We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF KAREN JOY FOWLER

Karen Joy Fowler was born in Bloomington, Indiana. At the age of 11 she moved to Palo Alto, California. She studied political science at the University of California, Berkeley, and went on to do a master's, during which she became pregnant with her first child. Several years later, Fowler enrolled in a creative writing course at UC Davis and began publishing science fiction stories. Her first novel, *Sarah Canary*, was published in 1991. The novel plays with the genres of science fiction, historical fiction, and mainstream fiction, and received praise from critics. Fowler went on to publish several more novels, of which *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* is the most recent. Fowler has noted that some of her novels have achieved enormous critical and commercial success (one of them, *The Jane Austen Book Club*, was adapted into a Hollywood movie) while others have done "very, very badly." Fowler has two children and seven grandchildren and lives with her husband in Santa Cruz, California.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Fowler was inspired to write the book after learning about a real experiment that took place in the 1930s. A psychologist named Winthrop Niles Kellogg and his wife Luella decided to raise a chimpanzee, Gua, alongside their own human child, Donald. Like the fictional Cookes, the Kelloggs treated the two babies in the exact same way and carefully measured their development. As with Rosemary and Fern, Gua and Donald began to take on characteristics of the opposite species. The Kelloggs wrote about the experiment in a book entitled *The Ape and the Child*, first published in 1967.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Other novels that explore the relationship between humans and primates include Yann Martel's *The High Mountains of Portugal*, which features a Canadian senator who has a close relationship with a chimpanzee. Meanwhile, Russell Banks' *The Darling* is a novel that resembles *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* in multiple ways. The book centers on a woman who, like Lowell, rejects her suburban upbringing in order to join the (real) violent radical group The Weather Underground. The woman moves to Liberia, where she develops a close attachment to a band of chimpanzees who she comes to love more than her biological family. In *We Are All...*, Rosemary also mentions several nonfiction texts that explore human/primate relationships by authors including Jane Goodall, Diane Fossey, and Biruté Galdikas. Through its inclusion of the ventriloquest's dummy named Madame Defarge, *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* also references the novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, and like that novel *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* explores the brutality that can accompany ideological purity.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*
- **Where Written:** Santa Cruz, California
- **When Published:** 2013
- **Literary Period:** 21st century American fiction
- **Genre:** Contemporary literary fiction
- **Setting:** Bloomington, Indiana; Davis, California; and Vermilion, South Dakota.
- **Climax:** The night Rosemary gets drunk and takes drugs with Harlow, during which she sees Lowell again and is arrested for the second time.
- **Antagonist:** Throughout most of the novel Rosemary's father is framed as the cause of most his family's problems; however, after his death Rosemary admits that she placed too much blame on him.
- **Point of View:** First person, told through Rosemary's perspective

EXTRA CREDIT

Personal experience. Fowler's father, like Rosemary's, was an animal behaviorist. However, he did not work with monkeys, only rats.

Hard to top. The famous science fiction author Ursula K. Le Guin declared that *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* was the book that Fowler was "meant to write"; Fowler has stated that she agrees, and that the book is thus a difficult act to follow.

PLOT SUMMARY

Rosemary explains that she is going to "skip the beginning" of her story and "start in the middle," which takes her to the winter of 1996. It has been 10 years since she has last seen her brother (Lowell) and 17 since her sister (Fern) "disappeared." Rosemary is 22 and in her fifth year of college at UC Davis. One day, she is having lunch in the cafeteria when she witnesses a fight between a girl, Harlow, and her boyfriend, Reg. Harlow screams and throws a chair at Reg, who calls her a "psycho

bitch." Officer Haddick and other members of the campus police arrive and mistakenly approach Rosemary, thinking she was involved in the fight. Rosemary throws her plate of food and glass of milk on the ground, and both she and Harlow are arrested.

The girls are taken to the county jail and placed in a **cell**. Reg comes to collect Harlow, and Rosemary is forced to call her father, who convinces Officer Hardick to drop all the charges against her in exchange for Rosemary promising to come home for Thanksgiving. Rosemary's family live in Indiana, and they do not discuss her arrest or any other contentious matters during the holiday. They spend Thanksgiving with Rosemary's maternal Grandma Donna, her Uncle Bob, Aunt Vivi, and cousins Peter and Janice. Rosemary's mother's family do not like Rosemary's father, who is a psychologist and professor. As Rosemary is preparing to head back to California, her mother tells her that she was considering donating her journals to a library, but has decided to give them to Rosemary instead.

During the flight back to California, the airline loses Rosemary's suitcase, which contain the journals. When Rosemary returns home, she is shocked to find Harlow in her apartment. Harlow explains that Reg kicked her out and she managed to persuade Rosemary's building manager, Ezra Metzger, to let her in. Harlow offers to make it up to Rosemary by taking her out for a drink. At the bar, Rosemary tells Harlow about a time when she was "shipped off" to live with her paternal grandparents, Grandma Fredericka and Grandpa Joe. Rosemary ended up running away and attempting to walk all the way home to her parents' house in Bloomington.

A few days later, Ezra hands over Rosemary's suitcase, which the airline returned while she was out; he also tells her that her brother, "Travers," came by and was looking for her. Rosemary finds it hard to believe that Lowell found her, but is convinced by the fact that he would not have used his real name. She realizes that the suitcase the airline returned is not actually hers.

The narrative jumps back to the year 1979. Rosemary is five years old and has just been picked up from Grandma Fredericka's house after attempting to run away. She is taken to an unfamiliar house and is horrified to realize that a member of her family has been "given away." Lowell is furious with their parents about Fern's disappearance, but Rosemary is frightened and even relieved that she was not the one who was given away.

After Fern's disappearance, Rosemary's mother has a nervous breakdown and is no longer able to eat, talk, or leave her room. Rosemary is babysat by a college student named Melissa, who sits in front of the TV, allowing Rosemary to sneak out with Lowell and their neighbor Russell Tupman. Lowell and Russell drive to their old house and persuade Rosemary to help them break in. The house is empty and Rosemary feels that it is "sad" and "angry."

At this point Rosemary explains that both her imaginary friend Mary and her sister Fern are chimpanzees. She did not reveal this detail until this point because she wanted the reader to see Fern as truly her sister. Rosemary recalls memories of the games she and Fern used to play, which would be assigned and monitored by graduate students in order to test and compare the sisters' abilities.

Rosemary's mother recovers from her breakdown and the family goes on vacation to Hawaii for Christmas. Rosemary's father tells her that Fern has gone to live on a farm with a new family. The kids in Rosemary's kindergarten class start to tease her, calling her "monkey girl." Lowell, meanwhile, gets a counselor, Ms. Delancy, to help him process his grief over the loss of Fern. Lowell is made point guard of the high school basketball team, but one day Rosemary finds him at home when he is supposed to be at practice. That night, Lowell runs away from home and never returns. On his way, he frees all the **lab rats** from his father's university laboratory. Some time later, the FBI arrive at the Cookes' house and inform them that Lowell is a suspect in a fire that caused millions of dollars' worth of damage to a veterinary laboratory at UC Davis.

One day, Rosemary is riding her bike in Bloomington when she runs into Lowell's high school girlfriend Kitch Chalmers. Kitch tells her that on the day Lowell missed basketball practice, they had run into one of the graduate students who previously worked with Rosemary and Fern. The student explained that Fern had been taken to live with a large group of chimps at a lab in South Dakota run by a cruel professor who treated her badly. Lowell freaked out, exclaiming: "That's my sister in that cage."

At college, Rosemary's freshman year roommate is named Larkin Rhodes, but insists that everyone call her Scully. Rosemary attempts to bond with Scully and other freshmen, but misreads social cues and ends up excluded from their friendship group. In her second year, she moves in with an art history major called Todd Donnelly.

Back in 1996, Rosemary realizes that she likes Harlow because of Harlow's "monkey-girlishness." Still stunned by Ezra's mention of Lowell's appearance, Rosemary researches the Animal Liberation Front, a radical animal rights organization she believes Lowell has been working with during his years of absence. Harlow persuades Rosemary to open the suitcase the airline mistakenly gave her, and they find a ventriloquist's dummy inside who Rosemary calls **Madame Defarge**.

Rosemary is sitting in lecture for a course entitled Religion and Violence. The professor, Dr. Sosa, explains that, like humans, chimpanzees commit intra-group violence. He begins talking about the issue of rape among chimps and this causes Rosemary to have a panic attack. After the lecture, Rosemary meets Harlow at a restaurant with the aim of getting drunk. Reg is there too, as is Madame Defarge. Rosemary takes a couple of pills that Harlow gives her and quickly begins thinking

and behaving in a strange way. The night proceeds chaotically, and suddenly Rosemary bumps into Lowell. However, at that moment Rosemary is again arrested by Officer Haddick and placed in a cell with Harlow. Harlow complains that Rosemary talks all night, but Rosemary is not even aware of this and cannot stop herself. After being released, she realizes that she's lost her bicycle and also Madame Defarge.

The next day Rosemary leaves the apartment; on her return Todd and his girlfriend Kimmy say that while she was out, a man came to return Madame Defarge, Harlow showed up, and finally Rosemary's brother "Travers" arrived. Harlow and Lowell left together to get dinner, asking Todd to invite Rosemary to join them. Rosemary walks to the restaurant and finds Harlow and Lowell. She feels annoyed that Harlow is taking Lowell's attention. Later that night, Lowell comes to Rosemary's apartment, wakes her and takes her to a diner. They stay there talking all night. Lowell explains his involvement in activism against animal abuse. He tells Rosemary horrifying stories about animal suffering, and says that he tried to rescue Fern multiple times from the lab in South Dakota. However, now that he is on the run from the FBI he cannot keep trying, and he assigns the role of looking after Fern to Rosemary.

Rosemary walks Lowell to the train station, wishing he would stay longer. They part, and Rosemary returns home. She falls asleep holding Madame Defarge. A few days later, she writes about the topic of animal abuse in her Religion and Violence final, and is reprimanded by Dr. Sosa for failing to answer the question.

During their one day of knowing each other, Harlow fell in love with Lowell, and is miserable now that he is gone. This annoys Rosemary, and she tries to avoid Harlow. Rosemary is packing to return home for the Christmas vacation when the police arrive at her door and take her in for interrogation. They ask if she is Lowell's sister, but she refuses to answer any more questions until a lawyer is present. The interrogation is abruptly ended, and Kimmy, Todd, and Todd's mother—a famous civil rights lawyer—are waiting to pick Rosemary up. They explain that Ezra has been arrested for breaking into the UC Davis Primate Center and attempting to free the monkeys. Harlow has been named as his accomplice, but she has managed to escape. When Rosemary returns home, she finds that Madame Defarge is gone.

Rosemary goes home for Christmas and eventually tells her parents about her encounter with Lowell. The family finally confronts the matter of Fern's absence, and Rosemary's parents explain that much of what she remembers of that period is incorrect. They explain that Rosemary should not blame herself for Fern's disappearance, and that they were in fact forced to give up Fern because as she got older she was too dangerous to keep in the house.

Todd's mother helps Ezra to get the fairly light sentence of eight months in a minimum- security prison. Harlow is still on the run. Rosemary and Reg begin dating, but break up after five months. In 1998, Rosemary's father dies after a series of heart attacks at the age of 58. Meanwhile, Rosemary and her mother work on preparing her mother's journals for publication. In 2012, they are living together in Vermilion, South Dakota, near the lab where Fern is kept along with her daughter, Hazel. Rosemary is a kindergarten teacher and her mother volunteers at Fern's lab. The book based on Rosemary's mother's journals is about to be published. Rosemary's agent calls to inform her that she has received an influx of requests for interviews; the reason why is that Lowell has finally been captured, just as he was planning an attack on SeaWorld Orlando. Harlow remains at large.

Rosemary explains that she decided to write the book the reader is holding "for Lowell." She ends the story by describing what happened when she and Fern saw each other for the first time again in South Dakota. Rosemary signed her name and Fern's name, and Fern came over and pressed her hand, and then her forehead, against the glass separating them. Rosemary couldn't know what Fern was thinking, but she still felt that it was like looking in a mirror.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Rosemary Cooke – Rosemary is the narrator and main character, and the entire novel is told through her perspective. Born in Bloomington, Indiana, she is the younger sister of Lowell. When Rosemary is one month old, her parents adopt Fern and raise her as Rosemary's twin. The sisters are the subjects of an extended scientific experiment conducted by Rosemary's father and a team of graduate students. As a child, Rosemary is very talkative, but after Fern leaves she feels that no one is interested in her talking and becomes exceptionally quiet. Rosemary is highly intelligent, but struggles to fit in among other humans and to understand social norms. At UC Davis, she fails to bond with her freshman roommate, Scully; the only person she is able to connect with is Harlow, who Rosemary feels drawn to because she behaves in the same impulsive, animalistic way as Fern. Rosemary is traumatized by her strange childhood and her feelings of guilt and confusion over the disappearance of Lowell and Fern. However, as time passes she is able to comprehend that her siblings' absence is not her fault and confronts the memories that she previously tried so hard to repress. By the end of the novel, Rosemary is working as a kindergarten teacher in Vermilion, South Dakota, near the laboratory where Fern is kept. She is happy to have found a fulfilling career and to live in proximity to her mother, her sister, and her "niece," Hazel.

Rosemary's Father – Rosemary's father is a psychologist and a professor at the University of Indiana, Bloomington. (His first

name is never given.) The son of Grandma Fredericka and Grandpa Joe, it is implied that he comes from a working-class background. He is rational and cynical, a passionate believer in science who is dismissive about other fields of knowledge, such as psychoanalysis. He is also an alcoholic, and dies of a series of heart attack at the age of 58 brought on by a combination of drinking, diabetes, and stress.

Rosemary's Mother – Rosemary's mother is also a scientist, although Rosemary does not describe her scientific work and it seems as though she may have stopped working in a formal capacity after having children. (Like Rosemary's father, her first name is not given.) After Fern leaves the family, Rosemary's mother has a nervous breakdown and loses the capacity to talk, eat, or even get out of bed. She eventually recovers, but then is further devastated by Lowell's departure. Eventually, Rosemary and her mother move together to South Dakota to live near Fern. Although Fern is at first hostile to Rosemary's mother, they eventually rekindle their relationship, and Rosemary's mother volunteers every day at the laboratory where Fern lives.

Lowell Cooke (aka "Travers") – Lowell is Rosemary's older brother. Rosemary idolizes him, but he is not always kind to her, and is arguably more protective of Fern than of his biological sister. Lowell has a strong sense of justice and, unlike Rosemary, is unable to turn his attention away from injustice—particularly when it comes to animal abuse. After Fern is given away, Lowell runs away from home, although not before stealing a key and freeing all the **rats** from his father's laboratory. After Lowell is accused of setting fire to a laboratory at UC Davis, he spends the rest of the book on the run from the FBI. Rosemary discovers that Lowell has joined the Animal Liberation Front, and he is eventually captured for planning an attack on SeaWorld Orlando. It is implied that Lowell and Harlow form a romantic relationship and engage in activism for the ALF together. Rosemary notes that Lowell's mental health suffers significantly as a result of his work publicizing and battling animal abuse. At the end of the novel he is in prison awaiting trial, and is not in a good mental state.

Fern – Fern is Rosemary's "sister," a chimpanzee who the Cookes adopt from Africa. Fern's mother was killed by poachers, and when Fern was found she was very sick with diarrhea and fleas. Fern is extremely attached to the Cooke family and sees herself as human. However, as she grows older she becomes more dangerous, attacking the graduate students who are assigned to conduct experiments on her. She is given away to a laboratory in South Dakota, where she is forced to live with a large group of chimps. Fern is artificially inseminated and gives birth to three children, two of whom are sold to other labs. Her youngest child, Hazel, is allowed to stay in South Dakota with her.

Harlow Fielding – Harlow is Rosemary's first real friend outside her family. They meet when Rosemary witnesses Harlow having a melodramatic fight with her boyfriend, Reg, in the UC Davis cafeteria, and Rosemary and Harlow end up being arrested together. Rosemary notes that Harlow exhibits the same impulsive, reckless traits as a chimpanzee, which is why Rosemary is drawn to her—although this also makes Rosemary feel that Harlow is "dangerous." Although Harlow is fun-loving, she also has a tendency to disrespect people's privacy and property and to lie. Harlow is studying drama and dreams of moving to Ashland, Oregon, to design lighting for the Ashland Shakespeare Company. However, after meeting (and promptly falling in love with) Lowell, she joins him in his life as an animal rights outlaw.

Grandma Donna – Grandma Donna is Rosemary's mother's mother. It is implied that Donna is of a higher class background than Rosemary's father's parents; Rosemary notes that unlike Grandma Fredericka, Donna is a good cook and lives in a tastefully decorated house. Donna dislikes Rosemary's father and wishes Rosemary's mother had married someone else. She also comes to dislike Fern after Fern eats the last remaining photograph of Grandpa Dan.

Ezra Metzger – Ezra is the manager of Rosemary and Todd's apartment building in Davis. He is a rather comic character who falls in love with Harlow and lets her into Rosemary's apartment without asking. His love for Harlow eventually leads him to break into the UC Davis Primate Center and attempt to set the monkeys free—but this is unsuccessful. Ezra is arrested and serves eight months in prison.

Dae-jung – Dae-jung is a young boy in Rosemary's elementary school class who has recently moved to the United States from Korea. At first he can't speak English, which draws Rosemary to him as it reminds her of Fern. She pretends that they are friends and talks "at" him so much that his English rapidly improves and he ditches her in favor of other friends.

Reg – Reg is Harlow's rather hapless on/off boyfriend. He and Rosemary at first have a fairly antagonistic relationship, and Rosemary describes him as having "the brains of a bivalve." However, after Harlow runs away with Lowell, Rosemary and Reg date for a number of months, before Reg breaks up with her without explanation.

Dr. Sosa – Dr. Sosa is the professor of Rosemary's *Religion and Violence* course. He is a popular lecturer and a religious man who rejects Rosemary's claim that, for some people, science is a kind of religion. He reprimands Rosemary for not answering the question on her final, but offers to give her an incomplete instead of failing her.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Officer Arnie Haddick – Arnie Haddick is the campus police officer who arrests Rosemary and Harlow twice, first at the cafeteria and second after their reckless night of drinking and drug-taking.

Grandpa Dan – Grandpa Dan is Rosemary's mother's father. He is dead by the time the novel takes place.

Grandma Fredericka – Grandma Fredericka is Rosemary's father's mother. Rosemary does not enjoy visiting her because she finds her house tacky and dislikes her cooking.

Grandpa Joe – Grandpa Joe is Rosemary's father's father. Like his wife Fredericka, he spends most of his time watching TV.

Uncle Bob – Uncle Bob is Rosemary's mother's brother. He is married to Aunt Vivi and is the father of Peter and Janice.

Aunt Vivi – Aunt Vivi is Uncle Bob's wife, Rosemary's mother's sister-in-law.

Peter – Peter is Rosemary's cousin, the eldest child of Uncle Bob and Aunt Vivi. He is very handsome, kind, and a talented cellist, but—unlike Rosemary—achieved poor SAT scores.

Janice – Janice is Peter's younger sister. She is unattractive, awkward, and "sullen," but benefits from having an exceptionally kind older brother who adores her.

Mary – Mary is Rosemary's imaginary childhood friend. Like Fern, Mary is a chimpanzee. Rosemary purposefully gives Mary unlikeable characteristics so no one will prefer her to Rosemary herself.

Todd – Todd is Rosemary's second roommate in college. Half-Japanese, half-Irish, he is the child of a bitter divorce. He is the boyfriend of Kimmy Uchida.

Kimmy Uchida – Kimmy is Todd's girlfriend.

Melissa – Melissa is a college student who babysits Rosemary after Fern leaves. She teaches Rosemary long words from the dictionary, but also sometimes neglects her to watch TV, allowing Rosemary to sneak out of the house unnoticed with Lowell and Russell.

