

# Good Omens



## INTRODUCTION

### BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF NEIL GAIMAN AND TERRY PRATCHETT

Sir Terry Pratchett was born in Beaconsfield, England, in 1948. He was a middling student with an interest in astronomy, though he was also an avid reader. As a young man, he worked as a journalist and a press officer for an English electricity board. He published his first novel, *The Carpet People*, in 1971 and finally quit his job at the electricity board to pursue writing exclusively in 1987. It wasn't long after this that *Good Omens's* co-author, Neil Gaiman, met Pratchett when he was asked to interview him. Gaiman, born in 1960, was also a middling student and a prolific reader who got his start in journalism. At the time that the two collaborated on *Good Omens*, Gaiman wasn't yet the household name he is today, though he had already begun writing the *Sandman* series for DC Comics. Both writers have earned numerous awards and accolades: Pratchett was knighted for services to literature in 2009 and Gaiman's novel *The Graveyard Book* won the 2008 Newbery Medal. In December 2007, Pratchett was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease. He continued writing until his death in 2015, and he also dedicated his final years to raising awareness and research money for Alzheimer's disease. Following Pratchett's final wishes, Gaiman continued to pursue a screen adaptation of *Good Omens* after Pratchett's death, which ultimately resulted in a 2019 limited series on Amazon Prime.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

*Good Omens* draws most of its source material from the Book of Revelation, the final book of the New Testament in the Bible. It was written by a man who called himself John sometime between 81–96 C.E., though scholars and historians disagree as to who exactly the author was. Early Christian writers believed the writer was the apostle John, while modern scholars suggest that little is known about the author and refer to him as John of Patmos, named for the fact that he wrote the Book of Revelation on the Greek island of Patmos. Gaiman has confirmed that the characters Agnes Nutter and Anathema Device, meanwhile, were inspired by two victims of the 1612 Pendle witch trials, one of the most famous and well-documented trials of the era. The victims, Alice Nutter and Elizabeth Device, were found guilty and hanged with eight others (12 were accused in total; one died in prison and one other was found innocent). It wasn't long after the Pendle trials that “witch finders” began to rise in prominence—one man, Matthew Hopkins, even called himself the Witch Finder

General. Though *Good Omens* casts the idea of looking for witches' marks (in the form of supernumerary nipples or moles) and pricking witches with pins as being humorous, this was a common method of torturing suspected witches until about 1700.

### RELATED LITERARY WORKS

As a joint effort from Gaiman and Pratchett, *Good Omens* naturally shares many similarities with both authors' individual works. Pratchett is best known for his 41 books in the humor and fantasy series *Discworld*, which begins with one of his most famous novels, *The Color of Magic*. *Good Omens* touches on the 17th-century British witch trails, which Gaiman revisits in his 2008 novel *The Graveyard Book*—and many of his other novels and comic books also feature witches. He also takes on religious themes, stories, and figures in several of his other novels, most notably in *American Gods* and *Norse Mythology*. As a work of religious satire, *Good Omens* shares similarities with works as varied as C.S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*—and in the way *Good Omens* also parodies the modern world, it's also possible to draw similarities between it and novels like *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. In both *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*, Lewis Carroll satirizes the Victorian society in which he lived. Gaiman also wrote what would become *Good Omens's* opening after collaborating on *Don't Panic: The Official Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy Companion*. Douglas Adams's *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and subsequent works in the series are, like *Good Omens*, humorous and absurd.

### KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** Good Omens
- **When Written:** 1988–1990
- **Where Written:** England
- **When Published:** 1990
- **Literary Period:** Contemporary
- **Genre:** Fantasy Novel; Humor Novel
- **Setting:** England
- **Climax:** Adam decides that he doesn't want to bring about Armageddon and chooses to save the world instead
- **Antagonist:** The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse; Hastur; Ligur
- **Point of View:** Third Person

### EXTRA CREDIT

**Isn't it Ironic?** Upon Pratchett's death, he left Gaiman a letter asking him to continue working on a film adaptation of *Good Omens*. The result, Amazon's 2019 limited series *Good Omens*, starred David Tennant as Crowley, Michael Sheen as Aziraphale, and Frances McDormand as the voice of God. Gaiman was delighted when its release spawned a petition from an American religious group asking Netflix—rather than Amazon—to cancel the show, which he saw as free publicity.

**Comedy of Errors.** The specific Bibles in Aziraphale's collection of misprinted Bibles may be fictional, but there are a number of Bibles, known as Bible errata, with printing errors. Some of the most famous are the Printers Bible, which reads "Printers have persecuted me without a cause" instead of "Princes have persecuted me without a cause," and the Wicked Bible. In addition to writing that God "shewed us his [...] *great-asse*" instead of "his *greatnesse*," the Wicked Bible also changes the Seventh Commandment from "Though shalt not commit adultery" to "Though shalt commit adultery"—and the printers were fined for the mistakes.



## PLOT SUMMARY

The demon serpent Crowley and the angel Aziraphale sit outside of the Eastern Gate. Crowley thinks it's silly that God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden for eating from the Tree of Knowledge—and Aziraphale, being thoughtful and generous, admits that he gave his flaming sword to Adam and Eve so they can protect themselves.

After this, Crowley and Aziraphale spend the next 6,000 years on Earth and come to love it. They also form a close friendship. Because of this, Crowley is distraught when he receives word that Armageddon (the end of the world, which will user in a war between Heaven and Hell) is upon them. It's up to him to deliver the Antichrist (the son of Satan who will usher in Armageddon) to a hospital to be switched with a human baby. After completing this task, Crowley alerts Aziraphale. Neither can stand the thought of *either* Heaven or Hell winning the final war, so in the back room of Aziraphale's London bookshop, they decide they'll try to stop it from happening by intervening in the Antichrist's childhood. They reason that if he doesn't get a true Satanic upbringing, he might not turn out evil and therefore might not end the world in 11 years.

Unbeknownst to everyone, though, there was a mix-up at the hospital. Instead of placing the baby Antichrist with the American Cultural Attaché and Mrs. Dowling, Sister Mary (a Satanic nun working at the hospital) accidentally places the Antichrist with Mr. Young and his wife Deidre, who live in the rural English village of Tadfield. As the Antichrist, Adam, grows up, he becomes the ringleader of a gang of kids known as the "Them." Meanwhile, the boy whom Aziraphale and Crowley

*think* is the Antichrist, Warlock, seems far too normal—and on his 11th birthday, he doesn't receive a **hell-hound** like he's supposed to. Adam, however, does receive a dog for his birthday. Out of Adam's sight, the massive, slavering hell-hound becomes exactly the dog Adam wants: a small, scrappy mutt. Adam names the dog Dog, and the animal starts to become less evil in his new form.

Realizing that there's been a mix-up, Crowley and Aziraphale search for the hospital where the switch took place over a decade ago. On the drive there, Crowley hits a young witch named Anathema Device with his prized vintage **Bentley**. Anathema is the descendent of a 17th-century witch, Agnes Nutter. In addition to being a witch, Agnes could see the future and published *The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch*. Anathema owns the only copy in existence, but she accidentally leaves it in Crowley's car when he drops her off at home after the accident.

When Aziraphale and Crowley are unable to find any useful information at the former hospital (which Mary has since converted into a corporate training center), they agree to call on their human networks for backup. Unbeknownst to them, their respective "networks" are actually the same single person: Mr. Shadwell. Shadwell supposedly runs an organization of witch-finders out of London—but in actuality, he only employs one person, a young man named Newt.

Meanwhile, Anathema is distraught when she realizes that she lost her copy of The Book. Agnes predicted that Armageddon would arrive mere days from now, and Anathema is left with only her notes. She's currently living in Tadfield, which she believes will be the site of Armageddon—and one day, Adam comes across her crying outside of her cottage. He's excited to meet a witch. Anathema graciously sends Adam home with a number of occult magazines, which Adam devours. Aziraphale, meanwhile, is thrilled when he discovers The Book in Crowley's backseat. As a rare book collector, Aziraphale has hoped to see this book for years. For a full day, he's completely absorbed in reading The Book.

Adam begins to tell the Them about various things he read about in Anathema's magazines, like the disappearing rainforests, the ills of nuclear power plants, and the Hollow Earth Theory. As he explains these things, odd phenomena begin to happen all over the world. The material in a nuclear reactor mysteriously disappears; multiple people spot a flying saucer and aliens; Atlantis rises from the sea; and South American rainforests multiply. As this is happening, a deliveryman makes several deliveries across the world to the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. He delivers a sword to War, a set of scales to Famine, a silver crown to Pollution, and a message to Death. The Four know that their time has come—Armageddon is imminent.

Meanwhile, Newt's boring job as a witch-finder suddenly

becomes interesting when he discovers that Tadfield has uncharacteristically normal weather. He convinces Shadwell to let him go and investigate—but when he arrives in Tadfield, he swerves to avoid a Tibetan man coming up out of a hole and crashes his car. Anathema tends to his injuries and tells him that Armageddon will happen in just a few hours.

Concerned for Newt's safety, Shadwell decides to call on Aziraphale for help. But when Shadwell gets to Aziraphale's bookshop, he catches Aziraphale communicating with the Metatron (the voice of God) and saying that he has it all figured out—Armageddon doesn't have to happen. Believing that Aziraphale is a demon, Shadwell attempts to exorcise him and accidentally succeeds in sending him to Heaven. He also sets Aziraphale's bookshop on fire.

Crowley, meanwhile, refuses to join the ranks of demons in Hell in preparing for the final battle; he seeks out Aziraphale instead. When he arrives at Aziraphale's burning bookshop, he discovers only *The Book* and Aziraphale's notes. After reading the notes, Crowley decides he has nothing to lose—he has to try to stop Armageddon. To get to the Tadfield air base, he drives his Bentley over the M25, which is shaped like an evil sigil and therefore kills anything mortal that tries to pass it. The Bentley catches fire, and Crowley has to use all his powers as a demon to pretend that the car still works for the rest of the drive.

While this is happening, Aziraphale enters the body of Madame Tracy, Shadwell's neighbor, and asks for her help in stopping the apocalypse. When Shadwell gets home and recognizes Aziraphale's voice coming out of Madame Tracy's body, he finally agrees to sit and listen to what Aziraphale has to say. Shadwell agrees to kill the Antichrist, so the three of them take Madame Tracy's motor scooter to Tadfield.

As Crowley, Aziraphale, Shadwell, Madame Tracy, and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse make their way to the American air base in Tadfield, strange phenomena continue to happen. All the while, Adam becomes increasingly distraught. Seemingly aware of his power as the Antichrist, he divides up the world between his friends and tells them that it would be best to burn the world down and start again. However, this only frightens his friends. Finally, when Adam sees how afraid his friends are, he screams—and a mysterious force seems to leave him. He decides that they have to stop Armageddon: armed with a makeshift sword, crown, and scales, they join everyone else in heading for the air base.

At the air base, the Four Horsemen are busy tampering with electronic and computer systems. Electricity goes out worldwide, and the world seems on the brink of nuclear war when the Horsemen emerge from the building and come face to face with Adam and the Them. As Crowley, Aziraphale, Madame Tracy, and Shadwell watch, Adam coaches his friends through vanquishing War, Pollution, and Famine. Then, Death salutes Adam and disappears. Newt and Anathema have been

hiding inside the building, and Newt manages to break the computer system. Suddenly, computers and phone systems all over the world start working again.

Beelzebub and the Metatron eventually appear to appeal to Adam. They insist that Armageddon must happen, but Adam refuses to give the go-ahead to start the war. With Crowley and Aziraphale's help, Adam proposes that it may be part of God's plan that Armageddon shouldn't actually happen. The Metatron and Beelzebub return to Heaven and Hell, respectively, to await instructions—for the moment, it seems like everything is going to be okay. But then, Crowley and Aziraphale sense that Satan himself is going to burst through the ground to punish Adam. Aziraphale (armed with War's sword, which is actually Aziraphale's flaming sword), Crowley, and Shadwell advance. But with a wave of his hand, Adam causes something to change: at the spot where Satan was going to burst out of the ground, Mr. Young instead arrives to shout at his misbehaving son.

The next day, Crowley and Aziraphale discuss whether or not this was all part of the ineffable plan. They also talk about the fact that Adam put things back to normal, but with tweaks: Crowley's Bentley is back to its former mint condition, while Aziraphale's bookshop now contains first editions of children's books instead of misprinted Bibles. Newt and Anathema receive a mysterious package that turns out to be Agnes Nutter's next book of prophecies, though Newt convinces Anathema to not dedicate her life to the book. Madame Tracy and Shadwell decide to get married and move to the countryside. Adam, meanwhile, ignores the fact that he's grounded after yesterday's events and sneaks out of the backyard with Dog. He steals a neighbor's apples and thinks that apples are always worth getting in trouble for.



## CHARACTERS

### MAJOR CHARACTERS

**Aziraphale** – Aziraphale is one of the novel's protagonists and the Angel of the Eastern Gate. As an angel, Aziraphale believes fully in Heaven's righteousness—in his opinion, it's nearly impossible for God or anyone in Heaven to make mistakes or do anything bad, himself included. But over the 6,000 years that Aziraphale spends as an earthbound angel, he comes to question this belief. During this time, he befriends Crowley, a demon, and they gradually discover that they have more in common with each other than with their superiors in Heaven and Hell, respectively. For instance, they both love the entertainment and creature comforts that the modern world has to offer. For Aziraphale, this means that he dedicates his life to checking out sushi restaurants, enjoying classical music, and collecting rare, antique books—especially misprinted Bibles and books of prophecy. When Aziraphale receives word that Armageddon (the end of the world) will happen in 11 years, it's

the prospect of losing access to these things that pushes him to go against Heaven and work with Crowley to prevent doomsday from happening altogether. Though he remains firm that angels and demons are set in their ways as either good or evil beings, he's the one who teaches Crowley that human beings cannot be truly good or evil unless they're allowed to choose what they'd like to be. In the days before Armageddon, Aziraphale discovers Agnes Nutter's book *The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch*—and being an angel, Aziraphale has the ability to decipher the prophecies and figure out what's going to happen. When he figures it out, he contacts Heaven to try to convince them to call off Armageddon altogether. When this proves unfruitful, and when he's accidentally exorcised, Aziraphale shares the body of a woman named Madame Tracy and uses her to get to Tadfield and try to stop Armageddon. His willingness to subvert his superiors suggests that even angels are made of both good and evil—like human beings, they can choose how they want to behave.

**Crowley/Crawly** – Crowley, a demon from Hell, is one of the novel's protagonists. He's suave, he always wears dark clothes and sunglasses, and he drives a vintage **Bentley** that's his pride and joy. He implies that he started life in Heaven as an angel but eventually fell from Heaven. When readers first meet him, he's in his serpent form and goes by the name Crawly—and he's just tempted Adam and Eve (the first man and woman, according to the Bible) to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. Six thousand years later, Crowley has made a life for himself in the modern world and loves everything that Earth has to offer. He's therefore distraught when he's tasked with delivering the Antichrist to his human parents, thereby setting off Armageddon (the end of the world) in 11 years' time. Because of Crowley's deep love of humanity and Earth, he conspires with his friend (and sometimes enemy) Aziraphale to stop Armageddon from happening. Though Crowley insists throughout the novel that he doesn't have free will, he's also very good at manipulating predestined circumstances to work out in his favor. For instance, when it comes to stopping Armageddon, Crowley convinces Aziraphale to help by noting that Armageddon is a *diabolical* plan—and as an angel, Aziraphale is duty-bound to try to stop it. Crowley is also convinced that life isn't worth living if things are only good or only bad. He can't stand the thought of either Hell or Heaven winning the Great War that's supposed to take place after Armageddon. In addition, Crowley is intensely interested in what makes human beings human. It's baffling to him that people can use free will to choose to be good or evil—and that human beings are usually a combination of both. But despite this confusion, Crowley loves people—so much so that he sacrifices his Bentley to try to stop Armageddon. Through this quest, Crowley comes to find that *everyone*—even angels and demons—contain both good and evil.

**Adam Young/The Antichrist** – Adam is the Antichrist—the son

of Satan—who is inadvertently raised by human parents. According to biblical prophecy and God's "Ineffable Plan," the Antichrist is, in the days after his 11th birthday, supposed to bring about Armageddon (the end of the world). But due to a mix-up at the hospital, the infant Antichrist is placed with the Mr. Young family instead of the American Cultural Attaché—and so the Antichrist grows up as Adam Young, a normal human boy. When Adam eventually receives a dog—unbeknownst to him, the **hell-hound**—for his 11th birthday. He names it Dog, and the hell-hound transforms into the exact small, scrappy dog that he wanted—a mark of Adam's normalcy. At about this time, Adam meets the witch Anathema Device, who introduces him to the occult magazine *New Aquarian Digest*. The magazine introduces Adam to the importance of being environmentally friendly, the ills of nuclear power, and conspiracy theories like UFOs and government cover-ups. And because he's the Antichrist, his interest in these new ideas brings about strange worldwide phenomena leading up to Armageddon. Though Adam briefly thinks that he wants to rule the world, he has admirable motivations: he wants to fix the things that others have messed up. And when Adam sees how much his powers terrifies his friends—Pepper, Wensleydale, and Brain—he gives up his powers as the Antichrist and denies his destiny by refusing to incite Armageddon. In doing so, Adam becomes fully human. He understands that everyone needs an adversary, and that's all Armageddon is about: Heaven and Hell want an excuse to fight. He also suggests that just because something is written or foretold doesn't mean that it can't be changed or erased—people, in his understanding, are complex and fickle. After averting Armageddon, Adam returns to his life as a human, though he still retains some of his supernatural powers.

**Anathema Device** – Anathema is a young witch, a descendent of the 17th-century witch and prophet Agnes Nutter. She's described as sensible and pretty. Anathema has spent her life immersed in Agnes's book, *The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch*—she and her family members have all dedicated their lives to decoding Agnes's predictions, especially as they pertain to Armageddon (the end of the world). Anathema's role is especially important: if she can correctly interpret Agnes's predictions, she might be able to prevent doomsday. In the weeks before Armageddon, Anathema rents a cottage in Tadfield, which Agnes predicted would be the epicenter for Armageddon. This seems unreal to Anathema, as even though her readings suggest that Armageddon is getting closer to Tadfield, she also senses an overwhelming feeling of love in the village. A few days before Armageddon, she loses Agnes's book when she accidentally leaves it in Crowley's **Bentley** after he crashes into her and gives her a ride home. The following day, she meets Adam—though she's unable to identify him as the Antichrist. Flattered by his interest in the occult, she sends Adam home with a stack of *New Aquarian*

*Digest*, a magazine that one of her friends edits. She doesn't realize that the conspiracy theories and environmental ideals the magazine supports will become the blueprint for how Adam will start to change the world once Armageddon begins. Even without *The Book*, Anathema is well-prepared for Armageddon thanks to an extensive card catalogue of Agnes's prophecies that her relatives put together. Thus, she's ready when a witch-hunter Newt shows up to investigate strange weather in Tadfield, and she coaches him through what they must do to prevent Armageddon. The novel implies that after Armageddon is averted, Anathema and Newt will eventually get married—a package arrives the next day addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Pulsifer. It contains Agnes's next book of prophecies, but Newt convinces Anathema to free herself and leave the book alone.

**Newton "Newt" Pulsifer** – Newt is a young man who, tired of his boring job as a wages clerk, takes a job with Shadwell and the Witchfinder's Army (WA). Newt joins the WA because he desperately wants a cause to believe in—his previous attempts to find religion or even a social cause to fight for have all ended with him feeling disillusioned. And to a degree, Newt is disappointed with what life as Witchfinder Private Pulsifer entails, as he spends his weekends poring through daily papers for mentions of witches or unexplainable phenomena. But Newt soon finds that he adores and admires Shadwell, though he finds Shadwell mentally unstable, and so he decides to stick with the WA. When he's not working for the WA, Newt spends his time working on his beloved Wasabi, a Japanese car that constantly breaks down. On the day that Armageddon (the end of the world) is supposed to take place, Newt convinces Shadwell to let him drive to Tadfield to investigate suspiciously normal weather. This sets off a string of events prophesied by 17th-century witch Agnes Nutter. Newt is the descendent of Witchfinder General Thou-Shalt-Not-Commit-Adultery Pulsifer, the person who executed Agnes for witchcraft—and in Tadfield, Newt joins forces and falls in love with Agnes's descendent, Anathema Device. Newt tries to be sensible, so he finds it hard to believe that Agnes foretold his and Anathema's meeting, as well as Armageddon. He only believes once he learns that Agnes correctly predicted that he and Anathema would have sex before Armageddon. Wanting to impress Anathema, Newt tells her that he's a computer engineer—but in reality, although Newt loves computers, he's hopeless when it comes to electronics. His lie comes out at the Lower Tadfield Air Base, when Anathema tasks him with undoing the damage that the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse did to the computer systems. Fortunately, though, Newt manages to "break" the systems enough to stop a multinational nuclear war. Following Armageddon, it's implied that Newt and Anathema will marry, as Newt receives a box from Agnes addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Pulsifer.

**Agnes Nutter** – Agnes Nutter is Anathema Device's ancestor. A 17th-century witch, Agnes is the only person in all of human

history who could see the future correctly. Thus, she published her book, *The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch*, in the mid-1600s, just to receive her free copy from the publishers. In almost all ways, Agnes was ahead of her time: she advocated for jogging and a high-fiber diet, for instance. All of this put her on the radar of the Witchfinders' Army, so in 1612, Agnes was burned at the stake by Thou-Shalt-Not-Commit-Adultery Pulsifer. In the moments before her death, she warned everyone in attendance to take note of what happens to people who meddle in things they don't understand—and as the flames consumed her, the gunpowder and roofing nails hidden in her pockets blew up the village square and everyone in it. Agnes left behind her book of predictions, which her ancestors then dedicated their lives to decoding. This is no easy task: Agnes could, according to Anathema, see things like cars, electricity, and flying saucers. But since she had no idea what she was seeing, her predictions often make little sense. Indeed, many of her prophecies don't make sense until *after* something has happened that aligns with something she wrote. After Armageddon fails to happen—something that Agnes seemingly predicted but that none of her descendants could figure out—Anathema is delivered Agnes's second book of prophecy, which concerns life after Armageddon.

**Mr. Shadwell** – Shadwell is the last remaining Witchfinder Sergeant of the English Witchfinder's Army (WA), which is an organization that both Aziraphale and Crowley employ to help them with their work on Earth. A small, cantankerous old man, Shadwell speaks in an accent that's impossible to place and is constantly grimy. He survives on cigarettes and cans of condensed milk, and he takes his job as a witch-finder extremely seriously. But although he's deadly serious about exorcizing evil from the world, to others he seems pitiable, lovable, and in need of looking after. This is why Newt decides to stick with his job as Witchfinder Private, and why Madame Tracy prepares Shadwell's Sunday dinner for him every week despite Shadwell's taunts (he refers to her as the Whore of Babylon). Shadwell thinks of himself as the only competent person in the world and humorously despises "Southerners" (that is, everyone who isn't him). As the last remaining Witchfinder Sergeant, Shadwell believes it's his duty to keep the tradition of the WA alive. To do this, he fabricates the existence of around 500 other witch-finders, unbeknownst to Aziraphale and Crowley. Shadwell gets wrapped up in the quest to stop Armageddon (the end of the world) when he sends Newt to investigate the suspiciously perfect weather in Tadfield. And, when he becomes concerned for Newt's safety, seeks out Aziraphale for financial help so that he can follow Newt. When Shadwell comes upon Aziraphale communicating with the Metatron, he manages to send Aziraphale back to Heaven. But later, he's enraged to discover that Aziraphale is inhabiting Madame Tracy's body. However, when Aziraphale dangles the prospect of killing "THE witch" (that is, the Antichrist) in front of Shadwell, Shadwell agrees to help.

Following Armageddon, Shadwell agrees to move with Madame Tracy to the country, and he retires from the WA.

**Madame Tracy** – Madame Tracy is Mr. Shadwell’s next-door neighbor. She’s a middle-aged woman who makes a living by hosting séances. In Mr. Shadwell’s understanding, she’s also a sex worker—he often refers to her as the Whore of Babylon, which Madame Tracy allows, as it gives her free publicity. A kind, generous, and practical woman, Madame Tracy keeps an eye on Shadwell and even fixes him Sunday dinner every week. She also takes a no-nonsense approach to her séances (during which she never actually communicates with the dead, as it’s all an act). She understands that most people aren’t looking for an experience that’s frightening or seems too real—instead, what people really want is just to know that their friends and loved ones are okay on the other side. As such, Madame Tracy has her act carefully planned to give people just the right amount of intrigue and spiritual connection to their deceased loved ones. Aziraphale briefly possesses Madame Tracy’s body after Shadwell manages to exorcise him, which causes Madame Tracy to speak in two different voices. Following Armageddon, Madame Tracy and Shadwell become a couple and decide to move to the countryside together.

**Death** – Death is one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. He’s the tallest of the Four and is never seen without his biker’s helmet, which entirely obscures his face. In the novel, Death speaks in all capital letters with no quotation marks, intended to convey that he’s communicating telepathically with other characters. The most mysterious of the Horsemen, Death is, according to War, “not exactly one of the lads.” While the other Horsemen delight in being evil and destroying the world, Death acts as though he’s simply doing his job—one that will always be necessary. Indeed, the novel insists that even if the mortal world eventually rids itself of war, pollution, and famine, death will always remain. Death is the only Horseman who isn’t destroyed when faced with Adam and the Them. Instead, he transforms into Azrael, the Angel of Death, salutes Adam, and resumes his work.

**War/Red/Scarlett** – War is one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and the only female Horseman. When she’s posing as a human, she takes the form of a beautiful young woman with long auburn hair. Wherever she goes, fights and wars seem to arise out of nowhere. To occupy her time while she waits for Armageddon (the end of the world), she works first as an arms dealer—and later, as a war correspondent. Other war correspondents are in awe of her, as she’s somehow able to arrive to the wars before they even begin—which, of course, is because she actually starts them. The day before Armageddon is supposed to begin, War accepts a delivery of a sword. It’s unclear if she’s aware that the sword is actually the angel Aziraphale’s flaming sword, which he gave to Adam and Eve after the biblical Fall from the Garden of Eden. During Armageddon, Adam coaches War’s young human counterpart,

Pepper, in doing away with her with the help of a makeshift sword made of sticks.

**Famine/Black/Sable** – Famine is one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. While posing as human, he takes the form of a tall, slim, dark-haired man named Mr. Sable. Wherever he goes, people suddenly find themselves hungry. As Mr. Sable, Famine popularizes the trend in expensive restaurants of serving miniscule portions. He’s also the mastermind behind the meal products CHOW and MEALS, which contain only filler and no nutritional value—so people who eat enough of them ultimately die of malnutrition. He takes special delight in seeing wealthy people go hungry by choice (rather than famine and hunger affecting mostly poor people, as has often been the case historically). In the hours before Armageddon (the end of the world) is supposed to begin, Famine receives a set of scales (which symbolize the way food might be weighed out during a famine). His young counterpart in Adam’s gang the “Them,” Wensleydale, vanquishes Famine with his own makeshift set of scales.

**Pollution/White** – Pollution is one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse; he took over after Pestilence’s retirement, following the invention of penicillin. As Pollution moves through the world, he leaves a trail of garbage, oil, and other dangerous refuse. He most often takes the form of a young man with long, white-blond hair and a gaunt, chalky complexion. During his time posing as a human on Earth, Pollution has had a hand in inventing the gas engine and plastics, and he’s worked in various nuclear power plants that have experienced major disasters, such as Chernobyl. In the hours before Armageddon (the end of the world) begins, Pollution receives a silver crown that tarnishes as soon as he places it on his head. In the moment that Armageddon is supposed to begin, Adam coaches Brian—the “Them” gang’s equivalent of Pollution—through vanquishing the Horseman using a makeshift crown made of grass.

**Wensleydale** – Wensleydale is a member of Adam Young’s gang, the Them. He (like his playmates Adam, Pepper, and Brian) is 11 years old, and he wears thick glasses. Wensleydale was born with the demeanor of someone in middle age—the narrator notes that it’s just a matter of time before Wensleydale becomes an accountant. Because of his mature personality, Wensleydale often acts as the voice of reason within the gang. He reads his father’s newspapers religiously and so often tries to fact-check Adam’s wild claims, usually without success. Wensleydale corresponds to Famine, one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse—an ironic pairing, given that Wensleydale is the name of a type of cheese. When Adam leads the Them to vanquish the Horsemen, Wensleydale does away with Famine with a makeshift set of scales.

**Pepper** – Pepper is the only female member of the Them, Adam’s gang of 11-year-olds who make mischief in Tadfield. She’s a vicious fighter and will take on anyone, even the hulking

leader of Tadfield's rival gang, Greasy Johnson. A tomboy, Pepper resents it when people treat her like she's a girl—so, for instance, she hates that her parents got her a “girly” blue bike with a basket for her birthday instead of the fast purple bike she actually wanted. Pepper's full first name is Pippin Galadriel Moonchild, which the narrator credits for her becoming such a violent and ready fighter. Indeed, she became friends with the rest of the Them (Adam, Wensleydale, and Brian) when she beat them up after sharing her full name. A red-headed girl and the most violent of the Them, Pepper corresponds to War, the female Horseman of the Apocalypse. She vanquishes War with a sword made of sticks and string when Adam leads the Them to stop Armageddon (the end of the world).

**Brian** – Brian, along with Pepper and Wensleydale, is one of the members of the Them, Adam Young's gang of 11-year-olds. He's good-natured but is consistently dirty, and he seems to shed potato chip wrappers wherever he goes. Brian is fond of ideas that seem interesting to him, no matter how far-fetched they might seem to others. He also adores comic books with lots of explosions in them. As the grimmest member of the Them, Brian corresponds to Pollution, one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. He destroys Pollution when Adam and the Them confront the Four Horsemen during Armageddon (the end of the world).

**Hastur** – Hastur is a demon and a Duke of Hell. In Crowley's opinion, Hastur and his associate, Ligur, are evil almost beyond belief—the only beings as evil as these two, Crowley suggests, are human. Hastur also has what Crowley refers to as a “fourteenth-century mind,” in that he hasn't adapted to the realities of the modern world. He concentrates his efforts on tempting individual people, rather than using modern technology to corrupt the masses. Hastur is the demon who hands over the Antichrist to Crowley, and later, he joins Ligur in collecting Crowley before Armageddon (the end of the world). Crowley manages to trap Hastur in his answering machine—but Hastur escapes when telemarketers call Crowley. Hastur leaps through the phone line, turns into a million maggots, and devours the office of telemarketers in seconds. After this, he disappears from the story.

**Ligur** – Ligur is a demon and a Duke of Hell. In addition to being almost evil enough to seem human, Crowley describes him as having a “fourteenth-century mind”—that is, he hasn't come around to the realities of the modern world. He doesn't have any concept of cars or cellphones, and like Hastur, he resents Crowley for having “gone native” (assimilated into the human world). “Below” (Hell) sends Ligur and Hastur to collect Crowley in the hours before Armageddon (the end of the world) is set to begin. But rather than allow this to happen, Crowley dissolves Ligur with a bucket of holy water.

**Sister Mary Loquacious/Mary Hodges** – Sister Mary Loquacious is a Satanist nun of the Chattering Order of St. Beryl and the nurse responsible for the mix-up that gives the

Antichrist to the Young family rather than that of the American Cultural Attaché. When readers first meet her, she's scatterbrained and likes being that way—she believes it makes life simpler to not have to be smart. But once the Order has to move away from Tadfield Manor, Mary breaks her vows and sets about restoring the Manor. During this process, Mary reassumes her given name, Mary Hodges, and discovers that she can be a shrewd and successful businesswoman. She transforms the Manor into a retreat and training center for businesses.

**Warlock** – Warlock is raised as the son of the American Attaché and Mrs. Dowling—and until he turns 11, Aziraphale and Crowley believe that he's the Antichrist. Warlock is a shy, quiet boy whom Crowley suspects from the beginning is too normal to be the Antichrist. While not wholly good and kind by any means, Warlock is afraid of lots of things, and he doesn't seem as powerful as the Antichrist should be. In Crowley's opinion, is just too normal. In fact, Warlock is actually the Youngs' biological child, but he (rather than the Antichrist) ended up with the American Attaché due to a mix-up at the hospital. Crowley and Aziraphale only figure this out when the **hell-hound** doesn't show up at Warlock's 11th birthday party.

**R. P. Tyler** – Tyler is the Chairman of the Lower Tadfield Residents' Association. He's a well-off, middle-aged man and has a firm grasp on what's right and wrong in the world. He feels it's his duty to make sure that everyone else learns, so whenever anyone in the neighborhood does something he doesn't like (like listening to music in public or allowing leaves to fall in his yard), he scolds the person in question and then writes a letter to the editors of the *Tadfield Advertiser* shaming his latest target. Tyler is walking his dog when the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Crowley, Madame Tracy, Aziraphale, and Shadwell come through Tadfield. He gives them convoluted directions to the air base (where Armageddon, the end of the world, is supposed to take place). He also harasses Adam and the Them—and tells Mr. Young that Adam is out past his bedtime.

**Greasy Johnson** – Greasy Johnson is the leader of the Them's rival gang in Tadfield, the Greasy Johnsonites. He's a hulking, clumsy boy who became a bully out of necessity—it was better to seem powerful as a bully than to just be a “big clumsy oaf.” Though the rivalry between the two gangs is fierce, Adam ultimately realizes that the gangs' conflict is what makes life fun and interesting. This leads him to his decision to not bring about Armageddon (the end of the world), as he sees the enjoyable gang rivalry as a metaphor for the fight between good and evil on a grand scale. Unbeknownst to him, Greasy Johnson was adopted. The narrator implies that Greasy Johnson is actually the biological son of the American Attaché.

**Satan** – Satan is the Antichrist, Adam's, father; he's a fallen angel and is referred to in the novel's list of characters as the “Adversary.” He directs the demon characters' activities, though

he never appears in person in the novel. His one attempt to appear on Earth is thwarted when Adam, in his capacity as the Antichrist, changes history so that his human father (Mr. Young) shows up instead of Satan.

