

The Christopher Killer: A Forensic Mystery Study Guide

**The Christopher Killer: A Forensic Mystery by Alane
Ferguson**

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Plot Summary

"The Christopher Killer" by Alane Ferguson is a forensic mystery novel about Cameryn, a seventeen-year-old girl who begins to work as the assistant to the county coroner, her dad. When Cameryn is called to aid in the autopsy of her friend who happens to be the recent victim of the serial killer known as the Christopher Killer, her dedication to finding justice puts Cameryn's life in danger. "The Christopher Killer" is an intriguing and entertaining forensic novel that is sure to capture readers' attention.

After convincing her father, the county coroner, to hire her as his assistant, Cameryn excels at her case, proving her knowledge of forensics and her excellent instincts. She is plagued by Deputy Justin Crowley. Her father dislikes the deputy for an unknown reason. Cameryn's second case is a murder and she is devastated when she recognizes the victim as her nineteen-year-old friend and co-worker, Rachel Geller. She is determined to identify the killer who they suspect is a serial killer known as the Christopher Killer after they find his calling card, a St. Christopher medal, in Rachel's bra. After Dr. Moore dismisses Cameryn from the autopsy because of her know-it-all attitude, she discusses the case with Justin and learns that her father dislikes the deputy because he is friends with Hannah, Cameryn's mother who abandoned her when she was very young.

Renowned psychic, Dr. Jewel, plans to visit Silverton to aid in the investigation because he claims Rachel's spirit visited him. Cameryn visits Dr. Jewel with her best friend, Lyric, to clear their friend Adam of suspicion since he was the last person to be seen with Rachel, but some of Dr. Jewel's claims begin to convince Cameryn that he is legitimate and seem to point to Justin. When she revisits Dr. Jewel, she notices him mixing DMSO in his drink, which could cause some of the oddities she noticed during Rachel's autopsy. However, when Dr. Moore refuses to run the tests, Cameryn sneaks into Dr. Jewel's hotel room to search for evidence. She hides under the bed when Dr. Jewel returns to the room and she overhears him talking about a car rental on the phone, which disproves his alibi. Unfortunately, Cameryn's phone rings as Dr. Jewel leaves the room and hearing it, he returns with the intention to kill Cameryn, confessing he became Christopher Killer to ensure the success of his television show.

Justin and Sheriff Jacobs arrive in time to save Cameryn and arrest Dr. Jewel because Dr. Moore called them after running tests that confirmed Cameryn's hypothesis. Later, Cameryn finally reads Hannah's letter, learning her mother left because she could not deal with the death of Cameryn's three-year-old twin sister. Cameryn did not know that she had a sister before reading the letter. Cameryn dials Hannah's phone number.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

"The Christopher Killer" by Alane Ferguson is a forensic mystery novel about Cameryn, a seventeen-year-old girl who begins to work as the assistant to the county coroner, her dad. When Cameryn is called to aid in the autopsy of her friend who happens to be the recent victim of the serial killer known as the Christopher Killer, her dedication to finding justice puts Cameryn's life in danger. "The Christopher Killer" is an intriguing and entertaining forensic novel that is sure to capture readers' attention.

Cameryn's father and county coroner, Patrick discusses a death over the phone while Cameryn and Mammaw continue their morning routine. Patrick is quite rude to Deputy Crowley because he thinks the boy should mind his own business. As Cameryn thinks about the scene her father will soon process, she and Mammaw get into an argument because Mammaw disapproves of Cameryn's interest in forensics. Defending his daughter, Patrick sends Cameryn to retrieve his death certificates while telling his mother that he is doing the best he can. Cameryn and her grandmother do not get along well because she looks so much like her mother, Hannah, who left when Cameryn was very young. Cameryn rarely allows herself to think of Hannah because it is better to focus on the Mahoney Trinity, Mammaw, Patrick, and Cameryn, which is the reality of her life. When Cameryn returns to the kitchen, Patrick can tell there is something on her mind, and when he presses, Cameryn, asking him to be open-minded, notes that he needs an assistant and asks him to hire her. Patrick objects that seventeen years old is still too young for Cameryn to subject herself to death. Mammaw insists that it is out of the question, but Patrick considers Cameryn's request, finally claiming that he and his mother are too afraid and need to let Cameryn decide who she wants to be. Cameryn is ecstatic when Patrick agrees to hire her as the assistant to the coroner of Silverton, Colorado. Furious, Mammaw stomps out of the kitchen, but Patrick assures Cameryn that his mother will get over her worry that Cameryn will delve too far into the macabre. Cameryn promises she will not, insisting she just likes the science. Patrick likes the fact that the dead do not talk back, but Cameryn objects "they still tell us their stories" (p. 17). Patrick never thought of it that way, but he agrees, reminding Cameryn that a dead man is waiting on them so it is time to find out what he has to say.

Chapter 1 Analysis

As Cameryn's father and county coroner, Patrick, discusses the body found in a tub of water while talking to Deputy Crowley, Cameryn notes that a floater does not sound good, knowing what water does to skin from her forensics books. While her father is learning about the floater, Cameryn considers how strange it is that routine things continue when a death call comes into the Mahoney home. Patrick hangs up after insisting the sheriff can wait for him to finish his breakfast, and Mammaw, Patrick's mother and Cameryn's grandmother, chides him for scaring the new deputy. Patrick



claims that Deputy Crowley needs to grow up as he has other issues with the boy. While making coffee, Cameryn's mind works the scene that Patrick will process in half an hour, but when Mammaw suggests teaching Cameryn to cook, an argument ensues because Cameryn is not interested in cooking and Mammaw worries that her soul is getting too dark lately. She disapproves of Cameryn reading books about death and dying, and she believes Patrick is making a mistake by encouraging her. Mammaw hates forensics and picks at Cameryn's dream, wondering why her granddaughter cannot be the type of doctor who helps living people. Patrick tells Mammaw to leave Cameryn alone, sending Cameryn to retrieve his folder of death certificates while he tells Mammaw that he is doing the best he can. Cameryn hates it when they fuss about her. She gets along fine with her dad, but she and Mammaw are "opposites bound by blood" (p. 8). While Patrick and Mammaw are pure Mahoney, large and blunt, Cameryn is more diminutive like her maternal side, though she has almost no memory of her mother who abandoned her when she was young. Cameryn believes it would be easier if her mother, Hannah, had actually died.

When Cameryn was six years old, she asked Patrick about Hannah, and he claimed he did not know why Hannah left but had to believe she would get better one day and come home. Patrick spoke of Hannah less and less until he stopped mentioning her altogether. Sometimes, Cameryn allows herself to think about her mother for a moment, but she knows it is better to focus on the practical reality of her life, the Mahoney Trinity. After retrieving the folder, Cameryn returns to the kitchen, and as they continue their morning, she thinks about her plan which is finally taking shape and the final piece just slipped into place this morning. She questions her father about the body he will examine, but he asks what is going on because he can tell she is up to something from the look on her face. Asking her father to listen before refusing, Cameryn points out that he obviously needs an assistant and asks to work for him. Patrick argues that real life is different from books, but Cameryn knows that she wants to go into forensics plus it would allow her to spend more time with her dad, making perfect sense. To Cameryn, the dead have one thing in common - a lack of a voice, just like she does regarding Hannah's memory. Perhaps she is drawn to forensics because she wants to be the person to give the dead a voice since the dead can tell their story to a good pathologist; however, all she says is that she wants to start learning now. Mammaw objects to the idea, but Patrick overrides her concern, hiring Cameryn as his new assistant. Cameryn is delighted and promises she will not become macabre as her grandmother worries. When Patrick mentions that he likes working with the dead because they do not talk back, Cameryn points out that he is wrong; they can tell their story to a good pathologist.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

As Cameryn and Patrick prepare for the job, Cameryn assures her father that she is fine, though she does not feel as confident as she portrays. When they quickly reach a rundown hotel across town, Patrick reminds Cameryn to bring the camera as he growls about the presence of nosy Deputy Crowley who he refuses to listen to as he enters the hotel room with Cameryn following. Inside, Cameryn first notices the odor, but after Sheriff John Jacobs greets Patrick and Cameryn, he objects to Cameryn's presence. Patrick insists Cameryn is his new assistant and is twice as smart and half as squeamish as most girls, but he agrees to look at the body before deciding. Returning from the bathroom, Patrick seems to have changed his mind, and when Cameryn protests, he suggests she can help process the room. Cameryn is frustrated that Patrick and Sheriff Jacobs seem to have shut her out. Patrick begins to believe they will need an autopsy when he learns the hotel manager last saw the deceased four days earlier when he checked in. Looking around, Cameryn finds a half-written phone number and a baggie with loose pills and three months' worth of prescriptions for Inderal, a medication for enlarged veins in the esophagus caused by drinking. Patrick is pleased because Cameryn may have just found the case of death, but when he asks about the camera, Cameryn panics because she forgot it in the car. Patrick tells her it is not a big deal but reminds her to take photos before moving things next time. As she heads toward the car, Cameryn decides to stop in the bathroom because the men are patronizing her and she wants to see a real case. Inside the bathroom, she fights the urge to run at the sight of the bloated, waxy dead. She is drawn and repelled at the same time, moving forward when she sees movement but jerking back when she realizes the movement is caused by maggots. Needing air, Cameryn breathes in the rotting flesh. Realizing she is going to vomit, she rushes outside and retches into a garbage can, relieved that Patrick did not see her. Someone lightly touches Cameryn's shoulder and she turns to stare into the eyes of Deputy Crowley.

