

Brighton Rock



INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF GRAHAM GREENE

Henry Graham Greene was born to a wealthy and influential family. As a boy, he attended a prestigious Berkhamsted boarding school, for which his father served as housemaster, and later went on to study at Oxford. Upon graduation, he worked as a tutor and journalist for both the *Nottingham Journal* and *The Times*. In 1926, he married Vivien Dayrell Browning, a Catholic, having converted to her faith. In 1929, Graham published his first novel, *The Man Within*, and the success of that book allowed him to work as a writer full-time. During World War II, he was recruited by his sister, Elisabeth, to join MI6 as a spy, and he spent much of his life traveling the world, using his experiences in foreign countries to inform his fiction. He also suffered from periodic bouts of depression and engaged in a number of extra-marital affairs. In 1947, he left Vivien and their two children, later proclaiming that his books were his true progeny. He wrote more than twenty novels, including *The Power and the Glory* (widely considered his masterpiece), four travelogues, eight plays, ten screenplays, and more than fifty short stories. He died at age 86 of leukemia in Vevey, Switzerland.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Brighton's horse racing tracks saw a rash of razor attacks in the 1930s and 1940s. Perpetrated by youth gangs, the assaults served as inspiration for Greene's novel. Greene based the character of Colleoni on Charles "Derby" Sabini, a leader of the London underground often referred to as "the king of racehorse gangs." Brighton was (and still is) a tourist town. The constant traffic of pleasure-seekers to the seaside town gives it an aura of transience and vice which informs the novel. Because the town's economy was dependent on a steady flow of cash from visitors, it is possible that *Brighton Rock* is set during an economic "slump" caused by World War II. Although the war had a chilling effect on the town, tourists still visited in large numbers.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

For more on Pinkie and his gang, check out Greene's 1936 thriller, *A Gun for Sale*, which acts in some ways as a prequel to *Brighton Rock*, in that it tells the story of Kite's death, which sets the stage for Pinkie's ascendance to the role of gang leader and the murder of Hale. With its focus on matters of damnation and redemption, *Brighton Rock* is often considered Greene's first "Catholic" novel. Greene's *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of*

the Matter, and *The End of the Affair* also feature characters struggling to reconcile their faith with the harsh realities of a world overrun by sin. Sin and its repercussions are likewise the subjects of James M. Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice* and William Lindsay Gresham's *Nightmare Alley*. Like *Brighton Rock*, these mid-twentieth century crime novels make it clear that murder is no easy business. Patricia Highsmith's *The Blunderer* is another take on the psychology of the incompetent killer, while Dolores Hitchens's *Fool's Gold* explores the unintended consequences of a teenage robbery gone wrong.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** Brighton Rock
- **When Written:** Late 1930s
- **Where Written:** London, England
- **When Published:** 1938
- **Literary Period:** Modernism
- **Genre:** Literary thriller
- **Setting:** Brighton, England in the early 20th century
- **Climax:** Pinkie drives Rose to the seaside town of Peacehaven where he hopes to convince her to take her own life in a suicide pact he doesn't plan to honor. His plan is foiled, however, when Ida Arnold shows up with the police to confront him about the murders of Hale and Spicer. Desperate, Pinkie spills vitriol on himself and runs off a nearby cliff to his death.
- **Antagonist:** Although Pinkie is the novel's main character, he is also its villain. Ida Arnold, Pinkie's adversary, is the strongest force for good in the novel. As such, each of these characters can be seen as both a protagonist and antagonist.
- **Point of View:** Third person omniscient

EXTRA CREDIT

Graham Green and America's Sweetheart. Early on in his career, Graham Greene wrote book and movie reviews for *The Spectator*, and, in 1937 he penned a scathing take-down of *Wee Willie Winkie*, a film based on the Rudyard Kipling story about the impact of British colonialism on mid-19th Century India. Greene's opinion was that child star Shirley Temple's performance amounted to thinly veiled child pornography, aimed at arousing priests and pedophiles. Commenting on Temple's "well-shaped and desirable little body," Greene raised the ire of both Temple and Twentieth-Century Fox, who successfully sued Greene and *The Spectator* for libel. The resulting settlement forced *The Spectator* out of business. Meanwhile, Greene fled to Mexico, where he started work on *The Power and the Glory*.

Greenland. Readers and critics often refer to the hard-edged locales where Graham Greene's novels are set as "Greenland." Regardless of whether the action takes place in Brighton, Sierra Leone, or the Mexican state of Tabasco, Greene's stories are characterized by a consistent atmosphere of impending doom, mortal sin, and the life-and-death struggles of right versus wrong, male versus female, and the rich versus the poor. The inhabitants of Greenland often include tortured priests, corrupt government officials, young people desperate to escape poverty, and lovers thwarted by convention and jealousy. Greene resented the term "Greenland," claiming that his writing was not the result of predetermined stylistic choices but instead depicted the world as he saw it.



PLOT SUMMARY

Brighton Rock by Graham Greene begins with the news reporter Charles Hale drinking alone in Brighton on a tourist-choked holiday weekend. Hale, in Brighton as part of his newspaper's "Kolley Kibber man" promotion, knows that Pinkie and his gang are after him for a story he wrote about Kite, the gang's now deceased former leader. His only hope for survival lies in securing company for the day. At a bar, he runs into the curvy and flirtatious Ida Arnold. The two share a cab ride and a kiss, after which Ida insists on ducking into a ladies' restroom for a wash. Hale begs her to stay with him, but Ida, confusing his desperation for ardor, promises to be right back. When she returns, Hale is gone.

Meanwhile, seventeen-year-old tough-guy Pinkie Brown is killing time, waiting for the members of his gang to show up and tell him that their job is done. Eventually, Spicer, Cubitt, and Dallow all join Pinkie in a café on the pier, informing him that Hale is dead and the remaining Kolley Kibber cards have been placed around town in such a way to throw the authorities off their trail. Pinkie worries that Spicer might have been seen when placing a card under a restaurant tablecloth, thereby leaving them vulnerable to discovery. Pinkie decides to return to the restaurant himself. There he meets Rose, a plain and timid waitress who says she found the card. He decides to woo her in order to keep her from talking to the cops.

A few days pass, and Ida pays a visit to Henekey's, her favorite pub. She soon learns that a Kolley Kibber man has been killed. She insists on reading the newspaper account herself and is horrified to learn that the victim is Hale, whom she knows by his pseudonym, Fred. Ida is likewise shocked by what she sees as an error-filled news report, and she finds his death not only sad and tragic, but suspicious. A firm believer in ghosts, Ida thinks Fred's might be talking to her, asking her to investigate. She decides to go to his funeral, the impersonality of which strikes her as almost as tragic as the death itself. Back home, she gets out her Ouija board, and she and her neighbor, Old Crowe, ask it about the circumstances surrounding Hale's

passing. The board offers up a word jumble that Ida thinks is pointing to forced suicide. She vows to get to the bottom of what killed Hale that day, telling Old Crowe that she is confident her firm and unshakable knowledge of right and wrong will serve her well.

Pinkie begins his campaign to woo Rose by taking her to Sherry's nightclub. Over drinks they discover they are both Catholics. The way they see and practice their faith could not be more dissimilar, however. Pinkie believes in a God that punishes and damns his subjects; Rose believes in a God that redeems. While they talk, Pinkie fingers a bottle of vitriol, or sulfuric acid, that he carries with him everywhere. The bottle is an odd, almost alive thing, and it whispers to Pinkie that, while he keeps the acid around for his enemies, it will, in the end, be the death of him.

Pinkie receives an invitation to visit Colleoni, the top mob boss in Brighton who is living in luxury at the Cosmopolitan hotel. The two men talk about the upcoming races and Kite's killing, which Pinkie blames on Hale and on Kite himself. Pinkie then threatens Colleoni, but the older man is not intimidated, only amused. He suggests to Pinkie that he join his gang. Colleoni would love to have someone so young, skilled, and hungry working for him, but Pinkie is offended at the idea and storms off. In the hotel hallway, he meets a cop who asks him to come to the station and talk to the police inspector. Pinkie goes, afraid that perhaps Rose has squealed, but the inspector's purpose for calling the meeting is to ask Pinkie not to commit any violence at the upcoming races at the horse park. The inspector is worried about a mob war between Pinkie's gang and Colleoni's. He warns Pinkie that Colleoni is too powerful to compete with, and Pinkie storms off again, angry that no one will give him the respect he deserves. He begins to think that a blood bath is in order. Kite and Hale's deaths started something; Pinkie wouldn't mind finishing it, even if it means more killing.

Ida is making headway in her investigation. She hears about Kite's death at the hands of Colleoni's men from a chatty barman and goes to Snow's café to talk to Rose, whom she learned found a Kolley Kibber card on the day of Hale's death. Ida begins to question Rose good-naturedly, and pieces together from Rose's scattered answers that it wasn't Hale who left the card in the café. In the company of Phil Corkery, a rather spineless, middle-aged man, she goes to the police station with her information, but they laugh off any suggestion of foul play.

Spicer, the oldest member of Pinkie's gang, has grown restless and fearful since Hale's murder. He was against the murder from the start. Now he worries that his dropping of the Kolley Kibber card in Snow's has exposed him to unnecessary danger. At Frank's boarding house, he answers the phone; it's Rose, wanting to talk to Pinkie. The call further rattles Spicer, who goes for a walk on the pier, dreaming of retiring to Nottingham

to open a pub. Spicer understands, though, that Pinkie will never let him escape, since Spicer knows too much.

Pinkie, too, is restless. Having been insulted by Colleoni and the cops, he is eager to prove his manhood. He goes in search of Rose, demanding that she come with him to the country. They take a bus to Peacehaven, a neighboring seaside town, where, on a cliff overlooking the ocean, Rose tells him about Ida's visit. Pinkie is alarmed, but Rose assures him she told Ida nothing.

Pinkie returns to Frank's and finds Spicer there. He tells Spicer that it's not safe for him and Rose to be in the same town. Pinkie worries that Rose will see Spicer again and recognize him as the man who left the Kolley Kibber card. Spicer says he could always take a holiday to Nottingham. Pinkie replies vaguely that Spicer will have to disappear. Then, after Spicer leaves to go to his own room, Pinkie phones Colleoni with a job for him. The job is to kill Spicer at next week's races.

The hit, however, goes wrong. Colleoni's men attack Pinkie as well as Spicer, forcing Pinkie to flee into the surrounding countryside to hide. When he gets back to Frank's later that night, he discovers that Spicer is injured but alive and packing for Nottingham. Furious, Pinkie throws Spicer down the stairs, killing him. Dallow and Pinkie's lawyer, Mr. Prewitt, are the only witnesses.

Ida continues to question Rose, but Rose stubbornly refuses to give her any information. What Ida does not understand is that Rose grew up desperately poor, and Pinkie's criminality does not scare her. What frightens her is the prospect of having to return home to the dirty and dank apartment she shared with her parents. She'll do anything to avoid that fate. Pinkie, found guiltless in a cursory police investigation into the murder of Spicer, visits Rose in the apartment she shares with two other Snow's waitresses and proposes marriage. Rose gladly accepts.

Rose is thrilled at the idea of marrying Pinkie, but Pinkie, a virgin with a negative view of marriage, sex, and women, grows more and more brittle over what he sees as his shrinking prospects and over the fact that he has had to shoulder all the burden of the deaths of Kite, Hale, and Spicer. He picks a fight with Dallow and Cubitt over shared responsibilities within the gang, but only Cubitt takes the bait. In the course of the fight, Cubitt comes to understand that Pinkie murdered Spicer, and Cubitt quits the gang then and there.

Still smarting from the fight, Cubitt proceeds to get extremely drunk and, at the Cosmopolitan bar where he'd hoped to speak to Colleoni about a possible job, he runs instead into Ida Arnold, who starts peppering him with questions about Hale, Kite, Spicer, and Pinkie. Cubitt blurts out just enough information to convince Ida that her theories about Pinkie's guilt are well-founded.

Pinkie and Rose's wedding day arrives. They tie the knot in the spartan and depressing municipal office, and, afterwards, go out to drinks with Dallow and Mr. Prewitt. Then Pinkie and

Rose wander around Brighton and Rose begs Pinkie to make a souvenir record of his voice for her—a way to mark the occasion. Rose assumes Pinkie will say something sweet on the recording; instead, he records a hateful rant about how she has trapped him. Pinkie doesn't worry about the record, though; they don't have a gramophone, so he assumes she'll never hear his message.

The newlyweds go back to Pinkie's room at Frank's and make love. Pinkie discovers, much to his surprise, that the sex act is not nearly as repulsive as he assumed it would be; it is, indeed, almost pleasurable, and it fills him with a new sensation of power and dominance. He is also surprised to find that Rose has known all along that he and his men killed Hale, but she never mentioned it because she doesn't care. All she cares about is Pinkie and their new life together.

That life wears on Pinkie, as does Ida's tendency to pop up wherever he and Rose are, haunting and hounding them. He grows paranoid that Rose will tire of him and tell the authorities all she knows, and that Cubitt and Prewitt will likewise turn, dooming him to prison or even death. One day, after spending hours on the pier with Ida and Phil Corkery watching them, Pinkie snaps, dragging Rose back to Peacehaven in order to fulfill a suicide pact. In reality, Pinkie has no intention of going through with it. His plan is for Rose to kill herself first, thereby freeing him. The plan goes awry, however, when Ida shows up on the cliff with the police at the last moment, confronting Pinkie and Rose with all she knows about Hale, Kite, and Spicer. Cornered and desperate, Pinkie spills vitriol on himself and runs off a nearby cliff to his death.

With the crimes solved to her satisfaction, Ida returns to Henekey's bar in triumph. She is happy with herself not only for bringing Pinkie to justice but for saving Rose from him. Rose, however, is anything but free. She is in deep mourning for Pinkie. The only comfort she takes is in the hope that she might be carrying his child. She goes to confession to talk to a priest about all that has happened to her, and, rather than damning her, the priest tells her that God's mercy is infinite. She leaves the church, relieved and full of anticipation. She has found a store whose owner will let her use his gramophone. She can't wait to listen to the record Pinkie made for her on the day of their wedding. She wants only to hear his voice telling her he loves her.



CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Pinkie Brown – Pinkie is the seventeen-year-old head of a Brighton race gang, and the leader of Cubitt, Dallow, and Spicer. Pinkie orders Charles Hale's murder in revenge for Kite's death, which he blames on Hale's newspaper reporting. Kite talked to Hale for a story that resulted in Kite's being

murdered by Colleoni, the boss of a competing mob, and his men. Over time, Pinkie grows convinced that a blood bath is in store, and he murders Spicer to keep him from talking about Hale's death. A conflicted Catholic, Pinkie's God is a vindictive and cruel one. Pinkie spends a great deal of time worrying about damnation, but he believes in his own cleverness. He thinks himself the equal of Colleoni, and sees his killing of Spicer and the orchestrations he goes through to marry Rose as proof of his superior intellect. Having grown up in the Brighton slum of Paradise Piece, he warms ever so slightly to the equally impoverished Rose because she is his opposite: whereas he is jaded and bent on evil, she is kind and good, and he begins to suspect that the two might be made for each other. However, his budding affection for her does not stop him from trying to talk her into killing herself in the novel's climax. Cornered by Ida and a Brighton police officer at the last moment and believing he has no escape, Pinkie breaks a vial of acid on his own face and runs off a cliff into the sea. His essential brutality is evident in Greene's description of his young, avid face: "He had a fair smooth skin, the faintest down, and his grey eyes had an effect of heartlessness like an old man's in which human feeling has died." His only vulnerability is **music**, which reminds him, to his great chagrin, of the humanity of others.

Rose – Poor, timid, and even more devout than the morbidly religious Pinkie, Rose is working as a waitress at Snow's café when she finds the Kolley Kibber card Spicer placed on one of the café's tables, which he did strategically in order to throw the police off in their investigation of Charles Hale's murder. Pinkie decides to woo Rose so that he can keep tabs on her in case she goes to the authorities. Even though she secretly knows that Pinkie is a murderer who is using her to avoid a prison sentence, she falls madly in love with him. Rose is good-natured but not entirely innocent. As a poor child, she witnessed enough violence and ugliness to make married life with Pinkie more desirable to her than returning home to her parents, who are dour and uncouth and given to black moods. Ida Arnold knows none of Rose's history but hopes to save Rose from falling into Pinkie's clutches, not realizing that Rose doesn't want to be saved. Rose would rather be damned right along with Pinkie. By the novel's climax, Pinkie seems to have convinced Rose to kill herself in a suicide pact which he doesn't plan to honor himself, but Ida arrives at the last moment with a Brighton police officer, effectively saving Rose's life. Even after Pinkie's gruesome suicide, Rose believes that Pinkie loved her. The novel ends, however, with Rose about to discover that she is mistaken in that belief, as she returns home to listen, for the first time, to a recording in which Pinkie cuts her down brutally.

Ida "Lily" Arnold – Ida is the unlikely, self-appointed detective at the heart of *Brighton Rock's* crime story. Like many men before him, Charles Hale is attracted to Ida's buxom and earthy beauty when he meets her on the Brighton pier, where the two

have a brief but fateful encounter. Hale disappears, however, in the middle of their date, having been murdered (unbeknownst to Ida) by Pinkie's men. Ida, convinced that Hale's death is suspicious even though an investigation found no evidence of foul play, vows to investigate further. Unlike Pinkie and Rose, Ida is not religious. She is, instead, superstitious, relying on her Ouija board and other omens to lead her in the right direction. Eventually, her sleuthing leads her to Rose, whom she befriends both in an effort to nail Pinkie and prevent the girl from throwing her life away on a hardened criminal. Utterly convinced of the righteousness of her cause, Ida hounds Pinkie to the point of death. Her intentions are good, but Greene makes it clear that Ida's ruthless pursuit of right is also dangerous, because her understanding of the world is shallow and incomplete. She knows nothing about the circumstances that led to Kite's death or the brutality of the Brighton mob world, and, in involving herself with Pinkie and his gang, plunges in over her head. That said, she is able, through dogged determination, to do what the police were not: solve Hale's murder and bring his killer to justice.

Charles "Fred" Hale – A reporter for *The Messenger* newspaper, Charles Hale travels to Brighton as a Kolley Kibber man, responsible for placing cards in shops around the town as part of a promotion meant to attract new readers. Hale, a native of Brighton, is proud of the fact that he worked his way up the ladder from the circulation department to staff writer and has been able to, for the most part, escape the dingy town where he grew up. Greene hints but never explicitly states that Hale is targeted by Pinkie's gang because he wrote an article exposing Kite's gang activity which led to Kite's murder.

Colleoni – Colleoni is the most powerful mob boss in Brighton. He is a small man with a round belly who walks on tip toe and has thinning gray hair, but his unassuming appearance and dandyish air are deceptive. He is utterly ruthless in his pursuit of power, and his drive has paid off. By the time he meets with Pinkie to try to recruit him into his syndicate, he has the police on his side. When Pinkie calls on Colleoni to have Spicer murdered, Colleoni sends his men to target Pinkie, too—a hit job that pinkie and Spicer both narrowly escape.

Kite – Kite was once the head of the Brighton gang that Pinkie now runs. Killed with a razor blade by Colleoni's mob while waiting alone at a railway station, Kite was like a father to Pinkie. The other members of the gang looked up to him as well. Kite's death left Pinkie in charge. It also made Hale a target, as Hale's newspaper story allegedly led to Kite's murder.

Spicer – The oldest member of Pinkie's gang, Spicer wants to be done with the mob. He'd opposed Hale's murder from the beginning and dreams of retiring to Nottingham and opening a pub there. He understands, though, that his dreams will never come true; he knows too much for Pinkie to let him go, and, indeed, Pinkie kills him by throwing him down the stairs of Frank's boardinghouse.

Phil Corkery – Phil Corkery is, in Ida's opinion, a weak and passionless man, not the kind of lover she would typically pursue, but, while on the hunt for Hale's killer, she finally accepts his attentions, mostly because he agrees to help her in her investigation. Gradually, though, he grows weary of the search and tells Ida that solving Hale's murder should really be left to the authorities.

Mr. Prewitt – A breezy and swaggering lawyer with more ambition than skill, Prewitt agrees to help Pinkie marry Rose despite the legal impediments to their underage union. Later, he witnesses Pinkie's killing of Spicer and agrees to take a holiday to avoid being questioned by authorities about the murder. On the cliff at Peacehaven, Ida lies to Pinkie about Prewitt, saying the lawyer told her everything about Spicer's death. In reality, Prewitt told her nothing; she simply made a lucky guess.

Bill Brewer – A stout elderly man who lives near the tram way with his sick wife, he has neglected to pay his protection subscription to Pinkie. He has, however, made sure to keep his subscription to Colleoni up to date. This double dealing infuriates Pinkie, who, in the company of Dallow, visits Brewer in the middle of the night and makes him pay up, slashing his face with a razor.

Jim Tate – The bookie that Ida visits to put money on Black Boy, Tate is often referred to by his friends as "Old Honest" Jim. Like Brewer, he has fallen behind in his payments to Pinkie. He is unhealthy looking, and his voice is loud and hoarse from having worked at the horse park for so many years.

Judy – Frank's wife, she has dyed red hair and an air of joviality. Like Ida, she wears California **Poppy** perfume. After Rose's marriage to Pinkie, Judy welcomes her warmly to Frank's boarding house. She is having an affair with Dallow, who would like to run away with her, but she has no intention of leaving Frank.

Molly Pink – Fat and covered in acne, Molly is the one woman on the Brighton pier Charles Hale thinks might be desperate enough to keep him company while he tries to avoid being murdered by Pinkie's gang. Molly is less easily swayed than Hale had hoped, though, and she insists that Hale produce a male companion for her friend, Delia. Pinkie arrives instead, and he, Molly, Hale, and Delia form and awkward foursome for a while. Molly is the first witness Ida questions in her search for Hale's killer.

Sylvie Spicer's girlfriend. Pinkie meets Sylvie the day after Spicer's death. Pinkie feels sexual attraction to Sylvie in a way he never has before. She leads him out to one of the cars to have sex, but Pinkie ultimately is filled with dread by the idea – his attraction is based on a desire for power, not true sexual desire, and so he cannot go through with it.

MINOR CHARACTERS

John Cubitt – A big man with red hair and a slow, friendly air and a tendency toward sentimentality when he's drunk, he leaves the gang when he discovers that Pinkie murdered Spicer.

Ted Dallow – Muscular and possessing of a broken nose and blank expression, Dallow is always ready to join Pinkie in a bit of violence or criminal activity. Dallow does feel for Rose, though. He draws the line at hurting her.

Mrs. Prewitt – A bitter woman who likes tinned salmon, Mrs. Prewitt is, in her husband's estimation, a hag. Mr. Prewitt tells Pinkie that she has ruined him.

Police Inspector – A tired man worn down with care, he tries to talk Pinkie into leaving Brighton. He doesn't want a mob war just as the peak tourist season is coming on. He wants peace.

Frank – The owner of the boarding house where Pinkie and his gang live, Frank is most known for his ironing prowess. His wife, Judy, is having an affair with Dallow behind his back.

Delia – Molly's pale, skinny friend, she does little more than squeal every once in a while.

Clarence – A somber man who frequents Henekey's bar and pines openly for Ida, Clarence eventually declares her a terrible woman.

Charlie Moyne – A drunken gambler, he meets Ida on her way to meet Molly Pink in the offices of Carter and Galloway. As Charles Hale's face fades from Ida's memory, it is gradually replaced by the bloodshot mug of Charlie Moyne.

Old Crowe – Old Crowe lives down the stairs from Ida and often joins in her Ouija board sessions.

Harry – A bar fly at Henekey's, he flirts with Ida and is rejected by her.

Crab – A young criminal who was once run out of Brighton by Pinkie and his gang, Crab is now Colleoni's right-hand man. A Jew, he dyes his hair red and has had his nose straightened in order to pass as a gentile.

Samuel – A young man who works for Jim Tate, handing out winnings at the race track.

Mr. Wilson – Rose's father, Mr. Wilson is small, thin, elderly man with a face marked by suspicion. He refuses to allow Rose and Pinkie to be married. Both of Rose's parents are given to black moods and show very little affection for their daughter.

Mrs. Wilson – Mrs. Wilson, Rose's mother, is described as stupid and vindictive. Both of Rose's parents are given to black moods and show very little affection for their daughter.

Annie Collins – A schoolmate of Pinkie's, she killed herself by putting her head on the railway tracks when she was fifteen and pregnant with her second child.

Maisie – Maisie is Rose's favorite co-worker at Snow's café.

Doris – The senior waitress at Snow's, Doris wears a habitual sneer.

Piker – Piker went to school with Pinkie and waits on him and Rose when they stop at his Peacehaven pub prior to fulfilling their suicide pact.

Tom Ida's ex-husband. He desperately wants Ida back, and often writes her love letters.

TERMS

Buer – The buer is, according to the sixteenth century magical textbook, *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*, the president of hell.

Pinkie, a Catholic whose belief system is characterized primarily by a morbid fascination with death and damnation, refers to **Ida Arnold** as a “buer,” because she seems like a demon sent from hell to punish him for his sins.

Kolley Kibber – In August 1927, the *Westminster Gazette* newspaper created the promotional character Lobby Lud. Reporters would assume the identity of “Lobby Lud” and travel to seaside resorts, doing their best to be spotted by tourists who would then be rewarded with a cash prize for spotting the right man. Greene modelled the *Messenger's* Kolley Kibber promotion after the real-life Lobby Lud. **Charles Hale** is in Brighton as the *Messenger's* Kolley Kibber man.

Polony – To **Pinkie** and his gang, all women are “polonys.” By likening every member of the female sex to a sausage, Pinkie and his men are literally reducing women to pieces of meat. In this scenario, women, robbed of their individuality, are nothing more than inconvenient and vaguely off-putting objects of sexual desire.

Vitriol – **Pinkie** carries a vial of vitriol, or sulfuric acid, in his pocket wherever he goes. On his first date with **Rose**, he fingers the vial with a pleasure that verges on the erotic. He finds the acid's power to maim and even kill titillating. Its presence is also a form of foreshadowing. While in Sherry's with Rose, Pinkie thinks he hears the acid whisper to him that it will inevitably disfigure his own face rather than the faces of his enemies, and, in the end, that is exactly what comes to pass.

devoutly (if imperfectly) Catholic, Pinkie focuses more on Hell and damnation, whereas Rose focuses more on Heaven and redemption. Ida Arnold, meanwhile—intent on making the brutal Pinkie answer for his crimes—believes most in common superstition, and in her own sense of right and wrong. These warring belief systems, when pitted against one another, prove explosive and deadly. In the end, although Pinkie himself dies a terrible death, it is Pinkie's vision of damnation that triumphs.

On their first date, Pinkie and Rose discover that they're both “Romans.” Their rearing in the Catholic faith becomes a touchstone for them, something they have in common that binds them from the beginning, but their unique perspectives on the way God works in the world could not be more different. Pinkie's Catholicism is one of damnation and flames and torments. Rose has hope. She believes in Heaven and forgiveness and it is her steadfast, optimistic belief that allows her to fall in love with Pinkie and eventually become his wife.

Pinkie's faith has been formed by his upbringing, of which Greene gives only glimpses. Those glimpses, though, are telling. Pinkie remembers his childhood in the downtrodden Brighton housing project of Paradise Piece primarily as a series of Saturday nights during which his father would mount his mother and both parents would forget they even had a son. On such nights, Pinkie felt dead, invisible. When he returns to the home of his youth, it has collapsed completely. It looks like a bomb has fallen on it. In reality, it was always cheap, shabbily built, and poorly maintained, barely fit for human habitation. Pinkie's belief in a God bent on punishment makes sense when taken in this context, as does his inherent inability to love. Pinkie's God is vindictive and ruthless; Pinkie is a reservoir of hate, much of it aimed at himself. He models his behavior as the head of a crime syndicate on that malicious God, reflexively turning to murder to solve his problems: “He trailed the clouds of his own glory after him: hell lay about him in his infancy. He was ready for more deaths.”