Russell Tupman – Russell is a friend of Lowell's who lives in the same neighborhood as the Cooke family in Bloomington. He is a stereotypical bad boy figure, who smokes and throws a Halloween party in the Cookes' empty old house.

Ms. Delancy – Ms. Delancy is Lowell's counselor. She praises Lowell's loyalty and strong sense of justice, and suggests activities for the Cooke family to do to help them recover from Fern's departure.

Katherine "Kitch" Chalmers – Kitch is Lowell's high school girlfriend. Raised in a Mormon family, it is implied that Kitch strayed from her conservative upbringing and lived a wild life as a teenager, although she tells Rosemary that she later returned to a more traditional path.

Larkin "Scully" Rhodes – Scully is Rosemary's freshman roommate in college. Her real name is Larkin, but she is so obsessed with *The X Files* that she insists everyone calls her Scully. Although her relationship with Rosemary is not antagonistic, they fail to bond and do not stay in touch after freshman year.

Hazel – Hazel is Fern's third baby. She lives with her mother at the laboratory in South Dakota.

Todd's Mother – Todd's mother is a renowned civil rights lawyer who defends Ezra after he breaks into the UC Davis Primate Center. At the end of the novel, Rosemary expresses her hope that she will defend Lowell.

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.

HUMANS VS. ANIMALS

The novel is narrated from the perspective of Rosemary, a young woman who was raised alongside a chimpanzee as part of a psychological experiment conducted by her scientist father. Rosemary's perspective is thus fundamentally defined by her unusual attachment to—and identification with—not just her chimpanzee sister Fern but animals in general. She claims: "I spent the first eighteen years of my life defined by this one fact, that I was raised with a chimpanzee." However, it is clear that even after Rosemary moves away to college (where she doesn't mention Fern and thus is no longer defined in the eyes of others by this fact), her experience of being raised with Fern colors her view of the world in a permanent and drastic manner.

Not only is Rosemary particularly attentive and attracted to animals, but she consistently frames the behavior of the human people around her as animalistic. She describes her own chimp-like behavior as acting like "the monkey girl" (a nickname which her elementary school classmates used to taunt her). She disagrees with the prevailing opinion that humans are superior to animals, and although behaving like "the monkey girl" gets her into trouble, she persists in acting this way and is drawn to other people, such as Harlow, who behave in a similarly impulsive, reckless manner. Such behavior is reminiscent of chimpanzees, who—although they are similar to humans in many ways—do not have the same social conditioning as people and thus act in a highly unrestrained manner.

Rosemary's brother Lowell is also deeply affected by being raised with Fern, and in some ways his life is even more dramatically colored by his intense attachment to animals. As a child, Rosemary resents the fact that Lowell seems to prefer Fern to her. Lowell's preference for animals over humans is reflected when, as a boy, he builds a "snow ant" instead of a snowman. When he is older, Lowell destroys a university lab in which testing on animals is conducted, liberating the **lab rats**, and eventually goes on to pursue further activism as part of the

Animal Liberation Front. This lands Lowell in trouble with the FBI, a fact that demonstrates the seriousness with which humans endeavor to separate themselves from animals and maintain a position of superiority and control over the animal kingdom. Due to the strictness with which the human/animal barrier is policed, Lowell's compassion for animals causes him significant anguish, and eventually lands him in prison.

Throughout the novel, Rosemary remains fixated on the similarities and differences between humans and animals. As stated above, there are moments at which she seems to identify more as a non-human animal than a human one, and she expresses this through descriptions of her own "monkey girl" behavior. Curiously, however, she is resistant to classifying Fern as an animal, clarifying: "By monkey girl, I mean me, of course, and not Fern, who is not and has never been a monkey." Elsewhere she objects to Fern being "treated like some kind of animal." At first these messages may seem self-contradictory, and it is true that Rosemary maintains an ambivalent relationship to animality. At the same time, Rosemary's objection to Fern being perceived and treated as an animal is less an objection to Fern's state of "being" than to the inferior position of animals within society. Rosemary wants people to value Fern as much as they value other humans, regardless of the fact that she is technically an animal. Like Lowell, Rosemary strongly objects to the way her father and other scientists conduct experiments on animals, and is particularly disturbed by the reality that Fern is treated as a commodity that can be bought and sold.

On the other hand, there are also points at which Rosemary expresses the belief that animals are superior to humans, rather than simply being equal to them. For example, she is so disturbed by the knowledge that chimpanzees rape each other that she has a panic attack during the lecture. Of course, Rosemary is well aware that rape exists within the human population. The fact that she is so surprised to learn that it also occurs among chimpanzees suggests that she had believed or hoped that chimpanzees were less cruel or violent than humans.

FAMILY, TRADITION, AND THE PAST

The often troubling dynamics of family life haunt Rosemary throughout the narrative. Although Rosemary has moved across the country to free herself from her family at the time the novel is set, she cannot ever truly escape them. This shows that even if one's interactions with family remain permanently in the past, they fundamentally shape who we are in the present. Just as the absence of her siblings Lowell and Fern continues to haunt Rosemary as a kind of presence, the history of her life with her family continues to define Rosemary's sense of self and her perspective on the world.

While emphasizing the intensity of family's role in shaping a person, the novel also suggests that families are connected less by biology and more by a sense of shared history and tradition. After all, Fern is not only biologically unrelated to Rosemary's family, she is from an entirely different species—yet despite this, Rosemary considers Fern her "sister," and in some ways is closer to her than any other figure in the novel. The similarity between the sisters emerges through the evidence of their matching preferences and traditions. After Fern is taken away, Rosemary grows concerned that she will be forced to try unfamiliar foods in her new home. While Rosemary's father tries to assure her that this will be exciting, Rosemary remains adamant that Fern will not enjoy it, insisting: "We like what we're used to."

Rosemary and Fern's shared experience and habits are presented in a positive light, and are shown to be the source of their strong, loving bond. Habits and tradition can thus create a sense of kinship and closeness, but—they can also pose their own dangers. When habits are broken and people (or animals) are forced to deal with unfamiliar environments, this can be traumatizing and isolating. This is true of Fern, who struggles to adapt after she is taken from the Cooke family and placed in a primate center with other chimps in North Dakota. However, it is also true of Rosemary, who throughout the novel struggles in isolation to deal with the legacy of her family's adoption (and subsequent giving away) of Fern.

Rosemary spends significant portions of the narrative reflecting on the nature of the past and memory. Indeed, memory is a rather troubled topic for Rosemary, no doubt in part due to the fact that her family have an agreement not to discuss "the past." Rosemary makes a similar kind of agreement with herself after Fern is taken away, vowing not to think or talk about Fern anymore. Of course, a vow to repress something as significant and important as all thoughts of one's sister is bound to cause problems. In Rosemary's case, it leaves her with a fragmented sense of her own past and identity.

This sense of fragmentation is emphasized when Rosemary discusses her access to her own memories and her family's past. She writes: "There are moments when history and memory seem like a mist, as if what really happened matters less than what should have happened. The mist lifts and suddenly there we are, my good parents and their good children, their grateful children who phone for no reason but to talk, say their good-nights with a kiss, and look forward to home on the holidays." The fact that Rosemary characterizes history and memory as the mist—rather than the forces of denial and pretence—highlights how confused her sense of history and reality has become.

At another point, Rosemary describes a moment in which, at the age of 8, a memory of her early childhood came back to her like pieces of a puzzle. Rosemary's presentation of the past through the metaphors of a "mist" and "puzzle" illustrates the difficulty, pain, and confusion inherent to her relationship to

her own history, family, and self. The novel thus highlights a tension between the fact that people are defined by their family and past, yet must also constantly struggle to make sense of these things.

ABSENCE, SILENCE, AND DENIAL

Throughout the book, Rosemary returns to the theme of what is missing—what is left unsaid, what is repressed, and who is gone. She opens the book by admitting that it will surprise people who know her now to learn that she was a very talkative child, thereby conveying that she is now unusually silent. Another of the first things we learn about Rosemary is that her brother and sister are both gone (though at first it is a mystery why they have disappeared). In this sense, Rosemary is haunted by the absence not only of certain figures, but also by the absence of thoughts, memories, and language. This creates the impression that she is an intensely isolated person.

Indeed, Rosemary frequently emphasizes that as a child she did not have any friends, and that socializing with others remained a struggle when she arrived at college. It becomes clear that Rosemary's social isolation is rooted in her relationship with Fern. The fact that Rosemary was raised alongside a chimpanzee permanently alienates her from the human peers with whom she is supposed to identify. This is made especially obvious when Rosemary attempts to befriend a boy in her elementary school, Dae-jung. Dae-jung has recently immigrated from Korea and doesn't yet speak English; Rosemary pretends they are friends and speaks at him so incessantly that his English rapidly improves, enabling him to make real connections with others and abandon Rosemary. Clearly, Rosemary was originally attracted to Dae-jung because of a warped sense of his similarity to Fern. Like Fern, Dae-jung initially did not speak English; however, Rosemary is quickly reminded that Fern and Dae-jung are in reality not similar when Dae-jung learns to speak English and immediately rejects her.

Indeed, Rosemary emphasizes her own distrust of human language throughout the book. She reflects that "language is such an imprecise vehicle I sometimes wonder why we even bother with it." At another point, she muses that "sometimes you best avoid talking by being quiet, but sometimes you best avoid talking by talking." There is evidently something about "talking" and language that Rosemary finds unsettling, no doubt a product of the fact that her closest relationship as a child involved no spoken language at all.

It is not just Rosemary, however, who is fixated on silence and absence. Early in the novel, she notes that her family agrees not to discuss certain subjects, such as her mother's nervous breakdown, her own arrest, or her cousin Peter's poor SAT scores. Rosemary also notes that the family agrees not to discuss "the past" in general. Of course, such an agreement highlights a strong sense of collective repression and denial. This denial theoretically enables Rosemary's family to keep up the pretence of normalcy and happiness despite having suffered major traumas (including the absence of Fern and Lowell).

However, it becomes obvious that silence and absence do not necessarily conceal trauma, but in fact can sometimes amplify it. Rosemary writes that Fern's "disappearance represented many things—confusions, insecurities, betrayals, a Gordian knot of interpersonal complications." Meanwhile, Rosemary's efforts "never to think of Fern again" come crashing down when she befriends the Fern-like Harlow and when Lowell comes back into her life. In this way, the novel suggests that a person's (or animal's) absence can also be a kind of presence, just as silence can be a kind of language, and that as much as we try to deny and repress pain, it will inevitably surface in some form or other.

SCIENCE, KNOWLEDGE, AND EXPERIMENTS

Rosemary is raised alongside Fern as part of an elaborate scientific experiment conducted by her father (alongside a team of graduate students from the university). As a result, scientific inquiry and authority casts a shadow over Rosemary's life. Rosemary's parents—who are both scientists—view ordinary social and intimate life through a scientific lens, as evidenced when Rosemary's father tries to persuade her mother to donate her personal journals to a library, or when Rosemary writes that they "felt that it was natural and mammalian not to want to sleep alone." Indeed, the behavior of Rosemary's parents is dictated by science to a rather extreme degree. Rosemary explains: "My father was kind to animals unless it was in the interest of science to be otherwise." "The interest of science" becomes a kind of moral and philosophical imperative for Rosemary's father, who is an atheist, serving the same function as religion in the lives of other characters, such as Rosemary's lecturer Dr. Sosa.

Although Rosemary understands that her parents' extremely scientific orientation toward life can be problematic, she cannot help but replicate this behavior herself. As a child, she tells her neighbor Russell "that his mother was cutting up a pumpkin. Only I used the word dissecting." Not only is Rosemary raised by two scientists, but she spends her early childhood participating in a constant stream of experiments (alongside Fern) in her own home. As a result, Rosemary's childhood is never free from science's reach and she cannot help but think of ordinary behaviors (such as cutting up a pumpkin) as scientific experiments.

Rosemary at times narrates in a style reflective of scientific research. For example, there is a passage in which she lays out memories of Fern in a clinical, numbered manner, and another

in which she lists the stories of other chimpanzees raised in human families in a similar style. Her adoption of this scientific format blurs the boundary between subjective, emotional experience and "objective" data. Indeed, Rosemary expresses this idea explicitly when she describes the three rats—formerly used in her father's laboratory—that Lowell keeps as pets: "In retrospect, there was something incomprehensibly strange about the way any of the **laboratory rats** could transform from data point to pet, with names and privileges and vet appointments, in a single afternoon." This opposition between "data point" and "pet" mirrors Fern's ambiguous status as something between a sister and an object of scientific research. Although many of the characters (including Rosemary herself) betray a fascination with scientific experiments and knowledge, science is also depicted as a rather sinister force in the novel.

Rosemary's frequent references to scientific studies also serve as a reminder that science does make life richer, easier, and more interesting. While Rosemary disagrees with her father's hardline scientific perspective, she has clearly inherited his passion for knowledge. Overall, while the book takes a markedly critical stance against science, it does also highlight science's positive sides and suggests that the field is redeemable. This is emphasized when, toward the end of the novel, Rosemary writes that the National Institute of Health has suspended new grants for biomedical and psychological research involving chimpanzee subjects. Such a major shift indicates that in the contemporary moment, science is moving in a more ethical direction.

NORMALCY VS. DEVIANCE

The novel contains an ambiguous and at times comic exploration of the tension between normalcy and deviance, encouraging the reader to question what counts as "normal" and whether normalcy is actually desirable. As a psychologist, Rosemary's father is invested in ideas about "normal" human (and animal) behavior and the question of why some people deviate from this behavior. Of course, the great irony of this investment is that in order to study these questions, Rosemary's father sacrifices any normalcy his family might claim to possess by introducing Fern into their lives. While Rosemary's parents at times seem to want to pretend that they are a "normal" and happy family, the existence of Fern makes this a comically doomed project.

Rosemary herself harbors a decidedly ambivalent relationship to normalcy (and to deviance). The weirdness of her family means that she attracts unwanted attention as a child and isn't able to make friends. As a result, Rosemary initially chooses to refashion herself in college and present a false image of herself and her family s normal. During her freshman year, Rosemary's roommate Scully invites friends over to their room and begins a conversation about families, saying: "You know how everything seems so normal when you're growing up… and then comes this moment when you realize your whole family is nuts?" The girls begin to bond over the common "weirdness" of their families, yet Rosemary either misunderstands this bonding ritual or (perhaps correctly) anticipates that her family is in fact too weird for her to bond successfully with the other girls over this matter. As a result, she lies and pretends that her family is normal, only to immediately regret this falsehood. Although she successfully convinces the others that her family truly are normal, she reflects: "Now I'd achieved it, normal suddenly didn't sound so desirable. Weird was the new normal and, of course, I hadn't gotten the memo. I still wasn't fitting in." Even in a social situation in which people are literally bonding over weirdness, Rosemary remains "weird" by failing to reject normalcy.

In reality, Rosemary is in fact deeply drawn to deviance, a way of being that she associates with Fern. Rosemary bonds with Harlow after they both exhibit "monkey girl" behavior, acting in a reckless, destructive, and attention-seeking manner in the college cafeteria. Where other people would likely find this kind of behavior patently unappealing, Rosemary finds it comfortingly familiar. Rosemary admits that in the past, she tried to stamp out her own inclination toward deviance: "In the comments section of my kindergarten report card I'd been described as impulsive, possessive, and demanding. These are classic chimp traits and I've worked hard over the years to eradicate them." However, after her attempts to erase these traits and assimilate into "normal" human behavior fail to win Rosemary friends, happiness, or self-acceptance, she decides to instead embrace her deviant chimp qualities through her friendship with Harlow. She becomes increasingly suspicious of the concept of normalcy, at one point reflecting: "What is a normal sex life? What is normal sex? What if asking the question already means you aren't normal?" Ultimately, the concept of normalcy is shown to be a mode of discipline that encourages people to conform to human behaviors and reject animalistic ones, again emphasizing society's dualistic concept of humanity vs. animality (see the first Theme). Furthermore, the novel emphasizes the extent to which everyone—no matter how hard they might try—is weird or deviant in their own way, leaving the concept of normalcy effectively meaningless.

SYMBOLS

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

CAGES AND CELLS

We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves is concerned with the relationship between humans and animals (and the ways in which humans abuse that relationship), and thus cages and cells play a central role. Rosemary and Fern's

early life together is defined by a remarkable absence of cages; part of the radical premise of Fern's existence in the Cooke household is that she is fully integrated into their lives, with none of the usual barriers that separate humans from animals. However, Fern is then taken away and spends the rest of her life in an enclosure at a laboratory in South Dakota. Rosemary's dream of building a sanctuary for her and Fern to live in speaks to her desire to rescue her sister from imprisonment within a cage.

Significantly, it is not just Fern who ends up imprisoned. As a result of her friendship with the chimp-like Harlow, Rosemary spends two nights in county jail, during which time she is haunted by thoughts of Fern being enclosed in a similar state. Ezra is sentenced to eight months in prison for attempting to free the monkeys at the UC Davis primate center, and the end of the book sees Lowell incarcerated for his actions with the Animal Liberation Front. There is a clear sense of irony over the fact that both Lowell and Ezra are imprisoned as punishment for their attempt to free animals from their own prisons. Furthermore, the fact that Rosemary, Lowell, and Fern all spend time in cages and cells illustrates the way in which humans strive to control and contain not just actual animals, but also people who exhibit "animalistic" behavior. The book arguably suggests that just as the confinement of animals to cages is arbitrary and unjust, so too is the incarceration of humans.

LAB RATS

At several points in the novel Rosemary refers to laboratory rats in an abstract sense, discussing their use in scientific experiments, and their symbolic importance then becomes more concrete when Lowell is allowed to keep some as pets. Rosemary observes how strange it is that by simply being moved from the laboratory into Lowell's bedroom, the rats are instantly elevated in status from a mere "data point" to a cherished pet. This emphasizes the fact that human-animal relationships are highly context-specific. The same animal can have an entirely different social meaning depending on whether it is found in a laboratory, child's bedroom, slaughterhouse, natural landscape, and so on.

Later on, Lowell's first act of animal rights activism comes in the form of breaking into a laboratory in Bloomington and freeing all the lab rats kept inside. Although it gets Lowell into trouble, this ends up being a highly successful gesture; Rosemary notes that the freed lab rats are found around the city for years after the fact. Rats are highly adaptable animals, equally capable of living in a small domestic hutch or urban sewers. (In this sense, they are a stark contrast to Fern and other chimpanzees, who need much more specific living conditions and do not cope well with changes in context.) The books' depiction of lab rats illustrates how humans seek domination over the animal kingdom, but are to a certain degree thwarted by animals' own adaptability and will to survive.

MADAME DEFARGE

Madame Defarge is a ventriloquist's dummy that Rosemary and Harlow find inside the suitcase Rosemary is mistakenly given after the airline loses her own. At first, Rosemary is reluctant about taking out Madame Defarge, both because she feels guilty about touching someone else's property and because she finds the dummy off-putting and eerie. However, Harlow insists on taking Madame Defarge out to a bar with them, and toward the end of the novel Rosemary discovers that Harlow has stolen Madame Defarge when she runs away to join the Animal Liberation Front with Lowell. This turn of events is a hint toward the fictional character after whom the dummy is named. In Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, Madame Defarge is a participant in the French Revolution, and one who symbolizes the violent, ruthless nature of the movement. It is thus significant that Harlow brings Madame Defarge to accompany her on her new life of ideologically-motivated "domestic terrorism."

Rosemary's feelings about Madame Defarge also help illustrate the boundary between humans and nonhumans and the idea of anthropomorphism (ascribing human attributes to something non-human). Rosemary is at first disturbed by the dummy because she finds it uncanny; it looks like a human (and is made to talk like one) but is in fact an inanimate object. Elsewhere in the novel, Rosemary points out that people can find apes uncanny for similar reasons. As our closest animal relative, apes (and chimpanzees in particular) bear a strong resemblance to humans and yet are, of course, not actually human. It is perhaps thus unsurprising that Rosemary eventually comes to feel fond of Madame Defarge, even falling asleep cuddling her at one point. Just as Rosemary anthropomorphizes Fern by treating her like a human sister, so too does she feel affinity with Madame Defarge and a sense of loss when Harlow takes her away.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the G.P. Putnam's Sons edition of *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* published in 2013.

