It

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF STEPHEN KING

Stephen King was born to Donald and Nellie Ruth Pillsbury King. His parents separated when he was a toddler, causing him and his older brother, David, to bounce between Fort Wayne, Indiana, where his paternal family lived, and Stratford, Connecticut before settling in Durham, Maine. King began writing when he was six or seven and was heavily influenced by comic books and movies. King graduated from high school in 1966, then went on to the University of Maine at Orono. While there, he wrote a column for the school newspaper and participated in anti-war protests. King was dismissed from the draft due to physical ailments that made him unfit for service. In 1970, he earned a B.A. in English, with a qualification to teach high school. Around this time, he met his wife, Tabitha Spruce, at a university library and they married in January 1971. Tabitha King is also a writer of suspense novels. King worked menial jobs before securing a position as a high school English teacher in the fall of 1971. He sold his first short story to a men's magazine in the same year and continued to write stories in the evenings. He also began to work on his first novels. *Carrie* was the first to be published in 1974, after he secured a contract with Doubleday. King is known as one of the most prolific and popular American authors of the twentieth-century. His novels have been adapted for numerous successful films and television series. One of these, *The Shining*, is based on his own struggles with alcoholism as well as his family's brief sojourn at a hotel in Boulder, Colorado. King still resides in rural Maine, where many of his novels and short stories are set. He and Tabitha have three children: Naomi Rachel, the novelist Joe Hill, and Owen Philip, as well as four grandchildren.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Most of the story's events take place in 1958 and 1985. The first year is at the tail-end of the Eisenhower era, a period characterized by the Cold War, the beginning of the space race with the Soviet Union, and initial steps toward desegregation in the South. For many white Americans, the 1950s are remembered as a decade of peace and prosperity, marred only by the underlying threat of nuclear annihilation. Nineteen fifty-eight is unique for being the year in which a major recession hit the U.S. economy—the first economic downturn since the Great Depression—and the year in which President Eisenhower established the National Aeronautical Space Administration (NASA). Culturally, television and rock-and-roll became significant fields of influence. King mentions numerous popular television shows at the time, particularly *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, a show hosted by the eponymous film director, nicknamed "the master of suspense." Like 1958, 1985 was a time in which conservative politics ruled under the leadership of President Ronald Reagan, who Ben Hanscom remembers as the host of the 1950s television show *General Electric Theater*. The United States was in the midst of the AIDS crisis, which King mentions in the context of Derry's rampant homophobia. The Reagan Administration was inactive in addressing the crisis and, in one notorious moment in 1982, White House Press Secretary Larry Speakes laughed about the virus, which he and several reporters called the "gay plague."

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Though King is the world's best-known author of horror and suspense novels, the genre includes a plethora of other writers who started publishing in the 1970s, along with King. Anne Rice's *Interview With the Vampire* debuted in 1976—two years after *Carrie*. Like King, Rice explores how elements of the supernatural collide with reality, though her work focuses on vampires. Also like King, Rice is a regional writer whose work chronicles New Orleans as closely as King chronicles Maine. King has praised Clive Barker, an English writer whose novella, *The Hellbound Heart*, became the basis for the popular *Hellraiser* film series. Barker also scripted most of the films in the series and directed the first *Hellraiser*. The children's author R.L. Stine has been nicknamed "the Stephen King of children's literature," according to The Associated Press. Stine's *Goosebumps* series has sold 400 million copies all around the world and the books have been translated into various languages. Like his contemporaries, King's influences are broad, which may explain his popularity. He read widely as a child. Edgar Allan Poe, Jack London, and Thomas Hardy were major influences. After reading Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, King developed a better understanding of misogyny in literature and worked to create female characters who are as fully developed and central to his stories as male characters.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** It
- **When Written:** September 9, 1981-December 28, 1985
- **Where Written:** Bangor, Maine
- **When Published:** September 1986
- **Literary Period:** Late-20th Century Popular Fiction
- **Genre:** Fiction; Horror / Suspense
- **Setting:** Derry, Maine
- **Climax:** Bill Denbrough reaches inside of It and squeezes It's heart until the organ bursts.

- **Antagonist:** It / Pennywise the Clown / Bob Gray
- **Point of View:** Third-person omniscient; First-person when Mike Hanlon narrates during the interludes

EXTRA CREDIT

I Was a Teenage Werewolf. Richie Tozier, Ben Hanscom, and Beverly Marsh go to see this film at the Aladdin Theater and, later in the novel, Bill Denbrough and Richie are chased by a more menacing version of the cinematic werewolf. During a "Fresh Air" interview with Terry Gross, King talked about how the "schlock" horror films of the 1950s have influenced his work, and how characters such as "the werewolf" and "the mummy" have remained fixtures in his imagination. Other influential "schlock" films include *The Fly* and *It Came From Outer Space*, both of which are also mentioned in the novel.

Shawshank State Prison. After pleading guilty to killing Dorsey Corcoran, Richard Macklin is sent to Shawshank—a place where inmates are supposedly forced to work in the prison's lime pits, causing one's tongue to turn green. The fictional Shawshank is best known as the setting of the film *The Shawshank Redemption*, starring Morgan Freeman and Tim Robbins, which is based on King's short story, "Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption." This story appears—along with "The Body," on which the hit film *Stand By Me* is based—in the story collection *Different Seasons*. Shawshank State Prison is also mentioned in "The Body."

PLOT SUMMARY

It is the fall of 1957 and it has rained for a full week, causing the streets of Derry, Maine to flood. Ten-year-old Bill Denbrough helps his younger brother, George Denbrough, make a waterproof **paper boat** so that the six-year-old can go play in the rain. To get paraffin wax for the boat, George must go to the basement, which he hates. George reaches the cellar door, opens it, and stands at the top of the stairs, certain that "It" lurks somewhere down there. He proceeds downstairs and finds the can of wax. George stares for a while at the picture of the turtle on the lid, wondering where he has seen it before. When Bill calls after him, George awakens from his daydream and brings up the materials. George watches admiringly as his brother waterproofs the boat. In gratitude, George kisses him before going out. This is the last time Bill sees his younger brother.

George chases after his boat as it rushes through the floodwaters in the street. The boat floats toward a storm drain and gets caught. When George peers down into the drain, he sees a pair of yellow eyes staring back at him. The eyes then turn blue, like those of George's mother. The eyes belong to a clown who introduces himself as "Mr. Bob Gray, also known as Pennywise the Dancing Clown." The clown tells George that the storm swept him and his circus into the sewer. George leans closer and smells delectable scents mixed with manure and the smell of dead things. The clown offers George his boat and a floating balloon. As George reaches forward, the clown's eyes change, and Pennywise pulls the boy into the darkness, ripping George's arm out of its socket. The boy dies instantly. Dave Gardener, a neighbor, races out of his house and carries George's body back to the Denbrough house.

It is now 1984. Adrian Mellon, a gay man, is beaten to death and thrown off of the town's Kissing Bridge into the Canal. The youths who assault Mellon and his partner, Don Hagerty, include Christopher Unwin, Steve Dubay, and their ringleader, John "Webby" Garton. Chris Unwin reports seeing a clown drag Mellon under the Kissing Bridge. Hagerty says that there were thousands of multi-colored balloons under the same bridge. News of the murder and the report of a strange clown prompts local head librarian Mike Hanlon to place six calls to six old friends.

The first call is to the home of Stanley Uris in suburban Atlanta. On the evening of May 28, 1985, Stanley and his wife, Patricia Uris, are watching television. The call prompts Stanley to take an evening bath, which his wife finds strange. When Patricia goes to check on him, she finds the door locked. When she gets the door open, she finds Stanley dead in the bathtub, the water red from his blood. On the wall tile, he has scrawled a message in his blood: "IT."

The next call is to Richard Tozier, now a Los Angeles radio personality. While Richie makes arrangements with his travel agent, Carol Feeny, the renowned architect Ben Hanscom receives the next call. Hanscom lives in Nebraska. After getting his call, Ben takes what he suspects may be his last drink at the Red Wheel, a bar that he frequents. Eddie Kaspbrak's telephone rings around this time. Eddie, the owner of a chauffeuring company, asks his wife Myra to substitute for him in picking up and driving Al Pacino around Manhattan. Myra, an overprotective woman who is similar to Eddie's mother Sonia begs Eddie not to leave, but he goes anyway. Meanwhile, in Chicago, the dress designer Beverly Marsh Rogan receives a late-night call. She tells her husband, Tom Rogan, that she must leave. Tom forbids her to go and a fight ensues. This time, Beverly refuses to obey her physically abusive husband, whose habits resemble those of her father, and beats him with the belt that he normally uses on her. She becomes so anxious to leave the house that she leaves her wallet behind. With the help of her friend Kay McCall, she is able to get the money that she needs to get back to Derry. The final call goes to the writer Bill Denbrough, who is in England, where he and his wife, the actress Audra Phillips, are working on *Attic Room*, a film adaptation of one of his novels.

Mike Hanlon is the only one who has remained behind in Derry—a town of 35,000. He collects local folklore and serves

as the town's "watchman," on the lookout for It. He and his six friends—nicknamed the Losers' Club—sent It away in 1958. Twenty-seven years later, he tells them that it is time to finish the job they started. They must destroy It and end its reign of terror over Derry.

Every member of the Losers' Club has a characteristic that makes it difficult for them to fit in. Ben is overweight and overfed, due to fears of poverty harbored by his single mother, Arlene Hanscom. Bill stutters and is as shut off from his parents as he is from his peers. Eddie is the son of an overprotective hypochondriac of a mother who has convinced him that he has asthma. Beverly comes from a poor and abusive home. Richie comes from a comfortable household but unintentionally irritates nearly everyone with his barbed sense of humor. Mike and Stanley come from more secure and loving homes, but they are socially outcast due to being black and Jewish, respectively. Another link that binds the group is that, after the death of George Denbrough, none of them has any siblings, resulting in their ability to find fraternity with each other.

The main tie that binds, however, is that each has a story to tell about It. Richie was the last to experience It, in the form of a werewolf, reminiscent of the monster from *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*, a film he sees at the Aladdin Theater. He and Bill flee from the monster on **Silver**, Bill's bike. In their childhood, the Losers' Club is able to elude death at the hands of It, but a myriad of other children are found dead or turn up missing. One of these, Edward Corcoran, remains missing until his mother declares him legally dead in the 1960s. Edward, like Beverly, also comes from an abusive household. His stepfather, Richard Macklin, regularly beats him and his brother Dorsey, resulting in the bludgeoning death of the latter. The Losers' Club knows that Richard is not responsible for Edward's death, which they sense when it occurs. Edward is attacked and killed by a creature that is half-fish and half-amphibian. Mike Hanlon finds Edward's pocketknife and spots of blood beside the bench that Edward tripped over on the night of his murder, trying to escape.

It, the children learn, can shapeshift. The group also finds out that It is what the Himalayans call a *taelus*, or "skin-changer." Mike has seen It take the form of a giant bird, similar in appearance to a bird that pecked at him once in his infancy. Eddie sees It transform into a leprous hobo at the house on 29 Neibolt Street. When Bill looks through George's old photo album, It causes the eyes to move in a photo of George. Henry Bowers, the violent bully who breaks Eddie Kaspbrak's arm and carves a letter "H"—the beginning of "Henry" into Ben Hanscom's stomach—sees a Frankenstein-monster rip the heads off of his friends and fellow bullies, Victor Criss and Reginald "Belch" Huggins. Meanwhile, Beverly hears voices from the kitchen and bathroom sink drains. In one instance, a gush of blood springs out of the pipes and covers the walls. Her father, Al Marsh, cannot see the blood; only she and her friends can. Later, she sees Patrick Hocksetter get attacked and killed by mutant leeches.

It, the children learn, is not only a terror within their time but a presence that has existed throughout Derry's history. It is present during Derry's transformation from "a sleepy little shipbuilding town into a booming honky-tonk." It is present in 1929 during the town's ambush of the Bradley Gang and participates in the shootout. It is also present during the burning of the Black Spot in 1930. The Black Spot is a speakeasy formed by Mike's father, Will Hanlon, Dick Halloran, and some other black soldiers stationed in Derry, which gets burned down by white supremacists.

Bill, Ben, and Richie decide in 1958 that they have to send It away by making a silver bullet. They learn this from the movies. With a silver slug, a slingshot, and her excellent marksmanship, Beverly sends It down a drainpipe. They learn, however, that this only repels It. The key to sending It away for good is by performing the Ritual of Chüd, in which the attacker bites down on his or her tongue, prompting It to bite its own. The attacker then tells jokes. If the attacker laughs first, It earns the right to kill. If It laughs first, It must go away. Through a combination of this ritual, as well Beverly's insistence that the boys make love to her to solidify the strength of their circle, the Losers' Club succeeds in sending It away, but not in killing It.

While members of the Losers' Club go on to achieve success in adulthood, Henry Bowers is locked away in Juniper Hills, a mental institution for the criminally-insane. He has been here since he murdered his father, Butch Bowers, with a switchblade mailed to him by Bob Gray. Henry is also blamed for the murders of his friends, Victor and "Belch," and for that of Veronica Grogan, whose underwear is found under Henry's mattress. One night, It leads him out of the institution and back to Derry. Henry first finds Mike in the public library and the two have a knife fight that leaves Mike nearly dead from a wound to his thigh. Mike notices that Henry has been possessed by It, which uses people as its "dogsbody," or servant. Henry then goes to Eddie's room at the Town House hotel. Eddie succeeds in killing Henry with a letter opener.

Both Tom Rogan and Audra Phillips have followed their spouses to Derry and unknowingly stay in hotels located beside each other. That night, they each have a dream. Tom dreams that he is Henry and has killed his father. Audra dreams that she is Beverly. When she awakes, Audra suspects that Bill is with another woman. Indeed, he and Beverly have spent the night together. Eddie calls Bill's room to tell him that he has killed Henry. The group also finds out about the attack on Mike, who is recuperating in the hospital. When the five are back together, they join hands and rescue Mike from an attempt by Mark Lamonica, a nurse who has been possessed by It, to kill Mike with a deadly shot. Tom, too, has been possessed by It, which uses him to kidnap Audra.

That evening, the five remaining members of the Losers'

Club—Bill, Ben, Richie, Beverly, and Eddie—enter It's lair, and discover that It has transformed into a giant female spider. Also there in the darkness is the Turtle. The Turtle speaks to Bill and apologizes for having made It, along with the rest of the universe, after vomiting from a bellyache. Richie looks up into It's web and sees Audra. She has entered a catatonic state and appears almost like a waxwork. Richie does his Irish cop impression to make It laugh, and the performance of the ritual saves Bill, but not Eddie, who gets his arm bitten off by the spider. Eddie later dies. While Ben stomps on It's eggs, Bill squeezes his hands around It's heart until the organ bursts. It dies.

It is now morning in Derry, and the town is bizarrely experiencing an earthquake. The underground portion of the Canal's supports collapses, as does downtown Derry. **The glass corridor** that connects the adult library to the Children's Library explodes. The remaining four members of the Losers' club emerge from underground.

Bill notices that his stutter is disappearing. Mike notices that his memory is fading. Ben and Beverly start a new life together as a couple and drive off to Nebraska. Bill, too, is starting to lose his memory. He forgets what led to Audra's catatonic state, but he is determined to free her from it. He mounts Silver with Audra behind him and drives away from memory "but not from desire." He pumps the pedals, moving the bike so fast that Audra awakens, startled. Mike has the final word, and surmises that no one will ever see his diary. He concludes that, even if the group forgets each other during their waking hours, perhaps they will remember everything, particularly their love for each other, in their dreams.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

It / Pennywise the Dancing Clown / Bob Gray – The monstrous antagonist of the novel, "It" first appears in the form of Pennywise the Dancing Clown. It introduces itself to George Denbrough from within Derry's sewer as "Bob Gray," also known as Pennywise. When It takes the form of a clown, It looks like a cross between the famous clowns Bozo and Clarabell. Pennywise wears a baggy silk suit with "great big orange buttons," an "electric-blue" tie, and big white gloves. The Losers' Club later learns that It is a glamour, otherwise known as a "skin-changer," with the ability to take on whatever form It needs to instill fear. The Himalayans referred to It as a *taelus*, or "an evil magic with the ability to read your mind and then assume the shape of the thing you were most afraid of." Very often, It takes the form of cinematic monsters, such as the mummies and werewolves in the horror films that the children go to see. It also takes the form of figures that its victims are likely to trust, such as a clown, or Mrs. Kersh, an old woman. It also has the ability to use humans as its "dogsbodies," or servants, who will kill on its behalf. It uses both Henry Bowers and Tom Rogan for this purpose. At the end of the novel, It takes its final form as a giant, egg-laying spider, which the Losers' Club witnesses during its last confrontation with It in 1958. The key to repelling It is to perform "the ritual of Chüd," a contest involving jokes and riddles. If the attacker laughs first, the *taelus* can kill it. If the *taelus* laughs first, then It must go away for a number of years. Stanley Uris and Bill Denbrough also separately find that they can repel It by reciting facts or poems. These demonstrations of power and confidence diminish It's ability to instill fear. The Losers' Club sends It away in 1958, but It returns every twenty-seven years. It is responsible for a litany of murders in Derry, but It prefers to kill boys. Henry Bowers witnesses It transform into a Frankenstein monster that rips the heads off of his friends, Victor Criss and "Belch" Huggins. The group later learns that It is an ancient force that has always existed in Derry, and that It was born from the Turtle. Bill Denbrough finally kills it by seizing It's heart and squeezing it until it bursts.

William "Stuttering Bill" Denbrough – Bill, sometimes also called "Big Bill" due to his height, is the unofficial leader of the Losers' Club—a motley group of adolescent social outcasts who are brought together through their mutual experiences of being bullied by Henry Bowers and of the evil supernatural forces that rule Derry's sewers. He is the son of Zack and Sharon Denbrough and the older brother of George Denbrough. At the age of three, he is hit by a car and knocked into the side of a building, an accident that left him unconscious for seven hours and that becomes his mother's explanation for his persistent stutter. Bill is sent to a speech school in Bangor where he learns techniques to correct his stutter, such as reciting a poem, which he uses later to help him combat It. When George is killed by Pennywise the Dancing Clown, Bill is ten years old and a student at Derry Elementary School. After George's death, Bill's parents shut him out, which he internalizes as a sense that he is partly responsible for George's death and that they value him less than they did his younger brother. Around the time that he befriends the other members of the Losers' Club, he gets an oversized bike that he calls "**Silver**." Bill writes a novel about ghosts while still a student at the University of Maine and supports himself by working part-time in a textile mill. Bill becomes a successful author at the age of twenty-three and his next book, *The Black Rapids*, is an even greater success. The book is adapted into a film entitled *Pit of the Black Demon* and stars his future wife, Audra Phillips. In adulthood, Bill is described as a tall, balding man. He is the novel's protagonist because he leads the pursuit of It, spurred both by the death of his younger brother as well as his wish to quell the darker forces in his life.

George Elmer Denbrough / "Georgie" – Bill Denbrough's six-year-old younger brother and the youngest son of Zack and

Sharon Denbrough. George, often called "Georgie," has a fear of the dark and last sees Bill when his older brother helps him make a **paper boat** that George takes out into the rain. George is last seen wearing a yellow slicker and red galoshes. When his paper boat goes into a sewer drain, he reaches in to get it and has his arm pulled out of its socket by Pennywise the Dancing Clown. The boy dies instantly. Dave Gardener discovers George's body, wraps him in a quilt, and takes him back to the Denbrough house. George's parents remain distraught after his death, causing them to ignore Bill. Later, George appears to Bill as one of the many shapes that It takes to terrorize Bill. While looking at George's photograph album, Bill comes across a picture of George that becomes animated and winks at him.

Ben "Haystack" Hanscom – Ben is an overweight social outcast who has no friends until he meets the Losers' Club. Richie nicknames Ben "Haystack" after the obese wrestler, Haystack Calhoun. Ben is known among adults for being exceptionally polite. Librarians appreciate that he is an avid reader and respectful of the library's rules, while his fifth-grade teacher Mrs. Douglas appreciates him for being a good student. Ben raises the ire of Henry Bowers when he refuses to allow Henry to cheat off of him during a math test. This prompts Henry to corner Ben in the Barrens, where he tries to carve his name into Ben's stomach, leaving a scar in the form of a capital "H" on Ben's body into adulthood. Ben has a crush on Beverly Marsh. He writes and sends her a haiku and, in adulthood, they become a couple and relocate to Nebraska together, where Ben lives. Ben and his mother, Arlene Hanscom, first live together in Derry, then move to Nebraska, where Ben attends high school. In Nebraska, Ben loses weight by taking up running and "gets skinny." He attends college in California. In adulthood, he is described as "handsome" and becomes an internationally renowned architect. He designs the BBC communications center in London, which he describes as the Derry Public Library's **glass corridor** turned vertically. He owns his own Learjet, which he pilots, "and [has] a private landing strip on his farm in Junkins."

Richard "Trashmouth" Tozier / Richie – The bespectacled member of the Losers' Club, who generally goes by "Richie." Tozier is known for his barbed sense of humor, his love of rock-and-roll, and his fondness for comic impressions. Along with Beverly Marsh, he starts smoking cigarettes at the age of eleven. He later improves his talent for impressions, including that of an Irish cop partly influenced by Officer Aloysius Nell, and uses it to develop a career as Los Angeles's most successful disc jockey. His latest nickname is "the Man of a Thousand Voices." Richie is the son of Wentworth and Maggie Tozier. He is an A-student and gets the nickname "trashmouth" due to "his wise mouth and his face, which just begged to be pounded into new and exciting shapes." When his jokes go too far, his friends warn him by saying "beep-beep." Initially, he is the only member of the Losers' Club who does not have a story about It. Later, while fleeing from the house on 29 Neibolt Street with Bill Denbrough, Richie is chased by It, in the form of a werewolf. Richie is a fan of 1950s "schlock" horror films and envisions the werewolf shortly after seeing the film *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*. Like Ben Hanscom and Mike Hanlon, he is unmarried in adulthood, though he had a two-and-a-half year relationship with his girlfriend, an attorney named Sandy, whom he came close to marrying twice.

Stanley Uris – A member of the Losers' Club who is also a part of Derry's tiny Jewish community. He is the son of Donald Uris and Andrea Bertoly. As a boy, he expresses an interest in ornithology, and his knowledge of birds saves him from being devoured by It when he goes to the Standpipe alone. As an adult, Stanley and his wife, New York-native Patricia Uris, live in an Atlanta suburb. Stanley owns a prosperous accounting business. Stanley and Patricia meet at a sorority party during his years as a student at New York State University, which he attended on a scholarship. They become engaged while they are both still in college. Stanley earns income by driving a bakery truck and later gets a job at an H&R Block, where he works before opening his own business in 1975. He and Patricia struggle to conceive a child, which Stanley is convinced they are unable to do because of him. Though he does not know it, none of the members of the Losers' Club have children. On the night of May 28, 1985, he gets a phone call from Mike Hanlon, notifying him that It has resurfaced, which prompts Stanley to commit suicide in the bathtub. His wife finds him with his arms and wrists slashed open and the message "It" written on the wall's tile in Stanley's blood.

Eddie Kaspbrak – Eddie is the most fragile member of the Losers' Club, though a violent childhood incident with Henry Bowers proves that he is stronger than he believes himself to be. Eddie is supposedly asthmatic and develops hypochondria due to the imposed fears of his mother, Sonia Kaspbrak. Eddie's first confrontation with It is when It shapeshifts into a leper who lives in the abandoned, ramshackle house on 29 Neibolt Street. Eddie is known in childhood for having an excellent sense of direction, which helps the other children navigate through the sewer's tunnels toward It. Eddie grows up to become the owner of his own limousine company—Royal Crest—which caters to a celebrity clientele in New York City. He is described as a short, balding man with "a timid, rabbit sort of face." On the night that Eddie receives a phone call from Mike Hanlon, he is due to pick up Al Pacino. His wife, Myra, is very similar to his mother, both in regard to her obesity and her neediness. She begs Eddie not to leave for Derry. While in Derry, Eddie is attacked by Henry Bowers in his hotel room but succeeds in killing his former bully with a letter opener. Eddie is later killed when the Losers' Club confronts It in its lair. It takes the form of a giant spider and bites off one of Eddie's arms. At Beverly's prompting, Eddie's friends decide to leave his body behind in It's lair, due to the sense that "this is where he's

supposed to be."

Beverly Marsh Rogan – Beverly is the only girl in the Losers' Club. She is tomboyish, smokes cigarettes, and demonstrates a talent for marksmanship. Beverly is the daughter of Elfrida Marsh, a server at Derry's best restaurant, and Al Marsh, a janitor at the Derry Home Hospital. From her father, Beverly inherits her red hair, her lefthanded-ness, and her talent for drawing, which she parlays into a career as a dress designer and the creative force behind Beverly Fashions—a business that she runs with her husband, Tom Rogan. Beverly develops an attraction to abusive men due to her childhood experiences with her father Al, who routinely beats Beverly and is verbally and sexually abusive. Her friendship with the feminist author Kay McCall suggests an aversion to this treatment, though she remains reluctant to disavow Tom, even after fighting with him and leaving him behind in Chicago, where they live. As a child, both to help send It away and to defy her father's obsessive control over her body, Beverly invites each boy in the Losers' Club to lose his virginity to her—an act that helps to solidify the group's bond. Beverly's beauty and curvaceous figure, along with her gender, are points of distinction that King depicts as both blessings and burdens. She is objectified sexually by most men who enter her life, particularly her father and her husband. The only males who do not sexualize her are (most of) the other members of the Losers' Club. During childhood, she harbors a crush on Bill Denbrough. They have a brief affair during their reunion in Derry as adults. She is also the lifelong object of Ben Hanscom's love, and the two end up together at the end of the novel. Beverly does not return to Chicago, but goes back to Nebraska with Ben.

Mike Hanlon – The seventh member of the Losers' Club and the son of Will Hanlon and Jessica Hanlon. The Hanlons are Derry's only black family, and they own one of two farms in town; the other belongs to Butch Bowers. Both of Mike's parents moved to Derry from the South. Mike plays football at Derry High School and remains in town, where he becomes the head librarian of the Derry Public Library and the town's recordkeeper and unofficial historian. He is the only character who narrates in first-person during the novel's interludes. Mike refers to himself as the "watchman"—that is, he keeps a lookout for It and, after the murder of Adrian Mellon in 1985, calls his six old friends to notify them that they must return to Derry and destroy the evil force that they sent away twenty-seven years earlier. Like all of the other members of the Losers' Club, Mike is childless. He is also unmarried. During the group's lunch meeting at Jade of the Orient, he notes how the others have left Derry to become very successful and wealthy, while he has stayed behind and makes a more modest living. Mike's role as the guardian of Derry is somewhat ironic, given the town's initial aversion to its first black inhabitants, most of whom, like Will Hanlon, were soldiers on an army base in town in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Turtle – The creator of the universe in the world of *It*. Bill Denbrough encounters the Turtle when the Losers' Club goes to kill It in It's lair. The Turtle is "a large presence" that does not inspire fear but "a sense of overmastering awe." Its shell is "plated with many blazing colors" and the Turtle's eyes are "kind." The Turtle introduces itself to Bill and apologizes for creating It, which came to life, along with the universe, as the result of "a bellyache." Though Bill begs the Turtle for help, it insists that it "[takes] no stand in these matters." The Turtle is symbolic of the indifference of the universe, which leaves mortals to fight against evil independently. The only advice that the Turtle gives Bill is to recite the speech that he learned to control his stutter. This tactic will give him a sense of control over It. The Turtle makes several appearances in the novel. The Turtle's image first appears when George Denbrough goes into his dark basement to get some paraffin wax for **the paper boat** that Bill constructs for him. He sees "an old flat can of Turtle wax" that he stares at "with a kind of hypnotic wonder." George has a sense of having seen the image before. On the same day, Bill, who is sick with the flu, sleeps and has a dream about a turtle or "some funny little animal." When Eddie is beaten up by Henry Bowers, he sees a chalk drawing on a hopscotch grid that starts to look like a turtle. The Turtle is It's enemy. It regards the Turtle as "a stupid old thing that never [comes] out of its shell." It has believed the Turtle to have been dead for a billion years, and It later lies to Bill about killing the Turtle.

Will Hanlon – Mike Hanlon's father and Jessica Hanlon's husband. Will owns one of two farms in Derry. The other is owned by Oscar "Butch" Bowers, who harasses Will and vandalizes his chicken coop. Of the two farms, Will's is the more successful. His family lives in a nice white house on the property. Will comes from Burgaw, North Carolina, where he joined the army. He ends up in Derry as a result of being stationed at the Derry Army Air Corps Base there in the 1920s. Along with other black GIs, he starts the Black Spot—a speakeasy that they form with the army's permission. The purpose is to provide the black soldiers with their own space to socialize, as the town fears black men frequenting speakeasies where white women are present. When white supremacists burn down the Black Spot in 1930, due to its success in attracting white patrons, Will and Dick Hallorann nearly die inside.

Sharon Denbrough – Bill and George Denbrough's mother and Zack Denbrough's wife. While looking through George's photo album, Bill comes across a photo of his mother from "when she was young and impossibly gorgeous." Sharon is a Julliard-trained Classical pianist who practices in what their father calls "the living room" and what Sharon calls "the parlor." She stops playing piano after George dies.

Adrian Mellon – A freelance writer and the partner of Don Hagarty. Unlike Don, Adrian is fond of Derry. Described, along with Don, as an effeminate gay man, he becomes the target of

John "Webby" Garton, Steve Dubay, and Christopher Unwin, who beat him up and dump him in the Canal. Both Hagarty and Unwin see Pennywise the Clown on the night that Adrian is killed. Unwin tells Tom Boutillier that he saw Adrian's body get carried away by the clown.

John "Webby" Garton – An eighteen-year-old who is brought in for questioning for his involvement in the murder of Adrian Mellon. Garton is the leader of the gang that harasses and savagely beats Mellon while he and his partner, Don Hagarty. Garton is violently homophobic and generally surly. He is described as having "heavily muscled arms" and "thick brown hair," which falls over one eye. He has blue tattoos on his arms, which appear as though they were drawn by a child.

Paul Hughes – A Derry police officer who, along with his partner, Officer Conley, questions John "Webby" Garton about his involvement in the assault and murder of Adrian Mellon. Hughes is the only officer who seems personally impacted by Mellon's murder. The details regarding the events at the fair leave Hughes feeling "tired and shocked and dismayed by [the] whole sordid business."

Chief Andrew Rademacher – Chief of the Derry Police Department. When his office is later moved from the third to the fifth floor of the police station, the tramp-chair, which is stored in the attic along with "all sorts of records and useless city artifacts," falls through the floor and onto the chief while he is sitting at his desk. He dies instantly.

Christopher Unwin – A fifteen-year-old questioned by Chief Andrew Rademacher and Assistant District Attorney Tom Boutillier for his involvement in the murder of Adrian Mellon. Unwin wears "faded jeans, a grease-smeared tee-shirt, and blocky engineer boots." During questioning, he weeps. Rademacher and Boutillier "accurately [assess] him as the weak link" in John "Webby" Garton's gang. Unwin reports seeing a "guy under the bridge" in a clown suit.

Charles "Chick" Avarino – A Derry police officer who questions Steve Dubay about his involvement in the assault and murder of Adrian Mellon. Avarino dislikes gay people and, "like every other cop on the force," would like to see the Falcon bar "shut up forever." However, he also does not believe that "they [gay men] should be tortured and murdered."

Elmer Curtie – Owner of Derry's gay bar, the Falcon, which opened in 1973. Curtie initially thinks that his bar will service bus passengers arriving in the terminal next door. In 1977, Curtie nearly goes bankrupt but his luck suddenly turns around when his bar becomes a hangout for the local gay community. Curtie does not realize until 1981 that "his patrons [are] just about almost exclusively gay." The Falcon has rather campy décor, which may have been part of its attraction for its clientele. It is painted in black and gold and is decorated in stuffed birds, provided by Elmer's brother, who was a taxidermist and bequeathed Elmer the birds when he died.

Patricia Uris – Stanley Uris's wife. Like Stanley, Patricia is Jewish. She grew up in New York City. Patricia is a prudish woman with lingering feelings of inferiority over the anti-Semitism she experienced during her teen years. In July 1972, she and Stanley move to Georgia after she takes a job as a teacher in Traynor, a small town forty miles south of Atlanta. She likes to watch game shows, particularly *Family Feud*, which she is watching on the night of May 28, 1985 when she discovers Stanley's body in the bathtub, his arms and wrists slit open.

Patrick Hocksetter – A twelve-year-old boy who disappears from Derry in July 1958. Beverly Marsh witnesses him being killed by mutant leeches. Patrick is a little overweight and has a round face, "as pale as cream." Patrick is a psychopath who, when he is five, kills his infant brother, Avery. In school, he has the habit of killing flies and keeping them in his pencil box. He also supposedly kills cats and dogs and keeps them in a refrigerator. He joins in with Henry Bowers, Victor Criss, and "Moose" Sadler in bullying and beating Eddie Kaspbrak, who later sees Patrick's body decomposing in the sewer.

Tom Rogan – Beverly Marsh's husband. Tom is a misogynist who regularly abuses Beverly. He first meets Beverly in a Chicago nightclub. He beats her partly out of lingering resentment for his mother, who beat him during his childhood. He helps to form Beverly Fashions, a company for which he serves as the president and general manager. Tom also beats and threatens Beverly's friend, Kay McCall, forcing her to tell him that Beverly has returned to her hometown of Derry. Tom follows Beverly there and becomes possessed by It, which uses his body and then kills him. Beverly leaves Tom's body in Derry and decides to declare him as missing.

Audra Phillips – Born "Audrey Philpott," she is a movie star and Bill Denbrough's wife of eleven years. Audra is five years older than Bill and a recovering drug addict and alcoholic. She is described as "auburn-haired, statuesque, and gorgeous." She stars in the film adaptation of his second novel, *The Black Rapids*, whose film version is entitled *Pit of the Black Demon*. Together they work on the film *Attic Room*, in which Audra also stars. Audra is better-known for her celebrity than for her talent and once did a stint on the game show *Hollywood Squares*. Other characters in the novel, particularly Tom Rogan, notice how much Audra looks like Beverly Marsh.

Henry Bowers – One of the trio of bullies, including "Belch" Huggins and Victor Criss, who torment members of the self-identified Losers' Club. Bowers is a large boy and stands out as the leader of the pack; he is also its most violent member. He wears his hair in a crewcut and dons a pink motorcycle jacket with an eagle on the back. He smells of sweat and Juicy Fruit gum. Angry that he has to attend summer school because Ben Hanscom refused to allow him to cheat during a math test, Henry attempts to carve his name into Ben's stomach. Henry is the son of Butch Bowers, whom he is convicted of killing in the

fall of 1958. Henry is also found guilty of killing his friends Victor Criss and "Belch" Huggins, as well as Patrick Hocksetter and Veronica Grogan, whose underwear is found tucked under Henry's mattress. Henry is sent to Juniper Hill, a facility for the criminally insane.

Reginald "Belch" Huggins – One of the trio of bullies, including Henry Bowers and Victor Criss, who torment members of the self-identified Losers' Club. Belch got his name due to being "able to articulate belches of amazing length and loudness." Belch plays baseball and is an extraordinarily large boy for twelve, but he is "big and not really fat." He is six feet tall and weighs "maybe a hundred and seventy." He is found dead in the tunnels under Derry in August 1958. Henry Bowers sees him get killed by what he describes as "the Frankenstein-monster."

Peter Gordon – One of the kids with whom "Belch" Huggins played baseball, and a boy who occasionally joins in with Belch, Henry Bowers, and Victor Criss in bullying Mike Hanlon and members of the Losers' Club. Unlike the other boys, he comes from one of the well-to-do families on West Broadway and is far less violent than the others. His family later sends him to Groton, a preparatory school in Massachusetts.

Oscar "Butch" Bowers – A farmer and the father of Henry Bowers. He is mentally ill and beats his son and his wife, who leaves him after he nearly beats her to death. He is a World War II veteran who fought in the Pacific arena and retains a resentment of the Japanese. The rumor around town is that he returned from the war "crazy." He owns one of two substantial farms in Derry—the other is owned by Will Hanlon. However, Butch's mental illness causes his farm to fall into disrepair. Butch is also a racist who kills Will Hanlon's chickens out of resentment for competition from a black man, and paints a swastika on the side of the chickenhouse.

Victor Criss – One of the trio of bullies, including Henry Bowers and "Belch" Huggins, who torment members of the self-identified Losers' Club. He wears his hair in an Elvis pompadour. He is a quick runner and a fastball pitcher, which sometimes makes him more physically threatening than Henry, though he is less violent. Criss dies in 1958, along with Belch, at the age of twelve. Henry witnesses him getting his head torn from his body by something he describes as "the Frankenstein-monster." When Henry is an institutionalized adult, he has a vision of Victor, who now resembles the monster that killed him. Henry also sees that Victor has "a scar like a hangrope [sic] tattoo" where the monster pulled his head off.

Mrs. Starrett – The librarian who sits behind the circulation desk at Derry Public Library in 1958. Like his fifth-grade teacher, Mrs. Douglas, Mrs. Starrett likes Ben Hanscom because he is polite and gentle. When Ben returns to Derry, he learns from Carole Danner that Mrs. Starrett died of a stroke at the age of fifty-eight or fifty-nine in 1982.

Carole Danner – The new librarian who sits behind the circulation desk at Derry Public Library. Ben Hanscom meets her in 1985. He describes her as a "pretty young woman." She becomes concerned for Ben when he appears sweaty and ill, not realizing that he is having a vision of Pennywise the Clown.

Arlene Hanscom – Ben Hanscom's mother. Arlene is a single mother and is thirty-two years old in 1958. She works forty hours per week in the spool-and-bale room at Stark's Mills in Newport. Breathing in dust and lint all day has given her a bad cough. She overfeeds Ben, causing him to become obese. As an adult, Ben reasons that Arlene did this to assure herself that she had the resources to keep Ben from going hungry. Arlene moves Ben to Nebraska, where he attends high school. She becomes upset when he decides to lose weight, perceiving it as a rejection of her hard work to keep him fed.

Richard Macklin – Husband of Monica Macklin and stepfather of Edward and Dorsey Corcoran. Richard abuses both boys and later confesses to bludgeoning Dorsey to death with a retractable hammer in the family's garage. Richard is sentenced to a prison term at Shawshank State Prison, where he converts to Catholicism. Shortly after he is paroled, he is found dead "in his small third-floor apartment" in Falmouth from an apparent suicide. In his suicide note, he writes that he "saw Eddie last night" and that the boy was dead.

Edward Corcoran – The eldest son of Monica Macklin, the stepson of Richard Macklin, and the older brother of Dorsey Corcoran. A ten-year-old boy who goes missing in Derry. In his suicide note, Richard claims to have seen Edward's dead body. Edward is attacked and killed in Bassey Park, where he sometimes goes to get away from his stepfather. It transforms into a creature that is something between a fish and an amphibian with sharp claws, and digs into Edward's carotid artery. Later, Mike Hanlon finds Eddie's "two-blade pocket knife" in Bassey Park and sees blood near the bench where Eddie is killed. Eddie is killed on the night of June 19, 1958 and declared missing that year. Monica declares him legally dead in 1966.

Dorsey Corcoran – The youngest son of Monica Macklin, the stepson of Richard Macklin, and the younger brother of Edward Corcoran. A four-year-old boy who, before his death, often shows up to school with a bruised body, due to Richard's abuse. Dorsey is bludgeoned to death by his stepfather in May 1957. Richard takes him to Derry Home Hospital and says that Dorsey fractured his skull playing on a stepladder in the garage and falling. He remains unconscious for three days before dying.

Alvin "Al" Marsh – Beverly Marsh's father and Elfrida Marsh's husband. Like Richard Macklin and Butch Bowers, he is physically abusive. He slaps and punches Beverly but also sexually abuses her by masturbating over her while putting her to bed. He works as a janitor. Al sees himself as a man with "no vices" because he does not drink or commit infidelity. In addition to being abusive, he is misogynistic. Beverly has

inherited her red hair, left-handedness, and ability to draw from her father, with whom she practiced drawing animal characters when she was a little girl. She marries Tom Rogan because he has qualities and behaviors very similar to those of her father. After Beverly grows up, Al sends her a postcard to ask her for money. When Beverly returns to Derry in 1985, she learns that her father has been dead for five years.

Elfrida Marsh – The wife of Alvin Marsh, and Beverly Marsh's mother. She works as a waitress and has the 3:00 PM-11:00 PM shift at Green's Farm, Derry's best restaurant. She is "a small woman with graying hair and a grim look." She has a lined face that shows the distress from her life. She knows about Al's physical abuse of Beverly but is tolerant of it. She worries, however, about Beverly's burgeoning womanhood and asks if Al has ever touched her inappropriately.

Greta Bowie – Along with Sally Mueller, she is one of Beverly Marsh's fifth-grade classmates. Greta and Sally are close friends. Like Sally, Greta is one of the rich girls who lives in one of the Victorian houses on West Broadway. Eddie Kaspbrak remembers how she played croquet on her rear lawn on Saturday afternoons. She is a beautiful girl with "shining blonde hair" that falls to her shoulders. Eddie has a small crush on her. She dies in a car crash at the age of eighteen, driving under the influences of alcohol and drugs.

Sally Mueller – Greta Bowie's closest friend at Derry Elementary School. Sally lives in a Victorian house on West Broadway, along with Greta. Sally and Greta look down on Beverly for her poverty and tomboyish manners. Sally and Greta are also jealous of Beverly because they believe that she is prettier than they are.

Mrs. Kersh – An old Swedish woman who is living in Beverly Marsh's childhood home when Beverly goes back to visit in 1985. She identifies herself as the daughter of Bob Gray. Mrs. Kersh transforms into a witch, reminiscent of the one in the "Hansel and Gretel" story that frightened Beverly when she was little.

Owen Phillips – King borrows the name of his middle son, Owen Philip, in an anecdote about "an unfortunate boy" who laughs when "Belch" Huggins is struck by a baseball. Belch walks over to Owen and kicks him so hard that the boy goes home with a hole in the seat of his pants.

Dick Hallorann – When the Black Spot is burned down by members of a white supremacist group, Halloran has a vision of several members of the hooded mob blocking an exit. King first introduces the character of Dick in *The Shining*, where he serves as the chef of the Overlook Hotel. Halloran's "shine," or gifts of clairvoyance and telepathy, save Will Hanlon's life.

Kay McCall – Beverly Marsh's friend in Chicago. Kay is a former designer and a feminist who has written three books. She is wealthy and gives Beverly the money that she needs to leave Chicago and return to Derry. Beverly needs Kay's help after leaving her wallet in her house while trying to escape from Tom Rogan. Later, in an effort to find Beverly, Tom goes to Kay's apartment and beats her up to get information on Beverly's whereabouts.

Norbert Keene – A pharmacist and the proprietor of the Center Street Drug Store from 1925 to 1975. Norbert is somewhat misanthropic and dislikes Sonia Kaspbrak. Norbert one day informs Eddie that he does not have asthma and that the "medicine" in the aspirator is merely a placebo. Norbert is 85 years old when Mike Hanlon interviews him about the shooting of the Bradley Gang. He is also the grandfather of Andrew Keene.

The Bradley Gang – A group of Depression-era outlaws who arrive in Derry in 1929 to hide out from the FBI. They are gunned down by members of the Derry community on Canal Street in the middle of the afternoon, while arriving at Machen's Sporting Goods store to pick up a shipment of ammunition. Mike Hanlon recalls seven members of the Bradley Gang, though Norbert Keene, who was alive during the ambush, recalls eight members. The gang consists of its leader, Al Bradley, and his brother, George. They rob six or seven banks in the Midwest and kidnap a banker for a ransom of thirty thousand dollars before deciding to kill the banker anyway. The other gang members are the brothers Joe and Cal Conklin, Arthur "Creeping Jesus" Malloy, handsome Patrick Caudy, George's common-law wife, Kitty Donahue, and Caudy's on-and-off again girlfriend, Marie Hauser.

Claude Heroux – A lumberman with a strong rural Maine/French-Canadian accent who engages in union activities as an excuse to drink. One night, in September 1905, he uses his ax to murder the patrons of the Silver Dollar bar during a poker game, in revenge for their having killed Davey Hartwell and Amsel Bickford. He is executed by hanging over the Canal.

Lars Theramenius – A three-year-old boy who lives in Derry. He witnesses Eddie Kaspbrak's injuries in the aftermath of Eddie's getting beaten up by Henry Bowers. Lars also sees Al Marsh chasing Beverly Marsh from their house. During the chase, he sees Al turn into a spider inside of his clothes—a vision that gives Lars nightmares for three weeks. Lars later dies in a motorcycle accident at the age of fifteen.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Zack Denbrough – Bill and George Denbrough's father and Sharon Denbrough's husband. He is a waste water electrician who sometimes helps to repair disruptions to Derry's sewage system in the 1950s. He also lives in town during the ambush on the Bradley Gang in 1929.

Dave Gardener – Harold Gardener's father. He is a neighbor of the Denbroughs who, in 1957, finds George Denbrough's dismembered body near the sewage drain, wraps him in a quilt, and takes him back to the Denbroughs' house.

Harold Gardener – A Derry cop and the son of Dave Gardener. He witnesses downtown Derry's collapse and tells his wife that "the end of the world [has] come."

Don Hagarty – A draftsman with an engineering firm in Bangor and the partner of Adrian Mellon.

Jeffrey Reeves – A fellow officer on Derry's police force and Harold Gardener's partner.

Steve Dubay – A seventeen-year-old who is brought in for questioning due to his involvement in the murder of Adrian Mellon. Dubay has an IQ of 68 and left school at the age of sixteen. He also has an abusive stepfather.

Officer Conley – A Derry police officer and Paul Hughes's partner. He assists in questioning John "Webby" Garton about the assault and murder of Adrian Mellon.

Assistant District Attorney Tom Boutillier – The legal official who, along with Chief Andrew Rademacher, questions Christopher Unwin about his involvement in Adrian Mellon's murder.

Officer Frank Machen – A Derry cop who breaks up a possible fight between John "Webby" Garton and Adrian Mellon at the Derry Fair.

Barney Morrison – Charles "Chick" Avarino's partner on the Derry police force.

Herbert and Ruth Blum – Patricia Uris's parents. They initially disapprove of Stanley due to his lower-income background and his wish to open his own business while still a young man.

Carol Feeny – Richie Tozier's travel agent. She makes the arrangements for his transportation from Los Angeles to Derry, Maine.

Ricky Lee – Owner of The Red Wheel, a bar that Ben Hanscom frequents in Nebraska.

Gresham Arnold – A man who went into the Red Wheel on the night of his suicide. Ben Hanscom's eyes, which appear haunted and distracted on the evening of May 28, 1985, remind the Red Wheel's proprietor, Ricky Lee, of Arnold's eyes on the night he committed suicide.

Annie – The barmaid at the Red Wheel who becomes concerned by Ben Hanscom's drinking on the night of May 28, 1985.

Myra Kaspbrak – Eddie Kaspbrak's wife. Myra is described as a "huge" woman who, in both size and temperament, is very similar to Eddie's mother, Sonia. Myra helps Eddie with his chauffeuring business, Royal Crest.

Sonia Kaspbrak – Eddie Kaspbrak's mother. Sonia is obese, overprotective of Eddie, and a hypochondriac. Sonia uses the specter of illness as a tool to ensure Eddie's co-dependency, due to Sonia's fears of Eddie growing up and leaving her alone.

Avery Hocksetter – Patrick Hocksetter's infant younger brother, whom Patrick suffocates with a pillow.

Susan Browne – Bill Denbrough's agent with whom he has a sexual relationship before meeting his future wife, Audra.

Albert Carson – The head librarian at the Derry Public Library from 1914-1960. Carson helps Mike Hanlon to initiate his research into Derry's history.

Mr. Ripsom – The owner of a Gulf station and the father of the deceased Betty Ripsom, who is his only child.

Betty Ripsom – The only daughter of Mr. Ripsom and his wife. Betty is found on Outer Jackson Street just after Christmas in 1957. Her body is found "ripped wide open."

Branson Buddinger – One of Derry's historians. He commits suicide by hanging.

Cheryl Lamonica – A murder victim from Derry who is killed at the age of sixteen.

Matthew Clements – A three-year-old murder victim from Derry.

Jimmy Cullum – A boy whose body is discovered on July 15, 1958. Jimmy is a quiet child who wears glasses and likes to play Scrabble on rainy days. One day, while playing in the Barrens, the children unknowingly pass over his body, floating in the Canal.

Veronica "Ronnie" Grogan – A fourth-grader at Neibolt Street Church School whose body is discovered in the sewer. Beverly Marsh knew her. Henry Bowers is convicted of murdering her after her underwear is found tucked under his mattress.

Mr. Fazio – The janitor at Derry Elementary School. He is the brother of Armando "Mandy" Fazio, the keeper at the town dump. Mr. Fazio warns Ben Hanscom to watch out for frost-bite shortly before Ben has his first vision of Pennywise the Clown on the frozen Canal.

Mrs. Douglas – The fifth-grade teacher at Derry Elementary School. Ben Hanscom is in her class. She is in her forties, Ben figures, and is as fond of Ben as he is of her.

Mrs. Davies – The pretty young librarian who is reading the story of "The Three Billy Goats Gruff" when Ben Hanscom enters the Children's Library one day during story hour.

Monica Macklin –Wife of Richard Macklin and mother of Edward and Dorsey Corcoran. Monica covers for Richard's abuse of the boys. Her own relationship with Richard is violent, resulting in several police visits to their home, though Richard never hits Monica. Monica divorces Richard after he confesses to killing Dorsey.

Chief Richard Borton – The chief of the Derry Police in the 1950s who heads the investigations of the mysterious murders of that decade, as well Richard Macklin's killing of his stepson, Dorsey Corcoran.

Henrietta Dumont – Edward Corcoran's fifth-grade teacher at Derry Elementary School. She notices Eddie coming to school

with bruises but is discouraged from saying anything due to the school's fears that it will lose money during "tax appropriation time."

Aloysius Nell – A Derry police officer who speaks in "whiskey-roughened tones." He is an Irish Catholic and is married to Maureen Nell. He dies around the same time that Derry collapses.

Wentworth and Maggie Tozier – Richie Tozier's parents. Wentworth is a dentist and Maggie quietly wishes that she were the mother of a little girl, due to her inability to understand Richie's crude behavior.

Bradley Donovan – Bill Denbrough's new friend whom he meets at a speech class in Bangor. Bradley has a lisp. He is expelled from the Losers' Club after calling Beverly Marsh a "cheater" during a game of pitching pennies.

Laurie Ann Winterbarger – A five-year-old girl who goes missing in February 1985. Police suspect that her father, Horst Winterbarger, whom Laurie's mother accused of sexually abusing the girl during their custody battle, has kidnapped her and taken her to Florida.

Dennis Torrio – A sixteen-year-old boy who goes missing in the same week that Laurie Ann Winterbarger disappears. Unlike Laurie, Dennis comes from a "wonderful family," is an Honor Roll student, and plays football. The police conclude that he had every reason to stay in Derry, making his disappearance inexplicable.

The Tracker Brothers – Phil and Tony Tracker are lifelong bachelors and owners of a truck depot in Derry. They own a house on West Broadway considered to be the nicest house on the street. Sonia Kaspbrak suspects them of being gay for keeping such a nice and neat property.

Sergeant Wilson – A large man from the South with carroty red hair and pimples who picks on Will Hanlon due to his racism and resentment for Hanlon's competence.

Trevor Dawson – A black soldier who is present with Will Hanlon and Dick Hallorann when the Black Spot is burned down. He saves Will from being trampled during the stampede to escape the burning shack.

Johnny Feury – A boy from Derry who is killed in the 1980s by a fish-like creature, similar to the one that kills Edward Corcoran. He is found dead on 29 Neibolt Street with his legs gone. A postman finds him by seeing a hand sticking out from under the porch.

Harold Earl – A hermit who lives on Route 7 in a shack. Chief Rademacher suspects him of killing John Feury. When asked if he's killed anyone, Earl says that he killed many people during the war. This is taken as a confession and Earl is sent to Bangor Mental Health Facility.

Fogarty and Adler – The "counselors" at Juniper Hill, the facility for the criminally-insane where Henry Bowers is imprisoned. The guards are not allowed to carry billy clubs, so they carry rolls of quarters instead, which they use to hit inmates on the back of the neck.

John Koontz – The "counselor" at Juniper Hill whom Henry Bowers considers to be the cruelest of all. While guarding the Blue Ward where Henry is imprisoned, Koontz is confronted by It, who is transformed into a Doberman dog (the only thing Koontz fears), as It helps Henry escape.

Jimmy Donlin – One of the inmates in the Blue Ward who ends up at Juniper Hill after killing his mother and eating her brains. Pennywise the Clown transforms into his mother to frighten and upset Donlin, whose screams distract John Koontz while Henry Bowers escapes.

Benny Beaulieu – A pyromaniac and fellow inmate in the Blue Ward at Juniper Hill who maniacally repeats, "Try to set the night on *fire*!", the refrain from The Doors' song, "Light My Fire."

Freddie Firestone – The British producer of *Attic Room*—a film adaptation of one of Bill Denbrough's novels, starring Audra Phillips and written by Bill.

Andrew Keene – Norbert Keene's grandson. Andrew witnesses the collapse of part of downtown Derry, but he has smoked so much Colombian Red marijuana that he perceives it to be a hallucination.

Lal Machen – The owner of Machen's Sporting Goods. Lal dies in 1959. He waits on the men from the Bradley Gang when they go shopping for ammunition at his store. He also participates in the ambush that kills the gang.

Sheriff Sullivan – Derry's local sheriff. He is present during the ambush on the Bradley Gang. He also helps Will Hanlon to get justice after Buck Bowers destroys the chicken coop on the Hanlon farm.

Jessica Hanlon – Wife of Will Hanlon and mother of Mike Hanlon. She is a devout Baptist and originally from Texas.

Major Fuller – An army officer who works with the Derry Town Council to control the Black Spot. Fuller is racist, and doesn't want the black soldiers in Derry, but he also doesn't want to shut down the Black Spot and anger the white patrons from town who go there.

Steve "Moose" Sadler – A mentally-challenged high-school boy who joins Henry Bowers, Victor Criss, and "Belch" Huggins in bullying Mike Hanlon. He takes his nickname from a character of the same name in the Archie comics.

Rena Davenport – A woman whom Butch Bowers courts for eight years. She is "fat, forty, and usually filthy." She farms beans, which are her "pride," and cooks them for Butch and Henry Bowers.

Egbert Thoroughgood – A toothless 93-year-old man who tells Mike Hanlon the story of the affair of Claude Heroux and the Silver Dollar, a massacre committed by Heroux which

Thoroughgood witnessed. Thoroughgood has a strong rural accent that makes it difficult for Mike to understand him.

Sandy Ives – A folklorist at the University of Maine who helps Mike Hanlon to collect historical records and old tales about Derry.

Davey Hartwell – The chief "organizer" or "ringleader" of the union of lumbermen and a greatly admired figure. Hartwell is found floating face-down in the Kenduskeag River along with Amsel Bickford. His legs are dismembered and something is left "distended [in] his mouth, stuffing out his cheeks."

Amsel Bickford – Another one of the union of lumbermen's "ringleaders" who is found decapitated and floating face-down in the Kenduskeag river, along with Davey Hartwell. Like Hartwell, he has a paper with the word "union" pinned to the back of his shirt.

Ralph Rogan – Tom Rogan's father. He commits suicide by drinking "a gin-and-lye cocktail," leaving Tom in charge of his brother and sisters and vulnerable to his mother's abuse if he does not look after them satisfactorily.

Steven Bowie – A timber baron who once lived on West Broadway. Bowie is a devout churchgoer and a deacon, as well as president of Derry's White Legion of Decency chapter.

Calvin Clark – A firemen with the Derry Fire Department, and one of the Clark twins Bill Denbrough, Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, and Richie Tozier attend school with. Calvin is electrocuted almost instantly after stepping on a live fallen power line.

Anne Stuart – A woman who is killed when "an ancient gear-wheel [catapults] from her toilet along with a gout of sewage." The gear-wheel goes through her shower door and hits her in the throat.

Mark Lamonica – Cheryl Lamonica's younger brother. He is the nurse who attends to Mike Hanlon at the Derry Home Hospital. Under the influence of It, he attempts to kill Mike in his hospital bed with a deadly shot.

Vincent "Boogers" Caruso Taliendo – A janitor at Wally's Bar and an alcoholic. While sweeping up at the bar, all of the beer taps turn on spontaneously, running not only beer but chunks of hair and flesh. After seeing greenish smoke drift out of the cupboard doors, he flees both the bar and Derry.

MaureenNell – Aloysius Nell's wife who witnesses his death and gives him his last rites herself, as the telephone is out of order and she can't call their priest.

Dr. Hale – A retired doctor who lives on West Broadway for fifty years and is killed by a flying manhole cover, which decapitates him while he goes out for his regular two-mile morning walk.

Mrs. Nelson – An old woman whom Bill Denbrough sees in the street after Derry begins to collapse. She and Bill wave at each other because he remembers how her sister used to babysit him and George. Mrs. Nelson's presence brings Bill some comfort.

Foxy Foxworth – Manager of the Aladdin Theater until 1973. He is hurt when a section of bleachers collapses at Bassey Park during a horse race.

Officer Bruce Andreen – The police officer who finds Chief Andrew Rademacher dead after the tramp-chair in the attic falls through the roof of the chief's office and directly onto him.

Russ Handor – Eddie Kaspbrak's doctor. Mr. Keene accuses him of being weak in the face of Sonia Kaspbrak's hypochondria.

Mr. Gedreau – The shopkeeper at the Costello Street Market. He tries to break up the fight between Eddie Kaspbrak and Henry Bowers, but Henry pushes him and threatens him with physical harm if he does not go back inside the store.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

EVIL AND THE SUPERNATURAL

Stephen King presents Derry, the setting for *It*, as a sleepy New England town in which terror and evil lurk beneath its placid surface. This evil takes the supernatural form of the monster "It." It is a presence that hides in dark, underground spaces, first discovered in the narrative by George Denbrough in his basement in 1957. This creature has several names—It, Pennywise the Dancing Clown, and Bob Gray. It can take almost any form and inhabit the bodies of those who are already inclined toward evil-doing, pushing them into murderous, obsessive rage. It has been present throughout Derry's violent history, witnessing and partaking in the racist attack on the Black Spot, the hate crime against Adrian Mellon, and numerous other murders and disasters going back centuries. On its own, It has killed many small children and teenagers up until the 1980s. However, It is also evil because It forces people to see the horrors of everyday life. In this regard, the novel illustrates how evil is not always as simple as a monster that lurks in the dark. Evil is, instead, a complex, multi-faceted thing that takes shape according to the darkness within the human psyche.

King uses Derry as a microcosm of the United States—a place whose wholesome surface belies a history of prejudice and violence. Will Hanlon, the father figure of Derry's only black family, enters Derry as an army private. He and other black

soldiers are allowed to open their own speakeasy—the Black Spot—due to opposition from Derry's White Legion of Decency over their mixing with white women at the town's speakeasies. The Black Spot becomes a success, and in 1930 it is torched in the middle of the night by hooded white supremacists. Reflecting on the incident in the 1950s, Will says that the incident occurred because "bad things, hurtful things, do right well in the soil of this town." In Hanlon's estimation, Derry is a place that nourishes evil. The Black Spot, whose very name suggests an attempt to mar Derry's white supremacy, is destroyed to protect the town's self-image.

Similarly, Derry's small gay community in 1985 also understands "the shadow under which it [exists]." Don Hagarty, Adrian Mellon's partner, describes Derry bluntly as a "dead strumpet with maggots squirming out of her cooze"—something that appears tempting but is rotting underneath. He also describes it as a "sewer," as though it contains all of the detritus American life, which it sweeps under its surface. A month before Adrian's murder, Don takes him to Bassey Park and, in "the dark, vaguely unpleasant-smelling shadows of the Kissing Bridge" shows him the violently homophobic graffiti covering the bridge's wall. Though Don is aware of the ubiquity of homophobia, the graffiti expresses a cruelty that is quietly embraced, it seems, by many of the town's inhabitants. The graffiti is a warning of the hatred that lurks just out of public view—never openly expressed by the town's "decent" inhabitants but by misfits like John "Webby" Garton and his gang. King thus presents Derry as a place that nourishes evil but denies responsibility for what it fosters.

"Decent" Derry citizens, such as those who live on West Broadway, blame the town's unsavory elements on "crazies," such as Butch Bowers and later, his son, Henry Bowers, who bullies the seven friends who make up the Losers' Club. Henry later ends up in a mental institution for stabbing his father to death. It uses both Henry Bowers and Tom Rogan, Beverly Marsh Rogan's abusive husband, to do It's bidding. Both men have obsessive and violent natures which It exploits, turning each man into It's "dogsbody," or servant, who carries out It's evil tasks. It uses violent impulses that already exist within people to push them more deeply into obsessive, murderous madness.

Henry's weapon of choice is a switchblade, which he uses to try to carve his name into the Ben Hanscom's stomach. In this instance, Henry's bullying shifts into a sociopathy that shocks his friends, "Belch" Huggins and Victor Criss. To complete his revolution in character, Bob Gray sends Henry a specially-designed switchblade in the mail, which Henry uses to stab his father in the throat and later uses to attack Eddie Kaspbrak. The switchblade thus represents the murderous violence lurking beneath Henry's role and actions as a schoolyard bully—a common figure among children everywhere. King pushes this character to a horrifying extreme as It senses Henry's violent impulses and use him as a conduit through which It can inflict terror on Derry.

Like Henry, Tom Rogan also grew up in an abusive household and inflicts that abuse on others—not only Beverly, but also her friend Kay McCall, whom he beats savagely to get information about Beverly's whereabouts. Rogan's personality becomes increasingly dangerous after Beverly challenges his authority by leaving Chicago to go back to Derry. Like Henry, Tom's evil surfaces from his need to have a sense of control over his environment—in this instance, his sense of power over women. The inability to secure that power causes him to lash out with more extreme violence, which It is also able to use to inflict real instead of imagined harm.

Along with It, Henry and Tom are the novel's most obvious villains. They are obsessive, vengeful, and, therefore, perfect couriers to carry out It's evil designs. However, King avoids making them seem inherently evil by detailing their backstories of child abuse. They are both products of corrosive environments, which makes them more vulnerable to It, or the evil that exists outside of them. Derry is thus representative of both that external and internal human evil. Bigotry is "nourished" in Derry, as Will Hanlon points out, but it does not start there. Bigotry, like bullying and violence, is a normal aspect of life, but it is aided by an evil supernatural force in this town. King uses the device of the supernatural to illustrate how evil behavior is both a product of character and of forces outside of one's control.

FRIENDSHIP AND LOYALTY

The Losers' Club—a group of prepubescent social misfits which includes Bill Denbrough, Ben Hanscom, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris, Beverly Marsh, and Eddie Kaspbrak—is brought back together decades later through a phone call from their sixth member, Mike Hanlon. Mike reminds them of a blood oath they all took in childhood, vowing to return to Derry if It ever resurrected itself and started killing again. When the inevitable occurs in 1985, each member feels called upon to fulfill this commitment. Stan, rather than face the fear that caused him so much "offense" in childhood, commits suicide—but the gang does not perceive Stan's suicide as an act of disloyalty, instead mostly worrying that their power will be reduced with one less member. Through his depiction of the Losers' Club from childhood to adulthood, King presents friendship as an antidote to evil, and shows how the gang's unbreakable loyalty fosters the bond that makes it possible for them to destroy It.

The Losers' Club creates a circle of power in childhood. This power, Bill realizes in the end, is borne from the "desire" of children—that is, their desire to believe and have hope in themselves and in each other when no one else does. With the exceptions of Hanlon and Uris, who suffer enough from being outcasts due to being black and Jewish, respectively, each

member of the club comes from a troubled home and has parents who do not appreciate them as they are. The club forms as an antidote to this rejection and to that which the group suffers from their peers. In this regard, their friendship has supernatural power, but it also provides a simple, human comfort.

During difficult moments in both childhood and adulthood, the group expresses frequent affection to each other through group hugs and by professing their love for each other. This tenderness between them is easy and natural and makes up for the absence of tenderness in their home lives. The hugs are correctives to the beatings that Beverly experiences at the hands of her father, and the declarations of love from her friends contrast with her father's claims that she is someone to "worry about." The group's tolerance of Richie's barbed humor and voice impressions contrast with his mother's lack of understanding and his father's coldness. The Losers' Club is a kind of family in itself, formed through most of its members' lack of a sense of belonging at home or, in the cases of Stanley and Mike, in the larger community.

For some members of the group, these are their first and only friendships. The members of the Losers' Club are Ben's first friends, and they are Eddie's, too. Of all the members' parents, Eddie's mother, Sonia Kaspbrak, is most averse to her son's friendship with the group and blames them when Eddie is badly beaten up and has his arm broken by Henry Bowers. For Sonia, the group's bond threatens to destroy her control over Eddie and her insistence on his co-dependency, which she believes will prevent him from growing up and leaving her all alone. Eddie rejects her attempt to destroy his friendships, however, for the first time asserting independence from his mother. In this instance, friendship is not only a source of comfort but one of the ways in which the children can assert their own needs and identities.

As a girl, Beverly is an outlier even within the group. Though Mike and Stan are also "different," the group knows and understands little about the racism and anti-Semitism that the adult world uses to mark them. On the other hand, the boys know that Beverly's body is distinctly different from theirs. As they grow up, that physical difference, and its ability to arouse desire, is what separates their childhood friendship from what will become their adult friendship. This desire also becomes a key aspect of forming a stronger circle, in an effort to destroy It.

The first time the group sends It away in 1958, Beverly offers her body to each of the boys—the very thing that her father has obsessed over—to strengthen their bond. The sexual act is the bridge between their childhood friendship and their commitment to each other in adulthood. Each of the boys goes to her, in a kind of sexual ritual that Beverly initiates and guides them through. King uses Beverly to help the boys pass from childhood to adulthood, through their realization of sexuality through her. The act also empowers Beverly, for it gives her an understanding of her sexuality, which her father seeks to contain and control for his own evil purposes.

Later in the novel, Beverly consummates her childhood crush on Bill when the group reunites in Derry. The act is not only the expression of a long-held desire but it is one that briefly conflates Beverly with Bill's wife, Audra Phillips, who, in a dream, merges with Beverly. Audra's dream results in her fear that she will lose Bill to another woman—a concern that Bill's commitment to the group has resulted in disloyalty to her. On the contrary, Bill's commitment to the Losers' Club reinforces his commitment to Audra, for without them, he cannot relinquish his obsession and commit more fully to his marriage.

Most members of the Losers' Club experience unconditional love only through their bond to each other. The club is also a refuge from abuse, prejudice, and the pain of loss. Though their circle diminishes because of Stan's suicide, Eddie's death at the hands of It, and every member's slow loss of memory, their bond persists through their mutual desires for connection, which they learned to foster through each other.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Beverly Marsh, Henry Bowers, and Dorsey and Edward Corcoran all have one thing in common: abusive households. Four-year-old Dorsey ends up bludgeoned to death by his stepfather, Richard Macklin, while Henry murders his father, Butch, and ends up in a mental health facility for the criminally-insane. Beverly's history of abuse compels her to seek her abusive father's approval through her marriage to Tom Rogan, who also abuses her. The prevalence of abuse in the novel, particularly within the narrative of the characters' childhoods during the 1950s, clashes with the wholesome, idyllic image of the decade—a period in which families often remained superficially intact but were sometimes very dysfunctional. King's theme of domestic abuse takes the novel's terror further, for it reveals that some of Derry's children have no place to escape It—no comfort from the threat of physical and emotional harm. King uses domestic abuse as an example of the very real violence that terrorizes people's lives, particularly those of children, even with no influence at all from It's supernatural evil.

King introduces the theme of domestic abuse with the story of the Corcoran boys, revealing the prevalence of child abuse in 1950s America and also reminding readers that the threat of mortal violence is not merely a figment of children's imaginations, but a daily reality for some. Both Dorsey and Eddie are abused by their stepfather Richard. The first person to notice Dorsey's abuse is his nursery school teacher, who sees "bad sprains" on his hands when Richard bends the boy's fingers back for being "bad." When the boy dies, the teacher insists on believing that it is an accident, refusing to think that someone could bludgeon a small child to death. The irony that King illustrates is how children can internalize the sense of

being "bad" when, in fact, they are the victims of callous and dangerous adults, including Dorsey's mother, Monica Macklin, who hides her knowledge of how her son dies. Furthermore, Dorsey's schoolteacher refuses to see the evil that is directly present, just as the Losers' Club notices that adults often do not see or hear It. In this regard, children are not only vulnerable to harm but are made more vulnerable due to the inability—or unwillingness—of adults to believe their stories.

As with Dorsey, Edward Corcoran's bruises are also noticed by his fifth-grade teacher, Henrietta Dumont. Unlike Dorsey's teacher, however, Ms. Dumont knows that this is another instance of a parent "confusing beatings with discipline." Yet she avoids saying anything because she has been discouraged in the past from doing so. The school worries that such reports could affect it during "tax appropriation time," and the principal tells her to forget about what she sees, suggesting that Dumont could be reprimanded if she does not. The enforced silence around Eddie's abuse mirrors Derry's silence about its own criminal past—such as the attack on the Black Spot and Claude Heroux's axe murder. It is as though the town fears that exposing the evils of domestic abuse will unearth all of the social ills that have, as Will Hanlon notes, been nourished in Derry's soil. In this regard, silence is the instrument that Derry's inhabitants use to maintain their peaceful self-image, not realizing that It feeds off of the town's willful ignorance and denial.

Beverly Marsh also realizes that adults, like her father Al Marsh, do not see It. When Beverly screams after hearing voices from the sink drain, her father "[pops] her one." This memory of being punished for a problem that she did not cause later makes her think of her husband Tom, whom she fights off and leaves behind at their home in Chicago. For years, Beverly hides Tom's abuse, just as she hid what she experienced at the hands of her father—another example of "confusing beatings with discipline." What makes Beverly's abuse different from that of the Corcoran boys or Henry Bowers is that it teaches her to blame herself for Al's behavior and, later, for that of Tom. Unlike Henry's father, Butch, who is mentally ill, or the Corcoran boys' generally hostile household, Al insists that Beverly needs "correction" in the form of beatings and that she needs it more than a son would. Thus, Beverly's experience of abuse is more directly tied to her gender and sets off a lifetime of self-blame in response.

