**ONDAATJE BIO: Overview**

[Philip Michael Ondaatje] is a [Sri Lanka-born](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka) [Canadian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada) poet, novelist, essayist, editor, and filmmaker.

He is the recipient of numerous top literary awards including the [Governor General's Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governor_General%27s_Awards), the [Giller Prize](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scotiabank_Giller_Prize), the [Booker Prize](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Booker_Prize), and the [Prix Médicis étranger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prix_M%C3%A9dicis). A former schoolteacher was quoted in a British newspaper saying that he wouldn't have predicted young Ondaatje would win the Booker someday as he had "[always seemed more interested in cricket](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2000/apr/29/fiction.features" \t "_blank)."

He is also an Officer of the [Order of Canada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Canada), later upgraded to ‘Companion’ in 2016, the highest level of the order.

In 2005, he was honoured by the former Sri Lankan President [Chandrika Kumaratunga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chandrika_Kumaratunga) with [Sri Lanka Ratna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_honours_system), the highest honour given by the Government of Sri Lanka to foreign nationals. In 2016 a new species of spider, *Brignolia ondaatjei*, discovered in Sri Lanka, was named after him.

Ondaatje's elder brother [Sir Christopher Ondaatje](http://www.arts.mq.edu.au/news_and_events/news/sir_christopher_ondaatje_oc,_obe" \t "_blank) is a successful businessman, explorer, philanthropist and represented Canada in four-man bobsled at the 1964 Olympics.

**ONDAATJE BIO: Timeline**

**12 September 1943** —Ondaatje was born in [Colombo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombo), [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka), then called [Ceylon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Ceylon). He is of [Dutch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_people), [Sinhalese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinhalese_people), and [Tamil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamils) ancestry, making him a [Burgher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_Burghers). The Dutch Burghers are an ethnic group in [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka), of mixed [Dutch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_people), [Portuguese Burghers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese_Burghers) and Sri Lankan descent. However, they are a different from the Portuguese Burghers. Originally an entirely Protestant community, many Burghers today remain Christian but belong to a variety of denominations. The Dutch Burghers of Sri Lanka speak [English](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language) and the local languages [Sinhala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinhala_language) and [Tamil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_language).

His earliest years were spent on the Kutapitiya tea estate (according to Ondaatje "the most beautiful place in the world") in the last era of colonial Ceylon, before the estates were nationalised. Though his memoir depicts the halcyon days of a westernised elite, where "nobody really had to grow up; they remained wild and spoiled", he describes his family as "on the edge of hard times". His brother Christopher, a businessman and explorer, thought his memoir romanticised. Ondaatje says, "It was probably an easier childhood for me than for my brother and sisters, being the youngest."

His mother, Doris Gratiaen, was given to dancing in the style of Isadora Duncan. His father, Mervyn Ondaatje, was in the Ceylon light infantry and supervised a tea plantation before losing jobs through alcoholism ("My father was in tea and alcohol; he dealt in tea and he drank the alcohol"). In one poem Ondaatje wrote of the "terrifying comedy" of his father's life: "My mother divorced him again and again. He would rush into tunnels magnetised by the white eye of trains".

**1948 (aged 5 years)** — His parents separated and, the following year, his mother moved to England with his older siblings, brother Christopher and sister Janet. He and his sister Gillian stayed in Ceylon with aunts and uncles he was schooled at [S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S._Thomas%27_College,_Mount_Lavinia) in Colombo.

**1954 (aged 11 years)** — He joined his mother in England where he pursued his secondary education at [Dulwich College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dulwich_College) where he went by the [nickname Kip](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/jul/09/michael-ondaatje-interview-the-english-patient-golden-booker" \t "_blank). Ondaatje says when he moved to England he became [preoccupied with surviving in this new, very different country](https://www.cbc.ca/radio/writersandcompany/how-canada-made-michael-ondaatje-a-writer-1.4180245" \t "_blank) and, in a sense, forgot about his childhood in Sri Lanka. At Dulwich College, his initial trauma was having to relinquish the sarong. "I had to dress differently. I'd never seen a tie before. " Though his school was "in retrospect a haven for young writers" (he was preceded by PG Wodehouse and Raymond Chandler, and followed by his friend Graham Swift), he remembers being more keen on sports. He is amused by the quoted comment of his former teacher praising Swift for winning the Booker while expressing surprise that Ondaatje should have done the same given his seemingly overriding interest in cricket.

**1962 (aged 19 years)** — He emigrated to Montreal, Quebec where he studied at [Bishop's University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop%27s_University) in [Lennoxville](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lennoxville) for three years. While working on his undergraduate degree at [Bishop's,](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop%27s_University) he met his future mentor, the poet [D.G Jones](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D._G._Jones), who praised his poetic ability. Ondaatje has stated that he [probably wouldn't have become a writer if he hadn't moved to Canada](https://www.cbc.ca/radio/writersandcompany/how-canada-made-michael-ondaatje-a-writer-1.4180245). He said that in England there was a sense that writing literature was for the "haves" — scholars at Oxford and others of that ilk. "The thing about Canada was that I met writers who were my age. They were making books and discussing poetry. That was a gift I was given. The community of writers was what allowed me to try writing and continue writing." … "It wasn't like England, where you feel, what right do you have to do this because of John Donne and Sir Philip Sidney. England felt repressive in the 50s."

**1965** —In his final undergraduate year he studied at [University of Toronto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Toronto) from which he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

**1967** — He graduated with a Master of Arts from [Queen's University, Kingston](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen%27s_University,_Kingston), [Ontario](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ontario), and began teaching English at the [University of Western Ontario](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Western_Ontario), [London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London,_Ontario), Ontario. That same year his literary career began with the publication of his poetry collection, *The Dainty Monsters*.

**1970** —The critically acclaimed [*The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Collected_Works_of_Billy_the_Kid:_Left-Handed_Poems) was published and won the [Governor General's Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governor_General%27s_Award). It has been adapted for the stage and produced in theatrical productions across North America and Europe.

**1971**— Reluctant to pursue his PhD, he left the University of Western Ontario to teach English literature at [Glendon College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glendon_College), [York University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/York_University), Toronto.

**From 1970-90** — He was an important force in "fostering new Canadian writing" with a two- decades commitment to [Coach House Press](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coach_house_press). He obtained editorial credits on Canadian literary projects like the journal [*Brick*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brick_(magazine)), and the *Long Poem Anthology* (1979).

**April 2015** — Ondaatje was one of several members of [PEN American Center](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PEN_American_Center) who withdrew as literary host when PEN gave its annual Freedom of Expression Courage award to [Charlie Hebdo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlie_Hebdo), in the wake of the [terrorist attack](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlie_Hebdo_shooting) on the magazine's Paris offices in January 2015. While Ondaatje with several other hosts condemned the attack, they refused their support due to the magazine's history of publishing anti-Islamic content.

**As of 2018 — he has published:**

**13 books of poetry**:

—…and won the [Governor General's Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governor_General%27s_Award) for *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* (1970) and *There's a Trick With a Knife I'm Learning to Do: Poems 1973–1978* (1979).

**7 novels:**

1976: [**Coming Through Slaughter**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coming_Through_Slaughter), Toronto: Anansi — set in [New Orleans, Louisiana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Orleans,_Louisiana), circa 1900, loosely based on the lives of jazz pioneer [Buddy Bolden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddy_Bolden) and photographer [E. J. Bellocq](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E._J._Bellocq). Winner of the 1976 [Books in Canada First Novel Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_in_Canada_First_Novel_Award).

1987**:** [**In the Skin of a Lion**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_the_Skin_of_a_Lion), New York: Knopf — about early immigrants in Toronto, was the winner of the 1988 [City of Toronto Book Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_of_Toronto_Book_Award), finalist for the 1987 Ritz Paris Hemingway Award for best novel of the year in English, and winner of the first [Canada Reads](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada_Reads) competition in 2002. Ondaatje called [In the Skin of a Lion](http://cbc.ca/1.3993698) his "first book with a real plot." He spent about a decade working on it. The scenes of rural life were inspired by Ondaatje's time living in Bellrock, Ontario where he knew a farmer named George Grant. Grant was full of stories like, "One day I pulled a cow out of a frozen river. It was quite difficult.”

1992**:** [**The English Patient**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_English_Patient)**,** New York: Knopf — won the [Booker Prize](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Booker_Prize), the [first Canadian book](https://www.cbc.ca/radio/writersandcompany/how-canada-made-michael-ondaatje-a-writer-1.4180245) to do so, the Canada Australia Prize, and the [Governor General's Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governor_General%27s_Award_for_English_language_fiction). It was adapted as a motion picture, which won the [Academy Award for Best Picture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Picture) and many other awards. In 2018, it won the Golden Man Booker Price recognizing the best Booker winner of the past 50 years, as determined by an online vote after a panel of judges chose contenders from each decade the prize has been awarded.

2000: [**Anil's Ghost**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anil%27s_Ghost)**,** New York: Knopf — Winner of the 2000 [Giller Prize](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giller_Prize), the [Prix Médicis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prix_M%C3%A9dicis), the Kiriyama Pacific Rim Book Prize, the 2001 Irish Times International Fiction Prize, and Canada's [Governor General's Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governor_General%27s_Award_for_English_language_fiction). It took seven years to write.

2007: [**Divisadero**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divisadero_(novel))— Winner in 2007 of the [Governor General's Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governor_General%27s_Award_for_English_language_fiction). In 2011 Ondaatje worked with [Daniel Brooks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Brooks) to create a play based on this novel.

2011: [**The Cat's Table**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cat%27s_Table)

2018: [**Warlight**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warlight)—long listed in July 2018 for the [Man Booker Prize](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man_Booker_Prize).

In addition he has a long list of editing projects and contributions to both fictional and non-fictional works.

**ONDAATJE on Writing**

[Various sources including [*www.theguardian.com/books/2000/apr/29/fiction.features*](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2000/apr/29/fiction.features)]

“Ideal Writing Day”

An [ideal writing day](https://www.columbiamissourian.com/news/ondaatje-embrace-creativity-in-your-writing/article_66146118-08b2-11e6-a5c9-db78115ebe12.html" \t "_blank), according to Ondaatje, entails working from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. where he concentrates on his writing and nothing else: "The only rule I have is don't go out for lunch. That takes two hours, and you can eat a sandwich in eight minutes or so."

Writing Method

Ondaatje always writes the [first drafts of his books with pen and paper](https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/books/2018/05/04/qa-michael-ondaatje-on-his-latest-novel-warlight.html" \t "_blank): "It just seems more natural to me [than typing] and I can think better by hand writing." In his handwritten manuscripts, Ondaatje uses magazine photographs and poem excerpts as [visual breaks throughout the text](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/sep/25/michael-ondaatje-opens-archive-to-reveal-his-writing-methods" \t "_blank). These, he says, may have some subliminal influence.

Writing Process — ‘Finding the story’

Ondaatje says his books begin with a couple of images. For [*In the Skin of a Lion*](http://cbc.ca/1.3993698), it was "a boy walking across a field eating rhubarb and an older man going into a dark room trying to answer the telephone."²

*[www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/authors/profiles/article/76727-michael-ondaatje-digs-up-the-past.html* Ondaatje says he finds the story as he researches and writes—like an archaeologist carefully brushing dust and grit from an artifact. “I think most of the energy spent on writing a book is used to discover what the story is,” he adds. And, like archaeology, it’s painstaking work.

Ondaatje admitted to the *[Toronto Star](https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/books/2018/05/04/qa-michael-ondaatje-on-his-latest-novel-warlight.html" \t "_blank)* that he doesn't plan his novels in advance and actually knows very little about what's going to happen in them until he writes it.

Ondaatje told *Eleanor Wachtel* in 2018 that [he doesn't know the ending when he starts writing a novel](https://www.cbc.ca/radio/writersandcompany/in-warlight-michael-ondaatje-explores-family-secrets-and-betrayal-1.4718375" \t "_blank): "If you write a novel with a huge plan and know exactly where you're going, then that's not a big problem. But if you begin with this one sentence at the beginning of the novel, which sounds like the beginning of a fairy tale, where do you go from here?"

Ondaatje has said when he gets stuck writing, [he just works on a different scene](https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703740004574513463106012106" \t "_blank).

Writing Process — ‘Developing the characters’

"I can't write novels where the author knows a character completely," says Ondaatje. "When they're off stage, they're off stage; the ending isn't a closed door. I love the idea of characters having lives outside the book; it makes them equal to the writer and the reader, rather than the author talking down to them, like puppets

In a [2018 interview with](https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/authors/profiles/article/76727-michael-ondaatje-digs-up-the-past.html" \t "_blank) *[Publishers Weekly](https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/authors/profiles/article/76727-michael-ondaatje-digs-up-the-past.html" \t "_blank)*, Ondaatje compares his writing process to archaeology: "I don't really know the characters before the book is written — they're not fully formed yet," he explains, saying that he needs to "live with the possibilities of characters for a period of time."

Writing Process — Re-writing

When an [interviewer complimented the author on his spare prose and moments of lyricism](https://www.stlmag.com/culture/Literature/a-conversation-with-michael-ondaatje/" \t "_blank), Ondaatje said the balance comes out of many rewrites: "And during that period of rewriting, you say, 'this is too much. This section is boring; perhaps we should just drop it.' I don't say to myself, 'This needs more lyricism.'"

Influence of other art forms

Voluble on writing and his other arts —theatre, film, photography — Ondaatje shrinks from personal inquiries. He prefers to write from anonymity, from a watchful invisibility, maintaining the unmediated bond between writer and reader.

"Fiction," Ondaatje says, "is the most conservative of genres - still mostly handcuffed to realism." But he sought new ways of telling. A "child of the movies", he relishes the influence of other arts, whether Henri Rousseau paintings, Diego Rivera murals, Sri Lankan temple sculpture or jazz. *Coming Through Slaughter* (1976), his first prose work fictionalised the life of the jazz pioneer Buddy Bolden, the cornetist in turn-of-the-century New Orleans who went mad on a public parade. It shows the background of brothels and knife-fights in which jazz flourished, and its syntax carries the music. Of all the arts, jazz is the one I envy the most," he says. "It's communal, free, you can improvise. If I could be Fats Waller, I wouldn't be writing." "

Influences from his own life experiences

…There's a need to write about family when there's a break-up."