Part 1, Chapter 1 Quotes

In 1996, ten years had passed since I'd last seen my brother, seventeen since my sister disappeared. The middle of my story is all about their absence, though if I hadn't told you that, you might not have known. By 1996, whole days went by in which I hardly thought of either one.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker), Fern, Lowell Cooke (aka "Travers")

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 5

Explanation and Analysis

Rosemary has promised to begin her story in the middle, which is the winter of 1996. She writes that by this point her family has "dwindled" to only her father, her mother, and herself. This quotation introduces the importance of absence in the book. Rosemary presents herself as someone defined by the experience of loss, which is unsurprising considering the foundational trauma of losing both her siblings. At the same time, there is also a paradox within this quotation: Rosemary says that the book is all about her siblings' absence, but also admits that by the year 1996, she barely thinks about them. Why would she not think about the main subject of her story—and is it even possible to ignore a loss so great?

As will become clear later in the book, the reason for this apparent paradox is that Rosemary deliberately suppresses all memory of her brother and sister—or at least tries to. The book explores the idea that no matter how hard we try, repressing painful memories and emotions is unsustainable, and will only cause us further distress and harm.

Part 1, Chapter 3 Quotes

❝ The idea that we would spend the holiday talking about anything as potentially explosive as my arrest was a fiction, and we all knew this even as I was being made to promise to do so. My parents persisted in pretending we were a close-knit family, a family who enjoyed a good heart-to-heart, a family who turned to each other in times of trial. In light of my two missing siblings, this was an astonishing triumph of wishful thinking; I could almost admire it. At the same time, I am very clear in my own mind. We were never that family.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker), Rosemary's Mother, Rosemary's Father

Page Number: 17

Explanation and Analysis

After Rosemary is arrested for smashing her dishes in the cafeteria, her father manages to get the charges against her dropped. In exchange, he makes her promise to come home for Thanksgiving, which she does reluctantly. Here she discusses her parents' tendency for dishonesty, repression, and denial. While all families arguably have such tendencies—presenting themselves as more harmonious and normal than they might be in reality—Rosemary points out that such "wishful thinking" is especially bizarre in her family, considering that her two siblings are gone. As the reader will later learn, it is even more bizarre in light of the fact that one of these siblings is a chimpanzee.

❝ There are moments when history and memory seem like a mist, as if what really happened matters less than what should have happened. The mist lifts and suddenly there we are, my good parents and their good children, their grateful children who phone for no reason but to talk, say their good-nights with a kiss, and look forward to home on the holidays. I see how, in a family like mine, love doesn't have to be earned and it can't be lost. Just for a moment, I see us that way; I see us all.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker), Rosemary's Father, Rosemary's Mother

Page Number: 28

Explanation and Analysis

During the 1996 Thanksgiving holiday, Rosemary's mother tells her that she'd like to give her her old journals, a gesture Rosemary finds moving. Her father then gives her a note he'd saved from a fortune cookie saying "Don't forget, you are always on our minds." In this moment, Rosemary loses herself in a fantasy of what she wishes her family were like. She imagines that they are kind and loving, free of all tension and conflict.

Such fantasies are clearly seductive, as evidenced by the fact that Rosemary's parents seem to buy into them wholeheartedly. Rosemary, however, is more cynical, and only entertains the fantasy for a moment. Of course, this quotation invites us to question whether any family is truly as harmonious as the one Rosemary imagines. Although her family may perhaps be more tumultuous than most, there is surely no real family like the one she fantasizes about here.

Part 2, Chapter 4 Quotes

Bed-hopping was an established custom in the house—Fern and I had rarely ended the night in the bed where we'd started. Our parents felt that it was natural and mammalian not to want to sleep alone, and though they would have preferred we stay in our own beds, because we kicked and thrashed, they'd never insisted on it.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker), Rosemary's Mother, Rosemary's Father, Fern

Related Themes:

Page Number: 65

Explanation and Analysis

After Fern disappears and the Cooke family move into a new house, Lowell and Rosemary both suffer as a result of Fern's absence and their mother's subsequent nervous breakdown. Feeling sympathy for his little sister, Lowell occasionally lets her get into his bed in the night. This passage presents Rosemary's family as more idyllic and loving than has previously been the case. Their absolute closeness is symbolized by the fact that they switch between each other's beds, remaining in intimate contact with one another even at night.

The passage also illustrates the curiously scientific way in which Rosemary's parents approach childrearing. Whereas other parents might resort to inherited wisdom or the advice of friends when deciding things like whether "bed-hopping" is permissible, Rosemary's parents think about it in biological terms. The phrase "natural and mammalian" implies that the natural way is inherently morally correct; furthermore, it suggests that what is natural for mammals is necessarily natural for humans. While on one level this is correct (humans are mammals, after all), it could be argued that there are "natural" behaviors that humans do not share with other mammals. For example, human babies are exceptionally helpless, more so than many other animals. The "natural" way of looking after a human baby, therefore, is quite different to the tactics used by other mammals.

Lowell's room smelled of damp cedar from the cage where three rats, washouts from our father's lab, would chirp and creak in their spinning wheel all night long. In retrospect, there was something incomprehensibly strange about the way any of the laboratory rats could transform from data point to pet, with names and privileges and vet appointments, in a single afternoon. What a Cinderella story!

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker), Rosemary's Father, Lowell Cooke (aka "Travers")

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 66

Explanation and Analysis

In the Cookes' new house, Lowell sometimes allows Rosemary to come and sleep in his bed during the night. In this passage, Rosemary describes Lowell's bedroom, which smells like the lab rats he keeps as pets. Rosemary's reflection on the transformation of lab rats from experimental subjects to pets is one of the most important statements on the relationship between humans and animals in the book. Rosemary points out that our understanding of animals is largely socially constructed and dependent on context; we perceive and treat animals different depending on the situation in which we encounter them.

This is certainly true of the rats. In the lab, the rats are monitored and kept alive simply in order to be tested, and are subjected to sometimes cruel experiments. When rats run wild in cities, they are exterminated as vermin. Yet in Lowell's bedroom, the rats are cherished and cared for. Of course, what is true for rats is also true for Fern. Chimpanzees are treated differently depending on whether they are found in the wild by poachers or encountered by excited children at the zoo. The unique peculiarity of Fern's position lies in the fact that she exists between several different categories: part "data point," part pet, and part sister. Indeed, this is part of the reason why Rosemary often feels that her relationship to Fern is at odds with what the world expects.

Psychoanalysis was completely bogus, he would say, good only for literary theory. Maybe it was useful, when plotting books, to imagine that someone's life could be shaped by a single early trauma, maybe even one inaccessible in memory. But where were the blind studies, the control groups? Where was the reproducible data?

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker), Rosemary's Father

Related Themes:

Page Number: 68

Explanation and Analysis

In the wake of Fern's disappearance, Lowell starts seeing a counselor, who occasionally suggests activities for the family to participate in together to help them recover from Fern's absence. This infuriates Rosemary's father, who rejects psychoanalysis as a fake form of knowledge. This quotation highlights Rosemary's father's reasons for rejecting psychoanalysis, which he views as unscientific. It confirms Rosemary's statement that her father views science as a kind of religion, the only valid way of approaching the world. Ironically, Rosemary herself spends much of the book critiquing science, arguing that it is insufficiently attentive to its own biases and pointing out that there are other ways of gaining knowledge than through "blind studies" and "reproducible data."

The other source of irony regarding this passage emerges from Rosemary's father's comments about the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature. *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* is a novel that betrays the obvious marks of psychoanalytic thinking, and is centrally focused on the way in which "a single early trauma" that is indeed "inaccessible in memory" shapes Rosemary's life. Rosemary's father's dismissal of psychoanalysis is thus part of his own inability to "read" and understand his daughter's life.

Part 2, Chapter 5 Quotes

❝ I would say that, like Lowell, I loved her as a sister, but she was the only sister I ever had, so I can't be sure; it's an experiment with no control.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker), Fern, Lowell Cooke (aka "Travers")

Related Themes:

Page Number: 79

Explanation and Analysis

Rosemary has finally revealed to the reader that Fern is not a human, but a chimpanzee. Rosemary explains that she kept this fact a secret up until this point because she wanted the reader to truly understand and believe that she loved Fern like she would a human sister, without having this understanding be influenced by any assumptions about the impossibility of meaningful human-animal connections. In this passage, however, Rosemary admits that she can only *hope* that she loved Fern as a sister—but she can't be sure, because she didn't have any other sisters to compare Fern to. Once again, Rosemary uses scientific language to frame her relationship to Fern, showing how deeply entrenched scientific thinking is within her mind.

The phrase "an experiment with no control" also speaks to the tragedy at the heart of Rosemary's existence. By adopting Fern, Rosemary's parents turned their intimate family life into a scientific experiment, and like many experiments, this one went wrong. The family was forced to give away Fern and the two remaining children—Rosemary and Lowell—were left deeply traumatized. Unfortunately, because the experiment was so all-consuming, Rosemary does not have a chance to try again. She only has one life, and this life will forever be haunted by the "experiment" of her sisterhood with Fern.

❝ I told him that his mother was cutting up a pumpkin. Only I used the word *dissecting*.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker), Russell Tupman

Related Themes:

Page Number: 84

Explanation and Analysis

Rosemary and Mary have climbed up the maple tree in Russell Tupman's yard, and Russell has come out of the house to aggressively ask Rosemary what she is doing. Dodging the question, Mary tells Russell that his mother is "dissecting" a pumpkin, which she can see from her vantage point up the tree. Once again, Rosemary uses scientific language to describe ordinary human activities, showing just how deeply affected she has been by growing up within an extended scientific experiment, surrounded by note-taking graduate students. Indeed, Rosemary's unusually scientific understanding of the world—and her use of unusual terminology—inhibits her from making friends and leaves her vulnerable to teasing by people like Russell.

Part 2, Chapter 6 Quotes

❝ Was my father kind to animals? I thought so as a child, but I knew less about the lives of lab rats then. Let's just say that my father was kind to animals unless it was in the interest of science to be otherwise. He would never have run over a cat if there was nothing to be learned by doing so.
He was a great believer in our animal natures, far less likely to anthropomorphize Fern than to animalize me. Not just me, but you, too––all of us together, I'm afraid. He didn't believe animals could think, not in the way he defined the term, but he wasn't much impressed with human thinking, either. He referred to the human brain as a clown car parked between our ears. Open the doors and the clowns pile out.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker), Fern, Rosemary's Father

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 94-95

Explanation and Analysis

At the age of 8, Rosemary suddenly remembers a moment when her father ran over a cat that was taking too long to cross the street in front of him. However, she is not sure if the memory is real, or if her father is the kind of person who would run over a cat. In this passage, she reflects on her father's relationship to animals and his assessment of the human/animal divide. True to his cynical nature, Rosemary's father does not think particularly highly of either animal *or* human intelligence. Indeed, the anecdote about the clown cars suggests that Rosemary's father's career as a psychologist—which involves opening the "doors" of the brain—is the cause of this cynical mindset.

This passage is also an important meditation on the ethics of science. Rosemary's father is "kind to animals unless it was in the interests of science to be otherwise." Unfortunately, as Lowell's investigations of animal abuse in scientific labs demonstrates, it often *is* in the interests of science to be unkind to animals. While for Rosemary's father, science is justification enough for cruelty, overall the book proposes that there needs to be a more rigorous application of ethics when it comes to the treatment of animals.

Part 3, Chapter 2 Quotes

❝ For a brief period in the third grade, I pretended that Dae-jung and I were friends. He didn't talk, but I was well able to supply both sides of a conversation. I returned a mitten he'd dropped. We ate lunch together, or at least we ate at the same table, and in the classroom he'd been given the desk next to mine on the theory that when I talked out of turn, it might help his language acquisition. The irony was that his English improved due in no small part to my constant yakking at him, but as soon as he could speak, he made other friends.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker), Dae-jung

Related Themes:

Page Number: 116

Explanation and Analysis

After Fern leaves, Rosemary starts school, but she has trouble fitting in. At her first school the other children call her "monkey girl," so she is transferred to a hippie school where she meets a young boy called Dae-jung, who has just moved from Korea. Given Rosemary's relationship with Fern, it is hardly surprising that she is drawn to Dae-jung. Rosemary feels comfortable around him because, like Fern, he does not speak English, enabling her to spend hours speaking happily "at" him. Of course, this is not particularly respectful to Dae-jung himself, who arguably cannot be blamed for ditching Rosemary as soon as he is able to make new friends. At the same time, this turn of events demonstrates Rosemary's tragic inability to relate to other humans in a normal manner.

Part 3, Chapter 5 Quotes

❝ I came to UC Davis both to find my past (my brother) and to leave it (the monkey girl) behind. By monkey girl, I mean me, of course, not Fern, who is not now and never has been a monkey.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker), Fern, Lowell Cooke (aka "Travers")

Related Themes:

Page Number: 128

Explanation and Analysis

Rosemary admits that at a certain point in her teenage years, she vowed to stop thinking about Fern altogether. At

college, she avoids all courses that have anything to do with primates. In this quotation, she explains that while she chose to attend UC Davis in the hope of finding Lowell (who the FBI claims is living there), she fled Indiana in order to escape her association with Fern. These somewhat paradoxical aims hint at the impossibility of Rosemary achieving her dream; it is not exactly straightforward to reconnect with one of your siblings while strictly renegading the other to the past.

This quotation is also significant due to Rosemary's comments about Fern not being a monkey. Such a statement at first appears odd. While Rosemary does at first withhold Fern's chimpanzee status from the reader, she is never in *denial* about the fact that her sister is a chimp. On the other hand, Rosemary never uses the word "monkey" to describe Fern. Perhaps this word in particular evokes human misconceptions about chimps, including the prejudices and understandings that most humans harbor about animals (and also the fact that chimps are apes, not monkeys). It is possible that Rosemary is not objecting to Fern being classified as a monkey in a technical sense, but rather that she doesn't want people to think of Fern as inferior to humans.

❝ Except that now I'd achieved it, normal suddenly didn't sound so desirable. Weird was the new normal and, of course, I hadn't gotten the memo. I still wasn't fitting in. I still had no friends. Maybe I just didn't know how. Certainly I'd had no practice.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 142

Explanation and Analysis

Early on in her first semester of college, Rosemary is sitting in her room with her roommate Scully and a group of other freshmen. The group takes turns telling stories about their "weird" families, but when Rosemary is asked if her family is crazy, she replies that they are all normal. At first Rosemary is elated at having convinced the others of this fact, but then she quickly realizes that she has misread the situation. Despite years of trying, Rosemary still struggles to understand the subtleties and complexities of human interaction. Of course, all young people struggle to adapt to the changing social expectations that come with moving through different stages of life. However, Rosemary finds it particularly challenging to understand the social cues of people her age, especially those concerning what is "normal" and what isn't.

Part 3, Chapter 6 Quotes

❝ I didn't want a world in which I had to choose between blind human babies and tortured monkey ones. To be frank, that's the sort of choice I expect science to protect me from, not give me. I handled the situation by not reading more.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 141

Explanation and Analysis

Rosemary explains that when she first arrived at UC Davis, she went into the university archives in order to learn more about the arson attack on the veterinary laboratory that the FBI linked to Lowell. Rosemary learns about the Animal Liberation Front and the laboratory conditions they protest, including the case of a baby monkey whose eyes were sewn shut at birth. Rosemary is horrified, but as she has done throughout the book, she deals with her horror by "not reading more." Unlike Lowell, Rosemary continues to ignore and repress things that upset her.

Rosemary's comments here also illuminate the problem of animal abuse in the name of scientific inquiry. As she argues, animal abuse is something that science should prevent, not enable. Although supporters of biomedical research on animals argue that it is a necessary evil, Rosemary seems to be favoring the view that animals should never be used as a means to an end.

Part 3, Chapter 7 Quotes

❝ What is a normal sex life? What is normal sex? What if asking the question already means you aren't normal? It seemed as if I couldn't get even the instinctual, mammalian parts of my life right.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 149

Explanation and Analysis

Rosemary is sitting in a lecture for her "Religion and

Violence" course when the professor unexpectedly brings up chimpanzee behavior. The professor, Dr. Sosa, explains that like humans, chimps commit intra-group violence and rape. Rosemary is so horrified that she has a panic attack. After, she assures the reader that just because she's never had any friends doesn't mean she hasn't had sex. She explains that she had sex, although a lot of it has been "bad" and she's not sure if she would classify her sex life as "normal." As usual, Rosemary is perplexed by normalcy. She seems to feel that everyone around her has an "instinctual" understanding of what's normal.

Of course in reality this is not true, and it is likely that every person could relate to Rosemary's feelings of confusion over what a normal sex life—or even a normal life full stop—looks like. At the same time, it makes sense that Rosemary is plagued by an above-average level of confusion on this matter. Raised by parents who framed behaviors as "instinctual" and "mammalian," yet who proceeded to make the very unnatural choice of raising their child inside a prolonged scientific experiment, Rosemary is left feeling like there are collectively agreed-upon norms that she will never understand.

Part 4, Chapter 7 Quotes

It seemed to Lowell that psychological studies of nonhuman animals were mostly cumbersome, convoluted, and downright peculiar. They taught us little about the animals but lots about the researchers who designed and ran them.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker), Lowell Cooke (aka "Travers")

Related Themes:

Page Number: 201

Explanation and Analysis

Lowell has found Rosemary in Davis, and after having dinner with Harlow the two of them spend all night in a diner catching up on one another's lives. Lowell discusses the abuse of animals and his disapproval of their father's scientific work. In this passage, Lowell articulates the feelings that Rosemary shares about animal research, yet did not have the words to express. Throughout the novel, Rosemary is confused about why her games and experiments with Fern are set up to test Fern against a human norm rather than the other way around. Although this could seem like simply childish naïveté, Rosemary is in fact aware from a young age of the problem of anthropomorphic bias in science that Lowell lays out here.

Part 5, Chapter 5 Quotes

Poor Mom and Dad. All three of their children incarcerated at once; that really was bad luck.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker), Lowell Cooke (aka "Travers"), Fern, Rosemary's Father, Rosemary's Mother

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 245

Explanation and Analysis

Shortly after Lowell leaves Davis, a police officer knocks on the door of Rosemary's apartment and takes her in for interrogation. She confirms that she is Lowell's sister but refuses to say anything else until she can speak to a lawyer. Rosemary imagines what will happen if she tells them about Lowell's whereabouts, how all three of her parents' children would end up "incarcerated at once." This phrase frames Fern's life in the South Dakota laboratory as akin to being in prison, further emphasizing the connection between (animal) cages and prison cells.

It also indicates that there is something about the Cooke children that makes them predisposed to incarceration. Indeed, throughout the book Rosemary explores how people who do not obediently observe the strict boundary between humanity and animality are punished by some form of incarceration. Rosemary's own first two trips to jail are brought on by her behaving like a "monkey girl" with Harlow, and it is Lowell's animal rights activism that leads him to be hunted by the FBI.

Sigmund Freud has suggested that we have no early childhood memories at all. What we have instead are false memories aroused later and more pertinent to this later perspective than to the original events. Sometimes in matters of great emotion, one representation, retaining all the original intensity, comes to replace another, which is then discarded and forgotten. The new representation is called a screen memory. A screen memory is a compromise between remembering something painful and defending yourself against that very remembering.
Our father always said that Sigmund Freud was a brilliant man but no scientist, and that incalculable damage had been done by confusing the two. So when I say here that I think the memory I had of the thing that never happened was a screen memory I do so with considerable sadness.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker), Rosemary's Father

Related Themes:

Page Number: 247

Explanation and Analysis

Rosemary is still being kept in the interrogation room, and as she sits alone she is lost in a "fantasyland" of memories from her past. She reflects on the nature of memory, wondering if her memories are accurate or if they are what Sigmund Freud would call "screen memories," false recollections that we come to believe as true. Throughout the book, Rosemary calls into question her own understanding of the past, wondering if even her sharpest and most important memories could be false. Her father is dismissive of Freud's theory of screen memories—again accusing the founder of psychoanalysis of being unscientific—but at least in Rosemary's case, the Freudian explanation of false memories rings true.

