**The Five People You Meet in Heaven Chapter Summaries**

(http://thebestnotes.com/booknotes/Five\_People\_You\_Meet\_In\_Heaven/Five\_People\_You\_Meet\_In\_Heaven01.html)

**Chapter 1: The End**

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

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

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

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

Notes

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Chapter 2: The Journey**

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

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

Notes

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

**Chapter 3: The Arrival**

Eddie awakes in some kind of amusement park. He is able to pull himself up and walk without his cane; he does not feel any pain. He then notices that he is at Ruby Pier. The colors and the attractions seem different and he realizes that he is at the Ruby Pier from his childhood, over 75 years ago. Eddie runs and jumps around, taking advantage of his new-found limberness and the fact that he no longer needed his cane. He passes by the sideshow and notices a man, who he vaguely remembers, with blue skin.

The Blue Man tells Eddie that he knows him from when he was a child. Eddie is trying to find out why is at Ruby Pier but he cannot speak. Eddie finds it quite ridiculous that heaven might be Ruby Pier, since he had spent most of his life wishing he was away from Ruby Pier. The Blue Man informs Eddie that he will meet five people in heaven who were each in his life for a reason; this will help him understand his life on earth. Eddie is able to mutter out the question of what killed the Blue Man; the Blue Man replies that Eddie killed him.

The next birthday flashback is Eddie's seventh birthday. He and his brother, Joe, are playing catch with Eddie's new baseball. Eddie mistakenly throws the ball off of the boardwalk. They search around the sideshow tents and freaks, from the freak show, catch them. Eddie and Joe become very scared, they grab the ball and run away.

The chapter returns to Eddie's conversation with the Blue Man. He tells Eddie his story about how he came to Ruby Pier and why his skin is blue. The Blue Man tells Eddie the story about how he died from Eddie's point of view and also the Blue Man's point of view.

Eddie attends a funeral on his eighth birthday; he is unaware of where he is or the purpose of the ceremony.

Notes

We now know that Eddie has reached his afterlife. It is unclear why he is at Ruby Pier, especially the Ruby Pier 75 years prior to his death.

The Blue Man is the first person Eddie meets in heaven. He tells his story about how he became a member of the freak show: He was a poor immigrant and a very nervous child. He had a falling out with his father and often wet his bed. The Blue Man went to a chemist to get some help for his nerves and he gave the Blue Man a bottle of silver nitrate. Silver nitrate was later considered a poison, but the Blue Man drank it every night; it turned his skin blue. One night in a saloon, the Blue Man was discovered by a group of carnival men. One winter he came to Ruby Pier and decided to live there. The Blue Man loved how he could play cards at night with the other sideshow workers, and could even walk along the beach without scaring people.

This is where we find out why Eddie is at Ruby Pier, after his death; the Blue Man states, "Do you understand? Why we're here? This is not your heaven. It's mine" (42). Ruby Pier is not Eddie's heaven, as he had originally thought; it is the Blue Man's heaven.

The Blue Man then explains how Eddie killed him: The Blue Man had borrowed his friend's Ford Model A to practice his driving. Eddie's baseball bounces into the street and he runs into the street after it. The Blue Man slams on his breaks and yanks at the wheel. The Blue Man managed to regain control of the car; however, he was still so nervous that he had almost hit Eddie. He feels dizzy and his head falls for a moment, causing his car to almost collide with another. He skids down the street and pulls into an alley and ends up colliding with a truck. No one found him in the alley until he had already died.

The chapter then brings us to Eddie's eighth birthday. His mother is dressing him for a funeral and Eddie does not understand where they are going and for what. Since reading the chapter we can infer that it was the Blue Man's funeral and we see the bit of irony that Eddie was the one who killed him and he did not even know whose funeral he was attending.

**Chapter 4&5: The First Person & Lesson**

**32 Present** learns why he feels like a kid

**34** learns this is a version of Heaven

**37 Memory** saves his ball when it rolls up to Freakshow

**39 Present** Blue Man’s life story

**42 Memory** Blue Man’s death: 2 versions of story, 43 quote

**45 Memory** Blue Man’s funeral through Eddie’s child eyes on birthday,

**48 Present** reliving the funeral

**50 Present on Earth** People’s reaction to the accident

**52-55Memory** Eddie’s birthday; Joe tells family about Margurite, Eddie & Joe fight, Eddie and mother dance, Eddie and Joe dance

**First Lesson: 48** all lives intersect; 49 strangers are family you’ve yet come to know

Eddie learns his first lesson from the Blue Man. Eddie feels terrible about killing the Blue Man and cannot understand what good came from the Blue Man's death. The Blue Man tells Eddie that in life, there are no random encounters and that we are all connected in some way.

