

# **Drop Shot Study Guide**

## **Drop Shot by Harlan Coben**

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# Plot Summary

Myron Bolitar, sports agent, becomes involved in the murder of former tennis star Valerie Simpson after she contacts him when trying to make a comeback. The mystery becomes more involved when Myron's current client, Duane Richwood, is tied to the murder investigation. Trying to prove Duane innocent and find Valerie's killer entangles Myron in a decades old murder involving old money, organized crime, and deep secrets.

Myron Bolitar is an agent representing athletes in many different sports. Myron is currently busy representing Duane Richwood, a rising star in the tennis world. Duane had been a runaway, teaching himself tennis in public courts, rising through the ranks, and had caught the public eye. Duane is competing in the US Open when a former tennis star, Valerie Simpson, is shot and killed while trying to find Myron at the courts.

Myron feels compelled to find out who killed Valerie. Duane is a suspect at first because Valerie had tried to contact him several times in the days before her murder. Suspicion shifts to a stalker, Roger Quincy, who had been following Valerie's career and sending love letters, etc. for years. Myron meets with Roger and discovers that though the man is a bit crazy, he is not the killer the police are searching for either.

Facts are uncovered along the way, including the fact that Valerie had suffered a breakdown six years earlier after her soon-to-be fiancé had been murdered at a party at an exclusive tennis club. Looking into things further, Myron also discovers that Valerie had been sexually abused by her tennis coach, becoming pregnant, and had been forced to get an abortion. The meshing of all these events had led to Valerie's breakdown.

The two murders are tied together, and though Myron is discouraged at every turn, even threatened, he continues to dig. Tennis is the only constant involving all parties, and while trying to tie things together, Myron searches for the reason that Valerie had contacted Duane. At first Myron believes that Duane might also have been present at the tennis club the night that Alexander Cross had been murdered, but the truth is Duane is actually Curtis Yeller, the young man believed to have been killed by the police that evening. Duane's mother had killed her nephew, and Duane had escaped, assuming a new identity and becoming Duane Richwood, tennis star. When Valerie had seen Duane at Myron's office, she realizes that he had been there the night Cross was killed and his mother kills her to keep his secret. Deanna Yeller kills herself in the end, another victim of an event that had happened six years prior.

Myron keeps Duane's secret, feeling that Valerie's mother would not care about the truth if she knew it. The truth saddens him, but the mystery has been solved and Myron does not believe that reopening the Cross murder will serve any purpose. Duane/Curtis had been as much a victim as the rest, a young man whose life was forever changed due to the acts of another.

# Chapters 1-5

## Chapters 1-5 Summary

Myron Bolitar, sports agent, becomes involved in the murder of former tennis star Valerie Simpson after she contacts him when trying to make a comeback. The mystery becomes more involved when Myron's current client, Duane Richwood, is tied to the murder investigation. Trying to prove Duane innocent and find Valerie's killer entangles Myron in a decades old murder involving old money, organized crime, and deep secrets.

Myron Bolitar and Windsor Horne Lockwood III watch Duane Richwood, tennis's newest star, compete in the US Open. While the two friends discuss villains in the Batman Television series, Myron receives a call from his associate, Esperanza. Diaz calls to tell Myron he has a meeting with Eddie Crane, an up-and-coming young player and his parents after the match, and that Valerie Simpson, a former star player had called three times, sounding agitated. As Myron disconnects a gun shot is heard: Myron and Win rush to the scene. Valerie Simpson lays dead, her comeback over before it had a chance to start.

Myron heads back to the office with Win. Win is trying to discourage Myron from getting involved in the murder of Valerie Simpson. Arriving at the office, Myron is surprised to find that Win is the one who had encouraged Valerie to contact Myron. Win and Valerie had grown up in the same social circles of old money, and the young woman had contacted him recently. Win leaves Myron on the elevator and continues to his office, and Myron enters MB SportsReps for a meeting with Ned Tunwell, a representative from Nike. Ned is there to show Myron the new commercial starring Duane Richwood. Myron reflects on the irony that days ago Valerie had been in his office following his last meeting with Duane. A washed up tennis star and a rising tennis star, both looking to him for representation. The commercial spot is good, and Myron knows that it will make Duane a bigger star. Afterward, the two men discuss Valerie and her past. Nike had lost money when the young woman had a breakdown years before. Myron tries to get more information, but Ned does not recall detail. The conversation is interrupted by Esperanza. Duane is on the phone, very agitated. The police are at his apartment; they believe he is involved in Valerie's death.

Myron arrives at Duane's apartment after spotting a strange car that appears to be following him through the city. At the apartment, Myron meets Roland Dimonte and his partner Krinsky, the officers investigating Valerie Simpson's death. Roland does not like Myron, or being called Rolly. Dimonte questions Duane about his relationship with Simpson, but Duane denies ever meeting her. Rolly is agitated by Myron's interruptions, but eventually reveals that Valerie Simpson's calendar had Duane's phone number and a note to call him. Duane still insists that he did not know Valerie, and had never spoken to her, as does his girlfriend Wanda. Dimonte leaves, warning Myron and Duane that he will be back. Myron asks Duane what is going on, but Richwood claims that he knows nothing and needs sleep.

Myron returns to his office building and visits Win at Locke-Horne Investments and Securities. Myron relates his afternoon to Win, who wonders if Myron really wants to remain involved in the investigation as he might discover something he would rather not. As Myron is going to continue regardless, Win relates the story of Valerie Simpson as he knows it.

Valerie had a breakdown at the age of eighteen, six years ago. Common knowledge stated that Valerie had burned out, under too much strain. Win tells Myron that while that may be true, what most people did not know is that Valerie had been in a relationship with Alexander Cross, the son of a senator from Pennsylvania. The young couple had been planning to announce their engagement at a party one evening, but before they had, Alexander had been murdered.

Plans are made: Win will arrange for Myron to meet with Valerie's mother the following day. Until then, Myron will head back to the US Open to meet with Pavel Menansi, Valerie's former coach, and Win will check the Plaza hotel where Valerie had stayed, hoping to gather further information into her activities in the past week.

Myron meets with Pavel Menansi. Menansi works exclusively with TruPro, a rival sports agency run by the Aches family. The Aches, large in organized crime, had taken control of the agency from the former owner. Pavel made the Aches an enormous amount of money each year with the talent that he cultivated.

While Pavel would like to discuss Duane Richwood, Myron wants to discuss Valerie, and steers the conversation in that direction. Menansi tells Myron that he blames himself for Simpson's breakdown, believing he had pushed the young woman too hard to excel. When Myron brings up the death of Alexander Cross, Pavel reacts as if struck, unsure of how Myron has such information, and tries to play it down. Pavel also tells Myron that Valerie Simpson had been stalked for a time by a man named Roger Quincy, who wrote love letters and sent flowers constantly. When Myron asks what Cross had thought of Quincy, Menansi again tries to steer the conversation in another direction. When Myron refuses, Pavel tells him that he needs to concentrate on the game and asks Bolitar to leave. Menansi's bodyguard steps in aggressively, and Myron brings him to his knees.

## **Chapters 1-5 Analysis**

Most of the main characters in Drop Shot are introduced within the first five chapters. Myron Bolitar, sports agent, is watching the newest rising star in the tennis world, Duane Richwood participate in the US Open, the only Grand Slam event held in the States. Duane is an anomaly in the tennis world. Rather than the usual young player trained from youth to play, Duane is a young black man in his early twenties, a runaway who had taught himself to play tennis on public courts while managing to survive on his own. Myron had discovered the young man and had promoted him, and Duane is on the verge of becoming one of the top earners in tennis between tournament prize money and endorsement deals. Along with Myron's talent as an agent, his best friend Windsor

Horne-Lockwood III provides sound financial management to the clients of MB SportsReps, Myron's agency.

At the US Open, a gunshot rings out, and Myron and Win respond quickly to find the lifeless body of Valerie Simpson, a former tennis star. Valerie had been to Myron's office two days ago, and had tried calling him three times that day. The fact that Simpson had been to Myron's office will be an important factor within the story line. Myron is drawn to the case, despite the fact that Win tries to discourage him from getting involved.

Myron discovers through Win that Valerie Simpson had suffered a breakdown six years previously after the murder of her fiance at their tennis club the night they had planned to announce their engagement. Though the news of the former star's breakdown had been somewhat public, the ties to Alexander Cross were not. The public had been led to believe that Simpson had merely cracked under pressure.

Myron's latest star, Duane Richwood, is brought into the investigation when the police tie him to Valerie Simpson via her calendar. Simpson had a note reminding her to call Duane, along with his unlisted phone number. Though Duane denies knowing Valerie, the police do not believe him, and Myron senses that the young man is hiding something.

The name Alexander Cross does not please Valerie's former tennis coach when Myron brings it up. Pavel Menansi claims that Valerie had merely cracked under pressure, pressure that he had put upon her and for which he still feels guilty. When Myron tries to get more information from Pavel, the coach declines, ending their interview abruptly, though calmly. Pavel also introduced the information of a stalker to Myron, another factor that will come up later in the novel.

Within the first five chapters, the reader is given a sense of the character of Myron Bolitar. A former professional basketball player, Myron's career had ended after he injured his knee before his first game. After completing law school, Myron had opened his sports agency. Bolitar is a good man, prone to helping others, and sometimes involving him in things which he should stay out of.

# Chapters 6-12

## Chapters 6-12 Summary

Myron arrives home to find his mother agitated because he hadn't called after the shooting that had taken place at the US Open. After the two discuss the day, Myron retires to his room, only to have his mother tell him he has a visitor. Wanda, Duane's girlfriend, is worried about what is going on. Wanda tells Myron that Duane has not been acting like himself, and she wants Myron to keep an eye on him and make sure he is ok. Myron agrees to do his best.

