

The Drop Study Guide

The Drop by Dennis Lehane

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



Contents

The Drop Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Section 1: Chapters 1-4.....	5
Section 2: Chapters 5-7.....	11
Section 3: Chapters 8-10.....	15
Section 4: Chapters 11-13.....	19
Section 5: Chapters 14-16.....	23
Characters.....	27
Symbols and Symbolism.....	31
Settings.....	33
Themes and Motifs.....	35
Styles.....	39
Quotes.....	40



Plot Summary

“The Drop” is a crime novel by Dennis Lehane which revolves around the characters who own, run, or frequent Cousin Marv’s Bar in the Flats, in Boston Massachusetts in the present day. Cousin Marv’s Bar is a front for the Chechen mafia, which runs the city. Cousin Marv is owned by Cousin Marv, who years before, had his own crew, but folded into the Chechens rather than fight them. Cousin Marv is now a fence for the Chechens, with his bar actually being owned by them. Cousin Marv is awaiting his chance to get out of the city, to strike it rich somehow. Bob Saginowski, Marv’s cousin, tends bar at Cousin Marv’s, and is seen by everyone as a good guy. He attends Saint Dominic’s Catholic Church regularly, though he never takes Communion, and though he is an ardent supporter of the traditions of the Church, he leans left on social issues. Another faithful attendee of church is Evandro Torres, a police detective who, despite numerous flaws including adultery, always comes clean to God, believing Confession is better than therapy or AA.

One night while walking home, Bob discovers an abused, abandoned puppy in a garbage can. The woman who owns the garbage can, Nadia Dunn, does not own the puppy, and invites Bob in to clean the puppy up. She agrees to help him get settled with the puppy, because Bob has decided to take the puppy in. He names the puppy Rocco, after the patron saint of dogs. Back at work, the Fitzgerald brothers, Bri and Fitz, hold up Cousin Marv’s. Marv tries to reason with them, telling them the bar is not what it seems. The Fitzgeralds do not care, and make off with \$5,000 in cash. Bob notices that one of the robbers wears a broken wristwatch, a fact which he passes on to Torres, who handles the case. Torres believes the Cousin Marv’s is a drop bar, though Bob and Marv deny this. Torres contacts his former lover, Detective Lisa Romsey, who reveals that Cousin Marv’s bar factors into the disappearance of Richie Whelan some ten years before, who left the bar to score some weed and never returned. This intrigues Torres who decides to pursue the cold case in light of the recent robbery.

As it turns out, the Fitzgeralds are working for Marv – and one of them, Bri, is caught and killed. Fitz tries to back out of the deal, and Marv runs him over with his car. Meanwhile, a sociopathic murderer, Eric Deeds, also a local, has been threatening to kill Nadia and Rocco if Bob does not return Rocco to Eric, or give Eric \$10,000. Eric says he is the one who killed Richie Whelan. Eric was also once in an abusive relationship with Nadia, and he leaves the dog in her garbage can as a way to get her to think about him. Bob doesn’t want any harm to come to Nadia or Rocco, so he decides he will give Eric the money. Marv, upon learning about Eric, goes to see Eric, telling Eric not to mess with Bob. He then hires Eric to rob the bar on Super Bowl night, when the Chechens will use the bar as a drop for millions of dollars. The plot fails horribly. Bob ultimately kills Eric, and the Chechens kill Marv. Bob is rewarded with Celtics tickets and money for his part in things. Torres learns, from one of Eric’s old partners, that it was not Eric who killed Richie Whelan. It is Bob who actually killed Richie Whelan 10 years before, toward the end of Cousin Marv’s days of running a crew. Without any hard evidence to go on, all Torres can do is let things be as they are. Yet he knows at the

same time that some sort of street justice has occurred, and is able to shake Bob's hands after church at the end of the book.



Section 1: Chapters 1-4

Summary

Chapter 1 – Bob Saginowski has worked at Cousin Marv’s bar in the Flats for more than 20 years. It is two nights after Christmas, and the bar is mostly quiet. Millie delays returning to the seniors home on Edison Green, while Cousin Marv reads a racing form and texts his sister, Dottie. A group of friends of a man believed to be dead, Richie Whalen, drink in his honor, and watch basketball. Ten years before to the day, Richie had left the bar to score some drugs, but had never come back. He left behind a girlfriend and a kid he never saw in New Hampshire with her mother, as well as his car – which he would never leave behind, his friends contend. That means he must be dead. His friends – Sully, Donnie, Paul, Stevie, Sean, and Jimmy – refer to Richie as Glory Days, his nickname from high school when he played one year as quarterback, and made the school’s horrible football record marginally better. They ask Bob what his opinion about the basketball game is, and he responds that basketball doesn’t interest him. He gives them a round of drinks on the house. They contend that nothing, not even attractive girls, interests Bob.

Cousin Marv dislikes the amount of free booze that Bob gives out, and doesn’t like that Millie has a \$140 tab. He tells Bob to take down the Christmas decorations, says Little Christmas doesn’t matter, and heads out. Millie asks for another drink, and Bob tells her he’ll have to settle the tab. She pulls out an old gym bag she carries with her every night, out of which she pulls a buck sixty-two, and an antique sterling silver picture frame from Water Street Jewelers. Bob accepts the dollar, but won’t accept the frame, telling her tab is covered. Bob is careful with his money, never drives anywhere, the house is paid for, and the property taxes are a joke in the area, so Bob has disposable income. He pulls seven \$20 bills out of his wallet and adds them to the cash register to handle Millie’s tab. Bob asks Millie if she remembers Little Christmas, to which she responds that it is January 6, and meant something in her day. Bob says it meant something in his father’s day as well. Millie finishes her drink, lights a cigarette, and heads out.

Bob heads home through the Flats, avoiding trashcans full of Christmas refuse, from old TVs and toasters to toys that have already been broken. People in the area scramble from paycheck to paycheck, and live on debt. Bob lives in the house he grew up in, and it often brings back memories which he tries to escape by doing everything from attending church socials to picnics. Bob is lonely, and doesn’t want to be alone anymore. He knows people think he’s a good guy, but they also know he is a socially-awkward loser. He recalls breaking down to Father Regan at Church about it, who tells him that he will find a good woman who sees that Bob has faith in God and a good heart.

As Bob walks, he finds a garbage can shaking down the sidewalk, with the lid clamped down tight. He pulls out some garbage and finds a small pit bull puppy with dried blood



near its ear, a white snout, and big paws. A woman with a scar on her cheek calls out through her upstairs window, asking what Bob is doing in her trash. He holds up the puppy. She asks him his name and if he knows Father Pete Regan. When Bob says he does, she takes his picture on her cell phone, sends it out to Pete Regan and six other people, and invites him to bring the dog inside. She introduces herself as Nadia, and they wash the dog in her sink. She explains she used to work at Animal Rescue, and that pit bull puppies are hard to find homes for. If Bob doesn't take the dog, whoever beat the puppy and left the puppy for dead will have a chance to reclaim the animal from Rescue, and then, after seven days, the puppy will be put up for adoption, and if that fails, put to sleep. The woman agrees to look after the dog until Sunday, when Bob comes back to pick the dog up to bring home.

Chapter 2 – Bob attends Church Sunday morning at Saint Dominic's. Attendance is slimmer every year, and particularly slim that morning, with only a handful in attendance. Among them are Bob, the widow Malone, Theresa Coe, former principal of the former Saint Dominic's School, Old Man Williams; and Torres, a Puerto Rican cop. Bob never takes Communion from Father Regan, though Father Reagan tries to convince him the damage for taking Communion in a state of mortal sin is worse than not taking Communion at all. Bob is very traditional about Church practices, though he leans left on most Church teachings. Bob loves the church building itself, dating from the late 1800s. He finds it beautiful, and doesn't like modern churches. As Mass ends, Bob and Torres give one another friendly nods, and go their own ways. Bob then heads to work at Cousin Marv's at noon, thinking over the puppy situation.

Cousin Marv is Bob's cousin from his mother's side. In the past, Marv had run a crew, or gang, of the loan and debt-repayment sort, from the late 1980s through the early 1990s. Eventually, they either had to put up a fight with other crews, or yield, so they yielded because they were not interested in violence. Marv is now a fence for the Chechens, who really own the bar. Marv also takes some bets for Chovka's father and the Chechens from time to time. Bob is glad to be away from the crew and only a bartender, regretting the one occasion Marv's crew had to resort to violence. Though out of the business more or less, Marv is still looking for his ticket to success, and is haunted, like Bob, by their unsuccessfulness and the bad things done to get ahead.

At the bar in the present time, Bob tends to black ice outside in the alley with ice melt. Bob tells Marv about the dog, but Marv is disinterested. Inside, Anwar, one of Chovka's men, comes for last night's books. A Boston Police Department raid on a Chechen social club resulted in the jailing of half the runners and bagmen, so pickups are slow that morning. Anwar helps himself to a drink and then leaves. Marv feels disrespected. Around five, business picks up, and Rardy, the other bartender, is late. He is a kid of about thirty, with a horrible sense of humor.

Outside the bar, two brothers, Ed and Brian Fitzgerald, drive past Marv's bar for the third time. Ed, overweight, is the older of the two, and everyone calls him Fitz. Brian, called Bri, is incredibly thin. Standing next to each other, they look like the number 10, so when they are together, they are referred to as 10. They pull up under the expressway, and snort cocaine. Bri wears a watch that stopped telling time a year ago,



which was a parting gift at the age of ten from his father when his father left home. They know Marv's is a drop bar, and is their test assignment. Inside the bar, Bob and Rardy handle drinks while Marv handles bets and passes off the envelope to the Chechens, who go as quickly as they come in. As the bar is being closed up, the masked Fitzgerald brothers enter with guns drawn. Bri puts a kitchen trash bag on the bar, while Fitz orders that it be filled. Marv tries to reason with them, that the bar really belongs to the Chechens, but the brothers are not deterred in the least. Bob notices the watch with the face turned in that the thinner brother wears on his right wrist. It reads six-fifteen even though it is past two-thirty in the morning. Bob is worried for his life, and can only think about how much he wants to raise the puppy and live more of his life. Marv fills up the bag with cash. The fat brother tells Marv he talks too much, and the brothers leave. They then find Rardy regaining consciousness, having been knocked out by the robbers upon their entry.