Chapter 2 Analysis

While Patrick gathers the materials he will need to extricate the corpse from the bathtub without damaging the body unnecessarily, Cameryn assures him she is fine with more confidence than she feels. Patrick's job is to announce the deaths of Silverton residents, but if there is any question about the cause of death, he orders an autopsy in Durango and transports the body in his station wagon. Cameryn's best friend, Lyric, refuses to ride in the station wagon because she insists it is haunted. Patrick hopes that this job will be a natural death which will make his job much easier because of the decomposition that will result from being waterlogged. It does not take long to drive across the small town, and when Patrick stops at a rundown hotel, a young man barely older than Cameryn paces just beyond the police tape. Patrick growls about the deputy, claiming he dislikes the young man because he pokes his nose in things that are not his



business. After having Cameryn record their time of arrival, Patrick reminds her to bring the camera, and Cameryn feels ready and official as she joins Patrick, whose entrance is blocked by Deputy Crowley who begs for a chance to explain, wanting to talk about something other than the case. Patrick refuses to listen to Deputy Crowley, urging Cameryn onward since they have work to do. When Patrick and Cameryn join Sheriff Jacobs, he objects to Cameryn's presence, suggesting Patrick take a look at the body before deciding whether to subject Cameryn to the horror. As recurs throughout this novel, the adult men are eager to protect Cameryn from the indignities of death, assuming the girl cannot handle it, though she proves otherwise repeatedly. Saddened by the sad life the deceased obviously lived, Cameryn chides herself for wondering about the man's lonely life because "it was her job to figure out the death, not the life" (p. 32). Patrick is proud of Cameryn when she locates a bag of pills and prescription which likely explain the cause of death, and when she panics about forgetting the camera in the car, he assures her that it is not a big deal since the death is natural. As Cameryn goes to retrieve the camera, she is annoyed by the men's protective attitude about the body, deciding to take a glance, but the smell and the sight send her running from the room to a trash can outside where she retches, embarrassed when Deputy Crowley alerts her to his presence.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Cameryn is obviously attracted to Deputy Justin Crowley, but she is mortified that he caught her in a moment of weakness. He assures her that there is nothing wrong with her reaction, and he even covered for her with her father and the sheriff so they do not know about her reaction. When Cameryn realizes that Justin is flirting with her, she insists she cannot like him since her father hates him, and though Justin is certain Patrick has not told Cameryn why he dislikes him, he refuses to share the information since people often kill the messenger, telling her to figure it out since she is the genius. When Cameryn is waitressing at the Grand later, her co-worker and friend, Rachel Geller, talks about the cute new deputy, but just when she is about to leave early, she asks to wait on Justin when he enters the restaurant. Rachel is agitated when Justin insists on being served by Cameryn, and after she leaves, Cameryn asks what Justin wants, demanding a food order when he claims that he wants to be her friend. Though he said earlier that he was afraid to tell her his secret, he is now ready to take the chance, but he is interrupted by Sheriff Jacobs who insists they need to leave for Montrose immediately. Justin promises that he and Cameryn will talk another time, and she simply shrugs in confusion as he leaves.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Cameryn notices that Deputy Crowley's eyes are somewhere between blue and green as he hands her tissues and assures her that he nearly lost it too. Cameryn is embarrassed and angry as she cleans herself, but Deputy Crowley tells her that Patrick is bragging about her finding the pills in the phone book. Deputy Crowley covered for Cameryn when Patrick was looking for her, claiming her cell phone rang. Cameryn does not understand why her dad hates Deputy Crowley, but when she realizes that he seems to be hitting on her, she tells him that she cannot like him since Patrick does not. Justin bets that Patrick will not tell Cameryn why he dislikes Justin, but he refuses to tell her either since people often kill the messenger, telling her to figure it out herself since she is the genius. Later at work at the Grand, Rachel Geller, Cameryn's nineteen-year-old fellow server and friend, chats about the cute new deputy. She is impressed by Cameryn's calmness after seeing the dead guy in the tub. Since business is slow, Rachel asks if Cameryn minds if she leaves early, but she changes her mind when Justin enters and sits at the bar. Cameryn agrees to let Rachel serve him, though he is in her section, but Rachel returns with an uncharacteristic smile because Justin insisted on Cameryn being his server. Rachel leaves, promising to return by the time Cameryn gets off work at 7 P. M. With nothing to do but take Justin's order, Cameryn approaches him and asks what he wants, but when he says he wants to be her friend, she demands his food order. Justin claims he is here to help Cameryn, but she reminds him that he is afraid to tell her his secret. Leaning forward, Justin claims he is ready to take a chance, but he cannot say more because Sheriff Jacobs enters and insists Justin has to leave

because they need to be in Montrose right now. Promising Cameryn that they will talk another time, Justin leaves \$10 on the counter as a down payment, and thinking about this as he leaves, Cameryn shrugs and pockets the money.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Lyric asks if Cameryn watched "Shadow of Death" last night, knowing Cameryn is lying when she claims she forgot. She tells Cameryn about how Dr. Jewel was visited by a girl's spirit who told him her body is on a dirt road in the mountains and she is the fourth victim of the Christopher Killer, a psychotic serial killer who leaves St. Christopher medals on the bodies of his victims. Cameryn is skeptical. As they drive through town, they notice Adam, a strange new kid who is rumored to be a Satan-worshipper. Lyric suggests giving him a ride for the sake of good karma, and though Cameryn objects, she slows down and offers Adam a ride. Once Adam gets in Cameryn's car, he and Lyric begin talking, and Adam mentions his fascination with the occult. As they begin talking about last night's "Shadow of Death", Adam mentions that the description of the mountains remind him of Silverton, and when Lyric agrees, Cameryn insists that they are both delusional. She is relieved when they reach school where there is a clear, comfortable division between the living and the dead. After telling Lyric that she is sick of this conversation, Cameryn is interrupted when Patrick calls her and asks her to leave school because some hikers found a girl's body by the stream near Smith Fork. He tells Cameryn to wait in the parking lot for him to pick her up, warning that they have not yet identified the girl but the sheriff claims that it is murder.

Chapter 4 Analysis

This chapter introduces Cameryn's best friend, Lyric. Lyric and Cameryn have been best friends since Lyric moved to Silverton in fifth grade, although they are complete opposites who see the world in very different ways such as how Lyric believes in psychics, a comment that foreshadows some of the events and concepts in this novel. The show, "Shadow of Death" is also introduced and Lyric tells Cameryn about the famous Dr. Jewel who will play a large role in this novel. Additionally, Dr. Jewel's latest show mentioned the fourth victim of the Christopher Killer who visited Dr. Jewel to tell him that her body is found on a dirt road in the mountains, foreshadowing the discovery of this unfortunate young lady. With her strong belief in science, Cameryn is skeptical about psychics. Adam is introduced when Lyric suggests giving the strange kid a ride to school, and though Cameryn objects at first, she yields. It does not take Adam long to warm up and talk to Lyric about his fascination with the local cemetery. He also claims that Silverton Souvenirs, where he works, is haunted, and noticing Lyric's excitement, Cameryn realizes Lyric is drawn to Adam because "wacky people are always drawn to their own kind" (p. 65). When Lyric tells Adam that Cameryn does not believe in ghosts, he notes that science-types always ignore their sixth sense. Cameryn is agitated by their conversation, especially when they suggest that Dr. Jewel's description of the mountains where the Christopher Killer's fourth victim will be found reminds him of the mountains near Silverton; however, this foreshadows the discovery of a body which is fulfilled very quickly when Patrick calls Cameryn to ask her to accompany him to

examine the body of a young girl found near Smith Fork, warning her that the sheriff claims the girl was murdered. The fact that the victim has not yet been identified foreshadows the possibility that Cameryn will know the victim.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Adam and Lyric wait with Cameryn until Patrick finally arrives, apologizing for asking her to miss school, but he needs all the help he can get since it has been a long time since he worked a murder case. He knows the victim is young and instructs Cameryn to take pictures from every conceivable angle. Patrick is glad she is with him because she acted like a professional last time and he needs her expertise since she has been reading up on forensics. Patrick warns Cameryn that everything they do will be evidentiary so they will be pressured to do it all correctly. He is glad that she is with him because she has great instincts. Patrick dismisses Cameryn's mention of Dr. Jewel's show, saying they do not have any facts yet. There is no evidence of a bullet hole, but Sheriff Jacobs believes this is a murder because the victim's hands were duct taped behind her back. They turn onto a dirt road and pull up to the sheriff's SUV, seeing a woman crying as Justin takes notes on her story about finding the victim. Justin stops working to object to Cameryn's presence, claiming murder is too strong for a young lady to see, but Patrick tells Justin that his family is none of his business. Following Patrick to the other side of the tape, Cameryn is excited to be a link in the chain that will hang the criminal until she sees the body which appears to be around her age. Cameryn takes photographs as she is filled with horror, fascination, fear, curiosity and mostly anger because no one deserves to die like this. She refuses to meet Justin's eyes when Patrick announces it is time to turn the body over. Patrick's eyes grow wide as he pleads "oh God, please no" (p. 85). Seeing the perfect faces, tears blur Cameryn's vision and her hand flies to her mouth as she recognizes Rachel.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Adam and Lyric stay with Cameryn while she waits for Patrick, discussing how it matches with Dr. Jewel's description. Cameryn insists that they do not even know if it is definitely murder yet since they have not been to the scene, but there is no proof that it is the murder Dr. Jewel mentioned. Cameryn is sure the victim must be a tourist, but she waits for her dad outside, needing air. When Patrick pulls up, he hurries Cameryn along. He apologizes for asking Cameryn to miss school, but he needs all the help he can get since it is a murder case. As they drive in silence, Cameryn worries about what a murder victim will look like, reminding herself to think clinically instead of emotionally. When she tells Patrick about Dr. Jewel's show, indicating that she may be considering the possibility that the psychic is legit, he insists the only fact is they found a dead girl. He tells Cameryn that the victim was found face down and has not been identified because the sheriff cannot move her until Patrick and Cameryn arrive, again foreshadowing the possibility that Cameryn may know the victim. Patrick's description of the scene indicates it will be traumatic for Cameryn, especially if she knows the victim. When Patrick and Cameryn arrive, Justin objects to a young lady seeing a murder, but showing his unknown antagonism toward the young man, Patrick tells him that his



daughter is not Justin's business. Cameryn's excitement to be photographing a murder diminishes when she sees the body which appears to be near her age, and anger takes over at the thought of anyone dying in such a degrading way. Patrick's reaction when they turn the body over reinforces the foreshadowing that Cameryn knows the victim, which is quickly fulfilled when Cameryn is horrified as she recognizes Rachel.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Because Cameryn is silent during the ride to Durango while she thinks about Rachel, Patrick advises her that she must learn to detach in order to survive, and she can do that by remembering that the only chance of obtaining justice for the victim is by doing their job right; this is the last and only thing Cameryn can do for Rachel now. Ben Short, the pathologist's assistant, objects to Cameryn's presence, but after Patrick explains that she is his assistant, he warns them that Dr. Moore will not like it. While Ben X-rays Rachel's body, Patrick asks how Cameryn is holding up, and she tells him that it is hard because she is blown away by the process and then feels like she has been punched in the gut as she remembers Rachel was only a year older than she is and wonders what Rachel's parents will do without Rachel and what Cameryn will do without her friend. Patrick claims it is impossible to know what fate has in store, but Cameryn protests that evil trumps fate, hoping that whoever did this burns in hell forever. Patrick tells Cameryn that Sheriff Jacobs is on his way to tell Rachel's parents who have not even realized she is missing since they are staying at a friend's cabin where they do not have cell phone service. After Ben leads Cameryn and Moore to the autopsy suite, Patrick leaves to get coffee, and Cameryn distracts herself by examining the autopsy instruments. Though she is unsure if she can do this, Patrick needs her, and so does Rachel. Leaning toward Rachel's ear, Cameryn tells her friend "I'm so sorry this happened to you" (p. 98), but she suddenly knows why she is here: she will help catch the killer. She whispers the promise to Rachel over and over, but when Ben warns her that Dr. Moore is watching her from the observation window and will not like her touching the body, Cameryn sees a man's face glowering at her as if he already hates her. The curtain snaps shut, and Ben warns that this could get ugly.

