

# **Back to the Bedroom Study Guide**

## **Back to the Bedroom by Janet Evanovich**

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



# Contents

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| <a href="#">Back to the Bedroom Study Guide.....</a> | <a href="#">1</a>  |
| <a href="#">Contents.....</a>                        | <a href="#">2</a>  |
| <a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>                    | <a href="#">3</a>  |
| <a href="#">Chapter 1.....</a>                       | <a href="#">5</a>  |
| <a href="#">Chapter 2.....</a>                       | <a href="#">7</a>  |
| <a href="#">Chapter 3.....</a>                       | <a href="#">9</a>  |
| <a href="#">Chapter 4.....</a>                       | <a href="#">11</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 5.....</a>                       | <a href="#">12</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 6.....</a>                       | <a href="#">13</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 7.....</a>                       | <a href="#">14</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 8.....</a>                       | <a href="#">16</a> |
| <a href="#">Chapter 9.....</a>                       | <a href="#">18</a> |
| <a href="#">Characters.....</a>                      | <a href="#">21</a> |
| <a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>                  | <a href="#">25</a> |
| <a href="#">Themes.....</a>                          | <a href="#">29</a> |
| <a href="#">Style.....</a>                           | <a href="#">31</a> |
| <a href="#">Quotes.....</a>                          | <a href="#">33</a> |
| <a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>           | <a href="#">35</a> |



## Plot Summary

Back to the Bedroom is a novel about a romance between two neighbors: Katherine (Kate) Flynn and David Dodd. The author opens the novel by describing the houses on Kate Flynn's street in Washington DC. Built in the early 1900s, many of the townhouses bear a plain facade. The house next to Kate's, however, bears more intricate designs and appealing color. The author describes it as a birthday cake among bran muffins. In this house lives bachelor David Dodd, who admires his single neighbor Kate Flynn, though the two only speak in passing. When a surveillance helicopter accidentally drops a camera on Flynn's house, however, Dodd take the opportunity to rush to her assistance.

The two notice an instant attraction to one another, despite their very different lifestyles. Since winning the lottery, Dodd follows no schedule. He draws cartoons for his comic strip, which enjoys moderate success. He also buys anything he fancies, from sports cars to electric train sets. Kate, on the other hand, operates on a rigid schedule of rehearsals, concerts and private lessons in her career as a concert cellist. She worries that Dodd's lack of drive makes them incompatible. Her brief and failed marriage to an oboist, Anatole, makes her more wary of serious commitment. Dave also worries about a relationship with Kate, because she never seems to have time for him.

Next the reader meets Elsie Hawkins, an elderly woman who rents Kate's third floor. Desperate to get out of her retirement home, Elsie rents the room even with a big hole in the roof. She quickly explains that she works at a local diner and enjoys an active social calendar of dating and bingo. Kate and Dave also learn that Elsie carries a large gun for protection. When she spots men snooping through the backyard shortly after she moves in, she uses her powerful gun to scare them off. She correctly guesses that the men are looking for the camera that crashed through Kate's roof. Kate later finds the camera in the bushes in front of her house.

For much of the novel, Dave pursues Kate, shooting down the reasons she gives for not deepening their relationship. Kate seems to accept the idea a number of times, until some perceived character flaw of Dave's, namely, his lack of motivation, gets in the way. She grows very dependent on him after breaking her leg during a football throwing lesson. Dave sets her up in his home in order to take care of her. Their physical relationship blossoms at this time. In addition, Dave invites Kate's parents and Elsie over for a dinner, which quickly turns disastrous.

When Kate recovers the camera pod in her bushes, she shows it to Dave, who recognizes a voice in the video as his friend Howie. Dave offers Howie the use of his house for future surveillance. The need arises for a stakeout during a dinner party Dave holds for Elsie, Kate and her parents. The stress of the night includes pressing questions from Kate's father towards Dave, Elsie's insistence on bringing her gun, and a raid on the house across the street which drives Omar, the criminal in question, into Dave's kitchen with a knife. Howie apprehends him only after Elsie threatens him with her gun.



The next morning, Kate asks to have a conversation with Dave concerning their different lifestyles. When he oversleeps and misses the opportunity, Kate decides to end the romantic part of their relationship. She does not see Dave again until the day she receives a leave of absence from the orchestra after an accident caused by her crutches. Dave helps her into the house, but Kate remains staunchly against a romance. She spends her free time much like Dave does, watching TV and daydreaming. She even consents to Dave's help in buying a kitten. When they return home, Anatole arrives with a get-well fruit basket from the symphony. Just as all three of them make their way outside, however, Omar appears, out on parole, and kidnaps Kate in Anatole's car. Elsie overhears the report her date's police scanner and speeds to Kate's assistance. She totals Anatole's new sports car when her heel sticks under the accelerator, effectively stopping the getaway.

Dave runs to Kate's assistance and she falls into his arms. She admits to her love for him and agrees to go home with him for the night before she discovers that her new kitten is missing. The discovery sends her into a depression about her own character. The next day, Elsie, Dave and Kate's parents all arrive, each with a replacement kitten to cheer her up. Then, Anatole arrives with a new fruit basket to replace the one he ate during the kidnapping. He tells her he put the first kitten in the backyard the night before. In private at last, Kate admits that having kittens makes her wish for her own children. Dave vows to support her in this, and they plan to get married. Kate points out that they need to move into a neighborhood that has children.



# Chapter 1

## Chapter 1 Summary

The novel opens with a detailed description of the homes on A Street in Washington DC. Most of the houses appear plain and similar, except one Victorian style home in the middle of the block. The author describes it as a cupcake among bran muffins.

Kate Flynn, the protagonist, resides in a plain townhome next to the Victorian style house of David Dodd. In chapter one, Kate hears a crash in her house and runs to the entrance to her basement. She assumes that any scary noises would originate there. At the same time, Dave enters her house from next door. He informs Kate that he saw an object crash through her roof. Together, they investigate the resulting hole in the ceiling of her second and third floors. They proceed to her bedroom, where they find a large hole extending through her second and third floor ceilings. Her bed and new spread lie in ruins.

Dave silently reflects on the attraction he has developed for Kate while watching her from afar. He watches her as she comes and goes while he sits on his front porch reading comic books. The only thing he dislikes about her appearance is an ugly, black overcoat she often wears. Aloud, he tells Kate that he saw a helicopter fly over and believes a piece falling from the helicopter caused the hole. Though Kate fears the accident targets her somehow and is part of the rest of her bad day, Dave assures her that her part in the accident was incidental.

Kate instantly feels an attraction to David. She enjoys his comfort in a trying situation. In spite of the stressful time, though, Kate maintains her staunch spirit that earned her the nickname Formidable Flynn. When Dodd accuses her of being a bad neighbor, she admits her schedule does not allow her to cook or keep much of a house. In fact, her ex-husband took most of the furniture when he left her. Kate explains that her job as a cellist with the symphony keeps her very busy. Dave suggests calling the police and the FAA. Late for practice, Kate leaves Dave to deal with the aftermath of the accident.