Chapter 3 – Two patrolwomen, G. Fenton and R. Bernardo, respond to the call first. They question Rardy, Bob, and Marv about the robbery. The detective who responds to the case is Evandro Torres, from Church. They reveal what happened to Torres, leaving out the part where Marv talked about the true ownership of the bar. Torres asks for details about the robbers, but all Bob can remember is the watch, which he reveals, not knowing why. He can feel the eyes of Marv and Rardy pressing in on him. Torres inquires as to the true nature of the bar, but Marv denies any involvement in drugs or theft. Marv insists the money stolen from the cash register will match the receipts, but Torres knows better, knowing the bagman must have already come by. Torres reveals that everyone knows Marv's bar is a drop bar. Marv pretends not to know what this is. Torres sarcastically explains that Eastern European syndicate gangs cover their money trails by collecting all the money from their illegal dealings, and drops everything in a preselected location, a bar, where the bar sits on the money until the morning, when it is messengered back to the syndicate. Drop bars are only notified a short time, hours before, that they are to be drops –and so they police can never catch them. Torres inquires about the accents the robbers spoke with, and Bob responds that they sound like everyone else in the area.

Torres reveals that Saint Dominic's will close its doors, and the parish will merge with Saint Cecilia's. Rardy is taken away in an ambulance. Torres goes on to say it is a shame that Saint Dom's is closing down, and hates the secular trend of culture. Bob counters about the covering up of child rape by Rome, to which Torres throws his hands up and says most people are Cafeteria Catholics, choosing to be mostly Catholic except for the difficult parts. Torres asks why Bob doesn't take Communion, and Bob responds that it is none of his business. As Torres leaves, Bob realizes he has just mad an enemy of a cop. When the police and EMTs leave, Marv berates Bob for talking about the watch. He says that at least Anwar and Makkhal picked up their envelope before the robbery, so he's only on the hook for the five-thousand and change from the register. While it is better than being on the hook for the drop, it is still not good.

Chapter 4 – Bob picks up the puppy from Nadia, but says he knows nothing about caring for a puppy. Nadia goes with him to a pet store to help him pick out all the right things, from vitamins and a crate to food and toys. Bob also buys a dog training book,



and is truly happy to be purchasing the items. They drop Nadia off at her house afterward, and she tells him to be patient, because training a puppy will take some time. At home, the puppy uses the bathroom in the house, but rather than get angry, Bob senses a connection with the puppy, and thinks they have been brought together for a reason.

Torres, meanwhile, laments that he no longer works homicide, having messed up in some way, and having been demoted to robbery as a result. He meets up with major crimes detectives Lisa Romsey and her partner, Eddie Dexter, at the Pen' Channel. They are sitting in their unmarked car, Eddie is quiet, thin, has no loved ones, but has encyclopedic knowledge of the New England mob. Lisa is a gorgeous Latina, divorced following a two year-marriage to the DA. She keeps her married name because the name carries weight. Torres asks her if she remembers Marvin Stipler –Cousin Marv – from back in the day. He asks if they have any interest in him, but Lisa explains that the department has little interest in a barely-known syndicate, because budget cuts mean having to prioritize what they do. Torres then says he'll take a stake in Marvin.

The next morning, Marv and Bob are shoveling away four inches of snow from the bar when Chovka Umarov shows up with two black Cadillac Escalades and a white van. Bob recalls his father telling him there are two cities: The First City, which are the clothes on the body which make the city look nice, and the Second City, which is the body itself. The city is run by the Second City from the cellar, not from the First City at the top. The Second City –the underworld –has Chovka Umarov as its prince. His father, Papa Pytor, runs everything, delegating tasks and getting along with other syndicates, but everyone knows not to cross him, for he is stronger than everyone else. Chovka approaches Bob and Marv, while Bob notices the van is moving around. Chovka tries joking around with Marv and Bob, but to little effect. He brings them over to the back of the van, where two Chechen gangsters have a thin man gagged in the back, his foot bare and a power drill bit through it into the floor of the van. Chovka asks if that is the man that robbed the bar, but Marv and Bob say the robbers wore masks. Chovka knows about the watch, word having gotten back to him, and Bob apologizes for having told the police. Chovka tells them to recover their money, and then leaves.

Analysis

“The Drop” is a crime novel by Dennis Lehane, which revolves around the fictional Cousin Marv’s Bar in Boston, Massachusetts, and the people who own, operate, and frequent the place. Cousin Marv and his bar are a front for the Chechen mafia, the biggest criminal syndicate in the city, who truly run things. Bob recalls his father telling him that there are two cities: there is the façade, the clothing, the first city that believes it runs things – or pretends to – and this includes government and law enforcement; and there is the second city, the real body, which truly runs things underneath. This is the Chechen mafia at the moment, headed by the Umarov family. Cousin Marv seems to get along well with them until the robbery occurs. Marv knows he is on the hook for the stolen \$5,000, and while \$5,000 may not seem like a lot of money to a criminal syndicate, every cent matters. Absolute power and control are dependent upon absolute



compliance. Letting anything slip becomes a slippery slope itself, so the Chechens take the robbery, and the \$5,000, very seriously.

Early on, there are two interesting counter-characters to the criminal underworld as it is presented in the novel. Both counter-characters occur in the form of Evandro Torres, a flawed but deeply religious police detective, and Bob Saginowski, a deeply religious, but lonely loner. Torres and Bob, interestingly enough, both attend Saint Dominic's Catholic Church, and both put their souls in the hands of God. This proves essential to both characters as the novel progresses, for it dictates much of their personalities, and has been incredibly instrumental in shaping how they have turned out as men – especially by the time of the novel.

Torres has noticed that Bob doesn't take Communion at any of the Masses they attend, and Bob tells Torres that it is none of his business why. It is let on that there is something in Bob's past for which he must atone, but what this is, is not yet revealed. Here, the reader should pay attention to how Roman Catholicism emerges as an important theme, influencing the lives of both Bob and Torres.

Indeed, Bob's presence as a bartender in the criminal underworld seems highly unusual at first, given that he is incredibly kind, has enough money, and merely doesn't want to be alone. The themes of crime and family can readily be seen here. Bob, being Marv's cousin, was once a part of Marv's crew, and twenty-some years before, began tending bar for Marv. Whereas in the past, Bob may have been an active part of Marv's gang, in the present, Bob truly does only seem to be a bartender. He gets along well enough with the Chechens when they come and go, but beyond that, his connection to the Chechens seems to begin and end at the bar. It serves to puzzle the reader why, if Bob has money, and is not tied down by the mob, he simply doesn't leave.

Part of the answer is in the fact that Bob is as lonely as he is, and what little there is left of his family – Marv and Dottie – as well as the fact that Bob lives in the house he grew up in, has given him enough reason to stay. He feels at home nowhere else, especially given that home is the last place he knew his parents, and feels like he belongs there. But as the reader will discover toward the end of the novel, there is a greater reason Bob has for staying in Boston.

Bob's life, however, begins to change dramatically when he finds an abused, abandoned puppy. Bob's kindness, and gentleness – as well as his absolute loneliness – encourage him to rescue the puppy – which in turn brings Nadia Dunn into his life. While the scars of Bob's past may all be internal, the scars of Nadia's past are not. They are visible on her face and neck, though Bob does not ask about them out of respect. Coincidentally, Marv's bar is knocked over the next night, and the finding of the dog and the robbing of the bar form two separate story arcs, that will ultimately intertwine before the conclusion of the novel. Bob, who has been looking for his life to change, will suddenly find his life has changed all too fast. Bob's rescuing of the puppy foreshadows the redemption that Bob is seeking, and redemption will, in turn, become an important theme as the novel continues.



Discussion Question 1

What is so interesting about the character of Bob Saginowski, given that he works at a bar that is a front for the mob?

Discussion Question 2

What does Marv's relationship with the mafia seem to be like? Why does he seem to be so worried about the robbery?

Discussion Question 3

Why is the Chechen mafia so concerned about the missing \$5,000 when they rake in millions? How do Marv and his bar factor into this?

Vocabulary

reconciling, unpredictable, punitive, theological, transgressions, bewildered, purloined, syndicate, publican, anonymity



Section 2: Chapters 5-7

Summary

Chapter 5 – In the past as a child, Cousin Marv had a good singing voice, and he sang at the inauguration of Mayor Kevin White in 1967. Every morning, Marv attended Saint Dominic’s School, and every afternoon, he was bussed to the Old South Church for choir practice. Marv was kicked out when another boy, Chad Benson, correctly accused Marvin of stealing a Baby Ruth candy bar from another boy’s backpack, in front of the entire choir and choirmaster. Chad went on to insult Marv for being poor, at which time Marv punched him in the face, knocked him to the floor, and punched him two more times. Marv learned that he has no chance against the Chad Bensons of the world, and that they aren’t even to be questioned. Neither are the Chovkas.

In the present, Marv considers Bob as they clear the snow, and Marv allows Bob to prattle on about the dog, even though Marv finds it boring. He is glad to see Bob happy about something for once. He is also annoyed at Bob, for having given away free information to a cop who he went to church with. Marv knows that Bob will fight back if pushed too far, but all in all, he is a kind man. He also knows that the entire Chechen mob is watching them, now. Marv heads home, where Dottie makes him dinner. Later, at the gym, Marv meets the Fitzgerald brothers and tells them to keep their heads down. He tells Bri to get a new watch. The brothers want to hit an actual drop, not risk their lives for a few thousand dollars. Marv tells them he has a plan, and uses an example to illustrate his point. He says the safest airline to fly the day after a crash is the one that had the crash.

Chapter 6 - After seven o’clock Mass, Bob remains seated in his pew while Father Regan cleans up. Bob thinks about how uneventful his life has been, but how eventful the last seven days have been, from finding the dog to meeting Nadia to being held up. He reflects on his father’s lessons about the world not including men who would leave dogs to die in trashcans, but then realizes that it was something he already knew, that savagery and cruelty existed in the world. Bob then walks the Stations of the Cross, Via Crucis. Bob wonders about the Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus, if they ever repented or were forgiven later in life by God. The Church maintains that all sins are forgiven if there is meaningful penance, but Bob worries that some sins are too big to forgive. He comes across a stained glass window of Saint Rocco, the patron saint of bachelors, pilgrims, and dogs – and decides to name his dog Rocco. Bob senses something is a little off about Nadia, but welcomes her friendship. She helps to train Rocco as he gets older. Bob and Nadia walk Rocco by the river in Pen’ Park. When she is in the restroom, a lanky guy with lanky hair compliments Rocco several times and puts his hood up as he walks away. Bob knows in his soul that something is not right.

