

PinkMonkey Literature Notes on . . .

<http://monkeynote.stores.yahoo.net>

Sample MonkeyNotes

Note: this sample contains only excerpts and does not represent the full contents of the booknote. This will give you an idea of the format and content.

The Five People You Meet in Heaven

by

Mitch Albom

2003



MonkeyNotes by Sharon Radisch

<http://monkeynote.stores.yahoo.net>

Reprinted with permission from TheBestNotes.com Copyright © 2005, All Rights Reserved.
Distribution without the written consent of TheBestNotes.com is strictly prohibited.

KEY LITERARY ELEMENTS

SETTING

This story takes place in several different locations in both heaven and on earth. The novel begins at Ruby Pier. Eddie grew up very close to Ruby Pier because his father worked there for a living. Ruby Pier was thus a significant setting in Eddie's childhood; the novel flashes back many times to Eddie's childhood involving incidents at Ruby Pier. Ruby Pier is also where Eddie had his career as a maintenance man and is the very place where he was killed on his birthday.

When Eddie is in heaven, which is the bulk of the novel and also where he learns the five lessons, he visits five different settings: Ruby Pier, the battlegrounds on which he fought in the war, mountains, various wedding receptions and a river.

Eddie meets the Blue Man, in heaven, at Ruby Pier. However, it is not the Ruby Pier where Eddie was killed at the start of the novel; it was the Ruby Pier Eddie remembers from his childhood. When he awakes he notices the primitive, simple, amusements and their crisp white paint. As he runs around the pier he also

CHARACTER LIST

Major Characters

Eddie - protagonist and main character around who the story centers; at the start of the story, he is killed on his 83rd birthday. When he awakes in heaven, he is taken on a journey to meet five people.....

Eddie's Father - antagonist, belligerent drunk, not very supportive or caring towards his sons. He worked at Ruby Pier and often returned home drunk and was violent toward Eddie and Joe. He hurt

The Blue Man - first person Eddie meets in heaven. He was a sideshow worker at Ruby Pier when.....

The Captain - second person Eddie meets in heaven; his former war captain. He explained that, although

Ruby - third person Eddie meets in heaven and also Ruby Pier's namesake. She teaches.....

Marguerite - Eddie's wife and only true love. Marguerite was the only happiness in

Tala - fifth person Eddie meets in heaven. Tala was the little girl who Eddie saw crawling into the....

Minor Characters

Dominguez - maintenance worker at Ruby Pier and friend of Eddie. After Eddie's death he.....

Joe - Eddie's brother who grows to have a life and family in Florida.

Eddie's Mother - caring, typical mother figure throughout the story. Later in the story we.....

CONFLICT

There are two major conflicts in this story; the first being Eddie vs. himself. When Eddie was young he never had the desire to work at Ruby Pier like his father did. After Eddie returned from the war, he was very depressed and angry at what he had done with the remainder of his life. He never had another career aside from Ruby Pier and he eventually moved back into the same apartment building, where he grew up, to take care of his mother. We can tell that Eddie internally stores a lot of regret, hatred and anger about his life. This conflict is resolved when he meets Tala in heaven. She helps him realize that his life did have.....

Protagonist - Eddie is the protagonist of *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. We are introduced to Eddie the day of his death, on his 83rd birthday. Through Eddie's journey in heaven, we learn a.....

Antagonist - The antagonist of the novel is Eddie's father. We see that Eddie had a very volatile relationship

with his father; aside from his war injury, his father caused most of the pain in

Climax - The climax happens towards the end of the novel when Eddie meets Tala and she says "You burn me. You make me fire" (188). This is the climax because throughout the novel we see.....

Outcome - The resolution of the story unfolds immediately after the climax. Eddie's worst fear had come true: he had killed an innocent child during the war while burning down the camp. After he

SHORT PLOT / CHAPTER SUMMARY (Synopsis)

The novel opens at Ruby Pier on Eddie's 83rd birthday. He goes about his normal routine until one of the rides breaks. Eddie gives a fellow worker, Dominquez, instructions on how to fix the ride; however, one of the carts breaks free from the ride and falls to the pier. Eddie jumps out of the way and tries to push a little girl out of the path of the falling cart. Eddie does not get out of the way in time and is killed by the falling cart.