Later that night, she returns to a rainstorm. She worries about her home, given the hole in her roof. After rushing upstairs, she finds Dodd patching the roof from the outside. He struggles to place a piece of her picket fence over the hole and cover it with a tarp. On the first try, Dave slips and falls through the roof, landing on Kate's bed.

## Chapter 1 Analysis

Right away in this novel, fate steps in to bring Dave and Kate together. The author uses an event that seems very improbable to emphasize the role of fate in this novel. Fate also emphasizes the lack of connection between neighbors in large cities. It takes an unusual and catastrophic event to bring two next door neighbors together.



In addition, Dave's house represents an area of indulgence from the beginning. Even the architecture, which existed before Dave moved in, shows more extravagance than the other houses on A Street. Since winning the lottery, Dave operates based only on his personal appetites, with no consideration for gainful employment or self-restraint. He does, however, continue to aid his fellow citizens, especially his attractive neighbor, Kate Flynn. The author wastes no time in developing the sexual and romantic relationship between Dave and Kate. The feelings appear strong and mutual from the start.



# Chapter 2

## Chapter 2 Summary

Kate rushes to his aid. The close, physical contact marks the beginning of strong sexual tension. Dave brushes off the injury and finishes patching the hole. Kate begins fishing for details about Dave's life. He responds with playful sexual banter. When he learns that Kate's cleaners ruined her ugly black overcoat, he rejoices inside.

Dave invites Kate to his home for a bite to eat; he instructs her to ice the cake, something Kate has never done. Kate continues to dig for details about Dave's life. He admits he is between jobs. He observes that Kate does not act very domestic, and she verifies this suspicion.

The next morning, Kate awakens in her sleeping bag in her living room. She finds Elsie Hawkins peering in the window. Elsie explains that she is answering the ad for a room for rent. However, after she climbs onto the window sill to look into what she thought was an empty house, she cannot get down. When Kate tries to help her, they both fall into the bushes. This is how Dave finds them while on his way over to Kate's house. Elsie questions the two about the house. Kate explains that she offered the room for rent following her divorce from Anatole in order to help pay the household bills. Dave explains that he only came to bring doughnuts. After inspecting the house and questioning the hole in the roof, Elsie agrees to rent the third floor if Kate provides some furniture. Elsie explains that she is desperate to get out of her retirement home. Always bold, Elsie questions Kate's sex life and the rest of her relationship with Dave. She questions Dave's plans and shares her concern about spies in Washington DC; she fears Dave is a spy. After paying two months worth of rent, Elsie leaves for her job at a local diner. She admits that she lied about her age to get the job.

Dave admits that he likes Elsie, despite her brash nature. He also silently admires Kate's lack of vanity, as she conducted the whole interview still in her night clothes and without makeup. Kate and Dave talk about buying new furniture for her room and Elsie's. Dave offers his help in finding furniture and moving it for free. The two flirt and touch. Dave thinks he is in love with Kate.

As alarms begin to sound throughout the house, Kate announces that she must leave for rehearsal. Though she lives a hectic schedule, she asserts that she enjoys her music and surrounding jobs. Dave expresses interest in attending her concert. He again offers to help with the beds. Kate agrees with the wisdom of getting the beds right away. She admits Elsie intimidates her. Inwardly, Dave's interest in her concert surprises her.

## Chapter 2 Analysis

The feelings between Kate and Dave escalate from mere attraction to sexual tension in a hurry with their first significant physical contact. Their inward thoughts about one



another foreshadow a deepening relationship to come. Contrary to traditional romances, Kate is the logical and fearful person in the relationship, though she is a female. Dave reacts with impetuosity and feeling, characteristics contrary to those normal of his gender.

The arrival of Elsie Hawkins signals a great deal of comedic relief within the novel. Due to her age, Elsie feels at liberty to speak her mind. For the same reason, she also feels qualified to offer advice on nearly every subject. Her character is also a balance between the career-driven Kate and the lazy Dave. Elsie enjoys both a work life and a varied social calendar.

Music in this novel represents Kate's passion. Eventually, Dave discovers that Kate directs this passion at anything she encounters, from bingo to making love. Kate sees music as the only passion she has room for in her life. Only after she loses this passion during an unexpected vacation after she breaks her leg does she see that her life holds room for other passions.





# Chapter 3

## Chapter 3 Summary

After Kate and Dave buy furniture for the bedrooms, Dave recruits moving help from the Blood and Guts Couch Potatoes, a group of professionals from Washington DC with whom Dave plays backyard football. With promises of beer and pizza, Dave bribes the Couch Potatoes into helping. Dave introduces each of the men to Kate.

Kate and Dave enjoy an easy attraction to one another. Dave explains himself in further detail, mentioning his former employment as a wedding photographer, which he found boring. Kate says she loves her music, but sounds wistful.

The Couch Potatoes easily move in the furniture. After they leave, Dave jokes with Kate about marriage. She asserts that she would rather be boiled in oil. In spite of this, Dave claims he loves the cello and attends her evening concert. Kate feels Dave's presence in the audience. He watches her intently while sitting behind a local music critic who sleeps through most of the show, as he often does. Dave hits the man with a program, which makes Kate laugh inside.

On the way home, Dave makes astute observations about the concert. He also comments on Kate's beauty as she plays. He moves to kiss her and Kate feels a stage fright that she did not even feel before the concert. Dave feels more than her fright, he feels sexual excitement and love in the kiss.

Elsie appears outside the steamy car windows and demands to know what is going on. She describes to them how she defended the house from unknown intruders with her gun, which she waves around proudly. Then she guesses that the intruder's appearance involves the pod that fell through the roof. Elsie launches into another spy theory.

After Elsie returns to the house, Dave expresses concern for Kate's safety. He also inspects Kate's outfit, which involves a number of small buttons down her back. She explains that it also sports a hidden zipper. Dave and Kate believe Elsie's story about men looking for the pod. However, they worry more about Elsie and the large gun. Kate relents and sleeps over at Dave's house. After she admires his furnishings, he confesses to winning the lottery and shows Kate a picture of him with the check. Such an admission explains his extravagant life, including his purchase of a new Porsche.

## Chapter 3 Analysis

The romantic relationship between Kate and Dave progresses in quick steps. They have moved from simple flirting and touching to passionate kissing. Only the appearance of Elsie stops the relationship from progressing further. The comic relief of Elsie's character also serves to pace the development of the relationship between Dave and Kate.



In addition, Dave's lottery winnings allow for a great deal of mobility in his character. It allows him to be caring, yet available. Though Kate and Dave enjoy similar surroundings, Kate came by hers through hard work and Dave through another hand of fate. Yet, very different paths led them to one another, emphasizing the role of fate in everyone's life once again.

Furthermore, the author uses the pod and ensuing intruders as a mysterious subplot throughout the novel. It lends a great deal of interest to Kate's life. Also, the danger of the situation often emphasizes the importance of the people in Kate's life.



# Chapter 4

## Chapter 4 Summary

In the beginning of chapter four, the author describes the inside of Dave's house through Kate's eyes. Dave pops popcorn and, as they sit together, Kate believes in love at first sight. She observes that it is not what she saw in movies. She compares it to getting one's wheels locked together at the grocery store.