Beverly first encounters It when she hears the voice of Veronica Grogan, a murder victim whom she knew, gurgle out of her bathroom sink, as It sends a "gout of blood" out of the drain that her father does not see. Her seemingly baseless fear inspires disgust in Al, and he does not become sympathetic until Beverly lies and says that she screamed because she saw a spider. This makes sense to Al, for "[a]ll girls are scared of spiders." This explanation even pleases him, as it reinforces his prejudices about women while also assuring him that they need him, and generally all men, to protect them as well as "correct" them. Therefore, Beverly can only get her father's love and attention, it seems, when she plays along with his understanding of gender roles.

Al Marsh, however, perverts fatherly protection, just as Richard Macklin perverts discipline, by expressing an obsessive concern over Beverly's body, such as when he asks if anyone has been peeking at her after she emerges from the bathroom in a fright. Al's perversion of his paternal responsibility for Beverly confuses her about how love ought to feel. She loves her father and appreciates moments in which he is tender, like when he puts her to bed at night and kisses her forehead. However, when he stands over her bed and masturbates while looking at her, she sees him as a menacing "shape" instead of the man who is her father. Beverly senses his desire to have control over her body, which he is on the verge of violating, and she escapes into her imagination to protect herself.

In the novel, domestic abuse can be even more frightening than nightmares because it is perpetrated by those who claim to love those whom they abuse. Beverly's fear of her father is more complex than her fear of It, because she knows It is wholly evil and repulsive, while she seeks Al Marsh's love and approval. She accepts his wish to hurt her in exchange for her hope of also receiving his love. The silence around abuse then reinforces the sense that children are often alone in withstanding this everyday horror, just as they feel alone and unheard when confronting It.

FEAR AND THE POWER OF FANTASY

Children's fears are often vividly evoked through fantasies, particularly those conjured by films and fairy tales. Horror movies and scary fairy tales entertain, but that entertainment can become obscured by real fears of menace and the frequent inability of children to separate reality from fiction. It knows that children believe that the terrors from fantasies can enter reality, and uses this belief to reach into children's imaginations to terrorize them. King uses characters from 1950s horror films as well as childhood fairy tales to demonstrate the power that stories and films can exert on young imaginations. King illustrates both how fantasy unearths childhood anxieties that linger into adulthood as well as how fantasy and imagination can empower children to fight against the things that frighten them.

Fairy tales that Ben Hanscom and Beverly Marsh remember from early childhood are especially key in producing dread, because they are seemingly innocuous stories that can evoke fear of dangerous creatures lurking around corners or under bridges, or of tiny old ladies transforming into witches. King uses the motif of fairy tales to explore how seemingly innocuous or mundane things carry an aspect of danger, particularly when they tap into fears that we seek to avoid or repress. One day, while entering the Children's Library, Ben

Hanscom overhears Mrs. Davies reading the story of "Three Billy Goats Gruff." The Norwegian fairy tale evokes the fear of a troll lurking beneath a bridge that three goats must cross without being devoured. This fear is connected to Ben's overconsumption of food in childhood, which makes him a target for bullies and a socially undesirable person, akin to the troll in the story. Years later, while arriving at It's lair, Ben sees "a pile of small bones" at the monster's entrance—the bones of countless children who have been devoured—and thinks of the story. King draws a connection between It's consumption of children and Ben's persistent anxiety about being fat. By confronting It, Ben exorcises both his adult fears about consuming too much, as well as his childhood fear of being "consumed" by It.

Like Ben, Beverly also confronts a fear of being devoured. When she returns to Derry in 1985, she goes to her childhood home. Her father, Al Marsh, died five years earlier. Mrs. Kersh, an old woman who is the daughter of Bob Gray, greets her instead. While having what she thinks is tea, Beverly watches Mrs. Kersh transform into the witch from "Hansel and Gretel," a character that always scared Beverly "the worst" during childhood "because she ate the children." This fear of being eaten is an incarnation of Beverly's fear of her father's potential sexual abuse. When It transforms into Al Marsh, Beverly conflates Al's desire for her body with the witch putting Hansel and Gretel into an oven until they are "plump enough to eat," or, in Beverly's case, until her father perceived her to be old enough to rape. The episode with Mrs. Kersh reveals that Beverly has not overcome her childhood fear of being "consumed" or objectified by an authoritative man in her life, but has only reiterated it in her marriage to Tom Rogan.

By the time the children reach early adolescence, they are not entertained by fairy tales but by the horror films of the 1950s. The Aladdin Theater is where all of Derry's adolescents go—members of the Losers' Club and Henry Bowers's gang alike—to see the decade's "schlock" films. The movies are notable for being poorly executed, due to their bad special effects, while still having the ability to suspend the viewers' disbelief. This suspension of disbelief occurs to such an extent that, when Richie Tozier sees *The Giant Claw* and the title character invades New York, he becomes "excited enough to spill his popcorn over the balcony railing." King demonstrates how children's willingness to believe in the imagination can override reality in both positive and negative ways.

Shortly after Richie sees *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*, he and Bill are chased by what Richie sees as a werewolf. For Richie, the teenage werewolf is the most indomitable figure in his imagination ("it keeps comin at us like the Teenage Werewolf in that movie") and, therefore, the easiest form that It can shift into to conjure up Richie's fear. The werewolf is also compatible with the children's developing understanding of It as a creature that shapeshifts from a normal person into a frightening monster.

On the other hand, Bill has a more positive fantasy that his old, clunky gray bike is **Silver**—that is, a powerful sidekick like the horse on the television show, *The Lone Ranger*. This fantasy helps him and Richie escape from the terrors that demonize them. While the werewolf reinforces the children's sense of powerlessness, the fantasy about the bike gives them the notion that they can fight against perceived monsters within their own abilities.

King illustrates both the negative and positive elements of make-believe, particularly the power of stories to tap into the characters' fears, though they do not understand the crux of these connections until adulthood. King also demonstrates how fantasy helps children achieve a kind of heroism in which they can overcome their sense of powerlessness. In adulthood, they realize how closely linked their anxieties are to the tales that they took into their imaginations as simple entertainment.

STORYTELLING AND MEMORY

Each member of the Losers' Club has a recollection about Pennywise the Dancing Clown, or It, and this shared experience and ability to tell a story brings them all together. Sometimes, the group's stories are linked to early memories or associations with other victims, which forge a personal connection between It and those whom It terrorizes. The storytelling during the Losers' Club's reunion in 1985 is necessary to help them remember all that they have forgotten about the summer of 1958. King presents storytelling as both a coping mechanism to try to recover lost memories as well as an act that reinforces relationships.

For Bill Denbrough, storytelling is particularly important, as it is Bill's way of controlling the darkness that shrouds his life after It kills his brother, George. Bill becomes obsessed with his brother's death, for which he feels partly responsible. Through writing, Bill can articulate himself in a way that he cannot in speech, giving shape to his fears and obsession and attempting to correct what went wrong in his family. His first published story, "The Dark," harks back to his younger brother George's fear of going alone into the dark basement. Though the story is rejected by Bill's writing instructor, it is published in the men's magazine, *White Tie*, proving to Bill that, while "politics always change, stories never do." The story of his brother's death will always exist, and it will always matter, particularly because it this memory that fuels Bill's will to confront and control fear.

During his childhood, Bill also tries to understand It through photographs—another medium of both storytelling and memory. He uses his brother George's old photo album and Will Hanlon's album, which is a collection of pictures from Derry's history, to learn how far back It goes. The photos serve to connect Bill to It's history, which is directly connected to that of Derry's origin. Photographs thus serve as key aspects of

both preserving memory and helping Bill understand the larger contexts of his experiences with It.

The group also recalls its travails with It in the context of more personal difficulties with parents and other authority figures. For Eddie, this aspect of his storytelling is particularly important. He feels that, in some ways, his challenges with monsters under the sewers of Derry were less difficult than those confrontations with his mother, Sonia Kaspbrak, or their pharmacist, Mr. Norbert Keene. Eddie is a hypochondriac whose fear of illness, particularly asthma, has been imposed on him by his mother. He recalls the instance in which Mr. Keene invites him into his office at the drug store to tell him that he does not have asthma but is merely a nervous child taking camphor-infused water through his aspirator. Eddie mistakenly thinks that Mr. Keene is accusing him of being "crazy." The revelation, however, is disturbing to Eddie because it reveals that the forces that can cause him pain and mortal danger do not necessarily come from within himself, but can also be external. Though he does not yet realize it, this will make it much easier for him to test his strength in true physical challenges.

Such a physical challenge arises when Henry Bowers and his gang confront Eddie, in revenge for the "rockfight" when the members of the Losers' Gang throw rocks at Henry's gang. Henry makes Eddie eat rocks, and then breaks his arm. Next, in a moment that would have horrified Sonia, Patrick Hocksetter spits phlegm in Eddie's face. The incident, as painful as it is, frees Eddie. Firstly, it disproves his mother's narrative that he is a sickly weakling. Secondly, it allows him to create his own existence apart from his mother, one in which he asserts his relationships with his friends. Eddie thus remembers the development of his selfhood by recalling stories about his most painful moments in childhood.

Interestingly, the members of the Losers' Gang (except perhaps Mike, who stays in Derry) tend to almost supernaturally lose their memories of It. As adults in 1985, this means they all struggle to recall the events of 1958, including their encounters with It and also their memories of each other. Their shared attempts to recall these memories make up much of the narrative, but also show how important memory and storytelling are—as it is only once they can remember everything that they can defeat It once and for all. This idea is then further complicated, however, by the fact that they *again* begin to forget things almost immediately after It is killed—and in this case, the forgetting seems like a positive thing, since it allows the characters to move on past the horror they have experienced.

King uses the theme of storytelling and memory as a device that helps the characters understand the nature of the force they are fighting, but also as a means of moving forward into lives that are healthy and whole. Though It is a form of evil that exists outside of themselves, it feeds off of the fears and anxieties that they harbor within. To recall and better understand those anxieties, and then to defeat them once and for all, they must remember through stories.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

THE PAPER BOAT

The paper boat is a paraffin-lined boat made out of a piece of the classified section of the Derry *News*. Bill Denbrough makes the boat for his little brother, George Denbrough, who plays with it on the flooded streets of Derry. The boat, which careens along the sidewalks while George chases after it, is a symbol of innocence. Innocence, like the paper boat, is a fragile thing that can be harmed by forces beyond its control, just as George is mortally wounded by Pennywise the Dancing Clown when his boat gets stuck in a storm drain and George goes to retrieve it.

Yet even after George's death, the narrator says that the boat "was still afloat and still running on the breast of the flood when it passed the incorporated town limits of Derry, Maine." This suggests that innocence can triumph over evil by enduring. The narrator imagines the paper boat reaching the sea, "like a magic boat in a fairy tale," and thriving in the indifferent universe that is the ocean. When Bill sends his first book off to be published, he chooses The Viking Press because he likes its ship logo—another sign that he wishes to recapture, in his adult life, the childhood innocence and happiness that becomes elusive after George's death.

SILVER

"Silver" is the name that Bill Denbrough gives to his oversized, clunky, old gray bicycle. The sight of Bill on the bike is somewhat comic, for it is much too big for him, and the bike's name makes it sound shinier and newer than it is. Bill takes its name from the horse on the TV show *The Lone Ranger*. Silver is a symbol of Bill's heroism and his courage to fight the evil that terrorizes Derry. The bike, which does not really "fit" Bill until he rides it as an adult, is a symbol of the man that he will become—the hero who kills It, another thing that seems too big for Bill to control. While riding Silver, Bill feels heroic and powerful. He outpaces the monsters that chase him, such as the werewolf that Richie Tozier envisions when they flee from the house on 29 Neibolt Street. At the end of novel, Bill and his wife, Audra Phillips, ride away on Silver. He drives away from memory, "but not from desire," and helps Audra to awaken from her catatonic state. In this instance, Silver helps Bill to take on the more traditional role of the romantic hero,

akin to a fairy-tale prince who awakens a sleeping beauty by coming to her rescue.

The color silver also appears elsewhere in the novel. Don Hagarty describes the eyes of Pennywise the Dancing Clown as silver and, when It takes the form of a giant bird that attacks Mike Hanlon in the smokestack at Kitchener Ironworks, Mike notices that It's tongue is silver. King uses silver to connect Bill and It as forces of good and evil, respectively, which are destined to confront each other.

THE GLASS CORRIDOR

The glass corridor at the Derry Public Library connects the adult library to the Children's Library. In the novel, the glass corridor represents the passage from childhood to adulthood. King based the corridor on an actual one at the Stratford Public Library in Connecticut, which connects the children's library to the adult library.

As a child, Ben Hanscom, a frequent visitor to the library, notices how the corridor is warm, even in winter. The corridor is designed to ease one's passage, and symbolically this means doing so in the transition from one phase of life to another. It is a source of comfort for Ben, who replicates its design when he becomes an architect and constructs the BBC communications center in London. Both during childhood and in adulthood, when he returns to Derry, he overhears a librarian reading the Norwegian fairy tale, "Three Billy Goats Gruff" to a group of children. Hearing the story returns Ben to his childhood feeling of being an overweight and bullied social outcast. The Derry Public Library has always been Ben's sanctuary, but there were terrors lurking outside of its walls that threatened to disrupt Ben's passage from boyhood to manhood, particularly It and Henry Bowers.

At the end of the novel, the glass corridor explodes. The bridge is never rebuilt and patrons have to go outside to get from the Children's Library to the adult library. The bridge's collapse is symbolic of Ben's break away from the terrors that haunted him in childhood.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Scribner edition of *It* published in 2017.

Chapter 1 Quotes

Her father tucked her in as he always did, and kissed her forehead. Then he only stood there for a moment in what she would always think of as "his" way of standing, perhaps of being: bent slightly forward, hands plunged deep—to above the wrist—in his pockets, the bright blue eyes in his mournful basset-hound's face looking down at her from above. In later years, long after she stopped thinking about Derry at all, she would see a man sitting on the bus or maybe standing on a corner with his dinnerbucket in his hand, shapes, oh shapes of men, sometimes seen as day closed down, sometimes seen across Watertower Square in the noonlight of a clear windy autumn day, shapes of men, rules of men, desires of men: or Tom, so like her father when he took off his shirt and stood slightly slumped in front of the bathroom mirror to shave. Shapes of men.

Related Characters: Tom Rogan , Alvin "Al" Marsh, Beverly Marsh Rogan

Related Themes:

Page Number: 404

Explanation and Analysis

Beverly and Al have just left the bathroom, where Beverly has seen blood gush out of the drain and Al has seen nothing. She lies and tells him that she saw a spider. When he cannot find the spider, he tells her that it disappeared down into the circuitous pipes. He then tucks her into bed and kisses her goodnight. With these acts, Al shows the loving, paternal aspect of his relationship with his daughter. Beverly holds on to this image to avoid confronting his abusive and predatory nature. There is a shift—almost as though one man has exited the room and another has entered—from the moment that Al kisses Beverly's forehead to the moment that he stands silently above her. He bends forward with his hands in his pockets to masturbate. To distance herself from the memory of her father performing this act, as well as from subsequent memories of other men watching her and doing the same, Beverly conjures them up as "shapes of men." The shapes are not actual people to her, but outlines formed from men's "rules" regarding how they look at Beverly, and "desires," which determine how they respond to her presence. Her father will later remind her of her husband, Tom, who positions his body in similar ways and performs the same rituals as her father did when she was growing up. Beverly grows up thinking that all men are virtually the same in regarding her as a sex object, until she reunites with the Losers' Club as an adult. They are the only men toward whom Beverly expresses understanding and trust.

Chapter 3 Quotes

❝ What a bunch of losers they had been—Stan Uris with his big Jew-boy nose, Bill Denbrough who could say nothing but "Hi-yo, Silver!" without stuttering so badly that it drove you almost dogshit, Beverly Marsh with her bruises and her cigarettes rolled into the sleeve of her blouse, Ben Hanscom who had been so big he looked like a human version of Moby Dick, and Richie Tozier with his thick glasses and his A averages and his wise mouth and his face which just begged to be pounded into new and exciting shapes. Was there a word for what they had been? Oh yes. There always was. *Le mot juste*. In this case *le mot juste* was wimps…

Related Characters: William "Stuttering Bill" Denbrough , Ben "Haystack" Hanscom, Beverly Marsh Rogan, Stanley Uris , Mike Hanlon, Richard "Trashmouth" Tozier / Richie

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 70

Explanation and Analysis

Richie Tozier is reflecting on his childhood friendships in Derry with a group who nicknamed themselves the "Losers' Club," based on their social inadequacy. Richie has just gotten a phone call from Mike Hanlon, telling him that he must return to Derry and fulfill the promise he made as a child with a blood oath. He and his friends agreed to return to Derry if "It" ever resurfaced and started to commit additional murders.

Each member of the Losers' Club had a distinct characteristic that Richie now recalls. They were outcast for being unable to fit others' ideas of how they should look or behave. Bill had a bad stutter, Beverly was tomboyish, Ben was obese, and Richie was what kids would have called a "four-eyes" due to his glasses and intelligence. Stanley's distinction is based on the rampant anti-Semitism of the time, which excluded him on the basis of his being Jewish. What is ironic is that Richie characterizes them as "wimps," but his descriptions, based on his memories of them, suggests that they were quite formidable. Bill, for example, is able to overcome his stutter—his weakness—when he sees himself as heroic. While riding Silver, Bill saved Richie's life from the werewolf. The members of Losers' Club were *socially* incompetent, but were otherwise quite capable of fending off forces that easily overtook other children in Derry.

❝ He looked at her, eyes narrowed, mouth smiling casually, completely alive, ready to see what would come next, how she would react. His cock was stiffening in his pants, but he barely noticed. That was for later. For now, school was in session. He replayed what had just happened. Her face. What had that third expression been, there for a bare instant and then gone? First the surprise. Then the pain. Then the (*nostalgia*) look of a memory . . . of some memory. It had only been for a moment. He didn't think she even knew it had been there, on her face or in her mind. Now: now. It would all be in the first thing she didn't say. He knew that as well as his own name […] He had regressed her. He was in this car with a child. Voluptuous and sexy as hell, but a child.

Related Characters: Beverly Marsh Rogan, Tom Rogan

Related Themes:

Page Number: 110

Explanation and Analysis

Tom recalls one of the "lessons" that he gave Beverly—that is, an instance in which he beats her to assume control over her—after they exited a movie one evening. Beverly's "offense" was lighting a cigarette in the car. King depicts Tom's predatory behavior by placing the reader in his mind. Tom examines Beverly's behavior, waiting for her reaction, as though she were his prey. The sentence fragments focus on the emotions that he reads in her face. His sexual arousal comes from the satisfaction of his desire to control her. He is aware that abuse is familiar to her, though he does not know the history of Beverly's abuse with her father. Like many manipulators, though, he is keen on reading behavior and understands that he has convinced Beverly that she belongs in his charge. He fulfills the abusive, paternal role that is familiar to her. Like her father, he is obsessed with her as an object of desire but is also determined that she not grow up—as growing up would mean that she could act on her own volition.

Chapter 4 Quotes

❝ Ben could see the clown's face clearly. It was deeply lined, the skin a parchment map of wrinkles, tattered cheeks, arid flesh. The skin of its forehead was split but bloodless. Dead lips grinned back from a maw in which teeth leaned like tombstones. Its gums were pitted and black. Ben could see no eyes, but something glittered far back in the charcoal pits of those puckered sockets, something like the cold jewels in the eyes of Egyptian scarab beetles. And although the wind was the wrong way, it seemed to him that he could smell cinnamon and spice, rotting cerements treated with weird drugs, sand, blood so old it had dried to flakes and grains of rust…

Related Characters: It / Pennywise the Dancing Clown / Bob Gray, Ben "Haystack" Hanscom

Related Themes:

Page Number: 217

Explanation and Analysis

Ben sees It standing on the frozen Canal after he leaves school one afternoon. It appears as a mummified clown. This is his first encounter with It and the story that he offers when he and his friends share their experiences with Derry's personifications of evil. The face is ancient—a detail that is emphasized with the examples of "Egyptian scarab beetles" and "rotting cerements." However, the face seems to merely *represent* something that is human instead of actually being human. The clown has markers of an old human face—wrinkles, cheeks, flesh, forehead, and lips—but it is "bloodless" and it does not have a mouth, but a "maw"—the throat of a wild animal. There is a strange contrast, too, between the lighthearted image of a clown and that of a mummy, which is symbolic of both death as well as the human desire to avoid death through methods of self-preservation. The clown's "maw" indicates its relentless appetite. The mummy is an example of the evil in Derry, which will not die and which is "fed," in a way, by the town's willful ignorance of history and insistence on focusing only on light and positive things.

Chapter 7 Quotes

❝ The leper was crawling out. It was wearing a clown suit, he saw a clown suit with big orange buttons down the front. It saw Eddie and grinned. Its half-mouth dropped open and its tongue lolled out [….] The leper's tongue had not just dropped from its mouth; it was at least three feet long and had unrolled like a party-favor. It came to an arrow-point which dragged in the dirt. Foam, thick-sticky and yellowish, coursed along it. Bugs crawled over it.

Related Characters: It / Pennywise the Dancing Clown / Bob Gray, Eddie Kaspbrak

Related Themes:

Page Number: 318

Explanation and Analysis

Eddie Kaspbrak is at the house on 29 Neibolt Street, which is known as a drinking and rest place for local bums and hobos. Eddie looks under the porch, which is overrun by wild rosebushes, and sees a leper crawling out. His first encounter with It is in its form as a leper. As with Ben Hanscom's experience with It, there is a disorienting contrast between the images of something repulsive (a rotting and infectious person) with that of something innocuous (a clown). Worse, the creature offers to perform oral sex on Eddie. Eddie convinces himself that his mind is putting on a show, similar to the movies he has seen at the Aladdin Theater. While It uses cinematic images to evoke terror, it also latches on to other fears within those whom It terrorizes. In this instance, It uses Eddie's fear of illness, imposed by his mother, as well as a subconscious aversion to sexuality. Eddie is still too young to understand what the "blowjob" is that the leper offers, but he has just had an ill-informed conversation with Richie Tozier about sex and is appalled by what he knows—particularly regarding the exchange of fluids and the risk of venereal disease.

Chapter 8 Quotes

❝ There was no zipper on the thing's jacket; instead there were big fluffy orange buttons, like pompoms. The other thing was worse. It was the other thing that made him feel as if he might faint, or just give up and let it kill him. A name was stitched on the jacket in gold thread, the kind of thing you could get done down at Machen's for a buck if you wanted it. Stitched on the bloody left breast of the Werewolf's jacket, stained but readable, were the words RICHIE TOZIER.

Related Characters: It / Pennywise the Dancing Clown / Bob Gray, William "Stuttering Bill" Denbrough , Richard "Trashmouth" Tozier / Richie

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 385

Explanation and Analysis

Richie Tozier has his first encounter with It in the form of the Werewolf from the movie that he has just seen at the Aladdin Theater—I Was a Teenage Werewolf. Like Eddie Kaspbrak, Richie and Bill are visiting the house on 29 Neibolt Street. Again, there is a contrast between a menacing image—that of the Werewolf—and the odd familiarity of the things that the Werewolf is wearing. It's "big fluffy orange buttons" are reminiscent of those on Pennywise the Clown's suit, and the Werewolf wears a letter jacket, like the werewolf in the film. Further, the presence of Richie's name on the jacket indicates that the werewolf somehow is Richie, rather than Richie's assigned killer. The sight of his own name on the jacket makes Richie want to "give up," indicating his sense of his fate being tied to the monster. What Richie liked about the film, I Was a Teenage Werewolf, was how it depicted the transformation of a normal boy into something menacing. The film taps into an anxiety about growing older, which Richie expresses as an adult later in the novel. Eleven-year-old Richie does not know what he will become, and his parents seem to have little hope in him. Therefore, when he is confronted by the Werewolf—which could be him—he too has a moment of hopelessness.

Chapter 9 Quotes

"*Oh!*" He smiled a little at her now, as if pleased by this explanation. "Was that it? Damn! If you'd told me, Beverly, I never would have hit you. All girls are scared of spiders. Sam Hill! Why didn't you speak up?" He bent over the drain and she had to bite her lip to keep from crying out a warning . . . and some other voice spoke deep inside her, some terrible voice which could not have been a part of her; surely it was the voice of the devil himself: *Let it get him, if it wants him. Let it pull him down. Good-fucking-riddance.* She turned away from that voice in horror. To allow such a thought to stay for even a moment in her head would surely damn her to hell…

Related Characters: Alvin "Al" Marsh (speaker), It / Pennywise the Dancing Clown / Bob Gray, Beverly Marsh Rogan

Related Themes:

Page Number: 403

Explanation and Analysis

Beverly has just witnessed blood gush out of the drain in the bathroom sink. When her father goes in to investigate her screams of horror, he sees nothing and silently blames Beverly for her own fear. Then, Beverly lies and says that she saw a spider crawling in the sink. Beverly's lie is what Al wants to hear; it reinforces his idea about women and girls being weaker and easily frightened. Al encourages Beverly to live in fear, whereas her friendships with the boys in the Losers' Club prompt her to confront and overcome her fears. Her father's unhealthy influence over her makes her go so far as to wish for his death. The thought inspires immediate guilt in her, for she loves her father, despite his unwillingness to allow her to grow up and his apparent obsession with her sexuality. She attributes the "voice" that speaks within her to "the devil," when, really, it is her burgeoning adult voice. This will later assert itself more forcefully and guiltlessly when she refuses to obey Al's desire to examine her to ensure that her virginity (that is, her hymen) is intact.

Derry: The Second Interlude Quotes

"It was most pop'lar in the big cities and the manufacturin areas. New York, New Jersey, Detroit, Baltimore, Boston, Portsmouth—they all had their chapters. They tried to organize in Maine, but Derry was the only place they had any real success. Oh, for awhile there was a pretty good chapter in Lewiston—this was around the same time as the fire at the Black Spot—but they weren't worried about niggers raping white women or taking jobs that should have belonged to white men, because there weren't any niggers to speak of up here. In Lewiston they were worried about tramps and hobos and that something called 'the bonus army' would join up with something they called 'the Communist riffraff army,' by which they meant any man who was out of work. The Legion of Decency used to send these fellows out of town just as fast as they came in. Sometimes they stuffed poison ivy down the backs of their pants. Sometimes they set their shirts on fire."

Related Characters: Will Hanlon (speaker), Mike Hanlon

Related Themes:

Page Number: 452

Explanation and Analysis

Will Hanlon recalls how Maine's chapters of the White Legion of Decency—a white supremacist group—formed first in Lewiston, Maine and later in Derry. This is the group that was responsible for burning down the Black Spot, a speakeasy organized by black army privates at the insistence of white officers who were pressured by the White Legion to keep blacks out of speakeasies in town and, thus, away from white women. The Derry Historical Society has suppressed records about the 1930 arson at the Black

Spot, hoping that this story, like other unpleasant aspects of Derry's history, would simply be forgotten. The Hanlons are now the town's only black inhabitants, and Will Hanlon was among the first. By telling his son the story about the White Legion, Will preserves history through narrative and, as the future head librarian of the Derry Public Library, Mike Hanlon becomes the keeper of Derry's history, including its secrets. Members of the White Legion included some of the town's wealthiest inhabitants—the scions of West Broadway. In Lewiston, the group sought to avoid class warfare with the poor and unemployed, all of whom were made more desperate by the Great Depression. The Legion's tactics are inhumane, and are reflections of more mundane forms of evil (as opposed to the supernatural evil of It) that people commit out of prejudice and hatred. Derry's tolerance for this violence, as well as its suppression of any discussion about it, then creates a breeding ground for further evil.

Chapter 10 Quotes

❝ "If we have to call It something, it might as well be what we used to call It. I've begun to think, you see, that It has been here so long ...whatever It really is...that It's become a part of Derry, something as much a part of the town as the Standpipe, or the Canal, or Bassey Park, or the library. Only It's not a matter of outward geography, you understand. Maybe that was true once, but now It's...inside. Somehow It's gotten inside. That's the only way I know to understand all of the terrible things that have happened here—the nominally explicable as well as the utterly inexplicable."

Related Characters: Mike Hanlon (speaker), William "Stuttering Bill" Denbrough , It / Pennywise the Dancing Clown / Bob Gray

Related Themes:

Page Number: 509

Explanation and Analysis

The members of the Losers' Club have reunited for lunch at the Jade of the Orient restaurant and are talking about the murders that have recently restarted in Derry, all of which Mike knows have been committed by It, due to their similar patterns. Mike connects the murders to Derry's history and to the town's overall eerie character. Though Mike and the others have seen It before, he still struggles to define It. It is an entity that exists within the town and that devours it from within. Mike ironically compares It to local monuments that are a source of local pride, and then contrasts It with these monuments to demonstrate that It is more than physical—It is the spirit of Derry. For Mike and the others, It's evil spirit is responsible for fostering "the nominally explicable"—things that are as plain to see as its monuments—as well as the "utterly inexplicable," or things that are supernatural and cannot be explained.

Chapter 12 Quotes

❝ Then they were all babbling together, laughing at him, calling him banana-heels, asking him how he'd liked the shock-treatments they'd given him when he came up here to the Red Ward, asking him if he liked it here at Juh-Juh-hooniper Hill, asking and laughing, laughing and asking, and Henry dropped his hoe and began to scream up at the ghost-moon in the blue sky and at first he was screaming in fury and then the moon itself changed and became the face of the clown, its face a rotted pocked cheesy white, its eyes black holes, its red bloody grin turned up in a smile so obscenely ingenuous that it was insupportable, and so then Henry began to scream not in fury but in mortal terror and the voice of the clown spoke from the ghost-moon now and what it said was *You have to go back, Henry. You have to go back and finish the job. You have to go back to Derry and kill them all. For Me. For—.*

Related Characters: It / Pennywise the Dancing Clown / Bob Gray (speaker), Henry Bowers

Related Themes:

Page Number: 624-625

Explanation and Analysis

As an adult, Henry Bowers is an inmate at Juniper Hill—a facility for the criminally-insane. While hoeing the fields for peas, he hallucinates that members of the Losers' Club are laughing at him. With this hallucination, It is forcing him to obsess over his childhood nemeses to encourage him to return to Derry to do It's work of killing the six surviving friends.

The fact that Henry hears a medley of voices "babbling together" is an indication of his insanity. His fixation on the group and the way in which Richie Tozier once mocked him long ago, calling him "banana-heels," is evidence, too, that he has never really grown up. He is permanently stunted in childhood and imagines that the others, such as Bill Denbrough, are also the same. In a way he is right to think this, because they all indeed return to Derry to attend to unfinished business from their childhoods and, upon his return, Bill does begin to stutter again. When Henry hallucinates the moon—the same moon to which he listened

when killing his father—it is as though he is awaiting his sign to transform (not unlike the werewolf of Richie Tozier's nightmare) into an even more evil being than before.

Chapter 13 Quotes

❝ In Henry's ears, it was a constant litany: the nigger, the nigger, the nigger. Everything was the nigger's fault. The nigger had a nice white house with an upstairs and an oil furnace while Butch and his wife and his son lived in what was not much better than a tarpaper shack. When Butch couldn't make enough money farming and had to go to work in the woods for awhile, it was the nigger's fault. When their well went dry in 1956, it was the nigger's fault.

Related Characters: Will Hanlon , Henry Bowers

Related Themes:

Page Number: 673

Explanation and Analysis

"Butch" Bowers teaches his son his own violent racism through his resentment of Will Hanlon's greater success. "Butch" Bowers is also mentally ill, and his son will inherit Butch's obsessive tendencies as well as his inability to take responsibility for his own life. Additionally, Butch teaches Henry how to use dehumanizing language. In his own pursuits against the Losers' Club, Henry never refers to any one of them by name. Instead, Bill Denbrough is "the Stuttering Freak" and Beverly is "the bitch" or "the cooze." This unwillingness to regard them as human mentally prepares Henry to kill them.

"Butch" Bowers's resentment of the Hanlon family reiterates commonly-held views among many racist whites who believe that they are entitled to more material wealth than black people simply by virtue of being white. Unaware of his own incompetence, Butch imagines that the Hanlons are the cause for his ill-fortune—and unable to confront his father's mental illness, as well as his own psychological problems, Henry agrees. Henry also finds that he can access some degree of his father's love by sharing his hatred, and so develops a twisted kind of relationship with Butch through parroting his racism.

❝ Glamour, he said, was the Gaelic name for the creature which was haunting Derry; other races and other cultures at other times had different words for it, but they all meant the same thing. The Plains Indians called it a manitou, which sometimes took the shape of a mountain-lion or an elk or an eagle [....] The Himalayans called it a *tallus* or *taelus*, which meant an evil magic being that could read your mind and then assume the shape of the thing you were most afraid of. In Central Europe it had been called *eylak*, brother of the *vurderlak*, or vampire. In France it was *le loup-garou*, or skin-changer, a concept that had been crudely translated as the werewolf, but, Bill told them, *le loup-garou* (which he pronounced "le loopgaroo") could be anything, anything at all: a wolf, a hawk, a sheep, even a bug.

Related Characters: William "Stuttering Bill" Denbrough (speaker), It / Pennywise the Dancing Clown / Bob Gray, Eddie Kaspbrak , Ben "Haystack" Hanscom

Related Themes:

Page Number: 683

Explanation and Analysis

Bill Denbrough has gone to the library to try and better understand the nature of It and how to combat It. He learns that It is an entity that is known among many of the world's cultures, and the group will borrow from those cultures' methods in their effort to destroy It. However, It most closely resembles the Himalayan taelus, and the group will practice the Himalayan Ritual of Chüd (which is fictional, but a reference to a Buddhist practice of enlightenment through fear) in their effort to dispel It from Derry.

The historical manifestations of It are similar to the images that the children know from 1950s horror films, such as those they go to view at the Aladdin Theater. Glamours, for example, are related to vampires and are most likely to take the form of werewolves. In many instances, It takes the form of a voracious, carnivorous animal—something that would have the "maw" that Ben Hanscom previously saw in the face of the clown/mummy on the frozen Canal. However, It can also take more innocuous forms, such as those of "a sheep" or "a bug." This knowledge parallels It's later confession that It turns into a clown to make itself "bait" for children. The clown is an image that children do not typically associate with harm, but rather entertainment.

Chapter 14 Quotes

He saw the gratitude in their eyes and felt a measure of gladness for them…but their gratitude did little to heal his own horror. In fact, there was something in their gratitude which made him want to hate them. Would he never be able to express his own terror […]? Because in some measure at least he was using them […] And was even that the bottom? No, because George was dead, and if revenge could be exacted at all, Bill suspected it could only be exacted on behalf of the living. And what did that make him? A selfish little shit waving a tin sword and trying to make himself look like King Arthur? Oh Christ, he groaned to himself, if this is the stuff adults have to think about I never want to grow up. His resolve was still strong, but it was bitter resolve. Bitter.

Related Characters: William "Stuttering Bill" Denbrough (speaker), It / Pennywise the Dancing Clown / Bob Gray, Will Hanlon , George Elmer Denbrough / "Georgie"

Related Themes:

Page Number: 742

Explanation and Analysis

The Losers' Club is looking through Will Hanlon's historical album of Derry, which Mike Hanlon has brought to the Barrens in order to show the group photos of Derry's history so that they can trace the origins of It. When It, in the form of the clown, begins to move around in a picture from 1945, none of the friends can now deny having experienced It.

Bill is now looking at his friends. The group is on its way to finishing the clubhouse—a space that is symbolic of their bond and is where they feel safe from the things that threaten them outside of that underground space. Bill is conflicted between his loyalty to his friends and his need for them and their collective strength to defeat It and avenge his brother's death. The desire for revenge is an adult sentiment—single-minded in its outlook—which makes Bill uncomfortable, though he is committed to his purpose. On the other hand, he feels like an imposter—King Arthur with "a tin sword"—and doubts that he is capable of defeating something so much more powerful than himself. At various points in Bill's childhood and adulthood, he will have moments in which he doubts his strength. However, through both his resolve and his introspection he nearly always achieves his aims.

Chapter 15 Quotes

The kid in you just leaked out, like the air out of a tire. And one day you looked in the mirror and there was a grownup looking back at you. You could go on wearing bluejeans, you could keep going to Springsteen and Seger concerts, you could dye your hair, but that was a grownup's face in the mirror just the same. It all happened while you were asleep, maybe, like a visit from the Tooth Fairy. No, he thinks. Not the Tooth Fairy. The Age Fairy.

Related Characters: Richard "Trashmouth" Tozier / Richie

Related Themes:

Page Number: 744

Explanation and Analysis

Richie Tozier is reflecting on what separates childhood from adulthood, and how adults slowly lose the sense of wonder that can make childhood so glorious. He feels that sense of wonder again when the Losers' Club is in the Derry Public Library, reflecting on their experiences of It.

Tozier's contemplation of the transition from childhood is pessimistic. Contrary to common sense, which has one think of adulthood in relation to growing up and to life expanding to make room for new experiences, Richie regards adulthood as a deflation. He seems to recognize his boy self clearly, whereas his adult self, looking back at him in the mirror, is a distant stranger. Also, the adult self feels more permanent—attempts to dye one's hair and go to rock concerts do not help to recover youth. Even mentally, he can no longer remember what it feels like to be young and naïve. Therefore, he cannot believably compare the abrupt shift in his life within the context of a visit from a Tooth Fairy, but rather within that of an "Age Fairy"—a much more cynical image.

Mike said, "It's always been here, since the beginning of time…since before there were men *anywhere*, unless maybe there were just a few of them in Africa somewhere, swinging through the trees or living in caves. The crater's gone now, and the ice age probably scraped the valley deeper and changed some stuff around and filled the crater in…but It was here then, sleeping, maybe, waiting for the ice to melt, waiting for the people to come." "That's why It uses the sewers and the drains," Richie put in. "They must be regular freeways for It."

Related Characters: Richard "Trashmouth" Tozier / Richie , Mike Hanlon (speaker), It / Pennywise the Dancing Clown /

Bob Gray

Related Themes:

Page Number: 773

Explanation and Analysis

Mike and Richie are reporting to the rest of their friends about their vision in the smoke-hole. It, they realize, is an entity that has always existed in Derry—long before the town had a name or human inhabitants. During their vision, they see a spaceship descend into a jungle and, though they did not see It emerge, the boys sense that It is something bad due to the sight of animals fleeing from the scene during It's arrival. Richie then proposes hypotheses about how It has survived over time and become a part of the cycle of life within Derry. What the reader knows from Richie's description is that It is a malleable creature, able to adjust itself from prehistory to modernity. In fact, the conveniences of modern life have only made it easier for It to infiltrate human lives. In this regard, It is a supernatural force that uses human development against humans themselves.

Chapter 16 Quotes

He looked at his mother, seeing her clear in his pain: each flower on her Lane Bryant dress, the sweat-stains under her arms where the pads she wore had soaked through, the scuff-marks on her shoes. He saw how small her eyes were in their pockets of flesh, and now a terrible thought came to him: those eyes were almost predatory, like the eyes of the leper that had crawled out of the basement at 29 Neibolt Street [...] Even through the haze he could see that the nurse was angry and he thought he said, *She's not the leper, please don't think that, she's only eating me because she loves me*, but perhaps nothing came out because the nurse's angry face didn't change.

Related Characters: Sonia Kaspbrak , Eddie Kaspbrak

Related Themes:

Page Number: 800-801

Explanation and Analysis

Eddie is recuperating at the hospital after being badly beaten by Henry Bowers and having his arm broken. His mother, Sonia, has been causing a commotion at the hospital, due to her over-reaction to Eddie's condition.

Eddie begins to realize that his waking nightmare about the leper (an incarnation of It) is largely the result of his relationship with his mother. The leper evokes his fears of illness—imposed by his mother—and the leper's sexual overtures are related to Sonia's wish for Eddie to remain her permanent companion, taking on a role similar to that of a husband. Eddie is too young to understand his mother's anxiety fully, but he can sense that her attachment to him is unnatural and overwhelming. He knows that she is devouring him so that he will be weak and permanently dependent on her. Still, Sonia is his mother and he loves her. Therefore, he feels the need to defend her—though, silently—from his nurse's disapproving eyes.

Chapter 19 Quotes

She looked back and here he came again, Al Marsh, janitor and custodian, a gray man dressed in khaki pants and a khaki shirt with two flap pockets, a keyring attached to his belt by a chain, his hair flying. But he wasn't in his eyes—the essential he who had washed her back and punched her in the gut and had done both because he worried about her, worried a lot, the he who had once tried to braid her hair when she was seven, made a botch of it, and then got giggling with her about the way it stuck out everyway, the he who knew how to make cinnamon eggnogs on Sunday that tasted better than anything you could buy for a quarter at the Derry Ice Cream Bar, the father-he, maleman of her life, delivering a mixed post from that other sexual state. None of that was in his eyes now. She saw blank murder there. She saw It there.

Related Characters: It / Pennywise the Dancing Clown / Bob Gray, Alvin "Al" Marsh, Beverly Marsh Rogan

Related Themes:

Page Number: 923

Explanation and Analysis

Al has just chased Beverly out of their home on Lower Main Street because she refused to allow him to examine her to ensure that her hymen (and therefore her virginity, in his view) is intact. Al learned, probably through Its instigation, that she has been meeting with a group of boys in the Barrens. Al is sexually possessive of Beverly and anxious about her burgeoning womanhood. King strongly suggests that Al does not want Beverly to be looked at or touched by boys, not so much because he is concerned for her health or safety, but because he is angry about being forbidden to have sex with her himself.

As in the moment in which Al masturbates over Beverly's bed, Beverly recognizes a difference between the father

whom she loves and the predatory being who abuses her. The being chasing her has the "shape" of her father—"a gray man dressed in khaki pants and a khaki shirt with two flap pockets, a keyring attached to his belt by a chain"—but the eyes of something foreign and evil. In identifying her father, Beverly recalls a litany of memories in which she contrasts his tender and caring acts—braiding her hair and making a humorous "a botch of it"—with his abuse. The language reveals her sense of conflict about who Al is and about who men in general are. Al is the "maleman of her life" and, therefore, the only example of masculinity that Beverly has. The example that he provides is unstable, unreliable, hurtful, and now murderous.

He would kill them all, his tormentors, and then those feelings—that he was losing his grip, that he was coming inexorably to a larger world he would not be able to dominate as he had dominated the playyard at Derry Elementary, that in the wider world the fatboy and the nigger and the stuttering freak might somehow grow larger while he somehow only grew older—would be gone.

Related Characters: William "Stuttering Bill" Denbrough , Mike Hanlon, Ben "Haystack" Hanscom, Reginald "Belch" Huggins , Victor Criss, Henry Bowers

Related Themes:

Page Number: 964

Explanation and Analysis

Henry, Victor, and "Belch" are in the Barrens looking for the Losers' Club. They do not realize, until they see Beverly Marsh and Ben Hanscom climbing up the embankment back to Kansas Street, that they were standing on top of their clubhouse all along. Henry has recently killed his father, "Butch" Bowers, and has been taking his murderous cues from voices that he believes come from the moon.

In this instance, Henry expresses the anxiety that is at the root of his obsession with the Losers' Club. His burgeoning sense of identity comes from bullying, as he has learned from his father that violence is the only way to gain influence and control. The "playyard" is a small space that he is able to dominate, due to his large body. However, he and the other children are growing up, and will leave the playyard to enter increasingly larger spaces where Henry will no longer be the biggest one. It is not only the others' inevitable physical growth that makes him anxious. but also his awareness that they will be more important in other ways as well. Henry feels a need to stunt their growth, which is why he refers to them as he sees them now—"the fatboy" and "the stuttering freak"—to freeze them in place. Even Mike's status as "the nigger" will shift, as open racism becomes less permissible after the 1960s, and in places other than Derry. If he cannot stunt them, he decides, Henry will kill them. This is the only way in which he can ameliorate his anxiety.

Chapter 21 Quotes

The former power of their imaginations would be muted and weak. They would no longer imagine that there were piranha in the Kenduskeag or that if you stepped on a crack you might really break your mother's back or that if you killed a ladybug which lit on your shirt your blouse would catch fire that night. Instead, they would believe in insurance. Instead, they would believe in wine with dinner—something nice but not too pretentious, like a Pouilly-Fuissé '83, and let that breathe, waiter, would you? Instead, they would believe that Rolaids consume forty-seven times their own weight in excess stomach acid. Instead, they would believe in public television, Gary Hart, running to prevent heart attacks, giving up red meat to prevent colon cancer. They would believe in Dr. Ruth when it came to getting well fucked and Jerry Falwell when it came to getting well saved. As each year passed their dreams would grow smaller. And when It woke It would call them back, yes, back, because fear was fertile, its child was rage, and rage cried for revenge.

Related Characters: It / Pennywise the Dancing Clown / Bob Gray

Related Themes:

Page Number: 1033

Explanation and Analysis

It is preparing for the return of the Losers' Club, which It knows is closing in on Its lair. The narrative explains how It works, how all of the glamours are mirrors into a person's mind. It seizes easily onto the fears of children, which are simple and vivid. Children are much likelier to believe in the impossible, and often use this aspect of their imaginations during play. It recalls a moment in which the members of the Losers' Club imagined that Derry's local river was full of piranhas. It contrasts this flight of imagination, which shows the sense of fun in danger and risk, with the Losers' adult lives, which are filled with responsibility and caution. The narrative not only depicts the lives of middle-aged adults, but middle-aged adults of the white upper-class whose

concerns in life are generally self-indulgent. The portrait that King paints is of people who pursue comfort and pleasure above all else. Their material pursuits have made them less imaginative but more fearful—and this fear still makes them vulnerable.

❝ Bill marked it as a paper boat. Stan saw it as a bird rising toward the sky—a phoenix, perhaps. Michael saw a hooded face—that of crazy Butch Bowers, perhaps, if it could only be seen. Richie saw two eyes behind a pair of spectacles. Beverly saw a hand doubled up into a fist. Eddie believed it to be the face of the leper, all sunken eyes and wrinkled snarling mouth—all disease, all sickness, was stamped into that face. Ben Hanscom saw a tattered pile of wrappings and seemed to smell old sour spices […] Henry Bowers would see it as the moon, full, ripe…and black.

Related Characters: Oscar "Butch" Bowers , Henry Bowers , Ben "Haystack" Hanscom, Eddie Kaspbrak , Beverly Marsh Rogan, Richard "Trashmouth" Tozier / Richie , Mike Hanlon, William "Stuttering Bill" Denbrough

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 1048

Explanation and Analysis

Back in 1958, the children have reached It's lair for the first time. They see a mark on the door. The mark serves as a sort of Rorschach test, tapping into each child's fear or obsession. Bill recalls the paper boat that he made for his brother—a symbol of guilt about George Denbrough's death. Stanley sees the bird that he witnessed in the Standpipe—a nightmare that threatens to turn his positive interest in ornithology into a source of fear. Mike Hanlon sees a hooded face, reminiscent of those worn by members of the White Legion of Decency. He recalls the story that his father told him about the burning of the Black Spot in 1930, and connects it with his own sense of racial ostracism in Derry, as well as the racist harassment he experiences from Henry Bowers. Richie fears being regarded as a nerd and a "four-eyes" whose sense of comedy will not rescue him from being socially outcast. Beverly fears domestic violence. Eddie fears illness and becoming weaker. Ben recalls the mummy that he saw on the frozen Canal, but the mummy's bandages now resemble candy wrappings. His image is also accompanied by the scent of "old sour spices," like sweets gone bad. The smell reveals Ben's sense of shame about his excessive eating habits. Later, Henry Bowers will approach the same mark on the door and see the evil moon that encourages him to kill. In this regard, Henry is similar to the teenager in I Was a Teenage Werewolf, who awaits the appearance of a moon to change into a more menacing version of himself.

Epilogue Quotes

❝ He touches his wife's smooth back as she sleeps her warm sleep and dreams her own dreams; he thinks that it is good to be a child, but it is also good to be grownup and able to consider the mystery of childhood…its beliefs and desires, I will write about all of this one day, he thinks, and knows it's just a dawn thought, an after-dreaming thought. But it's nice to think so for awhile in the morning's clean silence, to think that childhood has its own sweet secrets and confirms mortality, and that mortality defines all courage and love. To think that what has looked forward must also look back, and that each life makes its own imitation of immortality: a wheel.

Related Characters: Audra Phillips , William "Stuttering Bill" Denbrough

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 1152

Explanation and Analysis

Bill has awakened from a dream. In the dream, he revives his wife, Audra, from a catatonic state and rides away from Derry forever. This dream reflects his actual experience of going back to Derry in 1985 and killing It. Both Bill's childhood and adult experiences in Derry, particularly his friendships with the Losers' Club and his defeat of It, have faded from his memory. What Bill has retained is the feeling of desire, which becomes stronger in him when he relinquishes his obsession with It and his feelings of guilt about his younger brother's death. Bill has abandoned the anxieties of childhood to experience his adulthood more fully, reconciling both stages of his life with an acceptance of his mortality and no more fear of death. His mortality—or, rather, his knowledge that he can no longer go back—makes him more courageous and loving. His caress of his wife demonstrates that he is more present in his marriage now than when he left California for Derry. He dreams of writing about this new understanding of desire, which contrasts with the terror-based themes of his previous books. Now, instead of seeking to contain the horror that enveloped his

life, Bill embraces his sense of peace, which is characterized by "the morning's clean silence." The "morning" signifies a new beginning, as does his sense of the day being "clean."

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER 1: AFTER THE FLOOD

The terror begins, as far as anyone knows, in the fall of 1957 and does not end for another 28 years. It starts after a **paper boat** made from newspaper floats into a gutter "swollen with rain." It has been raining steadily for a week now, and the power has gone out in most sections of Derry. A small boy in a yellow slicker and red galoshes trails after the boat. He is George Denbrough—a six-year-old with a ten-year-old older brother, Bill Denbrough, known at Derry Elementary School as "Stuttering Bill." Bill currently has the flu and sits in bed while his mother, Sharon Denbrough, plays *Für Elise* on the piano in the family's parlor.

The scene that King sets is an idyllic portrait of middle-class American life in the 1950s, as the terror begins within a context of comfort and innocence. The image of the fragility of the paper boat contrasts with the rushing current—a force outside of human control, which threatens disaster. George's uniquely colorful presence on that gray autumn day alerts the reader to the fact that something will happen to him.

Meanwhile, the Public Works Department, including the Denbrough boys' father, Zack Denbrough, works to maintain Jackson Street. They remove the sandbags they stacked to prevent the Kenduskeag River from rolling into town. Such a flood occurred once before in 1931. Zack figures that, once the Bangor Hydro dam goes in upstream, the river will cease to be a threat. The important thing now is to get the power back on and forget about the rest. This habit of enduring tragedy, then forgetting about it is characteristic of Derry, which Bill Denbrough will come to learn in time.

King uses the motif of flooding, which has significance in many religious texts because of its potential threat of destroying vast human populations. For now, the people of Derry are as unprepared for this natural disaster as they will be for the impending supernatural disaster that will later overtake the town. Forgetting is Derry's strategy for withstanding and surviving the aftermath of catastrophe.

George splashes along in the water that carries his **paper boat** "from one side of Witcham Street to the other." George is happy to play in the rain, not realizing that, as he sprints to catch the boat, he is also sprinting to his death. He is overwhelmed by love and appreciation for his brother Bill and wishes that Bill could be there with him. He races down toward the intersection to catch up with the boat.

King prepares the reader right away for George's eventual death. This builds a sense of increasing dread, and could also demonstrate that George's carefree innocence cannot survive in a town like Derry, in which evil is pervasive in every aspect of life.

The scene flashes back to the moments before George leaves the house to go play. Bill is sitting up in bed and has just finished making **the paper boat**. He asks George to go to the basement to get him the paraffin wax, a knife, a bowl, and a pack of matches. George's mother starts playing a piece on the piano that sounds "dry and fussy." George reluctantly goes down to the cellar, which he does not like. He suspects that something is down there, in the dark. He knows this is silly, for his parents say so—and, more importantly, Bill says so. Still, the cellar has a smell—the smell of It, "a creature which would eat anything but which was especially hungry for boymeat."

George, like many small children, has a fear of dark places like basements. King demonstrates how children conjure fears through their imaginations, which are often fed by movies and stories. George imagines a creature lurking in an underground space, like a troll. His ability to conjure the fear of monsters makes his fear real.

George goes to switch on the light and remembers that the power is out. He wonders if he should go back and tell Bill that he can't get the wax because he's afraid that something will get him. He knows that Bill, who calls after him in the moment that George thinks of him, would call him silly and tell him to grow up. George walks downstairs and becomes overwhelmed by the smell of the cellar, which is worse in the aftermath of the flood. George sifts through the junk on the shelf as fast as he can and finds a can of turtle wax. He stares at the turtle on the lid, transfixed. George comes out of his "hypnotic wonder," grabs the can, and rushes back upstairs. By the time the door shuts shut behind him, his fear disappears, "as easily as a nightmare slips away from a man who awakes."

George's admiration for his brother and his wish not to disappoint Bill give him the courage to continue down into the cellar, facing his fear of the dark. Worse, the cellar smells dank, like dead things. The association of cellars with the dead comes from an instinctual sense of cellars and other underground spaces as places where people put useless or forgotten things. George, for example, "sifts through junk." He finds not only the wax that he needs but an image that will later serve as an important clue to saving Derry from evil: the turtle.

While George gets the matches and knife from the kitchen and the bowl from the Welsh dresser in the dining room, he continues to think about the turtle. He wonders where he has seen it before. Sharon starts playing *Für Elise* again—the song that Bill will remember for the rest of his life as the piece that his mother plays on the day that George dies.

George has a preternatural understanding of the turtle, just as he knows what It is even before he encounters the clown in the sewer. George is thus seemingly already in possession of the knowledge that Bill will only acquire as a result of his brother's death.

George watches as Bill uses the knife to cut off a cube of paraffin wax. Bill puts the cube in the bowl, strikes a match, and puts it on the wax. The boys watch as the cube melts. Bill explains that this will keep **the paper boat** waterproof. He does not stutter much, if at all, while talking to George. On the other hand, his speech is so stunted when he is in school that Bill's classmates look elsewhere, embarrassedly, while he clutches the sides of his desk and shuts his eyes, as though to squeeze the stubborn word out of himself. Sharon Denbrough explains the stutter as the result of an accident which occurs when Bill is three, but Bill and Zack Denbrough are not so sure.

Sharon seeks to give Bill's stutter an origin story, though Bill and his father seem to suspect that it is as natural to his identity as his hair color. Bill probably does not stutter much when talking to George because he is able to confidently inhabit his role as elder brother. Richie Tozier later notes how Bill does not stutter when he assumes another voice or can express another version of himself, as he does later when he speaks French or rides Silver and plays the hero.

Bill and George dip their fingers into the melted but cooling wax and smear it around the sides of **the paper boat**. George tells his brother that he wishes that he could come along. Bill agrees and tells George to remember to put on his "rain-stuff" so that he will not get the flu, like Bill. George then leans forward and does something that Bill never forgets: he kisses his elder brother's cheek. Bill tells George to be careful. George goes out, and it is the last time that Bill sees his little brother.

The kiss is later recognized as a kiss goodbye. A similar kiss will be repeated at the end of the novel when Bill kisses Mike Hanlon's cheek—that, too, is a kiss goodbye because it is the last time that the two friends see each other. Bill smears wax into the boat to protect its fragility from the elements, but he will later feel guilty about being unable to protect George in a similar way.

George chases his **paper boat** down Witcham Street. He watches with concern as his boat heads toward the opening of a storm drain. He runs after it and thinks, for a moment, that he will catch it as it speeds along its course. Then, George falls and goes sprawling. He skins one of his knees and cries out in pain. The boat swirls around near the storm drain and disappears. George pounds the wet pavement in anger. He then walks over to the storm drain and peers inside. A pair of yellow eyes stare back at him.

George is angry and disappointed with himself for losing the boat that Bill made for him. He is less concerned with injuring himself than he is with having lost the boat and possibly disappointing Bill, who he so admires. The yellow eyes echo George's fear of creatures lurking in underground spaces.

George thinks that the eyes belong to an animal, perhaps a housecat that got stuck in the sewer. Still, he is ready to run. Just when he backs away, a pleasant voice calls to him: "Hi, Georgie." George blinks and looks again. He sees a clown peering back at him from the storm drain. He notices, too, that, in one hand, this clown is holding a bunch of multi-colored balloons, like an offering of ripe fruit. In the other hand, the clown holds George's **paper boat**.

George does not realize it, but It has just shifted from an animal form to a clown, which seems more innocuous. The clown holds two items that float—balloons and the boat. Both items foreshadow George's fate as one of the floating bodies in the sewer.

The clown offers to give George both his **paper boat** and a balloon, but George is reluctant to take it due to his father's warning not to take things from strangers. George notices that the clown's eyes have transformed into a bright, "dancing blue," like those of his mother, Sharon. The clown introduces himself as "Mr. Bob Gray, also known as Pennywise the Dancing Clown."

To make himself less of a stranger to George, It transforms Its eyes into those of George's mother. The purpose is to get George to trust that the clown will not harm him. King uses color to signal fear (yellow) and friendliness (blue).

George asks Pennywise how he ended up in the sewers. The clown explains that he, and the circus from which he comes, got blown away by the storm. Pennywise asks if George can smell the circus and, indeed, the boy can smell the roasted peanuts and the vinegar that one splashes on French fries. He can also "smell cotton candy and frying doughboys and the faint but thunderous odor of wild animal shit." There is also the smell of something "wet and rotten," similar to that in his cellar.

The clown tells a story that only a small boy would believe. In getting George to believe this story, Pennywise can also get the boy to conjure up the smells of the circus in his imagination. George, however, still recognizes that the clown is in a sewer and smells the dankness of that underground space.

Pennywise again asks George if he would like to have his **paper boat**. The clown holds it up, smiling. George can now see his costume, which is "a baggy silk suit with great big orange buttons." Pennywise also wears a "bright tie, electric-blue," which "[flops] down his front." On his hands are "big white gloves, like the kind Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck always wore." The clown offers one of his floating balloons. As George reaches for it, the clown seizes his arm. He sees the clown's face change into something terrible as it pulls George down into the darkness. It pulls George with "its thick and wormy grip" and Dave Gardener watches as George gets pulled toward that darkness. Dave runs out of his house to reach the boy but arrives forty-five seconds too late: George's arm has been ripped from its socket; he dies.

Pennywise wears clothes that are familiar to children. George associates his big white gloves with Disney characters, which make the clown's hands seem inviting and warm, strongly contrasting with the "thick and wormy" feeling of a snake or sea creature. The offer of the balloon is another trick. It is not an item for George to play with, but an item that George unknowingly takes in acceptance of his death. King is unclear about how Its face transforms, indicating that George does not recognize the form of evil that has seized him.

Somewhere down below, **the paper boat** continues on. It sweeps "through knighted chambers and long concrete hallways." While Sharon Denbrough is in the Emergency Room at the Derry Home Hospital being sedated, and Bill Denbrough listens, stunned, while his father, Zack Denbrough, sobs in the parlor, the boat shoots out of the sewer pipes and into the Penobscot River. At this moment, the storm ends. The narrator imagines that the boat has reached the sea. All the same, "it passes out of this tale forever."

The Denbrough family is in a state of shock and grief over George's death. The paper boat could be symbolic of George's spirit of innocence, which continues on, but without George himself. The boat moves through Its domain of the sewers but then escapes Derry and passes out into the sea, into a freer and wider existence—unlike the characters in 1958, who are still trapped in Derry and about to experience even more horrors.

CHAPTER 2: AFTER THE FESTIVAL (1984)

Adrian Mellon wins an "I Love Derry" paper hat at a Pitch Til U Win stall on the Bassey Park Fairgrounds just six days before he dies. His surviving partner, Don Hagarty, tells Officer Harold Gardener that he was wearing it at the time of his death because he loved Derry, which Hagerty describes as "a shitty little town." Hagerty tells Gardener and his partner, Jeffrey Reeves, that Steve Dubay, Christopher Unwin, and John "Webby" Garton pushed Mellon off the bridge and into the Canal as the pair were coming out of the Falcon Bar.

Adrian and Don are a gay couple, and Adrian loves Derry for being exemplary of quaint, small-town New England life. Before his death, he either did not recognize or underestimated the extent of the homophobia and narrow-mindedness in the town, epitomized by Dubay, Unwin, and Garton. As a trio of bullies, they resemble Henry Bowers, Victor Criss, and Reginald "Belch" Huggins.

The supposed culprits in Mellon's death are being questioned. Chief Andrew Rademacher and Assistant District Attorney Tom Boutillier question Christopher Unwin, whom they correctly assess as "the weak link in the chain." Chris admits that he and his friends threw Mellon into the Canal but insists that they did not intend to kill him. He also mentions a guy under the bridge—a guy in a clown suit with balloons.

Unwin is perceived as "weak" because, unlike Garton, he expresses a conscience and, unlike Dubay, he is smart enough to understand the severity of his actions. His sighting of the clown with the balloons will match Don Hagarty's similar story.

Adrian Mellon won his hat at the Canal Days Festival, for which Mike Hanlon provided some historical exhibits. The festival runs from July 15th to July 21st and is a celebration of the centenary of the opening of the Canal, which runs through downtown Derry. The canal is what opened Derry to its lucrative lumber trade from 1884 to 1910. The city has cleaned up in preparation for the festival, working particularly to remove the anti-gay graffiti from the benches in Bassey Park and lined the walls of the "covered walkway over the Canal known as the Kissing Bridge."

Hanlon and his family have served as Derry's unofficial historians by keeping photos and sharing stories about the city's dark past. Many citizens of Derry, particularly those in the prim Derry Historical Society, seek to hide unpleasant aspects of Derry's history and character. They remove the anti-gay graffiti to efface visual reminders of the hatred that freely exists in the city. In what comes to be a pattern of behavior for Derry, the townspeople concern themselves only with how they are perceived on the surface, not the root of their problems.

Paul Hughes and his partner, Officer Conley, question John "Webby" Garton, who is irritable and uncooperative. Garton recalls seeing Adrian Mellon and Don Hagarty at the fair, "mincing along with their arms about each other's waists and giggling like a couple of girls." Garton pointed them out to his friends in disgust. Steve Dubay says he heard that Hagarty once picked up a kid hitchhiking "and then tried to put a few moves on him." Mellon and Hagarty walk away from the Pitch Til U Win and toward the carnival's exit, which is also in the direction of Garton, Dubay, and Unwin.

Adrian and Don's effeminate mannerisms make Garton ill at ease due to his own fragile sense of manhood. Garton is only a teen but has come to associate masculine strength with violence and opposition to homosexuality, which he thinks turns men into "girls"—not only feminine but also diminutive. The boys only know about gay people through exaggerated rumors and beliefs that connect homosexuality to pedophilia.

John "Webby" Garton explains to Paul Hughes and Officer Conley that his civic pride was "wounded" by the sight of Adrian Mellon in the "I Love Derry" paper hat. When Garton threatens to make Mellon eat the hat, Mellon flirtatiously responds that he can find something "tastier" than his hat for Garton to eat. This remark sends Garton into a fury. He is outraged by the suggestion that he would be interested in any homosexual behavior. Don Hagarty senses trouble and tries to pull Mellon away, but Mellon stands his ground. Suddenly, Officer Frank Machen prompts Garton to leave the couple alone. Chris Unwin tells Garton to "mellow out" and Steve Dubay suggests that they get hot dogs. Garton goes along with his friends and lets the matter rest, for the moment.

Garton distracts himself from the true problem of his insecure masculinity and possible fears of his own latent sexuality by projecting his anger onto Mellon wearing the paper hat. The hat, like the paper boat, is an innocent object that comes to symbolize vulnerability. Mellon wears the hat because he really does love Derry, not realizing the hatred that it inspires in Garton, who sees it as a reminder of Mellon's unwanted and threatening presence.

Officer Charles Avarino and his partner, Barney Morrison, are questioning Steve Dubay. Avarino does not like the presence of any gay people in Derry and would love to see the Falcon Bar shut down for good. However, he is not keen on anyone being tortured and murdered. Still, he would be delighted to take Dubay home to his stepfather and hold Dubay's arms while the elder man "[beats] the creep to oatmeal." He recalls how the police brought Adrian Mellon's body up from the Canal and saw how his eyes were bulging in terror. It annoys him now to hear Dubay claim no knowledge of what he and the others did.

Officer Avarino is also homophobic and violent, given his desire to see Dubay beaten. However, he has no awareness of how his own hatred of homosexuals and his tolerance for violence would contribute to a culture that validates the three teens' harassment and murder of Mellon. He is less concerned with Dubay's act of violence than he is with the young man's unwillingness to admit to his actions, which Avarino perceives as weak.

When Elmer Curtie opens the Falcon, a bar, in 1973, he imagines that most of his customers will be bus passengers from the terminal next door. By 1977, he nearly goes bankrupt. He decides in February of that year to keep the place open until July 4th. If nothing changes, he will simply walk next door and board a bus to Florida. Over the next five months, however, Curtie's fortunes turn. The Falcon, which is painted black and gold and decorated with stuffed birds given to him by his late brother, a taxidermist, gets a steady clientele of polite young men. Curtie does not realize until 1981 that his clientele is "almost exclusively gay." There are only four other bars in Derry, but Curtie's is the only one whose customers don't regularly wreck the place. Still, stories circulate about the Falcon being a hotbed of sin. The stories are merely a product of Derry's provincialism.

The Falcon is a symbol of Derry's fears about homosexuality and its open expression, which signifies a change in social mores that makes the town uncomfortable. The Falcon is also related to King's motif of using birds as emblems of subconscious fears. Both Mike Hanlon and Stanley Uris see It transform into a giant, menacing bird at various points in the book. The décor in the Falcon is part of its attraction to its gay clientele. Its ornate design and stuffed birds would be perceived as "camp"—that is, a form of style that embraces bad taste.

Don Hagarty is one of Elmer Curtie's regular customers. He frequents the Falcon for two or three years before meeting Adrian Mellon. Mellon is a freelance writer who has come to write a piece about the Canal for a bi-weekly magazine, but he stays to move in with Hagarty. Their summer together, Hagarty remembers, was the happiest of his life. In retrospect, Hagarty thinks that he should have known that something would go wrong, for "God only puts a rug under guys like him in order to jerk it out from under their feet." Though Hagarty is planning to leave Derry, worried about the town's hostility toward gays, Mellon insists on staying, at least until he finishes his novel.

Hagarty senses that the town is dangerous for gay people. He now remembers his idyllic summer with Mellon as a harbinger of the tragedy to come. Hagarty places his misfortune within a cosmic sense of being "cursed" due to being gay. God, he imagines, allows gay men brief comfort and happiness only to show them that they will never have these things permanently. Hagarty has internalized society's hostility toward gay people as a result of Mellon's death.

Christopher Unwin continues to tell his version of the events at the fair. The rides are taken down, so the boys occupy themselves with the games, which is when John "Webby" Garton sees Adrian Mellon at the Pitch Til U Win booth. Garton pitches at the booth to try to win the hat that eventually goes to Mellon. Steve Dubay, who is usually the one to tell Garton to "mellow out," has taken some red pill and is now heckling Garton for his inability to win "that queer's hat." Garton decides that he and the boys should "cruise by the Falcon" later and see if Mellon is around. Tom Boutillier and Chief Rademacher listen to Unwin's story and exchange a knowing glance. Unwin does not yet know it, but he is implicating himself in first-degree murder.

It irritates Garton that Mellon proves to be a better pitcher than he. Gay men, particularly effeminate gay men, are often derided for "throwing like girls," so when Mellon pitches successfully at the booth and Garton doesn't, this suggests that Garton is the one who "throws like a girl." The hat, too, is symbolic of Derry. When Mellon wins it, he validates his place within the town, which also offends Garton, who resents the presence of the gay couple in public spaces.

Adrian Mellon and Don Hagarty are coming out of the Falcon after having had two beers. The guys drive up and cut in front of them. Christopher Unwin denies "active participation" in what happens next. John "Webby" Garton gets out of the car and demands the paper hat. Adrian hands it over, hoping that he and Hagarty will now be left alone. Instead, Garton punches Mellon in the face, driving him against the pedestrian railing. Blood spurts from Mellon's mouth. A car passes and Hagarty screams at it for it to stop, but the driver never looks around. Steve Dubay then kicks Hagarty "in the side of the face." Hagarty hears the voice of Unwin warning him to get away before "he [gets] what his friend [is] getting." What Mellon is getting is shoved around like a rag doll while Garton, Dubay, and Unwin punch him and rip his clothes. The heavy rings that Garton wears tear Mellon's mouth open.

Unwin narrates a scene that sounds as though it could be from a film. Events occur quickly, and Unwin's denial of "active participation" comes from his sense that Mellon's abuse seems almost unreal. This is because of the speed at which everything happens, as well as the image of Mellon as a "rag doll," which is a reminder of his vulnerability. The driver who never slows down is characteristic of the citizens of Derry, who feign ignorance of bullies like Garton, Unwin, and Dubay, partly because they do not disapprove of the teens' harassment of Mellon and Hagarty.

Don Hagarty screams for help and a small voice, somewhere near his left, mocks his desperate cries and then giggles. Hagarty looks down and sees a clown. He describes the clown as a cross between Ronald McDonald and Bozo. The clown offers Don to help himself to a bunch of floating balloons. He then tells Don that soon Adrian Mellon, too, will float. Jeff Reeves notes that the clown calls Don by his name, which Don agrees sounds very strange.

As when it appears to George Denbrough, the clown shows characteristics that resemble popular characters in children's entertainment. The result is disorienting, for clowns typically represent fun and innocence, but in this instance, the clown mocks Hagarty's pain, indicating that it is not a friendly presence.

Meanwhile, Tom Boutillier and Chief Rademacher are trying to get Christopher Unwin to admit that he and his friends threw Adrian Mellon into the Canal. Unwin still insists that he did not. He admits that the situation was "crazy." He recalls John "Webby" Garton holding Mellon under his arms while Steve Dubay takes him by the seat of the pants. They then throw him over the bridge and into the water amidst Don Hagarty's pleas to stop. Dubay and Garton retreat to the car, but Unwin looks down. He sees Hagarty scrambling to save Mellon, who is being dragged away by the clown. Chris also thinks that he saw the clown bite into Mellon's armpit, as though the clown were trying to bite into Mellon's heart.

Unwin did not play an active role in beating Mellon or tossing him over the bridge, so he believes that he was not directly responsible for his murder. His sense of the incident as "crazy" reiterates his inability to understand the concrete nature of his actions. His sighting of the cannibalistic clown contributes to his sense of having experienced something unreal and even fantastical.

