

Dirt Study Guide

Dirt by Stuart Woods

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Plot Summary

Three of the biggest names in American gossip have been targeted and publicly humiliated by fax. Under the heading of DIRT, Amanda Dart, her employer Richard A. Hickock and Allan Peebles, Editor-in-Chief of the American Infiltrator are all exposed as individuals with very sordid sex lives. Amanda is photographed in bed with a wealthy real estate developer who happens to be married. Peebles is videotaped playing "horsey" with a supposed pizza deliveryman. Hickock's tawdry affair with a 19-year-old is uncovered. Amanda hires Stone Barrington, an ex-NYPD detective, to find out who is feeding information to DIRT. From the beginning, Amanda's staff is all considered suspects. Through a process of elimination, Amanda Dart's longtime secretary and confidante, Martha McMahon eventually becomes the primary focus of Stone's investigation.

Stone meets Arrington Carter at one of Amanda's dinner parties, and he is instantly smitten. Stone learns that Arrington has just gotten out of a relationship with the potentially violent and devilishly handsome Jonathan Dryer. Jonathan, a male model with a fondness for excellent food, good wine and designer wristwatches, had accompanied Arrington to several high class parties in homes which were subsequently burglarized.

In the meantime, Stone's ex-partner Lieutenant Dino Bacchetti and his wife Mary Ann are searching for an apartment to purchase in Manhattan. Against his own better judgment and Stone's advice, Dino Bacchetti decides to allow his father-in-law, Mafia boss Enrico Bianchi, help with the purchase of the apartment.

After one of his associates is murdered, Barrington learns that Martha McMahon also had a brief affair with Jonathan Dryer and that it was she who provided him with the titillating details of the gossip-mongers' lives. Jonathan Dryer disappears, Martha McMahon meets an unfortunate end near Amanda's home in Connecticut, and Stone Barrington is left with no leads, several unsolved burglaries. And Allan Peebles, trying to salvage what is left of his pride, tells Amanda Dart something that will lead to the deaths of three more people and the personal and professional devastation of at least to others, including herself. It is at this juncture that Dick Hickock makes a decision that will have cataclysmic results.

After a visit to the mysterious Professor Samuel Bernard an afternoon with boozy New Jersey divorcee Louise (Lou) Burch, Stone Barrington begins to close in on the people behind the inflammatory DIRT messages.

Eventually, the NYPD, the Mafia and Stone Barrington are all looking for the same men. However, one issue of DIRT remains to be published. The final installment is sent to only one recipient. The New York gossip game grinds on, using the biggest names in the business as grist for the mill.



Chapters 1-6

Chapters 1-6 Summary

New York City is the backdrop for Stuart Woods' novel *Dirt*. Amanda Dart is a famous syndicated gossip maven who receives a shocking fax. The fax, which bears the title DIRT, reveals tantalizing information about Amanda that she would prefer be kept quiet. However, after news of a secret weekend with her married lover is released, the buzz begins and Amanda is professionally and personally humiliated. More than being embarrassed, however, the gossip game's "Queen Bitch" needs to stop the proverbial bleeding, identify the leak, and do some damage-control. Amanda Dart hires Stone Barrington, former NYPD detective, to dig up the dirt on DIRT. What ensues is juicy to say the least, as Amanda is not DIRT's only not-so-innocent target.

In Chapter 1, Amanda Dart, a well-known New York gossip columnist, attends a high-class dinner party at the home of an acquaintance. Amanda is fifty years old, in very good shape and considered attractive. Although Amanda tells everyone that she will be in St. Bart's for the weekend, she sneaks off to the Trent Hotel to meet her married lover, a wealthy Atlanta businessman named Henry Bell. While the lovers are in bed, someone breaks into the hotel room and takes incriminating photographs. This sends Amanda into a panic.

In Chapter 2, Amanda Dart meets with her attorney, Bill Eggers (of the law firm Woodman and Weld) and her employer, Richard (Dick) Hickock. Hickock is chairman of the board of Galaxy Media. Amanda's contract will soon expire and she wants to get the jump on Hickock. She tells Hickock that she is being courted by SI Newhouse, one of Hickock's publishing competitors. Not wanting Newhouse to get the upper hand, Hickock agrees to Amanda's exorbitant salary demands and the contracts are signed that day. Amanda invites Hickock and his wife Glynnis to dinner at her home that Friday evening. Helen and Barry, two of Amanda's three employees, are introduced in this chapter.

In Chapter 3, Dick Hickock's chauffeur takes him to Central Park. Hickock tells his chauffeur that he is going for a walk. Instead, Hickock goes to the apartment of a young woman who lives not far from Central Park. Once inside, Hickock encounters a young man in the elevator seems to have just come back from grocery shopping. Hickock does not realize that the young man follows him to the apartment. While Hickock and the young woman are in bed, the young man picks the lock, breaks into the apartment, and bugs the phones.

In Chapter 4, Martha McMahon, Amanda Dart's secretary, arranges for Paul Brennan (the chauffeur) to pick up Amanda's new Mercedes S600. Shortly after lunch, Amanda receives a mysterious fax. The fax heading reads "DIRT" and includes a photograph of Amanda engaged in a sex act with Henry Bell. The text accompanying the embarrassing photo reveals the details of Amanda's tryst with her longtime secret lover.



Phones begin to ring off the hook. Amanda is not the only one who receives the lurid fax and everyone is calling to find out what is going on.

In Chapter 5, Amanda makes an appearance at a book signing party for her friend Norm Barton later that evening. She blithely fields questions from other party-goers, maintaining that she was in St. Bart's that weekend and that the DIRT fax is some sort of hoax. She leaves before dinner is served and runs into her lawyer Bill Eggers. They dine together at Elaine's, a famous New York City eatery.

In Chapter 6, Amanda informs Eggers that she wants to hire a private investigator to get to the bottom of the DIRT fax. Bill Eggers recommends that Amanda hire Stone Barrington, a retired policeman and attorney of counsel for Woodman and Weld. Amanda agrees to meet with Barrington.

Chapters 1-6 Analysis

The first six chapters of Stuart Woods' novel provide the groundwork for an unfolding mystery. Amanda Dart, one of the novel's primary protagonists, is established as a woman of a certain age who has worked hard to secure a position at the pinnacle of New York's gossip world. Amanda is known in certain high-priced circles as a woman with a large sexual appetite who engages in numerous clandestine affairs. However, Amanda Dart is an expert at protecting her own privacy.

Amanda's boss, Richard A. (Dick) Hickock is also introduced. Hickock is the Chairman of Galaxy Media. Like Amanda, Hickock also has something to hide. Hickock does not realize that Amanda manipulates him into renewing her very lucrative contract. When she receives the first issue of DIRT, Amanda realizes that she is as vulnerable as the people whose secrets she is paid to expose.

The young man who enters the apartment where Hickock meets an unidentified woman figures prominently in the next chapters. Also, this episode foreshadows Dick Hickock's impending humiliation. The introduction of Amanda's staff alerts the reader to the possibility that one of them (Martha, Helen, or Barry) might be leaking information to the author of the DIRT fax. Amanda's meeting with Bill Eggers at Elaine's is the first mention of a well-known New York City location. The author, like Amanda Dart, drops names in order to impress upon the reader the exclusivity of the upper classes.



Chapters 7-12

Chapters 7-12 Summary

In Chapter 7, the anonymous young man Dick Hickock encountered in the elevator breaks into another upscale apartment. As before, he picks the lock. Once inside the apartment, the man opens the safe with the use of a palm-pad computer. It is obvious that the man has been in this apartment before as he knows the layout by heart. Using a stopwatch to time himself, the young man disconnects the phone line, and then proceeds to steal \$35,000 in cash and a small caliber, nickel-plated handgun with a silencer. He escapes just in time, leaving the building by the stairs. On his way out, he collides with a garbage collector, runs into Central Park and disappears.

In Chapter 8, Amanda Dart goes to Stone Barrington's residence in the high-priced Turtle Bay neighborhood. Barrington is the son of renowned painter (and Communist) Matilda Stone. Stone's great aunt left him the house in her will. Helene, Barrington's Greek housekeeper, serves them some of her famous pound cake. Amanda tells Stone the truth about her affair with Henry Bell. Stone Barrington agrees to work for Amanda Dart to discover who is behind DIRT.

Stone Barrington asks Amanda Dart some rather personal questions in Chapter 9. While they drink Veuve Clicquot champagne, the two discover a mutual attraction. Amanda tells Stone that she is sure her none of her employees would leak information. Her chauffeur Paul Brennan has worked for Amanda for nine years. Martha McMahon, Amanda's secretary and confidante, has been with her for fifteen years. Amanda pays Paul Brennan, Martha McMahon, Helen Charlson and Barry White very well for their silence, and they are all intensely loyal to her. Amanda Dart then invites Stone to dinner on Friday evening.

In Chapter 10, Stone Barrington meets his former police partner, Lieutenant Dino Bacchetti, for dinner at Elaine's at 8:30PM. The two men meet at the restaurant once a week. Barrington and Bacchetti worked together at the Nineteenth Precinct in New York City. Dino is married to the former Mary Ann Bianchi, daughter of Mafia enforcer Enrico Bianchi. While waiting for his ex-partner to arrive, Elaine (owner of the restaurant) tells Stone that she does not particularly like Amanda Dart. Another issue of DIRT comes over the fax while Stone and Dino eat dinner. DIRT's author already knows that Stone Barrington is working for Amanda Dart.

In Chapter 11, the reader is introduced to Allan Peebles, editor-in-chief of the tabloid newspaper The American Infiltrator. Peebles lives in Beverly Hills, California. Peebles calls an escort service that uses the name Jiffy Pizza as a front. A young male escort arrives at Peebles' residence and they go outside to the swimming pool. Peebles is unaware that the escort leaves the front door slightly ajar. In a situation similar to Amanda Dart's, someone breaks into the house. Peebles and the young man are



videotaped naked on the diving board in what could only be described as a compromising position.