Kate has changed the conversation to the subject of selling her house when they spot people sneaking around outside her house. Dave instructs Kate to stay in the house while he chases down the suspected intruders. Not one to be left out of the action, Kate chases Dave. At the end of the block, Elsie emerges with her gun drawn. She aims it at the intruder but slips, and the ricocheting bullet grazes Dave's toe. The intruder gets away.

The next morning, at Dave's house, Kate begins her day with an early practice. Dave protests the practice by carrying Kate back to bed and pinning her there while he goes back to sleep. They both awaken when Dave's friend Mark arrives to repair the damage to Kate's house. Dave insists on making Kate breakfast before she returns home.

Later that morning, Kate tries in vain to practice her cello. The noise and traffic from the workmen cause endless distractions. As Kate stares out the front window and daydreams about bird feeders, Elsie arrives with hamburgers from the diner for lunch. She shares her observations about Dave's extravagant lifestyle and confesses that she thinks he is a spy. When Kate tells Elsie that Dave won the lottery, Elsie thinks it is more likely that he is a spy, but Kate assures her that it is true.

## Chapter 4 Analysis

Each time Kate visits Dave's house, their relationship ultimately suffers. When faced with concrete evidence of their differences, she always runs from the romance. Yet, the differences begin to have an effect on her life, and when she refuses to make room for things besides music, fate steps in and forces her to change. Though she curses the loud radio of the repairmen, she misses it when they leave.

The reader notices that, ironically, Elsie Hawkins proves more dangerous than the officers that sneak around the backyard or even the criminal living across the street. When she slips in her pursuit of the unknown intruder, she accidentally fires her gun and injures Dave's foot. In the end of the novel, her heel gets stuck while driving and she rams Anatole's car. By comparison, Howie and Slik, the men sneaking around the yard, only break a window. Omar, the criminal across the street, threatens to hurt them, but Elsie foils his plans every time. Though Elsie acts out of concern, she fails to temper the concern with caution.



# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

Chapter five opens with Kate stuck in traffic. At home, Dave greets her, gives her an update on the work at her house, and informs her that he invited her parents over for dinner the following weekend. The thought causes Kate to panic, especially given the sparse furnishing in her house. Dave's assurance that the dinner is scheduled for his house does not calm Kate's nerves. After the short conversation, Kate rushes off to symphony practice.

The next morning, in her newly furnished bedroom, Kate awakens to the sound of a helicopter over her neighborhood. She watches it as it circles and leaves the neighborhood. From the second floor of her home, she spots the bush that she and Elsie landed in a few days prior. As she mourns the unhealthy look of the bush, she notices a piece of machinery in its branches. Rushing downstairs, she finds a camera in the bush. She takes it to Dave's, and they put the tape in to view. Dave recognizes his friend Howie's voice and calls Howie to let him know they found the camera. Howie arrives and claims the tape. He explains that the man across the street is under surveillance by the Washington DC police for suspicious activity, namely, drugs. Dave offers use of his house for future surveillance. After Howie leaves, Kate rushes to her practice. When Dave comments again on her hectic schedule, Kate confesses that she needs more hours in a day.

## Chapter 5 Analysis

Howie's character operates in contradiction with the seriousness of his job. After describing the suspected criminal across the street, he and Dave discuss their plans for the Couch Potatoes, their neighborhood sports get-together. Howie also complains about the strict diet his wife put him on. Ironically for him, he always arrives at Dave's while they eat something he cannot have.

As Kate continues to rush around in her hectic music schedule, Dave begins to realize the problem it poses for their love life. However, he fails to see it as a terminal obstacle, but instead one in need for adjustment. He quickly makes room for her music in his life, but she fails to make room for his passions in return, at least until the end of the novel.



# Chapter 6

## Chapter 6 Summary

Kate returns home after a stressful day to find that her house has no power. She smashes a plate in her kitchen, but fails to feel better. Then, she gathers her things so that she may get ready at Dave's house for her evening performance. She finds Dave on his kitchen floor with his most newly acquired toy, an elaborate electric train set. Such a sight reminds Kate about their incompatibilities. She quickly dresses for her performance. Though she promises to meet Dave after the concert, neither one is surprised when she breaks the date.

When Kate goes days without talking to Dave, Elsie steps in. She invites Kate to bingo night on Kate's night off. Dave meets them on the sidewalk and Elsie invites him as well. At Elsie's insistence, they all cram into the front seat of Dave's Porsche. From her seat in the middle, Kate enjoys and dreads Dave's moves as he shifts through the gears in the powerful car.

At bingo, Dave only pretends to play as he observes Kate's passion for competition and perfection. At the end of the night, Kate emerges as the winner with twelve dollars. Elsie insists she must get home as she has an early shift in the morning. In lieu of a celebration dinner, Kate insists on driving home, placing Dave in the tortuous middle position. Before they all retire for the night, Dave goads her into a football throwing lesson the next day.

## Chapter 6 Analysis

Circumstances continue to throw Kate and Dave together, though Kate's worries about the health of the relationship given their differences persist as well. Though she suspects the bingo date to be a set up, it is never confirmed by Elsie. The two rides in the Porsche prove that, in spite of her misgivings about the relationship, Kate continues to harbor feelings for Dave. It is the bingo game that fuels Dave's interest in the relationship, as it confirms that Kate's passion can be directed in areas other than music.

The football lessons foreshadow a changing point in the novel. Though Kate initially resists, she comes to like the lesson, although in her haste towards perfection, she breaks her leg.



# Chapter 7

## Chapter 7 Summary

Once all the repairmen leave, Kate finds the house too quiet to practice. She misses the noise of the people and their work. She even misses Mark and his loud radio. Though she rues the feeling, she looks forward to seeing Dave emerge for their football lesson. Kate seems to have a natural affinity for throwing the football. Dave observes that Kate applies herself to football with the same passion she exhibits at the cello and bingo.

Shortly after their lesson begins, however, Kate falls into a trash can and breaks her leg. Dave takes her to the emergency room. After they cast her leg, she cannot get into the Porsche, so Dave rents a limo to return them to Dave's house. Kate explains the accident to a concerned Elsie. She also bewails the four or five days the doctor mandated that she take off work. Elsie informs Dave that she will be coming to dinner along with Kate's parents. The news does not make Kate feel better about the dinner.

That night, in Dave's house, Kate and Dave watch movies and eat junk food. Kate describes her marriage to Anatole as having been lonely. When she asks Dave if he will get married, he pretends as if the question is a proposal and accepts. He then changes the conversation by showing Kate his new box of crayons. As they draw, Kate feels childlike for the first time in a long time. Dave mentions his hobby of drawing cartoons, which Kate dismisses as frivolous. The conversation then turns sexual, and Dave carries Kate upstairs, where the couple begins a marathon of sex. They keep the tally on Kate's cast with Dave's new crayon.