The Blue Man had completed one of his steps in heaven and has to leave. As he leaves his skin turns back to a perfect caramel color, unblemished and smooth.

The chapter then leads us back to the day Eddie died to briefly describe the aftermath of the accident at Ruby Pier.

We are then lead back to a scene from Eddie's seventeenth birthday. Eddie's brother, Joe, tells his parents that Eddie met a girl the previous night (Marguerite) and that Eddie said he was going to marry her. Eddie gets mad at Joe and punches him in the arm several times and they even engage in a minor fight. Eddie and his mother dance as he and Marguerite had; she then passes Eddie off to Joe and the two, jokingly, try to dance with each other.

Notes

Eddie learns his first lesson from the Blue Man. The lesson can be portrayed by the quote, "...there are no random acts. That we are all connected. That you can no more separate one life from another than you can separate a breeze from the wind" (48).

The Blue Man brings Eddie back to the scene of his funeral. The Blue Man states that many of the people at his funeral did not even know him well, yet they came anyway. This is because the human spirit knows, in some way, that all lives intersect. The Blue Man continues to tell Eddie that there is a balance between life and death; he states that many people have probably died instead of him, and this is common to all of us, also that there is a balance and birth and death are two parts to a whole. He then states that this is the reason why humans are drawn to babies and funerals.

Eddie still does not seem to understand what good came from the Blue Man's death. The Blue Man says that the "good" is that Eddie was able to live.

The Blue Man says that this step, for him, is over and he must go. As he leaves, Eddie can see the Blue Man's skin return to normal, perfect skin.

**Chapter 6: The Second Person**

**Present:** Eddie finds himself in some sort of wooded area and notices that some of his limberness is gone. He hears bombs exploding in the distance; he crouches to the ground and finds a dog tag with his name on it. **Eddie wakes up in war (56).**

**War Memory:** When Eddie was younger he enlisted in the army. Since he had never fired a rifle he began practicing at the shooting arcade at Ruby Pier (**57)**. One night while Eddie was practicing, a drunk Mickey Shea approached him and told him not to think while he is at war; he told Eddie that thinking will get him killed and that he should just shoot with out thinking about who he is shooting or why. A few days later Eddie headed to war.

**Present:** The story returns to Eddie back at a war scene. He finds his former Captain up in a tree. (**pg 61**)

**War Memory:** Eddie recalls when he was in the war and he, and four other soldiers, were taken as prisoners. **(65)** They were kept in bamboo barracks and barely fed. One morning their captors lead them into a coal mine. Eddie and the other prisoners, including the Captain, are forced to strip coal to help the enemy's war effort. A few months later one of the prisoners, Rabozzo, developed a severe sickness and was unable to work. One of the captures shot him in the head, in front of Eddie and the rest of the prisoners. (Eddie loses hope/focuses only on surviving; **70)**

Three weeks later Eddie found one of the captors, Crazy Three, trying to juggle rocks. Since Eddie knew how to juggle, he decided to create a diversion for the prisoners to escape. He juggled for Crazy Three who then called in the other captors to watch. Eddie captured their attention with his juggling and then began to throw the rocks into the faces of the captors. Eddie and the other prisoners were successful at killing the four guards, enabling them to escape. (**73-74)**

**Birthday Memory:** The end of the chapter takes us back to Eddie's birthday right before he goes off to the War. Eddie and Marguerite walk around the pier to spend Eddie's last few moments home, together. (**78)**

**War Memory:** Right after Eddie and the remaining prisoners escape, they steal the enemies’ weapons and decide to destroy the prison they had lived in for almost half a year. As the hut went up in flames Eddie thought he saw an innocent child crawl into the hut. He ran in after it, caught on fire and was shot in the leg. His buddies rolled him around in the dirt until he was no longer on fire. He then remembers being carted away in a transport vehicle. **(81, 83, 84)**

