

3rd Degree Study Guide

3rd Degree by James Patterson

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

3rd Degree Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1-8.....	4
Chapters 9-17.....	6
Chapters 18-25.....	8
Chapters 26-31.....	9
Chapters 32-36.....	10
Chapters 37-41.....	11
Chapters 42-50.....	12
Chapters 51-58.....	13
Chapters 59-67.....	15
Chapters 68-77.....	16
Chapters 78-87.....	18
Chapters 88-95.....	20
Chapters 96-101.....	22
Chapters 102-107.....	23
Chapter 108-111.....	24
Characters.....	25
Objects/Places.....	29
Themes.....	32
Style.....	34
Quotes.....	36
Topics for Discussion.....	37



Plot Summary

This novel takes place in San Francisco, California, in modern times. It follows a serial homicide investigation headed by Lieutenant Lindsay Boxer.

The reader first meets Boxer and her friend Jill, who works for the District Attorney, as they jog through the park. Together with Claire, the medical examiner, and Cindy, a reporter, the women make up the women's murder club that appears in several of James Patterson's novels.

In chapter two, Boxer witnesses an explosion that turns out to be an assassination on the owner of a major corporation with questionable business practices. Soon, other benefactors of American capitalism begin to die. Boxer works quickly with Joe Molinari, from Homeland Security, to uncover a plot to derail capitalism worldwide.

The motivation for the killings stems from a decades old case in which federal agents killed the brother of the Charles Danko. Danko has waited decades to pull off his catastrophic payback. His final target involves a bomb and assassination at the G-8 summit.

Molinari and Boxer travel up and down the west coast to uncover leads, eventually learning that Danko now teaches in Washington under another name. Boxer takes down Danko at the G-8 summit, and prevents the bomb from exploding. However, another "soldier" of Danko's succeeds in shooting the Vice president of the United States. Once taken into custody, the girl reveals Danko's whole plot. The vice president recovers, but Danko does not.

One subplot within the book involves Jill, who finally confesses her husband's pattern of abuse to Boxer and the other women. Jill comes through on a promise to her friends to kick him out, and the women congratulate Jill. Jill, however, becomes Danko's next victim, because her father helped to prosecute Danko's brother's fellow protesters.

Another subplot involves Boxer and Molinari. Romance quickly blossoms between the two agents. They spend one evening in bed together. In the end, though, Boxer almost lets Molinari leave without being honest about her feelings. In the final chapters of the novel, Boxer calls Molinari's jet back from the runway and asks him to consider a long-term relationship with her.



Chapters 1-8

Chapters 1-8 Summary

This novel opens in a park in San Francisco, California, in modern times. Homicide Detective Lindsay Boxer jogs through the park with her friend, Jill.

Chapter one follows Lieutenant Lindsay Boxer and her friend, Jill, as they jog through the park on a sunny, Sunday afternoon. Boxer has just finished a big case and enjoys a day off. She comments on how she feels out of shape, but Jill appears to be fit and ready to run further.

Jill leaves to meet her overbearing husband, and Boxer turns to jog back home. She stops to admire an old townhouse along her route.

In the opening of chapter two, the townhouse explodes. Boxer calls 911 and enters the house to attempt to rescue the inhabitants. She rescues a small boy and exits the house with him just as firefighters arrive. They drag the two from the vicinity of the house and administer treatment for smoke inhalation. Boxer identifies herself as a homicide detective.

The firefighters commend Boxer on her rescue in. The other detectives under her command arrive. The author describes Detective Jacobi. Then, Boxer spots a knapsack lying next to a car at the scene. She evacuates the area, fearing a follow-up explosion.

Chapter five changes location. The reader meets Claire, who appears to be cleaning out her attic. She finds her cello, dusty from lack of use. Then, she learns of the explosion. Though her husband complains, she leaves for work, fearing that Boxer has been hurt. In the close of the chapter, the reader learns the Claire is the medical examiner.

In chapter six, the author returns to the scene of the explosion. The bomb squad carefully examines the knapsack, but only finds a fake bomb and a mocking note. Boxer remarks that the explosion appears to be an execution.

Boxer then learns the victim's identity, Morton Lightower. Lightower's sister arrives at the scene. The author describes the questionable stock deals of which Lightower's company was a part. Then, his sister informs them that, if only two bodies and the boy were recovered, a six-month-old baby is missing. A search through the house fails to produce the baby.

Chapters 1-8 Analysis

The author uses specific emotions to portray Boxer, the protagonist, as human. She stands to admire the beautiful townhouse just before it explodes. After, she must go inside to save the boy. Such actions endear her to the reader from the start.



Gender plays a role in the novel early as well. Boxer demands respect from all the people at the scene, even though, at first, it is not clear if they have a homicide or an accident. Her presence demands such respect that, from the crowd, Danko recognizes her as a force not to be ignored.

Furthermore, the reader learns of the dedication of all of the women that serve as main characters. Claire jumps to offer assistance after the explosion, though it is a Sunday. She also rushes to aid, because Boxer, her friend, needs help. The women remain fiercely loyal to one another.

Another tactic the author uses is placing a new element of suspense just after the resolution of a previous one. After the knapsack bomb proves to be fake and they learn of the victims' identity, the authorities also learn of the missing child. This also serves to throw the reader off from the bomber's true identity. It opens the possibility that the bombing covers up a kidnapping, though the baby proves to be unrelated to the bomber's motives.



Chapters 9-17

Chapters 9-17 Summary

From the crowd around the explosion site, a man named Danko watches the chaos in chapter nine. He spots Boxer and recognizes her as important. He feels the explosion is a success.

Boxer briefly visits the hospital, to be given a clean bill of health. She immediately goes to work. Her main objective becomes finding the Lighttower's missing baby.