A migrant's perspective - "the tense rubbing together of two distinct worlds" - fosters innovations of form. Ondaatje quotes as a principle John Berger's "Never again will a single story be told as though it were the only one". His fiction disrupts linear time with copious flashbacks and flash-forwards, spurning the omniscient narrator for a multiplicity of voices and viewpoints. *The English Patient* grew from a "chamber piece" about four characters in a Tuscan villa in the final days of the second world war - including Canadians from the previous novel, Caravaggio and Patrick's stepdaughter Hana - into an epic novel with flashbacks spanning Cairo, the Sahara and England. The "English patient", Count Almasy, charred into facelessness by a plane crash, is a Hungarian explorer, maybe a spy, recalling a tragic affair with a married Englishwoman, as he lies dying. While the novel (*The English Patient*) explores private and public betrayals, it forms part of a literature remapping the post-colonial world. As three continents meet in a villa in 1945, a shift is marked from the dying patient's era of European mapmaking and flag-planting to the younger characters from India, nearing independence, and the New World. "The novel was a debate between old-age humanism - the patient - and the new age of Kip," Ondaatje says. "It was a historical moment that remapped the world, when the balance shifted from colonialism." Kip's liberation from his English mentors comes through radio news of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima, which opens his eyes to the atrocities of the "civilised" west, both as a bomb disposal expert and as an Asian. That scene was missing from the film, though it remains close to Ondaatje's heart. His experience has left him frustrated with the medium. "It's an irony about the film that a personal death becomes more important than a war crime. But the Hiroshima scene didn't work. In the book, I can bring something in in the last chapter that makes it all look ironic; in a film it looks like someone put in the wrong reel."

Does he feel a responsibility to use his raised profile to speak out? "No, it would seem didactic," he says. But then he relates the legend of a king who wakes up with a corpse around his neck. "Each day he buries it, and the next day it's round his neck again. It was strange and nightmarish, someone trying to save a community, and it hit me that I had that kind of obsession Anil has with the skeleton."

He also began to excavate his own buried origins. "I see the world as utterly dangerous," Ondaatje has said, "that it's a very tenuous, accidental world and what you love, especially the people you love, can be swept away in an instant." He dedicated Handwriting to the ayah, or nanny, from whom he was wrenched as a child, "a lost almost-mother in those years of ‘thirsty love.’ I remember leaving Sri Lanka and being devastated by leaving her," he says sadly. "When I went back she'd died."

Though he describes himself as a Canadian writer, Ondaatje is clear: "I don't think I'm a North American solely; Sri Lanka is a place I love and feel very much part of." He put his Booker winnings into the creation of the Gratiaen prize (named after his mother) for Sri Lankan writers based on the island; recent winners include a "lost classic" by Tissa Abeysekara. His own uprooting has been matched by a restless creativity. "Moving, you learn twice as much; it doubles you in some way, like living three or four lives," he says. "There's a parallel between the writer and the migrant: in a way, writers are immigrants if you're writing about a new place. It's exciting and terrifying to start anew in a new land, with a new language and new rules."

Ondaatje’s Classics:

The Blue Flower by Penelope Fitzgerald

A Month in the Country by J.L. Carr

Waterland by Graham Swift

The Lonely Londoners by Samuel Selvon

The Land Breakers by John Ehle

The Letters of Townsend Warner, edited by William Maxwell.

**WARLIGHT Structure: Two parts, with title-paged sections in each, these sections separated (sometimes) with ‘sub-titles’.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Page#** | **PART/ Title page section/ Sub-titled section** | **Page/Text** |
| **1 –118** | **PART ONE** | |
| **1 –118** | **A TABLE FULL OF STRANGERS** | In 1945 our parents went away and left us in the care of two men who may have been criminals. I was 14 at the time and Rachel nearly 16… |
| 26 - 36 | Hell-Fire | P28 When I think of my youth, if you asked me to quickly remember just one thing, it would be the dark house that night during the hours after Rachel disappeared. And whenever I come across that strange phrase, ‘hell-fire,’ it is as if I have found a label to attach to that moment, when I remained in the house with The Moth, and barely moved away from that gas fire. |
| 37 - 63 | “The Sinister Benevolence of the Lift Boy” |  |
| 64 - 73 | Agnes Street |  |
| 74 - 114 | The Mussel Boat |  |
| 115 - 118 | Schwer | P31 Mahler put the word *schwer* beside certain passages in his musical scores meaning ‘difficult’ ‘Heavy’. We were told this at some point by The Moth, as if it was a warning. |
|  | | |
| **119 – 285** | **PART TWO** | |
| **123 – 157** | **INHERITANCE** | In November of 1959, when I was 28, after some years of what had felt like wilderness, I bought a home for myself in a Suffolk village … |
| 135 - 142 | The Saints |  |
| 143 - 151 | In the Archives |  |
| 152 - 157 | Arthur McCash |  |
| **161 - 191** | **A WORKING MOTHER** |  |
| 181 - 191 | A Nightingale Floor |  |
| **195 - 260** | **THE BOY ON THE ROOF** |  |
| 205 - 214 | Wildfowling |  |
| 215 - 218 | Night of the Bombers |  |
| 219 - 222 | Quiver |  |
| 223 – 244 | The Astral Plough |  |
| 245 - 260 | The Street of Small Daggers |  |
| **263 - 285** | **A WALLED GARDEN** | P285 The greyhound is next to me…But where is the sister who offered only that indirect farewell…Or the young girl I might one day catch sight of … |

**WARLIGHT Characters in order of appearance**

— at least 33 different named/identified characters.

**Nathaniel Williams = The Narrator**

* nicknamed Stitch by his mother
* Nathaniel = gift from God

**Rose Williams** — Mother of Nathaniel and Rachel

**Her husband, the father of R&N**

* P216 *Rose’s Mother:* You should never have married so young. You could have done anything after university. You fell in love with a uniform.   
  *Rose*: As you did. And I thought he was brilliant. I didn’t know then what he had been through. *Her mother:* The brilliant are often destructive.   
  *Rose:* Even Felon?   
  *Her mother*: No, Not Marsh.   
  *Rose:* *He’s* brilliant.  
  *Her mother*: But he is also Marsh. He wasn’t born into this world. He’s the accident, with, it seems, a hundred careers…
* P256 As for the story of my mother and her husband, that ghost in her story, I have only the image of him sitting in that uncomfortable iron chair in our garden lying about why he was leaving us.

**Rachel** — Narrator’s older sister

* nicknamed Wren by her mother
* Rachel = 2nd wife of Jacob, mother of Joseph
* P150 N meets **Rachel’s baby son Walter**

**Walter** nicknamed **The Moth** by Nathaniel and Rachel

* “our third floor lodger”
* Staff Manager of the Criterion’s Banquet Halls
* p24 He was a man of many doors.
* p48 “The music-loving Moth appeared blind to the evident anarchy in The Darter.”

**Rose’s parents** – N&R’s grandparents

* lived in an area of Suffolk called The Saints in a house called White Paint with a thatched roof
* died in 1945 in a car crash
* P199 Her parents gathered him (Marsh Felon) as they had once done during the injured solitude of his youth. Aware of his intelligence, they were to support him through his university years. He had essentially left his own family.
* P208 Rose’s father, the Admiral …had a busier more official life in the city.

**The Felon family**

* Thatchers who repaired White Paint roof
* a bearded man and his three sons — the youngest **Marsh Felon**

**Mr. Norman Marshall** AKA ‘**The Pimlico Darter’** and nicknamed **The Darter** by N & R

* p18 “a thin man sitting in the armchair my father always sat in”
* p86 “He had already spent a few years in the shifting tents of spivery.”— **Spivery** (British)**:** the practice of a spiv**:** obtaining one's living without effort at the expense of others.
* p89 “ He was by now sophisticated in his methods of tunneling under the rules of dog racing.”
* p102 …though full of shadowed surprises The D was clearly on a path he had beaten down and travelled along for years. He was incorrigible, that was his charm. That was the safety in him for us.
* p108 The D, in this sudden new role as my father, took on a protective and avuncular air with Agnes. She, surprised by his manner, thought he was a ‘card.” …He got on with the parents but he loved Agnes, and so I came to love Agnes too. I started to recognize aspects of her through The D’s eyes. He had that quick awareness about people.

**The Schoolmaster** — “A short, terrifying man who always moved silently down the halls in crepe-soled shoes.”

**The opera singer from Bigg’s Row**

**Mr. Florence** — the verbose beekeeper — pumps his smoker into the face of a guard at the Dulwich Picture Gallery to put him to sleep while he with help from N steals 2 or 3 watercolours

**Citronella** — once a spy for the government during the war but had now eased himself back into being a couturier for minor members of the royal family

**Tim Cornford** — fellow worked in the laundry at the Criterion — N breaks his nose by accident playing Scratch Ball at the Criterion

**Tolroy** — fellow laundry worker

**Mr. (Harry) Nkoma**

* 46 yrs with a scar on his cheek
* a dishwasher at the Criterion who told stories involving “drawn-out careful lessons of intercourse in all its varieties”
* p41 stories that described a universe of charms, with all the time in the world and with seemingly absent husbands as well as the absence of children

**Mrs. Rafferty**

* a character in one of Mr. Nkoma’s stories
* his piano teacher in the town of Ti Rocher, 4,000 miles from Piccadilly Circus (a town on the island of [Saint Lucia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Lucia) located at the northern end of the island towards its heart, near [Four Roads Junction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Roads_Junction), [Dubrassay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dubrassay), and [Trois Pitons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trois_Pitons).)

**Olive Lawrence**

* The Darter’s girlfriend for awhile — a geographer and an ethnographer (Ethnography is the scientific description of the customs of individual peoples and cultures.)
* p52  as if she had stumbled suddenly on a man who reminded her of an almost extinct medieval species, a person still unaware of any of the principal courtesies introduced in the past hundred years.
* P166 Rose: …[Olive] was not only an ethnographer…she was with a group of meteorologists in gliders scattered over the English Channel. …Olive was up there too, in the sky, forecasting the oncoming weather and the chance of rain to confirm or postpone the D-Day invasion. She was involved with other things too.

**The Russian**

* D’s girlfriend after Olive Lawrence

**‘Agnes Street’**

* Waitress
* Nathaniel’s first girl friend — Agnes Street is her nom de plume (pen name)
* p108 She was inhaling the world around her…With my silence I was probably a nightmare to her. She must have thought I was born with a distance in me, secretive about what I feared, secretive about my family. Then one day she ran into me with The Darter and so I introduced him to her as my father.

**Max**

* Agnes’ brother, the estate agent

**‘barge smugglers, veterinarians, forgers” p79**

**Arthur McCash**

* Invited to dinner by his friend The Moth after N’s incident in the elevator when he escaped being trapped and mugged by two men who “must have thought [N] had money”
* P101 “he did seem…one of those Englishmen who are happier in desert climates.”
* spoke French as well as other languages, though he never referred to this ability.
* P101 claimed he’d recently been stationed abroad doing crop studies in the Levant.

**Agnes’s parents**

**Mrs. Linette Malakite**

* P123 She did not remember me when she opened the door. “I am Nathaniel,” I said…”You have a walled garden,” and she stopped in her tracks. “How do you know that?”
* P124 Her knowledge (of the garden) was detailed, clearly accurate. That was the segment in her memory from far in the past that she could still reach. It was also clear she had continued with the upkeep …since the death of her husband, Mr. Malakite, two years earlier.

**Sam Malakite**

* neighbour who sells the vegetables he grows “on the periphery of the abandoned airfield at Metfield” in various town squares in the area.

[Malachite is a copper mineral, and that gives malachite a high specific gravity that ranges from 3.6 to 4.0. This property is so striking for a green mineral that malachite is easy to identify. Malachite is one of a small number of green minerals that produces effervescence in contact with cold, [dilute hydrochloric acid](https://geology.com/minerals/acid-test.shtml). It is also a soft mineral with a [Mohs hardness](https://geology.com/minerals/mohs-hardness-scale.shtml) of 3.5 to 4.0.

Malachite absorbs energy and draws emotions to the surface. ... An extremely powerful metaphysical stone, Malachite is often called the “stone of transformation” and is used for deep energy cleaning, bringing healing and positive transformation to the wearer.]

**The Veterinarian**

* p127 “no one really understands another’s life or even death. I knew a veterinarian who had two parrots. The birds had lived together for years, even before she inherited them. …Eventually one of them died. I sent a note of condolence to the V…and a week later … asked if the surviving bird was in a state of depression …”Oh no,” she said, “he’s overjoyed!”
* p146 It was the veterinarian, the one who had inherited the two parrots, who taught me how to open locks on a filing cabinet. …she recommended a powerful anaesthetic used on damaged hooves and bones that I could apply around a lock …the freezing would slow down the lock’s resistance …and allow me to carry out my next stage of attack. This was a Steinmann pin, which in a more legal world provided skeletal traction and protected the damaged bones of a racing greyhound. The smooth stainless-steel intramedullary pins, petite and efficient, were almost instantly successful, and the locks on the cabinets barely paused before they slipped open with their secrets.

**Ruth Howard**

* P201 a fellow ‘nocturnal’, sister of the boy who Marsh Felon saved from falling
* “Mathematics—Girton College
* p203 recruits Felon “We need someone there on the east coast, by the way. Near where you used to live …to keep an eye on certain people.

**Marsh Felon**

* A Nocturnal who became a Secretive who became a Gatherer and a Sender Out
* P212 Now the brothers keep their distance from him, weaving together their own communal stories, for instance about an anonymous thatcher on the coast who took the name of “Long-Flew Knife,” prepared, it was said, to kill German sympathizers in the event of an invasion. …There had been a killing with such a blade, seemingly random…
* P213 How did he become what he became, this rural boy curious about the distant world?
* P219 It was this range of creatures assigned to Felon [the New World porcupine, a diamondback snake, the madrigal weasel] that suggested how unknowable he was.
* P235 Still Felon is also a double-sided mirror. Thousands hear him as the genial broadcaster on *The Naturalist’s Hour*, mulling over the weight of an eagle or discussing the origin of the term “bolted lettuce,” …his audience prefers it when he speaks for himself. They are accustomed to his roving mind

**the (unnamed) soldier**

* Rose’s body guard in Italy
* P241 He had no idea what her mission was. Just that she was a woman he had to safeguard.

