

The Cuckoo's Calling Study Guide

The Cuckoo's Calling by Robert Galbraith

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Plot Summary

"The Cuckoo's Calling" is the debut detective fiction novel by J. K. Rowling, written under the pseudonym of Robert Galbraith. It begins with the death of supermodel Lula Landry, who is half-white, half-black and stunningly beautiful. John Bristow, Lula's stepbrother (both of them being adopted), insists the death is a murder and takes on the services of Cormoran Strike to solve the mystery. Strike is a childhood friend of Bristow's deceased step brother. Working alongside the down and out Strike is Robin, a pretty young woman who has just gotten engaged and is seeking temp work in London.

Strike and Robin delve into the world of fashion, fame, and supermodels to discover just what happened to Lula Landry. As it turns out, Lula's death was indeed a murder, committed by John. John, who is broke himself, was hoping to inherit more than ten million quid from Lula in the event of her death. However, Lula had previously found her biological half-brother. She left everything to him in her will. At the end of the novel, Robin decides she wants to stay on as Strike's secretary and assistant, and Strike readily consents, though he feels bad he cannot pay her as much as she deserves. Robin doesn't mind though, for the job is fulfilling her childhood dream of working to solve mysteries.



Prologue - Part 1

Summary

Prologue - Part I

The media and the public congregate around the entrance of Number 18. They are being held back by police. Young girls bring flowers for the deceased, who apparently fell from her balcony around two in the morning. Detective Roy Carver impatiently waits for the ambulance. There is a body inside that is hidden by a tented drape. Detective Sergeant Eric Wardle confirms the ambulance is two minutes away. The only witness to the jump seems to be a drug-addict, high at the time. The news floods the public with the story of a public fight with a famous boyfriend, the girl traveling home alone, screaming heard overhead, and the fall, followed by the boyfriend fleeing into a rehab facility. A witness claims there was a second argument before the fall. The witness later checks herself into rehab. It seems as if it is a suicide. Eventually, press interest wanes.

Chapter 1

Three months pass. Robin Ellacott, who is twenty-five years old, tall, strawberry-blonde, and well-formed physically, is introduced into the story. Her boyfriend Matthew proposes to her under the statue of Eros in Piccadilly Square, and Robin is thrilled. She has enjoyed the month she has spent so far in London doing temp work as a secretary. She heads to 12 Bar Café on Denmark Street, beside which is a black door that opens as Robin arrives. Another girl brushes past her. Robin realizes as she gets to the top of the stairs inside that she will be working for a private detective, C. B. Strike. She is absolutely thrilled, for this is her secret childhood dream. But suddenly the door flies open, and a disheveled male runs into her, knocking her back toward the stairs.

Chapter 2

Cormoran Strike grabs Robin, stopping her from falling. He accidentally grabs her left breast to do so. He apologizes quickly and invites Robin inside. Strike is a massive man with a slight belly. At thirty-five, he is not attractive. Robin explains she is the temp secretary. It's a one week gig. Strike is suffering from a black eye following an argument with Charlotte, the woman he has been with since his twenties. This time, he really believes things with her are over. Strike is in serious debt, and he worries about being able to afford Robin at the agency's rate. Strike explains to Robin that she will be answering the phone, tidying up, checking the mail, and so on. Strike has not received a work related email in three weeks. Strike crumples up in his private office, aware that his situation is humiliating. Robin has access to it all.

Chapter 3

Strike is stunned five minutes later when Robin, whom Strike sometimes calls Sandra, brings news that there is a client outside. He scrambles around to make himself look



presentable. Robin then shows Mr. John Bristow into the office. Bristow is immaculately dressed. Outside, Strike notices a woman in a tweed suit waiting on the couch.

Bristow's brother Charlie had been childhood friends with Strike. Strike's own childhood was hectic, but Charlie had taken him on as a best friend instantly. Charlie had later died as a result of riding his bike over a quarry on vacation in Wales. Since Strike is such a different last name, Bristow says that finding him is a sign from Charlie that it is right to ask for Strike's help. Bristow explains that his sister, Lula Landry, is dead. He goes on to tell that Lula, Charlie, and he were all adopted. Actually, Lula was adopted a few years after Charlie's death.

Bristow sobs a little, and Robin brings in tea. Strike passes her a note to Google Lula Landry to see if she was adopted and not to discuss what she is doing with the woman outside. Strike also wants to know what the woman outside is doing. Bristow gets himself under control. He explains that Lula was picked up by the model agency Athena when she was seventeen after being discovered on Oxford Street while shopping with their mother. Bristow explains that the police believe Lula killed herself. He doesn't believe it. Robin comes back in with a note confirming Lula's adoption by Sir Alec and Lady Yvette Bristow. John is her older brother. He is working for Landry, May, and Patterson law firm. John's photo is also on the website for the law firm. The woman outside is a secretary at LMP and John's girlfriend. Strike is impressed with Robin's seriousness, intelligence, and thoroughness.

John goes on to explain that Lula dabbled in drugs in school, got kicked out, and lived with addicts in London. Drugs worsened her mental problems. She ran away from a treatment center. Diagnosed with bipolar disorder, Lula got herself under control with medication, which she was faithfully taking according to the autopsy. Based on Lula's mental issues, the police think that her death was a suicide, but John explains Lula wasn't depressed. She had just signed a two year contract for five million dollars. She was working with her friend and designer named Some. She was also preparing for a shoot in Morocco. Strike, a military veteran, knows that depression can take hold of individuals suddenly, resulting in suicide.

John Bristow explains that there is hard evidence otherwise, by way of Tansi Bestigui, a neighbor who heard an argument upstairs. Tansy, dismissed by the police because she was high on cocaine, swears she heard arguing seconds before the fall. CCTV footage shows a man heading toward Kentigern Gardens twenty minutes before the death. He is seen running away fast following the death. The police have not identified him. John says that he has also worked out the timetables on an envelope. Even though Strike needs money to pay off his debts, he tells John that the police have already thoroughly investigated. John becomes enraged, saying he would have paid double the fee. He tells Strike that he has a lot of money and that he wanted Strike to handle the case because of Charlie.

Chapter 4



Robin does her best to act as if she has been with Strike for a long time, rather than half an hour. Robin offers Alison, John's girlfriend, coffee. Alison explains she knew that John would be upset, and she is glad Strike has turned down the case because John needs to accept the facts. Alison asks if Strike is a good detective. Robin unhesitatingly says that he is one of the best.

Eventually, Strike consents to handle the case. Strike tells Bristow to recount what he knows of Lula's last day, taking care to set aside the timetable on the envelope on his desk.

John explains that he and Lula had had an argument the morning of her death, but they had made up. Lula's boyfriend, Evan Duffield, had just gotten back together with Lula. Evan, an addict and a self-publicist, had a bad effect on Lula, which John tried to make her see. John's argument over the phone with Lula was about her getting back together with Duffield. Lula had been so angry with John that she had given instructions to Wilson, the security man, not to let John in, but Wilson did anyway. John had delivered a contract he has overseen with Some. After a little more arguing, John and Lula made up. Then, John told Lula that their mother, who was just out of the hospital from a hysterectomy, would appreciate a visit from Lula. She said that she would visit as soon as her schedule allowed, but she had things going on.

Lula did go to visit their mother about eleven. Then, her driver took her to a boutique and back home. She had a home appointment with a makeup artist. Lula's friend Ciara Porter, who is also a model, joined her for the appointment. The two went to dinner with Duffield and others and then to the night club Uzi. Duffield and Lula argued, and Lula left. No one had seen Lula fall. At first, Duffield was considered the prime suspect in her death, until his drug dealer confirmed otherwise.

John pays Strike for a month's work in advance with cash and a check. Alison is not thrilled that Strike has taken the case, but John salutes Strike before leaving.

Chapter 5

Strike compliments Robin on her efficiency, going so far as to borrow coffee equipment from the graphic designer, Mr. Crowdy, in the office below. Strike also apologizes for calling Robin "Sandy," saying it was the name of the last temp. Robin shows Strike a death threat, which Strike dismisses, saying they come in once a week. It is from a disgruntled former client.

Strike then goes for a beer at Tottenham Pub. In his mind, he recounts the cause of the previous night's fight, walking out on Charlotte, and her tracking him to his office. Strike is in deep debt, and his office is in financial difficulty. He speaks to Richard Anstis, Detective Inspector, who gives him the numbers of Wardle and Carver, the ones who handled the Lula Landry case. Anstis recommends calling Wardle because Carver is not nice. Strike calls in a favor with an unnamed, old friend. He then calls Wardle. Wardle agrees to meet Strike in a week, or sooner if their schedules allow it. Strike's reputation, once great, has been diminished over the past few years.



Chapter 6

Back at the office, Robin calls friends to let them know about her engagement. She also tends to the office well by taking messages and organizing. She discovers that Strike must have a bad love life, given his kit bag in his office. At five, she heads home.

Chapter 7

Strike sneaks into the University of London Union Building to shower; then, he goes to the various stores in London to pick up the things he will need to live out of his office. His right leg hurts terribly as he wrestles a camp bed up the stairs to his office. Strike is again impressed by Robin's cleanliness and order.

He begins to go over the notes from John Bristow. He goes through John's notes, mostly concerned with a black man John named "The Runner," who appeared before Lula's death and disappeared just after it. Strike notes that Bristow had seen another black man running in the video as well. Perhaps, he was a lookout for a car theft. Strike learns that Derrick Wilson, the security guard, was unwell and in the bathroom from 1:45 until 2. Wilson comes out of the bathroom after Lula falls, hearing Tansy Bestigui screaming. John concludes in the notes he left for Strike that this gives the runner exact timing to get to Kentigern Gardens if he had passed the security camera at the junction of Alderbrook and Bellamy Roads at 1:39. But, Strike wonders how the man would have known the security guard was in the bathroom.

Strike gets ready for bed, removing his prosthetic leg before sleep. He reflects on Charlotte's lies over the years. He knows their relationship must be over. He remembers losing his foot two and a half years before. He dreams of Charlotte.

Analysis

When "The Cuckoo's Calling" begins, Lula Landry is dead as a result of an apparent suicide. Cormoran Strike seems to be the last detective anyone would want to work on the case. His personal life is a wreck, having just broken up with his pseudo-fiancee. Deeply in debt, Strike is living in his own office, and he only has one part time client. This doesn't seem to bother Strike. As if ordained by God, Robin's arrival coincides with the arrival of a new client named John Bristow, who is apparently very wealthy. He is the step brother of Lula Landry. The pieces to solve a double puzzle have all fallen into place.

Strike accepts Bristow as a client, even though he thinks that the death of Lula is probably the result of suicide. John is convinced otherwise and presents enough evidence to pique Strike's curiosity. Meanwhile, as Strike's personal life crashes and burns, Robin's own personal life hits a difficult spot. Her fiance Matthew is not at all happy about her current position. He mocks the idea of solving mysteries, which hurts Robin. Her childhood dream was to solve mysteries.



Discussion Question 1

Strike is clearly dealing with emotional distress. Is this dangerous to his work, which involves heavy reasoning, deductive logic, and intellect? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

What is Robin's first opinion of Strike? Why does she decide to stay on with him despite Strike's obviously less than stellar circumstances?

