Lord Jim

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF JOSEPH CONRAD

Joseph Conrad was born in Berdychiv, a region that was part of Poland before he was born, was part of Russia at the time he was born, and is today part of Ukraine. Conrad's family, particularly his father, was politically active, with a strong interest in Polish patriotism and reclaiming former Polish land from Russia. Both of Conrad's parents died of tuberculosis by the time he was 11, and he lived for a while with an uncle, then at a boarding school. Eventually, he joined the merchant marines, first for France, then eventually for Britain, which became his home for most of his adult life. Compared to many writers, Conrad began his career later in life, not even becoming fluent in English until his early twenties. He published his first novel, *Almayer's Folly*, in 1895, but he is perhaps best known for the short novel *Heart of Darkness* (1899), followed closely by *Lord Jim* (1900). Conrad wrote several other novels and shorts stories, and in general, his works were very well-received, earning praise from critics and other writers of the time. When he died in 1924, he was one of the most famous writers in the world, and his works remain widely read and adapted.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In addition to being inspired by Joseph Conrad's own career as a merchant marine, *Lord Jim* may have been inspired by a real-life incident involving a ship called the SS *Jeddah*. Like the *Patna* of Lord Jim, the SS *Jeddah*, too, had nearly 800 Muslim passengers going on a pilgrimage who were abandoned by the captain and officers on the ship once the ship began taking on water—only for the ship to survive without sinking. The mate of the *Jeddah* even tried to avoid the scandal by starting a new life for himself working for a chandler in Singapore, similar to what Jim does in the novel. More broadly, *Lord Jim* was influenced by the rise of the British Empire, which was nearing its peak at the time the novel was published. Britain's vast overseas empire connected the world through trade routes to a greater extent than ever before (as shown in the diverse nationalities of the characters in *Lord Jim*), but exploitative colonialist policies had a devastating impact on residents of colonized lands, as *Lord Jim* and several of Conrad's other works show.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Lord Jim is closely connected to Joseph Conrad's other famous work, *Heart of Darkness*, since both are largely told from the perspective of a sailor named Marlow. Conrad's unique writing style is often attributed to the fact that he learned Polish and French before English, and when he was younger, he was particularly interested in Polish Romantic poetry. With *Heart of Darkness* coming out in 1899, Conrad was one of the first major novelists of the literary movement known as modernism, and his work influenced many other modernists, including F. Scott Fitzgerald (*The Great Gatsby*), T. S. Eliot (*The Waste Land*), and Ernest Hemingway (*The Old Man and the Sea*), as well as many other writers since then.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** Lord Jim
- **When Written:** Late 19th century
- **Where Written:** England
- **When Published:** 1900
- **Literary Period:** Modernism
- **Genre:** Adventure Novel, Psychological Novel
- **Setting:** Various ports in Southeast Asia and a remote village called Patusan
- **Climax:** Jim learns that his actions have indirectly caused Dain Waris to be killed.
- **Antagonist:** Gentleman Brown, Jim's own guilt
- **Point of View:** Third Person

EXTRA CREDIT

Famous Last Words. Joseph Conrad, a writer who was fluent in at least three languages, has his name spelled wrong on his tombstone.

First-Name Basis. While many characters in *Lord Jim* are referred to by their last names, Jim is only ever called by his first name—his last name is never revealed.

PLOT SUMMARY

Near the end of the nineteenth century, Jim is a young man in his mid-twenties who is the son of a relatively well-off parson in Britain. There's nothing remarkable about Jim's early life or physical appearance, but he has big dreams of one day going on adventures and making a name for himself, so he starts training to become a sailor.

Eventually, Jim becomes the first mate of a ship called the **Patna**, a steamer that has only a few crew members but 800 passengers who are all religious pilgrims, mostly from poor villages. One night, the *Patna* hits an unseen object in the water.

The damage is extensive, and Jim and the skipper believe the ship will soon sink. The skipper and two engineers decide to save themselves by lowering a lifeboat. Jim feels that these men are cowardly and wants to use the crisis to prove himself as a hero. But before Jim knows it, he finds himself almost unconsciously jumping into the lifeboat, right next to the other deserting crew members.

Jim and the fleeing crewmembers believe that the *Patna* will sink that night, but it doesn't, and the passengers on board are eventually rescued by some French ships. Jim and the other crew members have committed a serious crime by abandoning ship, but Jim is the only one who stays around to face trial. During Jim's trial, a man named Captain Marlow takes an interest in Jim, and Jim notices Marlow in the crowd, as well. Jim and Marlow talk and begin a cautious friendship, with Jim sensitive about any potential insult to his honor and Marlow confused by many of Jim's actions. After a few days of trial, Jim gets a comparatively light sentence: he is stripped of his sailing certifications but is otherwise free to go.

Jim becomes aimless after the trial, having faced the legal consequences of his actions but still feeling haunted by them. With Marlow's help, he gets a series of low-level jobs where he doesn't need certifications, but he runs away from them all, often after someone makes a casual reference to the *Patna* incident. Finally, with the help of Marlow's associate Stein, a world-famous naturalist and a trader with connections to the black market, Jim gets the opportunity to help run a trading post in a remote village called **Patusan**.

Jim's journey to Patusan gets off to a rough start when Rajah Allang, a greedy Malay chief who causes problems for many Patusan locals, particularly the Bugis people led by the elderly Doramin, imprisons him. Eventually, however, Jim manages to escape and form an alliance with Doramin, as well as with Doramin's son, Dain Waris, who has an interest in Europe and will one day inherit Doramin's leadership position.

But brash Jim doesn't stay under Doramin's protection in Patusan; instead, he seeks out Cornelius, the man who previously worked for Stein but had a falling out with him, and Jim takes on Stein's former role. Cornelius is conniving and cruel, particularly to his part-Malay stepdaughter. Jim hates seeing how Cornelius treats his stepdaughter. Eventually, he ends up rescuing her and marrying her, calling her by the name of Jewel. Two years after Jim's arrival in Patusan, Marlow visits and finds that Jim is so well respected by all the locals that they call him "Tuan Jim," meaning "Lord Jim." Marlow begins to believe Jim may have finally mastered his fate and come to terms with his past.

One day, however, a notorious captain known as Gentleman Brown ends up near Patusan by chance. Brown recently stole a Spanish ship and is in desperate need of food to continue his journey, and he and his men plan to ransack Patusan for supplies. Jim is away at the time, but Dain Waris and other local warriors manage to wound some of the invaders. Without Jim's leadership, the villagers of Patusan can't agree on finishing off Brown's men, and so they all remain for a while in a stalemate.

When Jim gets back, Brown sees an opportunity to take revenge on Jim for how the Bugis warriors attacked his men. The double-crossing Cornelius is also looking for revenge on Jim and is eager to help Brown. Brown leads Jim to believe that his men just want peaceful safe passage back to the ocean so that they can leave Patusan for good. Jim agrees with this plan and orders Dain Waris and the others not to attack them. As Brown is leaving, however, he sneaks up on Dain Waris and his men and fires several rounds, for no reason other than to send a message. Dain Waris dies, along with many others.

Doramin is devastated when he learns that his son, Dain Waris, is dead and that Jim was the one who gave the order to let Brown walk free. Jim himself feels extremely guilty—when Jewel tells him that he must be prepared to flee the village or to fight for his life, Jim instead resigns himself to going to Doramin to face judgment for his actions. A grief-stricken Doramin pulls out a gun and shoots Jim in the chest, killing him instantly.

Jewel eventually ends up with Stein, who grows old and begins to prepare to die in his house full of **butterfly** specimens from his days as a naturalist. Marlow learns about Jim's fate one day when he visits Stein's house.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Jim – Jim, the titular character of *Lord Jim*, is a romantic young man in his mid-twenties who dreams of becoming a hero. He forms an unusual friendship with an older sea captain named Marlow and tells him about his shameful past. Jim is the son of a parson and comes from a relatively well-off family, so his need for adventure seems to be driven by a desire to leave behind his comfortable past and create a new future for himself. Eventually, Jim becomes a respected leader in **Patusan**, a remote Malay village, where he marries a mixed-race woman, Jewel, and is known throughout the region as "Tuan Jim," or "Lord Jim." Before this success, however, Jim has many setbacks and must face the cruel reality that his dreams rarely live up to his lived experience. Jim's defining setback happens toward the novel's beginning. Jim is a crew member on a large passenger ship called the **Patna**. One day, the Patna strikes something in the water and starts to sink. Though Jim wants to be a hero and save the ship's passengers, he ultimately flees with the other white sailors. When the *Patna* doesn't sink, Jim and the other crew members are exposed as cowards who abandoned their duty. Jim tries to atone for his shameful actions by standing trial (where he meets Marlow), but even receiving official legal judgment isn't enough to clear Jim's guilty conscience. Feeling

lost and ashamed, Jim drifts from job to job, until finally Marlow makes an arrangement with a man named Stein to have Jim take over a trading post in Patusan. Patusan represents a chance for Jim to redeem himself. When he leads the Bugis people (headed by Doramin and his son Dain Waris) to defeat the dreaded bandit Sherif Ali, he becomes the hero he always dreamed of being. Still, it's not long before Jim makes another human error that leads to Waris's death. Needing to atone for his grave error, he publicly takes responsibility for Waris's death and then dies when Doramin, still grieving his son's death, shoots him. Jim is a complex character who represents the dangers both of holding on to the past and of dreaming too much of the future.

Marlow – Marlow is an older sea captain who narrates Jim's story, first through a monologue he delivers to an audience at a dinner party, then through a series of letters he sends to the privileged reader. Marlow first sees Jim when Jim is standing trial for the **Patna** incident, and Marlow is immediately fascinated by him. On the one hand, Marlow sometimes finds Jim ridiculous, particularly during a moment when Jim flies into a rage because he believes someone called him a "cur," only to realize later that someone is talking about an actual cur (mixed-breed dog) in the crowd. More often, however, Marlow sympathizes with Jim's plight and decides to help Jim get back on his feet after the *Patna* incident. Ultimately, it is through Marlow's connection to a man named Stein that Jim ends up becoming a great leader—Tuan Jim—in the remote Malay village of **Patusan**, at least until Jim makes a final grave error that results in his downfall and death. Marlow represents the difficulty of finding out the truth from any single source. He obsesses over Jim like a biographer, but despite his enduring interest in Jim, he is often forced to piece Jim's life together from fragmentary parts, just as the novel *Lord Jim* is made up of various fragments and narration styles.

Doramin – Doramin is the elderly but steady leader of a group of Malay called the Bugis in **Patusan**, who rebel against the cruel rule of Rajah Allang. Marlow describes Doramin as one of the most impressive Malay men he's ever met, and Jim also admires him, although it's clear that old age has diminished Doramin—he needs help to stand and rarely leaves his village. Doramin's son is Dain Waris, and though Doramin's ultimate goal is to have Dain Waris succeed him, Doramin also takes a fatherly interest in Jim and Jim's growth as a leader—at least until Jim makes a mistake that causes Dain Waris's death. The novel ends with Doramin personally executing Jim with a gunshot to the chest. Doramin embodies history and tradition. His character shows how justice is an important concept in remote parts of the world, even if it takes different forms than European notions of justice.

Dain Waris – Dain Waris is one of the Bugis people from the remote region of **Patusan** and the son of Doramin. He is a spirited warrior who nevertheless controls himself in the presence of his respected father. Out of all the Malays, he is described as the most European-minded, and so it makes sense that he forms a friendship with Jim, who is white and around the same age as Dain Waris. Although Jim poses a potential threat to Dain Waris's future authority, Dain Waris is happy to work with Jim, particularly after Jim's bold strategy helps the Bugis defeat the bandit Sherif Ali. Ultimately, however, Dain Waris's trust in Jim leads him to his own death when Gentleman Brown betrays Jim and Dain Waris dies in an ambush. Dain Waris's death represents the consequences that many in Southeast Asia faced when interacting with white European colonizers.

Stein – Stein is an associate of Marlow's. He's a naturalist and successful trader. Although Marlow describes Stein as one of the most trustworthy people he knows, it's clear that Stein is involved in all sorts of shady business dealings in various parts of the world. Stein is the one who helps Jim get set up at a trading post in the remote Malay village of **Patusan**. Stein went on wild adventures abroad in his youth, but he now plays more of a managerial role, although he still retains some of his boyish looks and vigor, even into his sixties. Stein is a famous naturalist, and the most notable feature of his house is the large collection of **butterfly** specimens. But while the butterflies are perfectly preserved in death, Stein himself eventually gets worn down by old age. One of the book's final images depicts Stein him preparing for death—suggesting that no one's youthfulness can last forever.

Gentleman Brown –Gentleman Brown is a notorious sailor who causes havoc for Jim in **Patusan**, ultimately leading to Jim's death. Marlow meets Brown on Brown's deathbed, and so while the version of events that Marlow hears portrays Brown as someone cunning and daring, the reader should take Brown's version of events with a grain of salt. But even Brown's version of events makes it clear that Brown was a nasty character. At one point, he orders an innocent Malay man to be shot dead, simply to prove how effective Brown's crew's guns are a distance. Later, when Jim shows Brown mercy, Brown returns the favor by ambushing some Malay warriors, killing Dain Waris. This attack accomplishes nothing for Brown—it is simply his way of leaving his mark on the world. Brown represents pure evil in the story, in particular the evil of white men who carelessly exploit and disregard the lives of people in the lands they colonize.

Jewel – Jewel (who is often simply called "the girl") is the part-white, part-Malay stepdaughter of Cornelius and the eventual wife of Jim. Jewel seems to be a nickname, signifying the immense value she has to Jim—but also perhaps the way he makes her a treasure in his fantastical adventures he constructs in his mind. Cornelius treats Jewel cruelly (he was equally cruel to his late wife, Jewel's mother), and this motivates Jim to try to save Jewel. Ultimately, Jim's interest in Jewel sets off a chain of events that leads to Cornelius helping

Gentleman Brown to betray Jim. At the end of the story, Jim chooses to sacrifice his own life for an abstract ideal rather than listening to the advice of his loving wife. Thus, Jewel embodies everything a romantic like Jim seek—but also what he's willing to leave behind to chase his abstract ideals about honor.

Rajah Allang – Rajah Allang is a greedy, dirty-looking Malay man who tries to impose his control over the Bugis people of **Patusan**. While Doramin, Patusan's leader, is a noble leader who remains steady despite his old age, Rajah Allang is a coward who wants to dominate people with arbitrary displays of power—but who gets scared at the slightest threat to his own authority. The Rajah imprisons Jim when he first arrives in Patusan, but eventually the two reach an uneasy working relationship. Arguably, Rajah Allang is a stereotyped caricature without much depth to him, although his inability to overcome his own cowardice provides an interesting parallel to Jim's own struggles with cowardice.

Cornelius – Cornelius is the stepfather of Jewel and Jim's predecessor in working with Stein at **Patusan**. Cornelius is cruel, ugly, and manipulative—although he paints himself as a victim, it's heavily implied that he was cheating Stein during their business relationship and also mistreating his wife. Although Marlow judges Cornelius as a man of no consequence, Cornelius ultimately plays a role in Jim's death (by aiding Gentleman Brown in killing Dain Waris).

The Skipper – The skipper (or captain) of the **Patna** is a white man charged with leading a passenger ship of mostly nonwhite Muslim pilgrims. Jim is the skipper's chief mate. As a leader, the skipper is a total failure: he abandons the ship with no consideration for anyone's life but his own, and then he later refuses to stand trial and face the consequences of his actions. The skipper represents what Jim fears most—the failure to be a hero—but when things get difficult, Jim flees just like the skipper, suggesting that despite the skipper's seemingly exceptional cowardice, he might be more representative of the average person than many would like to admit.

Tamb' Itam – Tamb' Itam is Jim's faithful servant and bodyguard while he lives in **Patusan**. Tamb' Itam loyally watches over Jim. Though Jim becomes famous for his power and invincibility, this reputation is really built on the silent work of Malay people like Tamb' Itam. After Jim makes a mistake that gets Dain Waris killed, Tamb' Itam sticks with Jim and is willing to do whatever it takes to save Jim's life. He embodies loyalty and nobility—perhaps even to a fault.

Sherif Ali – Sherif Ali is a bandit who is an enemy both of Doramin's Bugis people and of Rajah Allang. Jim's daring plan to use cannons against Sherif Ali isn't very tactically sound, but it succeeds in frightening Sherif Ali enough to flee the country, setting the stage for Jim's rise to power in **Patusan**.

Brierly – Captain Brierly is a distinguished captain who is one of the men presiding over Jim's trial. He seems bored and convinced of Jim's guilt during the trial. Marlow, however, who observes Jim's trial with interest, learns that Brierly dies by suicide following the trial. The exact circumstances of Brierly's death are unclear, but it seems that Brierly was depressed and that something about Jim's trial may have triggered him to kill himself. While Jim doesn't technically die by suicide in the book, Brierly's fate foreshadows how Jim and men like him can be self-destructive even if they don't literally take their own lives.

George – Two engineers escape the **Patna** along with the skipper and Jim, but perhaps the most significant engineer is George, the third engineer who dies while attempting to escape the ship. George's fate is ironic—he is older and dies because his weak heart got too much excitement during the escape attempt, suggesting that if he had just done his duty and remained calm, he might have survived the ordeal. Jim trips over George's corpse to escape the *Patna*, and so George represents the dangers of cowardice and the grim future that awaits men like Jim who run away from their problems.

The Privileged Reader – The privileged reader is an unnamed character who is at the dinner party where Marlow tells Jim's story. After the story, he comes up to Marlow and makes racist comments about how Jim sold his soul to brutes (nonwhite people). Marlow responds by sending the man a packet containing letters that tell the end of Jim's story, raising questions about why the privileged reader is the only character in the book who gets to hear the end of Jim's story.

The French Lieutenant – The French lieutenant is a character who witnessed the **Patna** incident without understanding what was going on. Despite his lack of understanding, his account helps fill in some gaps in Jim's story for Marlow. The French lieutenant shows how having an outside perspective can help a person discover come closer to understanding the truth.

Chester – Chester is an excitable Australian man who believes he's found a get-rich-quick scheme with a guano island (guano refers to the excrement of seabirds and bats for use as fertilizer), and he urges Marlow to invite Jim to join this guano expedition. Marlow refuses, Chester goes ahead without Jim, getting himself and his whole crew killed in a hurricane. Chester represents the arrogance and greed of white men in Asia, as well as the potential consequences of following this greed.

The two engineers – The two engineers flee the **Patna** in a lifeboat with the skipper and Jim. They go along with everything the skipper says, including the lies he talks about what happened on the *Patna*, and they worry that Jim might decide to blow their cover. Unlike Jim, they don't appear in court for the *Patna* trial.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Kassim – Kassim is a messenger of Rajah Allang who tries to

scheme with Brown against the Bugis people in **Patusan** but who ultimately becomes little more than a tool for Brown's own schemes.

THEMES

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

FANTASY VS. REALITY

The title character of Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* is, above all, a romantic. When Marlow, the sea captain who relates Jim's story, calls Jim a romantic, he usually means *romance* in the way it's used to describe adventure stories about daring feats at sea or knights in shining armor. Jim comes from a relatively comfortable upbringing, but he has big dreams about going on his own adventures and performing noble deeds. The problem, however, is that Jim's dreams are so big that his real life can't possibly live up to them. Jim's biggest encounter with disillusionment comes during the **Patna** incident, when Jim finds himself on a large passenger ship that seems to be sinking. Jim wants to believe that he's the type of person who would stay on a sinking ship and help rescue people, but when the time comes, he finds himself escaping with a few other cowardly sailors. The reality of Jim's actions is so different from his fantasy of being a hero that he blacks out and can't remember how he escaped. Though the passenger ship miraculously avoids sinking, Jim nevertheless remains haunted by his moment of cowardice when he abandoned innocent people to save his own life.