Two days later, they emerge from the bedroom to make preparations for the dinner party. Kate practices her cello while Dave cooks. Howie arrives during breakfast, announcing that he needs to set up surveillance in Dave's house that evening. Howie stares longingly at Dave's pancakes as he describes the strict diet his wife put him on. He notices, however, that Dave looks fit and trim. In fact, Howie points out, Dave looks like he needs rest. Howie questions this before noticing Kate's discomfort. When he realizes the cause of the tired looks on both people, Howie blushes. Howie assures them the surveillance will not interrupt the dinner party. Kate correctly feels that the promise foreshadows bad things for the evening ahead.

After Howie leaves, Dave watches Kate practice, admiring her many moods she has as she works on a new piece. Kate feels Dave's attention and is overwhelmed by the love she feels for him that has developed in such a short time.

## Chapter 7 Analysis

In the novel, the crayon symbolizes the strong attraction Kate and Dave feel for one another. They cannot help but continue until the passion is totally spent. Likewise, the pull they have over one another appears obvious to others, though they think they have



it hidden. In fact, sometimes it appears more clearly to others than it does to them personally, especially Kate. Elsie points this out on a number of occasions when Kate attempts to break things off with Dave.

Kate's apprehension about the dinner party, especially Howie's presence, foreshadows a disastrous evening for all involved. Each person that she feels nervous about does in fact add to the calamity. Kate's mother drinks too much and her father acts in a hostile manner toward Dave. Elsie brings her gun, which she ultimately pulls out on the criminal, and Howie appears throughout the party, along with Slik, adding to the confusion.

Paradoxically, it is because of her strong feelings for Dave that Kate feels she should end the relationship. She fears that if they get too involved the breakup will ruin any relationship they may have. Instead, she tries for friendship in order to salvage something. For Dave, however, the relationship is already an all-or-nothing deal. He feels so deeply in love with Kate that he will only settle for marriage.



# Chapter 8

## Chapter 8 Summary

Kate's parents arrive at Dave's dinner party looking prim and proper. Behind them, Elsie arrives carrying a bag, which she refuses to let Dave take. She explains that she needs a hanky nearby; the word "hanky" is her code word for her handgun. In the midst of numerous questions directed at Dave, Michael Flynn asks about the tally marks on Kate's cast. Dave offers a lie about toe exercises, but Elsie immediately calls them on it, assuring them that the older people are not that gullible. Mr. Flynn then moves to question Dave about his sex life, and admonishes him to pace himself. When Dave then describes his lottery winnings, Mr. Flynn replies by stating that he does not gamble. Dave recognizes that Kate gets her drive from her father. He notes that this inhibited any time for playing in Kate's upbringing, as her father views such things as a waste of time.

Kate, feeling the impending doom of the night, offers drinks to everyone. The women drink sherry while the men enjoy imported beer. When Howie's partner, Slik, goes for more equipment and returns with what appears to be a gun wrapped in a jacket, Grace Flynn, Kate's mother, chugs her glass of sherry. Kate asks to see Dave in the kitchen.

Dave does not deny the sense of doom Kate feels. He suggests sending all the guests away, but Kate points out that they should be fed first. Kate confesses that regardless of the outcome of the night, she loves Dave. Howie then comes back into the house through the kitchen. When he smells the roasting chicken and other food, he nearly drops his collection of supplies, including tear gas.

Back in the living area, Kate's mom wonders about the men upstairs. Dave claims they are friends working on photography. When Elsie threatens to get out her hanky, Dave threatens her with violence in return, and Kate seconds his threat. Even as a window breaks upstairs and Howie shouts across the street, Dave reassures Michael Flynn that the situation is under control. Kate's mom continues drinking, something she rarely does.

Elsie, Dave and Kate return to the kitchen to finish preparing dinner. Kate mostly tries to stay out of the way. Omar, the suspected drug dealer across the street, bursts into the kitchen and grabs a knife. When he casts disparagements towards Elsie, she pulls her gun. Howie enters shortly after and places Omar under arrest. Howie chooses to ignore Elsie and her gun.

Dave and Kate proceed with dinner and later bid their guests goodbye. Kate pronounces the dinner as a disaster, with her mother drunk and her father hating Dave. However, Kate does verbalize her love for Dave aloud again. The next morning, Kate seriously begins to consider her future, particularly her relationship with Dave. When





she asks to talk, Dave responds with double entendres. She leaves the room, expecting him to follow.

Dave awakens hours later with a feeling of foreboding. Unsurprisingly, he finds an empty house. He proceeds to Kate's house, where he finds her practicing. He tries to explain his need for toys and other hobbies. He also points out his cartoon drawing. Kate ridicules it all as meaningless play. Kate explains that she fears a relationship with her may ruin Dave's life. He claims that he has no life without Kate in it. Speechless, Kate returns to practicing her cello.

Later that week, Kate returns home earlier in the evening than normal. She falls while trying to wrestle her crutches and cello into her house. She calls for Dave, who appears and helps Kate into the house. He comments on the addition of new furniture to Kate's house. She explains that the realtor recommended it, suggesting it would aid in the sale of the house. Kate explains to Dave the reason she is home so early. Before her performance that evening, she accidentally stomped on another symphony member's foot with her crutch, and goosed another with her bow. The ensuing scuffle caused music stands to topple and created a mess that took nearly an hour to straighten out. The conductor himself put Kate in a cab and gave her a mandatory vacation. While she wonders aloud how to handle the unexpected time off, Dave silently vows to win her back.

## Chapter 8 Analysis

The reader could view the climax of the plot as being either Kate breaking her leg or the dinner party. The dinner party serves as a height in the act, when things happen very quickly and has an effect on all the characters up to this point. The plot only falls toward the resolution after this point, though it still holds some suspenseful moments.

Regarding the dinner party itself, the presence of Howie and Elsie gives humor to a situation that held a great deal of stress. The sheer improbability of the events gives lightness to the situation for both the characters and the reader. In contrast, when Kate and Dave talk alone the next morning, the mood is only serious. The scene plays out sadly but tenderly, as each person in the relationship acts in what they believe to be the other person's best interest. Despite Kate's passion for music and Dave's wealth, they fail to act selfishly towards one another.



# Chapter 9

## Chapter 9 Summary

Elsie rebukes Kate for her newfound laziness during her forced vacation. She points out that Kate seems to be gaining weight. Kate claims that it is only her clothes that make her look heavier. When Kate shares her daydreams about children in the neighborhood, which is currently childless, Elsie questions Kate's sex life, which Kate admits is nonexistent. Elsie then points out that Dave's actions only show that he is adjusting to his new life, just as Kate is currently. Elsie leaves for work after telling Kate about her date for the evening with the man that delivers sweet rolls to the diner. Elsie excitedly describes the man as perfect for her because he does not act dull like many men her age.

Dave comes over after Elsie leaves for work. Kate tells him she may get a cat. Dave acts on the idea right away, and the two of them leave to make the purchase. They return home much later that night with boxes of supplies that Kate charged to a new credit card and a small, black kitten. When she worries about paying off the debt, Dave offers marriage again, which would give Kate access to all his money. Kate once again worries that their differences doom any chance they have at marriage.

When Elsie and her date, Gus, arrive so that Elsie can change into dancing shoes, Kate grills Gus, questioning his intentions, both for the evening and for his relationship with Elsie. Dave calls Kate into the kitchen to rescue Gus from the inquisition.