Next, Cindy, a local reporter calls, but insists she is only calling as a friend. Soon after, Claire calls Boxer to the morgue.

An examination of the remains in chapter 12 reveals only that Charlotte Lighttower was pregnant. Boxer returns to her office to try to track down the Lighttower's nanny. Her other detective, Cappy, stops in to ask about her date the previous weekend. Boxer reflects on the respect she commands over the men, even though she breaks the mold for a homicide lieutenant.

Chapter 14 finds Boxer back home, where she showers away the grit from the fire. She thinks, while in the shower, that she may be ready to date again, after the death of her previous boyfriend 18 months prior.

The author introduces Michelle in chapter 15. She changes her appearance as the Lighttower's baby screams. Her boyfriend Malcolm appears and yells at her for saving the baby. Then, in chapter 16, Danko calls Malcolm. He commends them for doing a good job and asks them to perform another job for him.

In chapter 17, Boxer visits X/L, Lighttower's business. She asks for permission to view Lighttower's computer files, but the lawyer refuses such access.

Chapters 9-17 Analysis

Surprisingly, the author reveals the antagonist's identity in chapter nine. However, the mystery remains as to why he commits the crimes. Furthermore, the reader wonders how Boxer will track him down, and what kind of damage he will inflict before she does. This draws the reader into the story, because the reader knows that Danko plans more attacks, but cannot prevent them, much like the audience in a suspenseful movie cannot warn the characters of dangers that lurk in dark places.

The reference in this section to Boxer's personal life foreshadows her relationship with Molinari. When the author allows Boxer to point out, in her most private time, in the shower, that she desires a personal life, the reader hopes that the author will also create a personal relationship within the story.



Much of the conflict within this plot analyzes the society of the author's day. Man's greed, such as Lightower and his company, ultimately leads to his downfall. When one examines the poor examples of capitalism that Danko first targets, one has a difficult time arguing that the system is not flawed. Yet, common sense says that Danko's methods fail to correct the problems in a free market society.



Chapters 18-25

Chapters 18-25 Summary

Immediately after leaving X/L, Boxer calls Jill for a subpoena. Jill works in the district attorney's office. Jill points out that not enough evidence exists for a subpoena, but insinuates that Boxer could threaten the company with bad publicity.

The next chapters finds Boxer interviewing two women from the nanny service the Lighttower's used. Taking the address given by the agency, they enter a house by force where they believe the nanny lives. They quickly realize they are in the wrong place. The next day, a woman finds the Lighttower's baby in a restroom at McDonalds.

Boxer feels some reward in finding the baby unharmed. She also receives details of the bombing in Chapter 22. The best lead they find is an inhaler at the scene that must belong to the nanny.

In chapter 23, Jill hides in her office, dreading going home to her husband. She feels ashamed of the abuse she suffers at home, though she represents women in the same situation in court. She vows to herself to tell Lindsay the next time something happens. Her husband calls and she leaves for home.

In the end of part one, George Bengosian stumbles into the story. He goes to his hotel room with a woman, assuming she wants sex. Once in the room, the woman poisons him. In chapter 26, Boxer receives a call about the murder. She finds a note signed August Spies, just as they found in the knapsack at the bombing. The note declares war. This ends part one of the novel.

Chapters 18-25 Analysis

The safety of the Lighttower's baby brings some resolution, but being so early in the action the reader knows that more suspense is coming. This only confirms that the problem was not personal. Therefore, no one is safe from the perpetrator.

Jill's conflict with her abusive husband serves, also, to give the characters some personality. The reader feels sympathy for Jill, who ironically cannot help herself in the same way that she aids other women in court. For this irony, she feels some shame. Boxer reacts in the way some might wish to act, if they had the power, when she confronts Jill's husband.

The first part of the novel serves to bring out the various aspects of the plot, starting with the serial killings by August Spies. In addition, it introduces Jill's problems and Boxer's desire for love. Yet when part one ends, the reader is left only with suspense and no resolution.



Chapters 26-31

Chapters 26-31 Summary

In chapter 26, Boxer worries what the declaration of war might mean for her city. Then, Claire calls Boxer back to the morgue. She identifies the substance that poisoned Bengosian as ricin. Moreover, she says the amount used was much more than needed to kill one man. Boxer takes this as a sign that the killer possesses the ability to kill many more.

Finally, in chapter 28, Boxer calls in federal agents from several different agencies, including Homeland Security. X/L finally releases some threatening letters they received. Technical experts connect many aspects of the case back to the area around Berkley, California. Boxer calls Cindy, the reporter, to dig up information about radicals at Berkley, because she has history there.

The story returns to Malcolm in chapter 30, while he builds another bomb. He forces Michelle to test the cell phone trigger, before he makes the final connections.

Boxer reads up on anti-capitalism literature in chapter 31, in connection with the radicals at Berkley. Then she meets with Jill, who admits the bruises Boxer spotted may not have been an accident. Later, Claire, Cindy and Boxer meet for dinner and Boxer repeats her conversation with Jill.

Chapters 26-31 Analysis

The character of Michelle endears the negative side of the plot to the reader. She represents a young, idealistic girl who is caught up with the wrong people. Her motives seem to be mainstream, but the actions with which she becomes involved are not. The reader may think that without some care, anyone could end up as Michelle does. Somehow, even after she loses her passion for her cause, Malcolm continues to exert mental control over her, even causing her to put her life in his hands when they test the mob via cell phone.

Boxer's character seems to have strong, preconceived notions about the area of Berkley, without fully explaining them. In general, the law enforcement in the novel has nothing nice to say about the university and its inhabitants. A reader without background knowledge of the place, or one like it, must take Boxer's estimation as accurate, because little background information is given in the novel. The author seems to rely on the stereotype that institutions of higher learning breed groups of anti-government radicals, because the radical leaders prey on young, idealistic students like Michelle.