**Present:** The Captain tells Eddie that it was he who shot him. He did not want Eddie to burn to death and he knew Eddie would hurt him if he tried to get him out of the hut. Eddie is furious at the Captain for ruining the rest of his life; he beats him furiously, not harming him. Eddie then learns that the Captain died later that night trying to secure a path for the vehicle containing Eddie and the two other soldiers. **(87, 89)**

Notes

We see many clues in this chapter that tell us Eddie had served in World War II. Before Eddie had gone to war, he mentioned that during the Depression, roller coasters had become too expensive for Ruby Pier; they were replaced by a number of new and smaller rides. The Great Depression began on October 29, 1929, with the collapse of the stock prices on the New York Stock Exchange. The Great Depression lasted up until WWII. Eddie also was fighting and taken prisoner on a Philippine island, which is where a lot of fighting took place during WWII.

When Eddie finds the Captain in the tree, he asks Eddie if he can still juggle. This foreshadows that Eddie's juggling must have been significant during some point in the war. We find out towards the end of the chapter that it was Eddie's juggling which allowed him and the other prisoners to kill the guards, which then allowed them to escape to safety.

In this chapter we finally learn more about Eddie and Marguerite’s relationship. Eddie is probably around eighteen or nineteen years old and it is apparent that they are dating. She arrives at Eddie's house and he gets butterflies in his stomach and fills with love for her. Later that night Marguerite tells Eddie that she will wait for him to come back from the war. At that moment Eddie feels that he will never love anyone more than he loves her.

The flashbacks to the war, in this chapter, tell us how Eddie's life has changed afterwards. He thought he saw a child crawling into the burning hut. He became sickened by the war: the murders, captivity and the futility of it all. He merely wanted to salvage something and was convinced that there was an innocent soul inside the burning hut. The Captain shot Eddie in the leg to keep him from running further into the hut and burning to death. When Eddie finds this out he is furious with the Captain. Eddie's life had never been the same after his injury. For the rest of his life Eddie was haunted by that one mistake he had made by running back into the burning hut. After his injury, he could no longer run or dance.

Eddie then learns that the Captain had died that evening trying to help with their escape. He got out of the vehicle to make sure the path was clear and safe; however, he stepped on a land mine, which exploded right under him.

**Chapter 7: The Second Lesson**

The Captain tells Eddie his second lesson. Eddie begins to understand the Captain's meaning of "sacrifice" (93) and forgives the Captain for shooting him. After Eddie shakes the Captain's hand, the war grounds turn into lush green scenery **(94)**; the Captain also appears cleaned up and in a neat, pressed uniform. Eddie asks the Captain if he saved the little girl at the pier but the Captain does not tell him.

The chapter then takes us back to Ruby Pier, the morning after the accident. Dominguez and Willie sit in the shop wondering when Ruby Pier will open again. They sit and sit. By habit, they are waiting for Eddie to arrive. **(97)**

**Second Lesson: Sacrafice is a part of life. It’s something to aspire to, not something to regret.**  (pg 93)

Notes

Eddie learns his second lesson here, which is sacrifice. The Captain teaches Eddie that sacrifice is part of life, that it is supposed to happen and it is not something we should regret. The Captain explains how his sacrifice probably saved the other three soldiers in the car; if he had never went to inspect the grounds, all four of them may have driven over the landmine and been killed. The Captain explains that by shooting Eddie he kept his promise by not leaving him behind and giving Eddie his life. Eddie suddenly feels ashamed for having been bitter his whole life over his injured leg, because it turned out that the Captain had died for him. The Captain knows this and has been waiting for Eddie's forgiveness. Once Eddie shakes his hand the scenery changed into healthy branches, leaves and figs. Eddie was now able to see the war ground without the war.

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**Chapter 8: The Third Person Eddie Meets in Heaven**

Eddie now finds himself in a beautiful mountain range. Eddie notices that his body has changed once again. He is older, fatter and his knee was in terrible pain. Eddie thought the pain would disappear forever once his visit with the Captain was over. He finds a diner and can see all of the patrons inside, who appeared to all be from different decades. Eddie sees his father through one of the diner windows; he bangs on the window and yells for him, but he never looks up.

