

All That Remains Study Guide

All That Remains by Patricia Cornwell

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Plot Summary

All That Remains is Patricia Cornwell's third installment in her Kay Scarpetta series. Scarpetta is working a case that involves the disappearance and murder of the daughter of the so-called Drug Czar, politician Pat Harvey. As Scarpetta investigates the case with her police counterpart and friend Pete Marino, she comes up against resistance from the FBI, which is attempting to hide information not only from the public but from Scarpetta herself. However, Scarpetta does not let this lack of cooperation keep her from continuing to attempt to do the right thing, which is to find the killer for Mrs. Harvey. All That Remains is a suspenseful novel that will keep the reader glued to the page until the last bullet flies.

Kay Scarpetta is about to settle down to a relaxing afternoon of gardening when she gets a call from police detective Pete Marino. Another abandoned vehicle has been found in a situation that resembles the previous disappearances of three couples. Scarpetta goes to the scene where she learns that the owner of the vehicle, Deborah Harvey, is the daughter of politician Pat Harvey. Scarpetta watches as the investigation begins. However, little information is gained from examining the vehicle, so the investigators must sit back and wait for Deborah and her boyfriend, Fred Cheney, to be found.

The next day, Pat Harvey calls Scarpetta to her home. Mrs. Harvey is aware of the past cases, the couple murders, and wants to know if Scarpetta believes this is what has happened to her daughter and her boyfriend. Scarpetta tries not to commit to anything, but does believe that this is the case. Mrs. Harvey picks up on what Scarpetta does not say and begins to take the investigation in her own hands. Mrs. Harvey calls in a psychic to help find her daughter's body while gathering information about the case through her political connections.

The following winter the bodies of Fred Cheney and Deborah Harvey are found in a remote clearing in the woods near the rest stop where the vehicle was found. When Scarpetta arrives, she finds that the bodies have been moved, something that is against the rules of investigation. Later, Scarpetta learns from a reporter friend of hers that a jack of hearts playing card is always found in the vehicles of these victims and this information makes her believe that this is most likely why the bodies were moved, in order for FBI agent Benton Wesley to look for the card before she arrived. Wesley later confirms this assumption.

Scarpetta performs autopsies on the remains and cannot determine the manner of death on either body. However, Scarpetta finds a bullet lodged in Deborah Harvey's spine. This is unusual because this killer has never used a gun with the other three couples. Shortly after making this discovery, Scarpetta decides to go back to the clearing and search for the bullet casing. Scarpetta finds the casing, but it turns out that it was planted by the police under orders from the FBI. The FBI had been hoping to lure out the killer with the planted evidence. However, their plans change when Pat Harvey throws a press conference. Mrs. Harvey openly accuses the FBI, the CIA, and the



coroner's office of hiding information and of knowing the identity of the killer and hiding that as well.

Scarpetta changes the direction of her investigation into the case and begins searching through her files for cases that might be connected. Scarpetta finds two cases. One is the case of a dog shot three times by bullets similar to the one found in Deborah Harvey. The other is two women who were found murdered in a cemetery in Williamsburg under similar circumstances. Scarpetta and her friend, reporter Abby Turnbull, go to Williamsburg and are approached by a suspicious man. Scarpetta writes down the man's license plate, and this leads to the identity of a possible suspect. The suspect, Steven Spurrier, is placed under police surveillance. When Spurrier attempts to steal license plates from a car at the airport, he is placed under arrest and his house is searched.

Although the search does not find anything incriminating, the police are able to get a DNA sample to compare to blood found in the Harrison-Mott murders. While waiting for these results, Mrs. Harvey comes to Scarpetta and asks if she believes Spurrier is the man who killed her daughter. Scarpetta does not commit herself to a response, but Mrs. Harvey gets the answer she wants anyway. The next day, Scarpetta learns that Spurrier has been released from jail, that the DNA proved to be negative, and that Abby has gone to interview Spurrier. Scarpetta rushes to Spurrier's home to stop Abby only to arrive too late. Abby is dead, apparently shot by Spurrier, and Spurrier himself is also dead, shot by Pat Harvey. Mrs. Harvey comes into the room while Scarpetta is attempting to revive Abby and turns the gun on herself.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

All That Remains is Patricia Cornwell's third installment in her Kay Scarpetta series. Scarpetta is working a case that involves the disappearance and murder of the daughter of the so-called Drug Czar, politician Pat Harvey. As Scarpetta investigates the case with her police counterpart and friend Pete Marino, she comes up against resistance from the FBI, which is attempting to hide information not only from the public but from Scarpetta herself. However, Scarpetta does not let this lack of cooperation keep her from continuing to attempt to do the right thing, which is to find the killer for Mrs. Harvey. All That Remains is a suspenseful novel that will keep the reader glued to the page until the last bullet flies.

Kay Scarpetta is about to begin a restful afternoon gardening when she gets a call from Pete Marino. Another abandoned vehicle belonging to a missing couple has been found. Based on the cases of three other couples whose vehicles were abandoned and whose bodies have later been found murdered, Scarpetta has left standing orders to be involved from the beginning in any case with similar circumstances. Scarpetta arrives at the rest stop where the Jeep Cherokee has been found and watches as the police, along with FBI agent Benton Wesley, begin their investigation. Scarpetta also learns that the missing girl, Deborah Harvey, is the daughter of Pat Harvey, a well respected district attorney turned politician, currently the so-called Drug Czar.

Deborah Harvey and Fred Cheney, her boyfriend, were on their way to the Harvey beach home the night before. They were reported missing when they did not arrive on time. Pat Harvey arrives at the scene by helicopter about the same time the dog handlers arrive. After asking a few questions, such as if her daughter's purse had been found, Mrs. Harvey stands back and let the police begin their investigation. The dog handler opens the car door using a pen and a knife, careful not to get her own scent on the vehicle, and allows the dogs to smell the seats. The dog sniffing the passenger seat began to whimper and defecate, clearly deeply disturbed by what it smelled.

Chapter 1 Analysis

Scarpetta is called to the scene of an abandoned car. The car, left in a quiet place in pristine condition, makes Scarpetta and fellow investigators believe it is related to three previous cases in which vehicles were found in similar situation and condition, and later the bodies of the missing couples were found murdered. Scarpetta, who is the chief medical examiner of Virginia, has been called in because she has insisted on being in on these investigations from the very beginning. Scarpetta wants to be privy to any information that might help her when the bodies are eventually located.



The victims, Deborah Harvey and Fred Cheney, were driving alone to the Harvey beach home. Deborah, it turns out, is the daughter of the Drug Czar, Pat Harvey. Deborah's mother arrives by helicopter, an unusual situation for a victim's family member, setting the tone for Mrs. Harvey's participation in the case. Mrs. Harvey will prove to be a complication. The dog handlers arrive about the same time as Mrs. Harvey. When the dogs are allowed to smell the interior of the car, the dog on the passenger side where Deborah is believed to have been sitting has a violent reaction. The dog's reaction suggests to the reader that Deborah suffered great fear before her disappearance, placing doubt on the theory that she might have abandoned the car of her own free will and run off with her boyfriend.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

The dogs find nothing but a trail that leads to the rest stop across the highway and ends there. Nothing is found in the car, either. Now all the investigators can do is wait for the bodies to turn up, just as the bodies of the other couples eventually did. The next day, Scarpetta is summoned to Mrs. Harvey's home. Mrs. Harvey is aware of the previous couple murder cases and wants to know if Scarpetta feels that her daughter and Fred Cheney are victims of this serial killer. All four couples were alone on their way to a destination at which they never arrived. All four vehicles were found abandoned somewhere along the route, suggesting they picked up their killer for some unexplained reason before being overtaken. All four were eventually found dead in a remote area months after their deaths, their bodies so decomposed they were mostly skeletonized. Scarpetta agrees that Cheney and Harvey's disappearance has some similarities to these cases, but refuses to make the leap of stating they are victims of this serial killer until the bodies are found.

Scarpetta then turns the conversation to Deborah, asking about her personal life in order to learn any information that might help in an autopsy. Mrs. Harvey tells Scarpetta that her daughter was a gymnast and that she had a breast reduction operation a year before her disappearance. Mrs. Harvey also takes Scarpetta to Deborah's bedroom where she finds not the typical college student's room, but a clean, orderly room that speaks of a great deal of personal restraint. Mrs. Harvey tells Scarpetta that her daughter was often a neat person. Deborah kept to herself most of the time, often keeping secrets from her parents. Mrs. Harvey reveals that she and her daughter had just had a fight the day Deborah disappeared over her refusal to share information about Fred because Deborah knew that Mrs. Harvey disliked her boyfriend.

Chapter 2 Analysis

Mrs. Harvey is already using her political influence to become involved in her daughter's case. Mrs. Harvey summons Scarpetta to her home, and asks about the couple murders. Mrs. Harvey has a great deal of information on the cases, more than the average person, and she demands to know if Scarpetta thinks her daughter is a victim of this serial killer. Even though Scarpetta does believe this, she refuses to admit this to Mrs. Harvey. Scarpetta does not want to take hope away from Mrs. Harvey, because in her experience, she knows how helpful hope can be.

Scarpetta also goes into Deborah's room to garner all the information about the girl she can to use in the investigation. Scarpetta learns that Deborah was secretive, but that her relationship with Fred was not casual. Scarpetta also learns that Deborah was a gymnast and that she had a breast reduction, both pieces of information that might prove important in identifying Deborah's body should the opportunity arise.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

A week later, Benton Wesley invites Scarpetta and Marino to his home for dinner in order to discuss the case. On the way, Marino tells Scarpetta that Mrs. Harvey called a psychic to help with the case. Hilda Ozimek is a psychic used by the FBI on several occasions, a fact Mrs. Harvey most likely knew. However, when Scarpetta asks Wesley about this psychic, he refuses to tell her anything Ozimek told Mrs. Harvey. Wesley also tells Scarpetta and Marino that they found a receipt from a convenience store in Deborah Harvey's car that led them to a store not too far from the rest stops. Here they learned that the clerk sold Deborah and Fred a box of tampons and then sent them to the rest stop because customers are not allowed to use the rest rooms at the store. It is suggested that this is where Deborah and Fred met their killer. Wesley then says that the FBI is looking at the possibility that this case is not related to the others, but could be an abduction in response to pressure Mrs. Harvey has been putting on some charities she believes to be fronts for drug smuggling.

