

'E' Is for Evidence: A Kinsey Millhone Mystery Study Guide

**'E' Is for Evidence: A Kinsey Millhone Mystery by Sue
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Plot Summary

Kinsey Millhone provides investigative services for fire and wrongful death claims for a company called CFI. She gets caught up in a scam and is trying to clear her own name before she loses her life. Kinsey starts out receiving a mysterious letter from the bank telling her that \$5,000 has made it's way into her bank account. She thinks it is a minor glitch but soon realizes over the next couple days that it is much worse than that. Lance Wood at the Wood/Warren Company is being framed for arson and she is being named as his collaborator. She is put on leave and loses her office space. At this point she begins looking into things for herself. She talks to Lance Wood's family to see what she can find out and becomes friends with some of the Woods. She is at Lance's sister's house when a package explodes and kills his sister and almost kills Kinsey.

She finds out about a man named Hugh Case who died two years earlier, but his autopsy results disappeared after the body had been cremated. His widow swears that Lance Woods murdered her husband but there is no proof. As she begins to investigate, things get more complicated. She learns that someone at the company she previously was working for has set her up and enlists the help of the CFI receptionist to help her look around. They find no concrete evidence but know they are correct in their suspicions. Kinsey's ex-husband shows up and asks her to keep his expensive guitar for a few days but it turns out he was told to spy on her and the guitar is bugged. Lance's office is also bugged. Hugh Case's wife shows up in California about the time of the funeral for Lance's sister and is supposed to meet with Kinsey but doesn't show. The next day Kinsey finds her dead in front of her apartment. Kinsey begins to ask a lot of questions and talks to Lance's mother. She reveals to Kinsey that Lance and his sister, Olive, who passed away, had a sexual relationship for years when they were younger. Olive had never told her husband, but she and her younger brother Bass had an argument and for spite Bass told Olive's husband about the affair. Olive's husband's name is Terry Kohler but it turns out that isn't his real name. He killed his foster mother years before and because Olive was "tainted," he killed her as well. He tries to kill Kinsey in the final scene but she manages to kill him and get out as the bomb he left explodes in her apartment.



chapter 1-4

chapter 1-4 Summary

In the beginning Kinsey gets a letter from the bank stating that they received her \$5,000 night deposit. She didn't make the deposit. The deposit is a cash deposit left in a night-deposit slot. Kinsey has made no night deposit and the bank says they will call her back.

The next day Kinsey is assigned a file for a big warehouse fire for a company named Wood/Warren. Kinsey gets an interview with Lance Wood, the company president. Before she goes to the interview, she looks over everything in the file and it looks like a standard claim. There aren't any extra notes saying that anything is out of the ordinary and Kinsey is confused as to why it is such a rush.

Kinsey gets to Wood/Warren and looks around the office and learns what Wood/Warren manufactures. They gross more than 15 million dollars a year. After the interview starts Lance Wood gets a mysterious phone call and leaves with no explanation. Terry Kohler, Lance's brother-in-law and the vice-president, offers to show her the warehouse so she can inspect the fire scene. Kinsey takes her camera with her and her wallet but leaves her handbag in Lance Wood's office.

It takes her three hours to look everything over at the fire scene and take two rolls of pictures. There is a smell she can't identify but everything looks to match the fire reports. She goes back to Wood/Warren offices to the Christmas party to see if Lance has returned. Terry sees her and takes her to get her handbag out of Lance's office and then she stays for about an hour. When she leaves, someone follows her calling her name. Lance's secretary said she thinks he wanted Kinsey to have this envelope that has inventory sheets inside. Ava Daughtery from Wood/Warren watches Kinsey and the secretary as the envelope is traded. At the Wood/Warren Company she notes that while there are pictures from two years ago of the company staff that are happy, the theme of things now seem to be very glum. The company president died two years ago and Kinsey thinks that perhaps the joy went out of the place when he died.

Her phone rings the next workday and Darcy is calling for the file on Wood/Warren. Soon she is called to Mac's office. Mac asks her about the note on the front of the file and about the fire department report, a summary from the fire chief stating a suspected arson. There was a newspaper clipping with the file now that ended with a line to the same effect. Kinsey hadn't seen any of these before. Mac tells her he received a phone call that morning saying Kinsey was seen accepting an envelope from Lance Wood's secretary. She remembers the envelope and tells Mac that it is inventory sheets and they are in the file. Mac pulls out the file and it has no inventory sheets with it. Mac then produces the same envelope that Lance's secretary handed Kinsey with the Wood/Warren logo on it but it has an extra message jotted on the front of it now reading, "Hope this will suffice for now. Balance to follow as agreed."



When Mac calls her in to talk to her about the Wood/Warren file she knows that something is really wrong because Andy is there and he is looking smug. Mac tells Andy to leave and just sits there looking at Kinsey. She finds this really odd because usually he is the type to ask the questions and get answers, but now he is sitting silent. When he produces things in the report she hadn't seen she is worried. After talking with Mac, although he is rough and very blunt in his demeanor, he seems to think she has a valid point about being innocent but still has to cover the company reputation.

They discuss why someone would be setting her up and come to the conclusion that it would be to set Lance Wood up and Kinsey must have just gotten caught in the crossfire. She remembers the \$5,000 that showed up and knows it was not a mistake but also knows there is no way to get rid of the money without leaving a trail that will look even more incriminating. She packs her belongings from her office into boxes but doesn't turn in the keys as she was instructed. She knows Mac won't press the issue yet and she wants to keep access to her files in the building space.

Kinsey drives out to Wood/Warren. She tells Lance Wood what has happened. Lance tells Kinsey that his sister Ebony wants control of the plant. Kinsey sees a lawyer on the way home, who tells her to be careful. After getting home Kinsey tries to find a number for Ash Wood, who is Terry's wife. They schedule a lunch date.

chapter 1-4 Analysis

Kinsey Millhone is a divorcee with no close family. She is close to her elderly landlord who spends most holidays with her. This story opens during the Christmas holiday time and her landlord is leaving to spend time with family but is very worried about leaving her alone. Kinsey doesn't have many friends and doesn't like many people with whom she comes into contact. She doesn't like the claims manager named Andy, or the secretary for CFI named Darcy, but she does like the vice president named Mac. Kinsey feels like the claims manager manipulates things to make himself look good. She thinks Darcy is a flake, and she is rude to Darcy and Andy any time they talk.