Marv is on his way back from a warehouse in the Heights after visiting his father in hospice. He tells his father, Marvin Senior, that he has sold the bar, and will make a good amount of money, and will use it to put him in a better home – though his father



understands none of it. His father had long opposed him being in the business, but Marv will never settle for regular wages at a regular job. Though they were at odds about a lot, they were close enough. A series of strokes ultimately leads to Marv's father being put into hospice. But Marv hopes his father will somehow manage to recover and survive. At home, Marv and Dottie watch American Idol, and Dottie talks about getting away from Boston to see things in the world. She thinks they should apply to be on the show Amazing Race. Dottie says that a collection agency for the home has called, and wants money for their dad's stay. Dottie thinks they should let him die, but Marv doesn't agree.

Chapter 7 – When Evandro Torres was five years old, he got stuck on a Ferris Wheel at Paragon Park in Nantasket Beach. While stuck at the top, he realized he was seeing things the way God saw them, and how frail and breakable everything and everyone, was. He ended up crying not out of the experience, but because he realized life is finite.

Torres loves his wife and kids, and he makes sure they know it – but he is always horrified by the prospect that life will one day run out. He is not perfect – five years before, he drank too much and even did some cocaine, but he is doing his best to get back on the right track. He sleeps with Lisa for the first time in two years, and regrets it immediately. She tells him he is the worst Catholic ever, and he explains that no one is perfect, for everyone is born fallen, and life is about trying to atone for it.

Lisa reveals she looked into Cousin Marv's, and it has a mention in an unsolved case 10 years before, for the disappearance of Richard Whelan. Torres wants to make it back to Homicide, but Lisa says it will be impossible because Scarpone runs it now – and Torres once slept with Scarpone's wife, got drunk on duty, and smashed up his cruiser. Lisa says solving a 10-year-cold case might get Torres back to Major Crimes, in general.

While Marv is on his way home from a minimart, he thinks about how his life has improved since the days he was a cokehead. As he heads home, a Jetta driven by a 40-something man slows down beside him. He asks for directions to the hospital, and Marv directs him. The encounter unnerves Marv. As Bob goes to leave home for work, he finds a thin, 30-something man on his porch from the park the other day. His name is Eric Deeds. Eric says that Bob has his dog.

In the kitchen, Rocco slinks toward Eric and climbs into his lap when called. Bob feels terrible. Eric asks if Bob knows Nadia Dunn, and Bob lifts Rocco off of Eric's lap. Eric lights a cigarette, and Bob tells him not to smoke. Eric announces he is taking the dog, and it doesn't matter if he beat the dog. Eric says he's known Nadia since he was a kid, and wants to know if Bob is 'all up in her.' He says he saw Bob pick the dog up out of the garbage can, and go into Nadia's house that night. Bob says he will call 911. Eric tells him that the dog is his, registered and implanted with an electronic chip that proves it. Bob puts Rocco in the cage, and tells Eric they are leaving. Bob confronts Eric, telling him he beat the dog, but Eric says he'll tell the police that Bob beat the dog. Bob asks Eric what he wants, and Eric takes an umbrella from near the front door as he leaves. Eric tells him that it is sunny, but one never knows.



Analysis

As the novel continues to unfold, the reader is given glimpses into the past and present lives of Marv and Torres, though little is revealed about Bob's past. Here, the theme of history becomes especially important as it relates to Marv's past. Family also closely intersects with history in this section of the novel -as well as does crime, all in conjunction with Marv's bar.

Marv was brought up religiously, though he appears to have completely lost his way, and the faith. Marv is forever awaiting his ticket out, and it comes in the most unusual way. It is, as is revealed, Marv himself behind the robbery, having contracted the Fitzgerald brothers to carry out the operation. Marv uses the analogy of the safest airline as the rationale behind his plan. The Fitzgeralds, meanwhile, are terrified for their lives. Marv, without revealing why, tells Bri to get a new watch.

History, in conjunction with Roman Catholicism, all factor heavily into Torres's constitution as a character. As the reader learns, Torres came to discover at the very young age of five just how fragile life truly is, and this leads him closer to God, seeking solace and comfort in an uncertain world. Indeed, Torres's love of Catholicism, and love of God, are crucial to his life. Torres knows he is an imperfect person, but puts his trust in God's grace that he will be saved. Given the fragility of life, Torres does his best to make sure his wife and kids know they are loved, despite his many flaws. Lisa tells Torres he is the worst Catholic ever, but Torres does not pretend to be perfect. He knows he is imperfect, and is struggling in life to atone for being born fallen.

Indeed, the idea of repentance and forgiveness - redemption - becomes a focus of the plot, ultimately emerging as a theme. Torres is fully aware that he is an imperfect human being, that no one is perfect, and that life is about trying to atone for being born fallen. Torres has numerous flaws, and he doesn't try to hide them. Instead, he willingly Confesses them, and seeks forgiveness in God. Bob, on the other hand, doesn't appear (at first) to have many, if any sins, for which he must personally account.

However, the time he spends in Church after Mass, walking the Stations of the Cross, is revealing. There is indeed some sort of past sin or event that Bob knows he must be held to account for. There aren't even any hints given as to what this sin may have been, but the fact that it appears to be large enough to either warrant God turning away from Bob and refusing to forgive him, or Bob terrified that God may not forgive him, speaks volumes about the severity of the sin itself. The theme of crime can be glimpsed according to whatever it is that Bob has done.

At the same time, Bob also must deal with another new individual in his life, Eric Deeds. Eric is a cruel, sociopathic individual who claims ownership of Rocco, but whose own past has yet to be revealed to the reader. Eric's supreme confidence in himself and in his abilities – loaded language laced with menace, such as his commentary on the weather doubling as a promise that he will want something, but what that is, is as of yet unknown – seem to rival that of the confidence and wolf-in-sheep's clothing mentality of the Chechen mafia.



At the same time, an encounter Marv has on the street, where a man asks him for directions to the hospital, leaves Marv unnerved. The request, innocuous enough, leaves Marv troubled, for he believes that it is much more than a simple request for directions. Marv has been in the business long enough to know when trouble is on the horizon, and the fact that the place sought by the driver – the hospital – should not be lost on the reader. The injured, the sick, and the dying go to hospitals.

Discussion Question 1

Explain Torres's relationship with Catholicism, and with God. How does Torres's faith affect his life?

Discussion Question 2

Lisa tells Torres he is the worst Catholic ever. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

Bob names his puppy Rocco, after Saint Rocco. Why is this fitting, not only for the puppy, but for Bob as well?

Vocabulary

imminent, temporal, begrudge, meridian, finite, degenerate



Section 3: Chapters 8-10

Summary

Chapter 8 – This chapter deals with Eric's past. Eric grows up in East Buckingham in crime, and heads to South Carolina to do a job where one of Eric's buddies is killed, and the other, Vinny Campbell, is imprisoned along with Eric. During a three year stint at Broad River Correctional, Eric inadvertently saves the life of drug dealer Padgett Webster. Padgett tells Eric he owes him, and forces Eric to be on the receiving end of sex with him. Padgett is released six months before Eric, and tells Eric to look him up when he gets out. Vinny ends up a heroin-addict after falling in with the Aryan Brotherhood. Eric realizes the only way he can survive in the world is to live according to his own rules. He writes down nine of them in prison. When he gets out of prison, he steals a car, buys clothes at Target, and buys a gun off a guy in Broad River. He then calls

Padgett from a payphone. He arranges it so he'll sell a kilo of black tar heroin for Padgett up north, taking 40% of the cut. At Padgett's house, he meets Monica, his wife. Padgett decides to reduce Eric's cut to 20%, because it is a lot of trust Padgett is placing in Eric. Jeffrey, Padgett's younger brother, enters the kitchen, suffering from illness. Jeffrey pats down Eric even though Padgett says there is no need to do so. Jeffrey misses the .22 that Eric carries, which he then uses to shoot Jeffrey, then shoot and kill Monica as she reaches for a shotgun, and then shoots Padgett. He then asks Padgett what made him think he could get the better of Eric, and then shoots Padgett in the face. As he begins to take note of all the drugs in the house, he realizes Jeffrey isn't dead. Eric then lights the house on fire. Jeffrey tries to shoot Eric, but Eric shoots Jeffrey again, killing him. Eric is angered, however, because the drugs are ruined. But he considers it might be for the best, since he wouldn't know how to sell that much weight in Boston. As he leaves, he wonders what Nadia is up to these days, and looks at his list of 9 rules. They include to never trust a convict, no one loves him, and to get a dog.

Chapter 9 – Back in the present, since the robbery, Rardy has not come to work and has not bothered to call. The newspaper has two photos – one current and one old – of Saint Dominic's church, and the announcement that it will be closing. Bob blames the sex scandal for the need to close and sell churches. Marv worries about Rardy, and thinks he has guys after him, though Bob brushes off Marv's encounter as merely someone being lost. Marv also thinks that Eric Deeds is after him as well, and the dog is merely an excuse. Bob goes to check on Rardy, but only his wife, Moira, and their special-needs kid, Patrick, are at home. She tells Bob she hasn't seen Rardy in days, and that he's been drinking more than usual. Moira believes Rardy must be with old friends from Tuttle Park, or his brothers, and it isn't the first time he's been away for days without letting her know.



Bob meets Nadia at the park with Rocco. She wonders why he has never asked about the scar on her cheek. He explains that it isn't his business, and everyone in the world seems to want to tell everyone else about their business in the present day and age, like its news. And most people only ever talk, but have little real substance anymore. Nadia's scar, he says, is hers, and it is up to her when and if she wants to tell him about it. Before work, Bob goes to Saint Dom's, and talks with Father Regan, who confirms that the church and old school building are to be sold, but that he has not yet been reassigned. Bob finds this annoying that Rome will cover up a scandal quickly, but will not help someone genuinely good like Father Regan. Regan worries about Bob, but Bob says he is alright. Regan questions Bob about his new friendship with Nadia, saying that some would say she is troubled. Bob asks Regan if he has friends other than priests, and Regan says the he does. Bob says he himself didn't, but now he does.