Chapter 6 Analysis

The medical examiner's building in Durango looks nothing like Cameryn expects, and when Patrick suggests she pass on the autopsy, Cameryn insists she is fine. She has not spoken the entire ride because she was thinking about Rachel. Noting that it is worse when you know the deceased, Patrick suggests Cameryn focus on her job which is to find the killer. Cameryn still cannot believe that Rachel no longer has a future. When the pathologist's assistant, Ben Short, greets them at the car, Patrick gives him the details of the death as they lift the body onto a gurney. Ben objects to Cameryn accompanying them, but when Patrick explains that she is his assistant, Ben warns them that Dr. Moore is in a foul mood and does not suffer fools. The building smells like death and disinfectant as they wheel Rachel to the X-ray room to check anything the naked eye might miss. Cameryn still cannot believe that Rachel is gone, and she struggles with her grief even as she is mesmerized by the pathology that she so loves. Feeling weary, Cameryn realizes it takes a lot of energy to keep her emotions in check. After Ben returns and announces Moore will arrive soon, he leads Patrick and Cameryn



to the autopsy room where he warns that he is uncertain whether Moore will allow Cameryn to stay. Patrick insists that he is the coroner and Cameryn is fine where she is. While he goes to get coffee, Cameryn studies the autopsy instruments as a distraction, sickened at the idea that Rachel could have been raped. Patrick thinks she is a genius, but she knows that she is only a high school student who only knows what she has found in books; however, Dad believes in her and he needs her, as does Rachel. Cameryn suddenly realizes she is forcing herself to do this because she believes she can help catch the killer, and as she promises Rachel that she will find the murderer, Ben warns her that Dr. Moore is watching and will disapprove of her touching the body. A man glowers at her from the observation window, and when he snaps the curtain shut, Ben warns her that this may not go well, foreshadowing Dr. Moore's disapproval of Cameryn's presence and eventually his decision to remove her from the autopsy altogether.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Dr. Moore is furious that a seventeen-year-old kid is in his autopsy suite, and when Patrick returns, he threatens to remove Moore from the case if he tries to kick Cameryn out. Ben helps the situation by reminding Dr. Moore of the media frenzy concerning this case, so Dr. Moore relents but still insists that he will kick Cameryn out if she messes anything up since the body belongs to him after the autopsy begins. Cameryn tries to control her emotions as she becomes distraught at the pain her friend must have undergone. After Cameryn takes pictures, Dr. Moore begins collecting trace evidence, moving slowly from head to foot as Patrick signs and dates the envelopes with the evidence. When Dr. Moore checks Rachel's eyes, he notices petechial hemorrhaging which is usually a sign of strangulation. Taking photos at every step, Cameryn continually promises Rachel that they will catch her murderer, though the promise sounds hollow since she knows many murders remain unsolved no matter how good the forensics might be. While Dr. Moore collects hairs and fingernails, Cameryn cannot help but notice how Rachel has ceased to be since her nobility as a human has been taken; "there was no dignity in death" (p. 116). As Ben and Justin undress Rachel, Cameryn notices a strange shape in Rachel's bra, and reaching to remove it, she withdraws a St. Christopher medal.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Demanding to know why a seventeen-year-old kid is in his autopsy suite, Dr. Moore begins yelling at Ben for allowing it, and Cameryn is relieved when her father returns, the pressure of his hands on her shoulders letting her know that he will handle this. Patrick informs Dr. Moore that Cameryn is his new assistant, threatening to remove Moore from the autopsy if he tries to kick her out, and Ben contributes by telling Dr. Moore about the media frenzy that is coming due to Dr. Jewel's involvement in the case and the claim that the deceased is a victim of the Christopher Killer, suggesting Moore does not want the media to know about this misunderstanding plus he does not want Dr. Canfield from Montrose to get the glory of performing the autopsy for the national media. Though he does not believe that Rachel is a victim of the Christopher Killer, Dr. Moore admits that catching the killer is the most important thing and it is not his business if Patrick wants to expose his daughter to the indignities of death. Patrick claims that Cameryn has a gift for seeing things, but unimpressed, Dr. Moore threatens that he will kick Cameryn out if she screws up because the body becomes his once the autopsy begins. This foreshadows Dr. Moore kicking Cameryn out of the autopsy. As they prepare to begin, Sheriff Jacobs and Justin arrive after talking to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation. Dr. Moore suggests that the two newbies, Cameryn and Justin, stick together before asking Patrick to remove the deceased from the bag and check the bag. Cameryn's stomach turns as they unwrap Rachel, but she notes that the color on Rachel's face is due to the blood pooling at the lower point, meaning Rachel was put on



her stomach right after she was murdered. She silently asks Rachel who did this to her. Cameryn photographs Rachel's body as Dr. Moore collects evidence. The entire time, Cameryn promises Rachel that she will catch her murderer. As they begin to undress Rachel, Cameryn notices a strange lump in Rachel's bra and extracts a St. Christopher medal, fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing and Dr. Jewel's claims that Rachel is a victim of the Christopher Killer.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Unable to take her eyes off the medal, Cameryn cannot imagine how Dr. Jewel could have known. Dr. Moore tells her to put the evidence in an envelope, insisting that finding the medal means nothing except that maybe the crazy psychic murdered Rachel. Justin objects because he already checked and found that Dr. Jewel has a solid alibi. Dr. Moore is just trying to do his job, and as he continues undressing Rachel, Cameryn is embarrassed for her friend, but the men act professionally. Cameryn and Justin turn away while Moore takes out a rape kit, and when Dr. Moore announces that there is no sign of trauma, Cameryn is relieved that Rachel did not suffer that indignity. Sheriff Jacobs notes that none of the Christopher victims were raped. When Cameryn turns around, she notices something on Rachel's hands that looks like a stain, but no one else can see it, and when she insists on taking a sample, Dr. Moore mocks her for being a know-it-all. Though Cameryn reminds herself that this is nothing but a shell as Dr. Moore cuts into Rachel's flesh, her nerves react on their own; however, once the body is open, Cameryn is disconcerted by the smell of garlic since Rachel did not eat garlic. Dr. Moore claims that Cameryn is in over her head, but Cameryn knows there is something wrong that has to do with the stain and garlic. When Dr. Moore laughingly suggest Cameryn take a picture of the garlic smell, she tells him that he should care more about the case, infuriating Dr. Moore to the point that he asks her to leave immediately. Patrick, Sheriff Jacobs and Ben object, causing Cameryn to feel horrible since her dad trusted her to act professionally and she failed. The men are stalemated in their argument until Justin offers to take Cameryn home, claiming he has work to do in Silverton anyway. Patrick protests, but Cameryn insists that she wants to go, but she refuses to look at Dr. Moore as she exits the room. In the hallway, Justin leans close and suggests that they get out of there.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Cameryn is stunned when they find the medal, obviously beginning to believe the psychic a bit more, but Dr. Moore's comment that all the medal means is that perhaps Dr. Jewel murdered Rachel foreshadows the discovery of the Christopher Killer's identity. Justin demonstrates that he has already considered this possibility by assuring everyone that Dr. Jewel has a solid alibi. Justin is trying to keep an open mind since Dr. Jewel has proven himself with the Christopher killings and other cases. The men act professionally as they undress Rachel and continue the autopsy. Cameryn begins to understand the rhythm of forensics as they continue, noticing that it is almost like a dance set to its own music. Cameryn is relieved when Dr. Moore confirms that Rachel was not raped, but Sheriff Jacobs notes that none of the Christopher victims were raped, providing further proof that Rachel is the fourth victim of the Christopher Killer. As the procedure continues, Cameryn is disturbed by stains on Rachel's hands and the smell of garlic since Rachel did not eat garlic; however, Dr. Moore dismisses her



observations, mocking her and refusing to examine the matters any further. Cameryn's observations foreshadow the importance of these two circumstances in the case, especially as her observations remain unexamined because Dr. Moore's ego will not permit him to heed the advice of an untrained child. Dr. Moore is agitated by Cameryn's interruption, but she objects to not being allowed to have an opinion because she is tired of pretending she does not know how to think; she owes her allegiance to Rachel, not Dr. Moore. When Dr. Moore mocks Cameryn, she explodes in anger, telling him to care about the case and causing him to kick her out of the autopsy. Patrick, Ben and Sheriff Jacobs come to her defense, but as Dr. Moore is adamant, Cameryn insists that she wants to leave. Justin claims he has work to do in Silverton and offers to take Cameryn home. Patrick is not comfortable with this arrangement, reminding readers of his dislike for Justin which still remains a mystery, and this time alone foreshadows that Cameryn may learn why Patrick hates Justin so much.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Though Cameryn is grateful to Justin for getting her out of there, she declines his offer to grab food, insisting that she just wants to go home. When she asks what Justin thinks about Dr. Jewel, he says Dr. Jewel is convincing, but Cameryn needs more information to believe in a psychic. Cameryn cannot remember who St. Christopher is so she promises to ask Mammaw. She wonders about Justin's secret as he tells her about growing up in New York, but when he asks about her family, Cameryn claims her mother died a long time ago and she does not want to talk about it. Her thoughts returning to the case, Cameryn wonders what could cause a garlic smell besides garlic, and when Justin suggests looking it up in the books he has at his house, she is confused by how he says "we" as if they will work the case together. Mammaw interrupts the conversation to check on Cameryn because Patrick is concerned about her being with Justin since he does not trust the deputy. After Cameryn hangs up, she refuses to answer Justin's questions about Mammaw, instead asking why her father hates him so much; however, Justin insists it is not his place to tell, admitting he made a big mistake by talking to Patrick and insisting she talk to her father if she wants answers. Remembering how her father taught her to look to the source for information, Cameryn questions Justin about his life in New York, and when she asks if he has heard of the artist Hannah Peterson, he blushes, causing the mystery to make sense as the only subject that Patrick ever gets angry about is Cameryn's mother. Justin explains that he met Hannah at his brother's party, and they became friends, but he insists Hannah only told him about Cameryn after he took the job in Silverton. Justin insists that Hannah really cares about Cameryn, but Cameryn tells him it is none of his business because her mother abandoned her. His timing is horrific. Justin apologizes because he knows Cameryn is already dealing with Rachel's death. He planned to bring Hannah's letter and gift to Cameryn and explain that she should give Hannah a chance and not judge her mother until she has heard her side of the story. Once they reach Cameryn's house, Cameryn apologizes for taking her anger out on Justin, explaining her anger is directed at Hannah, but when he insists that Hannah still loves her daughter, Cameryn rushes into her grandmother's house.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Cameryn insists on going home immediately, but during the drive, she and Justin discuss Dr. Jewel. Justin finds Dr. Jewel convincing, but Cameryn needs more evidence to believe in psychics, showing her scientific training. Their interest in the story of St. Christopher foreshadows that this will have something to do with the murderer's identity. Realizing Rachel is the fourth victim of the Christopher Killer, Cameryn feels certain there will be a fifth if they do not catch the murderer. Cameryn and Justin talk about the case in between talking about their personal lives; however, Justin refuses to tell Cameryn why Patrick hates him so much. Reverting to her scientific training, Cameryn



begins at the source, asking Justin about his early life. When she learns that he spent some time in New York City, she questions him about whether he has ever heard of Hannah Peterson, her mother, realizing that Hannah is the only reason she has ever seen her father become so irrational like he is concerning his hatred of Justin. Justin admits that he knows Hannah and that Hannah asked him to deliver a package and a letter to Cameryn, insisting that Hannah still loves Cameryn. Cameryn is furious and tells him to mind his business, much like her father did earlier. She is furious and overwhelmed by the thought of Hannah returning to her life now after she has been gone for so long. Ignoring Justin, Cameryn just wants to go home because she does not know what to think anymore. Justin explains that Hannah has been afraid to contact Cameryn for fear of being rejected, but Cameryn argues that Hannah rejected her first, rebuffing Justin's attempts to comfort her when she begins to cry. At her house, Cameryn apologizes to Justin for taking her frustration out on him, but she rushes away when he again attempts to defend Hannah. This situation foreshadows Cameryn's decision to pursue a relationship with Hannah.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