Discussion Question 3

Does Strike think that Lula's death is a murder, a suicide, or is he undecided? Why? How do you think that she died? What text supports your opinion?

Vocabulary

Desultory, distended, paunchy, audible, hiatus, pugnacious, euphoria, querulously, incredulous, exorbitant, pneumatic, peripatetic, procrastinatory, perfunctory, absconded, exigencies, untrammelled, macabre, penury, alluded, vituperative.



Part 2

Summary

Chapter 1

Robin reads opinions on Landry's death, praising her for being half-black and beautiful, but also wondering why she deserves to be newsworthy. Countless girls who die each day, but they don't make the news. The writer, Melanie Telford, goes on to talk about how Lula's sordid existence provided entertainment for people. The article also mentions an unnamed friend who met Lula at a treatment center.

Derrick Wilson is prepared to meet with Strike on Friday morning at the Phoenix Pub in Brixton. Robin is reading aloud articles about Lula. Strike tells Robin to find out more about Lula's nameless rehab friend. They look through photos from the day of the funeral. They see Ciara Porter among them. Then, they find a photo of film producer Freddi Bestigui and his wife Tansi. They see Guy Some, John Bristow, Bristow's mother, and Evan Duffield. Geoffrey Hook is in a photo with a much younger and very attractive redhead. They find out that Deeby Mac (Daryl Brandon Macdonald) had sent flowers.

Robin finds an interview with Deeby Mac about the death of Lula. He says the press chased her to suicide. He jokes around about whether or not he should have brought his lawyers. Strike gets a text from Charlotte, telling him she will be out of her place Friday between nine and noon if he wants to pick up his things. Robin finds a nasty article about Landry's birth mother, Marlene Higson. She's a prostitute who never wanted Lula. Lula was left in the hall as a toddler for hours at a time, recounts Vivian Cranfield, a neighbor in the flat above Higson. However, before Lula died, she reunited with her birth mother. Strike asks Robin if she wants to take a walk.

Chapter 2

Strike and Robin go to Alderbrook Road, where the black runner was seen on film twelve minutes after Lula fell. Strike tells Robin to tell him if she sees anything or thinks of anything he doesn't. Robin is excited to be working with Strike. Strike learns through the police that they did attempt to find the runners, despite what John had said. They had probably been attempting to break into a car when an alarm went off and that's why they were running. That deduction, coupled with the lack of their DNA in Landry's flat, cleared them.

Strike and Robin walk from Alderbrook to Kentigern Gardens. The neighborhood is luxuriously wealthy. Strike looks at the balcony from which Lula fell. It's about forty feet up. He explains such a fall would not necessarily kill someone. Strike says that if the death of Lula was planned, it would have been incredibly difficult to do. The attacker would have had to have gotten past photographers, a keypad on the door, a security guard, and a closed inner door. Then, they would have to exit. Robin offers that if Lula



had an attacker, the attacker could have already been in the building. Strike agrees that it is possible. That would make Wilson, the Bestiguis, or someone else a suspect. Bestigui's wife contended the killer was still upstairs while her husband was beside her. Beside Kentigern Gardens is Serf's Way, By way of two garage doors and a shady stairwell, Serf's Way leads to underground parking spaces for cars of Kentigern Gardens residents.

Chapter 3

Matthew is concerned about Strike and whether or not Strike is a genuine detective. Robin insists he is a detective. She is angry because Matthew doesn't believe her. In retrospect, it seems like Robin has been given busy work to keep her occupied. Matthew downplays the whole idea that Robin is working on a case, and Robin is further unhappy. She cleans the dishes while Matthew goes inside to sit down.

Chapter 4

Strike goes to Charlotte's flat, which is located in an upper-middle class neighborhood, to collect his things. His belongings are already packed in four cardboard boxes. He carries the boxes outside, while a smirking, cocky neighbor looks amused. Strike leaves the building for the last time.

Chapter 5

Robin is sad on Friday, her last day of work. She is not looking forward to her next job. She is also aware that Strike is in financial difficulties and would be unable to keep her on. Mrs. Hook, Strike's only other client, comes into the office. She reflects on Strike's father, Jonny Rokeby, just as Strike returns. Robin rushes outside to let him know that Mrs. Hook is there, so Strike can bring up the boxes and organize his office without concern. When Mrs. Hook goes in with Strike, Robin looks up Rokeby Strike online. She finds out that Strike is the illegitimate son of 70s rocker Jonathon Leonard "Jonny" Rokeby. Mrs. Hook discovers her husband is indeed having an affair with her sister. Forty minutes later, Mrs. Hook leaves. As Robin packs up for the day, she is very sad about leaving. Strike is sad about it, too. Robin agrees to work for Strike privately, outside the temp agency, for another few weeks. She is very happy to do so, and Strike grins at the fact that she will be around a few more weeks.

Chapter 6

Strike goes through Brixton Market on his way to meet Derrick Wilson. He reflects on his mother and his half-sister Lucy, the latter of whom he wandered around the markets with while his mother was lying around their apartment. He then meets Wilson, a big West Indian man. Wilson reveals his nephew is fighting in Afghanistan. Strike explains he left the military because his leg was blown off. Wilson also reveals that Lula's driver, Kieran Kolovas-Jones, may be coming. It depends on the driver's work schedule. Wilson recounts that Lula was always very polite and kind to him, with usual formalities the order of the day. She even signed autographs for Wilson for his family members, including his nephew Jason. She asked about Jason from time to time.



Wilson recounts Lula and Ciara leaving and Mr. Bestigui coming in, saying something he couldn't hear to Lula. This caused Lula to look offended. Wilson also explained that Kieran hadn't been around that evening. Mick, a driver whom Lula had had before, was driving her and Ciara. Bestigui.

Lula arrived home, and Wilson buzzed her in because she wanted to get away from the paparazzi fast without having to type in her key number. Wilson recalls Lula being angry and unhappy with the photographers outside. Kieran, the usual driver, had an electric opener for the garage, but Mick didn't. So, Lula had to go in through the front door. She was only wearing a dress, and she was freezing. Wilson then recounts going into the restroom, having caught the stomach bug from Robson, his co-worker. He heard a bang while in the bathroom. It was Lula's body hitting the pavement. He heard screaming and crying from Mrs. Bestigui. Wilson ran outside, then back inside seeing that half of Lula's head was caved in. Wilson believed it was Duffield, so he rushed upstairs to Lula's room. It was empty. He even looked in the wardrobes, but there was no one. The Bestiguis were awake in their apartment. Wilson believed Mrs. Bestigui when she said that a man was in Lula's flat. Mrs. Bestigui was scared stiff. When the police arrived, Wilson goes went back to Lula's room with them. One of the police officers accidentally knocked over a glass vase with roses in the unoccupied, next-door flat. The flat was cleared. Meanwhile, neighbors were emerging, more police were showing up, and pictures were being taken.

Wilson explains that there are three guards for building number 18 –himself, Colin McLeod, and Ian Robson. Someone is always on duty. Robson had called out, saying he had a stomach issue, so Wilson agreed to stay through the next night shift because he owed Robson for a previous swap.

Wilson says the building has some Polish cleaners with very bad English. There is a book that everyone is required to sign when they enter and leave. A new guy had come to service the alarms, which is done about every six months. Mr. Bestigui leaves every day at eight in the morning. Wilson also explains the earlier part of the week had been busy, prepping for Deeby Macc. On the day of the death, packages had come for Deeby and for Lula. Roses were delivered for Deeby Macc, courtesy of Mr. Bestigui, who was enraged to discover the roses had been ruined. Wilson explains he was away from the desk for five, maybe ten minutes to help with the roses. After the death, Deeby moved to a hotel. Wilson also reveals that 1966, which was the front keypad, had not been changed in the three months Lula had been living at 18 Kentigern Gardens. All the rooms, Wilson explains, have individual keys and alarm systems, though Lula's alarm system was not set. The building, pool, and gym also have keys. All residents have a key. The pool was unlocked that night, and Wilson explains that Colin should have checked it. Wilson also recounts a bad argument between Duffield and Lula two months before. Kieran arrives.

Chapter 7

Kieran is short, small, and handsome. He is in his mid-twenties. He explains that he has twenty minutes. Kieran says that Lula always asked for him to be her driver. Kieran, of



mixed-race, had a lot in common with Lula, and they became close friends, though nothing more. Kieran recounts that Lula's relationship with her mother had been strange. Her mother, Lady Yvette, was weird and possessive. Kieran also explains that Lula had been unhappy because Kieran would not be her driver that night. Instead, he would be driving for Deeby Mac. He wouldn't switch because he wanted to meet Deeby.

After Lula was driven to her mother's, she came out strangely, scribbled something on a blue piece of paper, and then was taken to Vashti's, a boutique shop with a café. She was meeting a friend there from the mental hospital. The friend's name started with an "R." But, after only fifteen minutes, Lula came out alone and without the blue paper. She told the driver to take her home. Kieran first suspects that Duffield may have killed Lula, because he is an arrogant, unkind person. It is also revealed that Kieran once had a chance to act courtesy of Mr. Bestigui, but his part was written out. Kieran then recounts picking up Deeby from Terminal Five at Heathrow Airport. He took Deeby to Barrack, a hip-hop club, where Deeby stayed until after 3. When Deeby's entourage heard the news about Lula's death, they made arrangements at Claridges instead. Kieran drives Deeby there. Kieran then has to go. Strike makes arrangements with Wilson to inspect building 18.

Chapter 8

Strike is happy that Robin is working for him again come Monday. He has the weekend now to relax and enjoy some solitude. Strike, for his thirty-five years, feels as if he has accomplished nothing in his life. He moves to work through the weekend. He speaks with Lucy on the phone that afternoon. Strike pretends as if he is still dating Charlotte and confirms that he will be attending his nephew's birthday party. Strike goes looking around on Facebook for clues. Strike discovers that Lula did not have a Twitter account. He also discovers Duffield's claim to fame was a well received independent film about a drug addict who steals to support the habit. Duffield's band had simultaneously released an album which went up the charts based on Duffield's fame. His reckless lifestyle continually served the interests of the public. Strike also learns that on the night of Lula's death, Duffield left the club in a wolf's mask, but was later cleared by the police. He also finds that Lula had a brother-sister relationship with Some, or so it is said online. After finding the online information, Strike goes to sleep.

Chapter 9

It's Sunday morning, Strike showers again at the ULU. He then goes to Hammersmith Broadway and down the shops on Kings Street. As he walks, he calls John to ask about the mental hospital friend with the "R" name. John doesn't know how that will help. Then, he changes the subject. He tells Strike that Duffield came to visit his mother the previous day, along with innumerable photographers. Uncle Tony, John explains, believes it was for money; but, John has financial control. He has no idea why Duffield would have come. Strike brings up the "R-friend" again, which John dismisses as a token friendship. Lula could be selfish and pass through friends quickly.



Strike heads to Saint Elmo's Hostel for the Homeless to find the "R-girl," whom Strike learns is a girl named Rochelle. She has already left. Carianne, who is staying at Saint Elmo's, says not to trust Rochelle because she is a liar. She doesn't know where Rochelle has gone. Strike leaves his card for her and for the hospital to call in case Rochelle returns. Strike later gets a text from Robin about Duffield's visit.