Chapter 10 – Cousin Marv smokes a cigarette while Bob organizes the garbage cans after trash pickup. Bob notices a heavy duty black construction trash bag among the cans, and wonders about it. Opening it, Bob and Marv discover a pile of bloody money and a hacked-off human arm, with a wristwatch stopped at six-fifteen. Bob knows they need to return the money to Chovka, but they need to dispose of the arm. Bob cleans it, wraps it up in wax paper, and puts it in a gym bag. They go into the bar to discover Eric Deeds, who asks for a Zima. Marv orders him out. When he leaves, Bob explains Eric is the man who wants the dog, while Marv says he knows Eric. Eric is from Saint Cecilia's parish, has been to jail several times, and has even been committed to an insane asylum for thirty days. The entire Deeds family is screwed up, Marv contends, and many believe that Eric killed Richie Whalen.

Bob drops the wrapped arm in the channel at Pen' Park. Bob is later playing fetch with Rocco at the park when he is approached by Detective Torres. Torres tells Bob they haven't caught the robbers yet. Torres asks about the bag Bob is carrying, now empty, and Bob says he carries extra dog supplies in there, but lost one of the balls and used the last of his dog waste bags. Torres goes on to ask Bob if he knows Eric Deeds, but Bob says he doesn't know offhand, but might. Torres explains that Whelan had words with Eric Deeds the day of his disappearance. Torres goes on to quote the Church's position on repentance and Communion, and still wonders why Bob won't take it. Torres says he screws up most days, repents, and receives Communion, that Confession lets him come clean with God, and is better than therapy or AA. He tells Bob to give repentance some thought, and then heads off, telling Bob he has a good-looking dog.

Analysis

History is immensely important in this section of the novel. Eric's own backstory is delved into in Chapter 8, and is further explored in ensuing chapters. Eric has been trouble from the start, has been in and out of prison, and is responsible for the killing of three drug dealers in South Carolina. Crime (and here, the theme of crime appears dramatically) is central Eric's existence.



The reader learns that Eric is not to be doubted, but rather, is to be taken very seriously. He is, like Bob, a loner - but unlike Bob, Eric is very cruel, callous, and scheming. His only cause is himself, whereas Bob seems to reach out to others, including animals in the form of a puppy. As things would appear, Eric Deeds is responsible for the death of Richie Whelan, though the responsibility for the crime is only circumstantial at the moment. Given Eric's own involvement in drugs and violence, that Whelan would have met his end at Eric's hands seems very plausible. This is certainly the case among Marv and many of Eric's friends, whom believe that Eric is indeed responsible for Whelan's killing. Whereas Bob submits himself to the authority and judgment of God, Eric has no master except himself.

Marv continues to be haunted by the hospital directions encounter, and Marv is further unnerved by the appearance of the bloody money, and the hacked-off arm with a broken wristwatch. Marv believes that the Chechans want him dead, but Bob believes that Marv is overreacting. He also knows they need to dispose of the arm, which Bob does with an unexpectedly grotesque professionalism. Even Marv is surprised at how Bob handles the sawed-off arm, but doesn't push the point. Bob himself seems uncharacteristically unfazed by the handling and disposal of the arm, whereas a short time before, an abused and abandoned puppy stole away his heart.

Indeed, even the method of Bob's disposal of the arm – into the river – and the casual explanation he has for the gym bag when he speaks to Torres, reveal that Bob more than likely had a larger part in the activities of the underworld than previously considered by the reader. Bob's past crime, though still not revealed, is obviously serious enough that the disposal of the arm (let alone finding it) does not deeply disturb Bob. Marv has other reasons to worry as well, apart from his actual involvement in the robbery, and the planned successive heist. Rardy has gone missing, and while his wife contends that he is probably with friends or his brothers, Marv believes he has become a victim of the Chechens. He also imagines that Bob's finding of the dog, and Eric's sudden appearance, are more than meets the eye.

Crime becomes important thematically once again as Torres undertakes his investigation. Torres continues to press Bob for clues, not only to the robbery, but as to the disappearance of Richie Whelan. Bob is only somewhat forthcoming with Torres, for he knows and likes Torres, but also realizes he has to protect himself, his family, and the bar – and by extension, the Chechens. Here, the themes of family and crime intertwine. Both are dependent upon the other in a sick, symbiotic sort of relationship.

Torres, as interested as he is in the casework, also takes a personal interest in Bob as well, though the reason, as it later turns out, is not what Torres first considers it to be. At first, he thinks he is dealing with Bob on a purely theological level – and even goes so far as to call Bob a Cafeteria Catholic early on. Yet, as time goes on, Torres considers that he is dealing with Bob on a deeper theological level, and even a personal one. Torres can't help but like Bob, it seems. Torres explains that he himself screws up on a daily basis, sometimes big, but still repents. Bob, Torres contends, should consider repenting as well. Here, the themes of Roman Catholicism and redemption become incredibly important, as Torres seems to offer Bob a way out of crime.



Discussion Question 1

Why is Marv so unnerved by the request for directions to the hospital? Do you believe he has reason to be concerned? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Why do you believe that Torres continues to press Bob on his faith, on Catholicism? How does Torres view his theological discussions with Bob?

Discussion Question 3

What can the reader glean about Bob and his past from the way he handles the severed arm? Why?

Vocabulary

dominion, dwindling, canted, obscene, repulsion, sacrament



Section 4: Chapters 11-13

Summary

Chapter 11 – Bob worries that the arm will be found and that Torres will make the connection. Nadia is waiting at Bob's house, worried that both Bob and the dog were not there, and that Bob wasn't answering his cell phone. Bob asks Nadia if she knows Eric Deeds, but she knows him only in passing. She has a look of worry on her face, and wants to know why Bob is so interested in Eric. She storms off, nearly crying. At the bar, Bob cleans and dries the money, and places it in Ziploc bags. Cousin Marv worries that Torres saw Bob disposing of the arm.

A short time later, Chovka and Anwar come in and sit at the bar. The light cigarettes and Bob gives them the money. Chovka says all people die, but first they must try the whiskey that Bob serves him. He laughs at this. He then announces that they will handle the drop for the Super Bowl, and leaves with Anwar. Cousin Marv worries that Chovka only spoke to Bob, and not him. Marv thinks he'll be dead soon, and that Rardy is already dead. Marv thinks that the Chechens think he and Rardy are responsible for the robbery. But Bob asks why the Chechens would think Marv had the money if they found the robber and the money, and sent the money back to them. Marv says that people like Chovka don't have to have rational opinions, they just have opinions. And it is in their heads that Marv is somehow responsible for everything. On top of it, the bar will be handling a Super Sunday drop, which Marv thinks is a cover for the Chechens to knock it over, and kill him. Marv then leaves the bar.

When Bob gets home after work, he finds Nadia waiting for him, smoking a cigarette. Bob tells her he doesn't care if she knew Rocco. Nadia asks what Eric said to him. Bob reveals that Eric says Rocco is actually his dog, and that he knew Nadia. Nadia explains that she dated Eric for a while, thinking he had cleaned up his act from the past, but it was not true. He was as crazy as ever, but hid it for a while, after which time they broke up. A year later, Eric pulls the stunt with the puppy to get Nadia to think about him. They wonder if their past sins can ever be forgiven by God, but Bob comments that perhaps God isn't the issue - it is they who are the issue, for not letting themselves seek forgiveness, for not letting themselves out of their own cages. Nadia asks about Bob's past, and Bob explains that he just tends bar now, and isn't involved with the mafia itself. Nadia tells Bob that Eric is indeed responsible for the murder of Richie Whalen. Nadia doesn't know the reason, but says that Eric is not a big fan of why. Bob walks Nadia home. When Bob gets back to his house, he finds an umbrella in Rocco's crate – the umbrella that Eric took from the house in the past.

Chapter 12 – On Friday morning, Eric grabs some pizza at Hi-Fi Pizza. Eric reflects on a girl he dated, Jeannie Madden, who ultimately broke up with him, telling him to leave her alone and get help or her four brothers would beat him up. He leaves her alone, and she is now married with three kids. Eric is surprised when Cousin Marv sits down across from him at the place. He wants to know why Eric doesn't like Bob, and why Eric wants



his dog back. Eric says he doesn't want Bob walking around thinking he's "the shit", and he needs to learn. Marv asks if Eric has ever done time in prison, and Eric says he did in Broad River, South Carolina, and that time there was like no time at all. Meanwhile, Torres looks into Whelan's disappearance. Whelan went out into frigid weather, looking to score some weed. Whelan's dealers were Eric Deeds and Tim Brennan. Brennan is open about his selling to Whelan; Deeds never gave a statement. It matters that Whelan disappeared within three blocks of the bar, Torres knows. It is a crucial detail. Torres interviews Sean McGrath, one of Whelan's buddies from the bar. He asks if Marv and Bob were working that night, and Sean doubles down, telling Torres not to mess with his bar, and then walks away.

Bob goes to see Eric, who knocks his father out of his wheelchair for hitting the "entry" button on the intercom, allowing Bob to come inside the building. Eric's father laughs at Eric. Eric tells Bob his father is old, and needs peace and quiet. Bob apologizes, which makes Eric feel powerful. Eric tells Bob he saved him a trip, that he was coming by to see Bob later. Eric says he returned the umbrella, and could have taken the dog, but didn't. He says the dog doesn't factor into his plans anymore, but \$10,000 does. Eric tells Bob to take the money from Cousin Marv's safe. He knows it is on a timer lock, and that it opens at 2 a.m. and there is 90 seconds to transfer money or a silent alarm goes off in two different places, neither a police station. Eric says the money is stake money he needs. He tells Bob to be at his house the next morning with ten grand at 9 a.m. and he'll disappear, or he will kill Nadia and the dog. Eric says he killed Whelan for trying to get in bed with his girl, and he'll kill again. He says he had a partner in the killing of Whelan, who will kill Bob if Bob does anything to Eric.

