

The Winner Study Guide

The Winner by David Baldacci

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Plot Summary

In David Baldacci's novel, *The Winner*, LuAnn Tyler encounters the sinister mind of a criminal who calls himself Jackson. After surviving a childhood of abuse, "Jackson" sets his sights on recouping his family's lost fortune through illegal activity. Jackson is more than just a thug; he is brilliant. As such, his crimes are nearly impossible to solve. He preys on those whom he feels are vulnerable. He believes they will follow his directions unquestioningly and do virtually anything if paid enough. When Jackson chooses LuAnn as one of his flock, however, he is unprepared for her inner strength.

LuAnn was raised and remains in a state of poverty. She is not easily intimidated and is used to hard work. Her lack of monetary means does not mean that she is so poor as to be without hope. LuAnn was raised well by her mother and is doing her best to raise her daughter, Lisa, lovingly. When LuAnn accidentally walks in on her boyfriend's drug deal gone sour, she suddenly finds herself a suspect in his murder. To escape prosecution and a continued life of poverty for her daughter, LuAnn accepts Jackson's offer for employment. She buys a lottery ticket and shares with him the numbers. He then rigs the system so that she wins and takes a percentage of the profit. Jackson is a man of many resources. He is able to provide her with a new identity, and she flees the country with her winnings.

LuAnn spends ten years abroad. Jackson's secret is safe, and her privacy is assured. However, LuAnn eventually tires of running and returns to the United States under her new assumed name. Her presence worries Jackson and her return tips off a ripple of questions. An award winning reporter, Thomas Donovan, traces her travels and questions the legality of her winning. In order to keep his secret safe Jackson begins eliminating each witness, with LuAnn and her daughter as his main focus. With the help of her romantic interest, Matt, and her friend, Charlie, LuAnn is able to defeat Jackson. Matt, a former FBI agent, helps her to make a deal with the FBI where, in exchange for Jackson, she avoids jail time for her involvement in the lottery. The book closes with LuAnn, now very humbled, living safely with Matt, Lisa, and Charlie.

Part One: Chapters 1-4

Part One: Chapters 1-4 Summary

"The Winner" opens in a busy shopping mall. A middle-aged man studies a single mother named LuAnn. The man, who calls himself Jackson, is extremely smart, although one wouldn't know it from his appearance. His intellect, when combined with a lack of reservations regarding killing those who interfere with his plans, makes him dangerous. On this particular day Jackson appears anything but dangerous. He has rented office space and hired a receptionist for the day. Jackson has tried to create the appearance of a legitimate office from which he is expecting to conduct a job interview. The potential employee, LuAnn, is observant, and recognizes the hoax for the scam that it is.

LuAnn resides with her boyfriend, Duane Harvey, in his trailer. They have a daughter, Lisa, who is eight months old and is the center of LuAnn's life. LuAnn is a doting mother to Lisa. In her hometown of Rikersville, Georgia, she is well known for her beauty. The citizens always expected her to leave the small town and become famous. She stands 5 feet 10 inches and has auburn hair and a great body. Although she exudes great beauty, she also possesses an inner strength that goes unnoticed. She owns just one dress, which she pulls on to prepare for her interview at the mall. She is a clever girl but after having Lisa she became stuck in a cycle of perpetual work and has few resources. Her parents are both deceased. A single family heirloom, a clock, is LuAnn's prized possession. She is lured into the phony job offer of one hundred dollars per four hour workday, a sum greater than anything she could otherwise hope to obtain. She sees this job as a way out for her and Lisa.

The interview soon reveals Jackson's real plan. He isn't looking to hire her for her opinions and survey capabilities as originally described. He tells LuAnn that he can guarantee her success in the national lottery and asks for her cooperation. He appeals to her dreams of a better life and Lisa's future. LuAnn is understandably reluctant and agrees to telephone him at a toll free number with her answer within the next two days. She wonders if she can trust a man who claims to be able to rig the lottery and wonders what the repercussions from her involvement would be.

Part One: Chapters 1-4 Analysis

Chapters one through four introduce the two main characters, LuAnn and Jackson. Both their physical and mental attributes are discussed. Jackson is a complex character. He is a master of disguise. The costume he assumes when interacting with LuAnn is just one of the many of which he is capable. He creates new identities for himself through gels, epoxy appendages, wigs, and expertly applied cosmetics. Jackson also has the accompanying forged documents for each disguise. It is clear that Jackson has a great deal of resources. In this area he differs from LuAnn.

LuAnn never finished high school, having dropped out in the seventh grade. She currently teeters on the national poverty line and just tries to get by for herself and for Lisa. Jackson has studied her from afar and chosen her specifically for these circumstances. He sees her as vulnerable and intends to exploit her. The reader immediately grows distrustful of Jackson and recognizes that he is not an upstanding person. Part of the inherent disregard for Jackson probably originates in LuAnn's general goodness. She strives against the odds to be a good mother and clearly values the idea of family. Her greatest treasure is an inexpensive clock that was passed down from her grandmother to her mother before finding its way to LuAnn. LuAnn's daughter, Lisa, is named in honor of her mother.

Part One: Chapters 5-9

Part One: Chapters 5-9 Summary

Upon returning from her interview, LuAnn finds Duane in bed with a red-headed woman from town. He doesn't seem the least bit remorseful, and LuAnn recognizes him for the weak man that he is. LuAnn first places Lisa, still in her car seat, on the bathroom floor and closes the door to prevent her from viewing the confrontation. Then she grabs the sleeping woman by the hair and drags her across the room before depositing her, naked, outside. Duane asserts his love for LuAnn, but she is more convinced of her need to leave him. His words of endearment are met with a right punch and kick in the groin. As LuAnn gathers her things she discovers a cache of money beneath the mattress. Duane won't reveal its origins and LuAnn doesn't truly care anyway. Their fight makes her think again about Jackson's business offer. She returns to the mall to visit the "office" where her interview was conducted. She is not surprised to find it vacant. She continues her research at the library where she looks up news stories about the last six lottery winners. They all appeared to come from rough backgrounds akin to hers.

On the day that Jackson expected an answer, LuAnn feels compelled to visit her parents' graves. She often asks her mother for guidance. Unfortunately, on this particular day LuAnn sensed nothing from her mother. At her father's grave she was flooded with memories of how he berated her. Desperate to break the cycle of poverty and poor parenting, LuAnn runs from the cemetery. She decides to move in with her friend, Beth, and get her GED so she can care for Lisa properly and be self-reliant. Before going to Beth's house she returns to the trailer to grab a few items. She is surprised to find a car parked out front. Inside she discovers Duane on the couch. He had been shot and was nearly dead. An intruder, presumably the owner of the expensive car parked out front, approached LuAnn from behind. In self defense she fought him off and hit him in the head with the telephone, knocking him unconscious. When she collected herself LuAnn noticed bags of drugs on the table. She suddenly realized where Duane's money stash came from. Wanting to distance herself from the mess she grabbed Lisa and her mother's clock and left the trailer. She jumped into the stranger's car and sped away. The car contained a telephone which she used to call Jackson with her answer. The day's events had cemented her position. Cooperating with Jackson was her only way of escaping both Duane and poverty. Thinking more rationally now, LuAnn reversed direction and returned the car. She walked to the local store and bought her lottery ticket as instructed by Jackson. Although she didn't know it, she was followed by an assassin who had been placed in the vicinity in the event that LuAnn declined Jackson's offer. LuAnn boarded a train destined for New York City.

Part One: Chapters 5-9 Analysis

In chapters five through nine the author adds depth to LuAnn's character. The first chapters examined her motherly qualities and alluded to her intellect. This set of chapters demonstrates her brute strength. Ever the loving parent, LuAnn safely stows Lisa out of harm's way before ripping Shirley out of bed and throwing her forcefully out of the trailer. She leashes out her anger on Duane, as well, and he is incapable of stopping her. Another side of LuAnn is presented here. LuAnn is the product of circumstances, but certainly is not a weak woman. In addition to her physical prowess, she is smart. Although she didn't complete her schooling, there is a cleverness and skill of perception about her. Many people would jump at an offer for a million dollars, but LuAnn felt something wasn't right about it. She researched the situation and what she found reinforced her confidence in her own intuition. It is likely that had LuAnn not walked in on Duane's drug deal, she would have declined Jackson's offer, because her powers of deduction told her it was not the right thing to do. However, after Duane's death, Rikersville wasn't a safe place for her and Lisa. In a moment of fear she chooses what she thinks is the best option.