Myron receives a phone call from his girlfriend, Jessica Culver, who is working in Greece. Myron tells her what has been going on and Jessica asks him his plans. Myron tells her that he will meet with Valerie's mother the following day and take it from there. Jessica questions what Myron's motives are, and Myron tells her that he believes he is looking into things in the best interest of Duane, Wanda, and Valerie, but mostly Valerie. Jessica simply tells Myron to be careful.

Myron calls his friend Sheriff Jake Courter while on his way to meet with Valerie's mother. Myron invites Jake to lunch and asks him if he can access the case file on the murder of Alexander Cross. Courter agrees to see what he can do.

At the home of Helen Van Slyke, Detectives Dimonte and Krinsky are leaving. Rolly is not happy to find Myron there. Dimonte tells Myron that Duane is no longer the main suspect, and is not happy when Myron mentions Roger Quincy. Myron clearly had the same information as the police. Dimonte knows that Duane is lying about something, but assumes that the secretive nature is regarding an affair of some sort.

Inside, Myron is met by Helen Van Slyke and her husband Kenneth. Kenneth is antagonistic, but Helen asks him to leave and take their young daughter for a walk. Mrs. Van Slyke is intrigued by Myron's wish to find her daughter's killer, but unsure how her breakdown six years ago could be involved. Myron explains that he needs to check into Valerie's background in case it somehow involves her death. Helen tells Myron that Valerie had finally started to live again, had been feeling better and even playing tennis, but a few months ago something had happened. Before she can tell Myron what, Kenneth Van Slyke interrupts and tells Myron to leave.

Myron meets with Jake Courter, the sheriff of Reston, NJ. The two men have lunch at a diner and go over the case file for the murder of Alexander Cross. According to the file, Alexander Cross and some friends came across two black men stealing from the club. One of the men, Errol Swade, stabbed Cross. The two men ran and were tracked down a short distance away. The other young man, Curtis Yeller, was shot by a police officer and died in his mother's arms. Errol Swade had escaped and had never been seen since. Rumor at the time was that the fugitive had been killed as a favor to Senator Cross. Before viewing the mug shot, Myron was worried that perhaps Duane might have



been the missing Swade, but there is no physical similarity. Myron promises Jake tickets to the Open, and asks if he can contact his son Gerard a New York police officer and find out what Dimonte has on Duane.

Myron returns to the office and conducts some work for other athletes he represents. Win arrives and the two discuss things as they stand, including checking with Curtis Yeller's mother to see if she has information on her missing nephew, Errol Swade. Myron asks Win to arrange a meeting with Senator Cross. Win tells Myron that Valerie had made three calls from her hotel room, all to Bolitar. The doorman had seen her leave for several short walks. On a hunch, Win has a friend at the phone company check the line of the payphone on the corner. Several calls had been made to Duane Richwood's apartment.

Myron meets with Eddie Crane and his parents. Mr. Crane is not really impressed with Myron's small agency, but asks the appropriate questions. During dinner, Myron discovers that Eddie had been friends with Valerie, as they were both coached by Pavel. Valerie had recommended Myron to the Cranes, and had urged Eddie to stay away from TruPro. After dinner, Myron explains to Eddie that he is trying to find out what happened to Valerie. At the two had been friends at the tennis camp, Eddie is willing to help if he can.

Myron receives a call from Win that the car that had been following him was now parked at a club nearby and Myron goes to The Beaver Hunt to meet Win.

Myron heads into the bar while Win takes care of the car the two men following Myron had been driving. The two men, one black, one white, both big, are shocked when Myron confronts them. They quickly leave the club and Myron follows Win to the lot where their car is parked. The two men, Jim and Lee, arrive after Win and Myron to discover that their car has been vandalized. Lee, the car's owner, is enraged, and charges Win. Win disables the man and Jim runs away. Though Lee at first refuses to tell them who he is working for, with physical persuasion, Win encourages him to talk. Myron is not happy about it, but realizes that there is no faster way to achieve what they want. Lee tells them that one of Frank Ache's men had told him to follow Myron and report on his actions. Frank Ache is the owner of TruPro.

## Chapters 6-12 Analysis

Myron returns home to find his mother agitated that he had not called and told her he was alright. In his early thirties, Myron still lives at home, in the basement. Myron's mother, a well known attorney, reverts to the role of Jewish mother when at home; though she does not cook or clean, she dotes on her son. While at home, Myron is visited by Wanda, Duane's girlfriend of three years. Wanda's visit confirms Myron's feelings that the young woman was concerned about her boyfriend. Wanda is unsure if Duane has had any contact with Valerie, but tells Myron that he has been acting strange. Together for three years, Duane and Wanda had never had any secrets between them, but lately Duane had been acting odd, keeping things from her. Wanda



is worried about Duane and asks Myron to keep an eye on him, to help him. Myron is also worried about Duane and has no trouble agreeing to help if he can.

Myron meets with Helen Van Slyke, the mother of Valerie. Helen is reluctant to discuss Valerie's past, unsure what it has to do with her murder. Though Myron tries to explain that anything could be tied to her murder, Van Slyke is not open to the discussion. Helen is presumably happy with the notion that the police are pursuing Valerie's former stalker, Roger Quincy. Helen can see no connection with Valerie's murder and her relationship with Alexander Cross. Valerie's mother does come close to revealing some information, but is cut short when her current husband arrives and tells Myron to leave.

Myron delves further into the death of Alexander Cross when meeting with Jake Courter, the sheriff of Reston, New Jersey. The file contains the details of the incident. According to police records, two black men had been surprised while committing a crime by Alexander Cross and some friends. Errol Swade had stabbed the senator's son, and the two young men had fled the scene. A short distance away the police had shot Curtis Yeller, who had died in the arms of his sobbing mother. There was no record in the file as to whether Yeller's mother had witnessed the shooting. This is an important fact, and will be brought up later in the novel. Errol Swade had escaped, never to be seen again. Rumors abound that the young man had been killed as a favor to the senator. The true outcome of Curtis Yeller and Errol Swade will be important later in the novel, but it will not be revealed immediately.

The reader is also introduced to Jessica Culver, Myron's girlfriend. A writer, Jessica is currently in Greece, working. Myron is deeply in love with Jessica, but they have had troubles in the past and he is worried about giving too much of himself away too soon. Myron discusses the past few days with Jessica and she encourages him to do what he needs to, but to be careful. As time goes by, there will be a need for caution, not just on Myron's part, but on Jessica's.

The two men that are following Myron are confronted, and they do not want to engage Bolitar or Win. The two men had simply been instructed to follow Myron and report on his whereabouts. The timing of this assignment is important, not just who has hired them. Lee and Jim had been called shortly after the murder of Valerie Simpson by someone who works for Frank Ache, the owner of TruPro. Mention is made of Aaron, a man that has been known to work for Ache, but these men state that they have had no contact with him. Aaron will factor into the novel later; at this point the mention of his name is enough to make Ache's current employees quake with fear.

# Chapters 13-18

## Chapters 13-18 Summary

Myron drives to Cherry Hill to visit Deanna Yeller, the mother of Curtis Yeller. Bolitar finds an attractive woman who slips into inner city slang when he questions her about her son. Yeller appears to have no feelings whatsoever regarding her son's death, claiming that he was not a good person. Myron is perplexed by her seemingly callous behavior.

Myron meets Win at the stadium and tells him of his visit with Deanna Yeller. The two discuss where an inner-city widow with no visible means of support might find the money to move to the suburbs. Win tells Myron that Helen and Kenneth Van Slyke also have no money, yet maintain their affluent lifestyle. The two men wonder if Yeller's mother and Simpson's mother might be getting paid off, and by whom.

Myron confronts Duane about the phone calls he received from Valerie. At first Richwood reacts by threatening to fire Bolitar if he does not let the matter drop, then tells Myron that he and Valerie had a brief affair. Duane claims that he had not said anything because he did not want to upset Wanda. Myron does not think the story rings true.

Myron receives a phone call from Jake's son, Gerard Courter. Gerard tells Myron that the NYPD is looking for Roger Quincy in connection to Valerie Simpson's death. Quincy had been at the US Open the day she was killed and is now apparently on the run. A gun had been found discarded in a garbage can near Valerie's body. Myron realizes that whoever had shot Valerie had been very calm and methodical.

Myron reviews newspaper clippings that Esperanza had gathered for him about the murder of Alexander Cross and Valerie's withdrawal from the tennis circuit. Though there is no concrete information in the articles about Valerie, an interesting theory in one states that Valerie had been pregnant. The articles about Cross's death follow the main police reports, that Cross and his friends had come upon Yeller and Swade while they were robbing the tennis club and Cross had been stabbed. Yeller had been killed and Swade had escaped. An interesting article reports that Curtis Yeller had been an honor student who never got in trouble. The description is exactly opposite of that given to Myron by Deanna Yeller.

Myron discusses the facts with Esperanza as well as some business of MB SportsReps. Esperanza tells Myron that he has an appointment with Dr. Julie Abramson, Valerie's psychiatrist for the following morning. Esperanza had made Myron an appointment as a patient as the doctor would not discuss a patient, past or present.

Myron meets with Dr. Abramson, a pleasant woman who is not at all surprised or upset that he had lied in order to speak with her. On the contrary, Abramson remembers



Myron from his days playing basketball and had been a fan. Despite this, Abramson will not discuss Valerie; in fact, she refuses to acknowledge if she had been a patient at all. Myron keeps pushing and finally gets the doctor to slip, stating that Valerie's parents will not give her permission to speak with him. Myron wonders why a murder victim's parents would be so dead set against helping someone find out the truth behind their daughter's death, and why they would instruct her daughter not to provide information that might bring answers.