Marlow believes that Jim isn't so unusual and that many sailors wouldn't live up to their ideals when put to the test—they're just lucky enough to never face such a test. Nevertheless, Jim remains haunted by his failure to live up to his fantasies long after the rest of the world has forgotten about the *Patna* disaster. When Marlow arranges for Jim to go live in the Malay village of **Patusan**, Jim eagerly accepts—not because it's an opportunity to face reality, but because it's a clean slate for him to create a new fantasy. For a while, Jim gets to lead the fantasy life he always dreamed of, becoming a respected leader that many people trust with their lives. But this fantasy life reaches an appropriately dramatic conclusion when Jim makes a judgment error and offers his own life as a sacrifice rather than running away or fighting. Marlow's long retelling of Jim's life is a celebration of fantasy and its ability to drive a person's real life, but it's also a warning of the anguish and misfortune a person can suffer when their real life doesn't live up to their fantasies or when a fantasy goes too far.

JUSTICE AND DUTY

Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* deals with justice both in the strict legal sense, as well as in the harder-to-define moral sense. The first part of the novel largely focuses on the legal trial where Marlow first witnesses Jim. Jim is on trial for failing his duty as a sailor, having abandoned the passengers traveling on the **Patna** in order to save his own life (only to find out later that the *Patna* didn't actually sink). While Jim's accomplices all flee the scene to avoid trial and Jim has ample opportunity to do the same, he nevertheless decides to stand trial and face whatever consequences come of it, even though he doesn't have a high opinion of the people running the court. Ultimately, the court strips Jim of his sailing certifications, but he's otherwise free to go. Although Jim has dutifully fulfilled all of his legal obligations, he nevertheless remains haunted by feelings of guilt. The whole scene of Jim's trial and his lingering feelings of guilt afterward suggest that the concept of justice is much more complicated than what happens in a courtroom.

Later, Jim becomes a respected leader in the remote island village of **Patusan**, which falls well outside any European-inspired legal framework. When Jim makes the mistake of trusting the visitor Gentleman Brown, Brown returns the favor by killing several local villagers, including Dain Waris, the son of the local leader Doramin. Echoing his earlier behavior, Jim decides that instead of running from his error, he will go right to Doramin to face judgment. He is still haunted by his earlier failure to live up to his duty on the *Patna* and perhaps sees an opportunity to make amends. Doramin responds by shooting Jim in the chest, killing him instantly in what amounts to a very different type of justice. Both the bureaucracy of Jim's court case and the blunt violence of Doramin's judgment have a sort of justice to them, but *Lord Jim* shows that determining what's just is never easy and is influenced by who does the judging. Ultimately, then, the novel suggests that there is a difference between institutional justice and true morality—and that the power of the human conscience can be even stronger than the authority of institutions.

RACISM AND COLONIALISM

Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* is a novel about the consequences of racism and colonialism. Race is a controversial topic in Conrad's work, with some critics accusing Conrad of perpetuating racist stereotypes. However, if the reader takes the book at face value, it seems clear that violent European characters like the scoundrel Gentleman Brown are meant to be villains, whereas innocent characters like Jim's part-Malay wife Jewel are meant to inspire sympathy in the reader. The whole reason why European

sailors like Jim and Marlow are in Asian waters is due to colonialism and the desire of many European leaders to extract Asian resources. The novel includes white characters like Chester, who recklessly gets himself and many Asian sailors killed over some guano (seabird excrement used as fertilizer); and Stein, who is clearly involved in crooked (and potentially deadly) dealings in the remote Malay region of Patusan that governments overlook, to hint at the exploitative nature of European colonialism. And Marlow, the sea captain who relates Jim's story, doesn't know the full details of Stein's dealings and seemingly doesn't want to know them, perhaps reflecting how many Europeans preferred to live in ignorance of what went on abroad.

Interestingly, the only character who gets to hear the end of Marlow's story is a man (referred to as the privileged reader) who comes up to Marlow after the first part of his story and makes racist remarks about Patusan. Marlow doesn't tell the privileged reader what to think when he sends him a package about the final events of the story, but the story sets up a clear contrast between Brown, a man who seemingly places no value on Malay life, and Jim, who sacrifices everything to the Malay. While Marlow stops short of endorsing Jim's fanatical dedication to both his ideals and the welfare of Patusan, he nevertheless makes the case that both Jim and the people of Patusan are nobler than a simple plunderer like Brown, who takes things just because he can. The racist, privileged reader could also be seen as a stand-in for real-life readers whose racist views the story may have challenged. Some critics suggest that Conrad doesn't go far enough, and that the presence of characters like Rajah Allang (who is often described as dirty and ugly, embodying the stock character of the villainous "savage") undercuts the book's anti-racist themes. Nevertheless, while it's possible to debate the overall effectiveness of Conrad's arguments against racism and to question his portrayals of Malay characters, *Lord Jim* nevertheless interrogates Europe's relationship with the rest of the world and highlights flaws in the colonialist status quo.

TRUTH AND PERSPECTIVE

Most of Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* is narrated by Marlow, who wants to tell the full and true version of Jim's life. The problem, however, is that Marlow has limited information and so must piece together the truth from multiple sources, not all of which are reliable or fully detailed. Jim, for instance, romanticizes his version of events that he tells Marlow, while Stein is guarded and oblique, and Brown is openly self-serving. The fractured nature of the book itself reinforces the difficulty of finding the truth, with parts of the story told in traditional narration, parts told as a monologue, and parts told in letters. The end of the book takes this to the extreme, with Marlow sending a package containing several different documents—some of them written in different handwriting and one of which contains many stories within stories—to a nameless character who hasn't appeared before and is referred to only as the privileged reader. But the novel's many narrative shifts don't necessarily mean that it's impossible to find out a real, true version of events. Rather, *Lord Jim* explores truth by presenting its subject from many different angles. Marlow's dedication to getting Jim's life story right shows that it may be possible to tell the truth—or at least something close to it—but only after considering many different sources and the potential biases they bring.

SYMBOLS

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

THE PATNA

The *Patna*, the ship where Jim once served as first mate, represents the failures in Jim's life: both his failure to live up to his romantic ideas about himself as well as his failure to let go of the past. When the *Patna* hits an unseen object and begins taking on water, Jim initially thinks that he'll have an opportunity to be a hero. Instead, however, he ends up fleeing the (seemingly) sinking ship with the skipper and the two engineers—abandoning the *Patna* and its 800 passengers to their fate. But when the ship doesn't sink, Jim and the others are exposed as cowards. The Patna incident briefly becomes notorious, and Jim stands trial for his actions and faces a possible death sentence. In the end, though, he gets a relatively minor sentence: he is stripped of his sailing certifications. Though the lenient sentence gives Jim a second chance at life, Jim can't escape his past. Instead, he hops from job to job, fleeing the moment something comes up that reminds him of the *Patna*. Eventually, with help from Marlow and his associate Stein, Jim runs away to the remote Malay village of **Patusan**. But even Patusan isn't far enough away to make Jim forget his past. When a cunning, evil sailor nicknamed Gentleman Brown makes an offhand comment that reminds Jim of the *Patna*, he is so distracted that he makes a series of bad decisions that ultimately ends with his own death. The *Patna* thus symbolizes guilt and the feelings of inadequacy that haunt Jim as he continuously fails to make peace with his failures and put the past behind him.

PATUSAN

Unlike the **Patna**, which is the source of Jim's deep shame, Patusan becomes a new opportunity for Jim that gives him a chance to grow. It symbolizes the positive and negative potential of romantic ideals. Joseph Conrad's works often feature doubles and opposites, and so it makes sense that

the novel pairs and contrasts the *Patna* with the similar-sounding Patusan. Patusan is the first place in the world where Jim is treated with awe and respect—so much so that he earns the title "Tuan Jim" (Lord Jim). The Malay residents of the village see Jim as a legendary figure, exaggerating his positive qualities and seeing Jim in the same romantic way that Jim sees himself. But while Jim flourishes with the encouragement of the residents of Patusan, he also becomes a sort of prisoner, both to his own high ideals and to his sense of responsibility toward protecting the villagers. When Jim fails to protect his friend Dain Waris, he also fails to be the perfect leader that he and his followers expect him to be. As a result, he sees no choice but to sacrifice himself in order to die with honor, all for the sake of satisfying an ideal. Patusan, then, represents both the positive and negative aspects of fantasy: how romantic ideals can bring out the best in a person, but also how being overly committed to ideals can lead to self-destruction.

BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies, specifically Stein's specimens of dead butterflies preserved in jars, symbolize the disparity between the ideal and the real. The character Stein is a naturalist who is famous across Europe for his collections of preserved insect specimens. When he first hears about Jim from Marlow, Marlow calls Jim a "specimen," establishing a link between Jim and the butterflies. Throughout the novel, butterflies function as a mirror for Jim, symbolizing how, counterintuitively, Jim's death at a young age actually helps to preserve him as the ideal, heroic self he has always longed to be. But Jim's early death also suggests the impossibility of ever fully realizing one's dreams—in other words, that Jim must die to live out his heroic dreams suggests that his dreams are unattainable in life.

Stein's collection of insect specimens represents a preserved ideal—they stay pristine, but this purity comes at the cost of the insects dying in the process. As a romantic dreamer, Jim is looking for perfection like the butterfly specimens—the absolute ideal that can't be achieved in real life. Though he might not consider himself to be suicidal, he is ultimately looking to achieve a legendary, ideal status that no mortal can hope to maintain while still alive. The story's ending further establishes this symbolism, contrasting Jim, preserved forever in his youth as the ideal hero (but only after paying with his life) with Stein, who lives a much longer life than Jim, but whose former renown diminishes with old age as he faces his own inevitable mortality.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Signet edition of *Lord Jim* published in 2009.

Chapter 1 Quotes

He was an inch, perhaps two, under six feet, powerfully built, and he advanced straight at you with a slight stoop of the shoulders, head forward, and a fixed from-under stare which made you think of a charging bull. His voice was deep, loud, and his manner displayed a kind of dogged self-assertion which had nothing aggressive in it. It seemed a necessity, and it was directed apparently as much at himself as at anybody else. He was spotlessly neat, apparelled in immaculate white from shoes to hat, and in the various Eastern ports where he got his living as ship-chandler's water-clerk he was very popular.

Related Characters: Jim, Marlow

Related Themes:

Page Number: 1

Explanation and Analysis

These opening lines of *Lord Jim* describe the title character in the story, who at this point is simply known as Jim. Although an older sea captain named Marlow will eventually end up narrating most of the story, the first couple chapters have a third-person narrator. Jim is of average height, and although he has some positive features, like his strength, overall there is nothing particularly remarkable about him—certainly nothing to suggest that he is a "lord." Jim's immaculately clean white clothes are symbolic for two different reasons. On the one hand, they symbolize a clean slate, showing how in his youth Jim had no reputation or marks against him and was free to become whatever type of man he wanted to be. On the other hand, the whiteness of Jim's clothes also signifies his race, which will become important as the story goes on. When Jim becomes a sailor in Southeast Asia, his race makes him conspicuous, visually marking him as a member of the European colonizers who hold many of the leadership roles in the region. This opening passage presents Jim as a sympathetic character while also laying out the flaws that will guide some of his bad decisions in future parts of the novel.

Chapter 2 Quotes

The *Patna* was a local steamer as old as the hills, lean like a greyhound, and eaten up with rust worse than a condemned water-tank. She was owned by a Chinaman, chartered by an Arab, and commanded by a sort of renegade New South Wales German, very anxious to curse publicly his native country, but who, apparently on the strength of Bismarck's victorious policy, brutalized all those he was not afraid of, and wore a 'blood-and-iron' air,' combined with a purple nose and a red moustache. After she had been painted outside and whitewashed inside, eight hundred pilgrims (more or less) were driven on board of her as she lay with steam up alongside a wooden jetty.

Related Characters: Jim, The Skipper, The two engineers

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 9

Explanation and Analysis

This passage gives an early description of a ship called the *Patna*, which will become one of the novel's most important symbols, marking a major turning point in Jim's life. As this description shows, the *Patna* brought together people from all different parts of the globe. This mixing of nationalities suggests a cosmopolitan world that was becoming increasingly interconnected. Nevertheless, despite all these connections, not everyone on board the *Patna* is equal—quite the opposite. The many passengers on the ship have little authority and find themselves at the mercy of crew members like Jim, the skipper, and the engineers. In a way, the *Patna* is a microcosm for colonialism in general, where a handful of powerful, often indifferent or cruel foreigners were tasked with ruling large groups of locals whose ways of life they didn't really understand. Also noteworthy is the rust on the *Patna*, which suggests weakness and signifies the fragility of colonialism and the power imbalance that it represents.

Chapter 3 Quotes

What had happened? The wheezy thump of the engines went on. Had the earth been checked in her course? They could not understand; and suddenly the calm sea, the sky without a cloud, appeared formidably insecure in their immobility, as if poised on the brow of yawning destruction. The engineer rebounded vertically full length and collapsed again into a vague heap. This heap said 'What's that?' in the muffled accents of profound grief. A faint noise as of thunder, of thunder infinitely remote, less than a sound, hardly more than a vibration, passed slowly, and the ship quivered in response, as if the thunder had growled deep down in the water. The eyes of the two Malays at the wheel glittered towards the white men, but their dark hands remained closed on the spokes. The sharp hull driving on its way seemed to rise a few inches in succession through its whole length, as though it had become pliable, and settled down again rigidly to its work of cleaving the smooth surface of the sea. Its quivering stopped, and the faint noise of thunder ceased all at once, as though the ship had steamed across a narrow belt of vibrating water and of humming air.

Related Characters: Jim, The Skipper, The two engineers

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 19

Explanation and Analysis

This passage describes the moment when the *Patna* hits an unseen object at sea. The moment is very confusing for Jim and the other crew members, since any damage to the *Patna*'s hull while would represent a serious problem, raising the possibility that the whole ship could sink. At the same time, however, the *Patna*'s collision with the unseen object is so anticlimactic that it's hard for Jim and the others to feel properly alarmed, given how remote the danger seems. This is the first of many times in the novel when Jim has to face a danger he can't physically see. As a romantic dreamer, Jim likes to have concrete enemies, but the *Patna* teaches him that not every danger is something you can face directly or fantasize about overcoming. The *Patna* begins to take on water from below, perhaps symbolizing how Jim himself is often hurt by thoughts and feelings that he tries to repress by pushing them below the surface.

Chapter 5 Quotes

❝ 'My eyes met his for the first time at that inquiry. You must know that everybody connected in any way with the sea was there, because the affair had been notorious for days, ever since that mysterious cable message came from Aden to start us all cackling. I say mysterious, because it was so in a sense though it contained a naked fact, about as naked and ugly as a fact can well be. The whole waterside talked of nothing else.'

Related Characters: Marlow (speaker), Jim

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 25

Explanation and Analysis

This passage is Marlow's description of when he first saw Jim at Jim's trial about the *Patna* incident. For the next 31 chapters, the third-person narration in the story mostly disappears, with Marlow narrating the events as one long monologue he delivers to a small audience at a dinner party. Marlow's initial interest in Jim was due to scandal. For a brief time, Jim was notorious, and news of the *Patna* seemed to be everywhere. By this point in the novel, the outcome of the *Patna* hasn't been revealed, further increasing the sense of mystery. While it isn't clear at this point what Jim is guilty of, what is clear is that Jim is currently living out his own personal nightmare scenario. As someone who cares about being a hero and earning a good reputation, becoming the subject of an infamous criminal trial is a major blow to Jim, and so this passage establishes the difficult situation Jim finds himself in.

Chapter 6 Quotes

❝ 'He seemed consumedly bored by the honour thrust upon him. He had never in his life made a mistake, never had an accident, never a mishap, never a check in his steady rise, and he seemed to be one of those lucky fellows who know nothing of indecision, much less of self-mistrust. At thirty-two he had one of the best commands going in the Eastern trade—and, what's more, he thought a lot of what he had.'

Related Characters: Marlow (speaker), Jim, Brierly

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 42

Explanation and Analysis

This passage is Marlow's description of Captain Brierly, one of the men who oversees Jim's trial for the *Patna* incident. As Marlow describes Brierly, he is setting up a clear contrast with Jim. Whereas Jim faces a major mishap early in his career that will go on to define the rest of his life, Brierly is the lucky sort of man who never faces the type of test Jim does. Marlow's implication is that perhaps Jim is not really so bad and Brierly is not really so good—perhaps Jim could have risen to a position of honor with better luck, and perhaps Brierly might have made a grave error if he was ever put in a difficult situation. Furthermore, the fact that Brierly one day dies by suicide undercuts his seeming success. Brierly's suicide seems to suggest that a life full of success without challenge is empty, or perhaps simply that no amount of success is enough to help people overcome their inner demons, a theme that will become relevant later in Jim's life.

❝ "I will soon show you I am not," he said, in a tone suggestive of a crisis. "I declare I don't know," I protested earnestly at the same time. He tried to crush me by the scorn of his glance. "Now that you see I am not afraid you try to crawl out of it," he said. "Who's a cur now—hey?" Then, at last, I understood.'

Related Characters: Jim, Marlow (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 55

Explanation and Analysis

This passage describes a scene when Jim gets very angry at Marlow, believing that Marlow has just hurled an insult at him. Marlow is confused, at first, since he has yet to speak to Jim yet at this point. As the two talk, Marlow slowly realizes that Jim believes someone has called him a "cur" (a derogatory term for a despicable person). In reality, someone did say the word cur, but it was directed at a real cur (a mixed-breed dog) that was wandering around the courtroom. This interaction between Jim and Marlow neatly encapsulates two of the most important aspects of Jim's personality. First, he cares a great deal about what other people think about him. Second, in spite of this, he isn't always good at judging what other people really think of

him. Jim's paranoia causes him to think Marlow is insulting him, and this paranoia about his own reputation, while sometimes humorous, will continue hang over all of Jim's actions for the remainder of the story and lead him to make bad decisions and engage in self-destructive behavior.

Chapter 7 Quotes

'I can't tell you whether Jim knew he was especially "fancied," but the tone of his references to "my Dad" was calculated to give me a notion that the good old rural dean was about the finest man that ever had been worried by the cares of a large family since the beginning of the world. This, though never stated, was implied with an anxiety that there should be no mistake about it, which was really very true and charming, but added a poignant sense of lives far off to the other elements of the story. "He has seen it all in the home papers by this time," said Jim. "I can never face the poor old chap."'

Related Characters: Jim, Marlow (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 59

Explanation and Analysis

This passage contains Marlow's reflections on Jim's relationship with his family. While previous sections hinted that Jim came from a relatively well-off background, this passage goes a step further, suggesting that Jim's doting parents may even have spoiled him. Many aspects of Jim's character, like his romantic imagination for adventure, have a boyish quality to them, and so in this context, Jim's devotion to his father makes a lot of sense. As is often the case, what worries Jim most is his own reputation and how the *Patna* incident will affect his father's view of him. Jim's concern for his own reputation is an anxiety that verges on paranoia—certainly it's unlikely that Jim's loyal father will disown Jim over the *Patna* incident. Marlow has the maturity and distance to observe these things, but Jim's youthful passion leads him to interpret events in the most extreme manner possible.

Chapter 9 Quotes

'The last moment had come, as he thought, and he did not move. His feet remained glued to the planks if his thoughts were knocking about loose in his head. It was at this moment too that he saw one of the men around the boat step backwards suddenly, clutch at the air with raised arms, totter and collapse. He didn't exactly fall, he only slid gently into a sitting posture, all hunched up, and with his shoulders propped against the side of the engine-room skylight. "That was the donkey-man. A haggard, white-faced chap with a ragged moustache. Acted third engineer," he explained.

'"Dead," I said. We had heard something of that in court.'

Related Characters: Jim, Marlow (speaker), George

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 80

Explanation and Analysis

This passage comes from Marlow's summary of what Jim told him about the *Patna*. It particularly involves the moment when Jim comes across George, the third engineer on the ship. George's fate during the *Patna* incident is both tragic and ironic. He dies of a heart attack from too much excitement—meaning that if he hadn't gotten worked up and tried to flee the ship, he might not have died. In this way, his selfish attempt to save his own life is ultimately what killed him. Although George is a relatively minor character, he represents an ominous warning to Jim about the dangers of running away. Jim gets this warning loud and clear—when he himself flees the ship, he literally trips of George's corpse, getting tangled in his legs. Nevertheless, Jim doesn't internalize the lesson, and despite George's warning, Jim continues to run away from problems in his own life, both literally and metaphorically.

