

1st to Die: A Novel Study Guide

1st to Die: A Novel by James Patterson

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Plot Summary

First to Die by James Patterson is the first novel in the Women's Murder Club series. Lindsay Boxer is a inspector with the San Francisco police department, a strongly male-oriented career in which she has excelled for six years. However a health crisis and a high profile case threaten to destroy all those years of hard work. Lindsay turns to her good friend, Claire, and new friend, Cindy, and forms the Women's Murder Club in order to not only garner support from other women who understand the struggle of working in a male-oriented job but to help her solve this difficult murder case. Along the way, the club will also include Jill, a highly-ambitious assistant district attorney, and Chris Raleigh, Lindsay's new partner and new lover. First to Die is another exciting crime novel by bestselling author James Patterson that will more than live up to his fan's expectations.

Lindsay Boxer learns that she has a rare form of anemia called Negli's. This diagnosis is potentially fatal, leaving Lindsay emotionally vulnerable when she arrives on the scene of a double murder at a local luxury hotel. The couple had just gotten married and the female victim is still in her wedding dress. Both victims were stabbed, a brutal crime that seems like an assault on hope that Lindsay cannot handle so soon on the heels of her diagnosis. Lindsay is so emotionally touched by the scene that she nearly confides in an ambitious reporter, Cindy Thomas, when they run into one another in the ladies room.

Immediately after the beginning to investigate the bride and groom case, Lindsay is informed she will be working with a new partner, Chris Raleigh, a cop who has been working in the mayor's office for the past few years to mediate with the press in high profile cases. Lindsay is demoted from lead on the case to second and resents Raleigh's presence. However, as they work together, Lindsay learns that Raleigh is a good cop whose main concern is to find the killer. Together they begin searching for motives among the couples' friends and family, researching everything, including the father of the groom's business dealings.

As Lindsay begins treatments for Negli's, another murder takes place. Lindsay and Raleigh go to Napa Valley where the second couple was married and were staying in a local hotel before flying to Cancun for their honeymoon. As Lindsay and Raleigh discuss the case with a local cop, Cindy Thomas arrives. Lindsay agrees to drive home with Cindy if she will promise to keep any information Lindsay gives her secret until Lindsay gives her the okay. Lindsay discovers during this ride that she and Cindy have so much in common that Lindsey invites Cindy to meet Claire, another friend of Lindsay's. Over drinks, the ladies realize they all have an interest in the bride and groom case—Claire in her capacity as coroner, Cindy as a reporter, and Lindsay as the detective on the case. They decide to pool their knowledge and work the case together, forming the Women's Murder Club.

The next day, Lindsay and Raleigh return to Napa where they see the place where the bodies were found, an abandoned vineyard. Claire drives up to speak to the coroner and view the bodies. Claire and Lindsay drive back to San Francisco and Lindsay tells

Claire about her devastating medical condition. Claire is distraught but understands Lindsay's need to continue to focus on the case.

Lindsay and Raleigh begin to search for a connection between the two couples while continuing to follow up on evidence found in both cases. Nothing seems to connect until Lindsay realizes that both brides got their dresses at the same Saks store in San Francisco. An interview with the clerk there garners a sketch of the suspect. This brings in another witness who spoke to a similarly-appearing man at the Brandt wedding. It seems the case is beginning to break when another bride and groom are found murdered.

Lindsay and Raleigh fly to Cleveland where they learn that Kathy and James Voskuhl were murdered during their reception at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The security tapes reveal a partial view of the suspected killer. Interviews with the bride's family and friends also reveal that Kathy was having an ongoing relationship with an abusive man whom she claimed was famous. This man turns out to be Nicholas Jenks, a famous writer residing in San Francisco. Jenks becomes the main suspect in the case. However, his fame causes Lindsay and Raleigh to be forced to move cautiously.

Lindsay and Raleigh visit with the district attorney's office in the hopes of getting a search warrant for Jenks' house, but they are turned down. However, this meeting inspires Lindsay to invite Jill Bernhardt to join the Women's Murder Club. At the same time, Lindsay begins a passionate affair with Raleigh despite the fact that her treatments for Negli's do not appear to be successful. During this time as well, Lindsay interviews Jenks' ex-wife and learns about a book he wrote early in his career that parallels the bride and groom murders. This gives Lindsay the break she needs to arrest Jenks. After the arrest, the police find evidence in Jenks' house that appears to conclusively point to him as the killer.

After Jenks is arrested he claims he has been set up. The more Lindsay thinks about it, the more she thinks he is right. Lindsay begins to suspect Joanna Wade, Jenks' ex-wife, to be the killer. When Jenks escapes police custody, Lindsay goes to Joanna's house to search for Jenks but finds her dead. Raleigh follows someone who was seen leaving Joanna's building dressed like Jenks. When Lindsay catches up to Raleigh, she discovers he has been shot. At the same time, Lindsay comes across Jenks and his current wife arguing. When the wife attempts to shoot Jenks, Lindsay shoots her. Lindsay returns to Raleigh just as he dies.

After Raleigh's death, Lindsay falls into a depression despite the fact that her Negli's has responded to treatment and she will live. One day after everything has died down, Jenks breaks in on Lindsay and admits that he was behind the killings all along. Jenks tries to kill Lindsay, but she manages to kill him first.

Prologue, Inspector Lindsay Boxer, and Book 1, David and Melanie Brandt: Chapters 1-5

Prologue, Inspector Lindsay Boxer, and Book 1, David and Melanie Brandt: Chapters 1-5 Summary

Lindsay Boxer is a female homicide inspector who has ambitions to rise high in the police department despite the male-oriented atmosphere. Lindsay was once married but no longer is involved in a serious relationship. Lindsay has no family except a sister to whom she is not close. The most important person in Lindsay's life is her friend, Claire.

In the prologue, Inspector Lindsay Boxer is considering suicide. Lindsay claims her depression began with the bride and groom murder case. In chapter 1, Melanie and David Brandt have just gotten married and are finally alone in their honeymoon suite. A knock on the door interrupts their romantic moments alone. In chapter 2, Phillip Campbell hands David Brandt a bottle of champagne, then shoves a knife blade into David's chest before leaving him to bleed to death on the floor. Melanie comes out the bathroom where she was putting on the new earrings David had bought her and Phillip stabs her. Phillip then carries Melanie to the bed and stabs her twice more, then prepares to sexually assault her.

In chapter 3, Lindsay Boxer is waiting in her doctor's office for a follow-up consultation. Lindsay's thoughts are on work and how soon she might receive the promotion she hopes to get when her boss is promoted. The doctor invites Lindsay into his office and shows her a slide of her blood taken at a previous appointment. The doctor tells Lindsay has Negli's Aplastic Anemia, a rare type of anemia that could be fatal. In chapter 4, the doctor advises Lindsay to make an appointment with a hematologist to discuss treatment of the illness. At the end of the meeting, Lindsay is paged to a crime scene by her partner, Jacobi. In chapter 5, Lindsay arrives at the Grand Hyatt where she takes over the crime scene, instructing the officers not to let anyone in and out of the hotel unless they are a guest or employee. Lindsay enters the Mandarin Suite where the murders took place and immediately sees the groom lying in a puddle of his own blood. In the bedroom, Lindsay is shocked to see the bride still in her wedding dress.

Prologue, Inspector Lindsay Boxer, and Book 1, David and Melanie Brandt: Chapters 1-5 Analysis

The prologue introduces the main character of the novel. The reader will note that the narration is in the first person and will continue to be so throughout the novel. The prologue takes place in the present, suggesting the rest of the novel is a recollection of

Lindsay's memories of the bride and groom murder case. Lindsay is thinking of committing suicide, which suggests something about the case or the events surrounding it leads Lindsay into a deep depression. The source of this depression is suggested to be Lindsay's precarious health when the reader learns in an early chapter that Lindsay is diagnosed with a potentially fatal anemia as the bride and groom murder case began. However, the reader has no way of knowing this early in the novel if this is truly the source of Lindsay's depression.