Chapter 10

Robin is on her way to Strike's office, reflecting on the events of the day before. She had gone out to text Strike, only to be lectured by her fiancé about being rude to the friends they were eating lunch with. Meanwhile, Strike investigates Deeby Macc, who seems to be infatuated with Lula, mentioning her in songs and in interviews. Deeby himself is a former gang member, imprisoned for gang activity and drug offenses in Los Angeles. Strike talks to Robin on the phone, asking her for information about the address for the club called Uzi and Guy Some's phone number. He tells her to contact Duffield's agent, Nigel Clements, for an appointment. Strike apologizes for not responding to Robin's text the previous day, and she is a lot more friendly toward Strike from that point.

Strike later goes to visit Uzi, an exclusive private club with security cameras everywhere. He then goes to the Victorian pub Feathers to meet Eric Wardle. There, he tells Wardle the information needed to close a fatal stabbing, in exchange for information he needs. Wardle explains that they never found the two black guys who were seen running. Strike asks about the CCTV camera system, but Wardle explains that it is only good if the cameras are maintained and monitored. Not all cameras are serviced. Garriman Street's camera was out, and there were no cameras on Meadowfield Road or Hartley Street. Wardle is dismissive of Mrs. Bestigui, who he relates says she got up to use the bathroom around two, heard arguing, and saw Lula's body fall past the window. Wardle also dismisses that Mrs. Bestigui heard arguing because her brain is so fried from cocaine use. Police attempts to recreate and hear shouting in the flat above have failed. The police also discover that Tansi Bestigui was not in the bathroom to use it, but to snort. Wardle also relates that Mr. Bestigui was irate about the roses being smashed. Wardle believes it was done as a distraction because he was unhappy with his wife doing coke and the police sweeping through the apartment. Mr. Bestigui himself can't be ruled out just yet, though it is unlikely he committed a murder. He is also preparing for a divorce. Wardle then reveals that Duffield went into rehab the day after Lula died, he was uncooperative, and he is nothing more than a druggie. After the fight with Lula, Duffield left Uzi wearing the wolf mask, which he uses to annoy the paparazzi. Duffield, or someone believed to be Duffield, left the club. The person never took off the mask in the car. It's probable that after going to Lula's, they saw the paparazzi. Then, they decided to go to d'Arblay Street to a dealer to shoot up. The dealer, Whycliff, confirms Duffield's presence. Duffield left around four. He found his car and driver missing because they were on Lula's account, not Duffield's. Duffield then spent the rest of the night on Ciara Porter's couch. Wardle believes Lula's suicide was brought on by her bipolar disorder. Wardle ultimately agrees to give Strike the police file, if the police can nab Brett Fearney, the stabbing suspect.



Chapter 11

Robin relates that Duffield's agent says he isn't doing anything more related to Lula Landry. The people at Some's office and Bestigui's office are rude and unhelpful. Strike is in a suit, prepared to go to a meeting. Robin gives him a neatly clipped article about Bestigui. Robin asks about how Strike got a police officer to speak to him. He explains that Wardle and he have a mutual friend in Afghanistan, where Strike served as a military policeman investigating a Killed In Action. He explains he left the military police due to an injury.

Freddie Bestigui had inherited a fortune from his father and then made a fortune on commercial films. The article from Robin deals with allegations about sexual impropriety. Strike goes to the restaurant Cipriani, where he meets Tansy Bestigui, her sister named Ursula May, and Tansy's lawyer John Bristow. Tansy, impossibly thin, is interested in Strike's father, whom Strike says he has only met twice. Tansy has only agreed to speak with Strike provided her words are off the record. This annoys Strike.

Strike is interested to learn that Ursula May's husband, Cyprian May, is at Bristow's law firm. He also learns that Freddie had been trying to lure Lula into acting. Freddie had also been hoping to lure Macc into acting as well. His intentions were to make a fortune off them. John reveals that Freddie had visited his mother out of the blue, asking to make a movie about Lula's life. Uncle Tony then apparently had a heated exchange with Bestigui, ending the contact between them. Tansy goes on to tell Strike that at around 2 a.m. she had wanted a drink of water. So, she got up to go to the bathroom.

Tansy recounts Lula saying, "It's too late, I've already done it." A male voice shouted "You're a lying fucking bitch." Then, she sees Lula fall past the window. Tansy then screams and runs downstairs, where she finds Wilson, whom she blames for going outside rather than going after the murderer. Freddie, Tansy's husband, drags her back upstairs after calling 911. When John excuses himself for a phone call from Allison, the sisters laugh and mock Allison, who is in love with Tony, a senior partner at the firm. She has apparently settled for John as a consolation prize. Strike questions whether or not Tansy actually heard what she claims to have heard. She says that her window was open. She goes on to say that she hadn't done cocaine since earlier in the day. She insists the police did everything they could to discredit her. But, the murderer sneaked out somehow, by way of the back window, the lift, or the car park downstairs.

Strike questions Tansy about Freddie being fast asleep. She says it was her screaming that woke him up. Tansy says that Lula didn't have good taste in friends, from Ciara to Bryony Radford, the makeup artist who charges a fortune.

The sisters also reflect on and make fun of Rochelle. As the sisters are preparing to leave, Cyprian shows up to escort the girls out. John explains that Cyprian is unhappy with Tansy talking to Strike. As Strike heads out, he knows Tansy is a liar, but there is some truth in what she has said. Strike then heads into a toy store.



Analysis

Strike begins to trace Lula's movements on her final day alive. This involves contact with friends and acquaintances, of which there are many. As the case expands and involves more and more work, Robin is invariably drawn into things, much to her delight and much to Matthew's continued annoyance. Robin truly believes she is doing something important that will help someone. Strike is primarily concerned with his finances, in addition to getting to the bottom of things with Lula. The more he learns and discovers, the more he realizes that suicide is not as likely, though not impossible. He has too many loose ends to tie them all together in the direction of suicide or murder.

The webs spun by the rich, famous, and influential all circle back to one another. Strike learns the Bestiguis are also connected by divorce to the law firm where John and his Uncle Tony work. He also finds out that Freddie Bestigui was attempting to get Lula to act in a movie. Since Tansy Bestigui is a cocaine addict and was apparently high when Lula died caused the police to discount her testimony. However, Strike senses that there is some truth in her statement. Furthermore, Strike is interested to learn that Tansy's sister, Ursula May, is married one of the law firm partners, Cyprian May.

At the same time that he is reflecting on the case notes, Strike is beyond thrilled that Robin will continue to work for him privately, without the knowledge of the temp agency. He is, in all truth, grateful for her kindness and her professionalism, as well as her discerning intellect. Her help will prove to be invaluable in the coming weeks.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Robin agree to stay on to work with Strike privately, without the knowledge of the temp agency? Would you have done the same? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

What dangers and complications do you think Strike senses in the connections among John Bristow's law firm, the Bestiguis, and Lula? Explain.

Discussion Question 3

While the police are dismissive of Tansy Bestigui's testimony, Strike does not immediately reject it. Why not?



Vocabulary

Sanctimonious, voluminous, trivialities, lascivious, laconically, incurable, indecipherable, mundane, piquancy, amorphous, collate, onerous, précis, incendiary, hoi polloi, petulance.



Part 3

Summary

Chapter 1

On Wednesday, it rains in London and keeps on raining until Friday. Robin wraps a paratrooper doll for Jack, Strike's nephew. As they part ways for the weekend, Wardle calls Strike, confirming his information was valuable. Wardle will be sending over the police file for Lula. In the background, Strike can hear someone say, "Fearney's fucking face." Three hours later, the case file arrives. Strike finishes up his quick dinner of fish and chips and goes through the file.

The file contains everything from photos to the autopsy to CCTV footage on DVD. The autopsy reveals that Lula had been killed on impact, dying from a broken neck and internal bleeding. She also had bruising on her upper arms and had fallen wearing one shoe. She was also in a different outfit than the outfit she had worn home. He learns that the police found half a line of cocaine in the Bestigui's bathroom and more in a small, plastic bag in a tampon box. He learns that Duffield attempted to stop Lula from leaving Uzi's by grabbing her upper arms. Duffield's dealer and another woman in the building of the dealer attest to Duffield being there. Strike knows that either could be lying of their own accord or being paid to lie. He is disgusted with the portrayal of drugs in the media as glorified and misunderstood. His own mother had died from a heroin overdose.

Strike wonders when he will again have a social life with friends like having a beer on Fridays. His only real social outlet has been Robin. Strike then goes back to work. He reads Ciara Porter's statement, who says that Lula had wanted to leave everything to her brother. The makeup artist Bryony Radford stated that Lula Landry was unhappy and anxious, but would not say why. Lula's phone records reveal that she had barely used her land line during the week before her death. She didn't use it at all on the day of her death. Her mobile phone had sixty-six calls on that day, alternating between Duffield and her Uncle Tony. Tony revealed that he did not know his niece had called him so frequently until later in the evening, after she would have been out at a nightclub. Records from Landry's laptop and transcripts of her emails reveal Lula to be cheerful and happy. Lula had even sent an email to Some asking him to design something for her friend Rochelle for her birthday on February 21st. Lula said that she would pay him. Some himself had only gotten back to Japan the night of Lula's death, but he had been cleared by the police by saying he went to bed when he got home.

Chapter 2

Strike goes to his sister Lucy's house in Bromley. It is beautiful. He has only been there a few times before, for his sister prefers to meet him out and about. Lucy is happy to see him, though she is curious about Charlotte. Strike's three nephews are running



around out back with twenty other kids. Strike himself has never wanted kids, though Lucy disagrees. Strike goes inside with the DVD of CCTV footage to the front room of the house and puts on the DVD. One of the suspects consults something he pulls out of his pocket. Strike cannot determine what the suspect is looking at because the film is blurry. From bus footage, Strike can see the GS logo on one of the black men's hoodie. Strike calls Bristow to request a meeting. Then, he calls Wilson. Strike's nephew Jack comes into the room, and Strike gives him a present. They both play soldier, and Lucy is annoyed that Jack has run off on his other guests.

Chapter 3

Strike arranges a meeting with John, asking him to bring along Lula's laptop. Then, he calls Wilson, who checks the guestbook for Rochelle. She hasn't been there since early November. Strike thinks about the GS on the black man's hoodie. GS is the logo of Guy Some. Some is still refusing requests for interviews about his favorite model.

Chapter 4

Robin is continually worried by the death threats that Strike is receiving. Strike brushes it off. Robin also reveals that the temp agency is looking to see if she was still working there, but she told them her name was Annabel. Robin agrees to pretend to be Strike's sister, going to Vashti's to seek a gift for his wife. Robin asks about the death threats, and Strike explains it is Brian Mathers, who hired Strike to check on his wife to see if she was sleeping around. He discovers that, for some unknown reason, his wife is staying out late intentionally with friends or just driving around. Brian does not believe Strike, and Strike calls his wife because he is worried for her safety. This causes Brian to accuse him of being his wife's new lover. Strike lets on that he doesn't think John may be wrong about Lula's death.