The next day, Cameryn is glad for the chance to walk to school since nothing has yet been settled concerning Hannah or Rachel. Lyric is excited that Dr. Jewel is coming to town, certain he will catch the killer. When Cameryn asks Mammaw if they could have found Hannah if Cameryn had been the one to die, Mammaw realizes that Cameryn spoke to Justin but insists it is Patrick's secret to tell. Adam and Lyric wait for Cameryn at Lyric's house, and Lyric explains Adam needs to talk to someone about Rachel's death because he had a crush on her and is taking it hard. Adam is worried because his boss fired him and threatened to call the sheriff after finding some pictures he took of Rachel. Adam knows people call him a freak, but he would never hurt anyone. Lyric points out that Adam cannot be the Christopher Killer since the victims came from all over the country. Cameryn does not trust Adam, but she does not believe he killed Rachel so she is disturbed at school to find that many of her peers suspect Adam of being the murderer. Wondering if he could be a copycat killer, she regrets leaving him alone with Lyric. When school is dismissed for the day and the next day because of Rachel's tragic death, Cameryn rushes to the parking lot, relieved that Lyric is safe. Lyric tells Cameryn she has an idea to prove Adam's innocence; they will have Dr. Jewel summon Rachel's spirit. She has already scheduled an appointment for first thing tomorrow morning.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Thoughts of Rachel and Hannah plague Cameryn, and she is annoyed by the lack of resolution concerning either situation. When Cameryn talks to Mammaw about Hannah, Mammaw realizes that Justin spoke to Cameryn, but she insists Cameryn must talk to her father about this. Cameryn thinks that it makes no sense for Hannah to materialize now that she does not want her after years of praying for her mother's return did not work. When Cameryn joins Adam and Lyric at Lyric's house, Adam tells them that he is worried about being arrested because his boss fired him after finding pictures of Rachel that he was developing. He swears he would never hurt anyone, and Lyric believes him since the Christopher Killer victims were found all across the country. Though Cameryn does not believe Adam killed Rachel, she does not trust him, so when she learns that some of her peers suspect Adam, she begins to suspect he could be a copycat killer and worries because she left Lyric alone with him in the parking lot. When school is dismissed for students to mourn Rachel's death, Cameryn rushes to Lyric's side in relief that her best friend is safe; however, Lyric has an idea to prove Adam's innocence, and she tells Cameryn that she has already scheduled an appointment with Dr. Jewel to summon Rachel's spirit, foreshadowing their visit to Dr. Jewel.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Inside the Grand, Stephanie Kinde leads Cameryn, Lyric and Adam to their appointment with Dr. Jewel, asking to film the session. Since she studied photography chemicals, Cameryn knows Adam did not kill Rachel, but she is still wary of him and skeptical of Dr. Jewel. After Dr. Jewel talks to Lyric and Adam for fifteen minutes, they begin filming when he asks why Lyric wants to talk to Rachel, and Lyric explains that they want to know who murdered Rachel so her innocent friend is not accused, glancing at Adam. Closing his eyes, Dr. Jewel announces Rachel's presence, mentioning the color blue, the letter M and the number 88. Cameryn is stunned when he notes that Rachel's brown hair appears to have once been red and when he describes her jewelry. When Adam asks who killed Rachel, Dr. Jewel claims it is hard for those who passed to talk about their deaths, especially if it is violent. He notes that the murderer was someone close to Rachel's age and asks if she was strangled, but the reading is interrupted when Sheriff Jacobs enters to ask Adam to come with him because Adam was the last person to see Rachel alive; a witness saw Adam helping Rachel into his truck Saturday night. As Sheriff Jacobs takes Adam away for questioning, Dr. Jewel announces that Rachel is indicating Adam is not the killer. The killer is still out there, in Silverton, and Rachel says "the real Christopher Killer is ready to strike again" (page 188).

Chapter 11 Analysis

As they are led to their appointment with Dr. Jewel, Adam is glad no one knows they are here except Lyric's mother who arranged the appointment. He has not been home for fear of being arrested. Lyric's mom, Daphne, warns Cameryn that her skepticism could drain Dr. Jewel's psychic energy and asks her to keep an open mind. Asking the kids to be responsive when Dr. Jewel says something that makes sense because it improves ratings, Stephanie leads them to a private room where Dr. Jewel enters. Cameryn immediately dislikes the psychic, foreshadowing his nefarious intents when Cameryn's exceptional instinct is taken into account. When Dr. Jewel asks if Adam is the one in trouble, Cameryn realizes that Lyric gave it away by looking at Adam. Though Dr. Jewel's details are generally vague, Cameryn is amazed when he knows about Rachel's hair and earrings, beginning to believe he could be legit; however, Dr. Jewel insists that Rachel cannot give a clear answer about who murdered her. Sheriff Jacobs arrives to arrest Adam who was the last person to see Rachel alive. Adam's face shows the truth of this accusation, but he swears he did not hurt Rachel. As Adam is taken away, Dr. Jewel tells Lyric and Cameryn that Adam is not the killer, meaning the real killer is still at large, foreshadowing the danger to girls in Silverton, particularly Cameryn.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Beginning to believe in Dr. Jewel's abilities, Cameryn does not know how to reconcile her faith and science with Dr. Jewel's ability to talk to the dead. She thinks it is interesting that St. Christopher is the patron saint of travelers since all of his victims were found in different states. When Justin arrives to talk to Cameryn about the coroner's report, Mammaw warns her to guard her heart. After looking at a map of the victims' locations which indicates no obvious pattern, Cameryn and Justin discuss the differences between organized and disorganized killers. Though Adam fits the profile of a disorganized killer, Justin does not believe that Adam is the murderer because the Christopher Killer seems to fit the profile of an organized killer. Returning to the autopsy report, Justin tells Cameryn that Rachel was drugged, like the other victims, to make her compliant. This information was withheld from the public, disproving that Rachel was murdered by a copycat killer. Since the medal suggests a traveler, Cameryn mentions Dr. Jewel, but Justin already checked all car rentals and found a witness to corroborate Dr. Jewel's alibi. Thinking of Justin's license plate and something Dr. Jewel said, Cameryn asks about the scratches on Justin's neck, but he claims he was pruning trees for his landlady. Cameryn claims she is tired, and Justin leaves her with the map. Looking at the map, she notes Justin has told her about being in two of the places where Christopher victims were found, but the piece Dr. Jewel divined adds it all together: Justin's blue license plate has the letter M in the center.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Mammaw objects to Dr. Jewel being legit, but Cameryn now believes he can talk to the dead because he knew things he should not have known. She does not want to go to Rachel's funeral on Thursday, but it is the last thing she can do for her friend, besides finding the murderer. She asks Mammaw about St. Christopher and learns he is the patron saint of travelers, a fact she finds interesting since all of the victims were found in different states. Mammaw's warning for Cameryn to guard her heart indicates that she suspects her granddaughter has romantic sentiments about Justin. Justin wants to talk to Cameryn about the preliminary coroner's report, but first, she asks about Adam. It does not look good because of the pictures and Adam being the last person to see Rachel alive. Since none of the victims were raped, Cameryn does not understand the killer's motive, and when she tells Justin that St. Christopher is the patron saint of travelers, he shows her a map of the victims' locations which indicates no obvious pattern. They discuss the differences between organized and disorganized killers. Adam fits the profile of a disorganized killer, but Cameryn notes that one of the victims was from Albany, like Justin. When she mentions that Dr. Jewel claimed Adam is not the killer, Justin agrees because he believes the Christopher Killer is an organized killer. The duct tape shows a need for control and planning, while the St. Christopher medal fits the profile since organized killers like to make a statement. The fact that Rachel was



given the same drug as the other victims, a fact withheld from the public, proves that she was not murdered by a copycat killer. Again, the idea that Dr. Jewel is the murderer is foreshadowed, but Justin insists that Dr. Jewel has an alibi. Cameryn's thoughts and her discomfort concerning the scratches on Justin's neck foreshadow her suspicions that Justin killed Rachel. Nothing makes sense; Dr. Jewel seems to be legit, but a psychic goes against everything Cameryn knows about science. This suspicion is confirmed shortly after Justin leaves when the narrator notes that Justin's blue license plate has the letter M in the center, confirming two of the clues that Dr. Jewel claimed Rachel gave them: the color blue and the letter M.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Insisting it is an emergency, Cameryn convinces Stephanie to let her talk to Dr. Jewel, but she cannot believe she is buying into this craziness as Stephanie tells her about the ghosts that reside at the Grand. Claiming that he knows Cameryn is a skeptic because Rachel is telling him, Dr. Jewel also professes to see a dark-haired three-year-old girl who seems to know Cameryn, but Cameryn has no idea what he is talking about. Cameryn asks Dr. Jewel to ask Rachel for her killer's name, but he insists psychic energy is not that easy to understand, causing Stephanie to explain Dr. Jewel needs twenty-four hour cleansing periods like the one he took before Rachel came to him since the dead's impressions get distorted. When a news crew arrives, Dr. Jewel tells Cameryn she can have both faith and science, and she assures him that she understands a lot more now than when she arrived. After Dr. Jewel wishes her luck finding the murderer, Cameryn calls Sheriff Jacobs's office and asks for Dr. Moore's phone number. She does not want to tell Justin her suspicions until she is sure, but when he urges, she tells him she may have found Rachel's killer if she is right.