She receives the bank letter about the \$5,000 and thinks at first it is a note saying she is overdrawn again. She is very surprised when there is extra money there. She talks to the bank thinking that they aren't very concerned about the money in her account that isn't her money. After she realizes that someone is setting up either her or Lance Wood, she begins to understand that the money wasn't put there on accident but doesn't know what to do about the cash. She knows that if she moves the money, it will look worse than it already does.

She knows one of the five Wood children, having gone to school with Ash, one of the girls. She doesn't know the company president Lance Wood. She gets some ideas about his type of character when she goes to their 9:00 am appointment and he doesn't see her until 10:30 and then leaves her suddenly with no explanation. Lance's brother-in-law helps Kinsey as much as he can, and she finds out he is married to Ash. The Wood/Warren Company is having a Christmas party and after Kinsey looks over the fire



scene she stays at the party even though she does not like being around people. She is worried that being all-alone for the holidays may start her towards some holiday depression and knows this will be the only party she attends. She stays for only an hour.

Kinsey is worried about the thought of getting married again but is having an affair with a married man named Jonah Robb, who works at the police department. His wife Camilla told him she wanted to have an open marriage, but Jonah thinks it is more for Camilla's benefit than for his. Jonah and Camilla have two children. When she calls Jonah to talk to him about what is going on, he and his family have gone on a vacation for the holidays. The people at the police department thought he was going to call Kinsey before he left, but she never got the message.



chapter 5-8

chapter 5-8 Summary

Kinsey meets with Ashley Wood to have lunch and discuss the situation going on with Lance Wood and the Wood/Warren fire claim. Kinsey remembers that she and Ash were friends in school but were different when it came to social stature. The Wood's have money, and Kinsey lived with her aunt and they didn't have much.

Ash says that even if her brother Lance did set the fire, he wouldn't point a finger at himself after he did it. Ash lives at home with her mother, Helen Wood, because her place is being redecorated. Ash invites Kinsey to come over and talk to her mother about what is going on. Kinsey gets information about the family business and what is going on with the other members of the family and who would set up Lance. They talk about Terry Kohler and Olive. Terry used to be very ambitious before he and Olive got married. Ash suspects that marrying the boss' daughter made Terry a little more laid back. Ash tells Kinsey that Ebony tried to act interested in the company but her father told her that women get married, have babies, and spend money. He refused to give the company control to her because she was a woman. After she left and got married, her father said that if she had stuck with it, he would have given her the company. She is back home now because her husband cheated on her and they are getting divorced. She wants control of the company from her brother.

Kinsey goes to the coffee shop where Darcy eats breakfast to ask for her help. They agree they don't like each other but have reason to work together. They decide that Andy is more suspect for framing someone, than Mac. Darcy tells Kinsey that Andy and his wife are divorcing and gives Kinsey the new address and phone number for Andy's home. Darcy also tells Kinsey about some weird things with paper work Andy is doing lately and how mean he is. Kinsey goes to Andy's place after Darcy calls to tell her he is at work. She finds a key for his door above the frame and goes through his things. Kinsey takes home a bag of his trash to look for evidence he tampered with the files.

Kinsey finds notes from Andy's wife stating that the support payment is late and finds a romantic letter that he has written to someone referring to an interlude that occurred around Christmas time. There is not a name on the letters to indicate to whom they were written. Kinsey keeps anything that might be evidence to put in a file and throws the rest of the bag out with the other garbage.

After she is done with the trash she checks her messages. Ash has called with an invite to talk to her mother. Kinsey calls back and says she will be there later for tea. On the way to the Wood's house she stops at the firing range even though it is cold. She loves the smell of gunpowder; after firing off several rounds, she picks up all her brass casings from her .32 and goes to interview Helen Wood.



Mrs. Wood tells her about Lance and how the shares in the company are divided. Mr. Wood didn't give him a majority share in the will so he has to get one of his siblings, his mother, or the family lawyer to agree with him when he wants to do something. Mr. Wood was concerned that Lance would ruin the company his father had built. Mrs. Wood explains that they were never concerned with the money. They just considered that a big plus. The fun was the company and making it and building it the way they had. Her deceased husband took that very seriously. Even though he was old school in his thinking and wouldn't give the company to one of his daughters, he also wouldn't give his oldest son complete control of the company.

Mrs. Wood tries to hire Kinsey to do some investigating for her. Kinsey explains that she can't be near Lance Wood, and since it already looks like she may be accepting money from the Wood/Warren Company, she can't work for Mrs. Wood. Helen Wood tells her to keep her in the loop and let her know what is going on. Kinsey explains that may not be possible all the time but does agree to keep her informed as much as possible.

Mrs. Wood's daughter Ebony comes in. She tells Kinsey to follow her upstairs but is very harsh in her tone and her mannerism. She used to be a model after she was told she wouldn't be able to take control of her father's company. She tries very hard to keep everything cool and under control. Ebony is going through a divorce from her playboy husband and lives at home with her mother, as does Ash. She leads Kinsey to a bedroom and waits at the door for Kinsey to walk inside the room.

chapter 5-8 Analysis

Kinsey goes to meet Ash for lunch and it seems they used to be friends though it is not clear how deep their friendship went. Kinsey went to spend the night at the Wood's house one time and never invited Ash over because she was embarrassed of her home. Kinsey lived with her aunt who she feels wasn't a classy woman in any respect. She seems surprised that Ash is very friendly and surprised at how much information Ash is willing to offer. Kinsey and Ash meet again but do not seem to rekindle their lost friendship.

Kinsey goes to the Gym to work out the next morning and decides she is going to find Darcy. Kinsey seems to Darcy's habits well enough to know where she will be eating breakfast. Kinsey learns that Andy told Mac that Darcy had left the Wood/Warren file on her desk for three days, but Darcy saw Andy put it in his briefcase and take it home. Darcy seems to be interested in helping put Andy out and tells Kinsey that Andy's wife left him. You don't find out why until later on in the book.

Darcy calls Kinsey when Andy is in his office and gives her his home number and address. Kinsey seems to like Darcy much more now that the two are working on the same side. Kinsey seems sure that Andy has something to do with this case and is determined to prove it. His apartment is rather untidy, and she thumbs through everything in his place. She thinks she hasn't found any proof of anything. She grabs his



trash with the reassurance that he won't remember taking it out and leaves before he has a chance to get home.