Wesley, Scarpetta, and Marino kick around several ideas over the actions and identity of the serial killer, suggesting that he may be posing as a cop or cruising lover's lanes, but these ideas are dismissed because no witness has ever come forward suggesting either of these scenarios. Then Wesley asks Scarpetta about the cause of death in the couples. Scarpetta cannot tell him much because there was never any obvious injury found on the skeletons. Scarpetta suggests the couples are dying from soft tissue wounds, such as strangulation or cut throats. Wesley finishes the meeting by telling Scarpetta that he knows she met with Pat Harvey and thinks it would be a good idea if she avoids these types of meetings in the future. Wesley explains that the case has some aspects that cause the case to have to be handled carefully. The deeper Pat Harvey's participation in the case, the more danger of complicating these aspects and endangering Mrs. Harvey's personal well-being.

A few days later Scarpetta gets a phone call from Abby Turnbull. Abby is a reporter who once lived in Richmond but now lives and works in Washington, D.C. Abby became friends with Scarpetta when he sister was murdered and Scarpetta spearheaded the investigation. Abby is in town, so Scarpetta invites her over for dinner. As they eat, Abby tells Scarpetta she is in town investigating the Harvey case. In fact, Abby thinks she has gotten someone's attention while investigating this case. A few weeks before, she took a wrong turn and ended up at the gates of Camp Peary, a military training camp and a rumored training ground for CIA agents. The next day the FBI came to see her and ever since she has felt as if someone is following her. Not only this, but Abby has reason to believe someone has been tampering with her mail. Abby believes that this is a clue to the idea that the couples murderer is affiliated with Camp Peary. Abby also has other information on the cases, information that has not been released to the public, that she gained from Mrs. Harvey. Apparently Abby and Mrs. Harvey have been using each other as sources since before Deborah disappeared.



Chapter 3 Analysis

Marino and Scarpetta are called to Benton Wesley's house to discuss the Harvey-Cheney case. Scarpetta learns on the way there about Mrs. Harvey's decision to bring in a psychic. Because the psychic is reputable and Wesley refuses to speak about her findings, this interests Scarpetta as it suggests the psychic came up with something concrete. The psychic is important because it is a fact Scarpetta will remember later in the novel when she needs a new direction in the investigation. Wesley also discusses with Scarpetta and Marino the possibility that Deborah and Fred were kidnapped by a political enemy of Mrs. Harvey's. This is interesting because it introduces another angle to the case and it also seems to be an attempt to mislead Scarpetta by taking her attention off the serial killer angle.

Wesley tells Scarpetta that he knows she went to see Mrs. Harvey, suggesting the FBI is watching Mrs. Harvey, and warns her to stay away from Mrs. Harvey. Wesley does not want Mrs. Harvey to use her political influence to become involved in the investigation and possibly cause complications. However, the reader is already under the impression that Mrs. Harvey is a stubborn woman who intends to be as involved in the case as she can be. The victim is Mrs. Harvey's child, touching on the theme of grief. As a politician, she has the power to learn all the details of the case. The motivation to use this power is too great for her to back down.

Abby Turnbull comes to town to investigate the Harvey-Cheney case for her newspaper. Abby is a good friend of Scarpetta's, a friendship that grew from their connection during the investigation into the murder of Abby's sister, Henna. Abby tells Scarpetta that not only is she sharing information with Pat Harvey, but that she believes that the FBI is watching her. Abby says that she believes someone is following her and going through her mail. She thinks that because the FBI came to visit her after she accidentally found herself at the gates to Camp Peary that they are the ones watching her. The introduction of Camp Peary, a possible training ground for CIA agents, is curious because of the secrecy regarding this case and the FBI connection Abby believes exists.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Abby wants to interview the convenience store clerk that served Deborah and Fred the night they disappeared. Scarpetta goes with her, concerned about Abby traveling in this area in the dark by herself. Once there, Abby asks the clerk a list of questions, getting the same story Wesley told Scarpetta. However, Abby also learns that a man was in the store at the same time as Deborah and Fred and that he most likely overheard the clerk sending the young couple to the rest stop. The clerk says that the man left then, but Deborah and Fred stayed behind to attempt to buy some beer. The clerk carded Deborah, refused to sell the alcohol, and sent them on their way a short time later with a six pack of sodas.

When Scarpetta and Abby return to Scarpetta's home, the phone is ringing. The caller is Mark, Scarpetta's on-again, off-again lover. Mark moved away earlier that year after he and Scarpetta spent several months arguing over the future of their relationship. Scarpetta misses Mark, but she is unwilling to give up her career to be with him. Scarpetta explains all this to Abby who understands her dilemma and suggests that she not speak to Mark more than necessary.

The following week, Scarpetta goes out to buy the Washington Post special because she expects Abby's story about the Harvey-Cheney case to be there. However, the story is not there that weekend, or several weekends afterward. A short time later, Scarpetta learns that Abby has taken leave from the paper and that she has signed a book deal to write about the couple murders. Scarpetta feels as though Abby used her. Scarpetta does not hear from Abby for a long time after this.

The New Year has arrived and Scarpetta is on the capitol grounds waiting for word on the passage of a bill she has supported. While there, Scarpetta sees Mrs. Harvey and they exchange friendly words. Shortly thereafter, Scarpetta gets a page informing her that two bodies have been found in an isolated clearing.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Abby interviews the convenience store clerk and learns that there was a man in the store when Deborah was being told she had to continue on to the rest stop rather than use the bathroom in the store. Abby and Scarpetta both become suspicious that this person is the man who killed the couple and could possibly be the serial killer. Scarpetta also learns that the clerk handled Deborah's license, something that will become important later when Deborah's purse shows up.

The theme of commitment is introduced when Scarpetta and Abby come home to a phone call from Scarpetta's lover, Mark. Scarpetta and Mark had been fighting a great deal over whether he should move to Richmond to be closer to Scarpetta or if she



should give up her career to be with him. Mark finally made the decision by asking for a transfer to Colorado. Scarpetta is heartbroken, especially since Mark did not contact her in months. Tonight is the first contact she has with him and they end up having a fight. Abby consoles Scarpetta and advises her not to trust him with too much information about the case.

Scarpetta learns later that Abby has taken a leave of absence from the newspaper and has signed a deal to write a book. Scarpetta is angry about this because Abby did not tell her and she feels as though Abby has used her. Scarpetta moves on with her life and time moves on quickly. In January, Scarpetta runs into Mrs. Harvey and finds her tired and grieving, touching on the theme of grief. Shortly afterward Scarpetta gets a page.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Scarpetta arrives on the scene and immediately becomes aware that the bodies have been moved. Moving a body before the medical examiner arrives is against the golden rule. Scarpetta examines the bodies. One is clearly female, the other possibly male. They are badly decomposed with very little flesh remaining on their bones. They are both fully clothed, but there is evidence of small animal activity on the skeletons. Scarpetta asks the lead detective why the bodies were moved and is told they were searched for identification. Scarpetta is told that Deborah Harvey's purse was found. The detective tells Scarpetta that they are considering that it is possible the couple came to party at the clearing, which is just a few miles from the rest stop where their car was found. Scarpetta notes, however, that their shoes are missing, a detail common to the other couple murders. Scarpetta also learns that the FBI were on the scene before she or Marino were called, something that is highly unusual.

Scarpetta and Marino take the bodies back to the morgue. Scarpetta decides to wait until the next morning to perform the autopsy. At home that night, Scarpetta gets a call from Mrs. Harvey. Scarpetta tells her to gather dental records to keep her busy, again boosting Mrs. Harvey's hope by implying there is a possibility the girl in the morgue is not her daughter. First thing the next morning, Scarpetta begins the autopsy. As is routine, Scarpetta x-rays the bodies and finds a bullet in Deborah's spine. Scarpetta tells Marino the bullet wound was not fatal, but would have caused Deborah to slowly bleed to death. Not only this, but the location of the bullet would have caused immediate paralysis. Later, Scarpetta cleans the bones and begins to attempt to identify the various small bones. She finds that a finger bone, the left proximal phalange, has a deep cut in it, possibly made pre-mortem, as if Deborah Harvey had fought her attacker. Scarpetta examines the bone closely to rule out post-mortem cuts and makes an appointment to see an expert in Washington who can confirm her findings. Scarpetta then goes home and calls Wesley, who asks her to not release her findings to anyone, especially Pat Harvey.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Scarpetta is called to the scene of two badly decomposed bodies, but learns that she was not called immediately. This failure to call the medical examiner immediately suggests to the reader that someone, perhaps the FBI, is attempting to keep something from Scarpetta. What this something could be is still unclear, but the reader hopes it will become clearer in later chapters. Scarpetta also finds the body has been moved, an act equivalent to breaking a golden rule. This too suggests that something is going on to which Scarpetta is not privy. However, what Scarpetta does learn is that there are several similarities between the discovery of these bodies and the condition of the other bodies of the victims of the couple killer.

Before Scarpetta can perform the autopsies, she gets a call from Mrs. Harvey, who wants to know if there is any possibility these bodies are not those of her daughter and Fred Cheney. Scarpetta cannot tell her this; in fact, all the evidence points to a positive identification. To keep her busy, Scarpetta tells her to gather dental records for identification purposes. Then Scarpetta does the autopsies, finding a bullet wound and a cut on Deborah Harvey. These things are unusual because there has never been any identifiable trauma on the victims before. The evidence suggests to Scarpetta that Deborah Harvey fought her attacker. Before Scarpetta has finished her investigation, she talks to Wesley and he tells her not to release the autopsy information to Mrs. Harvey. Wesley's request is highly unusual as family members are entitled by law to the autopsy reports. However, Scarpetta agrees to put off the inevitable as per his request, creating a situation that places Scarpetta in the middle of a tense situation.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Scarpetta takes Deborah's bones to an expert in Washington, DC. This expert agrees with Scarpetta that the wound on Deborah's finger bone was made pre-mortem and that it was most likely made by a serrated knife. Not only this, but the expert suggests that rather than using a slicing motion, the cut was made with a motion more in line with a punching motion. The expert also says that the cut is on the top of the hand, an unusual location for this type of wound.

After speaking to the expert, Scarpetta goes to Abby's apartment. Abby is extremely nervous to find Scarpetta at her door and insists on going for a walk rather than talking inside the apartment. Once outside the building, Abby reveals that she still believes she is under surveillance and that it is possible her apartment is being bugged. Abby also tells Scarpetta that someone has broken into her apartment and accessed her notes on the couple murders. Abby's files are time stamped every ten minutes when opened and this one file has a date on it that Abby could not possibly have put there since she was not home at the time. Scarpetta listens to this and thinks that Abby is being paranoid.