Rose's homelife is equally bleak, but her faith takes her in a different direction. Born to a mother and father prone to black moods and having spent her first fifteen years in a dirty and depressing basement room, she looks to God to provide an escape. Later, when it's Pinkie who frees her from the bondage of a joyless poverty, he becomes her god. She enters in to what she considers mortal sin by marrying him in a fake ceremony and even sleeps with him out of wedlock. If Pinkie is damned, she is ready to be damned also. She places all of her faith in him.

On the surface, it would seem that Rose and Pinkie's Catholicism contrasts directly with Ida Arnold's free-wheeling spiritualism and her belief in herself as an agent of justice. Convinced that “poor old Fred” Hale has been killed by Pinkie and his gang, she makes it her mission to solve the case on her own, not necessarily because she cares deeply for Fred (she only knew him for a few hours; also, his name is really Charles), but because doing so sounds fun to her, like “a bit of life.”



THEMES

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CATHOLICISM

At the heart of *Brighton Rock* by Graham Greene is the unconventional love story of Pinkie and Rose, whose shared Catholic faith shapes, illuminates, and ultimately dooms their love. Though both characters are

Ida doesn't believe in God. Instead, she turns to her Ouija board for guidance when she's in a quandary. She's rarely in a quandary, though. To Ida, the world is a very simple place. There are good people and there are bad people; the good people should be saved and praised, the bad brought to justice and summarily punished. This is where her views and actions overlap with those of Pinkie. Her overly simplistic view of human nature shares much in common with the strictest tenets of Catholic doctrine which suggest that hell is reserved for sinners and heaven for those who repent.

Pinkie's Catholicism is fatalistic. Convinced that he has been damned since birth, he kills and kills again because hell isn't going to get any hotter. Rose's faith is all about redemption, and therefore it makes sense that she would fall in love with Pinkie, who is more in need of redemption than anyone. Ida's faith in the occult and her unshakable confidence in herself invest her with a frightening amount of power. Dallow tells Ida that she's the reason Pinkie and Rose end up on the cliff above the sea, locked into a suicide pact, and he is, to a certain extent, right. It is the combination of Ida's life philosophy of an eye for an eye, Pinkie's morbid fascination with death and damnation, and Rose's guileless belief in a merciful God, that results in the kind of blood bath Pinkie had anticipated all along.



PRIDE AND AMBITION

Pinkie and Ida might seem, at first glance, to be foils. Pinkie is a criminal and a Catholic, Ida an upstanding member of the community who puts more stock in superstition and the Ouija board than she does in God-given grace or the possibility of eternal damnation. The two are intimately connected, though, by the pride they take in their own accomplishments and the craven nature of their individual ambition.

Pinkie takes pride in the fact that he has managed at such a young age to leave behind his past as a poverty-stricken street kid to become the head of a successful crime syndicate. However, his ambitions get in the way of his finding true happiness, which, Greene makes clear, might have been possible with Rose if Pinkie could only have set aside his pride and need to rise for long enough to honor Rose's love and its healing power. Pinkie's pride in his own cleverness blinds him to the fact that Rose knew all along that he was behind Hale's killing; she just didn't care.

What Pinkie wants most is to be another Mr. Colleoni. While on the cliff near Peacehaven with Rose, "his pride coiled like a watch spring round the thought that he wasn't deceived, that he wasn't going to give himself up to marriage and the birth of children. He was going to be where Colleoni was and higher..."

Colleoni, though, is older, richer, and immeasurably more powerful than Pinkie. From his luxurious room in the Cosmopolitan, Colleoni acts like a man who owns the visible

world, and he does. The police are on his side. The inspector even suggests to Pinkie that he get out of organized crime and leave what's left of the business to Colleoni. Pinkie, of course, bristles at such a suggestion. He is willing to kill and keep killing to avoid the appearance of mediocrity.

Ida, meanwhile, defies the contempt of the police and the weak protestations of Phil Corkery to let the matter of Hale's murder drop because she thinks she is uniquely qualified to bring Pinkie and his gang to justice. Half-drunk for the bulk of the novel, Ida plunges forward with her investigation into Hale's death, convinced that whatever she does is beyond reproach because it is in the pursuit of right. She knows nothing of Kite's death or the tension between Colleoni's gang and Pinkie's. She simply trusts her own instincts, because, as Greene writes, "The world was a good place if you didn't weaken. She was like the chariot in a triumph—behind her were all the big battalions—right's right, an eye for an eye, when you want to do a thing well, do it yourself."

She rationalizes her monomania because it allows her to "save" Rose, but Rose does not want to be saved, especially not by a woman like Ida, who Rose describes as too ignorant and unkind to be damned. Even Ida's friend Clarence calls her "a terrible woman" for all her efforts in the Hale affair.

As the novel comes to a close, Ida congratulates herself on solving a crime that stumped police and snowed the public. She announces to her friends at Henekey's bar that she has also delivered Rose safely into the bosom of her family. The irony is rich here. If it weren't for Ida's relentless hounding of Pinkie, the bloodshed might have ended with Hale, and Spicer and Pinkie might still be alive. Additionally, Rose despises her parents. Home is the last place she would want to be.

Greene suggests that it was pride that doomed Charles Hale, the catalyst of all the violence and heart ache that follows. Hale took a great deal of pride in his job at the [Messenger](#) and the hard work it took to climb the ladder from lowly paper seller to reporter. It was in his capacity as a reporter that he became involved with Kite and, in exposing Kite's illegal activities, got Kite killed and set Pinkie on Hale's trail. "He was damned, [Hale] told himself with the temporary courage of another whisky, if he'd let that mob frighten him into spoiling his job. What could they do while he had people round him? They hadn't the nerve to kill him in broad day before witnesses; he was safe with the fifty thousand visitors." They do have the nerve, of course, although they kill him discreetly in a candy shop under the pier.

The sin of pride sets the violent events of the novel in action and it brings them to just as violent of a close. Pinkie's need to advance in the mob makes it impossible for him to grasp his only chance at real happiness and fulfillment with Rose, and Ida's misplaced confidence in her own abilities as a sleuth results not in justice but in tragedy.



SEX AND SHAME

Pinkie, having grown up a witness to his parents' Saturday night love-making ritual, views sex with revulsion and disdain. At seventeen, he cherishes his "bitter virginity," and avoids for as long as possible bedding Rose out of fear and disgust. Ida Arnold, on the other hand, sees the sex drive as nothing more than a healthy part of human nature. For Rose, sex with Pinkie is a mortal sin. Therefore, it is a deadly serious business. Once the sin has been committed, though, Rose is surprised by how free she feels.

Pinkie's dislike of sex is founded on a hatred of women. He and his gang's habit of referring dismissively to women as "polonys" (sausages) or "buers," a kind of demon, shows that they view women not as three-dimensional, thinking humans but as a) vaguely off-putting pieces of meat and b) forces of evil sent to earth to torment them.

Pinkie's Catholic faith augments his disgust with the sex act. Having been taught that sex is for procreation and is to be performed only inside the safe parameters of marriage, Pinkie learned to judge harshly his parents' weekly assignations, and, as usual, he blames the woman in the scenario, assuming that his mother's insatiable animal appetites made such repugnant displays necessary.

Pinkie is actually terrified of sex. He is scared of making himself vulnerable to a polony and of living in sin ever after. When he meets Spicer's girl in a road house the night after Spicer's death, he experiences real sexual desire for the first time, and the feeling is as exciting as it is foreign. At his urging, she comes with him "to the cars," but then he's too anxious to perform, and he ends up slipping into the road house pool instead.

When he finally forces himself to make love to Rose, his fears disappear. Far from finding sex distasteful, he actually rejoices in his newfound power and manliness, and he even feels a shred of tenderness for Rose who, much to his relief, saw him naked and overcome by passion and did not laugh at him.

Ida thinks hunting Hale's killers is a fun diversion from the mundane obligations of everyday life. Sex is much the same. It is merely an opportunity to enjoy herself, and Ida rarely turns down a chance to indulge her hedonistic side. As a nonbeliever, Ida eschews the idea that sex is in anyway dirty or sinful. Made briefly rich with her winnings from the racetrack, she suggests to Phil Corkery that they allow themselves one night of unbridled fun. "It doesn't do anyone any harm that I know of," she says. "It's human nature." When Phil suggests later that they've sinned against God, Ida scoffs at such a notion. It's not like murder, she argues. Sex never hurt anyone.

Ida prides herself on knowing what men like. She flirts with strangers and toys with her male acquaintances, wielding her large breasts like a weapon, and they're almost always effective. It might be her singing that first draws Hale in, but it's her full figure that seals the deal. He is convinced by her fertility

goddess-like proportions that she can protect him. Ida's body, though, like so much about her, is an empty promise.

For Rose, sex is not hollow fun. Nor is it nasty or vile. Instead, it is an act that, if enjoyed between two married people, is sacred. Neither she nor Pinkie considers their brief, municipal-building marriage legitimate in the eyes of God, so when they have sex later in Pinkie's room in Frank's boarding house, Rose believes they are both now living in mortal sin, but the state doesn't scare her. No longer a virgin, Rose finds herself freed from the obligations of the church and the attendant feelings of guilt and shame. She is damned right along with Pinkie and she likes it. Not having to worry constantly about how she might step out of favor with the church and with God, she is now in charge of her own life.

The difference in Pinkie, Ida, and Rose's attitudes toward sex is due in part to their belief systems. Catholicism has taught Pinkie to think of sex as shameful if it takes place outside the bonds of wedlock. Rose worries less about shame and more about her immortal soul. Ida, who worships herself, has no such hang-ups. She wants to have a good time and, if possible, exercise a little harmless power over men while doing so. The truth about sex, Greene suggests, lies somewhere in between Pinkie's fraught visions of buers and damnation and Ida's masturbatory desire for fun. Rose discovers that truth for herself when, in the final chapter of the novel, she confesses to a priest that she might be pregnant with Pinkie's child: "She had a sudden conviction that she carried life, and she thought proudly: Let them get over that if they can; let them get over that." Sex has not damned Rose. It has freed her from guilt and given her a future.



INNOCENCE VS. EXPERIENCE

Given the seriousness of the problems they face during the course of the novel, it's easy to forget that Pinkie and Rose are teenagers. Until, of course, they act their age. Both Pinkie, whom Greene often simply refers to as "the Boy," and Rose want desperately to have access to the adult world, but they're too young to understand what such access actually entails, and so they make disastrous choices that give Ida control over their destiny. Ida, of course, considers herself a very wise woman, when in fact, she only knows enough to be dangerous.

Pinkie's grand ambition is to be another Colleoni, but the latter is an old man with vast reserves of wealth and power and experience, whereas Pinkie is the seventeen-year-old leader of three hapless, low-level criminals. Colleoni himself, as well as the Brighton police inspector, warn Pinkie that he cannot possibly take on Colleoni and win. Even Pinkie's own men wish he would get out of the game. Pinkie takes each warning as an insult, and his defensiveness is a symptom of his youth and credulity.

Pinkie's main experience is with killing, which he confuses with manly action. Anytime someone suggests he might be in over his head, his instinct is to start a massacre. Furious with Spicer for daring to question his shaky authority, Pinkie throws his former friend down the stairs, killing him. That act, witnessed by Dallow and Prewitt, dooms Pinkie as well. It gives Cubitt the motivation to open up to Ida, who then uses both Dallow and Prewitt to corner Pinkie on the cliff at Peacehaven.

Pinkie's best shot at achieving some level of maturity is in his marriage to Rose, but he only enters into the union out of gross cynicism, knowing that, if Rose becomes his wife, she won't be compelled to testify against him in court. Again confusing corruption with manliness, he congratulates himself on outsmarting both Rose and the law. When they are finally married, though, he can't help but be moved by Rose and the commitment they've made to each other. They stand together on the Brighton pier, feeling "as if they were shut out from an Eden of ignorance." Really, though, they still know nothing of what marriage and family life are all about.

Rose thinks of her marriage to Pinkie and her subsequent deflowering at his hands as a ticket to a whole new world of womanly understanding. The morning after her wedding, she wanders around Frank's boarding house, catching Dallow and Judy, Frank's wife, in an adulterous embrace. Rose isn't fazed. What might have shocked her a day before no longer does: "Pride swelled in her breast as she came up from the basement...She had experienced as much as any woman."

For all her newfound feelings of sophistication, though, Rose is still only a girl with a girl's romantic fantasies and unrealistic dreams. When Pinkie drives her to Peacehaven again, this time for the purposes of going forward with a suicide pact, Rose goes along with him, thinking that she would rather be damned with Pinkie than saved and alone. She is ready to die for love, a love that Pinkie only values for selfish reasons of his own.

Rose's biggest mistake is engaging herself to a man she knows is a murderer. She thinks that because she grew up on the mean streets and in the dingy houses of Nelson Place that she knows the worst the world has to offer, but her essential goodness does not allow her to conceive of Pinkie's level of brutality.

The souvenir recording Pinkie makes for her on their wedding day is a symbol of her naivete and his wickedness. Rose wants very much to have a recording of Pinkie's voice saying something sweet to her. What he says instead is foul and cruel, but he's not worried about her ever hearing his message; they don't own a gramophone. In the concluding chapter of the novel, though, Rose decides to take the record to a nearby news agent and use his player to listen to the beloved voice of her dead husband. Greene suggests that a loss of innocence awaits Rose in the form of that record; she will soon know a great deal more of the world than she ever wanted to.

Ida is older than Pinkie and Rose, but her experience is of the

shallow, beer-soaked variety. She has never had to face the consequences of her actions. Rather, she goes from day to day, drinking in pubs and singing for her supper and admiring her own reflection in bar mirrors. She likewise admires what she thinks is her own cunning and righteous mind. Ida, though, is impervious to wisdom. She cannot acquire knowledge because she is, at heart, incurious. She made a lucky guess when it came to the circumstances of Hale's death; after that, she learns nothing.

Pinkie's violent actions are those of an immature, hot-headed boy, not the measured, calculated scheming of a grown man. Rose confuses marriage to and sex with that hot-headed boy as entry into the realm of womanhood, while Ida goes through life so certain of her of her own intelligence and powers of insight and observation that she is caught in a never-ending cycle of self-congratulation. She ends the novel where she began: bent over her Ouija board, waiting for answers to arrive from the ether. Greene suggests, through the trials and tribulations of Pinkie and Rose and Ida's utter obtuseness, that true experience is hard-won. Knowledge is accessed only from a place of acute pain, and, even then, it's arguable whether or not such knowledge is even that useful. In *Brighton Rock*, human connection and understanding is elusive at best. Life, according to Greene, is a long struggle, a balancing act between love and hate, good and evil, life and death, and trading in innocence for experience mostly means coming to terms with the fact that death will always win out, no matter what.



SYMBOLS

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



FLOWERS AND DOLLS

It's no coincidence that the primary female character in this novel is named Rose, or that Ida Arnold's nickname is Lily. To Pinkie, women are not fully human. They are flowers or dolls or "polonys," fine to look at but easily crushed and consumed. On the day Charles Hale is killed, Pinkie wins a doll at a shooting booth, portending both Hale's demise and Pinkie's eventual winning of Rose's innocent affections. Later, on his wedding day, he thinks to himself that Rose "looked like one of the small gaudy statues in an ugly church," remarking that "you could pray to her but you couldn't expect an answer." Pinkie and the men in his employ underestimate women's abilities to think for themselves and act on their own instincts. Ida, far from a fragile flower, is very much Pinkie's intellectual equal if not his superior, and Rose likewise often surprises him with her inner fortitude and courage. By writing women off either as delicate blooms or inanimate toys best left on the shelf and without agency of

their own, Pinkie shows his hand: he is, in fact, a frightened and vulnerable boy, terrified of female power and, more specifically, the sex act, which, as a “bitter virgin,” he assumes will be not only ugly, but degrading and humiliating. Flowers and dolls thus symbolize Pinkie’s conception of women as vacant-minded, frivolous, and powerless—a darkly ironic misconception, given that “Lily” and Rose prove more resilient than Pinkie, who takes his own life, while both women emerge from the plot’s many twists with their lives intact.



MUSIC

Pinkie fancies himself heartless and hard, and he does often act very much like a man without a conscience. Music is the only thing that can pierce Pinkie’s carefully constructed armor, reminding him that he has a soul which will ultimately either be saved or damned. A devout but doctrinally confused Catholic, Pinkie can’t help but be moved by music, which, in addition to awakening his religious conscience at inconvenient times, evokes in him odd and inexplicable feelings of empathy: “Only the music made him uneasy, the catgut vibrating in the heart; it was like nerves losing their freshness, it was like age coming on, other people’s experience battering on the brain.” As a tourist destination, Brighton’s atmosphere is infused with music, and so Pinkie’s focus on violence is forever being interrupted by misgivings and attacks of self-doubt, all of which he is able to tamp down until Ida Arnold, an amateur lounge singer, succeeds in tracking him down. In this way, each time a piece of music butts into the storyline or interrupts Pinkie’s heartless scheming, it is a reminder of that which is vibrant, sacred, and vital in every person: the soul.



CLOCKS AND WATCHES

The killing of Charles Hale requires not only cunning and cleverness on the part of Pinkie and his men, but good timing. In order to cover their tracks, it’s necessary that Hale’s death appear to have taken place before 2 P.M. on that fateful day, and so Pinkie, having ordered the killing but not an active participant in the murder, spends much of the afternoon checking his watch and distrusting the clock on Brighton pier. Later, with Hale dead but Ida Arnold hot on his trail, Pinkie cannot shake the habit of obsessively checking the time. Spicer, likewise, has a preoccupation with the passing hours. He even shows Pinkie a cherished silver pocket watch as a last-ditch attempt to plea for his life. Both men, however, are doomed, and their obsession with the audible striking of the town clock betrays their creeping awareness that their time is almost up.



QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Penguin edition of *Brighton Rock* published in 1938.

Part I, Chapter 2 Quotes

●● He only felt his loneliness after his third gin; until then he despised the crowd, but afterwards he felt his kinship. He had come out of the same streets, but he was condemned by his higher pay to pretend to want other things, and all the time the piers, the peep shows pulled at his heart. He wanted to get back—but all he could do was to carry his sneer along the front, the badge of loneliness.

Related Characters: Charles “Fred” Hale (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 4

Explanation and Analysis

Charles Hale is in Brighton distributing cards for the Messenger’s Kolly Kibber contest. He observes the Whitsun crowd, convinced he’ll soon be killed. Hale despises much about himself. He is skinny and unattractive and a shabby dresser. He takes pride, however, in his job and his professional success. He has worked his way up from newspaper deliveryman to reporter and left his past in Brighton behind. That past comes back to haunt him when he returns to the resort town on assignment. In Brighton, he is forced to confront his former self, the man who enjoyed peep shows and tourist traps. He can’t connect to that self in an authentic way, though, and his pride results mostly in loneliness and feelings of isolation.

●● The imagination hadn’t awoken. That was his strength. He couldn’t see through other people’s eyes or feel with their nerves. Only the music made him uneasy, the catgut vibrating in the heart; it was like nerves losing their freshness, it was like age coming on, other people’s experience battering on the brain.

Related Characters: Pinkie Brown (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 47


Explanation and Analysis

Pinkie, having ordered the murder of Hale and started his campaign of wooing Rose, is waiting on the Brighton pier for her to appear so he can take her on their first date. Pinkie is not often burdened by feelings of empathy. That is a strength in his line of work because heading one of the town's horse race gangs requires that he be at ease with killing and casual violence. Pinkie was raised a Catholic, though, and music, regardless of genre, reminds him of the hymns of his youth and the promises he made as a boy to follow God's commandments. They also remind him of how many of those commandments he has broken in his short time as a gangster.

☞ The inhuman voice whistled round the gallery and the Boy sat silent. It was he this time who was being warned; life held the vitriol bottle and warned him: 'I'll spoil your looks. It spoke to him in the music, and when he protested that he for one would never get mixed up, the music had its own retort at hand: 'You can't always help it. It sort of comes that way.'

Related Characters: Pinkie Brown (speaker), Rose

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 



Page Number: 53

Explanation and Analysis

Pinkie and Rose are on their first date at Sherry's night club and Pinkie is fingering the bottle of vitriol, or sulfuric acid, in his pocket, which he keeps around for emergencies. A voice speaks to him as he does so, warning him that the acid, which Pinkie intends to use on his enemies, will end up hurting him instead. The music playing in the club mixes with the odd and otherworldly voice, which suggests to Pinkie that the acid is fated to disfigure his own face. This is a concrete example of foreshadowing. Later, on the cliff near Peacehaven, Pinkie will spill the acid on himself and run off the cliff to his death.

☞ "You are wasting your time, my child," Mr. Colleoni said. "You can't do me any harm." He laughed gently. "If you want a job though, come to me. I like push. I dare say I could find room for you. The World needs young people with energy." The hand with the cigar moved expansively mapping out the World as Mr. Colleoni visualized it: lots of little electric clocks controlled by Greenwich, buttons on a desk, a good suite on the first floor, accounts audited, reports from agents, silver, cutlery, glass.

Related Characters: Colleoni (speaker), Pinkie Brown

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 66

Explanation and Analysis

Pinkie is at the Cosmopolitan hotel to meet with Colleoni, at the older man's invitation. Colleoni tells Pinkie that there is nothing Pinkie can do to hurt Colleoni's business; he is too powerful. But, Colleoni suggests, Pinkie might come to work for him. The proud Pinkie is offended by such a notion, hoping to be rise to the ranks of Colleoni someday. Greene's language suggests that Pinkie's aspirations are nothing more than pipe dreams. The world belongs to men like Colleoni whose immense power allows them to purchase not only a wide array of expensive goods, but also property, influence, and time itself.

☞ He watched her with his soured virginity, as one might watch a draught of medicine offered that one would never, never take; one would die first—or let others die. The chalky dust blew up round the windows.

Related Characters: Pinkie Brown (speaker), Rose

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 92



Explanation and Analysis

Pinkie and Rose are on the bus toward Peacehaven, where Pinkie hopes continue his selfish wooing of Rose. The way he looks at her suggests that, contrary to what he would like to believe, he needs her. Her sex and essential goodness have the power to heal him, if he could see beyond his pride, his curdled celibacy, and his desire to save his own skin above all things. The dust blowing up around the windows is a reminder of Pinkie's aloneness in the world, and it harkens back to Hale's ashes falling from the crematorium towers.

By refusing to open himself to the possibility of love with Rose, Pinkie is dooming himself to at least one kind of death: the death of the heart.

They lay on the chalk bank side by side with a common geography and a little hate mixed with his contempt. He thought he had made his escape, and here his home was: back beside him, making claims.

Related Characters: Pinkie Brown (speaker), Rose

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 95

Explanation and Analysis

On the cliff at Peacehaven, Rose tells Pinkie that she is from Nelson Place, a poverty-stricken area that borders Pinkie's equally downtrodden boyhood home of Paradise Piece. Pinkie is a striver and a dreamer. He had hoped that, through crime, he could leave behind the shame of his poverty and rise to the ranks of mob kings like Colleoni. Rose's presence is a constant reminder of where he came from and what he had always hoped to overcome. Now, thanks to the need to cover up Hale's murder, Pinkie feels like he is right back where he started. In this way, class is figured as a kind of predestined state which cannot be escaped.

Driven to her hole the small animal peered out at the bright and breezy world; in the hole were murder, copulation, extreme poverty, fidelity and the love and fear of God, but the small animal had not the knowledge to deny that only in the glare and open world outside was something which people called experience.

Related Characters: Rose (speaker), Ida "Lily" Arnold

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 131

Explanation and Analysis

Ida has once again come to Snow's to question Rose. Ida corners the young woman, following her up to her apartment above the café and forcing the door open. Ida tells Rose that Pinkie doesn't love her and is only courting her to avoid being prosecuted for Hale's murder, but Rose

tells Ida she doesn't care if Pinkie loves her. She loves him, and that is what matters. Ida does not comprehend the desolate nature of Rose's background. Having grown up surrounded by nothing but ugliness and poverty, Rose sees a future with Pinkie not as a punishment but as a way out.

She was good, he'd discovered that, and he was damned: they were made for each other.

Related Characters: Pinkie Brown (speaker), Ida "Lily" Arnold, Rose

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 135

Explanation and Analysis

Pinkie walks in on Ida questioning Rose in her room. He is immediately impressed with Rose's composure and bravery under pressure. While watching Rose avoid Ida's well-laid traps, he has an epiphany: he and Rose are made for each other. She is completely good; he is evil. Together, they could make a whole. Perhaps he believes that Rose can be his redemption, saving him from damnation. This realization doesn't mean that he loves Rose or has learned to measure her worth independent of his own wants, however. He still sees her as being useful to him. He is counting on her essential goodness to save him.

It was said to be the worst act of all, the act of despair, the sin without

forgiveness; sitting there in the smell of petrol she tried to realize despair, the mortal sin, but she couldn't; it didn't feel like despair. He was going to damn himself, but she was going to show them that they couldn't damn him without damning her too. There was nothing he could do, she wouldn't do: she felt capable of sharing any murder. A light lit his face and left it; a frown, a thought, a child's face. She felt responsibility move in her breasts; she wouldn't let him go into that darkness alone.

Related Characters: Rose (speaker), Pinkie Brown

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 249

Explanation and Analysis

Pinkie is driving to Peacehaven so that he and Rose might fulfill a suicide pact, the details of which they discussed previously when he confessed to her that there were men in the world who wanted him dead. His plan is to give Rose his gun so that she might shoot herself first. Then he will flee the scene. Rose is ignorant of the fact that Pinkie doesn't plan to hold up his end of the bargain. She is drowning in romanticized ideas of sin and damnation, and thinks it would be beautiful to join Pinkie in his downward spiral. Her love for Pinkie has turned her religious beliefs upside down, and he has become her God. She worships him and confuses absolute loyalty to him with goodness and devotion to what is holy and right.

☞ She was sixteen, but this was how she might have looked after years of marriage, of the childbirth and the daily quarrel: they had reached death and it affected them like age.

Related Characters: Pinkie Brown, Rose (speaker)

Related Themes:   



Page Number:

Explanation and Analysis

Rose is in the Peacehaven pub, composing the suicide note she promised Pinkie she would write. Pinkie returns from the bathroom to find two young men eyeing Rose and he is torn between a possessive affection for her and a feeling of shock at her worn looks. Just as he worried that life with Rose would turn him into his father, he sees her as a mother and a woman made ragged by the daily tedium of decades of poverty. Greene points out that Rose has been aged by the burden of the suicide pact. Near death, she has the face and demeanor of an old woman.

☞ While Pinkie found the money, she was visited by an almost overwhelming rebellion—she had only to go out, leave him, refuse to play. He couldn't make her kill herself: life wasn't as bad as that. It came like a revelation, as if someone had whispered to her that she was someone, a separate creature—not just one flesh with him. She could always escape—if he didn't change his mind. Nothing was decided. They could go in the car wherever he wanted them to go; she could take the gun from his hand, and even then—at the last moment of all—she needn't shoot. Nothing was decided—there was always hope.

Related Characters: Rose (speaker), Pinkie Brown

Related Themes:  

Page Number:

Explanation and Analysis

While on the final drive to the cliff near Peacehaven, Rose regains her previous understanding of Catholicism and religion. She discards her fixation on damnation and grasps at hope, and it is this inner rebellion that suggests that Rose is beginning to separate herself from Pinkie. She realizes that she is not of his body; she has her own body and her own mind to save. She wants to save Pinkie as well, of course, but he is beyond help. He clings to despair, and it is only when Rose follows him into this darkness that the lovers are able to feel connected. Allowing herself to believe in a different life for herself represents Rose's first real assertion of herself in the novel.

☞ An enormous emotion beat on him; it was like something trying to get in; the pressure of gigantic wings against the glass. *Dona nobis pacem.* He withstood it, with all the bitter force of the school bench, the cement playground, the St. Pancras waiting-room, Dallow's and Judy's secret lust, and the cold unhappy moment on the pier. If the glass broke, if the beast—whatever it was—got in, God knows what it would do. He had a sense of huge havoc—the confession, the penance and the sacrament—and awful distraction, and he drove blind into the rain.