Bob later asks Nadia about Eric once more. She explains they dated for a while, that he is messed up in the head, grew up on her block, and caused her to try to cut her own throat while she was high and in a bad way. She admits to knowing that Rocco was Eric's dog that night. She also asks Bob where he'll get \$10,000. Bob knows that it won't be enough, that people like Eric will always come back for more. He has no idea what to do.

Chapter 13 – Cousin Marv meets with Fitz on a rainy Saturday and drives him through the city. Fitz is beside himself that his brother has been killed and shows Marv that he is armed. Marv encourages Fitz to go in with him on the drop, for it will be over a million dollars. Fitz isn't so sure, but decides to go along with it. Marv asks Fitz if he knows a place he can stay after everything goes down, but Fitz is noncommittal. Marv's trunk pops open, he pulls into an empty parking lot, and he tells Fitz to go and shut it. When Fitz does, Marv reverses the car and runs over him, and then leaves. Bob, meanwhile, goes into his basement where he keeps \$50,000 in cash in an old coffee can. He tells Rocco he is worth the \$10,000. On the way upstairs, he glances at the black oil tank, with the receiving pipe and heating pipe having both been disconnected. Inside the tank is not oil, but a mixture of lye, rock salt, and human bones.



Analysis

As it comes to pass, Marv is correct in the analogy he uses about the safest airline to fly -all in a very criminal sense. Crime reemerges as a crucial theme in the novel. The Chechens have decided that Marv's bar will be the location of the Super Bowl drop, meaning that millions and millions of dollars will be stored at Cousin Marv's until the Chechens come to retrieve it. Marv realizes that he can no longer depend on Fitz, especially after the death of Bri, so Marv runs over and kills Fitz without a moment's hesitation. He must now figure out how he'll go about handling the robbery of the drop and how he'll get away.

As daring as Marv is in terms of wanting to pull off the heist, he is also incredibly worried as well. He believes that the drop might be a cover story for the Chechens coming into the bar and shooting everything up. He also still believes the Chechens suspect him of the robbery of the \$5,000, but Bob dismisses Marv's worries emphatically. Marv does not agree with Bob's reasoning, because the mafia doesn't need reasoning to kill. It does what it wants. And here is the terrible side of crime. People not only lose their souls and their lives to crime, but their freedom as well. By becoming a part of crime, crime becomes the person. Every aspect of the person's life is infected by crime like a disease. This can be seen clearly in Marv's justifiable paranoia and attitude toward the Chechens.

Things between Eric and Bob later intensify to such a point that Marv personally intervenes, both as a measure of respect toward Bob as family, and because Marv knows that, for all Bob's kindness, he does indeed have a breaking point and he is not to be messed with. Eric, probably borderline psychotic at the very least, does not care about Marv's warnings. Eric claims responsibility for the murder of Richie Whelan, as well as having done time in South Carolina. Marv, on the other hand, has ulterior motives for meeting Eric, which will be revealed in the final few chapters of the novel. Meanwhile, it is revealed that Eric and Nadia did date for a while, which is how Nadia ended up so troubled and scarred, physically and figuratively. This further lends credence to Eric's sociopathy, and psychopathy. Bob, despite whatever crime he has committed, now appears to be something akin to an angel for Nadia compared to Eric.

As things between Bob and Eric intensify, so does Torres's investigation into Marv's bar, and the crimes associated with it. Torres appears to focus now on Marv and Bob themselves, asking Sean McGrath about them – but Sean, owing to a neighborhood code of street conduct and ethics, refuses to say anything at all about it, telling Torres not to mess with his bar. The reader should again reflect on how crime, at various levels, even to the most petty levels, affects the actions and attitudes of those involved. For Sean, this association with crime is probably cursory at most, for his concern about Torres is confined mainly to the place he calls home, and where his history is.

At the same time, the first real clue emerges about what may be part of, or entirely, Bob's past sin. As Bob secures \$10,000 from his basement cache, he looks at the oil heating tank, and is deeply saddened by it. In the tank are lye, rock salt, and the bones



of a human being – though who this is, and how the body got there, are unknown. It is also explained that Bob knows that, for people like Eric, \$10,000 will never be enough – and Marv’s warning to Eric, not to mess with Bob, returns to the forefront of the reader’s mind.

Discussion Question 1

What are the reasons given plainly for Marv to visit Eric? Do you think Marv has ulterior motives for having a conversation with Marv? If so, what do you think they are? If not, why not?

Discussion Question 2

What is Nadia’s backstory with Eric? Does this matter to Bob? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Marv kill Fitz? How do you believe Marv’s plan for the drop heist will evolve now that Fitz is no longer in the picture?

Vocabulary

insinuating, rational, feeble, beatification, serenity, jostling, sluicing, materializing



Section 5: Chapters 14-16

Summary

Chapter 14 – It is Super Bowl Sunday, the biggest betting day of the year, bigger than all other betting days combined. Bob awaits Eric's arrival, keeping a gun in a nearby drawer, but Eric never shows. He then goes to Cousin Marv's house, leaves Rocco in the car with the doors locked and the alarm on, and says hello to Dottie as she leaves for work. She implores Bob to get Marv to eat something as she goes. Marv tells Bob he is not coming in that day, and to call BarTemps. Bob says he already has. Bob asks if Marv is up to something, but Marv only tells him to get out. Bob brings Rocco into the bar with him, sets up the crate in the back, and keeps a handgun close by. Torres talks to Tim Brennan at Concord Prison. Brennan is dying of AIDS, contracted in prison. Torres asks for what happened the night Richie Whalen died.

Eric, meanwhile, breaks into Nadia's house when she is out and everyone is preparing for the Super Bowl. He smells her clothing and then curls up in her bed. He goes over imaginary conversations with her, and when she returns home, he tells her not to scream.

Marv, with the departure of Bob, begins his plans for the drop by taping together several green plastic trash bags, and drinks a beer, intending to run away to Thailand when all is done. He covers his trunk with the trashbags, then covers them with a quilt. He then prints out plane tickets. Torres meets with Lisa Romsey, who gives Torres the chance to look over Eric Deeds's psych file. While he goes over the file, she puts on lipstick, and explains she has a friend she is going to see, and it is real love between them. Torres knows he and Lisa are at the end of whatever they had together. Torres learns something important from the file, but now has other questions.

Chapter 15 – The bagmen come and go all night as Bob makes drop after drop into the slot. As the night wears on, Bob sees Eric Deeds sitting with his arm around Nadia. He also sees Rardy in the crowd with a group of friends. Rardy orders drinks, but Bob walks away, refusing to take the order. Eric orders drinks, which Bob serves. He is ready to exchange the money for the rights to the microchip and paperwork, but Eric says it is not "the" deal, but "a" deal. Eric's phone rings, and he steps away from Bob. Marv is on the phone, and is angry that Eric is already at the bar. The plan is to rob the place and meet Marv in the alley at two. Eric says he's in Bob's head, but Marv warns Eric not to mess with Bob. Marv reminds him that there is a plan to stick to, and Eric says that there is "a" plan. When Eric goes to use the bathroom, Nadia goes to Bob to tell him that she came home to find Eric in her house with a gun in his waistband, and said that they had to go and see Bob. Bob reveals he has been living his life as a bartender to settle things with God so he can see his parents on the other side. He does not think he'll be forgiven, and thinks he'll be alone on both sides. Nadia tells him that no one is supposed to be alone. Eric then emerges from the bathroom and tells Nadia to grab their drinks from the table.



By 1:45, only a few people are still in the bar, including Millie. Eric asks when Millie will leave; Bob replies that she'll be gone in a few minutes. He asks Eric why he brought Nadia. Eric says he doesn't think Bob thinks he is serious. He says he will rape Nadia if Bob messes with him even in the slightest, and that if he kills Eric, Eric's partner on the Richie Whelan hit will kill both Bob and Nadia.

Bob gives Eric the \$10,000 for the dog, and then Eric asks Bob how much Nadia is worth. Bob tells Eric that a long time ago, Marv was addicted to cocaine, and it caught up with him. But back in the day, Marv was a loan shark, and there was a kid who created more debt than he could pay back. But the kid hit on a slot at Mohegan and won \$17,000 – slightly more than he owed Marv. Marv, who had been skimming money, needed to make up what he had stolen. The kid, coming up with \$17,000, was gold to Marv, provided no one knew where the money came from -so the kid had to be killed. The money helped Marv get his act straight. The kid was Richie Whelan, and Bob killed Whelan in his own basement.

In the present, Bob then shoots Eric in the throat, and as Eric dies, Bob tells him that kids like Eric have no manners, do whatever they want, and beat dogs. Nadia is stunned. Bob drags Eric's body into the cooler and then begins cleaning the floor. Bob explains that people like Eric feel like they're entitled, and they never stop coming back for more. And, on top of it, Eric beat Bob's dog.

Chapter 16 – Marv watches the bar, and wonders where Eric Deeds is. He has a sneaking suspicion Eric is dead. While Marv might be past those days, he wonders whether or not Bob is. As Marv is about to go in and check, Chovka's entourage pulls up. Marv realizes that Bob has just saved the syndicate millions, and they might cut him in as thanks. Marv decides to wait things out, and then go have a talk with Bob. At the bar, Chovka scrolls through Eric's recent calls, and recognizes Marv's number. So does Bob. Chovka's men break Eric's legs to fit him into a suitcase, and stash away the money from the drop into kegs. Bob is given Celtic tickets and money for his efforts by Chovka and his father. Chovka tells Bob he is an honorary Umarov now. He says that Dakka will be by soon, and then he and his men leave. Marv watches them load up and go. He then turns to see the man who asked him for hospital directions standing beside the window. The man – Dakka – then shoots Marv through the nose.

Father Regan presides over the last Mass at Saint Dominic's. More people than usual have turned up for it. Afterwards, Bob and Torres talk. Torres has learned that the church has been sold to Milligan Development, and will now have a secular purpose, which Torres can't stand. Torres says it is a shame what happened to Cousin Marv, a block and-a-half from the bar. Torres doesn't think it is a carjacking gone wrong, but an execution. Torres brings up Eric Deeds once more. He finds it strange how so many people connected with the bar disappear or die. Torres explains that Deeds always took credit for the kill, because he was convinced it would help his street cred. Torres tells Bob that no one ever sees him coming. They shake hands, and part ways. Nadia later tells Bob that she believes there is a purpose to things in life, and she doesn't want to be alone anymore. They take Rocco for a walk in the park, and Bob reflects on how quickly life can change, and how much of life is out of their control.