Part One: Chapters 10-14

Part One: Chapters 10-14 Summary

LuAnn disembarks off of the train at Penn Station in New York City. She is amazed at the hustling scene around her. LuAnn was greeted by a man Jackson had sent to accompany her. Although he seemed a competent guide, LuAnn was uncomfortable with his stoic demeanor. After much prodding he relented, saying that she could call him Charlie. He escorted her to her suite at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel and checked her in under the false name of Linda Freeman. Charlie had been working for Jackson for quite some time. He had guided many other lottery winners through the process, but he felt that LuAnn was different. She was inquisitive, friendly and well meaning but not entirely naive. Her quick departure left her without a change of clothes. Charlie returned the next day with a wardrobe for her, and supplies and a carriage for Lisa. LuAnn sensed a good person in Charlie as well and offered him passage with her and Lisa when they eventually left the country.

While at the hotel LuAnn telephoned Jackson. She was following most of his directions. Because she had never established a social security number or driver's license (those items were not important for survival or daily living in rural Georgia), Jackson was pulling strings to create them on her behalf. He was also busy arranging for her departure from the country, a requirement of their business arrangement. She failed to acquiesce to Jackson's demand with regards to staying inside the hotel. Now that she was in New York she wanted to experience the city, beginning with Central Park. They were also among the large crowd in attendance for the live lottery drawing, although they didn't announce her presence.

Shirley Watson, the woman LuAnn had discovered in bed with Duane, made her way to Duane's trailer armed with a hunting knife and canister of battery acid. Shirley's goal was to even the playing field and extract revenge by making LuAnn less of a beauty queen. Instead she found both Duane and a second, burly man, shot dead. The second man was related to Duane's drug dealing. He had simply been dealing with Duane at the wrong time. After his physical confrontation with LuAnn, he was killed by a man named Romanello. Romanello was following LuAnn, at first because of Jackson's directions, but later because he thought that doing so might somehow benefit him. He sends her an anonymous note at the hotel indicating that he knows about her mishap at the trailer and encloses a copy of the recent newspaper from her hometown. LuAnn leaves Lisa with Charlie, claiming that she is having her hair done and sneaks out to meet him. Romanello calls himself Rainbow and blackmails her, demanding half of her winnings in exchange for his silence. LuAnn agrees but only after he explains his presence at the trailer. After finding out about the assassination plan, LuAnn has further reason to fear Jackson.

Part One: Chapters 10-14 Analysis

Charlie's character is introduced on page ninety-seven. Charlie is employed by Jackson to escort the winners through the process as directed by Jackson. LuAnn is not the first winner he has guided. Charlie is paid to ensure that Jackson's directions are followed and that things move along smoothly. He is not in the habit of becoming friendly with the winners. LuAnn is different. She insists on knowing his name. Even though he supplies her with a fake one, she is pacified with his response. LuAnn is attempting to create a bubble of safety around herself and Lisa. Establishing rapport with him is part of that goal. Charlie sees LuAnn's inner strength. He is caught off guard by her insistence on knowing his name and is impressed with her parenting skills. LuAnn and Charlie talk openly, and he develops a soft spot for her and Lisa. His affection is demonstrated in his shopping spree, which included much more than the basic items they required. Charlie is expected to protect LuAnn at all times, but she does not share her phone call with him. Romanello, using the name "Rainbow," attempts to blackmail LuAnn. It is ironic that the man LuAnn is most in danger from (Jackson) would hire someone to escort and protect her (Charlie).

Part One: Chapters 15-17

Part One: Chapters 15-17 Summary

After meeting with Romanello, LuAnn proceeds to the salon to have her hair done as she indicated to Charlie. Romanello returned to his apartment to celebrate his new wealth. Jackson was waiting for him. Jackson methodically explains his disappointment in Romanello's continued interest in LuAnn Tyler. He then shocks him with a taser gun and injects his heart with a solution designed to induce a heart attack without leaving evidence.

Meanwhile, LuAnn accepts her lottery winnings at the national press conference. Charlie watches from the audience. He is happy for LuAnn but torn inside. He mulled over her proposition. He would love to accompany LuAnn and Lisa overseas but recognized that their friendship would only go just so far. At some point he expected her to become romantically involved with another man, and then he wondered what he would do with his life. However, until that came to pass, he was being offered a great opportunity to tour the world for free. While they planned their future, Sheriff Waymer of the Rikersville police department was in a state of disbelief. The investigation into Duane's death was ongoing and there was a warrant out for LuAnn's arrest. The sheriff was shocked that a girl of so few resources could have escaped him and traveled all the way to New York.

LuAnn exits the press conference through the isolated rear doors. Jackson is waiting for her in a limousine. He presented her with the final terms of their business arrangement—her new identification papers and traveling itinerary. While the financial rewards were quite generous, the arrangement was a coerced one occurring at gunpoint. Most surprising to her was Jackson's skill at costume. The deception was complete when he created her new identity via hair cut and color, a fake nose and makeup. When the transformation was complete, Jackson moved into the light and revealed that he was wearing the identical costume. He even accurately mimicked her voice, proving that he was capable of being anyone, anywhere, anytime.

Part One: Chapters 15-17 Analysis

The ease with which Jackson eliminates Romanello inspires fear. LuAnn accepts her lottery winning with a heavy heart. It should have been an exciting moment but it was riddled with anxiety. LuAnn still didn't know the full extent of Jackson's plans for her. She was a country girl and had never been outside of Georgia. She was afraid of going out of the country by herself. LuAnn had very few choices at that time and returning home where the sheriff was looking for her was not a good option. She hardly knew Charlie. However, LuAnn was a good judge of character and was confident that he was not a danger to her. In fact, she expected that he would provide great company while she traveled abroad. Just before her departure, Jackson decided to frighten LuAnn. He

accomplishes this by expertly applying enough make-up to each of them so that they resemble twin sisters. Jackson's disguise leaves a lasting impression on LuAnn. He also gives her the following advice "When trying to hide, make yourself as obvious as possible, put yourself right out in the open." This direction will be repeated and/or alluded to multiple times throughout the novel.

Part Two: Chapters 18-22

Part Two: Chapters 18-22 Summary

Part Two opens ten years after LuAnn's disguised departure from the United States. She has hidden successfully and traveled across many countries. Despite her wealth, LuAnn has felt unsettled and yearned to come home. Doing so was a dangerous proposition because it directly defied Jackson's orders. Both LuAnn and Charlie have lived in a hypersensitive state, always on guard for an unwelcome visit from their dangerous benefactor. Charlie visited the United States recently on behalf of LuAnn. He selected and directed renovations on an old estate known as Wicken's Hunt. They planned to reside in Charlottesville, Virginia, secluded among the estate's three hundred acres. Lisa is enrolled in St. Anne's Belfield private school and is excited to have what she views as a normal upbringing. Her childhood was spent country hopping and her education was developed through the employment of private tutors. LuAnn now goes by the name of Catherine Savage, a last name that she shares with Lisa.

In addition to Jackson, LuAnn is also sought by a man named Thomas Donovan. Donovan is a Pulitzer winning reporter employed by the Washington Tribune. Donovan had made it his life's ambition to unveil injustices and speak for the underprivileged. He has long had an abhorrence for the national lottery. Donovan believes that the majority of the people who play are the ones who can least afford the extra cash expended on the ticket. The odds of winning are stacked against the player, and for the few fortunate winners, life becomes complicated. The government-imposed taxes and a lack of smart financial guidance more often than not resulted in people that were even poorer after winning the lottery than beforehand. In fact, Donovan's research showed that nine out of every twelve lottery winners since the inception of the program had declared bankruptcy. The only exception was a ten year period during which all the winners proved successful and went on to attain wealth beyond their lottery winnings. They filed their forms, paid their taxes, and lived charmed lives. Donovan's intuition told him that something was different about this group of winners. Of the twelve, he could find no information about LuAnn Tyler. The speculation surrounding Duane's death, her winning and subsequent disappearance didn't sit right with him. He telephoned the Rikersville sheriff to learn more and discovered that the murder warrant was still outstanding. He continued to use his connections to unravel LuAnn's mystery. He theorized that she had obtained a fake social security number and found her assumed name. He filed IRS form 2848 and became her legal representative for tax purposes. He did this illegally, without her permission, but the government assumed that the request was legitimate and forwarded to him all of Catherine Savage's personal information. Included in the package was her new address in the United States. Donovan traveled to Virginia and approached LuAnn. When confronted by a stranger knowing her true identity, LuAnn panicked and sped away. A high speed car chase ensued. LuAnn was aided by the man she had contracted to build her fence, Matt Riggs. Matt put his truck in between Donovan and LuAnn, enabling her escape.