When Kinsey goes through his trash, she finds love letters to an unidentified person that Andy has written and a letter from his wife stating that the support payment is late. They seem to have nothing to do with the case. There was no typewriter in the place and Kinsey seems certain his wife got everything in the split.

Mrs. Wood seems a little harsh but pleasant and seemingly cooperates. You find out later she is hiding dark family secrets. She even asks Kinsey to help her clear her family's name. Mrs. Wood excuses herself for her afternoon swim but invites Kinsey to go with her. Kinsey declines but on her way out Ebony asks Kinsey to join her upstairs. To the reader this seems more of an order than request.



Chapter 9-12

Chapter 9-12 Summary

Ebony is arrogant and rude. She smokes and gives Kinsey a martini, which Kinsey later says, gives her a headache. Ebony is fishing for information claiming that the family won't tell her what is going on. She just wants to keep an eye on things but has nothing to do with anything going on. While Kinsey and Ebony are upstairs talking, Kinsey suggests that a rival company is framing Lance. Ebony tells Kinsey that if Lance is guilty, she does want him to go to jail but if not then she doesn't care. Ebony also admits to wanting the company. She thinks her brother Lance an idiot and that she can do a much better job than he can.

Ebony tells Kinsey about a man that worked for her father named Hugh Case. Hugh was an engineer that killed himself just a couple of months before Mr. Woods died. Ebony tells Kinsey that she is sure that Lance is involved somehow. When Kinsey asks if Lance drove Hugh to suicide, Ebony says she thinks Lance did the killing. Ebony can tell her the widow's name but doesn't know where she is located currently or if she has changed her name.

Kinsey has a hard time tracking down Hugh's widow, Lyda Case. She works in an airport bar in Fort Worth/Dallas. She hangs up on Kinsey two times, so Kinsey flies down to talk to her in person. Lyda becomes helpful and tells Kinsey everything that she knows about what happened. She can't prove that it was Lance but insists her husband didn't commit suicide. No matter what Kinsey says, Lyda keeps insisting Lance had to have something to do with Hugh's death.

According to his wife, Hugh had said he couldn't stand Lance and was going to start his own company, which would have been a rival for Wood/Warren. He was one of their top engineers with very intelligent ideas. When Hugh's wife got home, she found him in the garage with the car running. Tests were run but the tests disappeared and were never found again. By the time the test results were found to be missing, his body had been cremated and scattered. Since there was no way to retest the findings from the autopsy, it was ruled a suicide and nothing was ever said about it again.

She tells Kinsey that Hugh had previously had a problem with alcohol. Even though they met in a bar Lyda says she didn't know he had a problem. After they got together Lyda gave him a choice of either her or the alcohol. He chose her. He joined a program that is like AA and started taking Antabuse. He didn't make a big deal of the Antabuse but if anyone offered him a drink, he just said no thank you. Kinsey asks why Lyda had the body cremated so quickly. She replies that the body was released and she was told it was best to take care of the arrangements quickly.

At home, Kinsey is tired but doesn't sleep all night. Her ex-husband shows saying he wants apologize for leaving. Daniel Wade was addicted to drugs and strung out when



he left her after just a few months of marriage. She is so angry when she sees him, it's clear she never got over the hurt he caused. He tells her they had some good years, and she replies they had one good year and then he left. Kinsey slams the door in his face and leaves the house. Daniel is still sitting in the driveway when she leaves. She drives around until time to go to Olive Kohler's house, so she won't have to see Daniel again.

Kinsey goes to Olive and Terry Kohler's house to talk to them about what is going on at Wood/Warren. Olive tells her she doesn't care what is going on with the company. She can quote some things her husband has talked about but doesn't care enough to get involved past listening to her husband talk about his day. She says that Lance borrowed money against the company two years ago and now is losing his shirt. Olive is trying on dresses for a party while she talks to Kinsey and doesn't have much information past that and what she knows about her brother. She does say she probably will vote with Ebony to take over but hasn't made up her mind, mainly because she doesn't care. When Terry comes home Olive's whole demeanor changes. He tells her to go get him a drink and she begins to wait on him like a servant. She seems happy with tending to his every need.

Chapter 9-12 Analysis

Kinsey seems to think Ebony may have something to do with everything happening. Ebony tells her what she thinks of her brother and that if she wants the company she doesn't have to do anything underhanded to get it because her brother is worthless.

Kinsey is able to find Hugh's widow and flies out to talk to her. She seemingly has nothing to say to Kinsey. She says that no one cared so many years ago about her husband, why should anyone care now. It appears Lydia needs to talk about the death more than she realized. She believes that Lance Wood killed her husband. The reader gets the impression the man was not suicidal. Kinsey seemingly doesn't believe anyone can know someone well enough to make a definitive statement about what that person will or won't do. It's easy to see Kinsey has issues with trusting people. You see later on in the story that she has good reason for this.

There had been several people fired from the hospital where Hugh's autopsy findings had been done because they lost the samples. The reader never finds out who took the samples. Lyda had sent the body to be cremated quickly after it had been released seemingly unaware of the happenings at the hospital. With everything that has come out at this point, it seems to leave Kinsey with more questions than answers. She seems sure that Hugh's death is somehow involved with everything and perhaps even excited that there are more leads being generated and nothing is drying up.

Kinsey's ex doesn't seem to understand why she is angry and tells her that his therapist told him to take care of unfinished business. She slams the door in his face. It doesn't tell you his feelings but he seems genuinely confused by her anger. You find out later that he is there to help spy on Kinsey.



She makes an appointment to meet with Olive and Terry Kohler to talk to them about the situation at Wood/Warren to see what they think. Olive loves her brother but doesn't like him and describes him as a used car salesman. There is more there than the reader is aware of at this point. She is little help other than that and seems more worried about her appearance and money than anything that might be going on with the family company. When her husband comes home he sends her to get him a drink in a manner that seemed to almost be sending her away so that Terry can talk to Kinsey alone.



Chapter 13-16

Chapter 13-16 Summary

Kinsey talks to Terry after he has gotten ready for the party. Kinsey asks about Ava Daugherty, since she is the one that saw Kinsey receive the envelope from Lance's secretary full of the inventory slips. Both Terry and Olive say that while Ava and Lance didn't always see eye to eye on things, she wouldn't do anything to do him in. Terry says he can't think of anyone else that might want to harm Lance, but they will think about it.