'"I had jumped . . ." He checked himself, averted his gaze. . . . "It seems," he added.'

Related Characters: Jim, Marlow (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 83

Explanation and Analysis

In this quote, Marlow recalls how Jim confessed to him the moment that he jumped off the *Patna*. Though he is sometimes headstrong, in moments of crisis, Jim panics and becomes indecisive. Even the memory of a crisis can cause Jim to speak in unfinished or broken sentences, as he does here. The moment Jim jumps is the hardest part of the story for him to recall because it is the decisive moment when Jim chose to be a coward and abandon his duty. In spite of his guilt, however, Jim still can't picture his past self actually being cowardly enough to jump. He uses vague language like "it seems" as if he is an outside observer on his own past actions, instead of the one who was actually there. Although Jim feels guilt for his actions in the past, he simultaneously finds it difficult to accept what he did.

Chapter 13 Quotes

❝ '"Pray—tell me," he began, coming up ponderously, "what was there at the bottom of this affair—precisely (au juste)? It is curious. That dead man, for instance—and so on."'

Related Characters: Marlow, The French Lieutenant (speaker), Jim, George

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 109

Explanation and Analysis

This quote comes from Marlow's recollection of his conversation with a French lieutenant who helped rescue the *Patna* after Jim and the other crew members abandoned it. Although the French lieutenant is an eyewitness to the events that took place on the ship, he is also an outsider who hasn't heard about the scandal and court case surrounding the *Patna*. Interestingly, because the French man has little prior knowledge about the incident, he assumes that the dead man George is the most important part of the scandal. For the French man, the event that changed the whole course of Jim's life was just a standard, not especially memorable job. One of the defining features of the novel is how it incorporates multiple perspectives and has stories within stories, and the French lieutenant helps to provide an outside perspective that contrasts with Marlow's own perspective on Jim (since Marlow's bias is that he knows Jim and actively wants him to succeed).

Chapter 14 Quotes

❝ 'I said nothing. I had a rapid vision of Jim perched on a shadowless rock, up to his knees in guano, with the screams of sea-birds in his ears, the incandescent ball of the sun above his head; the empty sky and the empty ocean all a-quiver, simmering together in the heat as far as the eye could reach. "I wouldn't advise my worst enemy . . ." I began.'

Related Characters: Marlow (speaker), Jim, Chester

Related Themes:

Page Number: 126

Explanation and Analysis

This quote describes Marlow's recollection of when the Australian entrepreneur Chester offers an unusual new job for Jim. Chester believes that he has stumbled onto a goldmine in the form of an untapped island full of guano (bat and bird excrement that was valuable primarily because it made excellent fertilizer). Marlow, however, is less convinced about the value of Chester's proposition or even whether the island exists at all. Furthermore, he can't see the appeal of the situation for Jim. Chester is a businessman just looking to make a profit—not the sort of person who'd make a good match with a romantic like Jim. Guano, which is literally feces, represents the dirty nature of such a profit-driven business. Ultimately, Marlow's bad feeling about Chester is vindicated when Chester and his crew disappear at sea, presumably killed in a hurricane. Chester represents the recklessness of many colonialists and how greed encouraged men to do crazy things.

Chapter 17 Quotes

❝ 'But as to me, left alone with the solitary candle, I remained strangely unenlightened. I was no longer young enough to behold at every turn the magnificence that besets our insignificant footsteps in good and in evil. I smiled to think that, after all, it was yet he, of us two, who had the light. And I felt sad. A clean slate, did he say? As if the initial word of each our destiny were not graven in imperishable characters upon the face of a rock.'

Related Characters: Marlow (speaker), Jim

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 140

Explanation and Analysis

In this quote, Marlow reflects on the concept of a clean slate, which is what Jim wants most of all in the world after his trial about the *Patna*. Jim is still young and excitable, and so when Marlow hints that he might have an opportunity for Jim to start over again, Jim pounces on it. While Marlow is happy to help Jim and wants the best for Jim, a part of Marlow also believes that it's not really possible to give anyone a clean slate. The question of whether Marlow really is correct about the impossibility of starting over hangs over the rest of the novel. Initially, at least, it seems that Marlow is right: as much as Jim tries to throw himself into new jobs, he finds himself unable to escape his past and his guilt. This passage sets up Jim as a believer in free will, someone who believes that a man is in charge of his own destiny, while simultaneously casting Marlow as someone who believes more in inevitability and fate.

Chapter 19 Quotes

"All this was in the past, but I knew the story of his life and the origin of his fortune. He was also a naturalist of some distinction, or perhaps I should say a learned collector. Entomology was his special study. His collection of Buprestidae and Longicorns—beetles all—horrible miniature monsters, looking malevolent in death and immobility, and his cabinet of butterflies, beautiful and hovering under the glass of cases on lifeless wings, had spread his fame far over the earth. The name of this merchant, adventurer, sometime adviser of a Malay sultan (to whom he never alluded otherwise than as "my poor Mohammed Bonso"), had, on account of a few bushels of dead insects, become known to learned persons in Europe, who could have had no conception, and certainly would not have cared to know anything, of his life or character. I, who knew, considered him an eminently suitable person to receive my confidences about Jim's difficulties as well as my own.'

Related Characters: Marlow (speaker), Jim, Stein

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 153

Explanation and Analysis

This quote is Marlow's description of his associate Stein. After Jim runs away from several previous jobs that Marlow helped him get, Marlow decides to introduce Jim to Stein, perhaps believing that the two of them have some traits in common. Indeed, Stein has a taste for adventure and travel, and in many ways, he represents the sort of man Jim would like to become by the time he reaches Stein's age. Stein has a great reputation for his skill as a naturalist—something Jim envies due to his own lack of a wider reputation. Although Marlow considers Stein a friend, he is less impressed by his accomplishments, sarcastically referring to all his nature specimens as "a few bushels of dead insects" and noting that people in Europe *only* care about Stein's reputation, not the man himself. Stein serves an important role in the plot, bridging the gap from the first part of the story involving the *Patna* to the second part of the story which takes place in the village of Patusan. This passage also introduces another of the book's key symbols, butterflies. Butterflies symbolize the ideal of nature—something that Jim aspires to, but which no human can quite achieve.

Chapter 20 Quotes

"To tell you the truth, Stein," I said with an effort that surprised me, "I came here to describe a specimen. . . ."

'"Butterfly?" he asked, with an unbelieving and humorous eagerness.

'"Nothing so perfect," I answered, feeling suddenly dispirited with all sorts of doubts. "A man!"

Related Characters: Marlow, Stein (speaker), Jim

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 160

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Marlow recalls a conversation he had with Stein about Jim's potential future working for Stein in his trading business. When Marlow jokingly refers to Jim as a specimen, Stein immediately assumes that he is referring to the butterfly specimens on which Stein built his reputation as a naturalist. For Marlow, Jim is much more than just a specimen—he is a friend and even something like a son—but Marlow nevertheless studies Jim and picks over the details of his life as if Jim were a specimen.

For Stein, the similarities between Jim and a specimen are even greater. Just as Stein's specimens earn him a reputation in Europe, Jim's role in Patusan will increase Stein's reputation there, with Jim acting as Stein's local representative. Stein seems to be involved in illicit business dealings, and while he is not necessarily conniving, he's

certainly pragmatic, detached, and willing to sacrifice personal morals for personal gain. Where Jim's previous bosses sometimes got too close with him, Stein keeps his distance—in fact, he's usually many miles away. This relationship with Stein provides a new framework for Jim to test himself and try to start his life over again.

Chapter 21 Quotes

'I don't suppose any of you have ever heard of Patusan?' Marlow resumed, after a silence occupied in the careful lighting of a cigar. 'It does not matter; there's many a heavenly body in the lot crowding upon us of a night that mankind had never heard of, it being outside the sphere of its activities and of no earthly importance to anybody but to the astronomers who are paid to talk learnedly about its composition, weight, path—the irregularities of its conduct, the aberrations of its light—a sort of scientific scandal-mongering. Thus with Patusan.'

Related Characters: Marlow (speaker), Jim, Stein

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 164

Explanation and Analysis

This passage is how Marlow describes Patusan, the remote Malay village where Jim is sent in order to help run a trading post for Marlow's associate Stein. Marlow describes Patusan as a place of confusion but also as a place of possibility. Patusan is a fictional location, and Marlow describes it in terms that border on fantastical, as if Patusan were so isolated that it's not bound to the normal laws of physics. This light touch of fantasy recalls both the imaginative way that Jim looks at the world as well as how in general Europeans looked to Southeast Asia and other distant parts of the world as places full of mystery. Perhaps the reason why Conrad invented a fictional country was because Patusan is not just a place that Jim travels to but also a representation of his mental journey as he tries to rebuild his life after the *Patna* incident.

Chapter 22 Quotes

'The conquest of love, honour, men's confidence—the pride of it, the power of it, are fit materials for a heroic tale; only our minds are struck by the externals of such a success, and to Jim's successes there were no externals. Thirty miles of forest shut it off from the sight of an indifferent world, and the noise of the white surf along the coast overpowered the voice of fame.'

Related Characters: Marlow (speaker), Jim

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 171

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Marlow describes the geography of Patusan. Being a slightly mythical place, Patusan blends the internal and the external, representing on the outside things that Jim is thinking on the inside. Jim's shame after the *Patna* incident leaves him feeling isolated, and so he feels that the only logical course of action is to go to a place that's as physically isolated as he feels. Jim struggles throughout the early part of the novel with his concern about how the wider world views him, but Patusan neatly solves this problem—in a place as isolated as Patusan, there is no wider world. This makes Jim's situation in Patusan a little ironic: while he finally achieves the success that he dreamed of when he was a boy, his striving for success was motivated by a desire to impress people around him, and Patusan is so isolated that even the most famous person in the region could be totally unknown to the outside world.

Chapter 25 Quotes

'"This is where I was prisoner for three days," he murmured to me (it was on the occasion of our visit to the Rajah), while we were making our way slowly through a kind of awestruck riot of dependants across Tunku Allang's courtyard. "Filthy place, isn't it?"'

Related Characters: Jim, Marlow (speaker), Doramin, Rajah Allang

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 189

Explanation and Analysis

This quote is Marlow's recollection of his visit to Jim in Patusan when they meet Rajah Allang. Rajah Allang is an evil character who cruelly oppresses the nearby Bugis people (whom Doramin leads). Yet despite Rajah Allang's cruelty and the fear he inspires in those around them, he is also a coward who gets scared at the first sign of a foe who might fight back. Although Rajah Allang captures Jim and has the opportunity to kill him, Jim challenges the Rajah by escaping. This escape attempt, combined with Jim's unusual status as a white European foreigner, causes the Rajah to regard Jim with cautious respect. Arguably, the "filthy" Rajah is a one-dimensional racial stereotype of how some British people viewed foreigners, and his presence in the novel could be used as evidence that Conrad still had some of his own prejudices, despite the anti-racist themes that are present elsewhere in the book.

Chapter 26 Quotes

❝ 'Doramin was one of the most remarkable men of his race I had ever seen. His bulk for a Malay was immense, but he did not look merely fat; he looked imposing, monumental. This motionless body, clad in rich stuffs, coloured silks, gold embroideries; this huge head, enfolded in a red-and-gold headkerchief; the flat, big, round face, wrinkled, furrowed, with two semicircular heavy folds starting on each side of wide, fierce nostrils, and enclosing a thick-lipped mouth; the throat like a bull; the vast corrugated brow overhanging the staring proud eyes—made a whole that, once seen, can never be forgotten. His impassive repose (he seldom stirred a limb when once he sat down) was like a display of dignity.'

Related Characters: Marlow (speaker), Jim, Doramin, Rajah Allang

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 196

Explanation and Analysis

This passage is Marlow's description of Doramin, the leader of the village in Patusan near where Jim is staying. Marlow's description of Doramin contrasts sharply with the earlier description of Rajah Allang. Whereas the Rajah was dirty and had an ugly physical appearance to match his greedy personality, Doramin looks like a statue, representing his just and steadfast style of leadership. While one may cite Conrad's offensive portrayal of the Rajah as evidence of potential bias and ethnocentrism, Doramin's character could suggest that Conrad was trying to dispel European colonizers' racist beliefs about the perceived inferiority of people in colonized countries. While it is still possible to criticize Conrad's portrayal of Malays like Doramin—even positive characters can contain stereotypes—Doramin is nevertheless a complex character in the novel, in part due to the unusual contrast between his powerful spirit as a leader and his weakening physical body.

Chapter 27 Quotes

❝ 'The popular story has it that Jim with a touch of one finger had thrown down the gate. He was, of course, anxious to disclaim this achievement. The whole stockade—he would insist on explaining to you—was a poor affair [...]; and, anyway, the thing had been already knocked to pieces and only hung together by a miracle. He put his shoulder to it like a little fool and went in head over heels. Jove! If it hadn't been for Dain Waris, a pock-marked tattooed vagabond would have pinned him with his spear to a baulk of timber like one of Stein's beetles. The third man in, it seems, had been Tamb' Itam, Jim's own servant. This was a Malay from the north, a stranger who had wandered into Patusan, and had been forcibly detained by Rajah Allang as paddler of one of the state boats. He had made a bolt of it at the first opportunity, and finding a precarious refuge (but very little to eat) amongst the Bugis settlers, had attached himself to Jim's person. His complexion was very dark, his face flat, his eyes prominent and injected with bile. There was something excessive, almost fanatical, in his devotion to his "white lord."'

Related Characters: Marlow (speaker), Jim, Dain Waris, Stein, Tamb' Itam, Sherif Ali

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 204

Explanation and Analysis

This passage is Marlow's description of how Jim earned a legendary status in Patusan—how he finally became Tuan (Lord) Jim. While Jim often sets expectations for himself that he can never live up to, the Bugis people go even further, attributing powers to Jim that no mortal could ever have. While Patusan is supposedly a blank slate for Jim to start his life over, to some extent the reverse is true, and the people of Patusan treat Jim himself as a blank slate for their

own hopes and dreams.

Marlow is quick to note that behind Jim's exploits, like his defeat Sherif Ali, there are often capable Malay warriors like Dain Waris and Tamb' Itam. These Malay men aren't manipulating Jim—the relationship is mutually beneficial because Jim's symbolic role as a figurehead helps unite the people of the village against opposition. As this passage illustrates, the difference between real power and illusory power is not always clear cut—and sometimes the mere appearance of power is just as effective as the real thing.

Chapter 28 Quotes

'Next day, talking casually with the people of the little native court of the place, I discovered that a story was travelling slowly down the coast about a mysterious white man in Patusan who had got hold of an extraordinary gem—namely, an emerald of an enormous size, and altogether priceless.'

Related Characters: Marlow (speaker), Jim, Jewel, Cornelius

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 212

Explanation and Analysis

This quote by Marlow describes a rumor he heard during his visit to Jim in Patusan. Marlow heard the story of a white man who had gotten his hands on a jewel and mistakenly assumed that Jim had found an emerald somewhere— but in fact, the message got garbled, and it turned out that Jim actually married a woman he calls Jewel. In addition to proving yet another example of how Jim's legend grew to be larger than life, the confusion over "Jewel" versus a "jewel" shows how Jewel herself is sometimes treated more as a prize than a person. Cornelius, Jewel's evil stepfather, is the worst offender, treating her as a burden and always calculating what she costs him. Although Jim treats Jewel much better, showing real affection toward her on their evening walks, she is arguably even more important for him as an *ideal* than as a person. When Jim saves Jewel from Cornelius, he is not only helping a woman he loves, but he is also getting to live out his fantasy of being a hero. In other words, Jim's love for Jewel is tied up with how she makes him feel like a hero.

Chapter 29 Quotes

'This was the theory of Jim's marital evening walks. I made a third on more than one occasion, unpleasantly aware every time of Cornelius, who nursed the aggrieved sense of his legal paternity, slinking in the neighbourhood with that peculiar twist of his mouth as if he were perpetually on the point of gnashing his teeth.'

Related Characters: Marlow (speaker), Jim, Jewel, Cornelius

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 1

Explanation and Analysis

This passage is a scene that Marlow recalls from his visit to Jim and Patusan. Marlow paints an interesting scene with the tranquility and Jim and Jewel's new love threatened by the lurking Cornelius. Cornelius, Jewel's evil stepfather, is a cruel, petty man who resents Jewel just for existing (perhaps in part because he is not her biological father). For most of the novel, Cornelius seems impotent in his rage. Indeed, Marlow describes him at one point as a man of no consequence, someone who couldn't disturb Jim's happy life even if he tried. Still, Marlow's judgments are not always accurate, and, at times, Marlow seems to say things that he *hopes* are true—even if they aren't actually true. Although this scene seems to confirm Jim's triumph over his fate and his past, it nevertheless foreshadows that Jim's happiness could one day be undone.

Chapter 33 Quotes

'Why did I come, then? After a slight movement she was as still as a marble statue in the night. I tried to explain briefly: friendship, business; if I had any wish in the matter it was rather to see him stay. . . . "They always leave us," she murmured. The breath of sad wisdom from the grave which her piety wreathed with flowers seemed to pass in a faint sigh. . . . Nothing, I said, could separate Jim from her.'

Related Characters: Marlow, Jewel (speaker), Jim

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 235

Explanation and Analysis

This passage is Marlow's retelling of a conversation he had with Jewel during his visit to Jim in Patusan. When Jewel and Marlow are alone, Jewel asks him a question that has clearly been bothering her for a while: can she trust Jim to stay with her in Patusan. Although Jewel has lived a comparatively sheltered life, she intuitively understands the practice of colonialism, which involves Europeans arriving in foreign areas, taking what they want, and then leaving as soon as they have what they want—with no regard for the welfare of the indigenous populations whose resources they have extracted. Jewel and Marlow both want to believe that Jim is an exception and that he will break the mold of a typical European. Instead of just extracting resources from Patusan, they hope he will stay to form a real relationship with Patusan's people. During the *Patna* affair, Jim sides with the white crew members and abandons the ship's Muslim passengers, suggesting that Jewel's fears about Jim are valid. Nevertheless, Marlow seems to believe in Jim's potential for change, or at the very least, he says so in order to reassure Jewel.

Chapter 36 Quotes

❝ With these words Marlow had ended his narrative, and his audience had broken up forthwith, under his abstract, pensive gaze. Men drifted off the verandah in pairs or alone without loss of time, without offering a remark, as if the last image of that incomplete story, its incompleteness itself, and the very tone of the speaker, had made discussion in vain and comment impossible. Each of them seemed to carry away his own impression, to carry it away with him like a secret; but there was only one man of all these listeners who was ever to hear the last word of the story. It came to him at home, more than two years later, and it came contained in a thick packet addressed in Marlow's upright and angular handwriting.

Related Characters: Jim, Marlow, The Privileged Reader

Related Themes:

Page Number: 256

Explanation and Analysis

This passage ends over 30 chapters of Marlow's mostly uninterrupted narration, with the third-person narrator taking over storytelling duties once again. Marlow's break is short lived, however. Although Marlow is no longer telling a story aloud, the remainder of the book primarily involves a long story that he tells through a packet of letters he sends to a "privileged reader," a man who heard Marlow relate the beginning of Jim's story at the dinner party. Marlow's decision to only tell the end of Jim's story to a single person perhaps reflects Marlow's own unusual sense of humor. Marlow doesn't send his letter to the best listener to his story—instead he picks a man whose Eurocentric beliefs make him skeptical about the value of Jim's actions in Patusan. Marlow's decision to finish telling his story to a skeptical audience could be viewed as Conrad's own intention to challenge people who had different viewpoints.

Chapter 44 Quotes

❝ 'Thus Brown balanced his account with the evil fortune. Notice that even in this awful outbreak there is a superiority as of a man who carries right—the abstract thing—within the envelope of his common desires. It was not a vulgar and treacherous massacre; it was a lesson, a retribution—a demonstration of some obscure and awful attribute of our nature which, I am afraid, is not so very far under the surface as we like to think.'