**God** – Like Satan, God never appears directly in the novel. He rules over Heaven and is the mastermind behind the “Ineffable Plan”—that is, his unknowable and unchangeable plan for the universe. Crowley in particular takes issue with some of God’s practices and beliefs. He doesn’t agree with God that the only way to test His creation is to push it to the brink of disaster, as with Armageddon (the prophesied end of the world). He also takes issue with God’s choice to test Adam and Eve by pointing out the Tree of Knowledge, telling them to not eat the fruit on it, and then punishing them for their curiosity when they disobey.

**Greaser** – Greaser is one of the bikers in the café where War, Famine, Pollution, and Death meet. He and three of his friends (Pigbog, Big Ted, and Skuzz) accompany the Four Horsemen for much of their ride toward London. He dies when he crashes into a pile of fish on the M25 motorway.

**Pigbog** – Pigbog is one of the bikers in the café where War, Famine, Pollution, and Death meet. Despite his frightening appearance, Pigbog secretly loves the Bible. He’s the only biker to grasp who and what they’re dealing with when Death reveals himself. He and three of his friends (Greaser, Big Ted, and Skuzz) accompany the Four Horsemen for much of their ride toward London. He dies when he crashes into a pile of fish on the M25 motorway.

**Big Ted** – Big Ted is one of the bikers in the café where War, Famine, Pollution, and Death meet. He’s noticeably taller than his friends Greaser, Pigbog, and Big Ted. He’s also extremely ignorant: although it’s frightening when Death reveals himself to the human bikers, Big Ted persists in questioning the Four Horsemen about their involvement in biker groups and what kind of motorcycles they ride. He dies when he crashes into a pile of fish on the M25 motorway.

**Skuzz** – Skuzz is one of the bikers in the café where War, Famine, Pollution, and Death meet. He and three of his friends (Greaser, Pigbog, and Big Ted) accompany the Four Horsemen for much of their ride toward London—and he’s the only one to survive crashing into a pile of fish on the M25 motorway.

**Nanny Ashtoreth** A demonic nanny sent by Crowley to make sure that Warlock, whom Crowley believes is the Antichrist, gets a good dose of evil in his young life (even as Crowley has conspired with Aziraphale to make sure that Warlock also gets a solid dose of good in the form of the gardener Mr. Francis). Nanny Ashtoreth takes care of Warlock until he is six, and sings him satanic bedtime songs each night.

**Mr. Francis** A saintly gardener sent by Aziraphale to make sure that Warlock, whom Aziraphale believes is the Antichrist, gets a solid dose of good in his young life (even as Aziraphale has

conspired with Crowley to make sure that Warlock also gets a solid dose of evil in the form of Nanny Ashtoreth). Mr. Francis is closely associated with St. Francis of Assisi.

## MINOR CHARACTERS

**The American Cultural Attaché** – The American Cultural Attaché and his wife, Mrs. Dowling, are supposed to have their baby switched with the infant Antichrist. But due to a mix-up at the hospital, the Dowlings instead end up with the Youngs’ biological son, whom they name Warlock.

**Mr. Young** – Mr. Young is Adam Young’s adoptive father, though he believes that Adam is his biological son. He’s a solid, dependable man who smokes a pipe and works as an accountant. His approach to parenting consists of assuming that Adam has always done something wrong—and usually, he’s right about that.

**The Metatron** – The Metatron is the voice of God, though the Metatron a spokesperson, not God himself. It is fully committed to following God’s plan and has no real love for the mortal world.

**Beelzebub** – Beelzebub is Hell’s equivalent of the Metatron; he’s a fallen angel and a Prince of Hell. Like the Metatron, Beelzebub has no real love for the mortal world and wants Armageddon (doomsday) to happen.

**Sgt. Deisenburger** – Sgt. Deisenburger is the American soldier guarding the Lower Tadfield Air Base. When he starts to wave his gun around too much for Aziraphale’s comfort, Aziraphale causes him to disappear, and Sgt. Deisenburger finds himself in his childhood bedroom.

**Nigel Tompkins** – Nigel Tompkins is a low-level employee attending a training conference at Mary Hodge’s Tadfield Manor. He shoots Crowley and Aziraphale with a paintball gun.

**Giles Baddicombe** – Mr. Baddicombe is a lawyer at the firm that Agnes Nutter tasked with guarding her second book of prophecies. He’s delivers the book to Newt and Anathema at the end of the novel.

**Jaime Hernez** – Jaime is a maintenance employee at a shopping plaza in an unnamed big city. When Armageddon (the end of the world) arrives and trees begin to grow at an alarming pace, Jaime helps the trees in the plaza out by shattering the glass ceiling above them.

**Harriet Dowling** – Harriet Dowling is the wife of the American Cultural Attaché.

**Deirdre Young** – Deirdre is Mr. Young’s wife and Adam’s mother.

**Pestilence** One of the original Four Horseman of the apocalypse, who retired after penicillin was discovered. Pestilence was replaced in the Four Horseman by Pollution.





## THEMES

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



## GOOD AND EVIL

*Good Omens* follows the angel Aziraphale and his friend, the demon Crowley, as they receive news that Armageddon is coming: the armies of Heaven and Hell are preparing for a final fight. Neither Aziraphale nor Crowley are happy about this, as both of them have enjoyed the thousands of years they've spent living on Earth. As Armageddon draws near (and Aziraphale and Crowley work together to stop it from happening), the divine characters in the book pay close attention to the relationship between good and evil. They are, as angels and demons, supposed to be fully on the side of either Heaven or Hell—and each of them is, in theory, only good or only evil. However, this is a false dichotomy, as all of the characters demonstrate both good and bad characteristics. Through this dynamic the novel suggests that everyone—whether human or divine—contains elements of both good and evil, and that the choices an individual makes are what matter most.

The very premise of Armageddon sets up the idea that good and evil are polar opposites, with no gray area in between. As Crowley reflects on Armageddon, he explains how it will proceed: it is “The Great War, the Last Battle. Heaven versus Hell, three rounds, one Fall, no submission.” This will result in the end of the world—and “endless Heaven or, depending on who won, endless Hell.” This makes it clear that, at least when it comes to the divine, there's a divide between good and evil. Heaven is the realm of good, while Hell is the realm of evil. And therefore, depending on which side wins Armageddon, the world will be only good or only bad from that point on.

However, Aziraphale and Crowley's conversations about Armageddon imply that when something (or someone) is exclusively good or bad it's, at best, boring—and at worst, such polarity robs life of any meaning. Immediately after explaining what Armageddon would entail, Crowley can't decide if he'd prefer Heaven or Hell to win. And, for that matter, he “remember[s] what Heaven was like, and it had quite a few things in common with Hell.” This suggests that Heaven and Hell, good and evil, might not be all that different. As Crowley and Aziraphale brainstorm what to do about the world's impending doom, they also discuss the idea that life would be boring and meaningless without the interplay between good and evil. This is in part because, over the last 6,000 years, Crowley and Aziraphale have regularly worked together in

their respective professional roles as an earthbound demon and an earthbound angel. They've each allowed the other to carry out their work making the world either better or more hellish—and as a result, in their opinion, the world as it exists in the novel's present is a wonderful mix of both good and evil. So, with this decided, Aziraphale and Crowley set out to work together to prevent Armageddon from happening and ensure that the world continues to function in this middle ground between good and evil.

Ultimately, the novel proposes that it's impossible to tell whether someone is good or evil based on what they look like or where they come from—it's better to judge them by their choices. This idea is best exemplified through the Antichrist, the son of Satan who is supposed to bring about Armageddon on his 11th birthday. The Antichrist is supposed to grow up as the son of the American Cultural Attaché and receive a Satanic upbringing that will prepare him to take control of the Earth soon after his 11th birthday—but the plan goes wrong from the start. The Satanic nuns tasked with switching the Antichrist with the American diplomat's baby accidentally switch the Antichrist with the son of a normal Englishman. Thus, the Antichrist—Adam Young—grows up as a normal human in an idyllic rural English village. And though he heads up a gang of children that is the bane of the villagers' existence, Adam loves his life, his home, his family and his friends. So, when the moment of Armageddon arrives and Adam becomes aware of his supernatural powers, he chooses to give them up, stop Armageddon, and leave his happy life the way it is instead of precipitating the end of the world and the final fight between Heaven and Hell. Adam's character makes the case that good and evil are learned, not inherent; no one, not even the Antichrist, is entirely one or the other. This drives home the novel's assertion that a person's choices, rather than their birth, makes them good or evil. People, just like the world at large, are comprised of elements that can be seen as good or bad, depending on a person's perspective—and this interplay between good and evil is what makes the world as rich and interesting as it is.



## HUMAN NATURE

Crowley and Aziraphale are a demon and an angel, respectively, who have spent the last 6,000 years living on Earth among human beings—and because of this, they both have a keen interest in what it means to be human. Crowley and Aziraphale put forth different (and at times, contradictory) definitions of human nature, but *Good Omens* suggests that there are a few things that define human beings. Namely, it shows that people have the ability to be both extremely cruel and profoundly kind—and what really defines humanity is people's capacity to *choose* between cruelty and kindness, due to their ability to learn and grow over time.

Crowley primarily associates humanity with cruelty. He

explains that, at various points in history, he's considered contacting his bosses in Hell and telling them that "there's nothing we can do to [humans] that they don't do themselves and they do things we've never even thought of, often involving electrodes." In other words, Crowley recognizes people's capacity for creativity and innovation, but he believes that it's part of human nature to harness this capacity for evil purposes. He mentions the Spanish Inquisition (a period of time when thousands of people were imprisoned or executed for heresy) as an example of how violent and cruel human beings can be. The demons of Hell give Crowley praise for the Inquisition, but Crowley didn't actually have anything to do with it—it was all humanity's doing. With this, Crowley offers a distinctly pessimistic view of human nature: in his opinion, human beings are crueler than even demons can be. And this is largely because people tend to use their creative potential to harm others in ever crueler and more elaborate ways.

In contrast to this cynical view, the novel also shows that people have a shocking and profound capacity for goodness and kindness. For instance, one of the novel's minor characters, Madame Tracy, always makes Sunday supper for her rude and cantankerous neighbor, Mr. Shadwell. The novel seems to imply that, over the years, the neighbors have come to a comfortable understanding and have developed a sense of companionship, despite the insults Mr. Shadwell hurls at Madame Tracy. This is only one of many instances where human characters demonstrate kindness and a willingness to help others. A major subplot of the novel focuses on Anathema Device, who spends her life interpreting her ancestor Agnes Nutter's book of prophecies, which culminates with predictions about how Armageddon will play out. Since Agnes was the only prophet in all of history to actually come up with correct predictions, her descendants have spent the last several centuries trying to decode her strange prophecies (as a 17th-century prophet, Agnes didn't understand what she was seeing when, for instance, modern cars or alien spaceships featured in her premonitions). While it's possible to argue that Anathema helps stop Armageddon and the destruction of the world for selfish reasons (she believes that she, like everyone else, isn't supposed to survive Armageddon), saving the world is also a fundamentally selfless endeavor. It helps everyone on Earth, no matter how kind or how cruel they might be—and this selflessness is a testament to humanity's capacity for goodness.

Overall, *Good Omens* suggests that the capacity to learn, grow, and make conscious decisions between good and evil is what defines humanity more than anything else. Adam, the Antichrist, is the clearest example of this idea. Adam isn't aware that he's the Antichrist (he's switched at birth with a human baby)—but as the son of Satan, he's responsible for bringing about the end of the world, so he might very well be innately evil. But Adam grows up like a typical human child would: he learns right and wrong from his parents, he fears punishments

from his father, and he has only a loose grasp of how the wider world works. In other words, Adam isn't innately evil and cruel, as one might expect of the son of Satan. Rather, he's a normal kid who, in the course of his day-to-day life, makes choices about whether to behave kindly or not as he learns new things about the world around him. So eventually, when the time comes for Adam to lead the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and bring about the end of the world, he chooses not to. The reason why Adam believes he has this choice at all is because he's grown up as a human child and knows that he can choose to be good rather than evil. This drives home the idea that people are both good and evil, but human nature is defined by the capacity to make moral decisions between the two.



## DESTINY VS. FREE WILL

Throughout *Good Omens*, Crowley and Aziraphale talk often about what they call the "Ineffable Plan"—that is, God's plan for Earth. According to the Bible, this plan ends with Armageddon and the final fall of humanity. This fate seems inevitable, as divine beings like Crowley (a demon), Aziraphale (an angel), and Adam (the Antichrist) are supposedly bound by prophecy and have no choice but to follow the path that God has laid out. However, this simplistic way of looking at destiny doesn't fully encompass how the world works—while destiny and free will might seem like opposing ideas that can't coexist, the truth is actually far more complex. *Good Omens* suggests that prophecies are self-fulfilling—that is, someone's *belief* in destiny is what makes that destiny come true. Furthermore, even in the face of terrifying prophecies, people can still make choices that change the future.

The novel casts destiny as an inevitable fact of life for all its characters. Within the world of the novel, Crowley and Aziraphale work on Earth for their employers (Hell and Heaven, respectively, which are described as being like governments or businesses). Their jobs largely consist of meddling in human affairs, pushing people toward good or evil. They're supposed to continue until Armageddon, the final battle between Heaven and Hell, arrives. This is all part of the Ineffable Plan, and Crowley and Aziraphale don't feel as though they can go against what they believe is predestined to happen. Thus, when they learn that the Antichrist has been sent to Earth and will bring about Armageddon after his 11th birthday, Crowley and Aziraphale feel stuck. Though Hell encourages rebellion in a general sense, it doesn't encourage its own employees—like Crowley—to push back against its machinations. And similarly, if the Antichrist's arrival is part of the Ineffable Plan, Aziraphale doesn't feel like he has the power to do anything to stop it. Destiny, in this sense, initially constrains Crowley and Aziraphale and makes them feel powerless to try to stop Armageddon—which they believe is the right thing to do regardless of what the Ineffable Plan has to say on the matter.

However, although destiny seems inevitable, the novel also suggests that the particulars of any given prophecy are up for interpretation. For instance, Anathema Device and many of her ancestors have spent the last 300 years trying to deduce prophecies made by their 17th-century ancestor, the witch Agnes Nutter. Within the world of the novel, Agnes Nutter happens to be the only prophet in all of human history who ever made correct predictions. However, since Armageddon takes place in the late 20th century, and Agnes made her predictions in the 17th century, deciphering her thousands of prophecies is a difficult task. After all, Agnes was making her predictions long before things like cars and electricity were invented, so any of her prophecies concerning modern technology are nearly unintelligible. Thus, Anathema explains that it's usually impossible to figure out what Agnes meant until *after* the prophecies come true; they only make sense in retrospect. This introduces one of the novel's most important ideas concerning destiny: that it seems real and important simply because people believe in it. Agnes's predictions seem to come true because Anathema's family goes to the trouble of matching the predictions to world events—but if they didn't, it's possible that Agnes's predictions could refer to any number of events.

Indeed, *Good Omens* ultimately proposes that free will and destiny are actually two sides of the same coin. Though Crowley and Aziraphale are initially paralyzed by the thought they're powerless to save the world from Armageddon, they decide that they should try anyway. After all, as Crowley points out, Aziraphale is bound as an angel to thwart any evil plans he stumbles across—and the looming threat of Armageddon is nothing if not an evil plan. As Crowley and Aziraphale work together to keep Armageddon from happening, they justify their rebellion by reasoning that their actions are probably part of a much larger plan and not actually free will at all. The difference between destiny and free will is, in this sense, simply a matter of perspective. And later, at the moment when the 11-year-old Antichrist, Adam, is supposed to mobilize the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and bring about Armageddon, he refuses. Though various figures from Heaven and Hell insist that "it is written" that Adam must bring about Armageddon, Adam calmly says, "I don't see why it matters what is written. Not when it's about people. It can always be crossed out." In support of this, Crowley and Aziraphale suggest that the course of events might be written differently elsewhere—and, for that matter, the very point of the Ineffable Plan is that it's unknowable and subject to change at any minute. With this, Adam, Crowley, and Aziraphale propose that destiny isn't set in stone. Destiny is whatever people make of it—and though it's impossible to know for sure, it seems clear that people's *choices* of what to believe are far more important and meaningful than destiny itself.



## HUMOR AND ABSURDITY

Despite the fact that *Good Omens* is about the possible end of the world, it's nevertheless a humorous book. This is by design—in the book's supplemental materials, Neil Gaiman says that while he and coauthor Terry Pratchett were writing *Good Omens*, "The main objective was to make the other one laugh." By writing such a funny story about death and the end of the world, Gaiman and Pratchett show that it's possible to find humor in every situation, especially when it comes to the absurdity of the modern world. And for that matter, life is richer and more enjoyable when one takes this outlook.

One of the most important purposes of humor in the book is to make seemingly evil or unlikeable characters more sympathetic to readers—and in doing so, show that there's humor to be found in everything, even in beings who are supposedly evil. Crowley is one of the clearest examples of this. Though he's a demon—and therefore, supposedly evil—he's sympathetic and likeable, in part because most everything he thinks and does is funny. He's caught up in embracing the mortal world and a pleasure-driven lifestyle, which at once subverts traditional portrayals of demons in art and literature and humorously critiques modern culture and materialism. For instance, Crowley purchases expensive items, seeks out the best restaurants and bars, and owns a vintage **Bentley**. Indeed, even other demons who are far eviler than Crowley seem to lose their fearsome edge because of how funny they are. The Dukes of Hell Ligur and Hastur, for instance, have a more rudimentary understanding of the modern world—so Ligur's private jokes about the modern world would clearly fall flat with other characters if he were to voice them. As such, this turns them into jokes for the reader at Ligur's expense. A demon from Hell seems far less frightening when he has such a poor understanding of how cellphones work—and it's these little things that the novel encourages readers to see as funny.

In addition to the idea that any person (or mythical being) can be humorous, the novel also proposes that the modern world that the reader is familiar with (that is, England of the 1980s and 90s) is inherently funny and absurd. Throughout the novel, there are running gags about ansaphones (early answering machines) and telemarketers. While answering machines and telemarketers may seem like unavoidable facts of modern life, the novel encourages readers to recognize the absurdity of these things. Why, the novel asks, would a person dedicate their life to making cold calls that are almost guaranteed to annoy people, trying to sell goods or services that nobody wants? Similarly, *Good Omens* repeatedly touches on the idea that modern transportation is wildly ineffective. The novel encourages readers to consider whether roads and cars are really so great, given that traffic jams are a constant fact of life—and given that police (who are portrayed as stuffy and pretentious) lie in wait to dole out fines and citations to drivers.

The modern world, the novel suggests, may seem normal to people who are used to living in it, but that doesn't mean it isn't fundamentally absurd. Things don't work the way they perhaps should—and this is all the more reason to look for the humor in every situation rather than taking things too seriously.

Indeed, in a broader sense, one of *Good Omens's* major takeaways is that looking for humor is essential—and fun. Even though *Good Omens* offers a lot to think about in terms of good and evil, destiny, and even Christian theology, it exists first and foremost as a book intended to make people laugh—this can be a reader's sole reason for picking it up. Given the book's humorous tone, and Gaiman's own admission that his and Pratchett's goal was to make each other laugh while writing it, *Good Omens* seems to imply that the value of a story or situation doesn't always lie in its deeper meaning. It's equally important for people to enjoy life and the things that make it fun and exciting, including reading. Indeed, this is what makes the less savory parts of life—like traffic or telemarketers—worth putting up with in the first place.



## FRIENDSHIP

At its heart, *Good Omens* is a story about friendship. It portrays close, affectionate bonds between the demon Crowley and the angel Aziraphale, as well as

between the Antichrist Adam Young and his gang of mortal human friends, known around their village as the “Them.” Through its exploration of these strong relationships between individuals whom readers might not expect to be close friends, *Good Omens* suggests that friendship isn't only available to individuals with similar backgrounds or upbringings. Rather, a shared sense of loyalty or purpose can often bring people together in unlikely pairings. Furthermore, the novel makes the case that these strong friendships are worth fighting for, as the support they provide helps people better understand who they are and what they believe in.

Sometimes, it's possible for unlikely friendships to arise out of a lack of other options. For instance, as a demon and an angel, respectively, Crowley and Aziraphale aren't beings whom one might expect to be great friends. But they're seemingly the only divine beings who have spent the last 6,000 years on Earth exclusively (other angels and demons seem to have appeared on Earth for certain events, but don't stay). As a result, the two eventually discover that they have more in common than not—perhaps most importantly, they both love much of what the mortal world has to offer. For Aziraphale, the Earth offers him access to his beloved collection of misprinted Bibles and delightful sushi restaurants, while Earth offers Crowley good alcohol and the ability to drive his 1926 **Bentley**. Their interests differ, but they both agree that the modern world contains all manner of delights. Thus, when they learn that Armageddon will take place in 11 years' time, they decide that for the sake of their friendship and the world they both love,

they must work together to prevent it.

With this, the novel shows that friendship is more important than doing one's job—or indeed, than following one's destiny. This becomes most apparent in the case of Adam. As the Antichrist, Adam has the power to bring about Armageddon and is prophesied to do so in the days after his 11th birthday. But as he becomes aware of his powers and begins to contemplate ending the world and building it anew, his three friends, Pepper, Wensleydale, and Brian, express skepticism. Like Crowley and Aziraphale, Pepper, Wensleydale, and Brian like the world as it is—and it frightens them when Adam threatens to use his powers to force them to go along with his destruction. Ultimately, Adam is distraught when he realizes how badly he's frightening his friends, and this causes him to choose to abandon his role as the Antichrist. It's more important to him, in the long run, to show his friends love and support than it is to follow his destiny to bring about the end of the world.

Friendship not only has the power to encourage Adam to literally change his destiny—it also helps Adam come to a better understanding of *who* he is, aside from being the Antichrist. When he realizes how important his friends are to him, he discovers a new version of himself, one who prioritizes fairness and considering others' opinions over his own selfish desires. Similarly, in making the choice to stand up to their bosses in Heaven and Hell, Aziraphale and Crowley discover new things about themselves—namely, that they're not as wholly good or evil as they've spent their lives believing. Indeed, in the moments before they suspect that they're going to die saving the world, Aziraphale remarks that it's clear from Crowley's actions that he's not so bad—while Crowley quips that he's learned Aziraphale is “just enough of a bastard to be worth liking.” Friendship, *Good Omens* shows, has the unique power to give people the strength and support to understand who they are, make difficult decisions, and do what they think is right—and to make those choices worth the trouble or sacrifice.



## SYMBOLS

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



## THE BENTLEY

Crowley's vintage 1926 Bentley symbolizes his love of the mortal world. Like most of the other things Crowley owns, the Bentley is in pristine condition. Even though Crowley is a demon, he takes pride in owning nice, expensive items—they're what he loves best about the mortal world. And he especially loves the 20th century and its corresponding rise of cars. For Crowley, cars in general—and the Bentley in particular—symbolize the fact that civilization is

moving forward in a way that's increasingly fun and fast-paced. (His Bentley is a stark contrast to the horses and carriages of centuries past, for instance.) In this way, the Bentley encapsulates everything that Crowley loves about the world and the people who have made it what it is. Cars are, to Crowley, a genius invention that could've only come from the human mind.

On the day that Armageddon (the end of the world) is supposed to take place, the Bentley comes to symbolize the strength of Crowley's love for Earth as it is—and his willingness to save it from certain destruction. When he realizes he needs to get to Lower Tadfield as fast as possible, he knows the only way to do so is to drive over the M25, a highway in the shape of an evil sigil. Doing this causes the Bentley to catch fire, so Crowley must use his supernatural powers as a demon to keep the car in one piece and make it to Tadfield air base in time. When he arrives and gives up on keeping the car together, the Bentley is essentially destroyed. In this way, Crowley essentially sacrifices his beloved Bentley for the good of humanity—it's more important to him to save the world that gave him the Bentley than it is for him to keep his car pristine to the end.



### DOG (THE HELL-HOUND)

Dog, the hell-hound that Hell sends to the Antichrist, represents the idea that good and evil aren't innate, but learned. The Antichrist is supposed to receive the hell-hound on his 11th birthday to protect him and do his bidding. It's especially important that the Antichrist name the hell-hound himself, as this will give the dog its purpose. When the hell-hound first arrives on Earth, it takes the form of a huge, terrifying dog who looks like the canine incarnation of evil. But when it finds Adam and listens to him talk about the dog he'd like—a small, scrappy mutt that's highly intelligent and loyal—the hell-hound changes shape to become exactly the kind of dog Adam wants. And when Adam announces that he's going to name the hell-hound Dog, an important change takes place: the name Dog begins to change the hell-hound's very nature, making it less of an evil beast from the underworld and more of a domestic dog, like its namesake. Indeed, after receiving his name, Dog thinks that he's always wanted to jump up on people—but now, surprisingly, he also wants to wag his tail at them.

Dog's transformation illustrates how significant a being's upbringing and external influences are in determining whether or not they become good or evil. It makes no difference that Dog came from Hell explicitly to be evil, when Adam just wants a dog who "[he] can have fun with." Over the course of the novel, as Dog has more delightful and innocent experiences (like chasing rats and cats) and as he follows Adam everywhere, he gradually abandons everything that first marked him as an

evil, dangerous creature. Dog thus represents the idea that everything and everyone has the capacity for good, if only they have the right influences.



## QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the HarperCollins edition of *Good Omens* published in 1990.

### Eleven Years Ago Quotes

“I tied up every portable telephone system in Central London for forty-five minutes at lunchtime,” he said.

There was silence, except for the distant swishing of cars.

[...]

What could he tell them? That twenty thousand people got bloody furious? That you could hear the arteries clanging shut all across the city? And that then they went back and took it out on their secretaries or traffic wardens or whatever, and they took it out on other people? In all kinds of vindictive little ways which, and here was the good bit, they thought up themselves.

**Related Characters:** Crowley/Crawly (speaker), Ligur, Hastur

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 16

### Explanation and Analysis

When Crowley meets up with demons Hastur and Ligur, the Dukes of Hell, the three of them recount their recent evil deeds. While Hastur and Ligur stuck to tempting clergy and corrupting politicians, Crowley took the subtler approach of sabotaging London's phone system. He clearly takes a very different view on evil deeds—one that doesn't resonate with his colleagues. Crowley's evil deed reflects his love of and familiarity with the modern world (the novel takes place in the late 1980s). In his opinion, it's not enough to target and tempt individuals—the modern world is too big for that. And fortunately for a demon like Crowley, human beings have come up with imperfect technology that, if one has the right powers, is easy to manipulate and corrupt.

This passage characterizes Crowley as a demon who's very different from his colleagues in Hell. He's a man (or demon) of the modern world—he understands how it works, and he loves to marry his job as a demon with his appreciation of modern technology. But the way Crowley is able to easily disrupt the phone system also asks readers to consider whether modern technology, like cellphones, is actually all

that great if its malfunctioning can cause this much unhappiness and anger. Cellphones may be a fact of modern life, but this doesn't mean that their potential costs and benefits to humanity shouldn't be questioned.



Finally, this quote also introduces one of Crowley's core ideas about what it means to be human. When he notes that all the people took their anger out on other people in ways that they came up with on their own, he ties human nature to creativity and to cruelty. Throughout the novel, Crowley is continuously shocked by how cruel humanity can be. He often finds that the reason why they're able to be so cruel is because, unlike demons, they have the capacity to be creative (as opposed to receiving instructions from Hell).

●● And that'd be that. No more world. That's what the end of the world *meant*. No more world. Just endless Heaven or, depending on who won, endless Hell. Crowley didn't know which was worse.

Well, *Hell* was worse, of course, by definition. But Crowley remembered what Heaven was like, and it had quite a few things in common with Hell. You couldn't get a decent drink in either of them, for a start. And the boredom you got in Heaven was almost as bad as the excitement you got in Hell.

But there was no getting out of it. You couldn't be a demon and have free will.

**Related Characters:** God, Adam Young/The Antichrist, Crowley/Crawly

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 20

### Explanation and Analysis

As Crowley is driving the infant Antichrist to the hospital to be switched with a human baby, he angrily thinks about what the end of the world will mean for him. The Antichrist's arrival means that Armageddon (the end of the world, which will then bring about a war between Heaven and Hell) will come in 11 years, something that Crowley isn't excited to hear. He loves the modern world that humanity has created, so he doesn't want to see it destroyed—and he takes issue with both Heaven and Hell, so he doesn't want either side to win over the other.

As Crowley thinks through whether it'd be worse if Heaven won or Hell won, he says outright that both places are much the same. Neither offers any middle ground—Heaven is painfully boring, and Hell is too exciting—so it's impossible

to enjoy oneself in either place. With this, Crowley suggests that life isn't worth living if it's only good or only bad. Rather, it takes balance and a combination of things one might consider good and bad to make life interesting and fulfilling.

In addition, this passage introduces the idea that, as a demon, Crowley doesn't have free will or the power to change what's been prophesied to happen. In his understanding, he and other divine beings on both sides are bound by God's Ineffable Plan, or God's plan for how things are supposed to happen. Crowley eventually goes on to discover that he's not entirely correct about this—after all, he spends the entirety of the novel working to keep Armageddon from happening, and he ultimately succeeds. And with this, the novel makes the case that nothing is totally set in stone—*believing* in destiny, like Crowley still does here, is what makes that destiny come true.

●● It may help to understand human affairs to be clear that most of the great triumphs and tragedies of history are caused, not by people being fundamentally good or fundamentally bad, but by people being fundamentally people.

**Related Characters:** God, Adam Young/The Antichrist, Crowley/Crawly, Sister Mary Loquacious/Mary Hodges

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 26

### Explanation and Analysis

As the unnamed narrator sets the stage for the mix-up in which the baby Antichrist is placed with the wrong human family, they encourage the reader to understand that the people responsible for the mistake—Sister Mary Loquacious and her fellow Satanist nuns aren't being evil by making this mistake. Rather, they're simply being human. This sets up the idea that making mistakes is neither good nor bad—it's simply an inevitable part of human nature.

In addition to the nuns, it's implied that Crowley (who brings the baby Antichrist to the hospital) contributes to the mix-up as well. After all, he's the one who gives the Antichrist to the scatterbrained Sister Mary rather than handing him off to one of the other nuns. His role in this mistake suggests that he's more human than he gives himself credit for, despite being a demon of Hell who has supernatural abilities. Furthermore, this suggests that Crowley actually has far more power to change the future and exercise free will than he gives himself credit for.

Indeed, it's possible to argue that because Crowley is involved in the mistake in switching the Antichrist, he's one of the individuals responsible for thwarting Armageddon (which was supposedly part of God's unknowable and unchangeable plan). Having been switched with the wrong baby, the Antichrist, Adam, is raised in a normal family and doesn't grow up to be evil. He ultimately refuses to bring about Armageddon—and Crowley's involvement in the mix-up here plants the seeds for this to happen. Thus, even Crowley, who's supposedly bound by his duties as a demon, has the free will to make mistakes that go on to influence "great triumphs and tragedies."

ways. His actions, however, tell a different story: he does things throughout the novel that one would typically consider good, particularly when he teams up with Aziraphale to try to stop Armageddon.

With this, the novel suggests that everyone—humans, angels, and demons alike—actually have more free will than one might think. Everyone has the capacity to become "truly holy," just as everyone can be "definitively wicked." It boils down to a conscious choice between the two—or, in the case of angels and demons, breaking free from the systems or authority figures that tell them they can only be one or the other.

☛ And just when you'd think they were more malignant than ever Hell could be, they could occasionally show more grace than Heaven ever dreamed of. Often the same individual was involved. It was this free-will thing, of course. It was a bugger.

Aziraphale had tried to explain it to him once. The whole point, he'd said [...] was that when a human was good or bad it was because they wanted to be. Whereas people like Crowley and, of course, himself, were set in their ways right from the start. People couldn't become truly holy, he said, unless they also had the opportunity to be definitively wicked.

☛ As they drove past an astonished traffic warden his notebook spontaneously combusted, to Crowley's amazement.

"I'm pretty certain I didn't mean to do that," he said.

Aziraphale blushed.

"That was me," he said. "I had always thought that *your* people invented them."

"Did you? [We](#) thought they were yours."

**Related Characters:** Aziraphale, Crowley/Crawly

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 34


### Explanation and Analysis

As the demon Crowley thinks about Armageddon (the end of the world), which he now knows will happen in 11 years' time, he considers how astonishing it is that humans can be both unspeakably cruel and surprisingly good. Crowley is notably shocked at this. As well as being surprised that people can be eviler than Hell's demons or kinder than Heaven's angels, he's also surprised that the same person can be both good and evil. Whereas he seemingly used to believe that a being could only be one or the other, he now recognizes that the categories of good and evil are much more nuanced than Heaven and Hell make them out to be.

This may have to do with the fact that, according to Aziraphale, angels (like himself) and demons are either one or the other. They're "set in their ways" and, therefore, can only be either entirely good or entirely evil. And for much of the novel, Crowley seems to buy the idea that he's set in his

**Related Characters:** Aziraphale, Crowley/Crawly (speaker)

**Related Themes:**   

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 43

### Explanation and Analysis

When Crowley and Aziraphale are leaving a park to drive to lunch, a traffic warden is in the middle of ticketing Crowley's illegally parked car—and Aziraphale causes the warden's notebook to catch fire. This funny moment invites readers to laugh at the expense of a person performing a role that many consider necessary to modern life. Even if it's necessary to have traffic wardens and police officers to make sure that people follow the rules, this passage nevertheless suggests that those figures and their jobs are worth laughing at and questioning. Much of their jobs, after all, consists of giving people citations and doling out fines for illegal behavior.



Furthermore, the argument about whether Heaven or Hell created traffic wardens suggests that the division between good and evil isn't as clear-cut as one might like to think. Crowley seems to believe that traffic wardens are the

creation of Heaven and, therefore, reflect Heaven's stuffiness and reliance on boring rules and regulations. But in Aziraphale's opinion, traffic wardens are evil—they fine people and make life more difficult, after all. Indeed, it's possible for readers to agree with either Aziraphale or Crowley, or to partially agree with both of them. And with this, *Good Omens* makes it clear that no one and no job is either purely good or purely evil—it's possible for someone or something to be a combination of both.