## Chapters 13-18 Analysis

Myron meets with the mother of Curtis Yeller, the young man shot by the police the night of Alexander Cross's death. Though the woman had lived in the inner city of Philadelphia, she now lives in a single family home in an upscale suburban Cherry Hill. Deanna Yeller is pleasant enough when Myron introduces himself, but quickly shuts down when he asks about her son and the night of his death. The way Yeller describes her son does not in any way match the description that Myron reads in the clipping that Esperanza finds in the paper. Deanna Yeller clearly wants Myron to leave the subject alone, repeatedly stating that her son is dead and nothing can bring him back. This statement is important, though the truth will not be known until much later in the novel.

When discussing the case with Win, the men realize that both Deanna Yeller and The Van Slykes have no visible means of support but are living well. A discussion takes place hypothesizing whether someone is buying their silence. If that is the case, it would seem that the death of Alexander Cross and the murder of Valerie Simpson are linked somehow. Myron tries to gather more information from Dr. Abramson, but she will not admit that Valerie was her patient. Myron believes the Helen Van Slyke has called Abramson and told her not to discuss Valerie, further supporting the theory that the family is being paid to keep quiet. Myron assumes that the information the Van Slykes are hiding has to do with Cross's murder, but it does not. The seemingly obscure rumor that Valerie had gone into hiding because of a pregnancy is key.

Myron is informed that the police are looking for Roger Quincy, the man who had stalked Simpson years earlier. Gerard Courter provides more information to Myron about Quincy having been present the day Valerie was shot, as well as the fact that Roger now appears to be on the run. The murder weapon had been found nearby, pointing to the fact that the killer was calm and collected, had simply shot Valerie and walked away.

Myron confronts Duane about his relationship with Valerie and the phone calls she had made to him before her death. The young man is agitated, threatening to fire Myron if he pursues the matter, but eventually tells Myron that he and Simpson had had a brief affair. Myron does not feel that this story rings true. Though Duane may be telling the truth about not wanting to hurt Wanda, it does not follow that he would keep the secret from Myron, especially if it would clear Duane in the murder investigation.

# Chapters 19-24

## Chapters 19-24 Summary

Myron locates and arranges a meeting with Gregory Caufield, one of the young men with Alexander Cross the night he was killed. Caufield is more than happy to meet with Myron, almost anxious. Arriving at Caufield's law firm, Myron discovers that he is actually meeting with Senator Bradley Cross, Alexander's father. Senator Cross asks Myron to leave the death of his son out of his investigation into Valerie's death, but when Myron tells him he can't, Cross tells Myron the truth about the night his son was killed.

Alexander and his friends were on drugs and had left the party to use them. Outside they had seen Yeller and Swade with stolen tennis equipment and confronted them. According to the senator, his son was stabbed by Errol Swade, who escaped. Curtis Yeller had been shot by the police. The senator admits that he had heard the rumors that he had called in favors to have Swade killed, but denies it. Myron believes him.

Myron leaves Caufield's office and is met by Jim and Lee, the two men that had been following him and Aaron, an enforcer for Frank Ache. Aaron is a frightening man, and Myron is not happy to meet with him. In the car, Aaron tells Myron that Frank Ache also wants to find Valerie's killer and will work with Myron and find Roger Quincy. Myron is intrigued and asks why Ache would consider helping him. Though Aaron will not reveal anything, he tells Myron that if he does not stop digging into Valerie's past, Aaron will be forced to act, perhaps by hurting Myron's mother, one of his friends, or Jessica. To prove he is serious, Aaron tells Myron not only where Jessica is in Europe, but what hotel she is staying in and her room number. For the first time, Myron is truly worried, but also curious about what Ache's interest is in Simpson's death.

Myron and Win work out and discuss the situation. Win points out that no one wants Myron to continue looking into the death of Valerie Simpson: not her parents, the police, Frank Ache, or Duane Richwood. Myron is not dissuaded. As he continues his argument, Wanda arrives. Wanda tells Myron that Duane has been acting even stranger, taking phone calls in a separate room and leaving for several hours a night. Myron asks if Duane might be having an affair, but Wanda is sure he is not. Wanda leaves and Myron tells Win what they discussed. Win suggests surveillance on Duane and agrees to start that evening.

Myron plays basketball with some neighborhood kids until his mom calls him with news that Jessica is on the phone. Myron is always happy to talk to Jessica, and is even more thrilled when she informs him that her plane has landed and she is on the way home. Myron showers quickly and prepares to leave, but the doorbell interrupts him. Two uniformed police officers wait at the door and ask Myron to come with them. Roland Dimonte has sent the officers to pick up Myron, as Roger Quincy has been captured and refuses to speak to anyone except Myron.



Myron arrives at the police station and is greeted by a happy Detective Dimonte. Rolly happily leads Myron to Quincy, who also greets Myron warmly. The detective leaves the two men alone and Roger tells Myron that he had seen him play basketball for Duke and had recognized him. After lovingly describing the game of tennis, Roger tells Myron the details of the day of Valerie's death.

Roger Quincy had been at the US Open, and between games was headed to the score center. Valerie Simpson was at the gate trying to get in but the guard did not recognize her and she did not have a ticket. Roger went to her aide and suggested buying a scalped ticket, which Valerie did. Valerie told Roger that she needed to find Myron and the pair split up, agreeing to meet every fifteen minutes until Bolitar was found. While looking for Myron, Roger heard a shot and ran toward the sound. Quincy saw Myron holding the lifeless body of Simpson. Knowing that the police would suspect him because he had stalked her, he fled.

Myron meets with Rolly who goads him, suggesting that Myron had arranged the murder of Valerie to keep an affair between Simpson and Duane Richwood a secret. Myron scoffs, but Rolly thinks that a mixed relationship might have hurt any endorsements Duane gets. Myron stands to leave, telling Rolly that he will not answer any questions because it falls under attorney client privilege. Rolly blusters, but Myron knows that if there were any supporting evidence Rolly would arrest him. Outside the interrogation room Esperanza is waiting for Myron. Diaz tells Myron that Win has called and there is something Myron needs to see.

## Chapters 19-24 Analysis

Myron continues to try and find out who killed Valerie, and the coincidence of her fiancé being murdered six years ago tugs at him. Deciding to meet with one of the men who had been with Alexander Cross the night of his death, Myron discovers his meeting is with Cross's father instead.

Bradley Cross tells Myron the truth about his son, that Alexander had been on drugs at the time of his death and was not the hero that he was portrayed to be after his murder. Cross had known his son was on drugs, but did not think he was involved in heavy drugs like heroin or cocaine. Alexander had acted on impulse the night he was killed, and the politician's staff had done the best they could to make sure nothing detrimental was reported. Alexander's mother still did not know that her son had been on drugs, and the senator wants to keep it that way.

Myron asks Senator Cross why Yeller and Swade were at the tennis club, and why all they had stolen was tennis equipment. Cross does not have an answer; he assumes that the two men were planning on stealing more and had been caught before they could do so. This is a key factor in the novel, and this fact helps Myron unravel the truth.

Meeting with Aaron does not please Myron, as the freelancer for Frank Ache is a very skilled enforcer who will do whatever he is hired to do. Aaron's proposal that Myron

allow Ache to help him locate Quincy is a bit startling. Myron can think of no reason why the death of Valerie Simpson would affect Frank Ache, other than the fact that Simpson had been considering signing with Myron's agency and had once been represented by TruPro, Frank's agency. With Valerie dead, Bolitar can think of nothing that would cause Ache to continue showing interest.

Aaron proves that he is ruthless when he threatens Duane's career, Myron's family, and Jessica. Myron is aware of how serious the situation has become when Aaron reveals where Jessica has been staying, which is a fact that Myron did not even know. The threat to Jessica stops Myron in his tracks and makes him rethink his investigation for the first time. Later, meeting with Win, Myron's friend points out that no one wants him to continue looking into things, including Valerie's parents. The arrival of Wanda and the news that Duane has been acting even more strangely is a welcome change for Myron, and all he needs to convince him to continue.

The arrest of Roger Quincy brings news, but not what Myron was expecting. Though he would prefer to be with Jessica after her return from Greece, he is summoned to the police station to meet with Valerie's stalker. Quincy had requested meeting with him because he thought Myron knew what was going on and could help him explain to the police that he had not killed the woman he claimed to love. Myron can tell by speaking to Quincy that the man is self-centered and a bit crazy, but does not believe that he had killed Valerie. Detective Dimonte tries to weave a tale including Myron as the brains behind the murder, but Myron knows he's bluffing and calls him on it. Dimonte is no closer to solving the case than Myron is.



# Chapters 25-30

## Chapters 25-30 Summary

Esperanza drives Myron to the Chelsea Hotel where he meets Win. Win informs him that Duane has met a woman and rented room 322. Win has rented room 323 with a view of Duane's. Though Myron would rather be with Jessica, he goes upstairs and waits in room 323 and keeps an eye on 322. While waiting, Myron almost convinces himself that there is no reason to be there, that Duane's private life is none of his business. Getting ready to give up, Myron hears the door open across the hall and watches Duane hug the woman he is with. Duane leaves and Myron is shocked to see that the woman is Deanna Yeller, Curtis Yeller's mother.