The murder of David and Melanie Brandt is the first murder in what will become the bride and groom serial murders. David and Melanie appear to be a couple who have it all, good-looks, money, and love. Their lives are filled with hope as they begin to celebrate their new union. However, this hope is instantly crushed when the couple is murdered in their honeymoon suite. The murder begins to illustrate the theme of loss of hope. Hope will prove to an important necessity for Lindsay throughout her struggle with her illness; therefore, the crushing of hope in this murder case will parallel her own struggle, making the case more personal to Lindsay than any other she has worked in the past, explaining her unusually sharp reaction to the sight of Melanie Brandt still wearing her wedding dress.

Book 1, David and Melanie Brandt: Chapters 6-17

Book 1, David and Melanie Brandt: Chapters 6-17 Summary

In chapter 6, Lindsay learns that the groom's father is a Wall Street businessman, perhaps suggesting motive for the murders. Lindsay also takes notice both of a bottle of champagne the killer possibly brought to the room and the groom's tuxedo jacket folded beside the body. Lindsay struggles with her emotions, leaving Jacobi to speak to the groom's family. In chapter 7, Phillip Campbell walks past the hotel, thrilled to see the excitement caused by the murders. In chapter 8, Cindy Thomas, a reporter for the Chronicle, arrives at the hotel to find out what is happening. Cindy normally works the metro desk, but the two crime reporters were out, so this is her big chance to prove she can work on the big stories. Cindy lies her way into the hotel, claiming to be there to have a meeting with one of the guests. Cindy then speaks to one of the hotel employees and learns that the crime scene is on the thirtieth floor. Cindy quickly gets on a service elevator and heads up.

In chapter 9, Cindy reaches the thirtieth floor and gets close enough to the open door of the Mandarin Suite to see the groom's body before the police force her to leave. At the same time, Cindy sees a police inspector leaving the room upset. Cindy follows her into the lady's room downstairs and slips her her card, telling her to call if she ever feels like talking. In chapter 10, Lindsay is at her desk in the Hall of Justice, and Lindsay's boss brings her the Chronicle with a headline about the murders under Cindy's byline. Lindsay's boss is unhappy with the press coverage and the lack of leads. In chapter 11, Lindsay goes home alone and shares a quiet meal with her dog as she realizes she has no one to call and tell about her illness. In chapter 12, Lindsay is called into her boss's office first thing in the morning. Lindsay is introduced to Chris Raleigh, a police officer who has been working as a press liaison in the mayor's office for several years. Raleigh has been placed in charge of the bride and groom murder as Lindsay's partner.

In chapter 13, Lindsay and Raleigh go to the coroner's office to find out about the autopsies of the Brandts. Lindsay and Claire, the assistant coroner in charge of the case, have been good friends for years. Claire welcomes Lindsay with a friendly hug. In chapter 14, Claire discusses the autopsy with Lindsay and Raleigh, telling them the knife had no distinguishing characteristics. Claire mentions that the groom apparently urinated before he died, leaving a puddle of which she had a sample. Finally, Claire tells them that the bride was sexually assaulted, most likely with a fist. In chapter 15, Cindy Thomas has a talk with her boss in which he advises her to keep with the bride and groom murders. In chapter 16, Lindsay suggests they follow up on the tuxedo jacket, which it turns out was not the groom's and most likely belonged to the killer. Raleigh discourages this line of inquiry, concerned about intruding on the family's grief. In

chapter 17, Phillip Campbell is sitting at his desk reviewing the names of other brides and grooms-to-be.

Book 1, David and Melanie Brandt: Chapters 6-17 Analysis

Cindy Thomas is a reporter who is just as ambitious as Lindsay Boxer is in her own career. This ambition takes Cindy all the way up to the Mandarin Suite, showing the reader her determination when she is on the scent of a story. In the process, Cindy gets a story no other reporter is able to get and meets Lindsay. Cindy feels a connection with Lindsay and offers her her card, but Lindsay knows to be wary around reporters, so she brushes Cindy off. In fact, Cindy's story gets Lindsay in trouble and leads to the powers-that-be to remove Lindsay as the lead detective on the case and bring in Chris Raleigh, essentially a PR man. This causes Lindsay a great deal of distress and leaves her concerned that the case will not be solved in a timely manner, especially when Raleigh prevents her from pursuing the owner of the tuxedo jacket left in the hotel suite, their only good clue to the killer's identity. Tension fills the plot whenever Lindsay and Raleigh are together, suggesting to the reader that this relationship will come to a climax at some point, but there is yet no clue as to whether this will be a romantic climax or a violent one.

The clues in the case are piling up, but they seem thin at this point. Lindsay and Raleigh are focusing on people who knew the couple, but the reader quickly realizes that the killer plans to hit again, suggesting he is a serial killer who is picking victims at random. The reader then knows that Lindsay and Raleigh are laboring under a false assumption, causing them to waste time. This leaves the reader questioning whether or not the criminal will be caught. Also important about the clues to the crime at this point is the urine found near David Brandt's body. This urine is not important at this point but will prove to be later in the novel.

Book 1, David and Melanie Brandt: Chapters 18-25

Book 1, David and Melanie Brandt: Chapters 18-25 Summary

In chapter 18, Lindsay finds several messages waiting for her at her desk. Lindsay calls the CSU guy and learns there were no prints of any use in the suite. Lindsay calls Cindy Thomas and tells her the same thing she would tell any other reporter, no comment. In chapter 19, Lindsay is reluctant to go home and finds herself at the Hyatt. In the Mandarin Suite, Lindsay feels a connection to Melanie Brandt. Lindsay makes her a promise that she will find Melanie's killer. Lindsay also realizes that the killer took the Brandts' wedding rings. In chapter 20, Lindsay is in the office of the hematologist the following morning. The doctor wants to treat the illness with special blood transfusions that consist of mostly red blood cells in the hopes that they will encourage Lindsay's body to begin making its own red blood cells again. In chapter 21, it seems that a story about Gerald Brandt's business dealings providing a motive for the crime has been published in the Chronicle. This prompts Lindsay to call the older Brandt, who quickly puts an end to the speculation. Lindsay then calls Claire and sets up a date that weekend to tell her about her illness.

In chapter 22, Lindsay and Raleigh go to a coffee shop to discuss the wedding guest list in private but end up discussing their own marital status. Both Lindsay and Raleigh are divorced. In chapter 23, Becky Passeneu is at Saks trying on her wedding gown for her wedding that Friday. The clerk helping her sees a strange man watching them but does not pursue the matter any further. In chapter 24, Lindsay talks to Jacobi who has been tracking down people who have bought the kind of champagne found in the Mandarin Suite and the tuxedo jacket. So far he has had little luck. In chapter 25, Lindsay is becoming frustrated with the case and her illness. In a weak moment, Lindsay cries.

Book 1, David and Melanie Brandt: Chapters 18-25 Analysis

The reader learns more about Lindsay's personality as she begins treatment for her illness. Lindsay is strong and faces this illness alone, deciding not to tell anyone except for her dear friend, Claire. This leaves Lindsay alone in her struggle, a fact that is taking an emotional toll on her, as the reader sees when Lindsay gives in to tears during a weak moment. However, this struggle does not keep Lindsay from continuing on with the bride and groom case, which has grown difficult as time continues to pass without any definite clues to the killer's identity. At the same time, a woman is preparing for her wedding, and it appears the killer is checking her out at the bridal department in Saks.