Chapter 13 Analysis

With her new suspicions, Cameryn returns to visit Dr. Jewel, unable to believe she is lending credence to a psychic. Dr. Jewel is impressed when Cameryn explains she assisted her father, the county coroner, with Rachel's remains, and though she cannot discuss details about an ongoing case, she confesses that his description was accurate. Cameryn does not know what Dr. Jewel is talking about when he mentions a dark-haired three-year-old girl who seems to know her, but this seems to indicate that Dr. Jewel is not as fraudulent as he appears by the end of the novel when Cameryn learns the truth about her past. Though Rachel's ghost refuses to acknowledge the letter M, the little girl wants to speak to Cameryn, but even as Cameryn insists she does not know the little girl, a forgotten memory falls into place. When Dr. Jewel asks why Cameryn is visiting him, she realizes she wants her suspicions to be wrong because Mammaw was right and she did not guard her heart. Though the pieces add up, she still believes crimes are solved by scientist, but a real scientist follows the evidence and Dr. Jewel has already proven himself, so she needs to follow the thread that leads to Justin, regardless of the cost. When Cameryn asks about Rachel's killer, Dr. Jewel's answers are vague, but Cameryn learns about his cleansing periods where he refuses any human contact, like the one he took right before Rachel's spirit appeared to him. This combined with her observation of Dr. Jewel adding DMSO to his drink leads her to a new suspicion, and she assures him that she understands a lot more than when she arrived, foreshadowing her new suspicion that Dr. Jewel is the murderer. Ironically, Dr. Jewel wishes Cameryn luck in finding Rachel's murderer. Cameryn calls Justin to obtain Dr. Moore's phone number, excited that she may have found Rachel's killer, especially

because this time, the pieces fit forensically, and she is back in the world of science, no longer dependent on Dr. Jewel's claims.



Chapter 14 and 15

Chapter 14 and 15 Summary

In Chapter 14, Cameryn calls Dr. Moore and asks if DMSO could cause the stains on Rachel's hands and the garlic smell, and though Dr. Moore admits it is possible, he accuses Cameryn of wasting his time. Using her knowledge, Cameryn suggests a scenario in which Dr. Jewel could have used DMSO to drug Rachel. Dr. Moore mocks Cameryn, refusing to run the test before he hangs up. Hoping to find evidence in Dr. Jewel's room, Cameryn sneaks in and searches through his belongings in vain. When she hears Dr. Jewel outside the room, she hides under the bed, panicked that she is alone with Dr. Jewel in his room.

In Chapter 15, Cameryn tries to remain calm as Dr. Jewel calls a car rental place, explaining that he left his rental, under the name Raymond Jankowski, in the Santa Fe airport parking lot because he was in a hurry. Cameryn realizes that he used an alias for the rental, and his cleansing period was the perfect alibi since he refuses to see people during that time period. She is ecstatic that she now has the proof that Dr. Jewel is the Christopher Killer, but as he leaves the room, her cell phone rings. Cameryn quickly silences it, hoping Dr. Jewel did not hear it, but he returns to the room, pointing a gun at Cameryn under the bed and tells her the spirits "say it's time for you to join the party" (p. 250).

Chapter 14 and 15 Analysis

In Chapter 14, Dr. Moore accuses Cameryn of wasting his time when she calls him, but she insists she has a question about DMSO which has to do with the Geller case. She saw Dr. Jewel mix DMSO in his drink and remembers that DMSO can pull chemicals through the skin barrier. Dr. Moore mocks Cameryn for not even being able to stay on task; she wanted to be a forensic pathologist and has now decided she is a detective three days later. He admits that DMSO can leave a garlic smell, but he still insists the garlic smell meant nothing. Cameryn suggests the killer could mix roofies and DMSO in his drink, wait until he was the only customer and spill his drink so Rachel had to clean it up. Then, the DMSO in the drink would pull the roofies into her system, making her compliant. Dr. Moore mocks Cameryn, suggesting she should write fiction, and refuses to run a screen for DMSO in Rachel's blood because there is no proof that Dr. Jewel had anything to do with Rachel's murder. Cameryn is furious when he hangs up because everything she said fits with the evidence, even if it was speculation. Thinking that Dr. Jewel may have the drugs or another St. Christopher medal in his room, she offers to watch the front desk so the girl working can take a break, pocketing the skeleton key and sneaking into Dr. Jewel's room. After noting that the bottle of DMSO is only half full, Cameryn goes through the drawers and cases, finding nothing but needing to know if Dr. Jewel killed Rachel before he leaves town in an hour. She finds workman's clothes which do not look like something Dr. Jewel would wear, but she still



cannot find proof. She realizes he used fuzzy facts to convince her that he is legit, and of course he knew details about Rachel because he was there when she died. Finding nothing in the bathroom, Cameryn checks under the bed, and as she reaches for a used tissue, she hears Dr. Jewel saying bye to Stephanie and placing the key in his door. Cameryn hides under the bed as Dr. Jewel enters the room and shuts the door, frightened as she realizes she is trapped alone with Dr. Jewel in his room.

In Chapter 15, Cameryn tries to stay calm and silent as Dr. Jewel sits on the bed and dials a long-distance number to talk to a car rental place about leaving a car at the Santa Fe airport parking lot last week when he had to catch a flight on Friday. Agreeing to pay the additional charges, he explains the rental is under the name Raymond Jankowski. Cameryn realizes that she has proof that Dr. Jewel is the murderer; he obviously rented the car under an alias so it could not be traced to him, and now the people at Hertz will clean the car without ever knowing that they are destroying a crime scene. He was also in a cleansing period during which he never sees anyone right before Rachel's murder so that provided him with a perfect alibi. Figuring that the drive from Santa Fe to Silverton would give Dr. Jewel eight hours to find and kill his victim, Cameryn realizes no one would notice he was gone if he played a tape of his chanting. Cameryn assures herself that she is almost safe as Dr. Jewel packs, but as he exits the room, her cell phone rings. Cameryn hopes he did not hear it since the door was already shut, but after she silences her phone, the door opens, and Dr. Jewel returns to the room, flipping up the bed skirt and insisting Cameryn come out from under the bed as he holds her at gunpoint. Dr. Jewel is allowed to carry the weapon to protect himself against crazed fans, but he had no idea that Cameryn was such a fan. He tells her the spirits have a message for her; "they say it's time for you to join the party" (page 250).



Chapter 16 and 17

Chapter 16 and 17 Summary

In Chapter 16, Cameryn tries to figure out what to do as she scrambles out from under the bed. She feigns ignorance when Dr. Jewel comments about her knowledge of his car rental, but he insists she knows too much for her own good, so he cannot let her go and he is all out of St. Christopher medals. The admission chills Cameryn as she realizes there will be no more lies. When she asks why he did it, he explains he was a hick kid from nowhere and now he has everything, but he will lose it all if his credibility slips in this business. It is always about the money. He feels sorry for Rachel's family, but he is building an empire and will do whatever is necessary to keep his show going. When he announces that it is time for Cameryn to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, she thinks of Dad and Mammaw, regretting her refusal to read Hannah's letter. Grabbing his roofies, Dr. Jewel explains that Adam messed up his plans by taking Rachel home, but he followed them and grabbed Rachel. He knew the roofies in Rachel's system would clear Adam, plus it showed what a brilliant psychic he is since he said Adam is not the killer. Dr. Jewel is impressed that Cameryn knows that he used DMSO to get the drugs into Rachel's system; it is a great method since no pathologist screens for DMSO. Dr. Jewel makes a drink for Cameryn, threatening to shoot her if she refuses to drink it, but Cameryn refuses to make it that easy for him. As he grabs a pillow to use to silence the gunshot, she warns him that her DNA will be all over the room, but he assures her that he will think of something. As he cocks the gun, Justin kicks the door in, followed by Sheriff Jacobs. Dr. Jewel tries to claim that Cameryn broke in and he was defending himself, but they do not believe him. Dr. Moore ran the test for DMSO, and when it came back positive, he tried to call Cameryn; when she did not answer, he called the sheriff. Justin comforts Cameryn as she shakes violently, leading her outside as Sheriff Jacobs arrests Dr. Jewel.

In Chapter 17, Cameryn tells Patrick that she went to see Dr. Jewel because she suspected Justin, and she cannot believe she actually believed Dr. Jewel was legit. When Patrick asks if she still wants to be his assistant, she tells him to ask her tomorrow, and he promises he will because he wants her to stay on; they never would have caught Dr. Jewel without her. He goes on to explain how Dr. Jewel used his cleansing period as an alibi, leaving the hotels unnoticed by wearing plain workman's clothes which Cameryn saw but did not make the connection. He also always rented cars for a week, returning them by phone, and since he always scheduled speeches the day after a murder, police checked for cars that were returned by then. Dr. Jewel used the St. Christopher medal because he was raised Catholic and killed while travelling; he told police that he is death's patron saint. He grounds her for putting herself in danger since she is all he has. Thinking about how her life has turned upside down, Cameryn tells Patrick that Hannah is trying to find her, and she wants to talk to her mother because when she thought she was going to die, her only regret was refusing to read Hannah's letter. Patrick claims that Cameryn does not understand what she is asking, but Cameryn needs to read the letter. Mammaw has it, so Cameryn asks for the letter,



and Mammaw hands Patrick an envelope and package, telling him that he needs to tell Cameryn the truth now and assuring Cameryn that they have always tried to protect her out of love. Patrick makes no move to give the package or envelope to Cameryn, but he notes that it is strange they were talking about death since there are different kinds of ghosts. There are things about the past that he hid from Cameryn, thinking it was for the best, and she does not remember everything about who she was. Unable to continue, Patrick hands Cameryn the letter and the package and leaves her alone on the porch. Hesitating only a moment, Cameryn opens the package and sees a picture of two three-year-old girls that both look like her. Without allowing herself to think, she opens Hannah's letter. Hannah writes that she loves Cameryn and explains that she ran away in grief. Though she knows she made a mistake and it may be too late to rectify it, a piece of Hannah died when Cameryn's sister, Jayne, died, and Hannah ends the letter with a plea for Cameryn to call her. Cameryn does not understand how she could forget having a twin sister. Rousing herself from her thoughts of how secrets kept both Hannah and her silent, Cameryn dials the phone number on her mother's letter.

Chapter 16 and 17 Analysis

Chapter 16 shows Dr. Jewel confessing that he is the Christopher Killer, fulfilling earlier foreshadowing throughout the novel. He also explains his motive which is money and fame. As he decides it is time for Cameryn to die, Cameryn's only regret is refusing to read Hannah's letter, foreshadowing her decision to hear her mother's side of the story if she survives. Dr. Jewel mixes a drink for Cameryn while bragging about the perfection of his plan that nearly perfectly coincides with Cameryn's speculation to Dr. Moore that was mocked. Cameryn refuses to drink the drugged beverage, so Dr. Jewel prepares to shoot her. Luckily, Justin and Sheriff Jacobs arrive just in time to save Cameryn and arrest Dr. Jewel. Cameryn weeps for Rachel and the other victims, realizing that she barely escaped the Christopher Killer herself, before asking Justin to take her home.