Abby goes on to tell Scarpetta that she believes the FBI has reason to stop her from investigating this case. Pat Harvey, with whom Abby has been in close contact with, has told her that the FBI is hiding information in the case, such as the jack of hearts cards found in all the couple cases, except for the Harvey-Cheney case in which no one knows for sure if a card has been found or not. Pat Harvey believes that the FBI is hiding information because they know who killed her daughter and do not want to prosecute or make the killer's identity public. Pat Harvey believes the murder of her daughter stems from her investigation into charities that are being used as fronts for drug trafficking. The FBI does not want Mrs. Harvey to take down these charities because they want to build a case and prosecute.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Scarpetta has Deborah's finger bone examined by an expert and learns that not only is the cut a pre-mortem injury, but it is unusual because it was not caused by the killer slicing Deborah's hand, but from a motion that implies Deborah punched her killer and cut her hand on a knife he was holding. The expert's theory goes along with what Scarpetta was thinking, making her theories probable.

Scarpetta goes to see Abby and learns several interesting facts. The first thing she learns is that her friend has become paranoid. Abby thinks she is being followed and that her apartment has been broken into on several occasions. Scarpetta is not sure she should believe this even though Abby's argument about the proof of her computer being broken into is compelling. The reader is not sure what to believe, but Abby's



deterioration is curious. The reader must wonder if perhaps, touching on the theme of grief, Abby is reliving the death of her sister through Pat Harvey's grief.

Scarpetta also learns about the jack of hearts card that has been left in the vehicle of each of the first three couples. This is information Scarpetta did not have before speaking to Abby. Scarpetta also learns that no one knows if card was found in the Harvey-Cheney vehicle, something she suspects had a great deal to do with the moving of the bodies. Finally, Scarpetta learns that Mrs. Harvey believes the FBI is out to get her because she is trying to take down fake charities without working with the FBI to prosecute the criminals involved. Mrs. Harvey also sounds somewhat paranoid, but the way Abby presents her argument, the reader must realize it does sound somewhat plausible. The reader will have to wait for later chapters to find out if Mrs. Harvey is correct in her theories.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

A short time later, Scarpetta pays out of her personal accounts for her and Marino to fly to North Carolina in order to meet with Hilda Ozimek. On the way, Scarpetta asks Marino about the cards and learns that he knew nothing of them either. Once at Ms. Ozimek's, the first thing Marino does when they arrive is to test Ms. Ozimek by giving her a photo from his wallet and ask if she can tell if the person pictured is dead or alive. Ms. Ozimek immediately says that the woman is alive and then goes on to tell Marino how the woman is caught in a cycle of guilt, one minute feeling very guilty, the next feeling as though nothing matters. Marino becomes disturbed by Ms. Ozimek's reading and snatches the photo back.

Marino then presents Ms. Ozimek with several other pictures, these ones of the area where Deborah and Fred's bodies were found. Ms. Ozimek touches the pictures and says that she can feel great fear. Ms. Ozimek tells them that she senses death in the clearing, but not on the logging road leading to the clearing. Ms. Ozimek gets the impression of a man, light-complected, who laughed with the couple when he first came into contact with them. Ozimek also suggests that the killer lost something that worries him, but not enough to make him return to the area. Scarpetta asks if Ms. Ozimek could tell her what she told Mrs. Harvey, but Ms. Ozimek says that she can rarely remember what was said during a psychic reading. Ms. Ozimek says that Mrs. Harvey took her to the place where the vehicle was found where she got the impression of a large knife with a serrated edge. Finally Ms. Ozimek says that Mrs. Harvey showed her pictures of the other victims of the couple murders and she got some of the same impressions, including the image of the young man.

Marino is quiet on the way home. Scarpetta invites him over for dinner and he refuses at first, only to change his mind later. Scarpetta asks him about the picture he showed Ms. Ozimek and learns it was of his wife, Doris. Marino tells Scarpetta that Doris went home to New York to care for her mother last year and began an affair. Doris returned home for a short time, but recently returned to New York. Scarpetta tells Marino he should start taking care of himself rather than ignoring his personal hygiene if he wants Doris to come back. Scarpetta then teaches him how to make coffee, a domestic task Marino never bothered to learn.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Scarpetta takes it upon herself to travel to North Carolina in order to interview Hilda Ozimek, the psychic that Mrs. Harvey used shortly after the disappearance of her daughter. Scarpetta learns that Ms. Ozimek identified the same type of knife that Scarpetta's bone expert suggested was the type that cut Deborah Harvey. Ms. Ozimek also gives a vague description of the killer and ties the Harvey-Cheney case with the



previous couple murders. All of this is interesting, leaving the reader curious how Scarpetta will act on this information. Scarpetta is an unusual medical examiner in that she takes a great deal of the investigation on herself rather than waiting for the police to do their job. Now the reader must be wondering if Scarpetta might solve this crime before the police.

The theme of commitment is explored when Marino reveals to Scarpetta that his wife has left him for another man. It seems that Marino and Scarpetta are in similar places in their romantic life. Scarpetta's lover has moved away, just like Marino's wife, leaving them both wondering what they have done wrong in their lives that leave them choosing their careers over their lovers. It seems like something these friends could bond over. However, Marino is angry and resentful of Scarpetta's advice, giving the reader a deeper look into his personality. If Marino follows Scarpetta's advice, the reader is curious if his wife will come back to him. If so, perhaps Scarpetta will begin to follow her own advice.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Scarpetta and Marino return to the clearing where the Harvey and Cheney bodies were found to search for the bullet casing, thinking this might be the missing object that the killer is concerned about. They spend a great deal of the afternoon searching with a metal detector and a shovel only to find the casing in the last place they look. A few days later, Scarpetta arrives at work to find a letter from Mrs. Harvey threatening court action if she does not release the autopsy report. Scarpetta is called to the offices of her boss, the secretary of Health and Human Services. Scarpetta explains her conversation with Wesley, in which she was told not to release the autopsy reports to Mrs. Harvey. Despite his anger, the secretary agrees that Scarpetta should fulfill her promise to the FBI.

When Scarpetta arrives back in her office, she gets a call from the firearms expert. It turns out the bullet casing has initials written in it, suggesting it was at one point evidence in another case. Scarpetta calls Marino, who tells her that the FBI had the lead detective on the Harvey-Cheney case plant the evidence in hopes of catching the killer coming back to find it. Not only this, but the real casing has already been found and is in the FBI labs, suggesting that Wesley has not been honest with either Scarpetta or Marino about the evidence gathered thus far.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Scarpetta continues her investigation into the Harvey-Cheney case by returning to the clearing to find the bullet casing belonging to the gun that was used to shoot Deborah Harvey. Scarpetta and Marino find it after a long search, but quickly learn that what they have found is a plant. The FBI found the casing long before Scarpetta and Marino even knew to look for it and did not feel the need to tell anyone. In fact, they then planted another in order to try to lure the killer out. Marino is deeply angry about this, and the reader gets the feeling that Scarpetta is as well.

Mrs. Harvey is threatening court action if Scarpetta does not release the autopsy reports. This threat causes Scarpetta to be called in front of her boss to discuss the problem. Scarpetta admits that Wesley told her to keep the report from Mrs. Harvey, but personally she believes that withholding the report is cruel and that Mrs. Harvey should have the report. However, Scarpetta's boss is more concerned with politics than morality and decides that Scarpetta should obey Wesley's orders. Scarpetta's feelings about this situation suggest to the reader she might not sit back and wait for a court order to give Mrs. Harvey what she is entitled to by law. The reader wonders if Scarpetta will obey Wesley and what will happen when she finally acts.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Scarpetta meets Benton Wesley for lunch near Quantico. Scarpetta begins by accusing Wesley of not keeping her informed about the investigation. Wesley tells her the casing was planted to draw out the killer, that the FBI had intended to plant a story in the newspaper talking about possible evidence left behind and were watching the woods with hope the killer would appear. However, those plans would have to be delayed after Scarpetta's actions. Scarpetta then asks about the jack of hearts cards that had been found in the previous cases. Wesley tries not to answer her question at first, but finally admits that the card was found in the Harvey-Cheney case, but not in the vehicle. The card this time was found in Deborah's purse which was then placed under her body, explaining why the bodies were moved before Scarpetta arrived at the scene.

Wesley wants to know why Scarpetta is spending time with Abby Turnbull, and suggests that this might not be a good idea, giving Scarpetta reason to believe that Abby is not as paranoid as she originally suspected. Wesley also suggests that the MO in the Harvey-Cheney case is different enough from the previous cases that it might not be related. Wesley wants to know if Scarpetta found any drugs in their bodies. Scarpetta assures him all tox screens have come back clean, even tests for unusual or designer drugs. However, Wesley contends that the FBI still believes that this case may be unrelated and might be the result of some group of drug dealers trying to stop Mrs. Harvey in her appointment as Drug Czar.

The following week, Pat Harvey throws a press conference with Fred's father at her side. Mrs. Harvey accuses the FBI and the coroner's office of trying to hide something and suggests that they know who the killer is but are protecting him because he is a member of the CIA. Mrs. Harvey's assertions cause Scarpetta to think perhaps the killer picks the timing of his crimes purposely in order to insure that the victims are not found until hunting season begins. Scarpetta believes that Mrs. Harvey might be on the right track; therefore, she is shocked when she discovers that the press are treating her like a raving maniac. Scarpetta, feeling sympathy for Mrs. Harvey, sends her the autopsy report.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Scarpetta meets with Wesley in order to yell at him for planting the casing and learns that the FBI had been hoping to bring the killer out into the open. Scarpetta believes this was a stupid waste of time because the killer would not risk coming out into the open, not after the obvious care he has taken up to this point to keep from being caught. However, the meeting does prove to be useful when Scarpetta learns that a jack of hearts was found in the Harvey-Cheney murders, linking it with the previous couple murders. Despite this, though, the FBI does not believe that the cases are related



because the card was not found in the vehicle, as it was in the previous cases, and because of Pat Harvey's position, they still believe this case might be more personal than a random serial killer. The reader takes all these theories and applies what he already knows and begins to wonder if perhaps Wesley might be wrong.