The reader wonders if Saks might be a connection between the victims and if it will appear later in the novel.

Book 2, The Women's Murder Club: Chapters 26-46

Book 2, The Women's Murder Club: Chapters 26-46 Summary

In chapter 26, newly-married Michael and Becky DeGeorge are on their way to dinner at an exclusive restaurant when a limo pulls up and says he has been hired by the hotel for their use. In chapter 27, the limo driver encourages the DeGeorges to take advantage of the privacy in the back of the car. When the DeGeorges begin to make love in the backseat, the driver shoots them. In chapter 28, Lindsay spends Sunday morning jogging on Marina Green before Raleigh calls and tells her a newly-married couple has gone missing in Napa. In chapter 29, Raleigh and Lindsay speak with the local cop in charge of the investigation. They were last seen leaving for dinner the night before, but their car is still in the parking lot. In chapter 30, Raleigh and Lindsay are discussing what might have happened to the couple and whether it could be related to their case when they see Cindy Thomas coming their way. In chapter 31, Lindsay agrees to drive back to the city with Cindy and give her the inside scoop if she promises not to publish anything about the DeGeorges. Cindy agrees. In chapter 32, Lindsay tells Cindy all she knows while Cindy tells her that she learned about the DeGeorges by following Lindsay all weekend. They then talk about other things, learning they have a lot in common. Lindsay invites Cindy to join her and Claire for drinks.

In chapter 33, Lindsay introduces Claire and Cindy. The three women hit it off. In chapter 34, Lindsay proposes that the three of them work on the murder case regarding the Brandts together in an off-the-record capacity, unofficially creating the Women's Murder Club. In chapter 35, Lindsay is at work once again on the bride and groom case when she learns that the Napa police have found the dead bodies of the DeGeorges. In chapter 36, Lindsay and Raleigh arrive at an abandoned vineyard where the couple was found in a shed. It appears the couple was shot while making love. Their rings are missing just like the Brandts. In chapter 37, Claire arrives to consult with the Napa Valley coroner. Raleigh is deeply upset by this murder and swears he wants to get this guy. In chapter 38, Phillip Campbell is flying home after returning the rented limo. Phillip meets a young woman at the gate who is about to be married. In chapter 39, Lindsay drives back to San Francisco with Claire so she can tell her about Negli's. In chapter 40, Claire is saddened about the diagnosis but promises to stick by Lindsay.

In chapter 41, Lindsay realizes that the murder in Napa changes the focus of the Brandt murder investigation. Lindsay knows she must connect the two murders. In chapter 42, Claire grieves for her dear friend Lindsay and her struggle with Negli's. In chapter 43, Claire calls Lindsay to the morgue and shows her a hair from the killer's beard that was left in Becky DeGeorge's vagina postmortem. In chapter 44, Lindsay urges the detective in Napa to get a list of the investors who own the vineyard where the bodies were found.

Lindsay continues to focus on trying to find the connection among the four victims. In chapter 45, Lindsay gets together with the Women's Murder Club members over dinner where they discuss how the killer picks his victims. In chapter 46, Lindsay keeps the discussion of the night before in mind and realizes the killer must pick his victims at Saks, where both Becky DeGeorge and Melanie Brandt bought their dresses. Lindsay interviews the supervisor in the bridal department at Saks. The supervisor reveals that the bridal folder from their department disappeared a month ago. The supervisor also tells Lindsay about the man who was watching Becky during her dress fitting.

Book 2, The Women's Murder Club: Chapters 26-46 Analysis

Another newly-married couple is murdered by the same man who killed the Brandts, Phillip Campbell. The reader watches as Campbell kills the couple in an intimate moment and wonders how he continues to get away with these murders. The reader suspects that Campbell's name is fake, but knows very little else about him except that he appears to be determined to continue to kill as he flirts with a young bride-to-be at the airport.

Lindsay and Raleigh are called to Napa before the bodies of the DeGeorges are found because they are newly married so they might be connected to their case on the Brandt's. Lindsay hopes they are not related, touching on a theme of the novel. However, when their bodies are found missing their wedding rings and posed in a sexual position, Lindsay knows the cases are connected. Later, when Lindsay learns that the bride was sexually molested like Melanie Brandt, she knows it is the same killer. This changes the scoop of the investigation and gives Lindsay and Raleigh a new direction in which to look but takes away a whole group of possible suspects.

Cindy Thomas shows up at the Napa hotel where the DeGeorges were staying, prompting Lindsay to enter into a deal with her to keep her from intruding. Lindsay takes a leap of faith with both Cindy and Raleigh by entering into this deal, leaving her vulnerable to reprimand from her bosses. Cindy proves reliable, so much so that Lindsay invites her into her circle of friends. Lindsay turns to these friends in help with the investigation, forming their own little club in which these women who work in male-oriented jobs can rely on each other to succeed. This forms the foundation for the group that will spawn a series of novels beyond this one and gives Lindsay people she can trust and turn to for help with a difficult case.

Book 2, The Women's Murder Club: Chapters 47-59

Book 2, The Women's Murder Club: Chapters 47-59 Summary

In chapter 47, Lindsay learns that the commissioner has handed over their case files to the FBI. Lindsay becomes upset and rushes off to the bathroom. Raleigh gives her a hug. In chapter 48, Phillip Campbell checks into a hotel in Cleveland, Ohio in order to attend a wedding. In chapter 49, Lindsay has a bad dream about the killer. Raleigh arrives on her doorstep. In chapter 50, Raleigh invites himself to dinner, and Lindsay and Raleigh share a few more facts about one another before sharing a dance. In chapter 51, Kathy and James Voskuhl just got married and are having their reception at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. James slips off to the bathroom and Phillip Campbell follows. Phillip kills James as he sits on the toilet and then kills Kathy when she comes to join him. In chapter 52, Lindsay arrives at work on Monday morning and learns that a witness has come in in response to a sketch released to the papers of the suspected killer. The woman claims a man who fits the description the supervisor at Saks gave was at the Brandt wedding. Then Lindsay gets a call from Cleveland.

In chapter 53, Lindsay learns that the Cleveland police are investigating the murder of a newly-married couple. Lindsay asks if the wedding rings are missing. When she learns they are, Lindsay makes plans to fly to Cleveland. In chapter 54, Lindsay and Raleigh arrive in Cleveland where they are met by the lead detective and look over the crime scene photos. In chapter 55, Lindsay and Raleigh visit the museum and see the crime scene. Lindsay learns there are security cameras all over the museum, but none in the hallway to the bathroom or the bathroom itself. In chapter 56, Lindsay and Raleigh visit the family of the bride who lives in Cleveland. Lindsay learns that the bride once lived in San Francisco and was something of a wild child, but she had settled down in recent years. In chapter 57, Lindsay visits a friend of the bride from San Francisco and asks about any boyfriends Kathy might have had in San Francisco who might be capable of this murder. The woman tells Lindsay that Kathy dated someone who was abusive, but the woman refused to reveal his name. In chapter 58, Lindsay insists to Raleigh over dinner that the killer had to have known Kathy, explaining how he ended up in Cleveland. In chapter 59, Lindsay and Raleigh kiss as they walk back to the hotel, but Lindsay resists any further personal relations.

Book 2, The Women's Murder Club: Chapters 47-59 Analysis

Even as Lindsay appears to be becoming more obsessed with the bride and groom murders, she also appears to be developing a relationship with Raleigh that is more

than professional. Raleigh is the one pushing this new aspect to their relationship, showing up at her house and kissing her in Cleveland. Lindsay resists him, frightened that she is dying and it is not a good time to begin a new relationship. However, Lindsay's resistance seems to be waning, making the reader wonder if there will be a relationship eventually. The reader is also concerned that Raleigh's intentions may not be pure, but there has been no indication that Raleigh is anything more than what he says he is; however, there is still a killer on the loose.