Part Two: Chapters 18-22 Analysis

Page two hundred and twenty describes Jackson's apartment. His stylistic tastes were eclectic but the most notable piece is his make-up room. It included specialized lighting and many mirrors. He used photographs as his inspiration and they could be found readily displayed around the room. Also present were numerous wigs and synthetic materials for shaping his body. Cosmetics were always the finishing touch. Jackson was motivated by his past. He had an abusive relationship with his father. His father not only inflicted physical pain, but he robbed Jackson of his future as well. Their family had been considered affluent for many generations, but Jackson's father squandered the family fortune. He also illegally removed funds from Jackson's trust fund so that when he came of age there was nothing remaining. Jackson had counted on it as a way to escape his father's wrath. Jackson eventually tired of the abuse. He made a plan and his father became his first victim. He then set forth, determined to recoup the family fortune. Once he had recovered enough money, he purchased the apartment building he grew up in. He gutted it, moved into the penthouse, and eventually became accustomed to the memories it fostered. Jackson employed Horace Parker, the same doorman who worked there when Jackson was a boy. These examples show the complexities of Jackson's character. He is both a product of his abusive childhood and yet motivated by it. He is capable of killing, but also feels responsible for the doorman's employment. His character has many facets, and it is not surprising that he feels compelled to take on multiple identities. He is, in essence, reinventing himself, over and over again.

It is important to note that ten years elapse between the end of part one and the beginning of part two. LuAnn is now in her thirties and publicly goes by the name Catherine Savage. Her daughter, Lisa, is ten years old. LuAnn has been a fugitive for ten years and is tired of running from Jackson. The early chapters of Part Two also introduce Matt Riggs and Thomas Donovan, LuAnn's love interest and journalist, respectively.

Part Two: Chapters 23-26

Part Two: Chapters 23-26 Summary

LuAnn's interaction with Donovan left her shaken. She was now thirty years old and had spent a third of her life running. Every day was filled with the fear of being discovered, and she had created a complicated veneer to protect herself and Lisa. Her general contractor, Matt Riggs, had sustained damage to his truck in the car chase and proceeded to the house to ask for help. When LuAnn returned to the house, she rebuffed Matt, insisting she could take care of herself, and there was no problem. She clearly didn't want to admit any additional people into her tight inner circle. Matt is confused but excuses himself and leaves for the evening. Later, when LuAnn recaps the events for Charlie, she explains that she is most afraid of what will happen when their lives unravel and Lisa learns the truth about her mother and the origins of their wealth. As a devoted mother, LuAnn's priority is Lisa's safety and the health of their relationship.

Jackson learned of LuAnn's return to the country after depositing funds into LuAnn's account. The bank mistakenly informed him of her change of address, information to which he was not entitled. Upon further investigation, he learned that she had not only returned, but was legitimately paying her taxes. That meant that the money was traceable. He also discovered Donovan's falsified IRS form and was alerted to the possibility that someone else was aware of LuAnn's return. He was worried his operation would be uncovered.

Part Two: Chapters 23-26 Analysis

LuAnn harbors guilt for the way in which she became wealthy, as well as the people she was forced to leave behind. She attempts to rectify this by donating large sums of money to worthy charities. Philanthropy is a redeeming action. If it was possible to go back and make different choices, LuAnn would forfeit the money. It has caused her to run without peace for one third of her life. In returning to the United States, she knew she was taking a great risk by disobeying Jackson. LuAnn was motivated by her desire to create a stable life for Lisa. Although LuAnn appears much more polished on the outside, she retains some of her old characteristics. She never opted for the plastic surgery Jackson suggested. She liked her facial scar because it reminded her of where she'd come from and how much she'd sacrificed. She retained her inner strength and exercised regularly, sometimes with her grounds people. Despite her abilities, when Donovan approaches her and calls her by her true name, she becomes nervous.

Part Two: Chapters 27- 30

Part Two: Chapters 27- 30 Summary

In an effort to protect LuAnn's identity, Charlie engaged in Charlottesville society on her behalf. They donated large sums of money to worthy local causes but generally kept to themselves. People accepted that they were quiet, wealthy people and provided them ample space. LuAnn appreciated the privacy. She had tried to maintain that barrier by sending Matt Riggs away without an explanation or even a thank you following the car chase. Since that time she had had a chance to rethink her position and felt badly for treating him that way. LuAnn drove to his home to make amends. Unfortunately, he didn't appear to be home. Her curiosity got the better of her. LuAnn let herself into his home and began looking through his things. When Matt discovered her inside his home he was understandably upset. They verbally sparred for a short time but settled into a truce.

Charlie fostered useful relationships with members of the community. He recognized these connections could be quite helpful. Their real estate agent, John Pemberton, was an established member of the town. He knew nearly everyone and their families, and those he didn't know he could find out about. On this particular day Charlie wanted to find out what he could about Matt Riggs as well as the second man involved in the car chase. John told Charlie that Matt was a dependable man and hard worker. He also alluded to Matt's past and speculated that he was associated with the police.

Thomas Donovan left the country side and traveled into Georgetown to visit the woman he had been dating. Her name was Alicia Crane. Alicia was a socialite whose family was historically wealthy. While Donovan didn't share in her ancestral good fortune, he did enjoy the fringe benefits associated with dating her. Donovan was genuinely interested in Alicia and she cared for him deeply. His recent work had kept them apart. Alicia was glad to see him return to the city and expressed her concern for his safety.

Part Two: Chapters 27- 30 Analysis

LuAnn wants desperately to have a normal life. She knows she needs to provide a stable home for Lisa. Additionally, for ten years she has been without the companionship and intimacy of a man. LuAnn is attracted to Matt but fears that involvement with him could get either one, or both, of them hurt. She also worries about keeping her identity hidden. Charlie is her only friend and person with who she can speak honestly. Her life is a tapestry of lies. When Donovan arrives, uninvited, on her property, LuAnn envisions the end to all of her dreams. She thought it impossible for anyone to even discover her true name, never mind trace her travels. His arrival indicates that she underestimated some of the characters. LuAnn has good reason to fear Jackson. Donovan, however, means her no harm.

Part Two: Chapters 31-35

Part Two: Chapters 31-35 Summary

Pemberton was truly resourceful. Within a few short days he provided Charlie with the location of the elusive Honda involved in the car chase. It was being housed at a rental cottage nearby. Charlie and LuAnn bickered over who would investigate further. They each decided to go, but didn't share this information with the other. Matt Riggs followed at a safe and undetectable distance. Charlie arrived first. He found the cottage empty and picked the lock. Inside he discovered Donovan's detailed files and realized that Donovan had cracked the lottery scam. Matt watched Charlie's entrance and departure from a hiding spot in the woods. LuAnn was the next to arrive. She had chosen to ride her horse, Joy, to the cottage. While LuAnn was exploring inside, Donovan returned from his visit with Alicia. LuAnn was trapped inside the cottage. Riggs activated his car alarm to draw Donovan's attention away from the cottage. This created just enough time for Matt and LuAnn to escape on horseback. Again, she offered Matt no explanation for her odd behavior.

Charlie was not the only man to utilize John Pemberton's resources. A man going by the name of Conklin visited John. He inquired about available estates, specifically the Wicken's Hunt property. John starts talking and discloses a lot of seemingly unimportant yet still identifiable information about LuAnn. This confirms LuAnn's identity and provides Jackson with her whereabouts.

Part Two: Chapters 31-35 Analysis

When LuAnn and Charlie learn of Donovan's whereabouts, they each decide to take matters into their own hands. Charlie's visit goes unnoticed, but LuAnn becomes trapped inside Donovan's cottage when he unexpectedly arrives home. Donovan rescues her for the second time in two days, but she maintains that emotional wall that has been reinforced over so many years of solitary living. While LuAnn and Charlie are busy researching Donovan, Jackson is busy researching LuAnn. Jackson conducts his research through yet another of his disguises, a persona he calls Conklin.

Part Two: Chapters 36-39

Part Two: Chapters 36-39 Summary

After their poor beginning, LuAnn was compelled to set things right with Matt. She invited him over for lunch and shared her idea for an additional building on the property - one which she wanted to hire him to build. Lisa met Matt in passing and expressed her fondness for his company. Lisa was enjoying her new home and their new shared friends. Her happiness dissolved when LuAnn shared with her the possibility that they might need to move again. The mystery man driving the Honda had spooked LuAnn, and she feared for their safety. Unfortunately, Lisa had never learned the truth about their identities, or where their fortune originated, so she couldn't understand her mother's concerns. Lisa exploded with a childhood's worth of anger and frustration. She articulated her desire to trade their life of travel and affluence for a small town life of permanence. LuAnn was upset by her daughter's outburst. In their separate rooms they each cried for the challenges their lives included. LuAnn found comfort in the soothing rhythm of her mother's clock. It had traveled everywhere with her and now resided in her bedroom at Wicken's Hunt.