Don Hagarty also recalls seeing the clown but insists that "[t]he clown did not drag [Adrian] up on the far bank." He sees the clown's head in Adrian Mellon's armpit, but the clown is not biting—it is smiling. The clown's arms tighten around Adrian and Hagarty hears ribs splinter while Adrian shrieks in agony. The clown then invites Don to float with unnamed others. It sweeps one of Its white-gloved hands to gesture at the thousands of green, yellow, red, and blue balloons that float under the bridge. Each balloon has "I 'Heart' Derry" printed on the side. Don watches while the clown carries Adrian's body away. For Don, it is clear who the clown is—the clown is Derry. Don then runs away from the scene.

While Unwin sees a creature that eats people, Hagarty sees that the clown nearly hugs Mellon to death. The clown probably does both of these things in the imagination of each man. Hagarty loves Mellon and is unable to save him, so the clown mocks this by hugging Mellon in a death grip. The clown also mocks Mellon's love of Derry with the balloons that are printed with the same logo from the paper hat. This causes Don to think that Derry itself has killed Adrian with its homophobia.

Harold Gardener decides to talk to Tom Boutillier about the clown. Boutillier encourages him to drop it so that they do not risk losing the case against John "Webby" Garton, Steve Dubay, and Christopher Unwin. Gardener then asks how they will explain the bites on Adrian Mellon's body. Boutillier figures that one of the guys, probably Garton, liked to bite. Gardener relents. He wants to see Garton, Unwin, and Dubay put away and knows that the clown story will spoil the chances of a conviction. Furthermore, Boutillier is determined to use the case to foster his ambitions to run for District Attorney in two years.

Gardener believes the story about the clown, since his father, Dave Gardener, was the one who found George Denbrough's mysteriously dismembered body by the sewer. Gardener knows that an evil force lurks beneath Derry, but Boutillier is uninterested, due to the problem of presenting such a story in court. To win the case and realize his political ambitions, he wants to ground the case firmly in reality and dismisses the image of the evil clown.

John Webber Garton, known as "Webby," is convicted of first-degree manslaughter and is sent to Thomaston State Prison for ten to twenty years. Steven Bishoff Dubay is also convicted of first-degree manslaughter, but he is sent to Shawshank State Prison for fifteen years. Christopher Philip Unwin is tried separately as a juvenile and is "sentenced to six months at the South Tindham Boys' Training Facility, sentence suspended." All three of their sentences are under appeal around the time that Mike Hanlon is writing in his diary, in an effort to retain the memory of these events. Don Hagarty and Christopher Unwin eventually leave town. During Garton and Dubay's trial, no one mentions the clown.

The only record that exists of the clown in this case is in Mike Hanlon's diary. Unwin and Hagarty's departures from Derry are attempts to forget the town's evil. On the other hand, Mike remains in Derry and transcribes its stories, which are also its secrets. The two adult teens' appeal of their prison sentences likely comes from their insistence that they did not directly cause Mellon's death, though their only justification for such a case is too implausible to sustain a defense in court.

CHAPTER 3: SIX PHONE CALLS

On the night of May 28, 1985, Stanley Uris takes a bath. Patricia Uris, his wife, later tells her mother that she should have known from that that something was wrong, for Stanley never took baths at 7:00 PM in the evenings. Earlier, he was reading a book by William Denbrough, a childhood friend of Stanley's. Patty observes that Denbrough's books upset and depressed Stanley. Patty is a sweet, kind woman who finds it difficult to articulate what makes the books "bad." She recalls that they were horror books, filled with monsters "chasing after little children." There seemed to be something pornographic about them, though she had never spoken that word.

Patricia is a prim and prudish woman who senses a disturbance in her husband, though she is not able to make the connection between her husband's relationship to Denbrough and the source of the disturbance coming from his childhood. Instead, she blames Bill's books for being the source of something "bad," believing that Denbrough's imagination is a source *of evil, as opposed to a reflection of that which already exists in the world.*

That night in May, Stanley and Patricia Uris are sitting on their living room sofa, watching *Family Feud*. She is proud of the comfortable home in which they live, as well as their ability to afford two luxury cars. Patricia feels that she has come a long way from the outcast Jewish girl who was refused entry into the after-prom party at a country club in 1967. While reviewing these memories, she remembers, too, having tried to read a book by Bill Denbrough—a book about werewolves. She wonders what a man like Denbrough would know about werewolves.

Patricia defines her and Stanley's success in the context of their material acquisitions and the fact that they live in an Atlanta suburb—a community that would have once shunned her for being Jewish. She defines success through others' acceptance of her. She thinks that Denbrough, who is not Jewish, would not know what it feels like to be a "werewolf"—a person whom others suspect of being menacing.

Patricia Uris, then "Patricia Blum," meets Stanley Uris at a sorority party. He is at this time a scholarship student at New York State University. They are introduced by a mutual friend and, by the end of the evening, Patricia is convinced that she is in love. When they plan to marry, her parents, Ruth and Herbert Blum, suspect that Stanley will be unable to support her. His plans to become an accountant are unimpressive. Stanley's parents, Donald Uris and Andrea Bertoly, are equally concerned, despite having also married in their twenties. Only Stanley is sure of their future and, when Patricia secures a job teaching shorthand and business English in Traynor, Georgia, it is the beginning of their promising lives together.

Patricia and Stanley's early life together is typical of many couples who marry young. Their parents worry that they are too young and will repeat some of the mistakes that they made in their youth. Donald also thinks that Stanley is not good enough for his daughter and that his plans to become an accountant lack ambition. Stanley's sense of certainty about his future with Patricia indicates that, by marrying her, he believes that he has left his past in Derry behind him. Through his marriage, he creates a new story in which he lives happily ever after.

Stanley and Patricia Uris are married on August 19, 1972. Patty goes to her bed a virgin and, before making love, Stanley assures her that he will never hurt her. He keeps this promise until the night of May 28, 1985. In the '70s, Patricia's teaching job goes well and Stanley gets a job driving a bakery truck. In November 1972, Stanley takes a job at an H&R Block. Three years later, Stanley quits H&R Block to open his own accounting business. Around the same time the couple begins trying to have a child. Despite the reservations of Herbert Blum, Stanley lands an account with Corridor Video, "a pioneer in the nascent videotape business," which asks him to do "an independent marketing survey." The work puts him in contact with Atlanta's richest men. By 1983, the Urises are earning six figures.

The Urises are upwardly mobile. What sustains them is their commitment to each other and their belief that they can form a life together, despite opposition from their respective families. King foreshadows Stanley's death by informing the reader that something happens to Stanley on the night that Mike Hanlon calls him in 1985. The details that Stanley took a bath at an unusual hour and that he broke his promise to Patricia indicate an eventual suicide. Despite the Urises' successes, Stanley is a haunted man and a black cloud hangs over the family's good fortune.

Ruth Blum writes her daughter letters in which she asks when the couple expects to have children, for Patricia Uris is not getting any younger. Both Patricia and Stanley agree, as they do about most other things, that they want children, but they cannot get pregnant. In 1976, they go to a doctor who informs them that nothing should be preventing them from having a baby if they want one and that the problem could be that of nerves. Stanley wonders if there is something wrong with his life—something that haunts him in his dreams and is related to a problem he thought he solved a long time ago.

Only when Stanley and Patricia are unable to have children—their only major failure in life so far—does Stanley think that things may not be as ideal in his life as he thought he could make them. The absence of a definitive health problem makes their inability to have children seem eerie, as though an external force is blocking them from having the lives that they want.

Back on the night of May 28, 1985, Stanley Uris answers the ringing telephone in his living room. Patricia feels an instant fright and wonders if it is her mother, but Stanley greets someone named "Mike." At the end of the mysterious call, Patricia asks him who was on the phone. Stanley assures her that it was no one and says that he is going to take a bath. When she asks him about taking a bath at seven o'clock, outside of his routine, he does not answer her. She later goes upstairs and lightly raps at the bathroom door. Stanley does not answer and she hears only the sound of dripping water.

The ringing telephone is a harbinger of doom. For Patricia, this takes the form of her mother's voice reminding her about her inability to have children and the fact that she will soon be too old to have them. The sound of dripping water echoes the seconds of passing time—in this instance, not only the time lost during her fertile years, but also the time that she will lose with Stanley as a result of his suicide.

The bathroom door is locked. When Patricia Uris gets the key and opens the door, she finds that Stanley has "slit his inner forearms open from the wrist to the crook of the elbow," then crossed them "just below the Bracelets of Fortune, making a pair of bloody capital T's." He has also dipped a forefinger into his own blood, just before dying. On the wall tile, he has scrawled a message in his blood: "IT." Another drop of water falls into the tub and Patricia finds the voice that eluded her when she tried to call for help. She stares at her husband's "dead and sparkling eyes" and begins to scream.

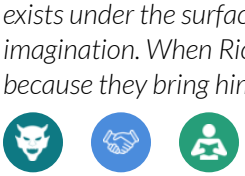
Stanley slits his wrists "just below the Bracelets of Fortune"—a part of the hand that, in palmistry, indicates good fortune. Mike's call tells Stanley that he will be unable to create the blessed life with Patricia that he hoped to have, due to the survival of It. Stanley's "sparkling eyes" mirror those of the clown, whose eyes are also described as "sparkling" in various instances. This indicates that It maintains a power over Stanley through the persistence of memory.

Mike Hanlon next calls Richie Tozier, who manages the news about It pretty well, until he starts vomiting. Mike asks how much Richie remembers. Richie admits to remembering little about what happened when they were boys, but enough to agree to go to Derry anyway. He calls his travel agent, Carol Feeny, who agrees to make arrangements for transportation quickly, in exchange for Richie doing a few impressions for her amusement. Richie then calls the Derry Town House to reserve a room. Calling Derry sends him into a flashback of his childhood—particularly being bullied by Victor Criss and Henry Bowers.

Richie accepts the news as though it were a call to duty. Like Stanley, he moved on with his life and stopped thinking about his childhood in Derry, but the call from Mike reminds him of the promise he made. Though he claims to remember little about what happened, it seems that he has merely repressed his memories. By placing a call to a familiar place in Derry, his memories return, but they are memories of being in peril.

Richie Tozier then calls his program director Steve Covall and tells him that he cannot interview Clarence Clemons of Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band because he has to go back to Derry, Maine, his hometown, and fulfill a promise that he made when he was eleven. Steve is incredulous, but Richie packs anyway and stuffs his pockets full of cash from his barrel safe. He suddenly remembers all of his old friends and recalls what a "bunch of losers" they had been. There are other things, too, just under the surface that he has not thought about in years: the house on Neibolt Street, the sewers, and Bill Denbrough's dead brother, George. The onrush of these memories causes Richie to vomit, and afterward he feels cleansed. He goes out, tosses his suitcases into the trunk of his car and tells himself that he is going home now.

Richie's economic success and celebrity in Los Angeles contrast with his sense of having been a "loser" in Derry. Part of leaving his hometown behind was to make an effort to reinvent himself. Whereas his voice impressions were not taken seriously by his friends and family at home, they make him a celebrity in Los Angeles. His memories of Derry are "under the surface," just as It exists under the surface of Derry and under the surface of the imagination. When Richie "excavates" those memories, he feels ill because they bring him in confrontation with his own mortality.



On the night of May 28, 1985, Ben Hanscom, named "perhaps the most promising architect in America" by *Time* magazine, is at the Red Wheel. Its proprietor, Ricky Lee, finds it odd that Ben is coming in on a weekday. Hanscom always comes in on Fridays and Saturdays. Ben is Ricky's favorite customer. Two years earlier, Hanscom was in London, building the controversial BBC communications center. This evening, Hanscom looks pale and distracted. When Ricky goes to draw him a beer, Ben requests a beer stein full of whisky—Wild Turkey—instead. Ben then shows Ricky a trick that he learned in Peru in 1978. He proceeds to squeeze the juice from two of the four lemon wedges into his nostrils, then drinks some of the whisky. The trick is that one is so concerned with the burning in their nose that they don't notice "what's going down [their] throat."

Ricky, like Patricia Uris with Stanley, is alerted to the fact that something is wrong with Ben due to a break in his routine. The simplicity of Ben's life in Nebraska, where he has lived since high school, contrasts with his international celebrity. Oddly, Hanscom's status as a famous architect is not the thing about him that makes him most unique, though Ricky does not know this. The Peruvian trick that Ben shows Ricky is a method of distraction—a way of trading one form of pain for another. Similarly, Ben gets drunk to distract himself from the daunting and painful task that awaits him in Derry.

Ben Hanscom then reminisces with Ricky Lee about his childhood, mentioning that he was "a regular butterball." He talks about how he was bullied by Reginald "Belch" Huggins, Victor Criss, and Henry Bowers, then lifts his shirt to show the "H" that Bowers carved into his stomach. He squeezes the juice from two more lemon wedges and takes two more big swallows from the stein. Ben then offers Ricky the "three cartwheel **silver** dollars" that his father left him when he died. Ben was four when his father died. He wants Ricky's children to have the coins. He says that he gave the fourth one to his old friend Bill Denbrough, who is a writer now. Ricky worries that Hanscom may be planning to kill himself.

Ricky's concern comes from Ben giving away valuable heirlooms. People who intend to commit suicide often give away their things—but Ben gives away his things because he thinks that he may die in Derry. By giving the coins to Ricky, the reader is alerted to the fact that Ben does not have children. Also, like Richie Tozier, his own connection to his childhood is marred by memories of being terrorized. Unlike Stanley, though, Ben and Richie are willing to confront these memories.

Ben tells Ricky Lee about the call from Mike Hanlon. He says that he will fly back to Derry tonight—but not on his own plane; he has booked a flight. Ben insists that he has to go back, believing that everything he has accomplished so far is due to what he and the other members of the Losers' Club were able to do back in 1958. When Ben leaves the bar, Ricky is convinced that he will never see him again.

Ricky senses that he will not see Ben again, because not taking his own plane suggests that Ben has no intention of returning. Ben thinks that he owes his success as an architect to the Losers' Club's ability to repel It and prevent It from killing them. Unlike so many of Derry's children, they survived to adulthood.

Around the same time, Eddie Kaspbrak is busy stuffing his tote-bag full of "bottles and jars and tubes and squeeze-bottles and spray-bottles" from his medicine cabinet. His wife, Myra, calls after him. While Eddie is a short man with "a timid, rabbity sort of face," Myra is "huge." She demands to know where he is going, but Eddie says he can't tell her. She then says that he cannot go, for he promised to get her Al Pacino's autograph. Eddie says that Myra will have to drive the actor herself, but Myra complains that none of her uniforms fit anymore. Eddie looks at Myra and realizes that she and his mother, Sonia Kaspbrak, resemble each other so much that they could be sisters. Myra begs Eddie not to leave and he commands her to stop. As he makes his way to the front door, she wails, as though in agony.

Eddie has not resolved his unhealthy attachment to his mother Sonia, who is also responsible for Eddie's hypochondria. As a compromise with his inability to marry his mother and his unwillingness to separate from her, he marries a woman who resembles Sonia and who demonstrates the same qualities of co-dependency. Like Sonia, who feared that Eddie would fall in love and move away from her, Myra fears that there may be something more important in Eddie's life that could take him away from her.

Eddie Kaspbrak strides away from his wife, Myra, faster and faster to get to the taxi. Along the way, he is plagued by the voice of his mother and memories of all that he was forbidden to do as a boy—participate in physical education or use the X-ray machine at a shoe store—due to his mother's fears of mortal illness. When he gets to the cab, he sees Myra standing in the doorway. He waves good-bye to her and directs the cabbie to Penn Station. On the way, he recalls memories of Patrick Hocksetter and Henry Bowers. He wonders where Henry is now and figures that he is probably in prison or a state asylum or even drifting around the country. He holds his aspirator tightly and feels dizzy as he imagines, not only going back home, but back in time.

Like Richie and Ben, some of Eddie's first memories of Derry are of the bullies that he encountered there. These images of Hocksetter and Bowers are more tangible forms of evil than It, whose true form the children never fully understood. Eddie's associations of the bullies with violence, as well as his sense that he is returning to a place that threatens him with harm, conflicts with his mother's voice, which instructs him to avoid any risk—real or imagined. Eddie's loyalty to his friends, however, overrides his fears.

At Beverly Marsh Rogan's Chicago home, her husband, Tom Rogan, is nearly asleep when the phone rings. Tom is angry that Beverly is on the phone with someone he does not know and is even angrier to find her smoking. She then tosses a suitcase onto the bed and pulls a bunch of casual clothes out of her bureau. After seeing the cigarette, Tom does not care about who she was talking to or where she thinks she's going. He recalls a night when they were heading home after a movie and he slapped her for smoking. He demanded then that she promise not to smoke again without his permission, and she agreed. Now, she is smoking again, requiring another one of his "lessons." Tom's "lessons" result in Beverly wearing sunglasses on gray days and turtlenecks and cardigans on hot days.

Just as Eddie "married his mother," so Beverly "married her father." The inability of both Eddie and Beverly to confront and resolve their childhood fears and anxieties in regard to their parents results in them seeking parental approval through doppelgangers—that is, through people who mirror their mother and father, respectively, in habits and appearance. Tom beats Beverly for smoking, but merely uses supposed concern for her health as an excuse to control her. Similarly, her father, Al Marsh, beat her because he "worried a lot." He used parental concern as a tool to usurp control.

Tom Rogan goes to a belt "hanging from a hook" in the closet. He recalls his mother giving him "whuppins" for being "bad." He was the eldest of four children and was left responsible for them after his father Ralph died. Beverly Rogan appears scared and frightened—not of Tom, but of what she heard on the phone. She continues to smoke her cigarette, which juts out of her mouth. She explains that she was speaking to an old friend and, before she announces what she has to do, Tom demands that she shut up and says that he has to give her a "whuppin." Unfazed, Beverly tells him to put the belt down. Tom suddenly feels invisible while Beverly recalls her childhood in Derry and tells him who Bill and George Denbrough are.

Tom is a misogynist who exercises his resentment against his abusive mother by becoming an abuser of women. He uses his mother's preferred tool—a belt—to infantilize and humiliate Beverly, just as he was humiliated by his mother's beatings. Beverly's sudden unwillingness to submit to Tom's abuse makes him feel "invisible," due to his sense that he has, however momentarily, lost power over Beverly. Her preoccupation with Derry takes her mentally, out of the present and away from Tom.

Tom Rogan swings the belt at his wife, Beverly, who grabs it away from him. He scolds her for this. A fight ensues after he runs toward her like a bull, with his head down and the belt swinging wildly. Beverly goes toward the vanity and throws bottles at him, screaming that she is going to the airport. Blood runs into Tom's right eye. Beverly looks hard at Tom and says that if he ever comes near her again, she will kill him. Tom rushes at his wife, but she stands her ground. She pushes the vanity table toward him, it falls, and its mirror breaks. She remembers all of the times that she has thought of leaving Tom. She decides now that she is leaving and will stay gone.

Beverly's resolution to keep her promise to the Losers' Club also gives her the strength to leave her marriage. Her commitment to destroy the evil in her hometown also commits her to eliminating the personal evil that has consumed her life since her marriage to Tom. By recalling the story of her childhood with the Losers' Club, she inadvertently creates a new story in which she can have a life without Tom.

Tom Rogan goes after his wife once more, but Beverly now has his belt, swings it, and hits him in the mouth. Blood pours out of his mouth and between his fingers. This is the same belt that Tom has used to hit Beverly on the legs, buttocks, and breasts for all kinds of perceived offenses—working late at the studio and forgetting to call, getting a parking ticket, serving dinner cold.

Whereas Tom hit Beverly in places that men associate with women's sexual attraction—the places that were also the sources of her father's resentments—Beverly hits Tom in the mouth—the origin of his duplicitous speech, which feigns concern for her while also seeking to control her.

Tom goes after Beverly again, but this time, she swings the belt low and hits him between the legs. As he crouches in pain, she senses a "new Beverly" take over. She steps onto a chunk of glass while grabbing her suitcase. She lets the belt drop from her hands while Tom screams after her. He threatens to kill her. Beverly leaves the house and walks three blocks before realizing that she has left her wallet and credit cards at home. She sits down on a low stone wall and begins to laugh. She is frightened but free. She picks up her suitcase and flees into the night, still laughing.

Beverly is jolted with adrenaline—so excited to take back control over her own life and to stand up to Tom that she does not even feel the pain from a shard of glass entering her foot. After fleeing from the house, she laughs at the absurdity of her situation—she escapes from Tom but has no money to go anywhere. In this instance, however, her sense of freedom overrides her fear and she continues on.

In England, Bill Denbrough explains to his wife, Audra Phillips, that he must go back to Derry, Maine. She asks him who was on the other end of the phone that has recently rung. He looks at her and imagines her concern within the context of a story. This reminds him of his years at the University of Maine on a scholarship, when he takes a creative writing course and gets Cs for most of the stories he writes. He gets an "F" for one entitled "The Dark," which he later sends off to the men's magazine *White Tie* and gets published. His writing instructor, with whom he regularly clashes, is unimpressed by the notice of Denbrough's publication, asking if Bill thinks that money means anything. Bill thinks to himself that, indeed, it does.

Bill's method of coping with events in his life is to use them in his fiction. In college, he took his memory of George's childhood fear of the dark and used it both to understand the nature of his younger brother's fear and to try to control it. If he could not save George in real life, he would try within the context of a story. The publication of the story tells Bill that there are other people who also identify with the fears that he explores, which makes his instructor's disapproval seem less relevant. In this way Bill is also a stand-in for King himself, who might be scorned by some "literary" critics but is nonetheless incredibly popular.

Bill Denbrough goes on to write his first novel in his senior year of college and sends it off to The Viking Press because he likes the publisher's logo. Viking publishes the book when Bill is twenty-three, and three years later, he meets and marries Audra Phillips—a woman five years his senior. Gossip columnists give the marriage seven months. They meet while he is writing the screenplay for his novel *The Black Rapids*, which is retitled *Pit of the Black Demon*. His agent, Susan Browne, with whom he has an affair, warns him not to do it. Bill insists. He needs to get out of New England. He thinks the title of the film is terrible, but the production is quite good. Audra is the star of the film. They meet during production in Hollywood and fall in love.

Like Stanley Uris, Bill rapidly achieves success and finds love while still very young. His life appears perfect, which is a set-up for impending danger. Denbrough's fondness for Viking's logo—a ship—is related to his memory of the paper boat that he constructed for George shortly before his younger brother died. Bill thinks that, through writing, he can hold on to his brother's memory and rearrange the circumstances that occurred in the aftermath of George's death. Bill moves to Hollywood, as though to fully embrace a life of make-believe.

Audra tells Bill what she knows about him. She recalls stories he has told her about his past, about how he lost his brother, George, and how he later worked his way through university. She recalls how they met when she was addicted to drugs and alcohol and caught up in the fast life of Hollywood. She was drawn to his slow speech and his steady manner, knowing that she would be able to depend him. Now, someone calls from the United States, saying that he must leave her. Bill admits that he never told her the full truth of what happened to George, only his name and who he was. He mentions the blood oath that he and other members of the Losers' Club took in 1958. He notices that the scar on his hand, where he and the other children cut their palms, becomes more visible after Mike Hanlon's call.

In relating what she knows about Bill, Audra inadvertently reveals how little she really knows about her husband. Her recollections about him have less to do with his own life than with the ways in which Bill has impacted her life. Bill is conflicted between his commitment to Audra and his commitment to the Losers' Club, which becomes visible after Mike's call. Like a stigmata, the old wound returns, reminding Bill of his destined calling to return to Derry.

Bill says that the children took an oath to return to Derry if It "ever started to happen again." Audra asks what Bill is talking about. Bill starts talking about how he lost his stutter, which he attributes partly to speech classes, but mainly to leaving Derry and forgetting everything that happened there. Now, his stutter is coming back, just as the scars are coming back. Audra asks to go with Bill to Derry. He insists that she must never go to Derry and makes her promise never to set foot in the town. She agrees and asks when she will see him again. He hugs her "tightly," but he never answers her question.

By remembering Derry, Bill regresses to his childhood self. In this mode, he does not have the control of language that he later cultivated to contain the evil that took his brother and nearly consumed his own life. Bill's tight hug is reminiscent of the "hug" that the clown gives Adrian Mellon, in mockery of Don Hagarty's love. Bill's hug foreshadows how Audra, too, will end up in It's grip.

DERRY: THE FIRST INTERLUDE

All of the interludes, written by Mike Hanlon, come from "an unpublished set of notes and accompanying fragments of manuscript" stored in the Derry Public Library's vault. The notes, which are kept in a loose-leaf binder, read like diary entries. The author has entitled the notes as "Derry: A Look Through Hell's Back Door." The title suggests that he has considered publishing them.

The interludes are the only sections of the novel that are narrated in first-person. Unlike Bill, Mike does not filter his experiences of Derry through fiction, but recalls things as they happened. His prospective title, however, is similar to that of Bill's adapted novel—both perpetuate the image of Derry as a source of evil.

In the notes, Mike Hanlon contemplates if it is possible for a town to be haunted. He then considers the meaning of 'haunted.' He has become frightened since hearing about what happened to Adrian Mellon and wonders what is "feeding on Derry." What happened to Mellon seems so much like what happened to George Denbrough. He thinks about calling his old friends, but he hesitates, wanting to be sure that It has started again.

Typically, people think of houses as "haunted," but not entire towns. However, Derry as a whole is a place where the spirits of the dead linger—both literally and in the town's collective memory, due to the litany of unresolved murders there.

Mike thinks of all of the cases that have appeared recently. There is the murder of Adrian Mellon, but also the children found dead on Neibolt Street and the Johnson boy found dead "in Memorial Park with one of his legs missing below the knee." Mike wonders if it is all a coincidence or if it is related to the thing that haunted Derry in 1957 and 1958, and even further back in 1929 and 1930 when the Black Spot was burned to the ground. The thing shows up every twenty years or so, going back as far as 1876.

It operates on a twenty-year cycle. It also has a habit of dismembering Its victims. Though Mike knows all of this, he still refrains from characterizing the deaths as the work of It. Part of this comes from his need to be accurate, but another part is his fear of confronting and being tasked with destroying the evil that has haunted Derry for decades.

Mike decides that he will have to make the six phone calls to his old friends. He remembers Bill Denbrough telling them many years ago how the turtle could not help them. Instead, the group held the hands they had cut open with a shard of glass. He remembers how they all stood in water in the sewer and formed a circle of power.

Together, the group forms a circle of seven members. In some cultures, seven is a number that symbolizes both physical and spiritual completion, which is what helped the group form its "circle of power."

Mike keeps the notebook to help him make sense of Derry, which has a longer history than what he and his old friends experienced. He goes to Albert Carson in 1980 who directs him to read Branson Buddinger and to talk to Sandy Ives. Carson tells Mike that, though Mike may think that he has encountered the worst of Derry's secrets, there are more. Mike later talks to Mr. Ripsom, who discusses the murder of his only daughter, Betty—one of the victims of the 1957-1958 murder spree. Ripsom recalls how his wife one day leaned over the drain of her kitchen sink and heard a slew of voices babbling together, announcing themselves as "Legion."

Buddinger and Ives are the official chroniclers of Derry's history. By reading and listening to history, Mike unearths Derry's heritage of violence and supernatural phenomena. Its evil has even Biblical significance. The voices that announce themselves as "Legion" mimic the demons in the Gospel of Matthew who possess two men but declare themselves as part of a "legion" of demons.

Mike goes to see Albert Carson once more, a month before Carson dies. Carson asks if Mike is still thinking about writing a history of Derry. If he is, Carson tells Mike to drop the idea, for no one would want to read it. Carson, however, knows about the twenty-year cycle of It. He implores Mike once again to let the matter rest. There are things in Derry that "bite," and Mike should beware. Mike, however, cannot let it go. Derry is his hometown but also a place that is overwhelmed with more than its share of violent history. He later asks Chief Andrew Rademacher about all of the children who have gone missing over the years. The chief has no answers and is annoyed by Hanlon's questioning. Mike surmises that, if anything else happens, he will have to make the calls to his old friends.

Whereas Carson deals in the legends about Derry, Chief Rademacher is only interested in facts and reason, which encourages him to deny accounts about the clown, due to these stories' lack of sense in relation to what is usually true and reasonable. Carson describes the thing that haunts Derry as cannibalistic—a thing that "bites." This suggests that Carson is aware of the Its tendency to consume Its victims. Like many citizens of Derry, he seems to think that the best way to avoid evil is to ignore that it exists at all.

CHAPTER 4: BEN HANSCOM TAKES A FALL

Ben Hanscom has boarded his United Airlines flight. He is drunk and stinks of whisky. A flight attendant asks if he is okay. Ben confirms that he is and tells her of how he was thinking about a dam he once built with his friends and what a mess that dam made. The flight attendant excuses herself so that she can check on other passengers. She hurries away to escape from Hanscom's "almost hypnotic gaze." Ben feels in the pocket of his vest and wishes that he had kept one of his **silver** dollars that he gave Ricky Lee. Ben then closes his eyes and imagines that he hears bells. The imagined sound takes him further back in time. He recalls a bright June day in Derry, twenty-seven years ago. The bells signal the end of the last day of school.

Ben has gotten drunk to overcome his fear of returning to Derry and, in a sense, going back in time. He is dazed and distracted by his memories, which come flooding back to him as he moves toward his hometown. His "hypnotic gaze" suggests his increasing lack of awareness on the present and fixation on the past. He wishes for one of his silver dollars, as he associates silver with protection. It was a silver dollar, which Ben transformed into a slug (a crude bullet or projectile), that saved the Losers' Club's lives.

The bell rings through the halls of Derry Elementary School on Jackson Street. Mrs. Douglas's class, in which Ben Hanscom is a student, lets out a cheer. Mrs. Douglas asks for their attention while she hands out their report cards. Sally Mueller turns to Beverly Marsh, whom she never speaks to normally, and says that she hopes she passed. Beverly says that she does not "give a shit" if she passed or not. Sally sniffs in disgust and talks to her friend Greta Bowie. Beverly is lower-class, while Sally and Greta are rich, snotty girls from West Broadway. Ben thinks of how much better he likes Beverly, on whom he has a crush.

Ben's memory returns to the excitement of being released from school for the summer. The excitement is so great that Sally, who normally looks down on Beverly, is friendly to her. Beverly is unmoved by Sally's sudden change in behavior and is shunned by the girls for being rough and tomboyish. Her manners differ strongly from the decade's expectations of how a girl should behave.

Mrs. Douglas calls the children to her desk, one-by-one, to get their report cards. When Ben Hanscom's turn comes, he rises and steals a glance at Beverly Marsh while he passes. Ben is obese but hides it with baggy sweatshirts. He decides to wear baggy clothes after the sight of him in an Ivy League shirt, which his mother had given him for Christmas, once prompted "Belch" Huggins to say that Ben had gotten "a big set of titties" for Christmas. Since that day, he has worn sweatshirts, despite his mother's objections.

Ben is embarrassed by his weight, which causes him to have a slightly androgynous look. This creates a feeling of awkwardness in him, given that he is on the cusp of adolescence and wishes to appeal to girls, particularly Beverly. For his mother, however, his excessive weight assures her that Ben is well-fed.

Mrs. Douglas hands Ben his report card and tells him what a pleasure it has been to have him in her class. When Ben thanks her, Henry Bowers mocks him from the back of the classroom. Ben notices that Henry's name has not been called, which could mean that Henry has to stay back again. This could mean trouble, for which Ben would be partly responsible, due to his refusal to let Henry cheat off of him during a math test. Ben figures he can stay out of Henry's way during the last week of school and, if Henry is held back, they will no longer see each other anyway. Still, Henry vows to get back at Ben for not letting him cheat.

Henry resents Ben for the favorable opinion that most adults have of him, due to Ben being polite, intelligent, and, despite his weight, unobtrusive. Henry is Ben's foil. Both boys are large, but Ben is gentle and embarrassed by his size. Henry uses his greater size, which is partly due to his being too old to be in the fifth grade, to bully the other students. Ben is one of his main targets.

Ben takes his rank card and walks fast out of the school building. Someone bumps into him and nearly knocks him over. It is Victor Criss, who calls Ben a "tub of guts" and demands that Ben get out of his way. Victor goes to join "Belch" Huggins, who is standing in the street, smoking a cigarette. Beverly comes out behind Ben and they wish each other a good summer. He watches her walk away and notices her milky complexion and how her red hair bounces against the back of her sweater.

Ben associates Victor and "Belch" with his struggles growing up, particularly his embarrassment about his weight, while Beverly represents the pleasing memory of his first love. In his memory, Ben idealizes her appearance.

Ben stands at the bottom of the steps for a moment longer and hurries around the building, hoping to get away from Henry Bowers. School has just let out past noon and his mother, Arlene Hanscom, will not be home until around six. He goes to McCarron Park and sits under a tree, whispering, "I love Beverly Marsh" under his breath, and whispering her name as "Beverly Hanscom." As he leaves the park to go to the library, Peter Gordon yells after him. Peter and some friends are playing a baseball game and wonder if Ben would like to *be* right-field. This sends Gordon and the others into an explosion of laughter. Ben is embarrassed and escapes as quickly as he can, grateful, at least, not to be physically attacked.

Ben's whispering of Beverly's name as "Beverly Hanscom" foreshadows their future romantic union at the end of the novel, which carries the suggestion that they will eventually marry. Ben's exclusion from pastimes like baseball is indicative of his social ostracism. He lacks athletic ability, which is a key marker of youthful masculinity in this culture. His inability to conform and be like other teenage boys makes the possibility of being with a girl like Beverly seem much more unlikely.

Ben then goes to the Costello Avenue Market and buys some candy. He thinks that if he continues to eat candy, particularly in the large quantities he buys, Beverly Marsh will never look at him. Then again, he feels that Beverly is a pleasant dream, while the candy is a pleasant reality. He walks to the Derry Public Library, not realizing that "Belch" Huggins, Victor Criss, and Henry Bowers are standing nearby.

Ben comforts himself with food. He figures that he will never lose weight, just as he thinks that he will never be with Beverly. His only other solace is in going to the library, though this will later be ruined by the three bullies.

Henry Bowers watches Ben Hanscom cross the street to the library. Victor Criss and "Belch" Huggins encourage Henry to "get him." Henry decides that he will wait until Ben comes back out. Meanwhile, Ben takes great relief in entering the library, which he loves. He likes **the glass corridor** connecting the old building that houses the adult library with the Children's Library and how the corridor is usually warm in the winters. He enters the Children's Library, which is bright and sunny, and overhears Mrs. Davies reading "Three Billy Goats Gruff" to a group of children. There are bright posters tacked everywhere, including a white poster from the Derry Police Department which reminds every one of the 7:00 PM curfew. Looking at the poster gives Ben a chill. He was so worried about Bowers that he forgot about the recent spate of murders.

Ben's apprehension about Henry matches that of the three Billy goats in the story who must cross a bridge without alerting the troll that awaits underneath. The glass corridor parallels with the bridge in the story—it is a place that literally provides patrons with a more comfortable passage, but it is also symbolic of adolescence—or, the passage from childhood to adulthood, and Ben's growing awareness of the dangers that exist in the world. The story that Mrs. Davies reads is meant to be make-believe, but the notice of the curfew reminds Ben that the threat of harm is very real.

Two weeks earlier, a boy named "Frankie-or-Freddy" Ross had been "prospecting" the sewers with an invention that he called "The Fabulous Gum-Stick." Frankie-or-Freddy and his gum-stick found the body of Veronica Grogan floating below Derry. Richie Tozier tells Ben Hanscom about how Frankie-or-Freddy pokes around with the gum-stick all day, and then chews the gum at the end of the night. Ben is disgusted.

The gum-stick is a silly childhood invention that alerts the children to unpleasant truths about their town. However, the children are seemingly less shocked by the discovery of the dead body than they are by Frankie-or-Freddy's poor hygiene.

Ben's mother, Arlene Hanscom, warns him to come home every night by supper time during the summer. If he does not return home at this time, she says, she will call the police. She knows that he isn't a fool and won't accept candy or rides from strangers. She also knows that he is big for his age, but warns him that a grown man could still overpower him if he wants to. She advises him to go places with his friends, when he can, not realizing that Ben does not really have any friends. She gives him a Timex watch to help him ensure that he is home by 6:00 PM every day.

A gift of a watch is often given as an adolescent's initiation into young adulthood. Ben is happy to receive the watch, despite his mother's reason of giving it to him out of concern for his safety. Arlene thinks, like the police, that an adult male is preying on children. Her sense of evil is mundane and cannot fathom the danger that truly exists in Derry.

Arlene Hanscom asks Ben if he has ever seen anything out of the ordinary. Ben considers telling her about the strange thing he witnessed last January, but he thinks better of it. Ben falls asleep that night and has a dream about playing baseball "with the other boys in the vacant lot behind the Tracker Brothers' Truck Depot." Beyond the chain-link fence which marks the boundary between the lot and the Barrens, Ben sees a figure who looks like a clown, clutching a bunch of balloons. When Ben wakes up, he forgets the dream, but his pillow is wet. It feels as though he were weeping throughout the night.

Ben considers telling Arlene about seeing the clown dressed as a mummy that stood on the frozen Canal. However, Ben knows that Arlene, who believes that a stranger is abducting and murdering children, would not understand this. Since Ben's sighting of the clown, the figure haunts him and confuses his understandings of safety and danger, good and evil.

Back at the library, Ben walks up to the main desk in the Children's Library and greets Mrs. Starrett. She likes Ben for the same reason most adults do—he is polite, soft-spoken, thoughtful, and funny in an unobtrusive way. He pulls three books off of the shelves. Mrs. Starrett tells him that he may not like one called *Hot Rod*, for it is "extremely bloody." Still, Ben wants to "give it a whirl." He goes over to a table by himself and reads three chapters of *Hot Rod*. He then looks up and sees a poster, prompting visitors to send a pre-stamped postcard to a friend. Ben marks his place in the book and asks Mrs. Starrett for a postcard. He addresses it to Beverly Marsh. He writes Beverly a haiku, which he learned to write in Mrs. Douglas's class. He says "good-bye" to Mrs. Starrett and leaves the library to mail the postcard.

Despite Ben's fear of the clown and the growing awareness of other missing children, he and other children are still attracted to reading stories or watching films that allow them to fantasize about danger. The novel Hot Rod *is "extremely bloody," like the stories about the children who have turned up dead, including George Denbrough. This taste for violence contrasts with Ben's wish to write a haiku to Beverly as an expression of his growing love for her.*

While Ben imagines Beverly reading the poem and offering to kiss him for writing it, Henry Bowers, Victor Criss, and "Belch" Huggins are closing in on him. Ben walks alongside a "rickety whitewashing railing, about waist-high," which runs beside the sidewalk. Down below the railing are the Barrens, and the Kenduskeag River runs through the center of the Barrens. A hand suddenly falls on Ben's shoulder: it is Henry. He prompts Victor and "Belch" to hold Ben's arms while Henry reaches into his pocket and grabs a Buck knife. Ben is terrified. Henry demands that the two other bullies hold onto Ben, but "Belch" starts to feel uneasy. Henry presses the tip of the knife to Ben's stomach. He reminds Ben of how he would not let Henry cheat on the math test. Ben feels like he wants to faint, but forces himself to stay upright.

The three bullies interrupt Ben's romantic idyll. Henry makes Ben revisit his fear of Henry's retaliation over Ben not allowing him cheat on the math test. Henry's actions surpass those of a childhood bully when he threatens Ben with mortal harm by pulling out his Buck knife. The other bullies feel uneasy with Henry's actions, but lack the courage to challenge his assumed authority. Henry will use knives in other instances in his life as well, when he attacks members of the Losers' Club and his own father.

"Belch" Huggins and Victor Criss look nervous. A car passes and Henry Bowers warns that if Ben yells for it, he will cut his belly open. Henry is standing so close that Ben can smell the Juicy Fruit on his breath. The car passes and Henry asks what Ben will say the next time Henry demands to copy off of him during a test. Ben agrees that he will say "yes" right away. To ensure that Ben never forgets the answer to this question, Henry decides to carve his name into Ben's stomach. Victor and "Belch" laugh, not realizing that Henry is serious. When they see that he is, they become nervous again.

In this instance, as in several others in the novel, a car passes along during a scene of violence, as though the driver does not see what is happening or does not care. Henry's threat to carve his name into Ben's stomach is an attempt to assert ownership and to ensure that Ben, who is a teacher's pet, regards Henry as his primary authority. Violence is Henry's method for assuming leadership and control, which he learns from his father.

Everything that happens next occurs very quickly for Ben. Henry Bowers snatches Ben's sweatshirt all the way up to the nipples and makes a vertical cut above the bellybutton. Henry next draws his knife downward, twice. Ben feels blood running into his underwear and left thigh. Before Henry can form the 'E' in his name, Ben pushes forward with his legs and sends himself falling backward into the Barrens. Victor Criss and "Belch" Huggins stare down at Ben, stunned. Henry chases after Ben, with his knife clutched between his teeth, calling after Ben and saying that he is going to kill him.

Ben realizes that he has to get away from Henry or risk being killed. Even if he is not killed, he cannot endure the torture of Henry carving his name into his stomach, or the embarrassment of carrying Henry's name on his body for the rest of his life, as though he were branded. Ben's fear gives him the strength to resist Henry.

Henry goes flying through the air, sort of like George Reeves in *Superman*, then crashes to the earth. Victor and "Belch" come down the embankment after him. Ben wonders when "this lunacy" will end. Ben sees Henry lying on his back "in the middle of the stream." Ben splashes toward Henry, forgetting that Victor and "Belch" are behind him, and bends over him to see if Henry is dead. Henry's eyes pop open and he grabs for Ben again. Ben pulls himself backward. Now, Ben finds himself angry—angry that, despite minding his own business, he is now bloody and in tattered clothes. He has also lost his library books, and imagines the future look of reproach in Mrs. Starrett's eyes. Filled with that anger, he lumbers forward and kicks Henry in the balls.

Ben recalls being bothered less by Henry's persistent bullying than by the fact that Henry damages Ben's library books, which threatens to give him a reputation as irresponsible. He also does not like that his clothes are ripped and messy, given that he prides himself on being neat and orderly. Despite his anger toward Henry, Ben still checks to see if Henry is dead. Ben either does this out of empathy or out of the wish to be rid of Henry for good. King is unclear about this, and it is possible that Ben is experiencing both feelings at once.

Henry Bowers lets out "a horrid rusty scream." Ben is satisfied with the pain that he has caused Henry. Ben scrambles "for the far bank" while Henry and the other boys throw rocks at him. Ben smashes his way through the bushes. Henry, Victor Criss, and "Belch" Huggins catch up to him and Ben crouches low to the ground, out of sight. He falls asleep there and comes out of his hiding place two hours later. Henry, Victor, and "Belch" are still looking for him. Ben works his way down into a shallow cave. He overhears the bullies talking to some other kids and ruining what they call "a baby dam." Ben overhears splashes, yells, laughter, and cries as Henry and the others break the dam. Finally, there is "a splintering crack." Ben thinks that he recognizes the voice of one of the kids as "Stuttering Bill" Denbrough.

This episode describes Ben's first meeting with the beginnings of the Losers' Club. They bond over being victims of Henry's wrath. Ben's cleverness, however, causes him to avoid the worst excesses of Henry's anger. When he befriends the other boys, the power of their friendship and their strength in numbers will make it easier for all of them to stand up to the three bullies. The reconstruction of the "baby dam" will become a project over which the boys will bond, as well as an opportunity for Ben to demonstrate his engineering talent.

Henry Bowers tells the two kids he is victimizing to "shut up" and asks them if they have seen a fat kid "all bloody and cut up." They say no. Ben hears more splashing sounds after Henry and Victor Criss say good-bye to the kids whom they have been tormenting. Ben finds the sound of the crying kid rather soothing. He listens to the throb of the drainage machinery nearby and feels its "low, steady vibration." Ben falls asleep again and gets lost in a dream.

It is possible that Ben finds the sound of the crying boy "soothing" because he realizes that he is not alone in facing Henry. The sound of the drainage machinery is also comforting, despite it being the source of the evil that haunts Ben. However, that evil will be another point over which the children bond.

The dream is about what happened to Ben in January. It is the first day of school after the long Christmas break. Mrs. Douglas asks for a volunteer to stay after school and help her count the books that were turned in before the vacation. Ben raises his hand. Henry Bowers calls him a "suckass." By four o'clock dusk has arrived. Ben feels a sudden fear and notices that Mrs. Douglas senses it, too. He does not know, however, what they are scared of. She asks if Ben would like a ride home from her husband, but he insists on getting home right away. He assures her that he will go into Costello's Market and stand by the stove if it gets too cold. On his way out of the building, Mr. Fazio warns him not to get frostbite.

In his dream, Ben relives his experience of first encountering the clown. The dream is mundane and seems to be an attempt for Ben, however subconsciously, to understand what he saw on that winter day. The icy air seems menacing, though neither Ben nor his teacher knows why, other than the danger of frostbite. In this instance, "frostbite" could also parallel with the fear of being bitten, or eaten, by the evil clown.

On his way out of the building, Ben feels both terrified and excited. He thinks of Jack London stories in which people freeze to death in the tundra. He sees that the Canal is frozen over. He walks southwest, toward the Barrens, and sees a figure dressed in "a white-**silver** clown suit." In one hand, the figure holds balloons that seem to float toward Ben. Ben thinks this is a hallucination. The clown on the ice seems to be calling to him, offering him a balloon. There is something evil in the voice and Ben wants to run away, but his feet feel fixed to the ground.

Again there is both the fantasy of danger but also the fear of it. When Ben sees the clown/mummy on the ice, he is both frightened and fascinated by the figure, which he is not sure is even real. The "white-silver" of the clown suit allows him to blend in with the frozen Canal.

The clown walks toward the Canal bridge where Ben Hanscom is standing. Ben can hear the *clud-clud* of Its funny shoes as It advances toward him. The clown, which appears in bandages like a mummy, tells Ben that he can stay young forever down there, where they all float. Ben runs away and reaches the corner of his street, "sobbing and winded." He thinks that the mummy/clown could not have been real. If it were, it would have been waiting under the bridge for him, like the troll in "Three Billy Goats Gruff."

Ben refuses to accept what he has actually seen because the clown's appearance does not conform to the narrative that he has learned from fairy tales. Dangerous creatures are supposed to lurk out of sight, whereas the clown was in plain view and approached Ben.

Ben hurries home and helps himself to "a dinner of noodles and Sunday's leftover turkey." He stuffs himself with food. He assures himself that what he saw on the ice was not real, just as all monsters on TV and from the movies are not real. With this thought, Ben awakes from his nap in the cave. He has been dreaming. He crawls out into the afternoon sunlight. He looks at his ruined clothes and worries about what his mother will say. He goes around "an elbow-bend in the stream" and sees that Bill Denbrough is still there with another boy. The other kid's head is thrown back as he tries to stop a nose bleed. Bill looks around and sees Ben. He says that the other boy's aspirator is empty. He is worried that the boy may be dying.

In the dream, Ben seeks comfort from his fear through food, as he likely did in real life. Though he recognized something between a clown and a mummy beckoning him on the ice, the hybrid nature of this creature makes him unsure of what it really it. Its image is one that suggests both innocence (a clown) and horror (a mummy). Furthermore, a clown is associated with entertainment and the world of the living, while a mummy signifies the wish to preserve the dead.

CHAPTER 5: BILL DENBROUGH BEATS THE DEVIL (I)

Back in 1985, Bill Denbrough is aboard the Concorde and feels that he is "space-travelling." The airplane is narrow and he is annoyed by his seatmate who is "fat and not particularly clean." The man's left elbow keeps poking Bill. He can almost feel Derry rushing at him. It feels as though he has been sitting in a darkened theater for years, waiting for something to happen. All of the stories he has written over the years, he understands, are about Derry. Bill sinks deeply into his seatmate's side for a moment, prompting the man to tell him to watch himself. Bill says that he will stop "whapping" the man with his elbow if the man watches where he places his own. Bill gazes at the man until he turns away, muttering. Bill looks out the window and imagines that he and the others are "beating the devil."

Like Ben, Bill feels that the flight is taking him back in time the closer it gets to Derry. All that has occurred in his life between 1958 and this moment feels as though he has been biding his time before the main event or attraction. He knows, too, that he wrote his books in anticipation of his return to Derry, though they were also a means to avoid confronting the evil that still existed. Now, he and his friends are going to "beat the devil"—go all out and kill It or die trying.

Bill remembers the bike he rode in 1958: **Silver**. He names it after the horse on *The Lone Ranger*. He buys it for twenty-four dollars after seeing it in the window of a shop and saving up money from Christmas, birthdays, and mowing lawns. By spring, he gets better control over the bike, which is much too big for him. Bill's only real friend, Eddie Kaspbrak, helps him get Silver into better shape for riding. Eddie suggests that Bill paint it, but Bill likes it the way it is. The bike does not appear impressive, but it rides like the wind and Bill thinks that it would "beat the devil." Furthermore, in the fourth week of June 1958, Silver saves the lives of both Bill and Richie Tozier. Bill cannot remember what has happened to Silver and realizes that he has not ridden a bike in nearly seventeen years.

Silver is both a symbol of Bill's heroism—he will save his friends and, later, his wife on the bike—and a symbol of his growing independence. He buys the bike himself and uses it to get away from his family, who have abandoned him emotionally, and to spend more time with his friends, who form a new kind of family. On Silver, Bill is free and abandons his fears and sense of caution. The fact that the bike is too big for him is an indication of the large role that Bill assumes as the leader of the Losers' Club, despite occasionally feeling unfit for it.

Bill flashes back to a memory of speeding down Kansas Street on **Silver**. As for Henry Bowers, "Belch" Huggins, and Victor Criss, Bill has only minor problems with them. He knows better, unlike Richie, than to antagonize them. The trick is to stay out of the bullies' way. If one cannot do that, then make every effort to make oneself invisible. Eddie forgets that rule and faces consequences. Worse, Eddie's aspirator runs out of medicine. Bill knows that he cannot leave Eddie alone, so when he sees Ben Hanscom, tattered and bloody from his own fight with Bowers, he calls him over for help.

Bill is careful not to antagonize the bullies, but he is also less of a target due to being rather tall for his age, and thus less vulnerable than the other boys. Eddie makes the mistake of crying, therefore demonstrating a weakness that makes it much easier for the bullies to select him for punishment.

Ben stays with Eddie while Bill speeds away on **Silver**. He dangerously passes a bus, causing the driver to shake his fist at Bill. He goes to Center Street Drug Store and goes inside. Mr. Keene, the pharmacist, greets him. To avoid stuttering during such a trying moment, Bill turns over a folder advertising vitamins and writes how Eddie is having a bad asthma attack and needs his aspirator, which he misspells as "asspirador." Mr. Keene tells Bill that it's no problem, for Sonia Kaspbrak, Eddie's mother, has an account at the pharmacy. Indeed, he would add the medicine to Sonia's bill, though the woman balks at how cheap the medicine is. Keene knows that it is nothing but water with camphor oil. If he wanted to, he could "soak" Sonia for her son's HydrOx Mist, but Keene has no desire to be a party to Sonia Kaspbrak's foolishness.

Mr. Keene is something of a misanthrope who regards the people of Derry with amused derision. Sonia Kaspbrak is one of the objects of his scorn. Mr. Keene is neither sympathetic to Eddie's hypochondria nor to Sonia Kaspbrak's unhealthy attachment to her son. For Mr. Keene, their behavior is yet another example of the human race's failings. His sense of being "above" them, like an objective spectator, prevents him from the temptation of taking advantage.

On the way back to the Barrens, Bill thinks about the recent murders and how some people believe that George Denbrough's murder is unrelated to them. Bill, however, believes that everyone has been killed by the same person—or thing. He believes that anything can happen in Derry and this worries him, but when he returns to Ben and Eddie, he appears cool. He hands Eddie his aspirator. Eddie sticks the aspirator into his mouth and figures that his mother will take one look at his bloodied shirt and want to send him to the emergency room. Ben asks why Eddie doesn't simply tell his mother "no" and explain that he feels fine, but Eddie doesn't respond.

Part of the reason why Bill is able to assume leadership of the Losers' Club is due to his ability to appear "cool," or to control his anxieties and fears regarding what has been happening in Derry. His friends assume that his self-control is a sign of competence. On the other hand, Eddie's inability to stand up to his mother is due both to the internalized belief that he is sick as well as his fear of upsetting his mother.

Eddie then asks Ben why Henry Bowers, Victor Criss, and "Belch" Huggins were chasing him. Ben explains how Bowers wanted to copy off of Ben during a test, but Ben would not let him. Bill says that Ben looks like they killed him and Ben explains how he slid down the hill from Kansas Street. This results in Bill doing an imitation of Henry that causes Eddie and Ben to collapse into laughter. Ben asks if they play often in the Barrens. Bill explains that they do because no one bothers them down there. He then invites Ben to return tomorrow when they intend to build a dam. Ben then rather expertly explains how they can do it, using boards, rocks, and a strut. They plan to meet again at 8:30 the next morning.

The Barrens is a local wasteland. No one bothers the Losers' Club in that space because, unlike the field behind the Tracker Brothers' depot, it is an undesirable space that, the kids later learn, harbors sewage. The name "the Barrens" is a bit contradictory, because the area is a lush forest, not a desert. However, it is also an abandoned space, which makes it ideal for a group of social outcasts.

On the way home, Ben has the idea of buying chocolate milk and spilling it down Eddie's shirt. The milk is similar in appearance to blood, so he figures that Eddie can explain the stains as spilt milk. Ben is pleased to have met "cool" new friends. As he walks three blocks up the street, he sees Henry Bowers, Victor Criss, and "Belch" Huggins boarding a bus. Ben ducks behind a hedge and waits until the bus is out of sight before heading home.

Ben empathizes with Eddie due to also having an overprotective single mother. Whereas Arlene uses Ben to satisfy her sense of inadequacy, Sonia uses Eddie to fulfill her desire for permanent companionship.

At Bill's house, his parents Zack and Sharon are sitting on opposite ends of the couch watching TV. The house is eerily silent. Bill offers to tell a joke, but Zack says the punchline before Bill can and his mother barely notices his presence at all. Bill flees the living room and goes to cry into his pillow. George's room has remained the same since the day he died. Once, Zack tries to remove some of the boy's toys to donate them to goodwill, but Sharon spots him and stops him. Zack flinches at her shriek and returns the items to George's room. One day, Bill sees his father kneeling beside George's bed and crying. He wants to comfort his father, but Zack tells Bill to go away.

Zack and Sharon are unable to overcome their grief over the loss of George, and they shut Bill out because of their sense that he is partly guilty for his younger brother's death. Their need to preserve George's memory overrides their interest in their living son. Worse, both parents deny their grief through the persistence of their silence. Zack's attempt to wave off Bill's offer of comfort is a form of macho posturing, which contrasts with Sharon's demonstration of hysteria.

On the first night of summer vacation, Bill goes into George's room. He, too, misses George—his voice, his laughter. On this night after meeting Ben Hanscom, he opens George's closet and reaches for his brother's photo album. The album is filled with pictures of family. George was fascinated by photography and begged anyone he could to give him photos. The final picture in the album is George's school picture. Suddenly, George's eyes roll in the picture and look up at Bill. The right eye closes in a wink. Bill hears the image in the photo say that it will see Bill soon in the closet, perhaps tonight. Bill throws the album across the room, then blood flows from the picture. Bill flees from George's room and closes the door behind him.

A photo album, which is typically a source of comfort to those who have lost a loved one, becomes haunted by It. Bill cannot take comfort in George's photos or in the memory of his love of photography due to Its machinations. It has the ability to render images and inanimate objects as though they are living. George's ironic offer to see Bill in the closet is not characteristic of the actual boy, given his fear of dark spaces.

CHAPTER 6: ONE OF THE MISSING: A TALE FROM THE SUMMER OF '58

Clippings from the Derry *News* chronicle fears about Edward Corcoran, who has gone missing. His younger brother, Dorsey Corcoran, has recently died "of what were reported to be accidental causes." His stepfather, Richard P. Macklin, takes him to the hospital, saying that Dorsey was playing at the top of a ladder in the garage and fell, losing consciousness. Dorsey dies three days after falling into a coma. By the end of June, Macklin is arrested for murdering his stepson. Both of the Corcoran boys suffer abuse at home, which is noticed by their teachers. Edward's teacher is warned against reporting it, out of fears that reports of abuse will hurt the school during tax appropriation season. Monica Macklin, the boys' mother, refuses to believe that Richard has ever beaten the boys.

The supernatural evil that lurks in Derry during the summer of 1958 co-exists with the mundane evil of domestic abuse, which the people of Derry also ignore in order to maintain the town's status quo as a peaceful, charming New England town. What Derry wishes to believe about itself is more important than confronting any wrongdoing. King tells the story of the Corcoran killings through the "objective" format of newspaper clippings, eliminating the narrative voice to tell a story about the common horror of child abuse.

Richard Macklin is later charged with Dorsey's murder and confesses to bludgeoning the boy to death with a retractable hammer. He recalls Dorsey begging Richard to stop beating him, telling Richard how much he loves him. Edward Corcoran remains missing and Macklin has no idea where the elder boy is, but his wife, Monica Macklin, who has started divorce proceedings, does not believe him. Richard has been sent to Shawshank State Prison and has become a Catholic. His priest testifies to Richard's contrition for what he did to Dorsey and thinks that Richard's hands are clean in regard to Edward.

Monica goes from believing that Richard would never harm Dorsey, which is really her attempt not to implicate herself in the boy's death, to fully embracing Richard's guilt. This, too, has less to do with her anger over her son's loss than in her desire for Richard to bear the full brunt of the blame for Dorsey's abuse and murder. Her tolerance of Richard's abuse of her children mirrors that of Elfrida Marsh.

The police later find a badly decomposed body, which they believe belongs to Edward Corcoran, but it is not him after all. In 1967, Richard Macklin commits suicide shortly after being paroled from prison. His suicide note reveals a "confused state of mind." Meanwhile, Monica Macklin has Edward Corcoran declared legally dead and inherits Edward's savings account, which contains sixteen dollars.

Richard Macklin cannot survive with the memory of his actions, as well as the sense that he is partly to blame for Eddie's death. His confusion is likely the result of being unable to reconcile his true actions with the rumors that circulate about him.

Edward Corcoran dies on the night of June 19th and it is true that his stepfather, Richard Macklin, does not kill him. Bill Denbrough, Ben Hanscom, Eddie Kaspbrak, Richie Tozier, Beverly Marsh, Mike Hanlon, and Stanley Uris—the members of the future Losers' Club—are all in their own homes and doing different things. However, they all look up at the same moment that Eddie Corcoran dies, "as if hearing some distant cry."

All of the children are equally attuned to It, which may be part of the reason why It has been unable to kill any one of them. At this time, their circle has not yet fully formed, but they are united through similar experiences with It.

Earlier that day, Edward Corcoran receives his report card and knows that his poor marks will anger his father. Besides, his parents have been arguing a lot lately. Eddie has never seen Richard Macklin use his fists on Monica—he seems to save that for Eddie and Dorsey—but they have regular shouting matches around the time that bills are due. This results in the cops being called and Monica flipping off the officers, daring them to take her in. His father is afraid of the cops but Edward still knows to stay out of Richard's way, using what happens to Dorsey as a cautionary tale. Two nights earlier, Richard throws a chair at Eddie when he changes the TV channel. One night Richard smears mashed potatoes into Eddie's hair for no reason at all. When Eddie accidentally slams the door coming in from school, Richard shoves him and sends him reeling backward into the low coat hooks his mother recently mounted.

Eddie Corcoran comes from a violent, unstable household in which Richard uses his authority and his assumed right to mete out discipline to abuse Eddie and Dorsey. He takes his resentments against Monica out on the children, either out of fear of her physical retaliation or Richard's belief that he can hurt her more by causing harm to the children. Everything Eddie does becomes cause to abuse or humiliate him. The abuse does not subside after Dorsey's death, but instead seems to intensify, as though Richard is daring Edward, who is approaching adolescence, to defy Richard's authority.

Edward Corcoran loses consciousness for ten minutes after being shoved into what feel like "hard steel fingers." He awakes to hear his mother, Monica Macklin, saying that she is going to take him to the hospital and Richard warning her against it, after what happened to Dorsey. Instead, Monica helps Eddie to his room. Eddie comforts himself by taking nips from his stepfather's whisky, which dulls the pain, though he pees blood for two weeks.

Monica chooses her marriage to Richard over the safety of her children, which was not an unusual act in the 1950s—a decade in which women often did not have the means to live on their own. Lacking comfort from his mother, however, Eddie establishes a dangerous precedent in finding comfort in alcohol.

Eddie is not a stupid boy but has missed a lot of school since his mother's remarriage, which explains his poor marks. He thinks that Richard Macklin used the recoilless hammer, which has disappeared, on his brother, Dorsey, then buried it in the family garden. Eddie thinks of this while walking toward the Canal. Eddie likes the park and thinks it is a peaceful place, despite its seedy reputation after sundown. He has thought, more than once, about walking beside the Canal with his stepfather, then giving the man one great big push, in revenge for what happened to Dorsey.

Eddie's aversion to school is due both to his preoccupation with his brother's murder and his sense that no one at school really cares about the horrors that he has endured at home. The town keeps the secret of Dorsey's murder in its effort to remain respectable. For this reason, Eddie finds solace in the park, which has a reputation for being a setting of vice. Here, Eddie can fantasize about meting out his own justice to his stepfather.

Suddenly, a hand closes around Edward Corcoran's foot. He looks down and his mouth drops open. It is Dorsey. Dorsey is grinning and croaks Eddie's name. Eddie wants to scream, but he cannot manage to produce the sound. He feels the hand slide away momentarily and thinks that the thing is not his brother. Eddie walks away, looking everywhere at once. The breeze seems to call his name. Something is following him. He can hear feet behind him, but they are not Dorsey's; they belong to the Creature from the Black Lagoon. Green fluid drips from vertical gashes in its cheeks. Its webbed fingers are tipped with claws. It has "green-black lips" that wrinkle back to reveal large fangs. The thing chases Eddie, with the intention of taking him into the Canal.

As with the false images and "glamours" that appear to Bill Denbrough, fooling him into thinking that they are reappearances of George, It uses Eddie's love for his brother, as well as his wish that he could have saved Dorsey, to haunt the elder boy. The glamour then transforms into something that Eddie probably saw in a movie, as the Creature from the Black Lagoon was the name of a 1950s horror film.

Eddie Corcoran runs as fast as he can. He becomes overwhelmed by a stink all around him. He trips over a park bench that some kids had pushed earlier in the evening. The edge of the seat smacks Eddie in the shins. The creature bears down on him and Eddie sees its eyes, which are like poached eggs. He crawls as the creature grabs hold of Eddie's neck. Eddie tries to assure himself that the creature is not real. Still, the claws go into Eddie's neck and puncture his carotid artery. Eddie gropes at the creature's back, feeling for a zipper. His hands fall away only after the creature tears Eddie's head from his shoulders "with a satisfied grunt." Then, Eddie's image of It fades and It turns into something else.

Like Ben, Eddie attempts to quell his fear by trying to convince himself that his senses are betraying him. The creature that kills Eddie is a real monster, not a character from a 1950s schlock film, so Eddie's efforts to "[feel] for a zipper" are futile. The amphibious creature is representative of Eddie's imagined fear of violence, which becomes real. When Eddie dies, the perceived reality of that image dies with him.

Unable to sleep, Mike Hanlon rises soon after dawn on the first full day of summer vacation. He dresses and has breakfast. He then hops on his bike and heads to town. He enters Bassey Park. On the ground, he spots "a cheap two-blade pocket knife." The initials E.C. are scratched on the side. He sees blood, too, but chalks it up to a dogfight. Still, he follows the grooves in the grass, wondering if they were caused by something else.

This is the first instance in which Mike encounters something eerie in Derry, and the scene also shows his investigative nature, as well as his intuition that something is awry in Derry. The presence of a knife beside a pool of blood would suggest murder or assault. Mike's brief explanation of a "dogfight" is an attempt to avoid an uncomfortable truth.

Each April and May, the Hanlon farm becomes active again. Will Hanlon tries to get his old Ford, which he scrounged from the city dump, running again. The year's work begins with a rock harvest. After the rock harvest, Will parks the Ford in the tall grass and drive the tractor out of the barn. Then comes the planting and hoeing. In July, there is picking and more hoeing. First come the peas and radishes, then the lettuce and tomatoes. Corn and beans arrive in August and September, then pumpkins and squash. New potatoes also arrive in the midst of other harvests.

Mike recalls how his family farm was a part of the cycle of life in Derry. The Hanlon farm, along with the Bowers farm, were both run by local families. The Hanlon farm, however, was successful and cause for "Butch" Bowers's resentment. Hanlon's old car is an example of his resourcefulness, which he learned from a lifetime of poverty in the South.

Will Hanlon leaves his son, Mike, notes about what chores to perform around the farm. On one or two schooldays a week, there is no note or a note that says "No chores," and Mike can do what he wants, such as go fishing or look at trolley tracks. One day he and his father go to the Courthouse and look at the old tramp-chair. One day, Mike rides his bike out to Pasture Road and comes home late for dinner, causing his mother, Jessica, to become hysterical. She chases him with a dishrag and admonishes him for scaring her.

When Mike has no chores, he is free to explore the town. However, during the days in which Derry is under curfew, Mike's mother becomes worried when he stays out too late. She fears that he will be hurt by the man whom everyone imagines is killing children in Derry. She does not realize that the source of her fear is not human.

One day, Mike goes over to the old Kitchener Ironworks. He peers inside of the old smokestack. He thinks that he sees a bird staring back at him. Mike pulls away, shaking. He walks down in the smokestack, exploring further. He decides to take something—a seven-inch gear-toothed wheel—as a souvenir and prepares to leave quickly. Mike cannot resist looking down into the "cellarhold" [sic] and sees the bird looking up. Suddenly, the ground shifts and he begins to slide. He scrambles to his knees and sees the bird rising out of the cellarhold.

Just as George Denbrough looked down into a dark space and imagined seeing eyes staring back at him, Mike has the same experience. What takes shape in the dark is whatever is on the child's mind. It is using Mike's subconscious fear of a bird to haunt him. The "cellarhold" parallels with George's walk into the cellar of his home early in the novel.

Mike starts to run. The bird screams, and he hears its fluttering wings. Its black eyes are fixed on Mike, and its talons close around Mike's forearm. He feels himself being pulled upward. The bird tries to force itself into the mouth of the stack. Mike falls to the curved floor of the smokestack and spreads his hands wide, feeling around. He finds a piece of broken tile and chucks it at the bird. Mike throws another piece of tile and hits the bird in the eye. He sees that the bird's tongue is **silver** with orange puffs, like tumbleweed. For a moment, Mike can see the bird's reptilian talons. Then, its wings flap and It is gone.

The bird's attempt to pull Mike into the air mirrors Will Hanlon's recollection of seeing a bird with orange puffs carry away one of the white supremacists who burned the Black Spot. The silver of the bird's tongue also matches the clown's silvery suit. This, along with the orange puffs, demonstrates that the bird is Pennywise in another form. Attacks on the eyes also occur frequently in the novel. Later, Henry Bowers will be stabbed in the eye, and the Losers' Club gets chased by a crawling eye, which they puncture.

Mike waits to see what will happen next. He has gathered a stack of broken tile to use as ammo. The bird comes back, its wings flapping, and Mike throws more tiles at It, demanding that It go away. He then steps out of the smokestack, looking around. He is sure that he will see the bird, but it's no longer there.

Mike's anticipation of what will happen next is similar to a reader or a viewer of a horror film waiting to learn how the next scene will frighten them. The characters' sense of anticipation builds their fear.

When Mike gets home, his father, Will Hanlon, is changing the plugs on the tractor. Mike explains his dusty appearance by saying that he swerved on his bike to avoid hitting a pothole. He shows his father the gear-wheel from the smokestack. His father says that he doesn't want Mike to go back to Kitchener Ironworks—at least not until the killer is found. Old places like that, he says, can be dangerous. Mike agrees then goes to get cleaned up for dinner.

Like many children, Mike likes to go exploring in old, abandoned buildings. His father worries, because old places that inspire children's curiosity can also be places that child predators inhabit. Will Hanlon, like Arlene Hanscom, erroneously believes that a mundane, human evil endangers his son.

Mike releases himself from this memory and looks again at the blood beside the Canal. He throws the pocketknife that he finds into the water. He hears something coming, like dragging footsteps. When he sees the headline in the paper the next day about a missing boy, he thinks of the pocketknife and the grooves that stop at the edge of the Canal.

King hints at the possibility that Mike, too, could be killed by the Creature from the Black Lagoon. However, the creature is not representative of Mike's subconscious fear. The sound could be Mike intuiting what happened to Eddie Corcoran.

CHAPTER 7: THE DAM IN THE BARRENS

Eddie Kaspbrak drives into Boston behind the wheel of "the black '84 Cadillac he picked up from Butch Carrington at Cape Cod Limousine." He thinks that he feels the onset of some sickness as he drives farther north, but Eddie knows that he is just scared. He looks in the dashboard and finds some **silver** dollars to pay for tolls. He remembers how one of his old friends used a silver dollar to save their lives, though he cannot remember which. He is starting to remember things, such as how he loved Bill Denbrough. He recalls how it had been Bill's idea to build a dam in the Barrens. Their "baby dam" got destroyed by Victor Criss. Then, they meet Ben Hanscom and build a dam so well that they get into trouble with Officer Nell.

Like with Ben and Bill, as Eddie gets closer to Derry, the memories of his childhood come flooding back to him. And like Richie, the thought of returning home and facing his mortality makes Bill feel ill. However, there are clues in objects around him, such as the silver dollars, that prompt him to remember how he and the others defeated It in the past. The catalyst for Eddie's memory is love.

Eddie recalls how Ben shows them how to flood out the whole Barrens, if they want to. Bill says that he also called Richie Tozier and that Stanley Uris, whom Ben does not know, may want to help. Bill confirms that Eddie has his aspirator and Ben asks if the chocolate milk trick worked on Eddie's mother. Indeed, it did, Eddie tells him. Ben prompts the boys to take their shoes off and Eddie can hear the voice of his mother, warning him against having wet feet. Eddie reluctantly takes off his shoes, hearing his mother's voice grow fainter in his head.

Eddie's wish to bond with Bill and Ben overrides his mother's imposed fear of hypochondria. By taking off his shoes and walking through the Barrens, he resists her imposition of the image of an impeccably clean boy who should seldom leave the house. Through his friends, in fact, he is able to find ways to resist his mother's unhealthy attachment and her imposed fears, and experience a fuller boyhood.