The killer has killed a couple in Cleveland. This seems unlikely to Lindsay whose experience tells her that a serial killer often remains close to home. This makes Lindsay believe that the bride, Kathy, knew her killer. The possibility rings true with the reader who saw some recognition in the scene in which Kathy was shot. Now Lindsay has a clear way of learning the man's identity, but the family seems resistant to Lindsay's attempts to learning the name of Kathy's abusive ex-boyfriend. This adds tension to the plot as the reader urges Lindsay to hurry and find the killer.

Book 2, The Women's Murder Club: Chapters 60-69

Book 2, The Women's Murder Club: Chapters 60-69 Summary

In chapter 60, Lindsay and Raleigh review the security tapes of the museum. They see a man fitting the suspect's description come into the museum for the party, but he never looks at the camera, so they cannot get a good look at him. In chapter 61, Lindsay attempts to get the name of Kathy's abusive boyfriend from Kathy's sister but fails. In chapter 62, Lindsay and Raleigh prepare to return to San Francisco. Lindsay receives a call from Kathy's friend and learns that Kathy's family knows the man's name. Lindsay is convinced the abusive boyfriend is the killer. In chapter 63, Lindsay arranges to meet with Claire and Cindy. In chapter 64, Lindsay tells Claire and Cindy everything she knows about the Voskuhl murders. Cindy offers to research Kathy Voskuhl.

In chapter 65, Lindsay visits with her doctor and learns she is not responding to the treatments. Her doctor decides to increase the number of transfusions she is receiving. In chapter 66, Lindsay goes home and calls Claire to pour out her fears. In chapter 67, Lindsay calls Kathy's mother and convinces her to give her the name of the abusive boyfriend. In chapter 68, Lindsay tells her boss that the suspect is Nicholas Jenks, a famous novelist who lives in San Francisco. Lindsay's boss urges caution. Then Jacobi comes to Lindsay and tells her that he discovered that Nicholas Jenks bought a case of the same champagne found in the Brandt hotel room. In chapter 69, Lindsay goes to a book store where she finds a copy of Jenks' latest book. The picture on the back reveals a man with a red beard, just like the description of the suspect.

Book 2, The Women's Murder Club: Chapters 60-69 Analysis

Lindsay not only has a suspicion about the killer's identity, but she also gets a glimpse of him on video tape. The video is not good, revealing only a profile of the clearly intelligent killer, but it gives Lindsay some confirmation that the killer is a man with a beard. Later Lindsay is finally able to convince the family to reveal who the abusive boyfriend is and Lindsey discovers he is a famous writer. This causes new complications for Lindsay who must be careful not to cause a media outcry against the police department for harassing a famous person. At the same time, however, more information comes in that points to this man as being the killer, leaving the reader anxious to see how Lindsay will eventually nail him.

Book 3, Red Beard: Chapters 70-80

Book 3, Red Beard: Chapters 70-80 Summary

In chapter 70, Lindsay and Raleigh visit Jill Bernhardt, the assistant district attorney, but she tells them she cannot ask for any search warrants based on the evidence they have so far; however, Jill assures Lindsay she is firmly on her side. In chapter 71, Cindy researches the Chronicle archives and finds a picture of Kathy Voskuhl with Nicholas Jenks. In chapter 72, Cindy takes the photograph to Lindsay who quickly brings her up to speed on the evidence against Jenks thus far. In chapter 73, the Women's Murder Club welcomes a new member, Jill Bernhardt. Again Jill tells them they will need strong evidence to make a move against Jenks. In chapter 74, Lindsay gets a call from Raleigh asking to meet. Raleigh tells Lindsay about a call to the Jenks home several years ago in which Jenks' first wife was beaten; however, the charges were dropped. Raleigh has also found that Jenks owns a gun similar to the one used in the final two sets of murders.

In chapter 75, Lindsay and Raleigh pay a visit to Jenks. Jenks outright denies knowing Kathy. In chapter 76, Jenks looks at the photo of himself with Kathy and calls her a fan, someone he met once but who he does not recall. Jenks denies as well being in Cleveland that weekend. In chapter 77, Jenks becomes angry when his wife, Chessy, asks too many questions. Jenks hits Chessy, then drags her into the closet and forces her to bark like a dog while he has sex with her. In chapter 78, Lindsay goes to speak with Joanna Wade, Jenks' first wife. Joanna claims to have an open relationship with Chessy and that she has warned her about Jenks' violent behavior. In chapter 79, Lindsay asks Joanna if Jenks is capable of murder. Joanna mentions an early novel Jenks wrote that has a similar plot to the bride and groom murders. In chapter 80, Joanna tells Lindsay to visit Jenks' ex-agent, as he might have a copy of the book. Unfortunately, the agent does not have a copy.

Book 3, Red Beard: Chapters 70-80 Analysis

Jill Bernhardt is introduced in these chapters. Jill is a wildly-ambitious assistant district attorney who takes on the cases no one else will touch. Jill is practical, however, and refuses to touch the Jenks case until Lindsay can come up with some solid evidence. Lindsay is disappointed, but she is so impressed with Jill's support that she brings her in on the Women's Murder Club, completing what she has begun with Claire and Cindy. Jill seems like a good match to the club and her profession puts her in the position to finish what the club begins with their investigations, and with her strong knowledge of the law, the club can find the right evidence needed to make a conviction stick.

Lindsay continues to search for evidence and a meeting with Jenks' ex-wife seems like a gift from heaven. Lindsay learns about a book Jenks wrote that parallels the bride and groom murders almost perfectly. If Lindsay can find this book it will be the evidence she

needs to get a warrant for Jenks and his house. This foreshadows Lindsay's attempts to get the book in the following chapters as well as charging the plot with excitement as both Lindsay and the reader sense the conclusion of the case is within reach.

Book 3, Red Beard: Chapters 81-95

Book 3, Red Beard: Chapters 81-95 Summary

In chapter 81, Lindsay gets a call from the cops in Cleveland who were able to find proof Jenks was in Cleveland the night of the murder. Cleveland wants to indict, so Lindsay has only twenty-four hours to find evidence strong enough to arrest Jenks herself. In chapter 82, Lindsay tells the Women's Murder Club about the novel and Cindy runs off with an idea. In chapter 83, Cindy goes to the San Francisco writer's guild and asks if Jenks has left a copy of *Always a Bridesmaid* there. Through some lies and deceit, Cindy learns it is there. In chapter 84, Cindy's discovery allows Jill and Lindsay to get a warrant for the book. In chapter 85, the four members of the Women's Murder Club split the book up and begin to read. Within a short time they find several incidences within the book that fit the bride and groom murders perfectly. In chapter 86, Lindsay makes the arrest with Raleigh. In chapter 87, Lindsay and Raleigh leave work together. In chapter 88, Lindsay and Raleigh make love. In chapter 89, Lindsay decides to tell Raleigh about her illness but is distracted by more love making.

In chapter 90, Lindsay returns to the Jenks house where the CSU crew has found the case of champagne whose serial numbers match the bottle at the Brandt murder scene and the pants that match the tuxedo jacket from the Brandt scene. The CSU was not able to find the gun, but they did find some hair they hope Claire can match to the one found inside Becky DeGeorge. In chapter 91, Claire shows Lindsay that the hair does match those taken from Jenks' house. In chapter 92, Lindsay questions Jenks with Jill and is happy to tell him about all the evidence they have against him. However, Jenks insists he is innocent. Lindsay has a dizzy spell when Jenks threatens her, causing her to have a coughing spell in the bathroom that results in some blood coming from her lungs. In chapter 93, Lindsay watches as Jenks is arraigned. In chapter 94, the Women's Murder Club celebrates the successful conclusion of their first case. Lindsay tells Jill and Cindy about her illness, so Jill shares some information about a childhood illness she had that caused her to be more ambitious than most. In chapter 95, a woman removes makeup she had been wearing that made her appear to look like Jenks, admitting to the mirror that she set him up.