Just as Elsie and Gus leave, Anatole arrives with the customary get-well fruit basket from the symphony. Dave and Anatole offer each other verbal insults. Anatole then assumes Kate is pregnant and criticizes her choice of Dave as a father. When an explosion from across the street rocks the house, the verbal spat ceases. The three run outside to investigate.

Omar, the criminal first apprehended in Dave's kitchen, appears from the blaze. Kate asks why he is out of jail. Omar responds that he made bail and returned to his previous work in order to pay his lawyers. To ensure his safe getaway, he kidnaps Kate and commandeers Anatole's new imported car. He curses his luck in kidnapping an injured person, but insists that Kate come along anyway. Just as they make it to the corner, a large, classic Buick speeds up behind them. Both Omar and Kate recognize Elsie at the wheel. She rams Anatole's car, effectively stopping Omar's escape. Howie soon appears to arrest Omar again. He decides to overlook Elsie's lack of a driver's license. Dave runs to Kate's aid as Elsie explains that she heard about the explosion on the police scanner in Gus's car. Believing that Gus drove too slowly, Elsie took over. She only rammed Anatole's car because her heel got caught in the floorboard. Kate observes that, while Anatole's car looks totaled, Gus's Buick survived without a scratch.



Back at Kate's, they find Anatole stretched out on Kate's couch, eating the fruit basket. Dave begs for the opportunity to tell Anatole about his car. With relish, he describes the destruction to Anatole, who responds sickly about the short time he owned the import. Elsie offers to give him a lift home in Gus's Buick. They leave, leaving Kate and Dave alone once more.

Kate and Dave start to make their way to his bedroom when Kate remembers her new kitten. An extensive search of the house and the neighborhood fails to produce the feline. Kate grows very depressed over the loss of her kitten, seeing the loss as a poor reflection on her personal character. To cheer her the next morning, Dave makes her breakfast in bed. Kate realizes that she loves Dave more than even her music. Dave leaves for the day, and Kate returns to her home, alone.

That afternoon, Elsie arrives with a kitten she claims she found in the yard. When Kate points out that it does not look like her kitten, Elsie admits she bought it at the pet store. Kate decides to keep the replacement kitten. Shortly thereafter, her parents arrive having heard about the missing kitten. Her father pulls another kitten from his jacket. Incredulous, Kate decides to keep both. Michael Flynn also gives his blessing on Kate's relationship with Dave.

Finally, Dave returns with a third kitten from an area shelter. Kate cries again, for joy at all the people that care for her. Just as she dries her tears, Anatole returns. He brings a fruit basket to replace the one he ate the night before. After Kate explains the presence of the three kittens, Anatole confesses that he put the kitten in the back yard the night before so that it could use the restroom. A note found in the kitchen confirms this. Dave rushes to the yard and finds the original kitten there.

Kate begins to realize that a marriage to Dave would differ from her marriage to Anatole. She recognizes the love she feels for Dave differs from the feelings she had for Anatole. Alone at last, Dave and Kate discuss marriage and children. The conversation leads them back to the bedroom, where they have sex. Dave adds another tally mark to Kate's cast and observes that they wore the crayon down to a nub. He stores the rest in his third floor room. Kate asks to see what he hides up there.

Dave opens the door to the third floor to reveal a showcase of toys and other items of inspiration. In the middle of the room, Kate spots a drawing table holding cartoon panels. Dave finally admits that he works as a cartoonist. Kate recognizes the cartoons from the funny pages. Kate accepts the admission with excitement and support. They plan their future together. Kate points out that they need a larger house, in a more child-friendly neighborhood.

## Chapter 9 Analysis

Kate's forced vacation from the symphony brings on the quick conclusion to the novel. At first, it seems that the romance between Kate and Dave has failed. However, the

reader assumes that, given the genre of the novel, the couple will somehow settle their differences.

The author uses unexpected means to achieve this, however. The reappearance of Omar shocks the reader and hastens the resolution of the plot. Dave sees Kate's decision to buy a kitten as a sign of her changing attitude toward family. He immediately seizes the opportunity to start Kate's family, even if it is only a cat. When Kate's kitten disappears, the kitten briefly represents Kate's lack of qualifications as a mother. However, when she ends up with four kittens, she sees that they really symbolize all the people in her life that love her a great deal. She decides to invest more of her life in them and less time in her music, which fails to love her in return.

The plot resolves into the expected happily ever after. Dave finally gets Kate to agree to marriage, which he originally brought up in the opening chapters of the novel. Kate happily obliges and looks forward to sharing a life and children with Dave. Neither of them sees a necessity in getting hung up on traditional roles in the home; they vow to make the home work for their unique family.



# Characters

## Katherine Flynn

The protagonist of this novel is a professional cello player named Katherine Flynn. Her dedication to her career earns her the nickname Formidable Flynn. This same dedication leaves little room in her life for romance, until a freak accident lands a camera in her bedroom. The camera falls from a helicopter and crashes through Flynn's roof. Her neighbor, long-time admirer David Dodd, rushes to help. He offers his services in repairing the roof.

Though Kate enjoys Dave's caring nature, she remains aloof because of her hectic life and past romantic failures. Her previous marriage to an oboist named Anatole lasted only a short time. It left Kate with no furniture and little trust in her own romantic feelings.

Attraction instantly blooms between Dave and Kate, however. Dave shows a genuine interest in Kate's work and her life. When she rents her third floor to a boisterous woman named Elsie Hawkins, he helps her furnish it and recruits his friends to aid in moving the furniture into her house. He also offers to teach her how to throw a football, but in the process she breaks her leg.

Due to her injury and resulting lack of coordination, Kate receives a rare break from her gig with the symphony. At first, the time off allows her relationship with Dave to blossom. His seeming lack ambition and employment, however, causes her to conclude that they are not compatible. In the end, though, she admits her love for Dave and her need for his companionship.

Kate's character matures in this novel from an untrusting but brilliant musician to the beginning of a well rounded woman who has many new types of relationships. She proves to be competitive in nature and always strives to do her best, whether in a performance or a bingo game.

## David Dodd

David Dodd lives next to Kate Flynn and admires her from afar for months. He feels attracted to her in spite of her unattractive overcoat and obviously harried lifestyle. When a camera falls from a helicopter and crashes through her roof, he takes the opportunity to come to her rescue and introduce himself.

Attraction quickly grows to love, which Dave admits well before Kate. He attempts to encourage her to slow down and enjoy a more varied lifestyle. Since winning a lottery jackpot, Dave enjoys many seemingly frivolous hobbies, such as reading comic books and playing football. As a test of her feelings, Dave remains evasive about his



profession. When Kate finally admits her feelings, Dave reveals that he works as a comic strip author and artist.

Dave's lifestyle seems to be lazy at first. The author uses it, however, to contrast the unusually busy life of Kate. Dave serves as a reminder to enjoy the important things in life, rather than get so busy that one misses the joys of everyday life.