Chapters 32-36

Chapters 32-36 Summary

In chapter 32, Cindy gives Boxer a phone number for a suspicious professor at Berkley, Lemouz. Boxer goes to interview Lemouz in chapter 33. He strikes her as annoying but not criminal.

When Boxer returns to the police station, Jacobi tells her they have a tip of a girl matching the nanny's description buying an inhaler near Berkley.

When the four women, Jill, Claire, Cindy and Boxer, meet for dinner in chapter 35, Jill explains the abuse and control her husband exerts. She promises to leave him the next time it happens. The next day, Boxer threatens Jill's husband at his law office.

Chapters 32-36 Analysis

It seems, for much of the novel, that Lemouz symbolizes a person who can have ideas outside of the mainstream and yet not be dangerous. However, this assumption proves wrong in the end.

Jill's subplot continues to be a matter of great concern for the women. Her honesty about the situation signals a turning point, when she takes control and promises to leave him. Like Danko, Jill's husband desires to control that which is obviously beyond his control. In the end, both men lose.



Chapters 37-41

Chapters 37-41 Summary

In chapter 37, Cindy gets an email at the newspaper from August Spies. The email claims the attacks center around the meeting of world politicians in the G-8 summit, coming to San Francisco. Immediately, Cindy takes the letter to Boxer, who tells her to respond, to draw more details from the writer. They have 9 days before the summit.

Boxer meets with Berkley cops in chapter 39. They tell of various radicals, claiming they trickle down from the Seattle area. The cops take Boxer to an anti-capitalism rally.

Quickly, the crowd at the rally becomes violent. Professor Lemouz appears to stir the crowd. He spots Boxer and confesses that peaceful demonstrations never make the news.

Chapter 41 returns to follow Danko as he practices entering police headquarters with Malcolm's bomb hidden in a briefcase. He relishes his freedom to enter undetected.

Chapters 37-41 Analysis

In Cindy's email exchanges with the criminals, the author shows that, sometimes, one must step outside the box to cover such crimes. Instead of strictly using law enforcement, Boxer uses a member of the press to draw out details. The emails also, as Cindy points out, show Michelle's remorse, because she communicates warnings to them. Cindy's character uses wrong technical terms to describe some of her exchanges, when she calls the chat session an email as well. It is unclear whether this is an oversight on the part of the author or just a way to illustrate the women's mediocre level of comfort with technology.

When Danko takes the bomb through the security checkpoint without being detected, the reader realizes that he must have another identity. Yet, the author keeps this name hidden to preserve the suspense of the plot. Danko's character irrationally walks around the city with a very powerful bomb hidden in his briefcase. The danger involved in such a feat signals to his mental instability.



Chapters 42-50

Chapters 42-50 Summary

Chapter 42 opens part three of the novel.

In chapter 42, Boxer meets Joe Molinari, second in command at Homeland Security. Then Boxer goes to see Jill, finding her mad about Boxer's altercation with Jill's husband. They smooth over the situation.

Another murder occurs in chapter 44, in Portland, Oregon. Chapter 45 and 46 find Molinari and Boxer on a government jet to Oregon, to investigate ties to the murders in San Francisco. Molinari describes for Boxer large-scale efforts to stop the spread of capitalism, as they may be connected to the current cases.

After a tour of the crime scene, Boxer states that she believes the murder to be unrelated to the killings in San Francisco. She continues to detail her reasons, though the FBI's forensics team disagrees.

In the following chapter, Molinari backs up Boxer's estimation of the situation. He then asks her to dinner. While dining in chapter 50, they share their personal histories. At the end of the meal, Molinari gets a call from the Vice President.

Chapters 42-50 Analysis

Often, in crime novels, aid from other agencies only creates stress among the law enforcement agents. In addition, stereotypically, romance in the workplace causes only problems. However, the physical attraction between Boxer and Molinari seems to help them work together in this case. With such a high stress job, Boxer stands little chance of finding love outside of work; so the author brings someone into the work place that catches her eye.

The author also gives Molinari a mysterious job title as, at the time of publication, the Department of Homeland Security is largely unknown to the reader. Therefore, the reader understands how Molinari's change of command even catches Boxer unawares.

Boxer's instinct on these cases serve to save time, when actual investigating may take too long. This might come across as unbelievable to some readers. This is the case most obviously in Portland, when she senses that the murder there is unrelated, by the time the evidence bears this out, Boxer has identified Danko as a possible suspect. Therefore, her instincts save much time. In addition, her instincts about Lemouz prove correct in the end, that he is more involved than he first lets on.



Chapters 51-58

Chapters 51-58 Summary

A romantic relationship begins to bud between Molinari and Boxer. He sends her back to San Francisco on the private jet in chapter 51.

Chapter 52 occurs in Jill's home, where she works to prepare an unusually formal meal at home. After her husband mocks her efforts she throws him out. After he leaves, she changes the locks.

Boxer returns home late in the evening in chapter 53. She returns calls from Jill, congratulating her friend on ridding herself of her troublesome husband.

In the office the next morning, the other homicide detectives tease Boxer about her weekend trip in the private jet. She takes the teasing in stride. Then, Cindy interrupts the conversation with news of another email. August Spies confirms Boxer's estimation that the murder in Portland is unrelated.

Boxer then rushes to her boss's office. There, she finds Molinari and Tracchio, her boss, in a meeting. Upon receiving the message, Molinari asks for office space in the middle of any action.

Molinari and Boxer leave Tracchio's office together. Molinari wants to track down old radicals, whom he refers to as weathermen. The latest email, they find, originates at the KGB bar in Berkley. Molinari and Boxer drive there together.

Inside the bar, in chapter 57, Molinari makes veiled threats about a Homeland Security search if the owner fails to cooperate. Suddenly, he remembers a woman matching the nanny's description being in the bar on the previous night.

