

Silent Corner Discussion Questions

by Dean Koontz

Author Bio: (from Fantastic Fiction & Dean Koontz website)

Dean Koontz is acknowledged as one of today's most celebrated and successful writers. His books are published in 38 languages and he has sold over 500 million copies to date.

Dean Koontz lives in Southern California with his wife, Gerda, their golden retriever, Elsa, and the enduring spirit of their goldens, Trixie and Anna.

Characters:

- **Jane Hawk** – Former FBI agent. Used to provide investigative support for the FBI Behavioral Science Unit. Widowed four months ago. Her husband, Nick, was a Marine. They have a son, Travis (5). Her mother is deceased. Her father is a famous musician.
- **Mr. Dhood** – The alias of the man/group threatening Jane and Travis. Name taken from “A Clockwork Orange.”
- **Kipp Garner** – Radburn's partner/henchman who enjoys violence.
- **John Harrow** – Special Agent in Charge of the LA FBI office.
- **Nick Hawk** – Former Marine. Unexpectedly and uncharacteristically kills himself with a knife. Married to Jane Hawk.
- **Booth Hendrickson** – Works in the Department of Justice. Becomes Silverman's handler after his infection.
- **Randolph Kohl** – Director of Homeland Security.
- **Gwyneth Lambert** – Widow. Her husband, Gordon, was a former marine Lieutenant General who committed suicide.
- **David James Michael** – On the board of the Gernsback institute (What if Conference). Inherited a fortune. Venture capitalist who funds high tech startups – Shenneck's technology and Far Horizons.
- **William Sterling Overton** – Lawyer. Friend/works for Senneck. Member of Aspasia.
- **Jimmy Radburn** – Hacker/cracker extraordinaire. Thinks of himself as a cyberspace pirate. His real name is Robert Branwick.
- **Rayshaws** – Act as security and performs household duties at the Shenneck's Zee Gee ranch. They are “programmed”. The title is taken from the Manchurian Candidate's Raymond Shaw.
- **Nathan Silverman** – FBI Section Chief. Jane's old boss and friend. Has a wife, Rishona.
- **Dr. Bertold Shenneck** – Neurologist studying technology and brain impulses. Married to beautiful Inga. In charge of Menlo Park Labs and owns Gee Zee (Ground Zero) ranch. Controls mice and coyotes with nanotechnology.
- **Moshe Steinitz** – Retired FBI forensic pathologist. One of Jane's work contacts.

- **Dougal Trahern** – Former member of the Special Forces with a Distinguished Service Cross. He is very rich through smart investing. Runs a food bank for the homeless. His sister, Justine, was murdered when Trahern was 10 years old.
- **Gavin & Jessica Washington** – Married couple. Both former military. He is a writer of military nonfiction. Jessica lost her legs in Afghanistan. Live on a farm. No one knows that Travis Hawk is staying with them.

Other information:

- **Aspasia** – Brothel where the girls have been programmed to be obedient/compliant. Run by Shenneck. There are 4 of them – Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington DC.
- **Gernsback Institute** – Produced the “What If” conference where military, sci-fi writers, and other highly intelligent people think about the future.
- **Silent Corner** – People who are off the grid. They can move freely and can use the Internet, but have no digital footprint.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not?
2. What do you think the title, “Silent Corner” means/signifies?
3. This book is also separated into 6 parts which each have a large number of very short chapters. How does this affect the story? Why do you think the story was written that way?
4. Is this book a mystery? Thriller? Science Fiction? In what ways is this novel a traditional thriller/mystery? In what ways does it bend the conventions of the thriller/mystery genre?
5. Blackburn (the hacker) is eventually killed/shot. Do you think his death was justified? Why or why not?
6. Nathan Silverman is warned off the Jane Hawk case. He does not heed the warning and continues to investigate. If you were warned, would you take it into consideration? Does his continued investigation make him partly responsible for what eventually happens to him?
7. Why do you think the coyotes killed their pack mates?
8. Silverman calls Shenneck’s guards “Hollow Men”. Is that an apt description? Does having no fear make the Renshaws better guards?
9. The Renshaws shoot Harrow in the back when he is only trying go to and help the Shennecks’. What does that tell you about the importance of free will?
10. Inga Shenneck sees small aberrations in the Renshaws that makes her think they are devolving. Why would they devolve? Why would having your own thoughts and free will keep you from regressing?
11. Is what happens to Nathan Silverman in the end wrong? Right? An act of mercy? What should Jane have done?

12. Koontz describes drones, modern surveillance, and other forms of high technology. Do you think he accurately portrayed the technology used in this book?
13. Do you think this story is realistic? Could it happen in real life? Why or why not?
14. What makes human life valuable? Does human life have worth if people do not have free will?
15. If someone is controlling the way you think and behave, is that a form of slavery? Or, since your actions are a result of your mind and thoughts, could it be considered normal/reality?
16. Are you responsible for your actions if they are programmed or you are brainwashed? Are you culpable for any crimes you commit? Why or why not?
17. What would you do to remain free? To keep your thoughts free?
18. Is the promise of utopia worth the price of “being programmed” and the loss of control of your mind, decisions, and actions? Why or why not?
19. Can a utopia ever actually happen? If one group is in charge, does that necessarily mean that a different group is being repressed? Why or why not?
20. Were you satisfied with the ending of the story? If you could change it, what would you do to make it better?
21. Koontz has written four other books in the Jane Hawk Series and a multitude of other novels. Will you read any of them?