Bill and Eddie set one of the boards across the stream. They place a second board two feet away from the first. Ben adds rocks and "muddy gook" from the streambed. The rocks and mud take the place of cement. Ben gets a third board and places it against the downstream board. He explains it as the strut that will handle the remaining water pressure. The boys watch as the two boards that form the base of the dam creak a little but do not move. They are stunned by the ingenuity. They then sit on the bank eating and not talking much as they watch "the water stack up behind the dam and sluice around the ends of the boards."

This is an example of how the children learn from one another. Each has an individual talent and applies it during play and, later, during their collective effort to fight It. Ben's talent is in engineering, which he has a knack for even early in life. This is one of the group's pleasant memories of how they spent the summer of 1958.

Eddie then asks Ben what his mother said about his appearance when he got home after the fight with Henry Bowers. Ben says that she was out grocery-shopping, which gave him time to wash up and throw out his clothes. He explained the bruises as the result of falling, saying he was overexcited for the last day of school. Ben stands up, noticing that the current is eroding the fill. He suggests that they use chunks of sod to replace it. Suddenly, they hear a voice. They turn to see Richie Tozier and Stanley Uris.

Along with his engineering ability, Ben finds ingenious ways of fibbing to his mother to protect her from worrying about him, and he passes on this advice to Eddie. This is how the boys can maintain some independence from their mothers and continue to spend the summer exploring the Barrens and bonding without interference.

The five boys hang out into the afternoon. Richie offers cigarettes. Only Ben and Bill take one. Richie is known for having about a dozen different voices he uses. His ambition, he tells Eddie, is to become the world's greatest ventriloquist. His friends, however, are unimpressed by his voices, which always sound like Richie. This is not to say that he could not be funny, but when Richie throws his voice, it does not go far. His friends are simply too kind to tell him the truth.

As part of the boys' loyalty to each other, they do not hurt each other. Richie is still cultivating the talent that will make him famous. When he is not working on his voices, he finds small ways to rebel against convention and to assert his growing independence from his parents, such as by smoking cigarettes.

Ben introduces himself to Tozier. Richie introduces Stanley and says that he is a Jew who, according to Victor Criss, killed Christ. Stanley jokes that that must have been his father. Richie is amused. The boys then proceed to work on the dam for another hour, with Richie following Ben's directions. Every now and again, he lapses into one of his voices. They use a car door, a corrugated piece of steel, and a stack of tires as the next stage of the dam. It is backstopped by a huge sloping hill of soil and stones. While the boys relax, Bill tells them about the winking photo of George.

Building the dam together helps the boys bond and build trust with each other. They joke about the anti-Semitism that plagues Stanley's family, demonstrating how children sometimes have a wisdom that allows them to see the absurdity in their elders' prejudices. When Bill realizes that he can trust the other boys, he tells them the secret of his experience of evil in George's room, knowing that they will believe him.

Eddie quietly thinks of his own strange story of a leper on 29 Neibolt Street who offered to perform oral sex on him. On Saturdays, when Eddie can find no one to play with, he goes to the trainyards on his bike. One day, a trainman flings a box at him containing four lobsters. His mother receives the box with delight, but Eddie refuses to eat one of the creatures. He hates how they slither inside the box and click their claws. Instead, he goes to his room to read.

Both the leper and the lobsters are repulsive to Eddie because they conjure up his fears about disease and vermin. Eddie is not interested when his mother tells him that the Rockefellers also eat lobster. Here, Sonia exhibits class pretensions that do not make any impression on Eddie.

In other instances when Eddie goes to the trainyards, there are hobos and tramps. Often, they are drunk and want a cigarette. Sometimes, they are missing fingers. One day, a creature crawls from under the house on 29 Neibolt Street one day and offers "to give Eddie a blowjob for a quarter." The hobo's nostrils appear to be eaten away and yellow puke is stiffening on the front of his "old green flannel pants." The leprous hobo then offers to perform the act for free. Eddie mounts his bike and takes off, but finds the hobo not only chasing him but gaining on him. Finally, when he flashes past Church School and goes through the Route 2 intersection, the hobo is gone.

Hobos are social outcasts who, in 1930s Derry, were the victims of the White Legion of Decency. Perhaps due to his mother Sonia's class pretensions in addition to her imposed fears of illness, Eddie's glamour is a hobo. On the cusp of adolescence, he seems to have fears about sex, which conflict with his worries about contamination. The colors yellow and green will reappear when the group goes to Its lair.

Eddie keeps the story about the hobo to himself for a week before telling Richie and Bill one day while they are reading comic books. Richie explains that the hobo probably had syphilis and incorrectly explains how one contracts that disease, as told to him by Vincent "Boogers" Taliendo.

In this era, the boys do not receive sex education but rely on older children or rumor to tell them what happens during sexual intercourse and how someone can contract venereal disease. These fallacies contribute to Eddie's fears.

Eddie goes back to 29 Neibolt Street and looks under the porch. There is no one there. There are no hobos, but there are signs of them, such as empty liquor bottles and cans. A face appears in the cellar window. The skin of its forehead is split open. Its teeth poke out from sagging, livery lips "in a sneering ring." It shoots a hand through the broken window pane. The hobo is wearing a **silvery** suit and introduces himself as Bob Gray. One of Its hands reaches Eddie's shoulder and Eddie screams. Eddie reaches the end of the porch and the hobo crawls out. Its tongue drops from Its mouth and stretches to about three feet. Eddie races for his bike and wonders if he is having a nightmare. The leper again whispers for a "blowjob" and tells Eddie to bring his friends. That night, Eddie awakes in bed with a start, hearing the voice of the leper and closes his hand around his aspirator.

As with Ben, the glamour that Eddie experienced in real life returns to him in a dream. The children are haunted by their fears both when sleeping and when awake. As repulsed as Eddie is by the image of the hobo, it also fascinates him—just as Ben was fascinated by the sight of the clown / mummy on the frozen Canal. The hobo now appears in the form of a rotting body and in a suit that is similar to that of the clown on the ice. Its unraveling tongue seems like a grotesque party gag. Again, there is the contrast between the image of a figure of entertainment and something that conjures up personal horrors.

Richie is stunned by Bill's story about the winking picture of George. Eddie is then prompted to share his own story about 29 Neibolt Street. Ben then tells his story about seeing the clown on the frozen Canal. Richie thinks that Ben dreamt about the floating balloons. The others ask if Richie has ever experienced anything out of the ordinary and he says that he has not. Stanley is the last with a story, though he struggles to tell it. Just when he starts to, "the whisky-roughened tones" of Officer Nell interrupt.

The children share their stories in an effort to bond around shared experiences of evil that the adults in their lives would neither understand nor believe. Richie is the outlier, but he does not express disbelief toward his friends' experiences. His trust solidifies his bond with the group.

CHAPTER 8: GEORGIE'S ROOM AND THE HOUSE ON NEIBOLT STREET

In 1985, Richard Tozier is driving in his rental car from Bangor International Airport and switches off the radio, which has been playing Madonna's "Like a Virgin." He pulls the car over, feeling a sudden burning in his eyes. A deer walks into the road and he launches into his Irish cop voice. He laughs at his own joke and finds that he is calm enough to get back behind the wheel of the car. He starts thinking about Mr. Nell and the day at the dam.

The burning in Richie's eyes is associated with a memory that he cannot yet identify. The motifs that King includes in this scene allude to a reversion to youth and innocence, even the ironic inclusion of the Madonna song. Mr. Nell's voice is important because Richie's impression of him (the "Irish cop") will later save the group during a confrontation with It.

Ben confesses to Officer Nell that he is the one who showed the boys how to build the dam. Then, all of the boys step forward and claim responsibility for the dam. Richie cannot resist mocking the officer's accent, prompting a dry response from Mr. Nell and an order from Bill to keep quiet. Mr. Nell explains how waste flows through the Barrens and that the boys' dam has caused a small back-up. He tells them that they should not play in the Barrens, but Bill tries to explain that it is the only place where they can be left alone. Mr. Nell knows that he cannot forbid the boys from coming to the Barrens, but he asks them to come together only for their safety. Mr. Nell tells Richie to work harder on his Irish accent. He then praises Ben's engineering ability, but he orders the boys to dismantle the dam while he watches and sips from a flask of whisky.

In a gesture of solidarity, all of the boys take responsibility for building the dam, showing that their friendship and commitment to each other is stronger than any fear that they have of adults. Still, the children do not understand the implications of what they have done or the risk of playing in the unsanitary space. As filthy as the Barrens may be, it is the only place where the children can be themselves without fear of being mocked or chased by bullies. Mr. Nell sympathizes with their need to have a space of their own, as well as the childhood impulse to be in spaces that are typically forbidden.

Later, Bill and Richie are walking up Witcham Street. Bill is pushing **Silver**. Richie has the idea that the boys should go to Bill's house and look around George's old room. Bill explains the moving picture as a ghost in the photo. Richie considers this. He thinks about what he has learned at church. His parents are Methodists. He figures God is at least "one-third ghost." Bill thinks that George's ghost is mad at him for causing him to get killed. Richie insists that the incident is not Bill's fault. This makes Bill feel better but he persists in thinking that he is not supposed to feel better.

Bill's guilt persists, largely due to his parents' unwillingness to acknowledge him in the aftermath of George's death. Richie provides Bill with assurance, but Bill really requires it from his parents. It seems that Bill also thinks that the ghost in the photo belongs to George. Due to his family's religious faith, Richie finds this plausible.

Richie insists that they go to George's room. A clue may exist there about who has been killing all of the kids in Derry. Richie and Bill slip into the Denbrough house like ghosts, but Sharon Denbrough hears them. Richie announces himself and Bill's mother invites Richie to dinner, which he politely declines. They go down the hall to Bill's room. George's room is across the hall, its door shut. They walk inside. Richie finds it "spooky." There are posters all over the walls of characters who would appeal to small children. Mrs. Denbrough has stacked all of George's report cards on a table by the window. Bill then points to the photo album lying on the floor.

Bill's mother has tried to preserve George's memory in an unhealthy way. Her fixation on keeping all of his things and displaying his report cards is an effort to keep him alive and constantly present, instead of moving on. Richie finds the macabre obsession "spooky," and It is able to use Bill's parents' obsession as a trick to reanimate George and make it seem as though the boy has been preserved in the photo album.

Bill tells Richie that the album was open before. Richie does not think this is out of the ordinary. However, it is not just the pages that have closed, but the cover, too. Richie gets up and walks over to the photo album to get a better look at it. He sees a dried maroon stain coloring the pages in the middle of the book. He opens the book and sees the faces of all of the relatives who have donated pictures, as well as pictures of Derry in yesteryears. Bill takes the book and starts looking for George's picture. When he stops, the pages start to turn by themselves. They come across an old picture of Center Street and see themselves in the old photo.

The photo album is a site of memory. However, the maroon stain suggests the presence of a living, animated being, as do the moving photographs. It uses the album to disorient the boys' sense of space and time. They are in George's room in 1958, but they are also a part of old Derry. Its placement of the boys in the photo suggests that It has been waiting for Bill and Richie.

Suddenly, Bill reaches *into* the picture. Richie prompts him to stop. He sees Bill's fingers turn into the old white of the photos. A series of diagonal cuts go through Bill's fingers where he stuck them into the picture. Richie grabs Bill's forearm and gives it a big yank, sending them both back and the album to the floor. Richie tells him not to open the book again; he could have lost his fingers. Bill shakes him off and opens the book to the old photo of Center Street again. This time, there is no one in the photo. However, an arc shows over the low concrete wall at the edge of the Canal. It looks like the top of a balloon.

Bill is tempted to enter old Derry in his search for the thing that killed his brother. The temptation is a trick that could have resulted in It killing Bill, if not for Richie's intervention. Bill's wish to understand how his brother died overrides his fear of being sliced up. Still, when he reopens the book, he finds the clue of the balloon's arc. The balloon is reminiscent of Ben's story about the clown / mummy on the frozen Canal, which held a bunch of balloons.

Bill and Richie leave George's room. Sharon Denbrough calls up from the foot of the stairs and asks if the boys have been wrestling. They lie and say that they have, and she tells them to stop, because of all of the thumping on the ceiling. Bill gets some Band-Aids for his fingers. Bill realizes that the clown was pretending to be George when the photograph winked. Richie also thinks that the clown was pretending to be the mummy that Ben saw and the hobo that Eddie saw. Bill then wonders if it really is a clown. Richie surmises that It is a monster that has been killing kids.

The boys are trying to understand what It is. They assume that It is a clown, which transforms Itself to commit a series of cruel gags and deceptions. However, they then start to realize that the clown takes on different forms, depending on who sees It. Even Richie's description of It as a "monster" is merely the concoction of his own imagination and may not be Its true nature.

On Saturday, Richie, Ben, and Beverly go to see Michael Landon play in *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*. Ben is quiet during the show, and Richie figures this is because he has nearly been spotted by Henry Bowers, Victor Criss, and "Belch" Huggins. However, Ben has forgotten about them and is quiet due to feeling overwhelmed by Beverly's presence next to him.

The children are excited to see the new schlock horror film, particularly Richie. Richie's simultaneous fear and enjoyment of the film distracts him from the real fear of confronting the bullies.

Richie wanted to see this film so badly that he convinced his father to give him additional allowance money, albeit less than what Richie wanted, in exchange for mowing the entire lawn. As he mows, he practices his voices. He calls Bill, Eddie, and Stan to go with him but none can make it. He decides to look Ben up and finds Arlene Hanscom's name in the phone book. Ben has spent his allowance, but Richie offers to pay his way. They meet outside of the Aladdin Theater. Halfway up Center Street Hill he sees Beverly Marsh approaching. Richie likes Beverly because she is tough and has a good sense of humor. She shows Richie how to make his yo-yo sleep and other tricks. He invites her to attend the movie with him and Ben, and offers to pay her way.

For Richie, the experience of going to the movies is incomplete without friends to share it with. Part of the pleasure of being frightened during a horror film is to watch the frightened reactions of one's friends, as this shared experience of fear is a form of bonding. Beverly here shows how adept she is at performing childhood tricks that the other boys do not know. Richie's willingness to allow her to teach him something reveals the relatively egalitarian nature of her friendship with the boys.

Richie and Beverly look around for Ben when the movie is about to start. They see Ben rush around the corner of Center and Macklin Streets. They wait until the show starts before going in and sitting in the balcony to avoid Henry Bowers, Victor Criss, and "Belch" Huggins. They see a double-feature. First, they watch *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein*. During the film, Richie spots Henry and his friends. He also sees Foxy Foxworth tell them to put their feet on the floor. They obey, then put their feet up again when Foxy leaves. The second feature is *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*. Richie finds the second film scarier. At the end, the werewolf is killed. The audience applauds, and Richie is somehow relieved.

The films tap into fears that the children harbor but did not previously recognize. Richie fears the notion of a normal teenage boy turning into something horrific, which could be a reflection of his own fears about what he will become when he grows up, due to his parents' negative attitude toward him and his form of humor. On the other hand, the Frankenstein film will play an important role in tapping into the imagination of Henry Bowers, whose friends are later killed by a Frankenstein-monster.

As Richie, Beverly, and Ben leave the theater, Ben is confronted by Henry Bowers. Beverly tells Henry to leave Ben alone. Henry calls Beverly a "bitch" and Richie sticks out his foot to trip Henry; though he does not mean to. Henry spills forward and "goes skidding like a shuffleboard weight." Until this moment, Ben is terrified, then he grabs a garbage can and throws it as the group runs away. They run toward an opening in an alley and Victor Criss jumps in front of them. "Belch" Huggins grabs Beverly's pony-tail and flings her against a wall. He then swings his fist at Richie, who has picked up a garbage lid as a shield, which "Belch" hits instead. The three then successfully run away from the bullies.

Henry's insult toward Beverly gives Ben the courage to forget about his own fear of the bully so that he can make a chivalrous attempt to save her from getting hurt. Richie's haphazard defense move also gives him the courage to defend himself more assertively from the three bullies. The children realize that they have some power in numbers. Later there are seven of them and this number has often shown up in popular culture in films about groups of fighters, including "The Seven Samurai" and "The Magnificent Seven."

Richie proposes that they go down to the Barrens. Beverly has not yet been there with them. When they arrive, she declares it "beautiful." They hear voices in the distance and suddenly, Bill Denbrough emerges. He has another kid with him, probably from Bangor, which is where he went for speech therapy. The boy's name is Bradley. Richie feels that Beverly is a part of them, but not this new kid, this Bradley-somebody.

What makes Bradley separate from the rest of the group is that he is not from Derry. Therefore, Richie knows that he will not have a story about It. The children's stories are the primary source of their bond. Without it, Bradley does not really belong.

At the end of June, Bill tells Richie that he wants to go to the house on 29 Neibolt Street and investigate the leper that Eddie thinks he has seen. Beverly Marsh shows up around three o'clock and the three children play in the Barrens. Later, Bill and Richie go to Richie's house. Bill decides that he wants to kill the clown and tells Richie that he will do it, using his father's pistol. Richie asks what they will do if a gun does not stop It. Bill says that they will have to think of something else.

Richie reminds Bill of the fact that the clown is not human, and so cannot be killed in the same way as a human. Still, Bill only knows that things tend to die when shot and his father's pistol is a memento from World War II—an emblem, to Bill, of good triumphing over evil.

The next morning, Richie and Bill walk their bikes up Kansas Street beside the Barrens. Bill brings a Bullseye slingshot out of his back pocket. Bill received the slingshot for his birthday the year before. It was Zack Denbrough's compromise between the .22 Bill wanted and Sharon Denbrough's adamant refusal about the boy having a firearm. Bill is not very good at using his slingshot, but Richie has also brought his sneezing powder to use on It. Bill then unzips his duffel bag and takes out his father's pistol. Suddenly, the house on Neibolt Street seems less frightening.

With their weapons, the boys imagine that they are prepared for anything. In keeping with his admiration of TV heroes like the Lone Ranger, Bill foresees that he and Richie will be able to conquer the evil that resides in the house on Neibolt Street. Richie's choice of a gag tool is a bit ironic, but also indicative of his belief that he can defend himself with comedy, as he does when confronted by the bullies.

Bill and Richie mount **Silver** and ride away. Richie is sure that they will crash. They turn onto Neibolt Street, get off of the bike, and start walking. The house was once a "trim red Cape Cod." Now, the red paint appears to be "a wishy-washy pink that [is] peeling in ugly patches that look [like] sores." Bill and Richie squat, looking under the porch. Bill takes out the Walther pistol, which Zack Denbrough had taken during World War II, and examines a broken window to the cellar. He slithers through the cellar window, barely missing a chunk of glass that would have badly cut him. Richie follows Bill inside. Both boys suddenly hear a snarling sound.

The house mirrors the decay of those who inhabit it from time to time, as well as the decaying body of the phantom hobo who haunted Eddie. Bill and Richie expect to see what Eddie saw, but the hobo is not a reflection of either of their fears. The glamour that takes shape in this section is a reflection of Richie's fear—a werewolf. Bill later reveals that he saw something quite different.

The sound is coming from a wild animal. Richie and Bill see someone—or something—in loafers coming down the stairs. It is wearing faded jeans but has paws instead of hands. Bill is calling for Richie to climb the pile of coal to a window, but Richie is frozen. Bill gives Richie "a gigantic shove." Richie seizes the latch to the window, but it won't move. The snarling gets closer, and Richie hears the gun go off below him. Bill screams at It in anger for killing his brother. It snarls back that It will kill Bill, too.

Like Ben and Eddie, Richie is transfixed by the glamour, which takes the form of a werewolf. This is Richie's first encounter with It, but he is so stunned by the movie image having come to life that he underestimates the real-life danger he is in. Bill, on the other hand, recognizes the evil that the boys are confronting.

Richie gives the window "a tremendous shove," but it does not break. Bill fires the Walther a third time. Bill cries out that It has him. Bill is being pulled backward. Richie sees what It is: the teenage werewolf from the movie he saw at the Aladdin. Bill scrambles back up the coal. Richie grabs his forearms and pulls. Then, with no thought at all about why he is doing it, Richie launches into the voice of the Irish cop. The creature lets out a sound of rage but is distracted enough for Richie to pull Bill up and out of the cellar. The werewolf's claws paw at the grass where Richie and Bill are now sitting.

Richie does not realize it, but he is performing the ritual of Chüd even before Bill researches the Himalayan ritual. Like the sneezing powder, comedy is Richie's self-defense, what he uses to disarm those who threaten him or put him ill at ease. The creature lets out a sound of rage because, when Richie speaks in the other voice, he becomes less afraid of the werewolf and less conscious of his fears.

Bill pulls the trigger on the Walther and takes off a chunk of the werewolf's skull. Still roaring, the werewolf climbs out of the window. Richie goes back into his Irish cop voice. He puffs a cloud of the sneezing powder at the monster. The werewolf stares at Richie for a moment, with slight surprise, then it starts sneezing. The boys see "greenish-black clots of snot [fly] out of its nostrils." The werewolf looks angry but it is also in pain. Richie stares at the werewolf in wonder until Bill pulls him away. The werewolf is still coming, "snarling and slobbering." **Silver** is leaning against a tree.

The boys succeed in repelling It, mainly because their preparations cause them to feel less afraid. Bill's ability to take a chunk out of the werewolf's skull and Richie's ability to cause It to sneeze make the werewolf seem more vulnerable and more real. King creates suspense by turning this into a chase scene in which the boys struggle to get back to Silver—which, like the trusty horse, will carry them away from danger.

Richie takes another look at the werewolf and sees that there are "big fluffy orange buttons, like pompoms" on its jacket. Stitched on the left breast of its jacket is the name "Richie Tozier." **Silver** begins to move, but much too slowly. The werewolf comes closer and grabs at Richie with one of its paws. Richie can see its teeth, which are crooked fangs, and smells the "sweet rotten meat on its breath." Bill pumps the pedals on the bike, which finally stops wavering, and they take off. The werewolf roars again and Richie feels as though it is right beside him. The paw swings again. Richie closes his eyes, holds on to Bill, and waits for the end.

The orange pompoms establish the werewolf's connection with the clown that Ben saw, which demonstrates to Richie that it is the same creature. Richie's vision of the glamour is so vivid that he can both see and smell it. The chase scene ensues, but Richie imagines himself getting the best of the werewolf. His trust in Bill and their reliance on each other's individual strengths help them both get out alive.

Bill does not see a werewolf but a clown. Unlike Richie, he does not turn around to look at his monster. However, he, too, sees the clown wearing a Derry High jacket with pompoms for buttons. Bill rides **Silver** toward the intersection of Neibolt Street and Route 2. The street is empty. Nearly too late, Bill notices that Richie is sliding off of Silver. His glasses hang askew and blood drips from his forehead. They crash in the street. Richie half-consciously goes into his Pancho Vanilla voice and Bill smacks him in the head to bring him fully back into consciousness. Richie begins to cry and Bill hugs him. He tries to say something, but Bill urges him to remain quiet.

Bill's fear is of the clown that he knows killed George. He is not only afraid of the clown, but also obsessed with killing it in revenge. The fact that both the clown and the werewolf are wearing Derry High jackets could be a reflection of both boys' fears about approaching adolescence. Perhaps with age they will be too cautious or less dependent on each other. For now, their solidarity lies in their friendship and their shared commitment to kill It before It kills them.

CHAPTER 9: CLEANING UP

Beverly Rogan is on an airplane, flying high over New York State. She laughs and stifles it so as not to appear odd. The guy next to her is young and attractive but has respected her desire not to talk. Now, he asks if everything is cool with her. He hands her a handkerchief to wipe off the tears from her laughter then asks what has happened to her hand. She says that she slammed her hand in a car door, telling another of many similar lies in the aftermath of her fights with Tom Rogan. Her seatmate asks her out for a drink in Boston. She declines because she has another flight; she thinks of Tom calling her a "bitch."

Now, the narrative shifts to Beverly's recollections of the summer of 1958. Unlike her friends, she contended with both the supernatural evil that pervaded her town and the personal evil of her abusive household. Beverly's relationship to men is complex and her experience reflects typical misogyny, which renders women objects of desire but also sources of contempt. She cannot separate her seatmate's attraction from Tom's expression of contempt.

Before leaving Chicago, Beverly calls Kay McCall first. Kay is thrilled to hear that Beverly has left Tom She meets Beverly, who is arriving in a taxi, at the end of her driveway. On the ride over to Kay's house, memories and names from her childhood in Derry pour back into her mind. Kay takes Beverly into the house, where Beverly showers. Kay makes her coffee and examines her injuries. Beverly tells Kay about the phone call from Derry and the promise she made years ago, but she is not specific about the promise.

Kay does not press Beverly about the details regarding her return to Derry. She is instead relieved that something has given her a reason to walk out on Tom for good. For Kay, who is a feminist, Tom represents the greatest evil that she can imagine.

Beverly takes a Greyhound north to Milwaukee, using the money that Kay McCall gives her. Despite the security people at O'Hare International Airport, she is afraid of her husband, Tom, looking for her. Her plane is now descending into Boston. She looks out the window and thinks of how Tom's evil is small compared to what awaits her in Derry.

Tom's evil is a part of that which already exists in Derry. The difference is that Tom's hatred seems to be limited to women, while the hate and evil that consumes Derry is indiscriminate.

Beverly Marsh is eleven again and is leaning over the bathroom sink, from which she hears voices. The voice is saying, "Help me." When she asks if someone is there, the voice tells her that they all want to meet her. The voice belongs to Matthew Clements, who says that the clown has taken him down into the drain and will soon take Beverly, Ben Hanscom, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, and the others. A red bubble backs up the drain then pops. Now, Veronica Grogan speaks. A gout of blood sprays up from the drain, splattering the walls. Beverly runs into the living room, where her father, Al Marsh, is sitting.

Like the others, traveling back to Derry causes Beverly to revert back to her memory of her childhood in 1958. Her first encounter with Its evil is different from that of the boys. It does not occur while she is out exploring, but while she is at home doing chores. The red bubble is similar to the maroon stain that Bill saw in George's photo album.

When Beverly shrieks about something in the bathroom, and Al Marsh asks if someone has been peeking at her. Al goes into the bathroom and does not see the blood that Beverly sees everywhere. Al tells Beverly that he worries about her—a lot—and punches her in the stomach. When he demands that she explain herself, she decides to tell him that she saw a spider. This makes sense to him, for he thinks that all girls are afraid of spiders. As he bends over the drain, she wishes that It would get him, then she feels guilty for having the thought.

This is the first time that King uses a spider as a symbol of something menacing. In this instance, it represents Al's assumption of his daughter's cowardice—and that of girls and women in general—in response to common pests. Beverly's wish that It "get" her father mirrors Eddie Corcoran's wish to push his abusive stepfather, Richard Macklin, into the Canal.

Al Marsh does not see anything in the pipes. He hugs Beverly and tells her to go to bed. She feels love for him again. She reasons that he hits her because he needs to "correct" her. Al believes that daughters need more correction than sons. Her father tucks her into bed, then masturbates over her. This later reminds Beverly of similar "shapes of men" that she will see throughout her life. She falls asleep.

Beverly's association of love with abuse will lead her to choose Tom as her husband. Beverly's memories of other "shapes of men" are the strangers who have sexually harassed her in public at various instances in her life. They are "shapes" instead of people due to their dehumanizing behavior.

Beverly awakes when the alarm goes off in her parents' bedroom. She looks at herself in the mirror and sees her breasts, which are still small, coming in. She cooks her father hamburger meat, as he demands. Beverly also makes his lunch and Al Marsh tells her to tell her mother, Elfrida, to clean the place. Beverly agrees that she will. He kisses her cheek and gives her a rough hug before heading out to work. She feels relief as she watches her father turn the corner and hates herself for the feeling.

Beverly is torn between wanting to love her father, particularly after he demonstrates fatherly tenderness, and wanting to be rid of him. Life with him also forces her into a highly restrictive gender role, exemplified by making her father breakfast. She is hyperconscious of her body, which she knows sexually excites her father, and is the source of his resentment.

Elfrida and Beverly clean their house. While Elfrida changes into her serving uniform, she asks if Beverly will wash the windows and Beverly agrees. She says that she has to cover for another employee because she and her "no-good" husband were in a car wreck due to his drinking. Elfrida tells Beverly to be grateful that her father does not drink. She says that Beverly will not have to fix her father's dinner after her chores because it is his bowling night. She then remarks on how quickly Beverly is growing up, noticing her developing body. She then asks if Al ever touches her, but Beverly is unsure of what her mother means. Elfrida lets the matter drop. Elfrida leaves and Beverly goes to the closed bathroom door. Most of the blood is gone. Beverly wonders if she is going crazy.

Elfrida is aware of Al's abuse of Beverly, but she overlooks it to avoid the possibility of Al leaving her. She imagines that other women endure worse situations, such as alcoholic husbands. Still, Beverly's maturing body alerts Elfrida to the possibility that Al's abuse can become sexual. Not wanting to describe to Beverly what she means by Al touching her, Elfrida lets the matter drop. She would rather ignore her fear than confront it or, worse, give her daughter the impression that her father endangers her safety.

Around three o'clock, Beverly locks up the apartment and goes out. She comes upon Ben, Eddie, and a boy named Bradley Donovan pitching pennies. Bradley has a lisp. He came down into the Barrens a week ago with Bill, who met Bradley at speech class in Bangor. Beverly plays and succeeds in getting her pennies closest to the wall, leading Bradley to accuse her of cheating. The accusation angers Ben. Beverly gives Bradley his money back, then the boy runs to the end of the alley, turns, and resumes calling Beverly a cheater with a "whore" of a mother. Ben runs toward him, but trips over a crate. Bradley disappears.

Bradley is irritated with Beverly because he does not like that he has just been beaten by a girl. His insult to Beverly gives the Losers' Club reason to expel him from their group. Bradley is not from Derry, and has had no experience of It—and furthermore, his insult to Beverly demonstrates a lack of loyalty to all members of their group.

Beverly is embarrassed, and her feelings are hurt. She calls out, in a shrill voice, that her mother is not a whore but a waitress. Ben and Eddie find this funny and, in a moment, so does she. They make so much noise, howling with laughter, that a woman shouts at them from an apartment above. They join hands, with Beverly in the middle, and head for Center Street.

Bradley's insult to Beverly's mother hurts her—not because it is true, but because it reminds her of her and her mother's objectification in their own household. She does not yet have the language to make that association, but she knows that she and her mother are ill-used.

Beverly, Ben, and Eddie pool their money and buy ice cream frappes at the drug store. They take their huge, waxed containers to Bassey Park. Stanley Uris joins them. Beverly tells the three boys about the voices she heard in the drain. She sees terror in their faces but not disbelief. Ben suggests that they go to her house and take a look.

The boys' faith in Beverly contrasts with her father's disbelief and tendency to blame her for her own fear. Their willingness to investigate assures her that she is not alone in facing her problem.

The children go in through the back door because Beverly is afraid of her neighbor seeing her walk into her apartment with three boys while her parents are gone. Beverly takes them to the bathroom. They, too, see the blood. Stanley suggests that they clean up the place. Beverly agrees. For the next half hour, they scrub to clean the blood that only they can see. They then go to a laundry to wash the rags. Ben then tells Beverly his story about seeing the clown on the frozen Canal. Eddie talks about the leper. When they look to Stan, he merely mentions that the wash is done. Then he admits that he did see something, but he does not want to talk about it.

Stan resists sharing his story with the others, though this is the source of their bond, because his experience jars with his sense of reality. Stan's requirement for orderliness in his life and his inability to secure it is part of the reason why he commits suicide as an adult. The children all see the blood because they all believe Beverly's story about the voices from the drain, just as she believes their story. Their mutual will to imagine conjures up what adults cannot see.

Beverly presses Stan to tell her what he once saw. He says that, on a rainy April evening two months ago, he was in the little park where the Standpipe—a vertical pipe extending from the water supply—is. Stan likes to go to the park to watch birds. He and his father usually go together, but on this particular night, his father has to work overtime. Stanley walks to Memorial Park. He takes out his bird album and examines the birds in the area, comparing them to the pictures in his book. He hears a sudden loud noise, but sees nothing that could have caused it. The door to the Standpipe is open, strangely. Stan swings it half-closed and it moves easily. He asks if anyone is there and there is no answer. Instead, he hears Calliope music, like the kind at carnivals. "Camptown Ladies" begins to play, and shadows emerge.

When Stan goes to the park without his father, he witnesses It. The shadows that appear on the walls are those of ghosts. They give Stanley the impression that he is not alone, but he is also not in the presence of the living. There is something disorienting about the light and happy sound of the carnival music and the play of dark shadows on the walls. Moreover, it is strange to hear carnival music in the Standpipe, which is a local landmark that is partially open for tourists and a main water source for the fire department. The purpose of this music is to disorient and distract Stanley.

Stanley runs back down the stairs, afraid and breathing hard. The music has become a dirge, and water spills down the stairs. Stan does not smell cotton candy, popcorn, or doughboys, but wet decay instead. Stanley asks again if anyone is there, and this time gets a response: "We're the dead ones." Figures emerge, saying that they float and that Stanley, too, will soon float.

The music now signals the threat of Stan's death. The smell of wet decay is the smell of the sewers and of all the bodies that It keeps down below.

Stanley can feel water around his feet. He grabs for his bird book in his slicker pocket, but it will not come out. He gives it another "tremendous yank" and it comes out. He starts screaming bird names. The door to the Standpipe opens and Stanley takes a giant step backward to go out. One of the corpses plays with a pompom on one of its fingers, dangling it like a yo-yo. Stanley gets up and runs across Kansas Street. He realizes that he has just seen dead bodies and runs for home.

It probably intends to drown Stanley, which is why water pools around his feet. Stan's knowledge of ornithology serves as a defense, because birds give him comfort and his knowledge gives him confidence, which makes him less vulnerable. Still, the sight of dead bodies is good reason to leave the Standpipe.

By the time the dryer stops in the laundromat, Stanley has finished his story. Eddie says that they should talk to Bill about all of this, as he will know what to do. Stanley, however, does not want to do anything. Beverly insists that they ought to talk to Bill. She also says that they should talk to the police chief, which Stanley finds absurd, given the fantastic nature of their stories.

Because Stan knows how implausible their experiences are, he does not think that the police, who only deal in concrete reality, would believe them. Stan worries, too, about being regarded as crazy. For Eddie, the next most helpful authority would be Bill.

Eddie mentions how Stanley Uris escaped the clown by reciting the names of birds. Stanley says that the others can tell Bill about everything if they want to, but, for him, there are worse things than being scared. The dead boys who lurched at him down the spiral staircase in the Standpipe had offended him more than frightened him. They offended his sense of order. Beverly asks if he will at least go with them while they talk to Bill, and Stan agrees.

Eddie realizes that Stan's unique knowledge of birds is what helped him, but Stan is not interested in exploring this. He seems to want to forget about what he witnessed in the Standpipe, preferring to chalk it up to a hallucination. To believe what happened would make it real, and for it to be real means that the world makes no sense.

Beverly leaves the boys outside of the Kleen-Kloze laundromat and takes the rags home by herself. She goes to the bathroom and looks down the dark drain—there are no voices. She gets her father's measuring tape and slides it down the drain. She takes it all the way to its final stop—eighteen feet. Then, she hears voices again, warning her that she can die trying to fight them. Fresh blood trickles over the clean white porcelain and back into the drain. She takes one of the clean rags and wipes the blood. She gets a second rag to clean her father's measuring tape. She then goes to the backyard and throws the dirty rags into the incinerator. Beverly then falls to her knees and weeps.

The blood keeps coming out of the drain, as a sign to Beverly that she cannot escape the evil that exists below Derry. It appears to her in the form of blood that she must continually clean because her father has assigned her to keep the house in order. The sight of blood, even though her father cannot see it, disrupts her own sense of order. There is also the fear that something wants to kill her and have her join the chorus of voices in the drains.

DERRY: THE SECOND INTERLUDE

It is Valentine's Day, 1985. There have been two more disappearances in the past week—both children. One is a sixteen-year-old boy named Dennis Torrio, and the other is a little girl named Laurie Ann Winterbarger, who police suspect got snatched by her father, Horst Winterbarger. Mrs. Winterbarger is divorced from Horst and accused him of molesting their daughter. Laurie has not seen her father in three years, not since she was two. Chief Rademacher says that he has the Florida State Police looking for Winterbarger, which is all he can do.

The possibility of sexual abuse in Laurie Ann's family, as well as the parents' custody battle, gives the police good reason to explain her father as the cause of her disappearance. In the police's narrative, Horst Winterbarger is the villain, or the figure who represents evil. Therefore, it does not occur to look for another source of her disappearance.

The case of Dennis Torrio makes less sense. Torrio comes from a wonderful, stable home, is an honor student, and a star athlete. He also has a girlfriend, whom he loves. Torrio had no reason to disappear from Derry. Mike Hanlon wonders what happened to him. Might he be keeping company with Betty Ripsom, Patrick Hocksetter, and Edward Corcoran?

Unlike Laurie, it is less likely that an athletic teenage boy would be kidnapped. With no abuse or delinquency in Dennis's history, the police are stumped. Only Mike senses what actually caused Dennis's disappearance, but his explanation would jar with the police's narrative.

Mike chastises himself for going over the same ground repeatedly and being unproductive. He comes close to dialing Stanley Uris's number and wonders if he really has to. Perhaps he is just afraid of withstanding this alone. He calms himself with the thought that the right time to call will come.

Mike still doubts himself. He doesn't want to call the group back to Derry without being certain, though there have been plenty of inexplicable murders pointing to It as the culprit. Still, he also does not want to disrupt his friends' lives.

Mike Hanlon's diary entry for February 20th covers the burning of the Black Spot, which he discusses with Albert Carson. The story of the Black Spot, which is largely forgotten by everyone except for Carson and Mike Hanlon. It's an example, Carson notes, of how the Chamber of Commerce tries to rewrite history. Mike's father, Will Hanlon, was stationed there in 1930 and has told his son the story.

The Chamber of Commerce tries to rewrite this history because it does not want the outside world to know that Derry has a legacy of racism and that, maybe, those who belong to the organization have benefited from this legacy.

Will Hanlon talks about going back to Derry from a three-day pass in Boston. It is the spring of 1930 and Will is returning with four buddies who accompanied him. When they come through the gate a "big old boy"—that is, a racist, red-headed sergeant, is standing at the gate. When Hanlon greets him, the sergeant, whose name is Wilson, forces him to dig ditches for being "smart."

The sergeant singles Hanlon out for mistreatment out of both envy and racism. Hanlon is indeed smart, which disturbs the sergeant's learned belief that black people are always inferior to him and other whites.

Will Hanlon digs for about two hours and is soon in a hole up to his chin. Then, Sergeant Wilson demands that Hanlon refill the hole. After that, Wilson again demands that Hanlon dig out the dirt that he has just replaced. Hanlon obeys but also fills it again. Wilson asks Hanlon why he filled it because he wants to defecate in it. So, Hanlon digs the hole out again, only for Wilson to tell him to fill it back in. Wilson only leaves him alone after he gets into some trouble for missing an inspection. Hanlon eludes punishment because his friends cover for him. Hanlon goes to find Wilson's name on the punishment roster but never finds it. He figures that Wilson simply explained that he was teaching "a smartmouth nigger" a lesson. Hanlon surmises that they may have given Wilson a "medal" for that instead of having him peel hundreds of potatoes.

Sergeant Wilson tasks Will with digging holes and then refilling them simply because he can. His authority gives him the power to abuse Hanlon and he takes full advantage of that perceived right. Hanlon does not believe that the sergeant was ever punished for missing inspection, due to his belief that Sergeant Wilson's superiors are quietly supportive of his racist attitudes. Hanlon has had enough bad experiences in the army with racists to know that the sergeant's attitude and behavior are not unique and are even tolerated by society as a whole.

Will Hanlon tells his son, Mike, this story in 1958, when Will is around fifty and his mother, Jessica, is "only forty or so." Will says that he was only sixteen when he joined the army. He is born and raised in Burgaw, North Carolina and joins up only because his mother tells him to. His father dies in a farming accident. His mother does not want to send him away, but someone needs to take care of his mother and younger brother, Phil, who later becomes a lawyer and councilman in Tucson, Arizona. She says that Will should then send her the allotment that he will get every month.

For many poor black families, both in Will's time and now, military service is perceived as a chance to escape poverty and enter the middle-class. Will's mother probably does not envision that her family will move this far up the social ladder, but she knows that they will have a better chance of survival with the money from Will's monthly allotment.

Will Hanlon goes to the courthouse where the army recruiter is and asks about joining up. When Will asks about training to be an officer the recruiter laughs, saying that there will never be "nigger officers" and that he should hurry up and sign the papers or just leave because he is "stinkin the place up." Will signs, watches the recruiter staple the allotment form to a muster sheet, then takes his oath. When he becomes a soldier, they send him to Derry and place him in Company E.

Will's meeting with the recruiter is his first experience of racism in the military. The refusal to allow black officers shows that the problem is systemic. After World War II, however, black soldiers are allowed to become officers. King uses the recruiter's statement to make a point about how wrong he will prove to be.

Will Hanlon concludes that the North and South are pretty much the same. The fire at the Black Spot convinces him of this. Will thinks that, in a way, the fire made him a man. He is clear, too, about who set the fire. It was not Sergeant Wilson and his "grits-and-cornpone" friends but the Derry branch of the Maine Legion of White Decency. Mike asks who they were, but Will does not have much of an answer. He mentions how history books talk about the KKK in the South but often leave out the White Legion of Decency, perhaps because Northerners write the history and are ashamed of their own legacy of racism. The Legion of Decency tried to organize in Maine but was really only successful in Derry.

Racism, both individual and systemic, is not particular to the South. Will has no illusions about going to the North to escape the racism in the South. He, like many other black people at the time, were merely seeking improved circumstances. As horrific as the fire was, Will regards it as a transformative experience, which helped him mature and better understand the nature of racism in his country.

Will Hanlon thinks that the White Legion of Decency was merely another seed of evil that found a place to grow in Derry's wretched soil. Mike wants to hear more about the burning of the Black Spot, but his mother tells him that it is his bedtime. Still, Will assures Mike that there are good people in town, too. Mike again asks to hear about the fire at the Black Spot, but Will insists it's no story for a boy. It's another four years before Mike hears what happened at the Black Spot.

Will thinks that Derry is an inherently evil place. He uses the analogy of "wretched soil" because he is a farmer and thinks in terms of what can and cannot take root and grow in a particular place. Racism is one of many evils that, while not native to Derry, are capable of developing there.

On February 26, 1985, Mike Hanlon writes about reading over his last entry about his father and bursting into tears. His father has been dead for twenty-three years. Mike's grief lasted for two years, until he graduated from high school in 1965, but he still feels the pangs of the loss. Will Hanlon left the army in 1937 with a disability pension. With the money, he was able to marry Jessica a year earlier than he planned. They live first in Houston, where they work at war factories until 1945. Will saves up some money and sees a classified ad for a farm for sale. They ride up from Texas. Will obtains a ten-year mortgage and the family settles down.

Will Hanlon returns to the South. He reverses his northern migration due to his disillusionment with the North after the fire at the Black Spot. However, when he finds a farm for sale—in Derry, coincidentally—he returns. It is almost as though the town calls him back with the temptation of cheap land, which was rather difficult for black people to obtain at the time, due to racist practices in real estate and homesteading.

Will Hanlon admits that he and Jessica had some problems at first from people who were hostile to the presence of black people in Derry. However, County Sheriff Sullivan gets to work on the matter. Sullivan finds out who killed Hanlon's chickens and vandalized his coop: Oscar "Butch" Bowers. Mike Hanlon mentions how kids at school say Butch is crazy. Will agrees that Butch was never quite right after he came home from fighting in the Pacific during World War II, when he was a Marine.

As loathsome and spiteful as Bowers is, his mental illness allows some room for sympathy. What both he and Will have in common is that they were both disappointed by what they believed would be the fruits of their military service. Hanlon failed to get any respect and Bowers never got the mental healthcare that he needed.

Sheriff Sullivan informs Butch Bowers that Will Hanlon does not want to press charges and only wants two hundred dollars to cover the cost of the coop and chickens. Bowers refuses, and dares Sullivan to have him tried before a white jury that he knows will not care about a black man's chickens. Sullivan agrees that might be true, but then he tells Bowers that a jury will care that he painted a swastika on the coop. Frightened by this prospect, Butch tells his brother to sell his new Mercury, which Butch had bought, so that Butch could pay off Hanlon. Meanwhile, Butch goes around telling everyone that he will burn Hanlon out.

Bowers is so secure in his status as a white man that he knows that the other citizens of Derry will not punish him in favor of sympathizing with Hanlon. However, in the sensitive aftermath of the Second World War, their hatred for Nazis and any assumed sympathizer will convince them to punish Butch. Knowing that he cannot win through legal means, Butch considers other ways to terrorize Hanlon and run him out of town.

Will Hanlon cuts Butch Bowers off on Witcham Street by the trainyards and takes out his Winchester rifle. Will warns Bowers that if there are any fires by his place, he will go after Butch. He reaches into the Ford that Butch is now driving and grabs him by the hair. He also tells Butch that the next time he calls Will a "nigger" or a "jig," his brains are going to be dripping off of the domelight of his car. Butch starts to cry. This is the last bit of trouble Will recalls ever having with Bowers, though he remains unsure about how the family dog, Mr. Chips, died.

Will violently confronts Butch because he can't allow Butch to think that Will is tolerant of any threat to his family or his livelihood. Butch cries both out of fear that Will may kill him and due to his pride being wounded. Butch is a failure as a farmer and his reputation as a crazy person overshadows his record as a veteran. All that is left is his sense of pride in being white. Will's ability to get the best of him, however, undermines even this.

Mike Hanlon is alone in the Derry Public Library and thinking of his father's voice telling him the story about the burning of the Black Spot. He hears the final story about six weeks before Will Hanlon dies. Mike goes to visit him every day in the hospital, every afternoon after school. They never speak of the cancer. In one of their interminable pauses, Will asks about the burning of the Black Spot. Will figures that, at fifteen, Mike is old enough to hear the story.

Will probably does not tell Mike the story when he is eleven because he does not want to risk giving him nightmares. At fifteen, however, Mike is more likely to have some awareness of the evil in the world. Indeed, he knows plenty about the evil that is particular to Derry.

Will Hanlon tells Mike that when he was at the army base in Derry from 1929 to 1930 there was a Non-Commissioned Officers' Club where the E Company boys—that is, the black company—were not allowed to go. At this time, Derry is a logging town with a number of bars that would have technically been speakeasies, though Will thinks that is too fancy a name for these places. The bars roar all night long and the cops do not mind. Will figures that payouts kept people quiet. The hooch is ten times better than what is available in the NCO club, for it is brought down from Canada. You could also pick up a woman—a white woman—at one of the Derry bars, though that comes with risk.

The exclusion of E Company from the club is not only due to it being an officers' club but also due to systemic racism in the army, which will not allow black men to become officers. The men go to the bars in town instead. Will refrains from calling them "speakeasies," which he associates more with the upper-class, fancy bars in New York or Chicago. The people in Derry's bars were rough-looking and ill-mannered loggers.

Lumbermen were the main customers in these dives and Will Hanlon insists that they did not mind the presence of black men. If they had, they could have easily thrown each one of them out. One of them takes a liking to Hanlon and offers to buy him a drink. The lumbermen were not the problem—instead, five men on the Town Council who do their drinking in country clubs want to ensure that no white woman "[gets] polluted by the blacks of Company E." Major Fuller says that he never wanted black people in Derry in the first place. An old man on the council, whose name is Mueller, says that is not his problem. Mike makes the connection to his classmate Sally Mueller. Will says that this Mueller would have been her uncle, not her father.

This anecdote establishes the relationship between racism and classism. It is not the working-class loggers who have a problem with the presence of black men in their bars, but the upper-class white men. Though they have fears about sex between black men and white women, which could upset the town's racial demographics, they are probably more worried about an alliance forming between the black soldiers and the white loggers, many of whom are employed by men on the council. It could be the start of a class war that the wealthier men would lose.

Major Fuller solves the problem by forming an old requisition shed where Memorial Park now stands. Dick Halloran, a private first-class who works as a mess-cook, suggests that they could fix it up nice, if they try. They do the best they can, but the place still has only two windows and a dirt floor. It starts looking nice enough that the white troops begin to grumble about it. Soon thereafter, the white officers seek to have a competition with the black soldiers on who has the better club. The black soldiers, however, want nothing to do with this.

The soldiers use the ingenuity that black people have always demonstrated in response to exclusion. They create their own space and make it so well that it draws the envy of the white NCO officers. However, the black soldiers do not want the officers to feel that there is competition, out of fear that they could then do something to destroy the black officers' club.

The Black Spot becomes home to a decent jazz band, and by the end of August, a rather good Dixieland combo is playing there on Friday and Saturday nights. Soon, people from town start showing up at the black soldiers' club. When the white people show up, the black soldiers forget to be careful. They bring in their own booze in brown paper bags—fine liquor. The black soldiers, who Will Hanlon recalls as "young and proud of what [they'd] done" underestimate how bad things can get.

When whites from town begin to show up, the young black officers do not perceive the danger. Hanlon describes a condition in which the young men always had to be on guard, even when trying to have fun. The new presence of the white patrons will worry the Town Council members again about integration.

The members of the Town Council are about a quarter of a mile from the Black Spot in their Victorian homes on West Broadway, overhearing the blues that is playing in the makeshift speakeasy and imagining white women dancing cheek to jowl with black soldiers. More young people come to drink, from all over Maine. There are even fraternity boys there with their sorority girlfriends. The Black Spot opens at seven and stays open until one. By October, the place becomes so popular that people are "standing hip to hip with six other people." There is no room to dance, only to wiggle.

The problem with jazz, according to the Town Council, is that it is a form of music that encourages people to dance in close proximity. Soon, people from every strata of Derry's white society are socializing with black people, which poses a threat to the Town Council's wish to maintain class and racial supremacy. This becomes less possible when traditional resentments dissolve between groups who now dance together.

Major Fuller could have shut them down easily with a court martial but was reluctant to do so, out of fear of upsetting the patrons from town. This leads the White Legion of Decency to put on some white sheets and bring an end to things themselves. It is a Saturday night and the place is "jumping." Will Hanlon estimates that there were two or three hundred people there. Six or eight white men arrive in a new Packard. None of them are young. The Packard parks on a hill and flashes its lights twice. All of the men have torches. One stays behind the wheel of the Packard. Hanlon recalls that Sally Mueller's uncle has a green Packard.

The White Legion resorts to vigilante violence to destroy the threat that they believe the Black Spot poses. As Will Hanlon tells the story, he pieces together characters and events that were unclear to him at the time. Mike, too, sees how even his classmate is implicated in Derry's history of violence. The snobbery that Beverly and Ben perceive in Sally Mueller comes from her family's sense that they deserve social prominence due to being rich and white.

The members of the White Legion gather in the back of the Black Spot. They douse their torches with gas. Will Hanlon wants to believe that they panicked when their torches blazed from the gas and threw them for that reason. He wants to believe that the men only wanted to scare them. All the same, the black November night is soon blazing with torches, which the men throw through the back windows into the kitchen. Others hold on to the torches and wave them, saying "Come out niggers!"

Hanlon still does not want to believe that the White Legion would be so evil as to burn people alive. He tells himself other versions of the same story to avoid confronting the extent of the evil that has long existed in Derry. He even makes the arsonists out to be incompetent, which is preferable to thinking that they could be so inhumane.

The band in the Black Spot is playing so loudly that no one notices what is going on at first. Flames shoot out from the kitchen and the assistant cook opens the door and gets torched—losing his mess jacket and most of his hair. Will Hanlon thinks that the gas stove has exploded. As he stands, he is knocked down by people heading for the door. A dozen people step on his back. Trevor Dawson pulls him up and saves him. The heat is overwhelming and he can feel his skin baking. Dick Hallorann tells Will and his friend, Trevor, that they have to get out by going through the fire. The safe exit, he knows, is being blocked by the white supremacists. They both go out Dick's way.

Dick Hallorann's gift of clairvoyance, which he describes in Stephen King's later novel The Shining as the ability to "shine," helps Will and Trevor escape. Having to go "through the fire" is both literally necessary in this instance and a metaphor for the lives of the black men, in which they have to endure the worst in order to secure some of the comforts that whites enjoy and take for granted.

As Will Hanlon escapes, he can smell people burning inside. When Will scrambles to his feet after escaping through a window, he sees the men in sheets. There are people lying on the grass, having fainted from the smoke. Sergeant Wilson comes along in his truck and Trevor Dawson tells Wilson that he needs the truck. Wilson rudely brushes Dawson off, prompting Dawson to hit him. Trevor gets in and hits the side of the building with the truck, to allow for more people to escape. His act prevents many more people from dying.

Trevor is a hero, but the racist structure of the army calls for him to be punished for hitting a superior. Sergeant Wilson is of a lower social class than the men in the Town Council, but they are united in their belief in white supremacy. The sergeant's complicity with racial oppression at the expense of his own economic benefit helps the men on the Town Council retain economic power.

Mike prompts his father to reveal the thing he saw nearby—the thing he does not want to mention. Will Hanlon recalls seeing a giant bird that grabbed up one of the men in sheets. The bird does not hover but floats. It also has "big bunches of balloons" tied to each wing.

The bird is similar to the one that Mike will later see at the Kitchener Ironworks. The bird's attack on one of the Town Council members is an example of how It will kill anyone—those on the side of good or evil.

On March 1st, in his final diary entry for this interlude, Mike realizes that the thing has come again. He writes until three in the morning and falls asleep at his desk in the library. When he wakes, he sees a single balloon tied to his reading lamp. On it is a picture of Mike's face, "the eyes gone, blood running down from the ragged sockets, a scream distorting the mouth on the balloon's thin and bulging rubber skin." He looks at it and screams, and the balloon bursts.

The balloon appears because Mike recalls his father's story. The detail of the balloon may have also recurred to him in a dream. It seizes upon the memory and uses it to manipulate Mike into fearing that he will become Its next victim.

CHAPTER 10: THE REUNION

Back in 1985, the telephone rings and Bill Denbrough answers it. It is Mike Hanlon. Bill remembers where he is. He is in Derry and staying at the Derry Town House on Upper Main Street. Mike says that he has arranged a little reunion. Everyone is coming except for Stanley Uris. When Bill says that Stan might show up today, Mike announces that Stan is dead. Bill wonders if his plane crashed, and Mike assures him that it was nothing like that, but that he would rather explain when they are all together. Mike says that they will all meet at a restaurant called Jade of the Orient. It's in the shopping mall on Mall Road, which is where the old Ironworks used to be. Mike then assures Bill that they will catch up on everything.

Bill's idea or narrative about what happened to Stanley is inaccurate. Mike does not want to divulge the details until everyone is present, so that he can explain to everyone what has been happening in Derry and that the evil is so pervasive that Stan felt it in Atlanta and could not withstand it. They meet in a space where Mike had his first encounter with It. This passage indicates how dependent the group is on Mike, who is a kind of gatekeeper for information about what haunts Derry.

Bill hangs up the phone and takes a shower. He then orders a breakfast that he does not really want and picks at it. He dials for the Big Yellow Cab Company and asks to be picked up at a quarter to one. As the cab moves slowly down Main Street, Bill think that Derry was a big town in 1958 but it is now a city. The places that he remembers from his childhood, such as Mr. Keene's Center Street Drug Store, are gone. Bill's cab is caught in traffic and his driver says that it may take a while. Bill assures him that it is fine. He asks the cabbie how long he has lived in Derry. The driver says that he has been in Derry his whole life and expects to be buried there.

Like Mike Hanlon, the cab driver has never left Derry. Indeed, the longer Bill is in the town, he will realize that many of the people with whom he grew up have remained in Derry. Only other members of the Losers' Club have left, and Henry was forced out due to the crime he committed against his father. The unwillingness of people to leave Derry or to inquire about its mysterious evils suggests a complicity with or tolerance of the town's bad elements.

The cabbie tells Bill how the First Merchants of Penobscot County wanted to tear down the Aladdin Theater and put up a "complete banking mall." Mike Hanlon helped to prevent it at a city council meeting. The cabbie asks if Bill knows Mike. Bill thinks back to how they had met in July 1958. The cabbie says that a lot has changed in Derry but a lot still holds up, such as the Town House and the Standpipe in Memorial Park. Bill says that the Canal is still there, too. The cabbie assumes that the Canal will always be there. They reach the mall. The old field is gone now, as is the old Ironworks. Bill finds the mall ugly and is a bit surprised to know that the mall is the reality, not his memories.

The cabbie assumes that the Canal will always be there because it is a symbol of the town's economic prosperity. The First Merchants want to perpetuate that legacy, but they are indifferent to other landmarks in favor of expanding Derry's commercial appeal. Bill wishes to remember Derry as it was in 1958. By remembering the Derry of his childhood, it will become easier to believe in the task he has returned to perform.

The cabbie pulls into the parking lot of a building that "[looks] like a large plastic pagoda." Bill gives the cabbie a big tip and the cabbie introduces himself as "Dave." Bill remembers that he meant to ask Dave if he likes living in Derry. Bill walks into the restaurant. Mike Hanlon is in the lobby, sitting on a wicker chair. Mike appears worn and very thin, looking older than he is. Bill cannot help but to tell him that he looks a little tired, and Mike admits that he is tired. Nevertheless, Mike sticks out his hand and welcomes Bill back to Derry. Bill ignores the hand and embraces Mike.

Bill wonders if the cabbie stays in Derry out of a sense of obligation, as Mike does, or if he really appreciates the town as it is. If his response is the latter, that would suggest a willful ignorance of Derry's evils or some complicity in it. Mike has the appearance of a man who has been fighting against a force much stronger than himself all on his own. Bill's embrace reminds him that he is no longer alone in his effort.

Mike pulls away from Bill around the time that the hostess comes to lead them to their table. She leads them past the main dining area, and to a space separated from the rest of the restaurant by a beaded curtain. Bill hesitates for a moment and feels nervous. He wonders how everyone looks. Mike invites him to come in and see for himself.

Bill is reluctant to see the Losers' Club as adults. Since taking the flight back to Maine, he has been recalling them all as the children they were. It may be difficult to fathom facing It as adults.

Bill walks in and first sees Richie Tozier. He is rocking his chair back so that he is leaning against the wall and whispering something to Beverly Marsh that causes her to giggle. Eddie Kaspbrak is on Beverly's left. His aspirator is next to his water glass. Sitting at one end of the table, watching the others with a look of "mixed anxiety, amusement, and concentration, [is] Ben Hanscom." Bill rubs his head to see if his hair has magically come back. Beverly Marsh—if her name is still Marsh—has become a stunningly beautiful woman. Eddie has grown up to look a bit like Anthony Perkins and has a prematurely lined face. On one wrist he has a Patek Philippe watch and on the little finger of his right hand is a ruby. Bill finds the stone too big and ostentatious not to be real.

Some things about the group have not changed—Eddie still has his aspirator, for instance. Bill's comparison of Eddie to Anthony Perkins is a reference to the Alfred Hitchcock film Psycho, *in which Perkins plays a man with an obsession and unhealthy attachment to his mother. This is also indicative of Eddie's own relationship with Sonia Kaspbrak. Seeing the group causes Bill to feel that he has regressed a bit. He rubs his head to remind himself of his age.*

Ben Hanscom is the one who has really changed. He has gotten thin. They are all there, Bill Denbrough thinks, even Stanley Uris and It. Richie Tozier grins at Bill and asks him how long he has been turtle-waxing his head. Bill calls him "Trashmouth" and tells him "fuck you and the horse you rode in on." This is how Bill is welcomed back to the group. He goes over to them and shakes hands, feeling as though he has come home for good.

Richie is the first one to acknowledge Bill's entrance and, in true form, he does it with a joke. The joke puts Bill at ease and reminds him that his relationship with his old group of friends has not changed. With them he feels at home, despite the anxiety he felt during his return to Derry.

Mike orders drinks. They find out that Beverly Marsh is now "Beverly Rogan." She says that she is married to a wonderful man in Chicago who was able to transform her "simple talent" into "a successful dress business." Eddie owns a limousine company in New York and jokes that his wife could be having an affair with Al Pacino as they speak. Everyone knows what Bill and Ben have been up to because they are famous. Beverly has two of Bill's paperback novels and asks if he will sign them. Richie is a disc jockey in California known as "the Man of a Thousand Voices." Bill remembers how terrible Richie's voices were. Beverly asks if he wears contacts now instead of glasses, and Richie says he does.

With the exceptions of Bill and Ben, whose life stories are well-known, they each tell stories about their lives. Beverly and Eddie embellish to make their circumstances sound better than they are. They do not want the others to know that they have not overcome their childhood anxieties but have merely repeated them in adulthood. Richie overcomes his geeky boyhood image by wearing contact lenses. His friends find it hard to believe that his corny impressions have made him famous, though comedy is the source of Richie's power.


Ben asks Mike if the library is the same. Mike reaches into his wallet and takes out an aerial snapshot of the library. Ben holds the picture the longest. He taps on the image of **the glass corridor** and asks Mike if it looks familiar. Mike accurately guesses that it is the BBC communications center that Ben designed. The drinks come, and Richie initiates a toast. The food comes, and they eat. For dessert, they have baked Alaska. Ben says that he has not eaten so much since he was a kid. Richie asks what prompted him to go on a diet. Ben tells the story of how he and his mother, Arlene Hanscom, move to Nebraska in 1960. They stay with his aunt for a while, who constantly chides him about being overweight. In high school, physical education is difficult for him. He is bullied and paddled in the locker rooms.

Ben, like Richie, transforms himself by changing his self-image. Though Ben moves away from Derry, the memory of the glass corridor remains a source of comfort in his transition from childhood to adulthood. This leads him to the memory of being bullied as a teen, as he was in Derry, for being overweight and not having a body that conformed to standards of male beauty and athleticism. Ben is constantly made to feel guilty for being overweight, while his mother keeps feeding him.

Beverly senses where the story is going and tells Ben that he does not need to continue, but Bill wants to hear more. The paddling results in Ben crying on the floor. His coach is unsympathetic. He bends forward and grabs each of Ben's "tits" then wipes his hands on his pants. He tells Ben that his self-indulgence makes him want to puke. Then, Ben gets mad and tells the coach that he will be ready to try out for his track team in March. The coach says that the day Ben can outrun the best athletes on his team is the day the coach quits his job and goes back to picking corn.

Beverly loves Ben and is sympathetic to him. Knowing that the story is painful, she assures him that he need not continue telling it. Bill's desire to hear the story, which will help him connect the old Ben to the man sitting before him, prompts Ben to continue. The coach's act of pinching Ben is not only an expression of disgust with Ben's weight but also with Ben's un-masculine appearance.

Richie asks if Ben succeeded in losing the weight. Ben says that he did, but that he first battled his mother, Arlene Hanscom, who refused to believe that he was fat. Ben reasons that it was scary for Arlene to raise a boy on her own and that when she was able to give him more food, it helped her feel like she was "winning the battle." Ben drinks more beer and tells the group how his mother would not accept his weight loss. She refuses to take in his clothes, which are getting smaller. At night, he only eats half of what is on his plate and she accuses him of trying to starve himself because he does not love her anymore. Ben buys his own new clothes with his paper route money and stays focused on losing weight—keeping the memory of the coach's face in his mind.

Ben realizes that he cannot depend on his mother to help him solve his problem because she is still obsessively afraid that her son will starve due to her low earning potential. By constantly feeding Ben, she reminds herself that she is capable of keeping her son alive. When he refuses to eat as much as she wants him to, it makes her think, again, that her efforts to support him are not good enough.


Ben makes amends with his mother by eating lots of a salad that she makes, after learning in Health and Nutrition class that one can eat as many greens as one wants without gaining weight. Arlene Hanscom, he realizes, does not care what he eats as long as he eats a lot of it. Ben loses about seventy pounds and has grown two inches, better distributing the weight. On the first day of track tryouts, he proves himself to be a shoo-in for the team. The coach does not say anything. Instead, he hits Ben and tells him to get off the field. He says that he would never have "a smartmouth bastard" like Ben on the team. Ben says he would never want to be on the team, but asks the coach to spare him a thought next time he sits down to eat corn.

Ben makes a compromise with his mother in which he agrees to eat all of the salad she can make. Arlene is only concerned with Ben's diet insofar as it assures her that she can provide for him. Therefore, she is not really interested in what he eats, only in the fact that she can provide him with an abundance of it. Ben triumphs over his mother and also over his coach by proving that he is capable of athleticism and being confidently masculine—with or without the weight.

The coach tells Ben that if he does not leave the coach will beat the living crap out of him. Ben tells him that if the coach lays another hand on him, he will make sure that the coach loses his job. He says that he lost the weight to have a little dignity and peace, which are worth fighting for. Bill has difficulty believing that a teenager would ever talk like that. Ben thinks that most might not, but most teenagers do not go through the things he has gone through. He assures Bill that he said every word. When Ben's homeroom teacher hands him his course sheet, it says that he has been excused from physical education. Richie congratulates him for beating the coach, and Ben thinks that he was able to do it partly because he was thinking of the Losers' Club.

Ben's unusually mature use of language comes not only from enduring forms of bullying that have been life-threatening (e.g., Henry Bowers trying to carve his name into Ben's stomach), but also from having faced the ultimate form of evil in It. In a way, Ben's experiences with It helped him later in life, for they made everything that he had to confront afterward seem relatively easy. Also, his knowledge that there are sympathetic people in the world also gave him strength.

Mike signals the waitress and they all order another round of drinks. Bill hopes that someone else will tell a story about the years between. He wants to hear about their lives because, at any moment, Mike will start talking and he dreads hearing what he will say. Eddie speaks next to ask when Stanley died. Mike says that he died the night before last, when Mike made the calls. Beverly asks if he committed suicide, and Mike says that he did.

Bill wants to hear the stories about what the others have done since leaving Derry, both because he is interested in how his friends' lives have progressed and because he wants to delay hearing about the latest murders in Derry. The first painful truth that the group confronts is Stan's suicide, which Bill knows is tied to Mike's news.

Mike says that he has subscribed to the newspapers closest to where all of them live, as a way to keep tabs on them. Richie asks Mike what has been happening in Derry. Mike is afraid to tell them too much, out of fear that they could also be driven to suicide. Bill insists that Mike tell them what he can.

Mike does not wish to tell them too much too early, out of fear that they will be overwhelmed, as Stan was. They are the only ones who can fight It, and the pressure of that realization was too much for Stan.

Mike tells his old group of friends that the murders have started again. He talks about the Adrian Mellon case. He says that both Don Hagarty and Christopher Unwin saw a clown. Ben says that it must have been Pennywise. Mike says that Harold Gardener was one of the investigating officers. This triggers in Bill the memory of his brother George's death. Mike then mentions a boy found mutilated in the park. Eddie asks how many there have been so far. Mike counts nine. They muse on why the stories have not become national news. Part of it is the relative smallness of Derry, but another reason is that It simply does not want too many people to know about It.

To numerologists, the number nine—the number of murders so far—is significant. Nine suggests a call to duty or humanitarianism. Mike calls his six old friends to alert them that it is time to return to Derry and fulfill their promise to help if the murders ever started again. Mike has kept tabs on his six friends because he knew that they would not be aware of what was happening in Derry. The town's smallness makes the murders seem almost quaint, rather than a serious cause for concern.

Mike muses that It has been around for so long that It's part of Derry's history. He goes through the litany of violent occurrences in Derry, including the disappearances of children and whole families. These are recorded in diary extracts but not in public documents. Ben surmises that something is going on, but it is private. Beverly compares the occurrences in Derry to a cancer, but that is not quite right, Mike thinks, for, Derry has otherwise thrived. It is a rather small place where bad things—sometimes ferocious things—happen often, every quarter of a century. Mike notes that It came to an abrupt end in 1958 because of the Losers' Club.

Derry's murders are kept quiet because the town actively forgets in order to survive. Institutions like the Derry Historical Society only elevate the positive aspects of the town's history. In this regard, King uses Derry as a microcosm of the United States—a place where forgetting and moving on is key to its ability to rapidly evolve and change. The unwillingness to confront unpleasant truths only results in their being submerged, not destroyed.

Eddie tries to remember how they stopped It. Mike assures him that he will remember in time. Ben wonders what will happen if they do not remember. Mike says, "Then God help us all." He then takes a photograph of George Denbrough out of a notebook. It is the old school photo from George's album. Mike asks Bill when he last saw it. Bill says that he has not seen it since the spring of 1958. He tried to show it to Richie, but it was gone. Eddie takes a hit from his aspirator.

Eddie takes a hit from his aspirator because all of this information makes him very nervous. Furthermore, he cannot remember how the group sent It away in 1958. The weight of Mike's information and Eddie's inability to recall the story from 1958 makes him feel inadequate, which is when he turns to his aspirator for comfort.

Mike says that after the death of a boy named Steven Johnson, he told himself that, if another body were discovered, he would place the six calls. He says that George Denbrough's picture was found "by a fallen log less than ten feet from the Torrio boy's body." Also, the picture was not hidden but displayed as though someone wanted it to be found. Mike says that he gets police photos of the dead children from someone on the department whom he pays twenty dollars a month.

It left the photo near the body, knowing that Mike would find out about it and that this information would signal him to tell the others to return to Derry. It seems to want to face the Losers' Club once more, now that they are all adults. Mike uses the photos that he gets from the police department to build a record of the latest cycle of Derry's murders.

Mike proceeds to tell stories of children who have been decapitated, drowned in toilets, and torn open. He also mentions a boy named John Feury who is found dead on 29 Neibolt Street. The mention of this street name sends Eddie into a minor shock. Mike says that Feury was found with his legs missing, when a postman noticed a hand sticking out from under the porch. Chief Rademacher arrests a hermit named Harold Earl who lives in a little shack on Route 7. Earl goes to a mental health facility, though his liver is nearly gone due to his habit of drinking paint thinner. He also claims to have witnessed UFOs and Bigfoot.

The police, who only deal in concrete realities, have found the likeliest suspect in Harold Earl. Earl's social isolation and mental instability make him a social pariah and, therefore, easiest to blame for the murder of Feury and the other children. They use Earl's ability to butcher deer as the reason for the decapitation of the bodies.

Mike next shows the gang a photo of the remains of a boy named Jerry Bellwood; "what [is] left of him [is] found at the foot of a cement retaining wall." A message is scrawled on the wall: "Come home." Bill looks at Mike grimly, and Mike confirms Bill's suspicion: the message has been written in Jerry's blood.

The message to "come home" is a sign to the remaining members of the Losers' Club—a teasing invitation but also an expression of It's wish to destroy the group so that It's reign of evil can continue undisturbed.