The story flashes back to Eddie’s 24th birthday in the V.A hospital. Eddie’s father, Joe, Marguerite, Mickey Shea and his mother had all come to visit him. They sing happy birthday and Eddie sees his father standing across the room, looking down at the windowsill. Eddie forces back his tears.

As a child Eddie’s father did not spend much time with him. On Saturdays he would take Eddie to the pier and would leave him in the care of an acrobat or an animal trainer. Later in the day Eddie’s father would come back drunk. Often, Eddie’s father would come home drunk late at night and beat Eddie and Joe. Eddie’s father has created damage to him in three ways: neglect, violence and silence.

After Eddie was released from the hospital, he was very depressed by his injury; he did not work and would spend his days indoors, staring out the window. Eddie’s father came home very drunk one night and yelled at him to get a job. He raised his hand to punch Eddie, but Eddie defended himself from his father’s swing. His father never spoke to him again.

Back in the mountains, Eddie meets a woman outside the diner, from where he sees his father. The woman leads him away and tells her story of how she met her husband, their courtship and how he built an amusement park for her. The old woman is named Ruby, “Ruby Pier’s” namesake.

After the war, Eddie suffers from severe depression and terrible nightmares. This specific night is Eddie’s thirty-fourth birthday. He returns home from driving his taxi and Marguerite surprises him with a cake and some taffy.

The baker, who lives in one of the ground apartments, comes to Eddie’s and tells him that he thinks something has happened to Eddie’s father.

Ruby tells Eddie how the pier caught fire, how her husband became injured, and how they moved far away from Ruby Pier. She tells Eddie that she is here to tell him why his father died. Eddie then recalls the death of his father and the following events; after his death Eddie and Marguerite move back to the apartment building where Eddie grew up so he could help his mother and continue his father’s job at Ruby Pier. Eddie cursed his father’s death, for it forced him to work and lead the life he was forever trying to escape.

It is then Eddie’s 37th birthday and he is having breakfast with his friend, Noel. The two talk about an amusement park accident in Brighton.

Notes

We learn a lot about Eddie's relationship with his father in this chapter. During the flashback of Eddie's birthday in the hospital, Eddie notices that his father is the only one standing back and over by the windowsill remaining silent. Seeing this, Eddie tries gets very upset and tries not to cry. This is foreshadowing, what we will learn about Eddie's father and how he has hurt him.

Eddie's father was a belligerent drunk; he would go out and come home drunk every night and hit Eddie and Joe. Eddie notes that his father never seemed proud of him unless it involved Eddie getting in a fight. Eddie remembers his father watching his baseball games without any sign of approval, even when Eddie would hit the ball deep into the outfield. If Eddie came home from an alley fight, his father showed a sense of approval. Eddie's father was not impressed by education or sports; however he would be impressed with Eddie if he had fixed a maintenance problem and returned with grease all over his hands. He wanted to be able to see "a hard day's work" (107) with greasy hands and dirty fingernails.

After the war, when Eddie was released from the hospital, he was very depressed about his injury. He did not have motivation to find a job or even leave the house. One evening his father came in very drunk and started yelling at Eddie to stop being lazy and to get a job. His father raised a hand to hit him, but Eddie defended himself and blocked his father’s fist. Eddie's father never spoke to him again. Neglect, silence and violence were the three ways in which Eddie's father damaged and hurt him.

During the excerpt from Eddie's 33rd birthday, we see that he is still haunted by that night in the fire, when he was at war. He has terrible nightmares and is still depressed about his injury.

Ruby tells Eddie of a terrible fire that broke out on the pier one evening. Her husband, Emile, heard of the fire and ran down to the pier; he tried to put out some of the fire and a column collapsed on him, which changed their lives forever. They lost the pier, his fortune and his health. They ended up moving away from the pier so Ruby could tend to her wounded husband. Ruby tells Eddie that she had one wish and it was that Emile had never built the pier. Eddie now sees that he is not the only one who regretted the pier ever being built.

After the death of Eddie's father, he secretly cursed him, for how he had treated Eddie and how Eddie was forced to take over his job at the pier. After Eddie had taken over his father's job, he and Marguerite moved back into his mother's apartment building to take care of her; for after his father's death, his mother was mentally unstable. Eddie hated his father because he was the reason Eddie never escaped Ruby Pier, which he had been trying to do his entire life.