## **Elsie Hawkins**

When her divorce from Anatole leaves Kate low on money, she decides to rent out her third floor. The morning after the camera crashes through her roof, she meets the spirited Elsie Hawkins. Kate, asleep on the living room floor due to the damage in her bedroom, awakens to find Elsie peering in the window. When Kate goes outside to help Elsie down, they both fall into the bushes.

Elsie, though well past retirement age, works part-time at a burger restaurant. She admits that she lied about her age to get the job. The subplot appeals to her, she explains, because life in the retirement community does not hold enough excitement for her. She introduces Kate to bingo, which she excels at.

Elsie also enjoys a full love life. On one of her dates, after hearing a fire call on her street on her date's police scanner, Elsie drives home. She aids in rescuing Kate from a criminal who took her hostage in Anatole's car. Elsie threatens the criminal with the large handgun that she keeps in her purse.

Elsie's character represents a middle ground between the overworked Kate and the lazy Dave. She works hard, even though she could legitimately retire. She keeps active in her social life as well, pointing out that, at her age, she cannot afford to waste any time.

## **Anatole**

Before the novel begins, Kate and Anatole divorce. Though Kate kept the house, Anatole kept his furniture, which did not appeal to Flynn. Dave takes an instant dislike to Anatole when he drops by with a get-well gift from the symphony when Flynn takes sick leave for her broken foot. Anatole exudes an air of sophistication which is off putting to Dave. Kate points out that Anatole is an amazing oboist, however. When the criminal takes Kate hostage, he flees in Anatole's new, imported luxury car. As part of her rescue tactic, Elsie Hawkins smashes into the car when her heel gets stuck on the accelerator of the car she is in. Anatole's car is totaled.

## **Michael Flynn**

Kate's father, Michael Flynn, attends Dave's dinner party. He immediately begins grilling Dave on his employment, background and intentions. At the end of the party, he tells Kate that she will be disowned if she marries a slacker like Dave. When they return later



in the novel to bring Kate a new kitten, Michael Flynn gives his blessing for the relationship, however. He desires happiness for his daughter. Dave can see that Kate gets much of her drive and passion from her father.

## Grace Flynn

Grace Flynn, Kate's mother, also attends the dinner party at Dave's. She appears to be the picture of a prim and proper housewife. Given the stress of the situation, however, Grace begins drinking multiple glasses of sherry. By the time she leaves, she is quite drunk. She also cares for her daughter's happiness, however.

## Blood and Guts Couch Potatoes

Dave's friends form a group called the Blood and Guts Couch Potatoes are recruited to move new furniture into Kate's house after the pod falls through the roof. The Couch Potatoes, Dave explains, meet weekly to play whatever sport is in season, such as football. The group includes married and single men with professions ranging from a photographer to unknown government agents. Dave turns to different members of the group for assistance in fixing Kate's roof, as well. The Couch Potatoes represent good networking on Dave's part, though at first Kate sees the group as unnecessarily frivolous.

## Howie

When Kate finds the camera pod in her bushes, she takes it to Dave, who recognizes a voice on the video as that of his friend, Howie, who works in law enforcement. Howie stops by the next day to retrieve the tape and Dave offers the use of his second floor for future surveillance. Howie takes Dave up on the offer on the same night that Dave hosts Kate's parents and Elsie for a dinner party.

Howie acts as a good neighbor to all those he knows. He follows his wife's strict diet, though he bemoans it often to Dave. Furthermore, he turns a blind eye to Elsie, first when she holds Omar at gunpoint and then when she drives Gus's car without a license. He seems to see gray areas in ethics which allow for some bending of the rules when no one gets hurts and the greater good is achieved.

## Slik

Howie's partner, Slik, helps him with surveillance in Dave's house. Elsie vaguely recognizes him as the man who had been sneaking around Kate's backyard looking for the camera pod. He remains quiet much of the time, but promises not to break anything while using Dave's house. This does not reassure Dave all that much.

## Gus

Elsie describes Gus as a catch. He delivers sweet rolls to the diner where Elsie works. When he arrives to pick Elsie up for their first date, Kate drills him about his plans for the evening, much like a mother would. Dave interrupts the conversation and tells Kate to back off.

Elsie overhears of Kate's abduction on the police scanner in Gus's classic Buick. She jumps behind the wheel and joins the pursuit. When she rams Anatole's car with the Buick, the sports car is totaled, but the Buick emerges without a scratch.

Gus and Elsie's relationship continues after that night. For their next date, he plans to take Elsie to meet his daughter, which she sees as a big step. When Kate warns Elsie to move carefully, Elsie points out that, at their age, they cannot afford to move ahead too slowly.

## Omar

Throughout the novel, Howie and Slik keep the house across from Dave's under surveillance because of suspected drug activity. During one stakeout set up in Dave's house during the dinner party, they manage to apprehend the drug dealer, Omar, after Elsie holds him at gun point. Omar makes bail, however, and returns to his business. When he accidentally explodes his house while making more product, he kidnaps Kate to ensure a safe getaway. However, Elsie foils his plan when she totals his stolen car. Once again, Howie arrests Omar and takes him away.





# Objects/Places

## Washington DC

The entire novel takes place in Washington DC. According to Elsie Hawkins, Kate Flynn's roommate, Washington DC is crawling with spies and everyone is suspect. In fact, many of the characters seem to have legitimate employment and only a few of Dave Dodd's friends work for the government, whether local or federal.

## Kate's House

Kate lives in a townhouse that looks just like nearly every other townhouse on her street. Since her divorce, however, Kate's house sits void of all but the most basic of furniture. It also suffers damages from a falling camera pod during surveillance of the drug dealer across the street. The incident brings her into contact with Dave Dodd and many of his friends. Her ads for a roommate also bring her into contact with Elsie Hawkins, an elderly lady who seeks a home away from her dull, retirement community. Kate only furnishes her house when she decides to put it up for sale, as the Realtor claims a furnished home sells better.

## David's House

The author describes Dave's Victorian style house as a birthday cake among bran muffins. The outside appears inviting and ornate. Inside, Dave fills the home with welcoming yet masculine decor. Kate enjoys Dave's house, not only because it looks lived in, but also because it feels and smells homey. Until the end of the novel, Kate fails to realize that those things she ridicules Dave for are the very things that she enjoys and admires most about his life.

Until the end, Dave's house causes problems in their relationship. Each time they become close enough to spend the night together there, Kate afterwards becomes nervous about the relationship and vows to end it. Only when they reconcile in Kate's bedroom in the end do they enjoy their happily ever after.

## Elsie's Gun

It is not until after Kate signs Elsie on as a tenant that she learns of the large handgun Elsie keeps in her purse. When Kate and Dave return from her concert, Elsie shows off the gun as she explains how she ran off potential intruders with two warning shots. While Kate and Dave both enjoy Elsie's exuberance in most instances, they worry about her lack of handgun skills. Another time they spot an intruder, Elsie slips and misfires. The ricochet hits Dave's foot.



Elsie becomes attached to her gun and refuses to leave home without it. She brings it to Dave's dinner party, which Kate's parents also attend. She refers to it as her hanky, and Dave warns to leave the hanky in her purse. However, when Omar bursts into the kitchen and threatens them with a knife, Elsie trumps him with her gun, allowing Howie to apprehend him there.