Mike takes back his photos. He puts them in his jacket pocket and when they are out of sight, everyone feels a sense of relief. Beverly finds it incredible that nine children have died and no one has been responsive. Mike says that some people are angry and others are scared but some are faking. When Beverly asks what he means, he prompts her to remember a man sitting on his porch who folded his newspaper and went back inside of his house when she screamed at him for help. Beverly does not recall this, but he assures her that she will in time.

The photos horrify the group, but also remind them of their call to duty. Beverly has forgotten how tolerant the people in Derry are of the violence and evil that flourishes there. When Mike offers her an example from an instance in her own childhood—in which her father chased her through town—she does not even remember, having repressed the memory or lost it through supernatural means.

Mike says that people are doing what they are expected to do in the midst of children coming up dead or missing. He mentions the Save Our Children Committee. Also, the curfew is back in effect. Mike mentions that the really sincere ones get scared enough to leave. Beverly recalls the message written on the wall: "Come home." Mike supposes that It may want all of them back to finish the job that It started—as revenge. Mike also notes that Derry has left its mark on the members of the Losers' Club, though all of them have also turned out to be rich. Mike reviews the successes of each of them and contrasts those accomplishments with his more modest living as a librarian. Ben says that Mike has "kept the lighthouse."

The citizens of Derry keep up the appearance of being outraged by the murders, but they will do nothing. Those who know what is truly killing the children allow their sense of disbelief to overpower their resolve to act. Mike, on the other hand, has stayed in town to keep watch over Derry in case It returned. This is what Ben means when he says that Mike has "kept the lighthouse." He has also maintained his promise to alert the others if the killings started again.

Mike then unbuttons his shirt and spreads it wide, revealing pink claw marks. Richie remembers the werewolf at 29 Neibolt Street and asks Bill if he remembers, but Bill does not. Bill only remembers that he wanted to kill It. Mike asks if he does still and Bill considers this carefully before responding, "More than ever." Bill tries to remember if they ever came close to killing It. He says that he can remember everything up to August 15, 1958 with perfect clarity, but everything from then until September 4 of that year is completely gone from his memory. Suddenly, Bill's arm jerks convulsively and he knocks over one of his empty beer bottles.

The claw marks are from the time when the entire group returned to the house on Neibolt Street to confront the werewolf. This was when Beverly used the silver slug that Ben made with a silver dollar that he later gave Bill. Bill cannot remember what he saw that day. He also does not remember the silver dollar. What is clearest to him is his anger. There is an apparent trend with sending It away and the disappearance of the associated memories.

Mike asks Bill if he remembers the "deadlights." Bill says that he does not, and he does not want to remember. Mike points out to everyone how they once exercised group will and "achieved some special understanding." Mike thinks that Stanley, "with his ordered mind," may have had some idea of what that was. Mike also alerts everyone to another important thing they all have in common: none of them have children. Each has a different explanation for why this none—none of which is related to infertility.

The "deadlights" appear at other points in the novel and will later feature prominently when Audra Phillips gets caught in them. Though King never defines them, seeing them leaves one in a state of hypnotic, catatonic terror. The group's inability to reproduce is seemingly the work of It, whose own ability to reproduce evil depends on eliminating the Losers' Club and ensuring that they have no offspring.

Richie then launches into a story about how he met a woman a year after he moved to California. They talk about having children but decide against it for political reasons. Richie then goes and has a vasectomy. Richie and the woman, whose name is Sandy, live together for two-and-a-half years. Then, she gets an offer to join a corporate law firm in Washington. They have a fight over her decision to take the job and, ultimately, she leaves. A year later, Richie tries to have the vasectomy reversed. He knows that the chances of doing this successfully are slim and that the surgery will be painful, but he wants to try anyway.

Richie and Sandy are typical of many couples of their generation who, due to their political beliefs, decide not to have more children who will contribute to overpopulation and environmental pollution. The decision not to have children is more Sandy's than it is Richie's and, when they break up, Richie realizes that he would like to give himself the chance of becoming a father.

Richie's doctor tells him that he wants to take a sperm sample because sometimes the vasa reconnect spontaneously, though it is rare. However, the doctor still insists on checking things out. After the test, the doctor tells Richie that he has good news and bad news: Richie does not need the surgery, but his sperm has been vital for several years. Richie calls Sandy, who announces that she has just gotten married. Richie asks if she was ever pregnant by him or had an abortion when they were together. She has not, but mentions that she is due to have a child in July. When Richie asks what made her change her mind about motherhood, she mentions being with a man who is not a "shit."

The reconnection of Richie's vasa is a mystery. Perhaps It has bestowed good fortune onto Richie and the other members of the group as a manipulative tool. For instance, if Richie thinks that he is less vulnerable, this can make it easier for It to kill him. Another explanation is that It wants the Losers' Club to know that It can still interfere directly into their lives—or this coincidence merely highlights how It has already influenced them.

Richie then says that the California branch of the American Medical Association has logged only twenty-three cases of "spontaneous regeneration." Six turned out to be botched operations and six others were hoaxes or cons. So, really, only eleven of the cases are genuine out of 28,618. Eddie insists that this fact from Richie's life does not prove anything about their childlessness, but Bill thinks it certainly suggests a link. Bill then asks Mike what they should do now.

Eddie refuses to believe in the link between the spontaneous reconnection of Richie's vasa and It because he does not want to believe that It has remained in their lives long after they left Derry. To Eddie, this suggests that there was never an escape, which Stan knew.

Mike suggests that they can try to kill It again, or just divide up the check six ways and go back to their normal lives. Mike is unsure, however, if they will be able to kill It with a smaller circle. He worries that It will simply kill them one by one. He suggests that they take a vote about whether or not to proceed, for he has brought them all back on the strength of a promise that most of them barely remember. Bill thinks of his brother, George, and feels the same old rage within himself. He raises his hand slowly and says that he wants to kill It.

Bill may not remember the promise, but he remembers the grief he felt after the clown killed his brother, as well as his sense of guilt, which was made worse by his parents shunning him. Mike suggests that they can go back to their normal lives, but after hearing Richie's medical news, it seems that their adult lives are not as normal as they would like to believe.

For a moment, Bill's hand hangs in the air alone. Then Beverly, Mike, and Ben raise their hands. Eddie sits back in his chair, looking as though he wishes he could disappear. He seems miserably afraid, and Bill thinks that he may bolt from the room. Then, Eddie raises one hand and grabs his aspirator with the other.

Eddie is afraid, but he knows that his friends need him and that they cannot destroy It without him. In 1958, each of them brought their own talent to the endeavor, and Eddie's talent was for navigation. As inadequate as he feels to perform the task, he knows that he must.

Bill asks what Mike's idea is. Mike thinks that everyone should go back to the place in Derry which they remember best. The assumed purpose of this is to plug back in to life in Derry. Mike admits that he is largely going off of intuition and also intuits that one of them may not turn up at the library that night, where they have all agreed to meet, at 7:00 PM. He notes, too, that It started alone for each of them. So, each of them will have to experience It again, alone.

Mike tells the group that, in order to jog their memories, they must revert back to what they remember best from their childhoods. This act will help them retrace their steps, which will lead them closer to It and to their memory of how they sent it away in 1958.

Before they leave, Beverly prompts everyone to open and eat their fortune cookies. Bill worries that the fortune cookies may be part of It, but it is too late and everyone is opening their cookies. Blood spurts from Beverly's fortune cookie. It splashes her hand and goes all over the white tablecloth. A huge bug—in "an ugly yellow-brown"—crawls out of Eddie's cookie. It is some sort of mutant cricket. Richie stares down at what comes out of his fortune cookie: an eye. Ben throws his cookie and two teeth are inside, both of which are clotted with blood.

What each person finds is related to their secret fears. Beverly has retained the memory of the blood from the bathroom sink drain. The "mutant cricket" that Eddie sees is reminiscent of the lobster, as well as his aversion to things that look like vermin. Richie's fear is related to the loss of his eyesight—a fear that was triggered by a schlock film he watched back in the Fifties.

Bill encourages everyone to "dummy up" and pretend as though everything is fine. The waitress, Rose, comes in and asks if everything is okay. Everyone assures her that the food was good. Bill looks down at his plate and seeks a leg poking out of his fortune cookie. Richie looks at it, too. A "great, grayish black fly" tries to emerge from the cookie. Yellowish goo flows out of the cookie and puddles onto the tablecloth. Beverly leaves, thinking that she has to vomit. She is coming out of the restroom when they all gather at the cash register.

Bill knows that Rose will not see what the others have seen in their fortune cookies. The glamours are the products of their own imaginations and anxieties, to which others do not have access. King never explains why a fly emerges from Bill's cookie. The reason could be as mundane as being annoyed by a house fly, or it could just be a generally grotesque or horrifying image.

Bill says that It is up to Its old tricks. Bill figures that It latches on to whatever is on people's minds. Beverly was thinking of blood and Eddie was thinking of the crickets in his basement. Ben notes that the waitress did not see anything, just as Beverly's father did not see the blood on the bathroom walls. Bill then says that he is going to take a walk to get some fresh air. Ben and Richie share a cab and the others take the bus. Bill knows that the walk back to town will be a long one, which is fine; he has a lot to think about.

Bill understands Its tricks. He also understands his friends' fears and anxieties. Due to Its ability to infiltrate the group's imaginations, they have to confront and overcome their anxieties. Otherwise, It will continue to exploit those anxieties in Its effort to destroy them. The group has to recall their old stories and then relinquish them before they can create new ones.

CHAPTER 11: WALKING TOURS

Richie and Ben end up in the same cab that Bill took to town. The cabbie, Dave, is silent with them, whereas he was chatty with Bill. Ben walks up Kansas Street, but to nowhere in particular. He vaguely recalls his **silver** dollar and how Beverly saved their lives with it. He looks down and thinks that he sees a turtle, but it is only a hopscotch grid, half-erased by the rain. He recalls the word *Chüd* but cannot remember what it means. Ben then goes to stand in front of the Derry Public Library, which has not changed. Nothing much has changed in general on Costello Avenue. The market where he bought candy as a boy is still there.

Ben remembers the silver dollar, but he cannot yet remember how *Beverly was able to save them on Neibolt Street with it. The image of the turtle appears to him as a reminder that he possesses the tools to his own salvation; he merely needs to access them. Ben returns to the library, which is the place where he was happiest in Derry and where he learned about Chüd.*

Ben walks into the library and feels momentarily disoriented, as though he no longer knows how old he is. He passes the Children's Library and overhears a young woman—much younger than Mrs. Davies was the last time he heard it—reading "Three Billy Goats Gruff," and he marvels at the coincidence. He looks at the checkout desk and sees a notice for the 7:00 PM curfew, which is also familiar to him from childhood. It becomes clear to him that there is no turning back and there never was.

When Ben steps back into the library, he realizes that nothing has really changed. The same fears and dangers that existed for him in 1958 continue to exist in 1985. The only difference is the reversal of numbers in the years. King may have done this to indicate two sides of the same coin—the childhood fears mirror those of the adults.

A young woman approaches Ben from behind the circulation desk and asks if she can help him. He recognizes her as a library assistant, like the ones he had seen in 1958. The fact that the girl is braless under a Western-style shirt is more of a relief than a turn-on, for it reminds him that he is, indeed, in 1985 and not 1958. Ben then asks if she has seen his son, whose name is Ben Hanscom. She says that he has not but will give him Ben's message to let him know that his "dad popped by on his way home." The library assistant looks at him with some suspicion. Indeed, nine children have been killed over the course of eight months, and it's suspicious to see an adult in the Children's library unless they are dropping off or picking up children. Ben then turns and goes to the adults' library.

Ben uses the visual cues around him to try to remind himself that he is still an adult and that he has not reverted back in time. To convince himself that he is no longer the obese eleven-year-old boy who once stepped into this library, he pretends that he is not Ben Hanscom, but that Ben is his son instead. The young woman seems unconvinced and, with the air of suspicion that pervades the town, she wonders if Ben might be the one who is killing Derry's children.

The name on the plate at the circulation desk is Carole Danner. On a door behind her is Mike Hanlon's name on a door with a frosted-glass panel. She comes over and asks Ben if he needs any help. He says that he would like to get a library card. He gives his address in Nebraska. Ben explains that he wants the card for sentimental reasons. Carole thinks this is "sweet" and says that, if he would like to browse around, the card will be ready in about fifteen minutes. She asks if he had a card when he was a boy. He notes that the library card was the most important thing to him other than his friends. In mid-sentence, however, he is interrupted by the sound of a voice, calling to him.

Other than hanging around in the Barrens with the Losers' Club, the Derry Public Library was the only other space in which Ben felt safe and welcome. As though to spoil that memory, a voice appears—almost on cue—to disrupt Ben's sentimental moment. Without Mike present, Ben will be forced to confront the voice on his own. Carole does not hear what Ben hears, just as Rose did not see the blood on the tablecloth in the restaurant.

The voice asks Ben to come up the stairs. Carole Danner looks at him and asks if anything is wrong. The voice again calls to him to come up the stairs. It is Pennywise the Dancing Clown. Ben thinks that he is not going to go upstairs. When he goes to Pennywise, it will be to kill him. The clown reads his thoughts and says that Ben is too old and that he and the others should just leave town. The clown then disappears and Dracula, with teeth like razors, has taken his place. Ben holds in his breath, sure that he will scream.

Ben insists on resisting the call from the voice, which belongs to the clown. He tries his best to ignore the clown, but thinking about It still allows It into the imagination. The clown tries to convince Ben that adulthood has rendered him too weak to defeat It, because he will be more cautious and less likely to believe in his ability to defeat a monster.

An old man in a driving cap is looking at a book of sketches and suddenly calls out, "Nonsense!" He repeats it and Ms. Danner prompts the old man, whose name is Mr. Brockhill, to be quiet. Ben, for a moment, thinks that he was the one who screamed out. Ms. Danner then goes to Ben and asks if he is all right; he looks ill. She invites him to lie down on a cot in Mike Hanlon's office, but he declines.

The man exclaims as though he were able to read Ben's mind. Indeed, the sights of an evil clown and Dracula are non-sensical, as is the fact that Ben has returned to town to try to defeat a monster that has haunted him from the age of eleven.

Mr. Brockhill exclaims again, in relation to the book that he is reading, something about how a "bullet would tumble." Suddenly, Ben recalls how he and his friends made slugs—that is, crude metal projectiles—not bullets, since they knew that they would not be able to make bullets. At the desk, Carole Danner hands him a small orange card. Ben realizes that it is the first adult library-card that he has ever owned. When Ms. Danner again asks if he would like to lie down, Ben assures her that he feels better. He then asks if she knows what happened to Mrs. Starrett. Ms. Danner says that Mrs. Starrett died of a stroke three years ago, at the age of fifty-eight or fifty-nine. Mike closed the library for a day in recognition. Ben is surprised to feel that he would like to cry. He then looks up at the landing and sees a balloon. On its side, a message is printed: "I KILLED BARBARA STARRETT! –PENNYWISE THE CLOWN."

Recalling the memory of how the Losers' Club sent It away the first time makes Ben feel better—or more at ease than he was when Pennywise first appeared. However, the knowledge of Mrs. Starrett's death gives It a new tool that It uses to taunt Ben. Ben feels that he would like to cry when Ms. Danner tells him the news because Mrs. Starrett, like his teacher Mrs. Douglas, appreciated Ben for who he was and made him feel welcome in the library. These women served as surrogate mothers for Ben, for Arlene's anxieties meant that Ben could only please her if he ate to the point of putting himself in poor health.

Ben then sees the book that he withdrew from the library on the day of his fight with Henry Bowers: *Bulldozer* by Stephen W. Meader. He sees his name amidst the list of boys who have borrowed the book. Stamped across the card is the message: "CANCEL." It is written in "smeary red ink" that looks like blood. Ben recoils and wonders what is happening to the others.

"Cancel" in this instance is a sign that Ben's life will soon end. The other names on the card are not mentioned, but one can deduce that they, too, were killed. Only boys have borrowed the book, suggesting that a taste for gory entertainment may be gendered, at least in King's view.

Eddie gets off the bus at the corner of Kansas Street and Kossuth Lane. Beverly has already climbed off the bus near Lower Main Street, and Mike drives his car back to the library. Eddie wonders in which direction he should go. As a boy, he liked to walk past Sally Mueller and Greta Bowie's houses on West Broadway. Once, while on his strolls back then, he sees Greta drinking lemonade and playing croquet and thinks of how pretty she is. He notices her shining blond hair and falls a little bit in love with her that day. Eddie timidly raises his hand to wave "hello," but she doesn't return the gesture. Eddie is not bothered. He sees no reason why a beautiful, rich girl like Greta would want to be around a "thin-chested, asthmatic" boy with "the face of a drowned water-rat."

Eddie has learned some of his snobbery from his mother. Sonia looks down on some people, as she will later look down on Mike and Beverly, and up to others, such as rich people who eat lobster regularly for dinner. Eddie does not look down on others, but he thinks that Greta is better than he is because she lives on an exclusive street and comes from one of Derry's best-known families. Like Ben, he has a growing sense of his inadequate masculinity, knowing that he is not handsome or athletic enough to get Greta's attention.

While Eddie is walking, he thinks that he should have gone to the Tracker Brothers' place on West Broadway, and is surprised to find himself standing in front of their truck depot, which is still there. The depot is nothing like the beautifully neat house which the brothers maintained on West Broadway, so neat that Sonia Kaspbrak was sure that they were gay, for "two men who [bothered] keeping a house so nice must be queers." Now, the windows of the low brick building are almost all dirty except for a small circular place on one of the lower panes. This place was once kept clean, so that boys could spy the *Playboy* calendar over the desk. The brothers kept their trucks at the back of the building, away from the lot, because they liked that the local kids used the space to play baseball. Eddie never played; his mother would have killed him if he tried.

The Tracker Brothers—lifelong bachelors whose tastes and lifestyle choice convinced Sonia that they were gay—seemed to inhabit two worlds. Their home was neat and decorous and suggested a refinement that would have been regarded as "feminine" in the context of the 1950s. Meanwhile, their depot was a very masculine space in which the men not only ran their business but also encouraged local boys to use the back lot for sports. It is never clear if Sonia was right about them or not, but certainly, the brothers did not conform to the decade's expectations for how men of their age should live.

Getting closer, Eddie sees a "For Sale" sign in the window of the truck depot. For Eddie, it suddenly feels as though someone has died. He wonders if Tony Tracker, the brother who managed the accounts and who was overweight, had a heart attack. The lot has not changed much, however. The boys back then had no actual bases, just pieces of canvas. Weeds have grown through the gravel and broken bottles are littered about. During his time watching games in the lot as a boy, he only twice saw a ball go over the fence at the back of the lot. Both of them were hit by the same kid: "Belch" Huggins.

The "For Sale" sign reminds Eddie that this memory from his childhood is just that, and the depot no longer exists. Its owners, if they are still alive, would probably be too old now to manage the business. Despite the litter and weeds, the lot looks as it did in his memory, which gives Eddie enough sensory material to recall the games that he saw the other boys play back in 1958.

Eddie remembers that "Belch" Huggins was big—abnormally so for his age—but not really fat. At twelve, he is clumsy, mean, and rather slow. One day, when a ball hits him on the head, a kid named Owen Phillips laughs at the bonking sound it makes. "Belch" walks over to Phillips and kicks his ass so hard that the kid runs home with a hole in the seat of his pants. Eddie thinks that if Richie were there, he would not have been able to keep himself from saying something and "Belch" probably would have put him in the hospital.

Like Ben, Belch is large for his age, and like Henry Bowers, he uses his size, which is clearly a point of insecurity, to frighten and dominate other children. When Owen pokes fun at Belch, he reminds Belch of his physical awkwardness, a point of sensitivity, which is why Belch beats the smaller boy up.

Eddie, lost in his memories, walks from the place where home base had been and walks "into shortstop country." He goes to the chain-link fence, which sweeps toward the Barrens. The Barrens look "more jungle-like than ever." He thinks of how he spent the happiest moments of his childhood down there. As he turns away, he sees "a cement cylinder with a heavy steel cap on the top." Ben used to call them Morlock holes. He suddenly remembers that this is where they went one August—down into the sewers, which were not sewers after a while. He struggles to remember what they became. He remembers seeing Patrick Hocksetter down there. Beverly said that Patrick had done something bad and It took him. Eddie can only remember that it was something to do with Henry Bowers. Eddie then turns away, not wanting to look at the Barrens anymore.

The chain-link fence separates the back lot, which is where the athletes and other kids who fit in hung out and played together, from the Barrens, which is where the Losers' Club played together. The fence is a metaphorical barrier between the social outcasts and the children who did not accept them. The Barrens is also the entry point into the sewers, which lead to It. Eddie cannot remember how he led the others through the sewers' circuitous system and toward Its lair, but he knows that the Barrens is both the place where he played as a child and the gateway to his pain.

Suddenly, Eddie hears a voice: "Catch, kid!" He turns toward the voice and a ball comes over the fence toward him. Eddie surprises himself by catching the spherical object, which is not a baseball but something that had once been a baseball and is now a round thing wrapped in string. The string trails away and goes into the Barrens. Eddie thinks, in panic, that It is here with him now. There is a voice on the other side of the fence, which Eddie recognizes as that of "Belch" Huggins. He remembers how Huggins was murdered in the tunnels under Derry in August 1958.

Ironically, this is the first instance in which anyone has ever offered to include Eddie in a game. It uses Eddie's wistful memory of watching games in the back lot, as well as his memory of being terrorized by "Belch" Huggins, to frighten Eddie out of his purpose of defeating It. The sight of It in the form of Belch, however, helps Eddie remember what happened to the boy.

"Belch" Huggins struggles up over the bank. He is wearing a pinstriped New York Yankees baseball uniform. He says that the ball that he just pitched to Eddie "would have been out of Yankee Stadium." He then offers to perform oral sex on Eddie. Belch's face then changes. His "jellylike bulb" of a nose caves in and reveals "two red channels," like those that Eddie has seen in his dreams. His hair coarsens, draws back from his temples, and turns white. Also, the rotting skin on his forehead pulls open to release a "mucusy [sic] substance." Belch is gone and Eddie is reunited with the leprous bum from under the porch on 29 Neibolt Street.

The presence of Belch is disarming; he is friendly to Eddie, which was not the case when Eddie knew the real Belch back in 1958. Belch's offer of oral sex before turning into the hobo is suggestive of latent homosexuality or bisexuality in Eddie. He was afraid of Belch growing up, but he also wanted Belch to notice him. This detail, along with Eddie's sacrificial love for Bill, his unromantic marriage to Myra, and Bill's comparison of Eddie to Anthony Perkins, is perhaps suggestive.

Eddie tries to scream and throws down the object that used to be a baseball. He steps back while the leper reaches the top of the fence. Suddenly, the leper's tongue unfurls to four feet long. Then, the leper pops out of view. Eddie turns and begins to run, but then he sees four stiff shapes come from the shadows "under the loading bay of the abandoned brick depot." They whirl and twirl in the still air. He ducks to avoid them. He runs past home plate then hears the phantom whack of a bat hitting a ball.

The phantom shapes mirror those that Stan once saw while walking alone in the Standpipe. The four shapes are probably those of Belch, Victor Criss, Patrick Hocksetter, and perhaps Greta Bowie—the girl he could not get to notice him. Eddie has recently been thinking of all of them, and they are all dead.

Eddie stops and feels the earth begin to shift. Second base goes flying into the air. Home plate goes flying as well. Then, he hears the voice of Tony Tracker, promising to get Eddie and his friends. Eddie shrieks and shrinks away. When he turns, he sees Greta Bowie. She is dead and half of her face has been eaten away by maggots. She holds a green balloon in one hand. She says that she died in a car crash at eighteen due to being "drunk and done up on reds." Eddie backs away and sees, just beyond her, Patrick Hocksetter. Patrick, too, is wearing the Yankees uniform. Now, Eddie is completely horrified and runs. Greta clutches at him, tearing his shirt and spilling awful liquid down his collar. He sees the message on the side of the balloon: "ASTHMA MEDICINE CAUSES LUNG CANCER! COMPLIMENTS OF CENTER STREET DRUG."

Eddie is revisited by all of the voices that were familiar to him in childhood. Tony's voice becomes hostile, which is another of Its tricks to get Eddie to think that the forces of evil and hostility in the town outweigh his resolve. King uses the anecdote about Greta, as he will later use one about Lars Theramenius, to explore how teenagers from Eddie's generation frequently died in accidents resulting from drug and/or alcohol abuse. Eddie's source of dependency is his aspirator. The balloon's message reminds Eddie of his unhealthy emotional attachment to the aspirator, and alludes to his conversation about it with Mr. Keene.

Eddie runs and ends up in McCarron Park, where he collapses "in a dead faint." The kids nearby steer clear of him because he looks like an alcoholic or someone with a strange disease. It is also possible that he is the killer everyone has been talking about. The kids think about reporting him to the police, but ultimately decide not to.

Ironically, the local children mistake Eddie for the very thing that he fears—the leprous hobo. In their imagination, Eddie becomes the thing that he finds most repulsive.

Beverly walks down Main Street from the Derry Town House, where she is staying. She thinks that her father may still be living in Derry. She last heard from him ten years ago, long before she married Tom Rogan. He sent her a postcard with the town's hideous plastic statue of Paul Bunyan. In the card, he writes to ask her for money. Beverly feels that her father did love her and that he was the reason why she had fallen in love with Bill in the summer of 1958—he had projected the same sense of authority as her father. She was, indeed, madly in love with Bill "by the end of their first meeting as a complete group in July of that year, that meeting of which Bill had taken such complete and effortless charge." She wanted to believe that Bill sent her the love poem, though she knew it was Ben Hanscom.

Beverly desires a strong, authoritative male figure in her life. She chooses the abusive form of that figure when she marries Tom in an effort to use him as a substitute for obtaining her father's approval. Bill represents the kinder and more loving form of male authority that Beverly craves. She wanted to believe that Bill loved her as much as she loved him because she wanted Bill to take care of her. Knowing Bill, however, has at least helped Beverly understand that masculine strength and abusive behavior do not have to be tied together.

Beverly thinks that she remembers Ben saying that he wrote the poem. She also thinks that she remembers telling Bill that she loved him. She realizes, with sudden shock, that she is standing in front of the Kleen-Kloze Washateria, where she, Stanley, Ben, and Eddie took the blood-stained rags that day in June. She walks around her neighborhood and realizes that it has not changed much. When she stands in front of her former home, she thinks about going up and ringing the bell. She thinks that her father might still be there, that she might hear the familiar sound of the shuffle of his slippers. She walks slowly up the path, which has weeds growing up between the concrete sections. She looks closely at the first-floor windows, which are curtained. Then, she looks at the mailboxes. The name "Marsh" is, indeed, still there.

Beverly recalls the love triangle from her childhood. However, there is no conflict between Ben and Bill over Beverly, for the love among the group overrides petty jealousies. Like Eddie, Beverly walks to significant places from the summer of 1958 as though she were sleepwalking. Like Ben, she sees that her own neighborhood on Lower Main Street has not changed much. The sounds from her childhood, such as the shuffling her father's slippers, come back to her.

Beverly rings the bell twice. She hears someone approaching and the sound is just as she imagined: the whisper of old slippers coming across the floor. When the door opens, she is surprised not to see her father but "a tall woman in her late seventies." Her hair is mostly white, but long and gorgeous with flecks of gold. Her eyes are blue. Her wrinkled purple dress, made from watered silk, is shabby "but still dignified." Her wrinkled face seems kind. The woman tells her that Al Marsh has been dead for five years. Beverly looks again at the mailboxes and sees the name "Kersh" instead of "Marsh." Mrs. Kersh mentions that she knew Al Marsh, who later moved down to Roward Lane. She used to see him at the Washateria, before it closed, or at the Costello Avenue Market. Mrs. Kersh worries about Beverly's pale appearance, so she insists on getting her a cup of tea.

Beverly feels disoriented because the mailbox carries her own name, not that of Mrs. Kersh. She begins to doubt her own senses. However, the sight of the gentle-looking old woman puts Beverly at ease. The blue of the old woman's eyes is reminiscent of the blue eyes that George Denbrough saw in the face of the creature under the sewer. For him, Its eyes put him at ease because they reminded him of his mother. Mrs. Kersh's memories of Beverly's father indicate that Mrs. Kersh is someone who shares something in common with Beverly, which tricks Beverly into thinking that the old woman is safe.

Mrs. Kersh says that she came to the U.S. in 1920 from Sweden at the age of fourteen. She worked in a hospital for many years before becoming the head housekeeper. Her husband invested their money well, allowing her to live in modest comfort in her later years. She invites Beverly to look around her old apartment while the tea boils. When Beverly is in the bathroom, leaning over the sink and waiting for the voices to come, Mrs. Kersh calls her in to have her tea. Mrs. Kersh passes Beverly a cup of tea, which appears muddy. She compliments how Mrs. Kersh has decorated the apartment, particularly the cedar chest. Mrs. Kersh declares it an antique and smiles, revealing yellow teeth with canines that look "almost like tusks." Beverly thinks that the teeth were white when she met Mrs. Kersh at her door.

Beverly remembers the voices from the drain of the bathroom sink, but does not hear them now because It knows that she would expect to hear them. The expectation would no longer make the voices as scary as they once were to her. Instead, It uses Beverly's sense of disorientation—her anticipation and dread at the prospect of seeing her father—to find a new way of frightening her. The gentle old woman, for instance, turns into a predatory-looking creature, indicating that Beverly is not as safe with her as she thought.

Suddenly, Beverly is frightened and wants to leave Mrs. Kersh's apartment. Mrs. Kersh goes on talking, sounding very much like Yoda in *Star Wars*. She asks if Beverly notices the R.G. carved into the chest. As she talks about her father, Robert Gray, also known as Bob Gray and better known as Pennywise the Dancing Clown, her dress changes and becomes "a scabrous, peeling black." She talks about her father, which she pronounces *fadder*, then offers Beverly something to eat. Mrs. Kersh's voice has risen an octave, and some of her teeth turn as black as her dress. Her claws scrape the plates where she has put out cookies and cake. Her breath is the smell of dead things burst wide-open.

Mrs. Kersh is turning into a witch. This is indicated by her change in dress and her higher voices, which we are to imagine as a cackle. Her origin story, too, changes from that of a thrifty Swedish immigrant to that of the daughter of the terrorizing clown, whose origins are unknown. Her breath smells like the sewer where It dwells, and with her claws, the old woman turns into a creature that seems only partly human.

Mrs. Kersh goes on to say that she loved her father, who gave birth to her by defecating her out. Beverly looks down into her tea cup and realizes that there is no tea in her cup, but instead liquid feces. The old woman shrinks before her eyes to become "a crone with an apple-doll's face." Suddenly, the furniture in the room turns to treats. The dining room table is not dark oak but fudge. The tea cups are "carefully looped with blue-dyed frosting." Mrs. Kersh, who has transformed into a witch, tells Beverly that "[they] are all waiting for her." Beverly thinks that the old woman is the witch from "Hansel and Gretel"—the story that scared her so much when she was little.

Fairy tales play an important role in the novel in contributing to the children's memory of terror. Details from the stories, which both frighten and entertain, are excellent fodder for It, who uses them to terrorize Beverly's imagination and to disrupt her sense of domestic comfort. The "they" who are waiting for Beverly are all of the dead children whose voices Beverly heard in the bathroom sink drain when she was little.

Suddenly, the witch transforms into Beverly's father, Al Marsh. Her father staggers toward her and his face hangs "with doughy, running flesh," his eyes "as black as obsidian." The image of her father tells her that he beat her because he wanted to rape her. She looks away and back again to see that her father is now wearing a clown suit and a coonskin cap, like the one worn by Davy Crockett. He is doing a mad "shuck-and-jive." Beverly runs into the street and the clown claws at her. She realizes then that it is real, and can kill her as it has killed all of the children.

It can kill Beverly because she still believes in It, and this gives It power over her imagination. Beverly has also failed to deal with her childhood anxieties, particularly her awareness of her father's incestuous desire for her. It taps into the awareness that she has repressed.

The clown disappears. The house, Beverly notices, is crumbling and deserted. She wonders if she was really in there. She looks down to see that her jeans are dirty and her yellow blouse is smeared with dust. Something brushes against her calf, like a cat's paw. It is a balloon, as yellow as her blouse, with a message written in electric blue: THAT'S WIGHT, WABBIT. She watches it bounce lightly in "the pleasant late-spring breeze."

The message on the balloon is a play on the voice of Elmer Fudd. It also uses the television shows that the children once watched to mock and terrorize them. These forms of entertainment allowed Beverly and others, such as Eddie Corcoran, a temporary reprieve from a violent household.

Richie is walking along Outer Canal Street, past Bassey Park. He has been walking aimlessly since the end of lunch. He thinks that maybe the group had a hallucination about the fortune cookies—the waitress's obliviousness to what they saw seems like proof of this. His eyes begin to burn, and Richie remembers the smoke that he and Mike once endured. He takes a step closer to the Paul Bunyan statue. He remembers how the school art teacher had written a letter, saying that, if the "monstrosity" went up, she would blow it up herself. Richie Tozier was one of the kids to attend the ceremony when the statue made its debut. He had been delighted by it.

Richie's sense of humor and fondness for schlock films means he has what his art teacher considered poor taste. Richie's fear, which It will exploit, is an inability to rely on his sight. He convinces himself that the incident with the fortune cookie was a hallucination, though all of his friends had the same experience. He thinks, however, that only the waitress can be objective, because she is not haunted by the fear and memory of It.

Richie remembers, too, an instance in which he raised the ire of Henry Bowers by laughing at him after the hulking bully slipped in a puddle and landed on his behind. For making fun of him and drawing the laughter of his classmates, Henry vows to get Richie later and does. In case Richie wants to leave by the kindergarten entrance, Henry has planted "Belch" Huggins there as a lookout. Richie sees "Belch" Huggins first and walks quickly off the playground and down Charter Street. He goes into a department store where Henry Bowers, "Belch" Huggins, and Victor Criss find him. A store clerk yells at them as the bullies rush to catch Richie at the emergency exit. Richie escapes and finishes up nearly a mile from Freese's.

Richie remembers an instance in which he got the best of his bullies. The chase scene is somewhat comedic and resembles something out of a cartoon, in which the smaller and more vulnerable underdog gets the best of his much larger and more physically capable enemies. Richie's wit and his inability to take Henry and the others too seriously save him from the serious abuse that Ben and Eddie endure from the three bullies.

As Richie Tozier continues walking, he sees the City Center marquee. He remembers how, in March 1958, the marquee advertised an upcoming rock-and-roll show that Richie wanted to attend. His mother hates rock-and-roll and believes it is a passing fad, while his father is neutral on the subject. Richie's eyes drift from the marquee and he thinks that he has fallen asleep. When he awakes, or is dreaming, he sees a new rock show being advertised on the City Center's marquee. When he looks up at the statue of Paul Bunyan, the statue is grinning at him but the smell of rotting animals drifts between its yellow teeth.

Rock-and-roll caused yet another divide between Richie and his mother, who also disliked Richie's crude sense of humor. Ironically, Richie builds a successful career out of the things that his mother most disliked about him. Richie is so disoriented about what is real and what isn't that he isn't certain if he is dreaming when he sees the statue grinning at him. The smell of rotting animals resembles the smell of dead things from Mrs. Kersh's house.

The statue of Paul Bunyan speaks to Richie, saying it is going to eat him up. It says that when Richie wakes up, he will wake up in hell. Richie realizes that he is not dreaming at all. He tries to scream but no sound comes out. The blade of the ax strikes the bench where Richie was only a few moments before. Richie ends up on his back but pushes himself up with his heels. He rolls over onto his stomach and staggers to his feet. Paul Bunyan comes to life and comes off of his pedestal. The statue then buries its axe "haft-deep in the sidewalk inches behind his feet." Suddenly, Richie begins to laugh and, when he does, he sees the statue back on its usual on the pedestal—"axe on its shoulder, head cocked toward the sky, lips parted in the eternal optimistic grin of the myth-hero."

As long as Richie believes that the statue can cause him harm, it is able to chase Richie around with its axe. However, when Richie laughs, as though acknowledging the absurdity of a statue attacking him, Paul Bunyan goes back to being a statue. The scenario is even more absurd because Paul Bunyan is a folk hero with no basis in reality. The image of Bunyan, which is supposed to represent the ideals of self-reliance and rewards through hard work, is too far removed from Richie's memory of the sewer-dwelling monster to be compatible with real evil.

Richie lingers for a while longer, wondering if the statue will move again. Richie figures that he can believe in monsters. After all, he has read plenty of news copy about Idi Amin and Jim Jones. But, the thought of a thirty-foot statue with an axe coming after him is too much. His eyes are beginning to burn again, and this triggers the memory of seeing a movie called *The Crawling Eye*. Though other kids laughed themselves into hysterics over the movie, it is the only horror film that has ever scared Richie. He remembers a dream of looking at himself in a mirror, taking a pin and sticking it into the black of his iris, "and feeling a numb, watery springiness as the bottom of his eye filled up with blood." He remembers waking from the dream and discovering that he had wet the bed.

The image of Paul Bunyan coming to life is too absurd to frighten Richie, but not the repugnant image of the crawling eye from the movie of the same name. The other children who viewed the movie with Richie found it absurd because an eye cannot animate itself, just as Richie knows that Paul Bunyan cannot come to life. However, Richie's fear of going blind overrides his good sense. He is so scared of the possibility, which he thinks he could also somehow cause himself, that he wets the bed, despite being too old for such an incident.

Richie starts to get up and decides that he will go back to the Derry Town House and take a nap. As he rises, his eyes go back to the marquee at City Center. He sees his name as part of an advertisement for the "All-Dead" Rock Show. Richie, too, is one of the dead. He feels as though someone has taken all of the breath out of him. He looks up again at the Paul Bunyan statue to find that it is not the folk hero but a clown. The clown's eyes widen, and, in those black pupils, Richie sees a darkness like "the mad darkness that must exist over the rim of the universe." Richie runs and the clown's voice thunders after him. A father and his toddler son are nearby. The father does not hear the clown's booming voice but the toddler does and begins to cry.

The toddler hears the voice of the clown because only children have the ability to dispense with reality and imagine the terrors that adults find absurd. In this instance, Richie and the toddler have identical sensibilities. The statue of Paul Bunyan does not scare Richie, but the clown does, due to his awareness of Pennywise and what he did to George Denbrough and so many others. The blackness in Its pupils hints at its ancient supernatural origins.

Reaching the sidewalk, Richie dares to look back again. Both Paul Bunyan and the clown are gone. Now, there is a twenty-foot high statue of Buddy Holly. Its spectacles are taped in the middle, just as Richie's were when he was a boy. Richie thinks about how badly he wants a drink—the Scotch he is going to have before taking a nap. A pretty young girl is walking ahead of him and turns around to ask if he is all right. He blames his contact lenses for causing him pain and nearly jabs himself in the eyes with his forefingers. In the back of his head, he thinks he can hear the clown laughing.

The clown then transforms into the image of one of Richie's childhood rock heroes, with whom Richie probably identified due to both of them wearing thick spectacles. The pretty young girl sets off Richie's social anxiety about wearing glasses, and his fear that they make him less attractive. In response to that fear, he nearly succumbs to his greater fear of blinding himself.

Bill does not see Pennywise, but he does see a ghost. He walks up Witcham Street, where George died, and hears a voice. Bill tells the voice to come out or they—he and the Losers' Club—will get It. He is about to stand up from his position over the sewer opening when a shadow comes over him. It belongs to a boy with a fluorescent green skateboard. The boy asks if Bill regularly talks to sewers. He says that he only does it in Derry. He then asks the boy if he has ever heard anything from within the sewers. The boy reluctantly admits that he has. The boy recalls that the voice spoke some foreign language. He heard the voice come out of one of the pumping stations by the Barrens. At first, the voice sounded like a kid, but then it sounded like a man.

The sewers are the openings through which the dead speak to the living. They are also the gateways to the evil that lurks under Derry. Though the boy admits to hearing the same voices as Bill, when he approaches he acts as though the prospect is absurd. Like everyone else in town, he knows that something is awry, but he prefers to act like nothing is abnormal in Derry. The voice that the boy heard near the pumping station was probably that of one of the children Pennywise killed.

Bill asks the boy if he ever heard the voices again. He says that he heard a girl's voice once while he was taking a bath. The boy recalls being scared to pull the plug, out of a strange fear of drowning her. The boy then asks if Bill knows about the voices. Indeed, Bill says, he does. Bill asks if the boy knew any of the children who were murdered. Suddenly, the boy becomes wary of Bill and mentions that he is not supposed to talk to strangers. Bill tries to assure him that he is not the killer.

The voice of the girl that the boy recalls hearing is reminiscent of the voice of Veronica Grogan, which Beverly heard in her bathroom sink drain. Bill's persistence in asking questions about the strange, supernatural occurrences is unusual in Derry, where everyone assumes that it is a human who is committing the murders.

The boy relaxes and mentions that a friend thinks that a shark lives in the Canal. The friend was in the park by himself and saw a fin come out of the water. He also says that the animal tried to bite him. The boy did not believe the story, but Bill warns him to stay away from the Canal. The boy sometimes thinks that he might be as crazy as he said his friend was. Bill understands. Bill rides a little on the boy's skateboard and warns the boy to stay away from drains and sewers and near his home. The boy assures him that he is very close to home. Bill remembers that George was close to home, too. The kid pushes off on his skateboard and leaves.

Typical of children's flights of imagination, the boy's friend thinks that Jaws lives in the Canal. Jaws was a popular film franchise at the time, and thus in the forefront of children's minds. Indeed, if Jaws is what the children wish to see, that is how It could appear. Knowing this, Bill warns the boy to stay away from the Canal, probably fearing that a shark-like monster will emerge and swallow the boy on the skateboard.

Bill walks up to his old house, and slows down when he sees people on the lawn. The house is the same dark-green color, but his mother's flower-beds are gone. He thinks about stopping and asking questions about the house but becomes afraid of how badly he would stutter. He rethinks wanting to know the answers to these questions. The house became so cold after Georgie died. He goes to the corner and turns right. Soon, he is on Kansas Street, heading back downtown. Like the others, he notices how similar everything looks from when he was a boy.

The lack of change in Derry is not a source of comfort but of concern, for it reveals that people have tolerated the existence of It—which has allowed them to keep their town and its landmarks in exchange for some of their children. Bill remembers how his parents maintained the memory of George by shutting Bill out of their lives, as though they thought they could bring one son back by withholding love from the other.

Bill keeps going downtown when he sees a little girl. He asks her what the best store is in Derry. She mentions the store Secondhand Rose, Secondhand Clothes. Her mother calls it a junk shop but she likes it because it has old things. Bill then asks her where the store is. He goes toward downtown and sees the store. Inside are items such as guitars, old records, and bunches of plastic flowers in dirty vases. Suddenly, he sees **Silver** in the righthand window.

Silver has been relegated to a place where people store old memories and things that they no longer need, with the hope that those items can be of use to someone else. The little girl's mother does not see the value in such things, but the girl does, perhaps due to people's former attachment to them.

The sight of **Silver** causes tears to run down Bill's cheeks. Bill notices that the shop smells musty with age. It has an "attic smell," as the little girl mentioned, but not a good one. The radio is sitting on a high shelf amidst nineteenth-century portraits. The proprietor is sitting under them. His hair is slicked back and he is thin to the point of emaciation. The proprietor asks if Bill is looking for anything in particular. Bill gestures at the bike but starts to stutter, confusing the proprietor into thinking that he wants the barber pole. Bill screams, unintentionally, that it is not the pole that he wants. The proprietor asks if Bill is okay and Bill thinks that he is reaching under his counter toward a gun. The man warns Bill that if he is going to have a fit, he can take it outside. Bill asks the man if he can try again. He asks for the bike in the window.

Bill's memories of Silver remind him of a time in his life when he felt stronger and more fearless than he does now. The "attic smell" of the shop parallels the name of the movie Bill is working on—Attic Room. If his memory has failed him, his fiction serves as a guide. However, he can articulate himself in writing in a way that he cannot in speech. He nearly loses his opportunity to purchase Silver back when he reverts back to his stutter, which is becoming increasingly worse as Bill gets closer to remembering how to destroy It. It is using the stutter to keep Bill at bay.

The proprietor offers to sell Bill the bike for twenty dollars. He then asks if Bill has a son. Bill lies and says that he has a child who is eleven. The proprietor thinks that the bike is rather big for an eleven-year-old. Bill then asks if he can make a phone call. After assuring the proprietor that the call is local, he goes to the telephone and dials the Derry Public Library. Mike Hanlon answers. Bill tells him that he is buying a bike and asks if he can store it at Mike's house. Mike asks if it is **Silver**; Bill tells him it is.

Bill lies about taking the bike for himself, though he is probably finally the right size to ride Silver. Like Ben, to convince himself that his actions are credible, he imagines that he has a son in the form of his boyhood self. Mike, the gatekeeper of the Losers' Club's memories, knows instantly what bike Bill has purchased back.

Bill walks the bike out of the store and marvels at how well his adult hands grip the handlebars. He stops for a moment to wonder what happened to **Silver**. Did he sell it? Did he lose it? All he can remember is part of the idiotic sentence he learned in speech school: *his fists against the posts and still insists*... He pushes Silver on to Mike's place.

Silver disappears from Bill's life with no explanation, just like the school picture of George disappears from the album. However, Bill is able to connect Silver's disappearance with part of a memory from his last encounter with It.

Mike makes burgers after he and Bill finish working on **Silver**. Mike's house is a neat little, white Cape Cod with green trim. Mike has recently bought a tire-repair kit, and Bill asks if Mike has a bike of his own. Mike says that he does not; he just had the urge to buy the kit. Bill gets to work on Silver—oiling the chain, sprocket, and axles. They then eat the burgers and sit back smoking. Bill then asks Mike about the phrase he cannot forget. Mike says that it is an old tongue twister and that Bill learned it in speech school. In the summer of 1958, he went around mumbling it to himself. Bill tries to remember how he learned the expression and thinks he has said it at least once, though he cannot remember when.

Mike and Bill work to revive Silver. Mike intuited that Bill would purchase the bike, which is how he knew that Mike was buying back Silver from the secondhand store. Bill has forgotten the phrase that he learned to help him overcome his stutter, and may have even forgotten that he once attended speech school in Bangor. The tongue twister, which helped him master his weakness, also helped him overcome his fear of It.

CHAPTER 12: THREE UNINVITED GUESTS

The day after Mike makes first his calls to the adult members of the Losers' Club, Henry Bowers hears voices. He is hoeing in a garden in the late afternoon. Voices are coming to him from the moon—first, Victor Criss; then, "Belch" Huggins. After a while, one of the guards, Fogarty, comes over and hits Henry on the back of the neck, knocking him flat to his face. Henry's offense is hoeing the peas along with the weeds. Fogarty, along with Adler and Koontz, hits the inmates at Juniper Hills—a facility for the criminally-insane—in the back of the neck with a roll of quarters, for this is not exactly a deadly weapon.

Unlike the voices that the others hear from drains and sewers, Henry perceives the voice from the moon as friendly—indeed, they are the voices of his old friends. Henry's life in Juniper Hills is characterized by abuse and loneliness. The voices of Henry's old friends remind him of a time in his life in which he was dominant. However, he also hears the mocking voices of the Losers' Club, showing his obsession with the past.

Henry Bowers is in Juniper Hills because he was sent there in 1958, after being convicted of killing his father, Butch Bowers. However, it was not only his father whom the authorities blamed Henry for killing. They also found him guilty of killing "Belch" Huggins, Victor Criss, Patrick Hocksetter, and Veronica Grogan. The Derry *News* declares Henry Bowers the monster that has been haunting Derry.

In the town's eagerness to cast for villains, they choose Henry, whom they determine was always a bad seed. He is easy to blame for the murders, not only due to his reputation but also the murder of his father, which makes seem him capable of any evil.

Henry thinks that he is responsible for killing "Belch" Huggins and Victor Criss insofar as he is the one who led them to the tunnels where they died. He is accused of killing Patrick Hocksetter after the police find some of the boy's books in Henry's bureau. However, he and Patrick were friends who regularly exchanged schoolbooks, which neither of them really cared about. As for Veronica Grogan's underwear, he has no idea how those ended up under his mattress.

Henry's feeling of responsibility in regard to Belch and Victor's deaths is similar to that which Bill feels about George's death. Henry blames himself for giving his friends cause for being in the tunnels, though he did not kill them directly.

Henry's cell mates in the blue ward are a serial rapist and a man who has murdered his wife and four children in the winter of 1962. There is also Jimmy Donlin, who killed his mother, and Benny Beaulieu—a pyromaniac. While hoeing, Henry can hear voices taunting him. Henry tells them to shut up. The voices belong to members of the Losers' Club. Fogarty is standing nearby and has been yelling at Henry for nearly two minutes. Finally, he gives Henry a whack with the roll of quarters. Henry falls, but now hears a voice chanting, "Kill them all."

The other inmates are mostly men who have killed family members. Henry remains obsessed with the Losers' Club. He hears their voices and those from the moon, which prompt him to kill the Losers' Club so that he can be free of their imagined derision.

Henry Bowers lies awake. He is staring intently at his nightlight. His fellow Blue Ward inmates are sleeping around him. Koontz is on duty, eating peanut butter and onion sandwiches. Another voice comes—this one from under the bed. It is the voice of Victor Criss. Criss's head was torn off years ago by the Frankenstein-monster. Henry exclaims at the sound of Victor's voice, which assures Henry that he does not need to talk aloud, only to think. Henry asks what Victor wants. He says that he wants the same thing as Henry: to get back at the Losers' Club.

To emphasize that Henry has not grown up and remains stunted in his eleven-year-old self, he must sleep with a nightlight. He also hears voices from under his bed, like a small child who is afraid of monsters lurking in unseen spaces in the dark. It appears as Henry's old friends so that Henry can do Its work for It.

Victor Criss, or the image of him that It has assumed, tells Henry that he can kill them if they only half-believe, but Henry is real and can actually kill them, no matter what they believe. Henry would like to "pay em back," but cannot leave, especially not with Koontz on guard. Victor tells him not to worry. Henry and Vic walk toward the Blue Ward exit. Jimmy Donlin sees It take shape as his dead mother. The top of her head is gone where he has cut her to eat her brains. Donlin starts screaming, drawing the attention of Koontz, who rushes in and sees Bowers standing next to a thing in a **slivery** clown suit. Koontz is so shocked that he drops the roll of quarters. He takes in a breath to scream, and then the clown grabs him. Its hands, however, feel like paws. It has taken the form of the Doberman Pinscher that Koontz fears most.

It relies on the group's imagined fears that It can cause them harm. However, Henry is real and can cause them harm regardless of what they imagine is possible. It distracts Jimmy with the image that haunts him most: the sight of the mother whom he murdered. The image of Victor transforms into the image of the clown, which Koontz sees as "a thing," due to the clown's likeness to a corpse and, in this instance, its transformation into a Doberman. It demonstrates the fluidity of adjusting quickly to the fear of whomever is looking at It.

Meanwhile, for the third time on this day, Beverly's friend Kay McCall goes to the telephone. She then fixes a Scotch-and-soda. When she catches a glimpse of her reflection, she wonders who the battered woman is looking back at her. When she goes to the hospital, the doctor asks if her boyfriend did it. Kay says that she would rather not talk about it. He urges her to call the police, but she declines. Shortly thereafter, Kay cries; she cannot help it.

Through her friendship with Beverly, Kay has become a victim of abuse, which is incompatible with her self-image as a strong feminist. She offers no explanation to the doctor because the incident makes little sense to her. She also cannot call the police, out of fear of what can happen to Beverly or to herself.

Tom Rogan calls Kay McCall around noon, inquiring after Beverly Marsh Rogan. Kay tells him that she has not seen Beverly in a couple of weeks. Then, her doorbell rings. The person at the door claims to be delivering flowers. As soon as she opens the door, Tom's fist comes flying. Kay notices that Tom looks mean and very angry. Kay turns and runs for the end of the hall. Tom catches her by the dress and yanks so hard that he tears it. Kay slaps Tom, reopening the cut on the left side of his face. He grabs her hair and pulls her face toward his fist. She feels blood gush out of her nose. He jerks Kay around and demands to know where Beverly is. When Kay screams that she doesn't know, Tom pushes her to the floor. When she looks around again, Tom is holding the jagged end of a Waterford crystal vase. He threatens to bring it down onto Kay's face unless she tells him where Beverly is. Kay relents and says that Beverly is in Derry.

Tom's duplicity parallels with the trick that Henry Bowers will later use when he goes to Eddie Kaspbrak's room at the Derry Town House. Both try to establish themselves as service people to gain trust. Tom grabs Kay by her dress, which was designed by Beverly. Tom is the president and general manager of Beverly Designs, meaning that he capitalizes off of Beverly's talent while also exploiting Beverly personally. He uses women in general for his own gain while also abusing them. His sincere threat to end Kay's life comes from an inability to see her as a fellow human being.

Tom Rogan then tells Kay that if she calls the police or tells them that he was there, he will deny it. If he is arrested, he will return to Kay's house and do much worse to her, he says. He then demands to know why Beverly went back, but Kay says that she does not know; Beverly did not tell her. Tom tosses aside the vase and leaves without looking back. Kay shuffles after him and locks the door.

Kay fears Tom, not only because of his greater physical strength but because he has the economic means to bail himself out of jail, if arrested; and, as a white male of a high economic status, he is likely to be believed if he lies to them about beating up Kay.

Kay decides that she must warn Beverly that Tom is going to look for her. She finds Beverly Rogan registered at the Derry Town House. Beverly is out but Kay leaves her name and number with the desk clerk for Beverly to reach her as soon as she gets in. She hopes that Beverly will call soon and watch out for the "crazy son of a bitch" she married.

Kay is more worried about Beverly than she is about herself. Tom's anger suggests that he will kill Beverly when he sees her again. At the same time, Kay still cannot fathom why Beverly married Tom in the first place.

Before leaving from O'Hare, Tom Rogan reads the brief author's note at the end of *The Black Rapids*. He learns that William Denbrough is a native of New England and lives in California with his wife, Audra Phillips. Tom thinks for a moment about how Audra looks like his wife, Beverly. When he gets to Bangor International Airport, he gets a newspaper and goes to the Classifieds section. He calls a guy selling a '76 LTD wagon for $1,400. Tom offers to pay cash for it if the seller can bring it to the airport. He gives his name as "Mr. Barr" and says that the seller will know him because his face is banged up due to his falling during a roller-skating accident.

Like Beverly, Tom makes a feeble, unconvincing excuse for having a beaten-up face. Tom is fixated on Bill Denbrough as a possible rival for Beverly's affections and, thus, a threat to Tom's control over her. Tom is right to think that Beverly's promise to return to Derry has something to do with Bill, but his narrowminded sexual obsession with Beverly cannot fathom the possibility that her promise is about something much greater than any man.

The guy with the used LTD shows up ten minutes later. He scribbles a bill of sale for Tom and takes off the license plates. Tom offers him an extra three bucks for the screwdriver. The boy shrugs and hands over the screwdriver in exchange for the money. The car is a "piece of shit" with a rattling transmission but it gets him along Route 2. He stops to buy a carton of cigarettes for Beverly, thinking of how he will make her eat each one.

In Tom's mind, Beverly has committed two offenses: she has left Chicago without his permission and she smoked a cigarette in front of him, knowing that he disapproves of it. He is clearly not interested in her health, but instead in her obedience.

Audra Phillips Denbrough flies to Maine from Heathrow. The day before, she had issues with Freddie Firestone, the producer of *Attic Room*, in regard to the hiring of her stuntwoman. Worse, Bill has been called back to do rewrites of the film. Audra tells Freddie that Bill has returned to the States for reasons that he did not specify. Freddie suspects that Audra intends to go after Bill, which he discourages. She resists the force of Freddie's personality and kisses him on the cheek to say "goodbye."

Audra's loyalty to Bill and her concern over what is going on in Derry leads her to disobey Bill's wish that she never set foot in Derry. Freddie discourages Audra from going to Derry, not so much because he is worried about her but because he is worried about the progress of his film.

Audra's plane lands in Bangor at 7:09 PM EDT. She grabs her single bag and approaches the rental-car booths, just as Tom Rogan will an hour later. She rents a Datsun and the young woman who attends to Audra asks for her autograph. Audra gives it, figuring that, with how she just ran out on Freddie Firestone and her movie, it might not be worth anything in five years. The young woman also traces out the best route to Derry and Audra sets out, feeling more frightened than she ever has in her life. In an odd coincidence, Tom takes a room at the Koala Inn while Audra has a room at the Holiday Inn. The two hotels are side-by-side and Tom and Audra's cars are parked nose-to-nose. Both sleep now. Meanwhile, Henry Bowers has spent the day hiding along Route 9. After dark, he hitchhikes, and some poor fool picks him up.

Audra knows that leaving her film location is a bad move for her career, which was never especially stellar in the first place. King prepares the reader for the fact that Tom and Audra, who do not know each other personally, are destined for their worlds to collide due to their connections with Beverly and Bill, respectively. However, their intentions are opposite. Audra has come because she loves Bill and wants to support him, while Tom has arrived to get Beverly back under his thumb.


DERRY: THE THIRD INTERLUDE

Mike Hanlon recalls the incident with the Bradley Gang, which occurs thirteen months before the burning of the Black Spot, in October 1929. As with the burning of the Black Spot, citizens of Derry pretend not to remember the incident. Mr. Norbert Keene, who was around during the ambush on the outlaws, says that maybe around 20,000 people lived in downtown Derry at that time. Mr. Keene asks if Mike is sure he wants to hear the story, and Mike says he is. Mr. Keene confirms that Sheriff Sullivan was present that day, though there is no record of it. The gang, Mr. Keene says, comes to Derry, thinking that they will be safe so far from the Midwest.

Mr. Keene narrates another incident that, like the arson at the Black Spot, has been kept secret. The Bradley Gang resembles many of the post-Depression outlaws who roamed the country robbing banks and seeking thrills. Ironically, the people of Derry are tolerant of the supernatural evil that lurks among them, but not of people who are criminal or immoral.


The Bradley Gang lays low for a while, then decides that they want to go hunting. They are a bit low on ammunition, so they go to Lal Machen's sporting goods store to buy some. They order hundreds of rounds for their various guns. Lal has some of the ammo but has to order the rest. Lal invites them to come back at two in the afternoon the next day to pick up the remainder of the order. The robbers agree.

Lal is setting them up. George Bradley, the leader, offers to buy his ammo at a store in Bangor, but Lal uses the fact that the owner of that store is "a Jew" to discourage Bradley from going there. This tactical anti-Semitism works, for it helps Machen establish a bond with Bradley.

Around 1:30 PM, there are men everywhere, sitting with guns. Little Zack Denbrough passes by and is warned to leave, for there is going to be a shooting. Things remain quiet for a while, then, around 2:25 PM, the Bradley Gang's cars arrive. Al Bradley, the leader of the gang, suspects something is up and tells one of his associates to move back. That's when Lal Machen tells Al to put his hands up. Before Bradley can turn his head, Lal starts blasting and tears a hole into Al Bradley's shoulder. Bradley gets back into his car and throws it into gear, which is when everyone starts shooting.

The men of Derry form a vigilante group. Instead of alerting the authorities to the Bradley Gang's presence, they take the law into their own hands. This action addresses the prevalence of vigilante violence during an era in which people lost faith in the institutions built to protect them. There is a possible association, too, with traditional New England self-reliance, which eschews authority.

Norbert Keene recalls that the whole incident is over in four or five minutes. There must have been fifty or sixty men firing at once. Members of the gang try to fire back. Marie Hauser, one of the girlfriends, tries to surrender, Keene thinks, but crawls back inside of one of the cars after being hit in the hip. Later, she walks into crossfire. The men of Derry keep shooting. Keene figures that when men get their blood up, it does not go down easily. Sheriff Sullivan joins others on the courthouse steps and pumps rounds into the outlaws' dead vehicle. Shortly thereafter, the picture-taking starts. Mike asks how something of that magnitude was covered up. Mr. Keene reasons that no one really cared because it was a group of outlaws and the women were "whores." Also, it happened in Derry—not a big city.

Mike's question to Mr. Keene is similar to Beverly's question to Mike about why the nine recent murders in Derry have not become headline news. The violence in Derry is self-contained. During the ambush, both civilians and the sheriff join in the effort to kill and then exploit the murder of the outlaws for fame and financial gain. Usually, evidence of having captured wanted armed robbers—dead or alive—came with the offer of a cash reward. People justified the murders by convincing themselves that the Bradley Gang was composed of low-quality people who got what they deserved.

Mike asks Norbert Keene one more question—if Keene has seen the clown. Keene mentions that he was, indeed, there and wearing a pair of biballs (overalls). Keene figures that he was someone trying to disguise himself. What Keene finds strange is that the clown cast no shadow.

In this instance, the clown is not a participant in the violence but an encouraging witness. Sometimes the people of Derry do Its work for It, without any effort on Its part.

CHAPTER 13: THE APOCALYPTIC ROCKFIGHT

Bill is the first member of the group at the library, watching as Mike deals with the last of the patrons. Bill thinks of **Silver**, leaning against the wall of Mike's garage. He remembers on July 3, 1958 when the Losers' Club goes deeper into the Barrens. Bill wants to tell them what to do next, how to proceed, but he does not know how. He remembers only music and darts of light.

Flashes of memory are returning to Bill, but he cannot yet make sense of any of the images. All that he knows so far is that Silver will help him fight against It. The image of the bicycle gives him comfort.

In the memory, Richie hangs his transistor radio over the lowermost branch of a tree against which he is leaning. The sun bounces off the radio's chrome, prompting Bill to ask him to take it down. Richie obeys and also turns the radio off, which Bill wishes that he did not do, for the silence suddenly seems very loud. He sees that his friends are waiting for him to tell them what to do because he is the idea-man and has lost a brother but mainly because he has become "Big Bill." Bill tells the group that they cannot go to the police. Bill suggests that Richie go to his parents and tell them about what the group has been witnessing, but Richie thinks that his parents would not understand or believe him.

Some members of the Losers' Club have objects that tell the reader something about who they are. Bill has Silver, which contributes to his image as the hero of the novel. Richie has the radio, which gives a clue about who he will become when he grows up. Bill decides that they cannot go to the police because the police will not believe their stories. However, Richie says that his parents would not be any more sympathetic. The children cannot rely on authority figures whatsoever.

Ben, Richie, Stanley, and Bill all believe that Henry Bowers hates them the most, but Henry hates all four of them equally. However, "the number one on Henry's personal hate parade" is not in the Losers' Club at this time. It is Mike Hanlon. Henry gets this hatred from his father, "Butch" Bowers, who associates the Hanlons with all of his failures. He tells Henry that Will Hanlon lied about Butch killing his chickens to get insurance money. Butch tells his son that while "all niggers are stupid, some were cunning as well" and all of them hate white men and want to go to bed with white women. Butch thinks that Hanlon got "a bunch of nigger-lovers" in town to lie for him because Butch is only "a man who fought the Japs for his country" while Hanlon is the only black man in town.

Butch convinces his son that he is being persecuted by the Hanlons and that their poverty and suffering is the result of the black family's presence in town. Though Butch is mentally ill, poor, and terribly ignorant, what he shares in common with the members of the Town Council who burned down the Black Spot is a belief that black people in Derry—and the Hanlons are the only blacks in town—should not be treated equally to whites or be allowed to intermingle. Lacking the wealth of those on the council, all that gives Butch a sense of pride is the illusion that he is superior to Will Hanlon.

All Henry Bowers hears from his father is how everything is Will Hanlon's fault. When the Bowers family becomes poor in 1956, Henry is ten years old. Remembering how, according to his father, everything is Hanlon's fault, Henry begins to feed the Hanlon dog, Mr. Chips. At first, he gives the dog old stew bones and potato chips, then he feeds the dog meat laced with poison. When the pains start, Henry ties the dog to a tree with a clothesline and watches Mr. Chips die.

This is one of the cruelest acts that Henry commits in the novel, and a sign of his psychopathy. Like Patrick Hocksetter, he is not averse to torturing animals. He uses the dog's defenselessness to get back at the Hanlons for making him and his father look and feel weak in comparison to them.

When the dog dies, Henry Bowers removes the clothesline and tells his father what he has done. Oscar "Butch" Bowers is extremely crazy by this time and his wife will leave him a year later after he nearly beats her to death. Butch claps Henry on the back with pride and offers Henry his first beer. He later associates its taste with his father's love. As far as Henry knows, the Hanlons never figure out who killed their dog, but he hopes that they do.

Butch is proud to have passed his racist values on to his son, and also feels that Henry has demonstrated loyalty to him. The offer of beer seems to Henry like a gesture of friendship from his father. This is the only instance in which Butch treats his son with kindness and appreciation—thus blatantly encouraging Henry's bigotry and violence.

Jessica Hanlon is a devout Baptist, so she sends Mike to the Neibolt Street Church School where things are okay, but Mike still feels that he is a bit of an outcast because he is brown. Still, Mike thinks that he will be treated well as long as he treats others the same way. Henry Bowers is an exception to this rule of conduct. Mike is somewhat tall and agile and goes to a different school from Henry. These facts save him from some beatings. However, one spring, Henry is hiding in the bushes and emerges while Mike is walking to the library.

Mike senses that he is socially outcast due to racism in Derry. He decides that if he is respectful he can at least receive respect in return, even if he never manages to make any friends at the parochial school. Mike's athletic physique make him less vulnerable to beatings than Ben or Eddie, but Henry relies on catching kids by surprise when he cannot overpower or gang up on them.

While running from Henry, Mike slips in some mud which Henry then rubs all over Mike, calling him "nigger." Henry then tells Mike that he killed Mr. Chips and kicks another clot of mud at Mike before turning and leaving. Mike goes home, weeping. When he arrives, his mother, Jessica, is furious. She wants Will Hanlon to call Chief Borton and send him to the Hanlon house before sundown. Will listens but does not do what his wife asks because he knows that Chief Borton is not like Chief Sullivan and will not be sympathetic. Jessica asks if Will thinks that they should "just let it go." Will says that racism is just something that Mike is going to have to learn how to deal with.

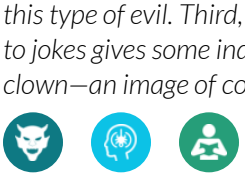
Will Hanlon's response is far from unsympathetic. He simply knows that there is systemic racism in Derry that will protect the Bowers family. There are also individual racists who either quietly support Henry's actions or are indifferent to them. Will also knows that this will not be the last instance of racism that Mike will experience. As embarrassing as this episode with Henry is, Mike was not injured, so he can at least withstand the experience.

The following day, Will Hanlon calls Mike out to the barn and warns him to stay out of Henry's way. He tells him that "Butch" Bowers is crazy and Mike says that he thinks that Henry is crazy, too. Indeed, because of his close association with his father, Henry is going crazy. Will is careful to say that he does not want Mike to "make a career out of running away," but he is going to be harassed a lot due to being black. Will also says that Mike must ask himself if Henry Bowers is worth the trouble. Mike does not think so, but he will change his mind on July 3, 1958.

Will gives Mike his first lecture to help him understand the condition of being black in the United States, which means that he will be a frequent target of hostility. His advice is to avoid people like Henry as best as he can. If confronted, he must decide if the person that he fights is worth the potential risk. Mike decides that, for the moment, there is nothing to gain from fighting with Henry Bowers.

Henry Bowers, Victor Criss, "Belch" Huggins, Peter Gordon, and Steve Sadler are chasing Mike through the trainyard and toward the Barrens when Bill and the rest of the Losers' Club are still sitting near the Kenduskeag River, pondering their collective nightmare. Bill thinks that It is in the sewers. The sewage system, Zack Denbrough explains to Bill one day, is massive and complex. Bill tells his friends what his father told him about the pipes. Bill also tells them that he went to the library to research what they have been experiencing. It is called a "glamour" in Gaelic and a *taelus* by the Himalayans. It is a "skin-changer" or a "shape-shifting" creature. The only way to repel It is by performing the Ritual of *Chüd*, in which the *taelus* and It's potential killer take turns telling jokes. If the killer laughs first, he or she dies. If the *taelus* laughs, It must go away.

The information that Bill gathers tells him three important things. First, part of the reason why It has been allowed to exist in the sewer system for so long is because the system is so complex that it would be very difficult to find where It lives. Second, creatures like It are not unique to Derry, and have existed for centuries. This helps the children to understand that they are not the first ones to confront this type of evil. Third, there is a way to defeat It. Its responsiveness to jokes gives some indication as to why It transforms Itself into a clown—an image of comic relief and mockery.



After talking about It, the Losers' Club passes the time by setting off some firecrackers that Stan Uris got from a kid at his synagogue. Meanwhile, "Belch" Huggins and Victor Criss are helping Henry Bowers work on his father's farm. The boys finish the farm chores and step out onto the road, where they see Mike Hanlon. Henry wants to sneak up on Mike carefully because Mike is fast. Victor asks, somewhat concernedly, what Henry plans to do. He knows that Henry can sometimes go "too far." Henry has the idea of taking Mike to the coal pit, putting some Black Cat firecrackers in Mike's loafers, stripping him, and sending him down into the Barrens with the hope that Mike will get into poison ivy. "Belch" also suggests rolling Mike in the coal. Henry remembers that he wants to tell Mike again that he killed Mr. Chips, thinking that Mike did not hear him the first time.

Coincidentally, both the Losers' Club and the bullies are playing with firecrackers at the same time. Henry remains obsessed with Mike and thinks of sadistic ways to torture him. He seems particularly interested in doing things that can cause harm or damage to Mike's skin, which is the offending attribute. Belch does not really understand the nature of Henry's hatred, but he is dumb and eager to go along. Victor's reservations are not a reflection of his concern for Mike but are due to his worry that Henry will do something that will land them in serious trouble.

The Losers' Club is walking through the Barrens. They imagine that they are wading through a jungle and that the Kenduskeag is full of piranhas. They teeter on the rocks to get across the river. Eddie nears the halfway point and almost falls over. Between the flashes of the sun, he actually sees piranhas in the water. The fish look like oversized goldfish. They are as orange as the pompoms that are sometimes on clowns at the circus. Stanley grabs Eddie's arm to keep him from falling in.

Their imagined play of walking across a jungle foreshadows the prehistoric image of Derry that Mike and Richie will see when they perform the smoke-hole ritual. Eddie sees piranhas in the water because he wants to imagine them. It latches on to Eddie's imagination and uses his playtime fantasy as a tool to haunt him.