Myron wakes up in Jessica's house and tells her the details of Valerie Simpson's death. Jessica points out that the only constant in the entire tale, including Alexander Cross's murder, is tennis. Myron begins to think about this, and how Deanna Yeller fits into things. Myron also tells Jessica that Aaron has threatened to harm her as well as everyone he cares about if he does not leave things alone.

Myron and Jessica head to the US Open to see Duane's afternoon match, after Myron meets with Eddie Crane, hoping to convince him to sign with MB SportsReps.

Myron meets with Eddie Crane and his parents after his match. The Crane's seem to have settled on Myron and he is pleased. Jessica invites Eddie's parents to lunch so that Myron can meet with Eddie privately. Crane tells him that he has turned down TruPro, but that his parents realize it is his decision to make. Myron asks Eddie about his relationship with Valerie. Eddie explains that being in Pavel's tennis camp was not easy, as most people considered you competition. Because Eddie and Valerie were not competitors, they had become friends. Eddie tells Myron how Pavel could make Valerie work harder than anyone, and how she one day seemed to give up her desire. Eddie also tells Myron that he had last seen Valerie at The Plaza, where she had told him to stay away from Pavel and TruPro, and that she was going to make a comeback, but that first she had to settle something. Myron questions when this had taken place and Eddie tells him. Myron figures out that Eddie had seen Valerie fifteen minutes before she had called Duane's apartment.

Before Duane's match, Myron sits with Jessica and sees Aaron sitting with Roy O'Connor, the owner of TruPro. Pavel Menansi enters the seating area. Myron comes to a sudden realization and need to leave.

Myron drives to Julie Abramson's house. She still refuses to say if she had been Valerie's doctor. Instead, Myron presents her with a hypothetical situation about a young girl sent off to tennis camp and being mentored by a world famous coach that she will do anything to please as the camp is basically a world of isolation, and that gradually the coach takes advantage of the girl. Dr. Abramson agrees that such a situation would



be difficult for anyone to deal with, and if the coach were to abuse the girl sexually as Myron suggested, perhaps even getting her pregnant, the girl would withdraw and disconnect from life. Add the death of the young man she loves and the young girl would most certainly be broken.

Myron leaves to return to the US Open, convinced that Pavel Menansi was the cause of Valerie's fall from grace in the tennis world.

Myron returns to the match. Duane is faltering, but begins to rally. Myron tells Win that he now knows TruPro's interest in keeping the murder of Valerie Simpson from being tied to them. Across from Win and Myron, Pavel Menansi sits in the TruPro seats with Aaron, accepting the adulation of those around him, disgusting Myron.

Myron returns to the office and deals with some other clients. Looking for a client's number in his Rolodex, Myron realizes that Duane's contact information is missing. Esperanza suggests that he has simply misplaced it, but Myron doesn't think so.

Esperanza tells Myron that she has tracked down one of the teachers that had been interviewed about Curtis Yeller. Bolitar has an appointment to meet with her after Valerie's funeral, but questions if he even needs to go. Remembering that Duane had been seen with Deanna Yeller, Myron decides to keep the appointment.

## Chapters 25-30 Analysis

Myron's discovery that Duane has been meeting with Deanna Yeller is yet another mystery. The fact that Richwood is spending time with the mother of the man who had killed Alexander Cross is too strange to imagine. Myron knows that he will have to ask Duane about it, but with his big match the following day, now is not the time.

Discussing the case with Jessica helps Myron to see things a bit more clearly. Jessica is correct that the one constant in everything is tennis. Alexander was killed at a tennis club, Yeller and Swade were stealing tennis equipment, Valerie and Duane were tennis stars. The only piece that does not seem to fit is Deanna Yeller. Where would the mother of a murderer meet Duane Richwood? The connection eludes Myron.

While waiting for Duane's match to begin, Myron mulls over the things Eddie Crane had told him about Pavel's tennis camp. A realization comes to Myron, one that he must follow up immediately. Meeting with Julie Abramson, Myron needs to present his thoughts as a hypothetical situation in order to get the doctor to comment. Discussing a young girl, Myron discovers that his suspicions were correct. Valerie had been taken under the wing of Pavel Menansi, but had also been taken advantage of. In the isolation of the tennis world, Pavel had sexually abused Valerie, even getting her pregnant and telling her to have an abortion. Valerie's slide from the top began with Pavel's abuse and had culminated with the Alexander Cross.

At the tennis center, Myron warns Win that he has discovered TruPro's interest in keeping things quiet. If Pavel's abuse of Valerie is revealed, and the abuse of any



others, TruPro's financial situation could be drastically altered. This explains the reason that Aaron has been called in. Myron is a bit more concerned, but Win seems almost pleased.

The seemingly small discovery of Duane's contact information being missing is an important fact that will tie things together later in the novel. While Myron is in the office, Esperanza tells him that he can meet with one of Curtis Yeller's teachers the following afternoon, a meeting he almost decides to cancel. The knowledge of Pavel's abuse seems to lead away from the murder of Alexander Cross when it comes to Valerie. The only thing that still convinces Myron to keep the appointment is seeing Duane together with Deanna Yeller.

# Chapters 31-36

## Chapters 31-36 Summary

Myron and Win attend Valerie's funeral, where Helen Van Slyke asks Myron if he knows who hurt Valerie. Myron says he does, and Helen asks him to come back to the house after the church service. At Brentman Hall, Myron has Win distract Kenneth so that he can meet with Helen alone. Myron confronts Helen about Pavel's abuse of Valerie. Helen at first brushes Myron off, telling him that Valerie was of legal age. Myron realizes that Helen has been taking money from Pavel and TruPro to keep things quiet. Helen denies it at first and then tells Myron that someone had threatened to kill Valerie and harm her family if she told the truth. Myron admits that this could be true, except for the fact that Helen is still taking money and Valerie is dead. Disgusted, Myron tells Helen that she has sold her daughter. Helen shuts down and thanks Myron for coming.

Myron drives to Philadelphia to meet with Lucinda Elright. The retired teacher is now running a daycare from her home and meets with Myron surrounded by children. Lucinda tells Myron that after teaching high school for twenty-seven years, she has seen plenty of bad kids, but that Curtis Yeller was not one of them. Curtis had been a model student, smart, friendly and popular. Elright also tells Myron that Deanna Yeller was a young mother who made sure her son did not go down the wrong path. Lucinda tells Myron that after Curtis was killed, Deanna had disappeared. Elright also tells Myron that she does not believe the story that Yeller and Swade had been stealing from the tennis club. It does not ring true to her. Myron agrees to tell her if he discovers the truth about what really happened to Curtis.

Myron and Jessica have dinner and he tells her what he has learned so far. Jessica believes that Deanna Yeller might have decided that denying her son is less painful than dealing with the truth. Myron wonders if he should approach Duane about his relationship with Deanna Yeller, but decides that it might be easier to speak with Yeller instead. Jessica decides that she will be a hindrance and tells Myron to drop her off at home. Entering the apartment, Jessica is confronted with Frank Ache's hired help, Jim and Lee, along with Aaron.

Myron speaks to Jake Courter and asks him to get in touch with the coroner that had been on duty when Alexander Cross was killed. Courter wonders why, and tells Myron that he knows the cop that shot Curtis Yeller, but that the man would speak to no one. Myron wonders why, but continues to the Chelsea Hotel to see Deanna Yeller.

At the hotel he confronts Yeller, who tries to shut him down. Myron tells her that he knows about Curtis being a good young man, and also that she had been getting an influx of cash over the last half year. Myron wonders if she is being paid off. Yeller continually states that Curtis is dead and nothing can bring him back. When Myron presses, Deanna tells Myron that for everyone's sake he should let it go.



Jessica is at her apartment where Aaron and the two henchmen discuss who will go first with her. Almost instantaneously, Jim and Lee are shot and Aaron spins toward the terrace with his gun drawn to stare at Win. The two men stare each other down until Aaron suggests that they fight hand to hand until the death. Win agrees on the condition that whoever wins, Jessica will go free. The men put down their weapons and Aaron prepares to strike, at which point Win draws another gun and shoots him. Jessica is shaken and Win laughs.

Myron and Jessica make love, she wants contact after her close brush with death. The following morning they discuss things while he readies to see Pavel. If the Ache's thought they had taken care of things last night, Myron might be able to catch the tennis coach off guard. Myron asks Jessica to go into hiding for a bit. Surprisingly she agrees. They discuss things that have happened so far and Jessica wonders if Valerie might have witnessed something the night Alexander Cross was killed and that it might be tied to her death.

Myron drives to Pavel's hotel and knocks on the door. There is no answer but Myron hears someone weeping. Frantically, Myron breaks the door down and finds Pavel Menansi dead, a bullet wound to the chest. The crying continues and Myron finds Janet Koffman, a fourteen-year-old, in the bathroom. The young girl tells Myron that Pavel is her coach and they had been 'talking' about her match. Myron simply tells the girl that she will be alright, not knowing what else to do.

## Chapters 31-36 Analysis

The realization that Helen Van Slyke had known about Valerie's abuse at the hands of Pavel Menansi floors Myron, but the biggest shock is that Helen had accepted money to keep quiet. Though Helen rationalizes the fact because she claims that Valerie was threatened to keep quiet, Myron point blank accuses her of selling her daughter. Van Slyke refuses to acknowledge that she had sold her daughter, accusing Myron of being a sexist, as a young man having an affair with an older woman would not bother him as much. When Myron points out that Pavel would continue to abuse others, Helen thanks him for coming.

Myron meets with Lucinda Elright, who reiterates the story that had been in the paper after Curtis Yeller had been shot by the police. Elright tells Myron that Curtis had been a stellar student and his mother had been a proud woman who would do anything to make sure her son did the right thing. This is at odds with the Deanna Yeller that Myron had met. Discussing this with Jessica, Myron decides to ask the woman herself, and drops Jessica off at home.

