

Reading: *Anil's Ghost*, through the end of "Ananda"

Reading: the rest of the novel.

NOTE: possibly you are somewhat busy at the moment. Below you will find an outline of the novel, which includes sections marked "*" which can be skipped by the overworked – just read the outline.

Outline for Michael Ondaatje, *Anil's Ghost*

Introductory material

Miner's folk song

Anil with forensic team in Guatemala

Sarath (9)

Anil lands in Sri Lanka.

A Buddhist cave temple desecrated.

She examines victims of political violence; she has been sent by the Center for Human Rights in Geneva; as the international specialist, she is teamed with a local archeologist, **Sarath**; in his lab -- which is on the ship -- she examines skeletons from an ancient sacred cave and finds a fragment of bone which is recent.

(22) **Anil** visits Lalitha, an elderly Tamil woman she knew as a child.

(27) **Anil** worries about Sarath's politics.

**A government official is murdered on a train.*

*(33) **Anil** and her married boyfriend, Cullis

What the National Atlas of Sri Lanka includes and leaves out

(41) A list of the missing; the politics of violence.

(44) **Sarath** and **Anil** drive towards Bandarawela, the place where the skeletons were found. On the drive, **Sarath** mentions two brothers, **Palipana** and Narada, his teachers; Narada, a monk, was murdered.

(50) as they excavate deep in the caves, **Anil** finds a whole skeleton which is new: proof of a murder by the government; they name it Sailor. She can tell that it has been moved from somewhere else and reburied in this restricted area.

(57) **Sarath** told **Anil** his wife was dead; the rest house owner mentions that she is alive, that **Sarath** has visited with her, and with a cousin in the government. **Anil** becomes ill, dreams, talks long distance to her friend Leaf (first reference to Cherry Valance); they return to Colombo and she continues to examine the skeleton.

*(66) **Anil's** background; she makes contact with Chitra, who works on insects, and asks for help with the skeleton.

(74) **Sarath** at work; he cuts off Sailor's skull; knows that "he and **Anil** needed help".

The Grove of Ascetics (79)

Palipana introduced: he is a historian of inscriptions who was **Sarath's** teacher. After an academic scandal, he retired into the forest to live in the ruins of an ancient monastery; he is

blind, and cared for by a young girl, Lakma, his niece. **Sarath** and **Anil** go there, bringing the skull.

A day in the life of Ananda, a miner.

How can they identify the skeleton? **Palipana** says they should find a ritual painter; he describes the ritual of painting eyes on statues. Lakma's story: as a 12-year-old, she saw her parents killed and became frightened of everything; **Palipana** brought her to the forest and taught her, while she helped him as he lost his vision. The narrative looks ahead to **Palipana's** death, when she will carve an inscription for him at the edge of the water as he is dying.

Palipana tells the visitors that the ritual painter he has in mind became a drunk now works in the mines.

*(109) They return to Colombo, but find a truck driver (Gunasena) is crucified alive on the road, and bring him to the hospital.

A Brother (118)

*Doctors and political violence: **Gamini**, a doctor, works with the victims of violence in a base hospital. Linus Corea, a neurosurgeon, is kidnapped by the insurgents to work for them. **Gamini** does triage after bomb explosions. **Gamini** is now working in accident services hospital in Colombo.

***Sarath** brings Gunasena to **Gamini**, who is his brother; Gunasena's injury is common; **Gamini** thinks their work with the skeleton is dangerous.

***Anil** remembers what **Sarath** would only say once she turned off her tape recorder.

*Family order in Sri Lanka. **Sarath** tells the story of a sister-in-law of the bad horoscope. **Anil** remembers her studies in London and a bad marriage to Sri Lanka medical student; after her marriage.

***Anil's** forensic work in the American Southwest, and relations with other pathologists. **Sarath** brings a soil sample which identifies Sailor's first burial site. They plan to go there; he has kept this secret from the authorities, remembering worse times.

(156) **Sarath** remembers rock drawings discovered in the times of worst violence.

Ananda (161)

They find the former ritual painter **Ananda**, and bring him along.

They set up shop in an old estate **Sarath** visited as a child.

Ananda begins to work on reconstructing the head, **Anil** studies the skeleton, **Sarath** goes back and forth to Colombo for supplies. **Anil** no longer has the fluency to talk with **Ananda**. **Ananda** builds up the skull with clay, and breaks it up at the end of each day.

Sirissa, a teacher, finds her students beheaded.

Anil sees what Sailor's skeleton suggests about his daily life, and begins to reconstruct his history.

Ananda has finished the head; **Sarath** remembers when people were being beheaded; Sirissa was **Ananda's** wife, and she disappeared at that time.

What **Sarath** told **Anil** and **Gamini** about the intuition which got Palipana kicked out of the profession. What **Gamini** said about his family and Palipana.

*(195) **Anil** finds **Ananda** trying to stab himself; **Sarath** takes him to the hospital.

The Mouse (209)

*After **Gamini**'s wife left him, he was attracted to his brother's wife. He is taking drugs in order to keep working in emergency services the services; it is also his job to identify the bodies of victims.

***Gamini** remembers taking time off at the beach; guerrillas found him and insisted he come give treatment to their wounded.

***Gamini**, nicknamed "the Mouse" by his family, thinks about his rivalry with **Sarath**. Divorced, solitary, "he was a perfect participant in the war".

He remembers his early days at a doctor at the base hospital in the Northeast. He passes on to **Anil** something important that he was told then.

Between Heartbeats (235)

***Anil** met her friend Leaf in Arizona; they watched movies together from a forensic perspective. (Who Cherry Valance is).

***Gamini** remembers a nurse he was attracted to.

***Gamini** telling **Anil** that **Sarath**'s wife should have married him; he was in the hospital when she was brought in as a suicide.

*Leaf left Arizona; much later, she asks **Anil** to visit her, and reveals that she has Alzheimer's and is losing her memory.

*A letter from **Anil** and Leaf about the forensics of a Lee Marvin movie.

Anil and **Sarath** talk about secrets; he remembers an excavation in China; *she remembers meeting Cullis, her boyfriend, a science writer.

***Anil** remembers early days, then when she left him, before going to Sri Lanka.

The Life Wheel (270)

Anil, ready to make the report about the political murder of Sailor, calls Dr. Perera, who is a family friend, for help (he is introduced early in the book, and later on 181).

A car brings her to Colombo, the doctor meets her, the skeleton of sailor is misplaced. She is now delivering her report to officials, the military, and police; she accuses them; **Sarath** sees the audience's hostility, challenges and patronizes her in order to defuse it. He challenges her to do a forensic analysis of another skeleton; her papers and tape recorder are confiscated; she is told to leave.

Sarath and Gunasena take two skeletons out of the building; he remembers aftermath of his marriage; he knows he has just taken a big step. When **Anil** finally emerges from the building, everything she has has been taken. He tells her to go to the lab and work on the skeleton.

Sarath has given her the skeleton of Sailor and her tape recorder, along with a message: report and leave.

Anil realizes **Gamini** and **Sarath** could speak easily only because she was there; she remembers how they talked about leaving as a feature of Western movies.

Gamini, reviewing the photographs of victims, recognizes his brother. He tends his brother's body.

National Heroes Day: the Sri Lankan president goes out to meet the people and is killed by a bomber; his body is not found.

Distance (299)

A statue of the Buddha is dynamited by thieves. **Ananda** is brought to supervise reconstruction of the statue. As he works, another statue is built to replace the one destroyed. He wears **Sarath**'s shirt under his costume as he does the ritual of painting on the statue's eyes.