Strike and Robin go into Vashti's. Robin contemplates the permanent job offer she's received in human resources. She doesn't know whether or not to accept the offer. She does know that she relishes her current work. Strike explains that they are at Vashti's to find out why Lula and Rochelle were there.

Robin relishes her role as sister, trying on clothes she would never have tried on in her life. She goads the sales girls into talking about Lula. They recount Lula being on the phone with Evan Duffield, begging him to come and see her. When she and Strike leave, Strike lights up a cigarette and tells Robin she was very impressive.

Chapter 5

Strike goes to meet John Bristow at Serpentine Bar and Kitchen. Strike reflects on Robin, whom he finds kind, considerate, and professional, as well as attractive. Yet, he knows he should not let the blossoming friendship with Robin become too personal. While waiting for John at the Serpentine, Tony Landry makes an appearance and sits down beside Strike. Tony is a pompous, arrogant man, who wanted to reveal certain facts to Strike in private. Tony thinks the idea of murder is all in John's head because he is high strung. Tony also thinks that Strike's assistance is doing nothing to help John



accept his sister's death. Yvette, who is in the process of dying, isn't helping things, either. Tony reveals that he and his nephew have an amicable working relationship, but not a close family relationship. He also reveals that Yvette was an overindulgent mother who refused to discipline or set boundaries for her children. Tony says Lula was as unstable as John and as wild as Charlie. Yvette couldn't manage Lula. Tony goes on to say that he had seen Lula at Yvette's the morning of Lula's death, which is the same statement that he had given to police. Looking rushed, John arrives a moment later. He seems frightened that his Uncle Tony is there.

Chapter 6

Strike says hello to John, but he goes on questioning Tony. Tony says that all that occurred between himself and Lula was chit-chat. He left Lula with Yvette because Yvette preferred Lula over anyone. Strike finds it strange that Lula repeatedly attempted to contact Tony after speaking to him about nothing important just a little while before. Tony dismisses it, saying Lula would call someone on the slightest whim and expect undivided attention. After Tony leaves, John explains that his uncle has less than favorable views on race. After lunch, Strike and John take a walk. It is revealed that Tony was never a loving person, but Yvette was loving. John had agreed to help Strike contact Guy Some and Lula's biological mother, Marlene Higson, right around the time Yvette came down with uterine cancer.

John thinks Ciara's statement about Lula's desire to leave everything to him is an exaggeration. A will was never found. John contends that Lula leaving everything to him would have cut out his mother and would have been hurtful. It wouldn't have been an issue of money –their father left their mother very well off –but a question of the message being sent. Strike asks about his mother's will and heirs. John believes that he and his Uncle Tony are the primary beneficiaries, but he doesn't want to think about his mother's death. Released from police custody, Lula's things have been at Yvette's. John gives Strike the laptop, though he does not know the password.

Chapter 7

Strike comes into the office just as Robin is leaving. She has been searching, without success, for anyone named Onifade (Rochelle's surname) with a British Telecom number in Kilburn. Robin suspects the name may be different. She is vexed to see Strike on the couch, looking exhausted. When she leaves, Strike removes his prosthetic and inspects the inflamed skin on his tibia. He knows that he is putting too much pressure and work on it. While out eating and drinking a beer, Strike looks at Lula's laptop.

Spanner, Strike's guest, comes in a few moments later. Spanner, who is tech savvy, says he'll handle the laptop, though the police are pretty good with them. He also confirms to Spanner that things with Charlotte are over. After Spanner leaves with the laptop, Strike gets a text from Charlotte asking for a quick call. He reflects on meeting Charlotte in college at Oxford, when he was nineteen. She later reveals that she had



meant to torture her then boyfriend as a punishment. Strike ended up being the man to do it. The following fifteen years are full of Charlotte's antics, lies, meanness, etc.

Chapter 8

Robin arrives at work the next morning to find Strike still sleeping. She knocks which wakes Strike. He gets dressed, while she gets tea. Robin has done something brilliant. Reading in the file that Rochelle is supposed to attend an outpatient clinic at St. Thomas's, she calls, pretending to be Rochelle and pretending to have forgotten her appointment time, which is 10:30 that morning. Strike has fifty-five minutes to get there. She gives him directions. Strike tells her she is a genius. For the first time, she calls him by his first name, Cormoran. Then, she points to his shirt, which is buttoned wrong. He thanks her, rebuttons, and rushes out. Robin is proud of herself, but a little depressed, hoping that Strike would have let her come along to meet Rochelle.

At St. Thomas's, Strike shouts "Rochelle!" at all of the outgoing patients. Finally, he finds her. They go to McDonalds together. Strike explains he is a private detective investigating Lula's fall. Rochelle is nervous. She insists that Lula jumped. She also reveals that Lula did not like the Bestiguis at all. Rochelle explains that she and Lula became friends because they were both black and because Rochelle was a regular sort of friend who was properly black. Rochelle explains that she and Lula didn't have lunch because Lula was in a hurry. To get Rochelle to stay, Strike buys her more food. She doesn't remember the person that Lula was talking to on the phone. Rochelle recounts how Lula was looking forward to meeting Deeby. Rochelle has nothing positive to say about Duffield. Rochelle reiterates that she believes it was suicide. She leaves then, and Strike catches up to her, hearing her talking to someone on the phone about him asking questions. Rochelle sees him, and Strike asks for her number. She gives him her number. Strike tells her that he thinks she is hiding something and she may be in danger because of it. She doesn't agree and leaves.

Chapter 9

Strike returns to his office, determined to put some distance between himself and Robin. Yet this plan falls through. Lucy is at his office, drinking coffee and having a good time talking to Robin. Strike fears what they have talked about, believing it may have been him. Robin excuses herself for lunch. Lucy is saddened to know that Strike and Charlotte have split up. Strike says it was his choice. Lucy is relieved. She hates Charlotte. She is worried about him and asks him to come live with them. He politely declines. Lucy later leaves, teary-eyed and concerned for Strike.

Chapter 10 – Robin reflects on Matthew's acceptance of her working with Strike because she has accepted the media consultant's job. While speaking with Lucy, Robin protects Strike's financial situation. Robin feels very bad for Strike, with everything ranging from the end of his relationship with Charlotte, to his living in his office, to his war injury, to his mother's death. Strike is working on her computer when she returns from lunch, having found the Italian designer online who designed the magenta fur coat worn by Rochelle. The coat had cost 1500 pounds. Strike relates the encounter. He



then spends most of the afternoon at the bar, wanting to distance his personal life from his professional life.

Analysis

Strike uses his connections with people out and about in London to secure some critical information for Wardle and the police, regarding an unsolved stabbing. Strike then delves deeper into the world that Lula had existed in. This involves getting more involved in Lula's family life, and an impromptu meeting with her uncle, Tony. Tony is wealthy, cold, and callous, especially when dealing with John and Lula. Tony is unhappy with Lula because Lula went searching for her biological mother at the same time Yvette was diagnosed with uterine cancer. It seemed, to Tony, untimely and ungracious. Strike is able to see for himself that Lula, though in far better circumstances than she was with her biological mother, was still nevertheless in a difficult environment with someone like her uncle being around.

Simultaneously, Strike's own family life comes back to haunt him in certain ways. His step-sister, Lucy, is terribly sad for Strike's current run of luck, and even asks him to move in with her and her family. Strike kindly rejects this offer. This also gives Robin a clearer, firsthand view into Strike's existence as the unwanted child of a rock star, and someone who has been used and manipulated by Charlotte for more than fifteen years. This grows an already blossoming friendship between Strike and Robin.

Strike also seeks out Rochelle, who served to be an unusual sort of friend for Lula, considering that Lula mainly hung around with the rich and the famous. While Rochelle appears to be nothing more than a cheap friend who was only interested in the material benefits of hanging out with Lula, Strike is able to discern that Rochelle, despite her uneducated nature and selfish existence, does have important information that he uses to his advantage.

Discussion Question 1

What is the source of animosity that Tony holds for John and Lula, as well as his antagonism toward his sister, Yvette? What useful information does Strike glean from this?

Discussion Question 2

Why do you believe that Strike gives more credence to the information that characters like Rochelle and Tansy provide, when the police are dismissive of them?



Discussion Question 3

Why do you believe Matthew is so antagonistic toward Robin working with Strike? How does Robin respond?

Vocabulary

exuberantly, superfluity, morbid, elucidation, frenetic, ubiquity, incongruous, laboriously, uncharacteristic, ethereal, multitudinous, pedantically, bereavement, collusion, predilection, viscera, ostentatiously, ornate, stymied, palpably, mollified



Part 4

Summary

Chapter 1

Strike visits ULU to shower once more and seeks out an appointment with Guy Some. While waiting, he tries to call Rochelle, but there is no response. This has happened ten times a day since he met her. Some then meets with Strike. Some is short, thin, and gay. He explains he always called Lula “Cuckoo.” Some is surprised to learn that Strike is making more than minimum detective wages because now John has his sister’s money to throw around. Some explains he was in Japan, then home, hours before Lula died. He went home by cab because Elsa, his former assistant, messed up the car booking. She was fired for it. Some then takes an Ambien and sleeps for a few hours. He wakes up at five and sees the news. Some says he was hoping it wasn’t Lula, but Rochelle, whom he hated. Rochelle was only in the friendship with Lula for free stuff.

Some is convinced the killer is Duffield. Who else, he wonders, would Lula have let in at two in the morning? Some also believes Duffield was faking his emotions at the funeral. Some thinks the wolf mask alibi is garbage. He also knows that he had a pact with Lula. If either of them were considering suicide, they would call the other. So he knows that if Lula was suicidal, she would have called him. The last time Some heard from Lula was while he was in Tokyo. She left him a message saying she had big, exciting news, but Some never learned the news. Some believes Lula was pregnant, but he hoped that it wasn’t with Duffield. He says he could just tell by her voice. He and Lula were like family, so he could tell. He also says that Lula was always looking for someone take care of and to love. Some hates the adopted Bristows, believing them all to be overly possessive and unkind to Lula.

Some reveals that the packages to Lula on the day of her death were purses. He had also sent some freebies to Deeby Macc , hoping to receive an endorsement. Some knows that Lula was not too excited about meeting Deeby because she didn’t like hulking men. Some explains his name used to be Kevin Owusu, before he left home. He believes that Lula changed her name to Landry because she hated the Bristows in the same way that he hated his family. The press drove her into living at the five-star prison Kentigern Gardens. While there, She could get away from them and from a stalker who was putting letters with obscene things in her front door. Lula felt safe at Kentigern, though she hated it in the end. Lula would open the windows to her apartment even in the winter so she could hear the sounds of London. She wanted to feel something real. Some says she befriended Rochelle so that she would know someone real. She believed that she would have been like Rochelle if the Bristows hadn’t adopted her. The stalker, Some reveals, was a mental case who believed he was married to Lula. He was locked up in a mental ward in Liverpool the night of the murder.



Some also knows that Lula hated the Bestiguis, especially Freddie, because Freddie had a thing for her. Some knows nothing about Wilson, but he knows that the driver, Kieran Kolovas-Jones. He was always striking poses around him, hoping to be picked up as a model. Some is surprised to learn that Lula was not wearing the same outfit when she died as the one she had worn home. Some begins crying, thinking about the death. He says that if she changed outfits, it was because she was expecting someone. Some invites Strike to 1 Arlington Terrace in Islington on Wednesday for a shoot about five. He will be able to meet Ciara Porter and Bryony Radford.