Part 6, Chapter 7 Quotes

❝ Three children, one story. The only reason I'm the one telling it is that I'm the one not currently in a cage.

Related Characters: Rosemary Cooke (speaker), Fern, Lowell Cooke (aka "Travers")

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 304

Explanation and Analysis

Rosemary has revealed that just as she and her mother were preparing to publish their book, she was informed by her agent that Lowell was arrested for planning an attack on SeaWorld Orlando. At the time she is writing he has been awaiting trial for three months and is in a bad mental state. Rosemary notes with sadness that she is the only one of her siblings who is not "in a cage," again drawing a connection between animal cages and prison cells. Although Rosemary does not say so explicitly, she also implies that it is rather arbitrary that she is the only one of her siblings not to be incarcerated. They have all had brushes with the law, and Rosemary alone was able to escape incarceration in part because she was the most successful at suppressing the animalistic side of her personality.

This quotation is also important in light of Rosemary's ongoing investigation of the nature of memory and truth. Toward the end of the book, she realizes that her understanding of the past differs drastically from that of parents. She comes to acknowledge that even though her version of events feels like the truth, it is in fact only one of many possible versions. It is thus possible to detect a sense of guilt in Rosemary's assertion that "the only reason" why she's telling her family's story is because she's "not currently in a cage." She implies that it is not necessarily fair that her story is the one that will be counted as the truth, but that this is simply the way things are.

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.

PROLOGUE

Rosemary writes that people who know her now will be surprised that she was very talkative as a child. She describes a series of home movies featuring herself, her mother, and her sister (Fern). Rosemary is not sure what she is saying in the videos, but the meaning of the words isn't important, only their high quantity. Even though her parents were pleased by her chatty nature, occasionally her father would grow exasperated by how much she talked and tell her to "skip the beginning" of her stories and instead "start in the middle."

This opening passage introduces several of the novel's major themes, including family, memory, and the tension between communication and silence. It is clear that Rosemary is preoccupied with her parents' approval, and perhaps struggles with their ambivalent reaction to her talkative nature. Her focus on home movies and the art of storytelling gives a metafictional slant to the prologue, alerting the reader that this will be a narrative about narrative.

PART 1, CHAPTER 1

The middle of Rosemary's story begins in winter of 1996. It has been 10 years since Rosemary has last seen her brother (Lowell) and 17 since Fern "disappeared." She describes the events that took place in the world during that time, and notes that she looks "ordinary" in comparison to them. She is 22 and in her fifth year at the University of California, Davis, though she has not fulfilled nearly enough requirements to graduate. This annoys her parents, who are still financially supporting her. Rosemary's father is a college professor and tries to teach her something during every one of their interactions.

In the prologue, Rosemary's family is presented as "normal" and harmonious. In this passage, however, a contradictory image of the family emerges, one that is defined by mysterious absence and loss. Rosemary indicates a further source of tension in relation to her own education. Education and knowledge are clearly important within her family, not least because her father is a professor. However, Rosemary herself is meandering through college in a somewhat aimless manner.

One morning, Rosemary is cycling to class when a flock of Canada geese flies past above her. At this time in her life she often feels "wild." During lunch, Rosemary is in the cafeteria when she witnesses a fight between a girl (Harlow) and her boyfriend. The girl knocks the dishes from their table and they smash on the floor. She then shouts at her boyfriend, mocking him for wanting "space." A bystander tells the girl to "take a chill pill," to which she replies: "Don't side with assholes." Her boyfriend (Reg) calls her a "psycho bitch" and requests the key to his apartment. She swings a chair at him for a second time, yelling: "Come and get it!" This makes Rosemary laugh. The boyfriend leaves, telling the girl that their relationship is over.

The presence of the geese overhead and Rosemary's comment that she is feeling "wild" introduce the importance of animals (and animalistic behavior) within the novel. Although it is not made explicit, there is a connection between Rosemary's feelings of wildness and the wild behavior of Harlow in the cafeteria. Rather than being offended or disturbed by Harlow's behavior, Rosemary is intrigued and entertained, as shown by the fact that she laughs at Harlow's command to "come and get it." The two girls do not yet know each other, but there is already a subtle sense of affinity between them.

The campus police arrive and approach Rosemary, telling her to put down her glass of milk and plate of half-eaten grilled cheese. A cafeteria worker explains that they have the wrong person, but the police officer ignores her. Meanwhile, Harlow raises the chair and throws it across the room. Immediately after, Rosemary lets her plate drop to the floor and smash. She holds up her glass of milk, and—in spite of the officer urging her not to—throws it on the ground.

The end of the chapter emphasizes the affinity between Rosemary and Harlow. Despite not knowing Harlow, Rosemary is compelled to imitate Harlow's deviant behavior. Both girls have an untamed, destructive quality to their personality, and resist control by figures of authority (namely the campus police).

PART 1, CHAPTER 2

Rosemary and Harlow are arrested and placed in the back of a police car together. Harlow is significantly cheered up by her arrest. She introduces herself to Rosemary as "Harlow Fielding. Drama department," explaining that she was named after Jean Harlow. The girls are taken to the county jail. The officer who arrested them is named Arnie Haddick. They are placed in a **cell**, and Rosemary climbs the bars to check if they go all the way to the ceiling.

Rosemary and Harlow's joint arrest solidifies the connection between them, but this passage also hints at a key difference between the characters. Harlow's mention of the drama department indicates that her wild behavior seems to be motivated by a love of performance and melodrama. Rosemary, however, behaves in a more animalistic way, climbing the cell bars like a monkey.

After several hours, Rosemary and Harlow are "processed." Harlow is charged with destruction of property and creating a public nuisance; Rosemary faces the same charges in addition to assaulting an officer. Harlow calls her boyfriend, Reg, who collects her immediately. Rosemary calls her parents, hoping her mother will answer, but instead reaches her father. He admits that he always assumed Lowell would be the one to call from jail, and Rosemary is surprised by this mention of her brother. At first, Rosemary speaks to her father in a breezy, irreverent manner; however, she then suddenly bursts into tears. Her father manages to get put through to Officer Haddick and persuades him to reduce and then drop all the charges. In exchange, Rosemary is forced to promise she will come home for Thanksgiving, which she sees as "a heavy price" to pay.

At first Rosemary and Harlow both indulged in their own deviance with a kind of carefree recklessness. However, at this moment both retreat into a more cooperative and submissive way of being. Despite the abuse she was hurling at Reg only hours ago, Harlow is now more than happy to be collected by him. Meanwhile, Rosemary attempts a brash, defiant attitude with her father, but quickly crumples into tears and agrees to come home for Thanksgiving. Rebelliousness and deviance can be intoxicating in the moment, but this passage suggests that they often give way to feelings of shame and regret.

PART 1, CHAPTER 3

Rosemary is totally unsurprised by the fact that her family does not discuss her arrest at Thanksgiving. Her family pretends to be honest and "close-knit," but this is not actually the case. For example, although her parents—who are both scientists—pretend to have a matter-of-fact attitude toward sex, they never explained anything related to puberty or sexuality to her. In 1996, Rosemary's parents still live in Bloomington, Indiana, which is where she grew up. Apart from Thanksgiving dinner, she hardly sees her father, who is so busy working on a project sponsored by the National Institute of Health that he barely eats and sleeps. He does not openly drink when he is working this hard, which Rosemary and her mother appreciate, but Rosemary knows that he still drinks in secret.

Here Rosemary expands on the idea that her parents are invested in appearing like a normal family, when in reality they are hiding some (rather serious) secrets. Her parents exclude matters that are deemed scandalous or deviant by society—criminality, sex, alcoholism—from their narrative about their own family. Rosemary indicates that there is a high cost to such dishonesty and denial, not least of which involves the fact that when her family engages in denial about a certain issue (such as her father's drinking), one person is left to deal with the issue unsupported and alone.

Rosemary and her parents alternate spending Thanksgiving at the houses of her two grandmothers, Grandma Donna and Grandma Fredericka. This year they are at Donna's house, along with Rosemary's Uncle Bob, his wife Vivi, and their two children. Fredericka makes heavy food and bullies her guests into having multiple helpings; Donna's food, however, is delicious, and her house is tastefully decorated. Donna asks Rosemary's father about his current project, commenting that his mind is clearly elsewhere. Bob also makes a subtle "dig" at Rosemary's father, but he doesn't notice.

The presentation of family life in the novel so far is rather scathing. Thanksgiving at Grandma Donna's house is infused with silent judgement and tension. While Rosemary seems intimately aware of this tension, however, her father is totally oblivious to it. This raises the question of whether it is better to be cognizant of family drama or to remain in an isolated, aloof state of denial.

Rosemary's father is a psychologist, a profession that has a bad reputation among people of Donna's age. Rosemary knows that Donna wishes Rosemary's mother had married someone else. Rosemary does not remember what the family discussed during the 1996 Thanksgiving dinner, but knows that they didn't discuss her missing siblings. They also do not discuss politics (in order to avoid arguments), Rosemary's brush with the law, or her cousin Peter's terrible SAT scores. Peter is very handsome, a talented cellist, and is loved by everyone in the family. He is also exceptionally kind to his little sister, Janice, who is 14, "sullen," and unattractive.

Throughout the novel, Rosemary pays close attention to silence and absence. Indeed, her focus on what the family does not say conveys far more than a report on what was *said at Thanksgiving. This is particularly true given the family's investment in appearing more normal and close-knit than is actually the case. It is also important to "read" the silence's in Rosemary's own narrative. For example, her appreciation of Peter's kindness to Janice seems to indicate that she wishes her own brother was more similar to Peter in this respect.*

Vivi asks Rosemary's father what he thinks of standardized tests, and he replies that they are "imprecise," before boasting that Rosemary got excellent SAT scores. Rosemary's mother attempts to smooth over this faux pas by explaining that Rosemary is an excellent test-taker due to have being tested so frequently as a child. Rosemary's father continues to brag about her, and Peter kindly comments that he remembers Rosemary's SAT scores, and that he personally thought that the test was very difficult.

This conversation continues to emphasize the unspoken tensions within ordinary family dynamics. It also introduces the thematic importance of testing. The discussion of the SATs speaks to larger questions about how human beings are evaluated using quantitative techniques. Rosemary's father's mixed messages about the SATs indicates his ambivalent relationship to such evaluation.

The next day, Rosemary's mother comes into Rosemary's room while she is studying. Rosemary's family has moved three times since she was born, most recently to this house in Bloomington, because the empty rooms in their old house made Rosemary's mother feel depressed. At around the age of four, Rosemary invented an imaginary friend called Mary. Rosemary and Mary were inseparable until Rosemary's mother told them that Mary couldn't come to school with Rosemary. At first Rosemary worried that while she was gone Mary would "charm" her mother into liking her better; in the end Mary spent all day sleeping, and eventually left the family and was never mentioned again.

Mary is simply a figment of Rosemary's childhood imagination, yet even as an adult Rosemary speaks about her as if she were real. For example, Rosemary does not consider that her mother's ban on Mary attending school could be easily overridden by the fact that Mary only does what Rosemary wants her to do. Meanwhile, the idea that Mary left the house and never returned suggests that Mary has a volition of her own, when again Mary is actually subject to Rosemary's own whims. This demonstrates Rosemary's tendency to anthropomorphize nonhuman things.

Back in 1996, Rosemary's mother tells Rosemary that it hurts her father when she doesn't speak to him. She then adds that Rosemary's father has suggested that she should donate her old journals to a library, but that she would prefer to give them to Rosemary. Rosemary is moved by the fact that her mother would allow her to read her account of the past. Shortly after, Rosemary's father comes in and gives her a fortune cookie message he has saved for her that reads: "Don't forget, you are always on our minds." For a moment, Rosemary sees her family as "good," loving, and happy.

The end of the chapter serves as a moving reminder that just because Rosemary's family is mired in dishonesty and denial, that doesn't mean that they don't want *to be warm, loving, and supportive. Likewise, Rosemary herself is occasionally tempted to engage in the same dishonesty and denial as her parents in order to think of her family as something that is far happier and more harmonious than is actually the case.*

PART 1, CHAPTER 4

Although Rosemary finds the gesture with the journals moving, she has no desire to read them. She is thus somewhat relieved when her suitcase containing the journals is lost by the airline on the flight home. Arriving back at her apartment, she is surprised to hear music playing, as her roommate, Todd, is not supposed to be back yet. She is even more shocked to find Harlow sitting on the sofa, drinking one of Rosemary's sodas. Rosemary does not know how to react, and Harlow eventually explains that Reg kicked her out and that she thought Rosemary wouldn't be back until tomorrow. Rosemary asks how Harlow knew where she lives; Harlow replies that she got the address from the police report, and persuaded Rosemary's apartment manager to let her in.

Harlow rebels against every social convention and expectation for human behavior. She violates Rosemary's privacy and property in a deliberately egregious manner, and does not seem interested in following any normal custom of politeness. Note that, beyond surprise, Rosemary does not give a sense of her reaction to Harlow's breaking-and-entering. While Harlow's previous deviant behavior made Rosemary feel a certain affinity with her, at this stage it is unclear whether Harlow has taken things a step too far. Will Rosemary draw a line when it comes to her own apartment?

The next morning, Rosemary's toilet breaks and she calls the apartment manager, Ezra Metzger, who arrives immediately and asks if Harlow is there. Rosemary says that Harlow has gone back home to her boyfriend and scolds Ezra for letting her in. Ezra protests that a large number of women are killed each year by their boyfriends, and that he was trying to save Harlow's life. Harlow's hair and trash is strewn across the apartment.

It is beginning to become obvious that part of what allows Harlow to get away with her outrageous behavior is the fact that men seem to fall in love with her easily. Not only does Reg keep taking her back, but Ezra allows himself to be totally manipulated by her even though they have just met. Rosemary's attraction to Harlow, on the other hand, seems different and for now remains unexplained.

Todd is the child of a bitter divorce, and once told Rosemary that it must be nice to have a "normal" family like hers. Todd is furious about Harlow's intrusion, asking if they need to now change the locks. Later that night, Rosemary's mother calls to say that although she promised never to speak about the past, she feels that "a weight's been lifted" now that she has given Rosemary the journals. Todd's girlfriend Kimmy comes over and Rosemary retires to her room to read *The Mosquito Coast*, thinking: "There seemed to be no end to the insane things fathers did to their families."

Once again, the perception of normalcy—particularly when it comes to families—is shown to be unreliable. Todd believes that Rosemary's family is normal just because her parents aren't divorced, but in fact all this really means is that her family is unlike Todd's family. Rosemary leaves a further hint about her family's lack of normalcy within the comment about the crimes of fathers. Clearly, her father has done something that is yet to be revealed.

PART 1, CHAPTER 5

A few days later, Harlow comes to Rosemary's apartment to apologize and offers to buy her a beer. Many people at the bar seem to know Harlow and countless men offer to buy her a drink, but all of them are sweetly refused. The girls ask each other questions that range from ordinary to strange and intimate. Harlow asks Rosemary if she loves her mother or father better, a question Rosemary finds "dangerous." She replies by telling Harlow a story about when she was unexpectedly "shipped off" to Grandma Fredericka's house in Indianapolis without explanation. The house is filled with fake, tacky objects and has a "stale" smell. All the children on the street are older than Rosemary, and her grandparents spend all day in front of the TV. Sometimes they watch a soap opera together; Rosemary's grandfather Joe warns her that in real life people do not act like this.

Rosemary's conversation with Harlow confirms the fact that she is also deeply invested in silence and deflection in order to avoid revealing her family's true nature. The story about being "shipped off" to her grandparents' house hints at some unspoken family tension, but such an experience is fairly common and thus preserves the impression that her family is still relatively normal. Notice too that Rosemary conveys most of her feelings about her grandparents without expressing them explicitly. Her comments about her grandparents' incessant TV watching and tacky décor suggests that they have a different class background and lifestyle to Rosemary's immediate family.

One day, Fredericka takes Rosemary to play with the children of a woman she met at the beauty shop, but while Rosemary is on their trampoline her skirt flies up to reveal her underwear, and she is so embarrassed that she attempts to walk all the way home to her parents' house in Bloomington. On the way, Rosemary knocks on the door of an unknown man, who ends up returning her to her grandparents. The next day, Rosemary's grandparents send her back to Bloomington. Harlow asks if Rosemary's mother was having a baby. Rosemary knows that her mother was in fact having a nervous breakdown, but is determined to conceal this truth. She tells Harlow that the weirdest part of the story is that when she was in the house of the unknown man, she accidentally opened a wrong door while looking for a bathroom and found a woman lying naked on a bed, her limbs tied, with something stuffed in her mouth. The woman winked at her.

This passage contains another powerful exploration of the tension between normalcy and deviance. Following the societal demand that people—and especially women—feel a sense of shame about their bodies and sexuality, Rosemary feels humiliated when her skirt flies up on the trampoline. However, this ironically leads her to the house of a man who is engaged in sadomasochistic sex and directly encountering a woman who seems to be taking pleasure in her own sexuality (and specifically sexual humiliation). The fact that it is this man who dutifully returns Rosemary to her grandparents suggests that the binary between appropriate behavior and deviance is more complicated than is often assumed.

Reg arrives; Harlow introduces him to Rosemary and tells him that Rosemary's favorite superhero is Tarzan. Rosemary originally picked Tarzan on a whim, without thinking through the fact that Tarzan does not actually have superpowers; however, the more she thinks about it, the more she is sure that this is the right choice. The conversation continues, and Rosemary concludes that Reg has "the brains of a bivalve" and that she is happy he is not her boyfriend.

This passage further emphasizes Rosemary's affinity with animals. Not only does she pick Tarzan—a character who was raised by apes and lives as an animal—as her favorite superhero, but when describing Reg's lack of intelligence she compares him to a bivalve, a type of mollusk without a head. Clearly animals are often on Rosemary's mind.

PART 1, CHAPTER 6

Reg points out that the Tarzan books are racist, and Rosemary decides to go home. At the apartment, she discusses the evening with Todd, and privately reflects that Reg was in the wrong but that it was "indiscreet" of her to mention Tarzan at all. The next day Rosemary asks Ezra to hand over her suitcase, which was delivered to the apartment building while she was out. Ezra makes her wait a couple of days, claiming he is too busy to return it immediately; when he eventually does so, he mentions that Rosemary's brother "Travers" came by and asked for her the day before. Rosemary finds it hard to believe that her brother has come looking for, but is persuaded by the fact that he called himself Travers, as Lowell "would never have used his real name." Rosemary asks Ezra if her brother mentioned coming back, but Ezra gives a deliberately vague reply.

Lowell has still not made a direct appearance in the narrative, and this—combined with the fact that Rosemary has failed to give an explanation of his original disappearance—creates a strong sense of mystique about his character. This mystique is further intensified by his use of a false name. Lowell apparently possesses the family trait of dishonesty, and this seems to be related to his mysterious absence. A further sense of mystery arises through the case of the missing suitcase and Ezra's deliberately unhelpful response to Rosemary's question. The overwhelming secrecy here helps build narrative suspense.

When Rosemary was young, she idolized Lowell, who was only occasionally nice to her in return. He was a talented poker player and taught Rosemary to be even better, and the two of them made money off his friends, who did not imagine a child as young as Rosemary could beat them at the game. Lowell once twisted the arm of a kid who had thrown a snowball with a rock in it at Rosemary, and afterward took Rosemary out for ice cream. Rosemary explains that she chose to attend UC Davis because it was far away from home and because the FBI had told her family that Lowell was living in Davis in 1987, a year after he left home. She fantasized that Lowell would show up at her door and tell her he missed her. The last time they saw each other, Rosemary was 11 and Lowell hated her. She concludes the chapter by noting that the returned suitcase is not hers.