**Hardwick**

* P242 The “other woman in the hut” – Felon’s “other woman”

**WARLIGHT Settings**

**PART ONE**

* London — Ruvigny Gardens,
* Grosvenor House Hotel — Both of them had worked as “fire watchers” in what they called the Bird’s Nest …on the roof of the Grosvenor House Hotel
* Chicksands Priory — our mother had intercepted German messages and transmitted data across the English Channel from a place in Bedfordshire called Chicksands Priory
* Bigg’s Row — an untraveled road since the Blitz where “we began eating most of our dinners from the local street barrows”
* The Criterion
* The Thames
  + P74: eastward from Woolwich and Barking, Caspian Wharf, Erith Reach, The Tilbury Cut, Lower Hope Reach, Blyth Sands, the Isle of Grain, the estuary and then the sea.
  + P84 as far west as Richmond, even Teddington where the river was too shallow for most tugs and barges.
* London — The Bark Theatre

**PART TWO**

* Suffolk — N’s walled garden house
* Suffolk — White Paint — Rose Williams family home — in a region made up of a cluster of small villages a few miles from one another.
* London — the Foreign Office — in a nameless 7-storey building
* London — a rented one-room flat near Guy’s Hospital
* London — “I had begun walking the north bank of the Thames at night” p145
* Cambridge
* Suffolk — the Blythe and the Alde estuaries
* Suffolk— the parish of Benacre in the Waveney district
* Suffolk— p217 NE of them is Lowestoft, SE is Southwold. All along the coast, the army has buried mines on the beaches to protect against a land invasion. They have commandeered homes, stables, and outbuildings. At night everyone disappears, and 500 pound bombs and high-explosive incendiaries whistle down on the sparsely populated houses and streets, so it seems as light as day.
* Trieste
* Naples
* Suffolk

**WARLIGHT Narrative Timeline**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Page#** | **PART/ Title page section/ Sub-titled section** | **Event** | **Page/Text** |
|  | | | |
| **1 –118** | **PART ONE** |  |  |
| **1 –118** | **A TABLE FULL OF STRANGERS** | Early to mid-Sept 1945  1917 — Rose is 8 yrs. when Marsh Felon (16 yrs.) falls from White Paint roof his family is thatching  1945 — Rose’s parents die in a car crash | P5 — In 1945 our parents went away and left us in the care of two men who may have been criminals. I was 14 at the time and Rachel nearly 16…  P10 Our mother’s job—she was 8 years old at the time—was to bring him (Marsh Felon) his meals.  P13 Earlier that year our grandparents had died in a car crash, so now we watched our mother roaming their house silently. |
| 26 - 36 | Hell-Fire | 1936-8 –N’s father kills his cat —N runs away from home | P28 When I think of my youth, if you asked me to quickly remember just one thing, it would be the dark house that night during the hours after Rachel disappeared. And whenever I come across that strange phrase, ‘hell-fire,’ it is as if I have found a label to attach to that moment, when I remained in the house with The Moth, and barely moved away from that gas fire.  P31 Walter: It was me you came to stay with. You told me. |
| 37 - 63 | “The Sinister Benevolence of the Lift Boy” |  |  |
| 64 - 73 | Agnes Street |  |  |
| 74 - 114 | The Mussel Boat |  |  |
| 115 - 118 | Schwer | 1946 — Walter ‘The Moth’ is killed in the Bark Theatre attack on N & R | P31 Mahler put the word *schwer* beside certain passages in his musical scores meaning ‘difficult’ ‘Heavy’. We were told this at some point by The Moth, as if it was a warning. |
|  | | | |
| **119 – 285** | **PART TWO** | | |
| **123 – 157** | **INHERITANCE** | 1939 – 1945 World War II  1959 — N is offered a job in the Foreign Office as an intelligence assessment officer  1959 — P132 The second wave of ‘correction’ after the “determined, almost apocalyptic censorship” during the closing stages of the war with the arrival of peace…The British were not alone in this instinct to conceal certain truths of war. | P123 In November of 1959, when I was 28, after some years of what had felt like wilderness, I bought a home for myself in a Suffolk village …  P130 A decade after my mother’s death I received an invitation to apply to the Foreign Office. My recruitment for such a post seemed initially strange. …No one told me why I had been approached …accepting a job that included sifting through the details of the war, might … be a way of discovering what my mother had been doing during the period she left us …Perhaps there was now a chance of discovering that missing sequence in her life. It was the possibility of an inheritance.  P132 N: I began to realize that an unauthorized and still violent war had continued after the armistice, a time when the rules and negotiations were still half lit and acts of war continued beyond public hearing.  P133…the job was to unearth whatever evidence might still remain of actions that history might consider untoward, and which could still be found in stray reports and unofficial papers…it felt to some of us, …that it was no longer possible to see who held a correct moral position. |
| 135 - 142 | The Saints | 1946 — Rose leaves the intelligence service and moves into White Paint — N when not away at school lives with his mother … and works during the summer for their neighbour Sam Malakite who sells his vegetables … in various town squares in the area. | P139 Sam Malakite “and his wife were my watched example of marital stability. His wife no doubt felt I lingered around too much. She was organized, ardently neat, whereas he was the rabbit’s wild brother…” |
| 143 - 151 | In the Archives | 1957 — Sam Malakite dies | P142 Years later when I heard he had died, I held up my glass and said, “Only in open fields.” I was alone in a restaurant when I said this.  P148 He (The Moth) had promised me once, by the light of a gas fire in Ruvigny Gardens, that he would stay with me until my mother came back. And he had. Then he slipped away from all of us that night when my mother returned. |
| 152 - 157 | Arthur McCash | 1959— N encounters Arthur McCash on the lift at work …and a second time when they go our for a meal  1945 — Rose works abroad | P152 …I came upon first a cache of records of Rose’s early activities as a radio operator during the war…then later …where she intercepted enciphered German signals and sent them on to Bletchley Park for decoding as directed by the “deceivers in London.” She had also made journeys to Dover to identify, among those giant aerials along the coast, the individual rhythms of specific German Morse operators—the art of being able to recognize the touch of a key being one noted example of her skills.  P152 Her name cropped up …in the investigation of the bombing at the King David Hotel in Jerussalem, as well as in fragments of other reports involving Italy, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere in the Balkans. …she had been based briefly with a small unit near Naples…There was mention of a possible betrayal.  P155 McCash to N: She stayed away from the two of you because she was fearful you might be linked to her, they would use her to somehow strike at you. Turned out she was right. |
| **161 - 191** | **A WORKING MOTHER** | | |
| 181 - 191 | A Nightingale Floor | 1949 — N stays in White Paint for 2 days after the funeral and discovers a hand-drawn map of what looked … like a chalk hill … no place names… a fragment” | P183 My mother had died in the early evening and Mr. Malakite found her about noon the next day. It was clear she had died instantly.  Marsh Felon (the tall man) attends her funeral and tells N: P182 “*Your mother was a remarkable woman.*”  P189 …my mother knew all of *La Comedie Humaine*, and I began wondering in which of the books she might have found a version of her own unrecorded life. Whose career did she trace, scattered within those novels, until she could understand herself more clearly? She would have known that *Le Bal de Sceaux* is the one book …in which Rastignac does not appear, but also that within it he is being constantly referred to. On a whim I pulled a copy of it from the shelf, flipped through, and inside, tucked between pages 122 and 123 found a hand-drawn map. …  P190 later photographs, the ones I had loved best, were no longer there. …The ones of Rose with her parents and the tall man…  P 191 N gets into Rose’s narrow sheetless bed in the dark and asks her [spirit] “Tell me about him…The man you lied to me about.” |
| **195 - 260** | **THE BOY ON THE ROOF** | 1901— Marsh Felon is born—the youngest of three boys  1920s — Marsh Felon attends Trinity College Cambridge — becomes a ‘Nocturnal” and meets Ruth Howard for the first time | P196 His own family had been motherless and womanless for years.  P196 …Once she (Rose) brought him a book from the family library. He consumed it, and asked for another.  P203 Ruth Howard: We’ve finished one war, but there’s probably another coming. …Few would know how or where Felon participated in the various conflicts that would smoulder through the next decades. |
| 205 - 214 | Wildfowling | 1923 — Rose (14yr) learns wildfowling from Marsh Felon (22yr) | P209 Even in her youth Felon would always talk to her as an adult.  P209 she is no longer a learning youth and it disappoints him. Where she…does not imagine him as anything other than the ally from childhood. … P210 then as she sweeps a cedar branch out of her way he recognizes the faint line of bones at her neck that brings his affection back to what he thought was no longer there. …So he proposes an idea of work to this brightest of women …He wants her in his world. …later on, in the coming years, nothing will draw her away from Felon, no logic of her husband, not even the responsibility of her two children. …Is it Felon who chooses her or is this something Rose always wished for? Do we eventually become what we are originally meant to be? |
| 215 - 218 | Night of the Bombers |  |  |
| 219 - 222 | Quiver | 1943 - Rose begins broadcasting over the airwaves of Europe under the name Viola | P222 She became more actively involved, parachuted into the Low Countries …journeying to Sofia, Ankara, …or wherever uprisings occurred. Her radio signature, Viola became known widely on the airwaves. |
| 223 – 244 | The Astral Plough | 1959 — After learning the map fragment is a ‘piece of intelligence,’ N projects it onto maps in the map room to discover its precise location.  Marsh Felon is captured and interrogated in Italian —[in 1959 N, while working in the Foreign Office is asked to translate the recorded interrogation.]  Sept 1945 —  After the funeral of Rose’s parents in Suffolk, fog prevents Rose and Marsh from driving back to London They stay together in Marsh’s nearby cabin. —their ‘night by the stove’ | P224 “where my mother had once briefly been based with a small unit sent in, as the report had stated to loosen the linch-pins of a post-war guerrilla group. Where one of them was killed and two of them were captured.  “*People behave disgracefully sometimes*,” my mother had once said to me  Rose: *My sins are various*  P228 …and so was it that during my translation of a recorded interrogation that included descriptions of possibly invented women, and parrot lore—all put forward by the captured man as useless information-I heard described the pattern of birthmarks on my mother’s neck.  P232 Rose: I think, after tonight, I am going to stay away from you. You’re too important to me. …Who was it, or what, exactly, would break off the relationship that began that night by an iron stove?”  P235 [Marsh’s] will is curious more than ruthless. So he needed a tactical executioner beside him, and he found that ability in Rose. He knows he is not the one they are after, but her—the unseen but regularly heard Viola—the woman intercepting their elusive signals over the airwaves, the voice reporting their movements, betraying their whereabouts.  P237 (Interrogator to Felon) Do you know how many of our people were killed by the Communist Partisans—your new allies in the *foibe* massacres near Trieste? How many hundreds died there—buried in the sinkholes…do you think?... or in my uncle’s village … Population 400. Now 90. Nearly all of them killed in one night. …Viola was the radio link between your people and the Partisans. She told them where to go that night. [P238]  P240 (Felon to Rose) What the hell are you doing? he asked again when she came outside. “They’ve taken control of the airwaves, so there’s radio silence. You could not be reached. So I [Rose] came myself. They’ve been tracking our communiqués. They know where you are. I’ve been sent to tell you you have to get out.” …This is not safe for you here, Rose. “None of you are safe. That’s the point.” …P241 everyone’s at risk if you’re caught. We’re without rules of war now. You’d be interrogated as a spy, then you’d disappear. We’re not much better than terrorists these days.” She said it bitterly.  P242 She had mentioned to Felon that she was confused about the location, and he’d quickly sketched a map on a loose sheet of paper to clarify where they were. |
| 245 - 260 | The Street of Small Daggers | 1946 — Rose is captured, her bodyguard soldier is killed but she escapes.  1949— Rose Williams is assassinated at White Paint. (Age 40 yrs.). Her funeral is held a few days later in the parish of Benacre in the Waveney district, 15 miles from White Paint. | P246 In some building they began cutting open her arm with each question. After an hour they stopped. She must have somehow got away…  P260 *When he comes, he will be like an Englishman*…But the person who came for RW was a young woman, somebody’s heir …dressed as a cross-country runner, no props or disguises. …The young woman fired again to make sure. And then she was running like a harrier over the fields as if she were my mother’s soul leaving her body; the way my mother herself had fled this house at age 18 … |
| **263 - 285** | **A WALLED GARDEN** | 1960s — N discovers a book by Olive Lawrence in his local bookstore and learns it is the basis for an upcoming TV documentary.  1949 — N stays in White Paint for 2 days after the funeral and discovers a hand-drawn map of what looked … like a chalk hill … no place names… a fragment” | P264 I had benefited from the clarity of female opinion in this person who had no close connection to me. In the brief time I knew her, I believed Olive Lawrence was on my side. I stood there and was perceived.  P285 The greyhound is next to me…But where is the sister who offered only that indirect farewell…Or the young girl I might one day catch sight of …  P285 Before Sam Malakite gathered me up from White Paint on my last day there, I washed some of Rose’s clothes and dried them outside on the grass …ironed them…I took the cardigan and the shirts to her room and hung them in the cupboard and came downstairs. |