At the hotel, Myron confronts an angry Deanna Yeller, who once again states that Curtis is dead and nothing can bring him back. Deanna seems to shut down when Myron accuses her of accepting a payoff, since she has purchased her house and received an influx of cash in the last six months.

Aaron, along with Jim and Lee, follow through on Aaron's threat to harm Jessica, but are stopped by Win. Win kills the three men, and laughs when he stands over the body of Aaron. Jessica wonders to Myron if Win enjoys killing, and if he does as well.

The following morning Myron decides to confront Pavel, assuming that he might catch the coach off guard, as the Ache's might consider the situation resolved after the attack on Jessica. Arriving at the hotel Myron finds Janet Koffman; another student of Pavel's locked in his bathroom naked, with Pavel dead on the bed. The young woman simply states that the two had been discussing her game. Myron is disgusted, knowing that Pavel has continued his ways, abusing the young women in his care.



# Chapters 37-42

## Chapters 37-42 Summary

Myron calls the police and moves Janet Koffman to her hotel room down the hall. Dimonte and Krinsky arrive, and Rolly questions Myron about why he is at the hotel so early in the morning, and wonders if Myron might have committed the crime in order to take the investigators away from Roger Quincy. Myron takes Rolly down the hall to Janet's room, and the detective is quickly angry. Both men agree that they would happily thank the person that had killed Pavel if they did not kill Valerie Simpson as well.

Myron walks back to the office and thinks things through. The murder of Pavel Menansi is a mystery. The murderer used the same method as the murderer of Valerie Simpson, firing through a Feron's bag. Myron wonders if there is one killer, or if someone used the same method to throw off the police.

TruPro had been protecting Menansi in order to maintain their reputation and their money. Killing Pavel did not make sense, nor did the threat against Jessica. If Frank Ache had decided to cut ties with Pavel, he would have had Aaron do the deed, but Aaron had been with Jessica. Therefore, common sense said it was not TruPro that had killed Pavel.

At the office, Myron speaks to Esperanza who has gone through the guest list of the party the night that Alexander Cross had been killed. One surprising name is on the list. E. Tunwell, Edward 'Ned' Tunwell of Nike. Esperanza tells Myron that Ned had lost his credibility when Valerie had spiraled downward, as he had signed her to Nike, just as he had signed Duane. Diaz has arranged a meeting with Ned for that evening.

Myron meets with Amanda West, the medical examiner that had worked on Curtis Yeller the night he was killed. Jake Courter had set up the meeting, but still refused to help Myron meet with Jimmy Blaine, the officer that had shot the young man. Jake does not want Blaine bothered. Myron wonders why.

Amanda West is a pretty young blond, who claims to have been waiting six years for someone to ask about the night in question. According to West, Curtis Yeller had been shot twice, once in the ribs, and once in the face. His face had been all but destroyed. That evening the police and government officials had confiscated all evidence, sighting national security, and even Yeller's mother had made an appearance, screaming that she did not want an autopsy. Usually a parent wants a body back for burial, but Curtis Yeller had been cremated. Amanda West has one more piece of information for Myron. Two different calibers of bullets had been removed from Curtis Yeller.

Myron drives to the remote house of Jimmy Blaine. Myron finds Blaine in a wheelchair, whittling on the dock behind his house. Courter had warned Jimmy that Myron would probably turn up, and at first the retired officer has nothing to say to Myron. That

changes when Myron points out that Curtis Yeller had been shot by two different weapons. Blaine tells Myron how he had fired twice and the two young men had disappeared around a corner. The police had not pressed the situation, even patting Blaine on the back for protecting his partner. The problem had arisen when Blaine had checked into Yeller's background and discovered that he had been a good kid. That and the sight of his mother crying over his body had stopped Blaine from reacting when he was confronted with another man with a gun four years later. The officer had hesitated and been shot, winding up in a wheelchair.

Myron asks who Blaine thinks might have shot Yeller, and Blaine tells him that he had heard shots while the police and Senator Cross's men had searched the area. Blaine and his partner had found Yeller's mother cradling her son, weeping. The mother had raised her head and screamed that she wanted to look into the eyes of the man who had murdered her son. Blaine wonders how a woman could be so cold, and who could have paid her to keep quiet about the murder.

Myron heads back to work, reviewing what he had learned over the past day. A car approaches and someone in the car shoots out the tires on his car. Two men approach and order him into the other car. Myron balks, but Frank Ache calls out that if he wanted Myron dead he would be. Myron sits with Ache, who tells Bolitar that they no longer have a problem, since Pavel is dead. Ache admits that he knew about the tennis coach abusing his young players, but money is the only factor in business that concerns Frank. Myron asks Frank if he had Valerie killed to protect Pavel, and Ache threatens Myron again.

Myron meets with Ned Tunwell. Ned is not happy that Myron knows about the night of Alexander's murder, or that he had been there. Ned tells Myron that he had been outside with Valerie, where they had kissed. Valerie was upset because Alexander had bowed to his father's wishes and not announced their engagement. While outside, they had heard a noise and saw the two black men standing over Cross's body. When the two men fled, Valerie had tackled the smaller one, bringing him to the ground. The man had escaped, and Valerie and Ned had returned to the party. Ned had not wanted anything else to affect Valerie's career.

## **Chapters 37-42 Analysis**

Myron does what he can to protect Janet Koffman and calls the police. Dimonte and Krinsky arrive, and Rolly questions Myron about being at the scene. Though the story Myron tells is plausible, the detective questions why Myron would have broken down the door. Myron leads the detective down the hall to another room and presents Koffman, who is not even aware that they are there. Dimonte is disgusted, and tells Myron that he will do his best to make sure the girl is cared for. Rolly wonders if there is any way that Janet might have killed Pavel, but Myron informs him that the girl had been locked in the bathroom with a chair under the door. The detective points out that the killer had done her several favors. Janet had not witnessed the killing, had been provided an alibi, and would no longer have to deal with the advances of the tennis coach.

Myron thinks over the murder of Pavel Menansi, and can come up with only two plausible explanations. Either the same person had killed Pavel and Valerie, or someone had used the murder of Valerie in order to draw attention away from themselves. Myron briefly wonders if Frank Ache and TruPro might be behind Pavel's death, but realizes that it is unlikely. The reason that Ache did not want Myron investigating Valerie's death is because he wanted to protect his investment in the tennis coach. Pavel made him money. While it would make sense for Ache to silence Valerie if she were going to expose Pavel, killing Menansi afterward was pointless. In addition, threatening Jessica would have been pointless if Frank Ache was going to kill Pavel. It is clear that someone else had been behind the murder or murders.

Myron's meeting with the coroner and then with Jimmy Blaine provides some interesting information. Amanda West tells Myron that the night Alexander Cross and Curtis Yeller had been killed was chaotic, with police and Cross's security detail all over the place. Evidence had been taken, but West still remembered the night well. The M.E. tells Myron that Yeller had been shot twice, with two different caliber weapons. Myron finds out from Blaine that he had fired his weapon twice, but had not seen Yeller again until he was dead in his mother's arms. West tells Myron that there had been a bullet to the ribs, but the second shot had killed Yeller, a close range shot to the face. There is no way that Jimmy Blaine could have fired the shot that had killed the young man. Blaine had lived his life cautiously from that night forward, afraid that he might kill a 'good' kid, and had wound up in a wheelchair because of his caution. Errol Swade is still missing but presumed dead, Blaine assuming that the gunfire he had heard that night was Cross's men shooting him as he fled. This is not necessarily the case. Myron realizes that Blaine is yet another victim of whatever had occurred six years ago at the tennis club.

Amanda West gives Myron another piece of interesting information about that evening. Curtis Yeller's mother had burst into the exam room at some point, demanding that there be no autopsy and the return of her son's body. Though some parents might want their child's body returned to them for burial, this was not the case here. Curtis Yeller had been cremated, effectively erasing all evidence.

Meeting with Ned Tunwell provides yet another view of that evening. Ned had been outside with Valerie, who was angry that Alexander had bowed to his father's wishes and not announced their engagement. Valerie was looking for revenge and Ned was willing to provide it, and the two were kissing when they heard noises and a scream. Ned and Valerie had seen Alexander on the ground with two black men standing over him. Alexander's friends were running away and the two suspects did the same. As they ran, Valerie had tackled the younger of the two. The young man had gotten away, and Ned had taken Valerie back into the party, partly to avoid her having to deal with things, but also because he had signed her to Nike and bad exposure would limit any profit. Errol Swade was still missing, but probably dead.

Frank Ache meets with Myron on the side of the road after shooting out the tires of his car. Ache tells Myron that what Pavel Menansi had done on his own time was his business, even if that included sleeping with underage girls that were in his care. Myron

is disgusted, but realizes that to Ache, business is business. As long as Pavel was making him money, the rest wouldn't bother him. Now that Pavel is dead, Frank has not problem with Myron, as there is no longer a risk to business.



# Chapters 43-48

## Chapters 43-48 Summary

Myron wakes up in Jessica's apartment and the two head to Flushing Meadows for Duane's big match. Duane tells Myron that Wanda has left him. Myron reminds Duane that while tennis is important, it might not be as important as the love he and Wanda share and that Duane should tell Wanda the truth. Myron believes that Duane was at the tennis club the night that Alexander Cross had been killed, a third person with Yeller and Swade. Duane does not respond, leaving the locker room for the court. Myron thinks things through and finally realizes what happened to Valerie during the fourth match.