Chapter 2

There is no further contact from Charlotte. Strike goes to Saint Thomas's on Thursday, hoping to find Rochelle, but to no avail. On Friday, he finds Spanner on the couch beside Robin's desk. Spanner is obviously into Robin, but Robin is politely keeping her distance. In Strike's office, Strike tells Spanner that Robin is not available. They talk about the laptop. The password is Agyeman, a Ghanian surname. She had been researching Professor J. P. Agyeman, Emeritus Professor of African Politics. Spanner also reveals that there are photos missing from the laptop. They were deleted ten weeks after Robin died. There are photos of social outings. Strike asks Robin to identify all the famous people in them. Then, he calls Wardle and leaves a voicemail: "John Bristow, who is in a meeting, and Rochelle, whose voicemail is full."

Strike congratulates Robin on her new job. She will be leaving in two weeks. The Bestiguis leave for a few days, so Wilson invites Strike to Number 18, and Strike brings along Robin.

Chapter 3

At Number 18 Kentigern Gardens, Wilson shows Strike and Robin the lobby, the desk, the off duty guard room, and the security monitors behind the desk. They investigate the Bestiguis' apartment. Wilson also explains that each of the flats has a panic button in the bedroom and in the sitting room. As they look around, a Ukrainian cleaning crew is there. One of them is Lechinska, a pretty, petite girl. She explains, in broken English, that Lula's brother was arguing with her, telling her she gives too much money to Duffield. With no one in the second flat, cleaning is quick, Lechinska explains. She remembers the alarm man coming, but she doesn't remember what he looked like. Lechinska says that while she was cleaning the Bestiguis' apartment, Mrs. Bestigui was telling someone on the phone she didn't want to lie anymore. Lechinska goes on to say that the person on the phone was a woman, by the sound of the shouting. Lechinska also confirms that she reset the alarms when she was finished cleaning.

Strike asks Wilson once more about the alarm repairman, whom Wilson describes as young, white, and long-haired. They go to Lula's flat on the third floor. Strike can see in his mind Lula being dragged, and thrown over the balcony. He reflects on Tansy saying she had seen Lula flail as she fell –flailing means the fall was not intentional. John calls Strike then, who asks John about the photos. John is shocked, and wonders who could have done it. He knows his mother knew the password, and imagines that perhaps even



a nurse, seeing the laptop open and running, took the chance to steal the pictures to sell to the media. Strike thinks it could be another visitor. John says that he'll ask his mother about it, even though she is very, very weak.

Strike has Wilson reenact what he did the night of Lula's death. As he heads down, he remembers that he slipped on the stairs, falling on his backside. He remembers slipping on big wet spots on the floor. Strike smiles. Something now makes sense to him.

Chapter 4

Strike looks at a photo of Number 18 taken the morning after Lula dies, versus the front of the building as it was now. He gets a call from Peter Gillespie, who is seeking payment on Strike's debt to Rokeby. Monday morning, Strike goes to meet Lula's biological mother, Marlene Higson, in Canning Town. Marlene is an aged prostitute still trying to be young. She says she only gave up Lula with the hopes that Lula would have a better life. Her boyfriend at the time, who was white, did not like Marlene having a black baby. Marlene explains that Lula was very happy with her adoptive father, but not with Yvette, whom she feared. What is more, Marlene disapproved of Evan Duffield. Marlene's two sons, whom she had after Lula, she has never been able to find. Lula's father was an African student, Marlene explains. His last name, which she can't remember, is something like Mumumba, but certainly not Macdonald, Agyeman, or anything else. The student, Joe, left not long after, leaving Marlene with the baby. Marlene recalls Joe attending school with some sort of museum attached to it.

Marlene also has negative things to say about Rochelle, whom she says leached off of Lula. She also doesn't like Ciara. She also hates Tony Landry, who didn't want her around after the death. Marlene also says she got nothing from Lula's death, though she says she doesn't care about the money itself, only the principle of the thing, and would rather her daughter be alive. Marlene explains that Lula said she was going to take care of her, but Marlene believes the Bristows destroyed her will.

Chapter 5

Back at the office, Charlotte calls, and leaves a message with Robin, telling her to tell Strike that she is now engaged to Jago Ross. Robin is worried about giving Strike the news. Strike returns with a fan for the office, saying it is stuffy. He asks her about some Deeby Macc lyrics, and why he mentions hating Johari, which Robin explains is a psychology term for how well one knows oneself. Robin, it is revealed, dropped out of college while studying psychology. Strike explains he dropped out of school as well. Robin relates the message to Strike, who thanks her, and then goes into his office. He emerges a short time later, and says he will see her the next day.

Strike is horrified as he heads down the street. He wonders how Charlotte could have ended up back together with Ross, a heavy drinker, divorced. He gets drunk at the Tottenham, and it is Robin who comes in to see how he is doing. Robin offers to take Strike out to eat. He tells Robin she is a nice person, and he is up for eating, and then says something about Charlotte being pregnant with Ross's child. They go to a kebab



shop, and eat there on the sidewalk. He drunkenly tells her about being a boxer in the army, and what a nice person she is. She calls Matthew to let him know she is running late, and Matthew is not happy. Strike goes on to tell Robin about a kairos moment, a special moment, a supreme moment. Strike recounts his as being broken up with Charlotte for two years, her coming to visit him in the hospital, them kissing, and then getting back together. Robin is a little amused, and very saddened by Strike's memories. Strike then tells Robin she can go home, and returns to his camp bed in his office.

Chapter 6

When Strike wakes up, he has a bad hangover, and flashes of memory from the night before. There is also a note from Robin, saying she has gone out to investigate Agymean and the Malmaison Hotel for him. She also tells him she has set an alarm for two for him, so he can make his 5:00 photo shoot appointment. She also tells him not to be embarrassed about the night before, that he didn't do anything to be upset about. He takes some medicine, eats some chocolate, and goes to ULU to swim. He realizes the engagement to Ross is a cruel, last test from Charlotte. Strike then showers, shaves, and dresses. Strike drinks lots of water, and heads to 1 Arlington Place. There, he is given a seat by Some, to watch the shoot.

Ciara Porter is among the models being photographed. When Bryony is done touching up the models with makeup, she heads into a back room with Strike, which has been set up as a makeshift makeup studio. Bryony reveals that Lula was very excited about Deeby Macc arriving, but that she was nervous, and kept looking at her phone. Bryony knows that is because Duffield was messing with her again. She also reveals that John, Lula's brother, was the only person Lula could completely depend upon. The last day Lula was alive, Bryony had gone over to thread her eyebrows. Bryony does not remember Lula having a blue piece of paper with her. Bryony also recalls Lula not being angry with Duffield until later in the day. While Bryony doesn't know Tansy Bestigui, she does know Ursula May, whom she doesn't like. Bryony then goes back to work.

Chapter 7

The photo shoot continues for three hours, during which time Strike drinks bottled water and smokes cigarettes out in the garden. Ciara, wearing a skintight silver mini dress, talks to Strike afterwards. Ciara is amazed that Strike is Rokeby's son, saying she knows him, and Strike's brothers, Al and Eddie. Ciara also thinks Strike's mother, a super groupie, is a legend. Ciara then says she is glad someone is investigating Lula's death. She still has Lula's number on her phone. Ciara recounts that Lula was happier than she had ever been that week. Lula and Evan Duffield had had a commitment ceremony after getting back together. Ciara explains the comment made to her and Lula when coming into the building the day of the murder had to do with getting Lula and Deeby on film together somehow. It isn't until after seeing Yvette that Lula is less than happy. Ciara also explains that Lula wasn't too excited about Deeby. Ciara, like Bryony, has no idea about the blue paper Lula was carrying.



Ciara goes on to explain that she had been joking about the handbags that Some had given her. She asked if she could have one left to her. This prompted the comment from Lula about leaving everything to her brother, but her brother would let Ciara have whatever she wanted. Ciara explains that Lula told her everything. She says that Lula didn't trust anyone easily. Ciara does not believe Duffield killed Lula. She thinks that the press has been incredibly unfair to him. Ciara invites Strike to Uzi to meet Evan Duffield.

Chapter 8

Kieran is the driver for Ciara and Strike. Strike and Kieran are surprised to see one another. Ciara asks Strike to hold onto her money and her phone. She doesn't want to take her bag in to the club. Ciara explains that it would have been Lula's dream to meet her birth father. At Uzi, the photographers crowd in and take photos, but Strike shields his eyes and guides Ciara inside. Inside, Ciara leads Strike along by the hand. They move through the bar and into an inner room, protected by a guard, for the more rich and famous patrons of the club. There, Strike meets Evan Duffield. He is easily distracted. Ciara brushes some crumbs off Strike's jacket, and Duffield returns with a drink. The three of them decide to leave. Duffield has Kieran drive them to his apartment, where Duffield has only lived a few weeks. He relates that Lula's family was never fond of him. Duffield also relates he has been clean for five weeks and two days. Duffield also hates John Bristow for trying to tell Lula how to spend her money. They didn't mind if she threw money at the family, only elsewhere, Duffield recounts.

Duffield says he didn't answer Lula's calls the day of her death because he was working on a song and didn't want to be disturbed. He also wanted to teach Lula a lesson because Lula would not move in with Duffield while Deeby was staying in her building. So Evan's songwriting friend, Ellie Carreira, was invited over, and Duffield brought her to the club to make Lula jealous. Duffield himself was worried about Deeby having a thing for Lula. Duffield elaborates that Lula had left him a message. She said that she wanted to tell him something important. She didn't say what it was because her phone had been hacked in the past. If there was something important, Duffield says, Lula would have told him at the club.

While at the club, Lula kept checking her phone for the time because Duffield believed she was waiting to go home and see Deeby. When Ellie went to the bathroom, Lula gave back Duffield's commitment bangle and left. Duffield doesn't recall grabbing her arms, but he does remember waiting ten minutes to follow her in a wolf mask. Seeing the paparazzi at Lula's place, Duffield decided to get high. As he recounts learning about Lula, he fights off tears. Duffield explains that he and Lula broke up two months before her death because of his using drugs. Also, pressure from family and friends led her to break up with him. Duffield hates Guy Some for his part in things. He relates that Lula wanted to learn more about Africa because she couldn't find her father. Duffield also hates Some so much because Some wanted her to get over Duffield and get along well with Deeby.

Duffield also tells Strike that two days before while he was having lunch with Freddie Bestigui, he saw on Freddie's Blackberry a message from Tansy. In the message, Tansy



threatened to go public with information about where she really was when Lula died if he didn't fork up more than 1.5-million pounds in the divorce settlement. Strike then says good night, and Ciara leaves with him. She convinces Strike to come home with her for the night.