Related Characters: Rose (speaker), Pinkie Brown

Related Themes:   

Page Number:

Explanation and Analysis

Pinkie is overcome with feelings of guilt and dread as he drives Rose to the cliff to fulfill the suicide pact. The monster beating against the car windows is his own guilt, and he asks for God to grant him peace. He is instead visited by memories of his bitterly poor childhood, as well as visions of Judy and Dallow in sin. He recalls “the cold unhappy moment on the pier,” suggesting that perhaps he regrets making the angry recording, or perhaps simply that he regrets marrying Rose. The rain is not the only force that is blinding him in this moment. Pinkie has always been incapable of seeing and appreciating Rose's love for him, and he has yet to face the fact that his actions are to blame

for his bleak and desperate circumstances. He has no desire to repent or confess. To do either would be to admit his culpability, and that would only distract him from his purpose: convincing Rose to kill herself so that he might finally be free.

Part I, Chapter 3 Quotes

☛ She smelt of soap and wine: comfort and peace and a slow sleepy physical enjoyment, a touch of the nursery and the mother, stole from the big

tipsy mouth, the magnificent breasts and legs, and reached Hale's withered and frightened and bitter little brain.

Related Characters: Charles "Fred" Hale (speaker), Ida "Lily" Arnold

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 14


Explanation and Analysis

Charles Hale is fleeing Pinkie and his gang, seeking company and comfort in Ida, whose curvaceous body he finds attractive. She seems to exude femininity and fertility, and thus also a sense of motherliness. Hale is torn between sexual desire for Ida and a need for motherly protection as he fears for his life. Ida's air of vitality and fertility contrasts directly with Hale's withered impotence. Greene is hinting that Hale is not long for this world, while Ida will remain stubbornly and vividly alive. For the rest of the novel, Ida's character will continue to be associated with feminine vitality and love for life.

☛ She came out of the crematorium, and there from the twin towers above her head fumed the very last of Fred, a thin stream of grey smoke from the ovens. People passing up the flowery suburban road looked up and noted the smoke; it had been a busy day at the furnaces. Fred dropped in indistinguishable grey ash on the pink blossoms: he became part of the smoke nuisance over London, and Ida wept.

Related Characters: Ida "Lily" Arnold (speaker), Charles "Fred" Hale

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 35

Explanation and Analysis

Ida has left Hale's sparsely attended and impersonal funeral service and ruminates on the fact that the ash flowing from the towers of the crematorium is all that is left of Hale. It is also all that remains of his pride and ambition. In this scene, Ida, often called "Lily" by her fellow bar patrons, is represented by the pink blossoms. Her vitality—and her desire to get to the bottom of the circumstances surrounding Hale's death—is in full bloom. Hale, on the other hand, is nothing more than stray ash. Ida weeps for Hale but also for humanity in general, since she knows that Hale's sad fate is what ultimately awaits everyone.

☛ "Of course it's true," the Boy said. "What else could there be?" he went scornfully on. "Why," he said, "it's the only thing that fits. These atheists, they don't know nothing. Of course there's Hell. Flames and damnation," he said with his eyes on the dark shifting water and the lightning and the lamps going out above the black struts of the Palace Pier, "torments."

"And Heaven too," Rose said with anxiety while the rain fell interminably

on.

"Oh, maybe," the Boy said, "maybe."

Related Characters: Pinkie Brown (speaker), Rose

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 53

Explanation and Analysis

Pinkie and Rose discover early on in their courtship that they are both Catholics and, while they share a basic belief in God and Catholic doctrine, their different perceptions of God could not be more different. A violent killer, Pinkie believes in Hell, and sees God as a wrathful entity who doles out damnation as a punishment for sin. Rose, by contrast, is a kind and giving soul, and believes in Heaven and a God who has endless mercy for all sinners. It is Pinkie's dark vision of God that allows him to kill indiscriminately and Rose's gentler faith that leads her into falling in love with Pinkie in the first place.

☛ He trailed the clouds of his own glory after him: hell lay about him in his infancy. He was ready for more deaths.

Related Characters: Pinkie Brown (speaker), Police Inspector

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 70

Explanation and Analysis

Pinkie is on his way out of the Brighton police department after talking to the police inspector who wants Pinkie to quit the mob and get out of town. The inspector is hoping to avoid a turf war between Colleoni and Pinkie at the height of tourist season and the start of the horse races. His main wish is for peace. Pinkie, though, is insulted by the inspector's suggestion that he should retire before he has fully begun to lead his gang, and he's still simmering with resentment over his meeting with Colleoni. The pent-up anger just makes Pinkie, a child of poverty and no stranger to violence, eager for more bloodshed.

☛ That was what happened to a man in the end: the stuffy room, the wakeful children, the Saturday night movements from the other bed. Was there no escape—anywhere—for anyone? It was worth murdering a world.

Related Characters: Pinkie Brown (speaker), Rose

Related Themes:    

Page Number: 97

Explanation and Analysis

Still in Peacehaven, Pinkie feels his first twinge of sexual desire for Rose when he sees a flash of bare skin between her skirt and silk stocking, but he rejects his urges as though they will ruin his life and doom him to the same life his father lived—that of the put-upon family man charged with taking care of his children and trying, often unsuccessfully, to please his wife. Pinkie would rather kill and kill and kill again to avoid such drudgery. His warped understanding of Catholicism comes into play here. Pinkie sees Hell and damnation everywhere he looks. He cannot imagine living happily with another person. He cannot imagine living happily, period. His solution to every problem is violence.

☛ The shadow of her sixteen-year-old face shifted in the moonlight on the wall. “Right and wrong. That’s what she talks about. I’ve heard her at the table. Right and wrong. As if she knew.” She whispered with contempt, “Oh, she won’t burn. She couldn’t burn if she tried.”

Related Characters: Rose (speaker), Pinkie Brown, Ida “Lily” Arnold

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 121



Explanation and Analysis

Ida knows that Rose and Pinkie are involved and has taken to questioning the young waitress during her shifts at Snow’s. Rose despises Ida’s simplistic view of the world. Even at the tender age of sixteen, Rose believes she knows more of how the world works than Ida does. Rose is arguing that it takes belief in a higher power to understand what is at stake in a relationship like hers and Pinkie’s. They are well aware that committing certain crimes means burning in Hell for all eternity. Ida doesn’t worry about flames licking at her ankles in the afterlife; she cares only about justice being doled out on earth by the court of law. To Rose, that makes Ida’s assertion that she is dedicated to the cause of right suspect. If you aren’t afraid of burning, Rose says, you can’t possibly know the difference between good and evil. In this way, the book raises the question of whether morality must necessarily be based in religion—and ultimately casts doubt on the idea that it must be.

☛ He stood back and watched Rose awkwardly sign—his temporal

safety in return for two immortalities of pain. He had no doubt whatever that this was mortal sin, and he was filled with a kind of gloomy hilarity and pride. He saw himself now as a full grown man for whom the angels wept.

Related Characters: Pinkie Brown (speaker), Rose

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 185

Explanation and Analysis

Pinkie and Rose are now married and she is signing the marriage certificate. Watching Rose, Pinkie considers the mortal sins they are both committing. The first is entering into a false marriage. The ceremony took place not in a

church but in a municipal building and was conducted by a civil servant rather than a priest. Also, the wedding night awaits. Pinkie knows that he will be called on to make love to Rose and to do so outside of the bonds of holy matrimony. He is doing all of this as a temporary fix, as a way to save his life, which, in the eyes of God and the church, is probably now worth nothing. The gravity of the situation makes him feel like a grown man for the first time, but this feeling only reveals the depth of his naivete.

☛ Again he grinned: only the devil, he thought, could have made her answer that. She was good, but he'd got her like you got God in the Eucharist—in the guts. God couldn't escape the evil mouth which chose to eat its own damnation.

Related Characters: Pinkie Brown (speaker), Rose

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 194

Explanation and Analysis

Pinkie and Rose, newly married, are strolling along the pier. Rose asks Pinkie to buy her a piece of Brighton rock, a hard candy for which the town is known. The candy store Pinkie goes to is, coincidentally, the scene of Hale's murder, and Pinkie is struck again with something akin to sexual pleasure when he considers that his marriage to Rose has brought him to this place where, only a short time ago, violence erupted and a man lost his life. Pinkie believes in the devil almost as strongly as he believes in God, and he wouldn't be surprised if the devil were working through Rose at this moment, prompting her to send Pinkie back to the scene of Hale's death. Either way, he is sure he has her exactly where he wants her; she has become completely and helplessly ensnared in his world of crime.

☛ Freedom again in the early sun, freedom from the silent prayers at the altar, from the awful demands made on you at the sanctuary rail. She had joined the other side now forever. The half-crown was like a medal for services rendered. People coming back from seven-thirty Mass, people on the way to eight-thirty Matins—she watched them in their dark clothes like a spy. She didn't envy them and she didn't despise them: they had their salvation and she had Pinkie and damnation.

Related Characters: Rose (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 212

Explanation and Analysis

On the day after her wedding, Rose takes a half crown from Pinkie's soap dish and goes out walking in town. She had forgotten it was Sunday. She's on her way to Snow's for breakfast. Much to her surprise, the mortal sins she committed with Pinkie the previous day do not bother her a bit. Her love for Pinkie and their marriage have freed her from the constraints of and tedious devotions required by Catholicism. The young woman who believed so strongly in mercy and salvation has now taken up Pinkie's vision of faith, which is based in damnation. The newly married Rose would rather be damned along with Pinkie than saved by anyone else. In this way, the book repeatedly points to the erotic allure of sin.

☛ “Oh, no they don't. Look at me. I've never changed. It's like those sticks of rock: bite it all the way down, you'll still read Brighton. That's human nature.”

Related Characters: Ida “Lily” Arnold (speaker), Rose

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 216

Explanation and Analysis

Ida is at Frank's boarding house, confronting Rose about Hale's death at the hands of Pinkie and his gang. Having posed as Rose's mother in order to gain entry, Ida pulls no punches this time. She tells Rose that Pinkie is a murderer. Rose retorts that she has known that all along; she just doesn't care. She tells Ida that people often change, and that repentance and confession often work wonders. Ida laughs at the notions of repentance and confession as religious nonsense, arguing that people's natures are fixed. She offers herself and Brighton rock candy as proof. Ida is correct about herself, at least; she does not change over the course of the novel. She is a static character, learning nothing from her investigation beyond the facts of Hale's murder.



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.

PART I, CHAPTER 1

Charles Hale is in Brighton on assignment from the Messenger, a newspaper. He is distributing Kolley Kibber cards around the seaside town, trying his best to be spotted by a loyal [Messenger](#) reader who, once he or she successfully identifies Hale and recites the pre-ordained speech, will win the newspaper's grand prize. Those who find cards will be rewarded with 10 schillings each. Hale has a strict itinerary to follow but manages anyway to squeeze in several gin and tonics while he works. Convinced he will be murdered soon, he aloofly observes a seemingly never-ending parade of tourists, gathered in Brighton to celebrate the Whitsun holiday, or Pentecost.

Hale is from Brighton and has a love/hate relationship with his home. He is drawn to the piers and peep shows, but, at the same time, finds the town's more tourist-heavy sections distasteful and lonely. Upon hearing a ballad drifting out of a pub, he goes inside to see a buxom woman whom everyone calls Lily entertaining her fellow bar flies. While Hale watches her, a young, intense, and shabbily dressed man addresses him, calling him "Fred." Hale tells the man, often referred to in the text as "the Boy" but who will later be identified as Pinkie Brown, that his name isn't Fred. Then he invites the young man to have a drink with him. The young man opts for a grapefruit squash. Hale has a double whiskey. The young man shoots hate-filled looks at both Lily and Hale.

Hale eventually admits to Pinkie that he is, indeed, the Fred he is looking for. He offers the young man a 10 shilling prize. Then he says he can have the grand prize if he'd prefer: 10 guineas. Disgusted, the young man throws his glass to the floor and tells the servers Hale will pay for the damage. Hale watches Lily some more and, fixated on her large breasts, feels as if he were looking at life itself while, at the same time, preparing for his own death. He is doubly convinced now that the young man and his compatriots plan to kill him.

Hale's mission is, at heart, a frivolous one. Its inherent shallowness contrasts with the seriousness of his situation, and the crowds of holiday merry makers likewise underscore Hale's bleak prospects for survival. Drinking allows him to observe the tourists with a certain amount of intellectual distance, but it is also a defense mechanism. The more he drinks, the less he thinks of his own imminent demise.



Names are significant in this scene. Lily's real name is Ida, but neither the reader nor Hale knows this. Lily might be approaching middle age, but she has not lost her youthful bloom, and her essential femininity and indisputable aliveness attract Hale, who feels doomed to die. The young man who approaches him in the bar is Pinkie, but, again, he is not named, and this is the first indication the reader has that Hale is going by a pseudonym. Thus, by name at least, no one is what they seem.



Lily's vitality continues to attract Hale. Her easy manner is that of the tourist on holiday, whereas Pinkie's seemingly unprovoked fury is a reminder that not everyone in Brighton is there to have a good time. Hale's flippant attitude, in offering Pinkie the 10-shilling prize, is an example of the newspaperman's tendency toward gallows humor.



The only other customer in the bar is asleep. Still, Hale comforts himself with the thought that no one would dare kill him in broad daylight with witnesses nearby. Lily invites Hale to join her for a drink. He is reluctant to drink anymore and asks if she might come to dinner with him, hoping her company might save him from the young man and his cronies. Lily finds his forwardness amusing. Hale sees that, as a newspaperman on a good salary, he is out of touch with Lily and her crowd. At one time he might have known how to connect with her, but he can't quite manage it now.

Lily asks Hale if he's okay. He looks sick. He stares at her breasts and wishes he could get lost in the safety promised there. Instead, he leaves the bar and mixes again with the crowd on the street, marveling at three old ladies in a horse-drawn carriage whose lives seem remarkably peaceful and easy compared to his. He watches women walk by, chattering like parrots, and a mounted policeman pass. Hale cannot ask the policeman for help. He feels as if he is beyond help, and he knows that the young man and his gang are following his whereabouts closely. They must have purchased a Messenger themselves, so they know where he'll be and when. A poor man sells razor blades on the corner, reminding Hale that Kite, a Brighton mob boss, was killed with one.

Hale spots Cubitt, a large man with red hair. He is leaning up against a letterbox. Hale knows Cubitt is waiting for him. Determined to thwart the gang's plans to kill him, Hale strides off in the opposite direction, hoping to pick up a girl eager to be shown a good time. This is his plan for salvation, but when he gets to the pier where young women preen on deck chairs, they seem to sense his desperation and turn away from him, laughing. Hale is humiliated and ashamed. He decides to pick out the most unattractive girl among them, settling on a fat girl covered in acne. The girl tells him she would be happy to join him for lunch, but she has a friend with her and doesn't want to leave her behind. If he had a friend, they could be a party of four. Otherwise, no dice.

Almost on cue, Pinkie appears and Molly, the girl he'd been chatting up, thinks that he is Hale's friend. Pinkie does not correct her, and Molly says that she and her friend, Delia, would now be overjoyed to accompany the two men to a nearby restaurant. Hale, unwilling to make a scene thanks to his stubborn pride, nearly goes with them, but at the last minute he breaks away and heads back down the pier where Lily sits by herself, singing a Victorian ballad about lilies and mourning shrouds. She tells Hale that someone has stolen her bag which contained 10 bob and a cache of love letters from her ex-husband, Tom.

Hale takes pride in having worked his way up from lowly deliveryman to reporter, relying only on his own cunning, talent, and drive to get where he is now. His pride is his main consolation, but it also handicaps him when it comes to interacting with people like Lily. Hale's snobbery shows here, and it foreshadows his inability to tell her the truth later when it most matters.



Hale sees the promise of comfort in Lily, mainly in her physicality. Her large breasts bring to his mind the comfort mothers give their children, but he is a grown man and must fend for himself. His reluctance to seek help from a policeman indicates that his actions leading up to this day might not have been entirely honorable, as does his mention of the circumstances surrounding Kite's death. The razor blades are yet another hint that Hale will not be getting through this day alive.



Hale's decision to approach the woman he considers least attractive suggests that he sees women as objects rather than as complex human beings. Molly is to him merely a shield, a means to an end, and he assumes that because she is not conventionally pretty, she'll jump at his offer of lunch because, ugly as she is, she couldn't possibly have any other prospects. Her rejection of him takes him completely by surprise.



This is a second instance of Hale's pride getting in his way. He is unwilling to confess to his desperation, and very nearly accompanies his potential murderer to lunch. His encountering Lily a second time seems destined, more than just a matter of luck, and the fact that she is singing a song about death is another harbinger of things to come.



Lily, whose real name is Ida, is waiting for some men to return from the bathroom. It gradually dawns on her that these men, who treated her to a snack in the pub, probably stole her bag and aren't coming back. She tells Hale that they'll get their comeuppance one day. She is not one to let injustice go unanswered. Hale admires her breasts and legs while she reclines on the deck chair and, looking around, he is relieved to see that Pinkie and Cubitt are nowhere to be seen. In Ida, Hale sees a lover and a mother. Her body radiates comfort and sensuality. She happily talks about Tom, his desire to get her back, and his passionate love letters. She won't be reuniting with him, though. She hopes to marry money instead.

Ida asks Hale his name and he tells her it's Fred even though it's really Charles. Ever since he was young, Hale was attracted to secrecy even though, he admits now, it's that attraction that has landed him in trouble now. They talk a bit about horses, and Hale suggests Ida put her money on Black Boy in the four o'clock race. She says she never ignores a good tip, even though Black Boy is running under 20 to one odds. Hale asks Ida to come with him into town, but she talks him into taking a ride around the Palace Pier instead. She wants to make a day of fun out of it, and in the cab Hale kisses her, spotting Cubitt's car in the rearview mirror. Ida worries that Hale is sick, and he tells her that doctors have given him a death sentence.

Ida says sick men are always glomming on to her; it must be her motherly looks. Then she questions Hale's claims further and he admits he's not ill. They get out of the cab in the middle of a crowd gathered around a huckster who's selling watches. Ida wants money from Hale so she can duck into the women's bathroom and wash herself. Hale is desperate for her to stay by his side, but he relents, and Ida, touched by what she assumes is Hale's romantic attachment to her, takes a quick shower. When she emerges from the lavatory four minutes later, Hale is gone. She supposes he, too, is in the bathroom, and she buys a watch from the street vendor, thinking she'll bet the change on Black Boy in honor of Fred. It is one in the afternoon.

PART I, CHAPTER 2

Pinkie makes his way through the Palace of Pleasure, stopping to play a shooting game. **Dolls** line the walls of the stall. They wait, glassy eyed and innocent as virgins, to be claimed. The Boy asks the man working the stall for the time. The man tells the Boy to check the **clock**. It's a quarter to two. The Boy lands six bullets in a bull and, declining a prize of chocolates and cigarettes, takes one of the dolls instead. He strides off to a café with the doll in hand, musing that holding the doll is like having the Mother of God by the hair. He asks for the time again and the waitress tells him it's now ten to two. Then he gives her the doll, telling her to take it home with her and pray.

Ida's gullibility makes her an odd choice for Hale's protector. Still, he sees in her blooming body his best chance for survival. This is the first time that Greene makes it abundantly clear that Hale is both sexually attracted to Ida and in desperate need of a mother figure to shelter him from danger. Blissfully unaware of Hale's dire circumstances, Ida makes idle, drunken chit chat about her ex-husband and her wish to elevate herself through marriage to a rich man. Hale, while prideful of his job, is not a rich man.



It is not only pride that damns Hale from the start; it is his desire for secrecy. There is no compelling reason for him to give Ida a pseudonym. It does him no good and, in fact, it only confuses things later when Ida tries to solve his murder. Like his unwillingness to seek help from a police officer, his telling Ida that his name is Fred and his knowledge of horse racing suggest that Hale is not necessarily the most ethical journalist. The death sentence he jokingly mentions turns out to be true, but not due to illness.



The watches symbolize Hale's sense of impending doom, and his fight against the clock. Hale is too proud to admit to Ida that he needs her to stay by his side so that he is not left vulnerable to Pinkie and his gang, and Ida is too wrapped up in her own world to see that she is in the company of a genuinely desperate man.



If all went according to plan, Hale's murder should have taken place a short time ago. Pinkie is not doing the dirty work; that is reserved for his men. The carnival game allows him to play at killing. The doll Pinkie wins symbolizes his limited and superficial understanding of women. As will become clear later in the novel, in Pinkie's mind, women are either toys or blessed virgins. Either way, he is more than happy to have them by the hair.



Pinkie is waiting for his compatriots and soon they arrive: Cubitt and Dallow. Dallow is a muscular man whose blank face betrays a simple brutality. The Boy asks after Spicer's whereabouts. Cubitt tells him he's in the bathroom washing up but that he'll join them in a moment. When Spicer appears, he is pale and sick-looking. He refuses the fish and chips that the Boy, whose name is Pinkie, has ordered for the table. Pinkie, angry to have been left waiting, even for five minutes, asks if the killing of Hale went as planned. The three men tell him it was a perfectly executed crime. Pinkie is particularly concerned about the cards that Hale was to leave around town as part of the *Messenger* contest. The cards will serve as an alibi and, Pinkie says, will convince the authorities that Hale died after 2 P.M.

There is talk about the woman Hale was with before he was killed. Pinkie says there's nothing to worry about. He calls Ida a "buer," or demon, and insinuates that she was nothing but a prostitute. He saw Hale give her money. Pinkie then orders Spicer to go back to the café, Snow's, where he placed Hale's last card, but Spicer refuses. So does Dallow. Pinkie says he'll go himself then, and he wonders aloud if he might not be better off working for himself. He asks Spicer about the table where he stowed the card. Spicer tells him the table had **flowers** on it. Pinkie leaves the men and heads to Snow's.

In the café, depressing **music** is playing. Pinkie goes to the appointed table. Feeling around for the card, he finds nothing and, in his anger, smashes a salt shaker. A pale, thin waitress comes over and apologizes for keeping him waiting. It's her first day and the lunch rush just ended. She clears the table, and, noticing Pinkie's hand under the tablecloth, asks if he's lost something. He says no, despising her timid looks and servile attitude. She seems to warm to him instantly, however, and tells him that she's had an exciting day. She found a Kolley Kibber card under the cloth. She didn't say anything to the man who left it, though, because he didn't look anything like his photograph in the newspaper.

Pinkie interrogates the waitress a bit, trying to discern if she got a good look at Spicer. She tells him she always looks closely at the customers because she wants to make sure she's giving them what they want. Pinkie tells the waitress she's the kind of girl he likes and then, seeing that his words might be taken as too forward, says he can see that she is sensitive like he is. He suggests they get together some evening soon and asks her name. She tells him her name is Rose. He gets up to leave, saying that he has an appointment at **2 p.m. sharp** but that he'll be seeing her soon. They have things in common, he says.

Pinkie's anxiety and intense attention to detail in this scene suggest that Hale's murder was not a perfectly-executed crime. So does Spicer's inability to eat. Of the three men, Spicer seems to be the only one who is bothered by Hale's death. Pinkie doesn't care about the bloodshed. He is concerned with any missteps that might leave them vulnerable to prosecution. Time is a critical consideration. It is necessary that the authorities think Hale died after 2 P.M. and that Pinkie and his gang are seen by witnesses at the café; that way they will be found guiltless.



Pinkie's views of women again come into sharp relief. His likening Ida both to a demon and a whore reveal not just his misunderstanding of Ida and Hale's interaction but his own inability or unwillingness to see women as full-fledged humans. Spicer's mention of the table's flowery centerpiece foreshadows Pinkie's fateful meeting with Rose.



Pinkie, who prefers to live his life as if other people do not exist, despises music's ability to pierce his armor. It seems that wherever he goes, he is surrounded by sentimental songs that alternately torture and annoy him. Rose, the young, naïve waitress, does not yet understand that her finding of the Kolley Kibber card is not a stroke of good luck but rather a cruel twist of fate. The man who placed the card under the table cloth looked nothing like his photograph because he was Spicer, not Hale.



Pinkie aspires to woo Rose not because he has any romantic interest in her but because he thinks she might be useful to him. His suggestion that she is sensitive like him is both ironic and oddly prescient. Pinkie is largely callous and brutal; at the same time, he and Rose will, indeed, turn out to have much in common. Pinkie's emphasis on the time of day is another attempt on his part to secure an alibi.



PART I, CHAPTER 3

It is **eleven o'clock** in the morning and Ida is on her way to Henekey's, her local pub. She's not the first customer. A somber man dressed all in black, Clarence, was there before her. He's in mourning. His wife died recently. Ida is surprised. She didn't know he had a wife. The man suggests the two of them go out again soon, but Ida refuses, saying she'd rather start fresh with someone new than try again with an old flame. Admiring her reflection in the mirror, she begins to talk about horse racing, thinking of how Hale told her to put her money on Black Boy, and then Clarence asks her if she's heard what happened to the Kolley Kibber man, how he was found dead recently.

Ida asks if the man committed suicide, and Clarence says no, that an inquest found that he died from the heat, that his heart gave out. The [Messenger](#) paid the man who found the body the grand Kolley Kibber prize of 10 guineas. Ida grabs the paper and sees a picture of Hale, thinking at first that Hale was the one who found the man. When it dawns on her that he's dead, the realization is like a blow. She thinks initially that maybe he was indeed sick, but the more she reads, the more suspicious she becomes. Something about the story in the paper is fishy. She's struck by Molly and Delia's testimony in particular.

The girls told the authorities that Hale introduced himself as Fred and that a young man came along, claiming to know him, and that Hale fled then, saying he wasn't the right Fred after all. Ida is confused. Hale told her his name was Fred, too. Clarence says Hale's real name was Charles. It's right there in the story, but Ida grows more and more convinced that the news report is wrong. She's also struck by the fact that Hale's only living relative is a second cousin in Middlesborough. It makes her melancholy, thinking of how alone Hale must have been, and angry, too, because it seems to her that no one bothered to ask the right questions about what led to his death in the first place.

Ida tells Clarence and another bar fly, Harry, that if she had been there—if she had found Hale—she would have asked the right questions. She's sad that the [Messenger](#) only gave Hale's death a few column inches and that they've already appointed a new Kolley Kibber man. She is struck by the sensation that Hale is somehow trying to reach out to her from the dead. Ida is a firm believer in ghosts. She wonders why Hale left her to go traipsing around the pier in the hot sun instead of waiting for her. Clarence says he supposes Hale lost interest, but Ida doesn't buy it.

Greene's pointing out the time in this scene is significant only in that it suggests that Ida is not one to shy away from drinking early in the day. She is also someone who keeps casual company with a number of men, including Clarence, and is enamored of her own looks. Clarence's mourning attire and his sad news are both obvious reminders of death's constant presence; Ida, however, is stubbornly alive.



What Ida had thought was a harmless flirtation with Hale now grows deadly serious. It's worth noting that she knows so little about Hale that she at first confuses him for someone else. Still, she is struck and saddened by the news of his death, and her suspicions, while inchoate, suggest keen powers of intuition, observation, and discernment.



Ida believes in herself and her own abilities to understand a situation more than she trusts the authorities and, indeed, the media, to get to the bottom of Hale's death. Her discernment is matched, then, by her confidence and self-assuredness. Hale's desire for a mother figure is perhaps more understandable now, given how alone he was in the world.



Ida is no one's mother. She is, instead, an inquisitive, independent woman whose very inquisitiveness often leads her to place her faith in the occult. Hale's ghost appearing to her in Henekey's bar is not, in Ida's estimation, metaphorical. It is very real to her. She feels strongly, even on the basis of one afternoon's casual encounter, that Hale is turning to her from beyond the grave, seeking answers and justice.



Ida thinks about a story she heard about a woman seeing her dead husband hovering by the radio and fiddling with the knob. She supposes that if Hale were a ghost, he'd be as likely to appear to her as his second cousin in Middlesborough. She puts the paper down and tells Clarence she is going to Hale's funeral. Someone ought to be there, she says, and she likes funerals.