It's also telling that Aziraphale causes the traffic warden's notepad to combust in service of Crowley. While it's laughable that a powerful demon like Crowley would even care about something as trivial as a traffic ticket, it's a mark of their friendship that Aziraphale does this to try to protect him. Aziraphale and Crowley might not agree on everything, but they can agree that they have to stand up for each other against the less savory parts of their world.

☞ “Don't tell me from genetics. What've they got to do with it?” said Crowley. “Look at Satan. Created as an angel, grows up to be the Great Adversary. Hey, if you're going to go on about genetics, you might as well say the kid will grow up to be an angel. After all, his father was really big in Heaven in the old days. Saying he'll grow up to be a demon just because his dad became one is like saying a mouse with its tail cut off will give birth to tailless mice. No. Upbringing is everything. Take it from me.”

**Related Characters:** Crowley/Crawly (speaker), Satan, Adam Young/The Antichrist, Aziraphale

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 52

### Explanation and Analysis

In the hours after the Antichrist's birth, Aziraphale and Crowley discuss whether or not he's guaranteed to grow up evil, since he's the son of Satan. Aziraphale seems to believe that because the Antichrist's father is evil, it will be in his genetic code to be evil as well. Crowley, however, insists that genetics don't matter nearly as much as the kind of life a person lives and the kind of influences they have. In other words, good and evil aren't innate—they're learned.

Crowley's viewpoint ends up being true for the Antichrist, Adam. Because Adam is switched at birth with a human baby, he grows up in a normal family believing that he's just a regular kid—he doesn't receive the Satanic upbringing that would prepare him to assume his role as the Antichrist. As a

result, Adam eventually refuses to bring about Armageddon (the end of the world), essentially refusing to fulfill his destiny as the Antichrist. He loves the things that have influenced him (like his family, his friends, and his home in Tadfield), so it's unthinkable to him that he should destroy it all, just because someone says he should.

But while Crowley is correct about the Antichrist, this passage holds a kernel of truth about him and Aziraphale as well. Throughout much of the novel, Aziraphale and Crowley believe that, as an angel and a demon, respectively, they're set in their ways and cannot change whether they're good or evil. But as the pair vows to do everything they can to stop Armageddon from happening, both begin to behave in ways that their superiors in Heaven and Hell might categorize as being the opposite of how they're supposed to behave. And here, Crowley hints that he already knows that he and Aziraphale can change. Saying to “take it from [him]” suggests that Crowley already understands that he has more free will than he initially thought, even if he continues to make a show of being an evil demon.

## Wednesday Quotes

☞ “I'll call him Dog,” said his master, positively. “It saves a lot of trouble, a name like that.”


The hell-hound paused. Deep in its diabolical canine brain it knew that something was wrong, but it was nothing if not obedient and its great sudden love of its master overcame all misgivings. Who was to say what size it should be, anyway?

It trotted down the slope to meet its destiny.

Strange, though. It had always wanted to jump up at people but, now, it realized that against all expectation it wanted to wag its tail at the same time.

**Related Characters:** Adam Young/The Antichrist (speaker), Agnes Nutter, Brian, Pepper, Wensleydale

**Related Themes:**   

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 75

### Explanation and Analysis

As the Antichrist, Adam is supposed to receive a hell-hound for his 11th birthday. Though the hell-hound initially seeks out Adam in the form of a massive and terrifying dog, it shrinks in size when it hears Adam say that he wants a small dog. It then accepts its name, Dog—which is supposed to



define its purpose in life.

When Crowley and Aziraphale discussed the hell-hound prior to this, Crowley remarked that the Antichrist will likely name the dog something like Killer—and that if he does, all is lost. This is because giving the hell-hound an evil name will indicate that the Antichrist himself is evil, meaning that he's certain to usher in Armageddon (the end of the world) like he's supposed to. But Adam's desires when it comes to a dog suggest that Crowley's view is overly pessimistic—he holds little hope that the Antichrist won't grow up to be evil. But rather than coming off as an evil and frightening figure, Adam seems like a normal child. He's not power-hungry and doesn't want a dog who's going to help him take over the world—he just wants a small one that he can have fun with.

Most important here is the shift that happens after Dog receives his name. Various characters in the novel, from Agnes Nutter to Crowley, insist that the naming of the hell-hound is important, as it's supposed to give the dog its purpose. Naming the hound Dog suggests that the hound's purpose might not be as malevolent as people thought—indeed, Dog's purpose might just be to be a normal family dog and Adam's companion. The description of what's going on in Dog's mind while all this is happening confirms that Dog's nature is beginning to change as he accepts this new name. Dog no longer wants to act like a vicious hell-hound—he only wants to wag his tail at people. With this, *Good Omens* makes it clear that good and evil are learned rather than innate, and that people (or dogs) can always change their ways with the right influences.

☛ They'd come up with some stomach-churning idea that no demon could have thought of in a thousand years, some dark and mindless unpleasantness that only a fully functioning human brain could conceive, then shout "The Devil Made Me Do It" and get the sympathy of the court when the whole point was that the devil hardly ever made anyone do anything. He didn't have to. That was what some humans found hard to understand. Hell wasn't a major reservoir of evil, any more than Heaven, in Crowley's opinion, was a fountain of goodness; they were just sides in the great cosmic chess game. Where you found the real McCoy, the real grace and the real heart-stopping evil, was right inside the human mind.

**Related Characters:** Warlock, Adam Young/The Antichrist, Satan, Aziraphale, Crowley/Crawly

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 76-77

### Explanation and Analysis

When Crowley and Aziraphale discover that Warlock isn't actually the Antichrist, Crowley explains to Aziraphale that there were Satanist nuns in charge of switching the infant Antichrist with a human baby. He then shares with the reader how embarrassing he finds Satanists, as they, in his opinion, don't actually understand how good and evil work. Most important here is Crowley's insistence that it's silly to blame cruelty or otherwise bad behavior on the devil and Hell. As Crowley notes at various points throughout the book, Heaven and Hell are (within the world of the novel) just two opposing sides in a great cosmic game of chess—neither is as good or as horrible as one might expect. Instead, it's human beings who have come up with the mistaken idea that Heaven and Hell are inarguably good and evil, respectively.

To take this a step further, Crowley makes it clear that true good and evil exist in people, not in Heaven or in Hell. It's part of being human, he suggests, to be able to choose how to act—whether to act cruelly or kindly. People are responsible for their actions, and insisting that the devil caused a person to do something awful is just an attempt to absolve oneself of responsibility.

### Thursday Quotes



☛ This wasn't, insofar as the hell-hound had any expectations, what he had imagined life would be like in the last days before Armageddon, but despite himself, he was beginning to enjoy it.


[...]

Form shapes nature. There are certain ways of behavior appropriate to small scruffy dogs which are in fact welded into the genes. You can't just become small-dog-shaped and hope to stay the same person; a certain intrinsic small-dogness begins to permeate your very Being.

He'd already chased a rat. It had been the most enjoyable experience of his life.

**Related Characters:** Adam Young/The Antichrist

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 128

### Explanation and Analysis

As Armageddon draws closer, Dog, who joined Adam a day

before, is beginning to rethink how he'd like his life to play out. He insists he didn't have any expectations of what his life was going to be like. This suggests that, as a hell-hound, Dog doesn't necessarily have free will like the novel's human, angel, and demon characters do. Instead, he's at the mercy of Adam's whims and how Adam wants to shape him. This is why Dog is currently a "small scruffy dog" in the first place—that's what Adam wanted, so that's what Dog had to become.



In becoming this small dog, the essence of Dog's nature is starting to change. Where he used to be a hulking, scary-looking beast of a dog, he's starting to experiment with what it's like to be small and scruffy. He's finding that life is far more enjoyable in this new form—and, in turn, Dog is becoming a happier creature. This again makes the case that good and evil aren't innate—they're learned. Dog may have arrived on Earth as an evil being, but because of his devotion to Adam (and to being whatever Adam wants), he's learning to be less evil. And importantly, Dog is *enjoying* his life as a less-evil creature. This offers hope that, as the novel progresses, Dog will continue along this path rather than reverting to his formerly demonic ways if the opportunity arises. And if this proves to be the case, it more generally speaks to the idea that no being (whether a person or a supernatural animal) is doomed to fulfill the destiny that others lay out for them.

## Friday Quotes

☝☝ "I thought the churches..." Newt began.

"Pah!" said Shadwell. [...] "Churches? What good did they ever do? They'm just as bad. Same line o' business, nearly. You can't trust them to stamp out the Evil One, 'cos if they did, they'd be out o' that line o' business. If yer goin' up against a tiger, ye don't want fellow travelers whose idea of huntin' is tae throw meat at it. Nay, lad. It's up to us. Against the darkness."

**Related Characters:** Mr. Shadwell, Newton "Newt" Pulsifer (speaker)

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 165

### Explanation and Analysis

Early in his employment under Mr. Shadwell at the Witchfinder's Army (WA), Newt asks if the churches aren't the WA's allies in stamping out witchcraft and evil around the world. In Shadwell's understanding, however, the churches have nothing to offer the WA—religion's existence



depends upon the continued existence of evil in the world. Shadwell's assessment makes it clear that it takes a combination of things that people consider good and evil to make the world an interesting place and make life worth living. He sees the existence of the church as a bad thing, but he puts his finger on the reason that the church (something Newt sees as a positive force of light and goodness in the world) exists in the first place: to give people a way to escape evil. Religion's very existence, in other words, depends on evil existing in the world so that it can offer people a refuge away from evil. Without evil, the church would either need to find another line of work or dissolve altogether.

## Saturday Quotes

☝☝ "Tye yt well," she said to the astonished witchfinder. And then, as the villagers sidled toward the pyre, she raised her handsome head in the firelight and said, "Gather ye ryte close, goode people. Come close untyl the fire near scorch ye, for I charge ye that alle must see how thee last true wytch in England dies. For wytch I am, for soe I am judgéd, yette I knoe not what my true Cryme may be. And therefore let myne death be a message to the worlde. Gather ye ryte close, I saye, and *marke well the fate of alle who meddle with such as theye do notte understande.*"

And, apparently, she smiled and looked up at the sky over the village and added, "That goes for you as welle, yowe daft old foole."

**Related Characters:** Agnes Nutter (speaker), Newton "Newt" Pulsifer, God, Mr. Shadwell

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 185

### Explanation and Analysis

This passage addresses the circumstances surrounding Agnes Nutter's execution in the mid-1600s. Modern-day witch-finder Newt Pulsifer's ancestor, Thou-Shalt-Not-Commit-Adultery Pulsifer, burned her at the stake for the crime of being witchcraft. As a prophet—the only one to ever come up with entirely correct predictions—Agnes foretold her own death. So, in considering this passage, it's important to keep in mind that Agnes knew exactly how her words and actions would impact people.

In her address to the villagers, Agnes makes it clear that in her opinion, being a witch isn't a crime that warrants being

burned at the stake—and indeed, isn't a crime at all. By pointing this out, Agnes gets at the idea that the witch-finder and the villagers might think that they're the good guys in this event—but the joke's on them, since Agnes is the one who can see how their lives are going to turn out and eventually save their ancestors from Armageddon. This is presumably the "such as they do notte understande"—the villagers, in Agnes's opinion, don't understand the consequences of their actions. And this lack of understanding has two separate meanings, as they don't understand that they're actually the bad guys here—nor do they understand that they're all going to go explode in a few minutes, since Agnes hid gunpowder and roofing nails in her skirt pockets.


Then, Agnes addresses the sky and a "daft old fool." Upon first reading, it seems as though Agnes is actually addressing God in Heaven and suggesting that God doesn't know what He's doing. There's evidence throughout the novel to support this reading—even though it's written in the Great Plan that Armageddon (the end of the world) is supposed to happen after the Antichrist turns 11, for instance, Armageddon doesn't actually end up happening. Within the world of the novel, this is God's work—so it's possible that Agnes shamed Him into changing His mind about ending the world.

But later in the novel, Shadwell (another modern-day witch-hunter) has a dream in which he's watching Agnes burn from above, and *he's* the recipient of this line. Addressed to Shadwell, Agnes's words become a warning to stop trying to eradicate witches when they're not actually the evil that Shadwell seeks. And with this reading, Agnes's warning once again comes true: Shadwell retires from witch-hunting after another dream in which he thinks about taking turns with the witches to search for each other, something that turns witch-finding into a game rather than a serious and violent vocation.

☞ "You don't have to be so *lit'ral* about everything," he said. "That's the trouble these days. Grass materialism. 'S people like you who go round choppin' down rain forests and makin' holes in the ozone layer. There's a great big hole in the ozone layer 'cos of grass materialism people like you."

**Related Characters:** Adam Young/The Antichrist (speaker), Brian, Wensleydale, Pepper

**Related Themes:**    

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 190



### Explanation and Analysis

The morning that Armageddon is supposed to happen, Adam is in an increasingly foul and agitated mood after a night spent reading issues of *New Aquarian Digest*. This occult magazine introduced him to the idea of "Grass materialism" (gross materialism, presumably), the disappearing rain forests, and the disappearing ozone layer. While Adam's understanding of these issues is clearly rudimentary, if not entirely wrong, it's telling that he's is getting upset about these kinds of things. Unbeknownst to him, Adam is actually the Antichrist (the son of Satan), and it's his fragile emotional state that ultimately brings on the storm that's supposed to usher in Armageddon (the end of the world). Though he might not understand what gross materialism is or the reasons why the ozone layer is in trouble, Adam is essentially upset that human greed is destroying the planet. In and of itself, this is a good thing—Adam is realizing that there are issues with the world, and that some sort of activism is necessary to slow climate change and deforestation.

All of this suggests that although Adam is the Antichrist, he isn't upset for selfish reasons. Rather, he wants to see the world become a better place—a desire that is perhaps at odds with the end of the world that he's supposed to bring. His interests leading up to Armageddon suggest that Adam isn't evil; rather, his upbringing in a normal human family has taught him to be good. Even when faced with wielding a great deal of supernatural power, what he really wants to do is make the planet a better, safer place for him and his friends.

☞ "You see, it's not enough to know what the future is. You have to know what it *means*. Agnes was like someone looking at a huge picture down a tiny little tube. She wrote down what seemed like good advice based on what she understood of the tiny little glimpses."

**Related Characters:** Anathema Device (speaker), Agnes Nutter, Newton "Newt" Pulsifer

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 199



### Explanation and Analysis


Anathema is trying to explain to Newt how her ancestor Agnes Nutter's prophecies work. Agnes, she explains, saw things but didn't understand what she was seeing—so it's not surprising that her predictions are vague and use language that makes little sense to those reading them hundreds of years later. Most important here is Anathema's insistence that knowing what the future holds isn't nearly as important as being able to interpret it. This is why Anathema and her family have spent the last several hundred years trying to make sense of all Agnes's prophecies: Agnes's work isn't meaningful without the help of people who can interpret it.

The idea that the future doesn't matter unless one knows what it means opens up the door for people to make multiple different—but possibly, equally true—interpretations of the same prophecy. Because Agnes's descendants often have no idea what she's talking about, it's up to them to piece together what current events match up to the prophecies. So, it's possible that there are multiple interpretations for each prophecy, as the margin notes on each of Anathema's notecards can attest. In other words, the future isn't necessarily set in stone—it's up for interpretation, and different people can interpret things in wildly different ways.

●● 1111. An the Great Hound sharl coom, and the Two Powers sharl watch in Vane, for it Goeth where is its Master, where they Wot Notte, and he sharl name it, True to Ittes Nature, and Hell sharl flee it.

**Related Characters:** Agnes Nutter (speaker), Warlock, Aziraphale, Crowley/Crawly, Adam Young/The Antichrist, Anathema Device, Newton "Newt" Pulsifer

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 208

### Explanation and Analysis

Newt is flipping through some of Anathema's notecards containing Agnes's prophecies, and he comes across one that none of Anathema's family members have been able to figure out. But readers, at this point, will be able to figure it out—a testament to the fact that different people will inevitably interpret prophecies differently, depending on the background information they bring to the table. Readers will likely recognize the "Great Hound" as the hell-

hound, and the "Two Powers" as Aziraphale and Crowley—after all, they watched in vain as Warlock, whom they believed to be the Antichrist, didn't receive a hell-hound for his birthday. They "Wot Notte" anywhere near Adam when he received the hell-hound, as they had no idea that Warlock wasn't the Antichrist at that point in time.

Even more important, though, is that Agnes predicted that the Antichrist should name the hell-hound "True to Ittes Nature." The hell-hound's name, in other words, will describe what the beast actually is—and Adam names the hell-hound Dog. With this, Adam makes it so that the hell-hound begins to transform from a fearsome beast into what it actually should be: a small, scrappy, and intelligent dog, and nothing more. This reinforces the idea that good and evil are learned, rather than innate. It's someone's upbringing and personal decisions that makes them who they are—everyone has the opportunity to choose between good and evil.

●● Dog slunk along with his tail between his legs, whining. This wasn't right, he was thinking. Just when I was getting the hang of rats. Just when I'd nearly sorted out that bloody German Shepherd across the road. Now He's going to end it all and I'll back with the ole glowin' eyes and chasin' lost souls. What's the sense in that? They don't fight back, and there's no taste to 'em...

**Related Characters:** Adam Young/The Antichrist (speaker), Brian, Wensleydale, Pepper

**Related Themes:**   

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 211

### Explanation and Analysis



As Adam leads the Them to the chalk quarry, telling them about all the things he's going to do to remake the world better, Dog is beside himself. Dog's inner monologue shows that despite his origins as a beast of Hell, he's now become a domesticated pet, plain and simple. He loves chasing rats, he's thoroughly enjoying his rivalry with the neighbor's German Shepherd, and he loves his master above all else. He knows that with Armageddon upon them, all of these delights will soon disappear—and after experiencing these things, his life as a hell-hound seems meaningless.

Dog's transformation drives home the novel's assertion that

anyone and anything, no matter their beginnings, can change—often for the better. Dog is becoming a more loveable, humorous creature as he spends time on Earth as Adam's companion. And although it is, of course, impossible to know what's going on in the minds of small dogs everywhere, Pratchett and Gaiman play on the idea that small dogs taking on dogs much larger than they are will always be funny. By making this a central part of Dog's reasoning as to why he doesn't want Armageddon to happen, *Good Omens* once again makes the case that it's important to look at life with a sense of humor and fun.

Now, as Crowley would be the first to protest, most demons weren't *deep down* evil. In the great cosmic game they felt they occupied the same position as tax inspectors—doing an unpopular job, maybe, but essential to the overall operations of the whole thing. If it came to that, some angels weren't paragons of virtue; Crowley had met one or two who, when it came to righteously smiting the ungodly, smote a good deal harder than was strictly necessary. On the whole, everyone had a job to do, and just did it.

**Related Characters:** Ligur, Hastur, Crowley/Crawly

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 232

### Explanation and Analysis

In the moments before demons Hastur and Ligur arrive to collect Crowley before Armageddon (the end of the world), the narrator explains how Crowley thinks of his own role as a demon. In his mind, he's just doing his job when he tempts people or makes their lives just a little bit worse. It might be an "unpopular job"—but in order to keep the world functioning with its balance of both good and evil, it's essential that Crowley do his job and do it well.

However, Crowley notes that not all angels are as good as one might expect them to be. Indeed, the angels he describes who "sm[i]te a good deal harder than [is] strictly necessary" read as distinctly evil, in that they abuse their power for, presumably, their own enjoyment. This makes the case that, as a demon who's just doing his job to make the world function, Crowley is actually one of the good guys—and it's possible to find angels whom one might consider a bad. Even agents of Heaven and Hell, then, aren't purely good or purely evil—which suggests that human beings are a combination of both as well.

And then it was Pigbog's turn.

"I, uh...I think I'll be them answer phones. They're pretty bad," he said.

"You can't be ansaphones. What kind of a Biker of the Repocalypse is ansaphones? That's stupid, that is."

"S'not!" said Pigbog, nettled. "It's like War, and Famine, and that. It's a problem of life, isn't it? Answer phones. I hate bloody answer phones."

"I hate ansaphones, too," said Cruelty to Animals.

**Related Characters:** Pigbog (speaker), Death, Pollution/White, Famine/Black/Sable, War/Red/Scarlett, Big Ted, Skuzz, Greaser

**Related Themes:** 



**Page Number:** 261

### Explanation and Analysis

As four bikers ride behind the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, they come up with new names. While some of them, like Cruelty to Animals in this passage, take names that don't make much sense, Pigbog tries to choose a name that best encapsulates the failings he recognizes in the modern world. This passage is intentionally humorous—it's one of many times that *Good Omens* encourages readers to consider the modern world and all the ways in which it's actually absurd. Two of the characters in this passage hate ansaphones (early answering machines) and perhaps other seemingly normal technology that makes the world what it is, to the point that they want their villainous alter egos to reflect this. With this, the novel asks readers to consider just how silly it is that in order to live, people put up with all sorts of things—like answering machines and telemarketers—that seem normal but are almost universally hated. The modern world is perhaps not what it should be—and if a person can't change it, the only thing to do is laugh about it.

●● But, to look on the bright side, all this only went to prove that evil contains the seeds of its own destruction. Right now, across the country, people who would otherwise have been made just that little bit more tense and angry by being summoned from a nice bath, or having their names mispronounced at them, were instead feeling quite untroubled and at peace with the world. As a result of Hastur's action a wave of low-grade goodness started to spread exponentially through the population, and millions of people who ultimately would have suffered minor bruises of the soul did not in fact do so. So that was all right.

**Related Characters:** Crowley/Crawly, Hastur

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 283

### Explanation and Analysis

Hastur, who had been trapped in Crowley's answering machine, has just broken out of his prison in a room full of telemarketers, turned into maggots, and devoured the telemarketers. The narrator, however, suggests that there's a good side to all of this—seemingly implying that, although Hastur's methods were cruel, sparing people the annoyance of telemarketing is a virtuous thing to do. With this, the novel suggests that it's impossible to neatly categorize things, people, or occurrences into either good or evil categories. What Hastur did was disgusting and evil—but the consequences of his action aren't as evil as one might expect. Rather, many people's days will improve, since they won't receive a rude and inconsiderate phone call from a telemarketer. It's possible to spread good in surprising ways—even if one is *trying* to spread evil.

This also concludes the novel's running gag about telemarketers. On the whole, the telemarketer jokes encourage readers to recognize that elements of the modern world that seem normal—like telemarketers—are actually humorous and worth questioning or mocking. It's actually absurd, the novel suggests, to dedicate one's life to making cold calls, trying to sell people things that they probably don't want. And all telemarketer's do, the novel implies, is annoy other people and take abuse. Thus, it's worth considering why telemarketers exist at all—and at the very least, it's worth recognizing that telemarketers aren't normal or good just because people are used to them.

●● “Oh, if that's all that's worryin' you, don't you worry,” said Adam airily, “cos I could make you all just do whatever I wanted—”

He stopped, his ears listening in horror to the words his mouth was speaking. The Them were backing away.

[...]

“No,” he said hoarsely. “No. Come back! *I command you!*”

They froze in mid-dash.

Adam stared.

“No, I dint mean it—” he began. “You're my friends—”


[...]

Adam opened his mouth and screamed. It was a sound that a merely mortal throat should not have been able to utter [...]

Whatever had been standing in the old quarry before, Adam Young was standing there now. A more knowledgeable Adam Young, but Adam Young nevertheless. Possibly more of Adam Young than there had ever been before.

**Related Characters:** Adam Young/The Antichrist (speaker), Brian, Wensleydale, Pepper

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 286-87

### Explanation and Analysis

Adam is becoming increasingly aware of his powers as the Antichrist, and he's getting excited about all the changes he can make to the world after Armageddon wipes the slate clean. But it's a transformative moment for Adam when he realizes how much his power is frightening his friends. The “Them” (Adam's gang) are unable to effectively stand up to Adam or refuse to participate—they are, as he articulates here, totally at his mercy. But even if Adam doesn't fully understand it at first, he wants friends, not subjects to rule over. Thus, it's horrifying for him to realize that he's frightening his friends—and, even more importantly, that he doesn't want to control them.

This brings about a fundamental shift in Adam. Whereas before, he was beginning to embrace his powers as the Antichrist and possibly harness them for evil, in this moment, he chooses to elevate his friendships and love of the world above his desire to be powerful and make the world anew. And when he comes to this realization and screams, “something” (presumably the part of Adam that was the evil Antichrist) disappears from him, making him



fully human for the first time in his life. Friendship, this passage shows, has the power not just to show people what's most important. It also has the power to show people who they want to be and help them become that person. In Adam's case, this means that he becomes human for his friends' sake—and by making this shift, Adam is able to go on and save the world from certain destruction.

“What you're all sayin',” he summed up, [...] “is that it wouldn't be any good at all if the Greasy Johnsonites beat the Them or the other way round?”

“That's right,” said Pepper. [...] “Everyone needs a Greasy Johnson.”

“Yeah,” said Adam. “That's what I thought. It's no good anyone winning.”

**Related Characters:** Pepper, Adam Young/The Antichrist (speaker), Aziraphale, Crowley/Crawly, Greasy Johnson, Brian, Wensleydale

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 292

### Explanation and Analysis

As Adam thinks through what Armageddon (the end of the world) is actually all about, he talks it through with the Them (his gang). Using the Them's rivalry with Greasy Johnson and the Johnsonites (another neighborhood gang) as a metaphor, Adam ultimately comes to the conclusion that the conflict itself is half the fun—winning isn't the point. Though he doesn't voice it outright, he then applies this metaphor to the upcoming final battle between Heaven and Hell. Though both the angel Aziraphale and the demon Crowley believe that their sides (Heaven and Hell, respectively) desperately want to fight and see who comes out on top, Adam is more of the mind that crowning a winner wouldn't actually do any good—it would, instead, deprive life of all its fun and meaning.


With this, *Good Omens* suggests that life is only meaningful and worthwhile when there are elements of both good and evil in the world. Under the right circumstances, the conflicts themselves are fun. And since Adam doesn't want to end the world anyway, it's convenient for him to realize that Heaven and Hell are engaged in the same kind of battle with each other as the Them and the Greasy Johnsonites are.

“I DO NOT UNDERSTAND, he said. SURELY YOUR VERY EXISTENCE REQUIRES THE ENDING OF THE WORLD. IT IS WRITTEN.

“I dunt see why anyone has to go an' write things like that,” said Adam calmly. “The world is full of all sorts of brilliant stuff and I haven't found out all about it yet, so I don't want anyone messing it about or endin' it before I've had a chance to find out about it. So you can all just go away.”

**Related Characters:** Adam Young/The Antichrist, Death (speaker), Pollution/White, Famine/Black/Sable, War/Red/Scarlett

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 326


### Explanation and Analysis

When Adam confronts Death and the other Horsemen of the Apocalypse, he refuses to lead them into starting Armageddon (the end of the world). For Death (who speaks in all capital letters with no quotation marks), this is confusing—it's “written,” after all, that as the Antichrist, Adam is going to lead the Four Horsemen and bring about the end of the world. For Adam, though, what's been written is essentially just a matter of opinion. He doesn't like what's been written about what he's supposed to do—so he goes into this with the understanding that he can change it and make the life for himself that he wants.

One of the reasons that Adam reaffirms his commitment to not bringing about the end of the world is because of his close relationships with the Them (his friend group). He wants to do what it takes to preserve their friendship—and it's clear to him that this means he can't lead the Four Horsemen and start Armageddon. He and his friends need the opportunity to grow up and figure out for themselves what the world is all about, not just destroy it and end things here. Friendship, in this sense, is what gives Adam the confidence to stand up to Death and refuse to go along with the plan. And with this, the novel suggests that friendship is worth fighting for because it helps people get to know themselves better and determine what they value most.

“I don't see what's so triffic about creating people as people and then gettin' upset 'cos they act like people,” said Adam severely. “Anyway, if you stopped tellin' people it's all sorted out after they're dead, they might try sorting it all out while they're alive.”

**Related Characters:** Adam Young/The Antichrist (speaker), Satan, God, The Metatron, Beelzebub

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 335

### Explanation and Analysis

In the pre-Armageddon standoff between Adam, Beelzebub (Satan's messenger), and the Metatron (God's messenger), Adam scolds the angel and the demon for creating a situation in which people are punished or disliked for acting like people. This is a to Adam and Eve, biblical figures who were given curiosity but whom God told to not eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. In Adam's understanding, Adam and Eve just acted like curious people—and it's counterproductive, in his opinion, to get so upset that people behave as expected.



Then, Adam moves on to critiquing the idea of a religious afterlife. In his mind, the idea that people will go to Heaven when they die and experience paradise might be a nice idea, but it's not helpful. In his opinion, people concentrate too much on getting to Heaven instead of worrying about the Earth.

In both cases, Adam takes issue with the fact that Heaven and Hell haven't set people up for success. They punish and get upset with people for behaving as people should, and they've created a system in which people don't feel any responsibility for the Earth they inhabit while they're alive, since they've been told to believe in an afterlife in Paradise. With this in mind, Adam insists to Beelzebub and the Metatron that Armageddon (the end of the world) isn't a good idea for humanity—it's just an excuse for Heaven and Hell to fight each other. Even angels and demons, Adam suggests, can be misguided—and in this case, he believes that they definitely are.

☞ Everyone found their eyes turning toward Adam. He seemed to be thinking very carefully.

Then he said: "I don't see why it matters what is written. Not when it's about people. It can always be crossed out."

**Related Characters:** Adam Young/The Antichrist (speaker), Satan, God, Aziraphale, Crowley/Crawly, Beelzebub, The Metatron

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 337

### Explanation and Analysis

As Adam (the Antichrist), the Metatron (God's messenger), and Beelzebub (Satan's messenger) argue about whether Adam has a choice in whether or not to bring about Armageddon, Adam suggests something radical: that it doesn't matter what he's *supposed* to do. In his opinion, it doesn't matter what's been prophesied when what's written about concerns humanity. In other words, this is the moment in which Adam fully accepts that he's a *person*—and in doing so, denies his identity as the divine son of Satan.

Adam also proposes that the meaning of prophecy and "what is written" is always up for debate. What's supposed to happen can change at a moment's notice, because in Adam's understanding, people are fundamentally unpredictable and have the power to exercise their free will. And, for instance, even if all of Agnes Nutter's prophecies were true—and the novel suggests that they indeed were—Adam still proposes that it's possible to interpret them differently or disregard them altogether if they no longer make sense. Whether, or how, to believe in destiny is up to the individual—and there's a lot of wiggle room when it comes to interpreting the meaning of that destiny.

☞ "I'd just like to say," he said, "if we don't get out of this, that...I'll have known, deep down inside, that there was a spark of goodness in you."

"That's right," said Crowley bitterly. "Make my day."

Aziraphale held out his hand.

"Nice knowing you," he said.


Crowley took it.

"Here's to the next time," he said. "And...Aziraphale?"

"Yes."

"Just remember I'll have known that, deep down inside, you were just enough of a bastard to be worth liking."

**Related Characters:** Crowley/Crawly, Aziraphale (speaker), Adam Young/The Antichrist, Satan

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 342

### Explanation and Analysis

Everyone thinks that the moment Armageddon (the end of the world) is supposed to happen has passed—but Crowley



and Aziraphale realize that Satan, upset with Adam's unwillingness to bring about Armageddon, is going to burst through the ground as a volcano. They decide that since they have nothing to lose, they're going to try to fight him to save everyone else.

It's telling that in what could be their final moments, Crowley and Aziraphale take the time to essentially reaffirm their friendship. They've been friends for millennia at this point, and after all this time, they've come to the conclusion that it's more important to foster their friendship and protect the human world they love than it is to please their superiors in Hell and Heaven, respectively. It's their friendship, in addition to their sense of responsibility to the mortal world, that spurs them to take this possibly doomed action.


But in affirming their friendship, Crowley and Aziraphale also show that they understand that even they, as an angel and a demon, aren't wholly good or wholly bad. Indeed, Crowley agrees to go along with this specifically because he's not entirely bad—he doesn't agree with his bosses in Hell and doesn't want to see Armageddon happen. And Aziraphale is, in Crowley's words, a little bit of a "bastard," which makes him worth being friends with. Neither is 100 percent good or bad—and that's what makes each of them worth investing in as the other's friend.

## Sunday Quotes

●● He couldn't see why people made such a fuss about people eating their silly old fruit anyway, but life would be a lot less *fun* if they didn't. And there never was an apple, in Adam's opinion, that wasn't worth the trouble you got into for eating it.

**Related Characters:** Adam Young/The Antichrist

**Related Themes:**    

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 369

## Explanation and Analysis

On Sunday, the day after what was supposed to be Armageddon (the end of the world), Adam sneaks out of his backyard to run around with Dog and steal neighbors' apples. The apples here are symbolically significant, as they bring the novel full circle. *Good Omens* began in the aftermath of the biblical Fall, when Adam and Eve ate a forbidden apple from the Tree of Knowledge, prompting God to expel them from the Garden of Eden. Now, Adam has just been chased away by a farmer for eating apples he's not supposed to eat—and in this way, he's replicating Adam and Eve's actions.

The biblical story of Adam and Eve is often presented as a cautionary tale against deviating from God's plan. Adam the Antichrist, however, presents a decidedly different view on this behavior, proposing that humanity's free will is what makes the world interesting. With this, Adam ties together some of the novel's most important ideas—that it takes good and evil for the world to be interesting, that people can contain elements of good and bad, and that people are fundamentally funny. Adam, by and large, isn't a bad kid, and yet he still thinks it's fun and exciting to steal from others. And if the Fall hadn't happened, Adam wouldn't be in a position where he could steal someone's fruit, as he wouldn't know the difference between good and evil. This passage, then, insists that things have happened as they should. It's a good thing that humans know the difference between good and evil and can contain elements of both—it's what makes the world a fun, exciting, and interesting place to live.



## SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

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

## IN THE BEGINNING

It's a nice day, but all days have been nice so far. Rain hasn't been invented yet, but there are clouds gathering east of Eden. The angel of the Eastern Gate, Aziraphale, shields himself from the first raindrops as the serpent, Crawly, says that whatever just occurred didn't go well. He continues that it seems like an overreaction, and he doesn't see a problem with knowing the difference between good and evil. In a tone that suggests he doesn't get it either, Aziraphale says that it *must* be bad, since Crawly was involved, and he's a demon—it's not possible for him to do good because of his basic nature. Meanwhile, Crawly thinks to himself that he wants to change his name to something more fitting.