Analysis

Bob, though bitterly alone, sees his being alone and remaining in the neighborhood not merely a question of family ties or historical roots, but as a measure of silent penance and suffering for having murdered Richie Whelan some 10 years before. Everything now makes sense to the reader – from Bob's refusal to participate in Communion at Mass, to his theological ruminations on the nature of God's mercy and the possibility of forgiveness, to Marv's warning to Eric that Bob is not someone to be messed with. Roman Catholicism may heavily influence Bob's life, but it is not wholly encompassing.

Indeed, as Marv had earlier contended, with his back up against the wall, Bob reacts. But unfortunately, Marv doesn't recognize that he, too, is forcing Bob back up against the wall. Eric's threatening of Nadia and Rocco are too much for Bob to handle, so he shoots Eric through the throat, and verbally chastises Eric as Eric dies. Eric has challenged Bob's home, family, and his criminal associations, and this trifecta forms a deadly trap for Eric.

Marv's decision to rob the drop, and attempt to involve Eric, lead to Marv's own outing, and then it becomes a question of Bob and Marv, or only Marv. When asked if he recognizes Marv's number on Eric's phone by Chovka, Bob readily explains that he does. Marv's fate is dealt by the man who requested directions to the hospital weeks before. As the reader will remember from the previous section's analysis, crime is not something that lets one go easily, if at all. For Marv, criminal involvement marked his end.

Interestingly enough, while Eric Deeds is the one who does everything he can to claim credit for the killing of Richie Whelan, in order to advance his own image on the street, Bob – the actual killer – does everything he can to distance himself from the killing. Indeed, Bob's handling of Eric in the final moments of Eric's life is one of cool and steady professionalism, taking great pains to explain the truth to Eric before killing Eric. As part of Marv's crew, and as part of Marv's family, Bob committed to the killing of Whelan in order to help Marv move on in life, and to cover Marv's tracks. It is something for which Bob is ashamed, but he has no compunction about killing a man like Eric, who is himself a savage murderer and dog abuser. It is street justice.

At the end of the novel, Nadia seems to have committed to a relationship with Bob, and Rocco is happy and healthy. Saint Dominic's Church ultimately sees its last Mass, and is closed down. Afterwards, Torres laments bitterly that a House of God will become some place secular, and views it as sacrilegious. Torres also knows the truth, now, about Whelan and Deeds, but has no hard evidence to back it up. In Torres's mind, it may well simply be street justice; and Torres, who seems to have some sort of relative respect for Bob, shakes his hand at the end of the book, peacefully parting ways rather than pursuing an arrest warrant.

The closing of Saint Dominic's Church itself becomes symbolic of the end of an era, the end of an old way of life, the end of the former life that Bob had lived. Torres, as well, seems to have moved on from his infidelity, and whether or not he will be a true



husband remains to be seen. Nevertheless, both men ultimately put their faith in God as time moves on, because so much of life is out of their control. The theme of redemption, in conjunction with Roman Catholicism -both brought about by Christ -always makes possible the chance of a better future. It is up to the individual, however, to choose how next to live.

Discussion Question 1

What is the truth behind Bob's willingness to stay in the neighborhood and tend bar for his cousin?

Discussion Question 2

What is the truth behind the death of Richie Whelan? How does the reader discover this? How does Torres discover this? Why is Richie Whelan actually killed?

Discussion Question 3

Do you believe that Eric's killing, and Torres's refusal to follow up on it, are justifiable? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

emaciated, incarcerations, racket, numbness, consignment

Characters

Bob Saginowski

Bob Saginowski is one of the major characters in the novel “The Drop” by Dennis Lehane. Appearing to be somewhere in his late 30s or perhaps early 40s, Bob is the cousin of Marvin Stipler and Dottie Stipler, and is the main bartender at Cousin Marv’s Bar. Bob is a lifelong resident of Boston, in the neighborhood in which his cousins also grew up. Bob appears to be incredibly kind and with a good heart, and he is incredibly lonely. His parents are long dead, and he has managed to save tens of thousands of dollars over the years, doing kind things with it sometimes, such as covering Millie’s tab at the bar. He attends church at Saint Dominic’s, despises how everyone in the world puts their business online for everyone else to see, and is haunted by a past sin for which he believes he cannot be forgiven.

His life changes when he discovers an abandoned and abused puppy, which leads him to meeting Nadia Dunn, herself abused and lonely. Bob becomes swept up in the robbery of Cousin Marv’s, handles disposal of the severed hand found in a trash bag along with the missing money in the alley beside the bar, and continually reassures Marv that the Chechen mafia is not after him. Eric names the puppy Rocco, after Saint Rocco, and then Eric Deeds, the dog’s former owner and Nadia’s former lover, enters the picture. Eric demands money in exchange for the life of Nadia and the dog, and Bob has no choice but to agree. When Eric attempts to rob the bar the night of the Super Bowl drop, Bob kills Eric, and admits that it is he, not Eric, who actually killed Richie Whelan in order to help his cousin, Marv, get straight. Bob is ultimately rewarded for his breaking of the plot by the Chechens, and appears to be in an actual relationship with Nadia at the end of the novel.

Nadia Dunn

Nadia Dunn is one of the more important characters in the novel “The Drop” by Dennis Lehane. She seems to be in her late 20s or early 30s, and bears a number of scars on her face and body. A victim of abuse, both physical and emotional in a past relationship with Eric, Nadia is also a recovered drug user, and is formerly suicidal. She is deeply troubled by the past, but is endeared to Bob by Bob’s kindness and gentleness the night he finds Eric’s dog in her garbage can. Nadia comes clean to Bob about her past, including her suicide attempt and time spent with Eric. She is later surprised by the fact that Bob kills Eric, but not put off by it. She sees there being more to Bob than the killing of Eric, and Eric is someone she has long been trying to escape. She appears to have begun an actual relationship with Bob by the end of the novel.



Cousin Marv

Marvin Stipler, known locally as Cousin Marv, is one of the major characters in the novel "The Drop" by Dennis Lehane. Marvin lives with his older sister, Dottie, and is the cousin of Bob. Marvin is a lifelong resident and native of Boston, having been raised religiously, but having moved away from the faith into a life of crime. Marv runs his own crew in the late 1980s and early 1990s, ultimately being absorbed by the Chechen mafia rather than resisting them. As a result, Marv's bar is now owned by the Chechans, and he acts as a fence for them. Marv is forever seeking his golden ticket out, and decides to do so by staging a robbery of the bar, and then carrying out a heist of the drop. Bob, who tends bar at Marv's, is not let in the plot in order to keep him clean and safe.

Marv cares deeply for his cousin, and is happy to know that Bob is with a woman and has a dog, because they make Bob happy. Marv, meanwhile, becomes concerned about Eric Deeds messing with Bob, and brings Eric in on the heist. Marv warns Eric not to mess with Bob, but Eric doesn't listen, and ends up killed. As a result, the mafia searches Eric's phone to discover Marv's involvement, and then kills Marv.

Eric Deeds

Eric Deeds is a 30-something sociopathic killer and criminal whose only cause is himself. A native of Boston, and born into a family prone to mental disorder and cruelty, Eric naturally falls into a life of crime. In South Carolina, Eric is arrested and imprisoned following a job gone bad, where he is sexually exploited by Padgett Webster, whom Eric later hunts down and kills, along with Padgett's wife and younger brother. Eric returns to Boston, where he falsely takes credit for killing Richie Whelan in order to advance his own image. Eric becomes part of Marv's robbery plot, and attempts to extort Bob for \$10,000 for the safety of Nadia and Rocco. Eric pushes Bob too far, and Bob ultimately kills Eric in the end. Eric's cell phone confirms Marv's part in the robbery plot, and this leads to the death of Marv.

Dottie Stipler

Dottie Stipler is the older sister of Marv, and the cousin of Bob. Dottie is incredibly sweet and kind, often works overtime in preparation for retirement, and has a comfortable life living with Marv. She has not given up on her dreams of traveling or getting out of Boston, but it seems more and more unlikely with each year that passes.

Evandro Torres

Evandro Torres is a Boston Police Department Detective who works mid-level and minor crimes, including robbery. Torres is a deeply flawed, though deeply religious cop. He attends the same church that Bob does, Saint Dominic's Catholic Church. Torres is married, loves his wife and children tremendously, but still messes up continually. He



has had a multi-year affair with Lisa Romsey, and in the past, was too heavy on drinking and even did cocaine for a while. He has since cleaned up his act - apart from Lisa - and desires to make his way back into the Major Crimes department, having been banished after sleeping with another man's wife and crashing a squad car while drunk. Torres is called to handle the initial robbery at Marv's, and through this learns about the cold case disappearance of Eddie Whelan. He believes cracking the case will get him back into Major Crimes. Torres learns that it is actually Bob who killed Whelan, and more than likely killed Eric Deeds as well. But rather than pursue warrants for arrest, Torres seems to let things go, perhaps believing some measure of street justice has been served, and shaking Bob's hand near the novel's end.

Lisa Romsey

Lisa Romsey is an incredibly attractive homicide detective on the Boston Police force. She is Latina, divorced, and retains her married name because her former husband is now DA, and the name carries weight. Lisa has been carrying on a multiyear affair with Torres, which ends toward the conclusion of the novel. It is Lisa who first tips Torres off about the disappearance of Whelan 10 years before, and Lisa who allows Torres the chance to see Eric Deeds's psych file.

Chovka Umarov

Chovka Umarov is the son of Papa Umarov, and is the old man's eyes, ears, and fist on the streets, overseeing daily operations of his father's Chechen criminal syndicate, which controls Boston. Chovka has a poor sense of humor, and is ruthless. Nevertheless, he comes to like Bob, and makes sure Bob is amply rewarded for killing Eric and stopping the robbery of the drop.