The funeral is taking place in a bare, nondescript place. There are no candles or **flowers** and Ida, who is late, walks in in the middle of a clergyman's generic sermon about Hale being "one with the One." The crowd is sparse. There is a woman who looks like a landlady, another who looks like a servant, and two men whispering impatiently. The clergyman finishes up his talk by saying that Hale has been reabsorbed into the universal spirit. Then he presses a button and Hale's coffin is swept into the fires of the crematorium.

Ida is horrified by the flippant nature of the funeral. Death is serious business, in her opinion. She is not religious, but she does believe in ghosts and Ouija boards and tables that rap on their own during séances and voices from the great beyond speaking of **flowers**. Still, Ida thinks, flowers aren't life. Life is relishing a Guinness now and then and kissing strange men in cabs. She is more determined than ever to get to the bottom of the mystery surrounding Hale's death. The narrator points out that Ida is the kind of woman who would happily cause someone pain if it meant defending something she believed in. Her optimism is boundless and dangerous.

Outside the crematorium, ash drifts from a smokestack. Ida weeps, thinking that Hale is now ash, wafting down into the nice, suburban neighborhood, coating the trees and **flowers**. She gets on a tram, headed for London, and, as billboards flash by, the narrator notes that Ida's inner life is as complex as a toothpaste advertisement. She wants to make whomever hurt Hale pay. Her reward would be vengeance, an eye for an eye.

Ida disembarks at Charing Cross station and heads to the offices of Messrs Carter and Galloway, where, according to the [Messenger](#) report, a certain Molly Pink works. Ida walks along the Strand and past the fountains of Trafalgar Square, which remind her of bright **blooms** of water, falling on the dusty bins below. The walk to Molly's building is long. So is the walk up the stairs to the office. She has to stop to rub her feet, and when she does so, she runs into a man who introduces himself as Charlie Moyne. Charlie is sure he has seen Ida before, maybe at Epsom horse park. Ida says it's possible. Charlie, whose eyes are bloodshot, asks if he might borrow a few quid to put on a horse. She gives him one and tells him to go away.

Ida thinks herself as important to Charles Hale as his own family. To her, it is immaterial that they shared only a kiss in a cab. What matters is Hale's ghost appealing to her for help and her own desire to become involved in the case. In this way, she is shown to have a strong sense of compassion.



As a Catholic himself, Greene seems, in this scene, to be casting aspersions on secular funeral services. "One with the One" is so vague it verges on meaninglessness, as does the idea of a universal spirit. Greene might be suggesting that a religious service is more intimate and comforting to the bereft, but, as Ida already knew, Hale has left very few to mourn him.



Ida is a woman of many contradictions. On one hand, she considers death a serious business. On the other, she is not averse to indulging in things like seances and Ouija board sessions, activities that look to death and the afterlife for entertainment. Ida also inhabits a black and white world in which it is very easy to discern right from wrong and she is confident that she is a very good judge of the two. Such confidence, Greene argues, can lead to trouble.



The neighborhood's trees and flowers represent life, while Hale's ashes signify death. Death trumps life, here. Ida's sense of justice, while firm and unshakable, is also somewhat naïve. Her understanding of the world is black and white. This will allow her to stick to Hale's case when others have given up.



Ida is seeing flowers everywhere. First, she notices the absence of flowers at Hale's funeral. Then, she sees Hale's ashes coating the petals of the pretty suburban neighborhood where he was cremated. Now, the fountains of Trafalgar Square seem to be in bloom. The flowers represent Ida's own vitality and vigor, which are the source of her drive to solve the mystery of Hale's murder.



When she finally reaches the offices of Messrs Carter and Galloway, Ida finds Molly alone in a room jammed with files and books. Molly is making tea and eating a toffee. She is surprised when Ida says she isn't there to see the partners. She's there to see her. Ida starts asking her questions about the day she met Hale, and Molly tells her that what she mostly remembered from that day was that Hale seemed anxious and that the young man who approached him was barely more than a kid. Molly asks Ida if she's a female detective, and Ida says no, she's just a friend of Hale's.

Ida leaves and, on her walk home to her apartment, mulls over what Molly told her. She thinks to herself that Hale was a true gentleman. Her memory of him, though, is starting to fade, and, in her mind, his face begins to meld with that of Charlie Moyne, to take on the old drunkard's features.

Having reached her apartment building, Ida finds a postcard from Phil Corkery on the hall table. He sent her postcards annually from modest vacation spots, hoping she might join him, but she never answers. She considers him too quiet, not masculine enough for her. She calls down the basement stairs to Old Crowe, telling him that she's going to take a turn at the Board. She goes up to her room and looks for a moment at a glass cabinet that contains her most cherished possessions. Inside is a Ouija board. She pulls it out and sits down at a small table. Old Crowe joins her. They talk about their days. They both went to funerals. Old Crowe says there are no good funerals anymore. Ida inserts a pencil into the little wheeled board and places a piece of paper underneath it. She and Old Crowe touch their fingertips to the board and Ida asks Fred if he's there.

The board jerks some. Ida thinks it looks like it might have drawn a "Y." Old Crowe sees an "N." They try again. The board moves across the paper with more purpose. It seems to spell "Sukill." Then, later, "Fresuicilleye." It's gibberish to Crowe but clear as day to Ida, who says the board was obviously trying to spell "Fred," "suicide," and her life philosophy, "an eye for an eye." They try one more time, and the word "Phil" appears. Ida says she is going to make whomever killed Hale sorry they were ever born. She believes in right and wrong and she will make whomever wronged her friend pay. Then she smiles. She tells Old Crowe that the search will be fun and "a bit of life."

In this scene, the two women that Hale had hoped would save him from Pinkie and his gang meet. Molly and Ida are foils for each other here. Unlike Ida, Molly is not bothered by Hale's death. She seems confused that Ida would show any interest in someone as obviously unimportant as Charles Hale.



Ida's burning need to get to the bottom of the circumstances surrounding Hale's death isn't motivated by any real affection for Hale. He could be anyone, really. He could be Charlie Moyne. What matters is justice.



One of Ida's most cherished possessions is her Ouija board, which she very much believes allows her to get in touch with the realm beyond the grave. She and Crowe both enjoy a "good" funeral, perhaps because death results in more ghosts and more ghosts means a greater likelihood of contacting someone of importance in the land of shadows. Hale's name is Charles, not Fred, so Ida's attempts to contact him at this moment are humorous, verging on the ridiculous.



The Ouija board is spelling out what Ida wants to see. The words are just garbled enough for her to claim she wasn't steering the board while at the same time evocative of Fred, death, and Ida's own haphazard approach to justice. The readings of the board might be nonsensical, but to the ghost-chasing Ida, they are simply more proof that she is doing the right thing by investigating Hale's death. Her motivations aren't pure, however, in that sense that she's not only after justice; she wouldn't mind a little excitement while she's at it.



PART II, CHAPTER 1

Pinkie and Spicer are together on the pier. Pinkie warns Spicer against going back to the scene of the murder. **Music** drifts from Sam's, a bar where the other men are drinking. Pinkie wishes the music would stop. Spicer asks him if they're home free, given that the inquest found that no foul play was involved in Hale's death. He seems worried that Pinkie might do something rash, maybe hurt someone else and arouse suspicion. Pinkie says he's only out late because he has a date. Spicer thinks Pinkie has a gun or a knife in his pocket, but Pinkie assures him it's only a bottle of vitriol, or sulfuric acid. Pinkie tells Spicer to go; Rose is here. He fingers the bottle as she arrives, experiencing something akin to sexual pleasure.

Rose apologizes for being late. Pinkie asks her if she ever got her Kolley Kibber money and if anyone has come around to question her about it. Rose says she has the money but no one has visited her. She can't believe that the man ended up dead. Pinkie pulls her down the pier, away from the **music** still drifting from Sam's. He asks her if she saw the photograph of the Kolley Kibber man and she tells him yes, but what's strange is the photograph was not of the man who left the card under the table cloth. Pinkie tells her that people often look different in photographs. He says that she has her money now and that's what's important. She doesn't want to get mixed up with anything having to do with Hale or the mob, Pinkie says. Rose promises to do whatever he tells her to.

Pinkie shows Rose his bottle of vitriol, saying that people who get mixed up with bad actors like Hale end up getting acid in their face. Rose is horrified, but Pinkie assures her the bottle is only spirits. He just wants her to be careful. Rose is impressed with Pinkie's knowledge of the world. A romantic **song** begins to play nearby and Pinkie angrily drags Rose to Sherry's, a popular nightclub. There's a line out the door to get into the gallery level, but Pinkie pulls Rose right in, saying they'll stick to the ground floor where it's less crowded.

Rose chatters about what the songs and colored lights of the club remind her of. The narrator notes that she has an endless supply of trivial memories she can access at any given moment. Pinkie asks her what she would like to drink. Rose is at a loss. She comes from a poor and sheltered background. No man has ever offered to buy her a drink before. She orders a vanilla ice cream. She and Pinkie both discover they're the same age: seventeen. They agree not to dance; Rose has no experience and Pinkie no desire. A man in a white jacket begins to croon a **love song** about everyday noises providing the soundtrack to a passionate affair.

Pinkie's warning to Spicer not to return to the scene of Hale's murder foreshadows Spicer's own demise. As the most experienced member of the gang, Spicer seems to sense Pinkie's trigger-happy state. He can tell that Pinkie is hell-bent on doing more damage. The bottle of vitriol might not be as lethal as a gun or knife, but it suggests that more violence is yet to come, because Pinkie is aroused by violence, not by love.



Music continues to plague Pinkie, reminding him of the presence and needs of others and of his own essentially sinful nature. He leads Rose away from it so as not to be shaken from his purpose, which is to pump Rose for information and gain her loyalty. His advice to Rose—that she not get mixed up with the mob—shows just how naïve Pinkie thinks Rose is. He assumes she knows nothing about his identity and that someone as sweet and timid as Rose would never suspect that he is part of the very crowd he is warning her to avoid.



Pinkie isn't completely wrong in thinking Rose a naïve young woman. That she would be impressed by his talk of acid and alcohol is proof that she is not as worldly as he. Pinkie's reaction to the sentimental song shows that he is not beyond entertaining romantic feelings for a woman; he is, however, totally resistant to letting his guard down in any way.



Rose's character is beginning to be revealed. Her naivete is courtesy of an impoverished background and also a function of her youth. Like the child she is, she orders vanilla ice cream instead of a cocktail. Her litany of silly memories likewise suggests an unformed mind, as does her lack of experience on the dance floor. Pinkie, meanwhile, continues to hold himself apart, doing his best not to be influenced by song.



While the man **sings**, Pinkie again fingers the bottle of vitriol and he senses the bottle telling him that it will get him someday, it will spoil his looks. Pinkie doesn't believe it. He's above being a victim. Pinkie asks Rose if she's ever been in love and she says she has. Pinkie teases her some about being naïve, but she insists she knows quite a lot. Then he says she'd probably like it if he were her guy, and she says yes and tears come to her eyes. Her sentimentality infuriates Pinkie, who insists they leave. While Rose gathers her bag, Pinkie sees that it contains a rosary.

Pinkie asks Rose if she's a Catholic. She is. They both agree that it is the only faith that makes any sense, although Pinkie's devotion is different from Rose's. He believes in Hell and damnation, in torments, whereas Rose believes in Heaven. Pinkie concedes that Heaven might exist, but he isn't sure.

Pinkie returns home to Frank's, his boarding house, to find the gang in his room. He's wet and irritated, convinced that they'd been having a secret meeting without him. They've been talking about how, ever since Kite's death, several men, including Tate and Brewer, haven't been paying their protection subscriptions. Dallow is anxious to cut them. Pinkie defers sarcastically to Spicer, whom Pinkie says has become a philosopher. Spicer is against further bloodshed, and he says he was against Hale's murder from the start. Pinkie says Spicer is "sour and milky," i.e. a coward. Cubitt agrees that they should lay low for a while. Talk turns to Rose. Spicer has told the others about Pinkie's efforts to woo her, and Cubitt teases him about their eventual marriage. Pinkie is furious and says he will never marry a cheap "polony," or sausage, like Rose.

Pinkie grabs a razorblade from the bathroom and tapes it under one of his fingernails. Then he slips a glove over that hand, and he and Dallow head out to confront Tate and Brewer. It's low tide. The **clock** strikes midnight. They pass Snow's and a single light goes out. A tram rolls by, empty except for its driver. Brewer lives next to the tram, nearly under a viaduct. Pinkie rings the bell and Brewer sticks his head out the window, asking him to come back at another time. His wife is ill.

The acid all but talks to Pinkie in this scene, and its short speech foreshadows Pinkie's sad fate on the cliff near Peacehaven. He is in denial, however, and even though he has created his fair share of victims, he insists that he will never be one. Rose's eagerness to be Pinkie's girl suggests that she is lying when she insists she knows a great deal about romantic matters.



Pinkie and Rose have very different conceptions of God. Pinkie's God is bent on punishment, Rose's on mercy. Their separate faiths align with their characters. Pinkie is a killer whereas Rose prefers to love and forgive.



Pinkie is determined to see the worst in Spicer, who has made it clear he found Hale's murder unnecessary and risky. There is no place in Pinkie's gang for a "philosopher." Pinkie demands loyalty and a willingness to commit violence at the slightest provocation. This is why he favors the blood-thirsty Dallow over the more thoughtful Spicer. Pinkie thinks of women as nothing more than pieces of meat, and Rose is no exception. In Pinkie's eyes, all women are vaguely disgusting inconveniences.



The clock striking midnight is yet another reminder that Pinkie is always working against time. The light going off inside Snow's café is symbolic of Pinkie's loveless heart. It also suggests the darkening of Rose's prospects, now that she has met, and become infatuated with, Pinkie.



Pinkie threatens to ring the bell a second time if Brewer doesn't let them in. Brewer opens the front door and invites them to have some scotch. Pinkie doesn't drink, but Dallow is happy to. Pinkie is surprised by Brewer's poverty. He thinks to himself that Kite must have been skimming some off of Brewer's earnings. Pinkie asks Brewer why he hasn't paid his subscription. Brewer admits to having been worried ever since Kite was killed. He is anxious to tend to his wife, whose coughing echoes down the stairs like the pathetic croaks of a machine that won't start.

Brewer eventually admits that he could not afford to pay both Pinkie and Colleoni. Colleoni would have killed him if he didn't pay him. Colleoni is, apparently, stopping in the Cosmopolitan hotel and, according to Brewer, "running the business in a big way." Tate, it turns out, has also paid Colleoni. Brewer suggests Pinkie work for Colleoni, combining his gang with that of the older man. Pinkie is offended by such a suggestion. He takes his glove off and slices Brewer across the cheek, saying he and Dallow won't leave without the twenty pounds they're owed. Dallow then takes Brewer upstairs to get the money. Pinkie remains where he is, stewing and eyeing a cat outside.

Dallow returns with the money and he and Pinkie walk back between the tram lines. Pinkie asks Dallow if he, like Brewer, thinks he's finished, but Dallow says Pinkie is just beginning. Pinkie feels a rush of almost affection for Dallow. They arrive back at Frank's, where Spicer informs them that Rose has called for Pinkie. Apparently, someone came to question Rose while she was out at Sherry's with Pinkie. Pinkie isn't worried. He tells Spicer to take a holiday; he obviously needs a rest. Then Pinkie orders both men to leave. He gets in bed. Outside, the moonlight illuminates the Whitehawk Bottom racecourse where the empty stands look for the moment like the monoliths of Stonehenge.

PART II, CHAPTER 2

Pinkie lies in his bed and composes a letter to Tate, demanding repayment. He falls into a dreamless sleep and wakes to Dallow handing him an envelope. The letter is from Colleoni, who has invited Pinkie to meet with him at the Cosmopolitan. Dallow urges Pinkie to refuse the invitation, but Pinkie says he will not be intimidated. He gets ready, paying some attention to his appearance but not too much. He has too much pride to be too careful about such things.

This is the first indication that Kite's death has left the gang in a place of diminished power. Kite's leadership, while imperfect, inspired confidence. Pinkie's, by contrast, does not. Brewer's wife's illness is clearly very serious, but Pinkie cannot bring himself to care. All he wants is proof of Brewer's allegiance and the money he is owed.



Pinkie might aspire to power and fame and fortune, but his accomplishments are nothing compared to Colleoni's, whose dominance intimidates Brewer and Tate into paying him even as they're stiffing Pinkie. Angry, Pinkie resorts to violence, as is often his first instinct. Pinkie's staring contest with the cat suggests that they are of the same ilk; like the cat, Pinkie is feral, and although he has three men working for him, he would much rather be alone.



Pinkie only feels real affection for someone when he is assured of their blind loyalty. Dallow is the most unquestioning member of the gang and, therefore, the one Pinkie trusts the most. Spicer is the one he trusts the least. When Pinkie suggests to Spicer that he take a holiday, he is giving Spicer false hope. The moonlit horse park hints at the races and drama still to come. The reference to Stonehenge again signifies the importance of time in the lives and deaths of the characters.



Like Hale, Pinkie has his pride, and much of it concerns his rivalry with Colleoni. His decision to dress well but not too well is indicative of his inexperience. Presumably, the powerful Colleoni has more pressing matters on his mind than Pinkie's appearance.



Later, in the Cosmopolitan waiting for Colleoni, Pinkie is completely at ease. He watches people drift through the lobby. Motorcyclists lead tiny women across the floor. The women ring like expensive glass when touched but look to Pinkie to be as brittle and lethal as tin. Colleoni appears in a double-breasted suit, walking toward Pinkie on tip-toe. Two “bitches” look up at Colleoni as he passes. Despite his unassuming appearance, he demands attention.

Colleoni greets Pinkie but does not realize at first who he is because he is so young. He had been expecting someone Kite’s age. There’s a wet spot on Pinkie’s freshly ironed jacket. Pinkie is embarrassed. Colleoni hopes to end the meeting, but Pinkie insists they talk. Colleoni pats him condescendingly on the shoulder and leads him out of the lobby, past the whispering “bitches” and people laughing in the American bar and a man snoozing over his tea.

Pinkie and Colleoni take an elevator to the fifteenth floor, where the hubbub of the lobby is replaced with a sort of heavenly hush. Colleoni’s room is luxurious, with windows that look out onto the sea. He lights a cigar. Pinkie is impressed to see that Colleoni’s cigar case is real gold. Colleoni asks what happened to Kite, and Pinkie grows vague, saying that it’s an old story, but that Kite would not have died had a journalist not crossed them. Colleoni then asks Pinkie if he’s interested in automatic machines. Pinkie sidesteps the question, saying that Kite trespassed and he never should have done that.

Pinkie tells Colleoni that he’s the one who will soon need protection. Colleoni responds by suggesting Pinkie come to work for him. He likes the young man’s hustle. Pinkie replies that he’ll see him on the race course, but Colleoni laughs gently at the suggestion. He dismisses the idea out of hand that his life and Pinkie’s could intersect, but Pinkie remembers what happened to Kite and knows that their lives already have.

Colleoni assures Pinkie that there’s nothing he can do to hurt his business. He can try to injure his men. It wouldn’t matter. Colleoni has two men in the hospital right now and they’re being showered with grapes and **flowers** because Colleoni can afford it. Pinkie can’t really touch him, Colleoni says. He’s too young and inexperienced. He tells Pinkie that Napoleon and Eugenie used to stay in this room. He puts a flower in his buttonhole and says that Pinkie should not try to hurt him specifically because such violence would only backfire. Colleoni tells Pinkie not to bother Brewer and Tate anymore. Those efforts, too, will lead nowhere. Pinkie leaves, thinking that the visible world, the world of riches, belongs to Colleoni and men like him.

To Pinkie, the women in the Cosmopolitan are like crystal goblets, brittle and potentially deadly. This is consistent with Pinkie’s views on women in general, as is his comparing the patrons’ pampered dogs to petty, gossiping ladies. Colleoni, too, is effeminate, but manages to be intimidating all the same.



The wet spot on Pinkie’s jacket is a tangible reminder that he is out of his league. He is, after all, a seventeen-year-old gangster. Colleoni has decades of experience on him. The whispering women and laughing patrons only add to Pinkie’s insecurity. It is as if they are making fun of him.



Colleoni, with his luxury apartment and beautiful view, lives in a different world from Pinkie and his gang. This conversation, while light on details, suggests that Kite talked to Hale about the gang’s activities and died as a result of Hale exposing those activities in an article. Although Colleoni’s reference to automatic machines and Pinkie’s mention of trespassing are ambiguous, it suggests that Kite may have encroached on Colleoni’s gang’s territory in business.



Pinkie’s bravado, like his freshly ironed suit, is proof of his youth and inexperience. Colleoni has amassed enough power and wealth that he has no need to impress anyone. Still, the two men share a common ruthlessness and tendency toward amorality.



In this scene, flowers represent a level of luxury that Pinkie can only aspire to. Flowers are impractical; they’re expensive and need to be replaced often. Colleoni can afford to throw his money away on such creature comforts. Pinkie, on the other hand, has no choice but to focus his energies on getting paid by the likes of Brewer and Tate. Pinkie has brutality and hustle on his side, but all the power is in Colleoni’s sphere. Money begets more money, which allows men like Colleoni to purchase not only worldly goods but influence and security.



In the hotel hallway, a police officer taps Pinkie on the shoulder. Pinkie experiences a moment of panic, wondering if Rose might have squealed on him, but the cop says he's wanted at the station for slicing Brewer's cheek. Pinkie agrees to come into the station. Outside the Cosmopolitan, a street photographer snaps Pinkie's picture with the cop. Then the cop mentions that Brewer's wife is gravely ill. Pinkie thinks all of this—the police officer, the talk of Brewer's wife—is Colleoni's way of intimidating him.

The police inspector, a tired man, old before his time, is waiting for Pinkie in the station charging room. He isn't going to book Pinkie. Brewer has decided to let the matter drop. The inspector only wants to talk. He tells Pinkie that, since the horse races are to begin in a week, he hopes Pinkie's men and Colleoni's can refrain from starting the kind of mob war that is bound to end with innocent people getting hurt. He suggests that Pinkie get out of Brighton. He's too young to be running an operation on his own, and, the inspector adds, there's no way he can hold his own with Colleoni.

Pinkie eyes the notices above the inspector's shoulders. He sees a picture of a drowned man. It is as if the man is looking at him. Pinkie tells the inspector he'll consider his proposal. Then he leaves the office, more determined than ever to show the police and Colleoni that they're wrong about him. He killed Hale and the police were too dumb to realize it. He could keep outsmarting them and his Italian rival. Having been born in hell, he is not afraid of more death.

PART III, CHAPTER 1

Ida wakes up in a Brighton boarding house, the reminders of the previous drunken night at Sherry's with Phil Corkery all around her. The room isn't as nice in the morning light as she thought the night before, but it's homey and she likes that. There are **roses** on the wallpaper. She knows she'll have to save her money. She doesn't want to ask Phil for any. She decides to go see Jim Tate, the only bookie she knows, to talk about putting some down on Black Boy.

Tate greets Ida expansively but gets her last name wrong, calling her "Mrs. Turner." She tells him she'd like to put twenty pounds on Black Boy and that she heard his odds were twenty to one. Tate tells her they've shortened a bit. He'll give her twelve to one. The phone rings and Tate's demeanor changes. He is talking to Colleoni. He promises to do something for him, then hangs up the phone and writes out a ticket for Ida, only he writes "Black Dog" instead of "Black Boy." He is obviously distracted and Ida leaves, wondering what happened to make him so anxious.

Pinkie and his men are always having their pictures taken by the same Brighton street photographer at inconvenient times. This moment suggests that Pinkie will continue to have run-ins with the cops, and that no matter what clever moves he makes to avoid the authorities, their paths will cross again.



The insults continue to pile up. First, Colleoni tells Pinkie that his time as a gang leader is limited; now the police inspector is suggesting the same. The fact that the police inspector doesn't even bother to arrest Pinkie for his assault of Brewer likewise underscores the idea that Pinkie is not considered much of a threat.



This scene parallels the moment when, waiting for Brewer to pay his subscription, Pinkie had a staring contest with a cat. The drowned man, though, is more foreboding. It hints at Pinkie's sad end on the cliff near Peacehaven. Pinkie is determined, though, to triumph, even if that triumph means more bloodshed.



Ida's search for information about Hale's death looks a lot like a vacation. That's not to say Ida doesn't take the hunt for Hale's killers seriously. She is quite capable of mixing business with pleasure, which is why she decides to bet on Black Boy to bankroll her investigation, rather than looking for more stable work.



This is the same Tate that neglected to pay his subscription to Pinkie. His nervousness following the phone call with Colleoni suggests that something is going to happen at upcoming horse race, perhaps the very thing the police inspector was most dreading. It also seems that Tate, like so many shady characters in Brighton, is in Colleoni's employ.



Ida goes to a nearby bar and orders a port. She asks the barman who Mr. Colleoni is. The barman is incredulous. Everyone knows Mr. Colleoni. He was involved in Kite's death. Ida has another port and asks who Kite is. The barman tells her that Kite got stabbed in a railway station. The people who did it only meant to cut him, but the razor slipped, he says. Ida looks at the **clock**. She is meeting Phil Corkery at one, so she has time for another port and some more gossip. The barman tells her that Colleoni wants a monopoly and he'll probably get one because the other mob in town is being run by a kid of 17.

The barman tells Ida to look out the window—the kid (Pinkie) is walking by right now. She goes and stares out but doesn't see anyone out of the ordinary. It's another beautiful day in Brighton with its assortment of girls in swimming suits, men selling newspapers, and tourists. Ida and the barman talk some about Hale's death. The barman said the news didn't make many waves in town, since Hale was a basically a stranger. Ida finds such a concept alien. Nothing is strange to her. She identifies with everyone and everything. What she can't understand, though, is a man like Pinkie, and she feels nothing for what she doesn't understand. She finishes her third port, saying to no one in particular that it's a good life.

Ida walks to Snow's and gets a table for her and Phil Corkery. She asks around for the waitress who got the Kolley Kibber card and changes her table to Rose's section. Ida asks Rose what it was like winning the ten shillings. Rose tells her it was thrilling. She and Ida chat some more. Rose says that she likes working at Snow's. She finds the tablecloths and **daffodils** elegant and she's grateful that the restaurant puts her and two other girls up in an apartment where they have two mirrors to share. Ida asks how old she is and Rose admits she's only sixteen. She pretended to be seventeen to get the job.

Ida begins to ask Rose what she noticed about the Kolley Kibber man, suggesting that, having won those prized 10 shillings, she will probably never forget him. Rose's attention is drawn to the window. She lets it slip that he wasn't so little. Then she clams up. When Ida asks Rose what the man looked like, Rose says she doesn't know. She can never remember a face. Ida speculates that that must have been why Rose didn't challenge the Kolley Kibber man to win the grand prize.

Tate's phone call gives Ida some precious information. Now, thanks to her time in the bookie's office and this conversation with the barman, Ida has more leads to follow. She also has a date to make. Like Pinkie, Ida is concerned with the passing hours. She only has so much time in which to finish her investigation. If she takes too long, her leads will dry up and she'll run out of money. She, too, is working against the clock.



Ida does not seem to understand the concept of a stranger; everyone she meets is a potential friend. Ida's love of humanity has its limits, however. She cannot pretend to understand someone like Pinkie who, born into poverty and entrenched in a life of crime, kills without remorse. Pinkie and people like him offend Ida's humanitarian sensibilities.



Ida's luck holds. She manages to get the usually reticent Rose to open up to her. Rose, unused to luxury of any kind, relishes what little Snow's has to offer her: two mirrors in her bedroom and vases of daffodils on every café table. Pale, timid, and plain, it seems Rose is more of a wallflower than a rose.



Rose is lying when she tells Ida she doesn't have a good memory for faces. In reality, she remembers Spicer's face perfectly. Rose, while sweet and timid, is not without discernment. She senses that Ida is trying to trap her and refuses to be drawn in.



Phil Corkery arrives, looking worn out by the passions he'd never have the opportunity to express. He orders two large bottles of Guinness for him and Ida. Ida grabs Rose by the arm, asking if the Kolley Kibber man had much to eat. Rose says she served him a Bass and a sausage roll and that that was the extent of her interaction with him because Snow's was busy that day. Then she flees. Ida tells a skeptical Phil that she can tell by what Rose said that it wasn't Hale who left the card at the restaurant.