Pat Harvey throws a press conference to announce her belief that the FBI is covering up evidence in her daughter's case because they know who killed her and they are protecting him because he is a member of the CIA. Scarpetta listens to this press conference and feels sorry for Mrs. Harvey, who is clearly suffering from grief, a theme of the novel. Some of the things Mrs. Harvey says makes Scarpetta think about the timing of the killings, seemingly designed so that the bodies will not be found until hunting season begins. Scarpetta seems to believe that Mrs. Harvey is making some strong points in her press conference, so she is surprised when the press treat her as if she is insane with grief. Pat Harvey was once an aspiring politician, in line to be the first female vice-President, and now she is made into a laughing stock by the press. The reader should wonder if perhaps this is not an orchestrated play by someone in the government, perhaps the FBI. If this is an orchestrated play, the reader could assume that perhaps Mrs. Harvey is correct in thinking the FBI and the CIA are trying to protect themselves.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Scarpetta insists on going to Wesley's house that night to discuss Mrs. Harvey with him but gets lost along the way. Scarpetta calls for help and is surprised when Mark shows up to drive her to the Wesley house. Scarpetta is upset that Mark is in the area and did not call her, so they exchange a few tense words on their way to Wesley's. Once there, however, Mark is on Scarpetta's side when she insists on knowing what is really going on in the Harvey-Cheney case. Wesley explains that because of certain aspects of the case, the CIA has reason to believe the couple killer was at one time in training at Camp Peary. Wesley says the jack of hearts card left in the vehicles has military connotations, as do the scenarios surrounding the killings and the choice of killing grounds. The CIA is concerned about their public image and do not want to be associated with a serial killer, which is why the FBI has been so tight with the details of the cases.

Afterward, Mark drives Scarpetta back to her car. Mark tells Scarpetta that he is in town trying to arrange a transfer back to Quantico. Mark regrets moving to Denver and wants to come back to his life in Virginia. Scarpetta questions whether he is willing to move to Richmond as this was a problem they had before, and Mark tells her he is not sure. However, despite this reluctance to commit to anything, Scarpetta embraces the possibility of getting back together with Mark. Scarpetta and Mark move into a romantic embrace that does not end until a cop comes along and advises them to use more caution while the serial killer is unidentified.

Back at her office, Scarpetta begins thinking about the serial killer and wonders if they know about his first victim. Scarpetta has someone in her office search case files for any cases involving the type of ammunition used to shoot Deborah Harvey. Immediately a case involving a dog shot three times comes up. Scarpetta calls Marino, who is able to find the owner and suggests they go visit him.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Scarpetta goes to see Wesley and learns that the CIA believes the couple killer is a person who was trained at the CIA's training grounds at Camp Peary. All the evidence is circumstantial, but seems compelling. Not only this, but it goes along with what Mrs. Harvey stated at her press conference. Wesley is under a lot of pressure to find this person quickly and to hide his connection to the CIA for as long as possible. Wesley also admits the FBI influenced the press to make it seem that Mrs. Harvey is speaking out of grief, touching again on the theme. Mrs. Harvey's career has been destroyed because of her grief and her desire to find the man who killed her daughter.

Exploring the theme of commitment, Mark tells Scarpetta that he wants to return to Quantico in order to be close to her. Scarpetta is happy to hear this, but is still



concerned that he will not commit to moving to Richmond even though this is where her job is and therefore where she needs to remain. Later, Scarpetta forgives Mark enough to fall into a romantic clutch with him until a cop comes around and warns them about the danger of feeling romantic in such a remote place. This makes Scarpetta think about the vulnerability of human beings and she becomes scared for her family members.

Back at the office, Scarpetta continues with her investigation into the couple killer. Scarpetta wonders if the killer ever used his gun before and does a search, discovering the death of a dog with similar ammunition from eight years before, five years before the first victims were found. Scarpetta is interested enough that she calls Marino who sets up a meeting with the owner, giving the reader not only a direction for the next chapter but also a direction in which Scarpetta might travel to find the identity of the killer.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

They visit the dog's owner and learn that the dog was out roaming an area near where the first bodies were found five years prior, and returned home shot. The owner also recalls seeing a car driving down the road away from the scene of the first murders about a month before they happened. The car was being driven without its lights on. The owner also suggests the car was a domestic model because he feels domestic cars have a distinct sound. All this information causes Scarpetta to wonder if there are other victims that have not been linked to the couple killer yet.

Scarpetta does another search of the computer files and finds a murder that matches the MO of the couple murders. Two women were found murdered in a cemetery in Williamsburg. Both women were fully clothed, one stabbed multiple times, the other shot in the neck and beaten badly, her shirt torn. The women were reportedly drinking in a bar shortly before they disappeared. Since their car was found in a hotel parking lot, the police at the time assumed they had picked up a man in the bar and gone to have sex in a local hotel but at some point things went wrong. However, there was no sign of sexual activity ever found on either body.

A toxicology test on the victims found no recreational drugs and their alcohol levels were minimal. One of the women tested positive for a drug called Librax, a muscle relaxer and anxiety reliever. Scarpetta takes all this information and decides to call the lead detective on the case, lying to him and saying that she is doing a survey on drug related cases, asking him about all of his drug related cases. When they get to the two women, Jill Harrington and Elizabeth Mott, Scarpetta asks detailed questions about their personal lives. The detective recalls the case well and tells Scarpetta that both women were professionals who lived relatively quiet lives.

Scarpetta decides to talk to Abby about the case because she reported extensively on the case at the time it took place. However, Scarpetta cannot call her directly because she does not want anyone to know what she is doing, so she arranges for a cop to take a message to her apartment. Then Scarpetta calls several pharmacies in Williamsburg looking for the one that filled Jill's prescription of Librax, but the pharmacy that Jill used does not have any record of Librax being filled by Jill.

Chapter 11 Analysis

Scarpetta and Marino find out that the killer might have killed a dog while scouting the location in which the first couple was found. However, Scarpetta wonders why this took place a full five years before the couple died. It helps that the owner of the dog remembers seeing a car drive away from the location of the first couple just a month before they died, giving them a description of the car that could come back to help them



later in the novel. Later, Scarpetta finds a case in her files that fits the killer's MO that took place about the same time the dog died. Scarpetta does not connect these two cases right away, but the reader has and is curious how the two might be connected.

Scarpetta begins gathering information about these two cases. First, Scarpetta reads through the case file carefully, and then calls the lead detective. The detective describes the girls as professional and intelligent, making the theories on how they picked up a stranger in a bar unlikely in Scarpetta's mind. Scarpetta also arranges to have a meeting with Abby who had reported extensively on the case when it happened. Finally, Scarpetta tries to find out how Jill Harrington got a hold of a prescription of Librax, but has no luck at Jill's regular pharmacy, suggesting either Jill got the pills from someone else or that she had the prescription filled somewhere other than her normal pharmacy.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Abby contacts Scarpetta and arranges to meet her for lunch in Williamsburg. Abby is surprised that Scarpetta would focus on the Harrington-Mott murders because they do not seem to fit the couple killer's MO. The women were older than the other victims, they were both female, and they were found immediately rather than months later. However, they were killed with a knife and gun, like Deborah Harvey. Abby tells Scarpetta that there was blood found in the car that was assumed at the time to belong to the killer, suggesting one of the women managed to hurt him. Abby says they were never seen at the hotel and never took a room there. Abby suggests that the women picked up their killer sometime after leaving the bar and never saw the motel. Abby also tells Scarpetta that Jill was suspected of having a lover in Richmond because she made frequent trips there the year before her death.

Scarpetta and Abby are getting into their car after leaving the bar when a man stops and asks for directions. Scarpetta is suspicious because he was sitting in his car, in the dark, when they came into the parking lot. Scarpetta notes his license number and has Abby write it down, thinking it might be an FBI agent following Abby. Scarpetta later gives the number to Marino.

The next day, an article comes out in the Washington Post by a reporter named Clifford Ring about the Harvey-Cheney case that reveals a great number of details in the case that were kept from the press. Most of the details in the article are things that Abby knew because of her relationship with Mrs. Harvey, however. Scarpetta reads it and thinks that perhaps Abby had something to do with it. At work later in the day, Scarpetta enlists the help of several of her staff to call pharmacies in Richmond in order to find the one that filled Jill's prescription for Librax. When the pharmacy is found, Scarpetta is shocked to learn the prescribing physician is her own psychiatrist, Anna Zenner.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Scarpetta talks to Abby about the Harrington-Mott case and learns few details that she did not already know. Scarpetta learns about the blood in the back seat of the car, something that could prove important when a suspect is identified, and about the women's more personal side. Abby theorizes that the women did not go to the hotel with a man as original assumed, but picked up their killer for some reason outside the bar and drove to the cemetery. Then the car was abandoned at the hotel by the killer. Scarpetta seems to think this theory is a sound one and that it fits that MO of the couple killer. The reader, however, must wait until the killer is identified to learn if this theory is correct. After having this discussion, Scarpetta and Abby are approached by a stranger looking for directions. Scarpetta is suspicious and writes down the license number.



Scarpetta's suspicions might prove that Abby has been telling the truth about the FBI following her or might lead in another, unexpected direction.

A story comes out in the Washington Post about the Harvey-Cheney case. The story is written by Clifford Ring, but contains many details that Abby knew due to her connection to Mrs. Harvey. This coincidence makes Scarpetta wonder about the source of the information. Later, Scarpetta learns that one of the victims, Jill Harrington, got a prescription of Librax filled at a pharmacy in Richmond, where she was suspected of having an affair. Scarpetta is shocked to learn that her own psychiatrist and friend, Anna Zenner, was the prescribing doctor. The reader is surprised too, wondering if Jill was a patient of Dr. Zenner's, and if so, why.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Scarpetta drives to Anna's house where she has been invited for dinner. Although Anna is her doctor, Anna is also a good friend to Scarpetta and they often have dinner together. Scarpetta feels out of place telling Anna she has legal right to her patient files, so she puts it off until after dinner. Anna tells Scarpetta about Jill without going through the legal route, simply explaining that Jill was her patient. Jill was having a sexual relationship with Elizabeth Mott and was uncomfortable with it because she knew her family would not approve. Jill had told Anna that she and Elizabeth would often go to the bar where they were last seen alive to have discussions about their relationships. This is most likely what they were doing that night. When Scarpetta asks if Anna can tell her anything about their routines that might help in the investigation, Anna tells her that Jill and Elizabeth would often go to breakfast together on Sunday mornings and do crossword puzzles together at Jill's apartment afterward.

After Scarpetta leaves Anna she calls Marino and has him set up a meeting with the lead detective on the Harrington-Mott case. The detective brings his case files to Scarpetta's house and shows them everything he gathered during the investigation. Among these are pictures of the women where they were found in the cemetery. Scarpetta notices right away that they are missing their shoes, as all the couples in the serial cases were.