Related Characters: Marlow (speaker), Jim, Doramin, Dain Waris, Gentleman Brown, The Privileged Reader

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 309

Explanation and Analysis

This passage, which comes from Marlow's letter to the privileged reader, describes perhaps the most pivotal moment in the story. "Gentleman" Brown is a notorious sailor who wanders into Jim's story seemingly by chance. He is a cruel but cunning man, looking to dominate anyone who crosses his path—unlike Jim who, as a leader, worries constantly about how he treats the people whose lives he's responsible for. The Bugis people of Patusan greatly outnumber Brown's forces and could defeat them handily, should Jim instruct them to do so. Jim, however, still can't let go of his heroic dreams, and so he decides that the noblest thing to do is to let Brown go free.

But Brown lacks Jim's sense of honor, and so he responds to Jim's show of mercy by ambushing and killing several Bugis warriors, including Dain Waris, Doramin's son. Brown's attack accomplishes nothing practical for him—he gains no power Patusan and has no plans to ever come back. The attack is purely for revenge—a "lesson," as Marlow

describes it. While Brown's actions might seem horrific, Marlow argues that perhaps many people have the capability within them to do similarly horrific things. Ultimately, the scene of the white Brown shooting down surprised Malays is a clear symbol of the horrors of colonialism.

Chapter 45 Quotes

❝ 'Who knows? He is gone, inscrutable at heart, and the poor girl is leading a sort of soundless, inert life in Stein's house. Stein has aged greatly of late. He feels it himself, and says often that he is "preparing to leave all this; preparing to leave . . ." while he waves his hand sadly at his butterflies.'

September 1899—July 1900.

Related Characters: Marlow (speaker), Jim, Doramin, Dain Waris, Stein, Gentleman Brown, Jewel, The Privileged Reader

Related Themes: 

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 318

Explanation and Analysis

This passage concludes Marlow's long letter to the privileged reader and also the novel as a whole. Feeling responsible for Brown's murder of Doramin's son (Dain Waris), Jim goes to Doramin to face judgement. Nobody forces Jim to go—in fact, Jewel and Jim's bodyguard, Tamb' Itam, both urge him to either flee or prepare to fight for his life. But just as Jim didn't flee from the court case of the *Patna*, he also doesn't flee from Doramin's judgment. In response, Doramin shoots Jim in the chest, killing him instantly.

Marlow doesn't offer much definitive judgment about the end of Jim's life. It's unclear whether Jim's death shows that he has finally succeeded in facing his demons—or if submitting to Doramin's judgment is just another way for Jim to run away from his problems. On the one hand, Jim still had a lot to live for, and his desertion of Jewel is perhaps the worst part of his decision to turn himself in and accept his fate. On the other hand, the very last lines of the novel about Stein and his butterflies suggest a different side to the story. Stein lived a more successful life than Jim did, at least when it came to adventure and reputation. But while Stein ran from old age for a while, it finally caught up with him. The end of the novel suggests that all humans will inevitably succumb to human fallibility, death, and decay, but it leaves open the question of whether it's better to willfully and heroically accept that fate like Jim or to have a slower, more controlled burn like Stein.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

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

CHAPTER 1

There's a man who is a little under six feet tall, with a strong build, and a deep, loud voice. He wears all white and is a water clerk who sails around Asia. Water-clerk isn't a position with a lot of technical qualifications, but it requires certain talent and street smarts. Good water-clerks are rare and so worth a lot to captains at sea. Although this man does good work, he often departs quickly after completing jobs. Most simply call him Jim. Jim, who is white, will eventually leave behind white men and live in a jungle village with Malays, who call him Tuan Jim—Lord Jim.

The opening paragraphs of Lord Jim *establish the title character as someone who isn't particularly remarkable—he is average height and doesn't come from noble birth, but he also doesn't have to face any adversity growing up. He doesn't sound at all like a lord, and indeed, the* title Lord Jim *is supposed to be partly humorous with "lord" being a very fancy title but "Jim" being a very informal-sounding name.*

Jim grew up on a parsonage, where his father ministered to rich people, and he had four brothers. From an early age, he showed an aptitude for sailing. He liked to imagine himself in heroic situations, saving people from drowning or fighting with "savages" on distant shores.

From childhood, Jim already displays the trait that will define the course of his life: his romantic imagination. Though Jim's childhood doesn't receive much detail in the novel, it is an important time for Jim because his childish fantasies drive many of his adult decisions.

Back in the present, it's dusk on a rainy, windy day in winter. Ahead of the training ship that Jim is on, two other ships crash into each other. Jim wants to live out his fantasy of saving people in the other boats, but he is too slow to react. He knows he looks like a coward but feels that at least he learned something useful for the next time he has the chance to be a hero.

During a moment of truth, Jim fails to rise to the occasion and become a hero. This brief incident reveals two important truths about Jim: he often fails to act under pressure—but even his failures don't stop him from picturing himself as a romantic hero.

CHAPTER 2

Jim trains for two years. When he finally goes to sea, he's disappointed to find that the experience doesn't match up with his fantasy adventures. Also, while life at sea is sometimes dangerous, the dangers are often vague and mundane—like when a spar falls and hits his leg, leaving him unable to walk normally for a long time.

As Jim transitions from boyhood to adulthood, he learns that the dangers of the adult world are less exciting than he anticipated—but no less dangerous. He learns the hard truth that even mundane things like a falling spar can be a danger to his health.

At port somewhere in Asia, Jim goes to a hospital for his leg injury. Eventually, he learns how to walk again and begins hanging around near the city's dock, where other sailors congregate. Some sailors are brave and have an air of mystery, but most just seem like lazy white men who are eager to force their work on Asian or Arabic subordinates. Jim begins to hate this second group.

Jim's story takes place during the height of the British Empire, when European sailors traveled the world extract resources to take back to their home countries. Jim correctly sees the exploitative nature of this arrangement, but his own actions don't always align with his beliefs.

Jim takes a new job as chief mate on a boat called the *Patna*, which is owned by a Chinese man, chartered by an Arab man, and commanded by a German man who claims to dislike his home country. The ship carries 800 travelers, many of them poor Asian people leaving behind rural lives in the hopes of starting anew. The Arab man in a white gown and big turban who is chartering the boat arrives with several servants, and soon the *Patna* sets off. The five white people on board live separately from the 800 passengers, although they can hear them.

The multinational makeup of the owners, crew, and passengers of the Patna *reflects how the world was becoming more interconnected at the time Conrad* wrote Lord Jim *(late 1800s). It also reflects an increasing divide between the haves and have-nots—while some non-Europeans like the Arabic man who charters the boat can obtain positions of authority, many people were like the 800 pilgrims, forced by their desperate situations to put their trust in the hands of foreign men like Jim and the other crew members.*

CHAPTER 3

One night on the journey of the **Patna**, all is still, and Jim feels at peace. He paces and looks around at the passengers. He dreams more of the heroic things he would do if he got the chance. He also finds the ship's other officers repulsive and ugly in various ways, and many of them drink a lot. Suddenly, despite the seeming calm, the ship jerks. There's a low rumble like thunder that builds for a moment while the boat quivers, then it all stops.

The calm sea reflects the dreamy nature of Jim's fantasies about being a hero. But just as Jim's leg was injured by a falling spar when Jim least expected it, his fantasies here are interrupted by an unseen obstacle that collides with the boat. While lost in fantasy, Jim is oblivious to real dangers around him.

CHAPTER 4

A month after the events of the previous chapter, Jim gives testimony in a police court about how the **Patna** went over whatever it hit very easily. It's a bright day outside the courtroom. Jim goes on to tell the court how, after the *Patna* ran over whatever it hit, he says he did not expect damage and was ordered by his captain not to tell others and potentially cause a panic. As he inspected the ship, however, he heard splashing in the forepeak and found evidence of a big hole.

This novel frequently skips around in time and uses experimental narrative techniques. While stories have been told out of chronological order since ancient times, Conrad took these time jumps to a new level, as did many other writers who were part of the late-19th- and early-20th-century literary movement known as modernism.

Still in court, Jim describes reporting the issue to his captain, delivering his testimony as carefully and accurately as possible. The skipper confirmed that the damage was serious then angrily started bossing and pushing people around. But the courtroom is uncomfortably hot, and he struggles to tell the events as he wants to.

Jim struggles to tell his story because he wants to tell a version that will paint himself in the best light, but as he tells the events, he realizes that there's no way to make himself look like a hero while still staying true to what actually happened.

There's a mix of races of people in the crowd, but Jim happens to notice a white man who is sitting apart from the others and watching everything with interest. Jim feels like he's seen this white man before, although he's sure he's never spoken with him. It turns out the man is named Marlow. Marlow will remember this encounter with Jim for a long time.

Marlow is a character who previously appeared in Conrad's novella Heart of Darkness *(which was published just a year earlier, in 1899). The events of the two novels are unconnected, although there is a thematic link between the two books, since they both explore the effects of colonialism.*

CHAPTER 5

After dinner at a party, Marlow tells a group of people that he remembers going to an inquiry about the **Patna**. He begins telling a very long story of Jim's life. Marlow says there's something about him that makes over men want to loosen up and tell him their stories. Marlow says he's often asked to re-tell these stories after dinner at parties and that the story of Jim is an easy enough one to tell after a big meal.

Chapter 5 through the beginning of Chapter 36 is almost entirely one long monologue by Marlow, and so there are whole entire chapters that take place inside quotation marks. Within Marlow's monologue, there are often stories within stories, and this creates a complex tapestry that illustrates how the truth can look different from multiple perspectives.

Marlow says Jim's case was notorious, since everyone in the local area connected to the sea was there. Marlow doesn't explain what the case was about at first—he just gives details about what it was like being there to witness it after having heard sailors talking about the **Patna**. When Marlow gets his first view of Jim in court, he's surprised at how comfortable Jim appears discussing the *Patna*—he can't tell whether Jim is oblivious or callous. Marlow knows little about sailing but says Jim looks like someone who should be left in charge on deck.

Marlow (and by extension Conrad) withholds vital information from the reader—it isn't clear at this point why Jim is in so much trouble. Partly, this is because the specifics of the Patna *incident aren't the most important part of the story right now. What is important is that society has judged Jim guilty of doing something wrong, and Jim has decided to face the consequences and try to defend himself.*

Marlow remains obsessed with the **Patna**. He speaks with one of the two engineers from the ship who had to be hospitalized. He believes that the ship sank and that when it did, it was full of reptiles, specifically millions of pink toads as big as dogs. Marlow, however, says this is a lie, and the ship didn't sink. Marlow finally manages to calm the delirious man, and then he leaves.

The novel continues to tease the mystery of what happened on board the Patna. *While it might have seemed earlier like Jim abandoned a sinking ship, this passage reveals that in fact, Jim seems to have abandoned a ship that didn't sink. Nevertheless, the engineer's delirious state suggests that something traumatic still happened.*

CHAPTER 6

Marlow continues his story. All the authorities at the **Patna**'s trial seem to have already made up their minds, but they're still holding a trial to satisfy the legal requirements. No one knows how the *Patna* got damaged, and in fact, no one at the trial really cares about this detail. Out of all the *Patna* crew members, Jim is the only one who showed up to stand trial.

This passage explores the bureaucracy of European-style courtrooms. Although everyone in the courtroom already seems to have made up their mind, there is still a long process to go through. Later, the novel will contrast this bureaucratic process with other forms of justice in order to question whether court justice accurately represents morality.

One of the men overseeing Jim's trial is a distinguished captain named Brierly who looks bored—he seems to already believe that Jim is guilty. Not long after the trial, however, Brierly will die by suicide. The suicide is mysterious, but one of his mates suggests that it seems to have been premeditated, based on the strange way Captain Brierly was acting before the suicide, talking much more than he usually did. A new captain with a strong stutter takes Brierly's place. The new captain tries to sit in Brierly's chair, but Brierly's mate objects to this and tries to preserve the memory of the old captain.

Brierly's story is meant to be strange, and the novel does not fully explain why he dies by suicide. Suicide is a common topic in modernist novels, and Marlow brings up the subject several times, often because he fears that Jim will die by suicide. The episode with Brierly shows how people can engage in self-destructive behavior, often without giving any warning or reason to the people around them.

Marlow himself spoke to Captain Brierly while he was still alive, when the inquiry about the **Patna** was still going on. Brierly complained about the inconvenience of being chosen to conduct the inquiry. He says he feels like a fool and wonders why the inquiry is being so hard on Jim. Brierly doesn't understand why Jim stayed behind when he has no hope of winning and other crew members cleared out. He wonders whether Jim's refusal to leave is really a type of courage or just an unusual type of cowardice.

Marlow's knowledge of Jim's trial comes from a variety of sources—his own eyewitness account of the trial, his conversations with Jim, and also his conversations with peripheral figures to the trial like Brierly. In a way, Marlow's storytelling style resembles journalism, where multiple sources are compiled into one story.

Brierly tells Marlow that while he doesn't really care about Asian pilgrims, sailors must maintain some professional dignity. Incidents like what Jim did (or failed to do) shake Brierly's own confidence about what he'd do in a tough situation. Brierly hurries off, and, at the time, Marlow isn't sure what he's really thinking.

Brierly's lack of concern for the pilgrims indicates how careless many Europeans were during the colonial era, and how the residents of foreign countries were often little more than instruments for them to achieve their economic and nationalist goals.

The day in court after Marlow speaks to Brierly, Marlow sits alone in court to watch Jim give testimony again. Eventually, Jim is taken away, and a new case about assault and battery begins. Someone has brought a yellow dog into the court room, and the dog wanders around between people's legs. Another person curses at the dog, calling it a "cur."

Seemingly insignificant details in the story, such as the yellow dog here, often take on surprising significance later. The case about assault and battery right after Jim's suggests that, while Jim's case was indeed a big news item, it wasn't quite as all-consuming as Jim himself believes it to be.

As Marlow is exiting the courtroom in a crowd, Jim turns around and stops Marlow from leaving, asking if Marlow said something to him. Marlow replies that he didn't. Jim insists so forcefully that he heard something that even Marlow wonders if he accidentally *did* say something to Jim. Jim then asks Marlow why he was staring at him all morning. Marlow defends himself, saying he was just looking normally, and Jim apologizes.

Jim shows a lot of defensiveness in this passage. Honor is one of the most important virtues to him, and so he reacts angrily whenever anybody questions his honor. Partly, this may be because Jim is insecure about his honor—he remains haunted by memories of the times he failed to live up to his own moral code.

Marlow can tell Jim has made a mistake and knows it, and so Marlow wants to end the awkward encounter quickly. He can also tell that Jim is angry and doesn't want to get punched. Jim tells Marlow he wants to prove that he's not a liar and not a "cur." Marlow realizes the issue: Jim thought the insult at the dog was meant for him. Marlow tries to explain the situation, and Jim refuses to listen until finally Marlow points to the yellow dog near the floor.

The fact that Jim gets angry over a mistake with a dog adds some humor, showing that Jim is so serious that he verges on becoming silly. Jim and Marlow's different personalities perhaps reflect their different ages, with Jim being younger and much more sensitive about proving his worth to the world.

Jim is so humiliated by his mistake about the cur that he doesn't speak anymore. He gets away from Marlow, but Marlow catches up to him outside the courthouse. Marlow wonders whether Jim will run away, but Jim says he won't. In fact, Jim says that not only is he not running from Marlow, but he never runs from any man. The eventually both apologize to each other. Jim tries to explain himself by saying that the people in court are such fools that someone really might have been calling him a cur. Marlow feels like he knows Jim better, but he still finds Jim mysterious. Marlow invites Jim to dinner at his hotel.

Jim's behavior continues to be a little bit ridiculous and perhaps even funny. As much as Jim doesn't like to picture himself running away from anything, he will continue to run away from different situations for much of the book. What makes his character both tragic and humorous is how he can't stop running away no matter how much he wants to stay put.

CHAPTER 7

Marlow and Jim are eating dinner at Marlow's hotel. Jim eats a lot and talks more after having wine. They talk about how difficult Jim's situation is, and Jim says he couldn't just clear out of town the way the **Patna**'s skipper did. Jim speaks admirably of his father, the parson, worrying that he has already seen Jim's story in the local news. Like Brierly, Jim doesn't think much of how the court's being run. Jim apologizes again about thinking Marlow called him a "cur."

Jim's determination to stay and face trial for what happened on the Patna *reflects a determination to atone for his prior mistakes. In addition to valuing honor, Jim also places a lot of value on reputation, and it is clear from his fretting about what his father will read in the newspaper that Jim thinks a lot about what people think of him.*

Jim begins to tell his story to see if Marlow really does think he's a cur. He says that he and four others, including the skipper of the **Patna** and two engineers, were out floating at sea in a boat when a steamer came across them. The skipper told his men to be quiet, and if the crew of the steamer found anything strange about the four castaways, they didn't act on it.

Because Jim is himself full of guilt and self-doubt, he hopes that if he tells his story to other people, they will perhaps judge him less harshly. This further highlights how Jim cares a lot about what people think of him.

Jim was on the steamer for 10 days before it reached shore and before he heard the conclusion of the **Patna** affair. Hearing the news made him sulky and antisocial. As it turns out, the bulkhead on the *Patna* didn't give out, meaning the ship apparently didn't sink. At their dinner, Jim laments to Marlow about the opportunity that he missed back then. He looks at Marlow in pain, regretting what he could have had but didn't.

This passage ends some of the suspense that Conrad sustained for the first part of the novel, as Jim finally reveals what really happened on the Patna. *Unsatisfied with how things turned out, Jim retells the story, perhaps with the hope that he can change things, but he remains trapped by his past cowardice.*

At dinner, Marlow doesn't want to indulge Jim by showing too much pity, but Jim keeps going. He swears to Marlow that when he was inspecting the **Patna**, he really felt like it was destined to sink. He recalls how he and the skipper struggled after first discovering the damage to the *Patna*, turning off the engines. The pilgrims hear the noise but don't know what's happening. There are enough rescue boats to save some of the pilgrims, but Jim believes the ship will sink at any moment, and so there's no time.

Jim tries to justify his actions on the Patna *while at the same time trying to avoid giving the impression that he is only serving his own selfish interests by telling the story. Jim maintains this internal conflict throughout the story, wanting to portray himself well without coming across as too self-serving.*

Jim swears to Marlow that on the **Patna** he wasn't afraid of death—he just truly believed that there was no time for boats to save the pilgrims. Marlow notes, however, that if Jim wasn't afraid of death, he seemed to definitely be afraid of emergency.

Marlow's observation about Jim being afraid of emergency suggests that, to a degree, most humans are irrational and don't always fear the things that can really hurt them the most.

CHAPTER 8

Jim stands still for a long time by a hatch on the **Patna**, expecting it to sink at any moment. At last, he gets the idea to cut some of the lanyards so that the boats will float if the ship goes down. He runs around to do this, but as he does, a beggar pilgrim stops him to say "Water, water!" in his native language. Jim is shocked, thinking at first that the man knows something, but the man is just asking for a drink of water for his sick child. Jim eventually loses sight of the man and sets about working on the boats. The skipper is by the boats and commands Jim to help. Jim looks up and sees a calm sea but rationalizes that nothing can be done to fix a bulkhead quick enough to stop the boat from sinking.

In the moment, Jim doesn't actually have to be a hero—he just has to consider what he might do if he were a hero, before ultimately acting in his own self-interest. But unlike the evil characters in the story, Jim is aware of his hypocrisy, particularly after the fact, and his inability to become the type of hero he fantasizes about being in moments of crisis continues to pain him.

Back at their dinner at the hotel, Jim tells Marlow that anyone in his position would have felt similarly paralyzed. Over dinner, Marlow tells Jim that unexpected things happen all the time, an idea Jim rejects. Marlow muses that Jim has such an active imagination that he could easily have pictured the **Patna** wrecking in his mind's eye. Marlow admits that in that situation, he himself would not have bet the *Patna* would have stayed afloat. But Jim tells Marlow that the pilgrims remained unaware of what was going on. And yet somehow, despite their ignorance, they were carried safely in the *Patna* to the port of Aden. A couple pilgrims eventually came over from Aden to provide evidence at Jim's inquiry.