**WARLIGHT Chronologic Timeline**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Event** | **Text** |
| 1901 | Marsh Felon is born—the youngest of three boys | (P196 His own family had been motherless and womanless for years.) |
| 1909 | Rose Williams is born to Admiral Williams and his wife. |  |
| 1917 | Rose is 8 yrs. – Marsh Felon (16 yr) falls from White Paint roof his family is thatching | P10 Our mother’s job—she was 8 years old at the time—was to bring him his meals. P196 …Once she brought him a book from the family library. He consumed it, and asked for another. |
| 1923 | Rose (14yr) learns wildfowling from Marsh Felon (22yr) | P209 Even in her youth Felon would always talk to her as an adult. |
| Early 1920s | Marsh Felon attends Trinity College Cambridge — becomes a ‘Nocturnal” and meets Ruth Howard for the first time | P203 Ruth Howard: We’ve finished one war, but there’s probably another coming. …Few would know how or where Felon participated in the various conflicts that would smoulder through the next decades. |
| 1927 | Photograph of Rose at 17 or 18 years | P16 …snapped by her parents along the banks of their Suffolk river …already incognito |
| 1928??? | Rose marries young — 19 yrs.? | P171 She had married young, the habit and fashion of the time, though she had studied languages at university and once told me she had wished to take a law degree. But … instead raised two children. She was in her early thirties, so still youthful, when war started and she began working as a signals operative. |
| 1929 | Rachel is born |  |
| 1930 | Marsh Felon attends Rose’s birthday at White Paint and gives her a fishing rod | P209 she is no longer a learning youth and it disappoints him. Where she…does not imagine him as anything other than the ally from childhood. … p210 then as she sweeps a cedar branch out of her way he recognizes the faint line of bones at her neck that brings his affection back to what he thought was no longer there. …So he proposes an idea of work to this brightest of women …He wants her in his world. …later on, in the coming years, nothing will draw her away from Felon, no logic of her husband, not even the responsibility of her two children. …Is it Felon who chooses her or is this something Rose always wished for? Do we eventually become what we are originally meant to be? |
| 1931 | Nathaniel is born |  |
| 1936-8 | N’s father kills his cat —N runs away from home | P31 Walter: It was me you came to stay with. You told me. |
| “The Blitz became a night bombing campaign after October 1940.” | On weekends Rose drives up to Suffolk to visit her children who are living with her mother safe from the Blitz that is terrorizing London. |  |
| 1939 - 1945 | World War II | P152 …I came upon first a cache of records of Rose’s early activities as a radio operator during the war…then later …where she intercepted enciphered German signals and sent them on to Bletchley Park for decoding as directed by the “deceivers in London.” She had also made journeys to Dover to identify, among those giant aerials along the coast, the individual rhythms of specific German Morse operators—the art of being able to recognize the touch of a key being one noted example of her skills. |
| 1943 | Rose begins broadcasting over the airwaves of Europe under the name Viola | P222 She became more actively involved, parachuted into the Low Countries …journeying to Sofia, Ankara, …or wherever uprisings occurred. Her radio signature, Viola became known widely on the airwaves. |
| 1945 – 1947 | Post-war skirmishes | P132 N: I began to realize that an unauthorized and still violent war had continued after the armistice, a time when the rules and negotiations were still half lit and acts of war continued beyond public hearing. |
| 1945 | Rose’s parents die in a car crash | P13 Earlier that year our grandparents had died in a car crash, so now we watched our mother roaming their house silently. |
| September 1945 | After the funeral of Rose’s parents in Suffolk, fog prevents Rose and Marsh from driving back to London They stay together in Marsh’s nearby cabin. —their ‘night by the stove’ | P232 Rose: I think, after tonight, I am going to stay away from you. You’re too important to me. …Who was it, or what, exactly, would break off the relationship that began that night by an iron stove?” |
| Early to mid-Sept 1945 | N & R’s parents leave them…— N is 14 yrs.; R 16 yr. | P5 …in the care of two men who may have been criminals.  P155 McCash to N: She stayed away from the two of you because she was fearful you might be linked to her, they would use her to somehow strike at you. Turned out she was right. |
| 1945 | Rose ‘works abroad” | P152 Her name cropped up …in the investigation of the bombing at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, as well as in fragments of other reports involving Italy, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere in the Balkans. …she had been based briefly with a small unit near Naples…There was mention of a possible betrayal.  P240 What the hell are you doing? [Felon] asked again when she came outside. “They’ve taken control of the airwaves, so there’s radio silence. You could not be reached. So I [Rose] came myself. They’ve been tracking our communiqués. They know where you are. I’ve been sent to tell you you have to get out.” …This is not safe for you here, Rose. “None of you are safe. That’s the point.” …p241 everyone’s at risk if you’re caught. We’re without rules of war now. You’d be interrogated as a spy, then you’d disappear. We’re not much better than terrorists these days.” She said it bitterly.  P242 She had mentioned to Felon that she was confused about the location, and he’d quickly sketched a map on a loose sheet of paper to clarify where they were. |
| Early 1946 (p227) | Marsh Felon is captured and interrogated in Italian —[in 1959 N, while working in the Foreign Office is asked to translate the recorded interrogation.] | P228 …and so was it that during my translation of a recorded interrogation that included descriptions of possibly invented women, and parrot lore—all put forward by the captured man as useless information-I heard described the pattern of birthmarks on my mother’s neck.  P235 [Marsh’s] will is curious more than ruthless. So he needed a tactical executioner beside him, and he found that ability in Rose. He knows he is not the one they are after, but her—the unseen but regularly heard Viola—the woman intercepting their elusive signals over the airwaves, the voice reporting their movements, betraying their whereabouts.  P237 Do you know how many of our people were killed by the Communist Partisans—your new allies in the *foibe* massacres near Trieste? How many hundreds died there—buried in the sinkholes…do you think?... or in my uncle’s village … Population 400. Now 90. Nearly all of them killed in one night. …Viola was the radio link between your people and the Partisans. She told them where to go that night. [P238]  P244 They let him go then, rather to his surprise. It is not him they are after, and by then they have located and identified Viola. With his help. |
| 1946 | Rose is captured, her bodyguard, the soldier is killed but she escapes. | P246 In some building they began cutting open her arm with each question. After an hour they stopped. She must have somehow got away… |
| 1946 | Rose and Marsh Felon visit Paris together briefly. |  |
| 1946 | Walter ‘The Moth’ is killed in the Bark Theatre attack on N & R | P148 He had promised me once, by the light of a gas fire in Ruvigny Gardens, that he would stay with me until my mother came back. And he had. Then he slipped away from all of us that night when my mother returned. |
| 1946 | Rose leaves the intelligence service and moves into White Paint — N when not away at school lives with his mother at White Paint and during the summer works for their neighbour Sam Malakite who sells the vegetables he grows “on the periphery of the abandoned airfield at Metfield” in various town squares in the area. | P139 Sam Malakite “and his wife were my watched example of marital stability. His wife no doubt felt I lingered around too much. She was organized, ardently neat, whereas he was the rabbit’s wild brother…” |
| 1949 | N (18 yrs.) plays chess with Rose (40yr) in White Paint greenhouse.  N leaves White Paint to start college in Sept. |  |
| 1949 | Rose Williams is assassinated at White Paint. (Age 40 yrs.). Her funeral is held a few days later in the parish of Benacre in the Waveney district, 15 miles from White Paint. | P260 *When he comes, he will be like an Englishman*…But the person who came for RW was a young woman, somebody’s heir …dressed as a cross-country runner, no props or disguises. …The young woman fired again to make sure. And then she was running like a harrier over the fields as if she were my mother’s soul leaving her body; the way my mother herself had fled this house at age 18 …  P183 My mother had died in the early evening and Mr. Malakite found her about noon the next day. It was clear she had died instantly.  Marsh Felon (the tall man) attends her funeral and tells N: P182 “*Your mother was a remarkable woman.*” |
| 1949 | N stays in White Paint for 2 days after the funeral and discovers a hand-drawn map of what looked … like a chalk hill … no place names… a fragment” | P189 …my mother knew all of *La Comedie Humaine*, and I began wondering in which of the books she might have found a version of her own unrecorded life. Whose career did she trace, scattered within those novels, until she could understand herself more clearly? She would have known that *Le Bal de Sceaux* is the one book …in which Rastignac does not appear, but also that within it he is being constantly referred to. On a whim I pulled a copy of it from the shelf, flipped through, and inside, tucked between pages 122 and 123 found a hand-drawn map. …  P190 later photographs, the ones I had loved best, were no longer there. …The ones of Rose with her parents and the tall man…  P 191 N gets into Rose’s narrow sheetless bed in the dark and asks her [spirit] “Tell me about him…The man you lied to me about.”  P285 Before Sam Malakite gathered me up from White Paint on my last day there, I washed some of Rose’s clothes and dried them outside on the grass …ironed them…I took the cardigan and the shirts to her room and hung them in the cupboard and came downstairs. |
| 1957 | Sam Malakite dies | P142 Years later when I heard he had died, I held up my glass and said, “Only in open fields.” I was alone in a restaurant when I said this. |
| 1959 | N is offered a job in the Foreign Office as an intelligence assessment officer | P130 A decade after my mother’s death I received an invitation to apply to the Foreign Office. My recruitment for such a post seemed initially strange. …No one told me why I had been approached …accepting a job that included sifting through the details of the war, might … be a way of discovering what my mother had been doing during the period she left us …Perhaps there was now a chance of discovering that missing sequence in her life. It was the possibility of an inheritance. |
| 1959 | P132 The second wave of ‘correction’ after the “determined, almost apocalyptic censorship” during the closing stages of the war with the arrival of peace…The British were not alone in this instinct to conceal certain truths of war. | P133…the job was to unearth whatever evidence might still remain of actions that history might consider untoward, and which could still be found in stray reports and unofficial papers…it felt to some of us, …that it was no longer possible to see who held a correct moral position. |
| 1959 | N encounters Arthur McCash on the lift at work …and a second time when they go our for a meal |  |
| 1959 | After learning the map fragment is a ‘piece of intelligence,’ N projects it onto maps in the map room to discover its precise location. | P224 “where my mother had once briefly been based with a small unit sent in, as the report had stated to loosen the linch-pins of a post-war guerrilla group. Where one of them was killed and two of them were captured.  “*People behave disgracefully sometimes*,” my mother had once said to me  Rose: *My sins are various* |
| 1959 | N is asked to translate a recorded interrogation of an Englishman by a woman, both of whom are speaking Italian — who asks him bluntly about a massacre of civilians near Trieste and about the English involvement with Tito’s Partisans. |  |
| 1959 (November) | N buys the Malakite’s house for himself – N is 28 yrs. | P123…a modest house with a walled garden in a Suffolk village a few hours train ride from London. |
| 1960s | N discovers a book by Olive Lawrence in his local bookstore and learns it is the basis for an upcoming TV documentary. | P264 I had benefited from the clarity of female opinion in this person who had no close connection to me. In the brief time I knew her, I believed Olive Lawrence was on my side. I stood there and was perceived. |
| 1960s | N tracks down the Darter and finds him married to a woman named Sophie with a daughter named Pearl. N determines that Sophie is Agnes and her daughter is likely N’s biological daughter. |  |

**WARLIGHT Themes/Metaphors**

**‘Clarifying a fable’**

* p8 I am now at an age where I can talk about it, of how we grew up protected by the arms of strangers. And it is like clarifying a fable, about our parents, about Rachel and myself, and The Moth, as well as the others who joined us later. I suppose there are traditions and tropes in stories like this. Someone is given a test to carry out. No one knows who the truth bearer is. People are not who or where we think they are. And there is someone who watches from an unknown location. I remember how my mother loved to speak of those ambivalent tasks given to loyal knights in Arthurian legends, and how she told those stories to us, sometimes setting them in a specific small village in the Balkans or in Italy, which she claimed she had been to and found for us on a map.
* P127 N: Sam Malakite remained a mystery to me. No one really understands another’s life or even death.
* P203 Marsh Felon and Ruth Howard: “We need someone there on the east coast, by the way. Near where you used to live… To keep an eye on certain people. We’ve finished one war, but there’s probably another coming. …He studied … maps of farms belonging to people on her list. They had done nothing wrong, were only suspect. “We need to keep an eye on them in case of an invasion,” she’d said. “Their sympathies lie with Germany. You could slip in, leave no trace, a hit-and-run, as Lawrence [Olive Lawrence?] calls it. And that tool…what is it called?” “A long-flew knife.” “Yes. Good name.”

[Tarantino on why he made *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* and why the Manson murders continue to fascinate: “We’re fascinated by it, because at the end of the day, it almost seems unfathomable …The more your learn about … it doesn’t make it any clearer. It actually makes it more obscure the more you know. And the impossibility of being able to truly understand I think is what causes this fascination.”]

**Maps**

* Epigraph — “Most of the great battles are fought in the creases of topographical **maps**.”
  + Wikipedia: an epigraph is a phrase, [quotation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quotation), or [poem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poem) that is set at the beginning of a document or component. The epigraph may serve as a preface, as a summary, as a counter-example, or to link the work to a wider [literary canon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canon_(fiction)) either to invite comparison or to enlist a conventional context. In a book, it is part of the [front matter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Front_matter). Some writers, as Ondaatje has done here, use as epigraphs fictional quotations that purport to be related
* P7 “Even then I loved **maps**.”
* P14 we watched as she filled the steamer trunk with maps etc.
* P32 “ as a boy, I sat at my desk and drew detailed maps radiating out to the rest of the world. …as precisely as I could …each week, making sure of any new alteration as if what was not recorded might be a danger. I needed a safe zone.
* Details of the River Thames
* P110 There’s another map I learned by heart that I still have clear in my memory, which distinguishes what was river and what was canal or cut in those waterways north of the Thames.
* P124 …so together (N and Mrs. Malakite) we created a map of the garden
* P189 …my mother knew all of *La Comedie Humaine*, and I began wondering in which of the books she might have found a version of her own unrecorded life. Whose career did she trace, scattered within those novels, until she could understand herself more clearly? She would have known that *Le Bal de Sceaux* is the one book …in which Rastignac does not appear, but also that within it he is being constantly referred to. On a whim I pulled a copy of it from the shelf, flipped through, and inside, tucked between pages 122 and 123 found a hand-drawn map. …

**Permanence and lasting memories …**

* P44 Why do I still remember those days and nights at the Criterion—that springtime fragment of a boy’s youth…perhaps because it was the only time that boy was alone, a stranger among strangers, when he could choose his allies and opponent s for himself
* P117 “Always knives,” she murmured. “Felon often said they were going to come after us. Revenge. If not the survivors, the relatives, their children.” … “People don’t forget. Not even children. Why should they? …” She sounded bitter.
* P127 It had been a long time since I’d visited it regularly (the Malakite’s house), but almost immediately a past that felt completely erased began returning. And there was a hunger towards it I never had when days had slipped past me at the speed of a blink. [Memories]…That unforgotten thrush. That unforgettable ribbon.
* P204 Ruth Howard’s name appears in a confidential gov’t report about the continuing, unforgiving turbulence in Europe, on a note attached to someone’s angry scrawl: *We find ourselves in a “collage’ in which nothing has moved into the past and no wounds have healed with time, in which everything is present, open and bitter, in which everything coexists*

… **vs Impermanence and lost memories**

* P33 …with time the Fleet ended its life as a path for sewage. …Nothing lasts. Not even literary or artistic fame protects worldly things around us. …In much the same way I believed my carefully recorded buildings…were dangerously temporary, in the way great buildings had been lost during the war, in the way we lose mothers and fathers.
* P47 the chronology of events has fallen apart, for whatever defensive reason.
* P50 fear about the effects of epilepsy, that frequent fits impaired a person’s memory
* p114 Is this how we discover the truth, evolve? By gathering together such unconfirmed fragments? Not only of my mother, but of Agnes, Rachel, Mr. Nkoma…Will all of them who have remained incomplete and lost to me become clear and evident when I look back? …You return to that earlier time armed with the present, and no matter how dark that world was, you do not leave it unlit. You take your adult self with you. It is not to be a reliving, but a rewitnessing. Unless of course you wish, like my sister, to damn and enact revenge on the whole pack of them.
* P81 N: I felt I was a caterpillar changing colour, precariously balanced, moving from one species of leaf to another.