Chapter 13 Analysis

Scarpetta visits with Anna Zenner to find out why Jill was seeing her. Anna tells her that Jill was having a sexual relationship with Elizabeth and was afraid her family would not approve. This fact makes a connection between Elizabeth and Jill and the other couples killed by the serial killer. Scarpetta also learns that Jill and Elizabeth would often go to the bar where they were last seen in order to talk about their relationship, perhaps explaining why they were there, but not why they picked up the man who killed them, assuming it is a man. Two women who are in a relationship together, no matter how volatile, would not likely pick up a man or a woman in a bar for sexual purposes. The theory that they picked up a man and went to a hotel is destroyed by this information. Finally, Anna gives Scarpetta what seems like insignificant information about how the two girls would have breakfast out on Sundays and then work crossword puzzles together. However, this information will prove vital to Scarpetta's investigation in later chapters.

Scarpetta and Marino meet with the lead detective on the Harrington-Mott case. The detective kept lots of information on the case and brings all of this for Scarpetta and Marino to look at. Scarpetta examines the photographs of the women where they were found in the cemetery and notices right away that they are missing their shoes. The clue

of the missing shoes ties these women in with the other murdered couples, making their case look more and more like the first in the series of couple murders.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

The detective cannot provide a reason for why Elizabeth and Jill might have been shoeless that night. The detective also tells them that he found nothing out of the ordinary at the scene except for an expensive lighter that he thought the killer might have lost, but the detective was unable to trace it to anyone. The detective leaves, allowing Scarpetta and Marino a few minutes alone to discuss possible scenarios. Marino believes that the killer approached the women in the parking lot of the bar, somehow got them to let him into their car, and then one of the ladies hit him in the nose causing a nosebleed, which was all the blood they found in the back of the car. Scarpetta suggests the nosebleed caused the killer to panic and instead of taking the ladies to the place in the woods where they found the first couple, he took them to the cemetery.

Marino tells Scarpetta that he checked out the license number she gave him on the suspicious car in Williamsburg and it came back to a traveling salesman who was out of town at the time. Not only that, but the salesman's car is a different color than the car that Scarpetta saw. This rules out an FBI agent, but looks suspicious just the same. Later that night, thinking things over in bed, Scarpetta suddenly thinks of something. Scarpetta calls the detective and asks if there was a vending machine near Jill's apartment that sold the New York Times. The detective said no, that the vending machines only sold local papers. Scarpetta asks if there was ever a New York Times in her mail and he again replies in the negative. Scarpetta remembers seeing a New York Times in Jill's apartment in the pictures the detective showed her. Scarpetta also remembers what Anna said about the ladies enjoying crossword puzzles on Sundays and wonders if the papers have any connection to the killer.

The next day at work Scarpetta learns that the credit cards found in Deborah's purse retained fingerprints because of the plastic compartment they were kept in. However, the driver's license did not have fingerprints on it even though it was also in a plastic compartment and had been handled the night she disappeared by both Deborah and the clerk at the convenience store. Scarpetta begins to think that the killer handled the license in order to verify Deborah's identity, assuming she told him who she was. Scarpetta believes this could explain why the purse was found with the body and the jack of hearts was inside the purse.

Abby arrives at Scarpetta's house that night uninvited. Abby tells Scarpetta that she had an affair with Clifford Ring, the reporter from the Post, and that he was the one who repeatedly broke into her house in order to read her notes on the Harvey-Cheney case, basing his articles on those notes. Abby is angry about this breach in trust and does not want to stay at her apartment any more. Scarpetta invites her to stay at her house for a while. When Abby unpacks, Scarpetta notices she has a gun among her belongings.



Chapter 14 Analysis

Scarpetta and Marino come up with a few scenarios that would explain the evidence found in the Harrington-Mott case. Marino thinks the women picked the killer up because he claimed to have car trouble or some such problem and had the women drive out toward the cemetery. Scarpetta believes that after the killer suffered a nosebleed for some unknown reason, he panicked and changed his plans. Scarpetta believes the killer was originally going to take the ladies to the place where the first couple would be found five years later, but the nosebleed caused him to need a place closer, so he chose the cemetery. Scarpetta believes this explains why the dog was killed shortly before the Harrington-Mott killings. Scarpetta believes the dog disturbed the killer while he was scouting the location in which he planned to kill the girls.

Marino has run the license plate number Scarpetta gave him and assures her that it was only a salesman lost on his route. Scarpetta does not believe this, however, because the salesman's car is a different color from the car she saw. However, this does clear the FBI of following Abby. Abby is also sure that the FBI is not following her as she has discovered that the person breaking into her apartment was an ex-lover who was stealing her notes on the Harvey-Cheney case. Abby feels violated and breaks down on Scarpetta who quickly invites her to stay. Scarpetta notices a gun among Abby's things and feels uncomfortable seeing it. The reader too should take note of this gun as it will come back to haunt Abby.

Scarpetta also discovers that Deborah Harvey's driver's license has no fingerprints on it even though she knows both Deborah and the clerk at the convenience store handled it the night she disappeared. Scarpetta believes this means that the killer handled the license and returned it to her purse after wiping the prints. Scarpetta also believes this means the killer knew who she was so he changed his MO to show disdain for her status in the community. Finally, Scarpetta also discovers that Jill liked to do crossword puzzles in the New York Times, but there was no vending machine in the area that carried it, suggesting she went to a store somewhere to find it. Scarpetta is beginning to think the killer knew Jill and Elizabeth and perhaps this store was the connection.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Scarpetta has both Abby and Marino to dinner that night. Abby and Marino immediately begin to argue, so Scarpetta gives them some time to work out their differences before they discuss anything. Abby had spent the day investigating the salesman whose car Marino traced the license plates to. Abby discovered through a picture in the man's house that he is not the man who stopped her and Scarpetta for directions. Marino decides to speak to the man the next day and learns he was in fact out of town and his car was in long term parking at the airport. Marino thinks the man who stopped Scarpetta was a drug dealer using stolen plates to avoid detection. Scarpetta does not agree. Scarpetta believes the man who stopped her was the killer.

Scarpetta and Abby go to Williamsburg to tour the locations involved in the Harrington-Mott killings. Scarpetta decides to look for the car belonging to the man who stopped them the last time they were there. Scarpetta finds the car parked outside a bookstore in downtown Williamsburg. Scarpetta writes down the license plate number and calls it in to Marino. Scarpetta then goes into the bookstore to see if the man maybe works there, explaining his connection to Jill and Elizabeth. As soon as Scarpetta walks through the door she sees a stack of New York Times near the counter. Behind the counter, Scarpetta recognizes the same man who stopped and asked her for directions.

Chapter 15 Analysis

Abby and Marino discover that the man who owns the license plates on the car that stopped Scarpetta and Abby in Williamsburg could not be the same man they spoke to. The salesman who owns the plates was out of town that night and his car was in long term parking at the airport. Marino thinks maybe a drug dealer stole the plates to avoid attention, but Scarpetta thinks it was the killer. Scarpetta returns to Williamsburg to find out for sure and quickly finds the car. Scarpetta calls Marino with the real plate numbers and then goes into the store to see if her theory is correct. Scarpetta believes that Jill and Elizabeth would have had breakfast and then would stop in a bookstore to buy the New York Times. Inside the bookstore, Scarpetta not only finds copies of the paper, but also finds the man who stopped her and Abby and asked for directions. It seems to the reader that Scarpetta has found the killer. The question now is whether or not Scarpetta can prove it is him.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Scarpetta and Marino are called to Quantico to talk with Wesley. Wesley tells them that the man in the bookstore is Steven Spurrier. Spurrier is the son of a successful real estate broker. Spurrier's father died when he was young and his mother died several years later of cancer. Spurrier was in the Navy for a short time, but was giving a discharge during his mother's illness. Spurrier then inherited a great deal of his father's money, presumably sharing it with his brother who now lives in Texas. Spurrier owns the bookstore and has owned it since before Jill and Elizabeth were killed. Wesley tells Scarpetta and Marino that he believes this is their man and has had him placed under surveillance.

Not long afterward, Spurrier is arrested for attempting to steal plates off a car at the airport. While Spurrier is in jail, a search warrant is served on his home and business. The police find very little except that the man is very careful not to have anything in his house that might leave fibers on his clothing or body and that he keeps surgical gloves and shoe booties in his bedroom closet. Marino also tells Scarpetta that Spurrier has a great deal of pornography in his house, suggesting a psychological obsession.

Scarpetta confronts Abby that night because she has not been home a great deal and is treating Scarpetta like a landlady rather than a friend. Abby tells Scarpetta that she is working hard on her book, looking at it as a second chance. Abby also tells Scarpetta that she has doubts about Spurrier's guilt. Abby still subscribes to the theory that the killer is a member of the CIA and that the FBI planted evidence to make Spurrier look guilty in order to take the heat off the CIA.

Chapter 16 Analysis

Scarpetta learns a great deal about the suspect, Spurrier. Spurrier is a loner who was often referred to as a wimp. Spurrier has a great deal of money, but chooses to live somewhat modestly. Spurrier has been in Williamsburg long enough that he would have been in his bookstore at least once when Jill and Elizabeth came to buy a paper. When Spurrier is arrested, Marino finds that he has a cleanliness fetish and that he enjoys pornography, especially violent pornography. Marino believes this proves Spurrier's guilt. Abby disagrees. Abby still believes that the CIA is involved and that Spurrier is just a scapegoat. Scarpetta does not agree. The reader is handed two theories in this chapter and neither one seems any more or less likely, adding tension to the plot. The reader looks anxiously to the next chapter to find the answers.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Marino shows Scarpetta the pictures taken at Spurrier's house and tells her that they took DNA from Spurrier in order to compare with the blood found in Elizabeth Mott's car. The early results look promising, but it will take some time to get the larger results. Scarpetta and Marino then theorize on Spurrier's M.O., suggesting that he used the same need for directions on his victims that he had attempted to use on Scarpetta and that somehow he got his victims to allow him into their car. In the Harvey-Cheney case, Marino believes Spurrier approached Fred while Deborah was in the restroom. Later, when Spurrier had revealed his intentions, Scarpetta theorizes that Deborah told him who she was so he looked at her driver's license. Then Spurrier left the purse with Deborah's body to show his disdain for her mother's powerful position.