LuAnn headed from the changing room back into her bedroom and came face to face with Jackson. He had apparently let himself into her home. Jackson wanted specific information about the Honda and its driver. Jackson found out about their confrontation and was concerned about having the lottery scam revealed. He was also disappointed with LuAnn's return to the United States. She had disobeyed him and he was not pleased. Having LuAnn back in the country was just too close to home for Jackson's liking. He was also aware of her new friendship with Matt. Matt did seem to be rescuing her a lot, and his past was full of secrets. This combination made Jackson uneasy. Jackson intended to research Matt's past and, if he found anything troubling, he vowed to kill Matt. With her growing affection for Matt, LuAnn seized the opportunity to warn Matt. She persuaded Jackson to allow her to discreetly inquire about Matt's past. LuAnn promised to report back to Jackson in a timely manner. With that issue finalized, Jackson provided her with the access information for a million dollars in a Swiss bank account. It was the entire original principal amount of her winnings, returned at the end of a ten year period as promised. She had lived off of the interest and its various investment dividends during her travels. With their business concluded, Jackson threatens to kill her, stating that she has fulfilled her purpose. He even pulls the trigger, but the gun was unloaded. He exits her home leaving her quivering in his wake.

LuAnn gained control of herself and made a decision. She resolved that if he ever tried to harm her family, either she or Jackson would die. LuAnn would not live in fear for their safety any longer. She checked on Lisa, who was sleeping soundly. LuAnn then went to Charlie's room and woke him from his slumber. She informed him of Jackson's visit and instructed Charlie to take Lisa away. They left in the middle of the night for an undecided destination. Lisa was anxious about their sudden departure. Not only was she afraid, but she was still angry with her mother about their earlier argument.

Compounding this was the fact that LuAnn was not joining them in their travels. LuAnn promised to tell Lisa the whole truth as soon as the immediate danger had passed.

In the morning LuAnn awoke to find Matt outside surveying the land for the new building. LuAnn rushed out to greet him, forgetting that she was wearing only a thin robe. They carried their conversation inside because of the cold morning air and LuAnn's inadequate dress. Coffee and a dose of honesty turned into passionate sex. Jackson observed their tryst before returning to the business of identifying the Honda's driver. He learned about Donovan's interest in the lottery and committed to killing him. Meanwhile, LuAnn and Matt's intimacy was interrupted by a telephone call from Donovan. Matt could hear enough from LuAnn's end of the conversation to begin putting together the pieces of her past. Although he still didn't know about the lottery, she did share with him the details surrounding Duane's death.

Part Two: Chapters 36-39 Analysis

LuAnn wants to include Matt in her life. She thinks about him often and has begun to daydream about him. Her behavior so far did not leave a positive impression, and she is aware of this fact. In an effort to improve her standing she invites him over for lunch and discusses plans for her property. Lisa is introduced to Matt and views him favorably. Lisa's encouragement leads LuAnn to wonder if it would be possible to have a relationship with a man and demonstrate for Lisa what a normal family life is like. This dream is shattered for both of them by Donovan's presence, and Lisa is angry when her mother mentions relocating. LuAnn was right to consider moving again, but Jackson moved faster than she expected. LuAnn still treasures her mother's clock, but she has grown a lot since the day she received it. LuAnn knows that Jackson is a man to be feared and that her family is in grave danger. She does not take his threats idly. LuAnn sends Charlie and Lisa away in an attempt to provide them with some measure of safety. In the newly-found emptiness of the house LuAnn and Matt consummate their relationship.

Part Two: Chapters 40-43

Part Two: Chapters 40-43 Summary

LuAnn's meeting with Donovan was insightful. She learned that the drug dealer she had hit with the telephone had been fatally stabbed to death. She had always thought that he died from the trauma she inflicted to his head, but she now knew this to be incorrect. When she learned of his stabbing she correctly concluded that another person was present that day. LuAnn recognized that this person must have been the man who called himself 'Rainbow' and who had attempted to blackmail her all those years ago. She also discovered that a warrant was still out for her arrest regarding Duane's death. Although Donovan did have information that Billy Harvey, the sheriff of Rikersville, would be interested in, Donovan's real motivation was related to the lottery. If LuAnn agreed to give him useful information pertaining to the fixed lottery, he would give her advance notice of the story's publication. One way or another he was determined to uncover the story, but her cooperation would ensure that she could flee to safety with minimal risk of police prosecution. LuAnn admitted that the situation was not proper, but in the interest of his safety she could not provide him with the information he sought. After realizing how much he already knew, she pleaded with him to leave the country and even offered him the monetary means to do so.

When Matt Riggs realizes the trouble LuAnn was in, and the extent of corruption of the lottery system, he called in some favors from his old friends. He made an inquiry into LuAnn's past. In doing so, he alerted authorities to her presence. After her meeting with Donovan, LuAnn drove around for a while to clear her mind. She then drove to Matt's home where she hoped to find solace. During the course of conversation, however, LuAnn realized that he knew more than just what she had shared and she became nervous about his knowledge. She excused herself and returned to her car. LuAnn felt inner turmoil. She could feel her involvement with him growing. She knew that if she were fortunate enough to stay here and call Wicken's Hunt home, they would be romantically involved. She cared for him and their passion was undeniable, but something was holding her back. He had his own secrets, and it seemed that he had external resources as well. The big question was whether or not she could trust him. LuAnn mulled over this thought in the quiet of her own home. She saw Jackson outside and accepted his presence. She was being watched, but at the moment she was not the focus of his predatory behavior. She knew that could change at any minute. Later that evening she returned to Matt and confessed everything.

Part Two: Chapters 40-43 Analysis

LuAnn's desire for Matt's companionship is tempered by her many years of refined caution. She repeatedly approaches him wishing to talk, but pulls away. As LuAnn explores her level of trust in Matt, their intimacy is tested and grows. One large stumbling block occurs when LuAnn realizes Matt knows more about her than just the

information she had offered. Under the circumstances, LuAnn can't help wondering where he got the information and if he is working with Jackson. Ultimately, she follows her own intuition and does decide to trust him completely, but that trust is not given easily. Once LuAnn knows Matt is trustworthy, she explains everything and shares her past with Matt. LuAnn is delighted to be able to tell the truth and share herself with Matt.

Part Two: Chapters 44-47

Part Two: Chapters 44-47 Summary

George Masters was a life time FBI agent. He had been following LuAnn's case since her disappearance ten years previously. He had been part of the original investigation and remained curious. Matt Riggs' queries about LuAnn caused Masters to think that LuAnn had reemerged. Masters had received reports that a woman matching LuAnn's description had been seen with Romanello, a known assassin for hire, within hours of his death. Those reports added a level of intrigue to her story. Romanello was found in possession of a train ticket departing from Georgia and arriving in New York prior to the lottery drawing. If he was indeed connected with LuAnn, and if she, too, rode that same train, then she was destined for New York because she expected to win. Masters knew that if the public were aware that the lottery was in some way rigged, they would rightfully lose confidence in the system, and the country would lose the revenues the lottery produced. Even worse was the fact that the president had personally endorsed the lottery for all of the help it provided to the country's infrastructure.

Jackson called one of his resource men and gained access to the national fingerprint database. It revealed that Matt Rigg's true name was Daniel Buckman. According to the database, he was deceased. When this information was retrieved, the FBI was alerted. Matt was part of the witness relocation program and both his previous and current identities were followed closely. The FBI contacted him to warn him about the possibility of danger. Matt quickly set out to find LuAnn, assuming that she was in danger as well.

LuAnn telephoned Jackson with an update. He was unpleasant and demanded to meet her in person at the cottage. LuAnn told him about her meeting with Donovan, and Jackson told her about Matt's real name and deceased status. He insinuated that Matt was a criminal which hit a nerve with LuAnn. Jackson again threatened to kill LuAnn, but she reminded him that doing so would only add to Donovan's story. As they both prepared to leave, Matt knocked down the door. He intended to save LuAnn, but became injured himself when Jackson threw a knife across the room. It landed in Matt's arm and the wound began bleeding profusely. LuAnn broke free from Jackson. He was surprised at the strength she possessed. LuAnn wrestled him to the ground and was close to killing him when his mask slipped off and her grip was lost. Jackson ran into the woods and disappeared, but LuAnn had caught a glimpse of his true face. During the fight Matt had called her by her birth name. Now that Jackson realized Matt knew the truth about LuAnn, and that LuAnn knew Jackson's true appearance, the stakes increased. Jackson wouldn't be safe from prosecution until they were eliminated. LuAnn dropped Matt off at the hospital and then, knowing their lives were in jeopardy, LuAnn called Donovan and imparted yet another warning. When Matt was discharged from the hospital, LuAnn was there to pick him up. They had a long discussion and he revealed his past to her. They decided to leave together and returned to LuAnn's house. While she was packing the FBI arrived. LuAnn and Matt were trapped. They ran into the woods to avoid capture, but running was difficult with Matt's injury. They climbed onto

Joy and rode to the cottage Donovan had been renting. From there they climbed into the black Honda, leaving Joy in the barn in its place.

Part Two: Chapters 44-47 Analysis

LuAnn wasn't the only mystery person in town. Matt had secrets as well. People around town knew little about him. He had just showed up a few years back, become an apprentice, and when the opportunity presented itself he opened up his own business. Matt provided LuAnn with his true identity and told her about his background. The reason why he appears to be without a history is because it has all been hidden through the witness protection program. As a FBI employee and witness, Matt was also seeking privacy. Matt's inquiry about LuAnn prompts much excitement at headquarters. The FBI had never quite understood how a young girl could escape the country on her own. They looked forward to finally capturing her.