After the meeting at Berkley, Boxer calls to check on Jill, and she begins to worry when Jill fails to answer the phone. Once again, in chapter 58, Boxer and Molinari plan to have dinner together.

Chapters 51-58 Analysis

The author uses a bit of irony in Jill's situation. Though she puts up with her husband's abuse for years, the night she kicks him out turns out to be the night she goes missing. This leads to a variety of guilt among those closest to her. Boxer, especially, feels guilty because she enjoys a pleasant evening with Molinari in Portland while Jill spends the evening alone, and then is abducted.

The tactics that Molinari and Boxer use at the KGB bar are classic good cop, bad cop. Molinari throws his weight around, once again exploiting the lack of knowledge in the public about his department.



Chapters 59-67

Chapters 59-67 Summary

At the newspaper office, Cindy feels excited to be involved in a story, not just writing about it. She sends another email to the suspect, following her instinct that the writer is a woman.

In chapter 60, Molinari arrives early at Boxer's home for dinner. He immediately embraces her, and they spend the evening in the bedroom instead of the kitchen. Their evening is interrupted, however, by a phone call from Claire. She tells Boxer she cannot reach Jill, who skipped a trial today. This is very unlike Jill.

At Jill's home, Boxer and Claire search for some clue as to her whereabouts. They find her briefcase and surmise that she never went to work. In chapter 63, they call Cindy and all three women sleep at Jill's home, hoping for her return. Boxer contacts her husband, who claims he knows nothing.

In chapter 64, Boxer feels the same fear she often sees in the survivors of the victims she investigates. Claire insists Jill went out of town, due to the stress in her marriage. Then, in chapter 65, Cindy gets another email, detailing August Spies next attack.

Cindy calls Boxer about the email and the two women drive to the scene detailed in the email. In chapter 67, Boxer identifies the victim as Jill.

Claire, Cindy and Boxer sit at the scene and mourn the loss of their friend. Boxer feels guilty she was out of town when the attack occurred. This ends part three of the novel.

Chapters 59-67 Analysis

Just as in part one, the author escalates the suspense in part three, without a resolution. The reader must read on, especially because Jill's whereabouts remain unclear. The insight into Boxer's private thoughts drives the suspense that something bad happened to Jill, though the nature of such an event remains vague. The reader probably suspects that Jill's husband will be at fault, as the author intentionally allows this misconception to arise in Boxer's mind.

One of the novel's themes, good versus evil, comes out in this section more starkly. Jill, as a prosecuting attorney, puts "bad guys" away. She represents good in this battle. When the antagonist successfully kills Jill, it seems that evil may win the battle. Yet, with two sections left in the novel, the reader hopes that the real protagonist and fighter of evil, Boxer, will prevail.



Chapters 68-77

Chapters 68-77 Summary

In part four, chapter 68, the three women continue to sit in the gloomy weather at the murder scene. Claire's autopsy, in chapter 69, reveals that Jill also died of ricin poisoning.

Danko returns to visit Malcolm in chapter 70. Danko emphasizes his philosophy that "there is always another soldier." When Malcolm mentions the G-8, Danko encourages him to broaden his scope. Malcolm continues tormenting Michelle. He withholds her asthma inhaler for some time, and then threatens to hide ricin in it after she uses it.

In chapter 72, the cops at Berkley call Boxer with a possible lead. They link a radical named Sam Hardaway with Professor Lemouz. In the following two chapters, Lemouz offers little help to the police, but does describe the Hayward Massacre in Chicago in the early part of the 1900s that resulted in the death of August Spies.

Danko returns again, in chapter 75, to instruct a man named Robert in the next attack.

The novel breaks from the action during chapter 76, when Cindy, Claire and Boxer attend Jill's funeral in Texas. Boxer vows at Jill's grave to find her killer.

After returning from the funeral, Cindy chats online with the killer. The person chatting warns of a large attack. She also reveals that Jill's death was personal.

Chapters 68-77 Analysis

As the action of the novel reaches its climax, the point of view switches from character to character more quickly. The reason for this, obviously, is that, as Danko hurries to carry out his plot, Boxer speeds up to catch him. This pattern continues throughout the rising action.

Jill's death leads the reader to hope for Boer' success more, because now the murders become personal to the main characters. In addition, catching the killer offers the only hope that good will prevail, as one always hopes for in a crime novel. The reader assumes that the novel will stay true to its genre.

Danko's slogan, "always another soldier" becomes apparent when Robert appears. The author leaves him so faceless that he really does represent all the "soldiers" that Danko has at his disposal. How he recruits these soldier remains a mystery, however, until after his demise.



Jill's funeral does not offer a break in the action. Instead, it affirms Boxer's desire to catch the perpetrator. It almost acts as a rally for the women to work harder, to avenge the murder of their friend.



Chapters 78-87

Chapters 78-87 Summary

Chapter 78 opens in a hidden command center within the city of San Francisco. The agents there prepare a public safety warning, but the red tape involved will take too much time. At first, it seems the strike occurs in the water system of an elementary school. Quickly, technicians show the illness to be unrelated to bio-terrorism.

Then, Robert enters the Rincon Center, a shopping mall near the city's financial district. He sets the bomb on his mark and waits for the victim to approach. Then, Robert walks out of the building and calls the number that sets off the bomb.

Boxer leaves the command center as soon as they receive word about the explosion in chapter 81. Bomb technicians find the handle of the briefcase holding the bomb; it is engraved with AS for August Spies.

Chapter 82 finds the three women, Claire, Cindy and Boxer at their favorite restaurant, Susie's Diner. They discuss possible connections between Jill and the rest of the cases. Boxer works several days with little sleep. She sorts through paperwork on all of Jill's cases, but finds nothing, in chapter 83.