Phil doesn't understand why Ida is getting so involved in a case that really should mean nothing to her. She says she's all about fair play, an eye for an eye. Then she asks Phil if he will stick by her. Taking a swig of beer, he tells her he will do anything for her. Ida replies that there's only one thing to do and that's go to the police.

Ida arrives at the station, exuding confidence and goodwill. Phil follows close behind. Ida asks a sergeant if she might see the inspector. She would like to report a suicide. The sergeant tells Ida that the inspector is busy and she'll have to wait. Ida, more than a little tipsy, says she and Phil have nothing to do until the pubs open again at six. Soon, though, Ida and Phil are called into the inspector's office. Ida wastes no time in telling him she's here about Charles Hale. She knows that the report in the newspaper was flawed because it could not have been Hale who dropped the card at Snow's that day. The waitress told Ida the man who dropped the card ordered a Bass and Hale hated Bass.

The inspector tells Ida that the concerns she has can be easily explained away. Hale most likely sent another man to Snow's to leave the card and then that man swore the waitress to secrecy. Ida still isn't satisfied. She asks to see the coroner report and the inspector hands it to her. She's impressed by the detail it goes into. She learns the Hale has a third nipple and suffers from gas. She keeps reading, seeing that he also had a number of bruises on his arms. She asks the inspector to explain those and he says it was probably a matter of getting jostled in the Whitsun holiday crowds. Ida is contemptuous of such an idea, and, when the inspector dismisses all of her theories as empty fancies, she tells him she doesn't need the police anyway. She'll solve this herself, with some help from her friends.

Ida's friends are everywhere in Brighton. They're the husbands following their wives obediently into the fishmongers and then sneaking away to the peep show. They know they can count on Ida to give them a good time and that she won't tell their wives about it afterward. They're the middle class who likes to get lit sometimes and sing a few songs and indulge in a few harmless superstitions. They're Ida and Ida is them.

Ida expresses every feeling she's ever had. Phil Corkery, on the other hand, is a shell of a man, aged by repressed desires. Ida's sense that it wasn't Hale who left the card in Snow's seems, at this point, to be based mostly on a hunch. When Molly Pink asked Ida if she was a detective, Ida laughed the idea off, but she is blessed with the right instincts for the job.



Ida assumes that the police will want to hear what she has to say about the Hale case because, as a firm believer in right and wrong, she thinks she and the authorities are on the same side.



Ida's trip to the police station parallels Pinkie's meeting with Colleoni in the Cosmopolitan. Pinkie was completely confident in his ability to meet Colleoni half way; Ida, too, is sure of herself and her findings. She is also convinced that the police will take her seriously and treat her accusations with respect and care, but, given that her only evidence is Hale's taste in beer, that respect proves elusive.



The police are obviously uninterested in reopening Hale's case. The bruises on his arms do suggest a struggle of some kind, but the cops do not want to consider any ideas that might prompt them to open a murder investigation and, in so doing, make their jobs more difficult. They're condescending to Ida, mocking her not just because she's been drinking and is armed with rather weak evidence, but because she is a woman. Ida, though, is not easily deterred. She is as determined as the police are lazy.



Ida belongs to the very class that Hale once looked down on and that, based on this passage, Greene considers inferior as well. However, he writes that, while Ida's friends might not necessarily be the best and the brightest, they are numerous, and that will help Ida in her search.



Ida and Phil are talking about money and doctors. Ida says she hopes to make money on a horse and that she doesn't trust doctors. Phil suggests they go for a walk along the pier and Ida agrees, but then she refuses to go through the turnstile when they get there, focusing instead on the same ladies' lavatory where she washed herself the last time she saw Hale. Nearby and unbeknownst to Ida is Spicer, waiting for an enemy to show up. Ida tells Phil her horse has to win. She won't be able to go on with her investigation otherwise.

Ida is becoming obsessed with the mystery of Hale's death. Phil hopes to convince her to take in a little harmless fun, but wherever she goes and whatever she does, Ida is reminded of Hale and their short but very sweet encounter. In many ways, her investigation is like a horse race: the odds are long and much depends on luck.



PART III, CHAPTER 2

Spicer is out walking, trying to calm his frayed nerves, but everywhere he goes and everything he sees reminds him of Hale's murder and the inquest, the conclusions of which make no sense to him. He worries constantly that the truth will come out. He pins the last shreds of his sanity on the races starting soon. They're his only hope for peace. While he ponders the Hale case, he runs into Crab, a thin man whose appearance has changed radically since Spicer last saw him, when he and the rest of Kite's gang ran him out of town. He has had his Jewish characteristics erased. His nose is straightened and scarred. His hair is red. Greene writes that he'd been a Jew once, but that a hairdresser and surgeon had taken care of that.

Like Ida, Spicer is preoccupied with Hale's death and the trial that wrongly exonerated him and the rest of Pinkie's gang. His guilty conscience tortures him, and he, too, is counting on the horse races to save him. While Ida needs Black Boy to come through for the money, Spicer pines for the excitement of the season to chase away his fears. Spicer's impressions of Crab's appearance are telling as they hint at the anti-Semitic sentiment that was so pervasive throughout Europe during and leading up to World War II, which would cause Crab to feel he needed to change his appearance.



Spicer asks Crab why he's back in Brighton and if he had his looks changed out of fear of being killed. Crab says that Spicer should be respectful. He is now Colleoni's right-hand man. Spicer says he better hope Pinkie doesn't hear of his return. Crab informs Spicer that Pinkie is at the police station. Upon hearing that news, Spicer runs in a panic off toward Pinkie's boarding house. Pinkie isn't there. The room looks abandoned. Spicer sees himself in the mirror and in that reflection sees a man who looks like he might rat his friends out to the cops.

It would seem that, in this meeting of Spicer and Crab, the latter would be at a tactical disadvantage since the last time the two men saw each other, Crab was on the run. In the meantime, though, Crab has gained power and clout, whereas Spicer is now the one running scared. Crab isn't the only one whose appearance has changed. Spicer now sees a rat when he looks in the mirror.



Spicer stands in Pinkie's empty apartment and thinks of Nottingham where he hopes someday to open his own pub. He realizes, though, that Pinkie and the rest will never let him leave. He knows too much. He is stuck in the mob forever. Staring down the boardinghouse's winding staircase, he sees an old-fashioned telephone. It starts to ring.

Spicer's dreams are simple and modest. For many men, opening a pub would not be out of the realm of possibility, but Spicer, whom Pinkie dismissed earlier as a "philosopher," understands that he is trapped.



Spicer puts off answering the phone, thinking he can't handle more bad news, but no one else comes to get it, not even the boarding house owner, Frank, so eventually he picks up, and it's Rose asking for Pinkie. Spicer gets increasingly agitated as she talks. She says that Pinkie asked her to call if anyone ever came by asking questions, and that a woman and a man did come by and now she needs to talk to him. Spicer, beginning to sweat, drops the receiver and leaves the boarding house, swearing to himself that he will not squeal.

Spicer reacts to Rose's phone call as one might to a summons from beyond the grave. His main fear now is not being caught for Hale's murder, it's that he might be tempted to turn traitor in order to save his own skin. Pinkie has accused Spicer of being a coward in the past. It would seem that Spicer internalized that accusation and is now worried that Pinkie was right about him all along.



Spicer walks quickly down to the pier, telling himself over and over that he will not go to the cops. Still, it wasn't his idea to kill Hale, which, in his mind, makes him a relative innocent in the whole affair. He trips on a shingle and nearly falls, catching himself on some rocks that are cold with sea wind and salt water. The nearby shops are closed, but the peepshows and carnival games are still going. A seagull heads straight for his face, banking fast to miss him. Spicer wonders what Rose knows and, stationing himself near the women's lavatory, keeps his eye out for the police. What he sees instead are tourists heading to the aquarium and cheap stores selling candy, namely Brighton rock.

Spicer's claims to innocence are shaky at best. Just because he didn't want to murder the man does not make him blameless. That is why he nearly plunges into the sea on his panicked walk down the pier. He is stumbling and flailing, hoping for salvation and relief that will never come. Pinkie warned Spicer not to revisit the scene of Hale's murder, but in this moment of desperation and paranoia, he is doing just that.



PART III, CHAPTER 3

Pinkie is in Snow's, simmering with fury over the insults he received not only from Colleoni but from Brewer and the police inspector. The restaurant is full; there are no places to sit, but Pinkie demands service anyway. The waitresses look at him contemptuously and move away. Someone nearby says in a small voice that there are no tables. It's Rose, dressed up for her day off. She guides Pinkie out of the café, where he tells her he could break her arm if he wanted to. Rose doesn't understand what she's done to offend him.

Pinkie's fury is easily triggered, and, once he is convinced he has been wronged, he must act out through violence. His threat to Rose about breaking her arm is his way of letting off steam and punishing her for Colleoni and the police inspector's poor treatment of him. Being sweet and retiring, she is an easy target for his free-floating anger.



Rose asks Pinkie if he got her message. He doesn't know what she's talking about. She tells him she called for him at Frank's and left a message with a man whose voice reminded her of the same man who left the Kolley Kibber ticket under her table cloth. Pinkie decides she needs to be scared again. She's getting too close to the truth, so he insists they go for a walk. Instead of walking, though, they get on a bus headed for a place called Peacehaven. Pinkie assumes that's in the country.

Rose knows much more than she admitted to Ida. Not only would she recognize Spicer's face in a crowd; she also knows his voice. Pinkie, who does not yet know that Ida is on his trail, decides to focus his powers of persuasion on Rose. His courting, though, has taken on a different flavor. His plan is to scare her rather than woo her into submission.



Once on the bus, Pinkie glances over at Rose and is disgusted by her. He is angry all over again that the guys could even think he would marry such a mousey creature. He tells her to take off her shabby straw hat and she does, but now he's left staring at her small skull and dull hair. Rose, though, is happy. She tells him it makes her giddy to be in the country with him. They stop at Peacehaven, a dwindling seaside village full of "To let" signs. Walking to the edge of a cliff, Rose says she feels as if she might fall into the ocean.

Pinkie's pride strikes again, as does his tendency to write off women as objects to be looked at or consumed. In her cheap straw hat, Rose does not paint a pretty picture, and, even though he is only dating her to keep her from talking to the cops, he feels he is owed something attractive to look at. Rose's comment about falling into the ocean is a quick bit of eerie foreshadowing.



Pinkie asks Rose about the call. She says again that the man who left the ticket answered. Pinkie reminds her that that man is dead, but Rose says it was him and that she called Frank's to let Pinkie know that a woman had come around asking questions. The woman had a booming laugh and seemed quite at ease. Rose says she wasn't like her and Pinkie. He doesn't like her suggesting they have so much in common. He asks what the woman wanted to know, and Rose tells him that she wanted to know what the man who left the card looked like. Rose insists she told the woman nothing and Pinkie tells her he's only worried on her account. He doesn't want her to get mixed up in anything underhanded.

Rose tells Pinkie she's never scared when he's around, and Pinkie grows irritated, realizing how much she likes him. Women, he thinks, really only want one thing from a man and that's sex. He remembers watching his parents make love every Saturday and is filled with revulsion, thinking that Rose will want him to do that to her, too. He tells her they should get going, but Rose wants to stay, so they sit down near the sea and talk. Pinkie asks Rose where she's from and she tells him Nelson Place. Pinkie acts like he's only passed through that poor neighborhood but, in reality, his family home is very close by there in Paradise Piece and he can't help but return in his mind to those ugly, worn houses. He'd wanted to escape that place, and now Rose is bringing it back to him.

Rose announces that the woman who'd come asking questions clearly did not come from Nelson Place. Then she asks if Pinkie might be from there, or somewhere nearby. Pinkie denies it. Rose says she thought he might be because he's Catholic and everyone in Nelson Place is Catholic, but Pinkie says religion isn't really all that important to him. He doesn't have to think about God until he dies. Rose says the questioning woman obviously did not believe in anything. She was completely carefree. Rose, though, prays, and when she does she hopes she won't die suddenly. Pinkie says he never prays, but in reality he prays all the time, mostly that he won't have to go home to Paradise Piece ever again.

Pinkie, who'd moodily asked for quiet, now tells Rose to say something. She grows angry and says if she doesn't suit him, she would like him to leave her alone. Pinkie is surprised by her passion. He'd thought she was too timid to act this way, and he knows now he has to be careful and to do the things a boy on a date would do for a girl. He reaches out and puts his hand on her knee. It lays there like a dead fish. He says he's sorry for his behavior; he has business cares, that's all, and he thinks that they suit each other perfectly.

Rose senses from the beginning that Ida is not from the same class as she and Pinkie. Ida's overly friendly demeanor struck Rose as insincere. Rose might be young, naïve, and mousey, but is she is as observant as Ida, if not more so. Pinkie, of course, underestimates her powers of insight. He is not worried about Rose's safety. Ever selfish, he cares only about his own future.



Pinkie is afraid of women and the power they might exercise over him, should he let himself be vulnerable to their needs and charms. Sex terrifies and disgusts him in equal measure. For him to think that Rose would only want him to make love to her shows how little he understands women in general and Rose in particular. Also, he's too proud to admit to her that they do, indeed, come from the same place. Rose represents many things to Pinkie, and one of those is his failure to leave his impoverished background behind.



Pinkie needs to think himself better than Rose in every way. That is why he lies to her about his upbringing and says that Catholicism doesn't matter to him. Religion and his desolate childhood have been as important in shaping his worldview as they have been in shaping Rose's. Ida, Rose argues, is not burdened with such baggage. Pinkie lies yet again when he tells Rose he never prays. His main prayer is one of pride. To return to Paradise Piece would be the ultimate failure.



Pinkie wrongfully assumes he can treat Rose poorly and never suffer the consequences, but Rose surprises him with a rare display of anger. His attempt to make up for his unkindness falls flat, though, because, as a bitter virgin, he has no idea how to physically express affection. Also, he doesn't really feel affection for Rose. To him, she's a problem to solve.



Rose apologizes, too, and they get up to leave. Pinkie catches a glimpse of bare leg between her skirt and stocking and feels a twinge of sexual desire that is like a sickness. He wonders if everyone is fated to live the same sad lives his parents did—that of stuffy rooms and annoying children and obligatory sex. He gets deeply depressed, thinking that there is no escape for him or anyone from such drudgery but then feels a sudden surge of pride, vowing he'll never submit to the system. Rose, though, seems to want him to kiss her. He flubs it. He's never kissed a girl.

Back on the bus, Pinkie wonders why he bothered to bring Rose out. She obviously still remembers seeing Spicer. They return to Brighton and walk up the pier. **Music** plays: silly, saccharine love songs. A street photographer asks to snap their photo. Pinkie refuses. Rose wishes he would have consented. She says they could have had their picture up on the photographer's kiosk window with the bikini clad girls and famous comedians. While she's looking at the photos, she sees one of Spicer and points it out to Pinkie. She says that Spicer obviously isn't dead, though he looks like he fears someone might kill him at any minute.

Pinkie goes inside the kiosk and tells the photographer he would like to buy the picture of Spicer. The photographer refuses. He tells Pinkie he needs "a slip," presumably something the photographer gives to the subject after he's photographed. On the wall behind the photographer's head are snapshots of famous people, including the Prince of Wales and Lily Langtry. Pinkie finds little comfort in thinking that Spicer is now among the immortals.

PART III, CHAPTER 4

Pinkie returns to his room in the boarding house to find Spicer passed out on the bed. The room smells like whiskey and an insect drifts around in the stale air. Pinkie captures the bug and pulls its limbs off one by one, saying "she loves me, she loves me not." Spicer wakes up and tells him he heard from Crab that he was at the police station. Pinkie says it was a friendly conversation about Brewer, nothing to worry about, but that they need to talk about Spicer going on a holiday. He's too old to be in the mob, Pinkie says. He can tell by the mistakes he's made recently, first by letting Rose see him at Snow's and then by allowing himself to be photographed on the pier.

Pinkie is not beyond experiencing lust, but his unexpected and fleeting desire for Rose sends him into a spiral of despair because what he knows of family life is bleak. His pride saves him such joyless ruminations, however. He decides that he will rebel against society's expectations. Even as he is rejoicing in his escape, he tries to please Rose with a kiss. His inexperience makes the effort a farce.



The love songs provide the perfect accompaniment to Pinkie's embarrassment and shame. As usual, the street photographer appears at the most inconvenient time possible. Pinkie is too proud to have his picture taken with Rose, whom he still considers nothing more than an ignorant girl. Rose, though, misses nothing. She spots Spicer's photograph and reads his expression with perfect accuracy.



Pinkie does not like his men being seen. That's one reason he wants the photograph. Also, he is already plotting Spicer's demise. To have Spicer's picture in plain sight after he is dead might cause trouble for Pinkie.



The whiskey smell and swirling insects hint at Spicer's future: it is one of dissipation and rot. Pinkie's sick treatment of the bug makes a mockery of a game usually played by infatuated young girls with flower petals instead of insect legs. It also makes a mockery of love. Pinkie is not being honest with Spicer. He clearly wants him more permanently removed from his gang but is not about to show his hand.



Pinkie tells Spicer he needs to disappear, meaning get out of town. Spicer is worried Pinkie intends to kill him. He shows Pinkie a silver **watch** given to him by friends at the track. Its inscription thanks him for being a pal for ten years. That was fifteen years ago, Spicer says. He is trustworthy and knowledgeable. In fact, Spicer says, he's been doing this since before Pinkie was born. Pinkie says he would just like Spicer to take a break for a while, but not before the races start soon. He'll need him there.

Pinkie looks down at Spicer, musing about the fact that, for the second time in a few weeks, he was looking at a dying man. He wonders if Spicer will go to Hell or Heaven. Then he asks Spicer where he'll take his holiday, and Spicer says Nottingham, where a friend of his runs a pub. He admits that, if it weren't for Pinkie and the others, he'd get out of the business for good.

Pinkie leaves and calls the Cosmopolitan on the boarding house telephone. He asks for Mr. Colleoni. Then he suggests in a coded manner that Mr. Colleoni's men kill Spicer. He says he'll wish him good luck and pat him on the back. Pinkie is upset for a moment when he thinks he hears Mr. Colleoni laugh. Then the line goes dead. Pinkie vacillates between excitement at the prospect of Colleoni killing Spicer and a holy sort of dread. The dread is a result of a **hymn** that comes to his mind as he climbs back up the stairs. By the time he's back in his room, he's feeling just fine again.

PART IV, CHAPTER 1

It's race day and tourists flood into Brighton like travelers during a bank holiday, only now people are intent on hoarding their money rather than spending it. A band plays, and children frolic near a cigar-smoking negro who tries to join in the fun but is snubbed. Lines of buses and cars wind up the hill toward the raceway. Among the procession is a little red sports car, in which sits a woman singing of brides and bouquets, a **song** that somehow goes with oysters and Guinness. The tune drifts down the slope to an Old Morris with a flapping hood, a bent fender, and a discolored windshield.

In the car are Pinkie and Spicer. Pinkie is again preoccupied with thoughts of sex and family life, the prison he hopes never to enter. Spicer asks after Cubitt and Dallow. Pinkie tells him they have something to do that he'd rather do with Spicer alone. He confesses to Spicer that he's planning on negotiating peace with Colleoni, and Spicer says he's all for peace. Then Pinkie reminds Spicer that he's taking his holiday tonight, and Spicer grows sentimental, talking of the fun he hopes to have in Nottingham.

The watch symbolizes Spicer's limited lease on life. The inscription means nothing to Pinkie, who is threatened by Spicer's age and experience. Because he is a veteran member of the mob, Spicer understands that Pinkie's talk of a holiday is code for a cold-blooded killing.



Pinkie is calmly planning Spicer's death even as he is inquiring about his possible vacation plans. He is a born killer, and he doesn't care if Spicer goes to Heaven or Hell. All that matters is that he be out of Pinkie's way.



In a surprising move, Pinkie is electing not to kill Spicer himself but to enlist the help of his rival, perhaps to make it a "cleaner" operation. Pinkie cannot suppress his feelings of insecurity and inferiority when dealing with Colleoni. He worries that Colleoni is mocking him. Pinkie's past as a poor kid and altar boy haunts him, too, but it doesn't take him long to reconcile himself to Spicer's death.



Ida is in the sports car, having, as usual, a very good time. Hale's death and the grave responsibility of finding his killers is not stopping her from enjoying herself. Pinkie and Spicer are in the Morris with the flapping hood. No music comes from their car. Rather, Ida's song invades the ugly, beat-up car, where Pinkie is bound to be annoyed by such an intrusion.



Pinkie, driving Spicer to his death, mulls over a state of being he thinks is analogous to death: marriage. He lies to Spicer without remorse or hesitation, and Spicer seems convinced, falling back on his dreams of owning a pub in Nottingham. In Pinkie's world, though, "holiday" means a one-way trip to the afterlife.



Pinkie and Spicer park the car and join the crowd heading for the horse park. Pinkie feels an immense sense of well-being. He is ready for the races. He is ready for violence. He buys Spicer a beer and watches the action on the causeway and the activity of the bookies. Spicer says he'd like to place a few bets and Pinkie agrees to go with him. He won't be putting any money down. He doesn't bet. He encourages Spicer to have a good time while he can, though.

Spicer takes his money to Jim Tate, betting on a horse named Memento Mori. He asks Pinkie what "memento mori" means and Pinkie says he isn't sure. It's foreign. Spicer mentions wishing he'd backed Black Boy when he still could. A woman in the crowd told him he was the best bet, but Pinkie doesn't believe it. He says Black Boy was always Fred's pick. Pinkie is sure he'll come to nothing. The race begins, and Pinkie is still convinced that Black Boy will lose. He is less sure about his mission, though. He wishes he had Dallow and Cubitt with him. He feels as if he started something on Whit Monday that will never end.

The race ends, and Black Boy comes in first. Memento Mori is second, and General Burgoyne is third. Spicer is ecstatic that his horse placed. Pinkie doesn't like the fact that Fred's horse won. It's almost too coincidental. He grabs Spicer's arm and the two of them head to Tate's booth so Spicer can collect his money from Tate's assistant, Samuel. Pinkie says goodbye to Spicer there. Spicer doesn't understand. He thought he and Pinkie were going to meet with Colleoni. Pinkie says he's decided to meet with Colleoni at his hotel instead. Spicer grows concerned that there might be something amiss.

Pinkie pats Spicer on the back and wishes him luck. Soon, a crowd of men descends upon Spicer and Pinkie. Pinkie can't believe it. He tells the men that Spicer's the one they want, but they continue to attack him, slashing his cheek and slicing his knuckles. One man kicks him hard in the leg. Spicer calls out for him, but Pinkie is too busy fending off Colleoni's men to do anything. Eventually, someone calls out that the cops have arrived, and Pinkie takes off running away from the horse park and toward the downs, two of Colleoni's stooges on his trail. He weeps as he runs. He even prays, but he knows that salvation only comes to those who repent and he has no time to do it.

Pinkie is in his element. The horse park is his home turf, and nothing makes him feel more at peace than the prospect of violence. Blissfully unaware that he is about to be killed, Spicer enjoys himself. Pinkie's words are a warning that goes unheeded. Spicer is living on borrowed time.



"Memento mori" translates to "remember your mortality" or "remember that you will die." Given that Spicer is about to be killed by Colleoni's men, the name of the horse is fraught with double meaning. Pinkie's sense of well-being slips for a moment when he thinks of what's to come. The pressure is too great to shoulder alone, but that is what this mission required. Dallow and Cubitt would only be inconvenient witnesses.



Hale's murder haunts Pinkie, who is anticipating Spicer's death as well. The horse park is suddenly a menacing place, full of bad omens. Spicer is beginning to notice that Pinkie is behaving oddly. Too friendly at first, his new standoffishness is equally confusing. Spicer is worried that he might have been right when he thought Pinkie intended to kill him.



Pinkie should have known better than to trust Colleoni. He suffers the consequences of his own bad decision as he becomes the target of his own hit job. The razor attack echoes Kite's death and Pinkie's assault on Brewer. Violence takes on new meaning when one is the victim and not the perpetrator. Pinkie is now vulnerable and weak. He cries and tries to pray, but he is desperate, on the run, and out of favor with God.



Pinkie ends up in someone's open garage. It doesn't seem like a place that has ever housed a car, though. It's more like a potting shed, full of dirt, ragged dolls, a rocking horse, an old lawnmower and some even older albums. Now that he is out of immediate danger, Pinkie is embarrassed. He wishes he hadn't run and cried and prayed. He supposes he should repent now, but he doesn't have the energy for it. He is reminded of Kite's attack and of accompanying him to the hospital. He thinks of making peace, of going home, of the confessional box he used to frequent as a child. Hell hadn't meant much to him before he felt real pain; now he worries about being cut by razors for all eternity.

Pinkie limps out of the garage and heads to the pier, where he hears **music** drifting over the sand. An injured moth hobbles by. Pinkie crushes it under his shoe. He tells himself this is just a setback. He is still the head of Kite's gang. He will make one confession and be done with it. He walks to Snow's and looks in the window. Rose is there, waiting a table. She sees him and tells him to go to the back. A luxurious car drifts by and Pinkie thinks he sees Mr. Colleoni inside, smiling at an old lady in a purple dress. Then again, it might be another millionaire entirely.

Rose lets Pinkie in, angry not with him but with the people who left him in such a state. Pinkie reassures her he's fine. He wasn't afraid; he felt no pain. He asks if there's somewhere he can wash. She shows him to a small closet and brings water and a few cloths. She begins to wipe his face clear, and he asks if anyone has been around, asking questions. She tells him the man has, the one who accompanied the brash woman from before. Pinkie assumes he's a cop, but Rose doesn't think so. His name is Phil.

Pinkie thinks about his next move, but he grows weary considering that life is all one tactical move after another. He wants to be alone for a while. Rose wonders if the people who did this to him might be waiting for him, but Pinkie says no, that they have poor Spicer so they should be satisfied. He tells Rose that Spicer's dead. Then they hear a brash laugh coming from up the passage. They both know it's the same woman who's been asking questions. Pinkie, again weighing his tactical options, pulls Rose in for a kiss. He bungles it again, and she says she supposes he hasn't had many girls. She admits that he's her first and she's glad. This infuriates Pinkie. He'd hoped at least to steal someone else's prize.

Pinkie's pride is as wounded as his face. He is not one to show weakness, and, even though the only witnesses to his shame were Colleoni's men, Pinkie regrets his behavior because it is not in line with the tough guy he aspires to be at all times. Now that he has felt real terror and real pain, he worries about Hell. Its torments have become tangible to him, and that is why he thinks of the confessional and of giving up the life of a gangster for good.



Pinkie hasn't learned anything from the razor attack at the horse park. His cruel treatment of the moth, reminiscent of his tearing off the legs of an insect back in his room at Frank's, demonstrates this. Whether or not the man in the luxury car is Colleoni is immaterial. Pinkie is of the class that gets his face slashed. Millionaires, meanwhile, glide through life with ease.



Rose is so devoted to Pinkie she doesn't ask him what might have prompted someone to attack him in such a way. Pinkie, though, is still focused on making sure that Rose doesn't talk to the wrong people, including Phil Corkery. It would seem that Phil is now an active participant in Ida's investigation.



Pinkie's life is, indeed, a series of increasingly complicated schemes, and his decision to kiss Rose in this moment is one more move in the clumsy game he is playing to keep her from going to the cops. Pinkie, who writes off all women as "polonys" and "bueers," is not a naturally gifted lover, and when Rose suggests that their inexperience is another thing they have in common, his pride is stung. No catch himself, Pinkie had hoped that his first girl would be desirable to other men.



Pinkie asks Rose not to give him away to the brash woman. Rose doesn't understand. Then she tells Pinkie that she doesn't care what he did. She loves him. The depth of her devotion takes him by surprise. The brash woman calls for Rose, but Rose stays with Pinkie. She tells him that she did something very wrong in her past as well. She committed a mortal sin when she was 12. The brash woman can talk all she wants about right and wrong, Rose says, but she knows nothing about it. She says she'd rather burn with Pinkie than be like that ignorant woman. Rose's boss from the café opens the door and interrupts them and Pinkie leaves, headed back to his boardinghouse.