Crawly continues to say that it seems a bit silly—He should've put the tree far away if He didn't want them to touch it, instead of pointing to it and telling them to not touch it. Crawly wonders what He's planning next, but Aziraphale reminds Crawly that it's better to not speculate, since one can't "second-guess ineffability." He insists that there's Right and Wrong, and that if a person does Wrong, they deserve to be punished. Crawly and Aziraphale sit, embarrassed.

Crawly asks if Aziraphale used to have a flaming sword. Aziraphale looks guilty, and with some prodding, admits that he gave it away. "They" were cold, and "she's" already pregnant—he thought they'd need it. He asks Crawly if that was the best course. Crawly sarcastically replies that Aziraphale can't do evil, but Aziraphale is too worried to notice the sarcasm. After a few minutes, Crawly says that he's been wondering if he actually did the right thing by showing "her" the apple—as a demon, he could get in trouble for doing the right thing. He jokes that it'd be funny if he did the right thing and Aziraphale did the wrong thing, but Aziraphale insists that it's not funny. The angel and the demon watch the animals in Eden cower from the storm.

*Aziraphale and Crawly are in the Garden of Eden, the biblical paradise from which Adam and Eve (the first man and woman in the Christian tradition) were expelled from for eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. This event is referred to as humankind's "fall" from innocence and obedience to sin and disobedience (since God forbade Adam and Eve to eat fruit from the Tree of Knowledge). This opening passage is implied to take place just after the fall—the demon Crawly is apparently the serpent from the biblical story who tempted Adam and Eve to eat the fruit. And here, he's referencing God's overreaction in punishing Adam and Eve. The angel Aziraphale situates himself as someone who views life in a black-and-white way, especially when it comes to good and evil—he believes that some beings (like demons) are inherently evil, and that this intrinsic nature prevents them from performing any good deeds. Crawly, on the other hand, seems to believe that there should be a balance between good and evil.*



*Throughout the novel, Aziraphale and Crawly repeatedly return to the idea of "ineffability." Simply put, ineffability means that something is impossible to understand—so here, Aziraphale is essentially saying that it's not worth trying to guess what He (referring to God) has in store. Aziraphale also puts forth a simplistic view of right and wrong, good and evil—one that even he seems to find embarrassingly simplistic.*



*Aziraphale implies that "they," that is, the people who now have his sword, are Adam and Eve—and that he probably wasn't supposed to give the sword to them. This suggests that Aziraphale has free will to make choices and bend the rules that God lays out for him, and that he thinks doing so is morally right. When Crawly then questions whether he did the right thing by pointing out the apple (the biblical forbidden fruit) to "her" (Eve), it makes it clear that good and evil aren't as clear-cut as Aziraphale would like to think. Rather, it may be possible for anyone to do good or bad.*



## ELEVEN YEARS AGO

While people have tried to figure out the exact date that the Universe was created, all have failed. The Earth was created on Sunday, October 21, 4004 B.C.E., around 9:00 a.m., and the dinosaur skeletons are a joke. This proves that God is mysterious and is playing “an ineffable game of His own devising” that’s comparable to playing poker in a dark room, with blank cards and a dealer who won’t share the rules. The Earth is also a Libra. In the astrology section of the *Tadfield Advertiser*, on the day that this story begins, the prediction reads that Libras are feeling run down, and that home and family are important and in trouble. Libras should avoid risks, keep their friends close, wait to make decisions, and expect help from unexpected sources. All of this is correct.

On night that isn’t dark or stormy, two demons lurk in a graveyard, waiting for someone who’s late. That someone is Crowley, the mastermind behind the M25 motorway (which is shaped like an evil sigil and pollutes the world with evil). Crowley is currently driving 110 miles per hour in his 1926 **Bentley**, which he’s owned since he got it new. He’s listening to a *Best of Queen* tape, but this doesn’t say much about him—all tapes that spend more than two weeks in a car morph into *Best of Queen*.

Crowley looks like an attractive man wearing snakeskin shoes—but he’s able to do strange things with his tongue, doesn’t blink much, and tends to hiss when he’s flustered. He’s late because he’s enjoying the 20th century, which is much more interesting than previous centuries. Crowley is also currently being pursued by the police, but he’s able to stop the police car with a complicated hand gesture.

*Within the world of the novel, it’s impossible to understand what God might have planned for humankind—but at times, as in the astrology section of the Tadfield Advertiser, people can come pretty close to figuring it out. Notably, though, the prediction for Libras on this day is extremely vague. Anyone who reads this prediction could find some kernel of truth in it—suggesting that destiny is, in many ways, all about what people make of it.*



*Readers can infer that Crowley, the creature that the two demons are waiting for, is also a demon, given that he created a motorway that apparently emanates evil. The name Crowley is also quite similar to Crawly, the demon from the previous chapter, which hints that Crowley is the new name that Crawly chose for himself. Whereas his old name was clearly associated with serpents (biblical symbols of evil and sin) who crawl and slither, his new one sounds more like a name that a human being would have. This choice perhaps implies that Crowley wants to distance himself from his fated role as a demon and is instead trying to blend into human society and enjoy what Earth has to offer. This is further evidenced by Crowley’s Bentley and cassette tape—these are rather humorous and absurd possessions for a demon to have, but they nevertheless suggest that Crowley loves his earthly comforts.*



*Crowley’s snakeskin shoes and serpent-like habits are further evidence that he is indeed the demon Crawly. In addition, his lighthearted enjoyment of the 20th century confirms that he likes what the human world has to offer. He’d seemingly rather take on a human name, drive a fun car, and listen to exciting music than attend a meeting with other demons.*



The two demons in the graveyard, Hastur and Ligur, see lights coming. Hastur tries to explain to Ligur what a car is (Ligur hasn't been on Earth in a long time) and sneers that Crowley has "gone native." Crowley gets out of his Bentley and cheerfully greets the other demons, but Hastur cuts Crowley off and says that they must recount the Deeds of the Day: Hastur tempted a priest, while Ligur corrupted a politician. With a huge smile, Crowley shares that he tied up every portable phone system in Central London for 45 minutes. Ligur and Hastur aren't impressed. Crowley doesn't know how to tell them that by making everyone angry, he tarnished thousands of souls. But Ligur and Hastur are antiquated: they prefer to pick souls off one at a time, even though times are changing.

Hastur reaches behind a tombstone for a basket, which contains the demons' reason for meeting. Crowley stares at whatever is in the basket and says no, but Hastur insists that it's time for Crowley to play his starring role in the end of the world. He gives Crowley a clipboard and asks him to sign with his *real* name. Crowley takes the basket, looking morose, and drives away. Once he's far away from the graveyard, he rams a tape of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* into the Bentley's tape player and mutters, "Why me?" The tape plays Queen instead of Vivaldi: the voice of Freddie Mercury says that Crowley has earned it, and that he's going to receive his instructions. Sure enough, "Below" drops the instructions right into Crowley's brain, telling him to drive to a certain hospital, and Crowley promises to be there in five minutes.

Crowley hits the steering wheel. Everything was going so well—but now, Armageddon is upon him. Once it arrives, there will be only endless Heaven or endless Hell, depending on which side wins. Crowley can't decide which outcome would be worse, since it's impossible to get a good drink in either place. But he can't get out of this mission, since demons don't have free will. Meanwhile, the newborn thing in the basket starts to wail.

Mr. Young thinks that the hospital is nice—except for the nuns. He normally likes nuns, but the Chattering Order of St. Beryl talk constantly. On the plus side, they overrode Mr. Young's wife, Deirdre, and refused to let Mr. Young in the room for the birth. Presently, he leaves the waiting room to go smoke on the porch. As he lights up, a large black car skids up, and a young man leaps out with a baby carrier. The man asks if it's started and how long they have. Mr. Young assumes that this man is a doctor, and he's proud to be recognized as a parent. He shares that Deidre is in room three, and the man races away.

*Hastur confirms that Crowley is having too much fun while carrying out his demonic duties on Earth—he's "gone native," or adopted human habits and traits that conflict with his demon identity. Crowley shows that this is true when his Deed of the Day doesn't impress his colleagues. He's clearly adapted to modern life on Earth and now spends his time coming up with ways to marry his enjoyment of the human world with his job of spreading evil and causing harm.*



*Asking Crowley to sign with his "real" name (Crowly) reminds readers that Crowley is just an identity that this being assumes in order to fit in and enjoy life on Earth—it's not who he really is. This sets the stage for Crowley to have an identity crisis, as he's seemingly reluctant to associate himself with his demonic side and carry out the duties that have been thrust open him. Even when Crowley tries to enjoy things that the human world offers, like music, it seems that "Below" (Hell) is always able to interrupt him. This makes Crowley feel out of control and powerless, further suggesting that there's more to his identity than the evil deeds Below expects him to do. It's unclear what's in the basket— but whatever it is, it's going to play a role in the end of the world, which Crowley doesn't seem to want any part in.*



*It's telling that, despite the fact that Crowley works for Hell on Earth, he's not excited by the prospect of living in endless Hell. The novel humorously suggests that one can't have fun in either Heaven or Hell, meaning that a balance—a combination of things one might consider good and evil—is what makes the world an interesting place.*



*The large black car is, presumably, Crowley in his Bentley—and the novel has confirmed that he has a baby with him. Crowley's flustered, rushed state in this moment reiterates that he isn't excited to be performing this task, whatever it is. But clearly, he doesn't feel like he can choose not to carry out whatever he was assigned to do. Mr. Young, meanwhile, doesn't seem to know what's going on—he assumes that Crowley is a doctor who's going to assist with Deidre's delivery rather than demon who's come to wreak havoc. This hints that the Youngs may be clueless victims of whatever evil task Crowley is going to perform.*



A mix-up is going to take place. In Delivery Room Three is Deirdre Young, who will have a blond baby boy (Baby A). The American Cultural Attaché's wife, Harriet Dowling, is in Delivery Room Four, also having a blond baby boy (Baby B). In the hallway, the scatterbrained Sister Mary Loquacious—a lifelong Satanist—accepts the Antichrist, a blond baby boy, from Crowley. She marvels that he's awfully cute and normal looking for being the Antichrist. At Crowley's suggestion, Sister Mary heads for the delivery rooms and settles the baby in a bassinet. Then, an older nun appears and tells Sister Mary to head for Room Four. She assures Sister Mary that the exchange will happen in due course, but they need to distract the father.

Sister Mary wheels the Antichrist into Mrs. Young's room. Mrs. Young is fast asleep, and Baby A has been tagged. Sister Mary copies out a duplicate nametag and attaches it to the Antichrist. Having completed her job, she thinks about the members of the convent; most of them are old-fashioned Satanists and aren't all that evil. The narrator notes that when it comes to human affairs, most triumphs and tragedies happen not because people are fundamentally good or bad—it's because people are "fundamentally people."

When someone knocks on the door, Sister Mary opens it: it's Mr. Young. Thinking that Mr. Young the American Cultural Attaché, Sister Mary is surprised—she expected him to be more handsome, but she swallows her disappointment and congratulates Mr. Young. She points to the baby Antichrist and tells Mr. Young that this is his baby. Then, she notes that he doesn't have much of an accent and asks if he's been here long. Mr. Young says that he's been here for about 10 years, since his job moved. He appreciates that Sister Mary seems interested in his accounting job, though he finds the thread of the conversation hard to follow. Finally, he asks if he could get a cup of tea. Sister Mary confirms that he doesn't want coffee instead of tea and then bustles away.

*Here, Crowley's assignment becomes clear: he's supposed to switch the baby Antichrist with the Dowlings' baby boy. However, Sister Mary is going to accidentally place the Antichrist (whom Crowley has delivered to the hospital) with the Youngs instead of with the Dowlings. By cluing readers in to the coming mix-up, the book shows that it's all too easy to make mistakes—it's part of being human, and this tendency to make mistakes can be darkly humorous. The nuns all seem to be in on the switch, suggesting that the Chattering Order of St. Beryl is a Satanist order rather than a Christian one. It's interesting that Sister Mary describes the infant Antichrist as looking cute and normal, like any other newborn. This suggests that the Antichrist—the son of Satan—might not be as obviously abnormal or evil as one might expect. While this may indicate that even evil can look surprisingly normal, it might also suggest that the baby isn't actually evil at all.*



*The older nun told Sister Mary to head for Room Four (that of the Dowlings), but Sister Mary is headed to Room Three (that of the Youngs) instead. Clearly, the mistake is starting to take shape. Sister Mary thinks that she's doing her job here, so it's clear that she's not intentionally giving the Antichrist to the wrong family. Although she's a Satanist doing the bidding of demons, she doesn't seem to want to wreak any more havoc than necessary by giving the Antichrist to the wrong couple. As the narrator suggests, Sister Mary is only human—a person who makes mistakes, like any other.*



*This exchange is humorous because Sister Mary believes she's talking to the American Cultural Attaché, not a local Englishman—and Mr. Young is simply flattered to be treated like he's important. With this, the novel implies that anything can be funny if one has the right perspective—in this case, the perspective of someone who's aware of differences between English and American culture. This is why Sister Mary offers Mr. Young coffee: she mistakenly believes that he's an American, so he'd rather drink coffee than tea.*



Mr. Young falls into a chair and decides that Sister Mary is so odd because she's a nun. Sister Mary arrives with tea and biscuits and slowly explains that English people call refer to cookies as biscuits. Just then, a nun rushes in. Seeing Mr. Young, she points to Baby A and winks. When Sister Mary winks back, the nun wheels the baby out. Though Sister Mary interprets the wink as praise for switching the babies, the nun's wink was actually asking where the Antichrist is—it's time to switch him with Baby B. The nun may have noticed Sister Mary's mistake had she not been so rattled by the Secret Service agents in Mrs. Dowling's room.

Meanwhile, eight-and-a-half-year-old Anathema Device reads from *The Book*. It's not a children's book, and it has few pictures in it, aside from a woodcut of Agnes Nutter being burned at the stake. But Anathema likes to read about herself, so the first sentence she ever read out loud was about several groups of people who "shal ryd in flames" that no angel or demon can stop—and *The Book* says that Anathema will be there too. This book also includes stories about Anathema's parents and grandparents, but nothing about Anathema's future children—or her future further out than 11 years. If one believes *The Book*, though, the next 11 years is a lifetime.

At the hospital, the nuns swap Baby A and Baby B. The Cultural Attaché isn't here in person, but he was on the phone with Mrs. Dowling through the birth. He's thrilled, and he got the Secret Service to tape the birth.

Driving away from the hospital in his **Bentley**, Crowley thinks that he'll have to start enjoying the world's pleasures now, while there's still time. In general, Crowley supports Armageddon, but he'd hoped it wouldn't happen so soon. He likes people too much, which is a big problem for a demon. He works to make their lives miserable, but what he comes up with is nothing compared to what people come up with themselves. In the last thousand years, he's considered sending a message Below telling them that they should give up, since people are nasty—and, unlike demons, people have imagination. Crowley was commended for the Spanish Inquisition, but he wasn't actually responsible for it, and he was disturbed when he went to check it out.

*Here, Sister Mary's mistake becomes even more obvious to readers: the Antichrist was supposed to be switched with the son of Mrs. Dowling and the American Cultural Attaché, not with the Youngs' son. Again, although Sister Mary is a Satanist, and her involvement in this plan clearly associates her with the demonic, she isn't being any more evil than her role calls for—switching the babies incorrectly is an accident. With this, the novel shows again that all human beings are guaranteed to make mistakes. Some might be more consequential than others, but it's an expected part of being human.*



*At this point, it's unclear who Anathema is or exactly how she fits into the story. The fact that this vignette is presented alongside the Antichrist's story suggests that Anathema will somehow be involved in the end-of-the-world scenario that the Hastur and Ligur implied the Antichrist would bring about. And indeed, *The Book* that Anathema is reading seems to be a book of prophecies concerning the end of the world—but the novel also suggests that *The Book's* accuracy is a matter of opinion, and that it depends on whether a person believes in it or not. If *The Book* is to be believed, it implies that in 11 years' time, life as the novel's characters know it will cease to exist.*



*Switching between these various vignettes gives the impression that all these events are happening simultaneously and working together to bring about some future event—likely the end of the world that Hastur and Ligur want Crowley to usher in via the Antichrist. This speaks to how interconnected the world is: everyone and everything, both good and evil, plays a role.*



*Crowley seems to think of Armageddon as something that may be guaranteed to happen, but not for a very long time. This attitude seems to be partially rooted in Crowley's grudging respect for and horrified awe of the human race. Human beings, Crowley believes, have the capacity to be extremely cruel, in part because they can come up with creative ways to hurt one another. Demons, he implies, don't have this kind of creativity—and creativity, in his understanding, is essential to true evil.*



At the same time, people can sometimes be exceedingly kind. Once, Aziraphale tried to explain this to Crowley: he proposed that humans are good or bad because they want to be, unlike angels or demons, who are set in their ways. When Crowley insisted that that would only work if people start off equal, Aziraphale insisted that the lower a person starts, the more opportunities they have—it's "ineffable." Aziraphale is technically Crowley's enemy, but since they've been enemies for 6,000 years, they're sort of friends. Presently, Crowley picks up his car phone. He might not have free will, but he's learned some things from humans.

Back at the hospital, Mr. Young doesn't like any of Sister Mary's suggested names for the baby, like Damien or Wormwood. Mr. Young says that he prefers traditional English or Biblical names, so Sister Mary suggests Adam. Meanwhile, the narrator suggests that the reader come up with their own story of what happens to Baby B, as their version will be better.

Meanwhile, in a small house in Surrey, 12-year-old Newton Pulsifer is working on changing a plug in an ancient radio. When Newton plugs in his radio, every light in the house goes out; this is better than last time, when he blacked out the whole town. Newton desperately wants to work with computers, which he thinks are the future. The future, though, has its own ideas, as laid out in *The Book*. At the same time, back in the hospital, Mr. Young decides to name the Antichrist Adam. Two days later, Ligur causes a bolt of lightning to strike the roof of the Convent of the Chattering Order and then heads home.

Under other circumstances, Crowley and Aziraphale wouldn't have become friends. But like so many other agents who work far away from their bosses, they've realized that they have more in common with each other than with their superiors. Their Arrangement consists of not meddling in the other's activities, so that neither side really wins or loses. Now, they stand by the duck pond in St. James' Park, a popular place for secret agents to meet. Crowley watches a traffic warden put a clamp on the back wheel of his **Bentley** as Aziraphale remarks that having the Antichrist be born to American parents seems very showy.

*Throughout the novel, both Crowley and Aziraphale insist that angels and demons are set in their ways as either good or evil, and that they don't have free will. Unlike humans, in other words, they don't have the capacity to grow, change, and make choices. However, Crowley upends this when he picks up the phone, presumably to call Aziraphale. He demonstrates that he does have some free will—he can choose to befriend someone who's supposed to be his enemy, and to reach out to his friend when he needs help.*



*The names Sister Mary suggests lean toward giving the Antichrist a name that would associate him with evil or with witchcraft. Suggesting Adam—after the first man God created in the Book of Genesis in the Bible—offers hope that the Antichrist could follow in the biblical Adam's footsteps, ushering in a new era of humanity rather than bringing about Armageddon.*



*At this point, Newton Pulsifer seems to exist in the novel purely for comic relief—it's funny that a boy who regularly shuts down the power supply of an entire city with a radio wants to work in computers (which are, of course, much more complicated and high-tech). Meanwhile, the fact that Ligur goes home after setting fire to the convent implies that he's heading back to "Below," or Hell. This suggests that Aziraphale and Crowley are perhaps the only angel and demon who live on Earth full-time.*



*Here, the novel begins to examine how unlikely friendships come about. Without the immediate influence of Heaven and Hell, respectively, Aziraphale and Crowley have the opportunity to get to know each other without needing to impress their employers. In this situation, they're able to learn that they actually have a lot in common—even if their superiors might like them to think otherwise.*



Aziraphale says that his side will win Armageddon, but Crowley counters that Aziraphale doesn't really want that—only two musicians have ever gone to Heaven. Aziraphale groans as Crowley notes that a win for Heaven would mean no more CDs, just celestial harmonies. For that matter, there won't be any salt, restaurants, crossword puzzles, or bookshops. Aziraphale cries that life will be better after Heaven wins, but Crowley insists it won't be as interesting. Aziraphale notes that his people are happy for Armageddon to happen, but Crowley says that it doesn't have to happen. The seas don't have to turn to blood; Crowley likes them as they are. And for that matter, God doesn't have to "test everything to destruction."

Aziraphale shivers from the cold and suggests that they go somewhere warm, so he and Crowley begin walking toward Crowley's **Bentley**. Aziraphale admits that he agrees with Crowley, but he can't disobey. Crowley says that he can't either—his people only support disobedience when other people do it. As they slide into the Bentley, Aziraphale says that they probably have until the end of the century. Most prophets didn't get into specifics about Armageddon, but phenomena like showers of fish or geese flying backwards are to be expected. Crowley snaps his fingers, and the wheel clamps fall off his car. He suggests that they have lunch at the Ritz—and just then, Aziraphale causes the traffic warden's notebook to burst into flames. Aziraphale blushes—he thought that Crowley's people invented traffic wardens.

Aziraphale is a book collector: he poses as a secondhand bookseller, using his bookshop to store his collection and making the store as uncomfortable as possible to prevent customers from buying anything. He specializes in books of predictions and the Infamous Bibles, which are named for their typesetting errors. One, known as the Buggre Alle This Bible, includes both a rant about the typesetter's working conditions and three extra verses in Genesis. In this edition, after the angel drives Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden, the Lord asks the angel where his flaming sword went. The Angel insists that he can't find it, and God doesn't ask anything more about it.

*Aziraphale's insistence that life will be better if Heaven wins begs the question of what better actually means. To take Crowley's assessment as correct, life won't be better—it'll be boring, because all of the fun things that Aziraphale (and probably many readers) enjoy will cease to exist. It's implied that this is because there is an element of evil or sinfulness in all of life's pleasures (restaurants may be considered gluttonous, for example). As far as Crowley is concerned, it's silly on God's part to "test everything to destruction"—that is, come up with this plan that dooms His creation, just to see if he made it right. Whether or not God made it right seems, to Crowley, to be beside the point—the world is fun and interesting as it is, regardless of its creator's intentions.*



*When Aziraphale and Crowley both insist that they can't disobey their superiors, it's another indicator that they don't feel like they have free will. Crowley's statement that Hell only supports rebellion when it's not its own employees also suggests that both Heaven and Hell are somewhat hypocritical in how they expect their employees to behave. The question of which side (Heaven or Hell) invented traffic wardens further suggests that there isn't always a clear-cut division between good and evil—it's possible to attribute traffic wardens to either side, depending on the evidence one uses.*



*Since Aziraphale is an angel, it's humorous and somewhat ironic that he collects Bibles with misprints. He clearly delights in others' mistakes and foibles, which suggests that he's perhaps not immune from making mistakes himself. The extra verses in the Buggre Alle This Bible harken back to Aziraphale losing his flaming sword in the first chapter; this particular interpretation suggests that God isn't upset about it. With this, the novel implies that God's plan is possibly more ineffable than even Aziraphale thought: even what he believed to be a mistake actually seems to be what God intended to happen.*





The Buggre Alle This Bible was the publisher's first great publishing disaster; their third was their decision to publish Agnes Nutter's book of prophecies in 1655. It should've been a success, since everyone wanted prophetic works at the time, but it didn't sell. It's the only book of prophecies that's entirely correct, and Agnes only published it to get her free author's copy. Aziraphale doesn't have a copy of Agnes's book, though he'd love one. There's only one copy left in the world—and it's about 40 miles from where Crowley and Aziraphale are eating lunch. Metaphorically speaking, the book has started to "tick."

After lunch, Aziraphale and Crowley drink together in the back room of Aziraphale's Soho bookshop. Crowley drunkenly slurs that all the dolphins and whales will turn into seafood gumbo when the sea boils, and everything on land will die too. Aziraphale points out that Crowley is part of all this, since he tempts people, but Crowley insists that that's different—that's "ineffable." It's important to test people, but not to the point of destruction. Aziraphale insists that he can't disobey, but Crowley points out that there are no theaters and few films in Heaven.

Desperately, and with many drunken interruptions from Aziraphale, Crowley asks if Aziraphale knows what eternity is. He asks him to imagine a tall mountain at the end of the universe. Once every thousand years, a little bird has to fly to the mountain to sharpen its beak and then fly back. By the time the bird has worn the mountain down to nothing, Aziraphale still won't be done watching *The Sound of Music*—and he won't have any choice but to enjoy it. Aziraphale looks pained. Crowley points out that Heaven has no taste and no sushi restaurants. Both men decide to sober up—using their powers, they each make the alcohol leave their bloodstreams instantaneously.

*Previously, a woodcut of Agnes Nutter being burned at the stake appeared in "The Book" that Anathema was reading. This perhaps suggests that The Book is Agnes's book of prophecies—the same book that Aziraphale wants to get his hands on. Although Agnes was apparently a legitimate prophet, the woodcut indicates that she was eventually executed for witchcraft. Aside from this dark history, Agnes's character is a humorous one: she seemingly only went to the work of writing and publishing a book for her free author's copy. Her actions make her relatable and suggest that she had a sense of humor, since she was clearly going to all that work just to amuse herself. Meanwhile, the fact that Aziraphale doesn't have the copy of the book implies that he probably does his best to play by humans' rules—he's not going to use his powers as an angel to find the book and take it for himself.*



*Aziraphale seems unwilling to recognize that even though Crowley is a demon, he's trying to do the right thing by floating the idea that they should save the world from Armageddon. Crowley's defining characteristic isn't that he tempts people to sin—his defining characteristic is that he loves Earth and everything it has to offer. And for that matter, he knows that Aziraphale does too, which gives him leverage in convincing Aziraphale that they should try to prevent Armageddon.*



*Crowley implies that The Sound of Music is the kind of entertainment that would be available in Heaven. The Sound of Music is widely regarded as a wholesome, family-friendly movie, and Crowley and Aziraphale seem to agree that having to watch it repeatedly would be insufferable. They both feel the need to sober up after this thought exercise, which implies that for all his holier-than-thou behavior, Aziraphale isn't actually all that interested in living in a perpetual Heaven, either—the idea seems nauseating to him. Again, he and Crowley have more in common than they might think.*



Now sober, Aziraphale says that he can't interfere with divine plans. Crowley suggests that since his side is responsible for Armageddon, Armageddon is a *diabolical* plan—and Aziraphale should try to thwart it. Crowley says that it's the Antichrist's upbringing and influences that are important. Aziraphale asks what will happen if the child doesn't have a Satanic upbringing, and Crowley suggests that it won't matter. When Aziraphale tries to argue that genetics matter, Crowley says that they don't—Satan, after all, started out as an angel. The child isn't evil: he's just *potentially* evil, or potentially good. With a shrug, Crowley says that they shouldn't be talking about good and evil like this—they're just names for sides. Aziraphale and Crowley decide that they'll be the child's godfathers and oversee his upbringing.

Meanwhile, a young woman with auburn hair named Scarlett has been selling arms for the last 400 years. She's currently driving a truck of weapons to a West African civil war, but the truck has broken down in the capital village of Kumbolaland, a small and peaceful country. When Scarlett can't find anyone to fix it, decides to take a vacation. Three days later, the city is a no-go area, and by the following week, the country is in disarray. Scarlett decides to become a journalist—she loves that people fight over and around her.

A man named Sable is having drinks with his accountant on the top of 666 Fifth Avenue in New York. They've just come from an exclusive restaurant that served a tiny meal of one bean, one pea, and a sliver of chicken. Sable had invented this type of cuisine the last time he was in Paris. A thin woman comes up and asks Sable to autograph her copy of his book, *Foodless Dieting: Slim Yourself Beautiful*. He writes a verse from Revelation in it and knows that the woman will die in a few months. Sable thinks of the exclusive restaurant and grins—he's never seen rich people so hungry. He's killing time until "the main event"—and sometimes he kills people, too.

*Crowley insists that Aziraphale would just be doing his job as an angel if he interfered in the Antichrist's upbringing, since doing so could potentially thwart Armageddon (which is being orchestrated by demons). Importantly, Crowley also reiterates his opinion that good and evil are learned, not innate. As he points out, Satan is a fallen angel—so there's no telling what the Antichrist, Satan's son, might turn out to be. Then, when Crowley insists that good and evil are just names for sides, he suggests that this dichotomy isn't useful: good and evil are just divisive words.*



*The way this vignette is abruptly inserted into the story gives the impression that it's happening simultaneously with Aziraphale and Crowley's conversation. It seems that other forces related to Armageddon are gathering far away from the Antichrist, Crowley, and Aziraphale. At this point, it's hard to tell exactly what Scarlett's significance is to the main story—but it's important to note that she loves conflict. The fighting that rapidly develops around her seems to suggest that violence is a common and perhaps unavoidable aspect of human life—and possibly that Scarlett has something to do with the wars breaking out around her.*



*Again, this vignette isn't presented with much context, but it's implied that Sable is somehow connected to Scarlett—and perhaps to Aziraphale, Crowley, and the Antichrist as well. Though this entire passage has an air of malice to it—it's implied that Sable is brainwashing rich people to starve themselves—it's also making fun of the real-life fine dining trend of serving tiny portions of food. The number 666 is known as the number of the beast in the Book of Revelation in the Bible, which gives more context as to what's going on here. Clearly, Sable and Scarlett are connected to Armageddon and the devil in some way, especially given that Sable copies a verse from Revelation into the woman's book.*



Another man known as White tends to escape people's notice. Unlike his colleagues, who can hold down jobs for a while, he bounces from job to job and has worked places like the Chernobyl Power Station and at Windscale, never doing anything too important. He helped design the gas engine and plastics; now, he works on an oil tanker. Someone somehow presses the EMERGENCY CARGO RELEASE button, releasing crude oil into the sea. The final person is everywhere, doing what he does best and doing "what he was." He's working, not just waiting.

Meanwhile, Harriet Dowling returns home with her baby, whom she and the Cultural Attaché named Warlock, and the Cultural Attaché advertises for a nanny. Crowley orchestrates a London tube (subway) strike so that on the day of interviews, only one nanny (and her gray dog) shows up. Nanny Ashtoreth aces her interview, and on the same afternoon that Nanny Ashtoreth arrives, a gardener named Mr. Francis also starts work for the Dowlings. He's able to just sit outside as the garden effortlessly blooms around him. When Warlock is a toddler, he often visits Mr. Francis, who tells Warlock to appreciate all living things. At night, Nanny Ashtoreth sings Warlock Satanic nursery rhymes. This setup, "the Arrangement," works perfectly—Aziraphale and Crowley meet often to compare notes.

Nanny Ashtoreth and Mr. Francis leave when Warlock is six. Two tutors take over next: one who teaches Warlock about Atilla the Hun and the Darkness of the Human Spirit, and one who teaches about Florence Nightingale and the golden rule. They both read to Warlock from the Book of Revelation. Despite their best efforts, the tutors are displeased with him: he's good at math and enjoys baseball, comics, and his BMX bike. Crowley is troubled by all of this, and so at one of his meetings with Aziraphale, he notes that Warlock seems too normal. He's not the "powerhouse of raw force" that he should be, and it's not just because of Aziraphale's influence.

*It's clear that the four people mentioned in these vignettes—Scarlett, Sable, White, and the final person—are somehow connected. The Chernobyl Power Station and Windscale are both nuclear facilities that experienced catastrophic accidents, suggesting that White is somehow connected to these catastrophes. The mysterious final person seems to be on a different level than his colleagues, since the novel suggests that the others are waiting for something, not working like he is. The final person's omnipresence, and the statement that he's doing "what he was"—meaning that his actions align with who he is at his core—suggests that this person is even more directly associated with evil and death.*



*Crowley and Aziraphale are still unaware that the Antichrist was placed with the wrong family—they assume that the Dowlings' son Warlock is the Antichrist, when really the Youngs' son Adam is the true son of Satan. "The Arrangement" of placing Nanny Ashtoreth and Mr. Francis with the Antichrist (or who Crowley and Aziraphale believe is the Antichrist) seems to be their way of assuring that Warlock gets a balance of good and evil in his life. Ashtoreth is a Pagan goddess—and Christians traditionally consider pagan worship to be idolatrous or sinful. Thus, having a nanny called Nanny Ashtoreth makes it clear that she's the one responsible for giving Warlock his Satanic upbringing. Mr. Francis, meanwhile, is a nod to St. Francis of Assisi, the 12th-century founder of the Franciscan Order who was known for his love of all living creatures. It seems that he's been sent as a counterpart to Ashtoreth, a benevolent presence to balance out her evil one. If Warlock is the true Antichrist (which readers know he isn't), Crowley and Aziraphale seemingly want him to naturally fall into that role rather than being pressured or brainwashed into it—so they're ensuring that his childhood role models are a balance of good and evil.*



*Just as with Nanny Ashtoreth and Mr. Francis, Warlock's first tutor teaches him about malevolent people and things, while the second introduces him to virtuous historical figures and ideas. And while one might expect Crowley to be thrilled to see how normal Warlock is—clearly, he's not entirely evil, as Aziraphale feared—he's instead beginning to suspect that they've made a mistake somewhere along the way. The Antichrist is supposed to be a "powerhouse of raw force" who lives up to the role of Satan's son—a reputation that doesn't align with Warlock's personality.*



Aziraphale isn't concerned, but he raises an eyebrow when Crowley sighs that Warlock will hopefully know how to act when the **hell-hound** arrives on his 11th birthday. Hell is sending him the biggest one they have, and it's essential that Warlock names the dog himself. The name will give the dog its purpose, and it should get a name like Killer or Terror. Crowley says that he's going to be there to watch, and that hopefully Warlock will be afraid of the hell-hound. If Warlock *does* name the dog something evil-sounding, it'll usher in Armageddon. Aziraphale says that he'll be there to watch the naming too.