Part Two: Chapters 48-51

Part Two: Chapters 48-51 Summary

After having little luck speaking with LuAnn, Donovan tried a new tactic. He had received LuAnn's sincere warning on his voice mail, and he knew that she wanted to help. However, if she was unable to do so, then he would just start asking all the other lottery winners. He figured someone was bound to tell him the truth and he was determined to tell their story. He found Bobbie Jo Reynolds at her home in McLean, Virginia. Following her winning of the lottery, Bobbie Jo became an upstanding member of the community. Her home was beautiful, but in addition to her property she was known for her generosity towards local charities. She tried valiantly to keep the secret, but Donovan kept peppering her with accusatory comments and questions in such quick succession that she was unable to keep the facade. She admitted to her part in the fraud and then proceeded to explain exactly how the game was rigged. All of the balls except the one with the winning number were sprayed with a chemical, preventing them from entering the winning spot and easing the path for the anticipated winning ball. At some point during the conversation Donovan recognized that something about the woman was changing. She was becoming more forceful. It was with the first punch that Donovan realized he wasn't speaking with Roberta Reynolds. Jackson had instructed her to make an appointment with Donovan when he called looking for information. Jackson arrived early, bound and gagged her, and then impersonated her for the interview with Donovan. Donovan had come armed in response to LuAnn's warning. Jackson confiscated the gun and used it to kill Ms. Reynolds. Jackson used his own hands to snap Donovan's neck. Lastly he carried Donovan's body out to the car, smearing his prints in the obvious places, including the gun. He disposed of Donovan's body and proceeded to Donovan's apartment to gather any evidence. One of the messages on his answering machine was from Alicia Crane, who was very worried for Donovan's well being.

Matt convinced LuAnn that the only way she would both survive this ordeal and retain her freedom was to cooperate with the FBI. He communicated with his former co-workers and struck a deal for her. Matt wasted no time with small talk. He didn't hide his lack of respect for Masters, whom he blamed for his wife's unnecessary death. Matt insisted that if he and LuAnn provided them with Jackson's identity, LuAnn's reward was no jail time, for anything, including her outstanding warrant in Georgia and failure to pay taxes. The FBI reluctantly agreed to Matt's terms. Matt left the building and took a convoluted route to his agreed upon meeting spot with LuAnn. The FBI was trying unsuccessfully to follow him. While trying to dodge the agents he ducked into a store and saw a newspaper headline announcing Roberta Reynolds' death and Thomas Donovan's disappearance. It implied that Thomas was responsible for her murder.

Part Two: Chapters 48-51 Analysis

Donovan was determined to get his story out to the American people. Despite LuAnn's multiple warnings he was still trying new angles. His research uncovered many other names but only one woman, Bobbie Jo, agreed to speak with him. Donovan went to the meeting armed with his gun and eager to hear what she had to share with him. Instead, Jackson dominated the meeting and it proved to be a deadly interview for Donovan. Especially important here are the ease with which Jackson commits murder and his high degree of premeditation. When faced with Jackson's violence, LuAnn agrees to let Matt and the FBI help her. Matt held great animosity towards the FBI. He did not enjoy approaching them for help but he figured it was the only way to secure LuAnn's safety. His concern for her superseded everything else. As the death toll from Jackson's actions climb, they are aware of the situation's gravity.

Part Two: Chapters 52- 56

Part Two: Chapters 52- 56 Summary

Alicia anxiously awaited further news about Thomas. She was convinced the media was reporting lies. The man she knew was simply not capable of murder. Additionally, she knew that he had been researching the lottery case and that the story was a dangerous one. She was at home when a man introducing himself as homicide detective Hank Rollins came by to speak with her. He asked about her relationship with Thomas and about her knowledge with regards to Donovan's workload. He wanted to determine the level of her knowledge. Alicia excuses herself to get a pot of coffee. When she returned, her brother, Peter, was standing in the detective's place. The pieces of what had been the detective's face were in a pile and she was utterly confused. Although she was caught off guard, she did manage to compose herself and have a relatively normal conversation with her brother. He had been sending her checks on a regular basis and was the provider for both her and their younger brother, Roger. Alicia idolized their father and since his passing, Peter had stepped in to care for his siblings. Unlike Alicia, however, Peter's memories of his father included years of mental and physical abuse. Peter was still Jack's son, and went by the persona of "Jackson" in all of his business proceedings, but he strove to be better than his father. Their father had squandered the family's vast fortune. That failure inspired Peter's lottery scheme, a project that resulted in the family's return to high society. He had killed many times to accomplish this task. He used a pillow to suffocate his sister and added her to his list of victims.

LuAnn was late for her scheduled meeting with Riggs. He had been waiting in the cold for three hours when she finally arrived. Her tardiness was a result of being plagued with doubts. She had finally concluded, however, that he was trustworthy. They grabbed dinner and retired to a hotel where they discussed their options. They needed to identify Jackson, but that seemed impossible because he was always disguised. Matt suggested they telephone him directly and request a meeting. That didn't come to pass, however, because as LuAnn watched a television news segment she felt she was staring at Jackson. The broadcast was announcing the death of Alicia Crane. The family resemblance was unmistakable, and LuAnn clearly recalled Jackson's facial features from the day at the cottage when she had torn off his mask. Matt promptly alerted the FBI of this new information. The FBI responded by sending agents to Jackson's apartment. Peter Crane actually owned the entire building, which he had renovated for nostalgic purposes. Jackson was tipped off by the doorman, Horace Parker, who was his childhood friend. Jackson left as quickly as he had arrived and evaded the authorities once more.

It was good to know that they had solved the mystery and fulfilled their end of the agreement with the FBI. Still, LuAnn couldn't rest because she knew Jackson would eventually return to punish her, Matt, Charlie, and Lisa. LuAnn suggested meeting up with Charlie and Lisa immediately. Matt recognized that they were both too tired to drive and suggested a morning reunion instead. During the night Jackson impersonated Matt.

Charlie let his guard down just long enough for Jackson to gain entry, knock Charlie down, inflict a deep knife wound, and kidnap Lisa. After Jackson left, Charlie managed to crawl over to the bed, create a makeshift tourniquet, and call 911 before passing out. Simultaneously, LuAnn awoke with a nightmare. She was sure that Jackson had found Lisa, although Matt reassured her that it was unlikely.

Part Two: Chapters 52- 56 Analysis

In these chapters we learn that Jackson and Peter Crane are the same man. When Thomas Donovan does not return Alicia's call she becomes nervous. Then, when he doesn't return but his prints are found at a crime scene, Alicia becomes convinced that something is wrong. Unfortunately, the detective that comes to her house to help isn't genuine. Her brother, Peter Crane, is impersonating the officer. In this disguise Jackson determined the state of Alicia's involvement with Donovan. Unfortunately for Alicia, Jackson deemed that she knew too much. The depth of Jackson's role play here is astounding. He suffocates his own sister, an unthinkable act by most people's standards. He then methodically cleans the crime scene and recovers all Donovan's research files. With Donovan eliminated, Jackson turns his attention back to LuAnn and her family.

Also of note is the play on words in Jackson's name. Jackson is the combination of "Jack's" and "son," further proof that Jackson's actions are a direct result of his painful past with regards to his father, Jack.

Part Two: Chapters 57-59

Part Two: Chapters 57-59 Summary

LuAnn and Matt found Charlie resting in a room at the University of Virginia trauma center. Charlie wasn't supposed to be discharged yet, but he wasn't interested in staying in bed while the others searched for Lisa without him. Luckily, Matt played basketball with the police officer guarding Charlie's room. Matt was able to convince the officer that things would be alright while he grabbed something to eat. With the door clear of its watch post, LuAnn and Matt helped Charlie out of bed and down the hall. Once outside of the hospital, LuAnn telephoned Jackson. She knew he would want to meet with her. As he dictated the specifics for their meeting she heard something crucial in the background. Her mother's clock had been sounding the ten o'clock hour. LuAnn knew she must return to her home to confront Jackson. He had impersonated the house keeper, Sally, to gain access into the house and literally walked in past FBI agents. Matt and Charlie expected her to meet with Jackson in the morning, but she had other plans. When they fell asleep for the night she sneaked away. At the house she discovers FBI agents patrolling outside and her housekeeper watching television. LuAnn saw through the disguise and locked Roger Crane, Jackson's younger brother disguised as Sally, into the pantry closet. LuAnn explores the house in search of Lisa. When she finally found her, Jackson was there as well. Jackson and LuAnn fought fiercely until he heard sirens approaching. On his way out of the house he stopped just long enough to kill his younger brother, who was still hiding in the closet.