Then, Boxer begins a search of Jill's home. There, she finds an article about Jill's father, who served as prosecutor in a case against radicals similar to those claiming credit for her current murders.

Boxer wakens Cindy in chapter 85. The two comb through old newspapers until they find the name of one victim in Jill's father's case: Danko. Later, in chapter 86, the two women uncover a follow-up article that reveals Danko also called himself August Spies. The next day, Boxer shows the articles to Molinari.

Chapters 78-87 Analysis

Radical cases from the 1970s, while Boxer's instincts and Molinari's high level of knowledge and security prove to be the combination that breaks the case. Molinari digs up the information about old radicals, while Boxer instinctively and almost accidentally finds the connection between Jill's father and the radicals hidden at her home. The combination of talent and coincidence serves to add excitement to what could be a long and tedious investigation.

Susie's Diner represents a kind of round table for the women, at which the exchange ideas both of a personal and professional nature. The absence of Jill resonates with the women, and her empty chair boosts them to work harder to find her killer. This meeting of the minds serves to empower women, all of whom work in male-dominated careers.

The author may be viewed as insinuating that their number, and not just their talent, aids them in being equal to the men with whom they work.



Chapters 88-95

Chapters 88-95 Summary

In chapters 88-95, Boxer begins working to connect the former victims to the Danko case. She and Molinari drive to Sacramento, California, to interview Danko's father, his only known surviving relative.

Mr. Danko proves unhelpful. Even thirty years after his son's death, he still blames law enforcement. Mr. Danko tells police that his younger son, Charles Danko, is dead also. On the drive back to San Francisco, Jacobi calls Boxer to confirm that Bengosian connects to the new leads as well.

After returning to San Francisco, Molinari discovers that one of the original FBI agents that took out Danko and the Hope Street Gang was among the victims killed in the Rincon Center explosion.

In chapter 92, the author returns to Michelle and Malcolm. Michelle tells Malcolm that she wants to leave, but he points out that she has no future in mainstream society after becoming known as the nanny who killed her charge. Malcolm promises, however, that they will be remembered.

Back at police headquarters, Boxer continues to follow leads on Danko's associates. She learns that his brother Charles, though missing from records for thirty years, does not appear to be deceased. Then, Michelle's mother calls from the Midwest, after seeing her daughter's picture on the news. She gives Boxer a PO Box that is the last known address for her daughter. Finally, she also remembers Malcolm's first name.

The next clue comes unexpectedly, when a unique looking girl sits next to Cindy on the city bus. Just before the girl departs, she gives Cindy her address. Though Cindy implores her to stay away from the house, Michelle leaves.

Chapters 88-95 Analysis

The discovery of Danko's name may be pointed to as the climax of the novel. From this point on, the investigation needs only to track him down and stop him. The mystery solved, the suspense results from the timing the author uses. The reader wonders if the authorities will track down the criminals in time.

The tragic nature of evil comes out when Michelle expresses a desire to leave, but Malcolm points out, accurately, that it is too late for her to rejoin mainstream society. Yet, he leads her to believe that there is no way out, that she cannot turn herself in. He further shows this in the next section, when he sets off the bomb. Yet, Michelle's character continues to see nearly like an innocent victim, especially when she sits next to Cindy on the bus. Yet again, this lucky break makes all the difference in Boxer stopping

Danko before he sets off his biggest attack. On the bus, however, Cindy noticed Michelle's barrette, which seems to symbolize the time in her life when she was carefree and innocent.



Chapters 96-101

Chapters 96-101 Summary

Chapter 96 opens part five, the final part of the novel. A large team of agents from several different state and federal agencies gather outside the address Cindy received from the woman on the bus. They formulate a plan for a peaceful capture, and a violent one.

Inside the house, Malcolm, whose real name is Stephen Hardaway, one of Boxer's first leads, vows never to surrender. He picks up a cell phone and sets off his final bomb.

From a safe distance away, Boxer and the other agents see the house explode. They quickly survey the remains, but cannot confirm that Charles Danko was inside. Boxer finds the flower barrette that Cindy admired on the girl on the bus.

At the same time, Danko wanders around busy San Francisco, with a bomb in a briefcase. He watches people go about their day, relishing the knowledge that they will die tomorrow.

In spite of the escalating violence, the G-8 summit goes on in San Francisco. The Vice President of America is set to give the opening speech. Desperate for leads, Boxer returns to Mr. Danko. He admits that though he disowned his son, he cannot confirm his whereabouts. He gives Boxer Danko's last known employer.

Boxer calls Reed College in Portland, after she faxes them a photo of Danko. They confirm that, not only does he teach there, he is in San Francisco to give a speech at the G-8 summit.

Chapters 96-101 Analysis

Danko's father symbolizes any parents, in that he does whatever he can to protect his son, even going outside of the law to do so. He desires to protect his son, even after disowning Charles from his own life. The truth about Danko's background reveals that his plan has less to do with global economy, and more to do with avenging his brother's death. Danko views all law enforcement as at fault in his brother's death, which he sees as a murder. His father seems to agree with this view, though he fails to fully endorse Charles's methods. First his disownment, then his honesty with the police illustrates this fact.

When Boxer identifies Danko as a professor at Reed College, and discovers him on the docket for the G-8 summit, the reader recognizes this as the climax of the novel. The resulting falling action leads to a resolution after the scuffle between Boxer and Danko.



Chapters 102-107

Chapters 102-107 Summary

In chapter 102, Danko easily gets the bomb past security at the site for the summit. At the same time, Boxer drives directly to the summit, at the Palace of the Legion of Honor. With everyone else already inside, she cannot warn them of Danko's identity.

Boxer clues Molinari in on Danko's identity and they split up to find him. Boxer spots him in the sculpture room, but Danko easily identifies her as law enforcement and disappears into the crowd.