Eddie travels to heaven and meets his first person, the Blue Man. The Blue Man informs Eddie that he is going to meet five people in heaven whose lives he has somehow affected. The Blue Man tells Eddie how he is indirectly responsible for his death: When Eddie was a child, he and Joe were playing with a ball that bounced into the street. Eddie ran into the street to get the ball as the Blue Man was driving by. The Blue Man swerved out of the way, terrified that he would hit Eddie. Eddie ran safely back out of the street but the Blue Man was still extremely anxious having almost hit him. His anxiety caused him to drive recklessly and hit another car, which killed him. The Blue Man teaches Eddie his first lesson, which is that events are not random and lives intersect for a certain reason.

After this lesson, Eddie finds himself back on a war ground, which resembled that on which he fought during WWII. There, he meets his second person in heaven, his former war Captain. During WWII Eddie fought in the Philippines and he, the captain and a few other soldiers were taken as prisoners of war. Through a juggling act, Eddie is able to distract the captors so he and the other prisoners can kill them and escape. When they

THEMES

There are no random acts in life - Eddie learns from the Blue Man that there are no random acts in life and that all lives intertwine in some way. The Blue Man's death exemplifies this theme: If Eddie's ball had never gone into the street, he would not have chased after it, running in front of the Blue.....

Additional themes are identified in the complete study guide.

MOOD

The mood is somber, yet thoughtful throughout the novel; each person makes Eddie reflect on his life, and also how his life has been intertwined with the others. However, the reflections of Eddie's life prove.....

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - BIOGRAPHY

Mitchell David Albom was born on May 23, 1958 in Passaic, New Jersey. Albom is not only a best-selling author, he is also a newspaper columnist for the Detroit Free Press, radio host for ABC and WJR-AM in Detroit.

Albom grew up in Philadelphia, PA and attended Brandeis University, where he obtained his degree in sociology. He then attended Columbia University for his Master's Degree in journalism and business administration.

Mitch Albom has written seven other books, including the bestseller, *Tuesdays With Morrie* (1997). His.....

LITERARY / HISTORICAL INFORMATION

World War II played a significant role in Eddie's life; it is where he was shot in the leg, which caused his life long injury, and also where he killed Tala. WWII was a complex war fought from 1939-1945 in Europe and

from around 1937-1945 in Asia/Pacific. It was one of the largest conflicts because it involved a.....

CHAPTER SUMMARIES WITH NOTES

CHAPTER 1 - *The End*

Summary

This chapter describes the last hour of Eddie's life. Eddie walks around Ruby Pier, where he works, and goes about his normal day-to-day business: he rode the Ghoster Coaster to assure that its breaks and steering were solid, talked with Dominguez in the shop, chased teenagers off the railing, and made an animal for a little girl out of pipe cleaners.

Eddie was daydreaming when an unfamiliar voice alerted him; a woman had brought to his attention that one of the carts was tilted on Freddy's Free Fall and people were clinging on to keep from falling out. Eddie tells Dominguez to go up the ladder and tell the ride operator, Willy, to release the safety restraint so he can get the passengers out.

As Dominguez was getting the passengers out, Eddie noticed that the cart's cable was unraveling. Eddie yelled for Willy not to release the cart but no one heard him. The carts began falling and one killed Eddie.

The end of the chapter recalls the day Eddie was born; it is the 1920's and his father was in the hospital waiting room with the other fathers-to-be. The nurse leads Eddie's father to the nursery to see Eddie.

Notes

The first chapter is entitled "The End"; this is because the book is beginning with the end of Eddie's life. In the first chapter we learn a little bit about Eddie: his job, personality, and his past.

Eddie is a maintenance man at Ruby Pier, which is an amusement park; his main job is to keep the rides safe. He checks every attraction, test rides the amusements, and looks for broken boards, loose bolts and worn-out steel.

We also learn that Ruby Pier is where Eddie met his love, Marguerite. It can be inferred that this took place in the late 1940's. Eddie remembers how he and Marguerite danced and how he bought her a lemon fizz.