Book 3, Red Beard: Chapters 81-95 Analysis

The pressure is on when Lindsay learns that Cleveland is building a case against Jenks. Lindsay is helped by Cindy who finds a place where they can get a copy of Jenks' early book without alerting Jenks. This works and Lindsay finally has the evidence she needs, thanks to her Women's Murder Club. Jenks is arrested and all seems to be coming together perfectly. However, Lindsay's health appears to be growing worse when she has a bad attack while interviewing Jenks. The reader becomes concerned for Lindsay even as everything else in her life appears to be coming together. Lindsay and Raleigh begin an affair; the case is over, and Lindsay has found a great group of women with

which to be friends. Nothing can end that perfectly, so the reader wonders if perhaps Lindsay's health might not be about to take a nose dive or if her murder case is not as airtight as she might have at first believed.

Book 4, The Whole Truth: Chapters 96-106

Book 4, The Whole Truth: Chapters 96-106 Summary

In chapter 96, Lindsay and Raleigh are invited to a ballgame with the police commissioner, and they spend a full inning making love in the bathroom. In chapter 97, Lindsay meets with Jenks again. Jenks tries to convince Lindsay that he has been set up, but Lindsay refuses to believe him. In chapter 98, Lindsay and Jill are leaving the visitors area when they run into Chessy Jenks. Chessy appears to be distraught and confused by her husband's arrest. In chapter 99, Lindsay learns that her red cell count is still falling and she might only have a month before a bone marrow transplant might be necessary. In chapter 100, Lindsay and Raleigh spend a weekend at his cabin in the country. In chapter 101, Lindsay finally tells Raleigh the truth about her illness. Raleigh is supportive.

In chapter 102, Lindsay recalls that Jenks is left-handed, contrary to the evidence that suggests the killer is right-handed. In chapter 103, Lindsay calls a meeting of the Women's Murder Club and expresses her concern that Jenks might not be the killer. Everyone is doubtful but agrees to keep an open mind. In chapter 104, Lindsay begins to go over the evidence again, this time with the idea that Joanna Wade might be the killer. In chapter 105, Lindsay makes the argument for Joanna being the killer to Raleigh, but he does not agree. Lindsay has a dizzy spell and nearly faints. In chapter 106, Raleigh tries to convince Lindsay to slow down and focus on her health, insisting the case is over.

Book 4, The Whole Truth: Chapters 96-106 Analysis

Lindsay and Raleigh become closer even as Lindsay learns her health is growing worse. Lindsay is frightened, but she shares the truth with Raleigh and he stands by her. However, even as Lindsay is struggling with her own health and begins to lose hope she will survive, Lindsay begins to believe Jenks is innocent. This focus on Jenks makes the reader wonder if Lindsay is simply holding on to her case in order to deny the truth of her illness. It seems even Lindsay's closest friends believe the same thing based on the fact that they are unwilling to help her investigate this new turn in the case even though Lindsay is the one who brought them together and began the club in the first place. Lindsay's fight for Jenks is ironic based on her insistence that he was the criminal when she had no proof and it seems symbolic in her fight for her own life.



Book 4, The Whole Truth: Chapters 107-126 and Epilogue, Coup de Grace

Book 4, The Whole Truth: Chapters 107-126 and Epilogue, Coup de Grace Summary

In chapter 107, Lindsay pays another visit to Jenks. Jenks confirms that he left Joanna as he became famous, leaving her without any of the money despite the fact that she worked two jobs while Jenks began his career. Jenks also tells Lindsay that Joanna once worked at Saks. In chapter 108, Lindsay talks with the Women's Murder Club again and finally convinces Jill to check into Joanna's background. In chapter 109, Lindsay learns that her body has begun to respond to treatment and she will most likely recover. In chapter 110, Lindsay invites Raleigh over to her house to tell him the good news. However, they are distracted and she is unable to tell him before they get word that Jenks has escaped police custody while returning from being arraigned in Napa Valley.

In chapter 111, Jenks is in police custody when an earthquake causes a massive accident. Jenks is freed from his bonds during the accident and is able to escape. In chapter 112, Lindsay and Raleigh rush to the Hall of Justice to join in the search for Jenks. Lindsay sends Jacobi and another cop to watch the homes of Joanna and Jenks's former agent. In chapter 113, Lindsay meets with the girls again and begs them to take one more look at the evidence. In chapter 114, the real killer dresses like Jenks one more time. In chapter 115, Claire drags Lindsay out of bed to tell her that the urine at the Brandt crime scene was not David Brandt's, but the killer's. Claire can also prove that the urine belongs to a woman. In chapter 116, Lindsay realizes that Jenks is innocent. In chapter 117, Lindsay tells Raleigh of these new developments. In chapter 118, Lindsay presents her evidence to Jill who agrees that she has enough for a warrant. In chapter 119, Lindsay gets a call from Phillip Campbell. In chapter 120, Jenks tells Lindsay he is going after the real killer. In chapter 121, Lindsay and Raleigh rush to Joanna's apartment where they spot someone who looks like Jenks. However, the person appears to be a woman in makeup. Raleigh follows the suspect while Lindsay goes into Joanna's apartment. Unfortunately, Lindsay discovers Joanna's dead body.

In chapter 122, Lindsay calls Raleigh and tells him about the murder. Lindsay now thinks the killer is Chessy and that she is headed to the Palace of Fine Arts where she and Jenks were married. In chapter 123, Lindsay rushes to the scene and she can hear Chessy and Jenks arguing. Lindsay searches for Raleigh and finally spots him sitting on the ground, a bullet wound in his chest. Raleigh sends Lindsay toward the suspects where she finds Chessy holding a gun on Jenks. In chapter 124, Lindsay attempts to talk Chessy down but is forced to shoot her when she turns her gun on Jenks. Lindsay then punches out Jenks for being an abusive lover. In chapter 125, Lindsay returns to Raleigh just seconds before he dies. In chapter 126, Lindsay attends Raleigh's funeral

where she meets his ex-wife. Lindsay then visits the memorial wall where Raleigh's name is being added. In the epilogue, Lindsay struggles in the days after Raleigh's death. One night, Jenks comes to her house and confesses that he and Chessy planned the murders together in order for him to write a non-fiction book about his false arrest. Jenks then attempts to kill Lindsay, but she is able to stop him with a hidden gun.

Book 4, The Whole Truth: Chapters 107-126 and Epilogue, Coup de Grace Analysis

Lindsay continues to insist that someone else is the murderer and she pushes her friends to help her. Slowly Lindsay gathers proof against Joanna Wade, Jenks' ex-wife, and the evidence builds, becoming almost believable. Soon the reader realizes Lindsay must be right, not only because of the glimpses the writer has given into the identity of the real killer but because of the evidence Lindsay is able to uncover. Therefore, the reader is just as shocked as Lindsay when Joanna Wade shows up dead.

At the beginning of the novel, the reader saw Lindsay considering suicide. As the plot continues to develop and Lindsay's life seems to be settling in to a happy pattern despite her illness, and Lindsay continues to fight the illness with all her strength, the idea of suicide appears remote. Therefore the reader expects something tragic to befall Lindsay. When Raleigh is shot, the reader realizes it is his death, not her own precarious health, that sends Lindsay over the top. In fact, Lindsay learns that her health is improving. Once again, everything is perfect for Lindsay, except that Raleigh is shot. Raleigh's death has a terrible impact on Lindsay, driving her over the edge. However, the successful conclusion of the case and the friendship of the women in the Women's Murder Club sees Lindsay through.