Molinari and Boxer pursue Danko. Boxer takes him down, only after he sprays her with an inhaler filled with ricin. In the struggle, she turns the canister back on Danko. His last words promise another soldier, and Boxer hears shots fire in another part of the Palace.

Boxer and Molinari rush towards the shots, only to discover that the vice president has been shot. Boxer recognizes the girl holding the gun to be someone she saw in Lemouz's office. Dishearteningly, Boxer realizes Danko's promises of another soldier holds true.

The girl, who shot the president, Annette, quickly tells the police every detail she knows of Danko's plot. The police proceed to Lemouz's house after she implicates him. Rather than be taken into custody, Lemouz shoots himself.

Chapters 102-107 Analysis

Throughout this novel, time passes with increasing speed. At first, Boxer describes the events days at a time, then hours, as she travels up and down the west coast in search of clues. Once she learns of Danko's presence at the summit, the action occurs minutes at a time.

Yet, Danko's take down offers a false resolution, as the reader soon learns of the vice president's attack. Boxer despairs that there will be no end to the violence. Yet, the shooter turns out to be their best informant to date. Quickly, they tie up the loose ends, including Lemouz.

Lemouz's involvement remains vague, though Boxer reveals he has been implicated at the ground level. The tragedy of the criminals runs all through society, from innocent young girls to respected university faculty.



Chapter 108-111

Chapter 108-111 Summary

In Chapter 108, the reader learns that both Boxer and the vice president will recover. Boxer gets a call of commendation from the President of the United States. Yet, Molinari leaves without the promise of a future relationship. Boxer seems reluctant to commit.

Claire and Cindy arrive to take Boxer home from her medical evaluation. Then, the three women go to dinner at Susie's once again. They encourage Boxer to pursue happiness.

Just before Molinari's jet taxis down the runway, he receives an emergency call back to the gate from local law enforcement. There, he finds Boxer, who sheepishly admits that her personal life is the emergency.

Chapter 108-111 Analysis

It seems that the novel may end on a less than happy note for Boxer, both personally and professionally. Danko's final words, "always another soldier" ring in her ears. She worries that the war against such anti-government radicals will continue. Then, she seems too ridden with guilt to allow herself happiness with Molinari. The author uses one more twist, however, in allowing Boer to call Molinari back to the gate to pursue her personal feelings for him.



Characters

Lindsay Boxer

The protagonist of this novel is homicide lieutenant, Lindsay Boxer. She works in a largely male career in San Francisco, California. Yet, her no-nonsense attitude and incredible instincts in the world of crime fighting gains her the respect of her colleagues. Not only her talent, but also unexplainable instincts and luck contribute to Boxer's ability to solve this high profile case in record time.

Due to tragedy in her love life, she currently lives alone, with no love interest in sight. Her personal life centers around her three closest friends, Jill, a prosecuting attorney, Claire, the medical examiner, and Cindy, a reporter.

Boxer happens to be in the neighborhood when the first attack happens, the bomb at the Lighthouse's home. She rushes inside to save the young boy, thus illustrating her deep care for her fellow man. Boxer exhibits a human side to the reader, which is very easy to relate to. She expresses doubt and guilt when she cannot be there for her friends at times, due to the high stress nature of her career.

She also expresses a desire for love and companionship, which she finds in Molinari, the agent from Homeland Security that flies in to aid in the case.

Jill

The second of the women the author introduces is Jill, an assistant district attorney. She works as a lawyer for the city, putting the "bad guys" in jail. This gains her no shortage of enemies among some very dangerous people.

Jill faces her greatest enemy at home, though. She confesses to her friends that she has suffered abuse from her husband for years. In this novel, she vows to put a stop to the abuse. This occurs when he treats her disrespectfully even while she prepares a special meal for him.

Yet, that evening, radicals involved in Boxer's case kidnap and kill Jill. Boxer later learns that the murder has little to do with Jill. It is revenge for a man, whom her father put in prison several decades prior.

Jill's murder serves as more motivation for Boxer to find the kills. She vows at Jill's funeral to avenge her friend's murder. Ironically, this same motivation drives Danko.



Claire Washburn

Like Boxer, Claire works in a man's field. As the medical examiner, she helps Boxer determine how each murder was committed. Her talent also commands the respect of her colleagues.

She possesses feminine qualities, too. She lives happily with her husband, who enjoys her other talent of playing cello. Claire shows this talent when she plays a song at Jill's funeral. She gives the deceased a face for the reader. She described their bodies and their final hours. Claire points out to Boxer that Charlotte Lightower was pregnant.

Cindy

The final woman in Boxer's circle is Cindy, a respected reporter in the city. She first appears just as Boxer's friend, when he calls to inquire to Boxer's health after the explosion.

Cindy becomes very involved, however, when she receives an email from the bomber. Immediately, she takes the letter to Boxer. Then, Cindy enters into a dialogue with the writer, who turns out to be a remorseful Michelle. The clues Cindy gains from the emails and Michelle herself allow Boxer to more quickly track the crimes and, eventually, the killer.

George Bengosian

The second victim of Danko, Bengosian, symbolizes the greed of the medical industry. Also, he connects to Charles Danko's brother's death from decades before.

Warren Jacobi

Jacobi works from Boxer in homicide. Though he teases Boxer concerning her personal life, he respects her professionally.

Morton Lightower

The first victim, Morton Lightower, owns a company of questionable business dealings. Such greed is ripped from the headlines at the time of the novel's publication. The ability for such a dishonest man to become rich serves as proof to the radicals that the capitalist system is flawed.



Caitlin

The Lighttower's missing baby, Caitlin, at first seems like a motivation for murder. The reader learns, though, that she is an innocent victim. Michelle's inherent goodness saves the baby, though Michelle's misplaced idealism results in the death of the rest of the family.

