



[One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest](#), by **Ken Kesey**

In A Nutshell

Published in 1962, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* tells the story of a controlling nurse in a mental institute and a patient rebellion against her. The novel is based on the experiences author Ken Kesey had while working as an orderly in a mental institution in Menlo Park, California. In order to better understand the experiences of people in a mental institute, Kesey actually subjected himself to electroshock therapy (a form of treatment for the mentally ill, also called electroconvulsive therapy) and took many of their prescription drugs. After Kesey published the novel, it was made into a Broadway play and later a film starring Jack Nicholson.

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Big Picture Study Questions

- 1 Is Chief crazy? Is he a trustworthy narrator? Did the events that Chief narrates really happen? Is Nurse Ratched really all that bad?
- 2 Who wins the battle in the end - Nurse Ratched or McMurphy?

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- 3 How does *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* fit into the literature of paranoia and conspiracy theories? In what ways does *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* suggest that conspiracy theories are true, rather than a product of mental illness?

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