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Auszug aus:

Cormier, Robert - After the first death

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The function of part one as an introduction to the novel

Ben Marchand, the voice speaking to us in Robert Cormier's novel "After the first death", is the character in the text who tells the reader about his experiences, thoughts and feelings.

The reader does not only get information about the narrator's present, but also about his past and the future.

In the first line of Chapter One, Ben talks about his present feelings. ("I keep thinking that I have a tunnel in my chest.") The hijacking is over and Ben types his thoughts in his room in Castleton Academy. ("I am typing this in the room at Castle and it's beautiful here as I write this...") In the middle of the introductory chapter of the novel there is a change of time. ("Years from now...") The first-person-narrator is looking into the future and further on he comments on a possible future development. ("Will my wound ache like this when I am his age?") Moreover, Ben informs the reader about a definite future development by explaining: "I won't have stayed around to become a human barometer or an instrument capable of forecasting weather.")

In the following lines the narrator expresses his thoughts in view of the past. He reflects on Thanksgiving and the traditional football game between Castle and another Academy. When thinking about the "Bus and the Bridge", Ben is looking farther back into the past. He does so when remembering the things which happened before he was actually involved into the scenes on the railroad bridge. ("I only saw him in uniform that one time when he summoned me to his office...")

By commenting on three different levels of time (present – past - future) the narrator supplies the reader with wide-ranges information. If the text was opened by a chapter which only deals with the present situation of the hijacking, the reader would neither get to know about all the things which had happened before nor about all the consequences. Apart from that, the reader gets detailed information about Ben's feelings, thoughts and fears, as the story is told through his view of the events.

What type of person is represented in Miro?

Having a closer look at the type of person that is represented by Miro, it becomes obvious that it is hard to find a general characterization, since Miro does not always behave in the same way.

On the one hand Miro is inferior to Artkin. ("Miro frowned. A question had formed itself in his mind, but he was too timid to ask. He had never questioned Artkin before, had been content, indeed pleased, to carry out orders.") He is obedient and always tries to fulfil Artkin's orders properly. Another thing is that Miro somehow is dependent on Artkin as he was the one who found Miro and his brother Aniel in the refugee camp and brought them to the training school for freedom fighters. Now that Aniel is dead, Artkin is the only person Miro has a more or less close relationship to. ("...because his brother's death left him all alone in the world. Except for Artkin.") When staying in the bus, Miro does not feel anything



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