In Chapter 17, Cameryn and Patrick discuss the details of Dr. Jewel's plan with Patrick praising Cameryn's ingenuity and instinct even as he punishes her for putting herself in danger. Cameryn decides she will only use facts when she is a forensic pathologist, but Patrick points out that she used intuition also which makes her a natural for the job. Patrick is upset when Cameryn tells him that she wants to read Hannah's letter, fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing. He tries to explain things to her, but unable, he hands her the letter. Cameryn is confused when she sees a picture of two little girls who both look like her at age three, but Hannah's letter tells Cameryn about the death of her twin sister. This indicates that Dr. Jewel was not a complete fraud because of the three-year-old spirit he claimed was trying to contact Cameryn. Pulling out her cell phone but not opening it, Cameryn thinks about how she wanted to be a translator for the dead, remembering her thoughts about how much of her life had been buried with Hannah's memory and how it stole her voice. She realizes that secrets silence her and Hannah. Finally, she dials her mother's phone number.



Characters

Cameryn Mahoney

Cameryn Mahoney is the main character and protagonist of "The Christopher Killer." She is a seventeen-year-old girl who is interested in forensics and wants to be a forensic pathologist. After convincing her father, the county coroner, to hire her as his assistant, Cameryn excels at her case, proving her knowledge of forensics and her excellent instincts. She is plagued by Deputy Justin Crowley who her father dislikes for an unknown reason. Cameryn's second case is a murder, and she is devastated when she recognizes the victim as her nineteen-year-old friend and co-worker, Rachel Geller. She is determined to identify the killer who they suspect is a serial killer known as the Christopher Killer after they find his calling card, a St. Christopher medal, in Rachel's bra. After Dr. Moore dismisses Cameryn from the autopsy because of her know-it-all attitude, she discusses the case with Justin and learns that her father dislikes the deputy because he is friends with Hannah, Cameryn's mother who abandoned her when she was very young.

Renowned psychic, Dr. Jewel, plans to visit Silverton to aid in the investigation because he claims Rachel's spirit visited him. Cameryn visits Dr. Jewel with her best friend, Lyric, to clear their friend Adam of suspicion since he was the last person to be seen with Rachel, but some of Dr. Jewel's claims begin to convince Cameryn that he is legit and seem to point to Justin. When she revisits Dr. Jewel, she notices him mixing DMSO in his drink, which could cause some of the oddities she noticed during Rachel's autopsy; however, when Dr. Moore refuses to run the tests, Cameryn sneaks into Dr. Jewel's hotel room to search for evidence. She hides under the bed when Dr. Jewel returns to the room and she overhears him talking about a car rental on the phone, which disproves his alibi. Unfortunately, Cameryn's phone rings as Dr. Jewel leaves the room, and hearing it, he returns with the intent to kill Cameryn, confessing he became the Christopher Killer to ensure the success of his television show. Justin and Sheriff Jacobs arrive in time to save Cameryn and arrest Dr. Jewel because Dr. Moore called them after running tests that confirmed Cameryn's hypothesis. Later, Cameryn finally reads Hannah's letter, learning her mother left because she could not deal with the death of Cameryn's three-year-old twin sister. Cameryn did not know she had a sister. Cameryn dials Hannah's phone number.

Dr. Raymond Jewel

Dr. Jewel is a famous psychic and the host of "Shadow of Death." He claims that Rachel's spirit came to him and told him that she was the victim of the Christopher Killer and her body is laying on a mountain near a dirt road. After Rachel's corpse is found, Dr. Jewel comes to Silverton, supposedly to help with the investigation. He grants a private session with Lyric, Cameryn, and Adam, claiming that Adam is not the murderer but providing clues that lead Cameryn to suspect Justin of being the murderer. When



Cameryn begins to suspect Justin, she turns to Dr. Jewel again, but during their conversation, she notices that Dr. Jewel mixes DMSO in his drink, causing her to add forensic clues together to suspect Dr. Jewel.

Dr. Jewel catches Cameryn when she is trying to find evidence in his room, but not until after she hears him talking to a car rental company about his rental under his real name, Raymond Jankowski. This conversation disproves his alibi and lends credence to the possibility that he murdered Rachel. Claiming Cameryn knows far too much for her own good, Dr. Jewel holds her at gunpoint as he admits that he is the Christopher Killer. When she asks why he did it, he explains he was a hick kid from nowhere and now he has everything, but he will lose it all if his credibility slips in this business. It is always about the money. He feels sorry for Rachel's family, but he is building an empire and will do whatever is necessary to keep his show going. Dr. Jewel wants Cameryn to drink his drugged concoction so he can sneak her outside and dispose of her, but when she refuses, he prepares to shoot her. Luckily, Sheriff Jacobs and Justin arrive in time to save Cameryn and arrest Dr. Jewel, the Christopher Killer. Later, Patrick tells Cameryn that Dr. Jewel used the St. Christopher medal because he was raised Catholic and killed while travelling. He tells the police that he is death's patron saint.

Deputy Justin Crowley

Deputy Justin Crowley is the new and attractive, twenty-one-year-old deputy in Silverton. Cameryn is attracted to Justin, though Patrick dislikes the deputy, and Cameryn finally learns that her father dislikes Justin because Justin is friends with Hannah. Justin brings Cameryn a letter and a package from Hannah, but Cameryn refuses to look at them until after her run-in with Dr. Jewel. Dr. Jewel's clues that he supposedly gets from Rachel causes Cameryn to suspect Justin, but Justin saves Cameryn after she learns the truth and is about to be shot by Dr. Jewel.

Hannah Peterson

Hannah Peterson is Cameryn's mother who abandoned Cameryn when she was very young. Justin's friendship with Hannah is the reason that Patrick dislikes the young deputy, especially as Hannah sent a package and letter to Cameryn through Justin. She has not tried to contact Cameryn for fear of rejection, and though Cameryn initially refuses to read the letter, she finally opens it after her encounter with Dr. Jewel, learning her mother left because she could not deal with the death of Cameryn's twin sister, Jayne, when the girls were three years old. Cameryn dials her mother's phone number.

Adam

Adam is an odd Goth kid who recently moved to Silverton. His peers dislike him because he is quiet and withdrawn, and rumors abound that he is a Satan-worshipper. Lyric convinces Cameryn to befriend Adam shortly before they learn of Rachel's murder. Adam is distraught that Rachel is dead because he had a crush on her, but he is more



upset when he suspected of killing her because he has pictures of her and was the last to see her when he gave her a ride home from work Saturday night. Lyric, Adam and Cameryn visit Dr. Jewel to ask about Rachel's killer in hopes of clearing Adam of suspicion, but Sheriff Jacobs takes Adam to the station for questioning even though Dr. Jewel claims that Rachel is saying Adam did not murder her.

Dr. Moore

Dr. Moore is the forensic pathologist in Durango who is called on to perform Rachel's autopsy. He is very arrogant and objects to Cameryn's presence, eventually kicking her out for her know-it-all attitude because she is concerned about the stain on Rachel's hands and the smell of garlic, both of which turn out to be clues that Dr. Moore dismisses as irrelevant. When Cameryn calls him and asks him to run a screen for DMSO, he refuses, mocking her ideas. However, Dr. Moore runs the test after he hangs up on Cameryn, and since it is positive, he tries to call Cameryn back, sending Sheriff Jacobs and Justin to Dr. Jewel's room when Cameryn does not answer, allowing them to arrive just in time to rescue Cameryn.

Rachel Geller

Rachel Geller is Cameryn's nineteen-year-old friend and co-worker at the Grand. After she becomes the fourth victim of the Christopher Killer, her spirit supposedly visits Dr. Jewel. Cameryn is involved with Rachel's case and promises to obtain justice for her friend by finding the murderer.

Patrick Mahoney

Patrick Mahoney is Cameryn's father and as the county coroner, he hires her as his assistant. He dislikes Justin Crowley because Justin knows Hannah, Patrick's wife who abandoned Patrick and Cameryn. Patrick hides the truth of Cameryn's childhood from her in an attempt to protect her.

Mammaw

Mammaw is Patrick's Irish mother who he and Cameryn live with in Silverton. She disapproves of Cameryn's interest in forensics, but near the end of the novel, she tells Patrick that it is time to tell Cameryn the truth about Hannah and the past.

Sheriff John Jacobs

Sheriff John Jacobs is the sheriff of Silverton and Justin's boss. He disapproves of Cameryn's presence at crime scenes but permits it when Patrick insists. Alone with Justin, Sheriff Jacobs saves Cameryn from Dr. Jewel and arrests the psychotic psychic.



Lyric Larson

Lyric Larson is Cameryn's best friend who believes in psychics and the occult. She turns to Dr. Jewel when Adam is suspected of killing Rachel.

Jayne Mahoney

Jayne Mahoney is Cameryn's twin sister who died when she was three years old. Cameryn does not remember Jayne, but Hannah's letter claims she abandoned Patrick and Cameryn because she could not cope with Jayne's death.



Objects/Places

Silverton, CO

Silverton, CO is the main setting of "The Christopher Killer." It is a small town in the mountains where the protagonist, Cameryn Mahoney, lives with her Mammaw and her father, Patrick, who is the county coroner. The majority of this narrative takes place in Silverton which is located in the San Juan Mountains.

Durango, CO

Durango, CO is a slightly larger town near Silverton where the medical examiner is located and where Cameryn accompanies Patrick for Rachel's autopsy.

Santa Fe, NM

Dr. Jewel is utilizing a cleansing period in Santa Fe, NM when Rachel is murdered, providing him with a perfect alibi until Cameryn discovered how he snuck away unnoticed.

The Grand

The Grand is an old hotel and restaurant in Silverton where Cameryn works as a server with Rachel. Dr. Jewel stays there during his time in Silverton, allowing Cameryn to sneak into his room when she suspects that he is the Christopher Killer.

Shadow of Death

Shadow of Death is Dr. Jewel's psychic television show on which he claims Rachel's ghost visited him after her murder. Dr. Jewel becomes the Christopher Killer to maintain his reputation and keep his show on the air.

Patrick's Station Wagon

Patrick's Station Wagon is the family car as well as Patrick's means of hauling bodies for his job as the county coroner. Lyric refuses to ride in the station wagon because she insists it is haunted.

Mammaw's House

Cameryn and Patrick live with Mammaw in her green-shingled house in Silverton, CO.



Medical Examiner's Building

The Medical Examiner's building, located in Durango, is plain and utilitarian. Cameryn accompanies Patrick to Rachel's autopsy, but Dr. Moore kicks Cameryn out because of her know-it-all attitude, though her suspicions eventually prove correct.

Silverton Souvenirs

Adam works at Silverton Souvenirs until he is fired for possessing photos of Rachel in the dark room.