After his wife leaves the room, he tells Kinsey that he received a phone call from Hugh Case's wife Lyda. She asked him how old he was going to be on his birthday and when he told her, she laughed and told him not to count on it. Terry didn't call the police but it did scare him a little. Terry also said that Mr. Wood had made Hugh an offer to be vice president of the company with a big raise if he would stay. According to Terry, Hugh's wife Lyda had told Hugh she was going to leave him.

Later Kinsey tries to call Lyda but only gets her roommate. Her roommate says that Lyda has gone for the holidays and she is not sure where. She can remember Lyda saying something about California but she isn't sure. She calls Darcy at home, but Andy had worked late and she didn't get time to look for anything.

When Kinsey returns home, her ex-husband Daniel is still in front of her house waiting on her. He tells her that he is in a bind and the trunk on the rental car is broke and he has an expensive guitar he needs to put in a safe place for a few days. They stand in the yard arguing for a time. Kinsey is reluctant but tells him yes so he will go away. She tries to keep herself from sounding harsh and hateful but after just a few moments finds that she is still so hurt by him she can't help snapping at him when she answers. She is sick to her stomach about keeping the guitar because she knows he will have to come back and get it. Part of the reason she hates the sight of him is because she knows he played on her emotions and what she needed when she was younger. When he packed up and left there was no note and no explanation, and now he has just showed up asking for favors like everything is ok and no one should be hurt or confused. Kinsey needs to feel in control so much that she hates that she lost the ability to handle herself.

Darcy calls again and says that she went through Daniel's office and everything is clean. No typewriter or anything. Darcy and Kinsey decide he might be keeping such things in the trunk of his car. Kinsey is sure she can figure out a way to get into the trunk. The Rolodex didn't have anything interesting in it but he would know the guys at Wood/Warren because he was taking care of the account.

Olive Kohler calls and offers to have Kinsey come over for a New Years Eve party. Kinsey normally doesn't have anything to wear to such things, but Olive had given her a dress. Kinsey is also very lonely with so much going on during the holiday weekend and is glad to have an invite. Kinsey agrees and says she will be there early to help get



everything ready, since the maid has the holidays off. Olive says Ash will be there later and Bass has flown into town.

Kinsey calls Lance and tells him about what she found out. He tells her Hugh wasn't leaving the company because Mr. Wood gave him a big raise. This happened just a couple of days before he killed himself. California Fidelity called Lance to tell him they were handing everything over to the cops, although he is not sure if they have enough to press charges yet, but Lance is beginning to worry. Lance says he has to talk to Kinsey and agrees to discuss things at Olive's party. Since it is the New Years Eve holiday most of the people that Kinsey wants to talk to are out of the office already so she decides not to worry about Wood/Warren for the moment and gets ready for Olive's party. As Kinsey takes a bath and shaves her legs she realizes that she is honestly looking forward to going. She feels like a little girl getting to play dress up with the adults. She reminisces about her youth and the fact that she didn't have a mother to teach her how to dress up and put on makeup.

When Kinsey gets to Olive's house, no one is home. Olive drives up with a car full of groceries telling Kinsey they have a lot of work to do. They both pick up several packages and walk into the house. Terry pulls up behind them, and as Olive walks in the house, she picks up a package off the porch. Olive tosses the package onto the hallway table as the house phone rings and the package explodes. Olive is killed instantly, and Kinsey is blown into the yard and slumped against a tree. Terry gets cuts and bruises but is not seriously injured. The nurses keep telling Kinsey that her husband is waiting for her. She tells them repeatedly that he is not her husband and even has a sign on her door for no visitors, but Daniel stays by her side.

At the hospital a cop questions Kinsey after she regains consciousness. Her ex-husband Daniel is there and tells the hospital staff he will take care of her. Kinsey goes down the hall to talk to Terry who is trying to get dressed to go home. His brother Bass and his sister Ebony are both there. Terry is released soon and Kinsey gets a chance to talk to Ebony who is shaken. When Kinsey gets back to her room she finds Darcy there waiting to talk to her. She tells her that Andy is gone.

Chapter 13-16 Analysis

While Kinsey is in the house talking to Olive and Terry, Kinsey seems to think Olive is very outdated with her ideas of how a woman should be. She seems submissive to her husband and only cares about shopping and tennis. It appears to the reader that Kinsey's aunt raised her to be very independent and she finds Olive to be out of place in a world of career women and super moms. Kinsey will take this back later on. Her actions suggest she finds Terry full of himself as well. Before she leaves, Olive gives her a very pretty gown to wear to a New Year Eves party she and Terry are throwing. Kinsey seems almost insulted by the gift.

She talks to Lance to tell him what she has found out and asks a couple questions. Much to her dismay he tells her that CFI has called the police and handed over their

files. She seems distraught to some extent. He tells her that they have to meet and speak and decide they will talk at Olive's party. It seems she will have to work fast to prove she has nothing to do with this. It seems Darcy is trying to help but has found nothing on the Rolodex and Andy has been in his office so much she hasn't had a chance to look there.

Kinsey gets to the Kohler's house several hours early and waits on Olive and Terry to get back from town. Olive arrives first and Kinsey helps her with the groceries. It seems Kinsey is starting to like Olive, who before she had found to be snobbish and rude.

At the hospital Daniel is waiting on Kinsey seemingly to make sure she is going to be ok. The reader finds out later this was just another opportunity to spy on Kinsey. She tries to tell him to get out and leave but is so weak she can't make the words come out. Kinsey feels close to the case since it revolves around her and people she knows. She seems to have trouble deciding who is telling the truth and who is lying at this point.



Chapter 17-20

Chapter 17-20 Summary

At the hospital, Darcy tells Kinsey that when Andy came into work the day before he was rushed and panicked about something. He left early even though he had meetings with people and didn't come back. Darcy drove out to his house today to check on him and Andy's next-door neighbor said that the day before he left with two suitcases. Kinsey and Darcy realize that he knew about the bombing before it was reported in the news.

Kinsey gets Darcy to take her home from the hospital without doctor approval. They go to CFI after Kinsey changes her clothes to look over what Andy left at his office. They talk to his ex-wife and find out that he never showed up to get the kids the night before. They find some clues as to the identity of the woman to whom he was writing love notes. They find a phone number and go back to Kinsey's old office to check out the number. Darcy dryly comments that Kinsey was supposed to turn in the keys. They find the woman's address and it is just a few blocks from Kinsey's house.