Stone Barrington visits Amanda's office in Chapter 12. He meets Martha McMahon, Amanda's secretary. Given that Stone read the second issue of DIRT at 8:30 the previous evening, he is almost certain that someone got the information from Amanda's engagement diary. Stone tells Amanda that he will be looking into her employees' personal lives. While Stone Barrington is at Amanda Dart's office, the third issue of DIRT arrives on the fax machine. This issue features Allan Peebles and the escort.

Chapters 7-12 Analysis

The narrative trajectory continues in an upward direction with the introduction of Stone Barrington, the novel's main protagonist. Barrington is presented to the reader as somewhat mysterious. Amanda's confidence in the discretion of her employees creates narrative tension. If no one in her office is leaking information, the circle of possible candidates must necessarily widen. Also, given Amanda's history with men, it is unsurprising that there is sexual tension between her and Barrington. However, since little is known about Stone Barrington at this point, the result of their attraction adds to the undertone of suspense. The introduction of Lieutenant Bacchetti fleshes out the Barrington character, establishing Stone as someone with a variety "resource people" and loyal friends — he and Bacchetti remain close even though Barrington is no longer associated with the NYPD. In terms of Dino Bacchetti, his character is made more complex by the fact of his marriage to Enrico Bianchi's daughter. This casts the specter of suspicion on Bacchetti. At this point, it is uncertain whether or not he is a police officer who plays by the rules.

The fact that the author includes Elaine (owner of the world-famous restaurant) as a speaking character in his fictional account begs the question of whether Stuart Wood is acquainted with Elaine in real life. Also, this serves to add a touch of sensationalism to the story. The plot continues to deepen when DIRT releases the information that Barrington is working for Amanda Dart. Again, some measure of narrative tension is achieved and Stone Barrington's hunch about the leak coming from Amanda's staff provides foreshadowing which pays off much later.

Allan Peebles' appearance in DIRT broadens the geographical scope of the narrative as the West Coast is now involved. Peebles lives in Beverly Hills. This disrupts Barrington's theory that one of Amanda's people is leaking information. Also, since the most recent issue of DIRT highlights Peebles' indiscretion, it is clear that Amanda Dart's personal life is just one sordid story among a host of sordid stories.



Chapter 13-18

Chapter 13-18 Summary

In Chapter 13, Arnie Millman visits Stone. Like Stone Barrington, Arnie is a retired NYPD officer. Arnie occasionally does freelance surveillance work for Stone. A short time later, Stone meets Sara, the woman with whom he is currently involved. Sara is a judge. Much to Stone's surprise, Sara tells him that she is ending their relationship.

In Chapter 14, it is revealed that Amanda's real name is Ida Louise Erenheim. Born in Delano, Georgia to blue collar parents, Ida Louise seems to have been born extremely ambitious, sexually voracious and very interested in money. Shortly before leaving for Barnard College in New York City, Ida Louise Erenheim is gang-raped and severely beaten in the boys' locker room. Undeterred, she begins classes at Barnard, and changes her name to Amanda Delano. She marries Robert Dart (who was already married when they met), and is given her own newspaper column. Her miserable marriage to Robert Dart ends when he dies suddenly, leaving her a widow of means.

In Chapter 15, Stone and Amanda have drinks at her apartment before the dinner party. In attendance that evening are Bill Eggers and his wife Susan; Dick and Glynnis Hickock and Vance Calder. Calder is a film star of ambiguous sexual orientation who is accompanied by a beautiful young woman named Arrington Carter. Even though Stone and Amanda have already made plans to go for a drive in the country the next day, Stone realizes he is smitten with the lovely Arrington.

In Chapter 16, Stone Barrington drives Amanda to her Connecticut country house in the new Mercedes S600. They dine on lobster salad and champagne after which they make love. Barrington and Amanda Dart agree to enter into a purely sexual relationship. As always, Amanda insists on absolute secrecy. No one is to know of their involvement, not even Martha McMahon.

In Chapter 17, Stone returns home from his rendezvous with Amanda and another issue of DIRT arrives. The fax reveals that Dick Hickock has a nineteen year-old mistress and Amanda Dart's real name. DIRT cautions Stone not to get involved with Amanda Dart as she has a reputation for sleeping around and hints that Vance Calder is bisexual. Arrington leaves Stone a telephone message. Dick Hickock also hires Stone Barrington to find out as much as possible about DIRT. Stone traces the DIRT fax number to a mailbox and photocopy shop but the lead proves useless.

In Chapter 18, Stone and Arrington Carter meet for brunch. Arrington gives Stone the short version of her life. She was born and raised in Virginia and moved to New York to study acting in hopes of someday having a career as a performer. Arrington was unimpressed with the sleazy side of show business and she wrote a piece about her experiences. It just so happens that Stone Barrington read the piece and liked it. Stone and Arrington agree to meet again.



Chapter 13-18 Analysis

Arnie Millman's arrival on the narrative scene reinforces Stone Barrington's ability to maintain relationships with the NYPD.

When Sara ends her relationship with Stone, it allows the reader to see something of who Barrington is in relationship. Sara wants a future, but Stone is not interested in marriage. Temporarily, at any rate, Stone becomes a suitable male counterpart for Amanda Dart.

The brief biography of Amanda Dart in Chapter 14 gives some insight into the nature of Amanda's character. Her humble, working-class background is incongruous with who she has become. Amanda Dart is represented as a woman who is not above using her body to get what she wants. There is something base about this knowledge. It becomes apparent that Amanda Dart has a great many secrets. She is a sham, a caricature, a construct-self. Moreover, the fact of Amanda's rape as a teenager contributes to the reader's understanding of Amanda Dart as a woman of little or no emotional depth. Her ambition is her most powerful motivator.

Amanda Dart allows Stone Barrington to drive her new Mercedes S600. In one way, this is a metaphor for the sex which is to follow. In another way, it reinforces Amanda's tendency to relegate everyone around her to servant status. The sexual episode which takes place at Amanda's house in Connecticut further reinforces that Amanda controls people with sex. Also, being exposed in the first issue of DIRT does not deter Amanda from forming yet another secret sexual bond. And even though Stone Barrington has sex with Amanda Dart, his attraction to Arrington Carter hints that Barrington may not be so shallow after all.

The next installment of DIRT arrives, providing pay off for Hickock's actions in the opening chapters. Also, this happening directly links the anonymous young man to the DIRT faxes. The information on Vance Calder proves to be a red herring, as he is not featured in the narrative after this.

Stone Barrington's discovery of the mailbox and photocopy shop is a false lead which nonetheless serves to heighten the suspense. Whoever is behind DIRT has a far reach and is as masterful at keeping secrets as Amanda Dart.

Stone's brunch with Arrington establishes a basis for a possible relationship. Arrington is obviously intelligent and interesting. Stone's brunch with Arrington Carter stands in direct contrast to his purely physical encounter with Amanda.



Chapters 19-24

Chapters 19-24 Summary

In Chapter 19, Arnie Millman investigates Helen Charlson and Barry White (Amanda Dart's employees). Charlson is seeing a man who is in the advertising business. Barry White, while somewhat promiscuous and fond of a bar called The Leather Room, does not discuss his work or Amanda Dart with any of his myriad one-night stands. Millman's information proves that neither of them are leaking information to DIRT. Dick Hickock contacts Stone Barrington again and tells Stone the truth about his nineteen year-old mistress. Stone pays the young girl a visit. Much to his surprise, Tiffany Potts (who prefers to be called "Tiff") is very mature for her age. Tiff is studying to be an actress. She is a bright, pleasant individual who comes from a small, unidentified town and no one knows about her affair with Hickock. Stone tells Tiff to call him immediately if she thinks she is being followed.

In Chapter 20, Arnie Millman follows Martha McMahon after she leaves Amanda Dart's home/office. Martha does some shopping after which Arnie sees her go into an apartment building. Martha is visiting someone and Arnie tries to find out just who it is. Millman identifies the apartment and checks the mailbox for a name. The apartment's resident is named Dryer. Arnie sneaks around the back of the building to get a better look at Dryer's apartment. He places an excelsior box on top of a trash can in order to get a glimpse of Dryer and Martha. Suddenly, Arnie Millman falls off the trash can.

In Chapter 21, Dino Bacchetti and Stone Barrington keep their standing dinner engagement at Elaine's. Dino tells Stone that Arnie Millman was murdered at six o'clock that evening. Barrington reveals to his friend that Arnie Millman had been working for him, conducting background surveillance on two of Amanda Dart's employees. Stone then tells Dino that Arnie was unable to come up with anything substantial. Stone learns that Arnie was killed with a small caliber handgun.

Stone Barrington leaves Elaine's after dinner with Dino in Chapter 22 and decides to take a walk. He stops at the building where Arnie Millman was murdered and tries to find something the police may have overlooked. Behind the apartment building, Stone discovers the excelsior box. Like Arnie Millman, he is able to identify the apartment as the place occupied by someone named Dryer. Stone goes to Dryer's door, but the young man refuses to answer any questions. Stone returns home to find a slightly intoxicated Arrington Carter sitting on his front stoop. Arrington spends the night at Stone's house.

In Chapter 23, Stone Barrington and Arrington Carter agree to meet for dinner at her apartment later that evening. Stone and Dino Bacchetti attend Arnie Millman's funeral. Amanda Dart attends the funeral as well. She tells Stone that Arnie was one of her regular sources for gossip. Lieutenant Bacchetti is shocked to find out that Millman would work for Amanda Dart.



In Chapter 24, Stone and Arrington enjoy a pleasant dinner and conversation at Arrington's apartment. Arrington apologizes for showing up drunk on Stone's doorstep. She explains that when she went to her now ex-boyfriend Jonathan's apartment to break up with him, there was another woman there. According to Arrington, Jonathan is incredibly handsome and usually broke. Moments later, Jonathan phones from the lobby of Arrington's apartment building and insists upon seeing her. Arrington refuses. She tells Stone Barrington that she is afraid of Jonathan and asks Stone if she can stay the night at his house. Stone and Arrington take the back way out of the apartment building. On the cab ride back to Turtle Bay, Stone has a feeling they were spotted leaving Arrington's building.