Myron watches Duane's match with Win and Jessica. Duane is playing well, and manages to keep things even. Dr. Abramson arrives to say hello and goodbye, greeting Win by name as well. Win tells Myron that he had visited Valerie after her breakdown. Myron begins to fit pieces together, and tells Win that he needs to speak to Gregory Caufield alone. Win makes the arrangements.

Win brings Caufield to Myron. Myron has only one question for the man. Myron asks Caufield what Yeller and Swade were doing when Cross and his friends came across them that evening at the tennis club. Gregory gives Myron the answer he had expected. The two young men had not been stealing, they had been playing tennis.

Myron makes several calls from his car to confirm some suspicions. He calls Esperanza and asks who had the appointment before Valerie when she had come to his office. Esperanza confirms that it was Duane. Myron also calls Lucinda Elright and asks to see her briefly, leaving her apartment with a book and confirmation. He also calls Jimmy Blaine and Amanda West. On the radio, Myron hears that Duane has won the match and is now in the finals in the US Open. The celebration is short, as Duane leaves immediately. Myron is not surprised.

Arriving at Deanna Yeller's home, Myron tells her that he knows that Errol Swade is dead. Yeller reminds Myron that she had said as much the first time they met. Myron agrees but reminds Deanna that she had not told him that she had been the one to kill her nephew.

Myron confronts Deanna Yeller with the truth. At first she denies being connected to Duane Richwood in any way except for a one night stand. Myron tells her that he is aware that she is Duane's mother, and Duane is Curtis Yeller. Bolitar presents the yearbook he had gotten from Lucinda Elright as proof. Though Duane had some plastic surgery over the years and is six years older, he is clearly Curtis Yeller.

Deanna tells Myron the truth. Curtis and Errol had been playing tennis the night Alexander Cross was killed. Errol had panicked and killed Alexander, effectively

dooming Curtis as well. Jimmy Blaine's bullet had hit Errol that night, and Curtis had helped his cousin into the house. Deanna had told Curtis to hide in the basement, and had then shot Errol, then pretended it was Curtis when the police arrived. For the past five years Curtis had lived on his own, working at tennis clubs, honing his game. The money that Deanna had gotten recently was not a payoff, but from Curtis, now Duane, going pro. Everything had been fine until Valerie had recognized Duane coming out of Myron's office. The girl had contacted Duane and would not listen to him or his mother when they tried to explain what had happened. Deanna had seen no other option than to kill Valerie to keep her son safe.

Outside, Duane screeches into the driveway and pounds on the door, telling his mother not to say anything to Myron and to open the door. Deanna, crying, tells Myron not to let Duane see her. She has killed twice to protect him and one more death won't matter. At first Myron believes that Deanna means to kill him, but she puts the gun to her head, telling Myron there is no reason to tell anyone about Duane's true identity, all the guilty have been punished, and then she pulls the trigger and kills herself.

Myron and Duane leave, and Myron calls the Cherry Hill police, telling them he thinks he heard a shot at Deanna's address. Myron will not tell anyone the truth, but recommends that Duane tell Wanda if he truly loves her. Duane tells Myron that he can no longer be his agent, and Myron agrees.

Myron goes to Win's office and speaks to him. Myron knows that Win is the person that had killed Pavel Menansi. Win needed to remove the threat that the mob provided and by killing Pavel, Frank Ache no longer had an interest in Myron and Win. Win also explains that killing Pavel was a bonus for what the man had done to Valerie. Win tells Myron that he had visited Valerie every week while she was hospitalized and had always wondered what had changed her so much. Myron had supplied the answer.

Myron knows that he and Win are different people and deal with things in different ways. Myron does not think that he would be able to kill in cold blood as Win does, but at the same time, can't be sure. The case is over, and the mystery of Valerie's death has been solved, as well as the connection to Alexander Cross's death so many years ago. Myron heads to Jessica's, ready to move on.

## **Chapters 43-48 Analysis**

The case comes together for Myron finally, all the pieces falling into place. Myron realizes that though the case of Alexander's murder is six years old, it is tied to the death of Valerie Simpson nonetheless. Ned Tunwell had told Myron that Valerie had tackled one of the men that were there the night Alexander was killed. It makes sense to Myron that she would never forget the face of a man that had been involved in the killing of her fiancé. Valerie had recognized Duane the day that they had passed each other in Myron's office, and had taken Duane's information from Myron's rolodex in order to contact him. Valerie had hidden too much in her life, and believed that it was time for

everyone to know the truth. Duane had tried to explain things, and when he could not, Deanna Yeller had tried as well, failing.

Deanna Yeller had killed her nephew the night that Alexander Cross had been murdered, doing so to protect her son. Deanna had killed Valerie for the same reason, seeing no other way to keep her son safe. Ironically, when first meeting Deanna, Myron was surprised that a mother could care so little for her child. In reality, Deanna had cared a great deal, killing twice to save him. In a final gesture, Deanna killed herself, effectively destroying any evidence of the truth, as it would be Myron's word alone that would stand.

Win had killed Pavel in order to pay him back for the abuse that Valerie had suffered at his hand. When Myron told Win what he had discussed with Dr. Abramson, and the fact that such a man would continue to abuse those in his care, Win feels that killing the man is the only option. Myron does not agree, thinking that ruining Pavel's reputation would have hurt the man more, but Win believes that Frank Ache would have killed both him and Myron in order to protect his investment in the tennis coach.

In the end, Myron solves the mystery of Valerie's death; however, he does nothing with the knowledge. Duane/Curtis had not been guilty of any crime other than pretending to be someone else. His mother had sacrificed herself to save her son, actually killing herself in the end. Myron agrees that the guilty have been punished, and moves on, picking up the pieces of his daily life and letting it go.

# Characters

## Myron Bolitar

Myron Bolitar is the main character in *Drop Shot* by Harlan Coben. Myron, a sports agent in his early thirties, is the owner of MB SportsReps, a small agency in New York. A former professional basketball player whose career ended before it began due to a knee injury, Myron had attended law school at Harvard, worked for the government with his best friend Win, and now managed the careers of young up and coming sports stars.

In *Drop Shot*, Myron's energy is focused on the career of Duane Richwood, a young black man on the verge of winning the US Open. While Myron is concentrating his energy on Duane's career, he is contacted by Valerie Simpson, a former tennis pro, whose career had ended after she had a breakdown. Valerie wants to make a comeback, but before she can, she is murdered at the US Open while looking for Myron. Myron feels someone needs to speak for Valerie and begins to look into her death. His search leads him into Valerie's past, and a connection to Duane. Six years earlier, Valerie's fiancé had been murdered when he interrupted a supposed robbery at a tennis club. In reality, he had found two black men playing tennis, and during a confrontation had been killed. The second man, who had escaped, was Curtis Yeller, who had run away and become Duane Richwood. Valerie is killed by Duane's mother when the young woman realizes Duane's true identity.

Myron is a caring man, who believes that the truth will set those involved free. In his quest for the truth he realizes that the truth can be more damaging, as the truth in Duane's case is that he had been innocent, but caught up in a situation that would have ruined his life. In the end, Myron chooses not to reveal the truth, knowing that Duane is living with the tragedies that take place in his life, and that may be enough.

## Duane Richwood

A tennis superstar in the making, Duane Richwood is a client of Myron Bolitar at MB SportsReps. Duane is a twenty-something African-American male who had stunned the tennis world by rising through the ranks and becoming one of the top ten players in the country. Duane had been a runaway, living on the streets from the age of fifteen, learning to play on public courts, beating all opponents, and catching the notice of the sports world and Myron.

Duane lives with his girlfriend Wanda, playing tennis in the US Open, signing endorsement deals and launching what will be a promising career. A chance encounter with Valerie Simpson in Myron's office changes things. After Valerie's murder, Myron digs into her past and discovers the truth about Duane. Born Curtis Yeller, Duane had been with his cousin Errol Swade the night that Errol killed Alexander Cross, Valerie's fiancé. Yeller had escaped with help from his mother and built a new life for himself. He



is almost at the top when Valerie recognizes him and contacts him, resulting in his mother killing the young woman.

## **Winsor Horne Lockwood III**

Winsor Horne Lockwood III, is Myron's best friend. President of the investment firm Locke-Horn Securities, Win is somewhat of an enigma. Wealthy and intelligent, he looks the part of the aristocratic blue blood; however, he is also a loner, letting very few people into his inner circle of friends. Win is very loyal to those that he considers his friends, Myron being the closest friend he has. The two men had been roommates in college and have been together ever since. Myron runs his sports agency and Win runs the family firm, and both have been known to work for the FBI undercover.

Win stays to himself for the most part, and has no close relationships other than Myron. Raised in a world of power and prestige, Win seems not to have developed the personality to become close to people, preferring his lifestyle of one night stands with no strings attached. Win readily admits to Myron that he is not the person with which to discuss personal relationships, as he does not have any way to guide himself, let alone anyone else.

Myron and Win seem to balance each other. Both are intelligent and care for other people; however, Myron has a conscience, and Win seems not to.

Win knew Valerie Simpson, having been raised in the same circle of wealth as she, and had visited her in the hospital after her breakdown. When Myron reveals the abuse Valerie had suffered at the hands of her tennis coach, Win shows his dark side, murdering Pavel Menansi in his hotel room. Win also kills three men that threaten Jessica, Myron's girlfriend. Win lives a double life, a CEO most of the time, but a lethal problem for anyone who might hurt or threaten his friends.