Father Peter Regan

Father Peter Regan is the Catholic priest who oversees the dwindling congregation of Saint Dominic's Church in Boston. It is the church that Bob and Torres both attend. Regan is well-liked and well-respected, and he encourages Bob to take Communion and seek redemption. When the novel ends, and Saint Dominic's is closed down, Father Regan is still awaiting his next assignment, which angers Bob, because he knows that Regan is a good man and deserves a place to be.

Richie Whelan

Richie Whelan is a much-talked about, but never-seen character in the novel "The Drop" by Dennis Lehane. Richie is a former high school star quarterback, and is known colloquially as "Glory Days". Richie disappears after leaving Marv's bar ten years before the novel opens, and is never seen again. Most believe he is dead, and most believe Eric Deeds is responsible. As it turns out, Whelan was murdered by Bob after incurring

a huge debt with Marv's old crew, as a way to cover the repayment of the debt, and to allow Marv to get his own life together, and walk away clean from his former life.



Symbols and Symbolism

Puppy

A pit bull puppy is found abused and abandoned by Bob on his way home from work. He ends up adopting the puppy, naming the dog Rocco. Rocco becomes the source of the relationship that develops between Bob and Nadia, and becomes so loved by Bob that he is willing to put \$10,000 on the line, and his life, in order to keep Rocco and Nadia safe.

Handguns

Handguns are used throughout the novel by various characters to kill others. They are extensively utilized by the Chechen mafia, and are used in self-defense by Bob when he kills Eric. Eric uses a handgun to kill Padgett Webster, his wife, and his little brother, while Dakka uses a handgun to kill Marv in his car.

Masks

Masks are worn by the Fitzgerald brothers when they commit the initial robbery of Cousin Marv's bar. They are kept stored in the trunk, and used during the commission of crimes. The masks disguise them and make it impossible to identify them, save for the wristwatch that Bri wears.

Umbrella

An umbrella is taken by Eric from Bob's house when Eric first tells Bob that Rocco is actually his dog, and not Bob's. Bob asks Eric what he will take in exchange for the life of Nadia and Rocco, and Eric responds by using the umbrella and the sunny weather as a dangerous metaphor, saying that he never knows how things will turn out. In order to demonstrate his power and scare Bob, Eric breaks into Bob's house, and leaves the umbrella in Rocco's cage with Rocco, though he does not take or harm Rocco.

Cash

Cash, in the form of United States currency, makes frequent appearances in the novel. At the beginning of the novel, cash is collected by Chechen mafia members from the bar, and \$5,000 is stolen by the Fitzgerald brothers from the bar. Bloodied cash is later returned to the bar, along with Bri Fitzgerald's arm and wristwatch. The cash is cleaned and returned to Chovka by Bob. The drop later consists of numerous increments of cash that are stored by Bob in a vault in the back of Marv's bar. At the end of the novel,

the Chechens pick up the cash, and part of Bob's reward for handling Eric comes by way of a large cash payment, direct from Papa Umarov, personally.

Envelopes

Envelopes are used by the mafia to conceal and carry cash. The envelopes are either then distributed or collected by mafia members as they run pickups or handle drops. On Super Bowl night, Bob handles the drop, collecting innumerable envelopes, which are then stored in the safe in the back of Cousin Marv's bar.

Cell phones

Cell phones are carried and used by every character in the novel in order to contact one another, but it is Eric's cell phone that proves to be the most important. Following Bob's killing of Eric, Chovka scrolls through the call list on Chovka's phone, to discover Marv's number among them. This confirms that Marv has been a part of the robbery attempt, and Marv is then killed.

Wristwatch

A wristwatch that is broken, and has stopped at 6:15, is worn by Bri Fitzgerald. A gift to Bri when he was 10 years old just before his father left home, Bri has worn the watch for years and years. He is wearing the wristwatch when he robs Cousin Marv's, and becomes the one distinguishable characteristic Bob observes and passes along to the police. Marv tells Bri to get a new watch, but Bri refuses. Word gets back to the Chechens, and they manage to find Bri based on the watch, ultimately killing him and severing his arm, sending it, along with the watch and the stolen cash, back to Cousin Marv.



Settings

Boston

Boston is the capital city of Massachusetts. It serves as the main setting for the novel "The Drop" by Dennis Lehane. It is where Bob, and the other characters of the novel, live, work, and carry on in the criminal world. It is where the fictional Cousin Marv's Bar is located, and is also where Pen' Park and the Channel are located. Boston's underworld is run by the Umaraov family, an Eastern European-bred crime syndicate. The city itself, especially the areas where the characters live and work - East Buckingham, the Flats, and so on - are populated by a mix of people and ethnicities, ranging from Irish to Puerto Rican.

Cousin Marv's

Cousin Marv's is a fictional bar in the Flats section of Boston, run by Cousin Marv, but truly owned by the Umarov crime syndicate. The bar serves food and alcohol, and is a hit with the locals, especially toward, and on, the weekends. Cousin Marv manages dealing with the mafia, as well as day-to-day operations of the bar, while Bob tends the bar. Cousin Marv used to own the bar when he ran his own crew, but rather than fight the Chechen mafia, he chose to fold and work for them.

Pen' Park

Pen' Park is an outdoor park located near a body of water referred to as the Channel. It appears to be a large park, for Bob is able to not only walk his dog there, but to play fetch there as well. It is at the park that Bob disposes of the severed arm by throwing it into the water, and it is at the park that Eric first makes contact with Bob about the dog.

South Carolina

South Carolina is one of the southern United States. It is where Eric travels to commit a crime with several friends, only to fail and be arrested. There, in prison, Eric becomes a sex slave for Padgett Webster, only later to hunt down and kill Padgett, his wife, and his brother in return.

Bob's basement

Bob's basement is where Bob kills Richie Whelan, and stuffs his body into a disconnected oil tank and heater, along with lye and rock salt to decompose the body. The basement is also where Bob keeps \$50,000 in cash in an old coffee container. He

goes down into his basement once during the novel to collect \$10,000 to pay Eric, to keep Rocco and Nadia safe.



Themes and Motifs

Crime

Crime is the singular, dominant, and all-encompassing theme found in the novel “The Drop” by Dennis Lehane. Crime in the novel, which involves everything from moral crimes, to using and selling drugs, to gambling, to fencing for the mafia, to extortion and to murder, is committed by every character in some way or another. Indeed, crime becomes the basis for the plot. Almost no character in the novel is totally clean of some kind of crime.

The most obvious form of crime comes through the criminal syndicate run by the Umarovs, which in turn, runs the city of Boston. The organization handles everything from illegal betting to murder. The syndicate runs drops through the bars and businesses that it owns, and uses nominal owners as fences, such as Marv. Marv himself once ran a crew, but was faced with the choice of fighting the Chechens, or giving in. Marv chose to give in and work with the Umarovs, rather than fight them. Indeed, Marv plans to commit the crime of robbery in order to get away with millions of dollars from the Super Bowl drop the Umarovs have organized for the end of the novel.

The law enforcement officials in the novel themselves are not totally clean. Torres commits moral crimes, committing adultery and going through a period of cocaine use years before the novel. Nadia is former drug user and near-suicide case. Bob is guilty of murdering Richie Whelan, and later guilty of killing Eric Deeds. Eric Deeds is himself responsible for at least three murders, though he also claims to be the killer of Richie Whelan. Marv is previously responsible for drug use, and running a crew, and for currently acting as a fence for the Umarovs. The Fitzgeralds are drug users and thieves. The only character in the novel who is truly clean is Father Regan, the priest at Saint Dominic’s Catholic Church, to whom everyone looks upon with respect. Even then, the sole source of goodness in the neighborhood is shut out when the church is closed and sold.

Redemption

Redemption is a major underlying theme in the novel “The Drop” by Dennis Lehane. Redemption involves the penance, and seeking to atone for, a past wrong, real or imagined, by the individual responsible for that past wrong, usually in conjunction with faith, specifically Christianity. The particular Christian religion in the novel that is associated with the idea of redemption and salvation is the Catholic Church. Indeed, both Bob and Torres are devoutly Catholic, and both are seeking to atone for past sins of some kind.

Bob is responsible for the murder of Richie Whelan 10 years before the novel begins, done to cover for Marv, who is cleaning up his life. Bob is tormented by the murder



every day of his life, and has spent the last decade alone and working the bar in the attempt to make up for his sin. He figures if he is alone in this life, he will not have to be alone in the next. He refuses to take Communion, believing his soul is in a state of sin that is unforgivable by God. Father Regan, and Torres both try to convince Bob that genuine penance is enough, that God will forgive him if he is truly sorry, but Bob does not believe it is possible. He does, however, wonder if perhaps his own belief in being unable to seek forgiveness comes from his own refusal to forgive himself.

Torres is seeking redemption for two primary reasons. First, he is a flawed human being who recognizes that he is imperfect, sins frequently, but also Confesses and seeks forgiveness from God just as frequently. He is trying to keep his life straight and do good by his family. Second, Torres is seeking to redeem himself following his demotion from Major Crimes after he slept with the wife of a superior, and crashed a cruiser while drunk. He believes solving a cold case will elevate him once more, and make up for his ruined past. Nevertheless, even though Torres solves the case, he does not seek to go after Bob, because Torres believes that there are higher forces at work in the world, and perhaps that some form of street justice has been served. Furthermore, he has come to like Bob, and recognizes Bob's own quest for redemption.

Catholicism

Catholicism is a major, underlying theme in the novel "The Drop" by Dennis Lehane. Roman Catholicism is a form of Christianity, which recognizes Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and the Only Son of God. Catholicism is the oldest Christian religion, and is the most steeped in tradition and theology. It is also the largest single Christian denomination in the world. Most of the characters in the novel are Catholic, including Bob and Torres. Catholicism is central to their lives and their actions, especially when it comes to their search for redemption (see the theme Redemption). Various aspects of Catholicism are discussed, debated, and meditated upon during the course of the novel.

Torres and Bob both believe that Catholicism is the most beautiful religion there is, and believe that it speaks the most truth to the nature of God, man, and their relationship to one another. Through Catholicism, Torres understands that all men are born fallen, are imperfect, and can achieve goodness and grace only through Jesus Christ. Confession, Torres feels, is better than therapy or AA because it allows the individual to come clean to God, not to other men. At the end of the day, God calls the shots, and so people had better be right with God. Torres intends to be right with God, no matter how flawed Torres himself may be. Bob struggles throughout the novel to approach God for forgiveness, though he greatly loves God and deeply invests himself in Catholicism.

