

## ***The Body, Stephen King: Part 2***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Chapter 19**

**Allusions and vocabulary from the chapter:**



Marines claiming Iwo Jima (p. 389)

### **Mending Wall by Robert Frost**

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,  
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;  
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.  
The work of hunters is another thing:  
I have come after them and made repair  
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,  
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,  
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,  
No one has seen them made or heard them made,  
But at spring mending-time we find them there.  
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;  
And on a day we meet to walk the line  
And set the wall between us once again.  
We keep the wall between us as we go.  
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.  
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls  
We have to use a spell to make them balance:  
'Stay where you are until our backs are turned!'  
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.  
Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,  
One on a side. It comes to little more:  
There where it is we do not need the wall:  
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.

My apple trees will never get across  
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.  
He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'  
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder  
If I could put a notion in his head:  
'Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it  
Where there are cows? But here there are no  
cows.  
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know  
What I was walling in or walling out,  
And to whom I was like to give offense.  
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
That wants it down.' I could say 'Elves' to him,  
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather  
He said it for himself. I see him there  
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top  
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.  
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,  
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.  
He will not go behind his father's saying,  
And he likes having thought of it so well  
He says again, 'Good fences make good  
neighbors.'

- Ululating: To howl, as a dog or a wolf; to wail
- Implacable: unrelenting; not giving up

1. Discuss Gordie's dream and what it might signify:

**Clearly the dream is in reference to Gordie's conversation with Chris, who said that friends can drag people down. Gordie's dream starts out well; it is summer, kids are swimming, little kids are playing in the sand. But it quickly becomes surreal, with their principal Mrs. Cote floating by on a rubber raft (and demanding that Chris recite Robert Frost's poem "Mending Wall"); Chris tries to comply, but his head goes under the water—and Gordie, rather than trying to help his friend, swims madly toward the shore. He is awakened by Teddy, who has had the first watch over their camp; it is now Gordie's turn.**

## Chapter 20

**Allusions and vocabulary from the chapter:**

Insouciantly [in-SUE-is-ant-ly]: Acting in a manner that is careless, indifferent, unconcerned

Remember that **time (the passage of time, the relativity of time)** is a **motif** (a central or dominant feature) of the novella. Notice the relativity of time when Gordie says, "[The deer and I] looked at each other for a long time... I *think* it was a long time." How does Gordie react to the deer appearing to him? **The deer appears—and they consider each other—when the other boys are asleep. Gordie is up as day appears (and night disappears); it is almost a magical time (all the things the boys had been afraid of at night seems silly, for example). The deer is so beautiful, almost magical—and it is something Gordie keeps to himself. He does not tell the boys; in fact he says he has never told anyone about it (until writing it in this story), yet he admits that he has returned to this peaceful image in stressful, difficult time in his life (in Vietnam, when his son was ill, when his mother was dying), but he echoes back to the opening line at the end of chapter 20, with the most important things being the most difficult to talk about.**

## Chapter 21

**Allusions and vocabulary from the chapter:** "the power to murder sleep": an allusion from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (Macbeth felt that when he murdered the king, he murdered sleep.)

1. Gordie says, "Whether it was harmless or whether it turned out to have the power to murder sleep with a hundred mangled dreams, we wanted to see [the body.] I think that we had come to believe we *deserved* to see it." Why might he feel that they deserved to see the body?  
**They had come so far—endured the dark and the mosquitos—they deserved to see the body.**
2. Feeling like they deserved to see the body seems to imply some **hubris** (extreme or excessive pride; a feeling of entitlement) on the part of Gordie and the boys. In literature, characters who suffer from hubris are then often humbled by failure, tragedy or loss. Can you think of an example from literature or film? What happens to humble the boys?  
**The incident at the pool of water that they have found is quite humbling. The boys had endured much on their trek in the woods; while they may be feeling rather strong after making it through the scary night in the woods (with strange sounds, etc.), they freak out when they realize their bodies are covered in leeches (see the next question/response)**
3. The appearance of water in the middle of a heat wave would normally **symbolize** rebirth, cleansing, or a fresh start. How is the pool that the boys swim in different, and why might that be?