**Moving between darkness and light** P7 “The lights on the map that identified those cities and ports were unlit during the weekends, in darkness much like those far outposts.”

* P13 driving without lights to the coast
* P21 “It was a night with what our grandmother called “a bomber’s moon”—the city, towns, and villages in blackout but the land below clear in the moonlight
* P32 these years later, as I write all this down, …I feel as if I do so by candlelight, As if I cannot see what is taking place in the dark beyond the movement of this pencil. These feel like moments without context.
* P39 N working as a lift jockey at night delivering upwards artworks stored in the Criterion cellars — now being ‘lifted back into the light.’  …So many saints and heroes I never knew.
* P81 We continued through the dark, quiet waters of the river, feeling we owned it, as far as the estuary. We passed industrial buildings, their lights muted, faint as stars, as if we were in a time capsule of the war years when blackouts and curfews had been in effect, when there was just warlight and only blind barges were allowed to move along this stretch of river.
* P217 At night everyone disappears, and 500 pound bombs and high-explosive incendiaries whistle down on the sparsely populated houses and streets, so it seems as light as day.
* On Rose’s gravestone: **“I have travel’d thro’ Perils & Darkness not unlike a Champion”**

LETTERS OF WILLIAM BLAKE.

… I promised to Mrs. Butts. I answer I have not, till now, in any degree pleased myself, and now I must entreat you to excuse faults, for portrait-painting is the direct contrary to designing and historical painting, in every respect. If you have not nature before you for every touch, you cannot paint portrait; and if you have nature before you at all, you cannot paint history. It was Michael Angelo's opinion, and is mine. Pray give my wife's love with mine to Mrs. Butts. Assure her that it cannot be long before I have the pleasure of painting from you in person, and then she may expect a likeness. But now I have done all I could, and know she will forgive any failure in consideration of the endeavour. And now let me finish with assuring you that, though I have been very unhappy, I am so no longer. I am again emerged into the light of day; I still and shall to eternity embrace Christianity, and adore Him who is the express image of God; but I have travelled through perils and darkness not unlike a champion. I have conquered, and shall go on conquering. Nothing can withstand the fury of my course among the stars of God and in the abysses of the accuser. My enthusiasm is still what it was, only enlarged and confirmed.

**Protection**

* P8 “we grew up protected by the arms of strangers’
* P13 “It’s a nightingale floor,” our grandmother told us. “It warns us of thieves in the night.”
* P32 It was a strange warning to be given, to accept that nothing was safe anymore. …My sister and I got used to parroting the word back to each other—“*schwer*.”
* p33 As if I am protected from the past, where there’s still a fear of recalling The Moth’s face lit by a gas fire while I asked question after question trying to force an unknown door ajar.
* P34 What was it that allowed us to be so seemingly unconcerned about the absence of our parents?
* P34 …There were times I thought the Moth was dangerous…he did not know, as a single man, how to speak the truth to children…The Moth breaking apart an order that should have existed safely in our house. …This man we had thought of as being quiet and shy now seemed dangerous with secrets.
* P36 the house seemed to have collided with the world outside
* P49 The tensions we felt whenever The Moth left home were the result of …the knowledge that The Darter had permission to oversee us with that grudging, uninterested concern.
* P50 N: we choose whatever life we feel safest in; for me it is a distant village, a walled garden. But Rachel tossed away such concerns. “It’s just ‘schwer,’”
* P75 Our involvement with these river activities had begun the afternoon The Darter overheard us talking about the approaching weekend. Casually…he asked The Moth if we might happen to be free to help him out with something or other. “Day work or night work?” “Probably both.” “And is it safe?”…”Absolutely safe,” The Darter answered loudly, looking towards the two of us, offering a false smile and suggesting complete security with an offhand wave.
* P116 “We knew they were following Nathanial. A group from Yugoslavia. Perhaps Italians. We’re not sure yet.”
* P213 Felon: You need to know not just how to enter a battle zone but how to get out of it. Wars don’t end. They never remain in the past. ‘*Seville to wound, Cordoba to die in.*’
* P125 N: “I’ve always been comforted by the security of a walled garden, ever since my teens.” …I had thought of this place so often. The warmth within its walls, its shaded light, the sense of safety I always found there.”

**Disguise /hiding places**

* P6 Ours was a family with a habit for nicknames, which meant it was also a family of **disguises**.
* P16 There’s a photograph …of my mother in which her features are barely revealed. …This almost anonymous person, balanced awkwardly, holding on to her own safety. Already incognito.
* P48 The Moth was content to move in The Darter’s slipstream. Shy people are drawn to such types for camouflage.
* P50 of the Darter—We knew he liked to breast his cards.
* P51 of the Darter— He’d never stepped inside a theatre in his life. The idea of watching someone pretend to be real …felt untrustworthy to him and as a man on the edge of the law he needed to feel secure about how reliable the truth was that he was hearing. Only cinemas appealed to him; for some reason he believed truth had been caught there.

**Rooms**

* P24 The Ivor Novello Room —one of the banquet **rooms** in the Criterion
* [Cardiff-born, Ivor Novello was a major figure in the British **theatre.** He began life as a composer, and wrote many songs for revues and operettas. Almost by accident he became a leading star in silent films and was known as the handsomest man in England, with a following that put him in the same league as Rudolph Valentino. He then turned to the theatre and won more acclaim as a stage actor. A fourth career opened when he started writing plays that consolidated his already considerable West End reputation. The biography of Ivor Novello, who was among the most naturally gifted figures the theatre has ever known.]
* P24 The Miguel Invernio Room —another of the banquet rooms in the Criterion  — ???
* P26 “Rachel made me follow her down to the **basement**, and there, under a tarpaulin and several boxes that she had pulled away, was our mother’s steamer trunk”

**From imprisonment to freedom**

* P39 of the Darter…”we believed, unfairly, that at some point he may have spent a few months of his life in …a prison cell. We were curious about prisons.
* P40 of the Darter…”We thought him the kind of man who would be most at ease escaping through a claustrophobic tunnel.”
* P40 half believed my mother had never gone to the Far East but had returned to Wormwood Scrubs prison to carry out her postponed sentence for some criminal act or other.

**Love and sexuality**

* P108 The D, in this sudden new role as my father, took on a protective and avuncular air with Agnes. She, surprised by his manner, thought he was a ‘card.” …He got on with the parents but he loved Agnes, and so I came to love Agnes too. I started to recognize aspects of her through The D’s eyes. He had that quick awareness about people.
* P221 N re his mother and Felon: …this was not just physical love and desire: it encompassed the neighbouring skills and possibilities of their surrounding work. The knowledge of how to retreat if contact with the other was broken. …The whole dictionary of love, war, work, education, growing up, growing older.

**Connecting and communicating with others**

* P13 as far as **radio** programmes went she was more at ease lying on the chaise …listening to The Naturalist’s Hour on the BBC
* P47 before the school start bell …talking with schoolmates about radio shows they’ heard the night before
* P77 The Darter also had a mouthful of **whistles, for every barge**, he told us, had its own signal. …It was the only signal you were allowed to use over the water as recognition or a warning, and each whistle was based on a birdcall.
* P78 N learns from The Darter: …But I now discovered The Darter was **an easy man to learn from**. He cared less about you than The Moth did, but told you precisely what he needed you to do, as well as what about him was to be kept from others. “Breast your cards, N,” he’d say, “always breast your cards.”

**Being secretive/betrayal**

* P78 The Darter to N: “Breast your cards, N,” he’d say, “always breast your cards.”
* P79 N knew about The Darter’s “intricately dovetailed relationships with women” from “having to provide alibis for him or deliver false messages from a public phone box that would excuse his absence some evenings. Women could never be certain of his exact hours of work, let alone what the work actually was.
* P89 The Darter asked Rachel and me to leaf through the 300pglist of criminals and find him there. But of course we could not. “They have absolutely no idea who I am!” he exclaimed proudly.
* P93 Agnes of World’s End. Of Agnes Street, of Mill Hill, and Limeburner’s Yard where she had lost that cocktail dress. I knew even then I needed to keep this part of my life away from The Darter and The Moth. Theirs was the world I was living in after my parents disappeared. And the world of Agnes was where I now escaped to alone.
* P106 There was no one I [N] liked as much to have beside me. [Agnes] And at the same moment there was a relief in us being possibly finished. Because …it was becoming too difficult to explain my double life.
* P112 W
* with the help of such false information our life on the barge became even more domestic.

**Family breakdown**

* P89 There was never sentimentality in The Darter about heritage or ownership. He scorned bloodlines among dogs as well as humans. “It’s never your family that’s the problem,” he announced, as if quoting some surprisingly overlooked line from the Book of Job, “it’s your damn relatives! Ignore them! Find out who can be a valuable father. It’s important to disturb rare bloodlines with changelings.” The Darter had never kept in touch with his own family. After all, they had practically sold him into the Pimlico boxing rings at sixteen.”
* P97 What kind of family were we a part of now? In retrospect Rachel and I were not too different in our anonymity from the dogs with their fictional papers. Like them we had broken free, adapting to fewer rules, less order. But what had we become? … Did my assignations with Agnes insert a thief’s guile into my nature?
* P126 I used to wonder how affectionate and close the bond was between the Malakites.

**Steamer trunk/coffin**

* P14 maybe she believed that the specifics and calmness of **packing a large trunk** would assure us of the sanity of her journey rather than make us feel even more bereft. It was almost as if we expected her to climb into that black wooden trunk, so much like a coffin

**Falling from a height**

The family on the roof — thatchers — a bearded man and his three sons — the youngest ‘Marsh’

P36 What The Moth chooses to play on the gramophone …felt more like a storm, something tumbling from a great height

**Explosives**

**P 162 I recall asking my mother once what had made her begin to like Mr. Malakite for it was clear she was very fond of him…”I must say, it was when he interrupted a conversation we were having to say, ‘I think I smell cordite.” …It was a branch of knowledge I was familiar with.”**

**Cordite**, a [propellant](https://www.britannica.com/science/propellant) of the double-base type, so called because of its customary but not universal cordlike shape. It was invented by British chemists [Sir James Dewar](https://www.britannica.com/biography/James-Dewar) and [Sir Frederick Augustus Abel](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Frederick-Augustus-Abel) in 1889 and later saw use as the standard [explosive](https://www.britannica.com/technology/explosive) of the [British Army](https://www.britannica.com/topic/British-Army). Double-base propellants generally contain [nitrocellulose](https://www.britannica.com/science/nitrocellulose) (guncotton), a liquid organic [nitrate](https://www.britannica.com/science/nitrate) (e.g., [nitro-glycerine](https://www.britannica.com/science/nitroglycerin)) having the property of gelatinizing nitrocellulose, and a stabilizer. The amounts of these ingredients may vary but generally have contained 30 to 40 percent nitro-glycerine and 5 percent [petroleum jelly](https://www.britannica.com/science/petroleum-jelly) as a stabilizing agent. Cordite is soluble in [acetone](https://www.britannica.com/science/acetone), which is used in [colloiding](https://www.britannica.com/science/colloid) the mixture. The original cordite (Cordite Mark I), as manufactured at the royal [gunpowder](https://www.britannica.com/technology/gunpowder) factory at Waltham Abbey, [England](https://www.britannica.com/place/England), in 1890, was composed of 37 parts of guncotton, 57.5 parts of nitro-glycerine, and 5 parts of mineral jelly together with 0.5 percent of acetone. Because of its large content of nitro-glycerine, this cordite had a high temperature of explosion and produced considerable erosion of [big guns](https://www.britannica.com/technology/artillery).

**The ‘first date’ of The Darter and Olive Lawrence at a Greek Restaurant where they dine on goat and 2 bottles of red wine, and the Darter insists they eat “the cooked head”**

**Symbolism of the Goat**

http://www.johnpratt.com/items/docs/lds/meridian/2009/scapegoat.html

In the law of Moses, the scapegoat bore the burden of the sins of the people. Did the goat represent Christ or Satan?

The elaborate "scapegoat" ceremony from the Law of Moses is one of the most puzzling rites of all. Alfred Edersheim, a noted scholar in the field, admitted, "Everything about it seems strange and mysterious."[[1]](http://www.johnpratt.com/items/docs/lds/meridian/2009/scapegoat.html#fn1) This article looks at the ceremony in some detail to appreciate the enigma, considers two opposite interpretations, and then offers a proposed solution.

**The Scapegoat**

What is a "scapegoat" and what is the origin of that word? The word scapegoat has two meanings. The most common is "one that bears the blame for others." That person may or may not be guilty. The original meaning was "a goat upon whose head are symbolically placed the sins of the people after which he is sent into the wilderness in the biblical ceremony for Yom Kippur" (the Day of Atonement).[[2]](http://www.johnpratt.com/items/docs/lds/meridian/2009/scapegoat.html#fn2) The word was invented by William Tyndale in his 1530 English translation of the Bible. He translated the Hebrew word "Azazel", which only occurs in connection with this ceremony, as "ez azel" the "goat" (ez) which "escapes" (azel). That seems like a good translation because in the ceremony the goat is indeed released in the wilderness. The King James version followed his lead, as have many modern translations.

