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Literature
Teaching Unit
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



The Five People You Meet in Heaven

by Mitch Albom

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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The Five People You Meet in Heaven

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. define the significance of figurative language in setting and theme of the story.
2. recognize literary devices used in the text, including allusion, personification, metaphor, and simile.
3. focus on the main points of a story and how they tie into the author's purpose or message.
4. explore how a character's action and dialogue reveals his or her inner thoughts and feelings
5. study character relationship and how one character may directly or indirectly affect another.
6. analyze how diction and imagery helps to establish mood.
7. trace the motif of coincidence in the story, specifically the Blue Man's message about the inter-connectivity of all people and events.
8. determine the practicality of having the plot revealed through a third-person omniscient narrator.
9. identify the theme of the novel, and evaluate how it is developed throughout the course of the text.
10. analyze the ways in which irony and foreshadowing help build suspense.
11. explain how flashback is used to develop Eddie's character.
12. determine how key actions and phrases act as symbols in the novel.

The Five People You Meet in Heaven

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Compare the stories of the five people Eddie meets in heaven. Who do you feel contributes the most to the message Albus is attempting to present? On which person does he place the most emphasis? Are there any characters you feel he does not emphasize enough? Explain your answers using examples from the text.
2. In heaven, Ruby tells Eddie he will have peace when he makes it with himself. What do you think that entails? Explain your answer.
3. How does Eddie's acceptance of his position in life help him or hinder him when he arrives in heaven? How would he react differently if he had followed his dream of becoming an engineer?
4. Discuss Ruby's role in the novel. Why is she the only one who can persuade Eddie to forgive his father? Could any of the other characters convince him to do that? Why?
5. According to the text, one person can indirectly benefit another without intentionally doing a good deed. What are some of the ways one person's *bad* deed can have a positive effect on another person?
6. Determine what Eddie gains from his encounter with each of the five people, and place the importance of each discourse in order from the most important to the least important. Use specific examples from the text to support your answer.
7. Elaborate on the motif of coincidence. Do you believe that every event in life happens according to plan, or do you think that there is no such thing as fate? Discuss how each theory dictates how a person chooses to live his or her life.
8. Neither of Eddie's parents is waiting to meet him in heaven. Discuss the reasons why you think that is the case and whether their presence would help or hinder his progress in learning.
9. Review the characters in the story. Who do you think might have been included or excluded in Eddie's meetings, and what purpose would those changes serve?
10. Do you believe Eddie is a universal character, meant to represent all men and women, or do you believe he is a unique character with distinct qualities, values, and traits?

The Five People You Meet in Heaven

The End – Today is Eddie’s Birthday

Vocabulary

- arterial** – affecting the blood vessels
- bolted** – moved suddenly or explosively
- cacophony** – a loud, noisy mixture of sounds
- craggy** – rough
- husking** – removing leaves from ears of corn
- hydraulic** – moved by pressure
- shingles** – an illness that causes nerve pain and a rash
- solvent sink** – a special basin used only for rinsing chemicals
- thrumming** – tapping; beating

1. What is Eddie’s almost super-human ability as “ride man” at Ruby Pier?

2. What literary device is illustrated by the phrase “Eddie lowered the lap bar and *clack-clack-clack*, up they went.” and what purpose does the device serve?

3. What is significant about the particular day that Eddie dies?

4. What is one possible reason why Albom mentions that the people at the park jokingly called Eddie, “Eddie Maintenance”?

4. What information does the Blue Man impart to Eddie about his arrival itinerary? Additionally, what is the overall objective?

5. What changed Joseph Corvelzchik's skin color?

6. Why did the Blue Man decide to stay at Ruby Pier?

7. How are Eddie and the Blue Man connected?

8. Eddie's eighth birthday is spent in a way he does not like. What is he forced to do?

9. What lesson does Eddie learn, and how is that lesson connected with the Blue Man's death?

10. According to the Blue Man, why do people go to funerals?

The Fourth Person Eddie Meets in Heaven – The Fourth Lesson

Vocabulary

ambushed – made a surprise attack
confounded – confused
contraption – a gadget with working parts
cutlets – thin slices of meat
exuberant – excited
lacerating – tearing
oblivion – a state of nothingness
parchment – a type of paper
protocol – a standard procedure
sallow – yellowish; faded
sparse – thin; small in amount
spurred – formed by jutting pieces of bone
travertine – limestone deposits near water
troughs – long, narrow boxes, usually used to hold water or food

1. When Ruby leaves and Eddie is transported to another part of heaven, where does he go?

2. Why does Eddie tend to feel uncomfortable at weddings? How do his feelings toward them change over time?

3. Who is the young bridesmaid in the lavender dress?

4. On his 38th birthday, why is Eddie jealous of his brother, and how do you know?