References:

- Fantastic Fiction – <https://www.fantasticfiction.com/k/dean-r-koontz/>
- GoodReads – <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/32148091-the-silent-corner>
- Dean Koontz – <https://www.deankoontz.com/>
- Novelist – <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/novp/detail?vid=2&sid=a1810a29-08e1-41d7-b8ce-feb5319e28ff%40sessionmgr4006&bdata=JnNpdGU9bm92cC1saXZl#UI=10560345&db=neh>
- Wikipedia – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dean_Koontz

Dean Koontz Books

Series

Tucker (as by Brian Coffey)

1. Blood Risk (1974)
2. Surrounded (1974)
3. The Wall of Masks (1975)

Santa's Twin

1. Santa's Twin (1996)
2. Robot Santa (2004)

Moonlight Bay

1. Fear Nothing (1997)
2. Seize the Night (1998)

Odd Thomas Graphic Novels

- In Odd We Trust (2008) (with Queenie Chan)
 Odd Is on Our Side (2010) (with Fred Van Lente)
 House of Odd (2012)

Odd Thomas

- 0.5. You Are Destined To Be Together Forever (2014)
1. Odd Thomas (2003)
 2. Forever Odd (2005)
 3. Brother Odd (2006)
 4. Odd Hours (2008)
 - 4.5. Odd Interlude (2012)
 5. Odd Apocalypse (2012)
 6. Deeply Odd (2012)
 7. Saint Odd (2015)

Jane Hawk

- 0.5. The Bone Farm (2018)
1. The Silent Corner (2016)
 2. The Whispering Room (2017)
 3. The Crooked Staircase (2018)
 4. The Forbidden Door (2018)
 5. The Night Window (2019)

Stand Alone Novels

- Star Quest (1968)
- The Fall of the Dream Machine (1969)
- Fear That Man (1969)
- Anti-man (1970)
- Beastchild (1970)
- The Dark Symphony (1970)
- Hell's Gate (1970)
- The Crimson Witch (1971)
- Demon Child (1971) (as by Deanna Dwyer)
- Legacy Of Terror (1971) (as Deanna Dwyer)
- Children of the Storm (1972) (as Deanna Dwyer)
- Dance With The Devil (1972) (as Deanna Dwyer)
- Dark Of Summer (1972) (as Deanna Dwyer)
- The Flesh in the Furnace (1972)
- Starblood (1972)
- Warlock (1972)
- A Darkness in My Soul (1972)
- Chase (1972) (as K R Dwyer)
- A Werewolf Among Us (1973)
- Hanging on (1973)
- Demon Seed (1973)
- The Haunted Earth (1973)
- Shattered (1973) (as K R Dwyer)
- After the Last Race (1974)
- The Long Sleep (1975) (as John Hill)
- Nightmare Journey (1975)
- Dragonfly (1975) (as K R Dwyer)
- Invasion (1975) (as Aaron Wolfe)
- Prisoner of Ice (1976) (as David Axton)
aka Icebound
- Night Chills (1976)
- Time Thieves (1977)
- The Face of Fear (1977) (as K R Dwyer)
- The Vision (1977)
- The Key to Midnight (1979) (as Leigh Nichols)
- Whispers (1980)
- The Funhouse (1980) (as by Owen West)
- The Voice of the Night (1980) (as Brian Coffey)
- The Mask (1981) (as Owen West)
- The Eyes of Darkness (1981) (as Leigh Nichols)
- The House of Thunder (1982) (as Leigh Nichols)
- Phantoms (1983)
- Darkness Comes (1984) (aka Darkfall)
- The Servants of Twilight (1985) (as Leigh Nichols)
- The Door to December (1985) (as Richard Paige)
- Twilight Eyes (1985)
- Strangers (1986)

- Shadow Fires (1987) (as by Leigh Nichols)
- Watchers (1987)
- Lightning (1988)
- Oddkins (1988)
- Midnight (1989)
- The Bad Place (1990)
- Cold Fire (1991)
- Hideaway (1992)
- Dragon Tears (1993)
- Mr. Murder (1993)
- Winter Moon (1993)
- Dark Rivers of the Heart (1994)
- Intensity (1995)
- TickTock (1996)
- Sole Survivor (1997)
- False Memory (1998)
- From the Corner of His Eye (2000)
- One Door Away from Heaven (2001)
- By the Light of the Moon (2002)
- The Face (2003)
- The Taking (2004)
- Life Expectancy (2004)
- Velocity (2005)
- The Husband (2006)
- The Darkest Evening of the Year (2007)
- The Good Guy (2007)
- Your Heart Belongs to Me (2008)
- Relentless (2009)
- Breathless (2009)
- What the Night Knows (2010)
- 77 Shadow Street (2010)
- Innocence (2013)
- The City (2014)
- Ashley Bell (2015)

If you liked Silent Corner, try...

- Night Watch – Iris Johansen
- The Fix – David Baldacci
- A Wanted Man – Lee Child
- Blowback – Valerie Plame
- Dangerous Games – Michael Prescott

Manchurian Candidate - is a novel by Richard Condon, first published in 1959. It is a political thriller about the son of a prominent U.S. political family who is brainwashed into being an unwitting assassin for a Communist conspiracy.

The novel has been adapted twice into a feature film of the same title, in 1962 and again in 2004. The 1962 film is faithful to the book; the 2004 remake updates the action and alters characters.