Chapters 19-24 Analysis

Arnie Millman's investigation of Helen Charlson and Barry White leaves the door open for other possible information-leak suspects. Tiff Potts is introduced into the narrative. Potts is not what Stone Barrington would expect a 19 year-old mistress to be. Conversely, Hickock's decision to hire Barrington paints the older man as a slightly unsympathetic character. Hickock is well into middle-age, and the fact that he would keep a young girl as a mistress functions to cast him in a less-than favorable light. Hickock's appearance in DIRT seems to be well-deserved.

Interestingly, Martha McMahon re-enters the narrative indirectly with Arnie Millman's death. Millman's murder signifies that progress is being made in the search for the author(s) of DIRT. The narrative puzzle breaks into even smaller pieces. DIRT and the information leak is one narrative thread and Arnie Millman's death is another. Thus far, however, no connection between the two has been established. However, Martha McMahon becomes more integral to the story. McMahon is the bridge between the two happenings.

Arnie Millman is Stone Barrington's way into the mystery of what Martha McMahon is doing in Dryer's apartment. Also, no one knows who Dryer is or whether Dryer is a man or a woman until Barrington goes to the door. Now, Dryer has a face and the narrative trajectory continues upward. When Stone finds out from Amanda that Arnie Millman was one of her gossip resources, Arnie becomes a part of the DIRT mystery. Dino's surprise upon learning that Arnie once worked for Amanda Dart re-introduces the fact that everyone has something to hide. If Dino did not know about Arnie working for Amanda, there are certainly many other things he does not know.

Chapter 24 serves as a turning point with the introduction of Arrington's ex-boyfriend, Jonathan. The narrative broadens because of Arrington's fear that Jonathan might do something violent. Jonathan's last name is not mentioned, which is immediately suspicious. Also, this episode works to bring Stone and Arrington Carter closer together. Arrington's safety is threatened and Stone is put in the position of protector. In this way, Stone Barrington becomes responsible for protecting two very different women, both of whom have feelings for him.



Chapters 25-30

Chapters 25-30 Summary

In Chapter 25 Stone meets with Bill Eggers and Glynnis Hickock, Dick Hickock's wife. Glynnis is contemplating divorce and she wants Stone to thoroughly investigate her husband. Stone privately tells Eggers that he cannot help Glynnis Hickock because he is already employed by Mr. Hickcock to get to the bottom of the DIRT matter.

In Chapter 26, Tiff Potts telephones Stone Barrington and says she is being followed. At the Oak Bar in the Plaza Hotel, Tiff shows Stone an advertisement for Spirit cologne in Vanity Fair magazine. Tiff tells Barrington that the man who followed her looks exactly like the model in the ad. However, Tiff is certain they are not the same person. Stone advises Tiff Potts not to see Hickock until Stone can find out who is following Tiff and why. Tiff phones Hickock and has Stone tell him the same thing. Much to his dismay, Hickock finds out from Stone that Glynnis is planning to divorce him. Stone plans to have Tiff's apartment swept for electronic listening devices.

In Chapter 27, Stone asks his friend Dino Bacchetti to recommend someone to find out if Tiff Potts' apartment is bugged. Stone also wants to know if his own home is bugged. Dino tells Stone that his wife Mary Ann wants to move to Manhattan. Bacchetti's father-in-law, who is in the Mafia, has offered to help. Stone warns Bacchetti to be careful and to make sure that Mary Ann's father does things legitimately.

Arrington informs Stone that she has had a piece published in the latest issue of Vanity Fair. Flipping through the magazine, Stone comes to the ad for Spirit cologne that Tiff Potts showed him earlier at the Oak Bar. Stone asks Arrington if she recognizes the man in the cologne ad. Arrington Carter identifies the model as her ex-boyfriend, Jonathan.

In Chapter 28, Bob Cantor phones Stone Barrington and tells him that he will check Stone's house for listening devices. As it happens, Stone's house — including the telephone and fax lines — is bugged. Stone then instructs Cantor to sweep Amanda Dart's place and Tiff Potts' apartment for bugs as well. Stone tells Cantor to disable the devices in Amanda's home and office, but to leave the bugs in Tiff Potts' apartment intact.

In Chapter 29, Amanda instructs Bob Cantor to completely remove all the listening devices from her home and office. Stone Barrington disagrees with Amanda's decision. Barrington insists that he be allowed to investigate Paul Brennan, Martha McMahon and Gloria, Amanda's live-in maid. Asked why he never called her after their rendezvous in Connecticut, Stone tells Amanda that he is seeing someone else. Stone instructs Bob Cantor to bug Martha McMahon's apartment. Cantor tells Stone that he may know who is planted the bugs Cantor found in everyone's homes. Stone starts carrying a gun.



In Chapter 30, Stone Barrington follows Martha McMahon when she leaves work for the day. She window shops for awhile before going into an expensive cosmetics store for a makeover. This leads Stone to believe that McMahon is involved with a man. After Martha returns to her apartment, Barrington notices Bob Cantor sitting in a telephone company van. The two men listen in on Martha's telephone conversation with a man who tells Martha that he will not be able to keep their date that evening. When Martha suggests getting together the next evening, the man does not give her a definite answer.

Later, Stone returns to his home. After making a date with Arrington for the following night, he sets the alarm and leaves the house via the front door. Moments later Stone re-enters the house through the back. Staging a stakeout in his own home, Stone Barrington waits to see if anyone will show up. To his surprise, he hears a noise coming from downstairs.

Chapters 25-30 Analysis

Glynnis Hickock appears again in Chapter 25. Her desire to hire Stone Barrington complicates the narrative only momentarily and solidifies Stone's position in terms of the DIRT investigation.

Chapter 26, in which Tiff Potts and Stone meet at the Oak Bar is pivotal in terms of the overall narrative. Stone now has a face with which to (possibly) match a name. Stone leaks the information of Glynnis' plans to divorce him to Dick Hickock, which, although it surprises him, does not deter Hickock from wanting to spend time with Tiffany Potts. Hickock's refusal to amend his behavior foreshadows the deterioration of his personal life and possibly his business life as well.

Arrington's admission that the model in the Vanity Fair cologne ad is her former boyfriend, Jonathan, closes one part of the narrative loop. At this point, though, Stone Barrington does not realize that Martha McMahon was definitely in Dryer's apartment on the evening of Arnie Millman's death, bringing into clearer focus the possibility that Martha may be responsible for the leak to DIRT. However, Amanda Dart remains skeptical about Martha's involvement.

The storyline concerning Dino and Mary Ann Bacchetti's potential move to Manhattan serves as comic relief throughout the narrative. The irony that Bacchetti is married to the daughter of a mob boss provides a temporary departure from the novel's building tension. In this way, the author guarantees that the tension will continue to mount steadily. Also, the Dino-Mary Ann subplot plays a vital role in the chapters to come.

The fact that so many of the characters' homes have been bugged contributes to the mystery of who is behind the DIRT faxes. At the same time, the bugging phenomenon proves that DIRT may not be the only source of trouble for the characters.



Chapters 31-36

Chapters 31-36 Summary

Stone ventures downstairs in Chapter 31 to find out if someone is in the house with him. He notices that the switch boxes for the phone and alarm system are both open. An intruder knocks Stone Barrington out cold and steals his Rolex watch. Arrington telephones, but Stone is unable to reach the phone in time. When he comes to, Stone calls Arrington back and tells her to call 911. Police and paramedics take Stone to the hospital, where he is met by Lieutenant Bacchetti and Arrington.

In Chapter 32, Amanda Dart discovers a rather angry pimple on her face. She is terribly stressed and anxious about DIRT and having her home and office bugged. She calls Stone in the hospital to find out what happened to him. Stone tells Amanda that he was attacked by an intruder who was in the process of re-bugging his house. He also tells her that the incident was probably not a planned burglary, even though his Rolex and all the cash from his wallet were taken. Later that same day, Amanda tells Dick Hickock what has happened to Stone Barrington. Amanda reluctantly agrees to meet Allan Peebles of the American Infiltrator.

In Chapter 33, Dino Bacchetti gives Stone Barrington a ride home from the hospital. Arrington informs Stone that on the night he was attacked, someone broke into her apartment. This information angers Stone, who says he is going to have a talk with Arrington's ex-boyfriend, Jonathan. Arrington tells Stone that Jonathan's last name is Dryer. The name Dryer sounds familiar to Stone for some reason, but he cannot remember why.

In Chapter 34, Allan Peebles tells Amanda Dart that Dick Hickock owns a considerable percentage of American Infiltrator stock. Peebles continues, telling Amanda that Hickock's corporate entity, Window Seat Limited, is an offshore corporation that owns three gay pornography magazines. Peebles then goes on to say that Geoffrey Power, an aspiring actor and Peebles' former lover, might be the person behind DIRT. Their relationship ended badly and Power (who may have worked for a government agency at some point) has a grudge against Peebles. Geoffrey Power also has a violent temper. Peebles gives Amanda Geoffrey Power's description and asks her to pass it on to Stone.

Bob Cantor visits Stone Barrington at home in Chapter 35 and reports that there is nothing in either Paul Brennan's or Gloria's background to suggest that one of them would be leaking information. Both men agree that Martha McMahan is the weak link in Amanda Dart's office. Stone then asks Bob Cantor to pay a visit to Jonathan Dryer. Stone tells Cantor that Arnie Millman was murdered behind Dryer's apartment building.

In Chapter 36, Amanda tells Stone Barrington about Allan Peebles' former lover, Geoffrey Power. Stone thinks that the description of Power sounds amazingly similar to



Tiff Potts' description of the person following her. Stone calls Dino Bacchetti, who runs the name Geoffrey Power through the police department's databases. Dino tells Stone that Geoffrey Power probably does not exist. Stone then contacts Amanda, instructing her to show Allan Peebles the cologne ad in Vanity Fair. Like Tiff Potts, Peebles admits that the model in Vanity Fair does bear an unmistakable resemblance to Geoffrey Power but that they are not the same person.