Jim's internal conflict is a conflict between mind and body. Intellectually, Jim knows that he should try to be a hero and help all the innocent pilgrims aboard the Patna. *On a more visceral level, however, Jim can't help putting his own survival above all else. The disconnect between Jim's thoughts and actions is so great that Jim's only way of resolving this discrepancy is to dissociate and act as if his body is paralyzed on its own.*

CHAPTER 9

Over dinner, Jim tells Marlow that when he was back on the **Patna**, he just wished the boat would sink. The skipper, meanwhile, orders them around as they try to get the rescue boat down. All of a sudden, Jim looks over and sees a black squall on the horizon. He feels trapped, and even the memory of this causes him to gasp in his chair at dinner with Marlow.

Jim is aware of his own selfishness, and this is part of why he hates himself. In this section, he wishes that 800 people will drown so that his own conscience will feel better about abandoning the ship.

An engineer (one of the two engineers) convinces Jim that they have to move quickly because otherwise the pilgrims will see them trying to leave and possibly try to steal their boat from them. Nevertheless, Jim keeps his distance as they get the boat down. Jim hates them all as he watches them with the boat. He closes his eyes and waits for what he believes will be certain doom, but he finds he can't keep his eyes shut. Suddenly, he feels the boat dip and move more than it has in a long time.

Jim is relating the Patna *incident to Marlow after the fact. This means that his perspective does not necessarily represent how he was feeling at the time—it instead reflects how he has chosen to make sense of events after the fact. Jim is hard on himself in some ways (since he could never have saved 800 people by himself) but lenient in others (since he constantly portrays himself as intending to be a hero, even when he fails to act heroically).*

Jim sees George, the third engineer of the **Patna**, collapse and die, seemingly of a heart attack. Jim muses that if George had just kept still instead of rushing around to save his life, he might have lived.

George's fate darkly and humorously shows how running away from problems can be self-destructive. In George's case, fleeing literally kills him.

Jim sees himself as a passive observer of the actions on the **Patna**. After a while, Jim gets up and stumbles over the legs of George, the dead third engineer (although Jim didn't know he was dead at the time). The skipper and the other two engineers are already in the boat, calling for George, the only dead man on a ship with 800 other living people on it.

The passive terms that Jim uses to describe his actions once again reflect the disconnect between Jim's idealistic intentions and his heroic self-image with his imperfect and cowardly real actions.

Jim skips ahead in the story. Suddenly, he's in the boat with the skipper. "I had jumped… It seems," he says. Jim says it's like he blacked out and didn't even know where he was until he looked up. In the process he injured his ribs. The **Patna** looms over their smaller boat.

The disconnect between Jim's thoughts and actions is so great that he can't even tell the part of the story where he decides to abandon ship—perhaps he's so ashamed of his behavior that he really has blocked it out of his brain.

CHAPTER 10

Jim has just jumped from the **Patna** to a small boat, and now the sea around him is dark and hissing. Jim's biggest fear is that the *Patna* seems to still be there—he just wants it to sink and get it over with. Suddenly, because the *Patna* has no lights, one of the two engineers shouts to the others that the ship must be gone.

Here the physical Patna *represents Jim's failure to do his duty and live up to his ideals. Later, the memory of the* Patna *will have a similar effect on him.*

Jim muses to Marlow at dinner that, strangely, he almost wishes that he had been forced to see the horror of the sinking **Patna** rather than just darkness. But Marlow doesn't think this isn't strange: Jim's imagination can come up with worse than any real horror.

Marlow correctly identifies the power of Jim's imagination. Jim is such a dreamer that his mind can create greater horrors than what exist in the real world.

On the rescue boat, Jim fights back the urge to swim over where the **Patna** (supposedly) sank so he can drown there. Eventually, everything goes still. The skipper and two engineers console themselves on the rescue boat by saying they made it off just in the nick of time, and that it probably went down quickly. Eventually, however, they start arguing, and they ask George why he took so long to jump. Jim realizes they all think he's George until eventually they realize who he really is. When they do realize it's not George, they're all furious with Jim. They act as if Jim hindered or even murdered George.

Because of the story's nonchronological structure, the audience already knows at this point that the Patna *doesn't sink. Whereas before the novel created suspense around what actually happened on the* Patna, *now the suspense is about what will happen when Jim and the other crew members find out what really happened to the ship they left behind.*

Jim gets so animated telling Marlow at dinner about his confrontation on the boat with the skipper and the two mates that he spills some cognac. He apologizes, then gets back to the story, where the men in the boat are enveloped in so much darkness that it feels like a tomb. Despite threatening each other, no one physically fights on the boat.

The animated reaction of Jim at the dinner visually illustrates the connection between the past and the present, showing how events that happened in the past still hold sway over Jim to the point that they make him react physically

On the boat, Jim mans the tiller for a long time, which demands a lot of endurance. When the sun rises, the skipper and the two engineers look very dirty to Jim. They try to put aside their differences and make peace with Jim. They say they don't even care about George anymore. Jim doesn't put up a fight.

Jim's show of endurance at the tiller is the beginning of his long journey to try to atone for his prior cowardice and prove that he is a good person after all.

All of a sudden, Jim, the skipper, and the two engineers see a ship coming on the horizon. The skipper tries to put together a story for them to tell. They worry Jim might tell the truth but eventually agree that he won't say anything. To his own surprise, Jim goes along with them.

Jim faces yet another opportunity to do the right thing (by telling the truth and contradicting the skipper's lies), but once again he finds himself unable to overcome his own instinct for self-preservation.

CHAPTER 11

At dinner, Jim says it was nice for an older man like Marlow to listen to Jim's story about the **Patna**. Marlow doesn't normally feel that old, but Jim's comment makes him feel much older.

Although Jim and Marlow are not far apart in age, Marlow's shows a much greater maturity and sense of his own identity, making the gap seem wider than it really is. .

Jim tells Marlow about how he felt so lost on the **Patna**. It was worse than being in a proper fight. The fake story that the skipper tells about the *Patna* incident is not a total lie, and Jim muses about how thin the line between right and wrong can be sometimes. Jim wonders what would've happened if he'd lingered a moment longer on the *Patna* and fallen off, needing to be saved, rather than jumping intentionally.

The novel's structure reflects Jim's musings about the nature of truth: different characters tell the events from their own perspective, and it is only through combining all of these perspectives that one can reach an idea about what the "real" true version of events is.

Jim hopes that Marlow understands why Jim hasn't tried to run away from his problems. He wants to face what he did. He wonders if he would've stayed on the **Patna** if not for the skipper and the others. Jim paces around and asks Marlow what he believes.

Despite Jim's shame about his past actions, he also wants to justify them to Marlow, reflecting how conflicted Jim is on the inside.

CHAPTER 12

At dinner with Marlow, Jim tells of how a steamer called the *Avondale* came right by to pick up the boat with him, the skipper, and the two engineers. Jim is still haunted by the shouts for help that he remembers from those on the **Patna**, but none of the others remember hearing shouts for help. Later, when the *Patna* is towed to shore and Jim and the others are exposed as frauds, it was almost a relief to Jim. He concludes that he must have imagined the shouts for help.

The dread of having to face the consequences is worse for Jim than actually facing them. This helps explain his seemingly illogical behavior earlier—why he chose to stand trial for his actions rather than running way, despite Jim's tendency to run away in so many other situations.

Even after being exposed as liars, the skipper and the two engineers maintain that they saw the lights of the **Patna** were off when they were in their rescue boat. Jim remembers this too. Jim wonders, however, if perhaps the men already knew what they wanted to see and simply overlooked any evidence that might contradict it. Marlow supposes the clouds of the squall might also have helped hide the lights.

While the human imagination can inspire fear, here Jim considers how the imagination can also pacify people, showing them exactly what they want to see. Jim is able to diagnose many problems of the human mind, but this doesn't help him actually come to terms with his own psychological unrest.

Later, Marlow hears more of the story of the **Patna** from a French lieutenant who was on a gunboat coming from Reunion when the crew of the *Patna* was discovered. Marlow learns this story many years later when he happens to meet the old lieutenant in Sydney. The French lieutenant looks to Marlow like a reliable man.

As someone who has no stakes in what happens to Jim, the French lieutenant adds an outside perspective to the story. Although he lacks context for many of the events, the French lieutenant is reliable precisely because he doesn't have a vested interest in portraying events in a certain way.

The French lieutenant tells Marlow about overseeing the rescue of the abandoned **Patna**. He describes the events calmly and complains about being on the *Patna* for 30 hours without any wine to have with meals. He mentions how there was a lot of interest about George's corpse and ultimately concludes that many parts of that incident still remain mysterious to him.

The French lieutenant's complaint about not having wine is humorous and shows how different people pick up on different details. For Jim, the Patna *is the greatest shame of his life, but for the French lieutenant, it's just an inconvenient job that he doesn't think about much afterward.*

CHAPTER 13

Marlow continues his conversation with the French lieutenant in Sydney. The Frenchman makes a passing remark about how quickly time goes, and it has a surprisingly strong effect on Marlow. The lieutenant asks Marlow what was so important about the whole **Patna** affair, anyway, mistakenly believing that dead George is the most important part. Marlow replies that the living people on the ship were even more important. Marlow goes ahead and tells him why he himself finds the affair so interesting.

The French lieutenant's outside perspective once again highlights how limited Marlow's and Jim's perceptions are. The lieutenant notes correctly that, under different circumstances, the most significant part of the Patna *would be the dead man on board. But in Jim's story, George is little more than a footnote.*

The French lieutenant picks up on the fact that Marlow seems to be interested in Jim in particular. The lieutenant assumes that Jim ran away with the others. The Frenchman muses idly to himself that fear alone is not enough to kill a person but just keeps drinking his drink and doesn't expand on what he means. He says that when he saw Jim, he felt that Jim looked like someone with a good disposition. He muses a little longer on honor and courage before leaving Marlow alone.

Courage and fear are two concepts that recur throughout the story. The French lieutenant claims that fear alone can't kill a person, and while it's true that fear perhaps can't literally kill a person, it nevertheless leads many characters in the novel to engage in self-destructive behavior—metaphorically and, in the case of Brierly's suicide, literally.

Marlow is disappointed that he doesn't learn more from the French lieutenant. Marlow is still thinking about Jim's case about three years later when he is headed to Sydney and he runs into Jim working a menial job. Marlow feels that the job's lack of adventure discourages Jim, who has become withdrawn, except for when the topic of the **Patna** comes up. Then, Jim turns violent.

Just as Jim can't let go of the Patna, *Marlow can't let go of Jim. In many ways, Marlow's interest in Jim is irrational—they haven't known each other for long, and yet Marlow feels an almost parental need to look out for Jim's welfare.*

In Sydney, Marlow thinks back to when he had dinner with Jim that one night in the middle of Jim's inquiry. Marlow was sure that Jim would be executed but really hoped he wouldn't be. Marlow told Jim that Jim had been through enough. He offered to give Jim money and introduce him to someone who might be able to get him work, and that Jim could pay him back whenever it was convenient.

Marlow is not just an observer in Jim's story—he's also an active participant. He intervenes to help Jim find work, perhaps moved by Jim's innocence and willing to lend some of his own experience that has come with age.

Still at that dinner, however, Jim turned down Marlow's proposal to help. He said he couldn't allow himself to run away from any part of the affair. Marlow said he meant no offense and that better men than Jim have run at times. With that, Jim got ready to leave. Marlow said like to see Jim again, and Jim replied that there's nothing stopping Marlow from seeing him. Jim, who was only 24 years old, disappeared into the night, running clumsily.

Jim metaphorically runs away from many things in the novel, but here he runs away literally. Jim's clumsy style of running reflects how unsure of himself he is, which is probably what causes Marlow to notice Jim's youth.

CHAPTER 14

The morning after Marlow's dinner with Jim at the hotel, he goes back to his own ship to check on his mate, who is generally good at his job but gets jealous at the slightest sign of potential infidelity from his wife. Jim, however, is unmarried, and Marlow turns back to thinking about him. He heads to court to witness the proceedings again, even though he doesn't expect to be impressed or learn anything.

Marriage will play an important role later in the story. Jim's status as a bachelor reflects his lack of attachments to the world and allows him to live the traveling life of a sailor—at least before the Patna *incident.*

Marlow imagines what Jim's punishment might be and imagines that he might be executed. The people involved in the assault case happening at same time are at court, too. Marlow feels that Jim's inquiry is so cold that it might lead to a fate worse than death.

While the alleged impartiality of the legal process might seem like a good thing, ensuring that justice is served, Marlow notes how this efficiency can also result in coldness—a lack of empathy.

In the inquiry, the court begins to give its judgment. They rule that the **Patna** wasn't seaworthy for the voyage, and then they surprise Marlow by saying that up until the ship's mysterious accident, it had been navigated with proper consideration. Finally, they conclude that because the skipper, the two engineers, and Jim abandoned their duty while at sea, they all have their certifications stripped away from them. Marlow tries to talk to Jim afterward, but Jim avoids him.

Perhaps impressed by Jim's testimony, the court hands him a lighter sentence than it could have. Still, it certainly helps that Jim is a white European from a respectable family. While Jim's privilege helps him avoid more serious penalties, the lightness of Jim's sentence will paradoxically become its own burden for Jim, making him feel as if he hasn't properly atoned for his bad deeds.

A deep-voiced West Australian man named Chester approaches Marlow after the trial. He says it looks like Jim is taking the judgment hard. Chester says this is a bad idea, and it's better for a man to grow thick skin. Chester is trying to purchase a steamer because he has supposedly discovered a guano island that is dangerous to approach but potentially a goldmine. Marlow is offended that Chester wants him to be part of this scheme, but Chester replies that he doesn't want Marlow. He has, however, heard that Marlow recently had dinner with Jim.

Guano is excrement from birds or bats. While it might not sound exciting, it used to be (and to some extent, still is) highly valuable for its use as a fertilizer. But while guano's value was real, Chester's excitement over an island full of bat droppings borders on comical and satirizes colonizers' limitless urge to extract resources from other lands.

Chester wants Jim to oversee his guano island, where he will "dump" forty Asian workers for Jim to manage. Marlow imagines Jim standing up to his knees in guano with birds squawking around him. He tells Chester he wouldn't offer that job to his worst enemy. Chester pleads, but Marlow refuses to help him. Chester sulks, saying he was only trying to do Jim a favor, and he and Marlow part on bad terms.

Chester's casual disregard for the Asian workers suggests that he is racist. While critics debate to what extent Conrad's own writing may have been influenced by his own prejudices, it's clear that characters like Chester are meant to draw attention to portray the racism of colonialism in a negative light.

CHAPTER 15

In the aftermath of Jim's inquiry, Marlow wants to see Jim right away but gets delayed by other appointments. Finally, he sees Jim down by the quay. Jim looks to Marlow like someone with nowhere in the world where he can withdraw and be lonely. Marlow lets Jim stay in his bedroom while Marlow starts writing letters to various acquaintances.

Jim's inability to be lonely reflects how Jim constantly seeks approval from others. It's possible to read homosexual innuendo in certain parts of Conrad's writing, such as this scene where Marlow invites Jim to his bedroom (although Conrad himself was private about his personal life and wasn't openly gay or bisexual).

Suddenly, while Marlow is writing his letters, he hears the sound of Jim going out on the veranda. Marlow is afraid Jim will commit suicide by jumping off (although a part of him also wonders if that would be the simplest solution to everyone's problems). He considers whether maybe he should let Jim know about Chester's offer after all.

Marlow has been afraid of suicide ever since he heard about Brierly's sudden, unexpected suicide. If Jim were to commit suicide by jumping, it would make a grimly fitting parallel to how he jumped off the Patna.

CHAPTER 16

Marlow, who has this entire time still been telling the story of Jim's life after dinner at a party in the present, says that eventually he would see Jim become a hero, loved and admired by many. The last time Marlow saw Jim, Jim was in a forest; he looked powerful, happy, and at one with nature. Marlow is glad of this outcome for Jim, although for his own peace of mind, a part of him regrets standing between Jim and Chester's offer—it turns out Chester and a crew of 22 all disappeared during a hurricane, providing a sad but definitive ending. Marlow says Jim was "too interesting or too unfortunate" to meet a fate like Chester's.

Most chapters in the middle of the book are told almost entirely in quotation marks, as a monologue by Marlow. This looks strange on the page, raising the question of why the novel doesn't just have Marlow as a first-person narrator. Perhaps the frame story in the middle of Lord Jim *calls attention to Marlow's role as teller of the story, putting additional emphasis on how he is merely giving one personal perspective and is not some all-knowing authority commenting on the events from a distance.*

Marlow resumes his story where he left off. Jim leaves the veranda and reenters Marlow's bedroom. Marlow is very afraid of what Jim will say at that moment, but Jim just asks for tobacco. Jim starts talking in half sentences about how he's glad the inquiry is over but is still uncertain about what's to come. Slowly, Jim becomes more confident, saying that if the **Patna** affair can't touch him, nothing can. He thanks Marlow for being so good to him the whole time.

This passage helps cement the bond between Jim and Marlow. Jim's pride makes it difficult for him to trust new people, but Marlow's inviting Jim into his bedroom shows a willingness to be vulnerable, which is perhaps what wins Jim over. Marlow's patience and kindness contrasts with how the rest of the world has treated him. In the outside world, Jim feels constant pressure to always be a hero—but with Marlow, he can be himself.

Jim suddenly decides to leave, even though it's pouring rain outside and dark. Marlow tries to invite him to dinner, but Jim stands in the open doorway.

Jim once again nearly makes a rash decision. The harsh conditions outside contrast with Marlow's gentle treatment of Jim.

CHAPTER 17

Jim doesn't actually leave Marlow's bedroom, probably because of the rain. Marlow takes the opportunity to plead with Jim to accept some help. Jim refuses to accept the money he would have earned as mate of the **Patna**, even though he needs money to live.

Jim's refusal to run this time shows growth as a character. Marlow has helped Jim to avoid listening to his impulse to always run away when things get difficult.

Marlow offers to write on Jim's behalf to ask for a favor, and Jim has a strong stammering reaction that confuses Marlow at first. Eventually, Jim accepts help, and Marlow believes that he's saved Jim from a life of alcoholism or even starvation. Jim doesn't have words to express his appreciation, since a clean slate to start again is what he wants most in the world. But despite Jim's excitement, Marlow is less sure about whether anyone's slate can truly be wiped clean.

Marlow's paternal attitude toward Jim is full of genuine sympathy, but there is also a part of Marlow that sees Jim's worst tendencies—which is why he's so eager to stop Jim from succumbing to them. Marlow's greater experience allows him to grasp why no one's slate is ever wiped fully clean.

CHAPTER 18

Six months after Jim was in Marlow's bedroom, an eccentric friend of Marlow's who owns a rice mill was interested in Jim and hired him, and now his letter to Marlow is full of compliments for Jim. The friend says Jim seems to be positively blooming in his new environment, and while the friend knows Jim has an incident in his past, the friend figures it can't be too unforgivable.

Marlow's friend has a personality like Marlow's. Unlike Marlow, however, the friend doesn't seem to have the same boundaries of formality with Jim. At first, this seems to allow the friend to become closer to Jim than Marlow did.

Not too long after, however, Marlow receives a new letter from his friend saying that Jim is gone. The friend makes clear that Jim hasn't stolen anything—he just seems to have disappeared. By sheer coincidence, Marlow notices he also has a new letter from Jim. Jim says Marlow's old friend was too familiar, but he got a new job at a chandler (a store that sells equipment for ships and boats) by mentioning Marlow's name. He asks for a formal recommendation from Marlow in order to make his job permanent. Marlow is disappointed but sends the letter.