The narrator recalls a story that happened a few months before Eddie's death, about a man named Nicky and his three friends. Nicky had just begun driving and was uncomfortable carrying a key chain; therefore he removed his car key and stuck it in his coat pocket. Nicky and his friends went on the rides and drank beer from brown paper bags. At the end of the night Nicky's key was missing. At the end of the chapter we learn that this key was the cause of the accident in Freddy's Free Fall, which killed Eddie.

It is also ironic, that the day of his death, was his 83rd birthday. As the story progresses we see that many important events took place on Eddie's birthdays.

It should also be noted that right before Eddie died, he felt himself holding the hands of the little girl, for who he had made the pipe cleaner animal. At the end of this chapter we are not sure if Eddie had saved the little girl, or if she too, was killed from the falling cart.

CHAPTER 2 - *The Journey*

Summary

This brief chapter describes Eddie's journey to heaven. Eddie is floating and he does not feel any pain. He remembers lunging toward the little girl but he is not sure if he saved her or not.

The end of this chapter brings us back to Eddie's fifth birthday at Ruby Pier. Mickey Shea, a friend of Eddie's father, picked him up and turned him upside down to do a "birthday bump" (23). With Eddie upside down, he lifted him up and down five times. When he returned Eddie upright, Eddie punched Mickey Shea in the arm.

Notes

In this chapter Eddie is still not sure if he had saved the little girl from the falling cart. Eddie also notices that he cannot feel any pain; he asks himself more than once, "Where is my worry...Where is my pain?" (21, 22). Eddie cannot feel agony and specifically, "every hurt he'd ever suffered, every ache he'd ever endured..." (21). This quote is alluding that Eddie probably felt a lot of hurt in his childhood and throughout the rest of his life.

CHAPTER 3 - *The Arrival / The First Person Eddie Meets in Heaven*

Summary

Eddie awakes in some kind of amusement park. He is able to pull himself up and walk without his cane; he does not feel any pain. He then notices that he is at Ruby Pier. The colors and the attractions seem different and he realizes that he is at the Ruby Pier from his childhood, over 75 years ago. Eddie runs and.....

OVERALL ANALYSES

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Eddie - Eddie is an 83-year-old maintenance man, who has dedicated his life to working at Ruby Pier. At the start of the story, we do not know much about Eddie, except for his age and occupation; we learn the most about Eddie when he takes his journey through heaven.

As Eddie meets all five people in heaven, we the readers, as well as Eddie, gain much insight to his life and how it affected others. Eddie was very depressed and full of regret during his life on.....

Blue Man - The Blue Man is the first person who Eddie meets in heaven. Eddie did not know the Blue Man when he was a child but his actions were responsible for the Blue Man's death.

When Eddie was a child, he and Joe were playing ball outside. The ball bounced into.....

The Captain - The Captain is the second person Eddie meets in heaven and is also his former war captain. While they were at war, the Captain made a promise to Eddie and his other soldiers that he.....

Ruby - When Eddie meets Ruby, in heaven, she is elderly; however when Ruby was younger, she worked as a waitress at a diner in Eddie's town. Ruby met her husband, Emile, in the diner when he.....

Marguerite - Marguerite was the love of Eddie's life; when he was young he met her at the pier and she then continued to be the happiness in Eddie's life. Marguerite was always there for.....

Tala - When Eddie set the prisoner of war camp on fire, during the war, he was sure he saw an innocent child crawling around in the fire. For the rest of his life he had nightmares and that.....

PLOT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

The plot is fairly straight forward; Albom wrote the story in the third person omniscient point of view. The narrator does not participate in the action of the story, but lets us know how Eddie feels. We learn all.....

EXPOSITION

In the Exposition, introductory material is presented which gives the reader the setting, creates the tone and presents the characters and other facts necessary to understanding the story. In the.....

RISING ACTION

The Rising Action is the events that build from the conflict. There are several conflicts in this story occurring simultaneously: Eddie vs. himself and Eddie vs. his father. We learn that throughout Eddie's.....