Chapters 31-36 Analysis

A minor narrative climax is reached with Stone Barrington's assault. This signals the reader that Barrington is on the right track. However, it is unclear whether his attack is directly related to the DIRT faxes. Even though Stone is robbed, he is nonetheless certain that this was not his attacker's primary motive.

Allan Peebles enters the narrative more fully when he visits with Amanda and tells her about Window Seat, Limited. Peebles' revelation sends the narrative in a different direction and represents a raising of the stakes for Dick Hickock. In this instance, it is Peebles who leaks information to Amanda Dart. Peebles is unaware, however, that he has given Amanda valuable ammunition to use against Hickock at a later date. In addition, Peebles' wish to resolve the DIRT issue proves to be his ultimate undoing. Peebles trusts Amanda Dart when he ought to know better. They are both gossip journalists and as such, not to be trusted. Peebles allows himself to be vulnerable without remembering that gossip is a valuable commodity.

Learning that Jonathan's last name is Dryer does not yet prove valuable to Stone Barrington, even though the reader realizes what it signifies. In this way, the progression of the action slows somewhat. However, Stone is now absolutely certain that Martha is the source of Amanda Dart's information leak. Once Amanda tells Stone about Allan Peebles' ex-lover, Geoffrey Power, things begin to fall into place. The narrative takes an odd turn when Peebles, like Tiffany Potts, agrees that the man he knew as Geoffrey Power bears a striking resemblance to the Vanity Fair ad.

It now becomes Stone Barrington's responsibility to connect Jonathan Dryer, Window Seat, Limited, Allan Peebles, Dick Hickock and Martha McMahon with DIRT.



Chapters 37-42

Chapters 37-42 Summary

Bob Cantor walks into Jonathan Dryer's Manhattan apartment in Chapter 37 only to be told that Dryer has disappeared. The landlord, Jim O'Brian, tells Cantor that Dryer left owing four months' rent. According to O'Brian, Dryer (who claimed to be a filmmaker) frequently had female visitors but that the women usually only stayed one night. After O'Brian gives Cantor Dryer's phone records, Bob Cantor rents the apartment from Jim O'Brian. Cantor then retrieves Dryer's garbage, which has not been picked up yet.

In Chapter 38, Cantor takes the garbage and phone records to Stone Barrington's house. They notice that Dryer only called number: the Santa Fe Residential Apartments in West Hollywood, California. Posing as Bob Cantor, Stone Barrington calls the Santa Fe and is told that the only person to move out in the past two weeks is a Mr. G. Gable. Oddly, the description that Stone receives makes him believe that G. Gable and Geoffrey Power may be the same man. Looking through Dryer's garbage, Stone and Cantor discover that the young man had very expensive taste.

Per Stone's request, Dino Bacchetti confirms that there were eight burglaries in the Nineteenth Precinct in which only cash and/or men's watches were stolen. Dino says he will have the burglary victims look at the Vanity Fair ad to find out if anyone recognizes Jonathan Dryer. Also, Stone asks Cantor to contact the manufacturer of Spirit cologne to find out who hired Jonathan Dryer.

In Chapter 39, Stone learns from Arrington Carter that Jonathan Dryer has a fondness for expensive watches, elaborate meals and fine wine. Dryer also told Arrington that he had lived in Washington, D.C. for several years earning a living "selling some sort of equipment to the government" (175). Arrington tells Stone that she always had the feeling that Jonathan Dryer was a man with something to hide. Bob Cantor then tells Stone that a young woman from Spirit cologne met Jonathan Dryer at a party and recommended him for the Vanity Fair ad. He also informs Stone that Martha McMahon has not heard from Dryer.

In Chapter 40, Stone Barrington and Bob Cantor meet Detective Ernie Martinez at the Nineteenth Precinct. Martinez is the lead detective investigating the cash-only burglaries. According to Martinez, three of the eight burglary victims recognized Jonathan Dryer from parties he had attended as Arrington Carter's date. Stone suggests that Dino talk to any of the burglary victims who may be missing a small caliber handgun.

Detective Kevin Gleason interviewed Jonathan Dryer the night Arnie Millman was murdered. Gleason tells Stone, Cantor and Bacchetti that it is likely Dryer was not alone. Detective Gleason recalls seeing a woman's brown tweed coat and a yellow scarf



draped over a chair. Cantor tells Stone that he saw Martha McMahon on the street wearing a brown tweed coat and yellow scarf.

Amanda Dart sends Stone a new Rolex watch in Chapter 41 to replace the one that was stolen. Stone informs Amanda that he wants to question Martha McMahon about her involvement with Jonathan Dryer. He tells her that Jonathan Dryer and Geoffrey Power (Peebles' ex-lover) may be working on DIRT together. Amanda is still incredulous and tells Stone that she will talk to Martha herself.

Dino Bacchetti meets with a lawyer by the name of Mr. Elliot. Elliot's .25-caliber nickel-plated Beretta was taken during one of the burglaries. Since the gun was unregistered and since Elliot purchased it on the street, he feels somewhat reluctant to discuss it. Bacchetti informs Elliot that the gun may have been used in Arnie Millman's killing. Dino is suspicious of Elliot and wonders why Elliot would have \$35,000 in cash locked away in a home safe. Dino then learns that the handgun was equipped with a silencer.

In Chapter 42, Amanda Dart and her loyal secretary Martha McMahon enjoy a picnic at Sheep Rock, not far from Amanda's country home in Connecticut. Amanda asks Martha about Jonathan Dryer. At first, Martha denies knowing Dryer but Amanda presses the point. Martha then admits to being in love with Dryer, saying that she gave him information on Amanda because Martha wanted to please Dryer. Dryer told Martha that he had learned about Allan Peebles' sexual habits from friends in Los Angeles. Amanda, resentful of all the humiliation Martha caused her, lures Martha McMahon to the edge of a 90-foot bluff and throws her secretary into the Shepaug River.

Chapters 37-42 Analysis

With the disappearance of the mysterious Jonathan Dryer, it would seem that part of the tangled DIRT investigation has reached a dead end. However, it proves fortuitous for Bob Cantor, who secures the empty apartment for himself. The phone records prove to be valuable, however, in extending the search for the people behind DIRT. Stone's discovery of the existence of Mr. G. Gable (formerly of the Santa Fe Residential Hotel in West Hollywood) introduces more questions than it answers. Neither Stone nor Cantor can be certain of the connection between Dryer, Power, and Gable. Although several of the burglary victims recognize Dryer, Stone is still no closer to finding him. Jonathan Dryer's personality, though, begins to take shape when Stone learns of his penchant for expensive watches. Also, the revelation that Dryer admitted to a connection to the U.S. government would explain Dryer's outstanding breaking and entering skills.

Ernie Martinez's efforts bring Jonathan Dryer into sharper focus as the burglar they have all been looking for. Arrington Carter, it turns out, was a victim of Dryer's charm and powers of manipulation. Martha McMahon was his second victim, in a manner of speaking. Gleason's interview of Jonathan Dryer in and of itself proves to be of no use. But Cantor's sighting of Martha wearing a tweed coat and yellow scarf place her in Dryer's apartment on the night of Arnie Millman's killing.



Certain that Martha McMahan is the person who leaked information to Jonathan Dryer and, by extension, to those behind the DIRT smear campaign, Barrington finally informs Amanda Dart that he wants to question Martha. Unfortunately, Amanda Dart decides to question the secretary herself.

Mr. Elliot, the lawyer who purchased the silenced Beretta, turns out to be nothing more than a tangent to the narrative. Bacchetti never follows up on the possibility that Elliot is involved in something serious and illegal. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Elliot's handgun was the weapon that Dryer used to end Arnie Millman's life.

Given her betrayal of Amanda Dart, it is not surprising that Martha McMahan meets an untimely end at her employer's hands. Amanda is more treacherous than Martha McMahan ever realized. It is worth mentioning here that Amanda's murdering Martha constitutes a major plot twist. It also sets in motion the possibility that Amanda Dart will somehow have to pay for her crime.



Chapters 43-48

Chapters 43-48 Summary

Amanda calls Stone Barrington in Chapter 43 to tell him that Martha McMahon is dead. Arrington and Stone drive to Amanda's country home. In the meantime, Amanda tells the police that Martha's death was an accident and probably alcohol-related. Amanda informs Stone that she will pay Martha's funeral expenses. Stone suggests that Amanda not say or do anything that would "imply a sense of guilt or liability" (197). On the way back to New York City, Arrington expresses to Stone that she thinks Amanda is lying about Martha's death.

In Chapter 44, Lieutenant Dino Bacchetti and his wife Mary Ann meet Mr. Charles Greenleaf Whitfield and his wife Eleanor. Whitfield is the head of the co-op association of the apartment the Bacchettis are trying to purchase. The Whitfields are wealthy, Caucasian and extremely upper-crust. Dino and Mary Ann Bacchetti, on the other hand, are from blue-collar Italian immigrant families. Whitfield asks the Bacchettis questions about their ancestral background. Dino stretches the truth about what his father did for a living and Mary Ann, unable to resist, intimates that she comes from a family with connections to the Mafia.

In chapter 45, Stone, Arrington and the Bacchettis enjoy a home-cooked meal at Stone's house. During dinner, Arrington sees Jonathan Dryer on television. Dryer is attending a gala benefit at the Shubert Theater. Stone and Arrington ask Dino to have Dryer brought in for questioning. Dino refuses, saying he does not have enough evidence against Dryer to justify having him brought in. Stone then suggests that the four of them go to the Shubert, find Dryer, and follow him home from the gala.

In Chapter 46 Stone and Arrington, along with Dino and Mary Ann, take a taxi to the Shubert Theater in search of Jonathan Dryer. Dino spots Dryer climbing into a limousine. They follow Dryer's limo until Dino sees him get out and head for the subway. Stone follows Dryer on foot. Remembering that he has no subway tokens, Stone leaps over the turnstile, only to be stopped by a policeman. Stone tells the police officer that he is pursuing a suspect and manages to make it to the subway, but not without tearing his new raincoat. In the nick of time, Stone tumbles into the subway car only to look out the window and see Jonathan Dryer standing on the platform, smiling at him.