Smith Fork

Smith Fork is a place in the mountains near a stream where Rachel's body is found, exactly as described by Dr. Jewel on "Shadow of Death."

St. Christopher Medal

The Christopher Killer leaves a St. Christopher medal on all his victims and Cameryn finds one in Rachel's bra. Since St. Christopher is the patron saint of travelers, Cameryn begins to suspect Dr. Jewel.

New York

Justin lived in New York before moving to Silverton and Cameryn connects him to Hannah because of the location and because Hannah is the only reason she has ever seen Patrick act irrationally.



Themes

Science v. Religion v. Mysticism

A major theme in "The Christopher Killer" is the need to reconcile science, religion, and mysticism as these three concepts that typically seem at odds all play a part in this novel, often intertwining. Cameryn is ecstatic when Patrick agrees to hire her as the assistant to the coroner of Silverton, Colorado. Cameryn promises she will not become too macabre, insisting she just likes the science. When Lyric tells Adam that Cameryn does not believe in ghosts, he notes that science-types always ignore their sixth sense, setting up a clear distinction between science-types like Cameryn and mystic-types like Lyric and Adam. During Dr. Jewel's interview with Cameryn, Lyric and Adam, Lyric's mom, Daphne, warns Cameryn that her skepticism could drain Dr. Jewel's psychic energy and asks her to keep an open mind. After talking to Dr. Jewel and finding that he seems legit, Cameryn does not know how to reconcile her faith and science with Dr. Jewel's ability to talk to the dead. Nothing makes sense; Dr. Jewel seems to be legit, but a psychic goes against everything Cameryn knows about science. When she asks what Justin thinks about Dr. Jewel, he says that Dr. Jewel is convincing, but Cameryn needs more information to believe in a psychic.

During her second meeting with Dr. Jewel, Cameryn asks him to ask Rachel for her killer's name, but he insists psychic energy is not that easy to understand, causing Stephanie to explain Dr. Jewel needs twenty-four hour cleansing periods like the one he took before Rachel came to him since the dead's impressions get distorted. When a news crew arrives after Cameryn's second conversation with the psychic, Dr. Jewel tells Cameryn she can have both faith and science, and she assures him that she understands a lot more now than when she arrived. After Dr. Jewel wishes her luck in finding the murderer, Cameryn calls Sheriff Jacobs's office and asks for Dr. Moore's phone number. She does not want to tell Justin her suspicions until she is sure, but when he urges, she tells him she may have found Rachel's killer if she is right. This time, the pieces fit forensically, and she is back in the world of science, no longer dependent on Dr. Jewel's claims, showing Cameryn's reversion to science and disassociation with mysticism.

Secrets

A major theme in this novel is secrets, which play a large role in Cameryn's life. Patrick will not explain why he dislikes Justin, and when Cameryn asks Justin, he refuses to tell her since people often kill the messenger. When he visits Cameryn at the Grand, Justin claims he is here to help Cameryn, but she reminds him that he is afraid to tell her his secret. Leaning forward, Justin claims he is ready to take a chance, but he cannot say more because Sheriff Jacobs enters and insists Justin has to leave because they need to be in Montrose right now. After being kicked out of Rachel's autopsy, Cameryn wonders about Justin's secret. Remembering how her father taught her to look to the



source for information, Cameryn questions Justin about his life in New York, and when she asks if he has heard of the artist Hannah Peterson, he blushes, causing the mystery to make sense as the only subject that Patrick ever gets angry about is Cameryn's mother. Justin explains that he met Hannah at his brother's party, and they became friends, but he insists Hannah only told him about Cameryn after he took the job in Silverton. Justin insists that Hannah really cares about Cameryn, but Cameryn tells him it is none of his business because her mother abandoned her. Later when Cameryn asks Mammaw if they could have found Hannah if Cameryn had been the one to die, Mammaw realizes that Cameryn spoke to Justin but insists it is Patrick's secret to tell.

When Cameryn tells her father that she wants to read Hannah's letter after her encounter with Dr. Jewel, Patrick claims that Cameryn does not understand what she is asking, but Cameryn needs to read the letter. Mammaw has it, so Cameryn asks for the letter, and Mammaw hands Patrick an envelope and package, telling him that he needs to tell Cameryn the truth now and assuring Cameryn that they have always tried to protect her out of love. Patrick makes no move to give the package or envelope to Cameryn, but he notes that it is strange they were talking about death since there are different kinds of ghosts. There are things about the past that he hid from Cameryn, thinking it was for the best, and she does not remember everything about who she was. Unable to continue, Patrick hands Cameryn the letter and the package and leaves her alone on the porch. Hesitating only a moment, Cameryn opens the package and sees a picture of two three-year-old girls that both look like her. Without allowing herself to think, she opens Hannah's letter. Hannah writes that she loves Cameryn and explains that she ran away in grief. Though she knows she made a mistake and it may be too late to rectify it, a piece of Hannah died when Cameryn's sister, Jayne, died, and Hannah ends the letter with a plea for Cameryn to call her. Cameryn does not understand how she could forget having a twin sister. Pulling out her cell phone but not opening it, Cameryn thinks about how she wanted to be a translator for the dead, remembering her thoughts about how much of her life had been buried with Hannah's memory and how it stole her voice. Now, she realizes that secrets silence her and Hannah. Rousing herself, Hannah dials the phone number on her mother's letter.

Death

The most prevalent theme in "The Christopher Killer" is death, which seems fairly obvious since Patrick is the county coroner and Cameryn is his assistant. On Cameryn's first case, they investigate the death of Larry Robertson, a man found in the bathtub of a hotel room in town. Cameryn is very helpful in finding pills that indicate the cause of death. Rachel is impressed with Cameryn's lack of squeamishness when presented with a corpse. Lyric is fascinated with "Shadow of Death" and tells Cameryn about Dr. Jewel being visited by the spirit of a murdered girl. After Rachel's body is found near Smith Fork, the remainder of the novel focuses on her autopsy and the investigation surrounding her murder. Cameryn is intent on justice for her friend. Though he disapproves of Cameryn's presence at the autopsy, Dr. Moore admits that catching the killer is the most important thing and it is not his business if Patrick wants to expose his daughter to the indignities of death. During the autopsy, Cameryn cannot help but notice



how Rachel has ceased to be since her nobility as a human has been taken; "there was no dignity in death" (p. 116). When Adam asks who killed Rachel, Dr. Jewel claims it is hard for those who passed to talk about their deaths, especially if it is violent.

When Dr. Jewel finds Cameryn in his hotel room while she is looking for evidence to prove that he is the Christopher Killer, he announces that it is time for Cameryn to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, telling her the spirits have a message for her; "they say it's time for you to join the party" (p. 250). Dr. Jewel tries to kill Cameryn, and she is relieved when Justin and Sheriff Jacobs rescue her. Cameryn weeps for Rachel and the other victims, realizing that she barely escaped the Christopher Killer herself, before asking Justin to take her home. After Dr. Jewel is arrested for being the Christopher Killer, Cameryn and her father discuss the case. Dr. Jewel used the St. Christopher medal because he was raised Catholic and killed while travelling; he told police that he is death's patron saint. When Patrick tries to tell Cameryn about Hannah, he notes that it is strange they were talking about death since there are different kinds of ghosts. There are things about the past that he hid from Cameryn, thinking it was for the best, and she does not remember everything about who she was. He is unable to continue, instead allowing Hannah's letter to tell Cameryn the truth. Hesitating only a moment, Cameryn opens the package and sees a picture of two three-year-old girls that both look like her. Without allowing herself to think, she opens Hannah's letter. Hannah writes that she loves Cameryn and explains that she ran away in grief because a piece of Hannah died when Cameryn's sister, Jayne, died, and Hannah ends the letter with a plea for Cameryn to call her. Cameryn does not understand how she could forget having a twin sister. Cameryn dials the phone number mentioned in her mother's letter.



Style

Point of View

The point of view in "The Christopher Killer" is third-person, limited, and somewhat unreliable. The fact that it is in the third person is shown by the fact that a third-party narrator describes the things that happen to Cameryn rather than having Cameryn speak directly to the reader. The narrator is limited though, as they only have access to Cameryn's thoughts and emotions without any insight about the other characters' thoughts and emotions. The narration is somewhat unreliable as it adheres to Cameryn's thoughts which are not always correct, such as when she suspects Adam and then Justin of killing Rachel. This style of narration is important to the story as it maintains the mystery since readers only know what Cameryn know, learning new information as she does.

The distribution of exposition and dialogue is fairly equal and it is very useful in the novel as it reveals the interaction between characters which is important to Cameryn's suspicions and ultimately her detection of the actual murderer. The exposition is also important as it provides clues in the case as well as Cameryn's thoughts which influence the readers' suspicions concerning the murderer's identity. This novel is recounted only through the viewpoint of Cameryn by a third-person narrator without any deviation.

Setting

This novel is set in the real world in the small town of Silverton, Colorado. The characters are mostly local inhabitants with the exception of Adam and Justin who recently moved to town as well as Dr. Jewel who is visiting to help with Rachel's case. This is significant since Cameryn is suspicious of these three males and never suspects any Silverton locals, at least partially because the Christopher Killer has left victims in several locations across the country. Cameryn's father, Patrick, is the county coroner and Cameryn becomes involved with Rachel's murder shortly after convincing her father to hire her as his assistant.

Silverton, CO is the main setting of "The Christopher Killer." It is a small town in the mountains where the protagonist, Cameryn Mahoney, lives with her Mammaw and her father, Patrick, who is the county coroner. The majority of this narrative takes place in Silverton which is located in the San Juan Mountains. Durango, CO is a slightly larger town near Silverton where the medical examiner is located, and this is where Cameryn accompanies Patrick for Rachel's autopsy. Dr. Jewel is utilizing a cleansing period in Santa Fe, NM when Rachel is murdered, providing him with a perfect alibi until Cameryn discovered how he snuck away unnoticed. The Grand is an old hotel and restaurant in Silverton where Cameryn works as a server with Rachel. Dr. Jewel stays there during his time in Silverton, allowing Cameryn to sneak into his room when she suspects that he is the Christopher Killer. Patrick's Station Wagon is the family car as



well as Patrick's means of hauling bodies for his job as the county coroner. Lyric refuses to ride in the station wagon because she insists it is haunted. Cameryn and Patrick live with Mammaw in her green-shingled house in Silverton, CO. The Medical Examiner's building, located in Durango, is plain and utilitarian. Cameryn accompanies Patrick to Rachel's autopsy, but Dr. Moore kicks Cameryn out because of her know-it-all attitude, though her suspicions eventually prove correct. Adam works at Silverton Souvenirs until he is fired for possessing photos of Rachel in the dark room. Smith Fork is a place in the mountains near a stream where Rachel's body is found, exactly as described by Dr. Jewel on "Shadow of Death". Justin lived in New York before moving to Silverton. Cameryn connects him to Hannah for the location and also because Hannah is the only reason she has ever seen Patrick act irrationally.