Kinsey goes to see her and learns the woman is Andy's ex-wife's sister Lorraine. She doesn't know where Andy is and hasn't heard from him which Kinsey does believe. Kinsey is sure Lorraine knows about the Wood/Warren scam but isn't going to tell anything incriminating on Andy. She tells her that her name is Darcy and leaves her with a phone number for Kinsey Millhone's flat knowing that it may come back to haunt her. The woman commented on the fact that she looked like she had been in an accident, and Kinsey told her she had a heater blow up in her face.

Olive's memorial service is the next day. When Kinsey gets there, she realizes there aren't many people there. The service said nothing about God and there was nothing religious about the service. Olive's mother, brothers, sisters, husband and a few friends were in attendance. Ebony leaves after the services and doesn't stick around for the food afterward. Most of the people there either are talking about how sad it is that Olive died so young or saying something catty and rude about her life.

Kinsey talks to Ash about the family and what everyone has been doing since Olive died. Ash tells Kinsey that while she thought Ebony and Ash were very close she isn't so sure now because Ebony has been so collected and cold. Kinsey assures her that everyone handles death differently and you can't judge someone's grieving.

She goes and has a talk with Terry about what all has happened since then and he tells her that Lyda called again. This time she swears she didn't have anything to do with anything and wants to talk to Terry and asked that Kinsey come along as well. Kinsey wants to know why he didn't call the police and that she will go with him, but that if he doesn't call the police then she will. Terry is upset that Kinsey had kept secret the visit to Lyda.



A policeman and Terry and Kinsey go to meet Lyda. They wait for more than three hours but Lyda never shows up. When Kinsey gets back to her place she finds Daniel is waiting on her and they have a little picnic. He tells her he thinks he needs to start doing drugs again because he can't play music the same as he used to and he wants her permission. When she tells him it will kill him, he tells her he just doesn't care anymore. She tells him to get out of her life.

Lance calls Kinsey the next morning and tells her that some weird things have been going on, and he is pretty sure that his office is bugged. After discussing it, she tells him she is going to get the stuff she needs and come look his office over. Before she leaves to go to Lance's office, Darcy calls and tells her that she heard Mac talking and that Lance Wood moved all the merchandise to another location before his warehouse burned down. The inventory he claimed reimbursement for was all worthless junk. According to the police he had a few pieces of real boxes among all the junk in the warehouse. Lance is going to be charged and Kinsey as a co-conspirator.

Kinsey gets the equipment out to Lance's office and does find a small bug and tells him to watch his step because there may be another to cover the fact that they might find that one. She also tells him the information that Darcy told her. Once she leaves, she calls her lawyer to let him know what is going on and he tells her not to worry until he tells her to.

When she arrives back home she has forgotten to turn her equipment off and it goes off in her house. She figures out that there is a bug in the guitar that Daniel left, which means he is part of whatever is going on. Meanwhile, since Terry was a target and someone is doing a good job of discrediting Lance, Kinsey is trying to figure out what Hugh, Terry and Lance have in common that would put them on the same list.

Chapter 17-20 Analysis

Darcy tells Kinsey about how crazy Andy had been acting. He had important meetings the day before. It seems he just left without a word. When Darcy gave him his phone messages he cut her off and acted so odd that she drives out to his place later when he didn't show back up to see what was going on. Darcy called every couple of hours all night long and even the next morning with no answer. Kinsey seems to understand something is amiss and asked when the reports of Olive's death hit the news. Darcy told her not till Andy was long gone. Both of them seem to know he had an idea what had happened before anyone else.

Kinsey gets Darcy, seemingly against Darcy's better judgment, to take her out of the hospital without a doctor's release and they go do investigating on their own and find out to whom Andy was writing love letters. Kinsey goes to see the woman alone and while she seems generally concerned about where Andy is she isn't going to give any information.



Lance seemingly thinks his office is bugged. Darcy calls her before she leaves and lets her know that Andy has not showed back up and Mac has handed things over to the police. It seems at this point they are charging Lance with arson and Kinsey as a co-conspirator. She calls her lawyer who tells her not to worry just yet. She finds a bug at Lance's apartment and one in the guitar that Daniel left and realizes Daniel is somehow involved with whatever is going on. She doesn't yet realize he was hired by Ebony and is the lover of Ebony's younger brother Bass.



Chapter 21-24

Chapter 21-24 Summary

After searching for some time, Kinsey finds the voice-activated tape recorders that Daniel hid at her place. Kinsey put the guitar and everything Daniel left in her house in the car and went to go find him. After circling the places she can think of, Kinsey gives up and goes home. When Kinsey gets there it was so late that she had to park several doors away. When she gets close to her apartment she caught the smell of dead dog. She looked around for something dead in the road but instead sees a car covered by a car cover. She looks inside and finds the reason that Lyda didn't meet with them—she was dead. Kinsey calls the police and tells them she has a body in front of her residence.

Kinsey again went out searching for Daniels rental car again and this time found it at a motel. There was a very expensive car sitting beside Daniel's car. Kinsey looks in the glove box and learns the car is Ashley Wood's. She knocks on the door and Daniel lets her in but no one else is there but the bathroom door is closed. She questions him about the devices left at her house but gets no answers. Kinsey opens the bathroom door and finds Bass Wood wearing nothing but a towel and looking very smug. He and Daniel had had an affair a long time ago and when Bass needed information on Kinsey it seemed to make sense to call in Daniel since they had a past.

She tells them both that Lyda Case is dead but neither of them knew her personally, and Bass says he just doesn't care. Bass also won't tell her who told him to get information on her and that everything they have is going straight to the DA.

After finding Lyda in her front yard, she is worried after she gets home so turns on all the lights and locks the house up securely. The next morning she talks to Ava at Wood/Warren. Ava was new about the time that Hugh died and can't give Kinsey much information but does tell her that Ebony was at Hugh's funeral and not in Europe.

Kinsey begins to get desperate and goes back to Andy's girlfriend to try and find something out, but the woman won't tell her anything. She goes Andy's house and finds nothing until she tries his phone for the last number called. It is the Kohler residence and she remembers that before the package exploded the phone rang. She drives to the Wood residence wanting to talk to anyone and gets Ebony. Ebony is the one who told Bass to get some information and got Daniel involved. She is very rude and hateful. When the conversation gets intense, Mrs. Wood comes and asks Kinsey to come to her room for a talk. Once in Mrs. Wood's room she confides in Kinsey that Lance and Olive had a sexual relationship for years when they were younger. Only the parents and Bass knew it. Bass had walked in on it.