In Chapter 47, Amanda gets an update from Stone Barrington. Stone tells Amanda everything he has learned so far about Jonathan Dryer, Geoffrey Power, and the burglaries. Amanda meets Dick Hickock later that afternoon. Over lunch at '21' she reveals that DIRT may be someone's way of getting back at Hickock because of his involvement in Window Seat Limited. Amanda tells Hickock that she learned about Window Seat Limited from Allan Peebles. She then warns Hickock that if Stone Barrington gets to the bottom of the DIRT matter, Window Seat will definitely be brought out into the light. She suggests relieving Stone Barrington of his investigative duties and



finding some more covert (and possibly less legal) method of neutralizing Dryer and Power.

Enrico Bianchi (Mary Ann Bacchetti's father) meets his old school chum, Dick Hickock, in Chapter 48. The two men, who were classmates at Yale, are in an abandoned factory somewhere in Long Island City, Queens. Hickock tells Bianchi everything Stone Barrington has managed to uncover about Dryer and Power. He pays Bianchi \$50,000 to handle the situation quickly and discreetly. Hickock then gives Enrico Bianchi a copy of Vanity Fair with Jonathan Dryer's picture in it. Bianchi then distributes Dryer's picture to all of his associates and offers \$2,000 to find him and Power. After they are found, Bianchi offers \$5,000 for each man's death.

Amanda Dart informs Stone that she wants him to stop investigating the DIRT taxes. Stone is suspicious and tells Arrington that Amanda may be finished with Jonathan Dryer but he, Stone Barrington, still has a score to settle.

Chapters 43-48 Analysis

Now that Amanda Dart has disposed of Martha McMahon, the information leak is no longer a major narrative issue. Amanda's attempt to seem innocent does not impress Arrington. This is a signal to the reader than at some point, Amanda will suffer the consequences of her actions. This foreshadows Amanda's own death in a later chapter.

More comic relief is inserted into the narrative when Dino and Mary Ann Bacchetti meet Mr. and Mrs. Whitfield. When they join Stone and Arrington for dinner, two things are set in motion. First of all, their dinner signifies that Stone and Arrington are an official couple. Secondly, having Dino and Stone together when Arrington recognizes Jonathan Dryer on television enables them to work together again as informal partners. In addition, it adds plausibility to what happens at the Shubert Theater. Had Stone gone in search of Dryer by himself, he never would have been able to locate Dryer in such a large crowd. Also, having Dino and Mary Ann along for the ride gives the impression of an adventurous double date. Since it really is Stone's investigation, it makes more sense (in terms of the overall narrative) that Stone should be the one to follow Dryer into the subway. The subway incident also proves that Jonathan Dryer is fully aware of Stone's existence and their pursuit-avoidance dynamic takes on a more sinister cat-and-mouse feel.

Amanda's lunch with Hickock at '21' cements her fate. By telling Hickock what Peebles shared with her about Window Seat, Limited, Amanda Dart becomes a liability. Rather than realizing that she has put herself in a vulnerable position by telling Hickock what she knows, Amanda sees this as an opportunity to extort Hickock professionally one day by forcing him to re-negotiate her contract for a substantially higher amount. Ultimately, it is Amanda who puts in motion the plan which leads to her own demise. Hickock involves Enrico Bianchi in the search for Jonathan Dryer without realizing the irrevocable nature of his request. Hickock is dealing with an old friend on the one hand.



On the other hand, Hickock soon finds out that he has struck a deal with someone much higher than himself on the food chain

Stone Barrington's decision to ignore Amanda Dart's request to call off the DIRT investigation proves to the reader that sometimes Barrington allows his personal feelings to seep into his professional dealings. Also, the matter of Arrington's honor is somewhat at stake. Now that she is his primary love object, Stone Barrington takes upon himself to return the favor by making Dryer pay for the pain he caused Arrington.



Chapters 49-54

Chapters 49-54 Summary

In Chapter 49, Stone visits the home of Samuel Bernard, one of his former professors at NYU. Through his contacts, Bernard is able to tell Stone that Jonathan Dryer is actually Thomas Bruce, the 34 year-old son of a deceased career naval officer. Bruce is trained in covert operations, holds an engineering degree and has a history of violence. Thomas Bruce's younger brother, Charles Bruce, is a convicted burglar, currently serving time in a California prison. Bruce's sister, Louise Burch, is a New Jersey housewife. Stone thanks Bernard for his help and sets out in search of Thomas Bruce's sister, Louise.

Chapter 50 opens with Stone Barrington driving to New Jersey in a blizzard. He is heading for Louise Burch's house in hopes of gathering more information on her two brothers. Stone notices that Louise ("Lou") Burch is very attractive and slightly drunk. She offers Stone a bourbon and after some minutes, the two have sex. Afterward, Stone snoops through the house for clues as to the brothers' whereabouts while Lou sleeps. He learns that Thomas ("Tommy") Bruce is staying at the Chelsea Hotel in New York City. Lou tells Stone that in a recent conversation her brother Tommy claimed he was "about to strike it rich" and that he "possessed very valuable knowledge" (232).

In Chapter 51, Stone contacts Dino Bacchetti and tells him what he learned from Professor Bernard. Bacchetti calls Stone later and tells him that Charlie Bruce has recently been paroled in California. Stone Barrington goes to the Chelsea Hotel in search of Tommy Bruce. He learns that Tommy Bruce is registered at the Chelsea Hotel as Jeremy Spencer. Posing as a FedEx delivery driver, Stone forces his way into Tommy Bruce's apartment. He is attacked by Tommy and his brother Charlie. Stone wakes up in an ambulance on his way to the hospital.

In Chapter 52, Tommy and Charlie Bruce check into the Mansfield Hotel and call their sister Lou Burch. Lou tells them about Stone Barrington's visit. The brothers then go to Figaro for Italian food. The new waiter at Figaro, Gaetano Calabrese, has a photograph of Tommy Bruce in his jacket pocket. Calabrese is also a numbers runner for the Mafia. Calabrese's mob boss is offering \$500 to anyone who spots Tommy and calls in the sighting. Telling the brothers that he is trying out his new camera, Gaetano Calabrese takes a picture of Charlie and Tommy. When Calabrese goes to the back of the restaurant to call his boss, the Bruce brothers leave Figaro. On the run again, Tommy tells Charlie that there is only one issue of DIRT left to deliver and that it will only be delivered to one person. He also tells Charlie that they will be staying at the apartment of a friend who is away.

In Chapter 53, Stone, lying in a hospital bed, tells Dino Bacchetti that he wants to file assault and battery charges against the Bruce brothers. Amanda Dart makes a brief appearance at the hospital and tries to convince Stone to give up on the DIRT



investigation but Stone flatly refuses. Amanda tells Dick Hickock that Stone is still on the case.

Stone is discharged from the hospital in Chapter 54 and he and Arrington Carter return to Stone's house. That same day, Enrico Bianchi learns of the Bruce brothers' appearance at Figaro and his informant tells him that now the police are searching for Tommy and Charlie as well. Arrington tells Stone that she has a meeting with her editor at The New Yorker magazine. She also needs to stop by her apartment to pick up a few more personal items.

Chapters 49-54 Analysis

Chapter 49 begins heralds the beginning of the end for Jonathan Dryer. It is obvious that Stone Barrington calls on Professor Bernard as a last resort. Bernard is as powerful man as Hickock, perhaps more so, given the purposeful ambiguity with which Bernard talks about his past and his influential contacts. In this instance, Bernard functions as Stone Barrington's fairy godfather, who lives quietly in the background until he is called upon to work a covert miracle. Armed with more information than he could have dreamed of acquiring on his own, Barrington encounters Lou Burch.

The episode at Lou Burch's house in New Jersey in Chapter 50 is troubling for different reasons. While the visit does yield valuable information concerning the Bruce brothers' whereabouts, the fact that Stone has sex with Lou is not obviously dealt with. It is safe to assert, however, that eventually the truth will out and that it is simply a matter of time before what is hidden is dragged into the light. The incident is hinted at, albeit very subtly, at the end of Chapter 60 when Arrington asserts that no one ever gets away with anything. Thus, Stone's liaison with Lou Burch is represented as being on par with Amanda's murdering Martha McMahan or any other dirty secret someone might want to keep to him or herself. Stone's encounter in New Jersey becomes another bit of gossip which, in the end, threatens something which has become important to him, namely his new relationship with Arrington.

The near-miss that happens at Figaro when Gaetano Calabrese fails to collect the \$500 levels off the tension in the narrative long enough for Tommy and Charlie to send out one final issue of DIRT. By this time, however, it is clear that they are running out of time. When Tommy tells Charlie that they will be using the apartment of a friend who is away, it goes without saying that the apartment Tommy is referring to is Arrington Carter. Arrington's announcement that she needs to return to her apartment after the New Yorker magazine signals the reader that things are about to come to a head.



Chapters 55-60

Chapters 55-60 Summary

Dick Hickock receives another DIRT fax in Chapter 55. The fax spells out in great detail Hickock's connection to Window Seat, Limited. In addition to gay pornography magazines, Window Seat is the parent corporation of an Internet company responsible for distributing child pornography. The DIRT fax has been sent to Hickock alone with instructions to contact the originator before close of business that day. If Hickock refuses to contact the author of the DIRT fax, the Window Seat information will be leaked to the media. Hickock dials the number given on the fax and speaks to Tommy Bruce (aka Jonathan Dryer). Dryer wants Hickock to pay him \$3,000,000 to keep his mouth shut about Window Seat. Dick Hickock is assured that if anything should happen to Tommy Bruce, the Window Seat information will immediately be sent to the media. Later, Hickock calls Enrico Bianchi and they arrange to meet at the abandoned factory in Queens.