Ben mentions how "creepy" it is where they are walking. Bill leads them up the dry bank into heavy shrubbery. The smell of the dump is "clear and pungent." Paper caught in the branches waves and flaps. The Losers' Club gets to the top of the ridge and looks down at the dump. Ben says that they cannot go down because there are rats and Mandy Fazio, the "dumpkeeper" [sic], uses poison to keep the rodents away. Mainly, Mandy does not think that a dump is a place for children to play. Still thinking of a place to play, Bill comes up with the idea of going to a gravel pit at the end of the Barrens by the trainyards. They all agree to go there.

The dump is "creepy" because it is full of waste and is a desirable place for vermin. The smell of the dump is similar to the smell of the sewer. Still, the children are attracted to dumps and other wastelands because of the things they can find there, which they use as tools to build things together. The dump also offers places to hide if the bullies come around hunting for them.

Mike is currently being chased by Henry Bowers, "Belch" Huggins, Victor Criss, Steve Sadler, and Peter Gordon. Henry, "Belch," and Steve, otherwise known as "Moose," present no problems; they are quite slow. Victor and Peter, however, are fast, too. Mike sees that the gate to the trainyard is open and slips through, though there is a sign saying that it is private property. He closes the gate behind him. Peter catches up and grabs for the latch but cannot reach it, for the latch is inside. Henry arrives and demands that Mike open up. Mike backs away from the gate, feeling more scared than he ever has before. The bullies line their side of the gate and call him every racist name they can. Henry then lights a cherry-bomb and lobs it over the fence. It lands to Mike's left. Henry then tells Mike again that he killed Mr. Chips. Mike hears him this time and the awareness ignites a fury within him.

Henry has more back-up than usual during his chase. One of Mike's victimizers is Peter Gordon, who lives on West Broadway and therefore bears some relation to the men on the Town Council who tried to burn Will Hanlon out of the Black Spot. In this instance, there is comradeship between the wealthy Gordon and the impoverished Henry Bowers due to both of them being white and believing that it is okay to harass and brutalize Mike. Mike, however, is quite adept at defending himself from the bullies until Henry hurts him emotionally by telling Mike that he killed Mr. Chips.

Mike turns and runs across the trainyards. Henry and the other bullies climb the fence. Mike runs but hears his father's voice, telling him not to get accustomed to running. Mike takes a right toward the gravel-pit. The gravel-pit was used as a coal pit until 1935 or so. As Mike runs toward it, he takes his shirt off. Henry does not see the coal but only a black boy that he thinks he has trapped against a fence. Suddenly, Mike lobs a chunk of coal that lands against Henry's forehead.

Mike uses his father's advice to defend himself against Henry. It is not wise for him to keep running, for then Henry would get the idea that Mike is afraid of him and thus easy to victimize. Mike stands his ground by throwing coal, both to avoid having a fist fight and to keep the other bullies at bay.

The other bullies skid to a stop. Their faces are fixed in disbelief. Mike lobs another piece of coal that hits Henry in the throat. Henry's face contorts and is smeared with blood and coal ash. Mike leaps up the fence. He makes it over before one of them strikes his face with a piece of coal. Then, Henry approaches and lights one of his M-80 firecrackers, which he then sends over the fence. For Peter Gordon, things are going too far. Henry pressures Peter to continue over the fence with the other bullies, threatening to come after Peter next if he does not go along. Mike, meanwhile, runs and escapes into the scrub.

Mike's resistance works because it makes the other bullies afraid to continue to engage. Peter Gordon is not interested in going after Mike if the pursuit entails some physical risk to him. However, Henry threatens to turn against Peter if Peter does not back up Henry. In this instance, Henry shows that he is willing to force the loyalty of the other bullies by threatening violence.

The Losers' Club has reached the far side of the gravel pit by this time. They are preparing to fire off Stanley's Black Cats. As Stanley unwraps them, they all hear an explosion nearby. Beverly asks if it is dynamite. Stanley asks if they still want to shoot off the firecrackers. Bill tells him to put them away. Stan opens his mouth to say something and hears another, smaller explosion—a cherry-bomb. Bill then prompts everyone to grab rocks as ammo.

Bill intuits that there is danger nearby. He knows that Henry and the other bullies are in the gravel pit but figures that they are probably there to terrorize the Losers' Club. Like Ben, he knows that one has to be prepared and on the lookout for Henry.

Ben and Richie bend to get rocks, as Bill says, then Richie takes off his glasses, folds them, and puts them inside his shirt. Beverly asks why he does that. Richie says that he is not sure why but goes on picking up rocks. Ben suggests that Beverly go back to the dump for a while, but she refuses. Eddie feels a tightening in his throat but also joins in with picking up rocks.

Richie takes off his glasses because he is worried about damaging them, and his mother has already scolded him over damaging a pair. Eddie's anxiety surfaces as the feeling that he cannot breathe. He resists the discomfort to support his friends.

Mike is still running and knows that Henry and the others are gaining on him. Mike falls down the gravel-pit and rolls to the bottom. He sees six other kids there and cries out, instinctively, to the tall boy with the red hair. He tries to tell them that he is being chased by Henry Bowers and his other bullying friends, just when Henry bursts into the pit. The other bullies join Henry at his side. Henry says that he has bones to pick with each member of the Losers' Club, but today, he is focused on Mike. Bill then steps forward and tells Henry to leave the Barrens because it belongs to the Losers' Club. Henry's eyes widen at the challenge. Bill then takes some rocks and throws them at Henry. The first misses its target but the third strikes Henry's lowered head, which is in the process of charging at Bill.

This is Mike's first meeting with the Losers' Club. They are brought together by what seems like fate, and united at first by their common problem—Henry Bowers. Mike instantly recognizes Bill as the leader of this group. Recognizing his role, Bill demands that Henry leave the area, asserting a strength that takes Henry by surprise. Henry charges at Bill like a bull. Unable to challenge Bill's assertion of authority, Henry resorts to brute force, which he can easily impose due to his size.

Soon, the entire Losers' Club charges the bullies and throws rocks. Henry picks up rocks, too, but they are mostly pebbles. He throws one of the larger ones at Beverly and hits her in the arm, cutting her. This sends Ben into a rage. Ben runs toward Henry and sends him flying upon contact. "Belch" repels Ben by hitting him with a rock the size of a golf ball. Henry gets to his knees but Ben kicks him, scolding him for throwing rocks at a girl. Henry tries to light one of his M-80s, which Ben swats away, back toward Henry. The ashcan explodes, blackening and tearing Henry's shirt. A moment later, "Moose" Sadler hits Ben, bringing him to his knees.

Bill's confidence gives the others the strength to stand up to the bullies. The sight of seeing Beverly harmed sets off Ben's protective instinct. He forgets about his own fear of Henry, in a strong indication of Ben's love for Beverly. Henry proves to be a poor match for Ben, in this instance, and avoids getting beaten up only because Belch and Moose assist him, as a result of their perverse loyalty to Henry's reign of violence.

Bill comes up behind "Moose" Sadler and hits him with rocks. "Moose" calls Bill "a yellowbelly" for hitting him from behind, but the others are unimpressed. After all, he and the other bullies had no problem ganging up on Mike Hanlon. In a kind of revenge, Bill, Richie, Stanley, and Eddie fling rocks at Moose, who howls in fear and pain. "Belch" and Henry get hit again, too, forcing them into submission. Victor does the most damage to the Losers' Club, due to his being such a good pitcher. He throws a rock at Eddie, which strikes him on the chin. Next, he hits Richie and gets him in the chest. One that he lobs at Bill hits Bill in the cheek and cuts him.

The members of the Losers' Club are smaller and weaker than the bullies, but they use their power in numbers to repel their attackers. When confronting the bullies, any means of attack is deemed appropriate, given how violent and unfair Henry and the others are. Therefore, Moose's attempt to suggest that there is a code to their fight strikes the group as absurd.

Bill then walks toward Victor and looks him squarely in the eye. Suddenly, as though able to reach each other's minds, they throw rocks at each other while simultaneously walking toward each other. Victor ducks and bobs but Bill makes no effort to move himself out of the way. Victor runs out of ammunition first. Bill has one rock left—a smooth one about the size and shape of a duck's egg and shot with quartz. Victor thinks it looks very hard. Bill warns him and the other bullies to leave. If not, the entire group will move in on them and Bill promises to put them in the hospital. Mike joins in on the promised effort. For the first time, Bill sees fear in Henry's eyes.

Bill becomes fed up with Victor. To demonstrate that he will not abandon the Losers' Club's place in the Barrens, he engages in a face-off to prove that he is unafraid and willing to withstand greater harm before he will allow Henry and the others to run him and his friends out of their place. Bill's act demonstrates that he knows that if he allows the bullies to run them out of the Barrens, the group will have no safe place to go in town.

Henry, however, still resists the demand to leave and calls Beverly and Mike names. This prompts four rocks to go flying. Henry is helpless and the other bullies do nothing. "Belch" warns that the Losers' Club will be sorry for crossing Henry. However, the bullies soon leave with their heads down. The apocalyptic rockfight lasts for about four minutes and leaves the seven survivors standing in a semi-circle, each of them bleeding from somewhere. Their silence is broken by Eddie's wheezing. Ben tries to go to Eddie but suddenly feels ill and heads for the bushes instead, to vomit. Richie and Beverly go to Eddie, and Richie helps Eddie get his aspirator. Beverly then thanks Ben for sticking up for her.

Bill and the others succeed in subduing the bullies. King describes the rockfight as "apocalyptic," a very dramatic adjective, to illustrate how the fight is a turning point in the Losers' Club's relations with Henry and the other bullies. It is the first instance in which they resist him, and they have now met Mike, the final member of their circle. His inclusion will complete them and make it more possible for them to defeat It.

Everyone then turns to look at the new dark-skinned kid. Their look of careful curiosity is familiar to Mike. Bill looks at him, then at everyone else, and senses that their group is somehow complete. Beverly asks Mike what his name is. Stanley then asks him if he wants to shoot off some firecrackers. Mike's grin is enough of a response.

Mike initially thinks that the group is only curiously interested in him because he is black. He does not realize that they are recognizing him as one of them. Stan's invitation puts Mike at ease and is his welcome into the group.

CHAPTER 14: THE ALBUM

During the group's meeting at the library, everyone brings booze. Mike thinks that the only thing left to do now is to finish the job of catching up, "of stapling past to the present." Beverly remembers that they were digging out the clubhouse when Mike brought his father's photo album to the Barrens. Richie remembers the album performing the same trick that he and Bill saw when looking through George Denbrough's old album. Ben then says that he remembers what happened to the extra **silver** dollar. He tells his old friends how he gave the other three to Ricky Lee before leaving Nebraska. He then asks the others if they made a silver slug out of the other one. Richie remembers being sure that Ben could do it but, in the end, they all got cold feet.

Mike encourages the group to remember what they can from the summer of 1958 and connect those memories to their current lives and, particularly, to what they experienced on their own earlier in the day. Photo albums are a symbol of how people must engage with stories from the past in order to understand what is happening in the present. Ben offers the first memory which will serve as a clue to help the others remember how they first repelled It.

Mike goes to his fridge to reach for his six-pack of beer and sees Stanley Uris's severed head beside his Bud Light. However, it is not the head of a man but of an eleven-year-old boy. The mouth is open in a soundless scream, but the head's mouth has also been stuffed with feathers. The feathers are huge and light brown. Mike knows which bird the feathers come from. He remembers seeing the bird in May 1958 and then years later while visiting his father in the hospital. Blood from Stan's neck drips down and forms a pool at the bottom of the refrigerator. Then, the head opens its eyes. It reveals the "**silver**-bright eyes of Pennywise the Clown."

It is using the group's knowledge of Stan's recent death to haunt them and warn them that they could be next. It uses the image of Stan as a child because this is how Mike remembers his old friend. The bird feathers illustrate another connection between them, because Stan took an interest in ornithology and Mike has a latent fear of birds. Its "silver-bright eyes" also relate to Ben's previous discussion of the silver dollar. The color is a point of connection between It and the group.

The eyes roll toward Mike and speak to him. Mike refuses to believe that what he is seeing is real. The clown promises that It is, indeed, real. Referring to the Ritual of *Chüd*, It claims that the Losers' Club will never make It laugh. The head rolls over on its face and comes toward Mike like "a hideous bowling ball." Suddenly, there is a loud pop like the sound of a plastic cork coming out of cheap champagne. The head disappears and sends a net of blood up and back down. Mike thinks that he could clean up, but Carole Danner probably won't even see the mess of blood in the fridge when she comes in the next day.

Mike knows that the blood is only real because it is a figment of his imagination. Carol will not see the blood, as it would not occur to her to think that there would be blood in the fridge. Mike tries to convince himself that the image is not real, but he cannot because he believes in the clown.

Mike then looks up and sees balloons. They have messages. The blue ones say: "DERRY NIGGERS GET THE BIRD." The orange ones say: THE LOSERS ARE STILL LOSING, BUT STANLEY URIS IS FINALLY AHEAD." Mike then thinks about the first day he goes down into the Barrens after the rockfight. It is July 6th. He cannot remember what happened, though. He looks toward the balloons, not really seeing them now as he tries to remember that day. Richie calls after Mike from another room to ask if he is okay. Mike suggests that everyone else join him near the fridge.

The clown uses Mike's memory of being socially outcast due to his race to taunt him. The clown also uses his subconscious fear of birds. The messages are double entendres. The first—"get the bird"—alludes to Mike's fear of birds and is also the clown's way of giving Mike the middle finger. The second—"Stanley Uris is finally ahead"—mocks Stan's death but also suggests that Stanley had intuited something before committing suicide, which the others have yet to understand.

Mike thinks back again to how they all meet in the Barrens. He remembers hearing Richie's "Pickaninny Voice" pointing out the novelty of Mike's presence. Mike says "hello" to everyone and is prepared to offer his thanks to the group for helping him get away from the bullies. Beverly asks if he would like one of her cigarettes and Mike politely refuses. Mike issues his apologies for how the others got banged up during the rockfight, but Bill tells him not to worry about it. He then asks Mike if he can pose a question to him.

In another circumstance, Richie's impression might be perceived as racist and hostile. However, Mike seems to understand that Richie's sardonic sense of humor is simply a part of who he is. This native understanding is part of the reason why the others know that he belongs in the group.

Mike thinks for a moment that Bill is going to ask him what it is like to be black. Instead, Bill asks him questions about baseball. The group bonds a little over this shared interest. Mike asks what they have all been up to. Richie tells Mike how Ben once flooded out the Barrens. Now, the group is going to dig themselves a clubhouse. Ben says that digging in the ground is a better idea because people tend to fall out of treehouses and break bones. He plans for everyone to dig about five feet underground in a square that he pegged there. Then, they will "shore up the sides" to make sure that the walls do not cave in on them. Finally, they will place boards over the top of the hole. The group agrees to share the expenses of the materials that they will have to buy at the hardware store. Bill then invites Mike to be a part of their club, but first, he says, he must share the club's secret.

Mike is accustomed to people only being interested in him—or repelled by him—due to the color of his skin. Bill's questions about baseball, however, demonstrate an effort to bond with Mike as a fellow boy, who Bill presumes would take as much of an interest in the sport as he would. Notably, though, this is different from how Bill would interact with Beverly. The decision to build the clubhouse comes after their encounter with the bullies. An underground clubhouse is safer because they cannot fall out or be pushed out if another confrontation occurs.

Before Bill divulges the secret, he asks if there is anyone who does not want Mike in their club. No one raises a hand. Bill then asks who wants to tell the secret. Beverly sighs and looks at Mike, then she begins telling him about all of the children who have been killed.

The final test to see if Mike can be a member of the group is to see if he will believe the Losers' Club's secret. Beverly seems to worry for a moment that he may not believe their stories.

The members of the Losers' Club tell Mike, one-by-one, their own unique stories about their experiences with It. While walking home that night, Mike thinks that he should have listened to their stories "with disbelief mounting into horror," but he does not. He listens with comfort. He also tells everyone that he, too, has seen the clown. He saw him on the Fourth of July. Mike also thinks to himself that this was not the first time that he saw something that seemed wrong.

Mike puts the group at ease and assures him that he is one of them by relating his own story about It. Mike knows how incredible these stories are, but he also knows that there is something uniquely wrong in Derry and that the other kids are the only ones who are acknowledging the problem.

Mike thinks again about the bird. This is the first time that he really allows himself to think about it, except in his nightmares. At Beverly's prompting, he goes on with his story about the clown. He saw it while he was playing the trombone with his school band in a parade. He describes it as wearing a **silver** suit, white makeup, and a big red smile that looks like it were smeared on with blood. He also had orange buttons on the suit and orange tufts of hair. Mike recalls that the clown knew that Mike was looking at him and turned toward him and waved. The feeling that Mike got after the clown looked at him was worse than any feeling he had from being chased by Henry Bowers.

The feeling that Mike gets from the clown is worse because Mike knows that the clown is not real. It is possible to resist Henry, who, while substantial in size, is still only a boy. The clown, however, seems to have the ability to read Mike's mind. There is also something disorienting about the clown's appearance. He does not seem to be there to entertain but only to engage with and frighten Mike.

Mike and his band then march up Main Street. He sees the clown again, handing out balloons to kids. The clown then waves at him and winks, as though they share a secret between them or as though the clown knows that Mike recognizes him. Mike thinks that he knows the clown but has to check the pictures in his father's album to know for sure. Mike also tells the group his story about the bird. This gets Stan's attention. He asks Mike what kind of bird he saw.

Mike is again disoriented because it now seems as though others can also see the clown. Still, the clown is fixated on Mike. Mike also thinks that the clown is not from the present but has some connection to the past images in Will Hanlon's photo album.

Mike describes the nightmarish bird as a cross between a sparrow and a robin but with an orange chest. Ben asks what is so special about a bird. Mike responds that the bird was "bigger than a housetrailer." The group looks at him, shocked and amazed. Mike swears that he is telling the truth and that the bird looked like something out of a horror film.

The mention of the "orange chest" tells the others that the bird is a form of Pennywise. Mike worries that the group will not believe his story, though he has believed their stories. This is because to him, the memory still feels like something out of a fantasy.

Mike watches the faces of the others grow concerned and scared but never disbelieving. This fills him with relief. Mike tells the story of the bird and of how he ran from the Ironworks to escape it. Later, Bill, Richie, and Ben walk to the Derry Public Library, still keeping a close watch out for Henry Bowers and his gang. Ben asks Bill if he believes Mike's story. Bill thinks that the story is true and the other boys agree. They also remember Mike's detail about the bird's tongue having "orange fluffs" on it. They cross the street to the library. Now, with Mike having told them that story, the bird exists in everyone's imagination and any one of them could see it at any time.

When Mike sees that the others believe him, he is relieved. However, their fear comes from their awareness that they may now see the bird from Mike's nightmares, too, because he has put the image into their imaginations. In addition to this fear, the group still worries about Henry. Fear and threat are perpetual aspects of the group's lives. The mention of the "orange fluffs" makes it clear to them that the bird haunting Mike was Pennywise.

Bill tells them that Stan Uris once suggested that they all had to do something about It as soon as possible. Ben and Richie ask Bill what they should do. He suggests that they use a **silver** bullet to kill the bird. He learned this from the movies, which say that silver bullets are always final. Richie asks how they are supposed to get a silver bullet. Bill says that they will have to make it. Bill says that he is going to use his father's Walther, a gun. Ben then takes responsibility for obtaining the silver. With the bullet, Bill says, they can blow the bird's head off. The three of them stand there for a moment longer, then walk into the library.

Because the images that Pennywise uses to haunt the group often come from the movies, the group figures that they can use the tools of movie heroes to defeat It. Bill and Ben agree to take things given to them by their fathers—the only strong male figures they can think of outside of characters from television or the movies—to assist them in defeating Its latest glamour.

A week passes, and it is mid-July. The underground club house is nearly finished. Ben and Richie are working on the clubhouse while the others have gone to get more materials. Richie tells Mike that he owes them twenty-three cents if he wants to be in the club—part of his share of the cost of the hinges for the clubhouse. Mike, who is holding his father's photo album, fishes the change for the hinges out of his pocket. Ben points to the album and asks what it is. Mike says that it's his father's collection of pictures of old Derry, and Richie asks to see it. Mike says that it would be better to wait until everyone comes back. The conversation then turns to rock-and-roll, with Richie listing all of the white artists he likes, while Mike mentions the black originators—none of whom Richie knows.

While baseball serves as a point on which Bill and Mike bond, Mike and Richie bond over rock-and-roll. Both are aspects of American culture in which black and white people co-exist. Mike wants to wait for the others to come before he shows the album and tells them about what is inside. If he retells the story later, the others may get more or less information than Richie, or the image from the album could disappear.

Richie then attempts to sing a rock-and-roll song, which amuses Ben and Mike. When Mike holds his nose and laughs so hard that tears come out of his eyes, Richie jokes that "Negroes have no taste" and that he is not jealous of black people. He would rather be Jewish like Stan, he says, and open a pawn shop from which he sells people "switchblades and plastic dog-puke and used guitars." Ben and Mike scream with laughter. Their laughter is young and carefree. Little do they know that, the previous afternoon, a thunderstorm came through, creating "a spate of water" that pushed forth the body of Jimmy Cullum. Jimmy's face is mostly missing except for his nose. Bill and Eddie come back toward the clubhouse, wondering what Mike, Ben, and Richie are laughing at. As they cross the Kenduskeag, they hurry "past the unseen ruin of Jimmy Cullum."

Richie's jokes about anti-black racism and anti-Semitism bring levity to otherwise painful topics. In this instance, despite being only eleven, Richie demonstrates an innate comedic understanding that it is important to laugh about the things that cause pain. His ability to make the others laugh briefly takes their minds off of the clown and Its murders of local children. For an instant, they can revert back to being kids with no awareness of the mortal danger that surrounds them in Derry.

After Bill and Eddie bring back the boards, Ben gets to work with pulling out the rusty nails. Eddie warns Ben that he can get tetanus—which Richie mishears as "titnuss"—if he cuts himself on a rusty nail. Eddie explains what tetanus is and how it can lead to lockjaw. When Eddie goes to pee, Richie then tells him that he has to remember to "shake off," otherwise he can get cancer. Eddie says that the reason there is so much cancer in the world is because people like Richie and Beverly smoke cigarettes. Bill Denbrough calls "beep-beep" to bring an end to their bickering and finish the house, which will be accessed by a mahogany door that someone threw out.

"Beep-beep" is usually a signal to Richie to let him know that he has gone too far with his brand of humor. The boys' talk is typical of boys their age. They are curious about sex and their growing bodies, but they are also ignorant due to the conservatism of the era, which offers no real sex education. Eddie warns Richie and Beverly about the dangers of their smoking, which was also common in the era and a method for kids to rebel.

Bill notices the album in Mike's hands and the group looks at it. Bill warns that no one should touch the pages. The group goes from hand-to-hand with each of them gingerly handling the album by the edges of its pages. In one picture, there is a group of about six kids gathered around a "funny fellow." The setting does not look like Derry at all, except for the Canal. The funny fellow has a huge grin and does not wear make-up, but he has two tufts of hair that stick up like horns.

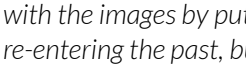
The children handle the album "gingerly" because Bill remembers how the temptation to touch an old photo in George's album caused him to nearly lose his fingers. The image of the clown seems to double as that of devil, due to his hair sticking up "like horns."

Mike goes to another picture, which is from 1856. In this photo, a bunch of drunks are standing in front of a saloon, while a politician tries to speak to them. A group of bonneted women stand nearby, looking with disgust at the men's intemperance and buffoonery. Mike explains that this is one of the many "foolcards" that were popular about twenty years before the Civil War. In another picture, the clown is wearing "a loud checked vest-busting drummer's suit" and is "playing the shell-game with a bunch of drunken loggers." He winks at a lumberjack. Bill estimates that this latter picture is from about a hundred years after the foolcard.

The photos provide examples of how the clown has existed throughout Derry's history. Derry's inhabitants, from all social classes and in all eras, have been tolerant of the clown. Mike's mention of "fool cards" not only suggests gags but also beasr a relation to the "fool card" during Tarot readings. The fool card bears the image of a jester or clown. This card signals new beginnings and faith in the universe.

Mike then points out a clipping from the Derry *News*. The picture shows a woodcut of the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Ironworks. A fellow in a morning coat and a tophat prepares to cut the ribbon while a crowd watches. On the left is a clown. The artist catches his image upside down, which makes his smile look like a scream. The next pictures are from the Prohibition era and the end of World War II. A parade is moving along Main Street toward Up-Mile Hill. Suddenly, the dots in the picture begin to move and Richie recognizes It. Richie alerts Bill to the same image that they saw in his brother George's room. The parade wiggles toward the Losers' Club. The clown prances along the sidelines, doing splits and cartwheels and performing other gags. Only the children in the photo see him and they shrink away. Ben goes to put his hand to the picture, as Bill did in George's room, but Bill stops him.

The clown's presence at the ribbon-cutting ceremony at Kitchener Ironworks establishes the connection between the giant bird that Mike saw while playing there and the clown. As with George's album, one of the images in Will Hanlon's album comes to life. King uses this motif to show the reader how history is alive even in the present. Derry's unwillingness to contend with history and its unresolved problems allows It to thrive. Ben is tempted to engage with the images by putting his hand in the photo, thereby physically re-entering the past, but this is clearly dangerous.



Ben thinks that it is okay to touch the picture as long as the plastic cover is on. He then lifts it up and Beverly screams. The clown is now rushing toward them. It then leaps up a lamppost in the foreground of the picture. Beverly screams again and Eddie does the same, though his scream is "faint and blue-breathless." The plastic of the photo bulges out and the clown threatens to kill every member of the Losers' Club. It identifies itself with every "glamour"—mummy, leper, werewolf, and others—that the kids have imagined. Stanley snatches the album from Bill's hand and shuts it.

The clown seems to rush at the group, as though It is a character from a 3-D movie they are viewing at the Aladdin. It uses the group's understanding that images can come alive, which they have learned from cinema, to haunt them. It also identifies itself with the movie characters that both frighten and entertain them, just as Pennywise is a figure of both fright and entertainment.

Bill helps Stan come to terms with the fact that, this time, everyone has seen the clown. Bill thinks that, together, they can still kill It. He then suggests that they all go back to the clubhouse and finish constructing it. He thinks about how he is, in a way, using the others to get back at It for killing his brother, George. There is an element of bitter selfishness in it that makes him wonder if this is what it feels like to be an adult. He thinks to himself that, if this is how adults have to think, then he never wants to grow up.

Now, everyone has the same amount of information and they are united in their belief that Pennywise exists. Bill knows that he can use his friends' belief to get them to help him avenge his brothers' death. He feels guilty for using their union for his own personal ends, and wonders if, as an adult, he will also privilege self-interest over the purer love of friendship.

CHAPTER 15: THE SMOKE-HOLE

Richie pushes his glasses up on his nose. The gesture feels familiar, though he has worn contact lenses for twenty years. He is listening to Mike's story about the bird at the Ironworks. Mike also reminds the others of how the photo from Will Hanlon's album had moved. Richie feels an exhilarating energy in the room and thinks of how it is a better high than cocaine. He thinks that it is the energy that one draws on in childhood, which slowly dissipates in adulthood.

Richie feels like his younger self again. Like Bill, he too understands how adulthood often robs people of the ability to become excited or to find pleasure and entertainment in the imagination. To recover this loss, Richie has used drugs, but the artificial high still does not equal the feeling he was able to generate naturally in his youth.

Meanwhile, the adult version of the Losers' Club continues to knock back their individual preferences for booze. Eddie is drinking gin-and-prune juice, Bill drinks bourbon, Mike opens another beer, and Beverly finishes her third screwdriver. Eddie breaks the silence that has overtaken the group and asks if It knows much about what they are doing in this moment. Ben reminds him that It was there a short while ago. Bill agrees that this means It knows what they are up to.

The adults use alcohol to desensitize themselves and to make it easier to listen to each other's stories. Eddie's strange cocktail reflects his willingness to partake with the others but also references his hypochondria—because prune juice helps with constipation and arthritis. Ben and Bill know that It is aware of their meeting in the library.

Suddenly, Richie half-stands, gropes for the table, then falls back into his chair. His eyes are burning. He suddenly understands why the memories have come back one at a time. If they came back all at once, it would have been like aiming "a psychological shotgun blast" at his temple. Richie then remembers he and Mike seeing It come in the "smoke-hole," and Richie attributes the memory to the burning in his eyes. Richie recalls feeling it for the first time after Mike called him in California. Richie wonders if it is psychological but Mike thinks the sensation is as real as the balloons and the head in the icebox, or the dead body of Tony Tracker that Eddie saw earlier.

Richie believes that his eyes are burning, and so the sensation becomes real. This feel is connected to the memory of being in the smoke-hole, and also to Richie's fear of losing his eyesight. Mike's assurance encourages Richie to believe in the things that are happening to him so that he can use these sensations as access points to his memories.

Richie recalls the story of the smoke-hole. He remembers that it occurred four or five days after Mike brought Will Hanlon's photo album down to the Barrens. The clubhouse is done by this time. Ben has read about smoke-holes and shares the idea with the group. Richie pinpoints the day as July 17th, two days after the body of Jimmy Cullum is discovered and a day after Mr. Nell comes down to the Barrens again and sits right on the clubhouse without realizing that it's there. He questions them carefully about Cullum, but there is not much that they have to tell him. In the present, Beverly prompts Richie to get to the core of his story, but he is figuring out where he should start.

Richie goes over the details of the day in an effort to jog his memory. He mentions the photo album and the clubhouse because they are relevant to the story, despite Beverly's wish that he get to the point. The smoke-hole takes them through the history of Derry, which they began to explore with the album. The completion of the clubhouse is important because it is the space where they gather to engage in the ritual.

Richie recalls Bill riding him to Kansas Street on **Silver** and stowing the bike under the little bridge there. Richie asks when Bill is going to tell everyone else—everyone except for him and Ben—about his plan to create silver bullets. Bill says that he won't talk about it today, and Richie rightly suspects that Bill has second thoughts about the plan working. The boys cross to a clearing. Suddenly, a piece of ground about ten inches long by three inches wide swings up, and eyes look out of the blackness. They belong to Eddie, who says, "Who's that trip-trapping on my bridge?" Richie Tozier goes into one of his voices—Pancho Vanilla. This routine sends Beverly and Ben, who is sitting next to her, go into a fit of giggles. Beverly prompts Ben to let them in and Bill and Richie drop through the hatch, which Ben closes again.

The bridge on Kansas Street is the place where Henry tried to carve his name into Ben's stomach. King's mention of the bridge and Richie's casual reference to the fairy tale "Three Billy Goats Gruff" remind the reader of the fairy tale's relation to the children's real and imagined fears. The silver bike and the silver bullet are the only modes of defense that they can imagine for fighting It, and this suggests that they will be successful—what is imagined becomes real when it comes to It. The sight of eyes looking up from the darkness underground is also reminiscent of Its eyes staring back at George from the sewer.

Bill asks what has been going on, and Eddie prompts Ben to tell Bill and Richie "the story" and see what they think. Ben, Beverly says, was telling a story about an "Indian ceremony," which she thinks would be bad for Eddie's asthma. Eddie calls it the "smoke-hole ceremony." Ben then talks about the book he borrowed from the library—*Ghosts of the Great Plains*—which discusses how indigenous people from the Plains engaged in smoke ceremonies as part of their religion. However, the ceremonies were also competitions to see who could stand the smoke long enough to have visions. The visions were then supposed to tell the tribe what to do to solve a collective problem.

The children collect information about legends and rituals from all over the world, which give remedies for how to deal with the supernatural and dispel evil. Though some of them were raised in particular faiths—Richie is Methodist, and Stan is Jewish—the rituals in those faiths only give them the tools to avoid and reject an evil like It, not to understand Its nature or how to combat It. Western faiths also often advocate personal introspection, whereas the smoke-hole ritual emphasizes collective effort.

Bill thinks that the smoke-hole ceremony is a good idea. Richie thinks that, if anyone has a vision, it will be Bill. Ben thinks that it's worth trying, though it may only work for Indians. He says that he has a hatchet, and they all help him cut some green wood. It takes an hour for them to cut four or five armfuls of branches. Beverly and Richie go to the bank of the Kenduskeag and collect stones. Richie then tells Beverly that she cannot participate in the ceremony because she is a girl. This makes her indignant, but Bill reasons that someone has to stay above ground in case anything goes wrong. Beverly asks why Eddie can't do it, given his asthma, but no one responds. She realizes that they don't they want her to participate because she's a girl. Instead of crying, as Richie expects, she explodes in anger and curses all of them. Bill relents and asks who will stay out of the clubhouse. Beverly suggests that they draw matches.

Richie figures that Bill is akin to "the chief" or the shaman of their group. The boys think that to ensure the purity of their ritual—in which only men would have participated—they have to exclude Beverly. Beverly then asserts her equality with members of the group in a way that she never would at home with her father. While she accepts her father's prejudices about her, such as being afraid of spiders, she refuses to accept those of the Losers' Club. Her knowledge that they have all had similar experiences means that her participation is as valid as anyone's.

Beverly takes out a book of matches. She lights a match and burns it out before adding it with six others. She then says that the person to draw the burnt match will be the one to stay outside of the clubhouse. They all pick a match and tell Beverly how much they love her. When none of them pulls a burnt match, Beverly thinks that she will be the one to stay out after all. However, she, too, draws an unburnt match. When they accuse her of cheating, she shows them the faint mark of soot from where she burned the single match-head. Bill reasons that they all have to go down. When Eddie asks what will happen if they all pass out, Bill reasons that they will not, if Beverly is telling the truth about the matches. When Stanley asks how Bill knows this, but Bill says that he simply does.

This is the only instance in the novel in which the group wonders if Beverly is telling them the truth. Despite the litany of eerie experiences they have had, they also quietly think that she may be tricking them (they know her to be good at tricks) so that she can participate in the ceremony. Bill figures that, if Beverly is telling the truth about the matches, it is a sign that the entire group is supposed to participate in the smoke-hole ceremony. Maybe some supernatural power other than It is at work too.

Ben and Richie go down first, and the others hand down the rocks one by one. For kindling, Mike offers his tattered Archie comic book. They light a flame and watch it blaze up. The clubhouse begins to fill up with smoke. Ben is the first to complain about the smoke, and Richie suggests that he leave. Stan, however, is the first to leave. Ben moves over to fill the space that Stan has vacated, and Mike throws more sticks on the smoky fire. Then, Ben gets up and leaves. Eddie and Beverly are next. Bill begins to cough and can't stop. Richie encourages him to leave, so as not to kill himself. Mike and Richie are now the only ones left. Mike throws more sticks on the fire. Not to be outdone, Richie throws some on, too.

The smoke-hole ceremony ends up being a test of wills. Eddie lasts for an unusually long time, which is proof that Mr. Keene's later assessment that he does not have asthma is likely true. Beverly also outlasts many of the boys, proving that she was able to handle the challenge as well if not better than some of them. Richie and Mike try to outdo each other by throwing more kindling on the fire. The ceremony also seems to be a kind of adolescent test of strength.

Mike asks Richie how he is feeling. Richie says that he almost feels "good" and Mike asks if Richie has been having "funny thoughts." Richie tilts his head back and feels that he is drifting away, like a balloon. Bill's voice calls down, asking if the guys are all right. Richie hears the voice as distant but still disturbing and asks Bill to be quiet. The clubhouse suddenly feels bigger than ever. Richie holds his hand out to Mike. It seems as though Mike is on the other side of an enormous room. Richie notices that the vision is happening, and he is beginning to float.

Mike and Richie are beginning to hallucinate, which is the purpose of the ceremony. Richie's feeling of floating like a balloon is an inversion of the clown's invitation to float with the dead. Here, the floating sensation seems to be the result of an expansion of consciousness.

Mike and Richie notice that they are no longer inside of the clubhouse but in the Barrens. However, the Barrens look different—lusher and greener. The air is hot and misty and not quite like Maine air in the summer. There is a flapping noise overhead and a group of bats flies by. They are the biggest bats that Richie has ever seen and he is frightened for a moment. Then, he remembers that there is no need to be scared, for it is only a vision. Mike and Richie move toward the sound of water from the river. In the "thick knee-high groundmist," Richie cannot tell if his feet touch the ground. Birds flock across the sky, "squalling harshly." The boys are in the Barrens as they had been thousands of years ago. They see dinosaurs and saber-toothed tigers. It feels now as though they are going back millions of years.

Mike and Richie have returned to the Barrens during a prehistoric time. The "bats" that Richie thinks he sees are probably pterodactyls. The climate is different because they have entered a different period in the Earth's history. The feeling of tumbling back into history is both disorienting and fun for them. Unlike the feelings that they get from going back in time as adults—anxiety and dread—as children they are fascinated by a vision of a world about that they have only read about or seen in movies.

Suddenly, they hear "a tuneless, soulless sound." Richie turns his head up toward the sky, where it is coming from. The sound takes on a voice that builds to "a shattering crescendo of sound." The clouds in the west bloom with red fire. Richie recognizes a spaceship and thinks that, whatever came down so long ago must have come from another star or another galaxy. There is then an explosion. Richie senses It. Mike drags Richie to his feet and they run along the banks of the Kenduskeag during this vision. Richie is dimly aware of the fact that they are not running alone—animals seem to be with them, recognizing the arrival of an alien presence. Then, Richie begins to cough and call for Mike.

The vision of It strongly suggests that It has come from outer space. Incidentally, there was also a popular 1950s schlock horror film entitled It Came from Outer Space. *King seems to be using the motif to explain Its origins, though the boys cannot figure out from where in the universe It came. They know from the explosion and the presence of fire that Its presence is violent and harmful. Both the boys and the animals run away because they can intuit Its ability to cause mortal harm.*

Richie's eyes flutter open and Beverly is kneeling beside him, wiping his mouth with a handkerchief. The others stand behind her, looking "solemn and scared." The side of Richie's face hurts a lot and he tries to talk but can only croak. Richie asks if Beverly slapped him and she says she did; it was the only thing she knew to do. He also asks if he threw up and Beverly nods. Richie gets to his feet but is unsure if he is going to faint. Bill says that he and Ben pulled Richie and Mike Hanlon out of the clubhouse. Ben says it was very smoky inside the clubhouse and that the group became even more scared when they heard how much Richie and Mike were screaming. More strangely, the screams sounded far away. Ben and Bill also mention how much bigger the clubhouse looked.

Richie learns that his experience of the clubhouse expanding was not merely a hallucination. Richie has no memory of being brought back to reality, and his voice is gone from the smoke inhalation. Ben pulls Richie and Mike out of the clubhouse because he is the only one who is strong enough to do so before the boys risked dying of asphyxiation. The sight of the other kids' "solemn and scared" faces alerts Richie to the importance of what happened.

Beverly asks if Richie really had a vision, like in Ben's book. Richie says that, if he did, he does not wish to have another. Richie then asks Beverly for a cigarette, and tells the group about the feeling of going back in time and seeing the Kenduskeag turn "wild." Mike talks about how they saw It come out of the sky, in something like a spaceship. Mike and Richie had the sense, during their vision. that It was bad.

Richie and Mike recall their vision to the group, confirming that the smoke-hole ceremony is real. There is a sense of disconnect between the experience of going back to a prehistoric era and seeing a spaceship, as King also blends genres and delves into science fiction. It could be a creature of advanced intelligence.

Mike goes on to reason that It has always been there, since the beginning of time. He thinks that It may have been using the sewers, waiting for the ice to melt and people to come. Richie adds that this may be why It uses sewers and drains—as "regular freeways." Stanley asks the two if they saw what It looks like and they shake their heads. Eddie wonders if they can beat a thing like that, but no one answers.

It is an ancient creature, according to the boys' vision, but it has the ability to use modern technology to Its advantage. Its anticipation of people indicates that It has depended on human ingenuity to survive.

CHAPTER 16: EDDIE'S BAD BREAK

By the time Richie finishes the story about the smoke-hole, everyone is nodding. Eddie reaches for an Excedrin. Five years earlier, he goes to the doctor for a routine check-up. The doctor notices an old break in his arm and asks if he fell out of a tree as a child. Eddie responds that it was something like that. Going down memory lane, Eddie mentions that it was Henry Bowers who broke his arm and asks if the others remember. Mike nods and says that the break occurred before Patrick Hocksetter appeared. Eddie gives the date as the 20th of July. Eddie mentions that Hocksetter was with Henry and the other bullies that day, and it was the last time Eddie saw Hocksetter alive.

The Excedrin pill triggers the memory of Eddie's broken arm. For some reason, Eddie lies to the doctor about how he broke his arm. He probably does not want to confront the painful memories of being bullied by Henry, which will lead him to other memories of Mr. Keene telling him that he does not really have asthma and his pivotal memory of his mother's visit to the hospital.

Beverly remembers that all of Henry's friends died on July 20th. She and Bill prompt Eddie to tell them the story of how his arm broke. Eddie remembers, too, that Beverly knows something important about Patrick Hocksetter, and she agrees to tell everyone after Eddie tells his story. Suddenly, Eddie's aspirator rolls across the table by itself. Bill tells him not to touch it. They then notice some balloons tied to the microfilm recorder, displaying a message: "ASTHMA MEDICINE GIVES YOU CANCER." Below the slogan are some grinning skulls. Eddie thinks back to being in the Center Street Drugstore and how Mr. Keene tells him something.

The message on the balloon seems to prompt Eddie to remember the source of his pain. It is able to do this due to Its access to Eddie's thoughts. The message is a play on Eddie's future knowledge that his aspirator does not really contain any medicine at all, as well as the fear of cancer that he earlier expressed to Richie and Beverly in response to their smoking habits.

Eddie revisits the memory of Mr. Keene inviting him into his office in the back of the pharmacy. Mr. Keene offers Eddie an ice-cream soda on the house. Eddie reluctantly agrees to a chocolate soda. Eddie is a little worried about what Mr. Keene wants to tell him. Mr. Keene asks his counter-girl, Ruby, two make two ice-cream sodas—one chocolate and one coffee—and bring them to the office. Mr. Keene then says something so peculiar that Eddie doesn't know how to respond: "This has gone on long enough." Mr. Keene asks Eddie how old he is, then asks if he knows what a "placebo" is. Before explaining, he is interrupted by Ruby tapping at the door. She sets down the sodas.

Eddie is initially wary of going into Mr. Keene's office alone. Mr. Keene's statement to Eddie is "peculiar" because it suggests that Eddie has either been trying to fool someone or is being made into a fool. Mr. Keene tells Eddie that it is the latter. He starts with an objective explanation to help Eddie understand the nature of his problem.

Mr. Keene continues with his explanation, but Eddie wishes that he were down in the Barrens fighting monsters. Mr. Keene has encouraged Eddie to relax because he is not going to hurt the boy, but Eddie somehow feels that he will be hurt, and he has no idea how he will fight that. Mr. Keene again tells Eddie to "loosen up." He says that Eddie's trouble comes from being stiff all the time. Mr. Keene takes out a balloon, which he asks Eddie to pretend is his lung. Eddie asks for his aspirator, which Mr. Keene says he will provide in a moment. He says that, in a healthy person, the lungs expand. However, in a stiff person, the muscles work against the lungs rather than with them.

Eddie would rather be fighting with monsters than having this uncomfortable human interaction. Mr. Keene is very real, however, and he has information that Eddie does not have. Eddie believes that this information will cause him harm—and he is right, for what Mr. Keene tells him will dispel an illusion on which Eddie relies for support. Mr. Keene's use of a balloon as a prop unintentionally relates to the clown's more sinister ballons.

Eddie is listening only dimly. He desperately wants his aspirator. He leans over the desk and grabs for it on the ink blotter, knocking over the glass which held his soda. He slams the aspirator into his mouth, triggering it off. He then apologizes for knocking over the glass. Ruby comes in to ask if everything is okay, and Mr. Keene sharply tells her to leave. Mr. Keene tells Eddie not to be concerned about the glass. He then says that he promises not to tell Eddie's mother about the glass if Eddie promises not to tell her about his and Mr. Keene's talk. Mr. Keene asks Eddie if he feels better. Eddie insists that he does because he has had his medicine. Mr. Keene then tells Eddie that he has not had any medicine at all. If it is medicine, it's only head-medicine.

The sight of the balloon, as well as his sense that Mr. Keene is going to tell him something that he does not want to hear, gives Eddie anxiety. Mr. Keene does not want Sonia Kaspbrak to know about his conversation with Eddie because she will deny the point that Mr. Keene wants to prove: Eddie does not have asthma. Mr. Keene's description of the medicine as "head-medicine" instead of lung medicine is to illustrate that Eddie relies on the aspirator to alleviate mental tension, not asthma.

Eddie begins to think that Mr. Keene is telling him that he is crazy. Mr. Keene launches into a story about a famous placebo test to prove to Eddie that most illnesses start in the head. Mr. Keene explains that the entire medical community is complicit in giving people placebos, as long as it helps them believe that they feel better. Eddie insists that his medicine works and Mr. Keene agrees that it works in Eddie's chest because it works in his head. He then explains that the aspirator contains nothing but water with a dash of camphor thrown in to make it taste like medicine. Mr. Keene then drinks some of his soda, but Eddie stands up, wanting to leave. Mr. Keene asks that he be permitted to finish, and Eddie sits back down.

Eddie perceives Mr. Keene's mention of "head-medicine" as an accusation that Eddie is mentally ill, and so he refuses to believe what Mr. Keene tells him. However, his obedience to his elders also prompts him to sit back down when Mr. Keene asks. Eddie also continues to listen, probably out of some interest in what Mr. Keene says, even though it is upsetting his sense of order in the world.

Mr. Keene then goes on to say that part of the problem is Russ Handor, Eddie's doctor. Mr. Keene says that Dr. Handor is weak. Eddie insists that he isn't crazy. Mr. Keene says that Eddie can think what he likes, just as Mr. Keene will think what he likes. Still, Mr. Keene insists that Eddie's lungs do not have asthma, but his mind does. Mr. Keene tells Eddie that he is not really sick. Eddie's mind whirls but he wonders why Mr. Keene would lie. As an adult, sitting in the library with his old friends, he would wonder why Mr. Keene told him the truth.

Dr. Handor, Mr. Keene thinks, is unwilling to stand up to Sonia Kaspbrak. Mr. Keene tells Eddie that he can continue to think that he is sick, which would please his mother, even though physically Eddie is not sick. In hindsight, Eddie wonders why Mr. Keene would tell him this, knowing that it would fuel mistrust of his mother and mistrust of Eddie's own understanding of his body.

Mr. Keene then asks Eddie about the new friends he has made and assumes that his mother, Sonia Kaspbrak, does not like them. Eddie lies and says that she likes them just fine. Mr. Keene suggests that Eddie talk to his friends about his "asthma" problem. He then stands up, saying that their conversation is finished. Mr. Keene apologizes if he upset Eddie, saying he was only doing what he thought was right. Before he can say anymore, Eddie grabs his aspirator and the bag of pills and nostrums for which he also came and bolts from the Center Street Drugstore. He senses Mr. Keene standing behind him in the doorway of the store, smiling "his dry desert smile."

Mr. Keene rightfully senses that Sonia does not like Eddie's friends because they challenge him to do things and are sources of love and comfort outside of Sonia herself. Mr. Keene does not exactly tell Eddie what he needs to know out of sympathy—otherwise he might have been gentler. He does it instead out of misanthropy and resentment for Sonia's imposing nature, which he senses will prevent Eddie from maturing properly. To retain his sense of order, Mr. Keene tells Eddie the truth.

Eddie wants to do the thing that Mr. Keene suggested: go into the Barrens and tell his friends everything. Then again, his mother is at home and expects the medicines. He gets halfway up Up-Mile Hill and takes out his aspirator. Eddie looks at the label and sees something he never noticed before. It reads: "Administer as needed." This strikes him as odd. If it were real medicine, it would not say that. Suddenly, he feels betrayed. He thinks about throwing it into the sewer grating. However, in the end, his habit is too strong, and he keeps the aspirator with him.

Eddie wants to tell his friends the story because he thinks that they, and particularly Bill, will know what to do. He is torn between wanting to go to his friends for comfort and answers and wanting to do what his mother expects so that she will continue to love and protect him. Eddie finally reads the label that he had always ignored out of blind trust of his mother. He now knows that the aspirator is not medicine, but he also knows that he still needs it.

Eddie comes out of Costello Avenue Market with a Pepsi and two candy bars twenty minutes after talking to Mr. Keene. He then sees Henry Bowers, Victor Criss, "Moose" Sadler, and Patrick Hockstetter "kneeling on the crushed gravel to the left of the little store." On an ordinary day, he may have gone back into the store and asked Mr. Gedreau, the owner, if he could leave by the back entrance, but today, he simply freezes where he stands. Victor sees him and elbows Henry. Then, Patrick looks up. Henry mentions how Eddie threw rocks at him before. Now, Eddie decides that he wants to go back into the store, but it is too late and Patrick grabs him. Eddie asks to be left alone and Henry mocks him. Henry then sweeps up a handful of gravel and smashes it into Eddie's face, cutting his cheeks, eyelids, and lips.

Eddie goes into the market, probably to give himself more time to think before going home and facing the prospect of confronting his mother about all that he has just learned. King suggests that this day is out of the ordinary for Eddie, not only because of Mr. Keene's revelation but because Eddie will soon learn that he is not as physically fragile as he thinks. As painful as the vengeful confrontation with Henry is, it is also a form of "medicine" that treats Eddie's self-imposed belief in his own weakness.

More gravel gets into Eddie's teeth. He feels it lacerating his gums and activating his fillings. Through half-closed, tear-blurred eyes, Eddie sees a large hand come down on Henry's shoulder. It belongs to Mr. Gedreau, who owns the store. He tells Henry to leave, but Henry shoves him and tells him to "get inside." Mr. Gedreau says that he is going to call the cops, but he still obeys Henry. Henry prompts his friends to "get" Eddie, who starts to run quite fast. Then, Eddie trips over a boy on a tricycle. Henry catches up with him and jerks his wrist up behind his back. Eddie can hear others approaching behind him and the boy on the tricycle starts to cry. In spite of the pain, Eddie begins to laugh.

Eddie laughs from the absurdity of the situation. Everything that occurs on this day disrupts his previous understanding of reality. First, Henry challenges and frightens an adult. Second, Eddie is enduring Henry's violence but is not yet dead or completely broken. Eddie is also laughing at how crazy Henry is, despite believing, just a short while ago, that he was the crazy one. Eddie realizes that everything Mr. Keene says makes sense, but Henry's obsession with the Losers' Club makes no sense at all.

Henry then twists Eddie's arm so hard that it breaks. Eddie hears a crack in his arm and shrieks. He is on the ground now and rolls over on his back, looking up into the faces of his bullies. They look impossibly tall, "like pallbearers peering into a grave." Eddie hears himself say that Henry's father is crazy and so is Henry. Henry draws his foot back to kick but the sound of a nearby siren stops him, and his friends prompt him to leave. Patrick Hocksetter stays behind for a moment to spit phlegm into Eddie's sweaty, bloody, upturned face. Eddie tries to wipe it off with his good arm, but that, too, causes him pain. Incredibly, he finds himself laughing again.

Out of spite for being called "crazy," Henry breaks Eddie's arm. For an instant, Eddie has the feeling of being dead and is in so much pain that he is willing to say anything to Henry, feeling that the bully cannot do much worse. Even the phlegm that Patrick spits in Eddie's face, which would have once horrified Eddie, causes less concern because Eddie knows that he is not really sick and is no more vulnerable than any other kid.

The cop car approaches and Eddie hears Mr. Nell's voice. Mr. Nell rides with Eddie in the ambulance and asks how he is feeling. Eddie's eyes shift past Mr. Nell toward the driver who has a big, leery grin and eyes as shiny and big as quarters. It is Pennywise. Eddie gestures at the driver and Mr. Nell assures him that they will soon be at the hospital. He then offers Eddie some of his whisky. Eddie drinks some and coughs. He looks again at the driver, who is now just a guy with a crewcut. He drifts off to sleep again.

Eddie hallucinates a vision of Pennywise driving the ambulance. The clown's big, silvery eyes indicate the "deadlights," which will figure prominently later and are a symbol of being trapped with Its evil.

Much later, in the Emergency Room, a nurse wipes Eddie's face and he can hear his mother bellowing. He tries to tell the nurse not to let his mother in, but she prompts him not to talk. The nurse is young and he can feel her bosoms pressing against his arm. For a moment, he has the idea that the nurse is Beverly Marsh. Eddie drifts away again and wakes up to see his mother talking to Dr. Handor. She bursts into "honking sobs" and Dr. Handor tells her that if she cannot control herself she will have to leave. She refuses and is astonished and hurt when Eddie agrees with the doctor. Eddie then asks for his aspirator and his mother gives it to him, explaining to the unimpressed nurse how he struggles with asthma.

Eddie conflates the nurse with Beverly Marsh because Beverly is the only other female in the novel who will hold Eddie. She will cradle Eddie in her arms at the end of the novel, while Eddie is dying. Despite his mother's obsession with his health, Sonia never offers Eddie any real comfort. Sonia's histrionics have less to do with Eddie and more to do with her own fears of being left alone or vulnerable.

Dr. Handor touches Eddie's arm and Eddie feels enormous pain, despite how gentle the doctor is being. Eddie feels like screaming but is afraid that his mother will scream, too. Sonia Kaspbrak then yells for the doctor to stop hurting Eddie, who is too "delicate" to handle "that sort of pain." The nurse looks furiously into Dr. Handor's tired eyes, as though to prompt him to send Sonia out of the room, but the doctor will not. Eddie looks at his mother and thinks of how her eyes are "almost predatory," like those of the leper at 29 Neibolt Street. Dr. Handor gently puts his hands around Eddie's arm and squeezes. The pain causes Eddie to pass out again.

Sonia reiterates her belief that Eddie is "too delicate," which is less plausible after the pain that Eddie has withstood from Henry. Dr. Handor's refusal to send Sonia out of the room is also proof of his cowardice, which is what Mr. Keene warned Eddie about. Eddie realizes that Sonia's presence in his life is not protective but consumptive and unhealthy. She wants Eddie to believe that he is sickly and fragile so that she can use him to assuage her loneliness.

The nurse and doctor give Eddie some liquid to drink, then Dr. Handor sets the fracture, telling Sonia Kaspbrak that it is a common greenstick fracture. He says that kids who climb trees get it all the time. Sonia refuses to believe this and wants the doctor to tell her the truth about how bad it is. The nurse then gives him a pill and Eddie can see that she is still angry. He wants to tell the nurse that his mother is not the leper and is only eating him because she loves him.

Eddie knows that the nurse senses Sonia's unhealthy attachment to Eddie. In a mature display of sympathy, Eddie wishes to explain that Sonia wants to keep Eddie small and weak because she loves him and does not want him to leave her. He wants to believe that Sonia's habits are not selfish, even though they clearly are.

Eddie goes to sleep again and thinks that he has a dream in which the rest of the Losers' Club arrives at the hospital (he later finds out that they did actually show up). He sees Bill and Richie riding double on **Silver**. He sees Beverly wearing a green dress, though she never wears dresses. He sees them coming at 2:00 PM, during the visiting hours. His mother shouts at them, refusing to allow them to come in. Meanwhile, the clown appears and starts jumping, doing splits, and smiling. The clown is getting exactly what he wants. He does a "double barrel-roll and burlesques kissing [Eddie's] mother's cheek." Bill tries to explain about the bullies, but Mrs. Kaspbrak chastises him for talking back to her. An intern then goes into the waiting room and tells Mrs. Kaspbrak that she will have to be quiet.

Eddie believes that he is dreaming about the Losers' Club visiting him in the hospital, but they have actually come to visit and have actually been turned away by Sonia. No one but him seems to see the clown, but that does not make his presence any less real. Eddie realizes that the clown wants to see the group disperse, since they are weaker alone. Sonia, though she has not been possessed by It, is doing Its work. She wants Eddie to be left alone so that she can keep him to herself, but this will also make it easier for It to kill Eddie.

Eddie then sees the clown's face change into the mummy, the bird, the werewolf and all of the other ghosts that now inhabit his imagination. Finally, he sees the face of his mother. He screams, "Not my ma!" No one hears, and he begins to think that he is dead.

The clown changes into all of the glamours that have been put into Eddie's imagination as a result of hearing the others' stories. He sees the face of his mother due to his belief of what Mr. Keene has told him.

To Sonia Kaspbrak's horror, she sees that one of Eddie's friends is black—or, in her mind, "a nigger." She tells herself that she has nothing against "niggers" and thinks that they should be able to ride buses and eat at lunch counters. They are fine, she figures, as long as they are not bothering white women, but she does not think that they should associate with white children.

Sonia is a racist but does not believe that she is racist because, unlike "Butch" and Henry Bowers, she has no violent hatred against black people, just no wish for her son to interact with them. She also expresses the commonly held racist belief that all black boys and men want to violate white women.

Then Sonia looks over at Beverly Marsh, who "[flashes] a pair of decidedly slutty jade eyes at Sonia." Sonia thinks that she must be from Lower Main Street or somewhere even worse. She also decides that if Beverly says a word to her, which she does not, she will tell her what she thinks about girls who run with boys.

Sonia is intimidated by Beverly because she is a pretty girl, thereby reminding Sonia of her fear that Eddie will one day fall in love with someone and leave her.

Sonia thinks of how she is sending these children away for Eddie's sake. She thinks that he will be disappointed in her at first, but he will soon understand. Except now, her sense of relief is marred by the fact that Eddie is awake and looking at her. Like his friend Ben, he has the ability to look at a face "as if to test the emotional weather brewing there, and glance just as quickly away." However, Sonia does not know this about him. Eddie speaks to her flatly: "You sent my friends away."

Eddie does not speak to his mother with anger, because he pities her too much to be angry with her. Sonia believes that being an adult gives her the wisdom to know what is best for Eddie, but Eddie no longer believes that his mother's actions are selfless. He sees that her satisfaction with her actions has almost nothing to do with Eddie's well-being.

Sonia flinches at the accusation, wondering how Eddie knows. She ignores him and asks how he is feeling. Eddie does not respond. She repeats the question and he still does not respond. that Dr. Handor says that Eddie will be fine, but if he isn't, they will go to see the finest specialist in Portland or even Boston. Again, Eddie says that she sent his friends away. Sonia relents and admits that she did just that. Sonia explains that, if it were not for them, Eddie would be at home watching TV or working on his soapbox racer to enter in a competition in Bangor. If he wins, he gets an all-expense paid trip to Akron, Ohio. Of course, Sonia would never allow him to go, due to the dangers of riding an airplane as well as riding in a soapbox going downhill.

Sonia pretends to be a concerned mother, but Eddie does not fall for what he now knows is an act. She keeps it up by offering to take Eddie to specialists, but this is merely another way of convincing Eddie that he is sicker than he actually is. She mentions that his friends may have spoiled his chance to compete in his soapbox competition, though in reality Sonia would never allow Eddie to do anything risky or to make a trip that would take him any real distance away from her.

Eddie tells his mother that his friends did not break his arm, and if he had been with his friends, this would not have happened. That brings up Sonia's rage and she remembers a comment from her neighbor, Mrs. Van Prett, about how it is safer to have friends. Sonia refuses to accept this and says that Henry broke Eddie's arm because his "friends" crossed him somehow. She says that, if Eddie had listened to her and stayed away from them, none of this would have happened. Eddie disagrees and says that he thinks that something worse could have happened.

Eddie tries to help his mother understand that he is stronger and better protected, particularly from delinquents like Henry, when he is with his friends. Sonia refuses to acknowledge this, though, because she wants Eddie to believe that she is the only person he needs for support and protection.

Eddie then tells his mother that Bill and the rest of the Losers' Club will be back and, when they come, she will not stop them. Sonia is "flabbergasted and terrified" and tears well up in her eyes. She says that Eddie must have learned from his "friends" to speak to her this way. Eddie looks at her and she sees a look of adult sorrow in his face. She thinks of what would happen if Eddie decided not to go to college close to home and come home every night after classes. He thinks about Eddie falling in love with a girl and getting married, and wonders where the place would be for her in all of that. She wants to tell Eddie that she can take care of him for the rest of her life.

Sonia's greatest fear is to be left alone after Eddie grows up. Her fear has resulted in an unnatural attachment to him that keeps him from growing into a fully functioning adult. Her tactic to keep Eddie close to her is to convince him that he is helpless—not only unable to maintain good health without her support, but also unable to cook for himself or even select the right kind of company.

Eddie says that he loves his mother, but he also loves his friends and that she is making herself cry. Though Sonia tells Eddie how much he is hurting her, he pleads with her not to make him choose between her and his friends. Sonia screams, "in a near-frenzy," that they are "bad friends." She stands up and says that she will return in the evening when the shock and pain of the accident subside. She insists that Eddie's friends are not appropriate for him—not their sort. Sonia realizes that she is now running away from her son. Eddie then tells her how Mr. Keene told him that his asthma medicine is just water. This information stops Sonia in her tracks.

Eddie refuses to take responsibility for Sonia's histrionics, knowing that she is being manipulative. He is sympathetic but unaffected. Sonia insists that Eddie is unwell, which is the only way she can cope with his disobedience and its possible consequences for her. She runs away from her son in order to avoid enduring more of his pity and disapproval.

Sonia Kaspbrak screams that Mr. Keene has told Eddie a lie and she wonders why he would lie like that. Eddie thinks there is truth to what the pharmacist says, otherwise there would be a warning on the bottle. Sonia clasps her hands over her ears, not wanting to hear anymore. Eddie says that she must have known this, too. After all, it is her job to protect him. Her lips tremble, but she is no longer crying. She is too scared to cry. Eddie says that he does not know why she would want him to think that water is medicine. She thinks about explaining to Eddie—a delicate child—how it is better for him to think he is sick than to get sick for real. However, she thinks it better to say nothing.

Sonia tries to avoid confronting Eddie's increasing awareness of her manipulation. He speaks to her knowingly but sympathetically, but Sonia is afraid of the maturity in her son's voice, knowing that it indicates that he will not rely on her as much as she wants him to. Sonia convinces herself and wants to convince Eddie that she was actually worried about him becoming ill, but she says nothing probably because she knows that her expression of concern would be inauthentic.

Eddie tells his mother that he will continue to hang out with his friends and help to protect them from the bullies. In exchange, he will continue to take his asthma medicine. Sonia Kaspbrak senses that this is a sort of blackmail. She knows one thing for sure: she will never set foot in Center Street Drug Store ever again. Eddie then asks her for a hug. She hugs him, carefully so as not to hurt his arm. She then thinks, "what mother would kill her son with love?" Eddie hugs her back.

Eddie allows his mother her illusion of Eddie being fragile and helpless in exchange for her not interfering with his friendships and allowing him a social life outside of her. Her rhetorical question to herself is then ironic. Sonia's form of love is not exactly "killing" Eddie, but it certainly threatens to stunt his emotional growth.

Sonia leaves just in time. Eddie starts to feel breathless. He grabs for his aspirator, not caring that it is a placebo. He breathes freely, however, for the first time since his mother has left. He lies back on the pillows. Eddie feels scared. He thinks about how he spoke to his mother and how, in a way, he did not feel like himself. There was some force working in him and through him and he thinks his mother felt it, too. He saw the acknowledgment in her eyes and in her trembling lips. The reason why he told her that she could not cut him off from his friends is because he knows that he cannot face It alone. He cries a little, then drifts off to sleep.

Eddie was cool and calm during the confrontation with his mother, but the scene has actually made him very anxious. Eddie's fear comes from the fact that he is growing up and learning to assert himself. Eddie realizes that, as mean as Mr. Keene's act seemed, he was right to tell Eddie the truth. Eddie does, indeed, need to have friends, particularly since he can only face It with the combined strength of his friends.

Bill and the rest of the Losers' Club returns to the hospital in the evening. Their faces look solemn when they ask Eddie how he is doing. They still plan to make a **silver** bullet using one of Ben's silver dollars. Beverly says that Bill wants her to shoot It with a slingshot, due to her being such a good markswoman. Bill then says that everyone should sign Eddie's cast. After everyone signs, Bill invites Eddie to go over to his house the day after tomorrow, if he can. They leave at seven fifteen. Eddie watches the storm clouds that threatened rain separate and drift apart. The rain comes the next day, not long after Beverly sees something terrible happen to Patrick Hocksetter.

The Losers' Club appears "solemn" because they regret not being present to help Eddie confront Henry and the other bullies. They don't wallow in this feeling, however, because they have a much bigger task to perform. Bill's choice to make Beverly the one who will shoot at It in the house on Neibolt Street is a reversion of his previous belief, during the smoke-hole ceremony, that she should be excluded from participation as a girl.

CHAPTER 17: ANOTHER ONE OF THE MISSING: THE DEATH OF PATRICK HOCKSTETTER

The adult Eddie finishes telling his story and pours himself another drink. He then asks Beverly if she saw It take Patrick Hocksetter, the day after she and the others visited Eddie in the hospital. They recall how crazy Patrick was. Beverly remembers that he had sweaty, meaty hands, though he would touch girls as lightly as a feather. Richie remembers his pencil box full of dead flies. Bill asks Beverly what happened to Patrick.

Each of the Losers has a memory of Patrick that certifies him as a creepy kid, though none of these details really indicate that he is crazy as much as he just seems weird. The group relies most on Beverly's recollection of Patrick because she recalls seeing how he died.

Beverly thinks back to that day during the summer, when she was becoming more conscious of her curving body. She also remembers that her father was much sharper with her during those days. She was increasingly nervous around him. If her mother was not around, things were always worst. Beverly remembers the smell they made between them as the summer wore on, and how her father stayed away from her partly because of that smell.

The "smell" that Beverly alludes to is that of pheromones. Al has increasing anxiety over Beverly's maturing body because his incestuous feelings are intensifying and become more difficult to resist when Elfrida is absent. To avoid his feelings, he beats Beverly, as though to make his perversity her fault.

Beverly also remembers the Bullseye slingshot. Ben recalls that she put a hole in something that day with the slingshot. Ben begins to ask if it was Patrick Hocksetter whom she hit, and she says "no." She recalls where she went that day. She decided to go to the Barrens to practice with the slingshot. She went by the clubhouse to see if anyone was there, but there was no one. All that remained of the group was the lingering smoke smell from the smoke-hole. Then, she went to the city dump. She figured that there would be lots of things to shoot at there. She recalls that Patrick, Henry Bowers, Victor Criss, and "Belch" Huggins were also at the dump. She starts giggling when she recalls what they were doing: they had their pants down and were lighting their farts on fire.

Through Beverly's memory of Patrick Hocksetter's death, the group recalls memories of other important events that may have occurred that day. Beverly spends a rare summer day by herself. Like the rest of the group, she cannot resist the city dump as a playing area. This habit causes her to differ strongly from other girls her age, particularly Greta Bowie and Sally Mueller, who consider Beverly un-ladylike. Still, Beverly is amused by boys' occasionally weird habits, such as the farting contest she witnesses.

Beverly walks toward the dump, carrying her skates and the Bullseye slingshot. She hears a shout, then laughter. She thinks that it is her gang and becomes excited by the possibility of seeing Bill Denbrough. She knows that she is too young to love a boy, but she loves Bill all the same. She nearly walks up to the group before realizing that it is not her gang—it is Henry Bowers and his crew. At first, she thinks that they are naked. She ducks behind an old, junked Studebaker and she sees that they are not naked but just have their pants and underpants pulled down.

Bill's leadership, as well as his inaccessibility—due to his single-minded obsession with getting revenge on It for killing his brother—are part of his appeal for Beverly. Beverly nearly endangers herself by walking up to Henry, which is why she hides from view. She does not want them to see her, but she is too curious about what they are doing to leave the junkyard.

Out of sight, Beverly's first thought is to get away. Then, she thinks that she will be seen if she tries to run. She is also curious about what they are doing. "Belch" Huggins has his back to her and she sees that he has a very large, hairy ass. Hysterical giggles begin to bubble up in her throat. Next, she sees the boys' penises. Henry's is "small and hairless" but Victor's is quite big. She thinks to herself that Bill "has one of those," too. Now, Beverly is scared to move—if they know that she has seen "their things," they could hurt her very badly.

Beverly is both intrigued by what she is seeing and frightened of running away. She worries that if the boys know that she has seen them, they may beat her up in embarrassment. Worse, her curiosity about their bodies, and the bodies of boys in general, could give them the idea of sexually assaulting her in some way.

Henry screams that "Belch" has released a fart that creates a three-foot flame. Next, Patrick Hocksetter sticks his behind in Henry's face. Henry holds up a lighter and flicks it. Beverly's jaw drops when she sees a blue flame look as though it is coming out of Patrick's behind. The boys roll with laughter. She is laughing, too, but mostly because of having seen the boys' "things." The sight of them fills her with a mixture of horror and revulsion, which she finds funny. She wants to stop laughing, out of fear that they will hear her, but she cannot stop. Instead, she muffles her laughter. Her cheeks are turning red from the suppression and tears swim in her eyes.

Beverly is more amused by the sight of the boys' genitals than she is by the farting, which is unremarkable to her. As silly as their competition is, she finds their penises even sillier and stranger. This seems to be the first time that Beverly has ever seen any boy naked. The sight of their genitals is alarming to her because they are so different from her own and seem so obtrusive.

Next, it is Victor's turn, and Henry tells him that his fart made a twelve-foot flame. Victor howls with pain, saying that he would not care if it went *twenty* feet because Henry nearly burned his ass off. This comment causes Beverly's fit of giggles to intensify, becoming more and more like silent screams. Her belly hurts, and tears stream down her face.

Victor "howls with pain" because the flame has gotten too close to his skin. Beverly finds it funny that the boys would risk giving themselves serious burns just to prove who has more intense gas.

Henry Bowers, Victor Criss, "Belch" Huggins, and Patrick Hocksetter end up lighting each other's farts because of Rena Davenport—a bean farmer who has been courting "Butch" Bowers. That morning, Henry eats "an enormous quantity of leftover beans." By the afternoon, Patrick decides that he and Henry should go to the dump to light their farts on fire. Victor is the first to announce that he has to leave, to help his father pick corn. Then "Belch" announces that he has to leave to make his paper route. Beverly watches the two boys leave and sneezes three times, quickly and quietly, into her cupped hands. She thinks that she should go back to the club house. She has lost interest in target practice and she has to pee.

It is telling that, when the boys are not bullying members of the Losers' Club or watching schlock films at the theater, having a farting contest is the only other thing they can think to do. When the other boys leave, Beverly thinks that she should, too. However, she is still afraid of being seen and she remains fascinated by what else these boys do when no one else is around.