Here Rosemary provides two contrasting pictures of Lowell. She states that he was only infrequently nice to her, yet emphasizes these rare occasions rather than the more common instances when he was unkind. In this way, Rosemary draws attention to her own bias. By only sharing positive memories, she implies that she wants the reader to think well of Lowell, rather than focus on his cruelty. At the same time, Rosemary does not totally whitewash Lowell. She notes, for example, that the FBI keeps track of Lowell's movements—yet refuses to explain why. Through these techniques, Rosemary deliberately suspends the reader's ability to draw conclusions about her brother.

PART 1, CHAPTER 7

Rosemary admits that she isn't sure if the story she told Harlow about staying with her grandparents is true. She reflects that language distorts people's memories and adds that now Lowell has come back, she's not sure if she can keep telling the story without returning to her family's past—the part she has "never told before."

This is another metafictional commentary on the nature of memory and storytelling. As the sole narrator, Rosemary has total authority over the story, yet undermines this authority by questioning the validity of her memories and her ability to tell the truth.

PART 2, CHAPTER 1

The narrative jumps back to 1979, "Year of the Goat." Rosemary writes that, among other events, the reader might not have noticed that this is the year that the Animal Defense League is formed. In 1979, Rosemary is five years old; her father would point out that she is in the "preoperational phase" of development, which means that her cognitive and emotional skills are still limited. When her father picks her up from her grandparents' house after her attempt to walk home to Bloomington, she is confused and unhappy, and decides to go to sleep.

Although Rosemary is a talkative child, her way of dealing with troubling situations is not by talking but by falling asleep. Rosemary's use of falling asleep as an avoidance tactic again highlights her preference for silence and denial over confronting situations head-on. As Rosemary herself admits, she also uses silence, avoidance, and denial in her narrative style.

Upon waking, Rosemary finds herself lying underneath the quilt she always sleeps with at home, but in an unfamiliar room. She cries out, and her father comes in and comforts her, telling her that this is their new home. He tells her to explore, but not to go into her mother's room. The house is smaller than their previous one, and Rosemary finds out that Lowell refused to stay there on their first night, instead sleeping over with a friend. The rooms are full of unopened boxes. Rosemary can't find a place for the graduate students to work and notices that there are only three bedrooms—one for her parents, one for Lowell, and one of her own. At this point she realizes that a member of the family has been "given away."

This passage drives home Rosemary's argument that her parents avoid discussing uncomfortable topics with her. Still, their failure to tell her that they have moved houses and that a family member has been "given away" seems to be a rather extreme manifestation of this secrecy. Rosemary's comment about the graduate students indicates that there is more to the situation than she is revealing here; after all, it is not exactly normal for graduate students to be working inside a family home.

When Rosemary leaves for college, she makes sure to never tell anyone about her sister, Fern. Although she was only five when Fern "disappeared," she remembers her clearly. At the time, Lowell was furious with their parents over Fern's disappearance, but Rosemary was afraid and even relieved that *she* was not the one who had been given away. Fern's departure marked the point at which Lowell stopped seeing himself as part of the family, and Rosemary draws a sharp divide between her life with Fern and her life after. Because Rosemary's parents don't discuss the past, her memories from her early childhood mostly come from Grandma Fredericka. (Grandma Donna also used to talk about Fern, but Rosemary's mother made her stop.) At the end of the chapter, Rosemary writes: "Once upon a time, there was a family with two daughters, and a mother and father who promised to love them both exactly the same."

At this point it seems as if Fern was kidnapped or subject to some other sudden tragedy. Yet this contradicts what Rosemary said in the previous passage about Fern being "given away." It seems highly unlikely that a family would actually give one of their children away (and even more unlikely given that they were then able to keep the other two). Yet the very last line of the chapter again subtly indicates that Rosemary's parents are at fault. Rosemary states that they promised to love their daughters the same, thereby implying that they failed to live up to this promise. The end of this chapter thus points to a "Garden of Eden"-like state of moral innocence before a fall.

PART 2, CHAPTER 2

Rosemary writes that in most families there is a favorite child, and that, in different ways, it is difficult to be the favorite and not to be the favorite. Rosemary was her mother's favorite child, and Lowell was their father's; Rosemary loved Lowell most, Fern loved their mother most, and Lowell loved Fern most. Rosemary reflects that writing these preferences out makes it seem as if there was enough love for everyone.

In some ways Rosemary's view of her family is rather cynical. Most parents would deny the accusation that they have a favorite child, yet Rosemary conveys a very clear, almost diagram-like image of the patterns of favoritism within her family. It is unclear whether this perception is born out of Rosemary's own bitterness or whether it is actually true.

PART 2, CHAPTER 3

After the move to the new house in Bloomington, Rosemary's mother barely talks or eats and only comes out of her bedroom at night. Grandma Donna comes over to help look after Rosemary during the day. Rosemary explores her neighborhood, but there aren't any children her age, so instead she befriends the neighborhood pets. She also spends time alone and with Mary, but does not enjoy this. Rosemary knows that Donna disliked Fern, particularly after Fern rifled through Donna's handbag and ate the last photograph taken of Grandpa Dan. Rosemary's father had originally wanted to name Rosemary and Fern each after one of their grandmothers, but a fight broke out because both grandmothers wanted their name given to Rosemary, so the plan was abandoned.

This passage contains further evidence of tensions that exist beneath the seemingly harmonious family dynamic. Following her nervous breakdown, Rosemary's mother has retreated from the world entirely, failing to live up to her role within the family. Meanwhile, in Fern's absence Rosemary is isolated, and her intense loneliness is shown by her befriending of the neighborhood pets. Perhaps the most curious example of this tension, however, is the grandmothers' battle over who could give their name to Rosemary. Why do Rosemary's family treat Fern with such coldness?

During the time she looks after Rosemary, Grandma Donna is sometimes kind and sympathetic and sometimes impatient and judgmental. Lowell is still staying with a friend, and Donna's attempt to retrieve him is unsuccessful. Donna leaves before Rosemary's father gets home and tells Rosemary to keep it a secret that she has been there, but Rosemary's father knows anyway. In the evenings, Rosemary's father makes her a dinner of peanut butter and crackers and spends his time drinking. When she is supposed to be asleep, Rosemary hears her parents arguing, with her father drunkenly protesting the fact that the family all blames him. Eventually, Lowell comes home, and Rosemary is thrilled to see him.

Rosemary's family seems to be at a breaking point, pushed apart by dishonesty, isolation, and self-destructive behavior. This downward spiral is triggered and exacerbated by three absences: Fern, Lowell, and Rosemary's mother. Although Rosemary's mother is still technically in the house and Lowell is only staying with a friend, their lack of participation in family life has a devastating impact on the rest of the family. This passage thus suggests that there is more than one way to be absent within a social dynamic, and that all forms of absence can have a dramatically damaging effect.

PART 2, CHAPTER 4

Both Rosemary and Lowell suffer from the burden of Fern's disappearance and their mother's breakdown, and at times Lowell is kind and sympathetic to this little sister. He occasionally lets Rosemary come and sleep in his bed, just as Rosemary and Fern used to climb into their parents' bed in the middle of the night. Lowell's room smells of the cage where he keeps three pet **rats** given to him by his father's laboratory. In the mornings, Lowell leaves before anyone else in the family is up. Rosemary later learns that he has breakfast with a devoutly Christian, childless couple, who—like almost everyone in Bloomington—know something about the "situation at our house." One day, the wife knocks on the Cookes' door and gives Rosemary some cookies, telling her to remember that she was made in God's own image.

The narrative focuses on Rosemary's feelings of isolation, but there is evidence that Lowell is feeling isolated and lonely too. Like Rosemary, Lowell reacts to Fern's disappearance (and the subsequent breakdown of the family) by withdrawing from their life at home, choosing to spend time with friends and even a random Christian couple from the neighborhood. Rosemary never explains why Lowell is drawn to the couple, but it is possible that Lowell seeks them out because of the stark contrast they provide to Lowell and Rosemary's father, an atheist who treats science as a kind of religion.

Rosemary notes that the reader probably assumes Fern is dead, but that she is in fact still alive. Rosemary can't remember her parents telling her anything about Fern's disappearance. Lowell sees a counselor, Ms. Delancy, who suggests various activities for the family to participate in together. This infuriates Rosemary's father, who rejects psychoanalysis as unscientific and "bogus." Rosemary, meanwhile, gets a new babysitter, a college student called Melissa. Though suspicious of her at first, Rosemary eventually warms to Melissa, requesting that Melissa teach her obscure words from the dictionary every time they see each other.

At this point it is clear that Rosemary's father's harshly rational and clinical view of the world is not helping the family move on from Fern's disappearance. While Rosemary's father rejects psychoanalysis as "bogus," he repeatedly engages in exactly the kinds of behaviors (denial, dishonesty, addiction) that psychoanalysis is designed to diagnose and treat. However, his scientific arrogance prevents him from being able to see this.

One day, Rosemary is home alone with Melissa, who is watching a soap opera on TV. That same day, a friend of Lowell's called Russell Tupman shows up in the Cookes' driveway, smoking a cigarette. Rosemary "instantly" falls in love with him, and Lowell tells her to get in the back of the car, explaining that the three of them are going on "a secret adventure." Rosemary sings along to the radio in the backseat until Russell tells her to stop. Eventually the car stops, and Rosemary realizes that they have arrived at their old house. Up until this point, she has assumed that Fern had stayed behind at this house, living with the graduate students. This thought does not trouble her, because the graduate students always loved Fern.

Russell is the stereotype of teenage male deviance, and Rosemary (somewhat predictably) falls for his "bad boy" persona immediately. Meanwhile, Lowell's explanation that they are going on a "secret adventure" is clearly sinister, yet Rosemary is too young and naïve to understand any of this. Her willingness to get into trouble in order to be liked foreshadows her relationship with Harlow, which is similarly defined by recklessness and rebellion.

Feeling nervous, Rosemary protests that "Mary doesn't want to see Fern"; Lowell replies with indignation that the house is empty. Lowell tells Rosemary to crawl through the dog door. When she hesitates, Russell tells her that they are counting on her, which persuades her to go in. Rosemary feels that the house is angry, and then sad. She mournfully remembers all the things about living there that she misses, and all the things she used to do with Fern. Russell asks Lowell if the front lawn is still electrified, but Lowell doesn't know what he is talking about. Russell says there was a rumor that the lawn was electrified to keep people away. Eventually, Melissa realizes that Rosemary is missing, and she and Lowell are found and reprimanded by their parents.

The detail of Rosemary climbing through the dog door again emphasizes her close connection to animals. Also, note that she feels that the house is "angry" and "sad." Rosemary has a tendency to anthropomorphize (ascribe human qualities to) nonhuman animals and things, and it is clear that—especially at this young age—she does not yet have a solid grasp on what distinguishes humans from the rest of the world. The rumor about the electric fence further proves that Rosemary's family is notorious in the neighborhood, but is not yet clear for what reason.

PART 2, CHAPTER 5

Rosemary writes that the reader probably doesn't know that Mary is not a human girl, but a chimpanzee—as is Fern. Rosemary has so far chosen to hide this because for the first 18 years of her life, she was defined by the fact that she lived with a chimpanzee. More importantly, however, she wanted the reader to see Fern as truly her sister. Rosemary's parents promised to love Fern as a daughter, and Rosemary still wonders if they kept that promise. Before Fern disappeared, Rosemary had almost never spent a moment alone. Rosemary's first memory is the touch and look of Fern's body after Fern had been given a bath.

All the hints about the Cookes' abnormality and Rosemary's relationship to animals now immediately come into focus, as Fowler finally provides this major "reveal." Rosemary's admission that she deliberately kept secret Fern and Mary's animal status confirms that she is just as guilty of dishonesty and denial as the rest of her family. However, her explanation suggests that strategic dishonesty and denial can actually be useful, particularly in the construction of a narrative.

Another early memory consists of the two of them playing games with some of the graduate students. Fern is playing "Same/Not Same," a matching game, whereas Rosemary plays a more challenging game in which she groups sets of animals together. Rosemary enjoys chatting to the graduate student she's playing with, but Fern quickly gets frustrated with Same/Not Same and comes over to press her head against Rosemary's. Rosemary can "smell" that Fern is unhappy but tells Fern to leave her alone. Fern runs around the room, requesting food in sign language, and when Rosemary joins in and falls over, Fern laughs. "Mocking laughter" is a human characteristic, not a chimp one, and Rosemary's father and the graduate students are so excited by Fern's laugh that they do not notice that Rosemary's arm is broken. Rosemary is always trying to discover things she can do better than Fern, and invents Mary out of this sense of frustration.

There is an extent to which Rosemary's relationship to Fern is presented as idyllic. Their intense affinity and affection, and Rosemary's animalistic understanding of the cues of Fern's body, demonstrate a moving effect of the experiment of raising Fern in the Cooke family. However, there is also a decidedly sinister element to Rosemary's relationship with Fern. Rosemary feels jealous and competitive, and her father's attention to Fern at times means that he totally ignores his human daughter's needs, even failing to notice when she breaks her arm. Moreover, Fern exhibits human qualities (such as mocking laughter) that are distinctly harmful and cruel.

The narrative returns to the period after Fern's disappearance. Rosemary and Mary are climbing the maple tree in Russell's yard. Russell, annoyed, calls Rosemary "monkey girl." Rosemary accidentally slides out of the tree and the leaves stain her crotch red. She feels humiliated. A few days later, Russell throws a Halloween party at the Cookes' former home and is arrested by the police. Rosemary wonders if Fern somehow cosmically managed to punish Russell for his violation of their home.

This passages introduces further ways in which being raised alongside Fern had a damaging effect on Rosemary. Her affinity with animals puts her at odds with human children and leaves her vulnerable to teasing. At the same time, Rosemary's abnormality as someone who has animal characteristics is still far better than Russell's deviance, which involves destructive behavior. Deviance from the norm is not necessarily harmful (although it can be).

PART 2, CHAPTER 6

Suddenly, Rosemary's mother comes "back into focus." Her mood is vastly improved, and she returns to tasks such as cooking, showering, and playing the piano. The family go to Waikiki, Hawaii for Christmas, and it is the first time Rosemary has ever been on a plane. During the trip, she learns to swim. Rosemary notes that the trip is made possible by Fern's absence, and that she thinks of Fern constantly but does not mention her. Rosemary's father suggests that Rosemary's mother should get a job now that Rosemary is going into kindergarten, but Rosemary's mother indicates that she doesn't want to discuss this.

For the first time, Rosemary explicitly admits that there are positive consequences of Fern's disappearance. While Fern lived with them, the family were prohibited from engaging in many normal activities, such as going on vacation (or, in Rosemary's case, learning to swim). At the same time, Fern's absence continues to haunt Rosemary. The fact that Rosemary must repress her feelings about Fern hinders her from recovering emotionally from the loss of her sister.

Back at home, Lowell suddenly brings up Fern, asking: "Remember how Fern loved us?" Rosemary's father tells him not to discuss her "yet." He says that Fern is happy now, but at this point Rosemary's mother is crying and Lowell has stormed out. Lowell does not come back for two nights, and the family never finds out where he went. Previously, Rosemary had asked her father where Fern went, and he explained that she now has a "different family" on a farm. Rosemary was upset at the idea of Fern being forced to try new foods. She notes that both she and Lowell believed that the "farm" was real for years.

Repressing the truth—particularly a truth as serious and painful as the loss of a family member—is inherently unsustainable, and it is thus unsurprising that the silence over Fern's absence eventually gives way. Each member of Rosemary's family has a totally different way of dealing with Fern's absence, but none of them seem to be working (in the sense that they do not allow the family support one another and heal together).

At eight years old, Rosemary suddenly remembers a time when her father ran over a cat that was taking too long to cross the road in front of them. She asks Grandma Donna if the memory is real, and Donna assures her that she must have dreamed it. Rosemary is reassured by this, as Donna doesn't like Rosemary's father and so would have no reason to lie. However, Rosemary continues to reflect on whether or not her father is actually kind to animals. She notes that her father doesn't believe that animals can think like humans, but that he doesn't think very highly of human rationality either.

Rosemary's father evidently carries a strong sense of bitterness about the world. This is exhibited in his disdain for phenomena ranging from psychoanalysis to human rationality, as well as his drinking problem. Yet bitterness does not necessarily translate into cruelty. Rosemary's concern over whether or father actually ran over the cat is a distillation of the broader question of whether or not he is a good person.

PART 2, CHAPTER 7

Rosemary recalls more memories of Fern. In the first, Rosemary and Fern are both three years old, and are sitting on a loveseat while Rosemary's mother reads them *Mary Poppins*. Rosemary keeps interrupting to ask about the story, which aggravates her mother. Rosemary feels jealous that Fern is praised for listening quietly when she isn't even capable of speech, and believes that her mother loves Fern best. In another memory, Rosemary, Fern, their mother, Grandma Donna, and the graduate students are all dancing joyfully together. In another, it has just snowed and Rosemary's mother is worried about how to dress Fern, as Fern refuses to let shoes be put on her feet. Rosemary's mother generally dislikes putting clothes on Fern, but because Rosemary wears clothes Fern must wear them too.

Many of Rosemary's memories have a surreal and comic quality. The idea of Rosemary's family dancing with a group of graduate students or of Fern being forced into a snow outfit is rather amusing. At the same time, the light-hearted nature of these recollections is undercut by Rosemary's own feelings, which emphasize the extent to which the memories are emotionally traumatic and painful. Rosemary's jealousy toward Fern, for example, is shown to be a foundational element of her personality, and has arguably had a damaging impact on her in later life.

Outside, Lowell is building a "snow ant." Fern tries to play with him, but he is not interested and leaves his sisters to play by themselves. Rosemary and Fern build a giant snowball together and roll it down the hill, and Lowell is impressed. Soon, the graduate students arrive to take them sledding. Rosemary admits: "We are so excited that… we're completely beside ourselves."

The inclusion of the book's title illuminates the significance of this passage. Rosemary emphasizes that the time with Fern was the happiest period in her life. The phrase "beside ourselves" evokes Rosemary's joy at having her sister, her constant companion, beside her to share in life's pleasures. At the same time, it also calls to mind ideas of twinning and disembodiment, connecting to the novel's larger theme of humans, animals, and the blurry divide between the two.

Even when Fern acts in a wild and unpredictable way, Rosemary is always sure she knows what Fern is thinking. She asks why Fern has to learn human language instead of the family learning Fern's language, and her father replies that it is unclear whether Fern is even capable of learning a language. Rosemary explains she's well aware that in psychological experiments, "the thing ostensibly being studied is rarely the thing being studied." The first people to raise a child and a chimpanzee together, the Kelloggs, supposedly did so in order "to compare and contrast developing abilities," and this was the same reason for the study conducted by the Cookes. However, Rosemary suspects that the study actually has a different purpose.

Once again, Rosemary suspects that her father is being dishonest, and must attempt to deduce the truth through her own knowledge and reasoning. Her confusion over why her family don't try to learn Fern's language highlights the profound impact that being raised alongside Fern has had on her. Unlike most people, Rosemary has not internalized the idea that humans are superior to animals, and instead views herself and Fern as existing within an equal, reciprocal relationship. This puts her at odds with other humans and leads her to struggle with many aspects of human life.

Rosemary references another study which shows that "twinness" affects language learning. This rings true to her, as she and Fern together developed a system of Rosemary acting as Fern's "translator." Rosemary wonders if her father was really discovering how well she and Fern could communicate with one another. One grad student argued that before Rosemary learned to speak, she and Fern shared an "idioglossia": a secret system of communication. However, Rosemary's father dismissed this as "unscientific" and "whimsical."

Again, Rosemary's father is shown to have a harsh and bitter attitude toward life, including his two daughters and the possibility of animal-human connection. Rosemary's own experience—particularly her feeling of total communicative fluency with Fern—indicates that the grad student's theory about their shared language is correct. However, Rosemary's father seems inordinately suspicious of such a view.