Amanda Dart then phones Dick Hickock and hints at renegotiating her contract for more money.

Hickock then calls Allan Peebles' father-in-law in London to tell him that Peebles has been talking about Window Seat Limited. Peebles' father-in-law says he will handle the matter.

In Chapter 56, Arrington Carter returns to her apartment after her editorial meeting at The New Yorker. She is quickly overpowered by Tommy and Charlie Bruce.

Ernie Martinez arrives at Arrington's building and shows Jimmy the doorman a photograph of Tommy Bruce and his brother Charlie. Jimmy tells Martinez that Tommy frequently visited Arrington and that he might be in the apartment at that moment. Martinez then telephones an anonymous man and tells him where to find Tommy Bruce. Stone calls Arrington at home but there is no answer. He leaves a message.

At the factory, Hickock tells Enrico Bianchi to give up the search for the Bruces. Bianchi tells Dick Hickock that it is too late — the brothers may have already been found. Hickock then tells Bianchi that there is one more person to take care of. He wants someone else killed and he lets Bianchi know that the killing does not need to look like an accident.

In Chapter 57, Allan Peebles receives a letter from the Chairman of the Board of The American Infiltrator. Peebles has been terminated. He is quickly escorted out of the building. Peebles is then forcibly removed from his (company-owned) house in Beverly Hills by security guards and the (company-leased) Bentley he had been driving is taken away. In a matter of minutes, Allan Peebles is left standing on the sidewalk with his suitcases; unemployed, without transportation and homeless.



Enrico Bianchi's associates enter Arrington Carter's apartment building in Chapter 58. They find the passkey and, after roughing up Jimmy the doorman, the two men enter the apartment just as Charlie Bruce is about to assault Arrington. Tommy and Charlie are both killed execution style. Before Bianchi's men have a chance to leave the apartment, however, Stone Barrington arrives. Barrington fatally wounds one of Bianchi's men, and injures the other. He finds Arrington, then calls 911 and Dino Bacchetti.

On the way to a gala benefit at the Plaza Hotel, Paul Brennan (Amanda Dart's chauffeur) stops to buy aspirin in Chapter 59. Amanda, dozing in the back seat, does not see the cyclist who rides up alongside her parked Mercedes S600. Amanda is murdered when the man shoves an ice pick up her nose and into her brain. The chauffeur does not notice anything out of the ordinary until he opens Amanda's door at the Plaza.

In Chapter 60, Lieutenant Dino Bacchetti arrives at Arrington's apartment just as the last of the corpses is being wheeled out. Stone hands Dino a FedEx packet containing the full story of Window Seat, Limited and proof of Dick Hickock's federal tax evasion. Dino complains to Stone that Mary Ann has been freely spending money on furnishings for their new Manhattan apartment.

Stone Barrington and Arrington Carter leave her apartment and climb into a taxi. On the way back to his Turtle Bay house, Stone tells Arrington that he believes Martha McMahon's death was no accident and that Amanda Dart will, more than likely, get away with murder. Arrington tells him that no one ever gets away with anything.

Chapters 55-60 Analysis

In the final six chapters of the novel, all of the narrative loose ends are reconciled.

It turns out that Dick Hickock, not Amanda Dart or Allan Peebles, is the real target of DIRT. What may have begun as simply a series of malicious messages is now a full-blown blackmail scheme. Just as Amanda and Peebles were publicly humiliated for their sexual exploits, Hickock receives his comeuppance for keeping the secret of Window Seat, Limited. Once this secret is revealed, however, Hickock will be completely ruined. Additionally, the net extends to Hickock's wife, Glynnis, and Glynnis' half-brother. Given what becomes of Allan Peebles later in Chapter 57, it can reasonably be assumed that Mrs. Hickock's half-brother is also Peebles' British father-in-law. After all, if the Englishman Hickock contacts by phone is not Glynnis' half-brother, Peebles would not have had his entire life snatched out from under him. Since the half-brother's identity is never revealed, though, this is purely speculation.

The Bruce brothers are liquidated by Enrico Bianchi's enforcers. This is originally set in motion by Dick Hickock. Hickock also seals his own fate by requesting that Tommy and Charlie Bruce be killed. With the Bruce brothers dead, the FedEx packets containing the Window Seat information are sure to be sent to the media. Had the Bruce brothers been



allowed to live, Hickock would have continued to pay them blackmail money for the remainder of his life.

Amanda Dart dies in an especially gruesome way. It is rather grimly poetic that a "nosy" gossip columnist should die as the result of an ice pick entering her nose and puncturing her brain.

No one is certain that Dick Hickock will ever be brought to justice for his association with Window Seat, Limited.

Stone echoes Arrington Carter's opinion that Amanda Dart killed Martha McMahan. Stone, however, without realizing that Amanda is already dead, thinks she will get away with it. In the end, Stone Barrington is the only character with something to hide.



Characters

Stone Barrington

Stone Barrington is a retired NYPD detective second-grade. He gained some notoriety by solving a case in which a young girl named Sasha Nijinsky disappeared.

He left the police force after fourteen years. The split was mutually agreed-upon. Barrington simply did not fit the mold of an NYPD officer. He was always the odd man out and everyone, including Stone Barrington, knew it. He currently works with Bill Eggers as attorney of counsel and private investigator for the law firm of Woodman and Weld. The cases Stone handles center around divorce, adultery, industrial espionage and various client-related criminal matters.

Stone's parents were both Communists. His father dropped out of Harvard to become a carpenter and his mother was the famous painter Matilda Stone (who died when she was quite young). Stone grew up in Greenwich Village and attended public school. After graduating from NYU (New York University), he attended law school and then joined the police force. A wealthy great-aunt of Stone's left him a townhouse in the fashionable neighborhood of Turtle Bay. Dino Bacchetti is Stone's closest friend.

Stone is unmarried. At the beginning of the novel, he is dating a judge named Sara. She breaks off their relationship, saying they have no future. It turns out that Stone Barrington is not interested in marriage. Quite an attractive man, Stone Barrington dresses well. He takes a certain amount of quiet pride in his appearance. He never wants for female companionship. Stone's attitude toward male/female relationships is rather casual and he is not quick to commit himself to any woman, which is evidenced by his casual liaisons with Amanda Dart and Lou Burch. When Stone meets Arrington Carter, however, he seems willing to give exclusivity a try. He and Arrington Carter are perfectly matched in terms of looks, sensibilities, and intellect.

Amanda Dart

Amanda Dart is a successful, ambitious, high-powered New York gossip columnist. Amanda is 50 years old, single, and proud of it. She keeps herself in fantastic shape and loves to show off her admirable body. Admittedly, though, she has had some cosmetic surgery done which, to Amanda, just makes a really good thing even better. Born Ida Louise Erenheim to mill working parents in a small town in Georgia, Amanda re-invents herself when she moves to New York City to attend Barnard College.

Since she is in the business of uncovering other people's secrets, Amanda is intensely protective of her own rather sordid personal life. She is sexually voracious by her own admission but very discreet about her many affairs. At the top of her field, Amanda Dart is syndicated nationwide and is the darling of Galaxy Media Corporation. Amanda employs three secretaries, a chauffeur and a live-in maid. She pays her small staff very



well, thus ensuring both their loyalty and their silence. In public, Amanda always appears calm, caring and confident. Inside she is shrewd, calculating, and not above manipulating others to suit her own selfish ends. Amanda knows that she is a shallow, petty person. She over-compensates for these minor personality flaws by faking concern for the welfare and feelings of others.

Arrington Carter

Arrington Carter is the primary love interest of Stone Barrington. A proud daughter of the American south, Arrington was born and raised in Virginia. She moved to New York City to try to break into the theater world but found certain aspects of the entertainment industry sleazy and disappointing. After giving up on show business, Arrington wrote a piece about her experiences and had it published. Thus began her career as a freelance writer. Physically, Arrington is captivating. Tall and lean, with "shoulder-length hair the color of ranch mink," Stone falls in love with Arrington the moment he lays eyes on her, thinking her "the most beautiful woman in New York". Arrington is unselfconscious beauty personified. She wears little makeup and likes to watch the Today show each morning. Arrington also owns one of Stone Barrington's mother's paintings, which establishes her as a woman of taste and discernment. Arrington has something of a quick temper and she can be quite emotional when she is feeling insecure. After ending the affair with Jonathan Dryer (Tommy Bruce) and beginning an intimate relationship with Stone Barrington Arrington Carter is forced to re-evaluate who she is and what she really wants out of life.

Lieutenant Dino Bacchetti

Dino Bacchetti, a Lieutenant for the NYPD, is Stone Barrington's former partner. Dino is the commander of the detective division at the Nineteenth Precinct and it is clear that Dino loves his job. Dino is good-natured, if somewhat moody at times. A first-generation American, Dino's sensibilities could definitely be described as blue collar. At this point in time, he has a successful career on the police force and is enjoying the fruits of his labor. Dino is married to Mary Ann and the couple has a 4-year-old son named Angelo. Since his father-in-law, Enrico Bianchi, is a known gangster, Dino makes certain that everything he does (professionally, anyway) is completely above suspicion. During the course of the novel, Dino remarks more than once that there are people in high places who are looking for any reason to come down hard on police officers who do not follow the rules. Also, Dino Bacchetti is something of a ladies' man. And while he admits to cheating on his wife, the extent and frequency of such infidelity is unclear. Dino nonetheless gives the impression of loving his wife — or at the very least, one could say that he is amused by her. Dino's loyalty to Stone Barrington is unquestionable and the two men help one another without hesitation. As friends, Dino and Stone have come to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses. In terms of their friendship, Dino is the brawn and Stone Barrington is the brains.