Charlie and Matt had woke to the sounds of a storm outside. When they realize LuAnn's missing, they figured she'd returned to the house. Riggs forwarded this information to the FBI and headed off to LuAnn's house as well. Riggs and Charlie arrived just in time to see Jackson dart into the woods. They pursue him until he stopped running. Riggs attempted to shoot him on the spot but his gun jammed. Jackson approached Matt, who was forced to step back. He encountered the edge of a cliff. In a calculated decision, he began firing with a hidden weapon. The bullets tore apart Jackson's face but the force emanating from the gun caused Matt to lose his balance and plunge into the rolling river below. LuAnn arrives just in time to see Matt's fall. Without any hesitation she dove in after him, diving repeatedly until she found him. She struggled to keep them both on the water's surface. Just when she couldn't hold on anymore, Charlie extended his hand and pulled them to safety.

Chapter fifty-nine finds Riggs closing LuAnn's deal with the authorities. All her unpaid back taxes ate up her once sizable fortune, but she was a free woman who no longer had to look over her shoulder. Now that their bank accounts were more equal, Matt didn't feel so awkward about asking her to marry him. Charlie and Matt's injuries were healing well and Lisa remained unharmed. LuAnn explained everything to Lisa, who appreciated the honesty. LuAnn did manage to hold onto the last million dollars Jackson had put into a swiss account for her. Its existence was unknown to anyone, and as long

as it stayed in Switzerland, it was tax free. LuAnn planned to use it as a nest egg in her new life with Matt.

Part Two: Chapters 57-59 Analysis

LuAnn is depicted in these last chapters as being stealthy. First, her powers of observation make a return appearance when she hears her mother's clock chime. Then, instead of waiting for or asking for help, LuAnn sneaks away while the men are sleeping. She bravely returns to her house to retrieve Lisa, even though she expects to die in doing so. She crosses the woods under the darkness of night and finds her way back to the house. By noting small clues such as the placement of her housekeeper's car, LuAnn is able to track Jackson's whereabouts. When they eventually come face to face, Jackson is physically imposing when compared to her. A mother's strength when protecting her child is legendary, however. Add this instinctual dynamic to LuAnn's natural athletic capabilities and one finds the two fairly evenly matched. LuAnn was strong enough to fight off Jackson and still found additional stores of energy to save Matt as well. Just before being fatally shot Jackson is forced to recognize that he greatly underestimated LuAnn when he selected her for her perceived vulnerability. The author finishes the book cleanly by marrying Matt and LuAnn, with Charlie and Lisa's blessings.



Characters

Luann Tyler (aka Catherine Savage)

Luann Tyler is a young, unwed mother at the beginning of the novel. She is the daughter of Benny and Joy Tyler, both deceased. LuAnn was born and raised in Rikersville County, Georgia. She dropped out of school in the seventh grade to go to work and earn a paycheck. Her choice was common among the youth of the area. Most families lived below the poverty line. Job loss, unemployment and low pay rates for available employment were expected. Townspeople believed LuAnn's prospects were better. She is five feet ten inches tall, a brunette beauty who carried herself with confidence. They thought her to be of a different caliber and expected her to leave the little town for far away, exotic places. However, at the age of twenty LuAnn was living with her boyfriend, Duane, in his trailer. Their union was a temporary one- neither expected it to last, but they had a child, Lisa, together. Lisa was eight months old at the onset of the story. She was the center of LuAnn's universe. LuAnn kept her daughter with her at all times, including when she went to work at the Number One Truck Stop diner. Lisa was the driving force behind all LuAnn's decisions.

LuAnn was solicited for employment by a man named Jackson. Jackson offered her greater pay than she could ordinarily earn. The promised pay was one hundred dollars per day for marketing data, and she was excited about the opportunity. When she reported for her interview, however, the office space was odd and the job offer was different. After luring her in, Jackson changed the job description and shared with her his plans to rig the lottery. LuAnn's conscience told her that getting involved with Jackson was not safe, but she was running out of alternatives. She discovered Duane dead and surrounded by drugs in his trailer. LuAnn thought about Lisa's prospects if she went to jail for Duane's murder and realized she couldn't take the chance. LuAnn accepted Jackson's offer and continued to run for the next ten years. Ironically, her desire for a better life for Lisa is exactly what brought her home again.

Ten years later, at thirty years old, LuAnn was a lot wiser. She had lived a life on the run full of lies and wanted something more. She dreamed of a stable life for her and Lisa, and even hoped for romance. She had lived without the companionship of a man and had focused solely on raising Lisa. She had matured emotionally and kept her body in shape. She was just as lithe but mentally tougher, characteristics that would help her survive the story.

Jackson (aka Peter Crane)

Jackson is the criminal mind of David Baldacci's "The Winner." As a child Jackson suffered from abuse at the hands of his father. Jackson came to hate his father, not just for the physical abuse, but also for the long term effects his behaviors had on their family. His father was not a good businessman. He wasted their family's fortune, and



when he ran out of money he borrowed from Jackson's trust fund. Unlike his father, Jackson is a brilliant man. He was educated at prestigious schools and studied acting as well as science and chemistry. Unfortunately, he used his intelligence in evil ways. He poisoned his own father, intentionally causing his death. In a warped sense of loyalty, he then took on the role of family caretaker. He made it his personal objective to care for his siblings and recover their family's lost fortune. In his business dealings, he goes by the name of Jackson, an alternative spelling of "Jack's son," but his real name is Peter Crane. His siblings are Alicia and Roger.

In order to escape his past and confront difficult situations, Jackson assumes different characters. He used a portion of his wealth to purchase the building in which he grew up. During the renovations he constructed a dressing room with state of the art technology. It included advanced lighting and mirrors which he used to create his many identities. He employed the typical masks, wigs, and cosmetics, but also prosthetics and voice technology. He was an actor as well as an impersonator. His many identities were so believable that he could easily go undetected. Even his doorman didn't know his real face. In addition, his wealth opens many doors, and he obtained forged papers to accompany nearly each of his identities. Jackson travels the world with ease and feels invincible. He has supreme confidence in his intellect and believes he will never get caught. Some of his rules to live by include meticulous planning and blending into the public to render himself so obvious as to be invisible.

The area in which Jackson errs is his assessment of LuAnn. Except for her, each of the winners he chose for his lottery program were followers by nature. LuAnn is more headstrong and, although she didn't finish high school, there is an innate cleverness about her. Plus, she is a survivor and is willing to fight for her daughter's safety and happiness. She and Jackson are well matched adversaries.

Matt Riggs (aka Daniel Buckman)

Matt Riggs is the main character, LuAnn's, love interest. Like LuAnn, Matt has a secret past. Matt's real name is Daniel Buckman. Dan was a special agent employed by the FBI. He was required to work undercover and later testified against the gangs he infiltrated. The criminals were dangerous people who didn't take his testifying lightly. They wanted revenge and Dan asked for protection. The FBI insisted that he keep working because he was so talented. His enemies took the opportunity to open gunfire on his car when he and his wife, Julie, were driving together. He was thrown from the car but she was killed when the car went over a cliff. Following the death of Julie he was finally granted entrance into the witness relocation and protection program. Because of their earlier refusal, he holds them accountable for Julie's death. Dan decided he wanted something simpler. The witness protection program gave him his new name, Matt Riggs, and he relocated to Virginia about five years before LuAnn returned to the United States. He apprenticed beneath a carpenter and then opened his own business in town. It was in his capacity as a general contractor that he was first introduced to LuAnn. Matt and LuAnn have an undeniable attraction. As adults, however, they are both aware of their painful pasts and the many secrets they carry. Learning to trust



again comes hard to each of them, although they both yearn to tell the truth and share their lives.

Uncle Charlie

When LuAnn first goes to New York City to claim her lottery prize, she is escorted by one of Jackson's employees. This mystery man is the strong and silent type. He used to play semi-pro football, and his body still shows his years of athletic training, however, he is starting to age a bit. LuAnn knows no one in the city and recognizes that he is there to help her. However, she also knows that Jackson and his affiliates only have her best interests at heart when the end result is mutually beneficial. Therefore, she is slightly suspicious. Despite her reservations, something inside tells her that he is a good man. She insists on knowing his name, which he claims is Charlie, although it is really Robert. Charlie does take good care of LuAnn and Lisa during their New York trip. His motivations are pure. Although Jackson introduced them under less than stellar circumstances, Charlie soon learns to truly care for LuAnn and Lisa. The feeling of goodwill and friendship are reciprocal and LuAnn invites him to travel the world with her. Charlie, being an expert traveler and quite a bit more worldly than LuAnn, consents. As Lisa grows she comes to know him as Uncle Charlie and they make an impromptu family of sorts. Charlie develops a deep bond with the ladies and would give his life for them if they were ever in danger, a vow that was tested multiple times during the course of the story.