Fern is sometimes interested in chimpanzees she sees on TV, but when another chimpanzee is brought to the farmhouse, Fern expresses dislike of him. As with most chimps raised among humans, Fern believes she is also human. Although nobody suspected it, this confusion works the other way around, too, as Rosemary identifies more with chimps than people. When Rosemary starts kindergarten, the other kids call her "monkey girl" or just "monkey." They are clearly disturbed by the ways in which she acts like a chimp. Over time, Rosemary slowly learns how to tone down her chimp behaviors, but she finds it difficult to convincingly adopt human ones. Rosemary hopes that Fern is better at adapting to life among her own kind. She fantasizes that Fern is teaching the other chimps the human skills she learned, like sign language.

Both Rosemary and Fern suffer as a result of their unusual upbringing together. Just as Fern loses her sense of affinity with other chimpanzees, so does Rosemary lose hers with other humans. Furthermore, Rosemary has trouble adopting the behaviors that in human society are seen as "normal." Even the fact that she is eventually able to behave in a normal human manner is somewhat tragic, as it involves the denial of her true personality and further distances her from Fern and her past.

PART 3, CHAPTER 1

Rosemary is less affected by Fern's departure than the rest of her family, because she is too young to truly understand it. Rosemary has no sense of who she is without Fern, and she misses her in a visceral way. She rocks and bites herself until her family intervenes. Now that Fern is gone, Rosemary realizes that her constant chattering is no longer useful or interesting.

Unable to express her feelings about losing Fern, Rosemary turns to nonverbal animalistic behaviors such as rocking and biting herself. Without Fern actually with her, Rosemary behaves more like Fern, metaphorically summoning the presence of her sister even while she is not truly there.

PART 3, CHAPTER 2

Rosemary shares a bedroom wall with her parents and can thus hear the conversations they have. Over the years, they discuss mostly the same subjects. After Fern leaves, Rosemary's father becomes paranoid that his career will stall, which causes him to drink. Rosemary's parents also discuss their concerns about Rosemary and Lowell. Ms. Delancy says that Lowell no longer believes that his parents love him unconditionally. She also praises the qualities that make Lowell "difficult," such as his strong sense of justice. Rosemary's parents try to overcompensate by paying Lowell extra attention and doing things they think he will like, but he hates this. Rosemary believes that Ms. Delancy cannot fully comprehend the grief her family feels over the loss of Fern.

There is a distinct and almost amusing contrast between the forced silence and denial that Rosemary's parents practice in their interactions with her and the freedom with which they talk when they think she can't hear. Rosemary's impression of this stage of her family's life together is thus colored by a strange mixture of extreme repression and extreme honesty. At the same time, Fern's comments about Ms. Delancy serve as a reminder that just because you hear the truth, doesn't mean you understand it. Ms. Delancy knows what happened to Fern and yet cannot properly comprehend the family's grief.

In the first grade, Rosemary transfers to a "hippie school," where problems are solved in a gentle, collaborative manner. Rosemary believes her parents do not tell the school about Fern. Rosemary's father gives her tips on using her body language to make people like her, but this backfires. For a while, Rosemary befriends a boy in her class called Dae-jung, who has just moved to Indiana from Korea and cannot yet speak English. Rosemary speaks at him so much that his English quickly improves, at which point he abandons her for other friends.

Again, Rosemary's ill-preparedness for normal human social life borders on comic. Her father's well-meaning but profoundly misguided advice about Rosemary's body language again confirms the limitations of science for solving ordinary social problems. The fact that even teaching Dae-jung English is not enough for him to like her proves just how much of a misfit Rosemary is.

PART 3, CHAPTER 3

After Lowell begins high school, he stops mentioning Fern. He begins dating a Mormon girl named Katherine "Kitch" Chalmers, who is one of nine children. At this point, Rosemary has almost completely stopped talking, having realized that she has an easier time at school when no one notices her. Her teachers complain about her lack of engagement, and her parents scold her. In Lowell's senior year he is made point guard of the basketball team, which in turn boosts Rosemary's social status. Yet just as a big game is coming up, Lowell comes home when he is supposed to be at practice. When Rosemary goes to find out why, he tells her: "Get the fuck out of my room" and "Don't you ever fucking come in here again."

Note that there is a pattern in Lowell's life of choosing to spend time with religious people—first the Christian couple in the neighborhood and then the Mormon Kitch. Rosemary does not describe Lowell as having any religious beliefs himself, and thus this choice of company can be interpreted as an act of rebellion against his father. Unfortunately, it is Rosemary herself who receives the brunt of Lowell's rebellion. Ostracized at school, she cannot even retreat into the comfort of her family and is thus totally alone.

At dinner Lowell behaves normally, but later that night he withdraws all his money, packs a bag, steals his father's laboratory key, and liberates all the **lab rats** from their **cages**. He then gets a bus to Chicago and never returns. After this, Rosemary's father is only able to work with graduate students whom all the other professors have rejected. Rosemary's mother never emotionally recovers from Lowell's absence. At first, Rosemary thinks that Lowell will surely come back in time for her birthday. Her parents hire a private investigator to find Lowell, and when this leads to nothing they hire a second investigator. Rosemary begins sleeping in Lowell's bed and one day finds a note from him that says: "Fern is not on a fucking farm." She doesn't tell anyone about the note.

Lowell's sudden departure from the family contains elements of a typical teenage rebellion against one's parents, but is clearly also motivated by his ideological concerns and (as Ms. Delancy points out) his strong sense of justice. There is thus an extent to which Rosemary's parents must blame themselves for Lowell's absence. If they had not raised him alongside a chimpanzee and encouraged him to treat Fern like a sister, he may have not developed such powerful beliefs about animal rights. On the other hand, would this have really been better? Is it not desirable, the novel asks, for all people to have the same sense of justice as Lowell?

At 8 or 9, Rosemary used to dream about herself and Fern living on the farm together, a fantasy inspired by *Peter Pan* and the *Swiss Family Robinson*. She reasons that she would live a happy life as an orphan. With Lowell gone, Rosemary's social status has dropped again. On the first day of seventh grade, someone tapes a picture of a chimp to the back of Rosemary's backpack, and she doesn't realize it until a teacher removes it. At home that night, Rosemary cries, wishing Lowell would come back. She doesn't tell her mother, who is in too fragile a state to handle it, or her father, who she believes would be no help.

Rosemary's belief that she would live happily without her parents likely emerges from a childish naïveté. Although she resents her parents' secrecy and dishonesty, she does not truly know what life would be like without them. At the same time, her fantasy speaks to the unparalleled relationship she has with Fern, which is not even comparable to her connection with Lowell. As Rosemary pointed out earlier, she and Fern were raised as twins and thus Fern's loss is uniquely devastating.

Luckily, there are kids in school who are considered even weirder than Rosemary, and she is no longer bullied after that first day. At night she hears her parents worrying about how silent she is these days. Occasionally they receive postcards from Lowell from different locations around the country. Eventually, they stop trying to find him. Then, one day, two men from the FBI arrive at the Cookes' house and ask to speak to Lowell. They believe that Lowell is a suspect in a fire that caused millions of dollars' worth of damage to a veterinary laboratory at UC Davis. Rosemary concludes the chapter by noting that not all of the **rats** Lowell set free from their father's lab were captured, and that for years after there were sightings of lab rats all over Bloomington.

Even in his absence, Lowell continues to indirectly rebel against his father and the entire institution of scientific research on animals. Again, the absence of a family member thus becomes a kind of presence. While the family do not actually see Lowell, there are reminders of his existence everywhere; not only in the dramatic example of the FBI showing up but also in the postcards he sends and the lab rats that continue to be spotted around the city. While Lowell may have left his family behind, the connection between them cannot easily be broken.

PART 3, CHAPTER 4

One day when Rosemary is 15, she is riding her bike when Kitch Chalmers flags her down to say hello. They catch up, and Kitch tells Rosemary that she regrets her wild youth but that she has returned to a better path now. She asks if Rosemary has heard from Lowell, and expresses sadness at the fate of the Cooke family. She then explains that the last time she'd seen Lowell, she was walking him to basketball practice when they ran into one of the graduate students who used to study Rosemary and Fern.

Kitch was never particularly close to the Cooke family, yet is now revealed to hold the key piece of information regarding Lowell's disappearance. This hints at the fact that sometimes outsiders are able to better view a family dynamic than those within the family itself. At the same time, Kitch's life has moved in a distinctly oppositional direction to Lowell's. Whereas she has embraced a more dutiful path, he has pursued rebellion.

The student told Lowell that when Fern left the Cookes, he took her to a psych lab in South Dakota where she was placed with over 20 other chimps, and which was run by a professor with a bad reputation. The professor did not allow Fern to be introduced into the new chimp community slowly, even though he was aware that she had never lived with other chimps before. The professor was strict and callous, and never called Fern by her name. Hearing this, Lowell "lost it" and refused to go to basketball practice, yelling: "That's my sister in that **cage**." Kitch notes that the graduate student had said Fern was being treated "like some kind of animal."

Lowell is deeply affected not only by his sense of justice and belief in animal rights, but also by his overwhelming love for Fern in particular. Indeed, this love stops him moving on from her absence and pursuing the "normal" activities of teenage life, such as playing on the basketball team and dating Kitch. Breaking down the binary between humans and animals can have devastating consequences in a world invested in upholding that binary and in treating animals in an inferior way.

Rosemary is horrified by Kitch's story, but reacts by telling herself that Fern's fate probably wasn't as bad as Kitch had made it seem. She also reassures herself that Lowell had probably gone to rescue Fern anyway, before he moved on to set fire to the lab at UC Davis. At dinner, she says nothing.

Now that he knows the truth about animal abuse and Fern's fate, Lowell cannot bring himself to look away, and upends his life in order to rescue other lab animals. Rosemary, however, has a greater capacity for denial and repression than her brother.

PART 3, CHAPTER 5

Rosemary tries to never think about Fern again. She leaves home for college, where she subconsciously avoids all courses that have anything to do with primates—a task which is more difficult than it might seem. She also decides never to talk about her family. Her first roommate is a girl named Larkin Rhodes who is so obsessed with *The X-Files* that she insists everyone call her Scully. After meeting Rosemary, Scully immediately begins to talk about her family, explaining that she is the oldest of three sisters and that her "whole family is nuts."

In college, Rosemary's tendency toward repression and denial takes on an even more severe intensity, as evidenced by the fact that she tries to not even think about Fern and avoids any mention of primates in her academic work. Scully's comment about her family being "nuts" is amusing; although it is possible that Scully's family truly is strange, at this stage it seems hard to beat the Cookes in terms of abnormality.

Other freshmen congregate in Rosemary and Scully's room to share stories about their own crazy families. Some complain that their parents are overly strict, others that theirs are stingy. One girl tells the story of how her older sister claimed that their father was molesting her, only to retract it and say that she'd been making the whole thing up. The girl concludes the story by making the hand sign for *whatever*. After everyone has told their stories, one girl asks Rosemary if her parents are weird too. Rosemary replies that they aren't, but quickly regrets this, realizing she has missed out on a bonding opportunity. Rosemary remains briefly hopeful that she hasn't ruined her chance at friendship, but realizes she has when the group—including Scully—go skiing and don't invite her.

This passage illustrates the perverse and ironic way that people deal with abnormality, and particularly how this changes as young people grow older. In grade school, Rosemary is mercilessly ostracized because of the strangeness of her family. Yet in college, her fellow freshmen bond over their strange families; to deny that one's family is strange is even something of a faux pas. This complex evolution of social dynamics is something Rosemary could not have hoped to learn without having friends—although of course it ironically now prevents her from making any.

Rosemary notes that the average chimp friendship lasts seven years, and that she and Scully only live together for 9 months. During that time they never have a serious argument, but after it is over they go their separate ways and never speak again. In her second year, Rosemary lives with a "nice, quiet guy" called Todd Donnelly who is half-Irish and half-Japanese. One night, Todd and Rosemary watch a film called *The Man in the Iron Mask*, which is about a pair of twins, one of whom becomes King of France and the other of whom is locked in prison and forced to wear a mask to conceal his identity. Rosemary has a panic attack, and then begins to cry. She doesn't tell the truth about why the film affects her, instead going to her room and forcing herself to go to sleep.

Rosemary may be able to avoid all mention of primates, but she cannot escape more subtle reminders of Fern's existence. The film affects Rosemary because she feels guilty about the fact that she got to stay with her family while her "twin" Fern was given away; she senses that this decision was arbitrary and unjust. Rosemary is right in the sense that her parents decided to love Fern like a daughter and then gave her up. At the same time, it is clearly absurd for Rosemary to blame herself for her and Fern's differing fates. Fern is not her parents' biological offspring; moreover, Rosemary was only a child at the time and had no say in the matter.

PART 3, CHAPTER 6

Rosemary returns to the scene at the cafeteria where she first met Harlow. Rosemary admires Harlow's "performance," but doesn't believe it is authentic. She jumps forward to the moment at which she finds Harlow in her apartment. It is at this point that she realizes she is drawn to Harlow because Harlow's behavior reminds her of her own "essential monkey-girlness." This realization makes her cautious that spending time around Harlow will lead her to re-adopt the chimp characteristics that she worked so hard to give up. At the same time, she feels "comfortable with her in a way that I never felt comfortable with anyone."

Rosemary's shame over her "monkey-girlness" is rather tragic, as it is a form of self-hatred directed at an aspect of herself over which she had no control. At the same time, it cannot be denied that Harlow's behavior is destructive, dangerous, and alienating—not to mention self-centered. While the book critiques the hierarchization of humans as better than animals, it is also true that human qualities of consideration, selflessness, and reason should not be discarded.

Rosemary notes that there are three major signs of change in her life at this point: 1) the appearance and disappearance of her mother's journals, 2) the communication from Lowell, and 3) the arrival of Harlow. She is most concerned about Lowell's return into her life. It is less than two weeks until the Christmas vacation, and she worries that Lowell will show up after she's returned home to Indiana. When Rosemary first arrived at Davis, she went to the university archives to research the arson attack on the veterinary laboratory of which Lowell had been accused. She learns that the lab was spray-painted with Animal Liberation Front graffiti, and that the incident was classified as a case of domestic terrorism. She looks up a string of arson attacks that followed the UC Davis lab, and learns that no arrests were made.

Rosemary has not generally shown herself to be a particularly superstitious person, but the possible return of Lowell has led her to begin searching her life for "signs." Her and Lowell's lives appear to be coincidentally or cosmically connected, when in fact this connection is rather deliberate; Rosemary moved to Davis because the FBI indicated that Lowell might be living there, and when she arrives she deliberately seeks evidence of his movements. The clues Rosemary finds give some level of insight into Lowell's life, but overall it remains a mystery—there are still too many gaps in the narrative.

Rosemary learns more about the Animal Liberation Front, trying to figure out if Lowell would be sympathetic to their ideology and tactics. She discovers the case of a baby monkey whose eyes were sewn shut at birth, and laments the fact that such atrocities are committed in the name of science. When the FBI visited Rosemary's family, they mentioned that most ALF activists are "young, white, male, and from the middle class."

The more Rosemary learns about the Animal Liberation Front, the more likely it seems that Lowell is a member. Note that Rosemary's reaction to the horrific stories of animal abuse differs from (what we presume was) that of her brother. Although she is upset, she is not compelled to join a radical activist organization as a result.

Rosemary is about to call the airline to demand that they find her suitcase when Harlow suggests that they first pick the lock of the suitcase Rosemary was wrongfully given. They enlist Ezra to help them unlock it, and at first they only find clothes inside. However, to their shock they then discover a ventriloquist's dummy. It is wearing a red mob-cap, and thus Rosemary calls it "**Madame Defarge**." Ezra and Harlow begin playing with it, but Rosemary finds the dummy disturbing and says they shouldn't play with it. Eventually, Harlow promises to put Madame Defarge away, and Rosemary agrees to go bar-hopping with her that evening. She admits: "I wanted Harlow to like me."

Once again, Harlow's behavior (and influence on Rosemary) teeters dangerously between fun and destructiveness. On one level, Harlow acts much like a light-hearted, carefree child; she is curious about what is inside the suitcase, and when she discovers Madame Defarge she wants to play with it. However, there is also a sinister element to this impulse. Harlow again shows that she has no respect for other people's privacy or personal property. It is thus arguably understandable that Rosemary is wary of her.

PART 3, CHAPTER 7

The lecture Rosemary attends that day stays in her memory forever. The course is named Religion and Violence, and it is taught by a popular professor called Dr. Sosa, who begins the lecture by discussing violent women. Suddenly, Dr. Sosa switches to talking about chimpanzees, who, like humans, participate in intra-group violence and police the sexual activity of females. Dr. Sosa points out that "the only difference" is that chimps do not do so for religious reasons. As Dr. Sosa continues to talk about rape among chimps, Rosemary begins to have another panic attack.

Rosemary's repression of all memories of Fern has caused such a profound psychological imbalance within her that she now has a panic attack any time something makes her think of Fern suffering (or confuses her conception of the animal/human divide—here, with the idea that chimps can be just as brutal and cruel as humans). The idea that repressing memories will lead to neurosis is one of the key tenets of psychoanalysis, and thus Rosemary's father's disdain for psychoanalysis can be partially blamed for his daughter's increasingly unstable mental state.

Rosemary explains that just because she hasn't had any friends up until this point in her life doesn't mean she hasn't had sex. However, she remains unsure about what constitutes a "normal" sex life. The first time she had sex was in the bathroom at a frat party. Rosemary admits that she's had a lot of "bad sex," but that she's also lucky to have never been forced into sex she didn't want. Back in the lecture hall, a discussion breaks out among the students about whether having more sex would lead to a peaceful society, or whether peace requires men leaving women alone and there being an increase in "female solidarity." By the time the lecture ends, Rosemary is still "profoundly, heart-racingly upset."

Rosemary's mind operates through cycles of tangents. It is rare for her to stick to the central topic being addressed in a given scene; instead, she bounces between related topics, weaving seemingly disparate ideas together. The lecture on violent women and discussion of chimpanzee violence thus forms the basis of Rosemary's consideration of what normalcy really means. This in turn highlights the complex connection between violence, social norms, and the human/animal divide.

PART 4, CHAPTER 1

Rosemary searches the Internet for information about what happened to other chimpanzees raised in human families. Most die of diseases such as meningitis or diarrhea, some at a very young age. Those who were returned to live among other chimps did not fare well among their own kind. Rosemary reflects that people who have lived among monkeys tend to write books about their experiences, and there is thus an abundance of literature on the topic.

Rosemary's comment about the abundance of narratives by people who have lived with chimpanzees resurrects the metafictional element of the novel. After all, Rosemary herself is constructing a narrative based on her experience of living with Fern and its consequences. Indeed, writing this story down seems to be a form of compensation for Rosemary's lack of verbal discussion on this topic.

PART 4, CHAPTER 2

After Dr. Sosa's lecture ends, Rosemary meets Harlow at a hamburger restaurant, where she plans to get drunk. She is considering telling Harlow about the lecture, and thus is annoyed to see Reg there too. To Rosemary's dismay, Harlow has also brought **Madame Defarge**. Harlow is filled with excitement about an upcoming gender-reversed production of *Macbeth* for which she will be making the sets and costumes. Rosemary steadily becomes drunk and sweaty. She admits that she also takes "a couple of pills" from Harlow. Eventually, Rosemary begins to tell Reg about "the mirror test," the practice of using mirrors in order to evaluate the self-awareness of monkeys. Reg seems uninterested and comments that Rosemary "sure talk[s] a lot."

This passage confirms Rosemary's fear that hanging out with Harlow will again bring out the "monkey girl" within her. Not only does Rosemary behave recklessly and even discuss monkeys explicitly, but she returns to her childhood habit of talking incessantly. Reg's comment that Rosemary talks a lot suggests that personality is a lot more flexible and less consistent than is often assumed. For the past 12 years, Rosemary has defined herself as an exceptionally quiet person; however, one night of recklessness completely reverses this impression.