Richard (Dick, Dickie) Hickock

Richard A. Hickock, known to friends and associates as Dick or Dickie, is the Chairman of Galaxy Media. He is stocky and balding. Hickock is married to Glynnis and has a mistress, Tiffany (Tiff) Potts, who is 19-years-old. Hickock panics when the third issue of DIRT reveals his affair with Potts. Hickock also has a large financial interest in an offshore company called Window Seat, Limited. Window Seat is the parent corporation of the publisher of three gay pornography magazines and an Internet company which produces child pornography. Window Seat's funds are all held in banks in the Cayman Islands, and Hickock's money is untaxed. He spends a great deal of time in Europe, which is also where he spends his offshore earnings. If Window Seat, Limited were ever exposed, Hickock would be ruined and very probably, sent to prison for tax evasion.

Allan Peebles

Allan Peebles is the Editor-in-Chief of a tabloid newspaper, The American Infiltrator. He lives in Beverly Hills and frequently meets with male prostitutes. A closeted Scottish homosexual who was forced to leave the United Kingdom, Peebles' ex-father-in-law owns a London tabloid. Peebles has two daughters. When the second issue of DIRT is released, Peebles suspects that his ex-lover, Geoffrey Power, may have something to do with it. Eventually, Peebles loses everything because he tells Amanda Dart about Window Seat, Limited.

Martha McMahon

Martha McMahon is Amanda Dart's personal secretary. Martha is a somewhat dowdy, middle-aged single woman with red hair. Tommy Bruce pretends to be interested in Martha in order to gather personal information about Amanda Dart. Martha is portrayed as lonely, naive, and starved for male attention and companionship.

Tommy Bruce (aka Jonathan Dryer)

Tommy Bruce is the son of a deceased naval officer. He is 34 years old and strikingly handsome. Rather tall, he has light brown hair which is highlighted at the ends and a slender physique. Bruce has a violent temper and is a womanizer. He enjoys dining in fine restaurants, likes to wear expensive clothes and has a penchant for pricey wristwatches. Bruce was trained in covert operations in some branch of U.S. intelligence. He is a master manipulator and he often uses women for money (or, in the case of Martha McMahon, information). Tommy Bruce uses Arrington Carter to gain access to wealthy people in order to burglarize their homes. He seems to have little or no conscience. Tommy Bruce is Lou Burch's brother.



Paul Brennan

Paul Brennan has worked as Amanda Dart's chauffeur for nine years. Paul has done well for himself on a chauffeur's salary. However, he cheats Amanda each time he sells one of her cars.

Tiffany (Tiff) Potts

Tiffany Potts is the 19-year-old mistress of Richard (Dick) Hickock. Tiffany studies at the Actor's Studio and has received good reviews for her theater performances. She is a pretty girl and exceptionally mature for her age.

Enrico (Rickie) Bianchi

Enrico Bianchi is a Mafia boss and an old school chum of Richard (Dickie) Hickock. Bianchi is also the father of Mary Ann Bacchetti and father-in-law of Dino Bacchetti.

Mary Ann (Bianchi) Bacchetti

Mary Ann Bacchetti is the wife of Lieutenant Dino Bacchetti. Mary Ann is also the daughter of known Mafioso Enrico Bianchi. Mary Ann is spoiled by her father. She is fond of high-end fashions and has expensive taste. She and Dino have a 4-year-old son named Angelo.

Helen Charlson

Helen Charlson is employed by Amanda Dart. Helen is 30-years old and has recently started dating a man in the advertising industry. When Martha McMahon dies suddenly, Helen Charlson is promoted and becomes Amanda's personal secretary.

Barry White

Barry White is an employee of Amanda Dart. Openly gay, White is known to frequent a bar called The Leather Room.

Henry Bell

Henry Bell is a successful 45-year-old real estate developer from Atlanta, Georgia. Henry is married to a retired opera singer. He and his wife have two daughters. Bell is one of Amanda Dart's many lovers. He and Amanda Dart are photographed having sex in a room at the Trent Hotel.



Arnie Millman

A retired NYPD officer, Millman often conducts background checks for Stone Barrington. It is also revealed that Arnie Millman is one of Amanda Dart's gossip sources. Arnie is middle-aged and overweight. Arnie is murdered by Tommy Bruce after he follows Martha McMahon to Bruce's apartment.

Bob Cantor

Bob Cantor is an associate of Dino Bacchetti and an NYPD officer. Cantor's specialty is surveillance.

Louise (Lou) Bruce Burch

Louise (Lou) Burch is the sister of Tommy and Charlie Bruce. Lou is the recently-divorced mother of a college-age daughter studying at the University of Virginia. Burch's husband left her for a 22-year-old. She is described in the narrative as being "of medium height, with sandy blonde hair and a particularly taut body..." (228).

Gaetano Calabrese

Gaetano Calabrese is a waiter at Figaro Italian restaurant, where he worked his way up from busboy. Gaetano Calabrese is also a numbers runner for the Mafia.

Glynnis Hickock

Glynnis Hickock is the wife of Richard (Dick) Hickock. Glynnis comes from a wealthy family. She contemplates divorce after it is revealed that her husband has been keeping a 19-year-old mistress in a plush Central Park apartment.

Bill Eggers

Bill Eggers is Amanda Dart's attorney. He is employed by the firm of Woodman and Weld. Eggers works closely with Stone Barrington. He is married to Susan, a woman of some influence.

Susan Eggers

Married to Bill Eggers, Susan is rather a cold person. Stone Barrington refers to her as "haughty" and somewhat standoffish (64).



Charlie Bruce

Charlie Bruce is the handsome younger brother of Tommy Bruce and Louise (Lou) Bruce Burch. Charlie is a master burglar who was recently paroled from prison in California.



Objects/Places

Manhattan

One of the five boroughs of New York City.

Vanity Fair

American fashion and culture magazine.

Shubert Theater

A theater located on Broadway in mid-town Manhattan.

Bloomingdale's

Famous high-end department store in New York City.

Delano, Georgia

Small southern town where Amanda Dart was born and raised.

Veuve Clicquot

A brand of expensive French champagne.

Bergdorf's

Also known as Bergdorf Goodman. An exclusive department store located in New York. Bergdorf's is a competitor of Bloomingdale's.

Queens

One of the five boroughs of New York City, New York.

St. Bart's

An island in the Caribbean French West Indies.



Twenty-One (21 Club)

Famous supper club and bar located in New York City.

Teterboro

A borough located in Bergen County, New Jersey.

Wall Street Journal

An American daily newspaper devoted primarily to business and financial matters.

Gotham

Nickname for New York City.

The Queen Mary

An ocean liner.

sherry

A type of wine made from white grapes.



Themes

Sex

While the identification of Sex as a major narrative theme in this novel may seem somewhat simplistic, there is a good deal of evidence to suggest quite the opposite. To begin, with the exception of lesser characters (Paul Brennan and Helene, Stone Barrington's housekeeper, for example), all of the characters in *Dirt* are involved in sexual relationships of one sort or another. What differentiates these sexual dealings is character motivation. Amanda Dart's sexual liaisons, while casual and very discreet, nonetheless reveal a personality which thrives on attention. In her younger years, the character's sexual involvements help to further her career and improve her social status. Tommy Bruce (Jonathan Dryer), on the other hand, uses sex as a means of gathering information. He sleeps with Arrington Carter in order to gain access to wealthy homes which he later robs. Bruce also engages in sex with Martha McMahon to learn about Amanda Dart's affairs. Lou Bruce, the lonely New Jersey divorcee, has sex with Stone Barrington to fill the void left by her husband's abandonment and her daughter's absence. In Dino Bacchetti's case, sexual infidelity seems to be something recreational, not emotional. Bacchetti cheats on his wife simply because he can. Dick Hickock's relationship with 19-year-old Tiff Potts can be interpreted as nothing more than an older man's desire to feel young. Conversely, it could also be posited that Hickock is a powerful man whose appetites are a reflection of his feeling of entitlement. Hickock is wealthy enough to buy an attractive lover. Hickock's mistress, on the other hand, maintains her involvement with a much older man because of the security it guarantees her. In this narrative, much of the characters' sexual activity is illicit, it happens in secret. The only exception to this fact is the sexual relationship of Stone Barrington and Arrington Carter.

Appearances Can Be Deceiving

Appearance is extremely important to most of the characters in *Dirt*. However, appearance alone is no indicator of a character's true personality. For example, in Chapter 44, Dino Bacchetti and his wife Mary Ann dress in such a way as to impress Mr. Whitfield in order to be allowed to purchase an apartment in an exclusive Manhattan co-op. Bacchetti purchases clothing that he would not ordinarily wear in order to convince Whitfield that he shares Whitfield's "white bread" sensibilities. Bacchetti admits that buying the interview clothes on Stone Barrington's recommendation. Similarly, Martha McMahon goes to an expensive cosmetics store for a makeover in order to enliven Jonathan Dryer's interest in her. Martha wants Dryer to want her, hence she allows someone to alter her external appearance. Inside, however, Martha is a lonely woman who is desperate to be loved. Tiffany Potts, on the other hand, is a very attractive young woman. When Stone meets Tiffany for the first time, he finds her to be intelligent, grounded and very personable as well. Knowing that she is involved with a man old enough to be her grandfather might lead to the perception that Potts is using her looks



to take advantage of Hickock when in fact, quite the contrary is true. Finally, Allan Peebles, a closeted homosexual, even goes so far as to marry a woman and father two children in order to appear "normal". Peebles uses the appearance of heterosexuality to mask his true identity. In Peebles' case, given the attitude toward homosexuality in some sections of society, it is understandable that he would perpetrate a charade in order to protect himself from discrimination and to escape scandal. Peebles' flaw is not his sexual orientation, but lack of discretion.

Male/Female Relationships

There is quite a broad array of male/female relationships in the novel. And while there are two gay male characters in the novel, these relationships qualify as secondary based on the characters' position in the narrative hierarchy. For the most part, it can be said that *Dirt* is a decidedly heterosexual book.

Men and women in the narrative are married and unmarried, and each represents a different facet of the relationship in which they are involved. For instance, several of the characters are married, and yet none of the couples could be described as happily married. Glynnis Hickock represents the disillusion of marriage whereas her husband represents marriage on auto-pilot. Dino Bacchetti represents marriage which is comfortable and yet unexciting. Mary Ann Bacchetti represents marriage as an extension of the father-daughter relationship. Stone Barrington's parents both represent marriage as a meeting of the minds and shared ideals.

