Erdman's psychoanalysis follows the case studies' pattern of gradual increases in understanding punctuated by periodic flashes of revelation. In contrast to the recent spate of criticism alleging egotistical and authoritarian tendencies on Freud's part, Thomas stresses the humane, inquiring, sensitive side of his personality, and in the process demonstrates that the writer and the psychoanalyst are engaged in similar and potentially symbiotic enterprises.

In more general terms, there are a number of parallels between The White Hotel and Thomas Mann's The Magic Mountain which suggest that the latter has exerted some degree of influence upon the former. Hans Castorp, the protagonist of The Magic Mountain, is, like Lisa Erdman, a sufferer from psychological problems which result in severe physical pain. Both are preoccupied with thoughts of death, and both must undergo profound emotional transformations before their bodies can return to a state of physical well-being.

Perhaps most importantly, both overcome their illnesses only to be killed in historical cataclysms — Hans Castorp in World War I, Lisa Erdman at Babi Yar — that seem to mock the significance of their individual human struggles. That both Hans Castorp and Lisa Erdman impress readers as examples of heroic achievement rather than pathetic failure is an indication of the essentially spiritual messages of their respective books, as the life force's conflict with the death instinct survives death's victory in the world by affirming life's ultimate triumph in the hereafter.

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