This brings us already to the first confusing meaning of this word and of the ceremony itself. On the one hand, the goat takes upon him the sins of the people, and on the other hand, he is set free in the wilderness. The first meaning of the word given above refers to one who is blamed (and usually punished) for the sins of others, but the ceremonial goat seems to be more of an "escape goat" that ends up going free. That is the first clue that there may be a puzzle here that needs to be solved. …

1.1 The Ceremony

Day 10 Tishri on the Hebrew Calendar—occurring usually in late September or early October— is the "Day of Atonement" (Yom Kippur), the holiest day of the year on which several rituals are performed. One, described in Leviticus 16 is performed to atone for the sins of the people. …

Two nearly identical he-goats chosen from the congregation of the children of Israel are presented to the high priest. He "casts lots" to determine which is "for Jehovah" and which "for Azazel" (Lev. 16:2,7,8, where Azazel is often translated "scapegoat"). He does this by reaching with both hands into a large golden urn that contains two lots, identical in size, shape and material. He picks one in each hand, one "for Jehovah" and the other "for Azazel". The goats stand on either side of the priest and the fate of each goat is determined by the lot in the hand on that side. The goat selected "for Jehovah" is sacrificed for a sin offering to atone for the sins of the people, and its blood is sprinkled on the mercy seat (Lev. 16:9, 15-16). Afterward, the high priest lays both his hands on the head of the living goat chosen "for Azazel" and thereby puts upon him all the iniquities of the children of Israel. Then, as prescribed by the law, an appointed man leads this goat into and releases it in the wilderness, a land not inhabited. That man then has to ritually wash himself to be cleansed (Lev. 16:21, 22, 26)…. In actual practice, however, this goat is not released to freedom but to die a miserable death. Most commentators are quick to point out that the custom must have been added after the law had been given, but even so, it clearly indicates that the understanding of the celebrants was not that the goat was released to freedom.

… The Hebrew word "azel" which Tyndale translated "escape" is better translated as "go away completely" or "go away forever" as in "their power is gone" (Deut. 32:36). My suggestion for the best translation of Azazel is "banished goat".

1.2 Christian Interpretation

After the Savior lived, it became evident to Christians that the law of Moses had been given to symbolize Christ. For example, Paul explained that the law of Moses "was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24), a "shadow of good things to come" (Heb. 10:1). Early Christians immediately noted that the Passover lamb sacrificed each spring symbolized the Saviour (1 Cor. 5:7).

The Christian interpretation of the scapegoat has seemed obvious. The scapegoat bore all the sins of Israel and so did Christ. The scriptures make it clear that Christ suffered for our sins and paid for them in full. That is the whole point of the Atonement, and that is a core belief of true Christians. … In every Christian interpretation known to me, the scapegoat is said to represent Christ.

1.3 The Enigma

But there are several problems with that interpretation, …For starters, the goat usually represents evil. Christ compared his followers to sheep, but those who did evil to goats (see Mat. 25:32-46). So why would an (evil) goat be used to symbolize Christ? Where does scripture even suggest that He was the "Goat of God"?

…And if the scapegoat represents Christ who bore all of our sins, then what was the point of sacrificing the other goat to pay for them? Most commentators have concluded that both goats represent Christ, but cannot explain the difference between them.

If both goats were said to atone for or bear mankind's sins, why are two goats necessary? …The standard answer is that only Christ suffered for our sins, so they must both symbolize Him. But when was it that Christ was led into the uninhabited wilderness to be banished forever? Why is it worth mentioning that the scapegoat was led by an "appointed" (translated "fit" in the KJV) man? Does he represent someone in particular? And if it was Christ he was leading, why was that man "unclean" afterward?

… What is the point of the elaborate ceremony where lots are chosen to determine the fate of each? If two animals are needed for some reason, why not just sacrifice one and let the other one go as was done with birds in the cleansing of a leper (Lev. 14:1-7)? Why have spectators witness the high priest determine which goat was which? Who cares which goat is chosen? Surely the answer has something to do with the fact that one was "for Jehovah" and the other "for Azazel", so another question is, what does Azazel really mean?

3.1 Azazel is Satan

The Book of Enoch explains that Azazel is a name for Satan. If so, then the scapegoat does not represent just any false Christ, but the greatest false Christ of all. In fact, it brings to mind the scene before this earth was created, where two great spirits stood before God, one being Jesus Christ (Jehovah) and the other Satan (Azazel): And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me. And another answered and said: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first. (Abraham 3:27). At that time, Satan used the identical wording of Jesus. It is as if he were trying to appear to be an equally good choice to be the Christ. Moreover, God himself is making the judgment between the two candidates. And afterward Satan is cast out of heaven, down to the earth where presumably no man had yet dwelt.

That episode truly seems to match the scapegoat ceremony well. Two nearly identical sounding candidates to be the Christ appear before God, who is represented by the high priest, and who judges between them to pick the true Christ. That emphasizes why the decision made by lots was important enough to be done publicly by the high priest. And then one goat goes on to become the atoning sacrifice and the other is cast out (released into the wilderness). If that scene was indeed intended to be represented by the scapegoat ceremony, then the symbolism is truly rich.

If Azazel is Satan, then what about the fact that all sins of mankind are put on the scapegoat? It is that single point that has caused Christian scholars to reject this hypothesis and to identify both goats as Christ. Edersheim, in his 18-page description of this one ceremony, rejects this possibility in one sentence, stating that it has "insurmountable difficulties" and implying that they are so obvious as not to require even mentioning. …So is Satan responsible for all sin? Does he in fact carry the weight of the sins of all mankind?

3.2 Satan Responsible for Sin

When shown to be guilty of sin, people have offered the defense, "The devil made me do it." We can chuckle at that because it would mean that man is not accountable for his actions, and hence should not be punished for sin. Clearly the devil never "makes" us do anything; we have our agency. Great discourses have been given about how we are each responsible for our own actions, and that it is our job to resist Satan's temptations. …

Nevertheless, there is still truth in the concept that Satan is ultimately responsible for all sin. Clearly he deserves some guilt because he does not usually lay evil out in the open, with all its consequences, or he would get very few followers. Rather, he deceives, lies, ensnares, tricks and only shows the "instant gratification" side of his ways, rather than being up front about the whole package deal he is offering. His goal is to enslave all mankind into his power.

Thus, it could well be that at the Judgment Day many will indeed use the defense that they really have been hornswoggled and never would have sinned if only they had not been deceived. But part of our test here on earth is to see if we can discern the difference between Christ and Satan. That is the very "scapegoat dilemma" each of us must face: "Which is the True Voice to heed?" Christ's sheep know His voice (John 10:3-4). Those who choose Satan may not qualify for either the celestial or terrestrial kingdoms. But the final judgment between the celestial kingdom and sons of perdition is deferred until the end of the Millennium, after Satan has been bound for a thousand years. It has been suggested that the whole purpose of binding Satan might be to determine who was really deceived (celestial) and who actually prefers to follow Satan (sons of perdition).

… Consider what the Book of Enoch has to say on the subject. Raphael, one of the seven chief angels of God, is told by the Lord, "And the whole earth has been corrupted through the works that were taught by Azazel: to him ascribe all sin" ([Enoch 10:12](http://www.johnpratt.com/items/docs/enoch.html#Enoch_10:12)). There it is in one sentence. Satan is said to bear the responsibility and guilt for all sin on earth.

If so, then it makes perfect sense to lay all our guilt on the goat representing Azazel. In that sense, Satan is entirely guilty and responsible for all sin, but Christ is perfectly innocent and yet suffers and pays for all our sins. So two goats are indeed necessary to show the complete picture. Now we come to the question of whether Azazel gets off the hook and is released to run free in the wilderness because of Christ's atonement, or whether he too must suffer for his sins. Indeed, will he someday also be punished for all the sins of mankind? Raphael was the angel who binds Satan, and that the bottomless pit corresponds to the cavern opening up in the earth filled with jagged stones. Then both books agree that the final end of Satan is that he is cast into the lake of fire (see also 2 Nephi 9:16,19; 28:23; Jacob 3:11; D&C 76:36).

4. Conclusion

The results of this investigation suggest that the standard Christian interpretation of the scapegoat as representing Christ is probably in error. The more straightforward Hebrew interpretation that Azazel is Satan can be explained in terms of Christian doctrine by the Book of Enoch. In particular, the goat "for Jehovah" is indeed Jesus Christ, who atoned and was sacrificed for all the sins of mankind. But the other goat, the scapegoat "for Azazel," also bears the weight of the sins of all mankind because Satan (Azazel) is ultimately responsible for them all. And he will be punished for them, first by being cast into the bottomless pit, and later by being thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone at the last day. This ceremony teaches these two truths simultaneously.

One practical lesson to be learned is that it can be very difficult to judge between the two nearly identical goats, representing Christ and a false Christ. Jesus appeared to the Jews to be a false Christ. They believed He performed His miracles by Satan's power (Luke 11:15) and some may have thought they were doing Jehovah a service by crucifying Him (compare John 16:2). Even though they were fulfilling scriptural prophecy, the Jews chose poorly between Barabbas and Christ.

Perhaps next time the choice will be between two lambs instead of two goats (Rev. 13:11). Satan is the great deceiver and can do miracles (Rev. 13:13-15). He disguises himself in sheep's clothing (Mat. 7:15). The Saviour warned us not to be deceived by false Christs who will show great signs and wonders, who will, were it possible, deceive the very elect (Mat. 24:24).

If we had to choose between two candidates, both of whom claimed to be Christ, to do miracles and to have the power to save us, would we vote for the One who is indeed the true Saviour? Would we go along with the screaming crowd and cast our vote against Christ, or would we have the courage to stand against the throng and heed the still, small voice that testifies of the true Son of God?

**Why goats are associated with Satan— The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats**

Sheep are loyal. They follow the Son of God, metaphorically a shepherd. Goats, on the other hand, are disobedient and difficult.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

NIV, Matthew 25:31-33

We see here that goats are being used as metaphor for sin in Matthew, very early in the development of the Christian church. In setting the sheep on his right hand, Jesus gives them a favored position. The goats, on the other hand....

Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

NIV, Matthew 25:41-43



The original goat pentagram first appeared in the book La Clef de la Magie Noire by French occultist [Stanislas de Guaita](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanislas_de_Guaita), in 1897. This symbol would later become synonymous with Baphomet, and is commonly referred to as the Sabbatic Goat. [Samael](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samael) is a figure in [Talmudic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talmud) lore, and [Lilith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lilith) is a female demon in [Jewish mythology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_mythology). The Hebrew letters at the five points of the pentagram spell out [Leviathan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leviathan), a mythic creature in Jewish lore. This symbol was later adapted by the [Church of Satan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Satan) in 1969 and officially named the [Sigil of Baphomet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigil_of_Baphomet)

**‘Olive Lawrence”**

Wikipedia

The olive branch is a [symbol of peace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_symbols) or victory deriving from the customs of [ancient Greece](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greece) and found in most cultures of the [Mediterranean basin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean_basin). It became associated with peace in modern Europe and is also used in the Arab world….

For the Romans, there was an intimate relationship between war and peace, and [Mars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mars_(mythology)), the god of war, had another aspect, Mars Pacifer, Mars the bringer of Peace, who is shown on coins of the later Roman Empire bearing an olive branch.

… The olive branch appears with a dove in early [Christian art](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_art). The dove derives from the simile of the [Holy Spirit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Spirit) in the [Gospels](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospels) and the olive branch from classical symbolism. The early Christians, according to [Winckelmann](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Joachim_Winckelmann), often allegorised peace on their sepulchres by the figure of a dove bearing an olive branch in its beak.

…  On July 4, 1776, a resolution was passed that allowed the creation of the [Great Seal of the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Seal_of_the_United_States). On the Great Seal, there is an eagle grasping an olive branch in its right talon. The olive branch traditionally has been recognized as a symbol for peace. It was added to the seal in March 1780 by the second committee appointed by Congress to design the seal. **The olive branch has thirteen olives and thirteen olive leaves to represent the thirteen original colonies.** Later on, the bald eagle and bundle of thirteen arrows were added. The idea of the olive branch opposing the bundle of thirteen arrows was to "denote the power of peace & war which is exclusively vested in Congress."

… Several towns have been named Olive Branch as a symbol of peaceful living, such as [Olive Branch, Mississippi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olive_Branch,_Mississippi). Some [Western](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_world) given names and surnames, such as "**Oliver"**, "Olivier" and "Olifant" allude to an olive branch.

**Saint Lawrence or Laurence** ([Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_language): Laurentius, lit. "[laurelled](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laurel_wreath)"; 31 December AD 225 —10 August 258) was one of the seven deacons of the city of [Rome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome), [Italy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy), under [Pope Sixtus II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Sixtus_II)  [martyred](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyr) in the [persecution of the Christians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Christians) ordered by the [Roman Emperor Valerian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valerian_(emperor))  in 258.

Lawrence encountered the future [Pope Sixtus II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Sixtus_II), who was of Greek origin and one of the most famous and highly esteemed teachers, in Caesar Augusta (today [Zaragoza](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaragoza)). Eventually, both left [Spain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spain) for [Rome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome). When Sixtus became the [Pope](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope) in 257, he ordained Lawrence as a [deacon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deacon), and though Lawrence was still young appointed him first among the seven deacons who served in the [patriarchal church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchal_church). He is therefore called "[archdeacon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archdeacon) of Rome", a position of great trust that included the care of the treasury and riches of the Church and the distribution of alms to the indigent.