Conversely, many of the characters are single as well. Similarly, none of them are presented as being especially satisfied with this status. Martha McMahon does not enjoy being single. Arrington Carter is single only momentarily, as she enters into her relationship with Stone fairly quickly after her break with Jonathan Dryer. One exception to this assertion would be Amanda Dart. Amanda is single not because she does not want to be emotionally involved but because she is incapable of caring for another person as much as she cares about herself. Her relationships are all purely sexual. This could be linked to Amanda's blatant self-objectification in service to her rabid ambition during her younger years in Georgia.

Finally, male/female relationships in the novel are all in a state of flux. Glynnis and Dick Hickock are on the verge of divorce and later reconcile. Tiffany Potts goes from being Hickock's mistress (and a kept woman) to finding herself a boyfriend. Stone Barrington's involvement with Judge Sara ends and he begins a physical arrangement with Amanda Dart, which he then gives up in order to explore a relationship with Arrington. Helen Charlson (Amanda's secretary and Martha McMahon's replacement) has just begun a relationship with a young man in the advertising industry. Throughout the novel, men and women move into and out of relationship very fluidly. This fluidity is warranted by the conventions of the genre. Since *Dirt* is a thriller, not much credence is given to deep emotion or psychological underpinnings. Thus, not much narrative ground is devoted to close examination of the relationships themselves.

Style

Point of View

Stuart Woods' novel *Dirt* is written entirely from the perspective of an omniscient narrator. There may be several reasons for this, the most obvious being attributable to the genre itself. Since *Dirt* is a relatively standard thriller, the convention of the omniscient narrator helps to maintain a steady pace. That is to say, the narrative action moves quickly in a linear progression. There are no departures from the plot itself. Also, the use of an omniscient narrator makes it less difficult for the reader to engage the characters, all of whom are more types than individuals. For example, Amanda Dart is "the high-powered bitch," Enrico Bianchi is "the mob boss," Dino Bacchetti is "the tough but fair Italian-American cop" and so on. In this particular thriller, the way the plot unfolds takes precedence over the intricacies of the characters. If the author were to use characters with complicated interior landscapes, a reader might lose sight of the story itself. Most importantly, Woods' use of the omniscient narrator is the best way to build suspense. In other words, the objective narration employed in the novel serves to keep the reader guessing. A successful thriller makes effective use of the element of surprise.

Setting

The majority of the narrative action of Stuart Woods' novel occurs in and around New York City, New York. The implication here is that the city is the hub of narrative meaning. Admittedly, some of the action does happen in satellite locations. For example, two very significant things take place in Connecticut at Amanda Dart's country home. First, Stone and Amanda establish a no-strings-attached sexual relationship there. Secondly, Martha McMahon is murdered not far from Amanda's house. In one episode, Stone Barrington travels to New Jersey and finds an address for the fugitive Tommy Bruce (alias Jonathan Dryer). And while things do happen outside the city, New York is the seat of the resolution of the plot's main points. For instance, Allan Peebles lives in Beverly Hills, but he must travel to New York City to visit Amanda Dart in order to inform her of Dick Hickock's involvement with Window Seat, Limited. Similarly, Charlie Bruce is paroled from prison in California, but it is necessary for him to meet his brother in New York to finish the business of *DIRT*. Also, New York is an ideal location for a story which centers on gossip, greed, sex and celebrity. The city itself strikes one as nearly mythical in terms of the world's entertainment and culture.

It bears noting that the locations within New York that are featured in *Dirt* are world-renowned. Elaines', the Shubert Theater, Central Park, the Oak Bar at the Plaza Hotel and '21' all have rich individual histories and there is something quintessentially American about each one. Such places are not simply fun or interesting locations to visit. Each one is an institution in and of itself. These places are what add to the allure of a city like New York. It should also be pointed out that Woods' novel does not limit



itself to those places frequented by the rich and famous. Brooklyn is mentioned, as are Queens and Montauk. Amanda Dart lies about leaving from Teterboro to fly to St. Barts and prior to renting Jonathan Dryer's apartment, the reader learns that Bob Cantor lives in Chelsea.

Language and Meaning

Dirt is written in Standard English. As such, there is little difficulty entailed in understanding what is being said. Given the nature of the subject matter, it bears mentioning that there are quite a few terms which refer to sex and sexual acts in this novel. However, for the most part, the language used by the characters in *Dirt* leaves little to the imagination. Again, given that the novel is a thriller, and that pacing is more important than what one might call "literary gymnastics," the language serves the form and the reader very well. There are instances of dialect use which one might associate with certain professions or ethnic groups. For example, in one conversation, Lieutenant Dino Bacchetti, who is Italian-American, says, "Fuggedaboutit," a figure of speech which is typically associated with Italians and/or Italian New Yorkers (208). In addition, when Dino and his wife Mary Ann meet with the head of the co-op association, the narrator makes a point of telling the reader that Bacchetti's accent is something he can turn off and on (200).

Amanda Dart's language is important not because of dialect but because of her professional and social milieu. The character is fond of calling others "darling" or "sweetie." In Amanda's case, not only is she not being genuine, she is being represented as a stereotypical "entertainment type." Given their reputation for being disingenuous, it is not surprising that Amanda (a gossip columnist, and by definition, fake and manipulative) would use such terms of endearment.

Finally, the matter of language becomes more salient upon considering the socioeconomic standing of the characters presented in *Dirt*. Simply put, there are characters included in the narrative who stand out as snobs because of their frequent use of the pronoun "one". Two striking examples of this phenomenon involve wealthy, white men. The first occurs in Chapter 1 during a high-tone dinner party. Amanda engages in conversation with a man named Lord Wight. Wight, an Englishman, uses the pronoun so frequently that it begins to aggravate Amanda Dart. She puts an end to their pretentious conversation by saying, "One is fortunate enough to have friends with jets" (2). And while her use of "one" is proper, it is a signal to the reader that even a character like Amanda Dart recognizes snobbery when she encounters it. The second instance of the use of the pronoun "one" comes in Chapter 44 during Dino and Mary Ann's meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Greenleaf Whitfield. Dino tells Whitfield that he is a police lieutenant and Whitfield knowingly replies, "I quite see your point! One watches NYPD Blue" (202). What Whitfield does not understand is that his statement alerts Dino Bacchetti to the full extent of Whitfield's disconnection from real police work and real policemen.

Structure

Both the narrative structure and the physical structure of the novel are fairly uncomplicated. As a matter of fact, some might consider Stuart Woods' *Dirt* to be something of an easy read. To begin, the book has a total of 272 pages, divided into sixty chapters. The number of chapters might be daunting, were it not for their length. Each chapter ranges in length from four to approximately seven pages. Rather than full-blown episodes, *Dirt*'s chapters are more like vignettes. In other words, just enough is included in the short chapters to (a) further the plot in a smooth forward trajectory and (b) give the reader a small amount of information at a time, thereby enabling the reader to keep from being bogged down by too much happening all at once. The effect rendered by the use of a large number of relatively short chapters is positive overall and somehow makes the novel more enjoyable. This is to the author's advantage, as it may leave the reader with a desire to investigate Stuart Woods' other novels.



Quotes

"Tonight, however, she had other plans, other company in mind, and the thought made for a weak feeling in her crotch" (Chapter 1, page 1).

"[Hickock] wasn't seeing enough tits in the book these days, and the man had ignored his request for more" (Chapter 3, page 12).

"After only a brief pause, Amanda strode forward, and the others gave way like yachts before the Queen Mary" (Chapter 5, page 20).

"[Stone Barrington] was the sort of man [Amanda] might like to be seen with. She would think about that" (Chapter 9, page 38).

"Stone was placed between Amanda and Arrington, and his hostess gave him the distinct impression that she would have arranged things differently if she had met the other woman beforehand" (Chapter 15, page 65).

[Stone] remembered, in a high school science class, seeing a captive black widow spider as it came upon a fly in its web and watching as the spider had sucked the life out of the fly. Now he thought he knew how the fly felt" (Chapter 17, page 71).

"...[B]e sure that neither the agent or the head of the corporation has a name that rhymes with a pasta" (Chapter 27, page 122)

"Stone didn't feel like moving just yet, since the floor seemed to be doing the moving for him" (Chapter 31, page 137).

"'Concussion? How the hell did you get a concussion?' [Amanda] demanded, as if a concussion were a personal affront to her" (Chapter 32, page 142).

"[Martinez] was a portly detective of Puerto Rican extraction who didn't like anybody who wasn't Puerto Rican" (Chapter 40, page 178).

"'My people have always been in the revenge business,' [Mary Ann Bacchetti] said sweetly" (Chapter 44, page 202).

"[Stone's] sex life had always been serendipitous, and he liked it that way..." (Chapter 51, page 233).

"Half the satisfaction of being a bitch was to be sure no one could ever prove it of her" (Chapter 5, page 19).

"[N]obody gets away with anything. Ever" (Chapter 60, page 272).

"One is fortunate enough to have friends with jets" (Chapter 1, page 2).

"They buried Arnie Millman in bright sunshine under a cloudless sky" (Chapter 23, page 100).



Topics for Discussion

Why does Dino Bacchetti lie to Charles Greenleaf Whitfield about his family background in Chapter 44?

Explain the following quote: "Amanda Dart's body rolled slowly out of the car into the gutter, now nothing but dirt" (270).

What does the acronym WASP mean? What does Dino mean when he accuses his wife Mary Ann of trying to turn them into Wasps?

Who is responsible for having Amanda Dart killed?

What steps does Ida Louise Erenheim take to re-invent herself? What, in your estimation, is her primary reason for wanting to leave her past behind?

The novel features a number of very wealthy characters. Keeping this in mind, how do upscale characters such as Amanda Dart and Dick Hickock deal with those who threaten their safety or security?

Give at least two reasons why Woods' novel is called *Dirt*. Use examples from the text to reinforce your argument.