

Gone for Good Study Guide

Gone for Good by Harlan Coben

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Contents

Gone for Good Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1 through 6.....	4
Chapters 7 through 10.....	7
Chapters 11 through 20.....	10
Chapters 21 through 28.....	12
Chapters 29 through 36.....	15
Chapters 37 through 43.....	18
Chapters 44 through 52.....	20
Chapters 53 through Epilogue.....	23
Characters.....	25
Objects/Places.....	28
Themes.....	30
Style.....	32
Quotes.....	34
Topics for Discussion.....	35



Plot Summary

The story opens with Will Klein attending the funeral of his mother with the support of his girlfriend. Will takes a walk through the neighborhood where he grew up and stops at the house where his childhood sweetheart, Julie Miller, was murdered. Will's brother Ken was the chief suspect and is still sought by police though many people believe that he is dead. Will certainly believes that his brother did not commit the murder. Aside from the death of his mother, he is happy with his life and deeply in love with his girlfriend whom he knows as Sheila Rogers. In actuality, she is not Sheila Rogers but is Nora Spring. Will believes that she has run away from an abusive home but discovers that Nora has actually been on the run from an abusive husband. Shortly after his mother's death, Nora leaves a note that says simply that she loves Will, then she disappears.

One night Will is attacked by a man named John Asselta, known as Ghost, who was a childhood friend of Ken's. John demands that Will reveal Ken's location but Will insists that he does not know it. Will learns that Sheila Rogers has been found murdered along a highway and believes it to be his girlfriend. At the funeral, he learns the truth—that his girlfriend has been lying about her real identity and that this woman is not the woman he loves.

He is then contacted by Katy Miller, Julie's little sister. Katy pleads with Will to help her track down what really happened to Julie. Will is warned by police to stay away from the case but persists in his search for the truth. He finds Nora and learns her real name as well as her real life story. It is through a collaboration between John and Katy that Will makes contact with Ken. They arrange a reunion and Ken explains away all the evidence against him, swearing to his innocence. Will believes him but then Katy shows up and reveals that she had been hiding in the basement on the night of Julie's murder and that she saw Ken kill her sister. Ken and Will fight and Ken has Will on the ground with a gun to his head when the childhood instinct to protect his little brother comes to the forefront. Ken does not run away, despite Will's urging that he do that, and says that he is sorry for the biggest betrayal of his life—that against Will.

Will does not know what Ken is talking about for some time but he then discovers that the child Ken had claimed was the daughter of Sheila and Ken was actually the daughter of Will and Julie.



Chapters 1 through 6

Chapters 1 through 6 Summary

Will Klein says that three days before his mother's death, she tells him that Will's brother Ken is still alive. Four days after his mother's statement, Will is surrounded by family at his mother's funeral. He is supported in this time of emotional need by his girlfriend. Will believes her name to be Sheila Rogers but her name is actually Nora Spring. Will's father is very angry because few of the neighbors and friends show up for the funeral. Will finally goes for a walk and heads up Downing Place and along the route Will and Ken had taken to Burnet Hill Elementary School. He arrives at 97 Coddington Terrace and remembers the events there. He says that most people remember the press coverage though the murder of the young girl who lived at this house happened eleven years ago. The victim, Julie Miller, was Will's girlfriend. His brother Ken is accused of the crime and the family has not seen Ken in the years since the murder. Some believe Ken is dead because his blood is found at the crime scene. As Will stands looking at the house, Mr. Miller comes out and yells at him to go away and Will does.

Back at his parents' house, he is in his mother's room with Nora when he notices something odd about a photo frame. He takes the back off and discovers a recent photo of Ken.

In chapter two, Will talks with his father. Will says that his father was always willing to support his children but never really cared about those outside his family. Will and Nora return home. In the middle of the night he wakes and finds that she is not in bed. He gets up and can tell she is crying but does not know how to comfort her. She tells him to go back to bed and he does.

In chapter three, Morty Meyer is asleep in bed when he is brought suddenly awake by a man with a gun. The man takes Morty to the basement where he is told to provide medical attention to a woman who is obviously near death. As he finishes, the man takes the woman back to the car and Morty sees that there is a third passenger in the car.