*When Crowley says that the hell-hound should be named something like Killer or Terror, he's suggesting that naming the hell-hound anything else would be antithetical to its role as the Antichrist's companion. Naming the hell-hound something evil-sounding will be a sign that the Antichrist is evil himself, and that he is indeed going to carry out Armageddon—the only hope of avoiding this outcome is if Warlock rejects the dog altogether. Crowley doesn't seem to believe that Warlock has the ability to change what's supposed to happen, except by rejecting his destiny outright.*



## WEDNESDAY

Warlock's 11th birthday party in Central London is well-attended. In addition to the 47 young guests, there are Secret Service men and a crew of caterers led by a vintage **Bentley**. Aziraphale shows up as a magician—he learned sleight of hand in the 1870s and spent a year practicing. As he stands in front of the disdainful children and begins to perform, he wishes that he'd *kept* practicing. Warlock is unimpressed: he and a girl rudely insult Aziraphale, convincing Aziraphale that Warlock is "infernally tainted." Aziraphale shoots desperate glances at Crowley, who's dressed as a waiter. Crowley, meanwhile, looks toward the mountain of presents: he sees a gerbil, but no sign of a **hell-hound**, which should arrive any minute.

*Aziraphale doesn't seem to realize that other children, like the little girl in this passage, are just as rude and dismissive as Warlock is. In other words, it's possible that children, not just the supposed Antichrist, are "infernally tainted"—that is, that they have elements of evil in them. Meanwhile, the fact that Aziraphale dedicated a year of his life to learning real sleight of hand is humorous, given that he's an angel with supernatural powers (for instance, the ability to remove alcohol from his blood in the previous chapter). But since he's been assigned to live and work on Earth, he wants to learn skills through honest, hard work, the way human beings do—and as an immortal, he has the time to do so. Aziraphale, like Crowley, seems to find human pastimes endearing and enjoyable.*



As Aziraphale continues his routine, he grows even more flustered when he realizes that this isn't the Victorian era—so no one in the audience will have a handkerchief for him to borrow. He desperately asks a security guard to check his breast pocket for a handkerchief. The guard grudgingly reaches in and pulls out a silk handkerchief with lace edging—which catches on the guard's gun, sending it flying. The children clap as Warlock runs for the gun and gleefully points it at people. He pulls the trigger when someone throws a dessert at him—but only water comes out. Aziraphale dodges flying cakes, turns the rest of the guards' guns into water guns, and walks out of the party.

*Even though he'd probably insist that turning a bunch of guns into water guns isn't exactly what he's supposed to be doing, Aziraphale demonstrates here that he can still snap under certain circumstances. In other words, Aziraphale might not be as unshakably good as he might like people to think. He still does what might be considered the right thing by making sure that no one is going to get hurt, but turning the guns into water guns will no doubt raise questions.*



Crowley follows Aziraphale out to the street and helps him extricate a dead dove from his sleeve. He blows life into the dove and then turns on the **Bentley's** radio to check the status of the **hell-hound**. A demon's voice comes through the radio and says that the hell-hound left 10 minutes ago. When the demon asks if there's a problem, Crowley replies that he can see the dog now, and that it looks great. Crowley then turns off the radio and meets Aziraphale's eyes. He tells Aziraphale to get in the car so they can figure out where they went wrong.

*Just as Aziraphale is clearly capable of reaching his breaking point and making poor decisions, Crowley shows here that he's capable of doing good unprompted when he brings the dead dove back to life. Neither is as wholly good or wholly evil as one might expect—indeed, Crowley isn't being as evil as he should, since he lies to his bosses about the hell-hound's whereabouts.*



Far from Central London, in Tadfield, a terrifying black **dog** appears in the road. It growls, slavers, and listens until it hears its master's voice. The dog follows the voice to a stand of straggly trees, where it can hear young voices—one of them its master's—discussing whether or not one boy will receive a dog for his birthday. The hound peers through the scraggly greenery and sees four children sitting on milk crates.

The children's conversation meanders and returns to the subject of whether the **hound's** master is going to get a dog for his birthday. One girl says with authority that he won't. As evidence, she notes that she wanted a seven-gear bike with purple paint for her birthday—and instead, she got a girl's bike. It's sexism, she insists, to give people "girly presents" just because they're girls. The hound's master insists that he's going to get a dog—it will be small, intelligent, and well-bred. Outside the chalk quarry, there's a clap of thunder as the hound becomes a small dog.

The **dog's** master deliberates about what to name it, and the dog waits with bated breath—the name will give it its purpose and identity. The boy says that he'll name his dog Dog. Deep inside, the hell-hound knows something is wrong, but he's already devoted to his master. Strangely, instead of just wanting to jump up at people, he also wants to wag his tail.

As Crowley and Aziraphale drive in the **Bentley**, they anxiously wonder if someone else is interfering with the Antichrist, and they discuss what can be done to a person "down there" or "up there." Crowley insists that Aziraphale's side has "ineffable mercy," but Aziraphale asks if Crowley ever visited Gomorrah "afterwards."

*The hell-hound's horrifying appearance suggests that, as its name suggests, it was created to be the embodiment of Hell. It looks terrifying and dangerous, and it seems designed to carry out evil deeds—a name like Killer seems appropriate, as Crowley suggested. But whereas Crowley has made the case that good and evil are learned and chosen rather, it seems that the hell-hound may indeed be innately evil.*



*Readers know that the Antichrist—the hound's master—is Adam, not Warlock. This first view of Adam as a kid shows that Adam has, in the last 11 years, grown up to become a seemingly normal little boy, just like Warlock has. This implies that Crowley may be correct about good and evil after all: although Adam is the son of Satan, he doesn't seem particularly evil. Being raised by normal human parents has seemingly molded him into a typical kid, which would suggest that good and evil are indeed learned characteristics rather than innate traits. Like many kids, Adam wants a dog for his birthday, and he has a very specific idea of what he wants—one that doesn't fit the hell-hound's description at all. His wish for a small, intelligent, well-bred dog seems to transform the hell-hound into just that, suggesting that it may be possible for the hound to shed its evilness.*



*Naming the hell-hound Dog seems to fundamentally change the hell-hound's demeanor. Crowley previously said that the dog's name is supposed to give it its purpose—and receiving the name Dog suggests that Dog's purpose might just be to act as a normal dog: a companion for a boy and his family. This further implies that Adam has grown into a regular kid rather than the evil Antichrist he was predestined to become.*



*In the Bible, Gomorrah was a city that was consumed by fire and brimstone as punishment for its people's sins. By asking Crowley if he ever visited Gomorrah after it was destroyed, Aziraphale makes it clear that although Heaven may be able to express "ineffable mercy," it can also choose to mercilessly burn cities to the ground.*



Crowley and Aziraphale decide that something must've happened in the hospital, even though the hospital was staffed with Crowley's people (Satanist nurses). Both Crowley and Aziraphale both find Satanists embarrassing—they're too enthusiastic and don't understand that all a person needs to be a Satanist is will, not elaborate symbols and rituals. Old-style Satanists aren't even particularly evil, whereas nowadays, some of them come up with horrifically evil ideas and then blame their actions on Hell or the Devil. In Crowley's opinion, neither Heaven nor Hell are major reservoirs of good or evil. True evil (and for that matter, good) exists inside the human mind. Suddenly, Crowley remembers a scatterbrained nun, and he drives the **Bentley** 90 miles per hour through London. Aziraphale puts in tape after tape of classical music, but each one plays Queen instead.

Surveyors don't tend to set up at midnight—and yet, at the same time as Crowley and Aziraphale are driving, there's a surveyor out on the Oxfordshire plain. Her theodolite isn't normal: it has a hazel twig strapped on top, crystal pendulums, and Celtic runes. The woman, Anathema Device, wears a sensible cloak and is a sensible person—so she carries a bread knife instead of amulets to protect against “prowling maniacs.” She draws a line on her survey map, which intersects another line. Then, Anathema collapses her theodolite and climbs on her ancient bike.

Meanwhile, Crowley snaps at Aziraphale as they argue about asking for directions. He slams the **Bentley** into gear as Aziraphale notes that there's something odd about this area; he gets the sense that someone really loves this place. Suddenly, there's a scream and a thump, and Crowley and Aziraphale get out of the car to find a bent bike. Aziraphale conjures light but gets rid of it when a woman's voice asks how he did that. Aziraphale pulls the woman, Anathema, up. He heals her minor fracture and picks up her things for her. Then, he picks up her bike, which is now gleaming and sports a puncture repair kit and a pump. Anathema is confused, but Aziraphale hurriedly tosses her things into the Bentley's backseat and levitates the bike onto the new roof rack.

*Crowley and Aziraphale are slowly putting the pieces together that Sister Mary must have made a mistake on the night that Crowley brought the baby Antichrist to the hospital. Crowley essentially proposes that what makes a person a Satanist is the desire to do evil things or worship Satan, not necessarily inclusion in a formal group of Satanists. And for that matter, even those who consider themselves Satanists usually aren't all that bad. This makes the case that association with a group isn't always a great indicator of what kind of a person someone is. Aziraphale and Crowley are perhaps the best examples of this, as neither of them are entirely good or entirely bad despite being an angel and a demon, respectively. Furthermore, they're both supposed to be supportive of Armageddon and the Final Fight—and yet, here they are trying to stop it.*



*Anathema Device is the little girl who was reading The Book of prophecies earlier in the novel—and it seems that she, like Agnes Nutter, has grown up to be a witch. A theodolite is an instrument used by surveyors to take precise measurements of the landscape. Anathema is clearly taking measurements of something a bit more occult, given that her theodolite's accessories are things associated with witchcraft. But this passage also characterizes Anathema as practical and sensible, first and foremost. She knows what witchcraft can and can't do—and it can't protect her from the “prowling maniacs.”*



*Aziraphale's feeling about the area is perhaps related to whatever witchcraft Anathema was performing with her theodolite and other objects. The reader knows that Anathema and her family members are somehow related to the end of the world that's prophesied in The Book, so it's possible that Crowley and Aziraphale are fated to run into her as part of their mission to prevent Armageddon. Meanwhile, the changes Aziraphale makes to Anathema's bike show that he's a kind, caring individual and wants her to be safe—but coming from a divine being, this kind of care is confusing instead of touching. The fact that Crowley hits Anathema at all suggests that even as a demon, Crowley isn't immune to making human mistake (like car accidents). All in all, this passage shows Aziraphale and Crowley as beings who want to do the right thing but, like everyone else, run up against issues as they try to do so.*



Anathema continues to remark on her bike's new features as Crowley drives slowly down the road, the Bentley's lights now on. He asks if there's a hospital run by nuns around, but Anathema says that the only big place nearby is Tadfield Manor. When they reach Anathema's house, she gets out of the car to find her bike already leaning against her gate. Once inside, she spreads some maps and mystical objects out on the table and tries to figure out what she learned from her surveying. She thinks that "IT" is in the northern part of the village, but the signal wasn't strong enough. The answer must be in The Book—but the book is unintelligible unless a person can think like Agnes, who's a brilliant but crazed witch from the 17th century. Suddenly, with horror, Anathema realizes that she's lost The Book.

As Aziraphale and Crowley drive, Aziraphale tries to explain that he can sense a "cherished" feel to this place, which he's never felt anywhere else. Crowley calls Aziraphale oversensitive. When they reach the hospital, Crowley pulls in and reiterates to Aziraphale that on the night he brought the baby Antichrist here, the nuns working here were Satanists. He explains how his side orchestrated things so that the American Attaché's wife, Mrs. Dowling, would have no choice but to give birth in a rural religious hospital. The plan worked perfectly—until it didn't.

Aziraphale smugly points out that evil plans are bound to self-destruct because they're evil, but Crowley insists that it was just typical human incompetence. Then, he notices that all the cars in the driveway are fancier than his, and Aziraphale suggests that they have the wrong place. Suddenly, someone shoots both of them.

*The simple fact that Crowley and Aziraphale are struggling so much to find the hospital where the Antichrist was born speaks to how human they actually are—they don't have access to extra knowledge or understanding, just because they're supernatural beings. Meanwhile, this passage confirms that The Book is indeed Agnes Nutter's book of prophecies. It's unclear what, exactly, Anathema was out looking for or how Agnes's book will help her—but it likely has something to do with Armageddon. The revelation that Anathema lost The Book shows that she, like Anathema and Crowley, is fallible despite being a witch. The car crash was a stressful moment, and she understandably wasn't able to keep track of all her belongings.*



*The "cherished" feel that Aziraphale picks up suggests that there might be more to the area around Tadfield than Aziraphale and Crowley realize. Indeed, since Aziraphale hasn't felt it anywhere else, it implies that there might be something supernatural going on—and indeed, unbeknownst to Aziraphale and Crowley, Adam Young (the real Antichrist) lives in Tadfield. Meanwhile, Crowley seems to have put the pieces together and realized that the nuns made a mistake—they switched the baby Antichrist with the Youngs' baby instead of the Dowlings'. Thus far in the novel, Aziraphale has continually insisted that God's plan is unknowable and unchallengeable—yet, in this case, something destined to happen was seemingly thwarted by simple human error.*



*When Crowley and Aziraphale discuss why the plan went awry, Aziraphale proposes that good will always win over evil. But in Crowley's estimation, the world is much more random and chaotic than this. The novel opened with Adam and Eve committing the "original sin" outlined in the Bible ("original sin" being the idea that humankind inherited Adam and Eve's sin of disobeying God and are now destined to sin and make mistakes). This story seems to underpin Crowley's view of the situation at hand: the switch-up of the baby Antichrist happened not because good triumphs over evil, but simply because making mistakes is human nature.*



Mary Hodges (formerly Sister Mary Loquacious) liked the Chattering Order, but she decided not to move with it when it left Tadfield Manor—she liked the manor and wanted to oversee its repairs. The Mother Superior handed over the deeds, since it wasn't going to matter in 11 years anyway. Over time, Sister Mary shed her old identity and became Mary Hodges. She gave up women's magazines and started reading magazines about finance; from one, she learned that the business community was looking for big buildings with beautiful grounds. She decided to start a business, Tadfield Manor Conference and Management Training Center, which quickly became a success. Mary's style of management training involves much more than just informative slideshows.

Having been shot, Crowley sinks down and thinks that he can't afford the hassle of trying to get a new body right now. Then, he realizes that his blood is yellow, and that Aziraphale is bleeding blue—they've been shot with paintball guns. Crowley doesn't know what game these people are playing.

Meanwhile, as Nigel Tompkins crawls through the underbrush, he thinks that he's *not* playing a game: he's here to help his chances of getting a promotion. Tompkins sneaks back toward the figures he shot, and when he sees something dreadful—Crowley's demonic form—he blacks out. Crowley quickly turns back into his human form, and Aziraphale scolds him for dirtying his shirt with the maggots that he conjured up as part of his demonic persona. As Crowley picks up and inspects Tompkins's paintball gun, Aziraphale shares that currently, Heaven supports guns in the right hands. Surprised, Crowley runs a hand over the gun and drops it onto Tompkins's chest.

Aziraphale and Crowley enter the manor. Crowley flips through a pamphlet in the reception area, hoping it'll include a note about where the nuns went. Eventually, a plump man wanders in, jovially asks who's winning, and says that an employee from Forward Planning got him good. Suddenly, they hear a burst of bullets from the grounds—real bullets, not pellets. Crowley smiles “like a snake.”

*Sister Mary Loquacious's transformation to become Mary Hodges exemplifies the idea that the ability to learn and change is central to being human. Embracing that ability, Mary's story shows, can help people find happiness and purpose in their lives (even if their lives are, in theory, only supposed to last another 11 years). It's not clear whether Mary knows that she switched the Antichrist with the wrong baby over a decade ago—either way, there's no indication that she feels guilty or distraught about her mistake.*



*Aziraphale and Crowley clearly aren't infallible or all-knowing: Crowley, at least, honestly believed that he was shot with a real gun before realizing that it was only a paintball gun. Being divine doesn't mean that Crowley and Aziraphale immediately understand everything—indeed, Crowley openly admits that he has no idea what's going on.*



*The reader knows Mary Hodges was (and perhaps still is) a Satanist, and that she now runs a managerial training facility. With this in mind, it seems that this paintball game being played on the Tadfield Manor grounds is some kind of violent and chaotic corporate training exercise. Indeed, Tompkins's inner monologue suggests that he's here for a very specific purpose: to help his chances of moving up in his company, by violent means if necessary. The fact that a seemingly average businessman like Tompkins is willing to shoot his coworkers (as well as innocent bystanders, in the case of Crowley and Aziraphale) suggests that selfishness is part of human nature—a tendency that one might consider evil.*



*Crowley is clearly angry that the nuns are nowhere to be found, and he's taking it out on the company employees who are here for a retreat—his smile after the sound of real bullets implies that he's the one who turned the paintball guns into real guns. He seems to delight in frightening Aziraphale by letting him think that things could go seriously wrong. The description of Crowley smiling “like a snake” aligns him with his demonic identity, Crowley, rather than his more human persona, Crowley. This suggests that Crowley can't totally separate himself from his demonic side—he still has evil tendencies.*





Out on the grounds, Nigel Tompkins comes to, aims his gun at a coworker, and pulls the trigger. Back inside, Aziraphale shouts at Crowley for giving Tompkins a real gun, but Crowley says that fair is fair. Meanwhile, another group outside realizes that their guns are real, too. Crowley insists to Aziraphale that no one *has* to pull the trigger, and he admits that he's orchestrated this incident so that no one is actually going to die. He and Aziraphale decide to wander the halls of the manor while everyone is distracted; outside, police begin to arrive.

When Crowley and Aziraphale reach Mary Hodges's office, Crowley pushes the door open and recognizes Mary immediately. He snaps his fingers, and she sits back with a blank look. Aziraphale looks scandalized but refuses to question Mary himself. Crowley confirms that Mary was a nun 11 years ago and asks if she can remember an incident involving switching babies—and if it's possible that something went wrong. Mary does remember the baby-switching, but she doesn't know anything else. Furthermore, the hospital records were destroyed in a fire that occurred just after the incident. Crowley groans—the fire was probably Hastur's doing. Suddenly, Aziraphale hears sirens outside, and he insists that Crowley hurry up, refusing to delay the police.

No one notices Aziraphale and Crowley leaving the manor—the police are too busy wrangling the management trainees into vans. Crowley insists to Aziraphale that if Mary plays her cards right, she could make a fortune with her business. After a pause, Aziraphale wonders why they can't find the Antichrist. Crowley explains that the boy has powers that keep him hidden from “occult forces,” like an angel and a demon. They gloomily toss out ways that the world might end. When Aziraphale suggests that it'll be a terrorist organization, he and Crowley name terrorists on their respective sides. Three terrorist groups are on both lists. Upset and distracted, Crowley puts a random tape in—it plays Queen.

Aziraphale suggests that they could get a human to find the Antichrist, since humans are good at finding one another. Crowley thinks this would be unlikely, but he doesn't have any other ideas. Aziraphale says that he'll contact his network of agents, and Crowley agrees to do the same. When they reach Aziraphale's bookshop in London, he reaches into the backseat for his coat and discovers a book. As Aziraphale opens it up, bells ring in his head—he realizes that it must've belonged to Anathema and is glad that Crowley can't see his face. Crowley refuses to return the book as Aziraphale fumbles with his keys and barely says goodbye.

*Although Crowley is no paragon of virtue, he's not evil enough to actually let anyone get seriously hurt. He also makes it clear that it's not just his actions that matter—the people with the guns have the choice of whether or not to pull the trigger, after all.*



*Although Mary remembers switching the babies, she's seemingly unaware that she mistakenly switched the Antichrist with the Youngs' son instead of the Dowlings'. This seems to confirm Crowley's earlier assessment that the mix-up was due to run-of-the-mill incompetence, not evil or malice. Hastur's choice to start the fire and destroy all the records, though, certainly seems evil—it means that Crowley and Aziraphale have no way to track what happened to the Antichrist after that night at the hospital.*



*It seems somewhat odd that Aziraphale doesn't know why he and Crowley can't find the Antichrist, given that Aziraphale is a divine being. And given his friendship with Crowley, he is, perhaps, more aware of the situation than other angels are. Meanwhile, the fact that there are terrorist groups on each side—both good and evil—speaks to Crowley's point that every human being is capable of good and evil—and that, more than anything, these sides are a matter of perspective. Even a terrorist could perhaps be considered good or evil, depending on what their cause is and how they carry it out.*



*Given that Aziraphale and Crowley's list of terror groups contained many of the same groups, it's possible that their “networks” might actually include a lot of the same people. Again, this would make the case that good and evil is a matter of perspective—and people can be both at once. When Crowley notes that humans are good at finding each other, he acknowledges that supernatural beings aren't all-powerful. There are some things that humans do better.*



Meanwhile, Anathema tries everything she can to find The Book, but she can't—she realizes that she left it in the back of the men's car. She's sure that Agnes Nutter's descendants are laughing at her. Anathema hopes that the men won't know what The Book is.

Aziraphale is extremely proud of his collection of books of prophecy—they're all signed, and he even has the original scroll of St. John the Divine of Patmos's "Revelation." (St. John was nice, but he liked mushrooms too much.) The book that Aziraphale found in Crowley's **Bentley**, *The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter*, is missing from his collection, so he holds the book gingerly. He puts on gloves to protect the book's pages and makes himself some cocoa to drink while he reads. Forty minutes later, the cocoa is still untouched.

Meanwhile, there's a red-haired woman sitting in the corner of a bar—she's the most successful war correspondent in the world. All the other war correspondents idolize her, but she writes for the *National World Weekly*. The *National World Weekly* typically publishes stories about Elvis, so they don't need a war correspondent. The woman seems to arrive at the wars before they even break out. Now, she's on a small Mediterranean island—which, all of a sudden, is experiencing violence. Suddenly, three men from different factions break through the window to claim the hotel for their side. While some believe that the hotel is strategically important, the bar's pianist notes that the wine cellar is just well-stocked.

One man lifts his gun and threatens to shoot anyone who speaks, but everyone stops to listen. A muttering deliveryman sidles into the room with a long, thin package. He gives it to the woman at the bar and asks her to sign for it. Rather than sign her current name, Carmine Zuigiber, she signs with a shorter name: Red. The deliveryman backs out of the room, and Red opens the package: it contains a large sword. She finishes her drink, hefts the sword over her shoulder, and looks around—every gun is trained on her, and every man is afraid. The men all shoot at the same time, hitting people as well as objects in the bar. Once they've ceased fire, Red licks someone else's blood off her hand and walks out, seemingly unharmed. Two surviving vacationers snap that they should've gone elsewhere, completely missing the importance of what happened.

*The fact that Aziraphale just so happened to stumble upon the rare book he wanted for his collection hints that perhaps he was destined to find it—although at this point, it's unclear what role The Book will play in Aziraphale and Crowley's story.*



*The aside that Aziraphale owns the original scroll of "Revelation" is a nod to Good Omens's source material, the Book of Revelation in the Bible. By implying that the author was fond of psychedelic mushrooms, Gaiman and Pratchett encourage readers to not take major cultural touchstones like this too seriously. In some cases, those famous works may not have been taken as seriously by the authors as they now are by the readership.*



*Given the similarities between the war correspondent and Scarlett earlier in the novel, it's likely that they're the same person. It's particularly telling that the correspondent seems to arrive at the wars before they start, as this implies that she has something to do with them starting. But even in this tense, war-torn environment, the novel makes it clear that it's possible to laugh—people are taking control of the hotel for the wine, not for any other reason.*



*Another clue that this woman is the same person as Scarlett is her current name, Carmine/Red (carmine and scarlet are both shades of red). Given everything the novel has revealed about Red thus far (that she's attracted to or causes war, that she's possibly immortal), when she receives this delivery of a sword, it suggests that she might be one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, War, who appears in the Book of Revelation. In this book of the Bible, the Four Horsemen appear as harbingers of an apocalypse—so Red's presence here suggests that Armageddon is drawing near. This is presumably the important thing that the vacationers miss.*



## THURSDAY

Newcomers are always interesting to Adam's gang, which is known around town as the Them. But Pepper has impressive news about the most recent newcomer: she's a witch, she gets a witch's newspaper in addition to other papers, and she moved into Jasmine Cottage. Wensleydale, the most mature member of the gang, insists that there's no such thing as witches, while Brian doesn't see why witches shouldn't have their own paper. Pepper tells him to shut up. If anyone else had said this, it would've incited a scuffle, but Pepper has always been a vicious fighter—and the 11-year-old boys are starting to feel weird about fighting girls.

Pepper became a fighter to prevent people from mocking her full first name, Pippin Galadriel Moonchild. The only people who call her this are her mother and the rival gang, Greasy Johnson and the Johnsonites—but only when they're out of earshot. Greasy Johnson is the same age as Adam (within a few hours, in fact), and his parents have never told him that he's adopted.

Adam sits and listens to the others argue, waiting for something to latch onto. Brian insists that his Sunday paper said there are thousands of witches in England who worship Nature, eat health food, and dance naked on Stonehenge. Wensleydale maintains that his aunt isn't a witch, even if she does try to talk to her dead husband—but Brian says that God sends people to hell for that. Adam shifts and notes that witches aren't so bad, which prompts Pepper and Brian to detail all the bad things that witches do. Wensleydale insists witches don't exist, since science has been invented, and vicars burned all the witches during the Spanish Inquisition. Brian says that they should find out if the newcomer is a witch and then turn her over to the vicar. Adam suggests they mount their own Spanish Inquisition instead.

The Spanish Inquisition convenes after lunch. Adam is the Chief Inquisitor, while Pepper will be the Head Torturer. Brian and Wensleydale are guards because they don't speak any Spanish. They decide to fetch the first practice witch, Pepper's little sister. Pepper's little sister admits right off she's a witch, even though she's supposed to deny it until Pepper tortures her. The witch thoroughly enjoys the torture, a makeshift medieval ducking stool. It's a hot day, so Adam lets the witch off with a warning so that someone else can have a turn.

*Adam and the Them are 11 years old. They're on the brink of puberty and are probably at different stages of development, hence why Wensleydale is all for shutting down talk of witches but Pepper and Brian are willing to buy it—and why the boys are starting to feel uncomfortable about sparring with girls. But despite these differences, it's clear that the four are close friends.*



*The fact that the Them and the Greasy Johnsonites are rival gangs suggests that they're engaged in a mutually fulfilling fight for power. This, in and of itself, is a sort of friendship—one that's based on how much they like to fight each other. Moreover, the detail that Adam and Greasy Johnson are so close in age—combined with the fact that Greasy is adopted—heavily implies that he's the American Attaché's biological son who was switched at birth with Warlock.*



*Again, the Them's age means that they have a questionable grasp of how the world around them works. Brian, for one, seems to be confusing a health food craze with witchcraft as it's often portrayed in art and literature—and he suggests that witchcraft is, on the whole, bad. This whole conversation seems designed to make readers laugh at how ill-informed the children are, even if what they're laughing about is no laughing matter. The Spanish Inquisition, for one, was a horrifically violent historical period. But to young kids with little understanding of what actually happened, it seems interesting and worth exploring.*



*The children have the capability to be both kind and cruel. They clearly don't entirely understand how horrific witch trials were for the accused—to them, this is just a convenient way to experiment with power structures and cool off in the pond. Adam's choice to let the witch go also shows that despite being the Antichrist, he's not evil. He has no interest in actually killing Pepper's little sister with a ducking stool (which were used to dunk witches underwater, or even drown them, as punishment).*



Later that afternoon, Mr. Young bans Adam from watching TV as punishment for destroying Pepper's little sister's dress in the pond. Now, Adam slouches down the dusty lane with **Dog** slouching along dutifully. As Adam grumbles about his punishment, Dog thinks that he didn't expect the last days before Armageddon to be like this—but he's enjoying them anyway. He's been taken over by "intrinsic small-dogness" and so has enjoyed chasing rats and cats. Suddenly, Adam realizes that he's walking past Jasmine Cottage and that someone is crying. He hesitates and then peers over the hedge at Anathema, who's young and without warts—so she's clearly not a witch.

To Anathema, Adam looks like a Greek god or a Biblical illustration, aside from the grubby sneakers. Adam introduces himself and is thrilled that Anathema has heard of him—she's heard to *avoid* him and the Them. Adam asks why she's crying, and when Anathema says that she lost a book, Adam offers to help look for it and says that Anathema can read the eight-page book he wrote, which will cheer her up. He decides that he adores Anathema when she compliments his book but refuses his help. She explains that two men kind of stole the book. Privately, she can't shake the feeling that Adam is odd.

Anathema explains to Adam that the book is called *The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch*. Back when the book was written, "nice" meant "precise." She thinks of how beautiful Tadfield is—it's depressing that this is where Armageddon is going to happen, according to Agnes. Fortunately, Anathema still has the file cards. She explains to a disappointed Adam that the book doesn't have any spaceships or robots in it, and then she offers him lemonade. Before Adam accepts, he asks if Anathema is a witch. She says that she's an occultist, and Adam insists that he knows what that means. With the matter settled, Adam tells **Dog** to follow him inside. Dog refuses, but Adam forces him in. With this, "a little more of Hell burn[s] away." Meanwhile, in London, Aziraphale continues to flip through The Book.

In Jasmine Cottage, Anathema tells Adam what the devices on her table are. Adam is enthralled. His family isn't spiritual at all, so Adam laps up everything Anathema has to say about ley-lines, whales, bikes, rainforests, and recycled paper. He only interrupts once, when she shares her view that nuclear power plants should be done away with, to say that the nuclear power station he visited was boring. Meanwhile, Anathema finally realizes what's wrong with Adam: he has no aura. This is perplexing, given how happy he seems. She eventually sends him home with copies of *New Aquarian Digest*. It changes Adam's life—and many other things in the world. He stays up past midnight, reading, eating lemon drops, and wondering how to make Anathema happy.

*It's telling that Dog is enjoying the last days in his new form as a small dog. The novel suggests that Dog is becoming who he was destined to be when it suggests that he's overcome by "intrinsic small-dogness." With this, the novel shows that due to Dog's relationship with Adam, he's perhaps not supposed to be the fearsome hell-hound that Crowley expected him to be. Meanwhile, the fact that Adam decides so quickly that Anathema isn't a witch based solely on how she looks is humorous; it suggests that Adam believes he should be able to identify evil outright.*



*In this passage, Adam seems like a normal child—he's happy that people know who he is, he's eager to be helpful, and he wants praise for his work. All of this suggests that he's not as evil as his being the Antichrist might suggest. However, this isn't to say that he doesn't seem divine in some ways—it's surely no accident that Anathema thinks he looks like a deity or a Biblical illustration, and that she finds him odd.*



*Anathema, like Aziraphale, seems to pick up on the fact that Tadfield is beautiful and seems like an odd place for Armageddon to take place. Adam again comes off as a normal child when he seems to imply that any book without spaceships and robots isn't worth reading, let alone getting upset over. Most important, though, is the novel's description of Dog's passage into Jasmine Cottage. The phrase "a little more of Hell burns away" suggests that Dog is gradually shedding his evil origins as the hell-hound and becoming the normal dog Adam wants him to be.*



*It sounds like Adam has had a rather mundane upbringing when it comes to religion—so Anathema opens up a whole new world for him by introducing him to spiritual practices. However, it's also worth noting that she introduces him to environmental issues, which have nothing to do with the occult and everything to do with trying to improve the state of the planet. The fact that this is what changes Adam's life (and, apparently, other aspects of the world) suggests that as the Antichrist, Adam might not be motivated by evil thoughts—he might try to make the world better.*



At 3:00 a.m., in the control room of Turning Point power station, alarms go off. The chief engineer looks at his dials and controls, which say that megawatts are leaving the station despite there being nothing to produce them. After three hours, the engineer has permission to open up the nuclear reactor. It's empty, save for a lemon drop.

*This is the first indicator that Adam is starting to draw on his superhuman powers as the Antichrist—the lemon drop at the bottom of the nuclear reactor links Adam to the nuclear material's disappearance. Adam might not know what he's doing, but Armageddon is clearly drawing closer.*



## FRIDAY

Sable sits in the back of his limousine. He's on the phone discussing the launch of MEALS, a diet product that contains no nutritional value. Sable is in the lot of a Burger Lord, where he's testing Hamburger MEALS. Inside, he orders a burger and shake. The other patrons seem no more disgusted than they'd be at another burger joint. As Sable stands, a deliveryman catches him. Sable signs for the package with his real name, which is six letters long and rhymes with *examine*. The package contains brass scales, which Sable shoves in his pocket. Back in the limo, Sable asks his driver to get him a ticket to England and to cancel all future appointments.

*The package that Sable receives harkens back to Red receiving the sword in the previous chapter—which adds more credence to the possibility that Red and Sable are two of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Indeed, given that Sable is launching diet products, sometimes kills people (which the novel previously revealed), and has a real name that rhymes with examine, all signs point to him being the Horseman Famine. In the Book of Revelation in the Bible, Famine carries scales that represent the way food might be weighed during a famine. Thus, the scales that Sable receives are an indicator that Armageddon is coming—hence why he needs to get to England, where Armageddon is supposed to start.*



The Them listens with interest as Adam tells them all about what he learned from *New Aquarian*. He announces that “they” paid Charles Fort to go away, so he sailed away in the *Mary Celeste* and founded the Bermuda Triangle. When Wensleydale points out that there was no one on the *Mary Celeste* when they found the ship, Adam scathingly says that the UFOs came and took Fort away. The Them love UFOs, but they're not as interested in Adam's New Age UFOs. Pepper says that if she was an alien, she'd shoot people with laser blasters, not tell them about “mystic cosmic harmony.” But Adam insists that the aliens have changed their ways, and now, they're like galactic police who encourage beings to get along.

*In this speech to the Them, Adam touches on a variety of historical events and figures. In the early 20th century, researcher Charles Fort took to studying and writing about paranormal phenomena. The *Mary Celeste*, on the other hand, was a ship that was found without a crew off the coast of Portugal, while the Bermuda Triangle is a swath of the Atlantic Ocean where a number of ships and aircraft have disappeared under mysterious circumstances. Adam is seemingly putting these unrelated things together to create a narrative that makes sense to him. Regardless of how accurate any of this is, his insistence that aliens are turning into galactic police is important: he seems to want to craft a world where people get along, a mark of his potential for good.*



Brian asks why they're even called Unidentified Flying Objects, when they're clearly flying saucers. Adam says that the Government hushes everything up, but he can't tell the Them why (*New Aquarian* never gave an explanation). It's just what governments do—for instance, nuclear power stations blow up all the time, but the Government keeps people from finding out. Wensleydale objects to this; his dad says that nuclear power is safe and means they don't have to live in a greenhouse.