Several weeks later, the night before Spurrier's trial date, Mrs. Harvey comes to visit Scarpetta. Mrs. Harvey wants to know if Scarpetta believes beyond a doubt that Spurrier killed her daughter. Scarpetta refuses to answer the question directly, but Mrs. Harvey sees in her hesitation the real answer. Later Scarpetta runs into Abby who is sneaking into the house in the middle of the night. Abby tells her that she believes Spurrier will go to jail the next day in order to appease all the law enforcement personnel who believe he is guilty of these crimes. Abby does not believe he is guilty and thinks the whole thing is a travesty.

The next morning Scarpetta sleeps in. When Scarpetta gets up she finds Abby is already gone. Scarpetta is worried about her, so she goes into her room and looks through her notes. Scarpetta quickly discovers that Abby has an appointment to interview Spurrier, who appears to have been set free. Scarpetta is concerned for Abby's welfare so she calls the Williamsburg police to warn them Abby is with Spurrier. Scarpetta learns they are no longer watching Spurrier. Scarpetta is in a panic now and calls Marino. She and Marino race to Spurrier's house. Marino goes inside first and moments later calls for Scarpetta. Scarpetta walks into the house and finds that both Spurrier and Abby are dead. Scarpetta is attempting to check Abby's vital signs when Mrs. Harvey walks into the room. Mrs. Harvey confesses to killing Spurrier out of fear that he would not pay for what he did to her daughter. Mrs. Harvey then turns the gun on herself.

Chapter 17 Analysis

Scarpetta and Marino now believe they know how Spurrier won the trust of his victims and how he killed them. They even believe they know why Deborah's driver's license had no prints on it. However, they are still waiting on the DNA evidence that will prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Steven Spurrier is the man who killed Jill Harrington



and Elizabeth Mott. It seems the case is solid; however, there is still a chapter remaining.

Mrs. Harvey comes to see Scarpetta a few weeks later and wants to know if Scarpetta believes that Spurrier killed her daughter. Even though Scarpetta does not say that she believes this, Mrs. Harvey guesses from what she does not say that she does believe it. Mrs. Harvey leaves, having gotten the information she wanted. Mrs. Harvey wants the person who killed her daughter to pay for his crimes, and the reader must see this through their empathy for the grieving mother. Therefore, it is no surprise when Scarpetta arrives at Spurrier's home and finds him dead. It is also no surprise to find Mrs. Harvey is the one who shot him. What is surprising is the fact that Abby is also shot. Abby is someone that Mrs. Harvey would not have harmed because they were friendly. However, before Mrs. Harvey can explain what has happened, she turns the gun on herself, a final act of grief.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Marino has taken Scarpetta back to her home where the police are searching through Abby's things. Scarpetta learns that Abby had a tape recorder that recorded everything that happened in Spurrier's house that morning. Scarpetta insists on listening to the tape. The tape gives the impression that Abby did not know Mrs. Harvey planned to kill Spurrier and that she attempted to pull her own gun when she saw what Mrs. Harvey's intentions were. Spurrier went for Abby's gun and shot her in the struggle seconds before Mrs. Harvey shot him. Marino then tells Scarpetta that Mrs. Harvey shot Spurrier because she learned the DNA tests had not matched the blood in Jill Harrington's car.

At Abby's funeral Scarpetta speaks to Wesley. Scarpetta tells him that she spoke to Spurrier's brother and learned that Spurrier had aplastic anemia and had to have a bone marrow transplant five years ago, explaining the gap between the murders. Scarpetta also explains that this transplant would have changed Spurrier's DNA and would explain why the blood did not match up. However, Scarpetta believes that further testing with DNA from his brain will match.

Chapter 18 Analysis

Scarpetta learns hours after Abby's death that the DNA did not match Steven Spurrier and is the reason Mrs. Harvey did not believe that Spurrier would be convicted of murder. Mrs. Harvey chose to take the law into her own hands and make sure Spurrier was punished. However, she did not know Abby would be at Spurrier's house. Abby tried to pull her own gun when Mrs. Harvey arrived and Spurrier fought her for it, causing Abby to be shot. Abby died of her wounds, as did Spurrier, but Mrs. Harvey would survive. Scarpetta continued to investigate after these events and discovered that Spurrier had had a bone marrow transplant, explaining why his blood did not match. Scarpetta still believes Spurrier is guilty and that further testing will prove it.



Characters

Kay Scarpetta

Kay Scarpetta is the chief medical examiner of Virginia, and she lives and works in Richmond. When the novel opens, Scarpetta is looking forward to some early fall gardening, but a call to a crime scene interrupts her plans. The vehicle of a young couple has been found abandoned at a highway rest stop. Immediately, the investigators, Scarpetta included, believe this case may be connected to the deaths of three other couples whose cars were found months before their bodies were discovered in isolated places. When Scarpetta learns that one of the missing people is the daughter of a well known politician, she becomes concerned. The investigation is already complicated by the number of law agencies involved. The involvement of this politician could only make matters worse.

When the bodies are found, Scarpetta discovers that the bodies have been moved, an act that goes against all the rules. Scarpetta begins to suspect that she is being kept out of the information loop and decides to do some investigating on her own. Scarpetta goes to visit a psychic who is rumored to have spoken to the mother of the murdered girl. With information related to this visit and the knowledge that the girl was shot, Scarpetta goes to the place where the bodies were found and looks for the bullet casing from the gun used to shot the young woman. When it is found, Scarpetta quickly learns that it was planted. Now Scarpetta knows that she is being kept in the dark and is determined to find out why. Scarpetta meets with her FBI contact and learns that they planted the casing in order to draw the killer out into the open. Before the FBI can draw the killer out, however, the mother of the murdered young woman has a press conference that is designed to accuse the FBI and the CIA of a cover-up. However, the FBI anticipated this move and managed to discredit her in the press.

Scarpetta begins to wonder if the killer had other victims before the four she is aware of. Scarpetta begins to search past autopsy reports looking for cases that involve the use of Hydro Shock bullets, the type of bullet used to shot the murdered young woman. Scarpetta comes across two cases. One involves a dog, shot near the area where the first couple was found. The other involves two women who were found murdered in a cemetery in historic Williamsburg. While investigating the deaths of these two women, thinking they could possibly be the killer's first victims, Scarpetta identifies a possible suspect. This identification leads to the man's arrest for a petty larceny, thus identifying him to the politician whose daughter was killed. Soon afterward, the politician takes justice into her own hands.

Pete Marino

Pete Marino is a detective with the Richmond Police Department and is also part of a special investigative group, VICAP, with his FBI partner, Benton Wesley. VICAP has



been investigating the couple murders, so when the Jeep Cherokee belonging to Deborah Harvey is discovered abandoned at a rest stop, part of the MO of the killer, Marino is called in. Marino, in turn, calls Scarpetta in case anything found in the car could be of use to her when the bodies are found. However, except for the unusual reaction of one of the search dogs, nothing unusual is found.

Marino realizes along with Scarpetta that the FBI are withholding information from him, causing him deep frustration. Marino's personal life is in turmoil at the same time, since his wife has left him for another man. These two things combined causes Marino to be dark and angry, difficult to get along with. Scarpetta seems to be the only person who cares enough to pull Marino aside and tell him to stop feeling sorry for himself and start taking care of himself. Through all this turmoil, however, Marino is still a good detective. Marino accompanies Scarpetta on her trip to visit the psychic and helps her search for the bullet casing. Marino is also the one who manages to learn the truth about the planted casing. When Scarpetta is approached by a strange man in Williamsburg, Marino runs the license plate and does the investigation that leads to the identity of the killer. Without Marino, Scarpetta would not have been able to solve the case the way she did.

Benton Wesley

Benton Wesley is an FBI agent who is also one of the first profilers in Quantico's profiling program. Wesley is also Marino's partner in VICAP. Wesley is the lead investigator on the couple murders and is the one who asks Scarpetta not to release the autopsy findings to the families in order to keep the politician, Mrs. Harvey, from learning exactly how her daughter died. Wesley is afraid that with this information, Mrs. Harvey will jump to the wrong conclusions and interfere with the investigation. However, Scarpetta watches the FBI discredit Mrs. Harvey, and decides she deserves to know the truth about her daughter's death.

Wesley is also Mark's best friend. This situation causes tension between Scarpetta and Wesley as she assumes that his reluctance to tell her the truth about the investigation stems from Mark's decision to leave Quantico. Wesley denies this. Eventually Wesley tells Scarpetta the truth behind his decision to keep her out of the investigation. The CIA believes that the killer in the couple murders has connection to their training facilities at Camp Peary. The FBI has been trying to keep this information quiet in order to help flush out the killer. However, Wesley has come to believe that the killer has nothing to do with Camp Peary but is planting evidence to give this appearance. In the end, Wesley is correct.

Pat Harvey

Pat Harvey, once a district attorney and now the Drug Czar, reporting only to the President, is the mother of murder victim Deborah Harvey. Pat Harvey calls Scarpetta the day after her daughter's car is found abandoned and asks her if she believes her



daughter's disappearance is connected to the serial murders. Scarpetta finds Pat Harvey well informed about the cases, possessing information that even Scarpetta herself did not have access to. Scarpetta becomes concerned that Pat Harvey will use this knowledge to overstep her place in the investigation. When the bodies are found, Pat Harvey immediately begins accusing the FBI, the local police, and Scarpetta of covering up evidence. It does not help that Scarpetta is ordered not to release her findings to Mrs. Harvey. Mrs. Harvey sees this as further evidence of a cover-up.

Mrs. Harvey threatens to sue Scarpetta if she does not release the autopsy report, getting her in trouble with her bosses. Then Mrs. Harvey gives a press conference at which she openly accuses the investigative bodies of hiding evidence because the killer is a member of the CIA or the military. Scarpetta is shocked to find that the press receives Mrs. Harvey's statements with disdain, implying that they are the ravings of a mad woman, or of a mother insane with grief. Scarpetta learns later that Mrs. Harvey was actually telling the truth, given the information she had at the time. The FBI and the CIA were concerned that the killer was a member of the CIA, but later learned that he was not. When the killer is identified and it begins to look as though he will not be charged with any of the murders, Mrs. Harvey decides to take justice into her own hands. Mrs. Harvey kills the man who killed her daughter and then attempts to kill herself.