The next section of the chapter recalls Eddie's 37th birthday. He is sitting in a diner with his friend Noel and they discuss an amusement park accident in another town. We can tell that this is one of Eddie's greatest fears-an amusement accident at Ruby Pier. This illustrates the irony of Eddie’s life and death. He had spend his whole life trying to escape Ruby Pier, however, he ended up working there for the rest of his life; the pier was even responsible for Eddie's death.

**Chapter 9: The Third Lesson**

The Captain tells Eddie his second lesson. Eddie begins to understand the Captain's meaning of "sacrifice" (93) and forgives the Captain for shooting him. After Eddie shakes the Captain's hand, the war grounds turn into lush green scenery; the Captain also appears cleaned up and in a neat, pressed uniform. Eddie asks the Captain if he saved the little girl at the pier but the Captain does not tell him.

The chapter then takes us back to Ruby Pier, the morning after the accident. Dominguez and Willie sit in the shop wondering when Ruby Pier will open again. They sit and sit. By habit, they are waiting for Eddie to arrive.

Notes

Ruby shows Eddie a horrifying scene involving Mickey Shea, his father, and mother. Eddie learns that his father died because of loyalty. Mickey Shea was drunk and hurting Eddie's mother. His father's initial reaction was to kill Mickey; however, when Mickey fell into the ocean Eddie's father jumped in after him and saved his life. It was because of this night that Eddie's father caught the pneumonia that later killed him. Although Mickey was a drunk and touching Eddie's mother, Eddie's father knew he had to save his friend and to preserve the loyalty in their friendship.

The night that Eddie's father died, he had tried to escape out the window of the hospital room. He was leaning out the window calling for his wife, Eddie and Joe. He was found dead by the window the next morning. Ruby saw all of this because her husband, Emile, was in the hospital bed right next to Eddie's father.

Eddie's third lesson is to let go of anger and forgive his father. He finds himself back in the diner where he saw his father. He tells him that he forgives him by saying "it's fixed" (144). If we recall in the last chapter, Eddie's father would always be proud of him after he fixed a maintenance problem, returned with dirty hands and said, "It's fixed". We can therefore assume that, although it appears that Eddie's father can't hear him, he has taken Eddie's forgiveness with approval.

**Chapter 10: The Fourth Person Eddie Meets in Heaven**

Eddie finds himself in a small room. He notices that his body has aged since when he saw Ruby. He pushes through many different doors and through each can see a different wedding reception with different languages and varying cultures. The final reception Eddie sees appears to be in an Italian village. Eddie notices a young bridesmaid and knows that it is Marguerite.

The chapter brings us back to Eddie's 38th birthday. He and Joe are in the maintenance shop when Marguerite enters and asks Eddie to come outside. A group of children and a cake were waiting for Eddie outside. Marguerite organizes all of the kids and lights the candles on the cake.

Marguerite and Eddie walk away from the reception. Eddie recalls their wedding at a Chinese restaurant with a few guests and an accordion player. He can not believe that he is finally back with Marguerite; she asks about how he died and without finishing the story he tells her how much he has missed her.

On the day of Eddie's 39th birthday, he and his friend Noel are gambling at the racetrack. Eddie wins money and calls Marguerite to share the news. She is not happy with him and tells him to come home immediately. She then feels bad for yelling at Eddie on his birthday and decides to drive to the racetrack to apologize and bring him home. As she is driving, two teenagers drop a whiskey bottle from the overpass above her, into her windshield. The impact shatters her windshield and causes her to crash into the concrete median.

After the accident Marguerite was bed ridden but eventually healed. She and Eddie became too old to adopt a child and a silence fell between them; Eddie stopped betting on the horses and eventually stopped seeing Noel as a result of his guilt. Marguerite eventually was overcome by cancer and passed away at age 47.

Back in heaven, Eddie and Marguerite walk through the different weddings and spend much time talking.

Notes

Marguerite leads Eddie through many different wedding receptions, in this chapter. She specifically chose this setting in heaven because she wanted to observe the love between the bride and the groom. She and Eddie pass through receptions of all different cultures and also in different countries. She states that the love between the bride and the groom looks the same throughout the world; “They truly believe their love and their marriage is going to break all the records” (157). This is foreshadowing her lesson about the power of love.