Henry and Patrick continue to light farts. Patrick then offers to show Henry something. Patrick says that it feels good. Then, Beverly hears nothing from the two boys. She is curious to look. She does not know what the boys are doing, but she is sure that it is something "nasty." Patrick has one hand between Henry's thighs. With his other hand, Patrick is rubbing his own penis. She is not sure of what is going on, but it scares her. She gets the feeling that, if they discover her seeing this, they will kill her. She sees that Patrick's *thing* has gotten a little longer, but Henry's has grown amazingly and nearly pokes his bellybutton.

Beverly's idea of something "nasty" is related to the performance of sexual acts. Despite her crush on Bill and her father's abusive behavior, she cannot yet fathom touching a penis or thinking of it as a source of pleasure. Moreover, it frightens her to watch it grow from flaccid to erect. Beverly thinks that they would kill her if they saw her because she would be a witness to homosexual experimentation.

Henry stares at Patrick's hand "as if hypnotized." Then, Patrick offers to perform oral sex. Henry responds as though startled, then slaps Patrick, knocking him back, before he can pose the question again. Henry claims that he doesn't go in "for that queer stuff," while Patrick says that Henry liked what he was doing. Henry warns Patrick that, if he tells anyone about what they just did, he will tell someone about what Patrick has been doing with dogs and cats and about Patrick's refrigerator. Henry leaves and Patrick is left alone.

Henry draws the line at oral sex seems to him like an acceptance of homosexual behavior, or "queer stuff." Henry blackmails Patrick into silence by threatening to tell others that Patrick secretly kidnaps, tortures, and murders local pets. Patrick is left standing alone, as though isolated from the world—which he is, due to his psychopathy.

Beverly waits, but nothing happens. Five minutes drag by. It also makes her uneasy not to know for sure where Patrick is. She peeks through the windshield again and sees him sitting. He is playing with the lighter and seems hypnotized by it. A line of blood runs from his mouth to his chin. Beverly thinks of how crazy this boy is and how much she wants to get away from him. Moving very carefully, she creeps to the back of the Ford Studebaker. When she reaches the pines beyond the junked cars, she looks over her shoulder. She goes to pee and is pulling up her shorts again when she hears footsteps approaching. It is Patrick. He stops almost directly opposite her and looks at "the rusting Amana refrigerator."

Beverly is uneasy not knowing where Patrick is because of how creepy he can be. Patrick's fascination with the lighter suggests a taste for arson. His indifference to the blood running down his chin is a reminder that he does not regard the blood—or any aspect of his being—as real, and therefore sees no reason to acknowledge the fact that he is bleeding. This sense of unreality is an important aspect of his psychopathy.

Beverly thinks that, if Patrick does happen to see her, she could easily outrun him. He is not as fat as Ben Hanscom, but he is pudgy. She pulls the Bullseye out of her pocket and puts about six steel pellets in her breast pocket just in case. She remembers the refrigerator now. It is the only one in the dump that has not been dismantled. Patrick hums as he approaches the fridge. Beverly feels a chill as she wonders what he is up to. However, if she had known about Patrick's "private ritual," she would have run away as fast as she could.

Beverly pulls out the Bullseye, in case she needs to defend herself against Patrick. She finds it odd that Patrick is humming as he approaches the fridge in the dump, as though he were grabbing something cold to drink out of his personal fridge. Beverly is worried, but she is also very curious about what unknown evil Patrick is hiding from the world.

No one has the slightest idea of just how crazy Patrick Hocksetter is. Patrick has repeated the first- and third-grades. His teachers find him apathetic and his IQ is low-normal, but Patrick is much cleverer than his IQ results suggest, and by July 1958, he has become "a full-fledged psychopath." He could not remember a time when he understood that other living beings were real. He has no sense of hurting or of being hurt. All of his teachers find him odd, but none of them have disciplinary problems with him. Certainly, no one knows that he has murdered his younger brother, Avery.

Patrick is not unintelligent, but lacks interest in school. The subjects that he learns there are unrelated to his actual interests. Furthermore, the social conditioning that students receive in school conflicts with Patrick's sense that neither he nor any other living being is real. His teachers ignore his strange behavior because he is not a delinquent, which, in the 1950s, was the only official sign of a problematic child.

When Patrick is in kindergarten, his parents have another son, named Avery. The baby cries late at night, waking Patrick up, and his parents are always hanging over Avery's crib. Seeing all of this frightens Patrick. He realizes that his parents once brought him home from the hospital, too, which would make him "real." If he is "real," then Avery might be, too.

What makes Patrick psychotic is his inability to understand that living beings are actually living. It is not clear what Patrick thinks other people and animals are, or even what he imagines himself to be. What is clear is that "realness" frightens him.

Patrick goes into Avery's room one afternoon around two-thirty, shortly after the bus drops him off from his afternoon kindergarten session. His mother is napping in her room. She is exhausted because Avery was fussy the night before. Patrick's father is at work. Avery is sleeping on his stomach, with his face turned to one side. Patrick, with no expression on his own face, turns Avery's head so that it is pressed directly into the pillow. He smothers him there. The baby struggles, but Patrick holds him in place. Finally, the baby becomes totally still. Patrick feels excitement begin to crest and then ebb in him. He goes downstairs for cookies and a glass of milk.

Patrick murders his younger brother very matter-of-factly—that is, he does it simply because Avery has proven to be an inconvenience to him. He has no expression on his face because he is neither angry at nor jealous of Avery—the baby, after all, is not real in Henry's mind. The only emotion that Patrick feels is pleasure at having carried out his task with such aplomb. He gets cookies and milk to reward himself. This horrifying story is then another example of King showing that evil doesn't only come from outside sources like It—evil is also very human, and can appear almost anywhere.

Patrick's mother comes downstairs half an hour later and says that she did not hear Patrick come in, due to her being so tired. He thinks of how she will no longer have to worry about being so tired. She asks her elder son how his school day was. He says it was fine and shows her a picture of what is supposed to be his drawing of a house and a tree. However, the paper is "covered with looping meaningless scribbles made with black and brown crayon." Patrick always brings home the same kind of drawing. His mother worries quietly about their "dark sameness."

Patrick's mother senses that something is wrong with her elder son but either does not have the language to describe what it is or thinks it better not to ruminate on the subject too much. The "dark sameness" of the pictures—no matter what they were intended to depict—indicates that Patrick has no feeling toward anything and no interest in the world outside of himself.

Patrick's mother discovers Avery's death around five o'clock. Until then, she assumes that the baby is taking a very long nap. Patrick is watching television while his mother, who is screaming, holds the baby's corpse in the open kitchen door, hopelessly believing that the cold air might revive him. It is diagnosed as crib-death. Patrick is gratified about how things settle down after the baby is buried, resulting in him getting his meals on time again.

While Patrick's mother screams in agony, he does not go to her to comfort her but continues to watch television, as though nothing out of the ordinary has occurred. Patrick's mother never registers this as odd because she is too consumed by grief over the loss of Avery.

Only Patrick's father comes close to realizing the truth. He stands beside Avery's empty crib about twenty minutes after the infant's body has been removed. He cannot believe what has happened. Then, he looks down on the floor and sees track marks from Patrick's rubber boots. His hand goes to his mouth and his eyes widen. A picture begins to form in Mr. Hocksetter's mind, but before it can fully develop, he leaves the room and closes the door. He never asks Patrick any questions. Patrick, meanwhile, has no guilt and no bad dreams.

Mr. Hocksetter chooses to embrace denial instead of facing the real possibility that his elder son killed his infant son. Patrick made no effort to hide his crime, which is an indication of his mental illness. In his mind, Avery was a problem that he needed to solve. If Patrick had made the effort to hide evidence, that would indicate that he understood that what he did was wrong.

Back near the dump, Patrick has been looking at the refrigerator for a long time. It is filled with the corpses of missing neighborhood pets. The refrigerator has a powerful hold on him and he finds himself drawing pictures of it in school. Patrick's latest victim is a pigeon that he discovered on Jackson Street two days ago. The pigeon pecked at Patrick's hand several times, leaving several shallow digs. The pigeon is now "nothing but a skeleton surrounded by a ragged fall of feathers." Beside its body are "dozens of flesh-colored objects that [look] like big macaroni shells." They are actually leeches. Suddenly, one of them unfurls insect wings. The mutant creature flies into Patrick's arm and turns pink, then red.

Patrick's animal pictures at school are probably mistaken for the innocent animal drawings that children frequently produce in art classes. No one knows that the seemingly innocuous images—the only ones that do not reflect the "dark sameness" of Patrick's other drawings—reveal something horrifying about the boy. The mutant creature that latches onto Patrick's arm turns red because it is sucking blood out of him.

Though Patrick is afraid of almost nothing—it is difficult to be afraid when almost nothing is "real"—he has great loathing for leeches. He pulls at one of the creatures and crushes it. Although it explodes, it continues to suck at him. Patrick throws it away, but more leeches fly out of the fridge. He feels no pain but there is "a hideous *draining* sensation." Also, the blood pouring from the leeches seems real enough. One of them falls down Patrick's shirt and settles on his chest. Another settles on his right eye. Another flies into Patrick's mouth and settles on his tongue to feed. There is still not much pain.

Patrick probably loathes leeches because they suck his blood and reveal to him that he has *blood when he pulls them off of him. This reminds Patrick that he, too, is a living being, and he dislikes this thought. The draining sensation comes from the mutant leeches sucking the life blood out of Patrick. It is unclear if Patrick does not feel much pain because the leech bites do not actually hurt or because he is incapable of feeling pain at all.*

Patrick is horrified, however, that parasites are hanging all over his body. Some of them drink to capacity, then burst like balloons, drenching Patrick with pints of his own blood. The one inside of his mouth also bursts, causing him to "[eject] a huge spray of blood and parasite-flesh like vomit." He falls down, still screaming. Before he passes out, he sees a figure step from behind the last of the junked cars. It tells Patrick "hello and goodbye" in a "bubbling voice." The figure, who is merely the shape of a man, then begins to drag Patrick toward the Barrens. Patrick tries to scream but loses consciousness. He awakes to find It feeding on him.

The parasites remind Patrick that he is, indeed, just flesh and blood and that his body is just as vulnerable as those of the animals that he has killed and that of his dead younger brother. The figure who steps from behind the cars is Pennywise. Patrick cannot see the clown clearly because he is losing consciousness. However, he does feel It feeding on him, much more forcefully than the leeches.

At first, Beverly does not know what she is seeing. All that she knows is that Patrick Hocksetter is thrashing around and screaming. She thinks that there is a great deal of pain in that screaming and she wishes that she had not come here. Then, the screams stop, and Beverly hears someone speak. It is her father's voice saying, "Hello and goodbye." The voice does not speak again, and she thinks that she has imagined it. She walks out of the bushes toward the path, still prepared to run from Patrick if she has to. She looks around and sees a lot of blood. When she bends down to touch it, she realizes that it is not fake.

Beverly does not know what she is seeing, but she is fascinated by it. The clown knows that Beverly is present, which is why It assumes the voice of the person whom she fears the most—her father. Beverly is still unsure whether or not Patrick is dead, despite hearing his screams. The sight of his blood is a shock to her.

Beverly feels a flash of heat in her left arm and thinks that she has been stuck by a burr. However, she realizes that something is biting her and goes to pick it off. Now, seeing the leech, she understands where all the blood has come from. Her eyes go to the fridge. She sees some of the parasites crawling "sluggishly" outside of the fridge. She prepares her slingshot and tries to use them for target practice but misses. Oddly, too, she sees the ball curve. She turns and runs. She stops, panting, and looks at the place in her arm where one of the leeches has bitten her. The flow of blood is slowing. She realizes that the leeches are a part of It.

The leeches are not merely products of Patrick's imagination; they are real. They are also indiscriminate. However, they are not so impressive to Beverly because she is not afraid of leeches. Beverly is aware, however, that some supernatural force is at work when she sees the projectile from her slingshot curve. She runs away from the scene, forgetting that she cannot really escape from It.

Beverly wants to flee but her curiosity gets the better of her again. She follows a trail of grooves in the soil. They lead her around a bend and she is facing the river. She looks down and hears "a thick and monstrous chuckle." This is too much for her and she becomes overwhelmed by panic. She flees through the trees.

The grooves are the trail leading to the place where the clown has dragged Patrick. The chuckle comes from the clown, whom Beverly can no longer see but whose presence is still palpable.

Four hours later, all of the members of the Losers' Club, except for Eddie, are crouched in the bushes near the spot where Beverly saw Patrick Hocksetter open his fridge. The smell of rain is in the air and Bill is working to patch up Beverly's wound. The rain then comes and turns into a storm. The group decides to check out the fridge. Bill opens it with the clothesline that he has used to wrap Beverly's wound. There is a message inside the door: "STOP NOW BEFORE I KILL YOU ALL. A WORD TO THE WISE FROM YOUR FRIEND PENNYWISE."

Patrick's dead pigeon is gone, as are the mutant leeches. The message inside the door is a warning. The group is learning more about Pennywise—for instance, It does not only take good children like George but also bad ones, like Patrick. Beverly has also learned that It takes bodies down near the river. The way Pennywise carries Patrick away is similar to how he carries off Adrian Mellon.

Bill advances toward the fridge and threatens to kill Pennywise, screaming about how It murdered his brother, George. Bill kicks wildly at the heap of pompoms that have come out of the refrigerator. Bill says that he can sense that It is afraid of the group. Beverly agrees; then, Bill, in a moment of vulnerability, asks for the group's help. The children put their arms around one another in a group hug. No one speaks, and Beverly's eyes are tightly shut. She remembers the sound of the rain, their shared silence, and "vague sorrow" for Eddie not being with them. She also recalls feeling "very young and very strong."

The pompoms are props that mock Bill, suggesting that George's murder was a gag or an amusing trick. Bill knows that It is afraid of the group because they are getting better at understanding It. Also, they have managed to stick together, despite the recent interference of Sonia Kaspbrak. Still, Beverly feels Eddie's temporary absence. Her vague sorrow will become clearer at the end of the novel, when Eddie dies.

CHAPTER 18: THE BULLSEYE

There is only one story left for the adults to tell: the tale of how they made the **silver** slugs in Zack Denbrough's workshop on July 23rd, and used them on July 25th. Ben stands up to reveal another scar on his chest. There is the letter "H" from Henry Bowers but also a heavy scar descending from the crossbar of the "H," which looks like a twisting rope. Beverly recalls the werewolf and how they all saw it after Richie told his story about the experience on Neibolt Street. Ben says that this scar was not present a couple of nights ago; it just came back. Ben recalls how they spent a lot of time at the library, trying to learn how to make silver bullets at Zack Denbrough's work table.

The "heavy scar" on Ben's body triggers Beverly's memory of the werewolf from the house on Neibolt Street. The group saw it after Richie told his story, because his storytelling placed the image of the werewolf into their imaginations. Like Bill's scar from the group's blood oath, Ben's scar from the werewolf reappears shortly before the group reunites. The scars reappear along with the recovery of their memories.

In the flashback, Bill insists that Ben make the **silver** slugs, just as he insists that Beverly hold the slingshot. Ben asks if Bill has the molds and Bill hands them over. After deciding on slugs instead of bullets, Richie and Bill spend additional time at the library, researching. The kids find the molds at the Kitchener Precision Tool and Die. The Kitchener who owns and runs it is a great-great-grandnephew of the brothers who owned Kitchener Ironworks. The molds are fifty cents apiece.

Bill assigns each member of the Losers' Club to do what he knows they can best accomplish. Ben's engineering talent makes him the ideal candidate for designing and producing the slugs, while Beverly's talent as a markswoman makes her the obvious candidate to shoot the werewolf.

Back in the workshop, Ben looks at the molds carefully and puts them down. Bill and Richie look at him with interest but little idea of what he is doing. Ben reaches into his pocket and takes out a **silver** dollar, which he drops into a makeshift crucible. Beverly notes that Ben's father gave him the coin. He then asks for matches and a funnel. Absorbed in what he's doing, Ben finds it easy to talk to Beverly. It is as though he is a surgeon addressing a nurse. He asks her to stick the funnel in the hole because she has the steadiest hands, and to use a glove so as not to burn herself. Bill gives Ben some wraparound glasses to wear while he holds the blowtorch.

Ben directs the others patiently and carefully, just as he did when he helped them to build the dam and their clubhouse. In these instances, Ben demonstrates a different kind of leadership from Bill. He inspires confidence by teaching the others how to create the materials that they need to help them feel safe. His methodical approach to things is an indication of his future career as an architect.

The others watch as molten **silver** flows from the shell into the funnel. Not a drop spills. Ben says that he has to reheat the silver and takes the blowtorch from Eddie. Ten minutes later, it's done. Ben then invites everyone to play Monopoly for an hour, while the silver hardens in the molds. Beverly says that she has to call home. When she does, she realizes that there will be no problem with her father; he fell asleep in front of the TV and woke just long enough to go to bed. Beverly's mother asks if she has a ride home, and Beverly says that Bill's dad will take them home. Her mother asks if she's on a date, but Beverly says she isn't. Elfrida says that she is glad, for the thought of that would make Al angry. As an afterthought, Elfrida adds that she would be angry, too.

With her father asleep, Beverly does not have to worry about him asking about her whereabouts or making unfair accusations against her based on whatever he has fantasized about her doing. Elfrida is only concerned with the prospect of Beverly being with a boy because she knows that the thought of such a prospect would send Al into a rage. Elfrida does not really know how she would feel about Beverly growing up and beginning to date because she is obedient to Al and follows his opinions.

Elfrida then asks if any of her daughter's girlfriends are there. Beverly does not have any girlfriends and suddenly wishes that she were talking to her father. She would be more afraid, but she would also feel less ashamed. She begins to think that maybe she is not a very good girl. She lies about some girls being present and tells her mother that she loves her, before hanging up.

Because she works a lot and distances herself from Beverly to avoid the truth about Al's behavior, Elfrida knows very little about her daughter. Beverly does not really want to talk to her father. Instead, she feels that it would be easier to lie to him than to her mother.

Beverly joins the others at the table where they are playing Monopoly. Stanley wins. Bill moves the little **silver** shoe that he is using as a marker around the board, and Beverly thinks that, if he held her hand, she would be so glad that she could die. A warm light begins to "glow briefly in her chest" and she smiles down at her hands.

Here the children do something relatively normal—playing a board game. For Beverly, playing the game gives her an excuse to be near Bill, with the hope that he will touch her. The warm light is her feeling of burgeoning love.

On July 25, 1958, the Losers' Club meet It in face-to-face combat. They arrive at 25 Neibolt Street around ten in the morning. They all ride their bikes, though Bill and Richie are riding double on **Silver**. Stanley thinks that the windows look like eyes. Beverly notes the terrible smell. Bill asks if everyone still wants to go in. Eddie fumbles for his aspirator and Richie and Stan ask to use it, too. Beverly asks if anyone lives on the street. Mike says that only bums frequent the area.

They arrive at a precise time, like a group with an important assignment. Richie and Bill ride together, as they did during their first visit to the house on Neibolt Street. When the rest of the group asks to use Eddie's aspirator, it is a subtle acknowledgement, on Eddie's part, that the aspirator is a tool to alleviate anxiety.

The group walks to the left side of the porch, where there is a wild rose bush. The bushes that the leper touched on the day of Eddie's visit have turned black. Bill asks if everyone is ready. They say that they are, and he drops to his knees to crawl "through the blighted rosebushes and under the porch."

Wild rosebushes can be a symbol of passion or sin, as they were in Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel The Scarlet Letter. When the leper touches them, they turn black, as though ruined by frost. The leper and the black roses indicate death.

The leaves under the porch crackle under the children's weight and release a "sour old smell." Bill reaches the broken cellar window and looks into the cellar. Beverly asks if he can see anything. Bill points out the coal pile that he and Richie used to escape the last time they were there. Bill and Beverly slip down into the cellar. She asks Ben to give her the slingshot the second she touches the ground. Ben next turns and wriggles himself through the window. Inevitably, he gets stuck. Bill and Beverly grab him by the ankles and he goes tumbling inside. Next come Eddie, Richie, Stan, and Mike.

The "sour old smell" is similar to that of the sewer, but it is also reminiscent of the attic smell that Bill will recall as an adult when he visits the secondhand shop to buy back Silver. The smell of old and decaying things can be both comforting and off-putting. In this instance, it is off-putting because it emanates from a house that typically harbors social outcasts, as well as the werewolf from Richie's waking nightmare.

The room is dim but not dark. Bill walks toward the stairs and the others follow him. Bill signals for everyone to go upstairs. They enter a dirty kitchen. Beverly opens a cupboard and a rat tumbles toward her. She thinks that It wants her to shoot at it, to use up their ammo. She becomes afraid of using the Bullseye and suggests that Bill do it instead. He shakes his head. The house, Richie finds, is full of rats. They go down the front hall, which smells like urine and rotting plaster. There are broken beer bottles in one corner. In the other corner is a "wet and swollen" girly magazine.

Beverly offers Bill the slingshot because, momentarily, she does not trust herself and worries that her fears of other things, such as rats, will cause her to waste their slugs. She figures that Bill would be less likely to make such a mistake, but he insists that Beverly keep the slingshot because she is the best shot in the group.

Bill pushes open a door to what might be a parlor. Ben thinks that he hears Pennywise the Clown's voice speaking to him, as though on a mental radio. He whispers for it to go away and it does. The house is a special place—one of several in Derry where It finds Its way into the overworld. Suddenly, the floor seems to slope. They are losing Ben. Ben runs to catch up with the group. When he does, Bill says that everyone must stay close. Bill opens a door to another, narrower hall. Suddenly, the corridor seems to elongate. The doors grow with the ceiling, pulling like taffy. Stanley claps his hands over his eyes. Bill tells Stanley that it is not real, but Stanley insists that it is only unreal to Bill. Stan's panic catches on among other members of the group.

The "mental radio" is Ben's imagined belief that Pennywise is present somewhere in the house, or at least knows that the children are there. It uses the house because it is an undesirable space filled with undesirable people whose images he can use to tap into other fears, such as Eddie's fear of illness. It also taps into Stanley's fear of irrationality when It disorients his sense of space. He cannot separate what he sees from Bill's insistence that it is only an illusion.

Bill helps Stanley remembers that he has something to defend himself against It: his bird book. The parlor is now almost black. They walk down the hall and Bill grabs the knob to the third door. Beverly is next to him with the Bullseye raised. The door opens to a bedroom. Bill thinks there is nothing out of the ordinary there, but then they see the mattress bulge in and out and a black, sticky fluid spills out. The liquid stains the mattress and runs over the floor toward the doorway. Richie tells Bill to shut the door. Bill shuts it and prompts the others to "come on." When he moves to the second door, a buzzing sound starts inside the room.

Stanley's knowledge of birds gives him confidence, which can help him to repel his fear, just as he did when he was alone with It in the Standpipe. The black, sticky fluid seems like blood, but it appears black because of the darkness within the house. The emission of the sticky fluid from the mattress foreshadows the blood that comes oozing out of Beverly's fortune cookie years later.

Bill draws back from the rising cry. Ben finds the sound maddening and thinks that a giant cricket is behind the door. He tells Beverly to shoot it through the door before it can get them. Before Beverly can pull the slingshot back, Mike stops her, opens the door, and points out that it is just a mooseblower, something used to scare crows. The room is empty. He looks at Bill and says that he is scared of It, but he agrees that It is scared of them, too.

The giant cricket that Ben imagines will reappear in Eddie Kaspbrak's fortune cookie during their lunch reunion. In this instance, It uses a mundane object to frighten the children. This again shows that their imaginations are the strongest producers of their fears.

They go to the door at the end of the hall. Bill pulls it open. White shards of a broken toilet lay everywhere inside. There is a bathtub standing on claw feet, with a basin and an empty medicine cabinet above it. Bill approaches the mouth of a drain hole over which the toilet once sat. Bill leans toward it and says that he can hear pumping machinery, as he can in the Barrens. He asserts that this is where It came from—the drains. Ben looks into the pipe and sees Its eyes down in the darkness.

It uses the place where the toilet once was as an entry point from the sewer into the house. Ben looks down and sees eyes peering up at him from the darkness, just as George Denbrough looked down into the sewer and saw eyes peering back at him. The difference is that Ben knows about what creature lurks below.

Beverly raises her Bullseye, ready to shoot a **silver** slug, when something explodes from the pipe. Ben would later only remember seeing "a silvery-orange shifting shape" during this confrontation. It is solid, not ghostly. Richie recognizes it as the Teenage Werewolf. The Werewolf stands poised over the drainpipe. Its green eyes glare at them from a feral face. It lets out a loud growl. It wears a high-school letter jacket and Its hairy arms jut out toward Beverly, who screams. The Werewolf's smell is hot, raw, and murderous. Ben grabs Beverly so hard that he tears her shirt. Mike and Richie prompt Beverly to shoot It, which she does. The silver slug misses by more than a foot—tearing a hole into the wallpaper.

The silvery-orange color is a remnant of the clown's suit. The Teenage Werewolf returns, as the Losers' Club predicted, because Richie put the glamour into the others' imaginations when he told them the story of his first encounter with It. Beverly is still reluctant to shoot, and her nervousness shows when she narrowly misses hitting the werewolf. King uses Beverly's missed shot and the fact that the friends have a limited number of slugs to help build suspense.

The Werewolf's head snaps around and its green eyes fix on Beverly. Ben steps in front of her. The Werewolf lunges at Ben with its greenish-yellow eyes flaring. Richie is bellowing, though the sound is dim in Ben's ears. Eddie yells at Beverly to shoot It. The Werewolf's claws descend again, and Ben is in Its grip, bleeding. The Werewolf throws him into the bathtub. The Werewolf spins around and Ben can see the lettering on the jacket: DERRY HIGH SCHOOL KILLING TEAM. PENNYWISE 13.

Ben wants to protect Beverly from the Werewolf's fury. He is so intent on making sure that she does not get hurt that he does not even hear Richie's screams nearby. The Werewolf scratches Ben, which explains the long scar on his chest where Henry's "H" also resides. The lettering on the jacket makes it clear that the Werewolf is another form of the clown.

The Werewolf attacks Bill again and Richie screams for Beverly to shoot it. Beverly aims for the right eye and misses by less than half an inch. The Werewolf screams. Bill and Beverly advance on the Werewolf and Richie screams for her to shoot it again, to kill it. Ben is confused by this because they have no ammo left. Then, he understands. Her fingers close over the cup that held the slugs, hiding its emptiness. The Werewolf's eyes flicker with uncertainty and pain. Blood pours onto its jacket in sheets. Then the uncertainty leaves the creature's eyes, and It believes. It turns and dives into the drain. A voice roars back from the drainpipe, promising to kill them all. The house then snaps back to its original size and goes back to being a hobo house. After It leaves, the silence seems very loud.

The inevitable occurs: the gang runs out of slugs. However, this ends up not mattering because Beverly believes that she can destroy It through faith. When the slugs disappear, she relies on her imagination to send It away. The creature's uncertainty comes from confusion over Beverly's sudden belief that she can destroy the Werewolf through sheer will, which means that she is not afraid. Imagination gives It power, but it also gives the Losers power over It.

Bill tells everyone that they need to leave. He asks Richie to help him with Ben. Ben looks down at his stomach. The Werewolf has slashed him long and deep but not mortally. Richie feels a sense of triumph in having beaten the Werewolf. Bill again tells everyone that they should leave before It decides to return. Beverly asks for someone's shirt to replace the one that Ben has ripped. Bill gives her his.

Bill senses that Its attack on the Losers' Club is not over and that It could return in a different form, one for which they will not be prepared. When Beverly loses her shirt, the incident causes slight embarrassment among the prepubescent group who are confronted with the sight of a partially naked girl.

An hour later, they are all back in the clubhouse. It is cool inside, and they sit without talking very much. Beverly and Richie pass a cigarette back and forth. Ben keeps thinking that everything that happened on Neibolt Street was merely a dream, but he knows that it was not. Beverly offers to return Bill's shirt but he waves a hand to show that this isn't important. She bites down on her lower lip and appears to him as an eleven-year-old girl who is "tall for her age and simply beautiful." She asks him what should happen next—more **silver** slugs? Ben thinks that it all comes back to power. He loves Beverly, so she has power over him. Beverly loves Bill, so he has power over her.

For the first time, Bill notices Beverly as an object of romantic interest. Ben, who is very observant, becomes aware of this. The thought does not seem to make him jealous, but only accepting. He decides that love is a form of power, just as Its evil is a form of power that can intrude into children's imaginations. At the moment, Ben cannot think much about Beverly's question about silver slugs because of the distracting power of his love for her, and the sight of her semi-nude body.

The children prepare to go home. Later, Ben would still wonder where power, such as the power of the **silver** slugs comes from. It seems to him that their lives would depend on such questions. For the next two weeks, nothing much happens.

Ben wonders how the children were able to do something seemingly impossible. This question will also keep coming back to him when he grows up.

DERRY: THE FOURTH INTERLUDE

On the night of April 6, 1985, Mike Hanlon is drunk. He has been bar-hopping and is now sitting in the public library with his diary. He thinks about the members of the library's board of directors, most of whom are the descendants of lumber barons. These were the people who changed Derry from a "sleepy little ship-building town into a booming honky-tonk." Derry, during the first twenty years of the twentieth-century, was "all boom and booze and balling." The "good folks" from West Broadway who descend from the barons would take the library away from Hanlon if he happened to publish anything about the Legion of Decency, the fire at the Black Spot, the execution of the Bradley Gang, or the affair of Claude Heroux at the Silver Dollar.

There is a conspiracy of silence among the officials of Derry to avoid confronting the unpleasant aspects of the town's history. They prefer to think, instead, that a handful of industrious and self-reliant men created a decent town out of a place that had been a hotbed of sin. The lumber barons were the "good folks" of West Broadway. Hanlon uses this term ironically because he knows, from his father, that they are the same people who conspired to burn down the Black Spot.

The Silver Dollar was a beer joint and, in September 1905, the strangest mass murder in the history of the United States occurred there. A few old-timers claim to remember it but the only one whose testimony Mike trusts is Egbert Thoroughgood, who now lives in a nursing home. To help Mike understand Thoroughgood's accent on the audiotapes, he gets the help of the folklorist Sandy Ives. Thoroughgood describes Claude Heroux as very sly, which made his hatchet-wielding episode in the bar so surprising. Heroux was someone more likely to light fires in the woods.

Egbert speaks with a Northern Maine / French Canadian accent, which indicates that he has not completely assimilated into Derry. What Egbert indicates about Heroux being "sly" is that he was someone whose violence would have been secret—nothing like the bold act he commits in the bar. The likelihood of his lighting fires in the woods also suggests that he tried to sabotage the lumber industry.

In the spring of 1905, there is some talk about union-organizing. Maine workingmen are traditionally anti-union, but Claude Heroux sees unions as a chance to talk big and spend a lot of time drinking. In May of that year, there is a big strike, which Claude and his organizing friends consider a great victory for their cause. According to Egbert Thoroughgood, Davey Hartwell was responsible for Claude's being involved in union-organizing. Claude loved Davey deeply. Thoroughgood reasons that Claude loved Davey in the way that a dog loves its master.

Maine workingmen are anti-union due to the belief that unions are inherently Socialist and that they interfere with traditional New England beliefs about thrift and self-reliance as the keys to success. Claude only becomes involved in union-organizing because of his love for Davey and his sense that the gatherings give him an excuse to spend more time with his friends.

Four of the organizers spend the night at the Brentwood Arms Hotel. Four check in, but none of them check out. Amsel Bickford and Davey Hartwell are later found floating face-down in the Kenduskeag. Bickford has been decapitated and Hartwell is missing his legs. Pinned to the back of each man's shirt is a paper with the word UNION written on it.

Maine loggers are hostile to union organizing because of its perceived association with a Socialist political philosophy. The Derry loggers view union organizing as such as a threat to their way of life that they viciously murder Bickford and Hartwell to make examples of them.

Claude Heroux spends the next weeks swearing that he will get revenge on those who killed his friends. That summer, there are lots of fires, likely started by Heroux. No one brings him to trial for arson, perhaps out of fear of what he will say on the stand. Then, on September 9th, he goes into The Sleepy Silver Dollar, which is full of loggers drinking beer. Heroux enters with a woodsman's double-bitted axe in his hand. The barman brings Heroux "a schooner of beer, two hardcooked eggs in a bowl, and a shaker of salt." He orders himself another schooner, drinks it, and belches. After he finishes the second, he excuses himself to Egbert Thoroughgood, who is beside him, and walks to the table where the men who work for the "lumber potentate," William Mueller, are playing five-card stud.

What they probably fear from Heroux is that he will implicate people in power for the arson. It is also possible that his suspected acts were assignments from lumber barons to destroy the fields of their rivals. Whatever the reason for the authorities' refusal to try Heroux, the lack of punishment emboldens him to get revenge against those who killed his friends. Heroux walks into the bar very calmly and normally, as though this night were like any other.

A man named Floyd Calderwood has just poured himself another whisky and is setting the bottle back down when Claude Heroux chops off his hand. Heroux then buries his axe in Tinker McCutcheon's head. Calderwood tries to pick up his right hand with his left. Eddie King is next. He begs with Heroux to spare him; he has just gotten married. Heroux brings the axe down into King's belly. Meanwhile, conversation and drinking continue in the rest of the bar.

The scene in the bar is bloody and crazed, but the other patrons carry on as though they cannot see what Heroux is doing. They reveal a tolerance and lack of shock that will come to characterize Derry's general attitude toward violence.

Mike turns off his cassette recorder and asks Egbert Thoroughgood if he really did not know what was going on. Thoroughgood says that everyone knew, but it was politics to them—town business. While men at the bar went on talking about weather, Claude Heroux went on cutting. Stugley Grenier gets out his pistol and fires a shot that strikes the head of the ax. Heroux goes after El Katook next, who asks the axeman to stop. Grenier fires another round, which gets nowhere near Heroux. El Katook says that he was out of town during the murders of Heroux's friends. As El Katook tries to escape the bar, Heroux decapitates him. El Katook crawls another three feet with blood spraying from his neck. Stugley Grenier goes running down Exchange Street and is the only one to escape the cutting party at the bar.

As with the murder of the Bradley Gang and the burning of the Black Spot, the town is quietly tolerant of Heroux's murders. They also may believe that Heroux was somewhat justified in attacking those who had killed his friends, and thus standing up for their honor. On the other hand, the murders were also political—the result of a war between union organizers and anti-union people, fighting over the future of labor in the town.

Claude Heroux stands puffing and blowing and "covered with gore from head to foot." He then goes over to the card-strewn table where his victims were sitting. He kicks over one of Eddie King's remaining legs. Five minutes later, some sheriff's deputies come in and take Claude away. The bars boom with news of the slaughter. A righteous fury stirs, leading a drunken mob to release Heroux from jail, carrying him on their shoulders down to Canal Street where he is lynched. His was the only lynching to occur in that part of Maine. Thoroughgood notes that none of this made the Derry *News*.

The mob carrying Heroux on their shoulders seems more like a gesture bestowed to a hero. If they were truly furious with him, he might have been dragged from the jail. Still, in keeping with the vigilante justice that was typical at the time, Heroux is publicly hanged. None of this ends up in the newspaper, just as the Bradley Gang's murder didn't, because the town wants to forget that it happened.

Mike asks Egbert Thoroughgood if there was anyone present at the bar whom he did not know, someone who seemed a bit out of place? Thoroughgood remembers "a comical sort of fella" doing flips, juggling, and doing other tricks. Thoroughgood falls asleep shortly after telling his story and Mike realizes that Pennywise the Dancing Clown was there all along. Mike is, again, contemplating making the calls to the other six. They are adults now but they nearly killed It twice. They no longer believe in tooth fairies or Santa Claus but they believe in It, which is the source of Its power. It feeds on children because It can feed on their willingness to believe. Mike is still frightened.

Just as Mike recognized Pennywise from Will Hanlon's old photos of Derry, he also recognizes the clown from Egbert's story. Mike is still reluctant to call the others back to Derry, understanding that they have moved on with their lives. However, he knows that, despite their growing up, they know of and believe in the evil that persists in Derry. Mike also knows that It retains the power to frighten him because he believes in It in the same way that children believe in Santa.

CHAPTER 19: IN THE WATCHES OF THE NIGHT

When Ben finishes his story about the **silver** slugs, the group still wants to talk. However, it is 1:15 AM now and Mike wants to sleep. Eddie wants to continue talking so that they can remember everything, but Bill agrees that they will either remember or they will not. Mike suggests that they all meet on Kansas Street, which Eddie realizes means that they will meet in the Barrens. Mike tells everyone to be careful tonight and that their meeting has made him feel better. He asks Bill if they can still kill It, and Bill thinks they can. Richie asks what they should do if It shows up. Mike suggests that there may be another force, or that there seemed to be when they were children. That force wants them to stay alive to finish the job of killing It.

Bill insists on moving things along. He has faith that they will remember what they need to know when the time comes for them to know it. Mike feels better because he is less frightened, knowing that he is no longer alone against It. Mike also suggests the possibility that It is not the only force of power that exists among the children. He cannot yet define what that force is, or tell if it is good or evil, but he seems to be remembering the Turtle.

The group prepares to leave. Suddenly, Beverly screams and looks down at her hands. Her hand opens and is bleeding. Bill sees that the old scar that he noticed on his hand in England is also bleeding. All of their hands begin to bleed where they cut themselves to take the blood oath many years earlier. They then grasp hands to close their circle. Mike realizes that it is all starting to happen again. A force overtakes the library, tipping over occult books and slamming doors. Then, it all stops, as though someone flipped a switch. They drop their hands and look at each other in a daze. Beverly presses against Bill, trembling, and he puts his arm around her.

Spirits enter the library in Its attempt to frighten the group as a whole. The scene that King creates is similar to what happens when people in the movies bring back spirits from the dead after playing with a Ouija board. In fact, it is possible that this occurs because one of the friends had such a thought. The cuts on their hands are also similar to stigmata—the sign of their suffering and their promise to sacrifice themselves for Derry.

When the group goes out, they see that the sky has clouded again. Bill glances back and sees the library half a block away. Eddie and Richie are standing on the top step. Ben is standing on the bottom step, watching as Bill and Beverly depart together. Beverly tells Bill about how much she hated her father and begins to tell the story about what happened the day she returned from the Barrens to take a shower and have lunch—the day she noticed that her father had been possessed by It.

Ben watches as Bill and Beverly re-establish their bond, which will become romantic. Beverly's father's possession by It is the first instance in which It uses humans as Its "dogsbodies," or servants. The story of Al's possession foreshadows what also occurs with Tom Rogan.

It is 11:30 AM when Beverly returns to house on Lower Main Street. As soon as she walks in, her father throws her across the room before she can enter completely. She screams as she hits the wall then the family's sagging sofa. Al reminds her that he worries about her, and that he sometimes worries a lot. He walks toward her, across the living room, "his face thoughtful, sad, deadly." He is wearing his khakis and high-top shoes, and Beverly sees that he is leaving mud tracks on the carpet. She thinks of how she will have to vacuum the dirt from his shoes, provided that her father leaves her able to vacuum. The mud looks like the kind from the Barrens.

Al has just come in from work and is alone in the house with Beverly. Beverly is concerned about what her father will do to her, but assumes it will be his usual beatings, the result of his sexual obsession with her. She is more concerned with the dirt on the carpet—not only the fact that she will have to clean it because her father insists that she and her mother clean up after him, but because of where the mud comes from. She wonders why her father was in the Barrens.

Al strikes Beverly in the face as he tells her that he has seen that she is getting bigger. Beverly asks what her father is talking about and he says that he will beat her within an inch of her life if she lies to him. She realizes that he is not really looking at her but at the Currier and Ives picture over her head, on the wall behind the sofa. Al asks her if she has been in the Barrens with a group of boys. Her heart leaps and she begins to tell him that she plays down there sometimes, but he slaps her again. He asks what she has allowed them to do to her, then demands that she take off her pants so that he can examine her. Beverly realizes that her father is gone and she is alone in the room with It.

Beverly notices that her father appears to be in a kind of daze. He is his usual violent self, but it also seems as though he is being directed by a force outside of him. This indicates that It is using Al. Al demands that Beverly take off her pants because he wants to ensure that her hymen is still intact—indicating that she is still a virgin. She knows that It is using her father's sexual obsession with her to threaten and terrorize her.

Al throws Beverly aside. He says that someone told him that Beverly plays in the Barrens with boys but he did not believe it until he saw for himself that morning. He shouts at her that she is not yet twelve years old and is running around with boys. He kicks her in the thigh, making her scream. He tells her that she is a pretty girl whom plenty of people would be happy to ruin. Finally, Beverly understands what It has put into her father's head—though part of her knows that the thought was in Al's head all along and It simply used the tools that were lying around to do Its work.

Al does not merely think that it's inappropriate for a girl to play alone with boys; he also thinks that the only reason she would be with them is for sexual experimentation. Al regards sex as the "ruin" of Beverly, but also privately insists that no one else will have his daughter if he cannot have her.

Al tells Beverly that he has seen her smoking. This time, he strikes her with the palm of his hand, sending her reeling back into the kitchen table. She looks at his face and sees him looking at her chest. She is aware that her blouse has come untucked and she is not wearing her only training bra. Her mind slips back to the house on Neibolt Street when Bill gave her his shirt. The glances of the boys had seemed natural to her. Now, she feels guilt mixed with terror. She tucks her blouse back in.

Al's act of slapping Beverly for smoking will recur when her husband, Tom, later hits Beverly in their car outside of a movie theater for the same offense. In this instance, Beverly becomes resistant to her father's efforts to control her. As a woman, though, she will relent to Tom, as she cannot seem to escape the pattern of male abuse.

Beverly explains to her father how she and the other boys simply play in the Barrens. He repeats that he has seen her smoking, and that a girl who smokes will drink, and a girl who drinks will do something he implies to be sexual. Beverly screams that she has not done anything, but her father wants to know what a girl does with boys in the midst of "all that trashwood" if she is not on her back. She screams at him to leave her alone and he tells her not to talk to her father that way. He then demands again that she take off her pants so that he can see that she is intact. Beverly says "no," which outrages her father.

Especially for young people, smoking is associated with rebelliousness, and Al imagines that the smoking is a sign of Beverly's loose morals. Beverly attempts to tell Al the truth, but her father's fantasies about Beverly outweigh his ability to hear the truth. He chooses instead to associate Beverly with the "trashwood" of the Barrens, where, he thinks, only a whore would go.

Beverly asks her father who told her that she and the boys play in the Barrens. She asks if it was someone dressed in orange and **silver**—a clown. She asks if it was a clown. Al tells his daughter to stop, and she tells him to stop. Al swings his hand again, but this time his fist is closed. Beverly ducks and his fist crashes into the wall. He howls and lets go of her. She backs away and he demands that she come back. Beverly tells her father that she loves him, but he wants to hurt her and she cannot allow that. He leaps at her but she grabs the kitchen doorknob and pulls the door open. She runs down the hall toward the front door, "running in a dream of panic, as she would run from Mrs. Kersh twenty-seven years later."

Beverly is sure that It has spoken to Al and caused him to believe that she is having sex in the Barrens. As Beverly becomes more resistant to Al, Al becomes more violent. Beverly still struggles between her love for her father and her insistence that she should not have to endure his violence. Her act of running out of the house and away from her father mirrors her encounter with Mrs. Kersh, but also her act of running away from Tom and their home in Chicago years later.

Beverly bolts out of the screen door and feels her father's fingers skid down the back of her blouse without catching hold. She goes sprawling on the concrete, losing the skin on both knees. She looks behind her and sees Al coming for her, but It is in his eyes. Beverly runs from It. They run past their neighbors. Their neighbor, Little Lars Theramenius, is pulling a Red Ball Flyer wagon when he sees Al Marsh and notices something so terrible in the man's eyes that Lars has nightmares for three weeks. In the nightmares, he sees Mr. Marsh turning into a spider in his clothes.

What both Beverly and Lars see in Al's eyes could either be the silvery color that the children often see in Pennywise's eyes or the orange deadlights that they will witness when they later confront It. Incidentally, Lars sees Al turning into a spider, which is the final form that It takes when It confronts the Losers' Club underground.

Beverly runs toward downtown and crosses the Canal. Her father screams at her, calling her "a little bitch." She crosses the street and ducks down an alley that runs behind Warehouse Row. The alley is narrow and cobbled and its cobblestones are slimy. Her father is gaining on her. The alley veers left and Beverly comes to a halt. A city dumpster is parked there and leaves no clearing for her to escape. She can hear Al getting closer. She throws herself down and gets under the dumpster. Her father catches up with her and asks if she is under the truck. Their eyes meet and she tells him to leave her alone. He calls her a "bitch" again and she hauls herself up, now running toward Up-Mile Hill now.

King includes another chase scene for suspense. In this instance, Beverly is not being chased by an evil product of her imagination but by her very real father who can cause her harm whether or not she believes in his power. However, she also knows that It is using her father. Like Tom many years later, Al chases after Beverly and calls her a "bitch." He is angry with her for not submitting to him, and his anger comes from a very misogynistic place.

Beverly darts between Feldman's Storage and the Tracker Brothers' Annex. This covert is too narrow to pass and is full of crates, weeds, sunflowers, and trash. There is a chain-link fence and Beverly climbs it. She is now at the Derry Theological Seminary. There is a tall hedge between the seminary and Kansas Street. Beverly peers through the hedge and sees Al on the far side of the street, breathing hard. She hopes to God that her father does not find her because she no longer has the energy or breath to run.

Beverly's hope to God that her father does not find her is somewhat ironic, given that she is standing in front of the theological seminary. She dislikes having to run from her father, but she also fears what he will do if he catches her.

Al walks slowly down the sidewalk. He does not see Beverly. She picks herself up slowly. Her clothes are covered with garbage. She cannot imagine going home, but she also cannot imagine not going home. She feels that she has defied her father. She wonders if something similar is happening to her friends. She thinks that only Bill would know what to do. She stops walking where the seminary pathway joins the Kansas Street sidewalk. She peers around the hedge and sees that her father is gone. She walks toward the Barrens and thinks that she can spend some time in the "cool clubhouse and try to get herself under some kind of control."

Beverly feels guilty about resisting her father, as she still loves him and accepts his authority. She wonders if her friends are also being confronted and terrorized by people whom they trust who have been possessed. She longs for Bill—an authority figure she can trust who does not threaten to hurt her. She cannot go back home, so she goes to the only place of comfort that she knows—the Clubhouse.

Beverly does not hear footfalls behind her, as the boys following her are taking pains to be quiet. They draw closer to her, "walking cat-soft." "Belch" Huggins and Victor Criss are grinning, but Henry Bowers looks "both vacant and serious." He has one finger pressed over his lips in a hushing gesture. Henry is becoming increasingly unstable mentally. He hears voices from the moon and the sewers. The voice from the sewer tells Henry to kill Beverly.

When Beverly does not have her father to worry about, she is threatened by Henry, though she does not yet know it. For Belch and Victor, chasing after Beverly is merely another opportunity for mischief. Henry, however, is as murderously obsessed with Beverly as he is with her friends.

Henry reaches into the pocket of his jeans and pulls out "a slim nine-inch-long instrument with imitation-ivory inlays along its sides." A small chromium button glitters at one end of it. Henry pushes the button and a six-inch blade emerges. He bounces the switchblade in his palm and walks a little faster. Beverly does not hear the approaching bullies, but she turns her head, based on a feeling, "too clear and direct and powerful to be denied."

Henry pulls out the knife that Bob Gray sent to him—the one which he has also used to kill "Butch" Bowers in his sleep. The gift of the switchblade is perceived as a sign to Henry that he is justified in killing Beverly and the others. Beverly does not yet see the bullies, but she can feel an evil presence near her. She has escaped one human evil only to face another.

At 1:55 AM, back at the Derry Public Library in 1985, Mike Hanlon lays his pen aside. He looks across the library's main room but he does not feel like he is alone here. He cleans the table where the Losers' Club was drinking and then goes to the Periodicals Room to pick up magazines. He thinks of how the group believes that they remember almost everything. However, there is more and it will come to them all in time.

The group still has not yet recovered their full memory of how to defeat It, though they are getting closer to recalling the ritual of Chüd. Mike is privy to an understanding of memory that the others lack, due to his constant practice of tracking Derry's history and recording his experiences.

Mike thinks that maybe he should have told them the rest of it, but something spoke strongly against the idea—probably the voice of the Turtle. He thinks that the repetition of their last act could be a part of the ritual that brings them back together. Perhaps there is a circularity to it. Mike puts away books and stops halfway down the third aisle. He takes out his notebook, which he has pushed so far back on a shelf that it is nearly invisible. He has not logged an entry since April 6th. He uncaps his pen and writes May 31st two lines below the last entry. He begins to write about everything that has happened in the last three days, starting with his phone call to Stanley.

Mike seems to have remembered the group's performance of the ritual. It is possible that the Turtle warned him against telling the rest of the group about the ritual, due to the sense that they should recall, on their own, how they last sent It away. Mike is able to recall what the others cannot due to his personal ritual of recordkeeping with his diaries. He senses that he may one day forget the things that have happened, just as the group did in 1958.

Mike writes quietly for fifteen minutes. He thinks of the image of Stan's severed head, but he banishes it from his mind to continue writing. Five minutes later, he jerks up and looks around, but there is nothing. Still, he has the feeling that he is being watched and wonders if someone from the Losers' Club has returned. He hears a footstep, moving quietly. Mike walks across the checkout desk. He sees what look like feet and he wonders, with horror, if Stan is returning, after all. There is another footstep and Mike sees shoes and ragged denim. In the darkness, nearly six feet from those shoes, he sees "glittering eyes."

The "glittering eyes" are a sign of the person being possessed by It. Mike is such a believer in Its tricks that he briefly believes that Stan has been revived from the dead. He half expects his friend's corpse to approach and speak to him. King builds suspense by making it unclear who Mike is looking at. The reader, however, is prepared for it to be Henry, due to his recent escape from the mental institution and his unkempt appearance.

Mike reaches over the surface of the circulation desk to get his letter opener. He clutches it tightly and stares into the darkened hallway. He sees the shape to which these legs belong: it is big and hulking, with ragged hair. The shape takes another step and Mike suddenly realizes who it is: Henry Bowers. Mike notices how aged Henry is. Henry emerged from **the glass corridor** connecting the Children's Library to the adult library. He greets Mike as "nigger."

Mike's letter opener is a sign of his quiet and bookish life, just as Henry's switchblade is an indication of his life of delinquency and violence. Henry's emergence from the glass corridor symbolizes his entrance from Mike's childhood into the present.

Henry asks Mike if he ever hears voices. Henry says that he hears lots of voices from the moon but, primarily, the voice of It. Henry says that he saw It turn into Frankenstein and tear off Victor Criss's head. Henry tells Mike about how he hitchhiked with an old man, killed him, then ditched the car in Newport. Just over the Derry town line, Henry heard the voice and looked in a drain, where he found his clothes and his old knife. Mike says that It does not play favorites, and that Henry is a part of Its unfinished business.

Henry is also a believer in It, which justifies his murderous rage toward the Losers' club. It also used images from the movies, such as Frankenstein, to create the glamours that killed Henry's old friends and fellow bullies. Like Beverly, Henry heard voices from the drain. It assists Henry, but Mike assures him that this does not mean that It is on Henry's side.

Henry lunges at Mike with his knife. Mike steps aside and sticks out a foot, and Henry trips and goes skidding across the floor tiles. Mike goes after him with the letter-opener and realizes that he can finish Henry. However, if he does this, he would be doing It's work. There is also the look on Henry's face—that of a badly used child. Henry grew up "within the contaminated radius of "Butch" Bowers's mind." In a way, he belonged to It long before he knew that It existed.

Mike feels pity for Henry, which prevents him from being able to kill him with the letter opener, despite the threat to Mike's own life. Mike still sees Henry as "Butch" Bowers's abused and misguided son. Furthermore, It wants Mike to murder Henry. Its purpose is to spread as much violence and evil as It can, and Mike does not want to contribute.

Instead of plunging the letter opener into Henry, Mike drops to his knees and grabs at the knife. Henry rolls away and grabs the knife again. Mike tells Henry to put the knife away. He says that he can call the police who will take Henry back to Juniper Hills where he will be safe. When Henry leaps at Mike again, Mike leans back to avoid his awkward rush. Mike sweeps the letter-opener around and feels it go deep into Henry's arm. Henry screams but, instead of letting go, he tightens his grip. He pulls himself toward Mike and sinks all six inches of his switchblade into Mike's thigh.

Henry's attack on Mike is his revenge, based on his father's belief that the Hanlons were the Bowers family's primary enemies. Mike remains sympathetic to Henry, who is mentally ill, but still underestimates the risk that Henry poses. Worse, Henry seems almost immune to pain and still has the strength to stab Mike in the thigh, despite having been stabbed in the arm.

Mike struggles to his feet, but Henry gets up more quickly. Mike thinks that Henry has hit his femoral artery. There is blood everywhere, pouring down his leg and into his loafer. Henry comes at him again, panting like a bull. Mike tells Henry again to drop the knife. There is a sound behind them and then a loud springing sound. Stanley Uris's head pops up from behind the desk as though from a jack-in-the-box. Its mouth opens, and it begins to chant for Henry to kill Mike. Henry shrieks and rushes at Mike, plunging the knife up and down.

The image of Henry "panting like a bull" is reminiscent of the time that he charged at Ben in the gravel pit, with his head down. Mike still tries to reason with Henry, but in vain. The sight of Stan's head in a jack-in-the-box is a mockery of Stan's suicide and another sign that It is encouraging Henry to do Its work. Henry plunges the knife up and down, like a murderer from an old horror movie.

Mike back-pedals, but there is hardly any feeling left in the leg in which he was stabbed. Henry rushes toward Mike again and Mike plunges the letter-opener into Henry's stomach. Henry grabs his belly and runs out of the library. Mike's consciousness is fading. He realizes that he had better use his belt as a tourniquet before he loses so much blood that he dies. He dials the phone number for the hospital. His eyes open wide when Pennywise the Dancing Clown answers the phone. The clown tells Mike that he is dead. Mike looks at the face of the grandfather clock and sees his father's face, "gray and raddled with cancer." The eyes turn up to show bulging whites, then his father sticks his tongue out and the clock begins to strike.

Mike momentarily believes that he has lost so much blood that he died in the library. However, this is merely another one of Its tricks. Mike stabs Henry again, but not fatally. Pennywise toys with Mike's sense of reality, which is easy to do because Mike is fading in and out of consciousness. The clown uses Mike's memory of his sick father to mock him and to force Mike to confront his own fear of death.

Mike loses his grip on the circulation desk. The phone swings before him on its cord and he finds it difficult to hold on to his belt. Mike croaks into the dangling phone for help, offering his name and location. He lies on his side, drawing his legs up into a fetal position. He hears the voice of Pennywise screaming from the phone: "Hello dere, howyadoon? Howyadoon, you dirty coon? Hello."

Mike is nearing death now, due to the puncture in his femoral artery. The voice of Pennywise mocks him, making him believe that he is already dead. Pennywise also includes racist taunts—a reminder of Henry's racist harassment of Mike during their childhood.

Back on Kansas Street at 12:20 PM in 1958, Henry approaches Beverly, calling her a "cunt." Beverly starts to run but Henry pulls her back by her hair and grins into her face. She struggles to get free. A car horn blasts and an old woman driving past tells Henry to leave Beverly alone. Beverly pleads with the woman for help, saying that Henry has a knife. Henry bares his teeth and runs at the car, dragging Beverly after him by her hair. The pain in her scalp is excruciating and some of her hair has been pulled out. The old lady screams and cranks up the passenger side of the window. She also goes to lock the doors. Henry lifts a boot and kicks out one of her taillights before the old woman speeds down the street.

Henry once again demonstrates that he is not impressed by the superior authority of adults, and he threatens the old woman. Henry's hatred toward Beverly seems to be directly related to her being a girl, and is probably also due to her being a pretty girl who does not like him. He witnessed his father beat up his mother growing up, and he has seemingly inherited his father's misogyny as well as his racism.

Henry turns back to Beverly, smiling again. Beverly lifts her foot and kicks him in the balls. Henry's grin turns into "a grimace of agony." He sinks to his knees, holding his crotch, and Beverly sees strands of her coppery hair in his hands. In that instant, her terror turns to hate, and she spits on the top of his head. Then, she turns and runs. "Belch" Huggins and Victor Criss try to help Henry get on to his feet. He insists on chasing after Beverly but "Belch" and Victor say that she is too far away. Henry insists that they will catch her because he knows where she is going: the Barrens.

Beverly knows that she cannot depend on anyone else to help her, so she defends herself in the only way that she knows how. When she renders Henry vulnerable, she becomes less afraid to demonstrate her hatred toward him. Instead of forgetting about Beverly, as his friends encourage, Henry wants to pursue her all the way to the Barrens because he cannot let her think that she got the best of him.

Back near the Derry Town House in 1985, it is 2:00 AM and Beverly and Bill are walking back to their rooms. Beverly tells Bill that the Losers' Club were the only friends that she had back then and that she has never been particularly good at making friends, with the exception of Kay McCall in Chicago. Beverly then tells Bill that she needs him to kiss her. Bill thinks of his wife, Audra Phillips, and realizes for the first time that she looks like Beverly. He feels "a pang of unhappy guilt" but takes Beverly in his arms and enjoys her warm, firm, sweet kiss. She prompts him to come up with her up to his room.

Beverly's friendship with Bill is different from that of the others because of her admiration for him. He is the only man in her life who ever demonstrated loving authority. Bill also encouraged Beverly to believe in herself, as when she doubted that she could shoot the Werewolf. Bill realizes that he loves Beverly, too, and that his love may be part of the reason why he married Audra.

Bill gets his keys to Room 311. If they had gone to Beverly's room on the fifth floor, they would have seen the message light blinking on her phone, and the TV desk clerk would have given Beverly the message from Kay McCall. The door opens to Bill's room and they go inside. Beverly puts his hand on her chest so that he can feel her heart.

Bill and Beverly seem destined to consummate their love for each other. If they had gone to Beverly's room, they might not have made love, due to Beverly's concern over Kay and her fear about Tom's arrival.

Bill and Beverly make love and, during her second orgasm, the window of memory opens. She recalls a feeling of physical pain mixed with pleasure. She cries out suddenly, "All of you?" Her eyes are wide and stunned. She recalls making love to the entire group of her friends. Bill reminds her that this was her way of getting them out. She looks at him without speaking and sits on the bed. Bill thinks that he will want Beverly again in the morning, and his feeling of guilt about this is only tempered by his knowledge that Audra is an ocean away.

Bill feels guilty about committing infidelity. However, the consummation of his relationship with Beverly will also help them to recover a key memory about how they defeated It. Beverly now recalls that she had her first sexual experience with each member of the Losers' Club.

Beverly and Bill go to sleep. She feels Bill's arm cradling her breast and has a dream. She is running, as though running back to her eleventh year. Beverly is now back in the Barrens and looks to see **Silver**, but it is not there. Once again, the bullies have caught up with her and Henry points at her. Beverly looks at them for a moment, as though hypnotized, then runs for the clubhouse. As she approaches, Ben stands up. She tells him to shut everything because Henry and his gang are coming. She tells Ben that Henry has a knife. That is enough for Ben, who pulls the trapdoor shut. Beverly comes close and hugs him in the darkness. Beverly then realizes that Richie's transistor radio is still playing in the darkness. Suddenly, there is a crunch and silence. Ben accidentally crushes the radio.

Beverly is having the same dream that Audra is having on the same night. In her dream, Beverly looks for Silver, which would be a sign of Bill's presence. The presence of Bill makes her feel safe because she thinks that Bill would know what to do about Henry and the other bullies. In Bill's absence, Beverly seeks comfort from her protector and admirer—Ben. In a comic moment, Ben then crushes Richie's radio by sitting on it. It is a happy coincidence, however, because the elimination of the sound prevents the bullies from finding the three friends.

Beverly and Ben listen for the approach of the bullies. Henry points out to Victor and "Belch" how the Losers' Club plays in the Barrens. Suddenly, there are footfalls above Beverly and Ben. Beverly notices Ben's breathing, which comes out "in little bursts." She thinks that he may start to cry then, but looking at him, she realizes that he is suppressing laughter. He finds the conversation between "Belch" and Henry about how they will "club" Beverly and Ben hilarious. Then, "Belch" farts. Henry yells something about the bank and the bushes and "Belch" follows him. Beverly then asks Ben if he sent her the haiku. Ben denies it initially, then asks how Beverly knew it was him who wrote the poem. She says that she just had a feeling. He tells her that he loves her, but he does not want that to spoil their friendship.

Victor and Belch's idiotic obsession with carrying out Henry Bowers's bidding amuses Ben and Beverly, who engage in their first intimate and rather mature conversation about the nature of their relationship. Beverly knows that Ben loves her, but Ben does not want his love to create a sense of obligation in her. What matters most to him is that they remain in each other's lives. He accepts that she prefers Bill. Ben's selflessness demonstrates great maturity.

Ben and Beverly sit for a while without saying anything. She feels safe, and images of her father's face and Henry's knife seem less threatening. She tells Ben that Henry is really crazy—"like that kid in *Blackboard Jungle*." Ben thinks about Henry's history of violence, and how haunted he looks, and how one always has to be on the watch for him, as if he were a poisonous snake. Ben then realizes that It is using Henry.

The fear of violence, which has literally followed Beverly all day, subsides when she is with Ben. Henry's behavior is so strange to Beverly that she can only liken it to a character from the movies. However, Ben attributes Henry's behavior to more than delinquency. He suspects that Henry has been possessed.

Beverly goes on to tell Ben about how an old lady saw the bullies trying to beat her up and Henry threatened the elder woman. This is most surprising to Ben because children do not usually assert their presences to adults. The fact that Henry would do so means that he is really crazy. Ben suggests that they go to Kansas Street, and he opens the trapdoor to the clubhouse. He stands up and looks around. There is only silence. He helps Beverly out. He suggests that they stay off the path, but she tells him that they must stay on because they need to hurry.

Henry's threat to the old woman suggests to Ben that he is capable of anything. Henry is truly crazy, in Ben's view, because he no longer estimates the risk of his actions. This makes him distinctly different from the other children. Ben wants to stay off the path to avoid Henry, but Beverly worries that this could slow them down.

Back at the seminary grounds in 1985, it is 2:17 AM. Kansas street is "early-morning silent." A balloon with a smiley-face is tied to one of the iron bars of a sewer grate. Henry Bowers stands up, with one hand pressed to his bleeding belly. Henry knows that he has been badly injured, but he is sure that Mike Hanlon is dead. Henry walks up to the front door of what used to be the Derry Historical Society. It is barred and has a "No Trespassing" sign. He crawls under the chain and moves to the left so that he is behind the ledge. A police car goes by and its sirens come on. Henry thinks for a moment that he may be caught. Then, he hears "a hellish warbling sound." He imagines "a huge silky black cat loping in the dark"—It in a new shape. Henry wonders, due to the sirens, if Mike might indeed still be alive, and if he has called the police.

The balloon with the smiley face is Its expression of satisfaction with the job that Henry has done. Henry has a moment of doubt when he sees the approach of the police car, and he worries about being sent back to Juniper Hill. The sight of the black cat could be a reference to another movie that Henry has once seen. Indeed, there is an old film called The Black Cat, *based on a short story by Edgar Allan Poe. The story is of a murderer who thinks that he has gotten away with a crime but eventually gives himself up out of guilt.*

Henry thinks back to the day when Beverly kicked him in the balls and Victor Criss and "Belch" Huggins helped him get into the Barrens. Henry remembers standing in the clearing and looking around for the location of "their baby treehouse." However, he was unable to see any treehouse and the "old familiar frustration rose in his throat." He remembers bending over and picking up a rock. He feels anger inside of him again, "something like a knotted rope around his heart." He thinks of how Beverly is the cause of this.

The frustration in Henry comes from feeling that he has been outwitted once again by the Losers' Club. He needs to think that their clubhouse is a "baby treehouse" because he wants the Losers' Club to remain weaker and smaller than he is forever. The simile describing Henry's anger as a "rope around his heart" reveals how he is constricted by his hatred.

In 1958, it is five minutes until 1:00 PM and Henry begins to think that the Losers' Club has some other hiding place—not a treehouse, but he does not know what it could be. He climbs out of the Kenduskeag, where he is standing, and goes to a pipe jutting over the river. A steady flow of sludge comes out of the pipe and goes into the water. Victor Criss asks what Henry is doing, as Henry puts first his eye and then his ear to the pipe. A voice drifts from the blackness inside. Henry feels frozen for a moment. A clownish smile spreads to his lips.

King suggests the merging of Henry's personality with that of It, due to Henry's "clownish smile." Henry remains in pursuit of the Losers' Club, determined that they will not outsmart him. The sludge that comes out of the pipe is reminiscent of what was in Beverly Marsh's teacup when she goes to meet with Mrs. Kersh.

Henry thinks of how he found his switchblade that morning. It comes when he is standing on the porch, looking into his family's battered mailbox. There are also balloons on the box—all of them different colors. On the balloons are the faces of the kids who "deviled him all this summer." The mailbox swings down and he sees "a flat rectangular package inside." When he opens the brown paper, there is a white box. Inside of the box is a switchknife on a bed of white cotton.

The switchblade arrives in Henry's mailbox as though it were a surprise birthday present. However, the balloons also come with the subtle message that he is to use the switchblade on the Losers' Club. Henry ironically perceives the Losers' Club as "devils" who haunt him, as though they are responsible for his bad behavior.

Back inside of the house, "Butch" Bowers is lying on the pallet in the bedroom that he shares with Henry. Henry places "the business-end of the switchknife against his father's scrawny neck." Henry keeps the knife there for about five minutes. His finger caresses the **silver** button on the neck of the knife. Then he hears a voice from the moon speak to him. There is a click inside of the knife and the blade plunges into "Butch" Bowers's throat. His eyes fly open and "Butch" stares at the ceiling. His mouth opens, he gurgles, and a large blood-bubble forms in his mouth. One of his hands goes to Henry's knee and squeezes it convulsively, then it drops off. "Butch" Bowers is dead.

Henry's obedience to the voices that he hears leads him to murder his father. In this case, the silver button on the knife is reminiscent of Pennywise's silvery suit and the silvery shimmer of the clown's eyes. Henry's "caress" of the silver button signifies his embrace of his psychopathic personality, as he prepares to cross a point of no return. It uses the anger that Henry already harbored toward Butch to convince the son to kill the father.

Henry pulls the knife out of his father and wipes it clean. He looks at his father with little interest. He then goes into the other room to call "Belch" and Victor. When he goes out with them, the voice from the moon talks to him all the way to town, prompting him to kill every member of the Losers' Club. Henry thinks of how he will kill them, then go back to his house, and sit with his father's "souvenir Jap sword" across his lap and drink one of his father's Rheingold beers. He will turn on the radio and listen to rock-and-roll. On this one subject, he and the Losers' Club have something in common.

Henry's clinical assessment of his father's murder mirrors Patrick's attitude after he murdered his younger brother, Avery. However, Patrick was presumably born with mental illness, while Henry's insanity is the result of a slow mental descent brought on by his father's abuse and Its possession of Henry's imagination. By killing his father, Henry thinks that he has asserted his manhood, symbolized by the sword and the beer.

The boys look back into the Barrens and see Ben Hanscom helping Beverly Marsh out of a hole in the ground. Victor notes how they were standing right on top of them the whole time. Henry prompts Victor and "Belch" to follow them back to town. Henry and the others close in on Ben and Beverly and Henry takes out his knife again.

The bullies are astounded by the ingenuity of the clubhouse—with the exception of Henry, who is only focused on killing Ben and Beverly.

At 2:30 AM in 1985, Henry takes out his knife and gets a ride in a 1958 Plymouth Fury—the car his father had always wanted. The vehicle is red and white. The car's passenger door swings open. It is "Belch" Huggins in the driver's seat, and one of his eyes is missing. His dead lips stretch into a grin. Henry gets in and the door swings shut by itself. The Fury begins to move down Kansas Street toward Up-Mile Hill. Henry asks "Belch" how he is doing, but "Belch" does not reply. Henry notices how ripe "Belch" smells, like rotten tomatoes. Suddenly, the glove compartment flops open, banging Henry in the knees. He sees a bottle of Texas Driver in the compartment, half-full, and takes a swig. Henry tells "Belch" how he never meant to leave him behind in the Barrens.

The Fury appears to Henry because It knows that the car is familiar to him and fondly remembered by him. The sight of Belch does not frighten Henry, but pleases him instead. Henry speaks to Belch as though they are old friends reuniting after years of living separate lives. He expresses guilt for having run away when Belch got attacked by what Henry saw as a Frankenstein monster. In that moment, Henry expressed what he perceives as a rare moment of physical cowardice by running away.

Henry thinks back to that day when they followed Ben and Beverly up to Kansas Street. The bullies hid in the bushes, watching Beverly and Ben climb the embankment to the top. Henry then remembers feeling a "bony, leathery hand" on his forearm. Henry screamed at its touch. Something came out of the darkness, though Henry was not able to tell what it was. Then, Victor shrieked, "Frankenstein!" When the monster looked at Henry, he peed his pants. The creature lurched at "Belch," who only stared.

Henry recently saw I Was a Teenage Frankenstein *at the Aladdin Theater. The film probably frightened him as badly as Richie was frightened at the same double-feature by the film* I Was a Teenage Werewolf, *which is why the image has stuck. The Frankenstein film is about a teenager who gets into a car accident and has his body reconstructed by a scientist.*

In 1985, Henry and the corpse of "Belch" pull up in front of the Derry Town House. Henry thinks that this is where the Losers' Club will be. "Belch" speaks for the first and last time when Henry tries again to apologize for leaving him to get killed in the Barrens. He says, "Just shut up and get them." Henry puts the liquor bottle back in the glove compartment, and sees a paper where the bottle was. Written on it is the room number of each of the Losers. Henry gets out and walks, but each step makes the pain in his belly worse. He enters the lobby, which is silent. His shirt and pants are streaked with blood and his eyes are bulging from their sockets. He gets to the elevator and pushes the "Up" button. He decides to go to the topmost room on his list and work his way down.

Henry still doesn't understand that he is not really talking to Belch but to It. It then assigns Henry with the task of killing each of his old enemies in their rooms. Henry enters the hotel as though he has just walked off the set of a horror film, but no one is present to notice him. His bulging eyes are either an indication of his obsessive anger or his fatigue, or both. Still, Henry is committed to performing the task and agrees to start at the top to make it easier for him to escape after he reaches his last victim.

Henry rechecks his paper and sees that Eddie is in room 609. Henry pulls the switchblade from his pocket. He knocks on the door and a sleepy voice responds. Henry pretends to be a bellboy with a message for Eddie from his wife. There is a pause then "a metallic rattle" as Eddie fumbles with the chain on the door. In just a moment, Henry thinks he will plunge the blade into Eddie's throat.