## **Gus's Buick**

The author uses the classic Buick to represent the durability of old workmanship. Compared to Anatole's new and pricey import, the older Buick holds up well. It also symbolizes the notion that, though some people cast things or people aside because of their age, they still serve a great purpose, such as Elsie herself. The author frequently uses such symbolism.

## **David's Porsche**

Dave sees the Porsche as an indulgence of his lottery winnings. Kate also sees the car as extravagant, but it fails to impress her. It proves inadequate in delivering Kate home from the hospital after she breaks her leg during a football throwing lesson.

The Porsche also serves for a comic yet erotic scene when Dave, Kate and Elsie go to bingo. The person in the middle, first Kate then Dave, endures suggestive movements by the driver while her or she is shifting.

## **Anatole's Car**

Anatole delivers a get-well fruit basket from the symphony in his recently acquired and specially ordered imported car. After the explosion across the street, the three go outside to investigate. At this time, Omar appears and kidnaps Kate, claiming Anatole's car as a getaway vehicle. He gets caught in traffic at a stop light, however, and this allows Elsie to catch up to them in the Buick. She smashes into Anatole's car, totaling it. The author uses the car to symbolize the theme that newer and more expensive does not always mean better. Given the animosity Dave feels toward Anatole because of his relationship with Anatole's ex-wife, he relishes telling Anatole about the damages to his car.

## **Kittens**

Kate's kittens represent many things. During her forced vacation from the symphony she decides to expand her life and her family by purchasing a kitten. It shows progress in her life, from having been too busy for companionship to seeking a friend. Dave takes her to buy the kitten.



When the kitten goes missing, Kate sees this as a sign that she makes an unfit friend, lover, and mother. She feels very depressed about the missing kitten.

Finally, when Kate ends up with four kittens, including the original, she sees hope. They represent all those in her life that love her. They also represent her ability for endless love; whereas she thought she had space for one kitten, she finds room in her heart for four.

## Camera Pod

Fate, in the form of a wayward camera pod from a police surveillance helicopter, brings Kate and Dave together. Fate also allows Kate to find the pod and help in the investigation, after Elsie and Kate fall into a bush where the pod was hidden.

## Comic Books

To Kate, Dave's comic books represent his apparent lack of ambition. Dave, however, sees the comic books as a way to pursue his dreams. His lottery winnings give him the ability to do this as well. Dave and Kate both feel that if Kate can accept Dave's chosen line of work, their relationship has a chance at surviving.

## Cello

Kate's cello is her first love. Before meeting Dave she invests all her time and effort into her music. She wakes early to practice and stays out late for concerts. When other things begin to appear in her life, however, the cello falls by the wayside. Only when Kate manages to strike a balance between her music and her love life does she find happiness.

## Coffee Pot

Kate realizes how empty her life is when, after spending her first night at Dave's, she realizes she does not own a coffee pot. She sees such domestic abilities as beyond her scope of learning. However, under Dave's influence, she comes to buy not only a coffee pot, but also living room furniture. Kate reminds Dave, in the end, that she may never learn to cook. Nevertheless, as far as housekeeping goes, Kate makes progress within this novel.

## Crayon

When Dave first shows off his newest box of crayons, Kate sees them as childish and silly. However, the crayons take on a more erotic symbolism when Kate and Dave use one to tally their sexual exploits on Kate's cast. In the matter of a week they wear the



crayon down to a nub. This causes Kate to investigate Dave's third floor, where she discovers his work as a cartoonist. She sees the need for all Dave's toys and comes to accept his way of life.

## **Bingo**

When Elsie invites Dave and Kate to bingo, Dave sees that Kate's passion for music carries over into any activity to which she applies herself. He only pretends to play as he watches the attractive way that competition plays over Kate's face.

## **Football**

Dave dares Kate to learn to throw a football, even after she claims to hate the game. Her fears of getting hurt prove not to be unfounded. During the lesson, Kate falls and breaks her leg. The resulting time off from her musical career, however, allows Dave much more opportunity to woo her, at which he succeeds.

## **Kate's Overcoat**

Dave's first impression of Kate is that she is attractive, save for a formless, black overcoat that she wears everywhere. During their first meeting, Kate mentions with regret that the dry cleaners ruined the coat. Dave rejoices inwardly at this discovery.

## **Furniture**

Kate's lack of furniture symbolizes her lack of desire toward honing domestic skills. She admires Dave's furniture, however. Kate's ex-husband, Anatole, had stark, boring furniture that reflected both his personality and their marriage. In the end, Kate only buys furniture to aid in the sale of her house, or so she claims. However, she fails to need her own once she agrees to marry Dave.



# Themes

## Love Conquers All

Love conquers all is a common theme in a romance novel. Though the protagonist, Kate, and her love interest, Dave, suffer from opposition internally and externally, their love helps them overcome all the trials for a happy ending.

Dave uses his instant love for Kate to overcome her resistance to the idea of marriage. Her bad luck in marriage in the past makes Kate skittish about remarrying, regardless of the circumstances. Also, she feels their differing work ethics make them incompatible. Eventually, Kate's love for Dave outweighs her fears about their personality differences.

Also, Kate shares her love with Dave in spite of resistance from her parents. In fact, her first vow of love comes in the midst of a disastrous dinner party involving her parents, Elsie, and Howie. Dave also shows his love by jumping to Kate's rescue first when her house suffers damage from the camera pod and then when Omar kidnaps her. It surprises even Dave when he feels an instant need to protect the very formidable Kate Flynn. Their care for one another, though, strengthens their relationship and allows room for more romance in their lives. When Kate has someone to share problems and concerns with, she feels less stress in her daily life, and Dave feels fulfilled by serving someone else in this way.

## Fate

The author uses a series of odd events to continue placing Kate and Dave together. Typically, rare events that result in a change in one's life receive the label of fate, destiny, or any other such name. The first instance of fate is the camera pod landing on Kate's house. It serves as the impetuous that brings them together for the first time, though Dave had admired her from afar for some time.

Fate arises again when Kate breaks her leg while learning to throw the football and must rely on Dave in new ways. It also gives her some time off, during which their relationship develops even more. Her eventual vacation from the orchestra, after a series of odd accidents started by Kate's crutches, gives Kate the time off she needs to get her life in order and make room for romance.

Fate also intervenes in seemingly negative ways, though it works out in the end. Fate brings Omar into Kate's path twice, first in Dave's kitchen and second outside of Kate's house, where he attempts to kidnap her. Yet one could credit fate with Elsie's accidental demolishing of Anatole's car that allowed the recapture of Omar. The author uses fate to bring about action in the characters that they would not otherwise seek. It throws twists into the plot that add mystery and suspense.



## Pursuing One's Dream

Dave's lesson for Kate involves pursuing one's dream, in spite of what others think. Kate appears to be doing this, but the arrival of Dave in her life causes her to question her contentment with the state of her life. Kate dedicates herself to music, her passion since childhood. She makes countless sacrifices, personally and professionally, to become a success in her cello playing. However, it appears within this novel that she uses music to fill other voids in her life. The utilitarian basis for her career, then, makes it mundane and less fulfilling.