… At the beginning of August 258, the [Emperor Valerian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emperor_Valerian) issued an edict that all [bishops](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishops), [priests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Priests), and deacons should immediately be put to death. Pope Sixtus II was captured on 6 August 258, at the [cemetery of St Callixtus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catacomb_of_Callixtus) while celebrating the [liturgy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liturgy) and executed forthwith.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Lawrence#cite_note-moraglia-6)

After the death of Sixtus, the [prefect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prefect) of Rome demanded that Lawrence turn over the riches of the Church. [St Ambrose](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Ambrose) is the earliest source for the narrative that Lawrence asked for three days to gather the wealth. He worked swiftly to distribute as much Church property to the indigent as possible, so as to prevent its being seized by the prefect. On the third day, at the head of a small delegation, he presented himself to the prefect, and when ordered to deliver the treasures of the Church he presented the indigent, the crippled, the blind, and the suffering, and declared that these were the true treasures of the Church. One account records him declaring to the prefect, "The Church is truly rich, far richer than your emperor." The prefect was so angry that he had a great gridiron prepared with hot coals beneath it, and had Lawrence placed on it, hence Lawrence's association with the gridiron. After the martyr had suffered pain for a long time, the legend concludes, he cheerfully declared: "I'm well done on this side. Turn me over!" From this St. Lawrence derives his patronage of [cooks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cook_(profession)), [chefs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chef), and [comedians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comedian).



**Greyhounds/Racing dogs**

* P35 What’s the most undetectable drug to give a racing dog?
* P76 We had not been aware of the existence of such moveable cargo, did not know of the strict laws countering the illegal importing of animals into Britain. But The Darter appeared to know everything.
* P78 There was no assurance about these animals as racing dogs, no knowledge whether they were fast or slow. All that was valuable about them was that they provided “the unknown element” and, as the public was uncertain about their worth, it guaranteed reckless betting— …A reckless bet meant active money.
* P86 [The Darter] had finessed the art of doping, not so much to give dogs strength and endurance, but to cause a hypnotic slowness in them, by feeding them Luminal, a tranquilizer used for epileptic seizures.
* P90 Never having had a dog in my life, I chose to sit in the back with their heat-seeking muzzles reaching over to rest on my shoulder. They were quick, mischievous company for a boy who was a solitary.

**Birds—Nests—Birdcalls—Fable-like characteristics**

**Playing chess in the greenhouse**

#### Notes on Balzac from Wikipedia

Some critics consider Balzac's writing exemplary of [naturalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_literature_of_the_19th_century#Naturalism)—a more pessimistic and analytical form of realism, which seeks to explain human behaviour as intrinsically linked with the environment. French novelist [Émile Zola](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89mile_Zola) declared Balzac the father of the [naturalist novel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naturalism_(literature)). Zola indicated that whilst the [Romantics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanticism) saw the world through acoloured lens, the naturalist sees through a clear glass—precisely the sort of effect Balzac attempted to achieve in his works.

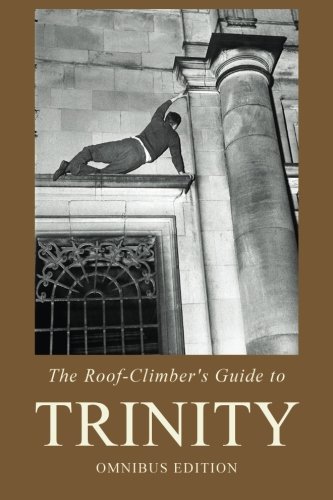
Balzac sought to present his characters as real people, neither fully good nor fully evil, but completely human. "To arrive at the truth", he wrote in the preface to [Le Lys dans la vallée](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_of_the_Valley_(novel)), "writers use whatever literary device seems capable of giving the greatest intensity of life to their characters". "Balzac's characters", Robb notes, "were as real to him as if he were observing them in the outside world". This reality was noted by playwright [Oscar Wilde](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Wilde), who said: "One of the greatest tragedies of my life is the death of [Illusions Perdues protagonist] Lucien de Rubempré.... It haunts me in my moments of pleasure. I remember it when I laugh".

At the same time, the characters depict a particular range of social types: the noble soldier, the scoundrel, the proud workman, the fearless spy, the alluring mistress. That Balzac was able to balance the strength of the individual against the representation of the type is evidence of the author's skill. One critic explained that "there is a center and a circumference to Balzac's world".

Balzac's use of repeat characters, moving in and out of the Comédie's books, strengthens the realist representation. "When the characters reappear", notes Rogers, "they do not step out of nowhere; they emerge from the privacy of their own lives which, for an interval, we have not been allowed to see". He also used a realist technique which French novelist [Marcel Proust](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcel_Proust) later termed "retrospective illumination", whereby a character's past is revealed long after she or he first appears.

# The Roof-Climber's Guide to Trinity: Omnibus Edition Paperback – Mar 20 2013

by [Geoffrey Winthrop Young](https://www.amazon.ca/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&field-author=Geoffrey+Winthrop+Young&search-alias=books-ca) (Author), [John Hurst](https://www.amazon.ca/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_2?ie=UTF8&field-author=John+Hurst&search-alias=books-ca) (Author), [Richard Williams](https://www.amazon.ca/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_3?ie=UTF8&field-author=Richard+Williams&search-alias=books-ca) (Author)



**TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY EXTREME SPORT**

*“The distant towers of the Great, New and Cloister Courts looming against the dark sky, lit by the flickering lamps far below; the gradations of light and shadow, marked by an occasional moving black speck seemingly in another world; the sheer wall descending into darkness at his side, above which he has been half-suspended on his long ascent; the almost invisible barrier that the battlements from which he started seem to make to his terminating in the Cloisters if his arm slips; all contribute to making this deservedly esteemed the finest view point in the College Alps.”*

By turns sage and foolhardy, the advice contained within represents the cumulative experience of three inquisitive, ambitious and daring men – the authors of the three editions of The Roof-Climber’s Guide to Trinity – and their accomplices. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young, John Hurst and Richard Williams were each their generations’ luminaries in an historic sport, now known as Night Climbing; one by its very nature sparsely populated and largely anonymous.

**THE ORIGINAL NIGHT CLIMBING CLASSIC**

This Omnibus Edition contains the full texts and images from each of those editions, as well as the appendices to the First Edition, and features a special introduction by Richard Williams, author of the Third Edition, in which he details the collected wisdom and history of Night Climbing, and finally removes the cloak of anonymity that has until now protected the identities of those first intrepid nocturnal explorers.

Although many may baulk at the methods described in the narrative, few could question the diligence spent obtaining that content, or deny the impeccable locution and erudition displayed in presenting the illicit achievements in this cult classic. As the Guide itself posits, its existence *“will have been justified if it has succeeded in providing the young stegophilist making his first night venture upon the Trinity Roofs with a clue, however poor, to the creditable unravelling of their somewhat complex mazes.”*

Wikipedia **Notes on the *foibe* massacres**

The "foibe massacres," or simply "the foibe," refers to mass killings in which the corpses were thrown into [foibas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foiba) (deep natural [sinkholes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinkhole); by extension also mine shafts etc.), perpetrated mainly by [Yugoslav Partisans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yugoslav_Partisans), mainly in [Venezia Giulia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venezia_Giulia), [Istria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Istria) and [Dalmatia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalmatia), against the local Italian population, during and after [World War II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II). In a wider … sense it is sometimes used in reference to all disappearances or killings of Italian people in the territories occupied by Yugoslav forces, thus excluding possible 'foibe' killings by other parties or forces.

**WARLIGHT Reviews**

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In [Michael Ondaatje’s](https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/michael-ondaatje) new book, warlight is the word for the twilight that shrouded London during the [bombings of World War II](https://www.britannica.com/event/the-Blitz), when lights were dimmed to avoid lighting the way for German bombs. It’s hard to imagine a more apt title for this dreamlike novel by the author of “The English Patient,” a story of secrets and revelations that unfolds like a night-blooming flower.

“In 1945 our parents went away and left us in the care of two men who may have been criminals,” writes Nathaniel, the narrator. The reason for his parents’ departure — a year’s stay in Singapore — is a cover story, as Nathaniel and his sister, Rachel, learn when they find a trunk that their mother, Rose, ostentatiously packed in front of them, creating a story for each garment, hidden in the basement.

Their minders are two men, and the teenagers name them the Moth and the Darter, Dickensian nicknames for men who live in the margins of the law. Freed from the constraints of parental supervision, Nathaniel roams the back alleys of postwar London. He falls in love. The Moth gets him a job at a great hotel, where from the wings Nathaniel watches him supervise an elaborate choreography: “All morning he organized the silver polishers and cake decorators, the oilers of trolley wheels and lift gates, the lint and vomit removers, the replacers of soap at each sink, the replacers of chlorine medallions in the urinals and the men hosing the pavement outside the entrance, as well as immigrants who squeezed out English names they had never spelled before onto birthday cakes, diced up onions, slashed open pigs with terrible knives, or did whatever else would be desired twelve hours later in the Ivor Novello Room or the Miguel Invernio Room,” writes Ondaatje in just one of many gorgeous sentences in this book (filmmakers will draw blood for the rights to this story).

Nathaniel’s expeditions with the Darter, floating the cuts and canals north of the Thames on a barge, smuggling illicit greyhounds to illegal races, have the texture of a dream that hovers on the edge of nightmare.

The teenagers’ sojourn in this half-lit world ends with an act of shocking violence, and the rest of “Warlight” follows what comes afterward, notably Nathaniel’s quest to discover the truth about his parents, a secret rooted in the “unauthorized and still violent war” that continued after the end of World War II.

Nathaniel learns that his family’s dissolution was the result of their mother’s war work, but despite his brief reunion with her in postwar Suffolk, she never reveals the truth. After her death, Nathaniel becomes a cog in Britain’s postwar intelligence machine, where he unearths her story and that of a third shadowy figure in the story of his mother’s past, the mysterious Marsh Felon.

“Warlight” is a spy story, a mother-son story and a love story.

**LEM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**1. What kind of ‘book’ is this?**

[*www.cbc.ca/books/75-facts-you-might-not-know-about-michael-ondaatje-for-his-75th-birthday-1.4818926]*

“Ondaatje calls his novels "[cubist](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/06/04/the-aesthete-2" \t "_blank)," by which he means that he eschews linear narratives and experiments with the form.”

“Ondaatje admires the music of [American saxophonist Ornette Coleman](https://www.npr.org/2018/05/17/612082798/author-michael-ondaatje-returns-to-world-war-ii-era-with-warlight" \t "_blank) and adopts the musician's creative approach to his own writing when starting a new book: "(T)here's a great line by Ornette Coleman — the thing you play at the beginning is a territory. What follows is the adventure."

In a 1992 interview with Eleanor Wachtel, Ondaatje says poetry didn't teach him how to write beautifully, rather it taught him how to structure novels: "You can leave a lot more for the reader to fill in... [Poetry's] taught me how to write a certain kind of novel and also to believe in the tightness and concreteness of words."¹

**Murder mystery —**with Rose Williams as the victim and her son Nathaniel the detective.

**Spy thriller** — The story ofpost-war British Intelligenceefforts and methods

**War story** — Ondaatje told [The Next Chapter](http://cbc.ca/thenextchapter) host [Shelagh Rogers in 2018](https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thenextchapter/michael-ondaatje-carrianne-leung-1.4656940/why-michael-ondaatje-thinks-warlight-is-more-than-a-war-novel-1.4660079) that despite the name, [Warlight](http://cbc.ca/1.4485663) is not a war novel: "'Warlight' is an invented word. At one moment in the book, I describe the River Thames at night during the war... I wanted to write a tone or a kind of light to suggest that time for those around before and after the war." … “It seems ridiculous and a bit like a kind of fairy tale,” Ondaatje says. “I knew nothing more than that when I began the book. Even the post-WWII era came later. I sort of discovered that was the time. I wasn’t setting out to write a war novel or a postwar novel; that became the landscape.”

**Love story** — p220 “…And she? My mother? What did she feel? And was it he or she who had persuaded the other into this adventure? I still don’t know. I like to believe they entered this tremulous universe as teacher and student. For this was not just physical love and desire: it encompassed the neighbouring skills and possibilities of their surrounding work. The knowledge of how to retreat if contact with the other was broken. …The whole dictionary of love, war, work, education growing up, growing older.”

**Bildungsroman** —

—a literary genre that focuses on the psychological and moral growth of the [protagonist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protagonist) from youth to adulthood ([coming of age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coming_of_age)), in which character change is important. A Bildungsroman relates the growing up or "coming of age" of a sensitive person who goes in search of answers to life's questions with the expectation that these will result in gaining experience of the world. The genre evolved from folklore tales of a [dunce](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunce) or youngest child going out in the world to seek his fortune. Usually in the beginning of the story there is an emotional loss which makes the protagonist leave on his/her journey. In a Bildungsroman, the goal is maturity, and the protagonist achieves it gradually and with difficulty. The genre often features a main conflict between the main character and society. Typically, the values of society are gradually accepted by the protagonist and he/she is ultimately accepted into society—the protagonist's mistakes and disappointments are over. In some works, the protagonist is able to reach out and help others after having achieved maturity. [Franco Moretti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franco_Moretti) "argues that the main conflict in the Bildungsroman is the myth of modernity with its overvaluation of youth and progress as it clashes with the static teleological vision of happiness and reconciliation found in the endings of [Goethe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goethe)'s Wilhelm Meister and even [Jane Austen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Austen)'s [Pride and Prejudice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pride_and_Prejudice)".

There are many variations and subgenres of Bildungsroman that focus on the growth of an individual:

* Entwicklungsroman ("development novel") is a story of general growth rather than self-cultivation.
* Erziehungsroman ("education novel") focuses on training and formal schooling.
* [Künstlerroman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%BCnstlerroman) ("artist novel") is about the development of an artist and shows a growth of the self.
  + Some memoirs and published journals can be regarded as Bildungsroman although being predominantly factual (e.g. [*The Dharma Bums*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dharma_Bums)by [Jack Kerouac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Kerouac) or [*The Motorcycle Diaries*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Motorcycle_Diaries_(book)) by [Ernesto "Che" Guevara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Che_Guevara)). The term is also more loosely used to describe [coming-of-age films](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coming-of-age_film) and related works in other genres.
  + In writing [Warlight](https://www.cbc.ca/books/warlight-1.4485663), Ondaatje recalls his middle childhood to be [a freeing time in his life](https://www.guernicamag.com/kumar_03_15_2012/" \t "_blank): "I was 11 years old, rather like the boy in the novel, I went from Ceylon (or Sri Lanka) to England, and I had no parents watching over me so I felt tremendously independent for the first time in my life."… His father had died of a brain haemorrhage after Ondaatje left. "My loss was that I never spoke to him as an adult," he wrote. "He is still one of those books we long to read whose pages remain uncut." Ondaatje adds: "He was a sad and mercurial figure. There was a lot I didn't know about him, and that was recurring in my books: trying to find the central character. It became a habit. In all my books there are mysteries that are not fully told."
  + P135 “When you attempt a memoir, I am told, you need to be in an orphan state. So what is missing in you, and the things you have grown cautious and hesitant about, will come almost casually towards you. “A memoir is the lost inheritance,” you realize, so that during this time you must learn how and where to look. In the resulting self-portrait everything will rhyme, because everything has been reflected. If a gesture was flung away in the past, you now see it in the possession of another. So I believed something in my mother must rhyme in me. She in her small hall of mirrors and I in mine.”