Predictably, however, when Marlow's friend gets too familiar, Jim gets his old impulse to run again. Marlow recognizes that as much as Jim wants acceptance, he also craves independence. Part of why Jim keeps moving from job to job seems to be that despite his many opportunities to start over, he can't do so without calling on Marlow for assistance.

Marlow goes to meet Jim at the chandler and asks him what he has to say for himself. Jim says he said it all in his letter. Jim explains that he started to dislike Marlow's friend after the friend started treating Jim like a son. Jim says he knew the friend liked him, but he was too familiar; once, the friend slipped a hand under Jim's arm, and that was too much for Jim. The friend also mentioned the **Patna** case. While Jim and Marlow talk, the chandler's two owners argue in the background. Jim says they treat him well, even though the one is annoying sometimes.

Again, it is ambiguous whether this passage is supposed to imply that Marlow's friend is homosexual or whether he is simply too familiar. In either case, it's clear that Jim is uncomfortable with intimacy, an issue that will continue to cause problems for him throughout the story.

Marlow doesn't see Jim again on that trip but returns six months later. The shop owners, however, inform Marlow that Jim has left them suddenly without saying where he went. Jim's sudden disappearance confuses the owners. Marlow asks if there was any mention of the **Patna** case, and the owners say there was, shortly before Jim disappeared.

The constant mentions of the Patna *symbolize how no matter where in the world Jim goes and no matter what he does, his past will always follow him.*

The owners of the chandler are surprised that Jim left because he seemed so dedicated to the store. They've had a hard time replacing him. Marlow reveals that Jim was in fact the first mate of the **Patna**. The shop owners ask who actually cares about that, and Marlow agrees it might not be so important to most people anymore.

For all his flaws, Jim is actually a very capable worker, particularly in situations that don't require courage. What makes Jim tragic is that he is a genuinely good person in many ways, and if he had never had his courage tested, he might have lived happily not knowing that he was coward.

CHAPTER 19

Jim continues to lead a wandering life after the **Patna** inquiry—there are many similar incidents. Marlow can't decide whether this behavior means Jim is facing his past or just running away from it.

Jim's restlessness and physical movements around the world reflect his mental state as he tries to figure out what type of person to be after he loses his sailing certifications.

In Bangkok, Jim gets into a bar-room fight with a Danish sailor who gets nasty after losing at billiards. Though Jim may have been defending himself, Jim's actions draw condemnation because the sailor is a respectable lieutenant. The incident troubles Marlow because he fears Jim will get a reputation as a "common loafer."

The bar-room fight foreshadows one possible life for Jim, where he becomes a brutish drunkard. Alcohol can be a way of mentally avoiding problems, and it might eventually replace Jim's physical roaming.

As Jim moves from job to job, Marlow notices that he seems to be losing some of his resilience. Marlow meets Jim one day at a new job. Jim says the job is killing him, and Marlow knows it's not due to the difficulties of the work but due to how unfulfilling it is. Marlow offers to try to get Jim a job on the West Coast of the United States. Jim asks what difference this would really make, and Marlow agrees.

Young and still eager to prove his worth, Jim is resilient in the face of setbacks at his new jobs. Nevertheless, he's not invincible, and both he and Marlow realize that a lack of mental fulfillment can eventually wear a person down as well.

Marlow decides to consult a wealthy merchant he knows named Stein. Marlow believes Stein is one of the most trustworthy people he knows. Stein looks like a student, even though he's 60 and has bushy white eyebrows. Stein had been on adventures across Asia in his youth, and he's also earned a reputation across Europe as a naturalist. Marlow feels that Stein is the right person to help Jim.

Stein is one of the novel's more mysterious characters. Although Marlow says that Stein is one of the most trustworthy people he knows, this may be Marlow's own way of reassuring himself that it is morally OK to introduce Jim to Stein. Despite Stein's many accomplishments, it's also clear that many of Stein's business deals don't seem to be entirely legitimate.

CHAPTER 20

Marlow goes to see Stein in his study. Stein's house is full of equipment and specimens from his time as a naturalist, most notably some **butterflies**. Stein was born in Bavaria and took part in a revolution in his 20s, escaping to start a new life selling cheap watches. He slowly built his business up to something more impressive, working in Asia and the Middle East.

Stein is someone who truly lived out the types of adventures that Jim himself dreams about living out. His life represents what Jim's could have been if Jim had only had the courage to live out his fantasies.

When an assassination disrupts the political situation where Stein was working, he starts life again and builds up a new fortune. At first, he goes on sea voyages, but as he ages, he falls back to managing an office of white and Chinese clerks.

Despite Stein's thirst for adventure, he also has a pragmatic side, and he knows when to leave the front lines to take on a more managerial role in his business.

During their meeting, Stein talks with Marlow about the wonder of bugs and how nature creates masterpieces, although man himself is no masterpiece. He tells Marlow stories of his past adventures in the Middle East. Marlow then tells Stein about how he's there to talk about a "specimen" of a sort. Stein thinks Marlow is talking about a "**butterfly**," but Marlow is actually referring to Jim.

Stein's confusion of Jim and the butterfly suggests that for Stein, Jim is not quite a fully-realized person. For Stein, Jim is a means to an end—mostly an object of curiosity to observe at a distance like a specimen. Given Jim's avoidance of intimacy, this feature may actually be a positive for their relationship.

Marlow tells Stein about Jim, and Stein grasps at once that Jim is a romantic. They talk about what a man like Jim must want out of life, how he must struggle against the realization that he might not be able to make his dreams come true. They avoid actually saying Jim's name, talking instead about ideals without putting flesh and blood to them. Stein invites Marlow to sleep over so that they can discuss practical matters in the morning.

Jim often puts ideals above the real people in his life, so it's an interesting reversal for Marlow and Stein to talk about Jim in the abstract. Perhaps part of the reason why Stein and Marlow don't say Jim's name is that Jim's condition isn't unique, as many romantics struggle to live up to their own lofty self-images.

Stein says it's both very good and very bad that Jim has such romantic tendencies. Stein talks about how, despite his successes, he still let many dreams slip away. He goes away to his room, and he and Marlow both sleep.

Perhaps the key difference between Stein and Jim is that Stein also faced many disappointments in life—but he didn't let them define him in the same way that Jim does.

CHAPTER 21

Marlow's associate Stein arranges to send Jim to **Patusan**, a remote region of Southeast Asia known for "irregularities and aberrations." Stein knows more about Patusan than even the government. Stein makes a mysterious comment about a woman who died in Patusan, although Marlow trusts that Stein has no involvement. As far as Marlow knows, the only woman for Stein is his Malay wife. Stein's previous agent in Patusan, a Portuguese man named Cornelius, will be relieved of his duties by Jim.

This passage makes it clear that what Stein is doing isn't legal and might even be morally dubious. Nevertheless, this is not necessarily a downside for Jim, who has a hard time getting respectable work and who might even be attracted to the potential dangers of his new position.

From what Marlow can gather, the dead woman is **Patusan** is somehow connected to Stein's need for a new manager of a trading post there, and Jim takes on this role. Patusan is remote and ruled by natives—Patusan is both the name of a larger district and the name of the main settlement in the district. When Marlow goes to visit Jim in Patusan, he finds that Jim's house is very nice and built in the native style. Jim seems to take pride in how efficiently he's running things in Patusan.

The name Patusan sounds somewhat similar to Patna, *containing the same letters. This coincidence is likely intentional, given how many other places in the novel Conrad uses doubles. Patusan is supposed to represent the opposite of the* Patna, *a new future to help him break free of the past, and at least at first, Jim seems to make good use of his new start.*

Marlow reflects on the power of fantasy and about how imaginative Jim is. He is relieved to see that in **Patusan**, Jim doesn't take to drinking but seems to grow and expand in his new role. Marlow feels that Jim achieves greatness, although Marlow notes that intense things, like sparks from a stone, don't always last.

Jim's success in Patusan shows how a person's environment influences their life. On the other hand, it's possible that the cowardly other crew members of the Patna *inspired the worst in Jim. Nevertheless, Marlow's ominous meditation about fleeting sparks from a stone, suggests that no matter where Jim is, he still retains some of his old rashness.*

CHAPTER 22

Patusan was an important trade area even before Jim's arrival. Pepper made Dutch traders so passionate that they would alternately cut each other's throats and perform heroic feats, and Patusan was a particularly rich source of pepper. The region was ruled by a wise Sultan, but at some point, the trading died down (perhaps due to lack of pepper) and the Sultan was replaced by a younger, less impressive successor.

This passage explores colonialism and how greed led people to violence. It also questions the value and morality of heroism. For instance, this section shows how Dutch traders performed heroic deeds not out of any moral obligation but because of their greed over pepper, a coveted spice.

Before Jim makes it to **Patusan**, Stein gives more details about Patusan to Marlow, some of which deal with the seedier side of the area. The government overlooks what Stein does in Patusan, trusting his discretion. There is turmoil in Patusan, with Rajah Allang, one of the current Sultan's uncles, ransacking defenseless Malays in the country.

This passage makes clear that Patusan is not some homogenous area; rather, it is a vibrant place with its own complicated system of factions and rivalries.

Marlow himself meets Rajah Allang (at some later time) and describes him as a dirty man strung out on opium. During this visit Jim is also there with them, looking grim and serious, dressed all in white. Jim is indifferent to any potential danger.

Although the novel contains anti-racist themes, the evil opium-addled Rajah Allang is arguable a racial stereotype of how European citizens pictured the residents of Asian countries they would colonize.

Marlow (in the present) reflects on how when he and Stein were first making preparations for Jim to go to **Patusan**, they had no idea how things would turn out. Marlow believes that he was honest with Jim about Stein's offer to go to Patusan—in fact, Marlow felt at the time that he exaggerated the danger of the mission to make sure Jim didn't take it lightly. In hindsight, however, Marlow feels that he may not have given Jim enough warning, since Jim's first day in Patusan nearly killed him.

It's unclear to what extent Marlow believes what he's saying here. At times, it seems like he's trying to justify his past actions, insisting that he knew that Jim would be safe, when in fact a part of him suspected (correctly) that Jim's journey to Patusan would involve real danger.

When Jim first hears about **Patusan** from Marlow, he comes to life and feels grateful to Stein. He feels honored for an opportunity to prove himself. What attracts him most about the offer is that once he goes away to **Patusan**, it will be as if he never existed in the outside world.

Previously, Jim turned down a job on the American West Coast because he believed his past would haunt him wherever he went. But Patusan is (mostly) unconnected to the global trade routes where Jim spent his early career, and so despite being physically closer to his past than he'd be in California, it represents a whole new society where he can start again.

CHAPTER 23

After Jim hears Stein's offer to go to **Patusan**, Jim feels Stein is the most wonderful man in the world. Stein introduces Jim to a man called Doramin who helped Stein with his ventures in Patusan. Stein supposedly saved Doramin's life, which impresses Jim.

Marlow seems to see the seedier sides of Stein's business without acknowledging them. Jim, however, seems oblivious and looks to Stein with unrestrained awe.

For the first time, Marlow gets a little sick of seeing how excitable Jim is. He tells Jim bluntly that the world doesn't remember the **Patna** incident that much—it's mostly Jim himself who remembers. Jim, however, remains so excited about going to **Patusan** that he doesn't even care about having a plan to get back. Marlow warns him that he'll definitely want to come back at some point, but Jim is too eager about going to concern himself with other details. Marlow gifts Jim a revolver with two boxes of cartridges, saying "It may help you to remain." He corrects himself to saying "May help you to get in."

"Remain" has a double meaning. It could mean remain alive, or it could mean remain in Patusan (by killing himself with the gun), leaving his "remains" there. The gun also foreshadows violence in Jim's future. The gift of the gun is further evidence that Marlow realizes he's sending Jim into a dangerous situation.

Marlow accompanies Jim as he's taken to be dropped off at the mouth of a river on the way to **Patusan**. As their parting approaches, Marlow drops some of the formalities he used to maintain around Jim. Despite Marlow's reservations, he still believes that Jim's best course of action is to go ahead. As Jim leaves, he shouts that Marlow will hear about him again.

That Marlow drops some of his familiarities around Jim suggests that in the back of his mind, a part of him is thinking this might be the last time he ever sees Jim. Perhaps it's no accident that Stein was Marlow's last resort and not the first person he went to when Jim needed work.

CHAPTER 24

Marlow sees the coast of **Patusan** for himself two years after he first gets Jim set up there. It is a swampy, dark, and isolated place. At a fishing village near the mouth of a river, Marlow meets an elder. Marlow believes that he's the second white man the elder has ever seen (the first being Jim). The elder calls Jim "Tuan Jim" (a term of reverence), saying that his whole village is under Jim's protection.

The transformation of just Jim into "Tuan Jim" was foreshadowed in the very first chapter of the book. While Jim achieves some real successes in Patusan, this passage also shows how he remains a mystery to the locals, suggesting a potential disconnect.

The elder talks about how from Jim's first appearance in the fishing village, he seemed to be blessed, although they are confused at first by his request to be taken to **Patusan**, wondering what Rajah Allang would make of this request. They begin the long canoe ride up the river to Patusan, and Jim struggles to remain stoic in the hot sun that gives him blisters. Jim himself tells Marlow about the canoe journey during a later visit, when Marlow is at Jim's house in Patusan, recalling how he felt fatigued and struggled to stay awake.

Jim's struggles with exhaustion and heat show how as a white European he is not as well-adapted to the region of Patusan as the Malay locals. Nevertheless, because Jim is so unusual in the area, it causes the locals to regard him differently, and this is how he begins to build up a legendary name for himself.

When Jim and Marlow talk at his house, Jim says he likes to watch the little lights out his window, which show when people of the village are going to sleep. He feels that he is trusted in every house where a light goes out at night. Jim tells Marlow he has not thought of leaving—that Marlow was ridiculous to ever have that concern in the first place. Marlow tells Jim that Stein wants to set up a trading post in **Patusan**. Marlow is proud to see what Jim has accomplished in Patusan, even though the very things that make Jim a master of his domain in Patusan have also in a way made him a captive of the place.

Jim's success in Patusan shows how he grows with positive reinforcement. While the cowardly crew members of the Patna *helped convince Jim to jump, the villagers of Patusan convince Jim to be more altruistic. Nevertheless, Marlow notices that Jim hasn't been able to shake his reliance of caring about what other people think, and Marlow recognizes that this tendency might cause Jim to become a prisoner of the very people who helped him flourish.*

CHAPTER 25

During Marlow's visit to **Patusan**, Jim and Marlow go to Rajah Allang's dirty residence, and Jim tells of how the Rajah kept him as a prisoner for three days when he first arrived. Meeting again, the Rajah and Jim show each other unusual respect, despite having been enemies earlier.

Rajah Allang is an open coward who doesn't seem to feel as conflicted about his cowardice as Jim does. Although the Rajah is a powerful man, his cowardice reveals how having power doesn't necessarily give someone a strong personality.

Marlow is a bit lost trying to follow Jim and Rajah Allang's conversation, but he makes out that there's some dispute over whether the Rajah has been stealing from some villagers or whether Doramin has been stealing. Things are tense, but the meeting ends with the Rajah offering Jim and Marlow coffee. Jim says Marlow doesn't need to drink any (implying it might be poisoned), but Marlow drinks anyway, and nothing bad happens.

Jim's choice to drink potentially poisoned coffee shows how reckless he's willing to be with his own life just for the sake of protecting his reputation. Marlow is perhaps not quite as reckless, but he feels responsibility for the position Jim is in, which is why he decides he must drink the coffee, too—he's in this together with Jim, at least as much as he can be.

Jim tells Marlow that Rajah Allang considers Jim more useful than dangerous, although Marlow cautions him that the Rajah is clearly afraid of Jim. As they leave the Rajah's place, Jim points out the place where he escaped captivity by leaping to his freedom. While Jim was escaping, the Rajah and his advisors debated what to do about Jim.

The situation with Rajah Allang illustrates how politics in Patusan are just as complex as any European political system.

During Jim's escape, one of Rajah Allang's men goes to find Jim (who hasn't gotten far) and asks what Jim is doing in **Patusan**. He brings Jim a watch and asks Jim if he knows how to fix it. Jim starts working on the watch before realizing he's in danger and focusing on getting away instead. He hides for a while in some mud before making his way to Doramin.

Jim's desire to fix the watch is an obvious metaphor for his desire to fix time by going back to change his past. This desire is so strong that it temporarily causes Jim to forget his own safety.

Doramin takes Jim in, barricading his place and giving him water. Doramin's wife helps care for Jim. Doramin is chief of a group of Malays called the Bugis who oppose Rajah Allang's rule, and they skirmish with him over trade disputes. Rajah tries to make himself the only trader in the area and kills anyone who dares to trade with someone else. Nevertheless, the Rajah is afraid of the organized opposition that Doramin represents.

Like Marlow, Doramin is an older, more experienced man who takes Jim under his protection. Rajah Allang's behavior characterizes him as a common bully: he's eager to attack the vulnerable but afraid of anyone who might fight back.

CHAPTER 26

Marlow meets Doramin on his visit and believes he is one of the most remarkable Malays Marlow has ever seen—he's very bulky and statuesque. He needs help from servants to walk, but somehow this only makes his movements feel more important and momentous. Many believe that Doramin's wife helps him govern, although few ever overhear them talking to each other. They have a son named Dain Waris who is in his mid-20s and who is fiery but shows deference to his parents in public.

While Rajah Allang is a racial stereotype, the novel arguably portrays the other Malay characters more positively—they are simultaneously more virtuous and more complex than Rajah Allang. For some critics, however, the fact that the "best" Malays are the ones most receptive to European ideas could be taken as evidence of Conrad's own biases and Eurocentrism.

Jim says that Doramin and his family are like people out of a book, very solemn and important looking. Jim says he could tell, however, that Doramin and his people were afraid of Rajah Allang, so Jim devised a plan to try to change things. Dain Waris, who out of the Malays acts the most European, was the first of the Bugis to believe in Jim.

Jim remains fixated on outward appearances, and so what attracts him to Doramin and Dain Waris is how impressive they look on the outside (as opposed to Rajah Allang, who is visibly dirty).

Marlow has heard the story many times about how Jim led Doramin and his people to a victory over Sherif Ali, who is a bandit and an enemy of both Doramin and Rajah Allang. Though Doramin's Bugis fighters were in a vulnerable position, their cannons were impressive and prevented Sherif Ali from attacking.

Jim's military victory is a surprising event, given that he has no previous experience leading people into battle. As it turns out, the whole affair involved more than a little luck on Jim's part, as well as some help from his Malay allies. Thus, the victory isn't quite so romantic as Jim's heroic fantasies.

CHAPTER 27

Jim's victory over Sherif Ali became legendary in **Patusan**. When Marlow visits, people are still telling fantastical stories of how Jim got his cannons in position to attack Sherif Ali. Dain Waris was in charge of a party storming Sherif Ali's camp directly. Jim is amazed at how much trust the Malays put in him as a leader during the attack and especially after victory, which provided a great morale boost to Doramin's people.

Despite his high ideas about himself, even Jim realizes that the Malays put a little more trust in him than perhaps they should. While these high expectations help Jim reach his potential, they also place expectations on him that no mortal could ever hope to live up to.

Stories of Jim's victory over Sherif Ali are so exaggerated that some say Jim opened the gate of Sherif Ali's camp with a single finger. In reality, Jim had help from Dain Waris and from Tamb' Itam. Tamb' Itam is Jim's Malay servant and a very dark-skinned man from outside of **Patusan** who escaped Rajah Allang and devoted himself religiously to serving Jim.

Part of the reason why Jim has earned such a super-human reputation is that he doesn't do everything by himself—loyal friends like Dain Waris and Tamb' Itam are doing work behind the scenes. This again highlights the discrepancy between Jim's fantasies and his reality. In some ways, the relationship is mutually beneficial, since the Malays who serve Jim can use Jim's legend as a way to scare off Rajah Allang.

Fighting between Dain Waris's party and Sherif Ali's was quick, with Dain Waris setting fire to the whole encampment and everyone clearing out. The victory over Sherif Ali was significant for Doramin and it cemented Jim's reputation as a leader with exceptional, even legendary abilities.