Jenks is proven to be the killer in the bride and groom cases after all. Jenks did not commit the first two sets of murders. However, the reader suspects that Jenks did kill Kathy and James Voskuhl. Jenks had a personal connection to Kathy, the connection that brought him to light as the killer, and he was the type to hurt the women he supposedly loved. In fact, that was what caused Chessy Jenks to kill four people, the control Jenks had over her. Jenks was planning to profit from the murders all along, leaving the reader suspicious that he intended for Chessy to take the fall at some point if Joanna was not convicted of the murders. In the end, however, Lindsay got her man.

Characters

Lindsay Boxer

Lindsay Boxer is a inspector with the San Francisco police department. Lindsay has been in homicide for six years and has worked hard to prove herself as good as the men, if not better. Lindsay is highly ambitious and hopes to take over the department when her boss is promoted in the next year or so. However, Lindsay's plans are sidelined when she learns she has Negli's aplastic anemia. Lindsay begins to fight for her own life as she fights this illness, while at the same time working on the bride and groom murder case in which newlyweds are murdered on their honeymoon.

Lindsay is a determined young woman who has found unique ways in which to get ahead on her investigations. One of these ways is by making friends with the women who are also in tough, male-oriented professions. As an extension of these friendships, Lindsay forms the Women's Murder Club with three of her closest friends. These include Claire, Cindy, and Jill, a coroner, reporter, and assistant district attorney. Together these three women investigate the bride and groom case, coming up with some answers that their male counterparts might never have thought to investigate, such as the sex of the person who left urine at two of the crime scenes.

At the same time Lindsay is fighting for her life and investigating these murders, she is also falling in love. Lindsay had not wanted to fall in love, especially since she might not live long enough to take the new relationship far, but she cannot resist the attraction she feels for her new partner, Chris Raleigh. Lindsay and Chris enter into a passionate affair, but the affair is cut short when Chris is shot and killed by the bride and groom killer.

Claire Washburn

Claire Washburn is the assistant coroner who handles the first bride and groom murder victims. Claire also happens to be a close friend of Lindsay's and is the first person Lindsay turns to when she learns about her fight with Negli's. Claire is frustrated upon hearing this news, however, because she considers herself a physician who cannot heal and therefore can do nothing to help her dear friend. Claire is married and has two teenage sons, a fact that keeps her busy enough. However, Claire also works for a coroner who is lazy, and she often finds herself having to do twice the work to run the coroner's office properly. Claire is a good doctor, however, and it is thanks to her that Lindsay is able to prove that the bride and groom killer is a woman.

Cindy Thomas

Cindy Thomas is a highly-motivated, young reporter. When the news comes into the newspaper office about a double murder at a luxury hotel, Cindy is the only reporter

available to go to the crime scene because the two crime reporters are already out on assignment. Cindy manages to get herself inside the hotel before other reporters and to con her way upstairs to the suite where the murder victims still lie where they fell. Cindy then meets Lindsay, the lead detective on the case, and is able to write an insightful piece on the crime ahead of all the other reporters in town. Cindy later begins to follow Lindsay in the hopes of finding out more information about the case in order to secure for herself a promotion to the crime desk. Lindsay discovers that she and Cindy have a lot in common, and Lindsey decides to bring Cindy into her confidence, forming the Women's Murder Club around herself, Cindy, and Claire.

Jill Bernhardt

Jill Bernhardt is a tough assistant district attorney who takes on cases no one else will touch. Jill had a difficult childhood filled with illness leaving her with a determination to be the best at everything she does. This attitude has been tough on Jill's psychological health but has helped her become highly successful in her career. Jill joins the Women's Murder Club when she becomes involved with the bride and groom murder case through Lindsay's suspicions that Nicholas Jenks is the murderer. Jill works alongside Lindsay to prove Jenks has committed the crimes despite resistance from her bosses, causing some friction between Jill and Lindsay when Lindsay begins to suspect that Jenks' ex-wife, Joanna Wade, is the real killer.

Chris Raleigh

Chris Raleigh is a police detective who has been working with the mayor's office for several years in an attempt to mediate damage in the press. Lindsay refers to Raleigh as a marketing guy when she first meets him. Raleigh is brought in on the bride and groom case to assist Lindsay because of the possible media attention because the groom's father is a rich, Wall Street businessman. Lindsay resents his involvement until she gets to know Raleigh and realizes that solving the crime is his first priority. As they work together, Lindsay and Raleigh begin to experience a growing attraction. Lindsay fights this attraction because of her illness and the possibility that it will be fatal. However, Lindsay eventually gives in and she and Raleigh have a passionate affair for a short time. Unfortunately, Chris is killed when he follows the bride and groom killer and she turns her gun on him.

Nicholas Jenks and Phillip Campbell

Nicholas Jenks is a famous writer who lives in San Francisco. Lindsay learns from the mother of the last bride victim that she was involved in a romantic relationship with Jenks. When Lindsay sees a picture of Jenks, she becomes convinced he is the killer, especially as she learns that Jenks has sadistic tendencies with women. Jenks likes to make women perform sadistical sexual acts and often forces himself on them while making them bark or make other animal sounds. Jenks has also been accused of



beating his ex-wife, but these charges were dropped. Evidence begins to mount against, Jenks and Lindsay is finally able to obtain a search warrant of his house and find other evidence that makes it appear he is the killer. Jenks is able to convince Lindsay that he was set up by his wife, but he later admits that he and his wife were in on the killings together.

Phillip Campbell is the main character in a novel Jenks wrote early in his career. In the book, Campbell finds his wife having an affair with his best friend. Campbell then begins killing brides and grooms on their wedding nights. Campbell eventually is caught, but he is able to make it appear as though someone else committed the murders. The police come to believe that Jenks has based his killing spree on this character and the plot of the novel.

Chessy Jenks and Joanna Wade

Chessy Jenks is Nicholas Jenks' current wife. Chessy is an ex-actress that Jenks likes to think he saved from a world of struggle. Jenks treats Chessy badly, often beating her for no reason and forcing her to participate in sadistical sexual games. Chessy is later revealed as the real bride and groom killer. It appears that Chessy committed these crimes to get back at her husband for his abuse, but Jenks later reveals that he put Chessy up to the crimes in order to allow him to write a best selling non-fiction book about their experiences.

Joanna Wade is Jenks's ex-wife. Joanna worked two jobs to support Nicholas Jenks when he began his writing career, only to have him leave her just as his career began to take off. Joanna once accused Jenks of beating her but later dropped the charges. It is Joanna who points Lindsay to the novel that contains a plot similar to the bride and groom murders, giving Lindsay enough evidence to arrest him. It is this that causes Lindsay to begin to believe that Joanna is the real killer, especially when she learns that the killer is a female. Joanna resented Jenks's success and his decision not to share the windfall with her, suing him many times after their divorce. However, when Lindsay goes to question Joanna, Lindsey finds Joanna murdered in her apartment.

David and Melanie Brandt

David and Melanie Brandt are a young, successful couple who marry in a luxury hotel in San Francisco. The night after their wedding, they are escorted to their hotel room by the groom's parents and begin to settle into the romance of their time alone. A knock on the door brings in murder, however. David Brandt is stabbed in the doorway and dies almost immediately. Melanie Brandt is stabbed multiple times and sexually assaulted after she dies. Lindsay is horrified by the crime scene, in part because the bride is still wearing her wedding dress. Lindsay promises Melanie Brandt she will make the killer pay and eventually she is able to fulfill this promise.