Duane Harvey

Duane Harvey is LuAnn's boyfriend at the beginning of *The Winner*. He is also Lisa's father. LuAnn does not feel that Duane is the marrying type. They live together but remain unmarried. Duane is not well educated and appears to be unemployed. He spends the majority of his time in a drunken stupor. After finally deciding to leave Duane and his antics, LuAnn strips her sheets off of the bed and uncovers Duane's hiding spot. The money under the sheets is overflowing and LuAnn has no idea how he came to possess it. Soon thereafter a man comes to the house, kills Duane and injures LuAnn. LuAnn correctly assumes that Duane was involved in drug dealing.

Thomas Donovan

Thomas Donovan is a reporter for the Washington Tribune. He won the Pulitzer Prize and is a respected journalist. At fifty plus years, Donovan is altruistic. He believes in telling the plight of the ordinary or disadvantaged citizen. One of his beliefs is that the lottery ultimately causes the destruction of individual characters and society as a whole. His dislike of the lottery motivated him to study its relevant statistics. In doing so he drew the conclusion that nine out of every twelve lottery winners later declare bankruptcy. Further research led him to LuAnn, who certainly never declared bankruptcy. He wanted to reveal the lottery system for what he believed it to be:



disingenuous, predatory, and outright deceitful. His continued research puts him in danger. As Donovan puts the pieces together and becomes more aware of the complexity of LuAnn's success, Jackson begins to take his presence as a threat. Jackson kills both Donovan, and Donovan's girlfriend, Alicia Crane, who also happens to be Jackson's own sister.

Alicia Crane

Alicia Crane is Jackson's sister. She is also Thomas Donovan's girlfriend. Alicia is in her thirties and described as "put together well". She is a classy lady with refined but simple tastes. She wasn't necessarily a classic beauty, but Donovan found her to be attractive. She worried when he was away on assignment. She had every right to be concerned, but she didn't know the extent of the villain's ruthlessness. Her brother, Jackson, strangles her to death when he learns that her boyfriend, Donovan, has uncovered his lottery scheme.

Shirley Watson

Shirley Watson was a local girl from Rikersville County. She had little ambition and it was likely that she would always remain in Rikersville County. She had red hair and was not as fit as LuAnn, although Duane still found her attractive enough to have sex with her. When LuAnn found them together she pulled Shirley out of bed by her long red hair and threw her out, forcing her to go home naked. Later, LuAnn feels badly for the embarrassment she caused Shirley because she knows that the story will probably circulate for quite some time and cause Shirley great pain.

Romanello

Romanello is the assassin hired by Jackson to kill LuAnn in the event that she declined his business offer. Romanello was about to do just that when Jackson called off the assassination attempt. Still, Romanello decided he could make some good money by blackmailing LuAnn. His plan is halted when Jackson learns of his scheme and so murders him. Romanello's fictitious name is "Rainbow."

Sally Beecham

Sally Beecham is LuAnn's housekeeper at Wicken's Hunt. Lisa calls her Miss Nancy.

John Pemberton

John Pemberton is the realtor that Charlie and LuAnn used when purchasing Wicken's Hunt. He is also a great resource because he has lived there for quite some time and knows everyone residing in the town.

George Masters

George Masters was the FBI specialist with whom Matt used to work. At the time of the story Matt was living under a new identity within the witness relocation and protection program. Unfortunately, he didn't get placed into the program fast enough and his wife was killed. For this reason, Matt has a grudge against Masters.

Roberta (Bobbie Jo) Reynolds

Bobbie Jo Reynolds was another one of Jackson's flock. She followed his directions implicitly. Unfortunately, Jackson rewarded her with death.

Lisa Marie Tyler

Lisa is LuAnn and Duane's daughter. She was eight months old when the book began and ten at its culmination. Like most tweens and teens, Lisa doesn't like her mother's overprotective nature and wishes for more freedom. Lisa is the center of her mother's universe.

Objects/Places

Honda

The black Honda originally approached LuAnn and caught her off guard. It was rented and driven by Thomas Donovan, but at the time LuAnn didn't know that and was concerned about it belonging to Jackson. Matt interceded on her behalf as the Honda chased after her.

Joy

Joy was LuAnn's favorite horse. Joy was purchased overseas, and when LuAnn moved back to the United States, she arranged for Joy to come over as well. LuAnn rode her regularly. Late in the book Joy becomes LuAnn's getaway vehicle as she avoids the FBI and Jackson.

Wicken's Hunt

The historical name of the estate LuAnn purchases in which to live once returning to the United States.

Charlottesville, Virginia

Where LuAnn settles upon her return to the States.

Mask

Jackson is almost always wearing a mask. This helps him to allude recognition from others and provides him with the self confidence that he otherwise lacks.

Penthouse

Jackson's penthouse is a reinvention of his childhood. As a child he was abused in that building. As an adult he reigns over it. The studio he uses for creating his disguises is located in the penthouse.

Scar

LuAnn receives a facial scar during her feud with Duane's drug dealing companion. She never has it repaired because it is a reminder of how far she has come.



Clock

The clock belonged to LuAnn's grandmother and mother, who gave it to her as a gift. Since LuAnn's mother's passing, the clock provides LuAnn with a sense of connection to her mom. The clock is inexpensive with poor internal mechanisms. Its movement is loud and irregular, but it brings LuAnn peace.

Lottery Ticket

The lottery ticket was the beginning of LuAnn's troubles. When she purchased the ticket and shared the numbers with Jackson she entered into an illegal and very dangerous business arrangement with him.

Rikersville, Georgia

LuAnn's home town.

New York City

The home of the lottery headquarters. LuAnn goes to the city to escape the Rikersville police and await the press conference announcing her as the winner.

Number One Truck Stop

LuAnn's place of employment.

Duane's Trailer

Site of Duane's affair with Shirley, his drug deal, his death, and the fight that leaves LuAnn with her facial scar.

Sweden

LuAnn's destination when she escapes from the United States with her lottery winnings. Per Jackson's directions, however, LuAnn moves continuously during her ten years abroad.

Shopping Mall

The Winner opens up in a shopping mall where Jackson has rented office space to conduct fake employment interviews.

Cottage

The "cottage" is rented by LuAnn's mysterious follower, the driver of the Honda, who turns out to be reporter Thomas Donovan. It abuts LuAnn's property.

Hoover Building

The Hoover Building is the headquarters for the FBI. Matt goes to the Hoover Building to strike a deal for LuAnn's future.

Waldorf-Astoria

Hotel where LuAnn stays in New York City while attending the winner's press conference.

St. Anne's Belfield School

St. Anne's is the private school LuAnn enrolls Lisa in when they move back to the U.S.

Swiss Bank Account

These accounts were the source of LuAnn's income. She used them and the interest they earned and avoided tax payments. Even after paying all of her back taxes, she still possesses one account with one million dollars- her next egg.

Themes

Disguise

Disguise plays a pivotal role in *The Winner*. Many of the characters are portrayed in disguise. The most obvious example is Jackson who is always in disguise. He utilizes masks, wigs, prosthetics and cosmetics to create his various disguises. Beyond the physical characteristics he creates for each of his persona, he fully acts out the part as well. He can change his voice and manipulate his own emotions to the extent of crying on cue. Jackson believes he is a master of disguise and incapable of being caught. His many disguises are really just a front for his insecurity. When dressed as Jackson, he feels power over those he accompanies. In truth, he is unable to address conflict in himself and uses the disguise as a crutch. For an added shock value, he often surprises his victims by duplicating their own physical attributes and mannerisms. He played this cruel joke on LuAnn. The result was to shock her into fear, vulnerability, and total agreement with his plans for her future.

Other characters in *The Winner* also experiment with disguise. LuAnn wears a disguise from the moment she leaves Rikersville following Duane's death until the resolution of the story. She begins with an over-sized hat and sunglasses. With Jackson's assistance she resembles an entirely different person. He uses cosmetics to shade her face giving her the appearance of cosmetic surgery on her nose. He also cuts and dyes her hair. When Jackson's work is complete they look like identical twins. He also gives her the advice of blending into public places. If one is being searched for, the hunter will look in hiding areas, and therefore it is easier to disappear when blended into a large area. Finally, he gives her a new name, Catherine Savage, and a social security number. LuAnn continues to use disguises while she is abroad. Affluence affords her a new wardrobe, and she reinvents herself as classy and sophisticated. Still, she keeps to herself and interacts with very few people, a behavior that is typical for the wealthy. When she returns to the U. S. she continues with the same style. The one thing she doesn't change is her facial scar. It connects her to her past, and she chooses to view it as a reminder of where she came from. This is ironic because it is a very distinguishing feature.

Matt also has dual identities. At birth he was given the name Daniel Buckman. As an adult he was employed by the FBI as an undercover agent. His line of work eventually leads to his own injury and the murder of his wife. To escape further danger he entered the witness relocation and protection program, where he was given the name Matt Riggs. Matt uses this identity faithfully up until he meets LuAnn and is drawn into a romance with her.