Cubitt is there, eating an apple. The phone is ringing. Cubitt answers and tells the person on the other line that Spicer isn't there. Pinkie asks who wanted Spicer, and Cubitt says it was a woman, probably a girl Spicer was sweet on at the Queen of Hearts nightclub. Pinkie tells Cubitt that Spicer is dead and that it was Colleoni's men who killed him. Cubitt is shocked and asks what their next move should be.

Pinkie says they're better off without Spicer, who was a coward. Then he asks Cubitt to call Mr. Prewitt, a lawyer and a fixer. Pinkie tells Cubitt he might have to get married after all. Cubitt laughs, saying he's a little young to be playing such a dangerous game. Pinkie thinks about how he knows everything in theory but has no idea how the world actually works. He knows the moves, but the essence of the game has always eluded him. He's pinning his hopes on Mr. Prewitt now.

Mr. Prewitt has a charlatan's appearance but is a shrewd and experienced lawyer. He's also sympathetic to Pinkie's plight. Pinkie wants to get married but he's underage and so is Rose. His best bet, Mr. Prewitt says, is to pretend to be 18. The rub is that Pinkie will have to get his parents' or guardian's permission. Pinkie tells him his parents are dead and he has no guardian. Prewitt tells him he might be able to produce a guardian if it comes to that, and that anything can be managed—just leave it to him. Pinkie is intent that the wedding not take place in a church. It's not a real marriage to him. It's only to keep Rose from being compelled to testify against him.

Prewitt jovially asks for a guinea for his trouble and Pinkie tells him he'll find some change on the washstand. Pinkie is busy thinking about how, once he's married to Rose, he can get out of it. He'd hoped, if he had to tie himself to someone for life, it would be to a woman much more desirable than Rose. Dallow peaks his head in and asks what happened to Spicer. Pinkie tells him Colleoni's men killed him on the course. Dallow says Spicer's alive and in his room.

Rose's life in Nelson Place was not a carefree one. She never tells Pinkie what mortal sin she committed as an adolescent, but that sin, along with the years she spent in poverty, gave her a thick skin and a loyal nature. Her religious beliefs have also prepared her for life with a man like Pinkie. She is convinced that everyone can be saved, but, if Pinkie is to be damned, loving him means accepting that she, too, might burn.



Pinkie informs Cubitt of Spicer's death like it is a trivial matter. He also did not witness Spicer dying, so there's the possibility that Spicer, like Pinkie, escaped the razor attack and is alive somewhere. Cubitt is appropriately shocked, but he is more concerned about his own future than Spicer's life.



This is the first and only time that Pinkie admits that he might not be acting from a knowledgeable and smart place. In matters of love, he is particularly ignorant. He has always looked down on women or done his best to ignore their presence all together. As such, marriage is intimidating, an alien territory.



Marriage is a sacrament in the Catholic church. That is why Pinkie insists that his wedding with Rose not take place in a church; it would be a sin because his reasons for marrying her are impure and he wouldn't consider the union binding in any way. Prewitt is not bothered by Pinkie's motives or the possibility that Pinkie's intended bride might get hurt. Prewitt is, in fact, happy to help.



Pinkie is still taking Rose for granted. He gives her no credit for being kind or devoted or even smart. He wants her to be more attractive. Pinkie finds out the hard way that he shouldn't have announced Spicer's death prematurely. Like one of Ida's spirits, Spicer has seemingly come back from the dead.



Pinkie goes to Spicer's room to investigate. Standing in the doorway, he thinks of a Latin saying he used to hear in church: *dona nobis pacem*, or "grant us peace." He feels a pang for his youth and things he's either lost or rejected. Spicer is in his room, packing a suitcase. When he sees Pinkie, he nervously admits he thought Colleoni's men got him. He seems to feel guilty for being alive. Pinkie wants to tear the plaster from Spicer's cheek. He stands silently watching Spicer pack. Spicer's guilt is replaced with a knowledge of what really happened on the racecourse: Pinkie tried to have him killed. Meanwhile, back in Pinkie's room, Prewitt is still fumbling around, trying to find some change.

This is not the last time Pinkie will think of this saying. It comes to him in moments when he is most disturbed, and, even though he often whispers it aloud like one would a prayer, it doesn't work. Pinkie will never be at peace. He finds Spicer's surprise appearance particularly unsettling. Spicer is likewise ruffled. A veteran gangster, he quickly realizes that Pinkie tried to have him killed. Prewitt's fruitless search suggests that he might not be that competent after all.



PART IV, CHAPTER 2

Ida is in Snow's, trying to question Rose, who wants nothing to do with her. Ida is not one to be easily dissuaded. She has, in her mind, all the right on her side, and now she has 200 pounds, thanks to Fred and Black Boy. She has the funds to keep up her investigation and the will to go on for as long as it takes. Rose flees to her room up the stairs from the café. Ida follows, admiring the **flowers** on the landing. She knocks on Rose's door, but Rose has shoved a chair up against the nob inside. Rose wants to know why Ida cares about her, and Ida says she's there to protect the innocent.

Rose cannot seem to shake Ida, who, interestingly enough, never questions Pinkie directly. She saves all her energies for Rose. Whenever Rose and Ida meet, flowers are involved. In this scene, the blooms represent the sad attempts at luxury Snow's offers its employees. Rose just wishes Ida would leave her alone, but Ida believes strongly that she knows what is best for Rose and she is not above imposing her own will on the girl if it will do any good.



Rose mutters that Ida doesn't know what innocence is. Ida reaches in the door, moves the chair, and walks in. Rose is up against the far wall like a frightened animal. Ida assures her she has nothing to fear from her. She's her friend, she says, and she's on the side of right. Ida goes on to explain that Pinkie is only using Rose; he doesn't love her. Ida has seen enough of the world and of men to understand what is going on. She's trying to keep Rose from harm. She confesses to Rose that she has never had a child of her own and she has taken to Rose, feels real affection for her.

Nearing middle age, Ida undoubtedly has more experience in some areas of life than the sixteen year old Rose, but Ida does not understand that Rose is motivated primarily by a love for Pinkie and secondarily by her religious beliefs, and neither is about to be shaken by Ida's threats and innuendo. Ida's saying that Rose is like a child to her likewise gets her nowhere.



Rose tells Ida she doesn't care if Pinkie loves her; she loves him. Ida asks Rose how her father and mother would feel about her affair with Pinkie. Rose says they wouldn't care. Ida supposes it's all due to Rose's youth. She's romantic like Ida was once, but Ida predicts she'll grow out of it. Rose stands there, quiet and staring, like a small animal staring out at the wide world from its dark cave. Rose might be young, but she has seen horrible things. Ida is right about one thing, though: she's too young to put all of it in perspective.

It would seem that Rose is all alone in the world. Her parents, she contends, wouldn't care if they heard she'd fallen in love with a mob boss. She looks out on the world like a trapped animal. Her life has been harder than Ida's. Ida might have more experience dealing with people, but Rose has seen true ugliness and horror.



PART IV, CHAPTER 3

Pinkie is standing at the top of the stairs at Frank's boardinghouse, looking down at the spread-eagled dead body of Spicer at the bottom. Prewitt is there, too, wondering how it happened. Pinkie says it was the faulty staircase, combined with Spicer's heavy suitcase. Spicer must have put his suitcase on the rail. Then the rotten rail gave way. Prewitt is horrified and tells Pinkie he will not get mixed up in this. Pinkie tells Prewitt that, as his lawyer, he'll just have to say that it was an accident. Prewitt goes to Pinkie's room with a headache. Cubitt has Spicer's suitcase. He asks Pinkie where Spicer was headed. Pinkie tells him the Blue Anchor in Nottingham. He supposes they should call. The Blue Anchor people might want to send **flowers**.

Pinkie starts to leave the scene. He has things to do. Prewitt can't believe Pinkie would leave now. There are too many details to take care of before the cops come. Pinkie reminds the old lawyer why he came to Frank's in the first place: Pinkie's upcoming nuptials to Rose. He has to propose. Pinkie lingers for a moment, as if waiting for Prewitt to give him some fatherly advice about marriage, but Prewitt says nothing.

At Snow's, Pinkie bribes a waitress to tell him where Rose is. He climbs the stairs to her bedroom, overhearing Ida telling Rose that she needs to come clean about what happened to Hale. It is the right thing to do, Ida says. Through the slightly open door, Pinkie sees Rose defiantly refusing to give Ida any information and he realizes that he and Rose are, indeed, made for each other. She is good, he is damned. He needs her. Pinkie goes in and asks Ida why she's pestering his girl.

Ida tells Rose not to give in to a wicked man like Pinkie. Rose tells her that she doesn't know a thing and that she had better leave her and Pinkie alone. Ida leaves, but as she goes she tells them she's not finished with them and that she has friends. When she's gone, Rose tells Pinkie she'd do anything for him. He replies that it's not what you do but what you think. Goodness, he suggests, is in the blood. He supposes that when they christened him, it didn't take somehow.

Ever since Hale's death and Spicer's torn feelings about the murder, Pinkie has wanted Spicer out of the equation. In the end, Pinkie opts to kill Spicer himself and he does so by throwing him down the stairs. Pinkie has a ready explanation for what happened, but no one, including Prewitt, is buying it. Pinkie's suggestion regarding the Blue Anchor patrons and flowers harkens back to Hale's funeral, where there were no flowers.



Pinkie's behavior, while shocking to Prewitt, is completely consistent with his selfish quest to save his own life at others' expense. That he can think of proposing on the heels of murdering his own man reveals just how little he cares about both Spicer and Rose.



This isn't the first time it occurs to Pinkie that he and Rose need each other to be complete. However, seeing her stand up to Ida, the feeling strikes him now with more force. He wants Rose to save him, but all he has to offer her is damnation—not a very good bargain.



Pinkie claims to have been born bad, but then tries to have it both ways by suggesting that evil isn't in what one does but how one thinks. He has the right thoughts, he argues, which makes the fact that he kills people to get what he wants somehow less sinful.



Pinkie asks Rose to marry him. She says she wants to, desperately, but that the church will never let them. He tells her there are ways; he has a lawyer. Rose admits that the proposal isn't quite what she'd dreamed of, but that it doesn't matter. She loves him and will marry him and will never let him down. Pinkie leans down to kiss her. She smells sweetly of human skin. He's slightly revolted. He wishes she smelled like a chemical compound. Then the idea of the marriage obligations would be easier for him to take. He manages to smile at her, but he can't help but feel a small stab of shame.

Rose is sixteen and had harbored dreams of a romantic proposal, but she loves Pinkie so much she quickly gets over her disappointment. Pinkie does not know how to connect with Rose on a human level. Anticipating the honeymoon night, he is overcome with feelings of revulsion. He wishes Rose were synthetic, like a doll. Then he wouldn't have to pretend to feel something for her.



PART V, CHAPTER 1

Pinkie and Cubitt are on their way home from the inquest called to look into Spicer's death. As with Hale, the inquest found no signs of foul play. Pinkie should be elated, but he's paranoid and angry instead. A band of blind musicians marches up the pier, and Pinkie walks in front of their leader, blocking him. The band comes to a halt for a moment. Then Pinkie lets them go by. He's not sure why he did such a thing. He didn't know they were blind. It's as if he has no control over his own behavior.

Pinkie should be thrilled that, for a second time, he was able to murder with impunity, but there is a hidden part of Pinkie that wishes he would get caught. He's tired of killing and scheming and knows he'll most likely have to keep doing both to stay out of prison or not get killed himself, whether by Colleoni or one of his own men.



Dallow asks Pinkie what's on his mind and Pinkie admits that he's starting to think the murder of Hale, a dirty little journalist who got mixed up with Colleoni and got Kite killed, might have been a mistake. It no longer seems worth the trouble. Dallow reassures him that everything's fine, but Pinkie isn't comforted. He feels like he's taking on all the risk. He stops and looks out at the sea and then turns, surveying Brighton, the territory he inherited from Kite. Dallow suggests Pinkie join him and Cubitt at the Queen of Hearts for some fun. An old man picks his way along the shore. Pinkie watches him for a while. Then he agrees to go out, but he says he won't drink. He never does.

This is the first time that Pinkie admits to another person that Hale's murder might have been a mistake. What seemed a matter of necessity at the time now strikes him as the catalyst for all the trouble that has come after, including Pinkie's wooing of Rose, which has made him feel bitter and boxed in. The old man picking along the shore represents to Pinkie the futility of human striving.



The Queen of Hearts is in a converted Tudor barn. Spicer's girlfriend, Sylvie, is drinking alone at the bar. Cubitt suggests they go over to her and offer her their condolences. Pinkie has never met her before. In the dance hall nearby a band is playing a sentimental song and Pinkie finds himself feeling something for Sylvie: admiration, maybe, and curiosity. She tells him that Spicer always spoke well of him, but that Spicer was pretty sure Pinkie was a virgin. Pinkie tells her Spicer didn't know much. Dallow suggests to Cubitt they leave to give Sylvie and Pinkie their privacy.

Music continues to work on Pinkie like a potion. As the song plays, he grows gradually more human, taking an interest in Sylvie, who, after all, is now bereft, thanks to Pinkie. Spicer was right when he speculated that Pinkie was a virgin, but Pinkie has far too much pride to admit that in front of the sexy Sylvie.



Sylvie says Dallow always knows when she likes a man. Pinkie eyes her with lust. Here is a woman who has been wanted by others. He remembers stories of her infidelities. He takes a drink for the first time and gropes her breast, thinking that she is not at all like Rose. He tells her he's going to be married soon. Then he suggests they dance, but dancing isn't good enough. He wants to take her to the cars. She refuses at first, since Spicer only died the day before. But soon she's leading him to someone else's Lancia. She gets in the backseat and pulls her skirt up, but Pinkie, overcome with visions of Colleoni in full retreat and Pinkie suddenly made conqueror of the world, is nauseated by the idea of making love and he tells her he'll run and get Cubitt for her.

There's a pool in front of the road house and Pinkie stops in front of it, watching two swimmers doing laps side by side, completely at ease. He thinks he would rather hang than marry. He sees his reflection quiver as they swim through it and then he feels his feet slip on the wet tiles.

PART V, CHAPTER 2

Cubitt and Dallow are laughing at Pinkie for falling in the pool. Pinkie keeps repeating that he'll never marry. When they get back to Frank's, Rose is waiting for Pinkie in his room. She has a newspaper with her. On the front page is a photograph of Spicer looking terrified. She asks Pinkie what really happened to Spicer. Pinkie says he fell down the stairs. Rose is confused. The last she heard, Colleoni's men killed him on the course. Pinkie grows frustrated with her. He admits that Spicer probably knew something about Hale and that he was targeted. Rose tells Pinkie she's been having nightmares. She had one about Pinkie dying. She thinks he should leave Frank's, and that they should get married and get out of Brighton.

Pinkie tells Rose they can't marry. He spoke to their lawyer, he says, and they're too young. Rose says she doesn't care about that. It wouldn't be a real marriage. Pinkie tells her to go back to Snow's, but Rose says she can't. She's been fired for being rude to Ida. She wonders aloud if Ida might be acting out of jealousy, a past lover of Pinkie's. Pinkie senses a deadly possessiveness hiding behind Rose's sweet exterior. He says he has no idea why Ida would be so interested in Hale's death; he doesn't know her at all.

Pinkie has never known true sexual desire before, and it takes him by surprise. His desire for Sylvie is based mostly on the fact that other men have wanted her in the past. No man that he knows of ever wanted Rose. Sex is therefore a competition to him, a gladiatorial contest. That is why, when he finally gets up the courage to try to seduce Sylvie, he is unable to follow through. He doesn't really want Sylvie. He wants power. That is what excites him.



The swimmers represent people who are comfortable in their own skin, the very opposite of Pinkie, who lurches from murder to sex to shame with no awareness of who he really is.



Rose shares very little in common with Ida, but one similarity is their ability to see through the lies that men tell them. Rose knows that Pinkie has not been completely truthful with her. Rather than resenting this or abandoning him, though, she wants only to protect him. Rose's nightmare is prescient, but it also makes sense, given the dangerous atmosphere that Pinkie has created for himself by killing to cover his tracks.



This is another lie. Pinkie has had no such conversation with Prewitt. He tells Rose they cannot marry because he has experienced lust and knows he does not feel any desire for Rose and doubts that he ever could. Neither Rose nor Pinkie understands why Ida is so determined to solve Hale's murder because they can't comprehend Ida's selfless devotion to the truth.



Rose asks Pinkie if she should take the newspaper to the police, and Pinkie is shocked by her shrewdness. He supposes he will have to marry her after all. He suggests that she get her father to write a letter on their behalf, giving them permission to marry, but she says her father can't write. Pinkie assures her there are ways around things. He'll talk to Prewitt. Rose recognizes the lawyer's name from the inquest. They're both distracted by music drifting from a radio below. Pinkie thinks about how long he'll have to pretend to be in love with her. He assures her they can get married in a couple days if they just apply themselves to the cause.

Rose is, as always, tuned in, and Pinkie is, as usual, surprised by her talents and intelligence. He decides that marrying her is necessary; she's too smart to trust. The music reminds Pinkie that Rose has emotions and needs and that, as her husband, he'll be expected to tend to both. The wedding itself is a challenge, but Pinkie likes challenges.



PART V, CHAPTER 3

Pinkie walks home to Paradise Piece to find that his childhood house has been demolished. He sent Rose back to Nelson Place the night before and now he's joining her. The neighborhood is even shabbier than he remembered. A child's dusty coffin hangs in the window of a shop. The Salvation Army butts up against the walls of where he used to live with his parents. Pinkie knows he'll have to marry Rose. The streets are cramped and ugly. He had thought that when he returned to his home, he would judge it wanting. Now he feels as if he's the one in need of forgiveness.

As he returns to the scenes of his youth, Pinkie's pride is at a low. The shabbiness and ugliness of the neighborhood remind him of his innocence as a boy and his sinfulness as a man. Having murdered Hale and Spicer, he is forced to return to a place he'd hoped never to see again, and now it's as if the streets and housing are judging him and finding him unworthy.



Pinkie finds Rose's house. Rose throws open the door, thrilled to see him. The hall smells like a lavatory. Rose warns him that her parents are unhappy with her over losing her position at Snow's. She'd been sending them money. Also, they "get moods." Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Wilson are most definitely in a mood, and they cherish their bad humor like it's a possession. They wouldn't let Rose clean the house or light a fire. Pinkie tells Mr. Wilson he would like to marry Rose, but they need his permission. Mr. Wilson refuses. Pinkie offers him ten shillings, then twelve, then fifteen. Mr. Wilson is offended and says he won't let Rose go for so little. Also, he's too young. Mrs. Wilson says they don't want his money. Mr. Wilson tells Pinkie to make it fifteen guineas and he'll think about it.

It is now clear why Rose does not want Ida to save her from Pinkie. Her life before she met him was drudgery. Living at home meant being a slave to her parents' moods. She is used to ugliness and lack and suffering. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson have very little, so they cling to their moodiness and to their daughter, for whom they have very little real affection. This becomes clear when Mr. Wilson, having refused Pinkie's offer of money in exchange for Rose's hand, considers giving her away for a higher price. One guinea was worth around 21 shillings—a much higher price than Pinkie offered.



Pinkie looks around the dirty and cramped basement room and thinks he was right to get out of such squalor, even if it meant committing crimes. He feels sorry for Rose that she can't murder to escape like he has. He gives in and tells Mr. Wilson he'll send his lawyer over with the money. Rose is overcome with gratitude. Pinkie says he would do more for her but is filled with a desire to die when he thinks of his husbandly duties. Rose says she's never known one of her parents' moods to pass so quickly, and they must have liked him.

Pinkie is torn between pity for Rose and a desperate desire to be free of her. He knows, though, that he is trapped—but not as trapped as Rose, who, as a woman with a conscience, was not able to murder her way to the top as he has. What Mr. and Mrs. Wilson saw in Pinkie is a mystery. It was most likely the money he offered them.



PART V, CHAPTER 4

Ida and Phil are at the Cosmopolitan in a café called the Pompadour Boudoir. Ida is eating an éclair, savoring the sweetness and her newfound riches. She tells Phil that she will solve the mystery of Hale's death if it's the last thing she does. She knows right and wrong. Mr. Colleoni appears in the café for a moment, ordering fruit for his wife. Ida tells Phil they could have a grand time here. Phil blushes, realizing she means they could spend the night together. He goes to get their bags. Ida heads up to her room and undresses, waiting for Phil like a large, **blossoming** surprise. She nearly forgets Hale in her anticipation of the day's delight.

Ida is in a celebratory mood following her big win at the horse park. Everything seems to be going her way, and she takes her good luck as a sign that her quest for Hale's killer is justified and right. For the sensual Ida, the perfect way to continue the celebration is with a little sex. Unlike Catholics Pinkie and Rose, Ida thinks of lovemaking as harmless fun. She blooms into her full self in anticipation of such pleasure.



PART V, CHAPTER 5

Cubitt and Dallow are toasting Pinkie's betrothal in his room at Frank's boarding house. Cubitt and Dallow are a little drunk. Frank's wife, Judy, comes by to wish Pinkie good luck. She'd been washing her bra. It drips on the floor. No one offers her a drink, so she leaves. Pinkie thinks about all he's had to sacrifice to keep them all out of trouble and wonders what else he might have to do in the future.

The toast is insincere. Everyone, including Judy, knows that Pinkie is only marrying Rose to shut her up. The men never refer to Judy (who, it is later revealed, is having an affair with Dallow) as a polony, as they do with other women; they merely act as if she's invisible.



Pinkie surprises Cubitt and Dallow by demanding a beer. He tells them he just might become a drinking and a marrying man. He pounds the beer and talks of Rose, telling both men how classy and intelligent she is, how he's marrying for her sake but laying her for his. As he talks, he thinks of how Dallow knows far too much about him, much more than Spicer. He begins to hate Dallow for that. Dallow says he remembers seeing Rose on the pier and that she wasn't all that great. Pinkie grows angry and defends Rose. It's almost as if he loves her.

By drinking the beer, the teetotaling Pinkie is signaling his willingness to change, but all he's really revealing is his youth and inexperience. Drinking one beer does not make him a different man. He will always be full of hatred and suspicion. At one time, he thought Dallow his most loyal friend. Now he is growing to despise him. His feigned pride in and love for Rose are equally precarious.



Cubitt and Dallow try to keep things light. They give him a couple gag gifts for his wedding. Growing more furious, Pinkie tells Cubitt he'll fix him the same way he fixed Spicer. Cubitt is confused. He thought Spicer died because of the faulty stair rail. Cubitt asks if it's true that Pinkie killed Spicer, but he doesn't wait for an answer. He tells Pinkie he's done and he'll find someone else to work for. Pinkie tells Dallow to go, too, but Dallow refuses. Pinkie says, mostly to himself, that he can do anything and men will always come tumbling back to him. He orders Dallow to get Prewitt on the phone and get everything ready for the wedding. Then he lays down on his bed and tries to picture what peace might look like. All he can see is endless gray going on for miles.

Pinkie has grown too sure of his own abilities and power and commits an act of hubris when he threatens Cubitt with Spicer's fate. Pinkie assumes that his men are so loyal he can get away with anything, but Cubitt's reaction proves him wrong. Pinkie is unable to imagine a life of peace because he has always been one of violence. Violence excites him. To him, it is the equivalent of Ida's "bit of life." In contrast, peace would seem like unremitting sameness.



PART V, CHAPTER 6

Ida is awake in her room at the Cosmopolitan, thinking about how sex, natural though it may be—and harmless and fun, too—almost always leaves a woman disappointed. She could have gone to the movies and gotten more out of the afternoon. Phil is asleep on the bed beside her. She begins to think about Hale and her search for justice. She can't really remember anything about "poor old Fred." That's not what matters to her, though. What matters is doing right in the world. Phil wakes up and they talk of getting dinner. Outside, along the beach, an old man scrounges among the shingles. She tells Phil they need to get in touch with one of Pinkie's men. One of them is bound to be unhappy, she says.

Ida's ruminations on sex are lost on the obviously much more satisfied Phil Corkery. Her investigation into Hale's murder began with compassion for the victim; it has now become a quest for justice. Ida justifies her ever-changing motives by telling herself that what has always mattered to her is fighting for right. Her hunch that one of Pinkie's men must be unhappy is spot-on. Cubitt is out there, just waiting to be roped in. Her instincts continue to serve her well.



PART VI, CHAPTER 1

Cubitt visits a bar and has several whiskeys on the local green grocer. Sitting there, seeing his handsome reflection in the bar mirror, he gathers confidence. He thinks about how he is involved in important, life-and-death matters. He tells his companions that there will be more death before it's all over, but then he realizes that he's alone. He leaves, thinking he'll go see Colleoni and ask about joining his gang.

Cubitt is attempting to impress his fellow bar goers but ends up only impressing himself. He's right, though, about there being more death looming on the horizon. This is not the right time to approach Colleoni about a job, but Cubitt seems unaware of just how much he's had to drink.



Cubitt sits down in a glass shelter by the sea. An old gentleman is there, too. He can't seem to stop coughing. The air is cold and misty. It's low tide. Cubitt thinks he hears the lilt of a **violin**. It reminds him of Spicer and of his mother, who died 20 years before and who, during a séance, told him she was on the seventh plane where everything was beautiful and good. He leaves the shelter and heads in the direction of the violin. A large crowd is gathered at Concert Hall for a performance. Out at sea, two ships blow their sirens at one another. Cubitt goes to the bathroom to rid himself of the whiskey. He looks up at the lights of the Cosmopolitan, intimidated and lonely.

Cubitt, like Pinkie, is moved by music. His memory of talking to his dead mother during a séance harkens back to Ida, who places a great deal of faith in the occult. Cubitt is very much alone. He has quit his job as one of Pinkie's men and, apparently friendless, wanders aimlessly around Brighton, rejoicing and despairing in turn. The Cosmopolitan is Brighton's most impressive building. It reminds Cubitt of his failures.



Cubitt stops and puts a penny in an automated fortune telling machine. The fortune is more of a character description than anything. It tells Cubitt that he is genial and well-meaning, and that his lack of initiative is counter-balanced by his common sense and that he will succeed where others have failed.

The "fortune" is almost humorously inaccurate. Cubitt may be genial and well-meaning, but his common sense is questionable and the evening is not proving a success for him; neither is his work in Pinkie's gang.



Cubitt keeps walking along the boards, feeling a deep longing for real affection from someone. He considers going back to Frank's, but he knows that would be a mistake. Cubitt left Pinkie angry enough to kill again, so it's best to avoid him. Cubitt sticks his last penny in a machine labeled "Love Letter," and gets a letter that he considers to be beautifully worded—literature, even. Cubitt is deeply moved by the man's words to his lady love. He thinks that such eloquence is the result of falling for a real woman and not a buer. Buers make you want to carve their faces up, but real women inspire such poetry. The letter is from John, which is Cubitt's first name. He takes it to be an omen.

Cubitt makes his way to the Cosmopolitan where he asks for Mr. Colleoni. A page goes in search of him, bringing back Crab instead. Crab has changed a great deal since Cubitt last saw him, and not just in his appearance. He speaks in a posh accent and is part of something greater than Cubitt. Cubitt haltingly asks Crab about his chances of working for Colleoni. Crab, puffing on a cigar, suggests he get out of the mob altogether, saying there's no way Colleoni would hire him. Also, Crab says, Colleoni is going legitimate—considering politics, as the police have immense faith in him.

Crab promises to put in a good word for Cubitt for old time's sake and leaves. Cubitt is despondent. He sees a large woman, a woman Crab referred to as "fine," sitting alone at a table drinking port. It's Ida. Cubitt thinks of the love letter and sees Ida as a worthy recipient of such beautiful words. He heads for her table, and she welcomes him, saying she couldn't help but overhear that he knew Pinkie. Cubitt feels an instant connection. Ida is not high class. He can tell. She's of his rank. He's anxious to talk to someone and she seems the perfect woman for his confidences.

