Thrush Encyclopedia Article

Thrush

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.



Contents

Thrush Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Thrush.....3

Thrush

Thrush, or oropharyngeal **candidiasis**, is an infection of the mouth and throat caused by the fungus *Candida*, a genus of **yeast**. This microorganism is naturally present on the skin and mucous membranes, but overgrowth can cause disease. Candidiasis is not considered communicable because the microorganism is ubiquitous (common and widespread).

Symptoms of thrush include cottage cheese-like white patches in the mouth and throat, with raw areas underneath. Esophageal involvement may result in difficulty in swallowing, nausea, vomiting, and chest pain. Candidiasis is confirmed by **culture** from a swab of the infected tissue.

Proliferation of *Candida* is most often the result of a weakened **immune system**. Candidiasis is one of the most common and visible opportunistic infections that strike people with **AIDS**, **chemotherapy** patients, and other immunocompromised individuals. Many AIDS patients have been first diagnosed after they, or their dentists, noticed a thrush infection. In individuals with normal immune systems, candidiasis may be associated with antibiotic use. Infants, diabetics, smokers, and denture wearers are particularly susceptible to thrush.

In addition to causing thrush, *Candida* may affect the gastrointestinal tract or genitals. The microorganism may also enter the bloodstream, either via surgery or catheterization, or through damage to the skin or mucosa. If the immune system is unable to clear the fungus from the bloodstream, a dangerous systemic infection may occur, resulting in endocarditis, **meningitis**, or other serious problems.

Antifungal medications such as fluconazole and clotrimazole are generally effective in treating candidiasis. However, drug-resistant strains of *Candida* are becoming increasingly prevalent, and recurrence is common. This situation is driving research into new therapies and potential vaccines.