Cappy Thomas

Thomas, Boxer's other homicide detective, also works for her faithfully, though he also teases her much like an older brother concerning her personal life.

Charles Danko

From his first appearance, Danko appears to be a disturbed individual. He enjoys watching the chaos that he bomb causes at the Lighttower's residence. Like Malcolm, Danko feels the ends justifies the means. He cares no who is injured, as long as his message gets attention.

Danko's true motivation lies not in the economy, however, but in revenge. He believes his brother died unjustly. He feels led to both get out his brother's message and avenge his death.

Ironically, Danko's own poison, ricin, kills him when Boxer turns the canister on him in self defense.

Michelle

Michelle represent any young, idealistic college student who sets out to change the world and ends up in a crowd of the wrong people. She obeys Malcolm first for the sake of the cause but his power over her in the end stems from fear alone. Her character draws the reader into the story because she shows how anyone might end up in a precarious situation if care is not taken. Michelle's dependence on her inhaler further shows her character's vulnerability.

Malcolm

Malcolm, though also young and idealistic, possesses a passion for his cause that drives him beyond the realm of reason. He feels that the message takes precedence over the methods. Therefore, killing innocents is justified because it brings the most attention to his message.

Robert

Robert represents Danko's mantra that "there is always another soldier." Disenchanted with the US government, Robert appears eager to join Danko's cause, to fight for what he now believes to be right.

Joe Molinari

Molinari appears first to help with the terrorist attacks. Quickly, though, an attraction between Molinari and Boxer becomes apparent. He seems comfortable pursuing a romance with a fellow law enforcement officer, though Boxer seems reluctant to get involved. The author turns a stereotype around, in that the female, not the male, seems reluctant for commitment in this relationship. However, the two end up together at the close of the novel.



Objects/Places

San Francisco

This novel takes place in modern San Francisco, California. The cities diverse population figures into the plot.

Fake Bomb

At this first crime scene, Boxer spots a potential fake bomb. Bomb squad authorities find only a fake bomb, revealing the nature and knowledge of the perpetrator.

X/L

The first victim made a great deal of money on questionable dealings through his company, X/L. This greed led the killer to target Lighttower as an example of capitalism gone wrong. Such a story jumps right out of headlines from the time of this novel's publication.

McDonalds

Caitlin Lighttower is left at a McDonalds by Michelle, showing Michelle's human side and her remorse for her actions. The location gives a clue to Michelle's location.

Inhaler

First, a melted inhaler offers a clue as to the Lighttower's missing nanny's identity. Then, a tipster spots Michelle purchasing a new inhaler, verifying what Boxer suspected, that Michelle lives near Berkley. Finally, Malcolm taunts Michelle with her inhaler, insinuating that he poisoned it with ricin. Danko takes this idea to the final level, when he attempts to spray Boxer with an inhaler filled with ricin. Ironically, Boxer turns the inhaler on Danko, killing his with his own poison.

Barrette

Cindy first spots Michelle's peace barrette when Michelle sits next to Cindy on the bus. The barrette symbolizes Michelle's innocence, interrupted by her involvement with Malcolm and his radical cause. Tragically, Cindy later finds the barrette in the remains of the house after Malcolm sets off his bomb rather than be taken by police.



Briefcase

To Danko, his briefcase represents power. He sneaks bombs into both police headquarter and the G-8 summit in a briefcase specially rigged by Malcolm.

In Jill's case, though, her briefcase represents her dedication to her job in fighting evil. When the women discover the briefcase in Jill's home after her disappearance, they correctly conclude that Jill did not leave voluntarily.

Portland, Oregon

At first, it appears that Boer has a multi-city case, when a similar murder occurs in Portland. Soon, however, she determines the Portland murder to be a copycat. She fails to see the same signatures that occur at the crime scenes in San Fransisco, such as the notes with the name August Spies. Soon, a note from August Spies confirms her suspicions.

Sacramento , California

Boxer travels to Sacramento to interview Danko's father. As often happen in the crime fighting genre, two interviews are necessary before Boxer gains the information that makes a difference in the case.

Gulfstream Jet

When Boxer sees the fancy jet to take her and Molinari to Portland, she realizes that Molinari operates at a level above her own. This intimidates her in the being. However, she comes to terms with his position when their relationship takes on a more personal nature.

Ricin

When Claire first identifies Ricin as the cause of Bengosian's death, Boxer fears it is only a warning. The sheer volume used shows the killer's mass murder capabilities. In the end, though, Danko's own poison kills him.

Cell Phone

Malcolm uses cell phones to set off his bombs. They allow the bomber to get away before the bomb goes off, thus allowing one person to set off multiple bombs. Malcolm uses this method to frighten Michelle, when he makes her call and test the trigger before he connects it to the bomb.

Berkley

Boxer and other law enforcement officers view Berkley as an area that breeds radicals among their intellectuals. The author illustrates this when one of the professors at Berkley, Lemouz, ends up heavily involved in the murderous plot.



Themes

Good v. Evil

As is common in crime fighting novels, good versus evil is the novel's main theme. Boxer and her friends represent the good. They fight tirelessly, and at great personal expense, to fight the evil in their city. Boxer gives up a proper love life, as does Jill. Claire gives up time with her loved ones. They all give up days on end to pursue the criminals.

Danko, Malcolm and Lemouz represent evil. They are men who care more about their message than the people whom their evil hurts. Their evil is escalated by the fact that they kill innocent people to get their message out.

Several times, it seems that evil may win this contest. This is especially true when Boxer discovers Jill's body. In killing one of the good agents, it seems that evil scores a point. However, this serves to motivate Boxer further to stop the criminals at any cost.

Though good wins in this novel, Danko's final words seem to haunt Boxer. Danko's promise that "there is always another soldier" makes her feel that the war continues, even after she apprehends Danko.