**Chapter 11: The Fourth Lesson**

Marguerite leads Eddie through another door into a room which resembles that of their wedding reception. They dance and Eddie asks her to return to herself, right before she died, at age 47. She changes herself back to her older age; they dance some more and she disappears.

Dominguez and an estate attorney go to Eddie's apartment to search for his documents. Dominguez rummages through Eddie's drawer and finds a box containing a bow tie, Chinese restaurant menu, deck of cards, a letter and an army metal, and the picture of Eddie and the children from his 38th birthday. They find a couple of documents and leave the apartment.

Notes

Marguerite teaches Eddie his fourth lesson which is the power of love. She tells Eddie that although people may eventually pass away, their love will endure even after their death. Although her life ended before Eddies, her love for him endured and will continue to forever.

**Chapter 12: The Fifth Person Eddie Meets in Heaven**

Eddie now finds himself in a purely white and silent setting. He hears a horrifying noise and notices that he is clenching his cane; his body is old and in pain just as it was before he died. The white setting disappears and turns into a river where children are happily playing. Eddie sees a young girl motioning for him to come to her.

Eddie's 51st birthday was his first without Marguerite. He is very depressed and goes about his normal daily business with no birthday celebration or guests. This pattern does not change for his remaining birthdays. On his 82nd birthday he visits the graves of his mother, father and Marguerite; he dreams of the taffy Marguerite used to buy him for his birthday and wishes she was around so he could eat it with her.

In heaven, Eddie makes Tala a dog out of the pipe cleaners which are still in his pocket. Tala tells Eddie that he has burned her with a fire. Eddie realizes that there was a child crawling in the fire, during the war, and that it is she. Her skin became burned again, and she asked Eddie to wash her. As he washes her, her skin gradually turns back to normal, free of scars and burn marks. Eddie tells Tala how sad he is because he feels that he had not done anything important with his life. Eddie once again asks if he had saved the little girl from the falling amusement; Tala finally tells Eddie that he had saved her by pushing her out of the way. It was Tala's hands that Eddie had felt right before his death; she was bringing him to heaven. Eddie felt himself be pulled away under water where all of his pain, weariness, scars and bad memories were washed away. He is lifted above a pier and finally rejoined with Marguerite.

Notes

At the beginning of this chapter we see how sad Eddie was after Marguerite died. Although he seemed to be depressed anyway, while he was with Marguerite, we see that she was a key factor in giving him some sort of happiness, especially on his birthdays.

Tala’s significance is very important for bringing Eddie’s life into perspective. When Eddie returned from the war, he had frequent nightmares about the night that he burned down the camp. That night he swore he saw a small child crawling around in the fire. The Captain and the other soldiers thought he was merely hallucinating, which was common for soldiers suffering from war trauma. Throughout the remainder of his life, Eddie knew in his heart that something had been in that fire. When Eddie meets Tala, all of his questions are answered.

Tala tells Eddie that he killed her in a fire and he immediately knows that she was the innocent child trapped in the hut. Eddie screams and lets out his frustration, which he probably wanted to do his whole life. Tala’s burns reappear and she asks Eddie to wash her. As Eddie washes her, the burn marks dissipate and she returns to her natural self. This seems to be Tala’s way for forgiving Eddie and allowing him to heal her and fix what he had done to her.

During the fifth lesson, Tala tells Eddie that his life did have a purpose: he was meant to work at Ruby Pier and keep the children safe.

**Chapter 13: Epilogue**

Ruby Pier re-opened three days after the accident. The ride, which had collapsed, reopened the next year with a new name, Daredevil Drop. Eddie's apartment was rented to a new tenant who covered the window with leaded glass, blocking the view of the carousel. Dominguez saved some of Eddie's possessions in the maintenance shop and took over his job. Nicky, whose key caused Freddy's Free Fall to break, had a new key made and sold his car a few months later. As the seasons came and left, Ruby Pier continued to attract crowds large enough to maintain its business.

Notes

The epilogue allows us to see the changes in Ruby Pier after Eddie’s death. The amusements are becoming more complicated and daring as the times change and people demand more excitement. Also Nicky, whose key caused Freddy’s Free Fall to break at the start of the story, goes about his daily life not knowing the damages his key had caused. We can make a valid assumption that when Nicky dies, Eddie will be one of the five people he meets in heaven.