When Bass and Olive had their falling out, Bass went to Terry and told Terry about Olive and Lance. At this point Kinsey calls the policeman in charge of the investigation and



finds out the prints on the car were that of a man who had killed his foster mother years earlier with a packaged bomb. He disappeared and hadn't been seen again. Kinsey realizes the man is Terry and tells the police to pick him up and to check on Lance Wood. She drives home and when she walks in realizes that her bathroom door is shut and she didn't shut it. Before she can react, Terry emerges with a gun and shows her the bomb on the kitchen counter and tells her how he changed his name. Terry says he killed Hugh Case because he was going to force fingerprinting for security purposes and he was sure Hugh knew who he was. Hugh unfortunately kept very good copies of his records at home and his wife found the records. Since she didn't trust Lance, she called Terry and told him about the file she found and never had threatened him at all. When she didn't show up that evening it was because she was already dead. Andy isn't dead but Terry was sure he could find him soon.

Terry then tells Kinsey he should have just killed Lance and tortured Olive for the rest of her days. He never loved Olive because she was tainted and never told him the truth. Kinsey is trying desperately to find the gun in the bottom of her purse and finally manages to shoot at him, and they fall to the floor fighting. She manages to get to the bathroom and turns out she had hit with a bullet him and he falls over after firing through the door several times. She realizes the bomb is about to go off and she can't get out of the bathroom because he is lying in front of the door. Everything explodes propelling her out the bathroom window she was climbing out of.

Henry Pitts comes home more worried about Kinsey than the hole in his house and plans a big place to be built in its place for her. All charges on her are dropped and charges are filled against Andy, and he loses his job. Mac gives her back her office and has it refurbished. Kinsey doesn't hear from Daniel again but doesn't care now. Kinsey privately was advised by a friend at the police department to not say anything about the \$5,000 put into her account by Terry Kohler.

Chapter 21-24 Analysis

Kinsey seems angry and very hurt when she realizes Daniel has betrayed her again. Not only did he leave her when she was younger with no explanation, he seems to have returned just to hurt her again. She searches for Daniel's car and finds it at a local motel. She is angry and when Daniel opens the door, Kinsey is somewhat ready for a fight. It seems Daniel is at the motel with one of the Woods daughters and they are doing drugs. Kinsey seemingly is very surprised when it is the son standing in the bathroom with no clothes on. He seemingly is smug and happy to be found out.

She calls the police to retrieve Lyda's body but now she seemingly feels vulnerable and unsafe in her own home. She gets little sleep that night but seems to know she must be close to figuring out what is going on, and the next morning she goes to Wood/Warren to investigate. After the talk with Mrs. Wood, she figures out the killer is Terry.



Once home Kinsey feels better about things but realizes someone is in her house. She manages to shoot Terry and get out before the bomb he planted goes off. She gets her job back with CFI and Andy is fired and charges filed against him. Kinsey seems to be over many of the hurts that had haunted her and seemingly feels nothing for Bass and Daniel.



Characters

Kinsey Millhone

A twice-divorced private investigator whose mother and her father died in a car accident when she was five years old. She was raised by her single aunt who thought it best if Kinsey knew how to take care of herself and not be dependent on anyone else. Kinsey's second marriage to Daniel Wade was a nasty mess. He was addicted to drugs and Kinsey said that being married to someone on drugs was the loneliest a person could get. He packed up and left her after only a little more than 11 months worth of marriage with no note and no explanation.

She was a troublemaker early on in high school and hung out with the boys that were in trouble and smoked dope but straightened out before she graduated. She used to be a cop and says that being a private investigator is her way of rebelling. She doesn't have a lot of friends and after Daniel left she was so hurt that she has decided she doesn't want to get married again.

She is slender and works out on a steady basis to calm her nerves. The one true friend she has is her elderly landlord who looks after her like she is family. They spend holidays together and she seems to care for him.

Terry Kohler

Terry Kohler is the vice president of Wood/Warren. He is married to Olive Wood. He tries to be very helpful to Kinsey Millhone but you find out later that is because he is responsible for the murders.

His real name is Chris Emms, and he murdered his foster mother twenty years ago with a packaged bomb. They decided he was insane and sentenced him to an institution, but he escaped and no one heard from him again.

After taking the name Terry Kohler and marrying Olive, he had to protect his secret so he killed Hugh Case because Case had learned his secret. His brother-in-law Lance had an incestuous relationship with Olive years ago. When Terry found out he felt like he had been lied to, so he set up for Lance to go to prison for arson and sent a package bomb to the house to kill Olive because she was what he called "Tainted." After Kinsey talks to Hugh's widow she finds the file exposing Terry. Terry kills the widow as well.

His life is ended when Kinsey manages to get away from him while he is trying to kill her with a bomb like the one that killed Olive. Terry said after he killed Olive that it was the wrong thing to do. He said he should have just killed Lance and then made sure that Olive was miserable for the rest of her life.



Maclin Voorhies

He is referred to as Mac and is the CFI vice-president and is in his sixties. He asks a lot of questions under normal circumstances. He has to give Kinsey a suspension until they figure out what is going on with the Wood/Warren case. At the end of the story he tries to make it up to Kinsey for doubting her innocence.

Andy Motycka

He is the CFI claims manager. Kinsey and he don't get along. He is the type of person who will change the circumstances around to make himself look better. He is forty-two years old and his wife just left him. He is secretly having an affair with his wife's sister. He is the one responsible for setting up the paperwork that incriminates Kinsey.

Darcy Pascoe

Darcy is in her late 20's and Kinsey thinks she is somewhat of a flake. She is the receptionist for CFI. She and Kinsey wind up working together later on to investigate Andy. She gives Kinsey the file for the investigation that starts all the accusations.

Daniel Wade

He is very handsome with sun bleached hair and blue eyes. He is Kinsey's second husband and the one that left her emotionally scarred. Turns out that he left her with no explanation because he had found a man with whom he was in love. He used to be on drugs and tells Kinsey that he doesn't like being off drugs and he is in a hurry to kill himself. He is an outstanding musician.