## **Valerie Simpson**

The murder victim, Valerie was a tennis star in her youth, a woman who had fallen from the limelight after suffering a breakdown. Valerie had been attempting to make a comeback and wanted Myron to be her agent. After the initial meeting, Valerie had tried to contact Myron several times, and when she was unable to, had tracked him down to the tennis tournament at Flushing Meadows. Before Valerie is able to find Myron, she is murdered, shot at the entrance to the stadium.

Valerie had been a great player at one time, and her mother had sent her to the tennis camp of Pavel Menansi. Simpson's life begins to unravel when she is sexually abused by Menansi. The tragedy in her life continues when her fiancé is murdered the night they were to announce their engagement. Valerie suffered a breakdown and six years later is trying to make a comeback. A chance meeting in Myron's office changes things forever. Bumping into Duane Richwood, Valerie realizes he is one of the men that had



been there the night her fiancé was killed. Confronting Duane, Valerie winds up a victim again, murdered by Deanna Yeller, Duane's mother.

## **Jessica Culver**

Myron's girlfriend, Jessica, is a writer. In Greece for a portion of the novel, Jessica returns to the chaos of the Valerie Simpson murder. Though Jessica is not directly involved, she is threatened by Aaron, an enforcer hired by Frank Ache to protect his investment in Pavel Menansi. Win is forced to kill the three men that threaten Jessica.

## **Esperanza Diaz**

Myron's associate, Esperanza, is a former wrestler who now works for Myron while attending law school at night. Esperanza deals with agency business, but also helps Myron research information regarding Valerie Simpson's past.

## **Ned Tunwell**

An advertising executive for Nike, Ned is about to sign Duane Richwood to a large endorsement deal. Ned had also signed Valerie Simpson to Nike, but his career had been damaged when the young woman had a breakdown. Ned provides information to Myron regarding the night that Alexander Cross had been murdered that links Duane and Valerie once Myron discovers Duane's true identity.

## **Roland Dimonte**

The police detective that is investigating the murder of Valerie Simpson, Dimonte's two constants are chewing on a toothpick and wearing garish cowboy boots.

## **Wanda**

Duane's girlfriend, Wanda is concerned about her boyfriend's behavior and asks Myron to find out what is going on.

## **Pavel Menansi**

Valerie Simpson's tennis coach, Pavel works with Frank Ache at TruPro, a rival sports agency. Menansi had sexually abused Valerie years earlier, taking advantage of his control over the young woman. Years later when the truth is discovered, Win kills Manansi in retribution.

## **Roger Quincy**

A stalker who claims to be in love with Valerie Simpson, Quincy is at first suspected of killing the woman when he flees the area after her death. Quincy had been with Valerie the day of her death, but had been helping her try and locate Myron.

## **Jake Courter**

A sheriff in New Jersey, Jake helps Myron research the murder of Alexander Cross six years earlier.

## **Helen Van Slyke**

Valerie's mother, Helen, had effectively sold her daughter, doing nothing to stop the abuse of Pavel Menansi, and then accepting money from him to keep his crimes secret.

## **Kenneth Van Slyke**

Valerie's step-father.

## **Errol Swade**

Curtis Yeller's cousin, Errol Swade murdered Alexander Cross six years earlier. When the two men fled, Swade was shot by a police officer in the ribs. Arriving at his aunt's home, Deanna Yeller kills her nephew in order to save her son.

## **Curtis Yeller**

The son of Deanna Yeller, Curtis is actually Duane Richwood.

## **Eddie Crane**

A young tennis player, Eddie had been friends with Valerie at Pavel's tennis camp, and gave Myron some insight into the type of life that Valerie had led.

## **Frank Ache**

A mob boss, Frank is the force behind TruPro. Frank threatens Myron through Aaron, his hired henchman, when Myron's investigation into Valerie's murder threatens to expose the abusive Pavel Menansi.

## **Aaron**

A hired enforcer, Aaron is a freelancer working for Frank Ache. Aaron warns Myron that if he does not stop digging into Valerie's past, he will be forced to hurt someone he loves. Aaron is killed by Win when he and two other men threaten to harm Jessica in her apartment.

## **Joe**

A hired henchman, Joe works for Frank Ache and is killed by Win after he threatens Jessica.

## **Lee**

A second hired henchman, Lee is also killed by Win.

## **Deanna Yeller**

The mother of Curtis Yeller/Duane Richwood, Deanna kills twice to save her son: first her nephew, then Valerie Simpson. When the truth is discovered, Deanna kills herself in order to protect her son again.

## **Henry Hobman**

Duane Richwood's tennis coach.

## **Gerard Courter**

Sheriff Jake Courter's son, Gerard is a police officer in New York City.

## **Dr. Julie Abramson**

Valerie's doctor when she had her breakdown, Abramson will not reveal this to Myron, but does indirectly answer his questions in order to help Myron understand Valerie find her killer.

## **Gregory Caufield**

A friend of Alexander Cross, Gregory was present the night Cross was murdered. Caufield tells Myron that the two men Cross had confronted that evening six years ago had been playing tennis, not stealing as reported.





## **Senator Bradley Cross**

The father of Alexander Cross, Senator Cross requests that Myron stop looking into his son's death so that the truth of the young man's drug use will not become public knowledge.

## **Lucinda Elright**

Curtis Yeller's teacher, Elright revealed the truth about the young man as well as his mother. Elright's description of Yeller is exactly opposite what Yeller's own mother had told him, causing Myron to doubt the truth he had gotten from Deanna.

## **Jimmy Blaine**

A retired police officer, Jimmy Blaine had received the credit for shooting Curtis Yeller six years ago after the murder of Alexander Cross.

## **Janet Koffman**

A fourteen-year-old tennis player being coached by Pavel Menansi. Janet is locked in the bathroom of Pavel's room when Win kills him for the abuse of Valerie Simpson years earlier.

# **Objects/Places**

## **MB SportsReps**

The sports agency owned and operated by Myron Bolitar and his associate Esperanza Diaz. Myron had started the agency after his professional basketball career was cut short by a knee injury.

## **TruPro**

A rival sports agency, TruPro is operated by Frank Ache, a man deeply involved in organized crime. Ache tries to stop Myron from investigating Valerie Simpson's death in order to protect Pavel Menansi, the tennis coach that works closely with TruPro.

## **FLOW/Fabulous Ladies of Wrestling**

The wrestling organization that Esperanza Diaz was a member of, wrestling as Little Pocahontas, the Indian Princess.

## **USTA National Tennis Center**

The location of the US Open, where Duane Richwood is competing, located in Queens, New York.

## **The John Adams Building**

The apartment building near Greenwich Village in New York, where Duane Richwood lives with his girlfriend, Wanda.

## **Cherry Hill**

A suburb in New Jersey, Cherry Hill is the location of Curtis Yeller's home.

## **Old Oaks Club**

The tennis club where Alexander Cross was murdered six years earlier by Errol Swade.

## **Dilworth Mental Health Facility**

The institution where Valerie Simpson was cared for after her breakdown six years earlier.

## **The Chelsea Hotel**

A hotel in New York, where Myron witnesses the meeting between Duane/Curtis and his mother Deanna Yeller.

## **Brentman Hall**

The ancestral home of Helen Van Slyke, Valerie's mother.

# Themes

## Deception

Deception is central in *Drop Shot*, by Harlan Coben. The biggest deception is the alternate identity of Duane Richwood. Duane is a tennis player, currently climbing the ladder at the US Open, and a client of Myron Bolitar. Duane had supposedly been a runaway, living on the streets and playing tennis in public parks, honing his skills and becoming one of the top players in the country. In reality, Duane is Curtis Yeller, a young man that had reportedly been killed after the murder of Alexander Cross six years earlier. Duane's mother had orchestrated his escape, and had helped him when she could in order to adopt a new identity and move on with his life. All goes well until Duane is recognized by Valerie Simpson and his mother feels that her only possible solution is to kill the young woman.

Another instance of deception is presented in the case of Valerie Simpson. Valerie had been abused sexually by her tennis coach and had gotten pregnant. The family, specifically her mother, Helen Van Slyke, had done everything possible to hide the truth from the press, not just to protect her daughter, but more likely to protect her own reputation.

The deceptions that occur in *Drop Shot*, large and small, intertwine to create the situation that Myron finds himself in. No character is completely honest, and the lies twist together, creating the tragic circumstances that take place regarding Valerie Simpson and Duane Richwood.

## Denial

In *Drop Shot*, Valerie Simpson's mother, Helen Van Slyke, is in denial about the damage she has caused to her daughter by covering up her sexual abuse. Valerie had become involved in a sexual relationship with her tennis coach, the much older Pavel Menansi. Living at Pavel's tennis camp, Valerie was no more than a pastime for the coach. Because of the isolation that Valerie felt at the camp, Pavel was able to manipulate her, eventually getting Valerie pregnant and forcing her to get an abortion.

After Pavel's abuse of Valerie is discovered, Helen Van Slyke accepts payment from Pavel, purportedly restitution for the money that Valerie might have earned if her career in tennis had continued. Van Slyke is quick to point out that Menansi had paid her out of goodwill, that he might not have been the cause of Valerie's downfall at all. Effectively selling her daughter's well being, Van Slyke rationalizes the behavior of all parties, talking herself into accepting the money offered by the tennis coach as the best course of action for all involved.

Deanna Yeller also embraces denial. Though her son was indeed innocent the night that Alexander Cross was murdered, Deanna killed her nephew, gladly sacrificing him in

order to protect her son. When Valerie discovers Duane Richwood's true identity, Deanna again rationalizes the murder of Valerie Simpson as an act of protection rather than murder.