Jim's victory over Sherif Ali relies more on a show of force that causes Sherif Ali to flee rather than real force. As Jim himself knows well, sometimes the enemy a person creates in their mind is scarier than the real thing.

CHAPTER 28

After Jim's attack, Sherif Ali flees the country without attempting to fight back against Doramin's forces. With Dain Waris's approval, Jim gets appointed headman, making him essentially the ruler of the area. This frightens Rajah Allang, who fears he'll suffer Sherif Ali's fate. Doramin hopes Jim will one day challenge the Rajah and that Dain Waris can rule, but he knows from what he's heard that white men often come to foreign lands and leave suddenly.

Although Jim's leadership represents a potential threat to Doramin's leadership, Doramin is a shrewd leader who knows that most white Europeans like Jim will eventually return to their homelands. In the meantime, Jim makes a formidable figurehead, valuable more for the fear he inspires in Rajah Allang than for his actual skill as a military leader.

Doramin's wife begins asking Marlow why Jim would leave his home. Didn't he have a family there or other people who would miss him? Marlow struggles to answer the question for her.

Although Doramin's wife comes from a very different culture from Jim, she can sense that it takes a very unusual person to willingly leave their old life behind.

During his time at **Patusan**, Jim also falls in love. Jim meets a woman that he calls Jewel—she is the part-white, part-Malay stepdaughter of Cornelius (Stein's trading partner in Patusan before Jim arrived), and she becomes Jim's wife. Jim is embarrassed the first time he introduces Jewel to Marlow at his house. Marlow makes a connection: on his way to meet Jim, he heard a rumor from an official that Jim had gotten his hand on some sort of valuable green gem through his strength and cunning. He realizes now that the rumor got twisted, and that people were confusing Jewel with a jewel.

This section objectifies the character Jewel: the rumor mill effectively transforms her from a human into an emerald. While Jim's love for Jewel seems to be genuine in some respects, she is perhaps more important to him as an ideal than as a person. Jewel's biracial background makes her a natural bridge between the European foreigner Jim and the Malay locals, although her in-between status also perhaps leaves her vulnerable to being excluded from both groups.

CHAPTER 29

During Marlow's visit to **Patusan**, Jim goes on walks with Jewel in the evening and how sometimes when Marlow is there, he walks, too. Otherwise, Marlow sees little of Jewel on his visit, mostly remembering her olive-colored skin and blue-black hair. She seems both shy and bold at the same time. She speaks fairly good English with a boyish accent. Jewel loves Jim intensely and seems vigilant about any potential threat to their love.

Jewel's boyish accent is significant: it suggests that she is logical culmination of all Jim's childhood fantasies. While the "romances" Jim read growing were more about adventure than love, love is nevertheless a key element of many adventure stories. Jewel's intense devotion to Jim (due to her lack of attachments to other people in Patusan) makes her seem like a loyal love interest from a story.

Tamb' Itam, Jim's servant, lurks in the background during Marlow's visit, silently watching for danger and disappearing unless he senses Jim has an order. Jim left Doramin's place soon after arriving so that he could carry out Stein's business, a decision that potentially made Jim vulnerable. This was before Jim's victory over Sherif Ali. At that time, he took up residence with Cornelius (Stein's previous contact in the area and Jewel's stepfather). Marlow figures Cornelius must have also had some level of protection from Doramin, due to Cornelius's previous work with Stein.

Although many residents of Patusan believe that Jim is invincible, this passage reveals all the invisible ways that Jim was receiving protection from outside sources, whether through Tamb' Itam's watchful eye or through Doramin's guidance. More broadly, this could reflect how, as a European from a respected family, Jim goes through life with privilege, sometimes without even realizing it—and often at the expense of oppressed peoples whose aid goes unrecognized.

Cornelius is a disgusting-looking man who didn't feed Jim well but charged him a lot of money to stay with him. Nevertheless, he pretended to be very friendly with Jim and constantly apologized for all the inconveniences. Cornelius claimed Stein owes him money, but his record books have pages torn and missing (which he blamed on his late wife, Jewel's biological mother). Rumor has it that Rajah Allang wanted to kill Jim, but for six weeks, Jim continued to live undisturbed with Cornelius.

Outward appearances in this novel often reflect a character's internal state, and so Cornelius's ugliness is a physical sign of his bad moral state. Although it isn't clear precisely what Cornelius has done, it seems that the missing pages from the record books are his attempt to run from his past, just as Jim is trying to erase the Patna *from his past.*

CHAPTER 30

During the period of time when Jim lives with Cornelius, Jim instantly sympathizes with Jewel for having to endure the mean things Cornelius does to her. Cornelius screams at Jewel and demands that she call him father and respect him, while saying bad things about her dead mother. Jim feels that he must intervene and that he can't leave Cornelius's house without first doing something to help Jewel.

Cornelius seems to resent Jewel just for existing, but yet he still demands that she show him respect. This provides an interesting parallel to Jim, who doesn't harass people but who nevertheless craves respect from people that he himself doesn't care about.

Meanwhile, Doramin keeps sending a servant to visit Jim and tell him that Doramin can't protect him unless he goes back to Doramin's place. One night, Cornelius himself even offers to smuggle Jim out of the country, and he tries to scare Jim about the dangers of staying. Jim refuses, which enrages Cornelius. That night, Jim gets his plan for how to use the cannons to take Sherif Ali's camp. He excitedly tells Jewel about his plan; Jewel approves.

Jim's newfound ability to stick up for himself coincides with his epiphany about a plan to take down Sherif Ali. Although Jim is proud of himself for refusing to run, he still acts without thinking through the consequences.

CHAPTER 31

Despite the danger to his life, Jim remains at Cornelius's house, and he begins telling the Bugis of how they can raid Sherif Ali's camp. Jim successfully convinces the Bugis. He's excited that when he goes back to Cornelius, he tries to be more polite, and Cornelius does the same.

Jim's actions are right at the border between bravery and recklessness, perhaps suggesting how thin the borders can be between these two qualities.

Jim wakes in the middle of the night at Cornelius's. Jewel is telling him to get up. Jim grabs his revolver and gets up, although Jewel warns him there are four men outside. She leads Jim away and tells him that he was to be attacked in the middle of the night. She reveals that she's been watching him sleep in case of attacks like this. Jim is annoyed, however, by all these alarms about unseen enemies.

Jim likes challenges that he can face head-on (or at least he thinks he does). The unseen potential assassins in the dark are like the Patna *on the dark night when Jim was fleeing it—in both situations, the horrors that Jim invents in his mind are even harder to face than reality.*

Jim calls out to Cornelius, but Jewel warns him to run away, since now they know he's awake. Jim wants to stay and fight, but Jewel pleads for him to go to Doramin. Jim eventually leaves; Jewel follows him. Jim remains frustrated that he can't see his enemies. As they walk, Jewel suddenly tells Jim to fire his weapon, but Jim says there's nothing there.

Jim can't see the danger for himself, but he trusts Jewel to lead him. Given Jim's prior resistance to intimacy and to relying on others, this passage represents a step forward for him, though a part of him still resists being led.

Just then, a man hidden and lying down leaps up at Jim. Jim feels relief and knows at once that this attacking man will soon be a dead man. He fires his revolver and shoots the man through the mouth. He steps over the dead man, and one of the other men quickly throws aside his spear to surrender, telling Jim that there are two more men.

Although it might seem terrifying to have to shoot an assassin, Jim prefers to deal with threats that he can see as opposed to phantoms in his mind, perhaps because he has such an active imagination. Succeeding at this challenge gives Jim the confidence to continue.

CHAPTER 32

Jim orders the three surviving attackers to link arms and march for him. Jim tells the men to go to the river, jump in, and take his regards to Sherif Ali. They follow orders, afraid Jim might shoot them. Jim is speechless for a while. Later, when Jim tells Marlow about this episode, he mentions how fond he is of Jewel and how at that moment, she was clearly fond of him too.

Jim's affection for Jewel grows because of the trust they formed overcoming a shared ordeal. That night also represents the first time that Jim comes to terms with his power to inflict fear in people, an idea that will be important later on.

Jim tells Marlow during Marlow's visit that he can't imagine living anywhere other than **Patusan**—because he still can't forget when he came there in the first place. Marlow tries to console Jim, but Jim refuses to listen.

Even though Jim has taken advantage of the blank slate he received in Patusan, he has come to learn what Marlow already knew: that no one's slate can ever be fully cleared.

After Jim and Marlow part ways, Jewel stops Marlow—she seems to have been waiting for him. She's looking for some sort of assurance from Marlow, but Marlow isn't quite sure what kind. She has lived in **Patusan** her whole life, and this has given her an unusual kind of innocence. She sees Marlow as part of an outside Unknown that might take Jim back at any moment.

Jewel's innocence here reflects her sheltered upbringing, but her apprehension toward Marlow also shows that she is familiar with European colonial practices: colonizers come to foreign lands, take what they want, and leave as soon as they have what they want—with little regard for the welfare of the native communities they have exploited.

CHAPTER 33

After Jewel stops Marlow, Jewel asks suspiciously why Marlow came to see Jim if he has no intention of taking Jim away. Marlow tries to explain that it's just friendship and business and that he'd prefer for Jim to stay in **Patusan**.

Marlow surely has conflicting feelings about Jim staying in Patusan, since he knows that every time he sees Jim could be the last. Nevertheless, his words here seem to suggest his highest priority is what Jim wants, and for the moment, Jim seems happy in Patusan.

Jewel tells Marlow about how on the night that the four men came to assassinate Jim, Jim promised that he'd never abandon her with Cornelius. Cornelius later confesses to Marlow about his role in Sherif Ali's plot to kill Jim. Cornelius was mystified by Jim and says he really would have saved him if Jim had only paid him.

Jim's behavior continues to be a mystery to many of those around him. While Jim often fails to live up to his lofty ideals, they nevertheless inspire him to follow a code of conduct that seems strange to people who don't know him.

After the attackers jumped in the river to swim back to Sherif Ali, Jewel urged Jim to leave her and get out of **Patusan**. But Jim stayed with her. Jewel says to Marlow that her big fear that night was that she would die weeping, the way her mother did. When Jewel's mother was on her sickbed, she cried as Cornelius pounded to be let in, but Jewel held the door at her mother's command. Jim promises to never leave her, but Jewel says other men have made the same promise before. Jewel begins to believe, however, that Jim isn't like other men.

The death of Jewel's mother is a harrowing scene that confirms the cruel nature of Cornelius. Jewel's position barricading the doorway between her two parents shows once again how she occupies an in-between place, caught between two different worlds (European and Malay).

Jewel begins asking Marlow about what it is from Jim's past that haunts him and troubles his sleep. Marlow feels a great responsibility about how to respond correctly to this question. He finally assures her by answering that nothing from Jim's past could ever tear him away from her. He promises Jewel that he'll never come back again and that no one else from outside ever wants to see Jim again.

Despite Jim's success in Patusan, his past continues to haunt him. His dreams and sleep-talking reveal to Jewel the things that he doesn't let out during the daytime. In order to please Jewel, Marlow perhaps overstates how unwanted Jim is in the outside world. Earlier chapters proved that if Jim wanted to find more traditional work, he could easily to so, and most people would overlook his past.

All around, the air in **Patusan** is silent. At last, Jewel asks why no one outside wants Jim. Marlow is a little annoyed at her insistence and says that it's because Jim isn't good enough. Jewel angrily calls Marlow a liar, and Marlow softens, adding that nobody is good enough.

Marlow develops his thoughts as he speaks. First, he faults Jim for failing to be the hero he imagines himself to be. But as Marlow considers the subject further, he realizes that maybe nobody turns out to be exactly the type of person they dream of becoming.

CHAPTER 34

Jewel continues to be skeptical of what Marlow tells her. Jim's footsteps interrupt Marlow and Jewel's conversation. Marlow shuffles away. Jim and Jewel greet each other in childish voices and Jim asks where Marlow went. He calls for Marlow. Marlow hears Jim but doesn't turn back. Marlow begins to feel sentimental as he walks through the solemn nighttime **Patusan**.

The childish voices that Jim and Jewel use to greet each other represent the innocence of their love, while also suggesting a lack of maturity. Marlow seems to judge that Jim is happy, and his refusal to even acknowledge Jim's call could be his way of choosing not to interfere in Jim's life out of fear that any interruption might disturb Jim's happiness.

Suddenly, Cornelius appears and interrupts Marlow's peaceful mood. Cornelius looks like an ugly corpse being swallowed up in his suit. Marlow can tell Cornelius wants to tell him something and doesn't resist. Marlow finds Cornelius's ugly personality easier to bear since, to Marlow, Jim is the only one who matters, and since Jim seems to have mastered his fate, people like Cornelius are of no consequence.

Marlow's assessment that Cornelius is a man of no consequence has some truth to it—certainly Cornelius hasn't accomplished anything great in his life. Nevertheless, this passage will become significant, given events that happen near the end of the story.

Cornelius tells Marlow that he feels untouchable—even if he gave Jim a rifle, he can't imagine Jim killing him. He paints himself as a victim and a very unhappy man. He explains that he'd have saved Jim if Jim had only paid the money, but Marlow replies that Jim has already saved himself and forgiven Cornelius. Cornelius, however, scoffs; he says Jim is a fool who has thrown dust in everyone else's eyes. Eventually, however, Cornelius backs down and says he didn't mean what he said about Jim; he hopes Marlow will forget he said anything.

Cornelius's feeling of invincibility is a twisted image of Jim's own near-legendary status in Patusan. Both of them are only mortal, and so they're each deluded in their own way. Nevertheless, Cornelius is able to correctly identify how Jim himself is not as powerful as he seems. Cornelius only takes back his insult of Jim because he knows Marlow is an ally of Jim's, and he doesn't want Cornelius to tell Jim how Cornelius feels about him.

Cornelius asks Marlow to ask Jim for a favor. Marlow realizes that Cornelius feels entitled to some money from Jim as payment for his role in raising Jewel. In order to look less like an extortionist, Cornelius adds that he will happily take Jewel back whenever it becomes time for Jim to go home. Marlow holds back on answering long enough that Cornelius thinks Marlow is seriously considering the offer. At last, Marlow replies that it doesn't matter, since Jim will never leave anyway. Cornelius expresses disbelief and gets angry again.

Cornelius seems to be serious about his offer—he thinks of humans like Jewel in such material terms that she is little more than a piece of property to be passed back and forth. Cornelius can't imagine Jewel as anything more than an obligation. Marlow obviously doesn't approve, having a better grasp on Jewel's humanity, but Cornelius is deluded enough to believe that everyone thinks like he does.

CHAPTER 35

The next morning in **Patusan**, Jim comes with Marlow on the first part of Marlow's journey back to the outer world. They become more emotionally distant with each other as their physical separation gets closer. When they make it out of the river to the sea, Marlow marvels at the vastness of the horizon, but Jim seems hesitant to acknowledge it.

The emotional distance between Jim and Marlow helps each of them prepare for their coming separation, which each of them knows will be long, perhaps even permanent. Jim's hesitance to look at the horizon symbolizes how, metaphorically, he's also stopped looking to the horizon, limiting his sights to Patusan's borders.

Marlow has a clear memory of that afternoon. He remembers how people in a fishing village came up to Jim and brought to him their problems with Rajah Allang. This renews Jim's belief that he has to stay in **Patusan** to help people. Jim seems sad about potentially never seeing Marlow again. He begins asking Marlow to "Tell them . . .", but he doesn't finish the thought. As Marlow leaves, the Malay fishermen fade from view first, while Jim's lighter skin stands out against the background longer, until it too fades away. This is the last time Marlow sees Jim.

Like many dreamers, Jim doesn't always finish what he starts. At many points in the story, Jim speaks in incomplete sentences, particularly when overcome with emotion. His inability to complete the sentence "Tell them . . ." is particularly significant. While Jim has always cared about an abstract "them" (i.e., people watching and judging him, his reputation), he finds at this moment that he has nothing in particular to say to the outside world and no one in particular to say it to.

CHAPTER 36

Marlow has finally finished telling the long story of Jim's life at the dinner party in the present day. His audience breaks up, and some go to the veranda. Many of the men in attendance have their own reactions to the story, but only one man ever hears the full ending. Marlow writes to this man two years later, sending him a thick packet. The "privileged reader" who receives the letter looks out his window at a lighthouse. He notices that Marlow's packet contains three items: many pages pinned together in Marlow's handwriting, a gray paper with unfamiliar handwriting, and a letter of explanation from Marlow. As the man inspects further, the explanatory letter has yet another letter with it.

Marlow's speech at the dinner party, which spans over 30 chapters, makes up the bulk of the novel. The last few chapters, however, take a different form (although they're still mostly told in Marlow's voice). For most of the people at the dinner party, Jim's story has a happy ending, despite the suggestions of some growing cracks in this happiness. While there is certainly an element of truth to this ending—Jim really does blossom in Patusan—the "privileged reader" will get an even more truthful ending to the story.

The privileged reader begins reading Marlow's letter. In it, Marlow writes that the privileged reader seemed interested in Jim's fate and assumes that the man hasn't forgotten Jim's story. At the time, the man didn't believe Jim had truly mastered his fate, despite Marlow's claims otherwise. The man told Marlow that for Jim to give up his life for "them" was brutish (with Marlow inferring that "them" meant "all of mankind with skins brown, yellow, black in colour"). The man, according to Marlow's letter, believed that such a sacrifice was only permissible if one maintained proper ideas about race.

The word "privileged" may have a double meaning, since reader is "privileged" to be able to hear the end of the story but also seemingly living a "privileged," wealthy lifestyle, benefitting from colonialism without having to see its horrors firsthand. It is interesting that Marlow specifically chooses to give his letter to the most racist person at the party—this could reflect the novel's overall intention to combat racist ideas by telling a story that undermines them.

In his letter, Marlow recalls how Jim tried to write him once. Jim signed the letter from "The Fort, **Patusan**," suggesting that he had begun to fortify himself against possible attacks. In the letter, Jim begins writing with a splotchy hand that something terrible has happened, but that's as far as he gets.

Jim's letter is yet another unfinished project in his life. His reference to his house as a fort (which, as Marlow knows from his visit, it clearly is not) shows that even after so much time in Patusan, Jim hasn't lost his romantic way of looking at the world.

In his letter, Marlow explains that one of the other letters enclosed in the packet is from Jim's father, and that Jim kept the letter carefully preserved in his writing desk. Jim's father wrote the letter a few days before Jim joined the **Patna**, so this means Jim kept it with him for a long time. In the letter, Jim's father advises Jim not to judge people too quickly or severely, then he updates Jim about various people's lives and about some of Jim's old pets. Marlow closes his letter by saying that he has heard the final events of Jim's story and can imagine them so vividly that he feels like an eyewitness, even though he is putting it all together from fragments.

The packet that Marlow sends comes in many parts, providing a physical manifestation of how the story becomes more fractured near the end. As Marlow himself is not there to witness the events, he increasingly takes on the role of a journalist, or even a detective, piecing Jim's story together from evidence and testimony by others who were there to witness what Marlow couldn't witness himself.

CHAPTER 37

Marlow's letter continues. He tells the privileged reader about the end of Jim's story, which begins with a man named Brown who steals a Spanish schooner. Marlow speaks to Brown—who is notorious and known as Gentleman Brown—after the fact, as Brown is dying in Bangkok.

Brown's relevance to Jim's story isn't clear yet. Marlow only teases the connection to suggest that the end of Jim's story will involve some real adventure, given Brown's notorious reputation.

Eight months before Marlow meets Brown, he goes to see Stein in Samarang (in Indonesia). At Stein's place, he sees a Malay the he remembers seeing earlier at Jim's house in **Patusan**. Jim had pointed out the man and said he was a respectable trader. Marlow goes on and sees Tamb' Itam. He asks Tamb' Itam if Tuan Jim is also there, but Tamb' Itam simply says "He would not fight" twice.

The presence of Tamb' Itam, as well as his repetition of the phrase "He would not fight" is a strong suggestion that Jim is dead. Rather than stating this directly, Marlow gradually leads the privileged reader to this conclusion, perhaps mirroring his own slow-dawning revelation.