**Beavers had built a dam, creating a pool of water that the boys swim in—but their carefree moment is disrupted when they realize they are each covered in leaches—and they all freak out, screaming and carrying on.**

4. Why does Gordie cry?  
**Gordie has a leech on his testicles, and he must take it off; he cries because he is so upset (and it is pretty humiliating...).**
5. Explain the following quote: *"The only reason anyone writes stories is so they can understand the past and get ready for some future mortality"* (457-8).  
**Clearly this is the reason why Gordie is writing the story in the first place—he wants to understand these events from his life (and to get ready for the future/future mortality).**
6. In the last line of this chapter, Gordie repeats the story's opening line: *"The most important things are the hardest things to say."* Why?  
**Because this story (and especially this chapter) is confessional. These events are important to him, to his life history.**

## **Chapter 22**

1. Why does Gordie faint? Why does the leech affect him so much?  
**The hot sun, they haven't eaten much, he has lost some blood—and he is freaked out. Also, it isn't just the leech; it is where the leech was attached....eeeeeeek.**

## **Chapter 23**

1. The boys discover another impediment to their progress. What is it?  
**The boys had thought that the railroad tracks went straight, but they do not, so the boys have much further to walk than they had suspected (they still have about 16 miles—and they still walk on—which illustrates their determination).**

## **Chapter 24**

**Allusions and vocabulary from the chapter:**

**"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge**

**Summary:** Three young men are walking together to a wedding, when one of them is detained by a grizzled old sailor. The young Wedding-Guest angrily demands that the Mariner let go of him, and the Mariner obeys. But the young man is transfixed by the ancient Mariner's "glittering eye" and can do nothing but sit on a stone and listen to his strange tale. The Mariner says that he sailed on a ship out of his native harbor—"below the kirk, below the hill, / Below the lighthouse top"—and into a sunny and cheerful sea. The Mariner recalls that the voyage quickly darkened, as a giant storm rose up in the sea and chased the ship southward. Quickly, the ship came to a frigid land "of mist and snow," where "ice, mast-high, came floating by"; the ship was hemmed inside this maze of ice. But then the sailors encountered an Albatross, a great sea bird. As it flew around the ship, the ice cracked and split, and a wind from the south propelled the ship out of the frigid regions, into a foggy stretch of water. The Albatross followed behind it, a symbol of good luck to the sailors. A pained look crosses the Mariner's face, and the Wedding-Guest asks him, "Why look'st thou so?" The Mariner confesses that he shot and killed the Albatross with his crossbow.

At first, the other sailors were furious with the Mariner for having killed the bird that made the breezes blow. But when the fog lifted soon afterward, the sailors decided that the bird had actually brought not the breezes but the fog; they now congratulated the Mariner on his deed. The wind pushed the ship into a silent sea where the sailors were quickly stranded; the winds died down, and the ship was "As idle as a painted ship / Upon a painted ocean." The ocean thickened, and the men had no water to drink ("Water water everywhere, nor any drop to drink"); as if the sea were rotting, slimy creatures crawled out

of it and walked across the surface. At night, the water burned green, blue, and white with death fire. Some of the sailors dreamed that a spirit, nine fathoms deep, followed them beneath the ship from the land of mist and snow. The sailors blamed the Mariner for their plight and hung the corpse of the Albatross around his neck like a cross.

A weary time passed; the sailors became so parched, their mouths so dry, that they were unable to speak. But one day, gazing westward, the Mariner saw a tiny speck on the horizon. It resolved into a ship, moving toward them. Too dry-mouthed to speak out and inform the other sailors, the Mariner bit down on his arm; sucking the blood, he was able to moisten his tongue enough to cry out, "A sail! a sail!" The sailors smiled, believing they were saved. But as the ship neared, they saw that it was a ghostly, skeletal hull of a ship and that its crew included two figures: Death and the Night-mare Life-in-Death, who takes the form of a pale woman with golden locks and red lips, and "who thicks man's blood with cold." Death and Life-in-Death began to throw dice, and the woman won, whereupon she whistled three times, causing the sun to sink to the horizon, the stars to instantly emerge. As the moon rose, the sailors dropped dead one by one—all except the Mariner, whom each sailor cursed "with his eye" before dying. The souls of the dead men leapt from their bodies and rushed by the Mariner.

The Wedding-Guest declares that he fears the Mariner, with his glittering eye and his skinny hand. The Mariner reassures the Wedding-Guest that there is no need for dread; he was not among the men who died, and he is a living man, not a ghost. Alone on the ship, surrounded by two hundred corpses, the Mariner was surrounded by the slimy sea and the slimy creatures that crawled across its surface. He tried to pray but was deterred by a "wicked whisper" that made his heart "as dry as dust." He closed his eyes, unable to bear the sight of the dead men, each of who glared at him with the malice of their final curse. For seven days and seven nights the Mariner endured the sight, and yet he was unable to die. At last the moon rose, casting the great shadow of the ship across the waters; where the ship's shadow touched the waters, they burned red. The great water snakes moved through the silvery moonlight, glittering; blue, green, and black, the snakes coiled and swam and became beautiful in the Mariner's eyes. He blessed the beautiful creatures in his heart; at that moment, he found himself able to pray, and the corpse of the Albatross fell from his neck, sinking "like lead into the sea."