World Economics

Though the novel involves some complicated world economics, even a reader with limited knowledge of such subjects understands the breadth of the crimes. The radicals feel that capitalism allows the wrong people to become rich. The radicals in this novel use terror, both threatened and actual, to manipulate world leaders to make changes in the entire world economical system.

Though the reader may be able to agree with the fact that sometimes the wrong people benefit from a free trade society, the methods used by the criminals in this novel obviously fail to address the real problem, and kill innocent people in the process. The saddest fact of the situation is that the men that the radicals target do not hold the power to enact the changes required to stop the terror. In fact, such a large system does not change on the timetable that the radicals demand.

Justice

Boxer is driven by an intense feeling of justice. She feels that the criminals must pay for their actions, and the innocent must be protected. The other women, likewise, work to see justice, along with good, prevail. Jill works for the rights of those that cannot help themselves, such as battered women. Ironically, it takes years before she sees a way to help herself and then it is too late.



Danko also wants justice for the death of his brother. He agrees with his brother's cause and feels his death, at the hands of law enforcement, is unjust. His brand of justice, however, brings about more injustice in the process, because many innocents die, first, the Lightower's son, then scores of people at the Rincon Center bombing.

The author does not fail to bring about justice's dark side, however. When Lemouz kills himself, not only does he fail to receive the due punishment for his actions, but also his young children witness the action. Such an incident illustrates the idealistic nature of perfect justice.

Style

Point of View

The author uses third person point of view in this novel. The person from which the point of view comes changes several times. Though Boxer is the protagonist, and, thus, the person through whom the story usually comes, other characters factor in as well. Often, the other women, Claire, Jill and Cindy, give their point of view. Several times, the point of view follows Danko, the antagonist.

The number and variety of the point of view gives it an omniscient quality. The reader knows everything about the story, from the view of both the "good guy" and the "bad guy." Even though the author reveals much of the villain's motivations and intentions, the author still leaves details vague enough to maintain the suspense until the very end.

Setting

This novel takes place in the 2000s in San Francisco, California. The plot follows Lieutenant Lindsay Boxer, from San Francisco homicide. Several times, she travels outside of the city to follow leads. These leads take her to Sacramento, California, and Portland, Oregon.

Within San Francisco, Boxer chases criminals to various locations, including the University at Berkeley and the home of her friend and attorney, Jill. Several private scenes occur in Boxer's home.

The urban setting of the novel adds to the drama. The same crimes in a less populated area would not cause the same level of catastrophe. The novel also plays on the fears of terrorism in such populated areas that pervades society at this time.

To Danko, the antagonist, the very scenes of the crimes are often symbolic. The bomb at the Rincon Center exposes man's greed, as it hits the city's financial district. He also fantasizes about placing bombs in places such as police headquarters, to expose the weakness of the justice system.

Language and Meaning

The author uses a very easy to follow language. The simple vocabulary and long passages of dialogue make the book a quick read. The reader enjoys colorful exchanges, followed by honest narratives of the characters' inner feelings and emotions.

Though a good deal of law enforcement jargon is used, the author does a good job defining lesser-known terms.



The different classes of characters come across in their speech. Michelle and Malcolm, the flunkies in the plot, seem to have the least sophisticated language. Boxer and her friends have an average level of speaking. Finally, Danko and Lemouz seem to have an educated way of speaking, as does Molinari, signaling the higher class of society that they move in.

Structure

Patterson uses a unique structure, in that each chapter is very brief, often only a few pages. The entire novel contains 111 chapters in 368 pages. The breaks in chapters serve several purposes. First, the beginning of a new chapter may signal a change in setting or point of view. In addition, it builds tension, as one chapter may end just before Boxer discovers an important break in the case.

The author uses both narrative and dialogue to tell the story. Much of the details come from Boxer's own thoughts and feelings, in the form of narrative. Often, the details she observes and records foreshadow future developments in her cases. The Dialogue serves to offer background information on the cases, such as when Molinari describes the long history some of the anti-capitalism radicals.



Quotes

She was used to representing women who felt like this, not hiding a secret in the dark herself. p. 64

He had always preached the gospel: there is always another soldier. p. 45

"No," he said. "That's Lieutenant Boxer. She's Homicide. A real bitch on wheels, I hear." p. 28

It had been eighteen months since he died. I was ready to put it behind me, to open myself to someone, if someone happened to be on the scene. p. 40

I walked out on the Lance Hart professor of Romance Languages before I blew him up. p. 103

I took a breath and stared into those very blue eyes. "You just make sure you're not an asshole, Joe Molinari." p. 193

Every time I glanced in the rear view mirror and caught a glimpse of my own eyes, I kept thinking, I've seen those eyes before. On the job. On the faces of parents and wives when someone close to them is missing. p. 200

Let the voice of the people be heard. p. 231

I can be wowed. "If I wasn't a Homicide lieutenant," I said, "I might believe that line. The vice president just called you?" p. 162

Start the revolution, baby...Robert smiled to himself. Bottom rail's on top now.... p. 250

"I'm the emergency," I said into the phone. "I need you help." p. 338

So many soldiers, I was thinking. This won't stop, will it? This Third World War. p. 325



Topics for Discussion

Discuss how the author maintains suspense even after revealing the name of the antagonist.

The characters in this book appear in others of the series. How well does this novel stand alone?

What events acts as the climax of the book?

To which character do you best relate? Explain.

Discuss the character of Michelle. How does she change in this book?

How does the subplot of Jill's abuse effect the plot of this novel.

Discuss how events of the early-2000s effect this subject matter.

What role does gender play in this novel?

Does Boxer fully solve this case? Reflect upon Danko's motto, "there is always another soldier."

Discuss the different views of Berkley.

For what purpose does the author include the romance between Boxer and Molinari?