Becky and Michael DeGeorge

Michael and Becky DeGeorge are a studious couple who met at the accounting firm where they both work. The DeGeorges marry in a quiet ceremony at a hotel in the Napa Valley and plan to spend a few nights there before going to Cancun on their honeymoon. While in Napa, Michael and Becky make reservations at an exclusive restaurant. The couple is stopped on the way to their car by a limo driver who claims that the hotel has hired the limo as a present to the couple. The couple does not hesitate to accept the offer. The couple begins to make love in the backseat when the limo driver reveals himself to be the bride and groom killer. The couple is shot to death and placed in a shed at an abandoned Napa Valley vineyard.

Kathy and James Voskuhl

Kathy and James Voskuhl are a young couple who both work in the music industry. As a result of this shared interest, they decide to hold their wedding reception at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame museum in the bride's hometown of Cleveland, Ohio. During the reception, the groom sneaks off to the bathroom to enjoy some marijuana. When the bride comes to join him, she finds her husband murdered. The bride is also killed and her body is positioned in a sexual pose. When Lindsay and Raleigh come to investigate the crime due to its similarity to the other bride and groom murders, they discover that the bride, Kathy, was involved with another man who was known to be abusive. This information leads them to their prime suspect, Nicholas Jenks.



Objects/Places

Knife

The Brandts are killed with a knife. The killer made precise stab wounds that cause the victims to bleed to death almost instantly.

Gun

The killer changes from a knife to a gun when the last two couples are murdered. This gun is traced back to Nicholas Jenks.

Tuxedo Jacket

The killer leaves behind his own tuxedo jacket after killing the Brandts. Police are later able to match the jacket with pants found in Nicholas Jenks's home.

Hair

A hair is found inside the body of Becky DeGeorge that establishes that the killer has a red beard.

Urine

The police find a puddle of urine at the first two murder sites and assume it belongs to the victims. However, Claire realizes by the positioning of the puddles, the urine must belong to the killer. Analysis of the urine also proves that the killer in the Brandt murders is a woman.

Negli's Aplastic Anemia

Negli's is a type of anemia caused by the body's failure to make red blood cells. In the final stage of the disease, the victim will die if a bone marrow transfusion does not fix the problem. Lindsay suffers this illness throughout the novel.

Blood Transfusions

To treat her rare anemia, Lindsay must undergo special blood transfusions several times a week.



Security Video

Lindsay and Raleigh are able to identify the killer in security video from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame after the murder of the Voskuhls. However, the picture is not clear enough for them to make a positive identification.

Chronicle

Cindy Thomas is a reporter for the Chronicle.

Always a Bridesmaid

Always a Bridesmaid is a novel written by Nicholas Jenks early in his career. In the novel, a man finds his wife having an affair with his best friend. This man kills his wife and friend, then goes on a spree killing newly-married couples.

Saks Bridal Department

Police established that the first two brides, Melanie Brandt and Becky DeGeorge, bought their dresses at the bridal department at Saks in San Francisco.

Vineyard

Michael and Becky DeGeorge are killed in the back of a limo and their bodies left in a shed at a vineyard. It is later discovered that the vineyard is owned by an investment group of which Nicholas Jenks is a part.

Mandarin Suite

The first couple murdered on their honeymoon, David and Melanie Brandt, are killed in their suite at the same hotel where they were married, the Mandarin Suite.

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

Kathy and James Voskuhl have their wedding in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in the bride's hometown of Cleveland, Ohio. The couple is murdered during the reception in a public restroom at the museum.

Themes

Death

From the beginning of the novel Lindsay Boxer must face the inevitability of death. Lindsay begins the novel by confessing she thought of suicide at the conclusion of the bride and groom murder cases. This begins Lindsay's story about the cases and how she met Chris Raleigh. This story begins with Lindsay learning she has Negli's, a rare type of anemia in which her body has stopped making red blood cells. Lindsay knows this illness can be fatal, and she begins to worry about her own future, especially as her body appears to resist treatment. Lindsay uses Negli's as an excuse to avoid entering into a new relationship; however, Lindsay relents and falls in love, causing her to fear her own death even more.

Lindsay then begins working on the bride and groom murder case. Lindsay is rattled by the viciousness of the crime and the destruction of hope they seem to represent. As the case continues, Lindsay finds herself determined to fulfill a promise she made to the first bride to make sure the guilty party pays. This causes Lindsay to doubt her own detective skills when she begins to believe the man charged in the murders might actually be innocent. Lindsay begins to focus on a new suspect, leading her and her partner, Raleigh, to find themselves in a dangerous situation.

Just hours after learning that her disease is finally responding to treatment, Lindsay and Raleigh discover the true identity of the killer and follow her through the streets of San Francisco. A gun is pulled and Raleigh is shot. Lindsay is devastated when she realizes that Chris has died. Lindsay believed she would be the one to die, not Chris, and she is not prepared to continue to live on her own. This is the event that led Lindsay to contemplate suicide, but realizing she still has a good life ahead of her, Lindsay holds on and decides to embrace life.

Revenge

Nicholas Jenks is a sadistical man. Jenks likes to force himself on women and to encourage them to play degrading sexual games. This type of behavior leads the police to his door in the search for the bride and groom killer when it is discovered that the last murdered bride was a former lover of Jenks. It appears that Jenks targeted this ex-lover because he did not want her to move on with her life and find happiness with a new husband. However, Lindsay quickly focuses on Jenks' ex-wife who was beaten by him and was left without the benefit of his fortune made from the writing career she financed throughout their marriage. Lindsay believes Joanna killed these couples in the same manner as the plot of one of Jenks' early novels in order to set him up for the murders.

The idea of revenge killings is increased when Claire finds evidence that the killer who attacked the Brandts was a woman. Lindsay continues to follow her hunch but comes to

learn that Joanna was not the killer, but rather Chessy, Jenks' current wife is. At first, Lindsey believes Chessy has been killing these couples in order to set her husband up in revenge for his cruel treatment of her. However, Lindsay later learns that Chessy actually killed the couples at Jenks's request. Chessy's actions at the end of her life in holding Jenks captive and threatening to kill him was her attempt at revenge. Unfortunately, it ended in Chessy's death.

Loss of Hope or Finding Hope

Lindsay found herself searching for a motive in the killing of newlyweds on their honeymoons. Lindsay could not understand why anyone would want to kill people who were just launching a new chapter in their lives. Then it occurred to Lindsay that the killer was killing hope, that he was taking away from these couples the hope of a new future and a happy life. This led Lindsay to think the killer had something against marriage. The case made Lindsay, who had always held a negative view of marriage, want to defend the institute of marriage.

Finding hope is also a theme of the novel because Lindsay struggles with the realization that she has an illness that can be fatal. Lindsay is frightened and clings to the hope that the treatments will reverse the progression of the disease. To illustrate Lindsay's hope, she becomes involved with Raleigh, her new partner. Lindsay believes that while she is struggling with this illness and could die, she should not begin a new relationship. However, Lindsay gives in to her desire, showing the reader that she has some hope she will recover. It is for these reasons that hope, or the loss thereof, is a theme of the novel.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of this novel goes back and forth from first person to third person. The chapters that are narrated by police inspector Lindsay Boxer are written in the first person point of view. Lindsay shares with the reader her deepest thoughts and emotions as she both struggles with a personal fight with Negli's and as she searches for the killer who has murdered three newly-married couples. Other chapters in the novel are written in the third person omniscient point of view, with the author utilizing many different characters as narrators. These chapters allow the reader to see events and actions of other characters of which Lindsay could not or will not have knowledge.