CLIMAX

The climax is the high point of the story and also the point at which the outcome can be predicted. The climax of this novel occurs near the end of the novel when Eddie meets Tala in heaven. The action.....

FALLING ACTION

The Falling Action is the events after the Climax, which closes the story and lead to the resolution. After Tala tells Eddie that he burned her, the incident which Eddie questioned.....

RESOLUTION (Denouement)

The resolution is the outcome of all the events in the story. It can be argued that there are two resolutions to this novel, a major and minor resolution. The first occurs in the diner when Eddie tells his father, "It's fixed" (144). Here we see

THEMES - THEME ANALYSIS

Each of the themes in the novel, Eddie learns as lessons in heaven; however, we also see these themes exemplified during Eddie's life on earth.

There are no random acts in life - The first lesson Eddie learns in heaven is that there are no random acts in life; this is also the main theme of the novel. Eddie did not know the Blue Man when he was younger; however, a seemingly insignificant act (Eddie running in the street after his ball), turned out to be the cause of the Blue Man's death. If Eddie's ball had not bounced into the street, he would not have chased after it, running in front of the Blue Man's car. The Blue Man then would have not become so anxious about nearly.....

POINT OF VIEW

The story is told in the third person; this means that the narrator does not participate in the action of the story as one of the characters; however, the narrator does let us know exactly how the.....

GENRE

The novel runs in the genre of adult fiction. In this novel Mitch Albom describes his.....

IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS - QUOTES

1. *"No story sits by itself. Sometimes stories meet at corners and sometimes they cover one another completely, like stones beneath a river"* (10) - Narrator

The narrator is referring to the major theme of the novel. He uses this quote to tell how the key became locked in the base of Freddy's Free Fall which lead to Eddie's death a few months later. The major theme of the novel is that there are no random acts in life and that all lives and stories intertwine in some way. Eddie then learns, in his first lesson, his actions ended up killing the Blue Man. We find it ironic that Eddie was killed in such a way as well.

Nine additional quotes are analyzed in the complete study guide.

SYMBOLISM / MOTIFS / IMAGERY / SYMBOLS

We find out at the end of the novel that Eddie did save the little girl from the falling amusement cart. It is important to note the symbolism of this child's rescue. At the end of the story Eddie learns that the meaning and purpose of his work at the pier, was to save and protect the children. Eddie's life ended with him saving a child, just as he had done for his entire life. Since the child lived, we can see this as a type....

IMPORTANT / KEY FACTS SUMMARY

Title: *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*

Author: Mitch Albom

Date Published: 2003

Meaning of the Title: The title refers to the five people Eddie meets in heaven after his death. Each gives Eddie a lesson and has somehow played a part in his life.

Setting: The main setting is heaven; however, each character brings Eddie to a different setting within heaven: a sideshow with the Blue Man, the war ground with the Captain, the mountains with Ruby, wedding receptions with Marguerite and finally the river with Tala. Ruby Pier also plays.....

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What was the name of the amusement that killed Eddie?
 - a. Flying Falcon
 - b. Ghoster Coaster
 - c. Freddy's Free Fall
 - d. Splashdown
2. Who are the five people Eddie meets in heaven?
 - a. Ruby, Marguerite, Blue Man, Joe, Captain
 - b. Marguerite, Captain, Blue Man, Eddie, Tala
 - c. Blue Man, Captain, Ruby, Marguerite, Tina
 - d. Ruby, Blue Man, Captain, Tala, Marguerite.....

ANSWER KEY

1.) c 2.) d 3.) a 4.) c 5.) b 6.) a 7.) d 8.) b 9.) a 10.) d 11.) d 12.) c 13.) b 14.) a 15.) d

ESSAY TOPIC IDEAS

1. List the themes in the story and discuss how the author maintains them throughout the novel.
2. Describe each person Eddie meets in heaven, how they were relevant to his life on earth, and describe what they teach Eddie.....

Copyright ©2005 TheBestNotes.com.

Reprinted with permission of TheBestNotes.com. All Rights Reserved.

Distribution without the written consent of TheBestNotes.com is strictly prohibited.

END OF SAMPLE MONKEYNOTES EXCERPTS

<http://monkeynote.stores.yahoo.net>