Deborah Harvey

Deborah Harvey is the daughter of Pat Harvey. Deborah and her boyfriend were on their way to her family's beach house when they apparently came across a serial killer. Deborah and her boyfriend stopped at a convenience store to get some supplies and to use the rest room, but were told they had to go to a rest stop down the highway. It is here that the police believe they ran into their killer. Deborah and her boyfriend were then forced to walk barefoot through the woods, where Deborah was forced to watch her boyfriend being killed. The autopsy report suggests that Deborah then managed to get her bound hands in front of her body and hit her boyfriend's killer, inflicting a knife wound on her hand, and then ran. The killer then shot her in the back, lodging a bullet in her spine, which would lead Scarpetta to another set of murders that would identify the killer.

Fred Cheney

Fred Cheney is Deborah Harvey's boyfriend. Mrs. Harvey did not approve of Fred's relationship with her daughter. When Deborah's Jeep is first discovered, there is some thought that perhaps the two lovers ran off together in order to escape Mrs. Harvey's disapproval. However, this proves to be false when their partially skeletonized bodies are discovered in the woods. It appears on autopsy that Fred suffered some soft tissue injury, such as a cut throat, that resulted in his death. However, Scarpetta cannot be sure what killed Fred because there is no indication of violence on his bones, the only parts of his body still in existence. Fred's death is overshadowed by his girlfriend's



famous mother, causing his father, who had no other children, to be overwhelmed with anger that no one seems to remember Fred's name.

Abby Turnbull

Abby Turnbull is a reporter who once worked in Richmond. A year or two before the disappearance of Deborah Harvey and Fred Cheney, Abby's sister, Henna, was murdered by a serial killer in Richmond. Scarpetta was the coroner on the case and became good friends with Abby during the investigation. Abby has since moved to Washington in order to work for the Washington Post. Abby contacts Scarpetta shortly after Deborah Harvey's car is found. Abby is in town doing a story on the case and visits Scarpetta to catch up. During their conversations, Abby tells Scarpetta that she plans to interview the clerk at the convenience store where Deborah and Fred stopped, so Scarpetta goes along with her in the interest of keeping Abby safe. When Abby's story does not come out the following week as she expected, Scarpetta tries to call Abby at the Post only to learn she has taken time off. Scarpetta then learns that Abby is writing a book on the case and she becomes upset because she feels that Abby used her to get information for the book.

Abby contacts Scarpetta a short time later and insists that she was not using her. Abby tells Scarpetta she believes the FBI is following her because she has evidence that someone has gotten into her computer and has been tampering with her mail. Abby learns later that this was not the act of the FBI but that of her lover, a fellow writer at the Post, Clifford Ring. Abby also learns that Cliff plans on writing a book of his own. Abby decides that she must finish her book first and throws herself into writing it. When Scarpetta focuses on the murders of Elizabeth Mott and Jill Harrington, she goes with her in order to get information for her book. Shortly after this, the killer is identified. Abby does not believe he is the killer, however. Abby gets an interview with the killer and is at his home when Mrs. Harvey arrives to kill him. Abby tries to pull her own gun, but the killer attempts to take it from her and shoots her. Abby dies from her wounds.

Steven Spurrier

Steven Spurrier is the owner of a bookstore in Williamsburg. Scarpetta becomes aware of him when, late one night, she and Abby are getting into their car in a parking lot and he approaches to ask for directions. Scarpetta is suspicious that he did not actually need directions because he has a sticker on his car proving he is local, so she writes down his license plate number. This number leads Marino to learn they are stolen plates. Shortly after, Scarpetta connects the book store Spurrier owns to the murdered girls, Mott and Harrington. Scarpetta believes Spurrier is the killer and convinces the police to put a tail on him. When Spurrier tries to steal some license plates, he is arrested. During this time, his home and business are searched, but nothing incriminating is found. Since Spurrier has never been arrested before, he is let go with a fine. When DNA tests come back and seem to prove that Spurrier is innocent, Mrs.



Harvey decides he is not going to pay for his crimes. Mrs. Harvey goes to his home and kills him before attempting to take her own life.

Jill Harrington and Elizabeth Mott

Jill Harrington and Elizabeth Mott are two women who were found murdered in a Williamsburg cemetery five years before the couple killings began. Since one of the women was shot with a bullet similar to the one found in Deborah Harvey, Scarpetta suspects they are the first victims of the couples killer. Scarpetta begins to investigate these murders, going to the cemetery, a bar where they spent their final hours, and the hotel where their car was found. The police theorized at the time of the murders that the women had picked up a man at the bar and had taken him to the hotel with them. However, Scarpetta discovers that the women did not take a room in the hotel and suspects that they were never at the hotel. Scarpetta believes the women picked up the man outside the bar for some reason, perhaps because he claimed to be having car trouble. This theory seems to be confirmed when Scarpetta discovers that Jill Harrington had been seeing a psychiatrist because of her discomfort with the lesbian affair she had been having with Elizabeth Mott. This fact allows Scarpetta to connect the couple more firmly with the couple killer's MO, leading her to a possible suspect.

Hilda Ozimek

Hilda Ozimek is a psychic that the FBI has used on occasion. Shortly after her daughter disappears, Mrs. Harvey brings Ms. Ozimek to Richmond in order to garner information about her daughter's whereabouts. When Scarpetta learns about this and discovers that she is not to be allowed to know what Ms. Ozimek told Mrs. Harvey, she decides to go visit Ms. Ozimek herself. During this visit, Scarpetta learns that Ms. Ozimek believes the killer left something behind at the scene of the murders. Due to the fact that Deborah Harvey was shot, Scarpetta believes this object is the bullet casing. Scarpetta takes Marino to the scene of the murders and finds the casing. However, it turns out the real casing has already been found and this casing is a plant left behind in order to lure out the killer.



Objects/Places

Jeep Cherokee

Deborah Harvey's Jeep Cherokee is found at a rest stop the day after she, along with her boyfriend, Fred Cheney, are reported missing.

Shoes and Socks

The killer forces the couples to remove their shoes and socks before he kills them. The shoes and socks are never recovered.

Jack of Hearts

A jack of hearts card is found either within the vehicles of or with the bodies of the murdered couples. These cards have certain meaning within the military community, giving the CIA and the FBI reason to believe the killer has connections to Camp Peary or the military in general.

Left Proximal Phalange

On Deborah's left proximal phalange, or index finger bone, Scarpetta found a cut that implies that Deborah attempted to attack her killer and was cut in the process. This gives Scarpetta a good idea of the type of knife used in the attack, a serrated blade common with military knives.

Hydro Shock Bullet

Scarpetta finds a hydro shock bullet lodged in Deborah's spine. This bullet is common to police issue ammunition. The bullet is unusual because none of the other couple victims were shot.

Bullet Casing

Scarpetta and Marino believe the bullet casing from the gun used to shoot Deborah Harvey is still missing near the place where the bodies were found. Scarpetta and Marino decide to look for the casing, find one, and later learn it was planted in hopes of drawing out the real killer.



Abby's Book

Abby decides to write a book on the couple murders when the situation at the Post becomes unproductive.

Abby's Mail

Abby becomes convinced that she is being watched by the FBI when she discovers that some of her mail appears to have been stolen and replaced.

Abby's Computer

Abby believes someone is breaking into her computer and reading her notes on the couple murders. Later, Abby discovers that a co-worker and ex-lover, Clifford Ring, is using a key she gave him to get into her home and read her notes on her computer so that he can write a series on the murders himself.

The Washington Post

Abby Turnbull moved to Washington and has become a reporter for the Washington Post where she writes several stories regarding the couple murders.

Camp Peary

Camp Peary is a military training facility that is rumored to be the training grounds for the CIA. The CIA and the FBI suspect that the couples murderer was once or still is an agent receiving training at Camp Peary.

Richmond, Virginia

Richmond, Virginia is where Scarpetta lives. Richmond is also close to where the bodies of the murdered couples are found, placing them in Scarpetta's jurisdiction.



Themes

Grief

Grief is a theme of this novel because it is grief that motivates two of the characters. The first is Mrs. Harvey, whose obvious grief stems from the murder of her daughter. Mrs. Harvey is consumed by grief not only because of her love for her daughter, but because they had a fight the day Deborah disappeared. Mrs. Harvey uses her political power to keep involved in the investigation. However, when the bodies are found, the FBI does everything they can to keep Mrs. Harvey out of the investigation, including telling Scarpetta not to release the autopsy report to her. Mrs. Harvey sees this as a cover up and decides to go public with her opinion. When Mrs. Harvey throws a press conference, accusing the FBI, the CIA, and the coroner's office in being involved in a cover-up, suggesting they know who killed her daughter, the press reacts as though these accusations are the statements of a grieving mother and are not serious. Pat Harvey is ridiculed and her promising political career is ruined.

Abby Turnbull once had a sister who was brutally murdered in the home they shared. Abby became good friends with Scarpetta during that investigation and has remained good friends with her. When the couple murders begin, Abby, a reporter, grabs onto them because they touch a nerve that is related to her sister's death. During her investigations into the cases, Abby learns a great number of details that even Scarpetta is not privy to. Abby begins to speak with Mrs. Harvey about these things, feeling empathy for her because of their shared grief. However, this empathy proves to be Abby's undoing because it is the information Abby shares with Mrs. Harvey that leads her to kill Steven Sperrier, causing Abby's death in the process.

Commitment

Scarpetta is in love with a man, Mark, whom she met in college. Scarpetta and Mark had a torrid affair for a year in college, but the relationship ended and Scarpetta married another man. However, years later, Scarpetta and Mark found each other again. Their relationship was just as torrid the second time around, until career pressures caused turmoil in their relationship. Mark and Scarpetta began fighting so much over their mutual commitments to their jobs that Mark decided to put in for a transfer that would take him halfway across the country. Now Scarpetta is alone and wondering if Mark was ever willing to commit to her. When Mark fails to call her over the long months they are apart, she decides he does not love her.

Marino has been married for almost thirty years. Marino was comfortable in his marriage, believing his wife would always be willing to wait for him at home. However, one too many disappointments drive his wife out of their home. Doris goes to New York to care for her ailing mother and ends up falling in love with someone else. Doris returns to Marino, but only for a short time. Doris leaves again, but cannot commit to either



Marino or her new lover. Marino is disappointed by Doris's infidelity to the point where he stops caring for himself. Scarpetta makes him realize that he needs to care for himself in order to show Doris he needs her, but not to be his mother. Marino takes her advice, but Doris fails to return.

Commitment is an important part of this novel because it underlies the murders of the couples, connecting Scarpetta and Marino to these couples in a personal way. Scarpetta is afraid of commitment, but she is a part of a couple just like the eight people who are murdered. Marino too is a half of a couple, even if that couple has come to an end to their relationship. It is their connection to the couples who died that makes those couple's deaths even more tragic and that spurs them on to solve the cases.