The points of view utilized in this novel are unique in the fact that the author chooses to use two very different points of view in the same novel. The first person point of view is highly intimate, bringing the reader in to the narration quickly and with a connection that is almost like a conversation between close friends. Then the author uses the third person point of view, a type of narration that offers some amount of distance between the reader and narrator but still offers a view into the thoughts and emotions of the character that would not be available in a different view point. These points of view allow the reader to recognize that Lindsay is an important character and must be a focal point but that other characters and activities taking place in the plot share an equal amount of importance.

Setting

The novel is set in San Francisco. San Francisco is a large city in California, but small enough that the murder rate is not equal to that of cities like New York or Los Angeles. The setting allows for the tragedy of the bride and groom murders to be outrageous enough to become front page news, presenting a unique problem for those attempting to investigate the murders. The setting of this novel also includes a vineyard in Napa Valley where another couple is found. This setting explores the more rural areas around San Francisco and presents a setting that makes the murders appear even more outrageous. The novel also includes a murder that takes place in Cleveland, Ohio, suggesting a killer who is not controlled by geographic borders, again injecting more fear into the nature of the killings.

The settings of this novel are rich with detail and are as diverse as the characters the author uses to populate his plot. The settings serve to set the stage for the crimes that take place within the plot, creating an atmosphere in which public outrage can grow and cause pressure to be placed on the main character to solve the crime. Unlike other novels in this genre, the setting remains a backdrop to the plot and does not become something of a character within the plot. The setting simply serves as a urban, or rural

as in the case of Napa Valley, backdrop to murders that serve to panic an already-frightened public and add to the urgency of the detectives to put the criminal in jail.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple English. There is slang used throughout the novel, including words associated with careers in law enforcement. The novel also includes some words particular to the medical community as the main character deals with doctors in the treatment of her anemia. When the main character visits the coroner's office, there are also some words used that the reader might not be familiar with but which describe the processes and results of tests performed in the autopsies of the murder victims.

The language of this novel works well with the plot because the language is simple enough for even the youngest readers to comprehend their meaning. When words of specific origin are used, such as words describing tests and procedures used in the coroner's office, they are often explained in the dialogue that takes place between Claire, the coroner, and Lindsay, the lead detective on the murder case. The language is appropriate to the plot of the novel and serves to enhance the characters and their work as they investigate the murders of three newly-married couples.

Structure

The book is divided into four books. Each book is named for an important character or event that will take place in the novel. Within each of these books are multiple chapters, with the total coming to one hundred and twenty-six short chapters. The book also includes a prologue in which the main character introduces the topic of the book as she struggles with thoughts of suicide in the aftermath of the investigation she is about to share with the reader. The book ends with an epilogue that shows the reader not only how Lindsay overcomes her desire to commit suicide but also how she finally found all the answers to the murder investigation that might have been left unanswered if the main suspect, Nicholas Jenks, had not attempted to exact revenge on her.

The book is told in equal amounts of exposition and dialogue. The dialogue is quick and well written, not only allowing characters to communicate with one another but also allowing them to explain complicated investigative techniques and medical procedures to the reader. The plot told within the novel includes one main plot that centers on the murder investigation regarding the murders of three newly-married couples and subplots that center on Lindsay Boxer, the main character, and her friends and lovers. Each of these subplots come to a satisfying conclusion about the same time the main plot is resolved, leaving the reader pleased with the overall story within the novel.

Quotes

"I'm looking out over glorious San Francisco and I have my service revolver pressed against the side of my temple." Prologue, Inspector Lindsay Boxer, pg. 3

"Beautiful long-stemmed red roses filled the hotel suite—the perfect gifts, really. Everything was perfect." Book 1, David and Melanie: Chapter 1, pg. 7

"Phillip Campbell had imagined this moment, this exquisite scene, so many times." Book 1, David and Melanie: Chapter 2, pg. 10

"The cold, blunt sound of the word hit me like a hollow-point shell between the eyes. Fatal, Lindsay." Book 1, David and Melanie: Chapter 4, pg. 16

"I had been having very close encounters with dead bodies for six years now. But what I saw sent a shiver of revulsion racing through me." Book 1, David and Melanie: Chapter 14, pg. 50

"I was surprised by Raleigh—live and learn. He was actually a nice guy." Book 1, David and Melanie: Chapter 22, pg. 83

"Becky DeGeorge, in the bloom of her first full day as Michael's wife, walked out of the hotel lobby holding her husband's hand." Book 2, The Women's Murder Club: Chapter 26, pg. 97

"I held on to Claire, and I realized she was all that kept me from hurtling out of control." Book 2, The Women's Murder Club: Chapter 40, pg. 143

"Then I felt him hold me close. A tingle raced down my spine, one that I almost didn't recognize anymore." Book 2, The Women's Murder Club: Chapter 50, pg. 173

"All you need to know about Jill was that as a third-year prosecutor, it was she who had tried the La Frade case, when the mayor's old law partner was indicted on a RICO charge for influence peddling." Book 3, Red Beard: Chapter 70, pg. 239

"But the voice in my heart said run it by the girls." Book 3, Red Beard: Chapter 81, pg. 281

"I never would have imagined, or dreamed, that Chris would be the first to die. That was the most terrible and dreadful shock. I was the sick one, the one whom death had brushed against." Book 4, The Whole Truth: Chapter 125, pgs. 413-414

Topics for Discussion

Who is Lindsay Boxer? What illness does Lindsay learn she has at the beginning of the novel? How does this illness affect Lindsay's professional life? How does this illness affect Lindsay's private life? What does Lindsay fear most in regards to this illness? How does this cause Lindsay to live her life a little differently than she might have had she not learned of the illness?

Who are David and Melanie Brandt? What life changing event takes place in their lives in the opening chapters of the novel? What happens afterward? What does Lindsay believe is the motive for this event? Who does Lindsay and her co-workers blame for this event in the beginning of their investigation? Why does this case bother Lindsay more than some of the other cases she has worked in her career? What promise does Lindsay make to Melanie Brandt? Does she fulfill it?

What evidence is left in the Mandarin Suite? What does Lindsay discover about this evidence? How does this evidence eventually lead Lindsay to the identity of the killer? Why does this evidence look like a dead end at first? Why does Jacobi have so much trouble tracking down who purchased these items and to whom they might have belonged? How does Jacobi eventually help Lindsay connect this evidence to the main suspect in the murders?

Who is Nicholas Jenks? What connection does Jenks have to the bride of the third murdered couple? What does Jenks do for a living? What item does Jenks' ex-wife point Lindsay to that allows the police to arrest Jenks? Discuss Jenks' relationship with both his ex-wife and current wife. What was it like? Was it abusive? In what way? How might this be a motive for murder? What was Jenks' relationship with the bride of the final couple married? How does this lead the detectives to Jenks as a suspect?

Did Jenks commit these murders? Does Jenks harbor any responsibility for these murders? Why does Jenks think someone set him up for the murders? Who does Jenks think is really responsible for the killings? Is she? Why does this person want to set up Jenks? Why does this person attempt to kill Jenks? How does this situation illustrate the theme of revenge? Was revenge a motive in the killings? Explain.

Discuss hope. What is hope? How is the murder of newly-married couples the murder of hope? Discuss Lindsay's relationship with hope. Does Lindsay experience hope in her fight against Negli's? Does Lindsay feel hope while investigating the bride and groom murders? Explain. How is the relationship between Lindsay and Raleigh a personification of hope? How does this relationship show Raleigh's belief in hope? How is a new relationship a general personification of hope? How does Lindsay's relationship with Raleigh parallel the relationships between the newly-married couples?

Discuss irony. How many examples of irony exist in the plot of this novel? How is the death of Raleigh ironic? How is the death of Chessy Jenks ironic? What about the death of Joanna Wade? Discuss other examples of irony from the plot.