1. Why does King compare himself to the Ancient Mariner and the reader as the wedding guest?

**Ah, stories to tell—and the stories people choose to tell about their lives...**

2. How can you tell that the story is reaching its climax? What information do we gain at the end of the chapter?

**The boys' journey, their quest, was to see the body of Ray Brower—and at the end of chapter 24, our narrator tells the reader, "we started to finally get close" (463).**

### Chapter 25

- **Setting** has been an integral part of this story. Notice how the clouds are building as we approach the climax of the story. It is after 3 pm, and thunderheads and lightning appear, the light becomes pearly, their shadows become fuzzy (a dreamlike quality), birds fly overhead "chattering and crying shrilly" – all omens of what is to come. Then the wind picks up, the temperature drops ten degrees, and their shadows disappear. Very Shakespearean!
- After a bolt of lightning and a peal of thunder, a fireball (see below) appears and speeds along the train tracks. **It is almost as if they are being warned not to proceed any further** (or only those who are brave enough or crazy enough or determined enough will carry on). This is when they see the body.

### Allusions and vocabulary from the chapter:

**Fireball:** "Ball lightning" may be an atmospheric electrical phenomenon, the physical nature of which is still controversial. The term refers to reports of luminous, usually spherical objects which vary from pea-sized to several meters in diameter. It is sometimes associated with thunderstorms, but unlike lightning

flashes, which last only a fraction of a second, ball lightning reportedly lasts many seconds. Until recently, ball lightning was often regarded as a fantasy or a hoax. Reports of the phenomenon were dismissed for lack of physical evidence, and were often regarded the same way as UFO sightings. Natural ball lightning appears infrequently and unpredictably, and is therefore rarely (if ever truly) photographed. However, several purported photos and videos exist. Depending on the report, ball lightning can move upwards as well as downwards, sideways, or in odd trajectories such as rocking from side to side like a falling leaf. It can move with or against the wind, or simply hover, more or less stationary in the air. Ball lightning has been reported in many different colors, sometimes even transparent or translucent. It is sometimes said to contain radial filaments or sparks while others are evenly lit, and some have flames protruding from the ball surface. It has sometimes been reported during thunderstorms, sometimes issuing from a lightning flash, while sometimes it appears during calm weather with no storms in the vicinity. The balls have been reported to disperse in many different ways, such as suddenly vanishing, gradually dissipating, absorption into an object, “popping,” exploding loudly, or even exploding with force, which is sometimes reported as damaging. Some accounts say the balls are lethal, killing on contact, while other accounts claim that they are harmless.



1. What **imagery** does Gordie describe when he first sees the body?  
**“The day became gloomy” (465); they see the fireball travel down the rail of one of the railroad ties (466); everything seems dire, to the point that even Teddy (not known for being the brightest young man) even asks, “What am I doing here, anyway?” (466).**
2. Interpret the storm (specifically the symbol of the lightning bolt just before Vern finds the body). How does this **imagery** make it clear to Gordie that Ray Brower is really dead and clarify what death means to a 12 year old?  
**There is a huge storm coming; lightening is flashing; they see a fireball—and then they see the body. The lightening, especially, symbolizes Ray Brower’s death—like the lightening, Brower was here one moment and gone the next...**

## Chapter 26

### Allusions and vocabulary from the chapter:

**Ersatz** (as in “ersatz tears”): imitation or substitute, usually inferior to the original

1. Who joins the boys at the body?  
**Ace and his gang (Ace Merrill, Eyeball Chambers, Charlie Hogan, Billy Tessio, Jack Mudgett, Fuzzy Bracowica and Vince Desjardins).**
2. What bothers Gordie most about their arrival and why?  
**Ace and his gang had not walked, the way Gordie, Chris, Vern and Teddy had—they had driven in their cars**
3. What causes Chris to bring out his father’s gun?

**The gang of older boys is demanding that the younger boys leave—and to allow them to “discover” the body of Ray Brower.**

4. Describe the following quote: *“He was wrong to mention Denny.”*  
**In trying to convince the boys to step aside, Ace says to Gordie, “You must have at least some of your brother’s good sense” (474).**

### **Chapter 27**

1. When it begins to hail, who stands by Chris and who abandons him?  
**Vern and Teddy run—Gordie stays.**
2. What do the older boys do, and what do they vow to do?  
**They vow that they will get back at Gordie and Chris.**
3. Why do you think Chris cries at the end of the chapter?  
**It is such an emotional scene—Chris, at last, breaks down.**

### **Chapter 28**

1. It’s **ironic** that after everything they went through, the boys don’t retrieve Ray Brower’s body. Why don’t they?  
**As Chris says (when Teddy really wants to bring Brower’s body home), Ace and his gang might say anything to the authorities—the older boys might even say that Chris/Gordie/Teddy/Vern killed Ray Brower.**
2. Describe the significance of the berry bucket.