Lance Wood

Lance is older and his siblings don't think much of him. He is being framed for arson. His father left the Wood/Warren business to him when he died. Lance has a funny smell and in the end you find out he had an incestuous relationship with his sister Olive when they were younger.

Olive Wood/Kohler

Olive is very rich and beautiful. She strikes Kinsey as a snob. After Kinsey gets to know Olive she begins to like her. Olive invites Kinsey to a New Years Eve party and that is when Olive is blown up. She loves her husband very much and has no idea that he isn't who he says he is.



Ashley Wood

Ashley is down to earth. She went to high school with Kinsey and when they were younger they were friends. She is a little larger than most women but is quick to make fun of her larger size. She is very friendly and genuinely kind. She doesn't know anything about what is going on but helps Kinsey out with the family.

Henry Pitts

Henry is in his early eighty's and is Kinsey's landlord. His family live far away. He may be Kinsey's only real friend. He worries about leaving her for the holidays and asks her to come with him because she usually spends time with him. When he returns home he worries about her more than the hole in the house the bomb created.

Hugh Case

Hugh Case was an engineer for Wood/Warren. He was murdered before Mr. Wood passed away because he was onto Terry Kohler's secret identity. He had a wife who was a lot younger than he named Lyda. He was a recovering alcoholic.

Lyda Case

She knows that her husband didn't kill himself. Kinsey has to track her down. At first Lyda doesn't want to talk. She is just sure that the Wood family paid to cover up her husband's death. After talking to Kinsey she finds the file that gets her killed by the same man that killed her husband.

Ebony Wood

Ebony wanted control of the company. Her father wouldn't leave her in charge because she was female. She wants the family members to vote Lance out and her in control of the company. She sets Daniel up to spying on Kinsey to find out what is going on.



Objects/Places

Kinsey's Garage Apartment

Henry Pitts made his garage into an apartment and rents it out to Kinsey. She calls it her small kingdom and though it is small she enjoys it. This is where she gets recharged after things go wrong and where the final battle takes place.

Wood/Warren Company Building

Wood/Warren is the company that files the fire claim that starts the incriminating events. Kinsey investigates the fire scene and questions the employees.

Daniel Wade's Guitar

Daniel, Kinsey's ex-husband, leaves his guitar telling her it was too expensive to leave in his car. She figures out later on that he had put a small tape recorder in the guitar to spy on Kinsey.

Package Bomb

This is a reoccurring item in the story. The "bad guy" in the story kills his mother with a package bomb, then his wife, and tries to kill Kinsey with one that winds up being his own demise.

The Kohler Residence

Terry and Olive Kohler are having a New Years Eve party. When Kinsey shows up there is a package on the front porch that winds up being a bomb. The fact of the bomb points her investigation in new directions.

The Wood Residence

Mrs. Wood, Ebony, and Ashley all live at the Wood house. They provide many clues to the mystery and at the end this is where Kinsey gets the final piece and solves the murder mystery.



California Fidelity Insurance Office

CFI is the company that Kinsey works for, and they provide her with office space. The claims manager at CFI is the one that falsifies paperwork to frame Lance Wood and Kinsey.

Santa Teresa Hospital

This is the hospital where Hugh Case had his autopsy done and the autopsy report disappeared so his death could not be proved to be murder instead of suicide.

Rosie's

Eatery that Kinsey eats at most everyday.

Bird Refuge

Lyda Case, Hugh Case's widow, supposedly wants to meet with Kinsey and Terry at the bird refuge. She never shows because she has already been murdered.



Themes

The Need for Love

The need for love doesn't refer to a romantic kind of love as much as it refers to a person's need for people to care for. Kinsey has spent much of her life alone after her second divorce. She professes to want her independence and to like her solitude. When Kinsey begins to get close to the Wood family, it becomes obvious that she wants people and friends in her life. As the story begins you find that the only person that she spends much time with that would be considered a friendly relationship is her landlord Henry Pitts. He goes out of town for the holidays, but before he goes he spends much of his time trying to convince her to go with him and is worried that she will be lonely while he is gone. After he leaves she begins her investigation into the Wood/Warren case and begins spending time with people in the Wood family. Ashley Wood is the youngest of the Wood daughters and is very friendly. Kinsey also spends time with Olive Wood before she dies.

When she first meets Olive she finds her to be pretentious and self absorbed but after a period of time, Kinsey begins to think that Olive is someone with whom she could enjoy spending time. Kinsey doesn't have romantic relationships that go anywhere long term. She is currently seeing a man that is married with two children. When her ex-husband shows up Kinsey realizes there are still strong feelings mixed with anger and hurt. It isn't until she realizes that he has betrayed her and is romantically involved with the Wood's younger son Bass that she begins to get work through the pain of Daniel leaving her.

The Quest For Understanding

When the story first opens we have Kinsey opening mail from the bank. She believes that the \$5,000 deposited into her account was simply a mistake. After she is accused of taking bribes, she realizes it is part of something much larger. As the plot thickens and she begins to ask questions about the past, she gets just as many new questions as she does answers. She finds out that 2 years ago there was an engineer that worked for the company whose death looked like suicide but his autopsy tests disappeared. His widow is sure that Lance Wood killed her husband and the family covered it up. As she digs further more people begin to die and she knows the engineer is somehow connected but even with all the pieces she has she still can't figure out what is going on. She is trying to understand the Wood family and understand why her ex-husband Daniel is back in the picture suddenly. As she begins to understand more of the puzzle, her life is put more and more in danger from the person that wants to keep the truth hidden. It isn't until Kinsey nears the end of the problem that she talks to Mrs. Wood and unearths the dark family secrets that help her understand the motive behind the happenings.



Good Versus Evil

Kinsey doesn't strike you as necessarily being a "good" person like a super hero or anything of that nature. She is your everyday realistic good person. That may be what makes us feel a kinship with the main character. The evil in the book is someone who is capable of killing and hurting those closest to him. He kills his foster mother when he was a boy and then later on kills his wife because in his opinion she was "tainted". Kinsey notes at different places in the book that Olive really did love Terry. He claimed that it wasn't love because she had never told him the truth. The funny thing here is that his real name wasn't Terry Kholer and he never told Olive that he had killed his mother or his real name. He had also killed the man that found out his true identity and then killed that mans widow.

Kinsey had definite flaws to her but at the end she didn't have to kill Terry which would have possibly made her seem less like a heroin. Terry was so evil that he ultimately destroyed himself.