*It's probably exciting for Adam to encounter the idea that the government covers up all sorts of things, as it gives him free rein to let his imagination run wild. It also gives him an enemy that he may focus on as Armageddon approaches—clearly, the world needs saving from the government. And as the Antichrist, someone with immense potential (whether for good or for evil), Adam might be the person who's able to do that.*



Adam stops the Them's bickering by asking severely if they want to hear about the Aquarium Age or not. He says that in America, the Government scolds people all the time for seeing UFOs. Then, there's Atlantis. The Them debate what they would've done had they been on Atlantis when it sank. Wensleydale insists that he would've stayed and worn a diver's helmet. Brian is thrilled that in all that water, he wouldn't have to bathe. Then, the Them begin to play a game called Charles Fort Discovering Things. Adam is pleased—the cowboys and pirates of his imagination are nothing compared to the Aquarium Age.

People have spent centuries trying to make sense of Agnes Nutter's prophecies. Anathema has, thus far, done the best, but none of those people were angels. Aziraphale is nothing if not intelligent, being an angel with thousands of years of practice. He sits reading Agnes's book, scribbling symbols that few others would be able to comprehend.

Over lunch, Anathema pores over her maps—Tadfield is brimming with shifting ley-lines. On the radio, a BBC reporter is interviewing a spokesman about an entire missing nuclear reactor—and the odd fact that the plant is still producing power. Anathema notices that the ley lines are forming a spiral, centered loosely on Lower Tadfield. Meanwhile, several thousand miles away, a cruise ship captain tries to come up with the appropriate code to send the ship's owners. He's just run aground on Atlantis, and men in diving helmets are mingling with the ship's passengers.

The Them sit in the quarry, arguing about the Hollow Earth Theory. Wensleydale doesn't buy it, since the holes in the Earth that Adam describes don't appear in atlases. Adam says the Government won't let people put it in atlases, and then he brings up the Tibetan tunnels. Some teachers who left Atlantis went to Tibet, and now, they run the world from an underground city—they have people all over the world in tunnels, listening to everything above. Brian wishes that they could learn this interesting stuff in school. The Them decides to play a rousing game of Charles Fort and the Atlantisans versus the Ancient Masters of Tibet.

*Adam begins to revel in knowing more than his friends do, which suggests that he might be more power-hungry than his normal upbringing might suggest. To him, America is a faraway, almost imaginary place where anything can happen. In this way, it's akin to Atlantis. All of what Adam has learned from the New Aquarian now means that his imagination is opening up—even if his practical understanding is questionable, as evidenced by his mispronunciation (“Aquarium Age” instead of “Aquarian Age”).*



*Though Aziraphale has, for the most part, avoided using his special powers as an angel in his life on Earth, desperate times call for desperate measures. Now that Armageddon is imminent, he's willing to possibly bend the rules to save the world.*



*Ley-lines are alignments that supposedly circle the globe, connecting important monuments and sites. The fact that they're moving gives the impression that things are starting to change on Earth very quickly: nuclear reactors are disappearing, and Atlantis has suddenly risen. However, the fact that Atlantis's inhabitants are wearing diving masks hearkens back to Adam's conversation with the Them, when Wensleydale said that he would have stayed and worn a diving helmet. This connection hints that all of these changes are because of Adam's interest in the theories in the New Aquarian. As Crowley predicted earlier, Adam is making things happen with his Antichrist powers, even though he's not aware of it—and because Adam is an imaginative 11-year-old, current events tend toward the fantastical.*



*At this point, all of the things Adam is learning about in New Aquarian simply fuel his active imagination and provide inspiration for the Them's games. All of this is totally innocent—it seems like Adam has no idea that his fantastical ideas are actually manifesting all over the world. This continues to give the impression that Adam is a kid first and the Antichrist second; he might not be as evil as one would expect.*



Long ago, witch-finders used to be respected. Now, there's no Witchfinder General—there's only a Witchfinder Sergeant and a Witchfinder Private named Newton "Newt" Pulsifer. He was drawn to the Witchfinder Army by an ad in the *Gazette* and decided to call. A Madame Tracy answered and, after some confusion, called Mr. Shadwell to the phone. Shadwell asked how many nipples Newt has (two) and if he has scissors (yes). Satisfied with the answers, he hired Newt.

Meanwhile, Aziraphale sits with a stack of notes. He never met Agnes; she was too bright. Usually, Heaven and Hell are able to identify the "prophetic types" and, if those people didn't come up with their own way of ignoring their thoughts (like St. John with his mushrooms), they send static down on the same mental wavelength. Aziraphale finally gets up and phones his contact. Then, he calls Directory Enquiries and asks for all the Youngs in Tadfield and Lower Tadfield. Aziraphale dials the first number. A middle-aged voice answers with "Tadfield Six double-six." Aziraphale hangs up, shaking.

Newt sits with a pile of newspapers, thinking that he never would've joined the army had he known what it entailed. His job is to cut out newspaper articles that mention either witches or unexplainable phenomena. As Newt cuts another article, he hears a thump on the door. He lets Shadwell in, and Shadwell dumps his massive stack of newspapers. He snarls that his landlord, Mr. Rajit, practices voodoo—to Newt, this is crazy, since voodoo comes from the Caribbean and Rajit and his family are from Bangladesh. When Newt points this out, Shadwell says that once Newt is initiated properly, he'll learn the secret truth: that the darkest voodoo comes from Bangladesh.

Shadwell grandly tells Newt how he was recruited to the army: his cellmate was in prison for burning a coven, and he was dying. He passed on the knowledge to Shadwell, just as Shadwell is now passing the knowledge to Newt. The Witchfinder Army (WA) stands between the world and the darkness. When Newt asks about the churches' role, Shadwell scoffs. The churches, he insists, are as bad as the witches—and they can't stamp out evil if they want to stay in business.

*Every passage about Shadwell and the Witchfinder Army is humorous—but this obscures the fact that the Witchfinder Army was, for a time, a real organization in England and did inspect suspected witches for extra nipples, often violently and publicly. But with centuries of distance—and in the form of Shadwell—this is now something people can laugh about.*



*Here, the novel reveals that Heaven and Hell took great care to keep people on Earth from figuring out what was going to happen in the future. This is, presumably, a good way to keep people from revolting—it's impossible to prevent Armageddon if one doesn't know it's going to happen. Hearing that the Antichrist presumably lives in a house with the number 666 (again, the number of the beast) tells Aziraphale that he's figured it out—the Antichrist lives in Tadfield.*



*Shadwell is a humorous character because he doesn't sound all that different from kids like Adam and the Them. He seems to make things up to suit his mood and whatever point he's trying to prove, just as Adam does with the Them. With this, the novel suggests that this is a normal thing that, to some degree, all people do. It's possible that some outgrow this tendency as they age—while others, like Shadwell, clearly don't.*



*When Newt asks about the role of the church, Shadwell essentially says that it's important to have both good and evil in the world if one wants to broadcast themselves as the representative of good. In order to represent good, there needs to be evil to fight against—suggesting the need for balance between the two.*



When Newt first joined the WA, it didn't take him long to realize that Shadwell is mentally unstable. The WA headquarters is filthy and run-down, but Newt sticks with it out of fascination, pity, and now affection for Shadwell—like most people, Newt likes Shadwell. The Rajits like him, since he seems to hate everyone. The next-door tenant, Madame Tracy, likes when Shadwell shouts that she's the whore of Babylon, which she sees as free advertising. She always leaves Sunday dinner on his doorstep. Shadwell also hits the walls, which saves Madame Tracy from having to operate the table rapper during her séances.

Newt pushes a pile of clippings toward Shadwell. They all mention unexplainable phenomena, but since disappearing nuclear reactors and the discovery of Atlantis don't concern witches, Shadwell isn't interested. Madame Tracy steps in to tell Shadwell that there's someone on the phone, and Newt hears Shadwell assure the caller that he'll put his best squad on the case. When Shadwell returns, cursing about a Southerner, Newt says that there's a town that, strangely, has been having normal weather—and witches affect the weather. He offers to drive the 40 miles to Tadfield. Shadwell curses; his caller mentioned Tadfield. He tells Newt to stop in before he leaves to get his "armor o' righteousness."

Just after Newt leaves, the phone rings again: it's Crowley, giving Shadwell the same instructions that Aziraphale did. Neither Crowley nor Aziraphale run the Witchfinder Army, but they both think that their side should support such endeavors. Technically, Shadwell doesn't run the WA—a Witchfinder General Smith does. There are lots of other Witchfinder Smiths on Shadwell's roster, since he doesn't have much imagination. Neither Crowley nor Aziraphale have read that far in the paperwork, so they pay Shadwell a combined 60 pounds per year, no questions asked.

## SATURDAY

It's early on Saturday morning, the last day of the world, and the sky is blood red. The deliveryman parks his van on the shoulder, climbs over a fence, and wanders along the river Uck with a parcel. The deliveryman notes how much the river has changed: it used to be a favored spot for fishermen, but now, it's covered in sludge. Eventually, he reaches a young man dressed all in white. The young man whispers that everything is so beautiful and signs his name. His pen bleeds, but the name starts with a P and either ends in *-ence* or *-ution*. After the deliveryman leaves, the man opens the parcel and finds a tiara. When he puts it on, it turns black.

*Here, the novel makes the case that Shadwell is actually a sad and pathetic man—and that's why he's both likeable and funny. Again, this makes the case that it's possible to find humor anywhere, even (and especially) when it comes to figures like Shadwell who could otherwise read as simple caricatures of villains. Instead, Shadwell is an integral part of his community—and his cantankerous nature is part of the appeal.*



*Shadwell's hypocrisy again makes him a humorous character—per his instructions, Newt should care about Atlantis or disappearing nuclear reactors. At this point, Shadwell probably just thinks it's a suspicious coincidence that his caller and Newt are both asking him about Tadfield. But this indicates that Anathema is correctly interpreting her ley-lines—things are starting to focus in on this small town in rural England, even if nobody understands why.*



*In revealing that the Witchfinder Army is actually just two people—and that Aziraphale and Crowley might know this had they read the paperwork—the novel pokes fun at bureaucracy and fine print in general. It questions why no one reads paperwork when there are clearly important things to learn from it—in this case, that the organization one employs is barely an organization at all.*



*The young man's all-white outfit implies that he's White, the person who was previously implied to play a role in nuclear disasters and oil spills. The delivery in this passage again mirrors the earlier passages about War and Famine, which means that White is another one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. The possible ending of this man's name suggests that he's either Pestilence or Pollution. Given how dirty and polluted the river looks (and the previous association of White with environmental disasters), Pollution seems more likely. The novel's assertion that this is the last day of the world confirms that Armageddon is indeed on the horizon—and that Pollution and the other Horsemen will likely play a key role in the coming apocalypse.*





The deliveryman carefully climbs into his van and reads the instructions on his next package. The address is one word: everywhere. The deliveryman writes a note to his wife that reads, “I love you,” and then walks across the road. A car zooms around the corner and hits him. Watching the car drive away, the deliveryman realizes that he no longer has a body, and he hears a voice say “YES” behind what used to be his shoulder. At first, the deliveryman is speechless, but then he tells the voice that he has a message: “Come and See.” The voice is pleased and tells the deliveryman to not think of this as dying—he should think of it as leaving early to avoid the rush.

Meanwhile, Shadwell confirms that Newt has his supplies, including his bell, book, and candle. Most important is the pin. Then, Shadwell salutes Newt and sends him off. Once Newt is gone, Shadwell squints at the WA’s map and puts a pushpin in Tadfield. Then, he admires the memorabilia of witch-finders past. Shadwell is no “lone nut”—the WA used to be as big as it is in Shadwell’s records, but everyone has since died. Oliver Cromwell set the pay rates, and no one since has revisited them (Newt’s pay is a shilling per year). Newt thinks of his participation as akin to participating in Civil War reenactments: it gets him out on weekends and keeps a tradition alive.

An hour after leaving the WA, Newt pulls over and tosses several of Shadwell’s items into the bushes. He keeps the military issue items, like the pin (for jabbing into suspected witches as a test; witches won’t feel it). Then, Newt resumes his journey in his Wasabi. Newt adores his car, which has safety features that malfunction and horrible gas mileage. As he drives, Newt wonders how he should go about stabbing potential witches. He might be interested to know that of the 39,000 women stabbed, only one—Agnes Nutter—said anything but “ow.”

One of the first entries in *The Nice and Accurate Prophecies* concerns Agnes’s death. She met the mob at the door, walked herself to the bonfire, and told everyone to gather round. She charged everyone to watch the last true witch in England die, and to pay attention to the fate of those who meddle with things they don’t understand. Then, she looked up and said, “That goes for you as well, yowe daft old foole.” Thirty seconds after Agnes caught fire, an explosion took out the entire village square—she’d hidden gunpowder and roofing nails in her skirts.

*With the deliveryman’s death, the novel reveals the final Horseman of the Apocalypse: Death. The fact that Death doesn’t receive a physical object like his colleagues sets him apart and suggests that he’s perhaps more important and more powerful. Indeed, given that the narrator previously noted that Death is always working and not just waiting, it makes the case that Death is omnipresent and all-powerful.*



*By giving some background on the WA, the narrator encourages readers to see Shadwell as a sympathetic, if funny character. He’s not crazy—he genuinely believes in his cause, and it doesn’t seem to bother him that he barely makes any money doing it (people’s salary expectations have definitely changed since the early-mid 1600s, when Oliver Cromwell lived). For Newt, his involvement gives him something to care about—and someone to care about, too.*



*Again, while Newt’s questions about how to use his pin are framed in a humorous light, the history of stabbing pins into suspected witches is anything but funny. Historically, suspected witches were often tortured publicly and stabbed multiple times, as their accusers looked for any insensitive spots that would indicate that the accused was a witch.*



*Agnes seems to have taken the occasion of her death to essentially scold people for behaving cruelly toward her and others accused of witchcraft. She also offered a warning against getting too full of oneself—in her opinion, people shouldn’t mess with things they don’t fully understand. Her final words, calling someone a “daft old foole” seem to be addressed to God himself, since she looks up (presumably toward Heaven) as she says so. She may have been telling God to change his plan for Armageddon, implying that God wouldn’t destroy the world if He understood what He was doing.*



Agnes left behind her book and a box, and instructions for how to deal with each. The people in the neighboring village decided to follow her instructions because of the predictions of what would happen to them if they didn't. The person who burned Agnes was Witchfinder Major Thou-Shalt-Not-Commit-Adultery Pulsifer. Now, his last living descendent is headed for Agnes Nutter's last living descendent.

*The fact that the Witchfinder Major's last living descendent is heading for Agnes's last living descendent means that Newt and Anathema are about to cross paths. Again, this passage gives the impression that things are beginning to converge on Tadfield, just as Anathema saw that they would in her map of the ley-lines. Agnes clearly knew that it's not hard to manipulate people if you can scare them into fearing the future—and in this sense, Agnes seemingly had an evil side as well.*



A flying saucer lands right in front of Newt as he tries to find the turnoff for Tadfield. It looks like every cartoon of a flying saucer, and three aliens come down the walkway in the manner of policemen. One short alien inspects a leaf; the other looks like a toad wrapped in tinfoil and raps on Newt's window. It tells Newt that the polar ice caps are below regulation size, but they'll let it go this time. Then, it says that it has to give Newt a message of universal peace and cosmic harmony—the toad has no idea why it had to deliver this message. The toad then it leads its fellows back to the saucer. Newt can't tell Shadwell about this, since he forgot to count the aliens' nipples.

*The aliens' humorous arrival is a direct reference to some of Adam's imaginings—he recently told the Them that aliens are actually intergalactic spacemen promoting peace. When this particular thing manifests in real life, it again suggests that Adam isn't particularly evil. His childish dreams that are coming true are, on the whole, not bad things—these aliens, for instance, are silly-looking and peace-loving.*



The Them sit on a gate, watching **Dog** roll in cowpats. Adam announces that they have it all wrong about witches—the witches have been right all along. Pepper says that, according to her mother, witches were actually just intelligent women. Brian says that witches still might worship the devil. Adam, however, says that they actually worship someone called Pan, who's half goat and has horns. Pepper insists that Pan must be the devil if he has horns. With a sigh, Adam accuses her of being too literal. It's people like her who buy into "grass materialism" and put holes in the ozone layer. Wensleydale adds that they also need to save the whales.

*Though there's no indication that Adam knows anything about Agnes Nutter, he takes a view here that's decidedly sympathetic toward her—that the witches, including her, were right and didn't deserve to be murdered. When Adam becomes exasperated with Pepper, though, it marks an important shift in his mood—he's becoming less understanding of his friends. But again, even as he becomes less sympathetic to them, he also latches onto important environmental issues, which further suggests that Adam isn't a bad person despite being the Antichrist.*



As the Them debate how intelligent whales are, they suddenly hear squealing breaks and a crunch. Running up the lane, they find an upside-down car that seems to have dodged a hole—as they look at the hole, a head quickly slips back into it. The Them pull the unconscious Newt out of the car and decide to bring him down the road to the Jasmine Cottage. Here, Anathema is already ready with first-aid items. Newt isn't what she'd hoped for: he's tall with dark hair, but he's not handsome. Newt wakes up in Anathema's bedroom. He asks if his car is okay and adds that he swerved to avoid a Tibetan in the road.

*Once again, it's becoming clear that all of Adam's fantasies are coming true—the Tibetan person in the hole is presumably an iteration of the Tibetans who, according to Adam and New Aquarian, live in tunnels all over the world. But still, the things that Adam manifests aren't negative or dangerous, per se—they're just the imaginings of a child's mind.*



Anathema steps into Newt's sight and says that she's never met a witch-finder before. Embarrassed to tell her that he's just a wages clerk by day, Newt lies that that he's a computer engineer. Anathema introduces herself as a witch and says that Newt is 30 minutes late. She gives him a small piece of cardboard to read. Newt notices sadly that most of Jasmine Cottage's parlor is littered with newspapers and clippings, but he's drawn to a clock on the wall. Anathema explains that her ancestor, Joshua Device, built it. He also invented the bit that made it possible to build accurate clocks cheaply, so they named it after him.

Newt isn't willing to believe what Anathema is telling him. He looks back at the card she gave him: on one side is one of Agnes's nearly unintelligible predictions, and on the other side is Anathema's translation. It predicts Newt's car crash and Anathema and Newt's introduction. Anathema tells Newt about their shared ancestors and Agnes's book. Newt is incredulous that Agnes correctly predicted he'd crash his car, but Anathema explains that Agnes was the worst prophet because she was always right. She only picked up fragments of information, and it's so specific that it's usually impossible to know what she meant until the event in question is over. Knowing the future doesn't help unless you know what it means—and being a 17th-century witch, Agnes didn't know what a lot of things meant.

Anathema continues that Agnes was pretty good about predicting things relating to her descendants. Agnes thought of *The Nice and Accurate Prophecies* as a family heirloom that would allow her to look after her descendants after she was gone. Ever since the family realized this, they've been trying to interpret the prophecies. There are more prophecies as they get closer to the end of the world, which will be in about six hours. Newt feels the urge to drink alcohol for the first time, so Anathema pulls out some gin.

Relaxing, Newt asks if he told Anathema about the Tibetan. She's unsurprised—two came out in her front lawn yesterday, confused as to how to get home. Newt suggests that they could've gotten a ride on the flying saucer. Anathema has also heard about the aliens; she tells Newt that Agnes foretold all of this. She pulls out a card index and pushes a card toward him: it mentions "menne of crocus" and "green manne from thee Skye," and it includes Anathema's notes. She explains that she goes through the papers every day, but she never knows if Agnes is referencing something tiny or significant.

*Newt clearly wants to impress Anathema, hence his lie that he's a computer engineer. On the other hand, Anathema finally tells someone the truth about who and what she is—a witch. However, it's difficult for Newt to believe that Anathema is a witch, especially when she goes on to say that people named the device after Joshua Device. This seems too far-fetched to be true—but given that Atlantis has risen, and Newt just swerved to avoid a mysterious Tibetan person burrowing under the road, it's odd that he would draw the line here.*



*Here, the novel suggests that it's impossible to make prophecies that are both true and easy to understand. While this gives Anathema an easier way to explain how Agnes's prophecies work, this also ties back to Crowley and Aziraphale's earlier conversations about God's Ineffable Plan. It's impossible, Anathema seems to suggest, for people to actually know what's going to happen when it comes to Armageddon—current interpretations could be wrong.*



*Anathema casts Agnes's prophecies as a method of caring for people she loves. Part of this care presumably means giving her descendants the prophecies to piece together what's supposed to happen during Armageddon—and to prevent it from happening.*



*Crocuses are flowers native to the Himalayas, hence Agnes's description of the Tibetans as "menne of crocus." This offers some insight into how Agnes structured her predictions—if a person is skilled at decoding riddles like this, they might be able to decipher what Agnes meant. Agnes's prophecies, in other words, aren't clear-cut—they're always up for interpretation.*



Meanwhile, the Them look down into the hole in the road. Adam says that they should get a medal for rescuing Newt from a blazing wreck, but Pepper reminds Adam that the car wasn't on fire. Adam is getting bored with Tibetans now, so Pepper suggests that they head over to the farm and help them dip their sheep. Adam, however, says that they should do something about the whales and the forests. Then, in a serious tone, he tells **Dog** that it's people like him who are eating all the whales. Something odd is happening in Adam's head: it aches, and he's experiencing odd thoughts that say he can do anything he wants. The world is rotten, and Adam is here to make it all better.

The other Them continue to discuss whales and rainforests until Adam snaps at them. He spits that everyone else is ruining the world, and there will be nothing left for them when they grow up. Adam's mood makes the world seem frightening. Brian suggests that Adam stop reading, but Adam ignores him. He says that just when you think the world is full of wonders like pirates and spacemen, you learn that the world is just dead whales, nuclear waste, and felled forests. It's not worth growing up for that. The sky suddenly turns yellow, and Adam says in an odd voice that the world should just start again. He pats **Dog**.

Adam says that sometimes, he wishes nuclear bombs would go off, and then they could start again. Pepper shivers and notes that if the bombs go off, they won't be around to fix anything. Adam brightens up and says that the four of them will be fine and will have the world to themselves—they can play War with real armies of Adam's making. He points to Pepper and says that she can have Russia, Wensleydale can have America, and Brian can have Africa and Europe. **Dog** will get Australia, since he needs space to run and chase rabbits. Wensleydale shrieks that there won't be any rabbits, but Adam ignores him.

*Adam desperately wants to feel important. He wants to be recognized for good deeds, like rescuing Newt from a flaming car—but his friends bring him back down to Earth. This starts to make Adam feel less sure of himself and leaves an opening for these strange thoughts that tell Adam he alone can fix all the problems in the world. These thoughts are probably the beginnings of Adam realizing his power as the Antichrist—they're telling him that he's powerful and important.*



*In this moment, Adam is being somewhat selfish, but he's also understandably angry that he's not going to grow up to experience and enjoy the same world that previous generations did. This continues to illustrate that Adam isn't entirely evil as the Antichrist, but he's not entirely good kid either—he has some of both. Still, the fact remains that as he gets angrier about the state of the world, he directs his anger toward people who are poor stewards of the planet—people who aren't making the world better for anyone. The fact that Adam wants to scrap the world and start over from scratch perhaps suggests that his motivation for bringing about Armageddon won't be to destroy the world, per se—rather, it will be to eradicate suffering and start the world anew.*



*The mood becomes tense and sinister as Adam divides the world up between his friends, but this is also an opportunity for him to show his friends how much he cares about them. It's important to note that Adam doesn't want to make the world a better place just for himself—he wants to share it. His friends' fear, though, offers hope that Adam won't continue with this line of thinking, as it will no doubt alienate his friends even further.*



While this is going on, Anathema patiently explains to Newt that Agnes didn't see the future; she was *remembering* it, albeit poorly. Newt reminds himself to be professional, but he can't ignore that there's a woman next to him. He glances at her notebooks and thinks about Tadfield. It is an odd area—it's like most of the 20th century ignored it. Anathema shows Newt a few more cards that mention a male figure dividing the world into four, a "Great **Hound**" arriving and being named "True to Ittes Nature" while "Two Powers" watch in vain, and a number of people riding to bring the end.

Despite the evidence suggesting that what's happening is real, Newt cannot ignore that he's sitting with an attractive woman who doesn't hate him. He suggests that they go for a walk, but Anathema insists that there's something affecting the area around Tadfield. She tells Newt that she can't figure out what or where it is, since it moves around, but lots of prophecies say that the Antichrist must arrive before Armageddon does. The problem is, she can't spot him—and there's no evil here, just love. It seems impossible that Armageddon would start here, where anyone would love to raise kids. Anathema is almost able to grasp the thought she's looking for, but Newt interrupts her by asking about the Tadfield Airbase on the map. Meanwhile, on the radio, someone mentions new South American rainforests. It starts to hail.

As Adam leads the Them into the quarry, **Dog** follows with his tail between his legs. He doesn't think this is right—he just got the hang of rats, and now he'll have to go back to chasing souls, which seems pointless. Wensleydale, Brian, and Pepper feel helpless to resist Adam, while Adam isn't thinking at all. He insists that they'll be fine, and that he'll make them new parents when it's all over. He tells his friends that afterwards, they can fill the world up with cowboys, policemen, and spacemen. The others, though, can't quite articulate their horror at the idea of "real pretend" cowboys and spacemen.

In a city elsewhere in the world, there's a tree in a plaza. It only gets poor light through the glass dome above it. As Jaime Hernez opens his lunchbox, he realizes that the tree is moving. The roots are crawling in the dirt, and Jaime directs one root to a crack in the concrete. Outside, he sees the street heaving as saplings come up. Jaime realizes that his tree isn't growing because it doesn't have light. He shatters the glass, and the tree bursts out of the dome as it starts to rain.

*The first card that Anathema shows Newt here is a reference to the previous passage—Adam divided the world between his three human friends and his beloved dog. This makes it clear that Adam's thought process, at least at this point, has already been foretold. The next prophecy presumably refers to the hell-hound finding Adam and receiving its name. The fact that the name is "True to Ittes Nature" suggests that Dog is actually meant to be just a dog, not a hell-hound. Finally, the "Two Powers" watching in vain are likely Aziraphale and Crowley, while the people riding to bring the end are the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (War, Famine, Pollution, and Death).*



*Even if Anathema can't connect the dots that the Antichrist is Adam and lives in Tadfield, she nevertheless articulates something extremely important here: that Tadfield is brimming with love. This suggests that even though Adam is the Antichrist by birthright, he's too full of love to be as evil as the prophecies might suggest. When Anathema suggests that it seems impossible for Armageddon to start here, it offers hope that Armageddon might not start at all—Aziraphale and Crowley may be successful yet in thwarting it.*



*After only a few days with Adam, Dog has already settled into his life as a small dog—and he loves it. It's taken mere days of love and fun to show Dog that there's more to life than chasing souls and doing whatever other evil tasks hell-hounds do. His purpose, at this point, is simply to be Adam's pet. Meanwhile, it's telling that Adam isn't thinking at this point. This suggests that he's given himself over to the thoughts that are telling him that he alone can fix the world—he's becoming the Antichrist in this moment.*



*The trees' sudden growth reflects Adam's newfound interest in preserving forests and the natural world. As Adam spirals further out of control and succumbs to his role as the Antichrist, more phenomena like this start to happen.*



Meanwhile, a whaling ship is having trouble locating any sea life. Any fish their technology does find is swimming away fast. The navigator notes that their instruments are failing—the seabed reads 15,000 meters instead of 200 meters. The instruments start to correct themselves. But deep below, the kraken is rising—it doesn't appreciate the tiny metal thing above it.

Suddenly, the windows of Jasmine Cottage shatter. Newt and Anathema cling to each other, and Newt asks what's supposed to happen next. Anathema offers him a card that mentions letting "harts enjoin" and reaching for each other as red, white, black, and pale approach. Newt jokes about Agnes wanting him and Anathema to get together, but privately, he feels weird. He hates Agnes for making life so complicated, but then he realizes that life isn't that complicated. He thinks of all the things that he hasn't done as he and Anathema reach for each other.

Shadwell, busy bringing the WA books up to date, hears a ping. Newt's pin is no longer on the map. Muttering, he puts it back in—but it flies out. When Shadwell tries to hold the pin, it burns his finger. He rummages through the WA's cashbox and finds petty change. Unwilling to ask Mr. Rajit or Madame Tracy for money, Shadwell decides to ask the "southern pansy" for money to get to Tadfield. Shadwell figures he shouldn't annoy the southerner in sunglasses, but the other one should be easy to threaten.

Aziraphale has been debating for 12 hours about whether to tell Crowley—he wants to, but he knows that he *should* tell Heaven. Privately, Aziraphale suspects that he and Crowley have more in common with each other than with their superiors—for one, they both like the world. Aziraphale decides that it'd be true to the spirit of his pact with Crowley if he tipped Heaven off. Then, he and Crowley can deal with the Antichrist and save the world. He ignores a knock at the shop door, pulls up his carpet to reveal a chalked circle, and lights candles and incense. In the middle of the circle, he says "the Words."

*The Book of Revelation in the Bible mentions a beast rising out of the sea—in Good Omens, this appears as a kraken. When the kraken takes issue with the whaling ship above, it seems to prepare to take revenge for killing the whales—another of Adam's current interests.*



*Newt's changing thoughts on the prophecies show again that destiny is, within the world of the novel, a matter of perspective. Newt can choose to be upset that Agnes is so interested in his sex life, or he can just appreciate that he and Anathema seem poised to have sex. Meanwhile, the red, white, black, and pale likely refers to the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, each of whom has been represented by one of those colors.*



*Once again, Shadwell manages to be humorous in everything he does—the "southern pansy" is, presumably, Aziraphale, while the southerner in sunglasses is probably Crowley. This gives some insight into how Aziraphale and Crowley come off to others—Aziraphale's insistence on being good and generous makes him look like a pushover.*



*As Aziraphale makes his decision, he remains firm in his belief that he doesn't have free will. Thus, in order to figure out a way to do what he actually wants to do and save the world, he has to make his actions seem like they'd be reasonable, based on what's already supposed to happen. It's also telling that as he thinks this through, he remains firm that he and Crowley are going to take care of this together. At this point, they're the other's closest friend and ally, despite belonging to opposing sides.*



A blue shaft of light shoots down, and a voice says, “Well?” It seems unimpressed when Aziraphale says that he can give Heaven the Antichrist’s address so that Heaven can stop Armageddon from happening. In a flat tone, the voice praises Aziraphale. Aziraphale persists—the sea doesn’t have to turn to blood. The voice asks why not, since they have to beat the dark forces and win the war. Aziraphale ignores the scraping noises near the door and asks who he’s speaking to. It’s the Metatron. The Metatron confirms that Aziraphale will join Heaven’s army and shares that Armageddon will start with a nuclear exchange. The Metatron bids Aziraphale goodbye, but it leaves the light on. Aziraphale knows that he can’t escape.

Aziraphale creeps to his phone and dials Crowley’s number. After four rings, Crowley’s voice says that he’s not in. Aziraphale hisses at Crowley to shut up and says that it’s in Tadfield. When he realizes he got Crowley’s answering machine, Aziraphale curses for the first time in 6,000 years and dials Crowley’s other number. Crowley picks up, but he sounds troubled—and he isn’t alone. Suddenly, Aziraphale hears a noise behind him and turns around to find Shadwell, trembling with excitement.

Shadwell saw everything and knows that Aziraphale is using him. Aziraphale hangs up on Crowley as Shadwell backs up. He grabs Aziraphale’s bell, *The Nice and Accurate Prophecies*, and his lighter. The circle glows blue as Shadwell starts to speak and walk forward. Aziraphale tells Shadwell to stay out of the circle and rushes forward to keep him from stepping into it—but Aziraphale curses again when he realizes that *he’s* in the circle. Aziraphale vanishes. Shadwell leaves and slams the door, making one of Aziraphale’s candles tip over.

Crowley’s flat in London is clean and stylish—because he doesn’t live there. But it has all the fanciest gadgets and technology, including an ansaphone (answering machine) and a computer. (Crowley sent the computer warranty, which absolves the company of any responsibility, Below to the department that draws up Immortal Soul agreements.) The only thing in his flat he loves are his houseplants, which he threatens into growing beautifully. He also owns Da Vinci’s original sketch for the Mona Lisa. Crowley has been in his flat for a while, waiting for the end of the world. He tried to call Shadwell for an update, but Madame Tracy informed him that Shadwell was out.

*According to Christian mythology, the Metatron is an angel who acts as the scribe or voice of god. Here, the Metatron makes it clear that Aziraphale is alone in his desire to save the world. As far as the Metatron (and, presumably, God) is concerned, Aziraphale is misguided and is missing the point—that Heaven and Hell must fight, and that Heaven must win. So, in this moment, Aziraphale has a choice: he can go along with Heaven and do what he’s supposed to do, or he can embrace that he has more free will than he thinks he does and work against Heaven. Given his love of the world as it is, it seems likely that Aziraphale will choose the latter.*



*The fact that Aziraphale is cursing for the first time in millennia drives home how stressful this situation is for him. It also suggests that he’s abandoning some of his goodness—or, at least, not trying so hard to appear virtuous. In other words, Aziraphale’s cursing shows clearly that he’s not entirely good, and that he’s starting to be okay with that.*



*Shadwell probably doesn’t know what he’s doing, given that the witch-finders in the novel are mostly described as bumbling and out-of-touch. Having this experience, where Shadwell seems to successfully exorcise Aziraphale, will probably make Shadwell even more committed to his cause—after all, now he knows for sure that the WA’s lore is true.*



*Crowley’s stylish flat drives home how invested in the mortal world he is. Since he has the means to live in the most stylish flat possible, with all the best technology, Crowley feels that it’s his duty to do so. While this may make him look self-serving and stuffy, though, the aside that Crowley loves his houseplants adds more nuance to this. Clearly, Crowley isn’t as horrible and selfish as he might seem, since he does enjoy caring for living things and seeing them thrive (even if his demonic nature means that he cares for them in an abrasive way).*



Crowley eventually turns on the TV: a newscaster says that odd things are happening, but a voice from Hell interrupts to address Crowley directly. It says that they've taken Warlock to the Fields of Megiddo, and he's clearly not Satan's son. The voice asks Crowley for an explanation. It says that Crowley is going to have all the time in the world to explain, and that this will be entertaining for everyone else in Hell. Crowley turns the TV off, but the screen keeps talking. It says that Crowley will "be collected." Outside, Crowley can see a car-shaped thing coming down the street. Most demons aren't strictly evil—but Hastur and Ligur are evil enough to pass for human.