Ida asks Cubitt if he's a friend of Pinkie's. Cubitt tells her no. She says good, because it's not safe to be friends with Pinkie. She mentions that Fred had been friendly with him, and look where that got him. Cubitt drunkenly blurts out that he's never liked killing; carving is okay but killing is different. He mentions Kite and tells Ida how that was all an accident; a razor slipped. Then he mentions that Pinkie's getting married, and Ida gets angry. She calls Rose a little fool. Cubitt is anxious to get out. He suddenly needs air. The room is too hot. Ida tries her best to detain him. Cubitt starts to say that the memory of Brighton rock haunts him, but he cuts himself off.

Like Dallow and Pinkie, Cubitt knows next to nothing about women and romantic love. While his drunkenness makes him more susceptible to sentimentality, his declaring a boilerplate love letter "literature" is proof of his ignorance. Like his compatriots, Cubitt lumps women into one of two categories: a buer or a "real" woman. One type inspires violence, the other poetry. No wonder John Cubitt is walking the pier alone.



Cubitt's decision to approach Colleoni and ask him for a job is an act of treason against his own gang. It also hints at desperation on Cubitt's part. Cubitt is humiliated when Crab tells him Colleoni has no job openings at this time. Crab's suggestion to Cubitt that he leave organized crime echoes the police inspector and Colleoni telling Pinkie the same.



Like Hale before him, Cubitt is attracted to Ida's voluptuousness. Unlike Hale, he identifies with her low-class demeanor. The connection he feels is a stroke of good luck for Ida, who just happens to be in the right place at the right time to hear Cubitt's drunken confidences. Ida is a smooth operator, asking Cubitt how he knows Pinkie, and Cubitt is in exactly the right mood to throw his boss under the bus.



Cubitt's drunken talk about Kite's death being accidental is yet another suggestion that he might have died by a friendly hand, perhaps by Pinkie's. Ida has become personally invested in Rose's welfare. She wants the girl to think like her, but that is not possible for Rose, whose perception of reality is tinted by her traumatic childhood and her belief in Catholic doctrine.



Ida tells Cubitt to wait for her. She wants a wash and then the two of them will take a walk outside. In truth, she goes in search of Phil, since she wants a witness. When they get back to the bar, though, Cubitt is gone. Ida is not worried, though. She has the information she needs. She knows now that Pinkie and his gang killed Hale and that Brighton rock, the candy, is somehow involved. She tells Phil that they're not done, though. They have an added mission. They have to keep Rose from marrying Pinkie.

Ida's asking Cubitt to wait for her while she washes is reminiscent of the day she asked Hale to do the same. Cubitt's disappearance is, of course, less dire. He is merely drunk and in need of fresh air—his life is not in danger. Ida's quest has expanded. She now wants not only to solve Hale's murder but to save Rose as well.



PART VI, CHAPTER 2

Pinkie is waiting for Rose in front of the municipal building. It's their wedding day and she's late. He goes walking down the street a bit with Dallow and they stop in front of a news agency where, at the back of the store, there are a number of naughty gifts and books for sale. Dallow tells Pinkie he knows how he feels. He was married once and the nerves got him, too. He says the naughty books never really taught him anything he didn't know, except for some things about **flowers**, the raunchiness of which surprised him.

Instead of preparing himself for a holy rite, Pinkie is looking at pornography. Dallow is attempting to ease Pinkie's wedding day jitters, but Pinkie is repelled by anything having to do with sex, even if it's about the oddly erotic reproductive processes of flowers.



Pinkie wishes Kite were here instead of Dallow—he could talk to Kite—but if Kite were still alive, he wouldn't be marrying Rose. None of this would have happened. He tells Dallow the story of a girl who went to his school when he was a boy. The girl's name was Annie Collins and she killed herself when she was fifteen by putting her head on the railway track. She was pregnant at the time with her second child. She'd had her first when she was twelve. Pinkie tells Dallow the father could have been any one of twelve different boys.

The story of Annie Collins appears, at first glance, to be a non sequitur, but Pinkie is compelled to tell Dallow about her because she is an extreme example of the dangers of sex. Sex leads to babies and babies lead to despair. Pinkie knows he is just hours away from losing his virginity and doing so with a woman he neither loves nor is attracted to. The possibility exists that they will conceive a child.



Pinkie is in a rare talkative mood. He tells Dallow that he's read the sappy love stories in the magazines, and he's read smut, too. All of it's the same. Dallow is uncomfortable. He tells Pinkie that it's almost 2 P.M. He really needs to get to the registrar. Pinkie looks down the street and sees Rose walking toward them. Pinkie muses about how Prewitt managed the whole affair by adding two years to Pinkie's age. Rose has done herself up for the occasion. She has a new hair cut and has put on some makeup. To Pinkie, she looks like a doll you could buy in a shop, one you could pray to but not expect an answer from.

Pinkie's fixation on sex suggests that he is nervous about the honeymoon night and about how he will perform. Rose's efforts with her appearance verge on the pathetic. Her doll-like face reminds Pinkie of the prize he won at the shooting booth on the afternoon Hale was killed. Even on his wedding day, Pinkie is thinking of murder.



Pinkie asks Rose why she was so late. She tells him she went to church, hoping to confess. She wanted to be in a state of grace when she married him, but the priest wasn't there. She says that they're about to commit a mortal sin. Pinkie tells her there's no use in either of them confessing ever again. Then he starts to lead her to the registrar, struck again by the sense that he needs her.

Pinkie's assertion that neither he nor Rose need confess ever again is really an admission that their lives as Catholics in good standing are over. Rose has more hope, though, and a greater desire to remain in God's grace.



The hall of the municipal building is tiled like a bathroom. Mr. Prewitt makes jokes as Pinkie and Rose make their way toward the chapel. Rose's parents have not come. Someone has dropped a **rose** on the floor. They step over it. Everyone takes a seat in an anteroom where the atmosphere is bland and prosaic. The doors open and a man and wife emerge. The wife looks astonished. Mr. Prewitt leads Rose and Pinkie into a small green room where there are three chairs lined up against the wall. It's time. Rose is deflated by the spartan nature of the surroundings and ceremony.

It's over almost before they know it. Pinkie says his vows quickly, feeling shame as he does so. Rose repeats hers as if surprised. The registrar asks about rings, and Pinkie tells him angrily that they don't have them—this isn't a church service. Later, they sign the marriage certificate and Pinkie is filled with a strange combination of lightness and gloom. He knows they've committed a sin, and it somehow makes him feel like a man. He leads Rose out into the hall where someone has picked up the **flower** and invites everyone to come and have drinks on him to celebrate the occasion. He thinks of Sylvie stretched out in the back of the Lancia and he is filled with dread.

They all head to a pub around the corner. It's nearly closing time, but they get drinks anyway. Prewitt offers an awkward toast. Rose, who hasn't spoken since the ceremony, stares at her reflection in the bar mirror. Dallow asks her what she's thinking and Pinkie answers for her, because he feels he knows her as well as he knows himself. He says she's thinking that it wasn't much of a wedding, and Rose nods. Prewitt says all weddings are equal in the eyes of the law, but Pinkie scoffs at such a suggestion. He knows that he and Rose are in agreement that the ceremony meant nothing.

Still, when the rest of the men leave Pinkie and Rose alone, they're shy with one another. Pinkie realizes that he should have planned to take her on a honeymoon of some kind. Perhaps a weekend away to a different sea. He offers to take her to the Cosmopolitan for the night. She can't believe it. He asks where she's left her bag, but she explains that she has no things, really. Only what she's wearing. Her parents didn't give her any money. They'd both gotten into moods and so that was that.

This ceremony is ugly and practical and, to Rose, depressing. It is nothing like the wedding she thought she would have someday. The dropped rose symbolizes her abandoned hopes. No one, of course, notices. This wedding is not about Rose. It's about Pinkie's desire to keep her from testifying about her should Hale's murder every become a subject of further investigation.



Even though he believes the wedding to be a farce, Pinkie is still moved by the idea that he and Rose are bonded, if not by holy matrimony, then at least by mutual sin. Rose loves Pinkie and wants very much to be his wife. Pinkie is only using her to protect himself.



The sad celebration is fitting, considering that the wedding itself was nothing more than a technicality. Pinkie flatters himself when he assumes that he knows what Rose is thinking. She doesn't consider the wedding meaningless. Rather, she is disappointed by its lack of elegance and romantic atmosphere.



Pinkie's specialty is killing and violence. He knows nothing about planning a honeymoon. The Cosmopolitan is Colleoni's home and headquarters. He wants to take Rose there to impress her and to prove to Colleoni and to himself that he is the older man's equal. Lucky for him, Rose is easily impressed.



When they get to the Cosmopolitan, the clerk tells Pinkie that there are no more vacant rooms. Pinkie is furious. He tells the clerk that his money is as good as anybody's, but the clerk, giving Rose a condescending once over, insists that the hotel is completely booked. With tears of humiliation and rage pricking his eyes, Pinkie grabs Rose and they leave the place together. Rose tells him she doesn't care where they stay. She suggests Frank's but he vetoes the idea. They decide to head to the pier for the time being.

The sea moves in and out relentlessly. Its motion reminds Pinkie of killing Spicer and the whole chain of events that began with Kite's death and shows no sign of ending. Rose points to a girl in the crowd that's staring at Pinkie. It's Molly Pink, the fat girl Hale chatted up in a futile attempt to keep Pinkie off his trail. She's with the same friend and Pinkie can tell they're talking about him. He lies to Rose and says he's never seen the girls before in his life.

Rose stops in front of a souvenir booth and asks Pinkie to go into a sound studio and record his voice for her. Pinkie tells her not to be silly, and Rose erupts, saying that he's never gotten her a single thing, not even today, and she has no idea what he wants with her. He tries to calm her and promises he'll do whatever she says. He just doesn't understand why she'd want a recording of his voice. Also, they don't have a record player. She says that if he ever goes away for a while, she can listen to him talk and she likes that idea. She'll borrow a gramophone if she has to. He goes into the booth and says, "Goddamn, you little bitch, why can't you go back home forever and let me be?" He hands her the record and tells her he said something loving.

Rose suggests they move on to the covered walkway under the pier. Pinkie feels for a second a rush of sexual desire at the thought of returning to the sight of Hale's murder. It's like mingling good and evil. They're in front of the shops that sell carnival food. Rose wants a stick of Brighton Rock. Pinkie agrees to buy it for her, thinking that he now has her the way Christians have God in the Eucharist: by the guts.

Pinkie would like to be Colleoni, who is very much at home in the Cosmopolitan. Instead, he cannot even get a room for the night. Young and poor, Pinkie and Rose face the contempt from the hotel clerk. Pinkie's pride is injured, but Rose is too happy to mind the obvious slight.



Although he is open to the possibility of a blood bath, Pinkie is unable to finish what he started. The sea's never-ending motion symbolizes the eternal nature of Kite, Hale, and Spicer's deaths, and Molly's appearance is one more reminder of a day that Pinkie would just as soon forget.



This recording is like a ticking time bomb. Rose wants only to hear Pinkie telling her he loves her. He has yet to say the words. His message is, instead, bitter and designed to hurt her. The fact that they don't own a record player means that Rose is spared Pinkie's cruelty for the moment, but she treasures the record and is now on the lookout for a gramophone. She is determined to someday listen to the message. Her love for Pinkie will never be the same after that.



Pinkie's sexual desire is often motivated by violence. He is aroused by the idea of bringing together Rose's love for him and the last moments of Hale's life. Brighton Rock was used somehow in Hale's killing. Once Rose eats it, it will bond her and Pinkie like a sort of twisted version of the Eucharist.



Pinkie enters the candy shop like he owns the place. He knows every square inch of it. There's something new, though—a wall of broken rock. The cashier says some clumsy men came in and broke a bunch. Pinkie orders two sticks of candy and leaves, impressed with his own cleverness. They eat the candy and Rose says they should probably go somewhere. Pinkie is filled with anxiety at the prospect of the marriage bed. He suggests a movie, but the film they go to see is a romance and his anxieties swirl anew. A **clock** by the screen shows the time. It's late. He knows he can't put it off much longer. A sentimental **song** accompanies the actor's lovemaking on screen and Pinkie weeps, envisioning a life free of hate and envy and fear that he knows will never be his.

Pinkie tells Rose roughly that they should go and they head back to Frank's, the sea seeming to disappear under an airplane, **music** drifting over them. No one's awake at Frank's. Judy left a note telling Pinkie they were out celebrating his wedding. Up in the room, they stand around for a while awkwardly. Rose says she likes his place; it's homey. She'll tidy up tomorrow. He says she won't touch a thing. It's his cave, he thinks, and she's an intruder. The bell rings in the hall, but instead of going to answer it Pinkie grabs Rose and begins to make violent love to her. He wants to get it over with.

Pinkie is surprised to feel a tiny bit of tenderness for Rose during the act. In fact, it wasn't as horrible as he'd always imagined. He'd exposed himself to another person and she hadn't laughed. He supposed he was going to Hell, but it was good to have that decided as well. He feels strong, vital, a man finally. The bell continues to ring. Rose is afraid it's the cops. She tells him she loves him. He runs to answer it, promising to come right back.

It's Cubitt and he's very drunk. He tells Pinkie he's only come back to get his things, but then he says he wishes the two of them could be friends—they're like brothers, really. Pinkie tells him they were never friends and he isn't about to take Colleoni's leavings. Cubitt begins to cry. He asks Pinkie to loan him some money; he's broke. When Pinkie refuses, his sadness turns to anger. He starts to tell Pinkie he could get him into real trouble. He mentions Hale and Spicer. He tells Pinkie there's someone who would pay him a lot more money for a lot worse. His speech is garbled by drink. Pinkie isn't worried. Cubitt, he thinks, is like a professor, going on about the exports and imports of a foreign country, whereas Pinkie has been to the actual jungle and seen the goods.

This is the shop where Hale was killed. Pinkie's men were the ones who broke the candy. Pinkie enjoys revisiting the scene of the crime without raising suspicion. It gives him a feeling of power and self-satisfaction. That feeling is short-lived, however, when he thinks about what the honeymoon night will require of him. The clock in the movie theater is a not-so-subtle reminder that Pinkie's life as a carefree virgin is almost over. The cynical Pinkie is moved by the film's sappy score to dream of a future his present makes impossible.



Pinkie comes to terms with the fact that he cannot put it off any longer; he must make love to Rose. He needs to keep her in love with him. Otherwise, she might be tempted to go to the cops and tell them what she knows about Hale's death. His extreme reaction to her offer to tidy up shows that while he is legally married to Rose, he is, in his mind, still very much a single man.



Pinkie told himself for years that he found the idea of sex disgusting because he witnessed the ugliness of his parents' weekly, Saturday night rituals and because it would give a woman control over his life. Really, his feelings were founded on fear. Rose did not mock him, and he now feels virile and immortal.



Cubitt and Pinkie are playing an elaborate game of chicken. Cubitt, of course, has already told Ida too much. Drunk and bent on blackmail, he tells Pinkie he's willing to do more. Pinkie's reaction is both arrogant and revealing. He thinks of himself as an experienced and wise man whose knowledge has been hard-won. Cubitt, he believes, is an amateur by comparison. All Pinkie knows, though, is lying, killing, and intimidation.



Rose is waiting for Pinkie on the bed. She's no longer afraid. She thought it would be the cops. Instead, it was a drunken man, and she's used to drunken men. Pinkie asks her why she thought the cops would come for him, and she whispers "Kolley Kibber." Pinkie realizes she knows all about what happened to Hale. She's known the whole time and she doesn't care. He says, with a faint trace of admiration that she's just as bad as he is, and she agrees, staring up at him with devotion.

Later, Pinkie is dreaming. At first, he's in a schoolyard and he's the new kid. He's sick with fear that he'll be mocked and rejected, but then Kite appears and, for the moment, he is not alone. Kite gives him a razor and Pinkie knows what he must do. The dream changes then, though, and he's on a pier, tipping into the sea. He scrambles frantically, sure that he'll drown, but really he's just in his bed in Paradise Piece and he's trying to sleep while his parents make love in the other room. He feels dead while they do it. It's as if he doesn't exist to them. Then he wakes. The **clock** strikes three. Relieved to be alone in his room at Frank's, he goes for a glass of water. Rose calls to him from the bed and he remembers.

No longer exhilarated from the act of love, Pinkie is depressed by the thought that he is now tied to Rose forever. The marriage at the registrar wasn't fake; it was real, and he will now have to work to keep her love. He won't be free until the day he dies. He goes out for air and walks toward the channel. While he walks, he notices there's something in his pocket. It's a note from Rose in which she says that she will love him forever. No matter what he does, she will always be by his side. Pinkie crumples the paper and almost throws it in the trash, but at the last minute, he holds onto it, thinking it might be useful someday.

On his way back to Frank's, Pinkie sees an old woman in the gutter. Her face is rotting, and her teeth are discolored. To Pinkie, she seems like the face of damnation. Then he realizes she is praying the rosary and he realizes she is actually, to his surprise, among the saved.

PART VII, CHAPTER 1

Rose wakes up alone in Pinkie's room. A **clock** strikes seven. The chimes aren't like the ones she heard back in Nelson Place. They're sweeter somehow. She feels almost guilty for sleeping so long, but she also thinks that she's living in a different reality, now that she is a wife, or, rather, a mistress. Life will, she supposes, simply be very different now. She gets up and looks around Pinkie's room, but there's not much to see—a wardrobe containing boots and biscuits, a bowl of dirty water. She supposes she should head downstairs and start a fire.

It is finally clear to Pinkie that Rose has known all along that he killed Hale and that Spicer planted the card under her table at Snow's to throw the cops off their trail. Pinkie has spent much of his time with Rose alternately underestimating and despising her. Now he feels a stirring of respect for her. He no longer sees her as completely good.



This dream is significant on many fronts. First, it highlights the torments Pinkie lived through as a child. He was bullied and ostracized. He also felt rejected by his parents, who, when they made love every Saturday, seemed to forget they even had a son. The dream also suggests that Pinkie felt genuine affection for Kite, but that he might have been the one who killed him. The clock striking brings him back to a reality he would rather not face: that of being married to Rose.



Rose's message of love and devotion is in direct contrast to the bitter recording Pinkie made for her on their wedding day. Pinkie keeps the note not because he is touched by it but because he senses he might be able to use it against Rose in the future. Regardless, Rose's words echo his premonition that he is tied to her forever.



Pinkie can't imagine that someone so poor and ragged would be favored by God. He had thought that God's chosen ones looked more like Colleoni, or himself.



Now that Rose is a married woman, or, in the eyes of the Catholic church, a deflowered mistress, time, like everything else, means something different to her. She is used to the chimes signaling the beginning of her work day. Now they're a reminder that she is in love and, she hopes, is loved in return. Old habits die hard, though, and she can't help from going in search of work.



The kitchen is deserted and it's obvious to Rose that the stove hasn't been used since at least the night before. She looks around the room for some coke to light it when Dallow appears in his pajamas. He's confused to see her up so early and asks if she's seen a red-haired bitch named Judy. She says no and tells him she'd like to light the stove for tea. Dallow is amused. The stove hasn't been lit since March. She is now living in "Liberty Hall," he tells her. No one makes anyone else tea. She's free to live as she pleases, unless, of course, she wants to work.

Dallow leaves, and Rose studies the room some more. A strip of flypaper dangles by the sink; an old mousetrap sits completely useless in one corner. She feels pride swell in her breast at the thought that she has slept with a man. She opens the kitchen door and walks in on Dallow and a red-haired woman tangled in a passionate embrace. Rose supposes the woman is Judy. She's nonplussed. She's slept with Pinkie. She knows everything now.

Judy welcomes Rose, kissing her on the cheek and wafting her way the scent of California **Poppy** perfume. Judy tells Rose she's one of them now, and she asks her to not tell Frank what she just saw, since he gets worked up over nothing. Rose silently agrees, a little stunned by the rules of her new world. Judy asks Rose if she's met any of the boys. Rose says she's not sure; a drunken man did ring the bell and beat on their door last night. Rose tells her that was Cubitt. Dallow says they need to have a serious talk with Pinkie about his behavior toward Cubitt. He's worried it will backfire.

Judy tells Rose that if she ever needs a dress cleaned, Frank is her man. He's wonderful at getting out grease. Judy brushes Rose's shoulder and says that the dress she's wearing could actually use a scrub, but Rose says it's all she has. Judy smiles and says she has to get back to Frank. Then she heads up the stairs, her slippers slapping her ankle, her gaping robe showing a white leg covered in red hair. Rose can't get over how kind everyone is being. She supposes there's a certain amount of camaraderie in mortal sin. She heads back to Pinkie's room, full of pride and happiness. She has been accepted, and now she knows as much as any woman. The **clock** strikes eight.

Rose's assumptions about the rhythms of domestic life are obviously at odds with how the inhabitants of Frank's choose to conduct their days. Accustomed to being of use, Rose supposes she's needed in the kitchen, but Dallow clues her in to the fact that she's now living in a place where no one does anything if they can help it.



The timid and retiring Rose finally has her first brush with pride. Losing her virginity has given her the confidence that heretofore always eluded her. There was a time when Rose might have been shocked by Judy and Dallow's adulterous dalliance, but that was before marriage to Pinkie opened her eyes and her mind.



Judy and Ida wear the same, flowery perfume. Thus, even when absent, Ida manages to be present in the lives of Rose and Pinkie. Rose's morals have changed overnight. Now that she is married to a mobster, she is at home with sin and sinners. Dallow's disapproval of Pinkie's behavior is likewise a new development. It seems that even Dallow's loyalty has its limits.



Rose's expectations of human kindness are set at such a low bar that she is deeply touched by Dallow's casual treatment and the run-of-the-mill courtesy Judy shows her on the stairs. Rose's feelings of new-found wisdom parallel the emotions Pinkie experienced while watching Rose sign their marriage certificate. They are still painfully young and naïve but think that marriage and sex have ushered them into a different world. Only the very young and naïve would think so.



Rose thinks about how, now that she's a married woman, she can go to Snow's like any regular customer and order breakfast. She thinks about the money Pinkie keeps in his soap dish. She tells herself that taking half a crown from her husband isn't really stealing. Besides, he still hadn't given her anything beyond the souvenir record. She takes the money and leaves Frank's, mingling on the street with the Sunday church crowd. She's overcome with feelings of freedom. Now that she has joined Pinkie as a mortal sinner, she no longer has to subject herself to the pomp and circumstance and shame of a church service.

At Snow's, the blinds are just going up. Maisie, the only waitress Rose likes, is cleaning tables. Doris, the sneering senior waitress, is drifting around lazily. Proud of her status as a married woman, Rose thinks she should go right in the front door, but she doesn't. Maisie sees her and motions for her to meet her at the side door and Rose obliges her. She tells Maisie that she's married and Maisie, amazed, asks her how it is. Rose tells her it's lovely. She's happy and she doesn't have to do anything all day. Maisie is clearly envious, so Rose tells her it isn't "all roses." When Maisie is called away, Rose walks back to Frank's, wondering what she did to deserve such happiness. Sin, she supposes.

Rose passes by a shop that sells Sunday papers and Dallow yells to her that her mother is at Frank's waiting for her. There's a gramophone player in the shop. Rose asks if she might play a record sometime. Dallow answers for the owner; of course she can. She buys a [News of the World](#) for her mother and walks on. Judy lets her in at Frank's, telling her she has a visitor. Rose runs up the stairs, anxious to finally meet her mother on common ground, woman to woman. But it's not her mother waiting for her. It's Ida.

Ida rushes at Rose as if to hug her. Rose recoils. Ida tries to explain gently that she is there to help. She wants to save Rose's life. Rose doesn't want saving. She tells her to leave or she'll scream. Ida explains that Rose has married a murderer, but Rose already knows. She tells Ida to leave her and Pinkie alone. Ida smiles at Rose. Her smiles are hooked on, like wreaths. She tells Rose what happened to Hale; she says Pinkie and his men took him down into one of the pier shops and strangled him. Or they would have, had his heart not given out first.

Rose's taking of the half a crown is a tiny act of rebellion on her part. She rationalizes the act because she knows that Pinkie would not approve. Once out on the street, she realizes it's Sunday, and, far from feeling guilty about what she and Pinkie have done, she feels liberated from the petty demands of religion. Her sense of freedom is conflicted, however, by the fact that it comes courtesy of living in mortal sin.



Not many women would envy Rose her marriage to Pinkie. She is married to a man she knows is a murderer, and they share a spartan room at Frank's boardinghouse. Also, Pinkie vacillates between fury and despair. When he does try to show Rose affection, the result is awkward and insincere. Still, Rose is blissfully happy and her happiness is evident to Maisie, who is living Rose's former life as a single waitress at Snow's.



Rose, having gained admittance into the rarefied world of the adult woman, is eager to talk to her mother about the weighty matters that concern wives and husbands. Ida, a believer in ghosts, will not leave Rose alone. She haunts her.



Ida's approach backfires. Rose wants none of her fake affection, and she doesn't care what Ida has to say about Pinkie or Hale. All that matters to Rose is her love for Pinkie, and she continues to see through Ida's façade of friendliness to the selfishness that lies just beneath the surface.



Ida says that there's a man she's paying who's been giving her evidence that proves Pinkie's guilt but that he's refusing to testify. She tells Rose that Pinkie doesn't love her and that he only married her so she wouldn't be compelled to give evidence against him. Rose says that people can change—there's such a thing as confession and repentance—but Ida laughs off both as mere religious nonsense. People don't change. She offers herself as an example of someone who has never changed, and compares herself to Brighton rock (the candy). It's the real world they're dealing with, Ida says, and in the real world there's such a thing as right and wrong. Rose doesn't care about that, though. She cares about good and evil—and to her, Pinkie is good.

Ida tells Rose that she, too, could go to jail for Hale's murder. She could be considered an accomplice after the fact, but Rose says that if the cops get Pinkie, she won't care about going to jail. Ida is incredulous. She tells Rose she had better take precautions so that she doesn't end up giving birth to the child of a murderer. After Ida leaves, Rose is filled with a sense of exultation that she could have Pinkie's child someday, and that that child could have more children and that she could have the pleasure of making an army of allies for Pinkie. It makes what they did in the bed the night before sacred. It makes it an eternal act.

PART VII, CHAPTER 2

From the news agent, Pinkie watches Ida stride down the street. Dallow points her out and tells Pinkie he's had a narrow escape with his mother-in-law. Pinkie does not correct him. He heads back to Frank's, finding a plastic violet on the stairs. It smells of California **Poppy** perfume. He picks the flower up and goes to see Rose, asking how it went with her mother. Rose tells him it was fine; she wasn't in a mood. The flower's wire stem digs into his palm. Pinkie leaves and finds Dallow again, saying they need to talk. In the basement, Pinkie tells Dallow that people are starting to close in on him.

Pinkie realizes he dropped the fake **flower** outside his room. He curses his carelessness and tells Dallow that the woman who'd come to see Rose wasn't her mother but the buer who was with Hale in the taxi the day he died. He wonders why Rose would lie to him, and whether she's started talking. Dallow doesn't think she would. Pinkie says they need to do something soon or the whole world will know they killed Hale.

Rose and Ida are operating in different worlds. Ida's is a practical and logical place where right is right and wrong is punished. For the deeply devout Rose, it's more complicated than that. Catholicism allows room for forgiveness. Pinkie has obviously sinned, but a merciful God will overlook his transgressions if he owns up to them and repents.



Ida's threats are no match for Rose's love and loyalty. Ida had counted on Rose being horrified at the thought of giving birth to Pinkie's child. Instead, Ida's words plant a seed in Rose, and she dreams of a long line of progeny that will multiply over the years, forming a shield and protecting their father from harm. This end goal would, she thinks, make their honeymoon night not a mortal sin but something blessed and holy.



The fake flower, plastic, tacky, and redolent of Ida's scent, represents Pinkie's inability to trust Rose for any extended period of time. It also symbolizes Ida's constant presence in Pinkie and Rose's fragile relationship. The stem digs into Pinkie's palm in the same way fear and mistrust press on his mind.