PART 4, CHAPTER 3

Later that night, Rosemary and Harlow bike to Jack in the Box to get a rice bowl, with Rosemary balancing on the bike's handlebars. While ordering, they change their minds so many times that the waitress eventually tells them to "go to hell." They go to another bar, where Rosemary makes out with a guy who is possibly in high school. Later, Rosemary sits on a bench in the train station sobbing, as she has finally thought about what it must have been like when Fern was taken away. She imagines Fern being drugged and waking up alone, then being placed in a **cage** with older chimps and being forced to accept a low status as a 5-year-old female. Rosemary despairs at the lack of "female solidarity" that allowed Fern to be taken away.

Rosemary's mind may be jumping around erratically, but her thoughts ultimately turn to the fundamental source of her unhappiness. When sober, Rosemary does not allow herself to think about Fern or imagine what has happened to her after she was taken away from the family. Yet in her state of extreme inebriation, Rosemary is powerless to stop herself thinking such things. In this sense, Rosemary's sudden friendship with Harlow—and all its ensuing chaos—serves as the therapy she never received (albeit a highly reckless and destructive form of therapy!).

The next thing Rosemary remembers is being at a bar with Harlow and two guys. Rosemary is strongly aware that she is the "consolation prize." She is aware that she is behaving strangely, but refuses to act any differently. Reg arrives, and Rosemary goes to the bathroom to throw up. She realizes that she is in the men's bathroom and that Reg is in there too, and begins to flirt with him. He tells her she should go home. Harlow and Rosemary walk outside together, and Rosemary feels "high" on their friendship. Then Rosemary finds herself back at the bar, playing pool. Suddenly, she falls into the arms of Lowell. On recognizing her brother Rosemary begins to cry, but is then immediately led outside by Officer Haddick, who tells her that she can sleep off her drunkenness and reflect on her choices while in jail. Meanwhile, Lowell has vanished.

Due to the drugs and alcohol, Rosemary's cognition is distorted, and her disjointed sense of temporality makes it difficult to piece together exactly what is happening and in what order. At the same time, it is also clear that—even from an objective perspective—this is a highly eventful night in Rosemary's life, where a number of previously distinct threads in the narrative are woven together in a chaotic climax. Rosemary allows herself to think about Fern, flirts with Reg, is reunited with Lowell, and is arrested again; in one night, her years of self-control immediately unravel.

PART 4, CHAPTER 4

Rosemary would have liked to sleep through her second confinement to a jail **cell**, but the pills keep her awake. She thinks of Fern, who was also drugged and put into a cage when she was taken from the Cookes' house. Rosemary notices that she has been unconsciously signing in the language she used to communicate with Fern. Her mind wanders erratically, but keeps returning to the subject of chimps. Harlow tells her to shut up and that she's been talking all night. Rosemary tries to be quiet and sleep, but cannot stop the pace of her own thinking. She realizes that she's lost her bicycle, and possibly also **Madame Defarge**.

Rosemary's transition back from being a quiet person to a highly talkative one is comically dramatic. Not only does she talk all night, she is simultaneously speaking (at least) two different languages—spoken English and the sign language she used to communicate with Fern. It is as if her years of enforced silence have led to a buildup of thoughts and feelings that are now exploding in the jail cell. Once again, repression is shown to have drastic psychological consequences.

Reg collects both Rosemary and Harlow from jail and takes Rosemary home. At first, Rosemary makes a desperate series of calls in order to find **Madame Defarge**, but is eventually overtaken by exhaustion and falls asleep. By the time she wakes up, it is dark. She has always suspected that Lowell ventures out at night. There was one occasion when Lowell woke Rosemary in the middle of the night and took her outside with him, telling her to pretend to be an Indian and be very quiet. They approached a pond with turtles in it, and Rosemary threw some crackers in for them. Nearby, there was a walkway leading to a house framed by two large statues of dogs. Rosemary later learned that the statues resembled the wealthy owners' actual dogs and marked the dogs' graves.

Rosemary's memory of her trip outside with Lowell suggests that at night, the siblings felt uniquely free to explore their affinity with animals and their own animalistic behavior. Furthermore, while Rosemary has spent her life trying to do deny and repress the animal side of her personality, Lowell has indulged his; even if it is under the cover of darkness. There is a sense of similarity here between Lowell and the folkloric figure of the Werewolf, a man who is transformed into a wolf under the light of the full moon. Indeed, stories about werewolves set an important precedent for exploring the animal/human divide.

Lowell lay down and Rosemary did the same, placing her head on his stomach. The memory brings her happiness. She thinks about the four things that are currently missing: 1) her bicycle, 2) **Madame Defarge**, 3) the journals, 4) Lowell, and 5) Fern. Rosemary suspects that Lowell knows where Fern is and hopes that this knowledge will not be upsetting, even as she knows this is unlikely.

Throughout her life, Rosemary remains fixated on loss. In this passage, she draws an explicit connection between lost objects and her lost siblings. Again, Rosemary has a tendency not to distinguish between the human and nonhuman. While Lowell is a human and the bicycle is clearly not, both Madame Defarge and Fern have a more ambiguous status.

PART 4, CHAPTER 5

Rosemary calls Harlow and the bar again in order to find **Madame Defarge**, but again is unsuccessful. She wanders around town for two hours "searching for various things I couldn't find." Back at the apartment, Todd and Kimmy say that while she was gone, Ezra came to see Harlow and ended up lecturing them about their damaged smoke alarm. Then another (unknown) man came and returned **Madame Defarge**. After this, Harlow herself arrived. Finally, a third man came; Rosemary recognizes from the description that it is Lowell, but he called himself Travers. Harlow and "Travers" left to have dinner together, and told Todd and Kimmy to tell Rosemary to join them.

This passage drives home the point that when people intentionally look for things that are missing, it is often impossible to find them. Rosemary's experience fulfils the cliché that when seeking something out, we often end up searching in all the wrong places. The fact that everything showed up while Rosemary was out highlights her continued lack of control over the events in her life. This is further emphasized by Lowell's sudden connection to Harlow and their trip out to dinner together.

Rosemary gets changed and inspects **Madame Defarge**, suddenly feeling sad at the prospect of having to return her to her owner. She ponders "Theory of Mind," a concept describing the capacity for awareness of other people's perspectives, and recalls a 1978 psychology paper entitled: "Does the Chimpanzee Have a Theory of Mind?" This question continues to be debated among psychologists, including Rosemary's father (who believes the answer is no). Rosemary feels nervous as she walks up to the restaurant to meet Harlow and Lowell. She wishes she could be alone with Lowell, and hopes that Harlow has "a sharp enough theory of mind" to realize this.

Despite all the chaos and destruction that have defined Rosemary's life of late, she continues to see the world in a profoundly scientific, rational perspective. It is almost as if Rosemary is a scientific researcher observing human behavior rather than a member of the human species herself. Indeed, this makes sense both in light of Rosemary's feelings of affinity with animals, and also given that she spent her early life being observed and tested by graduate students studying human and animal behavior.

PART 4, CHAPTER 6

Rosemary walks into the restaurant and sees that Lowell and Harlow are sharing fondue. She can see Harlow flirting with Lowell, and feels furious. Seeing Rosemary, Lowell beckons her over, and they hug. Lowell has already ordered for her, selecting almost the exact dish she would have chosen for herself. Rosemary and Harlow begin talking to Lowell in a frenetic manner; Harlow explains that Rosemary never told her she had a brother, and tells Lowell about their multiple arrests together. While Harlow is ostensibly trying to make Rosemary sound fun and loyal, she is also clearly flirting with Lowell. After going home, Rosemary begins to wish that she wasn't friends with Harlow at all.

This passage further illustrates the idea that Harlow is filling the gap left by Fern in Rosemary's life. Like Fern, Harlow leads Rosemary into dangerous, deviant behavior, and as with Fern, Rosemary feels both close to and intensely jealous of Harlow. The fact that the two girls compete over Lowell's attention recalls Rosemary's earlier thoughts about the problem of female solidarity. Rather than honoring their friendship with one another, both Rosemary and Harlow compete for the attention and approval of a man.

"Just like the old days," Lowell comes to pick Rosemary up in the middle of the night. At first he doesn't say anything, but once they are outside her apartment he hugs her and asks if she wants some pie. Lowell asks about their parents, and as Rosemary updates him she feels gradually less angry. They walk into a diner where they are the only customers, and order two pieces of banana cream pie. Rosemary notices that Lowell is looking more like their father, and also that he looks "exhausted."

In this passage, Lowell finally begins to fulfill the role of an older brother in a more conventional manner. The fact that he chooses to wake up Rosemary in the middle of the night could simply be in service of nostalgia; at the same time, it is perhaps also evidence of Lowell's lifestyle on the run from the law. Where as a child he had to hide his "deviant" animal impulses by sneaking out at night, as an adult he is forced to carry on doing the same thing.

PART 4, CHAPTER 7

Rosemary and Lowell stay at the diner until the morning, when they order breakfast and coffee. Lowell explains that he is now vegetarian and mostly vegan. He talks to Rosemary about the abuse of animals in the scientific and agricultural industries. He says he regrets not going to college but that he reads a lot. He expresses disapproval of their father's work and of psychological studies of nonhuman animals in general. Both siblings agree that the study with Fern began from a mistaken initial premise; instead of asking why humans could not understand Fern, their father and the other researchers only ever sought to understand why Fern couldn't understand *them*.

Rosemary has always had a sense that there was something morally and intellectually dubious about the study conducted on their family's life with Fern. However, she has never fully articulated her thoughts on the matter until this point. Lowell is more critical of science than Rosemary, but the siblings share a fundamental, instinctive conviction that animal abuse should not be justified in the name of scientific research. The fact that this conviction was born out of their own (involuntary) participation as subjects in a scientific study is somewhat ironic.

Nervously, Rosemary manages to ask Lowell how Fern is doing. She requests that he starts from the moment he left and explain everything from that point onward. Lowell says that he traveled straight to the laboratory where Fern was taken and introduced himself to the secretary as a prospective student interested in chimpanzee studies. He managed to find the address of the building where Fern and the other chimps were housed, and waited overnight for a car to arrive, during which time he slipped through the opened gate unseen. He warns Rosemary that what he encountered next was "awful."

Rosemary's attempts to deny the reality of Fern's existence and falsely reassure herself that Fern is fine cannot last much longer. After almost an entire lifetime of denial, Rosemary finds the courage to face the truth. Lowell, of course, has confronted reality since childhood, and it is this engagement with the brutality of the truth that compels him to take such bold, decisive actions, such as traveling to South Dakota and breaking into the primate center as soon as he learned about Fern's plight.

Lowell explains that he found Fern in a **cage** with four adult chimps. Fern sensed his presence before she even saw him, and immediately started screaming. She grabbed Lowell's arm and pulled him toward her so hard that she whacked him against the cage bars. Lowell apologized to her, but Fern was still screaming. An adult male came over and began pulling at Lowell's arm as well until Fern bit him on the shoulder. Fern signed Lowell's name to him and then the words for "good Fern"––promising that she would be good if he took her home. The older male then attacked Fern, and at that point staff members ran in with a cattle prod, which immediately scared the chimps into backing away. The staff members told Lowell to leave before they called the police. Fern kept signing "good Fern," but was clearly confused and distressed. Lowell left and never saw her again.

Lowell's encounter with Fern is both heartbreaking and disturbing. The fact that Fern remembers him, immediately wants to go home, and promises to be good is highly emotive, highlighting Fern's rich internal life and true status as a lost member of the Cooke family. On the other hand, Fern's violent physical behavior serves as a jarring reminder that she is not a human but an animal, and that she has the power to seriously hurt her human family members. These two elements of Fern's personality are difficult to reconcile, even if we acknowledge that humans also struggle with the binary between emotional sensitivity and violent destructiveness.

PART 5, CHAPTER 1

Rosemary now realizes that there is something profoundly "NotSame" about her and Fern, which is the fact that Fern is property that can be bought and sold. Lowell says that Rosemary's father originally tried to keep working with Fern after the family project ended, but it was too expensive and the university refused. There was nothing he could have done to stop it. Lowell explains that he has someone keeping an eye on Fern in South Dakota, and that at least the cruel professor overseeing the lab retired five years ago. At one point, Lowell paid someone to take Fern to a sanctuary in Florida, but the man ended up taking another chimp in Fern's place. This chimp was then beaten to death.

This passage highlights the limits of Lowell and Rosemary's understanding of Fern, even if the siblings struggle to understand and acknowledge those limits themselves. Rosemary's realization about Fern's status as a piece of property comes surprisingly late, and also seems to miss the larger point that Fern is also capable of inflicting violent damage on the people around her. Lowell, meanwhile, clearly misjudged the viability of taking Fern to a sanctuary, as shown by the fact that the chimp who was taken was immediately killed.

Lowell explains that because Fern grew up with them, she is not interested in sex with other chimps and has thus been artificially inseminated. She has had three children, two of whom were sold to another lab. Fern's youngest child, Hazel, is now two years old, and Fern is teaching her to sign. Lowell says that Hazel is extremely smart and is already making up signs of her own. Lowell returns to the moment after he saw Fern at the lab in South Dakota, admitting that he'd been naïve to assume he would be able to rescue her by himself. He then heard about a group of animal activists going up to Riverside and decided to join them.

Here it becomes clear that both Rosemary and Lowell were naïve about Fern's future and their relationship to her. Lowell fantasized about being able to seize her from the lab with ease; meanwhile, Rosemary's dream of living in a sanctuary with Fern belied the fact that Fern, as an ordinary mammal, would grow up to have children of her own. The story of Fern's children being sold confirms Rosemary's horrified realization that Fern is considered little more than a commodity.

Lowell tells Rosemary that he hadn't planned to leave the family forever; he simply wanted to rescue Fern before doing anything else. However, getting in trouble with the FBI meant that he couldn't go back to see Fern, or the rest of his family, or to college. Rosemary and Lowell leave the diner and walk to the train station. Rosemary is dismayed that her brother is leaving so soon, but Lowell says it is "too risky" for him to stay. He tells her that looking out for Fern is *her* job now. While Lowell buys his train ticket, Rosemary sobs. They hug, and Rosemary smells Harlow's perfume on him.

The fact that Lowell wanted to come home but was prevented from doing so by the FBI's criminalization of his animal rights activism is certainly tragic. At the same time, Lowell's disconnection from his family is somewhat selfish. Although he has sacrificed having a normal life for Fern, he has completely neglected his relationship with his other family members. The fact that he seems to have slept with Harlow pushes his betrayal of Rosemary even further.

Rosemary says she knows Lowell blames her for Fern's disappearance. At first he disagrees, but then says that she forced their parents to "choose" and says that "you were always such a jealous little kid." Yet he still urges her not to blame herself, as she was only five at the time. Lowell says he's glad that Rosemary has a friend in Harlow. As the train leaves, Rosemary hears the voice of Mary saying: "You love Fern." She thinks about all the moments in her life when she'd wished Fern had also been there; at the same time, she knows that Lowell is right, that she was jealous of Fern and still is.

Both Rosemary and Lowell have profoundly mixed feelings about Fern and each other. Lowell seems to know that it's wrong to blame Rosemary for something that happened when she was only five years old, and yet it's clear that he does still blame her. Rosemary, meanwhile, feels a uniquely powerful attachment to Fern and yet also (rather understandably) resents her for making the Cooke family's life so abnormal and difficult.

PART 5, CHAPTER 2

Rosemary walks home slowly, reluctant to see Harlow. She reflects that although she's presented Lowell as fairly "lucid," in reality he seemed totally insane. He'd told Harlow he was a pharmaceutical rep and behaved normally around her, but later Rosemary noticed that his eyes were moving in a strange way. Rosemary then begins to think about Fern. The prospect of freeing both her and Hazel seems impossible. Rosemary wonders if Fern would even want to be freed at this stage. Outside her apartment building, Rosemary finds Reg sitting in his car reading *Intro to Biology*. Rosemary asks him what he is doing there, and he replies: "Losing my self-respect." Reg tells her that he and Harlow might be breaking up. Rosemary tells him to go home, and then she goes inside and gets into bed. She falls asleep holding **Madame Defarge**.

In this passage Rosemary grapples with the aftermath of Lowell's brief entrance into her world. Throughout her life, Rosemary has looked up to and trusted Lowell, but here she reveals that there is now an extreme vulnerability and instability to him. Is it still right for her to trust him and obey his wishes when he seems to have a fairly shaky grasp on reality? Lowell's fragility immediately finds a parallel with Reg's lovesick state. Whereas in the past Rosemary felt that everyone around her was "normal" and well-adjusted, it now seems as if they are all falling apart.

PART 5, CHAPTER 3

Rosemary admits that she left out many of the things that Lowell said at the diner. He told her about experiments involving exposing beagles to radiation, hitting fully-conscious baboons across the head, and smearing chemicals into the eyes of rabbits. He told her about the heinous conditions inside slaughterhouses and battery **cages**. He also said that if you make people aware of this "endless, fathomless misery," they end up hating you, the messenger, rather than the culprits.

Rosemary has presented Lowell as unstable and insane, but this is also understandable given the abuse he describes having witnessed. In reality, most people react to issues like animal abuse in the same way as Rosemary—by pretending it doesn't exist. Yet this passage indicates that such a response is not only a copout, but even rather morally disturbing.

Rosemary writes about these issues in her Religion and Violence final a few days later. She finds the experience cathartic, but Dr. Sosa calls her into his office because she didn't actually answer the exam question. Rosemary suggests that she answered the question "tangentially," but Dr. Sosa objects that she didn't mention religion. When Rosemary tries to argue that science can be a kind of religion, Dr. Sosa disagrees and offers to give her an incomplete instead of failing her. When Rosemary's grades arrive, her father is furious, and her mother claims to be "speechless" with shock.

The most important part of this passage is Rosemary's belief that science itself can be a kind of religion. Dr. Sosa is immediately dismissive of this idea, but given what has taken place in the book so far, this dismissal seems misguided. Several characters—especially Rosemary's father—revere science as not just a way of understanding the world, but a framework for moral decision-making. The book itself thus strongly implies that science can indeed be a form of religion.

PART 5, CHAPTER 4

An apartment becomes available in Rosemary's building and Ezra allows Harlow to move in temporarily while he waits to find a new long-term tenant. Lowell had told Harlow that he wouldn't be back, but Harlow clearly didn't believe him and now she cannot stop talking about him, asking Rosemary infinite questions about his life. Rosemary answers Harlow's questions but insists that Lowell is a wanted man and isn't coming back. Unfortunately, this only makes Harlow's longing for him more intense.

Harlow's fixation with Lowell at first seems rather silly and pathetic. Just as five-year-old Rosemary fell in love with the neighborhood bad boy Russell Tupman, now Harlow meets Lowell for one day and immediately falls for his mysterious persona. At the same time, Harlow's longing for Lowell mirrors Rosemary's desperation for her brother to come back after he originally left.

Through her research, Rosemary has learned that anyone can join the Animal Liberation Front. The organization encourages its members to destroy property and to publicize the abuse of animals taking place behind closed doors. It focuses on urgent action, not waiting for the tide of public opinion to gradually change. Harlow is morose; she cries constantly and stops eating. Rosemary is irritated by this, as Harlow has only known Lowell momentarily, and so Rosemary largely ignores her. Instead, she throws herself into her finals and continues to devote time to chasing the lost suitcase. Just as Rosemary is packing to return home for Christmas, a police officer arrives at her door.

Perhaps because she has had to deal with the sudden loss and prolonged absence of family members so many times, Rosemary is rather stoic in the face of Lowell's disappearance. She is accustomed to finding ways of feeling Lowell's presence through his absence, such as in her constant thinking about the Animal Liberation Front. Harlow, meanwhile, cannot cope with Lowell's absence despite the fact that she only knew him for one day. In this sense, Rosemary is shown to be far more well-adjusted and mature than Harlow.