When it comes to certain issues, Bob and Torres split ways. Torres can be considered a very conservative Catholic, observing Church laws and traditions as well as he can. Bob, though he values Catholic tradition, leans left on social issues, though what issues in particular he leans left on, is never discussed. Torres finds people who lean to the left, like Bob, to be Cafeteria Catholics, picking and choosing what they like, but ignoring important and harder things associated with Catholicism. Additionally, Bob despises the



way that Rome has handled the sex-abuse crisis in the Church, while Torres believes it is over and done with, and people must move on, for it obscures deeper truths in the faith itself. While Bob is sad to see Saint Dominic's close, Torres is nearly-incensed that it will be developed with a secular use in mind, believing it to be heresy.

Family

Family is an important theme in the novel "The Drop" by Dennis Lehane. Family, thematically, involves the love for, loyalty towards, and support in various forms of, people who may or may not be blood-related, but who function according to the model of the traditional family. In the novel, family at times is a successful thing, and at other times, does not matter at all. There are several instances of family in the novel, and each results in something differently.

The first example of family comes through Bob, Marv, and Dottie. While Marv and Dottie are siblings, Bob is their cousin. They are all that seems to be left of a once much larger family, except for the father of Marv and Dottie, who is in a nursing home. Marv visits his father frequently, though his father is incapable of understanding that Marv is visiting him. Dottie cares deeply for her younger brother, cooking for him and taking care of him. Marv, meanwhile, keeps Bob employed at his bar, having once employed Bob as part of his crew. When Eric begins to mess around with Bob, Marv intervenes on Bob's behalf, telling Eric not to screw around with Bob. However, when Marv crosses the Umarovs, family is not strong enough a thing for Bob to protect Marv.

The second example of family comes by way of the Umarovs themselves. Though they are a crime syndicate, it is clear that Chovka has major respect for his father, both as a boss and as a parent. Chovka runs the day-to-day operations of the syndicate for his father, and their blood bond is what enables such trust between them.

The third example of family comes by way of non-blood-related family. Following Bob's killing of Eric, and the protecting of the Super Sunday drop, Bob is given Celtic tickets, and is given money from Papa Umarov, directly. Chakov contends this is an honor that has not been bestowed on anyone in a long time, and Bob is now an honorary member of the Umarov family.

The fourth example of family in the novel comes by way of the Fitzgerald brothers, who do everything together. Though they are drug addicts and criminals, it is apparent that their family loyalty is a bond that is stronger than anything else, for that loyalty allows them to commit crimes together, and to trust one another.

History

History is an important, underlying theme in the novel "The Drop" by Dennis Lehane. The history in the novel that is chiefly dealt with has to do with roots, both personal and family, in and around Boston as it relates to the characters themselves. The histories of characters –their past –determines who they are in the present. History is incredibly



important to these characters, as their reputations and the place they call home exceeds everything else. For example, when Torres looks into the disappearance of Whelan, Scott McGrath tells Torres not to mess with his bar, the bar being a local and historical fixture in Scott's life, and the lives of many others.

Bob and Marv are both Boston natives in the novel. Bob's entire world has been in Boston, from his family growing old and dying, to his being involved in Marv's crew back in the day. Marv, likewise, has lived his entire life in Boston, and Boston is where his history has been, from his younger days, through the days of his crew, to his bar. It is something he is not willing to let go of, though he is willing to walk away for the right price (millions of dollars from a heist of the drop). Indeed, every corner of Boston drips with history for Bob, from the house he lives in – the house where he was born and raised, and where his parents died – to the church that his family has long attended, and where Bob still attends.

Eric Deeds's life has been rooted in Boston as well, even though he spent years away in South Carolina in prison. Eric still lives with his father, and doesn't seem to venture out of a few-block-radius of his home. Once out of prison, Eric can do anything or go anywhere, but he chooses to return to Boston, to crime, to his home. Striving to get back in the game, he invents the story that he was personally responsible for the death of Richie Whelan in order to give himself credit by enhancing his own history. Street cred is respect, and street cred is based on a person's history and reputation by way of that history. It is no different with Deeds.

Styles

Point of View

Dennis Lehane tells his novel “The Drop” from the third-person omniscient perspective. The third-person perspective allows Lehane to follow the actions of more than just one character, and allows extensive background information about certain characters – such as Eric Deeds and Cousin Marv – which further adds to the plot, for it enables their characters to be three-dimensional, rather than merely flat characters. The omniscient aspect of the third-person not only allows detailed information into the characters, but into the plot as well. For example, early on, it becomes apparent to the reader that Marv is actually the mastermind behind the robbery, whereas this information only becomes apparent to Bob and the Chechens at the very end of the novel.

Language and Meaning

Dennis Lehane tells his novel “The Drop” using language that is simple, brutal, and at times, poetic and deep. The characters in the novel – all of them – live hard lives, and have seen hard times, from the deaths of friends and family to struggling to survive paycheck to paycheck, to dealing with high crime and the inability to leave their present place in life. Education is minimal, so it is no surprise that the language of the novel reflects both the lack of education, and the difficult lives the characters lead. However, their one saving grace appears to be actual grace by way of religion, specifically, Catholicism. Some of the deepest thoughts and most poetic language comes into play when God and faith are involved. For example, when reflecting on forgiveness, Bob wonders if it is God that refuses to forgive men, or men themselves put themselves in cages that they won’t let themselves out of.

Structure

Dennis Lehane divides his novel “The Drop” into 16 linear numbered chapters, though not all of them are chronologically in order. For example, Chapter 8 deals with Eric Deed’s background and past, years before the events of the novel, whereas Chapters 7 and 9 deal with the aftermath of the robbery and the plot that evolves from Bob’s taking in of Rocco. The structure of the novel, both ordered and unordered, weaves back and forth between the past and the present, adding depth and rounding out the dimensionality of the characters and events they are associated with by detailing their pasts extensively. This is also symbolic of the characters themselves, who live in the present based on the way they lived in the past.



Quotes

Bob found the dog two days after Christmas.

-- Narrator (Chapter 1 paragraph 1)

Importance: The novel begins with the first event of many that will change Bob Saginowski's life for the better. He discovers a broken and abandoned pit bull puppy left for dead in a garbage can, through which he meets a woman named Nadia Dunn. His growing relationship with both Nadia and the dog will have far-reaching consequences for them all.

All he wanted was to not be alone, but he knew there was no getting rescued from that.

-- Narrator (Chapter 1 paragraph 69)

Importance: Here, the narrator explains that Bob is terribly lonely, but there seems to be no way to avoid it. Why is only revealed later. Bob's loneliness is self-imposed, a penance for the murder of Richie Whelan years before. There is no being rescued from a self-imposed loneliness based on murder.

For the life of him, he had no idea why he'd opened his mouth. And then, even more to his surprise, he kept f----- talking.

-- Narrator (Chapter 3 paragraph 22)

Importance: Bob reveals details of the robber to Torres, notably, the broken wristwatch on one of the robbers. Bob, who has been in a crew before, and who has been acquainted with the Chechen mafia, knows that it is dangerous to talk to the police, or to spread any kind of information too far. Yet, he keeps doing so for some unknown reason with Torres.

Connection. He suspected they might have been brought together by something other than chance.

-- Narrator (Chapter 4 paragraph 25)

Importance: At home with the dog, Bob begins to wonder if there is a reason he and Rocco were brought together. He wonders if the encounter was truly chance, or was a sign from, or act of, God.

Cities aren't run from the capitol building. They're run from the cellar. The First City? The one you see? That's the clothes they put over the body to make it look better... the Second City is the body... Only time a working man hears from the First City is when it's f----- him over. But the Second City is all around him every day his whole life.

-- Bob's father (Chapter 4 paragraph 66)

Importance: When Bob is a boy, his father reveals the truth about how cities are truly run - from the inside, from the underneath. It is the Second City that truly runs things, by



way of the criminal organizations like the Chechens. The Second City is what truly controls the daily lives of people, and this is very true of Bob and Marv.

When an airplane crashes, what's the safest airline to fly the next day?
-- Cousin Marv (Chapter 5 paragraph 48)

Importance: Cousin Marv's plan is to pull a heist on a drop, and believes that his bar will be the location of the next drop, because his bar has already been robbed. He uses the example of the safest airline being the one that has had a crash the day before as rationale behind the idea. With his bar being robbed so recently, security will be tighter, and so the bar will be safer for a drop.

The worst in men is commonplace. The best is a far rarer thing.
-- Bob's father (Chapter 6 paragraph 4)

Importance: In a keen observation about men, Bob's father explains that good men, and good qualities in men, are hard to find. This weighs heavily on Bob's heart throughout the novel, because he is struggling to find the best in himself, especially the good qualities he has, because he is not singularly a good man.

It chilled him to realize how small and breakable everything was – every building, every person.
-- Narrator (Chapter 7 paragraph 3)

Importance: When Torres is five, he gets stuck on the top of a Ferris Wheel. The view is incredible, but it makes Torres see how temporary everything is, from buildings to people. This drives him closer to God, drives him further into faith, and motivates him to do the best that he can with his life because it truly is only temporary.

We don't let ourselves out of our own cages.
-- Bob (Chapter 11 paragraph 136)

Importance: Bob and Nadia are discussing the nature of, and possibility of, forgiveness and redemption. Bob has wondered whether or not God will ever forgive him, or if God's forgiveness is possible at all. Yet, he also wonders whether he, and others, are afraid to approach God for forgiveness not out of fear of not being forgiven, but of being forgiven, or allowing themselves to actually be forgiven. They are trapped in the cages they have made for themselves, and believe there is no escape.

He's not dead, Marv argued. We're past those days. You might be. Bob, on the other hand...
-- Narrator (Chapter 16 paragraph 8)

Importance: When Marv realizes something has gone wrong with the robbery, he suspects that Eric is dead, though he tries to rationalize that Bob is not. Marv convinces himself that he is past those days of murder (apart from Fitz), but he wonders whether or not Bob is, and whether or not Bob has killed Eric.