**Such an innocent image—a berry bucket—gathering ripe, sweet berries; it makes the reader think of late summer/innocence.**

**Notice that the adult Gordie wants to go back and see if he can find the berry bucket. It’s as if he wants to recover something tangible from that time, to bring back a piece of his childhood and remember who he was and that he was the boy that lived (remember that Chris, Teddy and Vern are dead when the older Gordie is telling the story...).**

### **Chapter 29**

1. When do the boys finally get home? How might it be **symbolic**?  
**Just past 5 AM on a Sunday morning—their town is asleep, but they are wide awake; they have walked all night to get home.**
2. What does Gordie find himself unable to say to Chris?  
**He can not tell Chris what their experience together has meant—they stood by each other (the only ones who did, Vern and Teddy ran away)—he can not tell Chris what Chris’s friendship means to him; he can not tell Chris that he loves him.**

### **Chapter 30**

1. Have things changed for Gordie at home? Explain:  
**No, he speaks to his mother; his parents barely seem to have noticed that he was gone. His mother talks about how much she misses Denny—she notices nothing. Although Gordie says it has been years since he was awake before his mom, she mentions nothing.**

### **Chapter 31**

1. Were any of the parents concerned? Discuss:

**Not very—these parents are far from attentive, but Teddy’s mom called Vern’s mom, who said she had seen a light in their tent the night before; Teddy’s mom was worried about smoking (which is ironic, being worried about smoking when her husband almost burned her son’s ears off...), but Vern’s mom is in massive denial that they could be smoking (as if that would be so bad, when her older son Billy hangs out with Ace Merrill’s gang). Gordie’s dad “asked “vague questions,” but hardly seems concerned (493).**

## **Chapter 32**

**Allusions and vocabulary from the chapter:**

**Nonpareil:** unparalleled

1. Discuss what happens to Gordie and his friends once they return:

**Gordie is beaten quite badly by Ace Merrill and Fuzzy Bracowicz (they break his nose and two of his fingers; they also knee him in the groin).**

**Chris: Eyeball breaks his arm in two places, but Chris doesn’t want Eyeball to go to prison, so he protects his older brother (he has told the hospital that he fell down the basement stairs; he has a neighbor call his mother and tell her to take the light bulb out of the stairwell).**

**Vern is knocked unconscious by his older brother Billy**

**Teddy is punched in the face and they break his glasses.**

2. How does their friendship change?

**“Vern and Teddy just drifted away” (497); Gordie makes reference to the dream he had had in chapter 19, where he is being dragged underwater.**

## **Chapter 33**

**Allusions and vocabulary from the chapter:**

- **Grendel** (p. 433): the monster killed by Beowulf, a hero from an epic poem written in Old English.

1. Discuss the deaths of Vern and Teddy:

**Vern is killed in a housefire in 1966.**

**Teddy is killed in a car crash in 1971/1972**

2. How does Chris try to change his life and what things get in his way?

**Poor Chris tries so hard to catch up in his studies, but he had messed around for seven years in school, so to make up for lost time he really has to work. He gets absolutely no support at home or at school—he only has Gordie. Chris is finally accepted in his junior year of high school.**

3. Discuss how Chris dies:

**Chris steps in between two men who are fighting at a Chicken Delight; he dies instantly when he is stabbed in the throat. Such a senseless death—so sad!**

## Chapter 34

1. What is Gordie's life like as an adult?

**Gordie describes his life as being like a fairy tale; he has written a few books that have been successful and have been made into successful movies; he is married and has three children. Gordie is basically in disbelief that his life has turned out so well—and that his friends have all died so young.**

2. What is Ace Merrill's life like?

**Ace at 32 works at the paper mill; Gordie sees him pull into a bar (The Mellow Tiger), where there are welcoming shouts when Ace enters; Ace doesn't seem to recognize Gordie.**

3. What **imagery** at the end **symbolizes** that life still goes on and time still passes?

**"The Castle River is not so wide now but a little cleaner, still flowing under the bridge between Castle Rock and Harlow. The trestle upstream is gone, but the river is still around. So am I" (503).**