PART 5, CHAPTER 5

Rosemary is taken to an interrogation room and left there alone for a long time. She watches a pill bug crawl across the floor. Eventually, the officer returns and asks Rosemary to confirm that she is Lowell Cooke's sister. She does, but then insists on speaking to a lawyer. The officer angrily points out that Rosemary is not under arrest, gets up, and leaves. Rosemary is allowed to go to the bathroom and is given a sandwich. She shivers and requests her jacket, and feels that she is becoming lost in a "fantasyland" of memories from the past. She reminds the reader about the period immediately after Fern's disappearance, when she was taken to live with her grandparents. She will now relay what she believes happened just before.

This scene emphasizes the notion that Rosemary has become more capable and mature over the course of the novel. Whereas before she did not cope well with her interactions with police—recall that she phoned her father crying the first time she was arrested—in this passage she remains lucid and composed, refusing to answer the officer's questions and requesting a lawyer. At the same time, Rosemary's new maturity has not helped her to escape the traumatic memories of her past and the constant encroachment of her family into her life in the present.

PART 5, CHAPTER 6

Rosemary and Fern are playing by the creek. Fern is now potty-trained and no longer wears a diaper. Rosemary wanders off and finds a cat and her kittens, and takes one to give to Fern. The mother cat begins hissing and eventually scratches Fern. In response, Fern swings the kitten against a tree trunk. Rosemary runs screaming back to the house and into Lowell, who insists that she take him back to Fern. Fern clings to Lowell and ignores his questions about where she's put the dead kitten. Fern signs: "Chase me!" and Lowell begins to believe that Rosemary is making the story up to get Fern into trouble. He tells Rosemary not to tell anyone else or he will call her "a big fat liar."

The story about Fern killing the kitten is certainly plausible. While Fern is generally gentle and kind, she is also an animal whose behavior cannot be predicted along the expectations of human compassion. Lowell's refusal to believe it is possible that Fern killed the kitten indicates that, as a result of having grown up as Fern's brother, he has a tendency to anthropomorphize Fern and deny her true nature.

Rosemary promises, but a few days later, after Fern hurts her while they are playing, she runs to her mother and complains. She protests that she is frightened of Fern, which at first shocks her mother. Then Rosemary tells the story about the kitten. Rosemary believes this is the true reason why Fern was sent away.

Like most children who experience a major trauma, Rosemary finds a way to blame herself for Fern's disappearance. This self-blame may seem irrational from the outside, but it has clearly colored Rosemary's entire life from that point onward.

PART 5, CHAPTER 7

Back in the interrogation room, Rosemary picks up the pill bug and places it next to her sandwich, thinking that Lowell would not want her to leave it behind. The interrogating officer doesn't come back; instead, a woman arrives to tell Rosemary she's free to go. Todd, Todd's mother, and Kimmy are waiting for Rosemary outside. They tell her that the night before, Ezra had been arrested for trying to break into the UC Davis Primate Center. He had been trying to free the monkeys inside, but they largely chose to stay in their **cages**. Ezra's "female accomplice" has not yet been captured.

This passage further emphasizes the contrast between Rosemary's first arrest at the beginning of the book and her third encounter with the law now. Whereas at the beginning of the book Rosemary was totally isolated and had to rely on her father calling from a whole other state, in this scene she has something of a community to support her, made up of Kimmy, Todd, and Todd's mother.

Rosemary is spared from jail because Kimmy and Todd vouch that she was at home the night of the incident, and because Todd's mother is a famous civil rights lawyer. Furthermore, Ezra told the police that his "accomplice" was Harlow. Todd's mother takes Todd, Kimmy, and Rosemary out to dinner and encourages Rosemary to order lobster to celebrate. However, Rosemary does not want to pick out a live lobster, which she believes would look like "a very large pill bug." Weeks later, Rosemary asks Todd if they are friends, and he replies with surprise, saying that they've been friends for years.

This part of the novel begins to resemble a stereotypical happy ending, with Rosemary having finally achieved her hope of making friends. At the same time, this resolution is not untroubled; Rosemary's affinity with animals still prevents her from engaging in society in the same way as other people (as shown by the fact that she refuses the lobster), and she still awkwardly misreads social situations, such as when she surprises Todd by asking if they are friends.

Back at home after dinner that night, Todd, Kimmy, and Rosemary drink beers while the rest of the apartment building rages with celebration over the end of the semester. Toddy and Kimmy are excited at the knowledge that Lowell, a dangerous criminal, has been at their apartment. They suggest that he recruited Harlow for his ALF cell, but Rosemary knows this isn't true. Later that night, Rosemary finds that **Madame Defarge** is gone.

As Rosemary herself points out, ever since Fern's disappearance her life has been filled with sudden and unexpected absences. This celebratory moment is haunted not only by the absence of Lowell and Harlow, but also the sudden disappearance of Madame Defarge.

PART 6, CHAPTER 1

After Fern left, the Cookes tended to travel during the Christmas vacation. However, after Lowell left, the family largely stopped celebrating altogether. When Rosemary arrives home in the Christmas vacation of 1996, she has already decided not to tell her parents about seeing Lowell until after Christmas is over. This year, they spend the 25th with the Cooke grandparents, and Rosemary's father drinks "like a fish." Rosemary is suffering from premenstrual pain and thus goes to lie down in the bedroom where she stayed after Fern left. She wonders if she made up the story about Fern and the kitten. A mix of conflicting feelings washes over her. Eventually, she feels certain that she didn't invent the story. She goes to sleep.

Rosemary continues to frame human behavior in animal terms, such as when she describes her father with the cliché of drinking "like a fish." Furthermore, notice that there is a parallel between Rosemary's memory of the kitten and the memory of her father running over the cat. Both memories are connected by the fact that they feature the murder of a feline, and by the fact that Rosemary is not sure if they are true or not. It is possible that she has made them both up, but also plausible that only one of them is true and the other is a projection.

A few days later, Rosemary tells her parents about Lowell's visit, although she leaves out any mention of Harlow, Ezra, the UC Davis Primate Center, or any other incriminating details. However, she does admit that she is worried about Lowell's mental state and newly horrified by animal abuse. Rosemary's parents cry, as does Rosemary herself. Rosemary is surprised to hear her parents say that they avoided mentioning Fern on her account, because she reacted so badly every time they did. There are many other memories that Rosemary's parents remember differently than she does, and they are stunned at her idea that the incident with the kitten was the reason why Fern was sent away.

This passage illustrates the potential danger of remembering family stories by oneself. Because Rosemary has spent so many years reflecting on her past in silence and not discussing it with anyone, all her assumptions and memories have been solidified to appear like the truth. In reality, human memory is highly unreliable; furthermore, Rosemary never had a proper understanding of much of what happened while Fern lived with her because she was only a child.

Rosemary's parents list other memories that she has no recollection of, such as Fern biting Peter's ear and biting a grad student's hand so badly that the student had to have surgery. Fern had also slammed another grad student against a wall. Rosemary's parents explain that although Fern was good-natured, she was simply too dangerous to keep as she got older. Rosemary is forced to admit that she didn't know Fern as well as she thought she did. She hadn't really known what Fern was capable of.

The end of this chapter confirms the idea that Rosemary has been living in a state of denial all her own—denial over the threat Fern posed to her family and the unsustainability of them living together in the long term. Rosemary may have grown up as Fern's sister—even her twin—but Fern is still ultimately unknowable to her.

PART 6, CHAPTER 2

Todd's mother helps Ezra get a plea deal of eight months in a minimum-security prison. Rosemary visits him there, and finds him dejected. He tells her that there has still been no sign of Harlow. Harlow had told Rosemary that she had three brothers and two sisters, all from different fathers, and that they all lived together with minimal adult supervision. However, in reality it turns out that Harlow is an only child and that her parents are still together.

This passage highlights how easily people can become deluded, and how dangerous delusion can be. As a result of Ezra's love for Harlow and his impulsive decision to break into the UC Primate Center, he is now in prison. Meanwhile, Rosemary is also a victim of Harlow's manipulation, as she believed her friend's lies about her family background.

Rosemary meets Harlow's parents for coffee, and they tell her that they are worried Harlow has been kidnapped. Rosemary assures them that she's certain Harlow is fine. She realizes that Harlow's parents have a totally different impression of their daughter than what Rosemary knows to be the truth. Back at the prison, Rosemary feels a strong impulse to comfort Ezra. She asks him where he thought the monkeys would go after he freed them, and he replies: "Wherever the hell they wanted."

Harlow's parents are clearly more delusional than anyone. Their desire to see their daughter as law-abiding and normal has totally blinded them to Harlow's true nature. Ezra's final comment further elaborates on the seductive yet dangerous nature of delusion. Ezra's naïve hope that the monkeys could go "wherever the hell they wanted" is certainly well meaning, but ignores the fact that humans have made most of the world inhospitable for wild animals.

PART 6, CHAPTER 3

Rosemary daydreams about going to work at Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania after she graduates and putting her sense of intimacy with chimpanzees to good use. However, she remembers Dr. Sosa's mention of the epic rate of rape among chimps and changes her mind. Kitch once told her that she would be a good teacher, and she begins to entertain this idea, even though it would mean more studying. That spring, Rosemary runs into Reg and they decide to go and see *Macbeth* together. Rosemary is disappointed to see that none of Harlow's ideas have been used in the production. After the show, Rosemary is shocked to realize that Reg had assumed they were on a date. They end up dating for five months, during which they fight a lot. Reg breaks up with her without explaining why.

This passage sees Rosemary steadily adapting to a more "normal" life for a person of her age. She dates Reg, and shifts her desire from working with chimpanzees in a Tanzanian national park to the far more ordinary profession of teaching. Her surprise that Reg considered their trip to see Macbeth as a date suggests that she is still adjusting to the norms of human social life. At the same time, she is no longer haunted by her unusual past in part because she has finally confronted it by discussing Fern with her parents.

In 1998, Rosemary's father dies after a series of heart attacks. Rosemary remembers there being an aquarium in the hospital waiting room. Rosemary reflects on what she would do differently if she had a chance to live her life over again. She wouldn't place the whole burden of blame for Fern on her father, and would eventually forgive him. He is only 58 when he dies, and the doctor explains that his health was in poor condition due to drinking, diabetes, and stress. As they drive away from the hospital, Rosemary's mother collapses and says: "I want Lowell." At this point, Rosemary is attending Stanford. A few days after Rosemary's father's obituary is published in *The New York Times*, Rosemary and her mother receive a postcard from Lowell, sent from Tampa, Florida.

The lives of Rosemary and her mother continue to be colored by loss—both the prolonged absence of Fern and the sudden death of Rosemary's father. However, this passage serves as a reminder that loss is an inescapable and indeed completely normal part of life. While it is unusual to have two siblings disappear, in reality all families must contend with the ultimate disappearance of its members. Although this does not help assuage the suffering of Rosemary and her mother, it at least no longer sets them apart as especially abnormal in comparison to the rest of the world.

PART 6, CHAPTER 4

Back in 1996, Rosemary's lost suitcase is eventually returned, only a few days after she leaves for the Christmas vacation. Rosemary gives back the wrong suitcase to its owner. She intends to write a note of apology for the fact that **Madame Defarge** is missing, but never sends it. She imagines telling the owner that Madame Defarge is now living life "as a political activist and dispenser of rough justice." Rosemary opens one of her mother's journals from the suitcase and finds a picture of herself as a baby, with a short poem underneath it. There is also a picture of Fern accompanied by a poem. Rosemary realizes that her mother's writings are not scientific journals at all, but rather her and Fern's "baby books."

This passage again draws into question the binary between scientific inquiry and ordinary social life. Rosemary's mother's journals are certainly of interest to scientific thought, but they are primarily records of the Cookes' family life. Rosemary and her family can never escape the fact that their life together was something of an extended scientific experiment, but that doesn't mean that they must view every aspect of their shared history through a scientific lens. Instead, Rosemary is able to appreciate the journals as a testament to her mother's love for her children.

PART 6, CHAPTER 5

Rosemary and her mother prepare the journals for publication. Rosemary's mother tells her that she was "the prettiest baby anyone ever saw." She also discusses how cute Fern was as a baby. Rosemary's first word was "bye-bye," which she signed at 11 months and spoke aloud at 13. Fern's first sign was "cup," at 10 months old. Fern was born in Africa, to a mother who was killed and sold as food. When Rosemary's parents were discussing adopting a chimpanzee, Rosemary's mother insisted it had to be a baby "with nowhere else to go." When Fern was purchased from a group of poachers, she was very ill with diarrhea and swarming with fleas.

This passage continues to explore the distinction between the "normal" aspects of Rosemary's childhood and the more unusual, scientifically significant elements. Rosemary's mother's record of the sisters' first words is a common practice among parents—but this record could also be studied from a scientific perspective in order to understand the development of Rosemary and Fern's cognition. (Note that the fact that Rosemary's first word was "bye-bye" foreshadows the role of loss and absence in her life.)

Fern arrived at the Cookes' house when Rosemary was one month old. For Fern's first two years of life, she would cling to Rosemary's mother so hard that she left bruises. Rosemary's mother fell "in love" with Fern, who was clearly deeply traumatized. Rosemary's parents originally assumed that Fern would live with them forever. One night, Rosemary and her mother are finishing a special dinner to celebrate the sale of the journals in the form of a book. Rosemary asks if her mother worried about the "impact" Fern's presence would have on Rosemary. Rosemary's mother replies that she certainly did, but it was clear that Rosemary was "a happy child" who "adored" Fern.

This passage introduces another side to the Cooke family's relationship with Fern: the fact that they helped Fern to survive the early trauma of her life. At other points in the book it appears as if the Cookes were simply using Fern as a means to their own end. However, this passage indicates that Rosemary's mother also served an important and irreplaceable role in Fern's life by filling the void left by Fern's own biological mother and enabling Fern to recover from her mother's loss.

Rosemary and her mother watch an old VHS tape made by one of the graduate students, which shows Rosemary and Fern in a room they have turned to carnage, lying side by side in identical poses. Rosemary predicts that they will eventually be able to embed videos into the book, but for now they rely on images to highlight the similarities between Rosemary and Fern and Fern's total immersion in the family dynamic.

It is clear that Rosemary and her mother want to convey what they perceive to be the reality of their life with Fern to the wider world. Just as Rosemary hid the fact that Fern is a chimpanzee for the first chapters of the book, so does she now feel the need to provide evidence of her family's love for Fern that will counteract the perceived impossibility of animal-human familial relations.

In 2012, Rosemary is living with her mother in Vermillion, a university town in South Dakota. Rosemary has taught kindergarten for seven years, and knows she is a talented teacher. She teaches her students "chimp etiquette" and chimp sign language. They go on field trips to the lab where Fern is held, and stand behind a wall of bulletproof glass separating them from the chimps. Rosemary's "niece" Hazel is still there too. Although Fern is not the oldest or a male, she seems to have the highest status among the group. Rosemary's mother volunteers at the lab every day, making sure Fern gets her favorite foods. When Fern saw Rosemary's mother for the first time, she refused to look at her, but eventually they rekindled their relationship.

Just as Kitch predicted, Rosemary makes an ideal teacher. This seems to be because of a natural affinity between human children and chimpanzees. Rosemary is able to use the behaviors and knowledge she gained as Fern's sister in order to be a better teacher and expose her students to the positive sides of her own early life with Fern. Although there is now a more solid boundary between Rosemary and Fern—symbolized by the bulletproof glass at the laboratory—their lives are in sync just as they were when they were both children.

Rosemary wonders what she would tell Fern about their father and Lowell, but Fern has never asked. The chimps who live in the center are no longer subject to scientific experiments. However, Rosemary clarifies that their lives are still "not enviable," and that they would be better off in the natural world. Rosemary dreams about a sanctuary where she and Fern could live together, but has read enough about chimp attacks to know that she will never touch Fern again. Still, she hopes to raise money for a sanctuary for Fern through the book sales and through donations.

This passage indicates that there is a kind of value to fantasies even when we know that they are unrealistic and will never actually be realized. Even though Rosemary is aware that she cannot actually live with Fern again, it still comforts her to retreat to her childhood dream of imagining herself and Fern living harmoniously together with no walls or cages to divide them.

The book is about to be published, and Rosemary is keenly aware that after that point, she will never be able to hide her past again. She will be making media appearances, but knows that the version of herself she will reveal to the world will inevitably be incomplete. The plan is for Rosemary to end up "widely admired" and Fern "stealthily influential."

The end of this chapter represents a complete reversal of the relationship Rosemary had to her past in earlier parts of the book. Whereas before she made every effort to hide her family's history from the world, she now feels compelled to share it publicly.

PART 6, CHAPTER 6

In 2011, the National Institute of Health suspends "all new grants for biomedical and behavior studies on chimpanzees." Rosemary celebrates with champagne, giving Fern a tiny sip. Rosemary notes that the power of Fern's long-term memory is still unclear. Yet while the scientific research on chimp memory is inconclusive, Rosemary believes that Fern does still know who Rosemary and her mother are.

The news about the National Institute of Health indicates that scientific research is indeed moving in a more ethical direction. While the pace of this change is too slow for Lowell and other members of the Animal Liberation Front, Rosemary feels that it is still cause for celebration.

PART 6, CHAPTER 7

In 2012, Rosemary's agent calls to say that she has received requests for interviews with the nation's most famous presenters, such as Charlie Rose and John Stewart. She asks that Rosemary move up the publication date of the book. It is only at this point that Rosemary learns that Lowell has finally been arrested while planning an attack on SeaWorld in Orlando. A "female accomplice" escaped arrest. Rosemary admits that the book she wrote with her mother was "for Fern," but that the book in the reader's hands now is "for Lowell." She is not going to argue that Lowell is innocent, as it is possible that Lowell intended to inflict major damage with the attack. At the same time, the ALF is against hurting any animals––human or nonhuman.

Here Rosemary returns to speaking about the novel in a metafictional manner, explaining that the book the reader is holding is the narrative she constructed in order to explain her version of the past to Lowell. Between the two books Rosemary has written and Lowell's arrest, her time out of the spotlight is well and truly over. Yet, just as Lowell has sacrificed his entire life in order to help the victims of animal abuse, Rosemary sacrifices her privacy in order to contribute to a better understanding of the relationships between animals and humans.

Rosemary wishes Lowell was caught earlier, before he accrued so many charges. As of now, he has been in custody for three months and is in a bad mental state. Rosemary knows that he is attempting to be tried as a nonhuman animal, and she has been trying to persuade Todd's mother to represent him. Just like Fern, Lowell has fundamentally good qualities, but has become dangerous as he's grown older.

Lowell's reaction to the traumas of his past and the unbearable ways in which humans treat animals have pushed him into an extreme direction. Rather than attempt to live in human society and maintain a close connection to animals (as Rosemary has done), he sees no other choice but to become a nonhuman animal.

Rosemary decides to end the story by telling the reader what happened when she saw Fern for the first time again. Rosemary's mother had already been visiting Fern for two weeks, and Rosemary waited in order to give Fern time to adjust. In advance of her visit, Rosemary sends Fern an old stuffed penguin, a sweater she hopes smells of her, and a red poker chip that they would use when they played "Same/Not Same." She brings a second poker chip when she arrives.

This passage emphasizes the extent to which Fern is ultimately unknowable to Rosemary. Despite their absolute closeness as children, Rosemary has no idea how Fern thinks or if she is capable of remembering her. In this sense, Rosemary and Fern's relationship continues to be a kind of scientific experiment, although one completed on their own terms.

Rosemary walks behind the glass wall, waits for Fern to make eye contact, and then signs her own name as well as Fern's. Rosemary places her palm on the glass, and Fern does the same. Fern presses her forehead against the glass, and so does Rosemary. They stare into each other's eyes for a long time. Rosemary realizes that she doesn't know what Fern is thinking, but is still overwhelmed by a sense of familiarity. It is like looking in a mirror.

The moving final passage of the novel contains a kind of thesis statement on the nature of the animal-human divide. The gap between species is ultimately unbridgeable, and because of this Fern will always be something of a mystery to Rosemary. However, despite this gap it is possible to build a powerful sense of affinity with animals, and to recognize that they are indeed our relations.

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