Contrarily, since winning the lottery Dave does nothing but what he loves. He gave up an unfulfilling job as a wedding photographer to become a cartoonist. Many of his hobbies, ones that Kate thinks are a waste of time, actually serve as inspiration for his cartoon drawing. In spite of his love for Kate, he refuses to give up what he loves. He instead waits for her to learn to accept it.

To a lesser degree, Elsie also pursues what she loves. Though she operates with a conservative moral code in most cases, she admits to lying about her age to procure her employment at the diner. She knows that many businesses refuse to hire people of her age. She feels that, despite her age, she wants to contribute to society and support herself. Because of this, she desires to move from the retirement community, where she feels life passes her by. She also pursues her relationship with Gus aggressively. She tells Kate that at her age she cannot afford to move slowly on such things.

## Love at First Sight

After seeing Kate, Dave believes in love at first sight. He embraces it without fear. After meeting her one time, he realizes his love for Kate and decides to pursue it to marriage. Such a theme rarely effects men in romance novels; typically, the female character attempts to convince the male character of her instant love. Many times, however, characters in this genre feel an instant attraction, which also occurs for Dave and Kate.

Kate also thinks it's love at first sight when meeting Dave, but she approaches it with fear. She finds that love at first sight is not what she thought it was. She does not feel the romantic feeling that she sees in movies. Instead, she feels frustrated and somewhat trapped. She compares her vision of love at first sight to spotting one's soul mate across a dance floor. In reality, she equates her feelings for Dave to locking wheels with someone at the grocery store.

Both Dave and Kate come to realize that love at first sight is not enough to sustain a relationship. They must develop their relationship further. In truth, they do not experience love at first sight but rather lust, a strong physical attraction. Dave feels the need to protect Kate and Kate feels secure in Dave's presence. Only after Kate comes to accept Dave's lifestyle choices, however, and makes room for their relationship in her schedule, do they really have a chance at success.



# Style

## Point of View

The author tells the story from a mostly omniscient third person. The reader sees the thoughts and actions from Dave and Kate at different times. The reader also knows the feelings of each, sometimes even before they realize it themselves. The point of view shifts regularly, showing first the thoughts and perspectives of Kate, then switching to those of Dave.

However, the author does not tell the story from any perspective other than from that of Kate and Dave. Elsie, Kate's parents and others serve only as supporting characters. A few times, the point of view appears to be that of an outsider, as in the introduction to the novel, when the author describes the exterior of the houses on A Street.

## Setting

The entire plot takes place in Washington DC. Most of the action is divided between Kate Flynn's house and that of David Dodd. They live on a wealthy street in Washington DC, inhabited by young, single, career-driven people.

Kate's house feels sterile since her divorce from Anatole. She allowed him to take the furniture because it was not her style, but she fails to replace it until nearly the end of the novel. Contrarily, Dave furnishes his house warmly. Since winning the lottery, he buys whatever he desires. He keeps the third floor room of his house full of whimsical items that inspire his cartoon drawing.

The plot follows the actions of Kate, however. She spends some time with the symphony, and Dave attends one such concert to listen to her play. They also venture to a furniture store and a pet store, but the reader does not follow them there. It almost feels like the reader resides in the two houses, unseen, much like Howie does in his surveillance of Omar across the street.

## Language and Meaning

The author uses a simple and easy to understand language, free of slang and dialect. Some musical terms appear in response to Kate's career, but they serve to add mystique to her profession. Occasionally, the terms are defined.

The author uses characters like Elsie Hawkins to add comic relief to the plot. Elsie gives the author her trademark wit. In some serious situations, such as romantic interludes between Dave and Kate, Elsie's presence makes the situations become comical, such as when Elsie interrupts to tell them of an intruder and waves her handgun around. Such tactics are classic devices within romantic comedy.

## Structure

The book consists of nine chapters, the last two of which hold the bulk of the action and are longer than earlier chapters.

The novel is set up as a classic romantic comedy, with three acts. The first begins in the opening and ends when Dave ends the relationship because Kate refuses to accept his hobbies and make time for him. The second act encompasses Kate's broken leg and ends with their sexual marathon. The final act begins with the dinner party and continues to the end of the novel. The author interjects comedic relief on a regular basis.





## Quotes

"It was an outrageous house, a birthday cake in a showcase filled with bran muffins. And it was inhabited by David Peter Dodd." p. 2

"If he was dead, then this had to be heaven because the Mystery Woman was sitting astride him, her warm hand pressed against his chest, her nifty butt resting on his thighs." p. 22

"Kate sat up in the bag and watched a little old lady inch across the front window. The woman was standing spread-eagle on the wide outdoor window frame, looking in at Kate. She reminded Kate of Piglet when the wind had picked him up and plastered him against Owl's tree-house window." p. 3

"David Dodd's touch filled a small corner of her that that been empty." p. 47

"Want to get married?' 'I'd sooner get boiled in oil. Nothing personal.'" p. 52

"She'd experienced it many times before. Stage fright, she thought. He was going to kiss her, and she was scared to death. It was great." p. 58

"He planned to marry this woman, and if he did, he'd remain married to her for the rest of his life." p. 106

"My day is too short. I need two more hours.' He'd already reached the same conclusion. She had no Dave time." p. 113

"He was the man of her dreams, and she was afraid living with him would be a nightmare." p. 117

"And if she smiled at him like that one more time, he'd go sailing over Washington like a helium balloon. There was real hope for them. Any woman who could get so excited over winning a bingo game could understand the value of Etch A Sketch . . . another of his favorite toys." p. 128

"How was she ever going to get through four days of this? The bottoms of her feet itched to get moving." p. 141

"Ultimate satisfaction. Gentle euphoria. He loved her. It was in his voice, in his eyes, in the way he touched her, in the way he teased her." p. 155

"A couple of years earlier it would have been simple. Go with the flow. Live with him,



marry him, divorce him if it didn't work out. But that was a couple years earlier. She was older and wiser now." p. 173

"Katie Flynn, he thought to himself, you don't stand chance." p. 185

"You've never been married and divorced. Everything is insurmountable when you're married." p. 193

"Somehow she'd been able to get through it. But neglecting the kitten was more than she could bear. All her worst fears about herself were true." p. 212

"Kate agreed. 'We need a house in a family neighborhood,' she said. 'Someplace where there are children skipping rope in driveways. Someplace with lots of bedrooms.'" p. 234



## Topics for Discussion

Which character do you most relate with? Explain.

Does this story support the idea of love at first sight? Explain.

Explain David Dodd's reason for hiding his profession. How did this effect his relationship with Kate?

What do the kittens represent in this novel?

How does Kate Flynn mature through this novel?

How does this novel differ from a classic romance novel?

Describe the role of Elsie Hawkins in this novel.

Explain the role of fate in this novel.

What does music represent to Kate?

Describe an event that was a turning point in Kate's life.

What role did the setting have in the plausibility of this novel?

How did winning the lottery seem to effect David's life?