Chapter 9

Robin is a little vexed not to find Strike in the office. Robin decides to type up everything she has found out instead. She wonders if Strike has reunited with Charlotte, but then reminds herself it doesn't matter because she is leaving in a week's time. She also worries that, perhaps, something has happened to Strike. She also recounts the fight she had with Matthew following Strike's night of drunken escape. Matthew believes she is naïve and a sucker for a sob story and that she isn't pulling her weight at home. The fight leaves a bad feeling between them. When Strike arrives, his nice suit and scruffy appearance make her believe he has reconciled with Charlotte. It makes Robin unhappy.

Strike asks for Robin's attention, and she gives it to him. He apologizes for the other night's drunkenness. She realizes there has been no reconciliation. Strike thanks Robin for coming to help him. Robin feels better. She recounts going to the School of Oriental and African Studies in Russell Square, which is walking distance from the British Museum. Professor Josiah Agyeman had studied at SOAS as an undergraduate. Robin recounts going to the Malmaison Hotel, a converted former prison. Tony Landy had checked in on the evening of the sixth and the morning of the eighth, meaning he was definitely at the hotel. Alison goes to see if he is at the hotel, rather than the conference he is attending. She leaves after learning that Tony isn't there. Strike wonders why Tony, who doesn't like his sister, would speed home to see her after an operation where two of her children were with her. Strike believes Tony was planning to see his sister anyway. Then, he wonders why Tony would bother to check in at the hotel or the conference.

Strike then recounts his evening, minus the trip to Ciara's. While Strike changes, he tells Robin to look at the photos of Lula's building in conjunction with where Tansy says she was that night. Robin heads out for some sandwiches, and comes back with food and a newspaper –the front cover showing Strike with Ciara. The newspapers had called Strike a bodyguard. Robin realizes Strike must have slept with Ciara, and she is a little put off by it. Strike then gets a car from Wardle. The police have pulled a body from the Thames with Strike's card on it.

Chapter 10

Strike takes a taxi to the station. The body is Rochelle Onifade. He identifies her for the mortician. Detective Inspector Roy Carver questions Strike about Rochelle. Wardle also comes into the room. Strike tells them that Lula didn't jump and Rochelle wasn't killed. Carver insinuates that Rochelle was driven to suicide by Strike, courtesy of her mental imbalance. Wardle wants to hear what Strike thinks. Strike says Rochelle was blackmailing Lula's killer. On the day she was murdered, Lula used Rochelle's phone in



the dressing room at Vashti's to make a call. Rochelle was the only person Lula knew would not go to the press. Strike tells them to check Rochelle's phone records. The phone, Strike believes, is in the killer's possession. Strike further believes what was written on the blue paper was a will, to be witnessed by Rochelle. The will, presumably, would leave everything to John.

Strike tells Carver that if the police had taken Tansy seriously, Rochelle would not be dead. Strike tells Wardle that he needs help. Strike is fearful that two more people will be killed. Strike can offer Wardle proof that Tansy was not in her flat when Lula was killed. He wants Wardle to call Deeby Macc to find out what clothes were received from Guy Some. One of the runners on the CCTV tape was wearing a custom Some hoodie that was intended for Deeby.

Chapter 11

Robin talks to Strike by phone, and Strike tells her that he does not want her doing surveillance, because things are getting dangerous. He tells Robin to call John in the morning to tell him about Rochelle. Strike believes Rochelle was calling the killer after their lunch at McDonald's. He then had a rendezvous with the killer. Strike reflects on his mother's life and how he had been the only one to ask questions when she died. Why, for example, had she suddenly begun shooting up heroin when she had only used marijuana before? Strike then calls Lieutenant Graham Hardacre to get him information on Agyeman of the Royal Engineers and his tours of duty in Afghanistan.

Chapter 12

Strike goes to Pinewood Studios in Iver Heath. He goes in to see Freddie Bestigui and introduces himself. Freddie is enraged, and calls for security. Strike tells Freddie that he has evidence that makes sense of Lula's testimony. Photographs taken are unnoticeable to untrained eyes. Freddie tells the security to hold off. Strike says one of the photos show a woman in her underwear crouching on the balcony of the house. Strike believes that Tansy was shoved out on the balcony as punishment for doing cocaine. Strike then believes that when Lula fell Tansy screamed and banged on the door. Seeing Lula below, Freddie then dumped his wife's cocaine in the toilet rather than call the police. He then wipes down his wife's fingerprints from the door to avoid having to respond to allegations of physical abuse, which he has been accused of before by previous wives.

Freddie, Strike says, then goes after Tansy to bring her back inside and to make her change her story about how things had happened. Strike is sure that once Tansy knows there is a photo of her, she will come clean. Strike also believes the rant about the roses was to give Tansy time to compose herself. Strike is positive that Tansy will change her story, though. If Freddie comes clean, he puts himself in the clear for the murder itself. He wouldn't have had enough time to kill Lula, then run downstairs and let Tansy in within seconds of Lula's body falling. If Freddie comes clean, the worst he will probably receive is a reprimand from the bench. If not, Freddie could be brought up on charges of obstructing justice. Strike brings up the biopic Freddie wants to make. Freddie reveals



that Tony doesn't want to do anything until Lady Bristow is dead. It turns out, Freddie says, that there may be a conflict of interest with Tony representing Tansy, as Ursula is having an affair with him. Freddie also reveals he heard a set of footsteps outside his door after Wilson had run upstairs.

Chapter 13

Wardle calls Strike the next day, saying that Deeby had been sent a hoodie by Some. He was also sent a belt, a beanie hat, and cufflinks. Strike tells Wardle that he will be attending Rochelle's funeral. He asks Robin to come to the funeral with him because he needs her to do something for him there, but he won't say what. Strike mentions Brian Mathers, the death threat man. Robin wonders what he has to do with Lula's death, but Strike says he has nothing to do with the death, yet. The funeral is held at a crematorium. Rochelle's aunt, Winifred, is there. She leads the way to the Red Lion, a pub where sandwiches are to be served. There, Winifred talks John's ear off, while Strike speaks to Alison. Alison is cold and distant. She reveals she works as a secretary for Tony and Cyprian and that Tony asked her to come with John to the funeral to keep an eye on him. She explains she and John began dating shortly after Lula's death.

Strike hits Alison with the idea that she was sent by Cyprian after Tony to see if he'd gone off with Ursula May. Alison says this is not true. She says she was sent after Tony with important documents to sign. Strike wants to know why Tony would have left the conference to drive all the way back to see his sister. Strike then asks John if he is absolutely certain his uncle was at his mother's house the morning Lula was also there. John says he heard his uncle, but he didn't actually see him. Except for John and Lula, Tony would have been the only one to have a key to get in. Strike tells John he thinks John and his mother are in danger. He thinks he knows who the killer is, but he has to speak to Yvette before he wraps things up. John consents to a meeting the following morning.

Chapter 14

Strike goes to Franklin Row in Chelsea. Robin texts Strike that John will be late. Graham Hardacre then calls Strike. He explains that Jonah Francis Agyeman, Royal Engineers, is a twenty-one year old lieutenant. He is not married and has no children. He will be back in June after his last tour in Afghanistan, which began January 11. He has a mother and no siblings. He asks Hardacre to email him a picture of Agyeman. John texts Strike that he cannot make it. Against John's wishes, Strike decides to talk to Lady Bristow. Strike is allowed in to see her. Strike tells Yvette that John has been detained at the office.

Yvette recounts that only her late husband may have known anything about Lula's background, but that she didn't. She believes Alec wanted to protect her, if he knew anything, after Charlie's death. Yvette reveals that Lula, after having cancer, had spent the past year searching for her biological parents. Her family wasn't pleased with the timing of the search. It had upset Yvette enough to learn about Lula's real mother. So,



Lula didn't press Yvette with more details. Yvette recounts meeting Lula on the day Lula died and speaking about Charlie.

Yvette asks Strike to hand her the Valium pills. Yvette wonders if she is being punished for loving her children too much, for spoiling them. She thinks Lula didn't love her the way she loved Lula. She remembers John being jealous at first when Lula came to live with them, though they ended up being very close friends. Tony was unhappy with all the adoptions the Bristows made.

Yvette recalls Duffield's visit. Duffield was feeling guilty about Lula's death, about not going in after her. Yvette can't remember Tony visiting the day of Lula's death, though she says he may well have, and she didn't remember it. Tony has been visiting frequently, saying bad things about John. She recounts John staying up all night talking to her about Charlie, when Lula fell. Strike excuses himself to use the bathroom, and he looks around. He finds one of Lula's handbags from Some. It has a detachable lining, beneath which is the blue paper. He puts the paper in a plastic bag. Hearing the nurse outside before he can gain access to a safe, he goes to the bathroom and reads the will of Lula. As he leaves, he replaces a telephone he has taken off the hook earlier. As Strike leaves, he trips and hurts his bad leg. He then calls a taxi. While waiting, he calls Robin, Wardle and the offices of Landry, May, and Patterson.

Analysis

Having learned more from Lula's family members and from her less-than-scrupulous friends, Strike then heads toward her famous friends, including Guy Some and Ciara Porter. Both of them present good evidence that Lula was very happy the week before her death. Some believes it was because she was pregnant, though Some said he hoped that the baby was not Duffield's. While most of Lula's friends and acquaintances, as well as her family, absolutely hate Duffield, Ciara is more forgiving, especially because she knows that Duffield has given up drugs and is fighting his addictions. In an interesting twist, Ciara draws Strike into a sexual encounter at her place. This gives Strike a much needed boost of self-confidence.

Strike, fully convinced that Lula was indeed murdered, also believes he knows exactly who committed the crime as well. The final missing pieces of the puzzle fall into place when Strike goes to speak to Yvette, realizing she is not totally with it, because of the amount of pain medicine she is taking as she is dying. There are two critical pieces of information that Yvette reveals. First, John sat up with her through the night to talk about Charlie. Also, she cannot remember Tony ever visiting her.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Strike believe Rochelle was killed? Whom does Strike believe is responsible? What evidence does he offer?



Discussion Question 2

Why doesn't John want Strike to speak to Yvette alone? Why do you believe Strike speaks to Yvette anyway?

Discussion Question 3

What critical pieces of information does Yvette give Strike? Why do you think this information matters?

Vocabulary

Exophthalmic, photogenic, pellucid, impassive, morass, frivolous, coquettish, pantomime, bellicose, attenuated, emanating, inveterate, reprovably, flippant, ostentatiously, vainglorious, androgynous, harangued, contemptuous.



Part 5 - Epilogue

Summary

Part 5

Strike, in pain from his knee, speaks to Wardle, saying action has to be taken, for a maniac is on the loose. Strike is angry that Wardle isn't more receptive to things and is struggling with bad pain from his fall. Strike threatens to go to the press if Wardle doesn't take action. He gives Wardle some numbers and tells him to get a warrant.

Robin, meanwhile, has been attempting to contact Strike. He doesn't answer. When he returns to the office, Robin sees something is wrong. Robin wants to go to a doctor, and Strike declines. Robin shows him the photo of Jonah Agyeman, who looks a lot like Lula. Robin reveals that Tony Landry has called three times, threatening to sue, saying that Alison has walked out. Strike tells Robin to leave. She knows he is expecting someone or something to happen. He tells her to go home, that he will see her tomorrow. Robin departs. Strike then examines his leg, which is inflamed and bruised. Strike hopes that John Bristow will arrive at his office first. But time passes, and Strike falls asleep.