## Loyalty

There are several instances of loyalty within the book. Myron Bolitar is a sports agent and Win Lockwood is his best friend. Regardless of what type of help Myron needs, whether it be help finding information, protection from a threat, or killing another, Win will do whatever is necessary. The two men do not need to prove themselves to each other, they simply know that they can count on each other no matter what.

Deanna Yeller is also loyal to her son, now known as Duane Richwood. Deanna killed her own nephew, Errol Swade, the night that Errol had murdered Alexander Cross. Knowing that her son was innocent, Deanna arranged to make the police believe that her son was dead and Errol had escaped. Her loyalty to her son gave her the strength to kill her nephew, and then Valerie Simpson, so that her son might have a chance at life. Deanna Yeller sacrificed a relationship with her son while he was growing up in order to push him toward success.

# Style

## Point of View

Drop Shot is written in the third person omniscient. This is a great deal of help to the reader, as it gives one insight into the thoughts and actions of Myron Bolitar, the main character in the novel. Myron and his plans are the main focus of the novel; however, there is a brief period when the point of view shifts to that of Myron's girlfriend, Jessica Culver. This switch takes place at a point of high drama, when Jessica's life is being threatened, to give the reader greater insight into Jessica's thoughts and feelings, and also to present Myron's friend Win from a different perspective.

The characters in Drop Shot vary in age and background, but all communicate in modern language, signifying a story that takes place in current times. Though all the characters in the novel are educated, there are times when some slip into a street type dialect, signifying a lower class of education or upbringing than some.

## Setting

Drop Shot takes place in New York for the most part, with some brief trips to New Jersey, as well. The novel centers around the life and history of several tennis players, and a great deal of the important parts of the novel take place in Queens, New York, at the National Tennis Center. It is here that Valerie Simpson is murdered while Duane Richwood is competing in the US Open. As the murder of Valerie triggers the events that follow, the Tennis Center is central to the novel. The main characters often return, as Duane continues to compete in matches, and Myron questions several people with involvement while there.

The office of MB SportsReps is visited frequently as Myron conducts business for his other clients or confers with Esperanza, his associate. It is at the agency that Valerie recognizes Duane for who he really is, starting the ball rolling towards her murder and the discovery of Duane's involvement in Alexander Cross's death.

Myron visits some areas in New Jersey, specifically Cherry Hill, when he interviews Curtis Yeller's mother. Deanna Yeller had moved from the slums of New Jersey to the affluent suburb after Duane had gone pro and he was able to help her as she had helped him. Myron also visits his parents home in New Jersey, where he lives in the basement when not staying with Jessica in New York.

## Language and Meaning

The language in Drop Shot is fast paced and entertaining, allowing the reader to get a better feel for the characters, as well as to express the characters personality traits more clearly. The characters are all around the same age and education; however, at

times some might slip into a street or urban dialect giving the reader a better insight into their background.

The novel is written with quite a bit of fast paced dialogue, with descriptive passages interspersed that give the reader a better idea of what the main character is thinking or what direction his thoughts are moving in. The novel takes place over a relatively short period of time, and the language allows the reader to follow the different storylines without losing track of the main plot.

## **Structure**

Drop Shot by Harlan Coben is a fictional novel broken down into forty-eight chapters of varying lengths. The chapters are numbered, not titled, but each chapter is, for the most part, self contained, following the action of the novel from one point to another. The reader is led along the same thought path as the main character, Myron Bolitar, and the chapters are written in a way to make this easier.

The main plot is the murder and subsequent investigation of the death of Valerie Simpson. There are several subplots that tie into the main plot, including the sexual abuse of Valerie by her tennis coach, Pavel Menansi, and the cover-up involving Alexander Cross's death at the hands of Errol Swade, Curtis Yeller's cousin. Each plot line is tied neatly into the other, providing the reader with a complete view of the character's thoughts and actions.

Drop Shot is well written, providing the reader with an entertaining story that is rich in character development. The reader is drawn quickly into the plot and carried along until the resolution. Though the mystery is solved by the main character before it is revealed to the reader, all is revealed clearly soon enough, keeping one intrigued and involved throughout.

## Quotes

"Win-full name: Windsor Horne Lockwood III- steepled his manicured fingers. He did that a lot, steepling. Steepling fit him. Win looked like his name. The poster boy for the quintessential WASP. Everything about his appearance reeked arrogance, elitism, Town and Country Parties Page, debutantes dressed in monogrammed sweaters and pearls with names like Babs, dry martinis at the clubhouse, stuffy old money-his fine blond hair, his pretty-boy patrician face, his lily-white complexion, his snotty Exeter accent. Except in Win's case some sort of chromosomal abnormality had slipped through the generations of careful breeding. In some ways Win was exactly what he appeared to be. But in many more ways-sometimes very frightening ways- Win was not." Chap. One, pp. 3, 4

"When you coach one so young, you have responsibilities that go beyond her life on the court. She was a child—a child growing up in the spotlight. The media, they are savages, no? The don't understand what they do to sell papers. I tried to cushion some of their blows. I tried to protect her, to not let it eat her up inside. In that end, I failed." Chap. 5, p. 45

"Duane doesn't have many people,' she continued. 'He doesn't have any family. He lived on the streets since he was fifteen, scraping by. He wasn't an angel that whole time He did some things he'd rather forget. But he never hurt anybody, never did anything serious. His whole life he never had anyone he could rely on. He had to take care of himself.'" Chap. 6, p. 57

"It was painful. You have no idea how painful. My daughter had a mental collapse, Mr. Bolitar. She was only eighteen years old. Beautiful. Talented. A professional athlete. Successful by any rational measure. And she had a breakdown. It was stressful on all of us. We tried our best to help her get well, to keep it from getting in the papers and becoming public. We tried our best to keep it under wraps." Chap. 8, p 70

"Curtis is dead. Nothing you can do can change that. Best to just forget it."

'It's that easy?'

'Been six years. Not like anybody misses Curtis.'

'How about you, Mrs. Yeller? Do you miss him?'

She opened her mouth, closed it, opened it again.

'Not like Curtis was a good kid or nothing He was trouble.'

'Doesn't mean he should have been killed,' Myron said.

She looked up at him, held his gaze. 'Don't matter. Dead is dead. Can't change that.'

Myron said nothing.

'Can you change that, Mr. Bolitar?' she asked, challenging."

Chap. 13, pp. 118-119

"Win smiled, sat back. 'So how was your visit with Ms. Yeller?'

'She's hiding something too.'

'Well, well. The plot doth thicken.'



Myron nodded.

'In my experience,' Win said, 'There is only one thing that can silence the mother of a dead boy.'

'And that is?'

'Cash. A great deal of it.' Chap. 14, p. 121

"But the most interesting rumor, the one that really snared Myron's attention, appeared in two separate papers. According to several 'unnamed sources,' Valerie Simpson had gone into hiding to cover up a pregnancy." Chap. 17, p 133

"It started out as a puff piece: Curtis Yeller was described as an 'honor roll student'" Not a big deal really. A psychotic child molester with the IQ of a citrus beverage was suddenly dubbed an honor student when killed prematurely. Very 'Bonfire of the Vanities.' But this story wen a bit further. Mrs. Lucinda Elright, Curtis Yeller's history teacher, described Curtis as her 'best pupil' and a boy who 'had never even gotten a detention.'" Chap. 17, p 134

"Perhaps there was a second cover up that night. If there was, I was not involved in it. And more important, I don't see what possible connection it could have with Valerie Simpson.'" Chap. 19, p. 157

"You don't understand. Pavel blames himself for what happened. He took it upon himself to remedy the situation in the only way he could.'

'By paying you off.'

'By providing us with some of the funds Valerie may have earned had her career continued. He didn't have to do that. The affair wasn't necessarily the cause—'

'It's called hush money.'

'Never,' she said in a near-hiss. 'Valerie was my daughter.'

'And you sold her for cash.' Chap. 31, p 232

"I'm no ballistics expert, but I know a little something about bullet slugs. I pulled two slugs from Yeller. One from the ribcage, one from the head.'

'Yeah so?'

'The two slugs were of different calibers.' Amanda West put up her index finger. All traces of a smile were gone now. Her face was clear and determined. 'Understand what I'm telling you Mr. Bolitar. I'm not just saying two different guns here. I'm talking about different caliber. And here's the funny part: all the officers on the Philadelphia force us the same caliber weapon.'

Myron felt a chill. 'So one of the two bullets came from someone other than a cop.'" Chap. 39, p 281

"So you killed her,' Myron said.

For a few moments Deanna said nothing. She stared down at her hands, as though looking for something. 'She wouldn't listen to reason,' she said softly. 'Duane told me that Valerie called him. He tried to convince her she had the wrong man, but she wouldn't hear it. So I met up with her at the hotel. I tried to persuade her too. I told her he'd done nothing wrong, but she just kept talking this nonsense about not hiding things



anymore—how she'd buried to many things and it had to all come out.' Deanna Yeller closed her eyes and shook her head. 'The girl left me no choice. I watched the hotel. I saw her rush out. I saw her rush to the matches, and I knew she was scared and I knew she was going to say something and I knew I couldn't wait anymore, that I had to stop her now or...' She sat still. Then she moved her hands off the table and folded them on her lap. 'I had no choice.'" Chap. 47, p 335

# Topics for Discussion

Why do the police initially suspect Duane in the murder of Valerie Simpson?

What was the relationship between Pavel Menansi and Valerie Simpson?

Who is Duane Richwood?

Who killed Valerie Simpson? Why?

Who killed Pavel Menansi? Why?

Why does Frank Ache wish to keep Myron from investigating Valerie's death?

How does Dr. Abramson help Myron without breaching patient confidentiality?

How was Jimmy Blaine wronged?