Henry's ruse mirrors that of Tom when he approached Kay McCall's home. The link between Henry and Tom will become clearer when King merges them as doppelgangers later in the novel. In this instance, Henry fantasizes about how he will kill Eddie, as though finishing the job he started in 1958.

At 1:20 PM in 1958, Eddie sees Stanley and Richie coming out of the Costello Avenue Market. Eddie asks for a lick of Richie's Rocket pop. Richie warns him about germs, but Eddie says that he will chance it and takes a couple of licks. Stan offers Eddie the rest of his. Bill rolls up to them on **Silver**, doing about twenty miles per hour, and shouts for them to wait up. Eddie remarks on how quiet it is in town, since so many people have left on vacation. They cross to the Barrens side of Kansas Street and see Ben and Beverly running toward them.

The benefit of Eddie getting beaten up and spat upon is that he is less squeamish about germs and is no longer so worried about getting sick. He allows himself to be a kid, which includes sharing food with his friends. He also realizes that his fear of germs, imposed by his mother, was yet another tactic to keep him from forming other relationships.

Beverly is panting when she reaches them and tells them how Henry has a knife and they cannot go down into the Barrens. Ben tells Bill that Henry really has gone crazy, and Beverly retells the story of how Henry and the other bullies followed her down the street. Ashamed, she omits the part about Al.

Beverly leaves out the part about her father chasing her because she does not want her friends to know about the abuse that she suffers at home. This shows just how isolating and terrifying domestic abuse can be.

Bill tells everyone that they are going down to the Barrens. He insists that it belongs to the Losers' Club and they will not give it up to the bullies. Eddie asks if it is not just Henry, Victor, and "Belch" in the Barrens. Bill turns to Stan and asks if he has his bird book. Stan taps his hip pocket to indicate that he does. The group goes down the embankment, single-file, and Richie pushes **Silver** down. When they reach the bottom, Bill puts his bike at its customary place under the bridge. Eddie feels that the quality of the light has changed, reminding him of the light from the house on 29 Neibolt Street. A streak of lightning goes through the clouds, and then thunder comes.

Bill insists that the group has to assert their possession of the Barrens, just as they did during the rockfight. If they do not, Henry will know that he has absolute dominance over the group, for there is no other place in town where they could be safe. The change in light seems to be an omen to Eddie. The arrival of the storm on this day in 1958 parallels the cataclysmic storm that destroys Derry in 1985.

Back in Eddie room in 1985, it is 3:05 AM. He opens the door to see a monster from a horror comic. Henry Bowers stands before him, looking like a corpse awakened from the grave. Eddie slams the door closed and there is a crunch as it pinches against Henry's arm. Henry throws his weight against the door and easily gets through because he weighs so much more than Eddie. Eddie is driven backwards like a ragdoll and hits the bed, where he falls. Henry's eyes drop to the floor, where he has dropped the knife. Eddie grabs a bottle of Perrier and breaks the neck of the bottle. Henry calls Eddie a "babyfag" and says that he will teach him to throw rocks.

Henry, oddly, resembles the Teenage Frankenstein from his childhood nightmares. With his bloodied body, he looks as though he has just been in a car accident. Despite having been stabbed twice, Henry is still remarkably strong. His strength comes from his single-minded purpose and determination to kill Eddie. Henry's speech to Eddie is an indication of his obsession. He still imagines Eddie as a fragile little boy and he remains angry about the rockfight.

Henry grabs for Eddie and Eddie rips the jagged part of the Perrier bottle through Henry's face. Henry screams and staggers backward. His eye has been slit and hangs loosely from its socket, and his cheek sprays blood. Now, Eddie screams, and he thrusts the bottle at Henry again, this time cutting Henry's left hand and sawing into his fingers. Henry shoves Eddie with his right hand and Eddie falls backward. His left arm twists behind him and he feels the pain of his old break. Henry is now standing over him.

Henry now looks truly grotesque. Eddie screams at the revolting sight but is determined to kill Henry, or at least keep him at bay. Henry still maintains enough strength to shove Eddie, however, and Eddie then feels the pain from the first injury that Henry caused him in 1958.

Eddie holds up the stump of the Perrier bottle and plunges it into Henry's sternum. Henry falls and twitches "like a landed trout." His final sound is "*gug*." Eddie stands up. Henry gets up, too, and makes the "gug" sound again. He opens his mouth and blood gushes out, and then Henry collapses a final time. Eddie's heart is racing as he fumbles for the telephone. The desk clerk answers and Eddie asks for Bill Denbrough's room. Bill answers the phone, sounding cautious. Eddie tells him how Henry Bowers entered his room and Eddie killed him.

Determined not to fall victim to Henry again, Eddie kills him. King's comparison of Henry to a trout suggests that Henry's death is a kind of conquest for Eddie (like a trophy fish he has caught), as Henry was one of the things Eddie feared most growing up. Also, by killing Henry, Eddie feels like he asserts his own masculinity, which Henry had called into question by calling him a "babyfag."

Back in the Barrens in 1958, Bill explains that he led everyone back down there to help them understand that no place in Derry is safe. He struggles to speak without stuttering. He insists that Derry is It. The children think of their experiences that morning and how, at some point between breakfast and lunch, they all became ghosts to the adults around them. Richie thinks of how safe they would all be if they could just get out of town. Then, Henry's voice calls to them: "Teach you to throw rocks!"

Bill comes to the same realization in 1958 that Don Hagarty has in 1985—the town is evil. There is no escaping from It as long as Derry exists and continues to thrive without confronting the evil that it willingly harbors. The adults are complicit in ignoring what is going on so that everything can continue to function like normal.

Ben tells Bill that they should run. Two rocks fly out of the bushes and one of them hits Stanley. Bill asks Ben if he remembers their first day in the Barrens, and indicates that the pumping station is where they are supposed to go. He tells Ben to take them there. More rocks whizz past them. Ben knows exactly which pumping station Bill is talking about—it runs along both banks of the Kenduskeag at irregular intervals. Bill insists that the pumping station is the way to It.

The children are taking care of two problems at once by going to the pumping station, and then underground into the sewage system. They will get away from Henry, who will probably not follow them into the sewer, and they can also confront It and end the evil that lurks in Derry, instead of simply trying to run away, as Richie would like to do.

Meanwhile, Henry tosses a "fist-sized chunk of rock" and hits Ben in the buttocks. Mike finds a piece of scrapwood left over from building the clubhouse roof and throws that, hitting Henry in the forehead. Bill and the rest of the gang run while the bullies chase them. At first, Ben does not know where the pump is, but then he sees the leaning tree with the eroded cave underneath. Lightning flashes again and, this time, Ben can hear the pipe. Thunder explodes—not above them, but around them. Ben goes splashing through the river. He reaches the tree and climbs over, and the others follow. When Richie sees Victor Criss, he chucks another rock at him. The bullies disappear into the underbrush.

The Losers' Club make their way toward It while also fending off Henry and his minions. The lightning and thunder are warnings to them not to approach It. Ben remembers this pump from the day when he hid from Henry and the other bullies. That was also the day in which he met Bill Denbrough and Eddie Kaspbrak. By splashing through the river and climbing over the leaning tree, Ben expresses a physical dexterity that he did not have earlier in the novel.

Bill looks at Richie, Mike, and Stan and tells them that they have to get the lid off of the pump. Inside, iron rungs descend into "a circular pool of black water." They help each other go down. Eddie whispers that he is scared, and Bill says that he is scared, too. They hear Victor yell to Henry that he sees Richie, and then see Henry again, with the knife. Richie gives Henry the middle finger. Henry shouts that they will die in the sewer. Henry then climbs after them but freezes about three rungs down. The seven Losers are at the bottom, waiting in a circle. Bill prompts the others to get Henry and they grab him by the ankles. Richie bites him and Henry prompts the other bullies to throw down rocks after he pulls himself out of the hole.

The circular pool of black water resembles a pit to hell or the sticky, black liquid that oozed out of the mattress in the house on Neibolt Street. Henry freezes while climbing down the ladder because he, too, is scared of what lives in the sewer. Moreover, the losers' have formed their circle of seven, which signals completion. Seeing the completion of their circle and being underground without the help of the other two bullies suddenly makes Henry nervous.

Beverly turns away from Henry and looks "along the bore of the inflow pipe." If enough water rises, they could drown. She asks Bill if they have to go in and Bill shrugs to indicate that, yes, obviously they have to go in. Richie asks Bill to remind him of the ritual Bill read about in a book: the ritual of *Chüd*. Richie says he cannot think of a single joke. Stanley asks if Bill knows where the pipe goes. Bill shakes his head—he also doesn't know how to find It. The Losers form a single-file procession, like a group of blind people. Bill takes the lead and takes them to the dark place where his brother George's **boat** disappeared many years before.

Bill leads the group instinctively through the tunnel. He is guided by his memory of what happened to his brother and his desire to avenge George's death. He knows the risk that is involved in being in the sewer, including the possibility that he and his friends could die. Though he does not know where It is, the group follows him, believing that he will intuit where they need to be.

CHAPTER 20: THE CIRCLE CLOSES

Tom Rogan is having a dream in which he is killing his father. When Tom was in the third grade, Ralph Rogan committed suicide with a gin-and-lye cocktail, so Tom knows that he did not actually kill his father. Tom struggles to wake up, but he cannot. The best he can do is fade into a new dream. In this one, he is "splashing and slogging his way down a long dark tunnel." There are some kids up ahead, and he feels that they need to pay. He enters a smelly place with a special friend who has balloons, and he and his friends hear them. What matters to Tom is that Beverly is up there with those kids. It occurs to Tom that Beverly has been doing worse than sneaking smokes; she has also been sleeping with Bill Denbrough.

In his dream, Tom merges with Henry Bowers, and briefly believes that he killed "Butch" Bowers. In denying this to himself, he recalls his own father's troubled history. In the second dream, he is again Henry, this time in pursuit of Beverly and Bill. Tom's anger toward Beverly coalesces with that of Henry. Henry is angry with Beverly for kicking him in the balls, thereby wounding his male pride. Tom is angry with Beverly because he rightfully suspects that she has had an affair with Bill.

Tom imagines himself in the dream, picking up the pace and encouraging his friends to come along. A boy with a split face and lips moving in two pieces says they are moving as quickly as they can. Tom is unclear of where he is and becomes aware of a "faint but clear white light." Then, he remembers leaving the bathroom door open and the fluorescent light on in there. He always leaves lights on in strange places to avoid bumping his shins into things. This fact about himself brings him back to reality. He realizes, however, that he has not simply had a nightmare.

Tom sees himself running through the sewers again. Though he does not realize it, he is intuiting—or learning, as a result of Its invasion of Tom's mind—where the Losers' Club will be later that evening. Tom also knows that his nightmare has revealed true and important things about Beverly and her whereabouts.

Tom gets up slowly and fumbles for a glass of water. He thinks to himself to go back to sleep and wait until morning. Then, a voice tells him that there will be too many people around in the morning. If he leaves now, he can be first down there, but Tom is unsure of where "down there" is. He remembers the dripping water from his dream. Suddenly, the light from the bathroom gets brighter and he sees a balloon tied to the knob of the bathroom door. The balloon glows. It is filled with a ghostly white light. An arrow is printed on in scarlet-red, pointing out the door and toward the hall.

The voice is the same one that guides and encourages Henry Bowers. However, Tom is unfamiliar with this voice and feels more puzzled than obedient. Still, Tom is able to connect Its reference to "down there" with the sewer from his dream. The white light from the balloon is connected to the sense of comfort Tom gets from leaving fluorescent lights on. The light indicates that the voice and its directives are familiar and sympathetic.

Tom hears a voice coming from within the balloon. It says that it doesn't matter where the voice comes from, only that the voice wants Beverly and the rest of them to "take a whuppin." Tom listens while the voice from the balloon explains everything. Then, when it is done speaking, it pops in one final flash of light and Tom gets dressed.

Tom takes his cues from a voice from within a mysterious balloon, just as Henry took his cues from a voice that he believed came from the moon. The voices validate the men's evil impulses.

Audra Phillips is also having nightmares and wakes with a start. Like Tom Rogan, she has the feeling of being someone else. She is aware of being chased, and Bill Denbrough is in her dream. Bill is only a boy in this dream—ten or twelve years old. She feels terrified. Then, they come to a series of tunnels. A boy with his arm in a cast tells them which one they need. They go that way, and there is a door. In the dream, she thinks that her name is "Beverly."

In her dream, Audra becomes Beverly's doppelganger, experiencing the group's last confrontation with It in 1958. Though Audra does not know it, the answer to Bill's obsession lies within her dream. Eddie also appears in the dream as the navigator.

Audra awakes with a start, sweating. She vigorously rubs her hands across her face and the "mental vertigo" subsides. She realizes that she is in Derry, Maine. Her bad dreams carry over into her waking, and the only thing that grounds her is her thought of Bill and her knowledge that he is from this town. A chill runs through her and Audra thinks that she might be crazy. She then concludes that it is merely jet-lag; no one is talking to her inside of her head. Then a voice comes from the bathroom. It giggles, then drops in pitch to sound like a gurgling drain. Audra tells herself that she heard no voice. She feels that she needs Bill. She turns on the light on the bed-table and looks at her watch. It is twelve past three. She gets the phone book and dials for the Derry Town House.

Whereas It goes to Tom with sympathy and a sense of common purpose, It mocks Audra. Her fear is that Bill is with another woman and will eventually leave her all alone. She has arrived in Derry because she wants to know Bill's secret and ensure that there are no secrets between them. She has a feeling of "mental vertigo," which will become a more literal sensation of vertigo when she gets caught in Its web.

A voice comes on the phone and Audra asks it to dial Bill Denbrough's room. Halfway through the seventh ring, the connection is broken. The desk clerk tells her that Bill is not answering, but that he had an inter-room call about five minutes earlier. She drops the phone back into its cradle and feels herself starting to cry. She tries to get a hold of herself. Then, the bathroom light comes on. She hears the voice again, low and dragging, telling her, "We all float down here, Audra." She asks, "Who's there?" The television flickers on. She sees a clown in a **silvery** suit with big orange buttons "capering around on screen." It has teeth like razors and holds up Freddie Firestone's severed head.

Audra knows that Bill is at the Derry Town House. His inability or unwillingness to answer his phone at such a late hour either means that something bad has happened to him, or he is with someone and does not wish to be disturbed. Audra then hears the voice of the clown. Pennywise tricks Audra into believing that he has decapitated Freddie Firestone. The clown also has the razor-like teeth that Ben Hanscom saw when Pennywise confronted him at the library.

Audra tries to scream but nothing more than a small whine comes out. She grabs blindly for her dress and her purse. She bolts into the hall and slams the door behind her. She hears the low, chuckling voice behind her, uttering, "Float." She gets outside and into the parking lot and looks around wildly for her car. She spots it, then she sweeps through her purse, looking for her keys. Suddenly, a hand falls on her shoulder. She turns around and sees a man's face looming over hers. His lips, which are swollen, curl into a grotesque smile. His teeth are broken and jagged. Tom Rogan asks, "Haven't I seen you in the movies?"

Audra decides that she must leave, though she is not yet clear about where she is going. Tom, like Henry Bowers, looks grotesque when he confronts Audra. His question to her is slightly ironic. Though she is a movie star, Tom looks more like a figure from the movies—a horror movie. The two "adult versions" of Beverly and Henry—Audra and Tom—now face off just as their doppelgangers did decades before.

Beverly and Bill dress quickly and go to Eddie's room. They hear a phone bell ring faintly. Beverly asks if it is Bill's phone. He supposes it could be another of their friends calling. When they get upstairs, Eddie opens the door for them. He says he is okay. Bill looks past him at the body on the floor. Beverly stares down at Henry Bowers's body and notes that he does not look old at all. Then, she turns to look at Eddie, whose arm is limp in his lap. Eddie, she thinks, looks "old and haggard." She recommends that they call the doctor, but both Bill and Eddie insist that they cannot go outside. If they do, they will involve the whole town. An accident could occur or some obstruction to what they need to do.

Beverly's sense that Henry "does not look old at all" may come from the fact that, due to his obsession with the Losers' Club and fixation on the memories of 1958, Henry did not grow up much. Eddie looks old because he is tired and again experiencing the pain from his old injury. Bill and Eddie worry that if they call a doctor, they will have to explain what happened and others will not understand how Henry was possessed by It.

Bill asks Eddie where the knife is. Beverly looks for it on the floor, but Eddie tells her not to bother, because he kicked it under the TV and it has since disappeared. Bill tells Beverly to call the others while he splints Eddie's arm. She calls Richie, then Ben. Both of them agree to come right away. She calls Mike last, but no one answers. Bill suggests that she try the library. Before she can try, Ben and Richie enter and see Henry Bowers on the floor. Eddie tells them what happened, while Beverly calls the library. The phone is picked up on the second ring and a voice that she has never before heard says "hello."

The knife disappears because It has reclaimed it. When Ben and Richie see Henry on the floor, it seems as though one evil that has haunted the Losers' Club's lives has been conquered. Beverly then knows something bad has happened when she hears the strange voice answer the phone at the library, for Mike should be the only one to answer the library's phone at this hour.

Beverly asks for Mike Hanlon, and voice asks her who is calling. She counters, "Who are *you*?" The voices announces itself as the Derry Chief of Police Andrew Rademacher. He says that Mike is at the Derry Home Hospital because he was assaulted and badly wounded a short time ago. He then asks for Beverly's name. She asks how badly Mike has been hurt. Bill puts his hand on her shoulder then takes her free hand. All of the friends place their hands on top of the other's. Rademacher asks for her name again and she says that she cannot tell him. He demands to know what Beverly knows about the situation, given how odd it is to call a library at three-thirty in the morning. Beverly worries that Mike may be dying, but she hangs up on the chief. She looks over at Henry Bowers. One of his eyes is closed, while the other one oozes liquid. He seems to be winking at her.

Beverly cannot tell the chief anything because she is afraid that he will try to implicate her in Mike's assault, and if she were to explain to the chief what really happened, he would not believe her. The friends support her and then each other, because they know that they are the only ones who can solve this problem for Derry, and they must do it together. The police only deal in the world of concrete facts and would not understand Its power over the imagination. This power makes Beverly think, for an instant, that Henry Bowers has become animated again.

Richie calls the hospital, pretending to be a reporter from the Derry *News*, to get information about Mike's condition. He tells the others that Mike is alive but in grave condition. Beverly begins to cry. Bill asks Beverly if she still wants to go to the police. She says that she doesn't; indeed, something unpleasant—something final—could happen to them if they call the police. Ben worries that the odds are against them because they are now two friends short.

Bill retains his mistrust of the police, which he first expressed in childhood. He knows that they will not believe them or be willing to understand. What is more likely is that one of the group will stand accused of attempting to murder Mike, causing someone to be arrested and the Losers' Club to lose another member.

The group take Eddie's borrowed limo from the hotel. Richie turns on the radio. Just as Bill asks him to turn it off, the clown's voice comes on the radio announcing the "Richie Tozier All-Dead Rock Show." Suddenly, the voice of George Denbrough comes on. Bill's brother wails about how Bill sent him out for It to kill him. Richie snaps off the radio so hard that the knob falls off and hits the floor. Bill's face is pale and thoughtful as they pass under the streetlamps. Thunder mutters in the west.

It mocks Richie again, using his love of rock-and-roll to taunt him, just as It did during Richie's visit to the City Center. It also uses Bill's lingering guilt about somehow causing George's death. The fact that Bill's face becomes "pale and thoughtful" indicates that Bill has not fully coped with his feelings of guilt.

Richie parks beside the bridge in the Barrens under which Bill used to park **Silver**. They all go to the clearing where the clubhouse once was, and Ben tells them to look. He pulls at the mahogany door they had used to close up the clubhouse. It's been cast aside and looks as though it hasn't been touched in a dozen or more years. Richie tells him to leave it alone because it's old. Then, Bill asks Ben to take them across the Kenduskeag and toward the pumping-station's concrete cylinder. There, they see the strap of something under the cylinder. Richie helps Ben, and they flip the cylinder "like a giant coin." Bill's eyes are fixed on the strap, which belongs to a bag that he bought for his wife, Audra, in a Burbank leather-goods store. Richie asks Bill what's wrong, and Bill screams.

The bridge in the Barrens is similar to the glass corridor, in that it symbolizes a passage that leads to It—the evil that entered the Losers' Club lives and robbed them of their childhood innocence. Richie tells Ben to leave the old door to the clubhouse alone because they no longer have any use for it. Instead, they need to go to the pumping station. Bill thinks that Ben will instinctively remember where it was, so he asks him to lead the group there. When Bill sees the strap, which belongs to Audra's purse, he knows that she is in Derry and has been harmed.

Bill grabs the matches that Beverly has brought and lights one. Then, he yanks the purse away from Ben. Bill unzips the purse and turns it over. Amid the Kleenex, makeup, and can of mints, he finds the jeweled compact that Freddie Firestone gave Audra when she signed on to do *Attic Room*. When they find her driver's license they realize, conclusively, that this is Audra's handbag. Bill wonders who has her, and Ben says that they had better go down and find out. Bill bends over so that Eddie can climb on his back, as he did once before. Bill feels his way down, step by step and rung by rung. Eddie says that he's scared. Bill says that he is, too.

The only way that Bill can get Audra back is by confronting It. However, he does not seem to know this initially because he wonders "who" has Audra, suspecting that a person has kidnapped her. He seems to sense rightly, without knowing for sure, that Tom has taken Audra. The group approaches Its lair just as they did in 1958. They retrace their steps because they want to ensure that they do everything correctly.

CHAPTER 21: UNDER THE CITY

Before the universe, there were only two things: It and the Turtle. It arrived long after the Turtle withdrew into its shell. Derry had been Its "killing-pen," and the people of Derry were like sheep, until these children came along. When It burst into the house on Neibolt Street, It had meant to kill all of them, but something happened that caused It pain and fear. Now, they are coming again, entering Its domain under the city. It listens to their approach, awaiting them.

It is inherently evil, while the Turtle is the creator of the universe who also accidentally created It. For many years, It had free reign in Derry, until the Losers' Club successfully confronted It. The thing that caused It "pain and fear" at the house was their unified faith that they could destroy It through the power of belief.

In 1958, the Losers' Club enters the tunnels at 2:15 PM. Beverly and Richie have ten matches between them, but Bill won't let them use them. The water is deeper now and a few dead animals pass by. Bill surveys the three pipes. One is venting nearly clear water but with leaves, sticks, and trash flowing through it. Bill asks Eddie which one they should take, but he says it depends on where they want to go. His response annoys Bill, though Bill also knows that Eddie is right. He trusts Eddie because he has a natural compass. They all also agree with Richie's assessment that It is in the middle of town, near the Canal.

Bill suspects that they will have greater need for the matches later. Bill asks Eddie where to go because he relies on Eddie's talent for navigation, just as the other kids rely on Bill's talent for leadership. Richie knows that It is in the middle of town—the heart of Derry—because the children have often seen It near the Canal.

Eddie indicates that they need to go through the third pipe—the shit pipe. Bill leads them through, grimacing. They go twenty feet and the air becomes rancid. Bill hears water or sewage running in controlled bursts over their heads. He is not aware that he has reached the end of the pipe until he falls out of it and staggers forward. He falls to his belly into a semi-solid mass and something squeaks past his hand. He tries to stand up and hits his head on the new pipe's low ceiling. Bill warns the others to be careful. Suddenly, the others come tumbling out of the pipe. Bill asks Beverly if any of the matches are still good. She says that she has kept them in her armpit to keep them dry. Bill lights one and sees a dead body on his right.

Its proximity to "the shit pipe" is a reminder of how It uses human waste from toilets to terrorize the group. The leper, for instance, is covered with vomit. Later, at Mrs. Kersh's house, Beverly notices that her cup of tea is actually a cup of feces. Bill falls into a pile of feces when he reaches the end of the pipe, and then a rat runs past his hand, but he tries to stay focused on his task of finding where It lives.

Bill lights another match so that everyone can see "the green, swelled thing that had been Patrick Hocksetter." Suddenly, Henry Bowers bellows through the pipes, saying that he will get the Losers' Club. Then, "a shriek of such mad fear and pain [comes] through the pipe that the guttering match fell from Bill's fingers and went out." Mike thinks that something has gotten hold of one of them. Bill asks Eddie which way they should go. Eddie suggests the Canal—to the right and past Patrick. They crawl further into the darkness.

Mike rightly suspects that the three bullies have just been confronted by It. In this instance, It takes on the form of Teenage Frankenstein and decapitates Victor Criss and "Belch" Huggins, while Henry runs away to safety. Eddie repeats Richie's directive to go to the Canal, which he instinctively knows is to the right. By crawling "further into the darkness," they get closer to It and Its evil.

In 1985, the "writer's woman" is with It. She is alive but not quite alive. She is in Its "deadlights." The glamours are amusing to It. For instance, Mike does not consciously remember the large crow that pecked at him when he was in his carriage at six-months old. A part of this memory has lingered with Mike, however; so, when It came to him, It came as a giant bird. Tom Rogan, who became Its "dogsbody," looked at It once and dropped dead of shock. Audra Phillips glanced at It and realized, with horror, that It is female. It has since prepared her physical remains for later feeding. She hangs now, crisscrossed in silk, with her head lolling on her shoulders.

Audra has entered a catatonic state. It chooses Audra to feed on because she is still alive, and It prefers to feed on live humans. Tom, on the other hand, died instantly. His beaten and bloodied body made him more useful as a tool to terrorize Audra, who saw him as something from a horror movie. It uses things that people have seen and maybe long forgotten to tap into their imaginations and terrorize them.

It has always fed well on children, but on some adults over the years. Adults have their own fears, but they are usually complex. The fears of children are so much simpler and more powerful. If bait were needed, It could always assume the visage of a clown. In the end, It escaped and they had chosen to believe it dead or dying. Now, It will call them and kill them.

Adult fears are often rooted in complex anxieties about loneliness or economic insecurity, whereas children are likely to fear things they have seen in movies or heard in a story. When they lack fear, images that they trust can be used against them.

At 4:30 AM in 1985, the adult group enters the tunnels. Richie calls out to find Eddie and Bill. Eddie responds and says that Bill is up ahead. Bill looks "haggard and almost used-up" as he waits for them in the sewer-shaft where the three pipes are lined. He points to the skeleton of "Belch" Huggins and the headless remains of Victor Criss. This section of the system has fallen into disuse. Bill says in a mechanical voice that Audra is dead. Beverly tries to help him snap out of it so that he can help them. Bill then asks Eddie which pipe they need. Eddie points to the small one.

Like Eddie, Bill looks increasingly aged due to contending with It. Beverly does not want Bill to wallow in his worry that Audra is dead. If he does, he will lose faith and be unable to lead the group. He will also make them all more vulnerable and likely to be killed. Bill remembers how Eddie was the navigator in 1958 and asks him, again, which pipe will lead the group to It and to the center of Derry.

At 4:55 AM, Bill crawls through the pipe and reminds himself of the drop-off at the end, though it still surprises him. He asks Richie for matches, but Beverly offers some. Bill strikes a match and sees his wife's wedding ring on the ground. In the darkness, he puts the ring on.

Bill's act of putting on the ring is an indication of his continued commitment to Audra. He is more determined to find her and It now, and his memory of their first trip through the pipes becomes clearer.

At 2:20 PM in 1958, the kids wonder how long they have been wandering through the tunnels since they left the place where Patrick Hocksetter's body was. Bill remembers how his father said that one could wander in the pipes for weeks. Some of the pipes are so big that Bill cannot even reach across them by stretching. The only thing that Bill knows is that they have reached the disused portion of the sewage system. Ben thinks that the place smells like the mummy, while Eddie thinks that it smells like the leper. When they reach the end of the narrow pipe, they slither down like eels. Richie asks Eddie how deep they are. Eddie figures that they are a quarter of a mile down.

Time seems to stop when the children are underground, due to the endless darkness. The smell of decay in the pipes triggers Ben and Eddie's sensory memories of their encounters with It. Ben smells the sour-sweet scent that emanated from the clown / mummy he saw on the Canal, and Eddie smells the dried vomit on the leper. It uses the smells of things that people throw away or cast down into toilets. Its ability to inspire revulsion with familiar materials is part of how it frightens the children.

A scream floats down to them. It is the voice of Henry Bowers. Richie says that some people are too stupid to quit. They start walking down the pipe. Suddenly, Richie stops, claiming to see the crawling eye from the horror movie. A gigantic eye fills the tunnel. The white of Its eye is bulgy and membranous, laced with red veins that pulse steadily. The eye stares at them. Bill cannot move, and he senses that It approaches. Beverly feels one of Its tentacles slip around her ear, and tells Ben that It has her. He pulls her away from the tentacle and Beverly screams with pain when it tears through her ear. The tentacle then scrapes over Ben's shirt and twists around his shoulder.

Richie does not realize that the scream from Henry Bowers is his own feeling of horror, because he has just watched Victor Criss and "Belch" Huggins get decapitated. When Richie sees the crawling eye—a memory from the horror movie that scared him the most—the others see it, too, because he has put the thought into their imaginations, thereby making the vision as real for them as it is for him.

Bill puts his hand out and plunges it into the eye up to his forearm. Eddie suddenly thinks that he should run home to his mother. Then, after hearing Bill scream, he is overcome by the need to save "Big Bill." He emits a scream that sounds like a Norse warrior. He raises his aspirator and imagines that it is acid. Eddie feels tentacles touch him. Bill's strength returns. Eddie screams deliriously that it is just an eye. Richie stumbles forward and delivers a single, weak punch. He feels his fist sink into the eye. Bill strikes another match and they all see thick, cloudy goo running from his arm. Beverly notices that the eye has eaten Eddie's shoe. Bill says they are getting close to It, and Ben suggests that they keep moving.

Bill refuses to be intimidated and tries to remember that the glamour will have less power if they express less fear. Eddie and Richie also try to conquer their fears of what they see. For Eddie, his hesitation surfaces as anxiety about getting himself dirty or concerns about physical harm, which cause him to regress, momentarily, to a boy who wants to run home to his mother. Richie weakly punches the eye because he still retains fear of the eye as a symbol of his fear of blindness.

They are approaching "Derry's dark and ruined heart." Mike and Beverly are able to feel that evil power. They crane their necks back to look at the ceiling, where the complexity of the pipe network resembles a cathedral. Suddenly, they hear a "loud, braying cry." The giant bird that Stan once saw in the Standpipe is back. It heads for Eddie. Mike rushes forward and digs a Buck knife out of his pocket. He cuts one of the bird's talons. The bird then flies up on the tunnel. The group helps Eddie onto his feet and examines his cuts, which are not deep.

The next glamour is the giant bird, which was familiar both to Stan and Mike. The rest of the group sees the bird, too, because they can recall Stan and Mike's stories about it. In this instance, because Mike is the one with a fear of birds, he is the one who must confront the bird and his fear by fighting back.

From behind them, they can hear Henry Bowers screaming. The group continues on, holding hands. Beverly notices a blank wall ahead, broken by a single door. There is a mark on the door and a heap of small bones at its base. They have come to the place of It. Bill imagines the mark as a **paper boat**. Henry, coming behind them, sees it as the moon—"full, ripe…and black."

The group holds hands to assure each other that they are confronting It together. The small bones are those of dead children. The mark on the door is a kind of Rorschach test, which exposes the thoughts that are predominant in each child's mind. For Bill, it is his guilt over making the boat and sending George out alone.

Ben says that he is scared. Bill pushes the door tentatively with his fingers. A flood of "sick-yellow green light" comes out along with a zoo smell. They pass through the fairy-tale door to the land of It.

The yellow-green color is similar to the fluid that they have seen on the leper and what came out of the werewolf's nostrils when it sneezed.

At 4:59 AM, the aged Losers' Club comes to the place where they had once seen the Eye. Beverly begins to ask Bill how his wife knew to come. Bill says that he mentioned the name of the town. Beverly realizes that Tom Rogan also knew where she was going, and she confesses that, in a way, she married her father. Bill suddenly prompts everyone to move around him, and they get in a circle. Beverly then remembers that they fought It with *Chüd*. Ben calls to Bill. He hears something coming, and Bill thinks that it may be Audra. He strikes a match.

The adult members of the Losers' Club repeat the circle that they made in 1958 to assert their power. However, they are missing two members, and now have only five. The number five, however, also has significance in the Bible, symbolizing God's grace and favor toward humans. The pentacle (a five-pointed star) is also a powerful symbol in many traditions.

The first wrong thing happens on that day in 1985 two minutes before sunrise. The clock in the white spire of the Grace Baptist Church does not chime at 5:00 AM. This is a clock that has always chimed at each hour and each half-hour. This sets off a sense of disquiet in the old-timers. Then, thunder rolls in the sky.

The clock is a symbol of the town's orderliness. When the clock fails to chime, it acts as a signal alerting them to what they have long ignored, and as a symbol that the town's order is about to devolve into chaos.

In 1985, Bill holds up a match and sees the body of his brother, George, whose face is as white as cheese. His eyes are **silver**. George's teeth gnash together as he comes toward Bill, saying how his death is Bill's fault and he is going to kill him. Richie tells Bill to fight his guilt. He wonders what his friends are doing beside him, given his earlier feeling that they had left him. Eddie shouts for him to kill the phantom because it is not his brother. George cuts his eyes at Eddie, causing Eddie to reel back and strike the wall, as though he were pushed. Bill stands mesmerized, watching his brother come toward him. He has a balloon face and his body consists of rotted leaves. Beverly shrieks.

George's face has the white, cheese-like appearance of the moon. Its silver eyes are an indication that the body has been possessed by It. These are Its attempts to keep the children at bay so that they will not succeed in killing It. Here, It is tapping into Bill's feelings of guilt and love for his brother. Unlike the others, who try to fight back, Bill stands "mesmerized" because he is unsure of what to do and does not want to hurt something that looks like George.

George tells Bill that they can look for his **paper boat** together. George says that it is still "down here" and they all float in that place. George's "fishbelly" hand closes around Bill's neck, and Bill cries out the rhyme that he learned in speech school. His voice is deeper and hardly his own. Richie remembers that Bill only stuttered in his own voice. The George-thing recoils and hisses. Bill tells It that George knows that Bill did not mean for him to die and that his parents were wrong. Bill continues to say the rhyme, and leaps at It. The rainslicker no longer feels like a slicker; it feels like warm taffy in his fingers.

Bill recites the entire rhyme, giving himself power and confidence. It in the form of George recoils, because It knows that Bill is conquering one of his key fears and weaknesses. In his adult and non-stuttering voice, Bill is also able to express that his parents were wrong for shutting him out and passive-aggressively blaming him for George's death.

Bill feels something grow in his chest, something as painful as fiery nettles. A "wavering moan" escapes from him. He cries out again that he is sorry about what happened to George. His friends surround him to comfort him.

The feeling is Bill's repressed grief, which he has withheld to appear as a strong leader and someone on whom his friends could depend.

By 5:30 AM in 1985, it is raining hard. Water runs down Up-Mile Hill in streams and roars in stormdrains and sewers. At 5:45 AM, a transformer explodes beside the abandoned Tracker Brothers' Truck Depot. The Derry Fire Department arrives at the scene at 6:09 AM. Calvin Clark is the first to step off of the fire truck and he is electrocuted almost instantly. Something like an underground explosion causes plates to rattle and fall off of shelves. A woman is killed when a violent reversal of sewage causes her toilet to explode. At 6:19 AM, a bolt of lightning strikes the Kissing Bridge. The wind picks up. Mike Hanlon awakes in his room at 6:46 AM.

Another flood occurs. This is the first major storm that the town has seen since 1957, when George died. However, this storm is more violent and is also accompanied by an earthquake. As the Losers' Club approaches Its lair in the heart of Derry, It goes into turmoil. Its ability to interfere with both the sewage system and the weather indicates Its power over the forces of nature as well as Its ability to use human technology. It also shows how inextricably linked It is to Derry as a whole.

Mike looks up and sees bottles hanging overhead. One has clear liquid and the other is full of blood. Mike tries to move his legs. One moves freely but the other does not move at all and has nearly no feeling, and is tightly bandaged. He remembers the notebook and the return of Henry Bowers. He tries to think of where Henry could be and if he went after the others. Mike gropes for the call bell and his nurse, Mark Lamonica, comes in. Mike wants to talk to him, but Mark tells Mike to hush, walking toward him with a syringe to put Mike to sleep.

Mike only vaguely remembers his confrontation with Henry in the library. However, he does remember that Henry was still alive when he left. When Mike tries to call for help, he is confronted by Mark, who has also been possessed by It. The syringe is undoubtedly filled with a powerful narcotic, which would kill Mike. It is still trying to break the group's strength by taking away members.

Back under the city, Richie strikes a light. Bill senses that something is wrong—something related to Mike. Bill tells everyone to grab his hands, as he wants to send Mike their power. In his hospital bed, Mike feels the power wash over him. His right hand goes to a night table where there is a pitcher of water. He smashes the glass into Mark Lamonica's face. The power then leaves him as quickly as it comes.

The power of the five friends, which is the sense that goodness is on their side, also makes them clairvoyant. Bill's ability to send Mike their power is further proof of the group's intuitive connection to each other.

Bill then has the sensation that Mike is fine. They continue into the tunnel, with Richie or Bill periodically lighting matches. The chamber they are walking through is getting larger and larger. It is no longer a tunnel. Their footfalls echo. Beverly whispers that they are approaching the door that they first came to twenty-seven years before. Bright greenish-yellow light floods out from under the door, just like before. Again, they each see something different on the door. Beverly sees Tom's face. Bill sees Audra's severed head, and its eyes staring at him "in dreadful accusation." Bill reminds them that the door is not locked and that places like this never are locked.

The "bright greenish-yellow light" is also reminiscent of the phlegm that comes out of the werewolf's nose and the dried vomit on the leper's pants. It is a color that the children (or the reader) might associate with revulsion. They see the same symbol on the door, and for each it takes the form of whatever fear is foremost in their minds, as the symbol did when they were children. Bill's greatest fear is that Audra is dead and, just as with George, it is his fault.

The adult Beverly shrieks and clings to Bill while a nightmarish spider "from beyond time and space" scurries down a web within It's lair. Bill coldly thinks that It is not really a spider either, but this is the closest that their minds can come to whatever It really is. It is about fifteen feet high and as black as a moonless night. Its jagged mandibles open and close, dripping ribbons of foam. Ben notices that the foam is alive and slithers away like protozoa. The creature is "squealing and mewling." Ben sees Its belly bulging and think that this is Its egg sac. It is pregnant, and Stanley Uris understood this. Bill steps forward to meet It.

The spider has recurred elsewhere in the novel, and Bill rightly thinks that it is the most obvious object of fear. A spider in the drain of her bathroom sink is Beverly's excuse to her father when she screamed, for instance, and Lars Theramenius sees Al Marsh transform into a spider when Al is chasing Beverly down the street. This seems to be a culmination of Its glamours, or perhaps Its most natural form.

Bill tells the others to stay back, and curses It for killing his brother, George. It rears up over Bill and buries him in Its shadow. Ben looks into Its "timeless, evil red eyes." For an instant, he sees the shape behind the shape currently in front of them. He sees lights and "an endless crawling hairy thing" made of orange light. It is the dead light that mocks life. The ritual begins for a second time.

The eyes change color from the silver eyes of the clown to the red eyes of a spider. Ben sees another shape behind this glamour, as though another force is manipulating the monster before them, and the "deadlights" are finally revealed.

CHAPTER 22: THE RITUAL OF CHÜD

In 1958, Bill holds them all together as the Spider races down from Its web. Richie stares at the web and thinks that he sees Eddie near the ceiling, with both of his legs and arms gone. Beverly and Mike cling to each other like Hansel and Gretel, as the Spider reaches the floor and scrabbles toward them. Bill goes toward It—not running but walking fast with his fists cocked. It rears up on Bill and buries him in Its shadow. Richie runs toward Bill and the shadow. It squats down on its hind legs. Bill stares up at It, his blue eyes fixed on Its orange ones.

Richie has a premonition of Eddie's death. Bill cocks his fists to demonstrate that he is not afraid. When he does this, It becomes somewhat subdued and sits down, as though to address Bill as an equal.

It asks Bill who he is and why he has come to It. Bill says that he is there because It killed George Denbrough. Bill is now going to kill It, which announces Itself as "the Eater of Worlds." Bill repeats the rhyme that stops him from stuttering. It commands that he stop. Bill senses another shape in the dark—a power that overwhelms Its power. He sees a great Turtle. Its shell is plated with many blazing colors and its eyes are kind. The Turtle says that it made the universe when it had a bellyache, and it takes no stand in matters between humans and It. Bill also feels the power of a "Final Other" that dwells in a void beyond this one and that is, perhaps, the creator of the Turtle, which only watches, and of It, which only eats. The voice of the Turtle then fades.

Its announcement of Itself as "the Eater of Worlds" is a declaration that it lives by feeding off of others. This is both in the literal sense of eating bodies, as well as the metaphorical sense of consuming images from people's minds and using them to sustain Itself. The Turtle, which also appears in King's Dark Tower *series, feels more powerful because it created It. King's introduction of a "Final Other" could be described as God or some sublime power that is the origin of all others.*

It screams with noxious laughter. Its voice is beginning to fade and swell simultaneously. Bill realizes that, however repulsive It might be, in Derry, It is physical and anything physical can be killed. The Turtle says that there is only *Chüd*, and that Bill is doing very well but time is running out. The Turtle tells Bill not to talk to It or to himself but to bite his tongue. Bill bites in—not with his teeth but with his teeth in his mind. He feels It scream in his mind in frustrated pain. Bill feels It writhing in him, trying to push him away and get rid of him.

It has supernatural capabilities, but It is still a physical entity. The realization that It is a physical thing that was born and thus can be destroyed as well gives Bill the strength to believe he can kill It. Bill imagines himself biting down on Its tongue, which is part of the ritual. By imagining this and believing, Bill causes It to scream out in pain and frustration, due to Its inability to speak or to free Its tongue.

Bill begins to laugh in the darkness and hears It scream again. Bill literally flies through the dark and pulls past the Turtle, whose head has withdrawn into its shell. The voice of the Turtle fades and there is only the dark. Bill continues to chant the rhyme, and It begs to be let go. It is screaming in death agony—or so Bill believes. Bill lets It go and It scrambles away. Mike tells Bill to look out because strands of the web are coming down. Bill wonders where the Spider is, and Richie says that the lights are going out. Ben yells for everyone to get back because the spiderweb is collapsing. Mike shouts for everyone to get out, but Bill worries that It might not be dead yet. Eddie insists that It is and Richie grabs for Bill. Bill insists that they have to make sure as they listen to the "tenebrous whisper" of Its web falling apart.

Bill is still imagining that he is biting down on Its tongue, which is why It begs to be let go. Bill is also actually chanting the rhyme, which gives him control over his stutter. Bill believes that Its cries of frustration mean that he is killing It, so Bill lets go—that is, he stops imagining himself biting on Its tongue. Other signs that Bill has gotten the best of It are the dimming of the yellow-green light and the collapse of the web. However, Bill has the feeling that It has only escaped; he has not yet destroyed It totally.

Somewhere in the void, the adult Bill confronts It and again reminds It that It killed his brother. This time, Bill insists that he will not leave It until It is dead. He senses Its voice rising. Bill concentrates his entire being on seizing Its tongue. The other four watch the replay of what occurred when they were children. Richie glances up at the new web and there are new bodies there, some half-eaten and half-rotten. Richie sees a woman in the web who looks like Beverly. Spittle dribbles from her chin. Richie sees another body crumpled near hers, which bears some "subconscious resemblance" to Henry Bowers. The man has blood around his eyes and caked in foam around his mouth and chin.

Bill repeats his speech to It, which he first gave in 1958. However, Bill insists that now he will complete the ritual of Chüd and destroy It. Bill focuses his mind on imagining that he is biting down on Its tongue. Richie looks up and sees Audra trapped in the web. She is the woman who looks like Beverly. He also sees the body of Tom Rogan, who bears a "subconscious resemblance" to Henry from their merging in a dream and also their mutual viciousness and psychopathy.


Richie's gaze moves from Bill to the Spider. Bill's face stretches in a curious way. Then, blood bursts from his nose in a foam. His mouth is writhing in an effort to scream. Richie realizes that It means to kill Bill's body while his mind is elsewhere. Bill begins to think that the Turtle really is dead, as It said. Richie then steps forward and does his Irish cop impression, as part of the ritual of *Chüd*, and the Spider laughs. The Spider then stops laughing and Richie feels growing pain and "a rising howl of anger" in his head. Its cries are like a furious hive of bees. It is trying to shake Richie loose, for Richie has control of Its mind. Richie laughs and bites harder on his tongue—a necessary part of the ritual. The Spider screams and shakes furiously.

Bill has lost concentration due to his sudden lack of faith that he can destroy It. By believing Its lie that the Turtle is dead, Bill feels abandoned and gives up hope. When this occurs, It "seizes his tongue" and causes Bill to become incapable of speaking or emitting any sound at all. In this instance, Richie steps in and uses his talent for impressions to get the Spider to laugh. This gives Richie control over Its mind and time to help free Bill from Its control.

Richie feels overwhelmed by darkness and calls out to Bill. It is hurting badly now and Richie realizes that he has caught It by surprise. Richie senses Bill tumbling and offers his hand. Bill's fingers close over Richie's. Richie senses them drawing closer to the real world. He bites down frantically on Its tongue, which is becoming flimsier. Richie thinks that he may be losing hold of It.

Richie struggles to maintain concentration so that he can perform the ritual of Chüd. However, he also does not want Bill to get hurt. His tongue is becoming flimsier, meaning that his ability to control It through jokes is getting weaker.

Eddie is half-aware of what is happening. He saw the Spider try to impale Bill with Its stinger. Then, Richie ran forward, doing the ridiculous Irish cop voice, which has improved. Time passes, but Eddie has no idea how much. Richie and the Spider stare at each other. Bill lies on the floor with his nose and ears bleeding and his fingers twitching. The Spider is bleeding in four or five places. Richie's head begins to turn slowly from side to side. His body seems to ripple inside of his clothes. Eddie runs forward with his aspirator and hears the warning voice of his mother, which he casts aside. He leaps at It, which screams in agony. Its huge eye begins to flatten out like bloody egg-yolk. Eddie triggers the aspirator again, calling Bill back home. The spider's mandibles then sink into Eddie's good arm, ripping it from its socket.

Eddie sees that Richie has saved Bill from being killed, but now Richie is losing control over Its mind, which is indicated by Eddie's sense that Richie's body is "[rippling] inside of his clothes." Eddie, out of loyalty both to Bill and Richie, attacks It with what he believes to be the source of his strength—his aspirator. He is inhibited by the voice of his mother, which reminds Eddie of his fear of illness and other forms of mortal harm. His ability to cast aside the voice signals personal growth and a better understanding of his strength and courage.

Eddie falls to the floor. His ragged stump is spraying blood, but he sees Bill begin to come back to consciousness. Eddie feels his life-blood running out of him. He looks up at Beverly and sees that she is crying. His last words are to Richie: "Don't call me Eds." He starts to say something else, but his eyes close before he can finish, and he dies.

Eddie sacrifices his life to save Bill and dies peacefully when he sees that Bill is still alive. Eddie's love for Bill is unconditional, showing his admiration for the boy he nicknamed "Big Bill" and also a possible crush. Eddie's last words also show his close connection to Richie, which was powerful despite its sometimes teasing nature.

By 7:00 AM, the wind in Derry has picked up to about 37 miles per hour. A stroke of lightning strikes the steeple at the Grace Baptist Church, and every toilet and drain in the city reverses itself. At 7:32 AM, Aloysius Nell suffers a fatal stroke. A series of explosions rock the Derry Mall and money flies out of the local bank, blowing about $75,000 away.

The city undergoes apocalyptic destruction as It fights for Its life. The sewage system, on which both It and the city have depended, is destroyed and the rest of Derry's infrastructure collapses. In keeping with this, one of the town's best-known police officers also dies suddenly.

At 4:15 PM in 1958, the Losers' Club is allowing Eddie to lead them through the tunnels. They have been here for an hour. Bill feels a sense of panic. Another thing that troubles him is that he feels the bond between him and his friends dissolving. With It seemingly vanquished, there is little to nothing to hold them together. Everyone asks Bill if he knows what to do next, but he does not. Then, Beverly says that she has an idea to help solidify their bond, to help ensure that they remain more than just children. She begins to undress.

Bill worries about their bond dissolving because he does not want to lose his friends. After his parents' neglect, they are his only source of love. Bill also has less of a sense of his own leadership and purpose now that It is apparently gone. He is having somewhat of an existential crisis. Beverly's solution to Bill's fear, as well as her solution to her father's attempt to control her body, is to make love to the group.

Back in Its lair in 1985, Bill sees It getting away again. Beverly cradles Eddie's head in her lap and prompts Richie Tozier to go with Bill, to ensure that It does not get away this time. Bill looks up and sees Audra sagging again in the web. He calls out to her. Bill decides to run after It, leaving Audra to swing in the numbing cocoon.

Beverly insists that if It gets away this time, Eddie will have died in vain. Bill does not want to leave Audra, but he also knows that he cannot save her if he does not first kill It.

Bill and Richie follow Its trail of blood. They encounter the eggs and stomp on them. It can sense them coming and can feel Its life force draining out of it. It does the only thing it can think to do: It turns to fight.

It is a mother who relies on Its ability to reproduce in order to perpetuate evil. When Bill and Richie start stomping on the eggs, It defends Its potential progeny.

Beverly is alone in the darkness with Eddie's body. She does not want to leave him here. She tries to remember August 10, 1958, when she became the first love of each of the boys. On that day, Eddie comes to her first. He is the most frightened. She shows him what to do. The pain of his love-making fades from her. He stops, stiffens, and makes a sound. She feels no physical pleasure, but she senses a closeness. Mike comes to her next, then Richie. She feels some pleasure now. Then, Stan goes to her. Ben and Bill are the last. She then holds their hands and they form a line, moving through the dark. They return to their homes.

Beverly loves Eddie and initially feels that, by leaving him behind in Its lair, she and the others would be abandoning him. This indicates that she does not want to accept his death. She retreats to her memory, in which he is the first boy to whom she loses her virginity. With Eddie, she has her first experience of intimacy. By making love to the group, she ensures their physical connection through her body, and also takes a stand against her father, who sought to control her body for his own purposes. They also all move as a group from childhood to adulthood, losing their virginities together and solidifying their connection in a symbolic way.

CHAPTER 23: OUT

At 9:30 AM, downtown Derry floods for the first time since August 1958. Many of the old drains clog or cave in during the freak storm. Local men attempt to stem the flood with sandbags. Later that morning, they hear a giant ripping sound: the Standpipe has fallen. Only Andrew Keene saw it happen. Meanwhile, Richie and Bill are staring It down underground. Its mandibles open and close and Its one good eye looks at them. Bill realizes that It has Its own source of light, but it is flickering, as though It is losing power.

The collapse of the Standpipe signals both the loss of one of Derry's best-known monuments as well as the loss of the water supply on which the fire department depends. This makes the town more vulnerable. The demise of It coincides with the collapse of Derry, again demonstrating their interdependency.

Bill moves in on It, which tries to tempt Bill by offering him more life or even to give his wife back. With a scream building up in him, Bill charges forward. He plunges his arm into the Spider, up to the shoulder. The spider lashes at them with Its legs, and Bill feels a leg cut him. Suddenly, he hears the sound of Its heart. He reaches his hands into It, seeking the source of the sound. Then, the heart is in the palms of Bill's hands and he squeezes. There is one final shriek of pain while Its heart explodes. The Spider collapses on Its side, though Its legs are still quivering. Bill then hears a voice—the Voice of the Other—telling him that he did well. Bill cries out for Richie. He cannot find him and there is no response. Bill begins to weep.

It speaks to Bill as though It were the Devil, offering Bill more years to his life and other selfish temptations to convince Bill to let It live and continue to wreak havoc on the town. When Bill plunges his hands into It and finds Its heart, this confirms his sense that It is a living, physical entity. The Voice of the Other could be that of the Turtle or the Final Other, which is the sublime power that created everything. Bill begins to weep because he is worried that Richie is dead, and that the group has failed.

At 10:00 AM, the steady vibration through Derry's streets turns into "a rumbling roar." Windows shatter and plaster ceilings falls. The statue of Paul Bunyan in front of the City Center collapses. It goes through the roof of the Kissing Bridge then hits the ground. At 10:02 AM, downtown Derry collapses. Most of the water from the ruptured Standpipe crosses Kansas Street and ends up in the Barrens, but lots of it rushes into the business district by way of Up-Mile Hill. Cracks open across the surface of Main Street, like gaping, hungry mouths. The sound of Derry's collapse is like artillery fire.

The death of It signals an earthquake, which is the last manifestation of Its fury and Its intimate connection to Derry. Downtown Derry floods and sweeps out into the Atlantic Ocean, just as George's boat was swept out to sea years before. King's comparison of the sound of Derry's collapse to "artillery fire" alludes to the war between It and the Losers' Club over the future of the town.

Back underground, Bill tells Ben that he and Richie killed It. Ben shakes Richie, who is unconscious. In the darkness, they cannot see Richie awake, but they hear him go into his Pancho Vanilla voice. Richie asks Bill to hold on to him while he throws up. Ben cries out for Beverly, who still has Eddie's head in her lap. Bill picks up his wife, Audra, who seems like a waxwork. The place is falling apart, and they have to escape. Beverly says that Eddie can stay. Ben agrees that this is where Eddie belongs now. They put Eddie down and Richie kisses his cheek. When they go out the door, it closes solidly behind them. Richie tells Bill that the mark on the door is gone.

Audra is still caught "in the deadlights," which means that she is in the catatonic state in which It placed her so that It could feed on her while she was still alive, in the same way that a spider feeds on live insects trapped in its web. Beverly finally accepts that Eddie is gone. Both the sound of the door closing "solidly behind them" and the disappearance of the mark mean that they will never again enter Its lair. Their war with It has ended.


At 10:30 AM, **the glass corridor** connecting the adult library to the Children's Library explodes. The tunnel, which had so fascinated Ben Hanscom, is never replaced. It seemed to blow up for no apparent reason and no one was hurt—but the Derry storm otherwise killed 67 people and injured 320. After May 31, 1985, if one wanted to go from the Children's Library to the adult library, one had to go outside and maybe put on a coat.

The glass corridor explodes after the town is destroyed, ending the illusion that Derry is a peaceful little New England town and a pleasant place for children to grow up. The destruction of the corridor is symbolic of the fact that young people in Derry endure growing pains like children anywhere else.


Richie offers to help Bill carry his wife as they work their way through the tunnel. The water rises. Bill is holding Audra again and is worried that he will have to "[float] her" so that they can continue on. The bottom of the tunnel is heaped with what feel like bricks. Ben calls out in astonishment—he has found the marquee to the Aladdin Theater! Bill then realizes that this means that the street has caved in. This also means that there has been another flood, given all of the water around them. He flounders ahead with Audra in his arms and the others following him. There are mini-mountains below them, threatening a broken ankle. Bill says that he thinks that most of downtown Derry is in the Canal and is being pushed down the Kenduskeag. Soon, it will all be out in the Atlantic Ocean, and good riddance for that.

The rising water signals that the group has a limited amount of time to escape from the sewer, or they will get trapped and drown. Though Bill was previously pleased to find out that Mike had saved the Aladdin Theater from being torn down by local business leaders, he is now indifferent to the fact that it has collapsed along with the rest of Derry. He views the destruction of the town as essential, for it was the place that harbored the evil that killed so many local children. He regards its destruction as a kind of cleansing that will make room for a better town in its place.

Richie takes Audra back from Bill, and they pull themselves out of the sewer. A woman in the street points to the place where Bill's head came up from underground. A police officer holds her back, calling her Mrs. Nelson and saying that it is not safe to be out in the street, which could collapse at any moment. Bill recognizes her as the woman whose sister would sometimes babysit him and George. He raises a hand to show that he is okay, and she raises one in response. He finds her presence comforting. A photographer with the Derry *News* snaps a picture of them coming out and the caption is entitled "Survivors." Bill later cuts out the picture and tucks it into his wallet as a keepsake.

Richie's assistance in helping Bill get Audra to safety, despite the risk that they could both drown in the flood, is another indication of his loyalty to Bill. The sight of Mrs. Nelson is comforting to Bill because he remembers her as a sympathetic adult from his childhood. Bill keeps the newspaper photo as proof of what happened in Derry and Bill's role in it. Despite having this keepsake, Bill will still forget what he did in Derry and will only recall his experience in his dreams.

At 10:33 AM, the rain stops. The wind also lets up. The people of Derry, particularly Andrew Keene, are interviewed by the TV media to report on what they have seen. Seeing themselves on television talking about what happened in Derry makes the events seem more concrete and less insane.

This is the first instance in which any event in Derry has received national attention. This coverage makes people believe for the first time in the supernatural evil that lurked beneath Derry, as they are taken out of their "bubble" and see just how bizarre the town really was.

Around this time, Richie flags down an ambulance for Audra. Bill says that he is going back to the Town House to sleep for about sixteen hours. Richie asks Beverly for a cigarette, but she says that she thinks she will quit again. Bill tells them that, alas, it is all over. While going to the corner of Upper Main and Point Street, they see a child in a red rainslicker and green rubber boots sailing a **paper boat** "along the brisk run of water in the gutter." Bill smiles and steps forward. He thinks it is the boy with the skateboard—the one whose friend said that he saw Jaws in the Canal. Bill tells him that everything is all right now.

The sight of the boy in the red rainslicker and the green rubber boots running after the paper boat is a repetition of the image of George, who wore a yellow slicker and red rubber boots. The return of the image of the paper boat means that, in destroying It, the boy's innocence will be preserved, which is why Bill tells him that everything is fine now. Bill's ability to keep this boy out of harm's way alleviates his guilt over being unable to rescue George.

On August 10, 1958, the children come out of the sewer one-by-one at dusk. The storm is over, but the Kenduskeag River is still very high. Stanley moves away from the group. His face is blank and thoughtful. Bill watches as Stan picks up a Coke bottle and breaks its neck. Stan picks through the remains of glass and chooses a narrow wedge. Stan looks up at him and Bill understands—it is perfectly clear. Stan cuts both of his hands. There is pain, but not much. The sound of a whippoorwill is somewhere. Its call is cool and peaceful. They all cut their hands, too, and then join hands. Bill holds Beverly's left hand while Ben holds her right. He can feel the warmth of her blood mixing with his own. Bill makes everyone swear that they will come back if It is not dead. They all swear. They stand there for a little longer, feeling the power of their circle and "the closed body that they make."

It is Stanley's idea that they all make a blood oath, promising to return to Derry in case It returns. Stan says nothing, but Bill and the others instinctively know what he is asking them to do. Years later, however, Stanley will be the first to break this promise by killing himself. Stan believed that they would not be able to defeat It, due to his knowledge that It could breed more evil, which the others realized when they saw Its eggs. In this instance, the children are united through their commitment to each other and in their belief in the strength of their imaginations, which convince them that they can defeat It. When Stan grows up, though, he loses this faith in the power of imagination.

At last, Ben drops his hands. He starts to say something, shakes his head, then walks away. The rest of the group follows him and starts to climb the embankment back up to Kansas Street. They then simply take leave of one another. When Bill thinks about it twenty-seven years later, he realizes that the entire group never did get together again. Bill is the last to leave the Barrens. As he climbs up and over the white fence, he looks down into the brush and sees the Barrens fill up with darkness. He thinks of how he never wants to play down there again. He finds the thought liberating.

After sending It away, the group realizes that they have little reason to remain together, despite the bond that they fostered. Bill never wants to play in the Barrens again because the area is a reminder of the group's journey through the tunnel and toward Its lair. The Barrens "fill up with darkness" as though the area is being blotted in Bill's memory.

DERRY: THE LAST INTERLUDE

On June 4, 1985, Mike writes that Bill entered his hospital room and gave him his notebook, which Carole Danner found on one of the library tables and gave Bill when he asked for it. Mike notices that Bill's stutter is disappearing again, but he looks as though he has aged about four years in four days. Bill says that Audra will be discharged from the hospital tomorrow. Physically, she is fine—there were only minor cuts and bruises. Mentally, however, she is still in a catatonic state. Mike tells Bill that he will be in the hospital for another week and suggests that Bill take Audra to his place and spend time talking to her. Bill still regrets telling Audra where he was going, but he accepts Mike's offer.

Bill's stutter is disappearing because he thinks that he no longer needs to tap into his childhood self. Still, the struggle with It has left him aged, and there is the additional stress of worrying about whether or not Audra will return to normal. Bill's sense of guilt is also returning. Just as he feels that he disappointed George by letting him go out alone, he feels guilty for putting Audra into this state by telling her that he was returning to Derry.

Bill says that Richie flew back to California in the morning. Mike asks if Bill will stay in touch. Bill thinks that he might, but he worries that the forgetting will occur again. So far, it is just little details that are disappearing from his memory, but he thinks the forgetting will spread. Mike thinks that this may be for the best.

The forgetting first occurred in the late summer of 1958, when the group sent It away. Details of the encounter disappeared, but later the group forgot nearly everything. Mike regards the forgetting as a cleansing, which will allow the group to start new lives.

Mike asks about Ben and Beverly. Bill smiles a little and says that Ben invited her back to Nebraska with him, and she has agreed to go, at least for a while. Beverly also told Bill that she will go back to Chicago the week after next to file a missing-persons report on Tom Rogan. Bill says, too, that he thinks that Beverly does not really remember what happened to Tom. Bill then says that he cannot remember what the doorway to Its place looked like. He gets, instead, an image of goats walking across a bridge, like in the story "The Three Billy Goats Gruff."

Ben and Beverly have finally become a couple. She understands now that Al and Tom's attempts to control her had nothing to do with love, and that Ben is the only man she has ever known who ever sought to protect and love Beverly selflessly. Bill's memory of the fairy tale in relation to Its doorway is a metaphor for the group crossing into Its lair. This is the only memory that he can still conjure up from his experience.

Before leaving Mike's room, Bill does what Mike considers an odd but rather lovely thing—Bill leans over and kisses his cheek. Ben and Beverly visit next to say "goodbye." They have decided to drive back to Nebraska together. He notices something in their eyes when they look at each other and thinks that they are lovers, or soon will be. They hug him and Ben asks if Mike will write. Mike says that he will, but he notices that he, too, is forgetting things. The notebook will have to remind him of what happened in Derry. Then again, he supposes that the words on the page will also begin to fade, leaving the notebook as blank as it was when he bought it.

Bill repeats the gesture that George made on the last day that the brothers saw each other. The kiss, which Bill remembers, is a sign that Bill regards Mike as his brother. It is also a subtle indication that the two friends will not see each other again. Ben likewise senses that there will not be another reunion. His insistence that Mike write to him, instead of calling, is also a desire to retain some recorded evidence of their friendship and what they experienced, in case they continue to forget.

The forgetting suggests to Mike that they really did kill It. He realizes that there is no longer a need for a watchman to stand by and wait for the cycle to begin again. He feels both dull panic and a sense of relief, but he chooses to embrace the relief. Bill then calls to say that he and Audra have moved into Mike's house, but there is no change in her.

The absence of It briefly leaves Mike with a feeling of no longer having a purpose. He has not only been watching out for It but has also been a chronicler of Its direct and indirect manifestations of evil throughout Derry's history.

Mike calls Bill in the afternoon of the following day. There is still no change in Audra. He also calls Richie in California. Mike tells Richie that they are forgetting things again, and asks him what Stanley's last name was. Richie does not know, but Mike finds it in his address book. Mike reasons that the distance is becoming palpable between them again. In six weeks or six months, they will have forgotten each other. Now, Mike cannot remember the name of Bill's wife or what has happened to her.

Bill is worried that Audra will never come out of her catatonic state. Mike, meanwhile, relies on his records to recall key information about his friends. They forget about their connection to each other because It is what brought them together, now that It no longer exists, the group no longer needs each other. There is also a clear supernatural element to this sudden forgetting.

Richie tells Mike that, if he is ever in Los Angeles, they should get together for a meal. Mike agrees and feels hot tears in his eyes. He says that if Richie ever comes back to Derry, the same offer goes. They hang up. Mike then lies back and closes his eyes for a long time.

Mike knows that he will never see Richie again, which explains why he wants to cry. They make offers to each other that both know they will never need to fulfill.

Some days later, Chief Andrew Rademacher is killed in his office in a bizarre accident. The tramp-chair from the attic comes crashing through the roof and falls directly upon him while he is working at his desk. Rademacher dies instantly. Meanwhile, Mike talks to Bill again about his wife. Audra is eating solid foods again. Otherwise, there is no change in her. Then, Mike asks if Eddie's health problem was asthma or migraines. Bill reminds him that it was asthma. Then, Mike asks for Eddie's last name and Bill says that it is "Kerkorian," which is actually the fake last name that Richie used to call the hospital when Mike was admitted for his stab wound. Bill tells Mike how scary it is to forget, and Mike agrees.

The tramp-chair was a restraining device used by the police in the 19th-century to torture and publicly humiliate criminals or accused criminals. It is a remnant of Derry's past, which the ladies of the Derry Historical Society did not want Mike to display during the fair. It falls on the chief as though something wishes to punish the chief for his willful denial of the evil that lingered in Derry.

Bill says he has an idea about how to get Audra back completely. Mike says he thinks that he knows what it is, but Bill will have to act quickly. The following day, June 9th, Mike wakes up from a terrible nightmare in which Mark Lamonica comes to him again with the hypodermic needle or Henry Bowers comes to him with his switchblade. He grabs his address book to call Ben. The number is fading from the page, but it is still legible. The call does not go through and a phone-company voice says that the line has been canceled. Mike tries to remember if Ben was fat when they were kids or if he had a club-foot. He lies awake until dawn.

Bill and Mike remain attuned to each other and have not yet forgotten key details about each other because Bill remains in Derry. Mike can only remember the incidents with Mark Lamonica and Henry in his dreams, and calls Ben, it seems, to confirm if these things actually happened. However, in leaving Derry, Ben has already forgotten about Mike, and Mike struggles to remember essential facts about their childhood.

Mike gets news that he can go home on June 11th. He calls Bill. Mike wants to warn Bill that his time is getting shorter all the time—Bill is the only member of the Losers' Club whom Mike can remember. Bill says that he is ready to try his idea for how to help Audra, and Mike tells him to be careful. Mike asks Bill how he will know how things turn out. Bill says that he will "just know." Mike hangs up thinking that, even if he forgets them all, he will remember them in his dreams.

What Mike means about Bill's time "getting shorter" is that soon Bill will no longer believe in the power of his plan to save Audra from her catatonic state. Mike worries that he will not know how things turn out because, once Bill leaves Derry, Mike will probably not remember him either. Then he realizes that their memories exist in their dreams, where they are likelier to believe in the impossible.

EPILOGUE

Bill stands naked in Mike's bedroom, looking at his aging adult body. He puts on his underpants and thinks of how he cannot remember what he and his old friends did that week, or how Audra ended up in a catatonic state. He finishes getting dressed and looks at himself in the mirror again. He thinks that he looks like a man nearing middle-age who is wearing children's clothes. He leaves the room.

Though Bill cannot remember defeating It, he still acts purposefully, as though working from rote memory. He dresses like his younger self, for instance, which strikes him as ridiculous, though he knows that it is also necessary for him to tap into his younger self to get Audra back.

In the dreams that Bill will have in his later years, he sees himself leaving Derry alone at sunset. The town is deserted. He can hear the echo of his footfalls, and the other sound is water rushing through the storm drains.

Sunset is a symbol of a scenario coming to an end. Everyone has left Derry, and It has been defeated at last.

Bill rolls **Silver** out of Mike's garage. He oils the chain-and-sprocket and lightly squeezes the horn. Then, he goes back into the house and gets Audra. She does not move and her hand lies in his like warm wax. He leads her to Silver. He tells her to get on, but she does not move, and he helps her. As Bill mounts the bike, he prepares to reach for Audra's hands to place them around his waist, but they creep around his middle, as though of their own accord. He calls to her, but there is still no answer. He tells his wife that they are going for a ride. He decides to go to Upper Main Street, which will run him downhill. He is initially reluctant to do this, but decides to let his child-self take over—the part of his being that just does things instead of counting the cost of his actions.

Audra slowly comes back awake after Bill puts her on Silver. When Bill rode the bike, he lost his sense of fear and became capable of doing what seemed impossible, like when he and Richie outpaced the werewolf on Neibolt Street. He figures that if he believes Audra will come back to life, then she will. In this instance, Bill's use of Silver is akin to how princes from fairy tales speed ahead on their horses to rescue sleeping beauties from evil spells.

Bill tells Audra to hold on. He still has thoughts of falling in the street, causing both of their skulls to split open. He starts pedaling faster when he reaches Upper Main Street, then he cries out, "*Hi-yo Silver, AWAYYYYY!*" Audra's hands tighten around his middle and he feels her stir. Bill cries out deliriously and feels, once again, that Derry is his place and that he is alive under a real sky. He feels overwhelmed by a feeling of desire and races down the hill on **Silver**, riding to "beat the devil."

Now that Bill has conquered It, he feels that he can call Derry home without being burdened by memories of guilt and fear of lingering evil. Though he retains his adult cautiousness, he has also retained his childhood desire for adventure and risk-taking. His fear of injury is overcome by that desire, as well as his happiness that Audra is coming back to life.

Bill feels himself driving away from memory, but not from desire. All the rest is darkness. Someone then calls for Bill to look out. He drags **Silver** hard to the left to avoid crash barriers. Audra awakens. Up ahead, he strikes a barrier that closes off a sidewalk at forty miles per hour. Bill yells out again, "*Hi-yo Silver, AWAYYYYY!*" He feels tears in his eyes. Audra cries out, with a mixture of fear and excitement, that he is going to kill them both. She asks him what is happening. She says that she can only remember getting off a plane at Bangor, but nothing after that. She asks if he is still stuttering, and Bill says that his stutter is gone, forever. Bill thinks of how he will write about all of this one day—or so he thinks, on those mornings in which he almost remembers his childhood and his old friends.

Bill is no longer beholden to the past, which is why both his memories and his stutter disappear. It is also unlikely that he will write about the experience because he has nothing to exorcise anymore. As if knowing that Bill is fully in the present and can therefore commit to their marriage more fully, Audra awakens. The presence of the stutter would mean that Bill has not relinquished the fears and memories of his childhood, but Bill is certain that he has moved on, which is why he declares that his old stutter is gone "forever." While the loss of his memories of his old friends is bittersweet, its suggested that this is kind of amnesia necessary for each member of the Losers' Club to escape Its horrifying influence and move forward into a healthier future.

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