Part 5

Strike wakes up as John Bristow arrives, unable to properly reattach it. John is enraged that Strike went to see Yvette without him. John says his mother is hysterical, and his girlfriend has disappeared. John says he was compelled to travel out to Rye to meet a client to find out there was no meeting at all. John says he is ending the investigation because of his mother's state of mind. John is incensed to find that Strike went through Lula's things. Strike reveals that Lula was leaving everything to her real brother, Agyeman. It was Agyeman on the CCTV, heading home to where he was staying with his mother.

Strike tells John it was he who murdered his own sister for ten million quid. Strike also suspects that John has been embezzling from clients, including American Conway Oates. Strike knows that John knew the black man on the CCTV footage was Jonah, Lula's real brother, who was walking to her flat, and then seen sprinting away moments after. Strike knows Rochelle had told him and was blackmailing him since Vashti's in exchange for the silence that John wasn't Lula's heir. Rochelle, however, believed Jonah was the murderer. John, it turns out, removed photos from Lula's laptop to obscure Rochelle's image. Bryony, the makeup artist, who is dyslexic, had stumbled across the will, and confused "Jonah" with "John". John is the other man on the CCTV, running away with black gloves on. Strike says that John was not with his mother, but went to her after the murder, reset the clocks, and pretended to stay up all night with her, with Yvette being on strong painkillers after surgery.



Strike believes John went to Lula for money, for help. Her refusal to help him resulted in John's sneaking into Deeby Macc's future flat and hiding. He overheard Wilson give Lechinska the alarm code. By then, Lula had already gone. John then uses Alison as a ploy to get her to lie for him, with Alison hoping she will appear more attractive to Tony. Alison, confronted with the facts, began working with Strike to get John out to Rye. While John waits after visiting his mother, he plots. John had never been loved like Charlie or Lula. Strike believes that Tony knew the truth, that John had pushed Charlie off the quarry as children. Tony was not unhappy with the Bristows raising John as a delinquent. Tony himself pretended to be somewhere other than where he really was. He was with Ursula May, but he said that he had gone to visit Yvette. Because of their duplicity, they lied about seeing and hearing one another at Yvette's.

John, in Deeby's future flat, uses the Some gloves to avoid leaving fingerprints. He waits for Lula to be alone. He puts on Some's hoodie for Deeby. He takes roses from the vase, leaking water on the stairs that Wilson later slips on. John then goes to Lula's door, knocks, and Lula sees white roses and the big hoodie. She throws open the door expecting her biological brother, not John. They scream and argue, Lula telling John that it's already been done—a new will has been made. John forces Lula across the room, enraged, and throws her over the balcony. John then makes his escape, narrowly avoiding Wilson. His footsteps are heard by Freddie, and he takes off running down the street, disguised by Deeby's clothes.

Strike contends that John could have gotten away with it, given the will was never found and Rochelle could have easily been paid off for life. Strike also says the police should, by that time, have a warrant to search the safe in his mother's house. He has given the police different possible combinations, but he believes 030483 will be the one to open it. John lunges at Strike with a knife, and Strike gains the upper hand. Just as he is about to kill John, Robin comes in, telling him to stop. She calls for a police car and an ambulance. Strike picks up his phone, which has been recording everything.

Epilogue

Strike meets Jonah Agyeman, whose second tour of duty is cut short by the events. He is in a state of shock because of his sister's death and his new fortune. Jonah is surprised by his father's affair with Marlene because his father was a committed Christian. Lula contacted Jonah by way of Rochelle's phone to arrange a meeting without the press becoming involved. Jonah admits to seeing what happened late that night, sneaking out so his mother would not know about Lula. He wonders if he had been lured to Lula's to see her jump. Strike believes that Lula was so upset after her mother's visit because Yvette had told her the truth about Tony, Charlie, and John. Also, she was trying to call Tony to see if there was any truth to the story. She had become terrified of John at that point.

Strike explains that John was hoping to kill him, based on all the death threats from Brian Mathers that Robin revealed to John at Rochelle's funeral. Jonah is happy to hear that Strike broke John's jaw and nose in the fight. Jonah offers Strike some money, but Strike turns it down. He then goes to meet Robin at the office. It is her last day. Strike's



business has picked up dramatically since the case. Strike gives her a gift of a green dress from Vashti's that she had tried on and loved. She breaks out in tears and says she won't leave. Strike says he couldn't match her new salary, and Robin says she wouldn't expect him to. They agree to a salary. Though Matthew is not happy with her staying, Robin is happy. A payment has even gone out to Gillespie for Rokeby.

Later, Strike goes to the amputee center. He reflects on the green dress and is amused by the fact that Matthew may not be happy with it, especially because Robin previously modeled it for Strike. As Strike goes in to see the doctor, he remembers a verse about life being full of beauty and challenges and persevering. It is from "Ulysses" by Alfred Lord Tennyson.

Analysis

Ironically, it is John, the person who initiated the investigation into Lula's death, who is the actual murderer. It makes sense that the murderer would know that Lula was not suicidal. John was hurting for money. He murdered his sister to inherit her fortune. Yet, ironically for John, Lula didn't leave him anything. She left everything to her biological half-brother, Jonah Agyeman. Her last will and testament was in the bottom of one of her handbags. It turns out that John is, indeed, a psychopath. He had previously murdered his brother Charlie during childhood. This accounts for Tony's frigidity and disapproval of John and the distance cause between John and himself.

At the end of the novel, work begins pouring in for Strike. Robin agrees to stay on with Strike. She very much enjoys working for Strike and the work that she is doing. Strike is happy to have her staying on. It seems, at last, as if everything is falling into place for Strike to start his life all over again. Strike's leg, which throughout the novel has served as a physical handicap, is finally addressed in the epilogue. Indeed, Strike's leg also serves as a metaphor for his past life, both in his injury and his emotionally-challenged existence. His leg, like his past life, is being addressed at the end of the story so that he can move on.

Discussion Question 1

What is John's motive for murdering Lula? How does Strike come to this conclusion? How does Tony Landry fit into things?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Robin ultimately decide to stay on with Strike, permanently? What does Matthew think? What does Strike think?



Discussion Question 3

Explain the significance of the lines from the poem "Ulysses" that appears at the end of the novel with respect to Strike and his life.

Vocabulary

Subjugation, truculent, impecunious, impermanence.



Characters

Cormoran Strike

As a thirty-five year-old veteran-turned-private detective, Cormoran Strike is the main character of Robert Galbraith's novel, "The Cuckoo's Calling." When the novel begins, Strike is heavily indebted to his rock star father named Rokeby. Strike also has a half-sister, Lucy, who is happily married with three children. Both Strike and Lucy are illegitimate. Strike is also coming off a tempestuous, fifteen year relationship with an almost-fiancee, Charlotte. Strike's detective business is in the gutters as well, for Strike has only one client. But the morning that Robin Ellacot becomes his secretary, things change. John Bristow arrives, tasking Strike with solving the murder of his sister, Lula Landry.

Over the next few weeks, Strike and Robin become friends as well as partners in deducing that John is actually Lula's murderer. Strike ultimately ends up taking on Robin full time, and is able to put his emotional past with Charlotte behind him. New clients pour in for Strike, and things finally seem to have picked up for Strike.

Robin Ellacot

A beautiful twenty-five year-old girl recently moved to London, Robin Ellacot is very kind and very intelligent. Engaged to a guy named Matthew who disapproves of her working for Strike, Robin continues to work for Strike anyways. It is the fulfillment of a secret childhood dream to work in solving mysteries, and Robin is thrilled to be working with Strike. She becomes a trusted professional employee, as well as a good friend to Strike. When John Bristow confronts Strike, it is Robin who stops Strike from killing John, and it is Robin who calls the police and an ambulance. At the end of the novel, Robin decides she will stay on with Strike permanently, even though Matthew is not entirely happy with her decision.

Matthew

Matthew, Robin Ellacott's fiancée, is something of a romantic, but very dismissive when it comes to Robin's desire to work with Strike. Matthew puts her down for it, as well as Strike, and this proves to be a source of friction between Matthew and Robin time and time again. In the end, Matthew tells Robin it is ultimately her decision what she does.

John Bristow

John Bristow is the step-brother of Lula Landry and the adopted son of Alec and Yvette Bristow. It is John who asks Strike to look into Lula's death. It is also John who is the murderer, having killed Lula in pursuit of money. Deeply in debt, John is refused money



by Lula, leading him to kill her to secure her inheritance. As a child, John was never loved as much as Lula, or his brother Charlie, whom John murdered by pushing over the edge of a quarry while on vacation. At the end of the novel, John tries to kill Strike with a knife, but Strike gets the upper hand, breaking John's jaw and nose.

Lula Landry

Lula Landry is a beautiful model who dies at the beginning of the novel, apparently from suicide. Half-white, half-black, Lula is adopted by Alec and Yvette Bristow, who dote on her and give her everything that she wants. Lula is a wild child, dabbles in drugs, and ultimately comes to be a model. She becomes famous and wealthy quickly. Then, she begins to seek out her biological parents, which leads her to her biological half-brother. Though she is close with John, Lula knows John is untrustworthy with money. She refuses to help him out. She decides to leave everything to her real brother in her will, causing John to murder her.

Evan Duffield

Evan Duffield, singer and actor, is the drug-addicted loser boyfriend of Lula Landry, whom most people suspect murdered her. When Strike meets Duffield, Duffield has been clean for five weeks. He explains several unclear aspects of Lula's final hours alive.

Guy Some

Guy Some is a gay, black fashion designer, most famous for working closely with Lula Landry. Guy is a heavy smoker and suspects that Duffield is the murderer. He also hates Rochelle, saying Rochelle was only friends with Lula for the material benefits.

Tony Landry

Tony Landry is the brother of Yvette Bristow and the step-uncle of John and Lula. Tony is cold, distant, and elitist. When John was a child, it was Tony who discovered that John had killed Charlie. Tony's later attempts to prove as much to his sister and brother-in-law leads to Tony being barred from the house.

Ciara Porter

Ciara Porter is a beautiful, young model who was close friends with Lula Landry. Ciara is kind and wants to pursue the study of English Literature in college. Ciara helps Strike piece together Lula's final day. Later, she sleeps with Strike.



Tansy Bestigui

Tansy Bestigui is the drug-addicted wife of film producer Freddie Bestigui. She and Freddie live in the flat beneath Lula's. When Freddie discovers Tansy is doing drugs, he locks her out on their balcony in her underwear to punish her. She then hears Lula arguing with a male, and then sees Lula flailing as she falls to her death. Tansy originally tells the police that she was in the bathroom when she heard what happened, however, which is proved not to be the case by Strike.



Symbols and Symbolism

Lula's Will

Lula's will, hastily scribbled on a blue piece of paper, is hidden in her Some designer purse. The will leaves everything she has to Jonah, her biological half-brother. The will is witnessed by Rochelle.

Some Designer Purse

A Some designer purse is a gift to Lula from Guy Some. Lula hides her new will in the purse.

Some Designer Hoodie and Gloves

A Some designer hoodie and gloves are sent to Deeby Macc's empty flat by Guy Some as a gift. John wears the hoodie and gloves to murder Lula, and then to make his escape, where he is caught on CCTV in disguise.