**A naturalist novel in the Balzacian tradition** —(Wikipedia) a pessimistic and analytical form of realism, which seeks to explain human behaviour as intrinsically linked with the environment. The naturalist sees the world through a clear glass presenting his characters as real people, neither fully good nor fully evil, but completely human. "To arrive at the truth", he wrote in the preface *to* [*Le Lys dans la vallée*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lily_of_the_Valley_(novel)), "writers use whatever literary device seems capable of giving the greatest intensity of life to their characters. … He also used a realist technique which French novelist [Marcel Proust](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcel_Proust) later termed "retrospective illumination", whereby a character's past is revealed long after she or he first appears. … A nearly infinite reserve of energy propels the characters in Balzac's novels. Struggling against the currents of human nature and society, they may lose more often than they win—but only rarely do they give up. This universal trait is a reflection of Balzac's own social wrangling, that of his family, and an interest in the Austrian mystic and physician [Franz Mesmer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Mesmer), who pioneered the study of [animal magnetism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal_magnetism). Balzac spoke often of a "nervous and fluid force" between individuals, and Raphaël de Valentin's decline in *La Peau de Chagrin* exemplifies the danger of withdrawing from other people's company…. Balzac's literary mood evolved over time from one of despondency and chagrin to that of solidarity and courage—but not optimism. *La Peau de Chagrin*, among his earliest novels, is a pessimistic tale of confusion and destruction. But the cynicism declined as his [oeuvre](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/oeuvre) developed, and the characters of *Illusions Perdues* reveal sympathy for those who are pushed to one side by society. As part of the 19th-century evolution of the novel as a "democratic literary form", Balzac wrote that "les livres sont faits pour tout le monde" ("books are written for everybody"). … Henry James wrote with admiration of Balzac's attempt to portray in writing "a beast with a hundred claws". In his own novels James explored more of the psychological motives of the characters and less of the historical sweep exhibited by Balzac—a conscious style preference; he stated: "the artist of the *Comédie Humaine* is half smothered by the historian".Still, both authors used the form of the realist novel to probe the machinations of society and the myriad motives of human behaviour.

**A Bestiary** — [Wikipedia] A bestiary, or *bestiarum vocabulum*, is a [compendium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compendium) of beasts. Originating in the [ancient world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_history), bestiaries were made popular in the [Middle Ages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages) in illustrated volumes that described various animals and even rocks. The [natural history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_history) and illustration of each beast was usually accompanied by a moral lesson. This reflected the belief that the world itself was the Word of God, and that every living thing had its own special meaning. For example, the [pelican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pelican), which was believed to tear open its breast to bring its young to life with its own blood, was a living representation of [Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus). The bestiary, then, is also a reference to the [symbolic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbol) language of [animals in Western Christian art](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animals_in_Christian_art) and literature.   
… [http://www.camrax.com/symbol/bestiaryintro.php4] The Bestiaries were a large genre of medieval books on the symbolic significance of animals. The genre became extremely popular by the 12th century particularly in England but was based on the much earlier [Physiologus, usually translated as ‘the Naturalist’ which was one of the most widely circulated books of the early Middle Ages and probably originated as a Greek text in Alexandria from the 2nd Century AD. The Physiologus was translated into almost every language in the Western world, from Ethiopian to Icelandic, and it was adopted by the Church as a convenient vehicle for the propagation of Christian morality.](http://www.camrax.com/symbol/books1.php4#physiologus") Over the centuries, the standard format of the Physiologus expanded from just forty-nine entries to over one hundred. Many of the animals described, such as the Unicorn, the Phoenix, the Centaur, the Siren and the Antlion, are now known to be fictitious but this did not deter the editors at the time. St. Augustine had validated the genre since according to him it did not matter whether certain animals existed or not, what mattered is what they signified. ‘Moreover, if for the administration of the sacraments, certain symbolisms are drawn, not only from the heavens and stars, but also from all the lower creation, the intention is to provide the doctrine of Salvation with a sort of eloquence, adapted to raise the affections of those to whom it is presented from the visible to the invisible, from the corporeal to the spiritual, from the spiritual to the eternal.’

… Birds also had symbolic significance for medieval Christians and many of the bestiaries had entries on birds. The formal title for a collection of the exposition of the symbols of birds is a **volucrary** and the most widely known volucrary in the Renaissance was that by Jean de Cuba in his book Jardin de Santé which describes 122 birds and gives pertinent extracts from the relevant classical authorities.

**An Atlas** — [Wikipedia] The use of the word "atlas" in a geographical context dates from 1595 when the German-Flemish geographer [Gerardus Mercator](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerardus_Mercator) published Atlas Sive Cosmographicae Meditationes de Fabrica Mundi et Fabricati Figura—[Atlas or cosmographical meditations upon the creation of the universe, and the universe as created.] This title provides Mercator's definition of the word as a description of the creation and form of the whole universe, not simply as a collection of maps. The volume that was published posthumously one year after his death is a wide-ranging text but, as the editions evolved, it became simply a collection of maps and it is in that sense that the word was used from the middle of the seventeenth century. The neologism coined by Mercator was a mark of his respect for the [Titan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titan_(mythology)), [Atlas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlas_(mythology)), the "King of Mauretania", whom he considered to be the first great geographer. The first work that contained systematically arranged woodcut maps of uniform size, published in a book, thus representing the first modern atlas is conventionally awarded to the Flemish cartographer [Abraham Ortelius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Ortelius) who in 1570 published the collection of maps [Theatrum Orbis Terrarum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatrum_Orbis_Terrarum). [The term “atlas” comes from the name of a mythological Greek figure, Atlas. As punishment for fighting with the Titans against the gods, Atlas was forced to hold up the planet Earth and the heavens on his shoulders. Because Atlas was often pictured on ancient books of maps, these became known as atlases.]



“In a 2018 interview, he told [Writers & Company](http://cbc.ca/writersandcompany)'s Eleanor Wachtel that a [love of cartography](https://www.cbc.ca/radio/writersandcompany/in-warlight-michael-ondaatje-explores-family-secrets-and-betrayal-1.4718375) partly inspired novel [Warlight](http://cbc.ca/1.4485663): "I just love looking at maps. The visual beauty of them fascinates me. And I know many artists do drawings on top of maps which are always beautiful."

**A** **Fable** — [Wikipedia] Fable is a literary genre: a succinct fictional story, in [prose](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prose) or [verse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verse_(poetry)), featuring [animals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal), [legendary creatures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legendary_creature), [plants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plant), inanimate objects, or forces of nature that are [anthropomorphized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthropomorphism), i.e., given human qualities, such as the ability to speak [human language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_language), and illustrating a particular [moral](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral) lesson, which may at the end be added explicitly as a pithy [maxim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maxim_(philosophy)) or [saying](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saying). A fable differs from a [parable](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable), the latter excluding animals, plants, inanimate objects, and forces of nature as actors that assume speech or other powers of humankind. A person who writes fables is a fabulist. Fables are found in the literature of almost every country and are one of the most enduring forms of [folk literature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folklore), spread abroad… less by literary anthologies than by oral transmission. … On the arrival of printing, collections of Aesop's fables were among the earliest books in a variety of languages. Through the means of later collections, and translations or adaptations of them, Aesop's reputation as a fabulist was transmitted throughout the world. Initially the fables were addressed to adults and covered religious, social and political themes. They were also put to use as ethical guides and from the [Renaissance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaissance) onwards were particularly used for the education of children…. Sometimes the titles given later to the fables have become proverbial, as in the case of killing [*the Goose that Laid the Golden Eggs*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Goose_that_Laid_the_Golden_Eggs) or [*the Town Mouse and the Country Mouse*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Town_Mouse_and_the_Country_Mouse)*.* In fact some fables, such as [*The Young Man and the Swallow*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Young_Man_and_the_Swallow), appear to have been invented as illustrations of already existing proverbs. One theorist, indeed, went so far as to define fables as extended proverbs. In this they have an aetiological function, the explaining of origins such as, in another context, [why the ant is a mean, thieving creature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Ant_and_the_Grasshopper#Fable_and_counter-fable) or [how the tortoise got its shell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zeus_and_the_Tortoise). Other fables, also verging on this function, are outright jokes, as in the case of [*The Old Woman and the Doctor*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Old_Woman_and_the_Doctor), aimed at greedy practitioners of medicine.

**2. Whose story is it? — Nathaniel’s, Rose’s, Marsh’s…everyman’s?**

**3. Is there a hero? — Marsh, Rose, Nathaniel, Walter, Rachel, The Darter?**

**4. Does the reading experience = Nathaniel’s experience trying to piece together his life and his parents’ lives?**

**5. Is the epigraph the moral of this clarified ‘fable’? What does it mean?**

**6. Are there more epigraphs embedded in the text?**

**7. Are all memoirs akin to fables in the sense of being partly fictitious tales? Can we ever recount the story of our own life without inaccuracy or distortion? How then to even approach recounting or telling the story of the life of someone else?**

**8. Puzzles?**

* Marsh tailoring his diction on *The Naturalist’s Hour* for the sake of his near-deaf Mother? (Haven’t we been told he was motherless from an early age?)
* Morphing of first person narrator into omniscient narrator — Does this parallel our thinking as we mature? Do we become more omniscient with age?
* P155 McCash to N: She stayed away from the two of you because she was fearful you might be linked to her, they would use her to somehow strike at you. Turned out she was right. (Seems backwards— Seems they would use her children to strike at her???)
* The chopped up timeline —Why? —Also see 4. above.

**9. Positives?**

* Rebirth
* The hope of reconnection and reconciliation
* That ‘strangers’ care — that we can find our own families
* That the great battles fought in the creases of the map are winnable

\* \* \* \* \*



**Bookmark Notes:**

* Table of Strangers set me to thinking about Da Vinci’s *Last Supper* partly because the first figure on the far left is said to be Saint Bartholomew. *Bartholomew* is the alternate form of the name *Nathaniel* which means in Hebrew "Gift from God". One side of the book mark is the Da Vinci painting, the other the painting in colouring book form with the various disciples numbered, as if their identity is now unknown, which, of course, it largely is. In effect, these forebears of so much that is the underpinning of western culture have now become strangers, along with what they mean and stand for symbolically and empirically in their writings and storytelling as they spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.
* Taking a big step back from all the confusion of all the detailing and symbolism in the novel, the basic story is about a boy's search to uncover the secret of his mother's life—a mother-son story—hence the Pieta on one side. Then on the back another mother-son team of the era of the book—FDR and his mother Sarah, perhaps the most important character in his life. This opposition of these images is meant to contrast the mother who outlives her son—the ultimate sacrifice —with the son who outlives his mother—the normal course of events but not in this particular case. In both cases, though, the sons are the ultimate fulfillment of their mother's hopes and dreams. (Of course not quite for Mary who is never portrayed without looking upon even the infant Jesus with both love and sadness. She knows his fate and that her fate as a mother will be to watch him suffer. Maybe this is the key to one of the puzzles at the end of my notes—the idea that they will get to the children through Rose???)
* Nathaniel washing and ironing his mother's clothes at the end is one of the main timeline upsets in the book and obviously purposeful. I interpret it as hopeful—his tribute to his mother and his acceptance of his own nature and distinctness. She is ruffled; he is ship shape and more pin-downed. Hence the opposition of the two shirts, ironed and wrinkled.
* The map of the piers along the Thames is obvious. I liked the snake-like shape of it. Snake-like things happen in the novel on the river but also wonderful, magical moments. The map on the back is of the area in now Slovakia/Croatia then Yugoslavia with some of the foibes identified. As I understand the little bit of the history I have read about this, these foibes have been only recently identified and excavated uncovering hundreds of bodies of those massacred by the Yugoslavian Partisans at the war's end and into the post-war period. Britain was allied with Russia and so British intelligence did assist them with identifying so-called Axis sympathizers. Of course this filter was crude and inaccurate. Many of the so-called Axis sympathizers had in fact worked for the Allies. It was a mess, as noted in the novel. And many of the post-war atrocities committed under the guise of playing out war-time alliances were long-simmering parochial disputes —the reason why, when Tito and Yugoslavia eventually expired, the whole region blew up...again.
* The opposite checker-boarding alludes to the chess board and the way Nathaniel and Rose grope their way towards one another as she teaches him the game.
* Apparently, despite being the card of death in the Vietnam War the Ace of Spades remains the luckiest card. (I do not understand!) The Wren and the stitching and the adherence of the epigram are fairly obvious. I was trying to collage these elements to echo the collage technique that is the essence, I think, of Ondaatje's writing and storytelling.  Actually … the whole of the bookmark is a collage.

**Some final thoughts:**

Despite trying to end my 'Notes' on a positive note I don't thing the book is 'positive'. If it is this would be only in the sense of it being positive and affirmative (and not delusional) to see things as they are clearly. I think whatever Ondaatje would say—although I don't think he would disagree— the book is about living today in a warlit/warlight world, in 'the crease of the map', and hence without clarity, without a map, without guides. We stumble around searching for the bits of light and wonderfulness and beauty, but without a moral code, disconnected from our personal and cultural ancestries. We—western culture(?)— are engaged in a great cultural battle for survival. We may not be winning.

...And weirdly enough the spy and thriller aspects of the book set me to thinking about 007 and his 'license to kill' granted by 'the state'. And how heroic and adventurous this dominant strain of storytelling has become. Bodies piled up in foibes …mere collateral damage. “*My sins are various*.”