Lastly, Charlie also uses an assumed name. His birth name is Robert.

Love

Love is another theme in *The Winner*. Maternal love is evident in the relationship shared by LuAnn and Lisa. LuAnn was the center of her mother's affection and LuAnn replicates that adoration with her own child, Lisa. All of LuAnn's decisions are made to benefit Lisa. Even LuAnn's decision to cooperate with Jackson is based in her dreams for Lisa's future. LuAnn found herself in a loveless relationship, residing in a dirty trailer, with no prospects for a better life. She did not want Lisa to grow up that way. Although LuAnn had serious reservations surrounding Jackson and his plan, she could think of no other way to escape her life with Duane, whose murder only solidified her decision. Once LuAnn began her life abroad, however, she realized that the grass wasn't always greener on the other side. Even though she could afford to provide everything Lisa could ever need or want, she recognized that Lisa would benefit more from a typical childhood. They returned to the United States to provide Lisa with the kind of life LuAnn thought would be best for her.

Once in the United States, LuAnn meets and falls in love with Matt. Their relationship is a difficult one. Each has a secret past and difficulty with the concept of trust. Their courtship has a push and pull aspect to it. They are drawn together by mutual attraction, but one or the other repeatedly pulls away from the prospect of intimacy. Eventually they learn to be honest with one another and are successful in their union.

In addition, the lack of love in Jackson's life is, to a great extent, the motivating factor behind his actions. His father's abuse and withholding of love drove Jackson mad. He came to the conclusion that he had to do more than just follow his father; he had to be better than him. This fanatical obsession spawned the lottery scheme, and everything associated with it. One can only wonder what kind of man Jackson would have become if he had received his father's love and affirmation.

Charlie, too, experiences love. The title "uncle" aptly describes the level of love and affection between Charlie, LuAnn, and Lisa. Even though a blood relationship is missing, the devotion and affection they have for one another truly mimics that of a family unit. Charlie once expressed his concern that when LuAnn eventually became romantically involved with a man there would no longer be a place for him in her life. His lamentations proved unfounded as she welcomed Matt and Charlie into her life simultaneously, each in his own special way.

Fear

Fear influenced each of the characters in different ways. Jackson feared inadequacy. His father instilled in him a sense of worthlessness. The fear of never being good enough propelled him to take extreme risks to obtain his goals. LuAnn was afraid of failing as a mother. She wanted Lisa to have the best life possible and she made calculated decisions to accomplish that scenario. Once she began a life on the run, she kept running out of fear of being caught. At one point she commented that she was more afraid of Jackson than she was of the police. With that said, she was afraid that if

she had to serve jail time there would be no one to care for her daughter, a chance LuAnn was not willing to take. Matt feared retribution from the criminal organizations he had infiltrated. His fears were well founded as they had already murdered his first wife. Matt and LuAnn both feared commitment and the possible unraveling of their lives that could accompany it. Charlie wasn't afraid of much except being alone. The idea of starting over with a new career and no family in his fifties caused him anxiety. Fortunately, this didn't come to pass. All the minor characters experienced fear as well. They were motivated by sheer greed to enter into business with Jackson. However, it was fear that kept them aligned with Jackson. He referred to them as his flock, each docile and willing to do whatever he requested of them. The origin of their subjugation was fear.

Style

Point of View

David Baldacci's novel, *The Winner*, is written from the third person point of view. The characters speak to one another through dialogue. Supporting text describes the scene, the characters' mindsets and their emotions. While not rendering as much empathy as a book written in the first person, *The Winner* does not require a sentimental approach. The reader receives adequate information for scene and character building and the story is interesting.

Setting

Part One of *The Winner* is set in what is described as present time. No specific dates are used for placing this in context. Rikersville, Georgia, where the main character resides, is a poor area. The majority of its constituents live below the federal poverty line. Life is a matter of survival. The main character never received a social security number. There was no reason to do so. She was poor so filing tax returns wasn't an issue, and she didn't have enough money to open a checking or savings account, either of which would have required a social security number. Cars were an extravagance she could not afford, so she didn't have a driver's license either. LuAnn routinely took the bus and walked miles in between the stops it offered. Children rarely received medical care, and if they did it was obtained at the free medical clinic. LuAnn's mother labored and delivered her babies at home, simply because that is what one does when lacking resources to do otherwise. The reader comes to understand that the word poor is inadequate when describing the county of Rikersville. It is understandable that LuAnn wants to escape the cycle of poverty in which she finds herself.

Part Two of *The Winner* is set ten years after the first portion. Again, no specific dates are used. We are simply told that ten years have passed. LuAnn is now thirty instead of twenty, and her daughter is now ten years old instead of eight months old. LuAnn's deal with Jackson has theoretically come to its conclusion. The ten years is up and her original principle is returned. Much has changed for LuAnn. She has achieved wealth beyond her wildest dreams, although she now knows that money does not equate to happiness. She has decided to return to the United States and has purchased an old estate called Wicken's Hunt. After renovating it she moves in with her daughter, Lisa, and hopes it will be their permanent home. It is located in Charlottesville, Virginia, on three hundred secluded acres, amid the large estates of other wealthy families. In other words, despite their wealth, they will not be the focus of others' curiosity. There are additional buildings on the property as well as a pool and plans for a tennis court.

Small sections of the book occur in other areas. LuAnn travels to New York City in Part One to claim her lottery winnings. She is in awe of the large buildings and sheer number of people. In Part Two LuAnn becomes romantically involved with Matt, and they spend

some time at his home. A cottage that abuts LuAnn's property is another area of interest. A journalist, Thomas Donovan, rents the cottage and is researching the lottery scam.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is ordinary. There is no use of special terms or foreign language. The characters do not use slang or a particular dialect. There is one example of a play on words in Jackson's name. Jackson is the combination of "Jack's" and "son." This use of language underscores the idea that Jackson's actions are a direct result of his painful past with regards to his father, Jack. The character development is good, and the lack of complicated language lends the book to fast and enjoyable reading. Overall, *The Winner* may be classified as an easy read.

Structure

David Baldacci's *The Winner* is divided into two distinct parts. Part One encompasses chapters one through seventeen. These chapters provide background for the characters of LuAnn, Lisa, Jackson, and Charlie. The story line is planted and LuAnn wins the lottery. Part One ends with LuAnn's departure from the United States. Part Two includes chapters eighteen through fifty-nine. These chapters discuss LuAnn's return to the United States, her relationship with Matt, and her difficulties with Jackson. The entire book (in paperback format) is six hundred and twenty-eight pages.

Quotes

"Later, she would think that it was a premonition of things to come." page 15

"You are most assuredly trapped, Ms. Tyler." page 23

"She had never filed a tax return; she had lived her entire life well below the poverty line and rightly figured she didn't owe any taxes." page 58

"Then the fabrications seemed to just happen; they seemed to be an inextricable part of simply surviving." page 65

"Well, you know what curiosity did to that old cat." page 100

"Suddenly, everything became very quiet, very still." page 113

"The entire crowd seemed to tense all at once, like a biceps flexing and forming a ridge of muscle." page 169

"Remember, rule number one: When trying to hide, make yourself as obvious as possible, put yourself right out in the open. " page 188

"It was a game designed for the ultimate destruction of the winner and it was done under the veil of the government doing good for its people." page 211

"Admiration was his first thought." page 249

"Eventually, she would have to deal with it all." page 287

"I take it you're not into delayed gratification." page 333

"As usual, she would just go it alone." page 374

"After all these years of fabrication, of lies, deceit, and constant fear of exposure, she just wanted to be held; to be loved for herself, not for the enormous wealth she possessed." page 437

"Jackson seemed to appear and disappear whenever he damned well pleased with less rippling than a pebble flung across the ocean." page 460

"He decided to pass on that impulse." page 490

"Let's just say your track record hasn't inspired my confidence all that much." page 514

"Here the truth was far more dangerous." page 518

"Riggs took a deep breath and thought about how he would break the news to LuAnn." page 528

"He wasn't worried about leaving any evidence behind this time." page 575

Topics for Discussion

Lisa is a minor character in the book, but a lot can be inferred from her lifestyle as well as her interactions with her mother. In what ways is Lisa a normal pre-teen? How is her life different from what you might consider to be average?

Charlie becomes a sort of family for LuAnn and Lisa. Examine their relationship. How do you think such an unlikely trio evolved?

Explain Matt's history with the FBI on both a professional and personal level.

LuAnn's clock is an example of symbolism. Explain this statement.

Why did LuAnn choose not to have her scar repaired via plastic surgery?

Do you believe LuAnn and Matt are capable of honesty?

Jackson is a master of disguise. Aside from his face, what is Jackson really hiding?

How was Charlie employed? Would you say he was good at his job? Please provide examples to support your opinion.

Some might say Thomas Donovan was altruistic. Please elaborate upon this statement.

Use the text to recreate the Crane family lineage. How do the siblings compare and contrast with one another?