Pinkie is getting sloppy. His carelessness contrasts with Ida's methodical approach. She is tireless. Pinkie, it seems, is weary of cover-ups and subterfuge. And he's becoming paranoid and increasingly suspicious.



Pinkie tells Dallow they have to find some way of shutting Rose up. Dallow says he needs to stop thinking that way, but Pinkie feels like he's set events in motion and he has to keep going, that there is no stopping. Dallow reminds Pinkie that Rose is devoted to him, and Pinkie says that will simply make everything easier. Dallow tells Pinkie he will not stand for any more killing, and Pinkie suggests the possibility that Rose will kill herself. The thought gives him a spurt of pride.

Pinkie heads back up to his room and finds Rose waiting for him on the landing at the top of the stairs. She confesses that she lied earlier. It wasn't her mother she met with; it was Ida. Pinkie feels a momentary sensation of comfort. Maybe he doesn't have to make a plan for Rose's death after all. Then he sees the **fake flower** on the landing to his room and supposes she's only telling him about Ida now because she realized he knew all along. He doesn't know if he can trust Rose, but he's also convinced it doesn't matter. He'll take care of things, one way or another. He reminds Rose of the note she wrote to him about sticking to him no matter what and she tells him she meant it.

Pinkie says he's not worried; as long as Ida doesn't find out about Spicer, he's fine. Rose recoils the slightest bit at this, saying she thought Pinkie was guiltless in Spicer's death. Pinkie lies and tells her he just doesn't want Ida to find out he was at Frank's when it happened. That's all. He tells Rose not to worry, either. They'll just keep going on as they are and everything will be fine.

PART VII, CHAPTER 3

Pinkie decides to pay Prewitt a visit. He supposes that the old lawyer will be Ida's next target. Prewitt lives on a street that parallels the railway. It's dusty and loud. There's a scowling woman with a bitter face staring out at Pinkie from a basement window. He found out recently that the woman is Prewitt's wife. Pinkie demands to be seen, even though a servant girl has told him that Prewitt is indisposed and won't come out. He waits in Prewitt's office where empty file boxes rumble every time a train goes by. **Music** drifts through the open window and Pinkie asks the servant girl to shut it. She leaves without doing so. Eventually, Prewitt appears, smiling broadly through pain. He has indigestion.

Pinkie is proud of the idea that Rose might be driven to suicide. This depraved reaction to what would, in fact, be a tragedy, reveals Pinkie's growing desperation. He thinks he has everything figured out, but, in reality, he is plagued by feelings of guilt and anxiety.



Rose is incapable of lying to Pinkie. Pinkie, given his background and his work in organized crime, is incapable of trusting anyone. Pinkie's vow to take care of things has an ominous tone. It harkens back to his conversation with Dallow about the possibility of Rose committing suicide.



Rose always knew that Pinkie was involved in Hale's death. She did not realize, though, that Pinkie killed Spicer, and she is disturbed by the thought that he would kill one of his own men. Going on as they are is not a happy prospect for Rose, who is being dogged by Ida at every turn.



Prewitt's living conditions are almost as pathetic as Brewer's. Instead of a sick wife, though, he has a bitter one. Pinkie's visit to Prewitt shows that he is taking Ida's investigation somewhat seriously. Still, he calls on Prewitt without notifying him first and without the benefit of a firm plan for how to deal with Ida, should she try to intimidate the old lawyer. Music at this moment is particularly bothersome. Pinkie does not want to be distracted by sentiment when he is trying to talk Prewitt into leaving town.



Pinkie asks if the **music** coming from the neighbor's apartment ever ceases. Prewitt bangs on the wall and his neighbor turns the radio off angrily. Pinkie asks Prewitt if anyone has come around asking questions about Spicer. Prewitt looks even sicker. He tells Pinkie he's lucky; he will probably hang for his crimes. Prewitt, on the other hand, will rot. Pinkie is uncomfortable, seeing the old lawyer look so vulnerable. Prewitt tells Pinkie he's ruined. When he took on Pinkie as a client, he lost his only other one, a bank, and now Pinkie will soon be ruined, too, run out of business by Colleoni, who has his own, much more high-powered attorney.

Pinkie sees that Prewitt is drunk. The old man begins to unburden himself. Pinkie listens against his will. Prewitt bemoans the fact that he married beneath him. He'd felt passion for his wife at one time. That was why he married her. Now, he calls her "the mole" and "that hag" and claims that she's ruined him. He quotes *Dr. Faustus*, saying, "Why, this is Hell, nor are we out of it." He points to a picture of a boy's public school class to show Pinkie just how far he has fallen. To think, Prewitt says, that his only client is a gangster and that he is married to a hideous woman. He'd had much greater ambitions than this.

Pinkie wishes Prewitt would stop talking. He doesn't like having to consider what life is like for any man but himself. He offers Prewitt some money to take a holiday, maybe to Boulogne. Prewitt confesses that sometimes he considers exposing himself in a park. Mostly, though, he just watches the young typists walk by. He agrees to take Pinkie's money and make himself scarce. Pinkie leaves, meeting Prewitt's wife on the stairs. She seems to be looking out at him from her cave. Once outside, Pinkie glances up at Prewitt who is standing at his window, staring out blankly. There are no typists to see on a Sunday.

PART VII, CHAPTER 4

Pinkie orders Dallow to watch out for Prewitt. Then he climbs the stairs to his room, happy for the moment, thinking of his cozy little shabby home. Then he opens the door and sees that Rose has tidied it. He's furious with her and he studies her face, trying to see how it will age and when she'll begin morphing into a hag like Mrs. Prewitt. Then he reminds himself that he has guts and he can handle this. He tells Rose it's fine, what she's done with the room, and that he's readied the car in case they have to skip town.

The music is getting close to making Pinkie feel compassion for Prewitt, whose ruin is mostly Pinkie's fault. That said, Prewitt made a deal with the devil when he took on Pinkie. Now he is reaping the rewards of that deal. Prewitt makes a distinction between his likely fate and Pinkie's here. Pinkie, he says, might be put to death for his crimes. Prewitt, on the other hand, will rot slowly, a worse outcome by far.



*Like Hale and Pinkie, Prewitt is a victim of his own pride. He is full of self-hatred because he never achieved in his life what he thought he was capable of, and now he spends his days feeling sorry for himself and despising his wife, whom he blames for his lowly state. The *Faustus* quotation is applicable to Pinkie as well. Following Hale's murder, Pinkie entered a Hell of his own making.*



*Prewitt had come across to Pinkie and the others as a competent and successful lawyer. Pinkie now knows that he is an ineffectual, self-pitying old man with deviant sexual appetites. Mrs. Prewitt's looking out of her cave echoes the scene in which *Ida* tells *Rose* that Pinkie is only pursuing her to avoid prosecution. *Rose*, too, was like a small rodent, staring out at a wider world.*



*Pinkie is so impressionable that he now sees a second Mrs. Prewitt in *Rose's* young face and frame. He is reacting to Prewitt's contention that his wife has ruined his life. Pinkie is waiting for *Rose* to ruin his. All she's really done, though, is rearrange his apartment.*



Rose passionately declares that that will never happen. Pinkie feels so boxed in by her certainty that he feels nostalgic about committing murder. Rose tells him she's very happy and that he's made her this way by being so good to her. In the next room, a baby starts wailing. Rose wishes someone would tend to it. Pinkie doesn't understand why she cares. It's not hers. Rose says no, but it might be, and if she had a child, she wouldn't leave it alone all afternoon. The baby stops crying, and it dawns on Pinkie that Rose wants a child. He's disgusted by the idea, but Rose looks at him with patience, knowing he will always cycle between revulsion and relief. That is the bargain she has made.

Rose, who is already acting in many ways like a mother to Pinkie, wants to mother the world. Pinkie, of course, wants to avoid fatherhood at all costs. Having finally learned to enjoy sex, he is still repelled by its consequences and by the thought of Rose bearing his child. Rose is wise beyond her years. She has already come to accept that life with Pinkie will never be stable or secure. She'll always be at the mercy of his moods.



PART VII, CHAPTER 5

Pinkie comes flying out of his room calling for Dallow, who's been on the look-out for Prewitt. Pinkie's been alone with Rose for two days. He's in a fevered state. Judy appears with Dallow's freshly laundered coat. She's obviously in the mood for love, but Dallow dismisses her. Pinkie asks Dallow what he would do if Judy became pregnant. Dallow says that would be her funeral. Pinkie begins to talk to Dallow about his options, should Prewitt talk to the cops. One option would be to enter into a suicide pact with Rose, whom he's sure would not want to live without him. Then, maybe, Pinkie might not die but Rose would. Dallow is shocked. He says he'd never go in for such a plan.

Dallow is the gang's most blood-thirsty member, next to Pinkie, and even he disapproves of Pinkie's idea of a suicide pact, which shows just how extreme the idea really is. Still, Dallow's compassion only goes so far. He would have no compunction about making Judy handle an unwanted pregnancy on her own. Both Pinkie and Dallow view women and the love women offer as disposable and inconvenient.



Rose is in the room when Pinkie returns. She's always there. She says she's going out, though, and he closes his eyes, wishing he could go back to the time before he met her, before he killed Hale, before his life became something he didn't recognize. Eventually, Rose leaves and Dallow peeks in, telling Pinkie that Prewitt is probably on his way out of town by now and so they can breathe easy. He tells Pinkie that Cubitt went to make sure that Prewitt got on the boat as planned. Pinkie doesn't respond. Dallow leaves, saying he hears Cubitt, and Pinkie remembers the first time he came to Frank's with Kite, back before Rose, when everything was clearer and easier.

Pinkie's regret is based primarily on the complications that have ensued since he murdered Hale. He doesn't wish Hale alive again. He simply pines for a time when he wasn't in charge of the gang and Rose wasn't always hovering nearby, reminding him of the need to always be vigilant. At seventeen, Pinkie is already nostalgic for days gone by.



Dallow comes back, saying it wasn't Cubitt at the door after all. He asks to see a letter Pinkie received from Colleoni. It's unopened. Dallow reads it. Colleoni is offering to give Pinkie 300 pounds to not hurt his men and clear out. Dallow is getting nervous. He wishes Cubitt would call. He and Pinkie talk about where they might go if they took the offer. Pinkie can't imagine leaving Brighton. He's the town and the town is him.

Unlike Hale, who wanted very much to distance himself from Brighton, Pinkie cannot imagine a life anywhere else. He also can't imagine giving up his role as the head of Kite's gang. Colleoni's offer is intriguing: as of yet, Pinkie has no plans to exact revenge on Colleoni's men.



Still, Pinkie says he could change. He already has. He's a drinking man now and he has a wife. Dallow tells Pinkie he's very secure in Rose—she'll never betray him—but Pinkie isn't so sure. He has to work hard, he says, to make sure she doesn't get angry or fall for someone else and turn on him. Rose returns. She was afraid that something might have happened while she was gone. The phone rings and it's Cubitt saying that Prewitt is safely on a boat out of town. Dallow congratulates Pinkie on being so clever and thinking of everything.

Pinkie hasn't really changed. A few drinks and a fake wedding aren't enough to alter his character, and that is why he doubts Rose's loyalty. It's obvious, even to Dallow, that Rose will never betray Pinkie. Dallow is wrong about one thing, though: Pinkie has not thought of everything. He has tragically underestimated Ida's determination and savvy.



PART VII, CHAPTER 6

Ida is on the pier. She's put back a few beers and is feeling good. The sea rolls in and out. It's like bath water to her. It sets her **singing**. Phil Corkery joins her. He's miserable and cold. He points out that Rose and Pinkie are nearby. Ida knows; she sees it as a stroke of good luck. Phil wishes that Ida would just let the matter drop. Ida muses about how they've been unlucky with witnesses—including Rose, Spicer, Prewitt, and Cubitt. The latter took a train out of town that morning. Ida isn't worried. She has money, thanks to Black Boy, and she's sure that right will triumph in the end.

To many of the characters, including Spicer and Cubitt, the sea's power is a reminder of their own powerlessness. For Ida, on the other hand, it is background music. She is so confident in her own power, she hardly recognizes the strength of anything else. Her Black Boy winnings are only enough to set her up temporarily, but she isn't thinking of anything beyond the immediate future anyway.



Phil wonders how he ever had the courage to send Ida those postcards. She's too much woman for him. He says quietly that he really thinks this whole situation is now clearly one for the police. Ida disagrees. Now is when Pinkie and Rose are sure to crack and do something stupid. She tells him Hale's murder is the business of anyone who knows right from wrong. Phil counters that she's only in it for the fun. She never really cared about Hale, Phil says. Ida doesn't see the problem in that. Phil also suggests, shyly, that the two of them have committed a sin by sleeping together out of wedlock. Ida dismisses that idea out of hand, saying it's just human nature to want to couple and it's fine.

Ida wanted to investigate Hale's death not just because she wanted justice, but because she thought it would breathe some life into her mundane existence, and it has most certainly done that. Her methods, while unorthodox, are justified in her mind because they will lead to criminals being brought to justice. Phil is the quiet voice of reason, but Ida is incapable of hearing him.



Ida is still determined to save Rose, and, while Phil goes to buy her another Guinness, she considers all the people she's saved over the years. The sea pounds at the pier uprights like a boxer's fist against a punch ball. It's a sign of bad weather to come.

Ida is sitting and drinking idly and congratulating herself on saving Rose, but Rose's life is still very much in danger. This is yet another example of Ida's tendency toward cockiness.



PART VII, CHAPTER 7

Pinkie and Rose are with Judy and Dallow at the same café where the men convened the afternoon Hale was killed. Dallow is musing about moving to the country, all four of them. Why not? he says; they probably have sixty years of their lives yet to live. The thought is too much for Pinkie. So is the sight of Ida staring at them across the pier. He asks Rose to take a walk with him and they head to the shooting booth where he won the doll. His aim isn't as good today, though, and he leaves empty handed, suggesting to Rose that they take a ride into the country. He tells the man in the shooting booth that they're headed to Hastings. The man says he doesn't care where they go.

Pinkie and Rose get into the car, headed toward Peacehaven. Rose wonders if Ida was telling the truth, if Pinkie doesn't love her after all. It would be the hardest truth to face. She tells herself it doesn't matter, because she loves him—that's what's important. She tells Pinkie that life isn't so bad, but he disagrees. It's prison, he says, and cancer and kids shrieking from windows. He takes the note Rose wrote to him about never betraying or leaving him and he asks her if she meant it. She says yes, knowing that in doing so she is laying down her life.

Pinkie mumbles the Latin phrase “dona nobis pacem,” and, hearing him, Rose responds that God will never give them peace. She wishes they could just wait a day or even put off attempting suicide until the cops came to take them away, but Pinkie says they have to do it now. He thinks about how, to him, Heaven is just a word but Hell is real. He looks at Rose and sees a mouth hungry for sexual union and breasts ready for a baby. She is a good woman but not good enough; he's brought her down.

Rose feels as if Pinkie is a thousand miles away from her. He sees things she does not about damnation and eternal fire. She realizes that what they're about to commit is the most serious sin of all. The sin of despair cannot be forgiven. Still, she will do it for him. If he is damned, so is she. She vows not to let him face that kind of darkness alone.

Pinkie stops at a pub and recognizes the waiter as Piker, a boy he used to torture back during his school days. Pinkie orders two brandies for himself and Rose and demands that Piker give them some music. He would like to celebrate. Piker turns on the radio and Pinkie and Rose stand awkwardly near a fireplace, sipping their drinks, trying to make conversation. Rose attempts a prayer, but she can't pray; she's in mortal sin.

Dallow's suggestion that he, Judy, Rose, and Pinkie all have sixty years left to live is laughable, since the reader knows that Pinkie is bent on seeing Rose die. The day that Hale was murdered, Pinkie's aim at the shooting booth was true. He couldn't miss. Today, though, he is less sure. This hints that his scheme for Rose to kill herself and leave him free is flawed and will not go as planned.



Rose and Pinkie's separate visions of the world are essentially incompatible. She believes in love's power to save. He sees wretchedness and damnation everywhere, even in family life. Still, for all his cynicism, Pinkie depends on Rose's love and devotion. She, by contrast, knows it would be folly to count on his. Nevertheless, Rose's self-sacrifice verges on being Christ-like.



Pinkie is begging for peace even as he is planning Rose's death. Rose knows that God will always refuse Pinkie's prayer. Peace is not possible when one lives and dies in mortal sin. Pinkie wants not only to be free of Rose but to destroy her chances of becoming a mother, as if he is averse to creation in general. He prefers destruction.



Rose has transferred her devotion from her Christian God to Pinkie, confusing worship of him with good deeds. Her love for him knows no bounds.



For once, Pinkie seeks out music instead of trying to avoid it or tune it out. He is beyond feeling at the moment. He is so focused on his plan that music cannot touch or disturb him. Rose is likewise suspended in a vacuum, but what she is missing is a connection to God, because Pinkie has replaced Him.



Pinkie tells Rose to write a suicide note. It's what's always done, he says, and he would like them to do things the proper way. Then he leaves to find the bathroom. Walking down the passage to the men's room, he thinks about his and Rose's shared history. He hears the radio program pause to announce the **time** and the weather report. Storms are on the way. He watches through a window as the sea rolls over the breakers and thinks of how, soon he'll only have himself to think about. He'll be free. In the bathroom, he loads two bullets into the chamber of a gun he's been keeping in his pocket. He can't help it; he feels a twinge of pity as he readies the weapon.

There is no proper way to commit suicide. Pinkie's insistence on Rose writing a note is simply his way of buying time to duck out and load the gun—and also make her suicide look “natural.” Time, however, is running out, and the relentless rolling of the waves symbolizes the sea's indifference to human life. Pinkie's scheme is no match for the power of nature, and, no matter how hard he tries, his attempts to play God will always fail.



PART VII, CHAPTER 8

Dallow and Judy are still at the Brighton café, waiting for Pinkie and Rose to return. Judy asks who the large woman staring at them is, and Dallow realizes it's the same woman who's been giving Pinkie such a hard time. He walks over and asks Ida what she wants with them. Ida asks him to have a drink with her. Then she informs him that Prewitt was picked up by the police before he could get on the boat. He's been arrested for swindling. Then she says that she's been talking to Cubitt. That's how she knows all about what they did to Hale. She tells Dallow to invite Judy over but he says he'd better not: she's a jealous bitch. Judy comes over anyway, wanting to know what they're talking about.

What Ida tells Dallow about Prewitt is later revealed to be a lie, but Ida has reached what she senses is the final chapter in her investigation and she hopes the falsehood about Prewitt will motivate Dallow to talk. Besides, she has always been willing to lie to get what she wants. That willingness comes from a firm sense that she is in the right and Pinkie and his men in the wrong. Like Pinkie, she believes that the ends justify the means.



Ida offers Dallow twenty pounds. She'd like to have a little chat. Dallow leaves, disgusted. He walks in the direction of the shooting booth, looking for Pinkie. He'd heard shots and thought it was him, but he's nowhere to be seen. The shooting booth attendant tells Dallow that Pinkie and Rose took off for Hastings but he refuses to tell Dallow the time; he's sick of being used for alibis. Dallow listens to the **clock** strike four. He wishes he hadn't had so much beer. He remembers seeing Rose trying to light a fire in Frank's kitchen and feels overcome by a desire to have something Judy can't give him: domestic comforts, mundane happiness.

The clock striking the hour tells Dallow, just as it told Spicer and Cubitt before him, that the time he has spent as a member of Pinkie's gang has gotten him nowhere close to the life he wants. The thought of Rose's sweet, domestic habits convinces Dallow that what he would really like is a wife and the boring day-to-day existence of a happily married man.



Dallow heads for the car park, knowing that Pinkie's Morris won't be there. The attendant tells him Pinkie and Rose took off for Peacehaven for a drink. Dallow is helpless. He knows what Pinkie intends to do; he's left little hints and breadcrumbs everywhere. He turns and Ida is there, telling him to get a car. Dallow says he doesn't have money for it; besides, it's always been his job to follow Pinkie's lead. Ida insists they get a car and drive to Peacehaven right then to stop Pinkie from following through on his plan.

Dallow knows how to kill. He's less knowledgeable when it comes to saving someone. Ida is, as always, a woman of action, but she is hiding from Dallow that she is interested not just in saving Rose's life, but trapping Pinkie into confessing the murders of Hale and Spicer.



PART VII, CHAPTER 9

Pinkie returns to the pub from the bathroom and watches as two posh men eye Rose. He can tell that they're willing to have a go with her, if she's willing, but that they won't take too much trouble because she's not really worth it. Pinkie feels a stirring of anger and possessiveness, seeing the men dismiss Rose so cruelly. He returns and the men clear out, laughing—laughing at him, he thinks. He considers scrapping the entire plan and letting Rose live. It's all gotten so complicated and exhausting. Rose tells him she's written the note he asked her to.

Piker comes in to tell Pinkie he hasn't paid for the drinks. While he goes to pay, Rose is seized with a desire to rebel. She is not, after all, of Pinkie's flesh. She's her own person and she does not need to do what he asks. She can take the gun from him; she can change his mind. There is still hope. She wants to wait until the last possible moment, though, and they get in the car, headed back toward Brighton.

Rose asks Pinkie if he hates her for the fact that they had sex out of wedlock and committed a mortal sin. He tells her he doesn't. It's the truth. He hadn't even hated the act, as he thought he would. As he drives, a heavy and inexplicable emotion overtakes him. He thinks of his school days, of God, of Dallow and Judy's lust, of confession and repentance. He pulls into a side street leading to the ocean and stops the car. They listen to **music** coming from a garage radio and the sea battering a cliff. Rose knows she has to tell Pinkie she won't do it, but she waits as he gives her instructions on how to use the gun and how to fire it.

Rose lets her hope expand. She thinks about how she and Pinkie might go on living for years, long enough to go from meek and good to evil and back again. Pinkie says he will go for a walk. She can go first. Then, when she's finished, he'll take the gun and finish himself off. He kisses her on the cheek and leaves. Rose sits with the gun in her lap, thinking of Sunday school lessons, weighing courage and devotion against self-preservation. She doesn't know at the moment if it would be more virtuous to stand by Pinkie or allow herself to live. She can feel Pinkie's will making her act. She puts the gun to her ear, and just then hears someone splashing through puddles on the road, calling for Pinkie.

Pinkie will never admit to anyone that he values Rose as anything other than an alibi, but his jealousy is proof that he has, in fact, learned to care for her. His willingness to scrap the suicide pact is another indication that he sees Rose as more than just a means to avoid prosecution. Her writing of the suicide note, though, reminds him of his purpose.



Rose is much stronger than anyone realizes. Both Pinkie and Ida underestimate her. She is capable of independent thought and of being her own person. Still, up until this point, it seemed that her wish was to meld with Pinkie, to be a part of him, but now that he wants to die, she considers pulling away.



Pinkie is not without a conscience. The emotion that overtakes him on the drive from the pub to the cliff at Peacehaven is guilt. The music stirs in him an awareness of Rose as an individual apart from him and his needs. Still, his plans are unchanged, perhaps because, if he grows desperate enough, he can always repent and confess, thereby regaining good standing in the church.



Rose's confused Catholicism and her deep and abiding love for Pinkie are complicating what should really be a simple decision. There is no compelling reason for her to kill herself. It is Pinkie who is putting the gun to her head and Pinkie's voice in her brain telling her to go through with the pact. Rose's serious deliberations are made even more tragic by the reader's knowledge that Pinkie only wants to be rid of her.



Rose sees Dallow and Ida coming toward her. They're accompanied by a confused looking policeman. Someone asks her for the gun. She tells them that she threw it away. Pinkie begins yelling at Dallow, calling him a squealer and wondering aloud if he's going to have to kill everyone in sight to put an end to this. Dallow tells him it's no use; the police have Prewitt. Pinkie asks Rose for the gun. She tells him it's gone. Pinkie pulls something from his pocket. There's the sound of breaking glass and then of Pinkie screaming in agony. Steam rises from his face and then he's gone, running off the cliff before anyone can stop him.

PART VII, CHAPTER 10

Ida is back in Henekey's bar, drinking a stout with Clarence. She has told him all about the affair with Hale and Pinkie and Rose. She feels a calm satisfaction with herself. It all turned out just as it should have, she says. There was no other way. She saved Rose, and Pinkie's death was justice being served. She admits that she lied to Dallow about Prewitt—he did, indeed, make it to France—but the ends most certainly justified the means, and at least she can say that she delivered Rose into the safe bosom of her family. Clarence tells Ida she's a terrible woman, but he will admit that she always acts for the best.

Ida returns home to her apartment and calls for Old Crowe, hoping that the two of them can take another turn at the Ouija board. There are no postcards from Phil Corkery waiting for her. She supposes she won't get one of those again, but there is a letter from Tom. Old Crowe joins her at the board. Ida thinks about how it saved Rose's life. What she wants to ask it this time is more personal. She wants to know if maybe she should finally go back to Tom.

PART VII, CHAPTER 11

Rose is in the confessional of her local church. She has told the priest her story, and she says that she doesn't repent anything beyond not killing herself so that she could be with Pinkie in the afterlife. She wants to be damned. Her worry, though, is that if she were to die, she wouldn't be able to find him. One of them might go to Heaven, the other Hell. There are no guarantees. She tells the priest that it's really Ida who should be damned, as she knows nothing of love.

The voice Pinkie heard back in Sherry's on his and Rose's first date now proves to have been prophetic. It is left mysterious whether Pinkie threw the acid on himself deliberately then committed suicide or if the acid spilled was an accident, leading him to run to his death. Suicide is, according to Catholic doctrine, a mortal sin and would doom Pinkie's soul to Hell, where he always assumed he would end up anyway.



Ida has learned very little from her efforts to bring Hale's murderer to justice. She feels no pity for Pinkie and has no compunction about causing grief to Rose, who despises her family and would not look upon being delivered to them as any sort of gift. Clarence is right when he describes Ida as "terrible;" she is a force of nature whose good intentions do not benefit everyone equally.



Ida's giving credit to the Ouija board for saving Rose's life is doubly ironic. The board did very little to solve Hale's murder. It was all Ida. Meanwhile, Rose is far from saved. She wanted only to live in love with Pinkie forever. Now she is cut off from that prospect. Ida, on the other hand, always has her ex-husband's affections to fall back on.



Rose's wish that she were dead and her soul mingling with Pinkie's reveals the depth of her devotion. Her wish that Ida be damned shows that there are limits to her mercy. Rose's love for Pinkie is undoubtedly sincere, but it is also warped by the violence she has experienced.



The priest tells Rose a story about a French man who served in the war and how that man never obeyed the sacraments but was a saint all the same because he sacrificed himself at every moment for his friends. The priest goes on to say that God's mercy is abundant and endless and strange and that Rose should hope and pray and realize that, no matter what her sins, she is never cut off from that mercy. He tells her that Pinkie loved her and that shows that there was some good in him. She hesitantly asks the priest about what might happen if she is carrying Pinkie's child, and the priest tells her to raise her child to be a saint to make up for the sins of his father.

Rose leaves the confessional, heading for Frank's boarding house. She is full of cautious hope. She knows that Snow's will take her back as a waitress and so she will soon be able to support herself and the life she feels certain is growing inside her. At Frank's, she hopes to find the record that Pinkie made for her back at the souvenir booth, the one she asked for on the day of their wedding. She thinks again of the priest's words: "If he loves you..." She is sure she will find proof of that love on the record. The nightmare is over, she thinks, and her troubles are behind her. Little does she know that, when she listens to the record, the horror will begin all over again.

The priest's merciful words echo Rose's own ideas concerning God and faith. Rose believes in a God that forgives. Still, she wonders if her marriage to Pinkie might strain even God's boundless mercy. The spirit of sacrifice embodied by the French soldier highlights Pinkie's extreme depravity. The soldier sacrificed everything for his friends, while Pinkie expected his "friends" to sacrifice everything for him.



It would seem that Rose's chances for happiness are brightening. Even though she is in deep mourning for Pinkie, she takes comfort in the idea that she will soon bear his child. The record, though, will shatter any illusions she might still be clinging to. In the recording, Pinkie called her a bitch and accused her of trapping him. This makes the priest's assurances null and void, because the recording will prove to Rose that Pinkie never loved her.





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