Crowley fetches a bucket from the kitchen, takes the Mona Lisa sketch down, and opens the safe behind it. Inside is a flask, a pair of heavy gloves, and tongs. Crowley can hear crashes downstairs as he grabs the items in the safe, his bucket, and his plant mister. In his office, he pulls on the gloves and carefully dumps the contents of the flask into the bucket. He balances the bucket on his cracked office door and then sits at his desk, plant mister in hand. When he hears Hastur and Ligur enter, he calls that he's in the office.

Ligur says he wants a word with Crowley, and he pushes the door open. The bucket falls neatly on his head, and Ligur screams and dissolves. Hastur snarls that Crowley had no reason to use holy water on Ligur, since Ligur hadn't done anything. Crowley threateningly raises his plant mister and hears his ansaphone catch a phone call. Hastur waves his hand, dissolving the mister. Crowley doesn't have a plan C. When the phone rings again, he picks it up: it's Aziraphale, and perplexingly, Aziraphale hangs up. Crowley suddenly knows what he's going to do. He tells Hastur that he's passed the test; the Lords of Hell know that he's trustworthy now. Crowley dials a number and vanishes.

Crowley moves quickly down a phone line, Hastur a few inches behind him. Crowley listens for three rings and then stops suddenly. Hastur shoots past him, and Crowley returns to his body in his lounge. His ansaphone beeps, and Hastur screams at him out of it. Crowley wishes that he had more holy water in which to dissolve the machine. He considers putting the tape in his car until Hastur turns into Freddie Mercury, but he decides that this is too much. Crowley gets into his **Bentley** and drives.

*The Fields of Megiddo are where the Book of Revelation says that Armageddon will take place. This adds some complexity to the idea of prophecy—clearly, there are two different prophecies at work in the world of the novel. Hell is treating the Book of Revelation as inarguably true, while Agnes Nutter's prophecies seem to be what people should actually believe, since everything she predicted is coming to fruition. This introduces the idea that one shouldn't believe everything that's written as prophecy—it might not be correct.*



*Though it's unclear exactly what Crowley has in the flask, his careful handling of the flask implies that it's something disturbing or dangerous for him—and probably for Hastur and Ligur, too. This suggests that Crowley has decided to think for himself and do what he thinks is right, even if that means going against his superiors in Hell.*



*The very fact that Crowley owned a flask of holy water speaks to his understanding that the world requires a combination of both good and evil. This interplay might not always be comfortable—Crowley was clearly uncomfortable about being in such close proximity to holy water—but sometimes, it's necessary. Hastur doesn't believe that Crowley should be able to act like this, suggesting that Hastur also doesn't believe that demons have free will.*



*Trapping Hastur in his ansaphone is not only funny—it shows that even if answering machines are universally disliked by the characters in the novel, they do have their uses (just not the ones they were designed for). With this, the novel encourages readers to think of other ways to make annoying features of the modern world more useful to them.*





Madame Tracy hears Shadwell coming up the stairs more slowly than usual. Though he protests, she leads him into her flat. He's surprised that it's not draped in silks, though it does have a beaded curtain and a crystal ball in the middle of the table. Madame Tracy assures Shadwell that Newt will be fine, and then she tucks him into her bed. Shadwell decides to nap and then head back out to fight the Powers of Darkness. While Shadwell sleeps, Madame Tracy holds a séance in 20 minutes. She understands that when it comes to the occult, people just want to know that Mother is fine in the afterlife.

It's early afternoon. The firefighters hope that it will start to rain soon—they know that the building will be a loss. A Bentley skids around the corner, and Crowley leaps out, racing for the bookshop's door. He enters the blazing bookshop, shouting for Aziraphale, but Aziraphale doesn't answer. Crowley turns when he hears glass break, and water hits him straight in the chest, knocking him over. His sunglasses fly off and melt, revealing yellow eyes with vertical pupils. Crowley curses everything Above and Below and then notices The Book; he picks it up and leaves the collapsing building. The firefighters just stare as Crowley drives away. With a deafening thunderclap, it begins to rain.

Meanwhile, the red-haired woman rides a blood-red motorcycle with a sword strapped to it. Her black leather jacket reads "Hell's Angels" in ruby studs. When she enters the Happy Porker Café, she orders a sandwich and takes a seat. A group of bikers are gathered around a very tall biker still wearing his helmet, playing Trivia Scrabble on a machine. The tallest biker ignores the others as they argue over the answers. When the woman sits down, the Sport category transforms to War. Two of the bikers, Greaser and Pigbog, discuss this. Pigbog wishes that there were more Bible questions.

Soon, a black motorcycle pulls up outside; its rider, Black, joins the woman, Red. Suddenly, every biker in the café is ravenous—but the kitchen is out of food. The category Famine pops up on the trivia game. As Red and Black discuss the brewing thunderstorm and their upcoming ride, another motorcycle pulls up. It's not hard to imagine this motorcycle leaving behind clouds of black smoke and oil slicks. Black orders four teas from the counter as a young man dressed in dirty white leathers enters. Suddenly, the entire café seems coated in a thin layer of grime.

*When Shadwell enters Madame Tracy's flat, he learns that he shouldn't make assumptions about people—Madame Tracy's flat is almost nothing like he imagined, suggesting that she herself might not be as evil as Shadwell thinks. Indeed, Madame Tracy seems like a sensible woman who's just trying to make a living by channeling the occult. She's trying to do a good thing by giving people peace and comfort.*



*Crowley's human form only barely conceals the fact that, underneath, he's still Crawly, the serpent who tempted Adam and Eve in the novel's first chapter. When Crowley curses everyone in Heaven and in Hell, it shows that he is, at this point, totally on his own—no one is willing or able to help him right now. But finding The Book in the fire means that Crowley has a chance to learn about Agnes's prophecy and use that knowledge to keep Armageddon from happening.*



*Finally, the novel confirms that the red-haired woman with the sword is indeed War, one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Updating the classic imagery of the Horsemen by making them Hell's Angels bikers is humorous, but it also shows that, within the world of the novel, it's impossible for supernatural beings to be successful if they never change. Like humans, they must adapt to new situations and new time periods.*



*Again, the novel confirms that the black-haired figure, formerly Sable, is actually the Horseman Famine. The third Horseman is either Pollution or Pestilence, leaving only Death absent. Pollution, in particular, seems to be in direct opposition to what Adam wants to do with the world. Adam wants to return the world to a healthier, cleaner, and more peaceful state, whereas Pollution clearly wants to destroy it.*



Now, the available categories are War, Famine, Pollution, and Pop Trivia. The tall biker refuses to press any of the buttons that the crowd tells him to press and says that he never touched Elvis. At this, the three people at the table ask the tall biker how long he's been here. He says that he never left, and he joins War, Famine, and Pollution (who took over when Pestilence left, after the invention of penicillin). The other bikers, baffled, notice that the four strangers all have Hell's Angels on their jackets and look too clean to be real bikers. A biker named Big Ted approaches and asks what chapter of Hell's Angels the four belong to. Pigbog's skin turns ashy when the tall biker—Death—shows his face and answers with, "REVELATIONS, CHAPTER SIX." Pigbog understands that they're in trouble, but Big Ted asks what bikes the four are riding.

In the quarry, the Them huddle around Adam, who seems somehow bigger than normal. **Dog** sits and growls, thinking that he's going to lose all the great smells that Earth has to offer. Adam marches excitedly, talking about getting the jungles to grow again and how, when all this is over, they'll never have to do anything they don't want to do.

In the Kookamundi Hills sits a man named Johnny Two Bones. Suddenly, in precise English, Johnny asks where he is. Johnny figures that it must be an ancestor talking, and he asks why it's talking like that. In a disgusted tone, Johnny says that he's in Australia. Aziraphale moves on. Next, Aziraphale enters the body of a Haitian Voodoo priest, and then, that of a born-again Christian televangelist named Marvin. Marvin steps to the center of the stage and tells the cameras what's going to happen, according to Revelation. War, Pestilence, Famine, and Death will ride out and bring about nuclear destruction, and then the Rapture will come. When this happens, True Believers will be swept up into the sky and saved—and everyone else will burn as Heaven and Hell engage in a great war. Heaven will win.

Suddenly, Marvin starts to speak in a different voice. He says that there will be fire and war, but nobody has time to pick up believers so they can sneer at everyone else dying. Furthermore, the idea that Heaven will inevitably win is just propaganda—people would be better off sending money to Satanists to be on the safe side. Then, Aziraphale asks where he is. He answers his own question—he's in America.

*In the Bible, Revelations 6 is the moment when the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse emerge, divide up the world, and start killing people. Pigbog, with his interest in religion, is the only biker who knows this—and he's the only one who understands the danger they're in associating with the Horsemen, Death in particular. When Death says that he never left, it speaks to the constant nature of death—people will never stop dying, even if certain things, like Pestilence, someday stop killing them. Pestilence's retirement adds levity to this passage and implies that not all divine beings have adapted to the modern world.*



*As Adam spirals deeper and deeper into his role as the Antichrist, Dog is doing exactly the opposite. He is, at the moment, a dog who just happens to remember that he used to be a hell-hound—and he knows which existence he prefers.*



*Aziraphale's possession of a Christian televangelist gives the novel the opportunity to summarize the Book of Revelation for readers who may be unfamiliar. However, it's important that Marvin has already decided which side is going to win the war. This harkens back to Shadwell's earlier insistence that churches need evil to fight in order to stay in business—Marvin needs to convince his followers to stay loyal by dangling the possibility of being saved in front of them, but he also needs to make sure that he acknowledges evil's existence so that he can fight against it.*



*Aziraphale offers a decidedly less righteous view of what will happen during Armageddon—in his understanding, it's no sure thing that Heaven will win. Thus, it's important to understand that Heaven and Hell, good and evil, are more evenly matched than people like Marvin might like to think.*



Meanwhile, Crowley can't find extra sunglasses in his **Bentley**. He shoves a Bach tape into the slot, and Freddie Mercury sings to him. Lightning flashes above as Crowley sits back and flips through *The Nice and Accurate Prophecies*. In the back of the book, he finds Aziraphale's notes. His stomach sinks. The Bentley switches direction and heads for Tadfield, an hour's drive away. When the cassette finishes, the radio switches on: it's Gardeners' Question Time, and they're discussing that people are losing flowers to rains of fish. Suddenly, a voice comes out of the radio. It tells Crowley that Hell will win the war, but it won't make any difference for Crowley—all Crowley can do is hope for mercy.

Crowley is tired, scared, and suddenly very angry—his superiors Below talk to him like he's a misbehaving houseplant. The **Bentley** veers onto the M25, but something about the road now it hurts Crowley's eyes. He hears sounds of traffic and angry people chanting, "Hail the Great Beast, Devourer of Worlds," in a secret tongue. Crowley swings the Bentley around. He made the M25 into the dreaded sigil *Odegra*, and he did a good job—but was it necessary? Crowley smiles and conjures a pair of sunglasses—if he's going to go, he's going to go in style.

The Four Horsemen ride with Big Ted, Greaser, Pigbog, and Skuzz behind them. The storm and the traffic are deafening—but behind the horsemen, it's silent. The bikers begin to debate what they're going to be, since they're the other Bikers of the Apocalypse. Big Ted decides to be Grievous Bodily Harm, Skuzz takes the name Embarrassing Personal Problems, and Greaser names himself Cruelty to Animals. They all inform Pigbog that he can't be Ansaphones, even if ansaphones are problems of modern life. They follow Death, Famine, War, and Pollution toward Tadfield.

Madame Tracy has three people at her sitting. She asks her guests to link hands and does her shopping list in her head as she waits the two minutes to make contact with the Spirit World—any more or less time and the guests don't buy it. When time is up, she lets her head loll. Mrs. Ormerod explains to another guest what's happening and, annoyed that she's being upstaged, Madame Tracy moans. After another minute of silence to build suspense, Madame Tracy speaks. Mrs. Ormerod asks after her late husband, but Madame Tracey knows to make Mrs. Ormerod wait until the end. Otherwise, she'll spend the entire session telling her husband every boring detail of the last week.

*The rains of fish reported on the radio hearkens back to what Aziraphale said after the Antichrist's birth: that the end of the world will be marked by strange phenomena like this. Finding Aziraphale's notes, and presumably taking them to heart, shows Crowley's dedication both to his cause of preventing Armageddon and to his friend. Aziraphale might not be around to help Crowley right now, but that doesn't mean that Crowley shouldn't continue their quest alone.*



*When faced with the possibility of losing everything he loves, Crowley questions whether he actually wants his job as a demon. He's clearly good at his job, but he's beginning to question if it's worth it if fulfilling his duties means bringing about the end of the world. In short, Crowley is faced with the question of whether to remain loyal to his job or to his love of the world—and he seems to choose the world.*



*The bickering among the four bikers is funny, particularly Pigbog taking issue with what he sees as the ills of the modern world. Ansaphones, he suggests, deserve to be mocked—and their existence and usefulness is something people should question. When the novel says outright that the Four Horsemen are headed for Tadfield, it's another indicator that not all prophecies are created equal—Armageddon isn't going to take place on the Fields of Megiddo, as the Book of Revelation foretold.*



*While the novel offers a number of versions of the occult that are, within the world of the novel, real, Madame Tracy presents something entirely different—her séances are fake. She recognizes that what her customers want when it comes to the occult is comfort and an opportunity to believe in something larger than themselves. And for Madame Tracy, conducting these séances allows her to feel important and knowledgeable—which, in many ways, is the same thing Adam wants right now.*



Madame Tracy gives another guest a message of good news, and then she says that there's someone else coming through. In a very different voice, Madame Tracey asks if anyone speaks German or French. Mrs. Ormerod asks if Ron is there, and in a testy tone, the voice says that there is a Ron around. The voice tells Mrs. Ormerod that she can only speak to Ron for a moment, because whomever the voice belongs to is trying to avert the apocalypse. In Ron's voice, Madame Tracy says hello—and then tells Mrs. Ormerod to shut up. Suddenly, in her own voice, Madame Tracy stands and pushes everyone out of the room. Then, she makes two cups of tea and angrily asks the voice for a good explanation.

A semi-truck has spilled its load all over the highway. It was supposed to be filled with corrugated iron, but the police are fixated on the fish everywhere—they think they must have come from the truck. The truckdriver, however, says that the fish fell from the sky and caused him to crash. Another police officer gets on his radio to tell his superiors that they need to shut down all the southbound lanes.

Meanwhile, as Anathema gets up to shower, Newt tells her that the sex was wonderful. When Anathema comes out of the bathroom, he suggests that they do it again, but she says they're only supposed to do it once—Agnes said so. She hands Newt a card. He reads it, blushes, and hands it back; Anathema's relatives have written encouraging comments in the margin.

Shadwell is dreaming that he's watching Agnes walk to the pyre. She says something that Shadwell can't hear to the crowd and then looks to the sky. Then, she says, "That goes for yowe as well, howe daft old foole." Shadwell suddenly realizing that burning is a horrible way to die—and just then, thunder crashes, waking him up. It takes him a minute to realize that he's looking at his own reflection in a mirror above the bed. He doesn't remember his dream. He gets up and leaves the bedroom but stops short when hears Madame Tracy talking to the Southern pansy. Shadwell sputters when Aziraphale speaks *through* Madame Tracy and tells him to sit down and listen. Shadwell only does as he's told when Madame Tracy calls him an "old silly."

*The different voice is, presumably, Aziraphale—and being an angel, it's very possible that he could actually allow Mrs. Ormerod's dead husband to speak through Madame Tracy. The way Madame Tracy goes along with this proves that she knows exactly what people want when they come to her—and the truth isn't it. They simply want to be comforted by hearing from their deceased love ones.*



*The fish all over the highway, and the police's reaction to them are undoubtedly humorous—but it's also worth considering that Adam doesn't seem to be entirely in control of the fish. His goals seem more in line with saving the fish, suggesting that he's not the only one causing strange phenomena to happen right now.*



*Seeing the notes from Anathema's relatives shows again that when it comes to prophecy, perspective is everything. The sex that Newt had with Anathema doesn't seem nearly as great to him, now that he knows he has generations of Anathema's relatives cheering them on.*



*This passage revisits the events surrounding Agnes's death, which gives her final words new meaning. She may have been talking to God when she was calling someone a "daft old foole"—but being a prophet, she probably also knew that Shadwell was going to have this dream. By telling Shadwell that her earlier words (to not meddle in things he doesn't understand) apply to him as well, she encourages him to rethink his involvement with the WA. He probably has no idea that in order to save the world, he needs to trust a witch—not burn one.*



As the four bikers make their way down the road, they see signs reading that the southbound lanes are closed. But the bikers ignore the warnings—they're following the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Meanwhile, Adam excitedly says that it'll be great to get rid of other people's mistakes and build a better world, just for the Them.

Back in Madame Tracy's flat, Aziraphale asks Shadwell if he's familiar with the Book of Revelation. Shadwell isn't—he only cares about one Bible verse, which concerns witches—but lies that he is. He also says that he's familiar with the Antichrist, since he saw half a movie about it. Aziraphale tells him that the Antichrist is alive and bringing about Armageddon—and Shadwell needs to kill him. Shadwell isn't convinced until Aziraphale says that the Antichrist is "THE witch" and has lots of nipples. This prompts Shadwell to fetch his Thundergun while Madame Tracy pulls out helmets—they'll take her scooter.

Meanwhile, a 30-foot wall of fish is blocking the road, and a police sergeant leaps on top of his car when a lobster tugs on his pant leg. He hears a roar and sees four motorcycles approaching at 100 mph. The sergeant tries to wave them away, but he only hears whooshes as they fly overhead. Behind the first four bikers are four more—and they thud into the tower of fish. Only Skuzz survives.

Traffic is stopped everywhere in London, so Crowley takes the opportunity to reread Aziraphale's notes and Agnes Nutter's prophecies. He concludes that Armageddon is happening in Tadfield, and there's nothing he can do about it. Aziraphale seems to be out of the picture, and it seems like Crowley should just find a nice restaurant and get drunk. But Crowley is an optimist: even though the odds are against him, he knows that he needs to get to Tadfield. He decides that it's time for drastic measures, so he turns on the **Bentley's** lights and drives onto the sidewalk.

*These two contrasting scenes offer different possibilities of what Armageddon will be like. While the bikers and Four Horsemen are excited to usher in a violent, destructive apocalypse, Adam wants to reset the world in order to make it a better place—especially for him and his friends. This again touches on the idea that prophecy isn't necessarily set in stone: the foretold Armageddon seems inevitable at this point, but it could go either of two ways.*



*Shadwell's interpretation of the Bible is a lot like Adam and the Them's interpretation of various historical events and myths: he picks and chooses the parts of the Bible that appeal to him and disregards the rest. Indeed, the way that Aziraphale has to convince Shadwell to come with him and kill the Antichrist reads very similarly to how someone might convince a child to do something they're not sure about. But Aziraphale can't just force Shadwell and Madame Tracy to help him kill the Antichrist, which reminds readers that humans do have free will within the world of the novel.*



*As funny and absurd as a 30-foot wall of fish is, this scene is nevertheless sad. Greaser, Pigbog, and Big Ted were funny and sympathetic because they were such caricatures of classic "bad guys," driving home the idea that no one is purely good or evil.*



*It's telling that Crowley initially concludes that there's nothing he can do about Armageddon—but then, moments later, he decides that he's going to get to Tadfield one way or another. Even if a prophecy, or his lack of free will, might keep him from doing anything meaningful, Crowley shows that it's still worth it to try. He might not be able to live with himself if he didn't.*



Ten people sit in a room, each with a telephone: they're telemarketers trying to sell people double-glazing and bathtubs. One young woman dials the number of a Mr. Crowley and gets the ansaphone—but something climbs out of her phone. It looks like an angry, screaming maggot. The thing splits into thousands of maggots that instantly consume the telemarketers. After spending 30 minutes trapped in Crowley's ansaphone listening to Aziraphale's message, Hastur is in a foul mood. When the smoke clears, there are only skeletons left. On the bright side, though, this just proves that evil contains the seeds of its own destruction—now, instead of answering annoying calls from telemarketers, millions of people will have a happy afternoon.

Having been driven down the sidewalk, the **Bentley** now looks like it's been in a hundred demolition derbies. All that separates Crowley from the highway to Tadfield is the M25, which nothing mortal can cross and survive. Crowley isn't sure what it'll do to him, but he crashes through the police roadblock anyway. The Bentley begins to smoke as flames engulf it. Crowley fumbles for the *Nice and Accurate Prophecies*, wondering if Agnes predicted this. She did—she wrote that “the black chariot of the Serpent will flayme, and a Queene will sing quicksilver songs no moar.”

Thunder rumbles overhead, but the quarry is calm—aside from **Dog**, who's howling “like a small dog in deep trouble.” Adam says that he has friends coming as Pepper sits deep in thought. Finally, she asks what bit of the world Adam gets, and Wensleydale notes that there's not much world left now that Adam has divided it up. Suddenly, Dog stops howling and looks at Adam. Adam says that he only wants Tadfield and the surrounding areas, so he can make the trees and ponds better. But Wensleydale says that's impossible—Tadfield is real, and it can't get any better. Adam tells his friends not to worry, because he can just make them do whatever he wants.

When Adam realizes what he's saying, he stops, horrified. The Them back away as Adam's face collapses. Adam commands his friends to come back and they stop. He says that he didn't mean it; they're his friends. At this, Adam's body jerks. He raises his fist and screams a sound that a mortal shouldn't be able to make. When Adam stops, something drains away. Now, the being standing in the quarry is Adam Young. He's more knowledgeable and more Adam Young than he's ever been before. The Them, now freed, stare at Adam. Adam says that it's all right, and that he knows everything. They have to work together to stop it from happening.

*The idea that evil contains the seeds of its own destruction essentially means that anything evil is doomed to fail because it goes against God's will. Earlier in the novel, Aziraphale suggested that this was the case, and Crowley rejected the idea—but here, the narrator suggests that (at least in some cases) Aziraphale was correct. This passage also makes the case that it's impossible for anyone or anything to be wholly good or evil. Hastur did an undeniably awful thing by destroying the telemarketers—but he also unwittingly gave a bunch of people a happy afternoon by ensuring that they won't receive annoying telemarketing calls.*



*In facing the M25, Crowley has to face up to his prior actions—after all, he was the one who created the M25 to be deadly. Now, he's forced to accept that he may have made things harder for himself by doing his job. But it's also notable that Crowley is willing to essentially sacrifice his beloved Bentley to save the world he loves—the world that gave him the Bentley is more important to him than the Bentley itself.*



*Again, the way the narrator describes Dog makes it clear that he's no longer a fearsome hell-hound; he's learned to love his life as a normal dog. And now that Armageddon is threatening to take away that life, Dog has to accept what he is—a small, helpless dog in trouble. When Adam says that all he wants is Tadfield, it explains the feeling of love that Anathema and Aziraphale picked up on in this area. Adam genuinely loves his home—perhaps so much that he won't destroy it.*



*Suddenly, Adam has to confront the consequences of his power as the Antichrist. The primary consequence, he sees now, is that he's going to alienate his friends—people whom he loves dearly and doesn't want to lose. When he screams, it seems as though Adam chooses to give up on being the Antichrist and is now a mortal boy. However, he's still the only one who knows how to fix things—and he can only make things right with the help of his friends.*



Newt takes the coldest shower of his life, and when he gets out, the sky is red. Anathema interrupts Newt's manic muttering to ask if he thinks the sky is blood-colored, but Newt thinks that it's pinker than blood. Anathema says that she needs to cross-reference one of the cards, but Newt tells her not to bother. He knows what card number 3477 means—it's talking about the air base, and there's probably someone there getting ready to launch missiles. Anathema doesn't buy it.

Crowley is driving 110 mph toward Tadfield; his teeth are clenched, and a red glow is coming from behind his sunglasses. He's intent on finishing the journey in his **Bentley**, not that the car looks much like a Bentley (or even a car) anymore. There's no paint left, and it's traveling in a ball of flame; its melted tires are an inch off the pavement. Crowley is gritting his teeth with the effort of holding the car together. He hasn't felt like this since the 14th century.

Adam begs his friends to help him sort everything out. He asks them to think about Greasy Johnson, the leader of the rival gang in Tadfield. Adam points out that the Them nearly always win their skirmishes, and Pepper says that the Them are better than the Johnsonites. Adam asks his friends to imagine what it'd be like if they could send away Greasy Johnson. Brian says that this would be great, but Pepper doesn't think that life would be interesting without a rival gang. Wensleydale notes that if they asked people around Tadfield, they'd probably say that the world would be better without *either* the Johnsonites or the Them.

Adam sums up everyone's thoughts: it wouldn't be any fun if either the Greasy Johnsonites or the Them beat the other. Wensleydale says that this seems awfully simple to have taken thousands of years to sort out. Pepper snaps that that's because men were trying to sort it out, and Wensleydale accuses her of taking sides. Adam suggests that they can make their own side and tells his friends to fetch their bikes—they need to talk to some people.

Madame Tracy, Shadwell, and Aziraphale weave in and out of stopped traffic at about five miles per hour. Madame Tracy tells Shadwell to hold onto her, and he grudgingly readjusts. After another 10 minutes, Aziraphale points out that it'll take them 10 hours to get to Tadfield. He tells Shadwell to hold on tightly—with a whoosh, the scooter is gone.

*Anathema has spent her entire life immersed in Agnes's prophecies, while Newt has not. This means that Newt may be able to bring an outsider's perspective to the table that Anathema doesn't have, since she's been so close to the prophecies for so long. As Anathema chooses to trust Newt and give up some of her control, their relationship strengthens.*



*The fact that Crowley is so intent on getting to Tadfield in the Bentley speaks again to his love for and respect of the modern world. He adores everything it's given him, and he wants to honor that by completing this journey in his favorite souvenir of the 20th century.*



*Here, Adam uses the rivalry between the Them and the Greasy Johnsonites to talk about how he perceives the conflict between Heaven and Hell. In his mind, the goal shouldn't be for one side to win—that would end all the fun. Instead, the fun is the fight itself. Applying this idea to Aziraphale and Crowley's friendship, it doesn't seem all that odd—their bond is what keeps good and evil, both necessary forces, alive and connected on Earth.*



*Pepper and Wensleydale seem to be under the impression that there are only two sides to any conflict, and that a person has to choose a side. But Adam is discovering that it's always possible to come up with new ways of thinking—and, as a consequence, new sides to a problem. Meanwhile, the fact that the Them are heading out on bikes mirrors the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, suggesting that these two groups are parallels of each other. The reader can thus infer that the Them and the Horsemen are headed to the same place, and that they're going to form opposing sides of the ensuing Armageddon battle.*



*Earlier in the story, Aziraphale probably wouldn't have felt comfortable making a scooter disappear like this, as he didn't believe in using his powers to give him an advantage over mortals. But now, Aziraphale is clearly tapping into a side of himself that he either ignored before or didn't know he existed, which suggests that he isn't the paragon of virtue he might like to be.*



Where the highway to Tadfield intersects with the M25, there are now twice as many police as when Crowley crossed the divide. One officer insists that a vintage car made it over in flames, but an army technician insists that's impossible—the temperature above the M25 reads as both 700°C and -140°C. Suddenly, the assembled officers hear a high-pitched noise, and a white motor scooter flies overhead.

As Newt drives the Wasabi toward the air base, Anathema moans that she won't be able to sort the cards out now that they've fallen on the floor. But Newt insists that any card she picks up will be significant—Agnes will have predicted it, after all. He says that it's more important to figure out what they're going to say when they get to the air base, since there will be guards with real guns. Anathema tells him that Agnes was very good about predicting when people were going to be shot. She then says that she read about how computers are the tools of the Devil, which Newt believes. Suddenly, he slams on the brakes—they've arrived at the entrance of the air base.

Newt tells Anathema to pick a card. The card reads, "Behinde the eagle's neste a grate ash hath fellen." Anathema tells Newt to keep driving around the side, to where local lovers hang out. They get out, and she leads him to a fallen ash tree—Agnes was right. They walk past a guard and decide to wait around to see what happens next.

Meanwhile, Adam pedals along on his bike as **Dog** runs excitedly behind. Pepper joins Adam on her own noisy bike, and Brian and Wensleydale soon follow. Wensleydale's bike is black and sensible, while Brian's white bike is covered in mud. Pepper announces that it's stupid to call the place they're going a military base—there aren't any weapons, just knobs and dials. Adam notes that you can do amazing things with knobs and dials, like tell everyone in the world to start fighting each other.

R. P. Tyler, the Chairman of the Lower Tadfield Residents' Association, stomps down the lane with his wife's miniature poodle. He knows right from wrong and believes it's his responsibility to tell the world, which he does by writing to the *Tadfield Advertiser* whenever anyone does anything bad. Presently, Tyler surveys the fallen branches and blames the weather forecasters for the bad weather. Suddenly, four people on motorcycles zoom past him. He yells, "Vandals!" after them. But when Tyler comes around the corner, he finds the bikers stopped at a fallen signpost.

*The police's inability to figure out what's going on only adds to the absurdity of the situation. It also suggests that it's not always useful to try to look for a deeper meaning in something like this—rather, the novel implies that it's better to just accept it and laugh.*



*It seems like Newt now believes in Agnes's prophecies wholeheartedly, and that he's taking her predictions a step further. In his mind, it's no longer necessary to go to such great lengths to try to decipher them. Since they're getting very close to Armageddon, it's more important to accept that the prophecies are going to come true and instead focus their energy on protecting themselves from anything Agnes might have missed.*



*Anathema is able to easily decode this prophecy that could mean multiple things, which speaks to the importance of perspective. Anathema clearly knows the area well, so she knows she's looking for an ash tree—not burning ash of some sort.*



*Brian and Wensleydale's bikes reinforce that the Them are parallels to the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Wensleydale's sensible Black bike is similar to Famine's all-black belongings, while Brian's dirty white bike is the bicycle version of Pollution's dirty white motorcycle. And given Pepper's comment about the military base, it's clear that the Them are headed for the Tadfield Air Base, where they're sure to run into the Horsemen. Meanwhile, Adam's grim note about knobs and dials suggests the possibility that Heaven and Hell have kept up with modern technology and may use it to their advantage.*



*Tyler embodies the idea that trying to be too good—or too evil—is guaranteed to backfire. Rather than coming off as a person who knows right from wrong, Tyler just makes himself look like a bored busybody who just wants to police others' conduct. In trying to get people in trouble rather than focusing on his own behavior, he's more of a villain than he'd like to think.*





Tyler prepares to tell the bikers off, but one of them asks for directions to the air base. Tyler loves giving directions, and he gives them overly complicated instructions of how to get to the base. Three of the bikers are confused, but the tall, quiet man says that he understands. As the bikers climb back onto their bikes, Pollution drops a chip bag. Tyler scolds him for this, but Pollution says that he wishes everyone would litter. Moments after Death leads his fellows away, the Them pass Tyler and stop when he shouts. Tyler insists that it's past their bedtime and threatens to tell Mr. Young. Adam sullenly says that they're headed for the air base and then leads his friends away. Their route is far simpler than the one Tyler gave the bikers.

After the Them ride away, R. P. Tyler is mentally composing a long letter about the failings of today's youth when the sound of Madame Tracy's motor scooter interrupts his thoughts. Madame Tracy asks for directions to Lower Tadfield, and she then changes her voice and says that she's looking for Adam Young. Madame Tracy is aghast when Tyler says that Adam is only a boy, and the other voice speaks through Madame Tracy to confirm that Adam is only 11.

Tyler realizes that he's speaking to a ventriloquist—the old man on the back of the scooter must be the ventriloquist's dummy. He tells them that Adam just ran off to the air base and then asks Madame Tracy if she does functions. Her voice changes again as she asks for directions, and Tyler just points. Then, the dummy opens its eyes and insults Tyler. Tyler is disappointed—he'd hoped it would be more realistic.

Ten minutes from the village, R. P. Tyler stops and stares at the cows, which are somersaulting. He smells something burning. Behind him, a young man in sunglasses leans out of a burning car and asks for directions to the Lower Tadfield Air Base. Tyler figures that the man knows his car is on fire, so he tries not to stare as he gives Crowley directions. As Crowley drives away, Tyler can't help himself—he tells Crowley that his car is on fire.

Meanwhile, Mr. Young is in his garden, smoking his pipe. Deirdre has recently banned smoking in the house, and this doesn't help his mood. It also doesn't help that R. P. Tyler is shouting at him and calling him "Young." Tyler tells Mr. Young that Adam isn't home, getting ready for bed, like Mr. Young thought—rather, he and his friends are cycling toward the air base. He reminds Mr. Young that Adam loves to press buttons. Mr. Young harrumphs and goes inside.