Stein comes out to greet Marlow and stays that the girl (Jewel) is also there, though she is too frightened to say anything to Stein. Stein stays since the girl won't talk to him, Marlow should talk to her and try to get her to forgive Jim.

In terms of their backgrounds, Stein and Jewel are too distant from each other to be able to communicate well, but because of Marlow's connection to Jim, Stein hopes he'll have better luck.

When Marlow goes to the part of the house where Jewel is staying, she recognizes him at once. She says Jim left her after all, despite what Marlow promised. She says it would've been easy for her to die with him, but he wouldn't allow it. She tells about how when Jim got passionate about something, it was like he was blind or in a dream. She can't forgive Jim for leaving her for a dream.

Although Jewel is often a passive character who is controlled by the men around her, she nevertheless has strong opinions that she expresses. Despite her devotion to Jim, she refuses to approve of the choices he made near the end of his life.

Marlow sees Jewel a second time on his visit to Stein. She's walking with Stein. She says Jim was false, just like the others, but Stein gets frustrated and tries to explain how Jim was true. Marlow eventually leaves Stein's place, taking Tamb' Itam and the Bugis trader with him (since they are headed in the same direction). This is where Marlow's first letter ends. The privileged reader flips over to Marlow's longer narrative letter.

Marlow's first letter is really more like a prologue than a developed story. It's unusual to put a prologue so late in a novel, illustrating once again Conrad's willingness to play with the structural conventions of the typical novel.

CHAPTER 38

Marlow's longer letter begins with the statement that everything starts with the man Brown, whom Marlow briefly mentioned earlier. Gentleman Brown is supposedly the son of a baronet, but he has done things at sea that could get him hanged. His exploits include running off with the wife of a missionary, who was ill at the time and died on his ship, prompting a violent outburst of grief from him. At another point, he gets captured by the Spanish while trying to smuggle guns.

Brown is like a pirate. His running off with the wife of a missionary shows a total disregard for (Christian) religion and the conventional morality it espouses. His grief at the death of the sick woman suggests that he isn't entirely heartless, although this brief biography certainly paints him as a person without a strong conscience.

With the help of a loyal crewmember from the Solomon Islands, Brown manages to reunite with his crew and steal a Spanish vessel. Brown's eventual goal is to take the vessel to Madagascar. Along the way, however, he comes across **Patusan** somehow and sees the opportunity to stock up on supplies.

Brown's exploits show that he is notorious for a reason—not only is he amoral, but he's also very clever and capable as a leader, taking advantage of every opportunity that comes his way.

There are sixteen men with Brown, and fourteen of them go with him up the river toward **Patusan** in a smaller longboat while two stay behind with the schooner. When Brown first arrives at a fishing village, the place seems deserted. It turns out, however, that the villagers had been warned in advance of the approaching longboat. All of a sudden, Brown hears drums and war cries, and he sees that two of his men are wounded. Boats from Rajah Allang's stockade block their retreat.

Brown's invasion of Patusan causes Doramin's people and Rajah Allang's to form an uneasy alliance, showing that they have a common interest in keeping out men like Brown's crew. Although the Malays are not as well armed as Brown's men, they have superior numbers, higher ground, and better knowledge of the environment.

Brown and his men land their boat and go inland to take up a position on a knoll. Brown waits for an attack, or at least for someone to try to take his longboat, but for a long time, nothing happens. The boats from Rajah Allang seem curiously hesitant to attack.

Rajah Allang's failure to attack suggests at best a failure of communication and at worst a splintering of the fragile alliance between the two main factions of Malays in Patusan.

CHAPTER 39

Marlow continues his letter, noting how Brown's arrival that night is significant to Jim's story. At the time of Brown's arrival, Jim is actually away from interior **Patusan**, and so Dain Waris leads the initial attack on Brown's crew. Some of the Malays are injured in the skirmish and are being tended to in the lower part of town, where Jewel oversees things. The Bugis agree that rather than trying to fight Brown's men directly, they'll wait for them to either try to retake their boat or to starve in the woods. Some Bugis, however, worry about why Rajah Allang's boats didn't attack.

Jim's physical absence from Patusan during Brown's arrival leaves a power vacuum. It shows that perhaps the people of Patusan have put a little too much faith in Jim, to the point where they can't function without him (even though a lot of Jim's power is symbolic). The hesitance of the Bugis to take decisive action against Brown suggests that perhaps Jim has taught them his ways a little too well—he, too, hesitates in moments of crisis.

Without Jim, the villagers are indecisive. Doramin makes a rare journey down to the village, but he is aging and doesn't speak much. At the same time, Dain Waris doesn't want to offer his opinion in the presence of his father. They send several messengers out to find Jim, whose precise location is unknown. A messenger from Rajah Allang named Kassim takes Cornelius back with him to the Rajah. His plan is to use Cornelius as an interpreter to contact Brown.

This passage further explores the power vacuum in Patusan without Jim around. The lack of a decision has no particular source—it is a combination of factors, including Doramin's age, Dain Waris's deference to his father, and the general confusion about Rajah Allang's real intentions.

Brown's men hear a voice in English asking them for permission to approach. It's Cornelius. He reveals himself as a white man and eventually goes over to talk with Brown about the state of things in **Patusan**. Brown sees possibilities but demands a show of good faith in the form of food. Cornelius goes back to Rajah Allang, and then some of the Rajah's men come back with a small supply of food.

Based on what's already been revealed about him, it seems clear that Cornelius is up to no good with Brown. While Brown represents a threat to the people of Patusan, for some, he also offers an opportunity.

Kassim hopes that Brown and his men will be able to defeat the Bugis before Jim gets back—he figures that Brown is less likely to stay and try to control Jim. Brown, however, gets greedier as he hears from the Malays. Instead of stealing food, he wants to steal all of **Patusan**, figuring that if Jim did it alone, he could just as easily do it himself. Bargaining between Brown and Rajah Allang is tense, with Brown bluffing about how well-armed his big schooner is.

Like Cornelius, Kassim also sees the opportunity to profit off Brown's unexpected arrival. Brown's greed and increasing desire to dominate Patusan represents not just his own personal failings but also the broader greed among European eager to extract resources from foreign lands.

Kassim is anxious for Brown to order his big schooner to come down the river and offers to send a messenger. Brown agrees, but on the message, he simply writes that he's in the middle of a job and that the two remaining crew members on the schooner should detain the messenger. They get the message and do so.

While Kassim thinks he is being clever, Brown is in fact tricking him. Brown's quick thinking in this situation foreshadows how he will create problems for Jim when he finally comes back.

CHAPTER 40

Brown hopes to delay until Jim gets back, thinking Jim will be the best person to work with. He plans to work with Jim for a while, believing Jim must be clever to have gotten so far—but ultimately, Brown hopes to stab Jim in the back. In the meantime, however, he needs Kassim to remain unaware.

Having never met Jim before, Brown believes that Jim is probably someone who shares similar views (meaning he is also willing to exploit Patusan). But in spite of that, Brown is ruthless and has no problem betraying Jim—even if it does turn out they're similar.

At one point, to show the power of himself and his men, Brown asks his second-in-command to shoot a random Malay villager dead from a great distance. Brown wants to inspire terror in the Malay because he knows they outnumber his forces 200 to one.

Brown's cruel and arbitrary show of force shows how he uses fear to his advantage—a darker version of what Jim did earlier to Sherif Ali.

Kassim goes back to Dain Waris and warns him that Brown's warship is coming up the river, but he downplays its power and says the Bugis should prepare to oppose it. People of the village sense that there will soon be bloodshed. Rajah Allang is in a constant state of fear and indecision, but old Doramin remains steady.

Kassim is so eager to trick other people that he becomes gullible himself. He thinks that he is sending Dain Waris to his death, but in fact, there is no big, powerful warship of Brown's coming up the river.

One of Brown's men remembers that there is some tobacco left in their longboat and asks if it's OK to go back and get it at night. Brown allows it. The man returns successfully, but suddenly there's a flash, and the man says he's been hit. More rifles sound as Brown's men fire back. A voice calls out telling everyone to stop firing.

One of Brown's men is willing to risk his own life over some tobacco, and he ends up paying for it with a severe wound. The episode illustrates how Brown's men are impulsive, driven by desires and vices.

With Cornelius translating, Brown confirms that he hears the voice telling them to stop. The voice says there will be no peace for Brown and his men. He says he is a Bugis who was related to the man Brown randomly murdered earlier. This Bugis undertook a lot of danger to give this message to Brown, but he manages to get away unharmed. The wounded man continues to shout, but Brown refuses to help him.

On the one hand, the Bugis and Brown are now equal, with each having killed (or at least seriously wounded) one from the other group. Nevertheless, Brown doesn't think in those terms—he wants to always be the one in control.

Eventually the wounded man dies. There's a sound from the nearby village, and Brown asks Cornelius what's happened. Cornelius says Jim must be back and that he'll come talk to Cornelius. Cornelius says that Jim isn't afraid of anything, meaning it will be easy for Brown to kill him and frighten the villagers.

Despite Cornelius's many personal shortcomings, he is nevertheless better at seeing the faults of others, particularly Jim. He correctly identifies pride as Jim's biggest weakness.

CHAPTER 41

As Jim approaches Brown's men, Cornelius points him out. Jim and Brown go off to talk. Brown hates Jim at first sight and abandons any plans to cooperate with him. Jim asks why Brown came here, and Brown says "hunger." He asks Jim the same question and Jim just blushes. Brown says Jim should just treat him like a dead man and that Jim himself is a dead man (since one of Brown's men is ready to shoot him), and so they're both equal before death.

The impulsive Brown dislikes Jim at once. He can tell immediately that Jim lacks the same greedy spirit as him—or "hunger" as Brown euphemistically puts it here. Although Brown and his crew literally are on the verge of starvation, Brown has an even deeper hunger that can only be satisfied through domination and conquest.

Brown knows what to say to provoke Jim and his pride. Brown claims that he came for a noble cause: searching for food to fill his crew's bellies. He says he's lived a dirty life but is sure it's as good as Jim's, if not better.

Just as he used cleverness to escape with a Spanish ship, Brown uses his wits again to try to get himself out of a new difficult situation. Jim's romantic personality makes him easy to trick.

CHAPTER 42

Brown and Jim's conversation by the creek is like a duel. Brown seems to have been an expert at finding men's strengths and weaknesses, and he uses these skills against Jim. He presents himself to Jim as a victim of fate who came to **Patusan** not to pillage but to beg. He says Dain Waris attacked before even asking questions. (Brown, on his deathbed, admits to Marlow that he would've come into Patusan guns blazing, killing anything that moved—though he doesn't tell Jim this at the time.)

Brown blatantly lies to Jim with no remorse. In fact, he's so proud of the cleverness of his lies that many years later on his deathbed, he can't help but telling Marlow what his real intentions were at the time. Brown likes to dominate people's minds just as much as he likes pillaging actual lands.

Brown insists to Jim that the one Malay he killed was killed cleanly, whereas Brown's wounded man died a prolonged death over six hours. Now they were equal, a life for a life. Brown says a desperate man will do anything to save his own life, no matter how many other lives are at stake, and this comment deeply affects Jim.

Without knowing anything about the Patna, *Brown says something that reminds Jim of it. This perhaps reveals less about Brown's cleverness and more about how deeply ingrained in Jim's psyche the* Patna *remains, even after so many years.*

Jim at last asks Brown if he'll promise to leave at once and surrender his crews' arms. Brown refuses to give up the weapons. Jim hesitates and says he doesn't know if he has the power to make the decision. Brown says Jim must have the power, or else their whole conversation has been a waste. At last, Jim says Brown has a clear path to escape—or else a clear fight. With that, Jim leaves.

Brown shows some deference to Jim, but he also knows just when to taunt him. Here, he correctly senses that Jim is afraid of being seen as weak, so he eggs Jim on to exercise his authority over the people of Patusan.

When Brown returns, Cornelius is angry that Brown didn't kill Jim, but Brown insists he did even better. Events after this move quickly. The people of the village rejoice when Jim returns unhurt. Many Bugis warriors take a hill, hoping that the sight of so many of them will encourage Brown and his men to leave. While the villagers are uneasy about the possibility of war with Brown's men, Jim remains convinced that they will turn around and head back to sea. He says so to Doramin. He also says that if Doramin wants to attack Brown, he'll have to have Dain Waris lead, since Jim will not.

For Brown, many of his interactions with other people are a game. Cornelius and Jim both mean nothing to Brown—they are simply pawns in the game, and so it makes no difference to Brown whether he kills Jim or pleases Cornelius. Jim, on the other hand, is just the obvious, taking things too seriously and wrongly believing that men like Brown will keep their promises.

CHAPTER 43

Tamb' Itam is shocked to hear Jim say that he believes it's best to let Brown's men go. Jim reminds everyone that he has never deceived them before. Eventually, everyone agrees out of respect for Tuan Jim.

Tamb' Itam is consistently one of the wisest characters in the story, and so his shock here foreshadows that Jim is making an error by trusting Brown.

Although Jim seems to trust Brown, he is still worried about a possible misunderstanding causing problems. He feels responsible for the life of every person in the village, and so he goes to take command and oversee things. He and some men take up a position to wait until Brown leaves. At last, Jim sends Tamb' Itam out to relay the message to Dain Waris that Brown's boat should be allowed to pass unharmed. Brown gets a letter from Jim letting him know that he is free to go. But Jim warns him that the surrounding woods are filled with armed men. Brown rips the letter up and says goodbye to Cornelius.

Jim remains worried about reputation above all else. While he should be worried about the threat that Brown and his men represent, instead he's worried that the people of Patusan might give the appearance that they aren't honoring their agreement with Brown. For Jim, it is unthinkable to give even the appearance of a betrayal to Brown.

Cornelius, however, lingers and says he can tell Brown something interesting. Brown doesn't want to hear it, but Cornelius insists that Jim intends to betray Brown and that Dain Waris's army is set up down the river to attack him and his men when they try to escape.

Cornelius is clearly lying, something that even Brown might pick up on, but Brown needs little convincing to get revenge on Jim. The people of Patusan refused to submit to Brown, and Brown doesn't take opposition lightly.

The warriors of **Patusan** remain on alert, but all seems peaceful as Brown's longboat comes down the river. There's a light fog that day. Jim tells them as they pass that they'll have a clear road. If they need to wait a day, he can send down some food; a voice calls back that Brown should do so. And so, Cornelius manages to leave on the longboat with Brown.

Jim's desire to be seen as a hero even extends to his enemies like Brown, hence why he graciously offers to send them down food if they need it.

CHAPTER 44

As the longboat enters a narrow channel, Brown tells his men that they'll have a chance to get even with the villagers of **Patusan** soon enough. Meanwhile, Tamb' Itam makes his way to Dain Waris and gives Jim's message about letting Brown pass unharmed, including a ring to prove the authenticity of the message. Dain Waris makes plans for his men to return.

Brown promotes a twisted idea of justice—while Jim and the people of Patusan have lately tried to make peace with Brown's crew, Brown still harbors a sense of having been wronged. Brown feels that it's his right to walk into places like Patusan and plunder to his heart's content, so anything less than that outcome is a cause for him to seek revenge.

Brown lands his boat and stealthily leads his men to Dain Waris's Bugis camp. They attack suddenly, all 14 of them firing at once. It's so surprising that Tamb' Itam recalls that no one moved for a while. Tamb' Itam himself pretends to fall down dead but keeps his eyes open, and he sees Dain Waris get shot in the forehead. Eventually, Brown and his men leave unseen.

Brown's attack on Dain Waris's men accomplishes nothing beyond sowing destruction and proving a point. This passage is the perhaps the harshest depiction in the novel of the destructive attitudes that many colonialist Europeans carried with them when they traveled to foreign lands.

Later, Brown and two skeletal-looking men are found at sea in a longboat on the Indian Ocean. Brown tells a story about a cargo steamer wreck that he survived. When they flee after firing their rifles, they leave Cornelius behind. Cornelius runs into Tamb' Itam, who kills him. There is disorder and confusion among Dain Waris's men, who scatter but eventually all make their way back to the village on their own.

Marlow's assessment that Cornelius is a person of no consequence ends up having some truth to it. Despite Cornelius's role in Brown's betrayal of Jim, ultimately Cornelius is just a minor figure who gets killed immediately after the attack.

CHAPTER 45

When Tamb' Itam makes it back to the village, things are festive. Tamb' Itam has to break the news that they killed Dain Waris and many others, first to Doramin, then to Jim. Jim says there's no time and he must take action, but Tamb' Itam prevents him from going out, saying that it isn't safe for Jim to be among the people.

The festive spirit in the village contrasts with the news that is about to break, recalling the old saying that ignorance is bliss. The village of Patusan, which was once a safe haven for Jim, now suddenly becomes a place where his life is in danger.

Jim stays in his house, his life once again in ruins. Marlow believes this is when Jim attempted to write his half-finished letter. Tamb' Itam warns Jim that they might have to fight for their lives, but Jim says he has no life. Jewel also encourages Jim to fight, but Jim just says to open the gates of his house.

Previous chapters have hinted at how fragile Jim's happiness in Patusan was, and now this passage shows how Jim falls into despair as soon as things fall apart. While Jim has people willing to fight for his life and who see value in him, he once again finds that crisis paralyzes him.

Dain Waris's body is brought back and laid at Doramin's feet. There's a commotion when Dain Waris's body is uncovered, and everyone in the crowd sees Jim's ring. Jim emerges from his contemplation and says to Tamb' Itam that it's time to finish things. Jewel again pleads with Jim to fight or flee, but Jim says he has no reason left to do either. Jewel accuses Jim of breaking his promise to stay with her, but he says he's not worth keeping.

Jim's words to Jewel suggest a suicidal personality, just as Marlow always feared. Although Jim uses the language of justice and honor to describe his actions, the people who love him, like Jewel and Tamb' Itam, believe that Jim is acting more out of fear and desperation than honor.

It's a stormy evening. Jim canoes over to Doramin's village. Tamb' Itam goes with him, but after a while, Jim forces him to follow at a distance. As Jim comes into the torchlight, the mourning sounds in the village stop. Everyone begins to murmur. Jim announces that he comes unarmed and ready to face whatever comes.

The novel invites the question of how to judge Jim's actions: is he finally facing his problems head on, or has he just found a new way of running away from them?

Doramin, held up by two servants, gets to his feet slowly. He is full of rage and pain as he raises one arm and shoots Jim in the chest. Jim falls forward, already dead. In his letter, Marlow comments that Jim died as he lived, a hopeless romantic. Jim left behind a real-life wife to find a different sort of bride with his ideals. Though Jim is no more, Marlow sometimes still sees him as a ghost. Jewel lives a dull life with Stein, who is getting older and is ready to die and leave his butterfly specimens behind. And so ends Marlow's letter about the last days of Jim's life.

The ending provides a definitive end to Jim's life but still raises questions about how to interpret the events. While Marlow clearly faults Jim for committing too much to his ideals, and particularly for abandoning Jewel, he doesn't necessarily see Jim as a bad person, just a flawed one. Jim seems to have acted in the foolishness of youth, and the butterfly imagery that closes the novel reinforces this idea: unlike nature, which can achieve the degree of perfection that Jim dreamed of in his heroic fantasies, humans are fundamentally flawed and fated to fail, decay, and die. On the other hand, for better and for worse, Jim will always be preserved in Marlow's memory as he was, just as Stein's butterflies are preserved under glass.

HOW TO CITE

To cite this LitChart:

MLA

Gahr, Tim. "*Lord Jim.*" *LitCharts*. LitCharts LLC, 14 Dec 2022. Web. 14 Dec 2022.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Gahr, Tim. "*Lord Jim.*" LitCharts LLC, December 14, 2022. Retrieved December 14, 2022. https://www.litcharts.com/lit/lord-jim.

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MLA

Conrad, Joseph. Lord Jim. Signet. 2009.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Conrad, Joseph. Lord Jim. New York: Signet. 2009.