Death

Death is an obvious theme to this novel because of Scarpetta's career. Scarpetta has made her life exploring death and finding reasons for its existence. Due to this career choice, Scarpetta is on the scene when the bodies of Deborah Harvey and Fred Cheney are found. Scarpetta spends the bulk of the novel attempting to find their killer, and working to bring justice and understanding to these deaths. Scarpetta is successful, but death continues to take victims when the suspect and Scarpetta's friend, Abby, are killed in the process.

Death is also important to this novel because it is an essential element to the investigation that drives the plot. An unknown person is killing couples, having killed four that the police are aware of. No one knows why this person does what he does, but they know that he is smart, that he has access to military equipment, and that he has a problem with couples. Murder is the way he acts out against those who offend him. It is also death that will lead Scarpetta to his door when she finds two women whom he killed many years before the first couple was found. It is these things that make death an important theme to the novel.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of this novel is first person. The narrator is Kay Scarpetta, the main character. The novel is seen constantly through Scarpetta's eyes, giving the reader an inside track on the investigation into the murders of Deborah Harvey and Fred Cheney, but only to the extent in which Scarpetta is involved. The reader does not get to see how the FBI is handling the case except to the extent in which Scarpetta can convince Wesley to tell her. This allows the reader to feel Scarpetta's frustration in not being given all the information that pertains to these cases while still attempting to assist in helping with the investigation. Eventually it is Scarpetta who discovers the truth in the killer's identity, despite the attempts of the FBI to keep her out of the investigation.

The point of view of this novel works because by seeing everything through Scarpetta's eyes the reader is kept in touch with the most important character in the novel. Scarpetta is the focus of the novel despite the exciting events taking place around her and her first person view makes this fact clear to the reader rather than muddying up the narration by moving from one narrator to another. Not only this, but the point of view gives the reader unique insight into the life of a forensic scientist, taking the reader into the autopsy suite and allowing the reader to make discoveries within the human bodies along with Scarpetta. This is a unique situation within this novel that makes it fascinating to readers interested in this type of science.

Setting

The bulk of the novel takes place in Richmond, Virginia. It is in Richmond where Scarpetta is the chief medical examiner of the state of Virginia. Due to this setting, the novel gives the reader a description of the beautiful landscape of Richmond, including its wintry weather, its historic buildings, and its eastern beauty. However, Richmond is simply a backdrop to the area where Scarpetta lives. More important settings within the novel include the rest stop where Deborah Harvey's Jeep is found and the wooded area where her body and Fred Cheney's body are discovered. The wooded area especially is vital to the plot within the novel due to the fact that this is where the couple was murdered. It provides many clues to the identity of the killer.

Another important setting in this novel is the historic town of Williamsburg. It is in Williamsburg where the first two victims of the couple killer were murdered. Scarpetta goes to Williamsburg after learning about the deaths of Elizabeth Mott and Jill Harrington. In Williamsburg she visits the cemetery where the women's bodies were found, the bar where they spent their final hours, and the hotel where their car was found. In visiting these places and learning more about the women themselves, Scarpetta learns the identity of their killer. Working on her information, the FBI arrests the killer. However, they are forced to let him go where he is subsequently killed by



Harvey's mother. If not for the setting and Scarpetta's visits there, the identity of the killer might not have been discovered, making this setting one of the most important within the novel.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is precise English. Scarpetta, the narrator, is a well educated woman, holding both a degree in medicine and a degree in law. Therefore, the language that Scarpetta uses in her narration is clearly educated, with very little slang. The language also contains scientific words associated with Scarpetta's work as a forensic scientist, peppering the novel with large words and short explanations to their meaning. There are places within the narration where dialogue presented by police detective Marino includes slang, profanity, and less refined speech inherent to his less educated background. These passages are not frequent, though they appear often enough to break up the monotony of Scarpetta's more educated language.

The language of this novel works because it fits the personality and background of its narrator. Should the author have chosen to use less refined language with Scarpetta it would have taken away the authenticity of the character. Using a less formal language in Marino's speech also adds to the authenticity of his character, showing the reader the contrast between these two main characters and underscoring the differences between them in a way that makes their friendship somewhat ironic. The author uses language in a way that enriches the narration, making the novel much easier to both read and understand.

Structure

The novel is divided into eighteen chapters. Each chapter is about twenty pages long, covering a progressing time line within the novel. The novel takes place over more than six months, progressing from early fall through early spring. Time is handled well within the novel with easy explanations in order to keep the reader from getting confused. Most of the novel is told in both exposition and dialogue, giving the reader a sense of being a part of the narration rather than just reading a story.

There are two major story lines within the novel. The first revolves around the murders of Deborah Harvey and Fred Cheney, including the investigation of similar murders that took place before these two. Scarpetta is the primary coroner on all the cases; therefore, she takes it upon herself to help find the killer. Scarpetta leaves the lab and participate actively in the investigation, putting herself in danger several times throughout this investigation. Scarpetta teams up with both Marino, a police detective, and her friend Abby Turnbull, a reporter, in order to investigate these murders. Eventually, Scarpetta stumbles upon information that leads her to the identity of the killer.

The other main story line is the trouble Scarpetta is having in her private life with her estranged lover. Scarpetta has been involved in a relationship with an FBI agent for

many years. However, before the opening of the novel, this agent moved away in an attempt to get Scarpetta to commit more fully to their relationship. Through the novel, Scarpetta struggles with her feeling for this man and whether or not she can make a commitment to him.



Quotes

"Saturday, the last day of August, I started work before dawn. I did not witness mist burning off the grass or the sky turning brilliant blue. Steel tables were occupied by bodies all morning, and there are no windows in the morgue. Labor Day weekend had begun with a bang of car crashes and gunfire in the city of Richmond." Chap. 1, p. 1

"A perpetual complainer, Marino had a habit of arriving at a crime scene and acting as if he did not want to be there." Chap. 1, p. 9

"My first months at Georgetown I was so overwhelmed by law school and feelings of alienation that I kept my own counsel and distance from others. I was already an M.D., a middle-class Italian from Miami with very little exposure to the finer things in life. Suddenly I found myself cast among the brilliant and beautiful, and though I am not ashamed of my heritage, I felt socially common." Chap. 4, p. 70

"I had been told there were two bodies, suspected to be a male and a female. They were less than four miles from the rest stop where Deborah Harvey's Jeep had been found last fall." Chap. 5, p. 79

"It wasn't until I moved in close and got down on my knees that I noticed a margin of dark soil, so narrow it was barely perceptible, on either side of the bodies. If they had died Labor Day weekend, autumn leaves would not have fallen yet. The ground beneath them would be relatively bare. I did not like what was going through my mind. It was bad enough the police had been tramping around out here for hours. Dammit. To more or less disturb a body in any way before the medical examiner arrives is a cardinal sin, and every officer out here knew that." Chap. 5, p. 81

"Other passengers were filing in, and it was amazing the power Marino had to make the world tilt slightly on its axis. He had chosen to sit in an area designated as non-smoking, then had carried an upright ashtray from rows away and placed it by his chair. This served as a subliminal invitation for other semi-awake smokers to settle near us, several of whom carried over additional ashtrays. By the time we were ready to board there was hardly an ashtray to be found in the smoking area and nobody seemed quite sure where to sit. Embarrassed and determined to have no part in this unfriendly takeover, I left my pack in my purse." Chap. 7, p. 127

"In the light of a clear afternoon, the woods did not seem so ominous until Marino and I drew closer to the small clearing. Then the faint, foul odor of decomposing human flesh was an insidious reminder." Chap. 8, p. 153

"A frigid wind wreaked havoc with the dark shapes of trees, and in the scant light of the moon the terrain looked foreign and foreboding as I drove to Benton Wesley's house." Chap. 10, p. 193



"Fielding, my deputy chief, was never too preoccupied or busy to glance at any reflective object he happened to pass. This included plate-glass windows, computer screens, and the bulletproof security partitions separating the lobby from our inner offices." Chap. 12, p. 257

"I thought of the bloodhound's reaction when he had sniffed the seat where it was believed Deborah had been sitting. What the dog had detected was her terror." Chap. 16, p. 344

"I drew upon a break in the trees, the river below glimmering like tarnished copper, muddy from recent rains. It did not seem possible that Abby was now part of this population, a granite marker weathering passing time." Chap. 18, p. 367

"I followed the narrow road to the cemetery's entrance, passing through elaborate wrought-iron gates. The sun shone on downtown office buildings and steeples in the distance, light caught in the trees. I opened the windows and drove west toward home." Chap. 18, p. 373



Topics for Discussion

Why does the FBI attempt to keep Scarpetta out of the investigation into the couple murders? Does the FBI believe Scarpetta will compromise this investigation, or are they attempting to keep her in her rightful place? Does Scarpetta's job entitle her to the depth of investigation in which she attempts to participate?

Was Wesley proper in advising Scarpetta not to divulge the autopsy report to Mrs. Harvey? Did Scarpetta's decision to ignore this advice lead to Mrs. Harvey's emotional meltdown? Why does the FBI discredit Mrs. Harvey when most of what she had to say was true?

Why does Abby become so focused on the couple murders? Does this have a connection to her sister's murder? Or is Abby's motivation more connected to her emotional heartbreak over her relationship with Clifford Ring? Why does Abby give Mrs. Harvey so much information? Is this partly to blame for Abby's murder?

Why does Scarpetta visit Hilda Ozimek? What information does Ozimek give Scarpetta that helps her find the killer? Why does Scarpetta go in search of the bullet casing after visiting Ozimek? Does Scarpetta believe this casing will help discover the identity of the killer?

Why does the FBI plant evidence at the murder site in the Cheney-Harvey case? Why did they not inform Scarpetta? Should they have informed Scarpetta? Why or why not? Do you believe this planted evidence would have worked if Scarpetta did not interfere?

Why does Scarpetta investigate the deaths of Harrington and Mott on her own? Why does Scarpetta believe these murders are connected to the deaths of Cheney-Harvey? What are the differences in these cases? What are the similarities? Would you have connected the two cases if you were Scarpetta? Why or why not?

Did Steven Spurrier kill all the couples? Why did the DNA not match? Does this prove that Spurrier committed the crimes? Was Mrs. Harvey justified in killing Spurrier? Do you believe she deserves to go to jail for this crime? What would you have done in Mrs. Harvey's position?