*Again, although the novel suggests that both good and evil are necessary forces in the world, it seems that Aziraphale's skepticism of evil has merit. Here, evil—or in this case, perceived good—contains the roots of its own destruction, just as Aziraphale previously suggested. Tyler may have led the Four Horsemen astray by giving them such convoluted directions, as the Them's ease in charting their course suggests that the directions were unnecessary. This might give the Them time to come up with a plan to stop Armageddon. Threatening to call on Mr. Young, meanwhile, reinforces that Adam is still just a regular kid in many ways—he's not the root of all evil that the Antichrist is expected to be.*



*The dialogue in this passage reveals that Aziraphale never told Madame Tracy that the Antichrist is still a child—something that clearly disturbs her. This might complicate Aziraphale's plan to stop Armageddon. After all, if Shadwell agrees with Madame Tracy that it's not okay to harm a child—even one who's potentially evil—Aziraphale may have to act alone.*



*Tyler's choice to see Shadwell as a ventriloquist's dummy speaks to just how ridiculous Shadwell's character is. Even when he speaks of his own volition, he's too humorous to even seem like a real person. This again encourages readers to find humor even in a situation as dire as Armageddon—there's always something to laugh at.*



*Tyler's attempt to keep his cool through all of this illustrates how desperately people want to follow the script and pretend things are normal. In this situation, it crosses the line into absurdity. With this, the novel suggests that it might be better to question things that don't seem right rather than letting them slide.*



*Again, Tyler reads as an overly righteous busybody—and here, the novel shows that his meddling behavior (essentially evil disguised as good) could have major consequences. Getting Mr. Young involved in Armageddon could get Adam into deep trouble, since he will likely be motivated to protect his father from harm above all else. This passage is also further indication that, despite being the Antichrist, Adam is just a regular kid with everyday problems to deal with—like his angry father.*



At the same moment, four motorcycles stop near the main gate of the air base. Three of them remove their helmets. War wishes they could crash through the fence, but Famine notes that if people react logically to what seems like a terrorist attack, the whole Plan will collapse. Death says that they'll go in, do the job, and let human nature take its course. War and Pollution note that this isn't what they thought it would be like, and War asks if they were supposed to meet someone. When she asks again where "he" is, Death says that this is a job for professionals.

Later, Sergeant Deisenburger recalls an official-looking car pulling up to the gate (though it sounds a bit like a motorcycle). Four generals get out and offer some kind of identification. One of them says that they're here for a surprise inspection, and after some haggling, Famine and Pollution talk Sergeant Deisenburger into letting them in. No one stops the four generals as they enter one of the long, low buildings. It's possible that no one saw them—people are good at not seeing War, Famine, Pollution, and Death when they don't want to be seen. The alarms in the base, however, are triggered. Outside, Newt goes pale.

Inside, War looks around. She, Pollution, and Famine know what computers are, but Death doesn't. She thinks that there might one day be an end to War, Famine, and Pollution, but never to Death. This is probably why he doesn't fit in with them. As War runs her hands over the electronics, she thinks it feels like holding a sword. This particular sword encloses the whole world—and mankind hasn't done a good job of keeping it from accidental misuse.

The guard on the fence is perplexed by Newt's identification card. Suddenly, he feels something pressing into his back. Anathema tells him to drop his gun, hoping that he listens—if he doesn't, he'll find out that she just has a stick. Meanwhile, at the main gate, Sgt. Deisenburger struggles to deal with a muttering old man and a middle-aged woman who keeps interrupting herself in a different voice. At the same time, the Them's four bikes stop not far away from the base. Adam is trying to keep ahold of himself, but it's a struggle. He knows that his friends are entirely human—and this is going to get them into big trouble. He says they need to come up with a sword, a crown, and scales.

*Famine confirms that people are, on the whole, committed to pretending that nothing is wrong. But there are limits to this, as Tyler demonstrated earlier when he couldn't help but comment on Crowley's burning Bentley. So, in order to effectively harness human nature and bring about Armageddon, the Four Horsemen have to disrupt the status quo—but not enough to tip people off.*



*Even though the Four Horseman of the Apocalypse have taken the form of individual people, they're stand-ins for greater human problems. The narration implies that people worldwide ignore issues like war, hunger, pollution, and death when they appear. This speaks to the idea that no one is entirely good, since ignoring issues like this is certainly a bad thing.*



*While War, Pollution, and Famine read as somewhat evil characters, it's interesting to note that Death doesn't seem to take the same kind of pleasure in his job as the others do. Rather, he seems to take a far more neutral stance to killing people. This is perhaps because, out of the four problems that the Horsemen represent, death is the only that isn't manmade. War, pollution, and famine are all issues that tend to result from government policy or other forms of human error. Death, by contrast, is often natural or accidental. With this, the novel suggests that even something that seems tragic and malevolent, like death, shouldn't necessarily be feared or written off as evil. And given that Death is a parallel to Adam's character, this implies that the Antichrist shouldn't be written of either.*



*While the situations with Newt, Anathema, and Sgt. Deisenburger seem purely humorous, Adam's struggle shows how difficult this is for him. He's fighting against who he wants to be—a human being, Adam Young—but he has to fight his intrinsic nature as the Antichrist. What keeps Adam moving forward and trying to resist is his love for his friends and for the world. With their help, he's may be able to override the voices in his head telling him to give in.*



A car pulls up, floating inches off the ground—it's almost entirely destroyed. Crowley steps out and asks if the world has ended yet. Aziraphale greets him, but Crowley barely acknowledges him. He doesn't feel well, since he spent the last 30 miles imagining that the burning **Bentley** was still a car. As Crowley pats what's left of the Bentley, the gate starts to rise, and four bikes and a **dog** zip through. Shaken, Sgt.

Deisenburger raises his gun. Aziraphale tells Crowley to deal with this—but then he snaps his fingers, and Sgt. Deisenburger disappears. Crowley compliments Aziraphale and advises that he shouldn't worry about sending people somewhere nice. Then, he asks for an introduction to Aziraphale's new body. After greeting Madame Tracy, Crowley sees a jeep coming their way.

The Them park their bikes outside one of the low buildings. Adam tells his friends that they're looking for grownups who look particularly grown-up. He assures his friends that they won't have to fight—they just have to do as he said. As Adam looks around, an exasperated lieutenant shouts at him. Adam tells the lieutenant and all the soldiers to go to sleep. The lieutenant pitches forward, and Adam tells Pepper that he's finally learned how to hypnotize people.

All over the world, switches weld shut, steel doors close, and men stare at their computer screens in horror. Electricity flows where it shouldn't as cities go dark. In the building on the air base, Death straightens up and says that he's here. War, Pollution, and Famine now seem to have "ill-fitting bodies." Only Death hasn't changed. As the Four leave the building, Anathema and Newt notice their strange appearance. Anathema and Newt have been hiding in the building since before the Four entered—now, they can safely speak. Anathema notes that they had auras like black holes.

Anathema looks around at the rows of metal cabinets; the machinery doesn't look like it'll allow any last-minute heroism. She can't tell what's supposed to "take[] its course," as specified in the prophecy. Newt starts to poke around and snaps that he doesn't know how to fix this.

*For once, Crowley is the one who seems vulnerable and in need of someone else to take the reins—and because Aziraphale is at the end of his rope and has been getting in touch with his darker side, he's able to step into this role. Sending Sgt. Deisenburger away shows that Aziraphale is willing to break the rules if it means he gets to help his friends, though he hasn't entirely abandoned his conscience.*



*In this passage, Adam shows how good of a friend he can be, as he's able to reassure and lead the Them. Although he lies to Pepper about hypnotizing the soldiers (it's implied that he actually uses his powers as the Antichrist to force them into falling asleep), he does so to comfort her and make sure she isn't afraid. Pepper would no doubt be disturbed if Adam told the truth, so this is an act of kindness.*



*The fact that Armageddon begins with the ruining of the world's electrical system suggests again that perhaps the modern world, for all its conveniences, doesn't work as well as it should. Meanwhile, it's telling that even Anathema—a witch with access to Agnes's prophecies—doesn't recognize the Four Horsemen for who they are. In this sense, Anathema is a human being like any other, who can easily ignore difficult subjects when they come up.*



*Though Anathema seems to think that it's the electronics that are supposed to take their course, it's possible that this could refer to anything—even, perhaps, the coming standoff between the Them and the Four Horsemen.*



Adam looks up. The air looks clear—but if he looks closely, he can see angels and demons waiting. The Four step out of the building, now looking even less human. Adam tells his friends that they're not real, they're just nightmares. Brian points to Pollution and notes that he's melting, but Adam says this means it's not real. The Four stop a few yards away, and Death tells the Them that it's done. Adam replies that he doesn't want it to be done. Behind them, a jeep screeches to a halt. Death notes that Adam's existence requires the world to end—it's been written. Calmly, Adam says that it doesn't matter what's written. He wants to find out about all the brilliant things in the world, so they can't mess it up yet. He tells the Four to go away.

Meanwhile, Aziraphale points the Antichrist out to Shadwell, sounding uncertain. War tells Adam that he's part of them, while Pollution says that they're making the world anew. Famine says that Adam is supposed to lead them. Adam hesitates. He hears voices inside saying that this is true—all he has to do is lead them, and these are "his kind of people." Behind them, Shadwell exclaims that Adam is just a kid, so he can't shoot him. Adam looks at the Them. They're his kind of people too, and he tells his friends to get the Four.

War laughs and tells the boys that she can make them fall in love with her, but Pepper steps forward and raises a sword made from two sticks. War raises her sword too, and the swords connect. War's sword falls down onto the path, Adam snaps not to touch it. Brian whines that War was sucked up into the sword. Suddenly, the air begins to vibrate as Wensleydale raises something that, with imagination, might be scales. He whirls it around, and Famine disappears, his scales falling. Then, Brian pulls a circle of grass from his head and flings it. Pollution disappears in a cloud of smoke, his crown falling to the ground.

Wensleydale asks where War, Pollution, and Famine went, and Death says that they've gone where they belong—back into people's minds. With a tearing noise, Death's robes split, and dark wings emerge. He introduces himself as Azrael, creation's shadow; he can't be destroyed, as destroying him would destroy the world. Adam grins and says that it's time to stop. With a shrug, Death says that it's stopping already, now that the other Horsepeople are gone. He salutes Adam and says that they'll be back. Then, Death vanishes.

*Again, Adam takes full responsibility for getting his friends through this frightening experience. He wants to make sure that when all of this is over, he still has the Them to fall back on. Death's statement that "it's been written," meaning that Adam must end the world, indicates that he (like Anathema and others) believes fully in prophecies foretelling the end of the world. But to Adam, prophecies don't matter—he suggests that part of being human (which he is now) means that he has the free will to change things.*



*Adam has an important choice to make here: accepting his place with the Four Horsemen would mean accepting that sickness, violence, and pollution are going to destroy the world. Staying with the Them, however, reads as an investment in what might be a healthier future—for his friends and for the planet as a whole.*



*What happens here is, of course, not what the Book of Revelation in the Bible said was going to happen—but there's no indication of how Agnes's prophecy differed on the matter. This again leaves open the possibility that the characters who interpret the Bible as prophecy might not be putting stock in the right thing. With enough will, it may be possible to change what's supposed to happen.*



*Azrael, the angel of death, is a figure in Islamic and Jewish traditions. Like Death in the novel, Azrael is largely portrayed as a benevolent or neutral figure whose job is to ferry souls to the other side. Especially when Death notes that he's impossible to destroy without destroying the world, the novel drives home that both good and bad things are necessary to keep the world turning. Without death, life would be meaningless—it's necessary to have both.*



Meanwhile, Newt stares at the electronics. Anathema suggests they consult Agnes's prophecies, but Newt bitterly points out that a 17th-century witch won't be much help. Anathema says that Newt just has to *stop* it working, not fix it. She pulls out a card that reads, "He is Not that Which He Says he Is." Newt admits that he's not actually a computer engineer—he breaks every electronic thing he touches. Anathema smiles theatrically and tells Newt to repair the machinery. Newt puts a hand on top of the nearest cabinet, and suddenly, most of the lights go out. All over the world, switches start to work again, and "Civilization stop[s] its slide into chaos."

Outside, Aziraphale crows that Adam didn't want to do it and is actually good at the core, but Crowley says that it's not over. Adam notices the angel and the demon, and for the first time, Crowley feels real terror—Below can hurt him, but Adam seems capable of making it so that Crowley never existed at all. Adam looks at Madame Tracy and says that it's not right to be two people. Aziraphale is suddenly sitting next to Madame Tracy, and Shadwell looks jealously at him. Crowley gloomily says that people think wars start because a duke is shot—but what actually causes war is when two sides can't stand the sight of each other.

Crowley congratulates Adam for saving the world, but he suggests that it won't make a difference. Aziraphale agrees—he thinks that his people *want* Armageddon. Anathema asks what's going on, but as Aziraphale starts to explain, lightning flashes near Adam. The Metatron suddenly appears—and moments later, a figure that looks similar but darker rises out of the ground. The second figure speaks quietly to Adam, but Adam says that he doesn't want it to happen. He introduces himself and asks the figure's name. Crowley says that it's Beelzebub.

The Metatron says that Armageddon must take place *now*—it might be temporarily inconvenient, but that shouldn't get in the way of the "ultimate good." Crowley whispers to Aziraphale that this means they have to destroy the world to save it. Adam says that he doesn't see why everything needs to end now for no good reason, just to see who has the best gang. It's like the Them and the Johnsonites—nobody really wants to win. Pointing to Crowley and Aziraphale, Adam says that they'll just keep sending people like them to wreak havoc.

*Anathema's prophecy card can obviously refer to Newt in this situation—he's not a computer engineer like he said, after all. But this could also apply to a number of other characters in the novel. Aziraphale and Crowley, for instance, have insisted that they're nothing more than an angel and a demon—but their actions suggest that they're more than just angels and demons in the classic sense. Rather, both of them contain elements of both good and evil.*



*Aziraphale seems all too willing to believe that this is the end, and that Armageddon has been averted—but Crowley makes it clear that things aren't so simple. The duke that Crowley mentions is presumably Archduke Franz Ferdinand, whose assassination set off World War I. But, as Crowley notes, it wasn't just his death that sparked the war. Rather, World War I was the result of years of tense relationships between European countries that finally reached the breaking point with the assassination. With this, he seems to be implying that Armageddon isn't just a conflict between Adam and Death—it's the culmination of centuries-long conflict between Heaven and Hell.*



*Crowley makes the case that although Adam may have fixed things in the short term, it doesn't change the fact that, in his opinion, Heaven and Hell still hate each other and are actively looking for an excuse to fight each other to the death. When the Metatron and Beelzebub (a demon who speaks on behalf of Satan) appear, it speaks to how serious Adam's choice to stop Armageddon was—and how powerful Adam really is.*



*The Metatron's words betray how little it thinks of humans on Earth. It doesn't seem to care that a temporary inconvenience will mean a total annihilation of humanity—all, as Adam says, just to see who has the best gang. For Adam—who's now mostly human—this is personal. He wants to grow up and experience the world, so it's essential that he stop Heaven and Hell from carrying out this battle.*



The Metatron says that it doesn't matter, but Adam cuts it off. He snaps that he doesn't see the point in creating people and getting upset because they act like people. If they stopped telling people that things would be sorted after they die, people might try harder while they're alive. He suggests that people might try to think about the environment. Beelzebub interrupts and says that Adam wants to rule the world, like his father. Adam says that he's thought about it, but he doesn't want to rule. It'd be like having to tidy up everyone's bedroom, and he has enough work keeping Pepper, Wensleydale, and Brian entertained. Confused, the Metatron says that Adam can't refuse to be who he is—it's part of the Great Plan. Beelzebub adds that this goes beyond simple rebellion.

Adam insists that he's not rebelling—he's just pointing things out. He again notes that if they'd stop messing with people, people might stop messing up the world. The Metatron says that this doesn't make sense, and it implores Adam to think. Adam senses that the dark undercurrent in his mind is still there, ready to tell him to follow the Plan—but Adam is only 11, and he's exhausted. Crowley puts his head in his hands, but Aziraphale stands up.

Aziraphale asks if the Great Plan is the same thing as Ineffable Plan. In a flat voice, the Metatron replies that it's the Great Plan that the world should last 6,000 years—but Aziraphale interrupts and asks again if it's ineffable. The Metatron snaps that it's the same thing, "surely," and Crowley perks up, realizing that they don't actually know. Grinning, he points out that the Great Plan "can only be a tiny part of the overall ineffability." Beelzebub shouts that it's written, but Crowley and Aziraphale insist that it might be written differently somewhere else. Everyone looks toward Adam, who says that it doesn't matter what's written, because it can always be crossed out.

A breeze passes over the airfield, and everything falls silent. Crowley grabs Aziraphale's arm and says that Adam grew up *human*—so he's not Evil Incarnate or Good Incarnate. He's a "human incarnate." The Metatron and Beelzebub both sniff that they need further instructions. Finally, Aziraphale asks if it's over. Crowley replies that it's not over for them, though Adam assures Crowley and Aziraphale that they don't need to worry. He suggests that everyone will be happier if they try to forget what happened.

*Here, Adam proposes that being curious and making mistakes are part and parcel of what it means to be human—and it's silly for Heaven to get upset when people make mistakes because they're curious. He also insists that Heaven is doing the world a disservice by not giving people enough reason to fix the world while they're alive. But by giving up his power to fix the world himself, Adam refuses to align himself with either Heaven or Hell. It's important, he believes, to allow people to act freely.*



*The idea that Adam is just an exhausted kid again makes the point that he's human—being born the Antichrist doesn't mean that he's any less of a normal 11-year-old boy. Crowley's defeated gesture of putting hands in his hands suggests that he still holds a pessimistic view of humanity—in his mind, Adam is going to give in and start Armageddon out of exhaustion.*



*In this moment, Crowley and Aziraphale see that they have a way out of this. They can prevent Armageddon while still following the plan—but God's ineffable, unknowable plan rather than the Great Plan that insists the world has to end. Beelzebub and the Metatron's ignorance on the matter suggests that it's silly to unquestioningly believe something, just because it's been written down. As the others point out, perspective matters—and it's always possible to rewrite something or interpret it differently.*



*Again, the novel affirms that it's nearly impossible for human beings to be either wholly good or wholly evil. People are complex and adaptable: they inevitably make mistakes, form relationships with others, and have the ability to change their minds with new information. This also makes it clear that a person's environment and upbringing is more important than their birthright. Adam is human simply because he grew up believing that he was one, which suggests that everyone has the free will to overcome the destiny that's laid out for them.*



Anathema cries that Adam should use this opportunity to do some good in the world, like bring back the whales. Adam notes that that won't stop people from killing whales. He figures that he shouldn't mess around with the natural order of things—the consequence for killing a whale should be a dead whale. Aziraphale suggests he and Crowley take Madame Tracy and Shadwell to dinner, and Adam tells the Them that it's time to get home. Newt gently grabs Anathema's arm as she tries to follow the children. Aziraphale offers his condolences to Crowley about the **Bentley**. Crowley sniffs—he smells something burning.

Horried, Crowley looks at Aziraphale and says that it can't happen—the moment is gone. The ground begins to shake, and Crowley shouts that Adam's Father is coming. It feels like a volcano. Aziraphale reminds Crowley that there are humans here, and that they shouldn't let this happen to them—they've done enough damage as it is in the course of their jobs. He points out that Crowley doesn't have anything to lose, and Crowley realizes that Aziraphale is right. He feels free. He grabs a tire iron from under the seat, which he knows is useless but makes him feel better anyway. Aziraphale, meanwhile, picks up the sword that War dropped; with a whoosh, it catches fire. Aziraphale tells Crowley that if they die, he'll know Crowley was good. Crowley retorts that Aziraphale was just unlikable enough to be likable.

Shadwell pushes between Crowley and Aziraphale, waving the Thundergun—he doesn't trust “two Southern nancy boys” to kill anything. He asks who they're fighting, and Aziraphale replies that they're killing the Devil. Newt and Anathema watch the three of them walk forward. Aziraphale and Crowley's coats split, revealing their wings (which look much the same). Newt shouts that they have to save Shadwell as Anathema finally recognizes Aziraphale. She says that if Aziraphale has damaged The Book, something awful is going to happen. As they all run forward, Adam looks around and moves his hand in a half circle.

Aziraphale and Crowley feel the world suddenly change. Where they once felt the start of a volcano, there's now just a car pulling up. Mr. Young gets out of the car and shouts for Adam, but the Them race for the gate.

*Anathema's idealism is admirable, but Adam suggests that simply fixing things won't solve anything. In the case of the whales, bringing them back might mean that there are just more whales to be killed. In other words, Adam is accepting that there's only so much a person can or should do—interfering in free will won't necessarily bring about the desired outcome. As Agnes warned, it's not a good idea to meddle in things one doesn't understand—and Adam sees that the consequences might be awful or simply meaningless.*



*In this moment, it seems like everything is lost for Aziraphale and Crowley: Satan, Adam's father, is coming. As two of three divine beings present, they're likely to take the brunt of whatever Satan is going to do. And as far as Aziraphale is concerned, this means that it's their duty to go out fighting for humanity and the world that they love. Most importantly, Aziraphale insists that it's no longer an option to just do the bare minimum that their jobs require—they have to actively stand up for what they believe in. This also means that they must reaffirm their friendship and draw on each other for strength. In doing this, Crowley and Aziraphale also acknowledge that neither is as good or as evil as one might expect—like humans, they contain multitudes.*



*The aside that Crowley and Aziraphale's wings look similar reinforces the idea that they're not so different from each other. As a demon, Crowley is, after all, a fallen angel—he probably once looked much like Aziraphale does. Meanwhile, Shadwell finally seems to grasp that witches aren't the best target. Rather, it's better to align himself with people who want to do good in the world and fight truly evil forces.*



*It seems that Adam brought about this shift, transforming his divine father Satan into his human father, Mr. Young. Even as Adam gives up his role as the Antichrist, this doesn't seem to mean that he has to give up all of his power.*



Sgt. Deisenburger opens his eyes; he's in his childhood bedroom. Downstairs, his mother is taking an apple pie out of the oven. She says she thought that he was in England and notes that his father and brothers are down in the field. Sgt. Deisenburger takes off his helmet and tells his mother that if anyone calls, he'll be in the field.

A van drives slowly up to the air base and passes the checkpoint. It parks near where Aziraphale and Crowley sit, sharing a bottle of wine. Crowley asks if He really planned it like this all along. Aziraphale allows that it's possible and suggests they ask Him—but Crowley remembers that He's not one for giving answers. The van driver gets out with a box and a pair of tongs. He uses the tongs to put the crown and scales back in the box, and then he asks Crowley and Aziraphale about a sword. Aziraphale stands up—he's been sitting on the sword—and puts it in the box. The van driver thanks Aziraphale and asks him to sign.

When the van driver is gone, Crowley helps Aziraphale up and offers to drive them back to London. He takes a jeep, which suddenly has a cassette player, because Crowley expects all cars to have cassette players. He puts in a tape marked as Handel's *Water Music*—and it plays Handel's *Water Music* all the way to London.

## SUNDAY (THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF THEIR LIVES.)

Newt wakes on Sunday morning to the sound of the paperboy dropping three stacks of Sunday papers on the steps. He lets Anathema sleep—she needs her rest now that there are no more prophecies to attend to. The phone rings, and Newt declines a telemarketer's offer of double-glazing. He refuses to wake Anathema up to ask her and thinks that something awful should happen to telemarketers. Then, he starts preparing breakfast and makes do with instant black coffee.

Newt looks at the leather-bound book on the table: he can only make out a few letters of the title, and he can't quite remember how he and Anathema got it. He remembers a man in sunglasses and grubby boots—and somehow, the Wasabi now runs quietly, gives its warnings in haikus, and gets 250 miles to the gallon. Newt stares into space until he hears a knock at the door. A small man smiles at him and says he has a package for Newt and Mrs. Pulsifer. Newt tells him that there's no Mrs. Pulsifer, but the man says that the letter is quite specific. Finally, the man offers Newt a business card: it reads that he's Giles Baddicombe of the firm Robey, Robey, Redfearn and Bychance.

*Revealing what becomes of Sgt. Deisenburger shows that Aziraphale isn't capable of doing anything too bad—rather than killing Deisenburger, he simply sent him back to his childhood home. Indeed, Sgt. Deisenburger seems more than happy to be here.*



*Though it's impossible to tell, the deliveryman's arrival to pick up the crown, the scales, and the sword suggests that God did have a hand in what took place on the airfield. With this reading, Adam's refusal to act as the Antichrist was indeed part of God's "Ineffable Plan" rather than the Great Plan of destruction as laid out in the Book of Revelation. Now, with Armageddon averted, Crowley and Aziraphale have all the time in the world to figure out how and why things happened as they did.*



*When this cassette actually plays the music as marked, it recalls Agnes's earlier prophecy—that a queen won't sing quicksilver songs anymore. If Armageddon did anything positive, it freed Crowley from being forced to listen to Queen every time he drives a car.*



*Newt, of course, doesn't realize that something did happen to telemarketers yesterday, when Hastur destroyed the telemarketers through Crowley's ansaphone. However, this wasn't enough to wipe all telemarketers off the face of the Earth. Anathema's exhaustion suggests that she's going to have to adjust to a new way of living now that Armageddon is over. But now, she'll have the opportunity to decide who she wants to be, rather than letting someone else dictate her path.*



*While Anathema didn't appreciate what Aziraphale did to her bike, there's no indication that Newt is upset about the new, improved features on his Wasabi. Aziraphale has clearly found an appreciative audience. It's no doubt confusing that Newt is receiving a package, addressed to Anathema's house—one that assumes he and Anathema are married. This suggests the possibility that Agnes is at it again with her prophecies—and given the accuracy of her other predictions, this package suggests that Newt and Anathema will indeed get married one day.*





Mr. Baddicombe lets himself in and puts the box on the table. He tells Newt that everyone at the firm is very interested, and says that someone wanted Newt to have the box. Mr. Baddicombe explains that the firm has had it for about 300 years. The struggling clerk who accepted the box long ago found a letter addressed to him. It included information about the next 10 years that would make him successful, provided he could make sure the box would stay safe for 300 years and then be delivered. Mr. Baddicombe says that two people have opened it: the first had a heart attack, and the second threatened to fire anyone who opened it.

Newt suggests that Mr. Baddicombe opens the box, eyeing a saucepan. He edges behind a door and hears Mr. Baddicombe open a wax seal. Then, Mr. Baddicombe races back to his car and down the lane. Newt takes the pot off his head and reads the letters: each promises to reveal an inappropriate sexual encounter if the reader doesn't put the box back. Under the letters is a manuscript. Anathema appears in the doorway and pulls out *Further Nife and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Concerning the Worlde that Is to Com: Ye Saga Continuef!* She prepares to open it, but Newt puts a hand on hers and asks if she wants to be a descendent for the rest of her life.

It's about 11:30, and St. James's park is quiet. The only people in the park are a tall man feeding the ducks, two members of a guerilla organization, and Crowley and Aziraphale. Crowley and Aziraphale discuss that things have gone back to the way they were: Crowley found a **Bentley** parked in front of his flat, and Aziraphale's bookshop isn't burnt (though it currently stocks only children's books). Fortunately, the books are all mint first editions. Neither of their people have been in contact, and Crowley suggests that they're getting ready for the "big one." As he sees it, the actual big one will be Heaven and Hell against *humanity*, not Heaven against Hell. Adam may have changed everything, decided to stay human, and gotten rid of his power. Aziraphale hopes so.

Crowley says that they can never know for sure. He asks why there's Heaven and Hell in the first place, and he notes that anyone who can build a universe in six days isn't going to let little things get by unless it's planned. Aziraphale tells Crowley to be sensible, but Crowley insists that looking at things sensibly yields funny results—for instance, why make people curious and put a metaphorical neon sign on forbidden fruit? Maybe it's all part of a big, ineffable plan, and it's just a test to see if things work right. It might be a game of Solitaire rather than chess; maybe they're not supposed to understand. Crowley can't come up with why, and the tall figure by the pond—Death—says that it's just ineffable.

*The age of the box further suggests that this is Agnes Nutter's work—300 years ago would put the firm receiving the box in the middle of the 17th century, around the time that Agnes died. Agnes's warnings to those who tried to open the box again speak to the power of prophecy—Agnes was able to scare people into cooperation with probably just a tiny bit of information. She knew they'd buy it, so she was able to shape the future to her liking.*



*Having grown up free from the prophecies, Newt understands that there's value in letting life unfold randomly. Indeed, by suggesting that Anathema not open Agnes's next book, he proposes one of the novel's most important ideas: that living one's life by prophecies like this deprives a person of any individual identity. Anathema has lived her life only as Agnes's descendent—if she's willing to abandon that identity, she may be able to come up with something far more fulfilling to spend her time on.*



*Crowley and Aziraphale believe that Adam is responsible for this return to normalcy. Adam took it to heart that people would be happier if they didn't really remember what happened—but as an angel and a demon, Aziraphale and Crowley aren't exactly people. This means that they can enjoy being in the know and spend the next several hundred years trying to piece together exactly what happened with Armageddon. However, the novel does suggest that Crowley is probably correct about Adam giving up his powers and becoming human. Having Mr. Young show up instead of Satan implies that Adam chose to accept that his human father—not his divine one—is his real father.*



*The idea that everyone is living in a game of Solitaire rather than chess suggests that the ongoing conflict between Heaven and Hell isn't as meaningful as the Metatron and Beelzebub seemed to think. Indeed, if everything is a game of Solitaire, there's only one player, meaning that there isn't a conflict at all—both sides play a necessary role in the same game. But as Crowley asks these questions that are unanswerable, he places himself in the role of a human. It's normal to ask questions and be curious, even if it's impossible to come up with answers that are definitively true.*



Shadwell has followed the same Sunday routine for the last decade: he reads books in the WA's library and eats liver prepared by Madame Tracy. But tonight, he accepted Madame Tracy's invitation to eat in her flat, remembering an odd dream from last night—in it, he said that witch-finding is fun, but that he had to take turns and let the witches find *him* for once. Having eaten ate his liver, Shadwell now sits in an armchair, sipping a glass of stout. Madame Tracy puts down her tea and says that it would be nice to move out to the countryside. Shadwell agrees, and Madame Tracy asks if he's comfortable. Surprisingly, Shadwell is. Madame Tracy giggles and asks where she could find someone to settle down with. Shadwell asks Madame Tracy how many men she's slept with, and then he agrees to retire with her.

Late Sunday afternoon, Warlock is in an airplane high over England. It's been a strange couple of days: his father was called to the Middle East, where a guy showed them around ruins and asked Warlock if he'd like to do anything. He'd looked upset when Warlock said he wanted to leave. Far below, Greasy Johnson is flipping through a photography magazine. He pauses on a spread about American football catching on in Europe (when the magazine was printed, the spread was about photography in desert conditions). This will change his life.

Adam sits in the garden and scratches at the dirt. Last night, Mr. Young found Adam fast asleep—but at breakfast, Mr. Young made it clear that he's not convinced Adam was in his room all night. Nobody is sure what happened last night, but Mr. Young is certain Adam is guilty of something. Adam looks up when Pepper, Wensleydale, and Brian call his name. There's a circus over in Norton, and they want to watch it set up. Adam daydreams about being asked to perform with the circus, but he shakes his head. His parents won't let him out.

Pepper uneasily asks what happened last night. Adam says it doesn't matter—he just tried to help, and now people are treating him like he killed someone. His parents won't let him out for years. Wensleydale asks if they might let him out tomorrow, and Adam says that they'll have forgotten everything by then. He tells his friends to go on to the circus without him.

*Shadwell's dream suggests that Adam's reach is more extensive than Aziraphale and Crowley might have thought. Adam has, in a way, expanded upon Agnes Nutter's warning to not meddle. Now, he's encouraging Shadwell to treat witch-finding like a game rather than taking it seriously. Though humorous, this also makes the case that anyone—even Shadwell—has the capacity to change when they encounter new information. Indeed, Shadwell has changed so much that he's now willing to settle down with Madame Tracy.*



*Previously, the novel heavily implied that Greasy Johnson is Baby B, the biological child of the American Attaché who was switched at birth with Warlock. It's fitting, then, that Greasy Johnson's life is going to change when he discovers American football. It's implied that Adam will be responsible for introducing Greasy Johnson to football, which will seemingly bring him success in the future. Adam chooses to do this even though the Johnsonites are the Them's rivals, which suggests that Adam is going to use his powers for good from here on out.*



*Adam has a wild imagination—he's still a boy of 11, after all. But now that he's made his choice to accept his human parents as his true parents, Adam seems to feel a sense of responsibility to obey them. He's still loyal to the Them, of course, but he nevertheless seems to feel like he has to make his choice clear to everyone else.*



*As the Antichrist, Adam knows exactly what happened last night—but in his quest to protect people by altering their memories, he's not going to let anyone else in on what he knows. The fact that Adam is in trouble with his parents and can't be honest with his friends speaks to the classic adage that no good deed goes unpunished—everything has a downside.*



Adam thinks of all the things that are waiting on the other side of the hedge. In a stern voice, he tells **Dog** to stay away from the hedge—if Dog went through it, Adam would have to disobey his parents and follow. Suddenly, there’s a hole in the hedge—it’s always been there. Dog races through it, and Adam shouts at him as he follows. Somehow, Adam knows that something, perhaps summer, is coming to an end. He needs to make the most of it. He stops in the middle of a field and looks at the smoke coming from Jasmine Cottage. Adam can hear more than most people and he hears a laugh—and for an instant, he sees Agnes Nutter in the smoke. She winks at him.

Adam runs on and catches up with **Dog**. He looks up at the old apple tree above and climbs it quickly, pocketing as many apples as he can. A voice threatens to tell Mr. Young, so Adam and Dog run away. Adam knows he’ll be in trouble now, but not until evening. Adam doesn’t understand why people get so bent out of shape about others eating their fruit—but life wouldn’t be nearly as much fun if people *didn’t* get upset. In Adam’s opinion, apples are always worth the trouble. The future, according to the narrator, is a boy, his dog, and his friends walking toward Tadfield forever.

*When Adam is able to conjure the hole in the hedge that’s mysteriously always been there, it suggests that he hasn’t given up all of his powers as the Antichrist. He may be human, but he’s a human with the power to pursue his dreams and give himself some supernatural help along the way, as the situation requires. Given Adam’s age, it’s likely that it’s his childhood that’s coming to an end. But as Adam grows, it’s implied that he’ll only become more human, meaning that he’ll have to navigate a balance between good and evil.*



*The apples Adam steals recall the Forbidden Fruit that Adam and Eve ate off the Tree of Knowledge. By insisting that it’s always fun and worthwhile to steal fruit, Adam essentially suggests that all the things that define humanity (like curiosity, the ability to grow, and the ability to make mistakes) are worth the trouble. It’s the interplay between good, evil, and curiosity that makes life worth living.*





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