Language and Meaning

The language used in this novel tends to be fairly casual and informal for the most part, though some scenes are written using forensic jargon, which can be more difficult to understand. Because of this technical language, it is helpful that the rest of the novel is so easy to understand. Also, the forensics are explained in detail so that readers can understand what is going on. This fits in naturally with the story as Cameryn is just beginning to work as the coroner's assistant so terms are often explained to her or she shows her understanding of forensics by describing certain objects or events. The language aids comprehension as the difficult concepts are explained fully so they are accessible to the target audience, American teenagers. The language in this novel tends to characterize Cameryn's decision to become a forensic pathologist as well as the beginning of her training and the reasons for this decision.

The distribution of exposition and dialogue is fairly equal, and it is very useful in the novel as it reveals the interaction between characters which is important to Cameryn's suspicions and ultimately her detection of the actual murderer. The exposition is also important as it provides clues in the case as well as Cameryn's thoughts which influence the readers' suspicions concerning the murderer's identity. Though the technical concepts can be difficult to grasp at first, the characters explain them fully, making the difficulty of forensics more accessible to the average reader. The rest of the language is that which is commonly used for and among American teenagers, making it easy to understand. The language used in "The Christopher Killer" is easy to understand, especially as the author is very effective in describing and explaining the more difficult terms or concepts.

Structure

This novel is comprised of 17 chapters and 274 pages, with the chapters averaging between 15 and 20 pages in length. The semi-long chapters are numbered, rather than titled, and they are very detailed. Each chapter encompasses a short amount of time, generally several hours, as the entire book takes place over the course of less than a week.



"The Christopher Killer" by Alane Ferguson is a forensic mystery novel about Cameryn, a seventeen-year-old girl who begins to work as the assistant to the county coroner, her dad. When Cameryn is called to aid in the autopsy of her friend who happens to be the recent victim of the serial killer known as the Christopher Killer, her dedication to finding justice puts Cameryn's life in danger. "The Christopher Killer" is an intriguing and entertaining forensic novel that is sure to capture readers' attention. The novel's pace is fairly slow, but it is easy to read as the pathology passages are fully explained, preventing them from becoming a hindrance. The story is mostly linear with some discussion of Cameryn's past as concerns Hannah's abandonment and Cameryn's early friendship with Lyric. The novel is very entertaining and enjoyable.



Quotes

"No matter what ugliness appeared, life kept its rhythm" (Chapter 1, p. 2).

"It's a sad world we live in when a human being leaves so little of a mark that no one even realizes it when he's gone" (Chapter 1, p. 11).

"It was the power to give voice that had drawn her to forensics. The dead told a story that the pathologist, if she were good enough, could hear, and Cameryn wanted to be that person" (Chapter 1, p. 14).

"Ahead of her was her very first forensic case. She'd read theory after theory in her books, but this was reality and the difference made her almost dizzy. A puzzle etched in the remains of a human, ready for her to decipher, and she felt her hands begin to sweat inside the gloves" (Chapter 2, p. 26-27).

"Cameryn may have found our answer. Nice work. Don't know if I would have thought to look there" (Chapter 2, p. 34).

"First of all, I'm a server, not a waitress. Second, I'm a woman, not a girl. And third- my dad doesn't like you. He won't tell me why, but he's a smart man. If he doesn't like you- I can't like you, either" (Chapter 3, p. 41).

"I can't believe you saw some dead guy. It's already all over town. You are so not like me. If I had seen some rotting corpse in a bathtub I could have absolutely lost it. But nothing bothers you. You are, like, the toughest girl I know. Sometimes I think you're more like a guy" (Chapter 3, p. 43).

"I'm glad that I'm smart, 'cause everybody always thinks I'm way older than I am. You know, I think it's a lot better to be like you and have people figure you're some kind of genius or something" (Chapter 4, p. 55).

"I don't believe in seat belts. I believe in fate. If we're meant to die, we die. If not, we live. Our lives are whatever is meant to be" (Chapter 4, p. 63).

"They've... some hikers found a body. By the stream near Smith Fork...It's the body of a girl...Cammie...the sheriff says it's murder" (Chapter 4, p. 68).

"It's not the Christopher Killer. Okay, it's a possible murder- and I say possible because we haven't even been to the scene yet to know for sure- but that doesn't mean it's the murder. I mean, you just made a huge leap in logic. I want to stick to facts" (Chapter 5, page 70).

"Emotions surged through her in rapid succession- horror, fascination, fear, curiosity, and yet most of all anger. It welled up like bile in her throat- no one deserved to die this way, trussed like an animal and left in the wild" (Chapter 5, p. 83).



"By remembering that if we do our job right we'll find out who did this and bring him to justice. We're the last line of defense for the victim. You're the one who said the dead tell their stories to us. We've got to keep it together for Rachel's sake. Focus on that, and you'll get through" (Chapter 6, p. 87).

"It's hard, because one minute I feel like I'm blown away by the process and the next I feel like I'm being punched in the gut. I keep thinking she's only one year older than I am, and it could have been me out in that field. What are her parents going to do without her? What am I going to do" (Chapter 6, p. 93-94).

"You'd better check your rule book, Dr. Moore. You'll find you work for me, which means I have the power to remove you from this autopsy. You bounce Cameryn, I'll call in Dr. Canfield from Montrose. We'll take her up there and he can do the honors. Your choice... And may I remind you the body belongs to me. Cameryn stays or we all go" (Chapter 7, p. 102).

"But Cameryn couldn't help but notice how Rachel had ceased to be. Not just the fact that her soul was gone from her flesh, but the way her nobility as a human being had been taken. There was no dignity in death" (Chapter 7, p. 115-116).

"I realize a couple of you in this room have been thrown by this discovery, but finding the medal means nothing. Except perhaps your crazy psychic is the killer of this unfortunate child" (Chapter 8, p. 120).

"And with all due respect, you're not listening. There's something wrong here. I know Rachel. It's not right- it's something about this stain on her hands and the garlic smell. I can feel it" (Chapter 8, p. 130).

"But where did Jewel fit in? Did he truly possess supernatural powers? If so, where did her faith, and her science, connect" (Chapter 9, p. 139).

"Cameryn, listen to me- you've got it all wrong! I got this job in Silverton because I knew anything. Then I told Hannah where I was going and she freaked. That's when she told me about you- not before! I swear. You've got to believe me. Believe her- she really cares about you" (Chapter 9, p. 147).

"Everyone's lining up to be interviewed. The only one not running a freak show is Jewel- he's going to be here tomorrow! Did you hear he's staying at the Grand? Don't worry, he's going to find Rachel's killer. He was on the news, and he said this time the energy's really strong. Jewel will get whoever did this- wait and see" (Chapter 10, p. 153).

"Tomorrow morning, first thing, we're going to Shadow of Death for a reading with Dr. Jewel" (Chapter 10, p. 168).

"Darling, you must remember that psychic energy is drained away by unbelief. You've always been such a closed shell. You've got to open your mind, Cammie. We can't have your negativity affecting the reading" (Chapter 11, p. 174).



"I'm- we're here to reach Rachel, the Silverton girl who got killed. Murdered. She was a friend of mine. Of ours... Because I want to see if she'll tell you who the real killer is. An innocent person might be accused and I want to help him. I know he didn't do it. If you lead the police to the real killer, then my friend will be off the hook. It's really important that you help us find the real killer" (Chapter 11, p. 178-179).

"Why is Rachel shaking her head and pointing to her neck, please? I'm listening. Was she strangled, please? Rachel's indicating to me that there was a pressure. Yes, a terrible pressure right... here. She's telling me she had the air pressed out of her. And pain. She's saying she wasn't ready. She's telling me she couldn't breathe... Does this make sense to either one of you? Please- I'm listening" (Chapter 11, p. 184).

"Your mind is strong but you need to watch your spirit. Guard your heart, girl. Think first" (Chapter 12, p. 195).

"Um, they're smart. They fit in well with society. They're the type of people you want to be friends with, but they're really self-centered. They're almost always male, older than the disorganized killer. And I think they try to involve themselves with the police investigation" (Chapter 12, p. 203).

"A real scientist followed the evidence, no matter what. If Dr. Jewel was genuine, she needed to follow the thread that led to Justin. No matter what the cost" (Chapter 13, p. 217).

"If I'm right, swear to God, I may have just found Rachel's killer" (Chapter 13, p. 223).

"You just made my point for me. Let me be direct here: You're a high-school kid who's overestimated herself. You can't even stay on task- you've gone from forensic pathologist to detective in the span of three short days! Goodbye, Ms. Mahoney" (Chapter 14, p. 226).

"The spirits have a message for you. They want me to get it just right. Yes, I got the message. They say it's time you join the party" (Chapter 15, p. 250).

"Drop the act, Cameryn. I'm sure you understood plenty- well, too much for your own good, anyway. But my problem is- what am I going to do with you now? I can't let you go and I'm clean out of Christopher medals" (Chapter 16, p. 252).

"Don't look at me like that - like you don't have a price. No one knows what they'd do until the money's dangling in front of them. I want you to be honest: What would you do for ten million dollars? Come on, Cameryn, you can tell me. At this point, you've got nothing to lose. Would you sleep with a man? People kill every day for a buck. What I'm building is an empire! I'm famous against all the odds. And I do have the gift. I'm really good. But, in this business, good isn't ever enough. There's a pressure you can never understand. A psychic has to be great to land the really big deals" (Chapter 16, p. 254).



"Except you were using a bit of intuition there yourself. Which makes you a natural for the job. Although I don't know why we're talking about your future when you're grounded for life - You are. But, bottom line, you could have gotten yourself killed. You're all I've got, Cammie. In this whole wide world, you're all I've got. Promise me you'll never take such a stupid risk again" (Chapter 17, p. 266).

"I realize that you must have always had questions about me- why I left, why I chose to disappear from your life. But death can make a person walk a path she never thought herself capable of. In my grief, I ran away from you. Now, I realize what a mistake that was, and worse, that it might now be too late. Cammie, when your sister died, a piece of me died, too. Jayne's death sent me to places that were not safe for you. But now I'm well again" (Chapter 17, p. 272-273).



Topics for Discussion

How does Cameryn get experience with her future chosen career in this novel?

What does Cameryn notice during Rachel's autopsy, and how does this help her find Christopher Killer?

Which two guys does Cameryn suspect of being the Christopher Killer before finding the real killer? Why does she suspect them?

Who is Christopher Killer and why does he murder? How does he get away with it?

Why does Patrick Mahoney dislike Deputy Crowley?

How does Hannah contact Cameryn? What does Cameryn say? How does Patrick feel about this?

Why does Cameryn want to be a forensic pathologist?