Prosthetic

A prosthetic is worn by Strike to walk on his leg, blown off in the War in Afghanistan. The prosthetic also allows Strike to move around relatively well, though the prosthetic often hinders him during more strenuous physical activity.

Knife

John uses a knife in an attempt to murder Strike. He is not successful in his attempt.



Settings

London

London is the capital of England and the main setting for the novel "The Cuckoo's Calling." London is home to Strike, Robin, Matthew, Lula, John, and the other main characters of the novel. It is where Kentigern Gardens and Strike's office are located, as well as numerous night clubs, fashion designer shops, and poorer areas. It is in London that Lula is murdered and Strike solves the mystery of her death.

Kentigern Gardens

Kentigern Gardens, located in London, is a gated community of three-flat buildings manned by security guards and cameras. It plays host to the rich and famous. It is where Lula and the Bestiguis live. Deeby Macc intends to live there as well. Kentigern is also where Lula is murdered.

Chelsea

Chelsea is an affluent area where the wealthy live. It is leafy and full of green lawns and trees. It is where the home of the Bristow family is located and where Yvette is slowly dying. Chelsea is visited by Strike when he goes to talk to Yvette.

Uzi

Uzi is a night club with an inner sanctum for the rich and famous. It is the last place Lula visits before heading home, where she is later murdered. Uzi is frequented by Duffield and Ciara Porter, as well as others. Strike visits Uzi with Ciara to meet Duffield.

Denmark Street

Denmark Street is the location of 12 Bar Cafe, the office of Strike's detective practice.



Themes and Motifs

Love

Love is a major, and underlying theme in the novel "The Cuckoo's Calling" by Robert Galbraith. Love appears in the novel primarily in romantic form, both in a present form, and in an absent form.

In terms of love appearing in a primarily present romantic state, the characters of Strike and Robin both come to the fore. Genuine love appears briefly for Strike, in reference to a woman named Tracey, about whom not much is said. Love also appears, in the smallest of ways, between Strike and Charlotte in the rarest of circumstances. Yet, it is enough to keep Strike in a relationship with Charlotte, who is cruel, manipulative, and vindictive with Strike. Love also affects Robin's character, and seems to be the basis of her move to London, to live with Matthew, who soon after becomes her fiance. Though Robin's employment with Strike causes unrest between her and Matthew, their love is evidently strong enough to have survived the friction so far.

In terms of the absence of love, the characters of Strike and Lula are both primarily affected. Strike's shell of a relationship with Charlotte demonstrates how the absence of genuine love between the two affects both, especially Strike. He reels almost as much from leaving Charlotte, as he does from being in a relationship with her. Lula, likewise, lacks a genuine form of love. Her relationship with Evan Duffield is tempestuous at best, mainly due to Evan's selfishness and drug use. Indeed, it is later revealed by others that Lula had been looking for something or someone to love. Some incorrectly believes Lula is seeking genuine love through pregnancy, for example. Regardless, there is enough lacking in Lula's relationship with her boyfriend and her family to make her seek her real parents and someone else to love.

Family

Family is a major theme in Robert Galbraith's novel, "The Cuckoo's Calling." A family involves mutual feelings of unconditional love, affection, loyalty, support, protection, and compassion between individuals who may or may not be blood related, but who seek to fulfill the traditional family structure. In the novel, the family is presented as having been broken and unable to do what it is meant to do. The concept of this failure of family affects the characters of Strike and Lula Landry.

Strike is the illegitimate son of rock star Rokeby. His sister is Lucy. Their mother is a useless drug addict who seems to take little interest in her children beyond spiritually raising them in the vein of the Eastern world. Nevertheless, Strike and his sister bond and share a close friendship that continues into their adulthood. When Strike is homeless and living in his office, Lucy tries to get him to move in with her and her family. Lucy is happily married with three children. Strike respectfully refuses Lucy's offer.



Lula's own experiences with family are just as difficult, if not more so. Part of this is her own fault, and part of it is out of her control. Lula, who is multiracial, never feels truly at home with the Bristows, even though Alec and Yvette dote on her and take good care of her. When Yvette is stricken with cancer, Lula goes out to search for her real birth mother, to discover she is the daughter of a whore and a deceased Ghanian professor. While Lula does have a close relationship with her step brother, John, this relationship sours quickly before her death over John's desiring of Lula's money to pay of his debts.

Pop Culture

Pop culture is an overarching theme in Robert Galbraith's novel, 'The Cuckoo's Calling.'" Pop culture includes that which is produced for mainstream consumption, by way of media, news, movies, television, music, fashion, art, literature, and so on. The novel deals with the effect that pop culture has on society at large, and how society at large also feeds into pop culture as well.

In the novel, pop culture revolves around that which is fashionable, sordid, glamorous, gritty, and pleasurable. This includes sex, drugs, celebrity status, and modeling. The lifestyle of those who follow such a path is inevitably doomed: Lula's mother is a has-been slut, Evan Duffield is a drug addict with little money, and Strike's mother is a dead drug addict. Nevertheless, pop culture glorifies such things, which Strike finds disgusting. There is nothing glorious about such things, as he knows firsthand courtesy of his mother.

However, while pop culture may make its mark on society in negative ways, a hungry public eats up the lives and the misfortunes of those who make pop culture possible. The public delights in Duffield's idiocy, in fights between Lula and Duffield, and in Lula's death. Society responds to such tragic events with contemptuous regret and sorrow, nevertheless feeding the industry of paparazzi and reporters to follow up on more sordid behavior, while lecturing those in pop culture about their ways.

Styles

Point of View

Robert Galbraith tells his novel "The Cuckoo's Calling" from the third-person limited omniscient perspective. This allows the reader to follow the thoughts, actions, and events that affect both Strike and Robin when they are together or apart from one another. This also allows the reader to get glimpses of Strike's personal life, and Emma's personal life, that would not otherwise have been possible (for example, if the novel had been told in the first-person perspective.) The narration is also reigned in by limited omniscience, allowing the reader to know and learn only as much as either Strike or Robin know and learn -and at times, now allowing the reader to know what Strike knows -to build suspense and increase the mystery.

Language and Meaning

Robert Galbraith tells his novel "The Cuckoo's Calling" in language that is swift and educated. This is done for primarily two reasons. The first is that the swift, simple language, being straightforward rather than poetic, dense, or dry, allows the reader to move quickly through the plot, rather than being tied down in the language itself. Yet, at the same time, an educated vocabulary is also used, allowing believability into the characterization of Robin and Strike as intelligent people doing intellectual and deductive detective work.

Structure

Robert Galbraith structures his novel "The Cuckoo's Calling" into seven parts, including an epilogue and a prologue. Each of the five parts between the epilogue and prologue are subdivided into linear, chronological chapters. Each part concludes a specific part of the plot, and paves the way for the next. For example, by the end of Part 4, Strike knows who the murderer is and prepares to confront him in Part 5. The prologue serves as an introduction to the book, focusing on the crime, while the epilogue paves the way for another Strike novel, focusing on the growing friendship between Strike and Robin and Strike preparing for a better phase in his life.



Quotes

All I want, Strike," said Bristow hoarsely, the color high in his thin face, "is justice.
-- John Bristow (Part 1, Chapter 4 paragraph p. 32)

Importance: Here, John explains to satisfy Strike's curiosity about why John would want Lula's death investigated, that he wants justice to be done. The irony here is that John is the murderer, and is seeking justice against himself.

But they had already tried, again and again and again, and always, when the first crashing wave of mutual longing subsided, the ugly wreck of the past lay revealed again, its shadow lying darkly over everything they tried to rebuild.
-- Narrator (Part 2, Chapter 4 paragraph p. 76)

Importance: Here, the narrator reveals the tempestuous relationship that has existed between Charlotte and Strike for fifteen years. No matter how much they want to get back together, the past cannot be undone. It serves to haunt the present continually.

He had lost the army, and Charlotte and half a leg; he felt a need to become thoroughly accustomed to the man he had become, before he felt ready to expose himself to other people's surprise and pity.
-- Narrator (Part 3, Chapter 1 paragraph p. 166)

Importance: Strike is ready to move on with his life, but he is not just yet ready to move on in social circles. He needs time to recover, to heal some of his wounds, before heading back out in public. Interestingly, while Strike can keep much of his life private, Lula and the other celebrities she had traveled in social circles with cannot do the same. The irony should not be lost on the reader here.

To prove, to solve, to catch, to protect; these were things worth doing; important and fascinating. Robin knew that Matthew thought her somehow childish and naïve for feeling this way, but she could not help herself.
-- Narrator (Part 3, Chapter 4 paragraph p. 186)

Importance: Here, the narrator reveals some of Robin's motives for wanting to remain working for Strike. While Matthew looks down on Robin for such noble feelings and motivations, Robin simply cannot help but be who she really is, and she is really a good person.

She became a morality tale stiff with Schadenfraude, and so many columnists made allusion to Icarus that 'Private Eye' ran a special column.
-- Narrator (Prologue paragraph p. 6)

Importance: In reference to Lula. the narrator explains how the press and the media at large are handling her death. Her own misfortunes and circumstances are consumed by the media for its own profit and fed to whet the appetite of a hungry public.



All of us have got it in us, somewhere, to kill, so why would Duffield be any exception? He's got the vicious mentality of a twelve year-old.
-- Guy Some (Part 4, Chapter 1 paragraph p. 255)

Importance: Guy Some sums up why he believes that Evan Duffield murdered Lula, speaking with Strike. Duffield's vindictiveness and his instability from drug use could easily have resulted in an angry tantrum which led him to want to hurt Lula, as Some believes.

The dead could only speak through the mouths of those left behind, and through the signs they left scattered behind them.
-- Narrator (Part 4, Chapter 3 paragraph p. 282)

Importance: As Strike seeks to find Lula's killer, he knows that he has to understand just who Lula was as a person. To do that, he has to listen to her voice, which can only be done through the recollections of loved ones and the things left behind. It is these clues that Strike follows up on.

How easy it was to capitalize on a person's own bent for self-destruction; how simple to nudge them into non-being, then to stand back and shrug and agree that it had been the inevitable result of a chaotic, catastrophic life.
-- Narrator (Part 4, Chapter 11 paragraph p. 378)

Importance: Here, a comment is made once again on the pressure placed upon celebrities and those in the media's spotlight. It exhorts them to do things that are even more over the top than before, only to be condemned for the action in the end.

Lucky is he who has been able to understand the causes of things." -Virgil, Georgics, Book 2
-- Virgil (Part 5 paragraph p. 419)

Importance: Part 5 begins with a quote from Book 2 of Georgics, from Virgil. The quote most clearly is in reference to Strike, who has managed to figure out who Lula's killer is. Luck will also factor heavily into John, who, by sheer luck, was able to pull off the murder in the first place.

An innocent man wouldn't be sitting here listening to me. He'd have stormed out by now.
-- Strike (Part 5, Chapter 2 paragraph p. 433)

Importance: Here, John Bristow has confronted Strike, and Strike has confronted John Bristow with the truth of the murder, to which John Bristow listens, and argues, rather than storming out. John Bristow is clearly guilty.