

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of *Little Deaths* is to Simon Wise from his initial psychological state of depression and withdrawal caused by the death of his wife to a state of acceptance, understanding and engagement with family and work. On this journey, he passes through stages of grieving that are expressed in the psychological, interpersonal, and work domains.

	PSYCHOLOGICAL	INTERPERSONAL Family	Love/Sex	WORK
A:	Depressed, withdrawn small visible anger	Dislikes Emily Remote from kids Dependency on Henrietta	Nothing; numb	Detached
J:	Bargaining If he does certain things case he can be redeemed	Still dislikes E Ignores children & starts listening to Henrietta's feminism	Hints of feeling toward Penelope	Commitment Fairhaven
M:	Driven; obsessive rage	Anger toward Henrietta, kids	Tears of rage; emerging passion	Obsessive desire to solve Fairhaven case
Z:	Acceptance, t understanding	Compassion; love	Love for Penelope	Recommitment  on the other side of obsession

## ANALYSIS OF EACH PHASE

### PHASE A: DEPRESSION

1. ***Why is Simon depressed by deaths of wife and daughter?***
  - a. He feels guilty that he didn't protect them from death (sin of omission)
  - b. This has been a blow to his black-and-white image of himself as a "good" man, as well as his view of an ordered society, and a righteous universe where evil is punished and good triumphs
  - c. He may have some specific guilt that Rachel's frequent pregnancies contributed to her death, and that, despite being a "good" man, he was unable to restrain his sexual passions toward her

- d. Rachel's and Leah's deaths have triggered partially repressed memories of the other time in his life when he did evil by contributing to the death of his fellow soldier in the Crimea (sin of commission). These memories also challenge his self-image as a "good" man
  - e. Although he feels guilt, he does not admit any of it. He has repressed the Crimean incident, and blames God and Emily for Rachel's death.
2. ***Why does Simon dislike Emily?***
    - a. Ostensibly, he blames Emily for Rachel's death. This other-blame, however, is a mechanism for hiding from his own deeper self-blame.
    - b. He is repulsed by her physical deformity, sees it as imperfect, "bad" (opposite of good)
  3. ***Why is Simon remote from his other children?***
    - a. He feels he has failed them by not preventing their mother's death; he is not worthy to be their father
    - b. If he couldn't protect their mother and sister, then he can't really protect them
  4. ***Why does Simon feel annoyed dependency toward Henrietta?***
    - a. Simon never liked Henrietta, considering her feminist ideas too advanced
    - b. He sees himself as a failure in her eyes but
    - c. He needs her organizational ability to manage his household
  5. ***Why hasn't Simon allowed himself to feel love for another woman?***
    - a. He doesn't deserve it; he is a "bad" man, who failed one wife; he isn't worthy of love
  6. ***Why is Simon so withdrawn at work?***
    - a. Why should other crimes be prevented, or criminals brought to justice, when the worst crime in the world (the death of his wife) cannot ever be undone or resolved?
    - b. He sees himself as "bad," no longer distinguished from the criminal class, therefore no longer competent to pursue and punish

## PHASE J: BARGAINING

1. ***Why does Simon start to bargain?***
  - a. He meets Penelope, and feels he could love again; however, he can't because he sees himself as a "bad" person unworthy of love
  - a. To escape his depression, to save his life, to find love again, he wonders whether he can climb back into the ranks of a "good person" by solving the Fairhaven crime
  - b. If he brings her killer to justice, then he can win Lady Penelope
2. ***Why does the Fairhaven crime become the focus of his attention?***

- a. Pressure from Superintendent Walker to improve performance in a high-profile case
  - b. Win the approval (and love) of Lady Penelope, Lady Alicia's friend
  - c. Fixates on Sir Gregory as guilty party, so by bringing him to justice, is indirectly punishing himself
  - d. Begins to see Lady A through Penelope's eyes, begins to see her as worthy of receiving justice
3. ***Why doesn't Simon bring the same interest to the baby deaths?***
- a. Emily still stands between him and a conscious recognition of his own guilt regarding Rachel's death if he admits Emily is innocent and thus deserving of life by acknowledging the worth of these other dead infants, he will have to face his own guilt directly
  - b. Not as high profile a case as the Fairhaven murder; dead infants a common occurrence and often these cases were not prosecuted vigorously
4. ***Why does Simon's attitude remain essentially unchanged toward the children?***
- a. This bargaining has nothing to do with his family life, but only to do with his awakening passions and feelings of adult love
5. ***Why does Simon become more interested in Henrietta's feminism?***
- a. Because Lady Penelope shares some of these views, this is a way of getting closer to her and understanding her.

#### PHASE S: RAGE, OBSESSION

1. ***Why does Simon begin to feel rage?***
- a. Ostensibly, he cannot solve the case, so feels increasingly frustrated
  - b. Murdoch and Walker are both bird-dogging him
  - c. He begins to realize that even if he does solve the Fairhaven case, it will not absolve him from the guilt he feels about Rachel and Leah
  - d. His greater guilt, about his action in the Crimea, starts to obtrude more insistently in the form of nightmares and flashbacks
2. ***Why does Simon show anger toward his family?***
- a. He is trying to defend against his guilt by outward blaming
3. ***Why does Simon feel anger in his relationship with Penelope?***
- a. He starts to realize the social impossibility of their relationship, even as it intensifies
  - b. He begins to realize he cannot get close to her, cannot be intimate with her because he is holding so much back from her
4. ***Why does Simon become obsessive about the Fairhaven case?***
- a. His lack of progress intensifies his guilt on all levels, which he wants to relieve

- b. He keeps trying to redeem himself through trying harder

#### PHASE Z: ACCEPTANCE, UNDERSTANDING

1. ***What is the trigger that moves Simon to this final phase?***
  - a. He is unable to hide from his culpability in Murdoch's death; this forces him to confront his culpability in the other losses in his life, from Rachel and Leah to the Crimean soldier
  - b. This realization leads him to briefly contemplate suicide as a way of dealing with his culpability; instead, he decides that even imperfect men must not abandon their duty to try to do good in the world
  - c. By realizing that men are not either good or bad, but some of each, he is able to reconsider Talbot, whom he had labeled "good," as a suspect
2. ***Why does Simon feel increased love for Emily?***
  - a. Once he acknowledges that his depression/anger was caused by his own feelings of guilt, Simon is able to accept Emily
3. ***In what way does Simon continue to love Lady Penelope?***
  - a. Simon continues to have feelings for love toward Penelope, but as a woman, not as a symbol and means of his redemption
4. ***How is Simon able to recommit to work?***
  - a. Simon has freed himself from the demon of perfection
  - b. By facing his mistakes and shortcomings in the past, he is able to assume a more realistic burden of trying to do good in the world