Style

Point of View

The story is told first person past tense with a limited point of view. You know Kinsey has a limited point of view because throughout the story she is trying so hard to figure things out that have happened. She can't tell who is lying to her and who is telling the truth. She has several suspects throughout the story that she leans towards for who did the framing and the killings, but it isn't until the end of the book that she realizes it isn't any of her suspects. The person that did the killing was someone to whom she had given compassion and sympathy. Writing the book in past tense with her not sure of what is going on gives the effect of her telling a story the way it actually happened rather than watching the story as it happened. The perspective is not changed during the story with Kinsey as narrator. She reads people's faces as the story is told and though she can describe their faces and their actions, she can not always tell why they are doing the things they do. It forces the readers to try and find their own reason for the actions of the characters to whom she is talking. As if the readers are the detective as well.

Setting

The story takes place in Santa Teresa, California beginning December 27th. Her description of the weather and the atmosphere of California in the wintertime give you a more realistic feeling. Santa Teresa is a real place and actually it is where the author of the story was born and grew up. This is most likely why she is able to describe the place and time of year with such detail and accuracy. She is able to tell you about the winds and what the weather are like that match actual wintertime California accounts of weather. It's a lot of fun when the characters you are reading about are placed in the world you actually live it. It causes them to feel much more alive. There is even a Wood and Warren Company in California, though I'm sure that part of the story was more fiction than actual people. She even describes the view from her office balcony saying that she can see the V of the Pacific Ocean from State Street ten blocks down. Even when she flies to Dallas to talk to Lyda Case it feels like she is describing the airport as it actually looks.

Language and Meaning

The story is fictional about a private investigator that gets caught up in a plot to incriminate and kill members of a family. Despite the fact that the story is a little far fetched, the fact that the setting is a real place - California - and the people are so believable will likely entice some people to get caught up in the story. There is little doubt that the story has a "disturbing" element that will grab the attention of many readers. Overall, the book is written in an easy-to-read style and the story line flows well



and quickly. Most readers with an adequate vocabulary will have no trouble understanding the story, though there are some uncommon words thrown in. As a rule, the meanings can be determined by the context. The story characters seemingly are normal people, which makes it more realistic when you learn about the dark secrets they keep. There are a few questions left unanswered at the end of the story such as how did Chris Emms manage to change his whole identity and did Lance Wood actually have anything to do with the fire but despite these unanswered questions, the way the story ends is over all satisfying. The end notes in the story add a few personal notes to the effect of Kinsey's over all attitude now that all this has transpired.

Structure

The overall story length is 307 pages with an epilogue of two pages. There are 24 chapters with the amount of pages varying from chapter to chapter. The structure of the story gives plenty of space for a person to pause and pick the book back up with out feeling lost. The chapters often end when one situation has just started so that when you are ready to start the next situation you are reminded what is going on. For instance at one point a chapter ends with Ebony Wood standing in front of a door waiting for Kinsey to walk in for a private discussion. The next chapter starts with them walking in and beginning the conversation. Another chapter ends with Darcy telling Kinsey that Andy has disappeared but nothing more. The next chapter they discuss what happened. If Kinsey has a severe argument with someone or harsh words, the chapter may end on that with the next chapter with her at a different location. It is very easily followed and the story line follows the actual time line.



Quotes

"At first, I assumed I was overdrawn, but what I pulled out was a slip, dated Friday, December 24, showing a five-thousand-dollar deposit to my checking account." Chapter 1 page 1

"Monday morning, I would do a background check on Lance Wood's financial situation just to make sure there wasn't any hidden profit motive for the fire itself... a mere formality in this case, since the fire chief had already ruled out arson in his report." Chapter 3 page 28

"Somebody's accusing me of a criminal act and I want to know who it is." Chapter 3 page 38

"The deposit was damning in itself, but if I tried to move the money, it would look even worse." Chapter 4 page 47

"Maybe somebody's throwing business his way, or giving him a kickback." Chapter 6 page 70

"She thought Lance murdered him." Chapter 9 page 106

"Because the evidence disappeared, that's how come." Chapter 10 page 118

"Lance Wood did it, as sure as I'm sittin' here, but he's not going to admit it in a million years and neither will his family." Chapter 11 page 133

"Somebody's working very hard to get me put away." Chapter 14 page 169

"There was a flash of light, a great burst that filled my visual field like a sun, followed by a hug could of white smoke." Chapter 14 page 173

"The memorial service for Olive was held at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday at the Unitarian Church, a spartan ceremony in a setting stripped of excess." Chapter 19 page 225

"Tucked into the space was a microcassette recorder about the size of a deck of playing cards." Chapter 20 page 247

"It took me nearly two hours to find the voice activated tape recorder which turned out to be hidden on the sun porch that formerly connected my converted garage apartment to the main house." Chapter 21 page 251



"Leaning against the window on the passenger side was the bloated face of Lyda Case, eyes bulging, tongue as fat and round and dark as a parakeet's, protruding slightly beyond puffy darkened lips." Chapter 21 page 253

"You suspected Lance was abusing her and you never interfered?" Chapter 24 page 290

"They belong to a fellow named Chris Emms, who was charged with the murder of his foster mother twenty years ago." Chapter 24 page 294

"Eventually, with effort, I roused myself and went back inside to see if there was anything of Terry left." Chapter 24 page 307



Topics for Discussion

Discuss the need for family. Do you think that Kinsey's need for family was subconsciously being imposed on the Woods?

Discuss Olive and Terry's relationship. Do you really think that Olive loved him just because she was willing to be submissive?

Discuss family secrets. Do you think the family would have been better off if they had discussed the thing they found to be the most hurtful and embarrassing?

Discuss close friends. Do you think that Henry Pitts is just a nice guy or does he care for Kinsey more like she is his family? Do you think that Kinsey feels the same way?

Discuss Wood/Warren Company. Do you think that the company would be better off with Ebony in charge of things rather than Lance. Regardless of what he has done in his personal life, who do you think would be better suited to be in charge of the family business?

Discuss Mac. Mac is one of the few people Kinsey seems to respect. What do you think makes her feel that respect for him?

Discuss Helen Wood. Do you think that Mrs. Wood cared for her children or her reputation more? Why?

Discuss Kinsey. Kinsey shows that she is not comfortable around the Wood family again and again and it always seems to point to the money. Do you think that she is happy with herself? What actions appear to give you that answer?