In chapter four, Will finds a note left by Nora that says, "Love you always." Will does not think much of it because Nora sometimes leaves very early. He is caught up in the information that Ken is alive and says that he has always known that Ken was not guilty of murder. Will says that his family has always believed that Julie was killed by someone else and that person wounded and later killed Ken. He says the police believe that Ken killed Julie but that Julie fought back. Will says that his mother had adamantly believed that Ken was dead and he now believes that she might have been helping him hide all these years by providing him money. Will leaves the apartment he shares with Nora at 24th and Ninth Avenue, headed for Covenant House. He is picked up by his best friend, a man named Squares because of the tattoo on his forehead. They talk on the way and Will reveals that Ken is apparently alive. At the Covenant House, an FBI agent named



Claudia Fisher arrives with another agent named Darryl Wilcox. They ask Will all kinds of questions about Nora's alias, Sheila, including where she is now. Will evades them and eventually Squares calls Assistant Director in Charge Joseph Pistillo, a personal friend. When he hangs up, Squares tells Will that Pistillo wants to see him in person.

In chapter five, Pistillo shows Will crime scene photos of a house in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He says that Sheila Rogers' fingerprints have been found all over the house. Will believes Nora's name is Sheila Rogers which means Nora was at the crime scene where two men were found dead.

In chapter six, Phillip McGuane is in New Jersey with a hired man named Tanner. He is there to meet John Asselta, a man known as Ghost, in a cemetery. John says that he has heard that Ken is back in the picture and that he has a "stake in this." He tells McGuane that he wants information and McGuane reveals that Will has been called in by the FBI for questioning. John says that he will start there. As he is about to leave, he tells McGuane that "it's going to be a lonely ride back" and reveals Tanner's ring, indicating that he has killed Tanner.

Chapters 1 through 6 Analysis

The book contains a number of twists, not the least of which is that Sheila Rogers and Nora Spring meet in Stockholm and trade identities before returning to the United States. The woman Will calls Sheila is actually Nora Spring using Sheila's identity. Sheila is actually using Nora's identity. For the purpose of avoiding confusion, both women will be referred to throughout this study guide. The reader of this guide should remember that this twist adds a level of suspense to the story that does not exist in the study guide.

Will is a director of a shelter for youthful runaways. It is called Covenant House and Nora volunteers there. As he is in his mother's room, he recounts the impact Julie's murder had on everyone, including his mother. He thinks it is strange that his parents did not move away. There was an outpouring of anger against them because they were the parents of an accused murderer. Will believes they felt the need to feel something and that staying forced them to deal with pain. He also believes that moving might have made them feel they were somehow agreeing that Ken might be guilty. Ken's mother had been known as Sunny and he says that she always smiled and that she brought joy to everyone. That changed dramatically after Julie's murder and Will believes the grief is why she weakened enough to allow the cancer a stronghold in her body.

Morty Meyers is a low-life gambler who has lost his medical license because of his addiction. He is deep in debt over the gambling and often treats people who cannot go to the hospital because medical staff would be bound to tell the police of gunshots, knife wounds and other injuries. There is another instance of the foreshadowing used so frequently by this author when Morty sees the third passenger in the car. It will later be revealed that the man is Ken Klein, the woman is Sheila Rogers and the child is Carley, who is the biological daughter of Will and Julie Miller. Will does not know that the child



exists at this point. The reader does not know these details at this point in the story and is actually led to believe that the woman who is near death is Nora Spring.

Squares' story is interesting. Most people who know him know that he is into yoga and believe that the tattoo on his forehead—a large square cut into quarters so that it is four squares—is some sort of metaphysical symbol. In actuality, it was a swastika and Squares had the sides closed to form the four squares. He is very wealthy and could afford to have the mark removed, but he says that he keeps it as a reminder of where he once was. He is now involved with a black woman and they later have a child together. He was "discovered" by a starlet and his yoga classes are now all the rage among the wealthy. He owns several studios, employs several teachers and is wealthy himself. Still, he reaches out to the homeless, the runaways, the drug addicts and the prostitutes that make up the youth population of the seedier side of town.

There is another case of the misdirection used by this author to twist the plot seen in the cemetery. McGuane is meeting John in a cemetery. Along the way, McGuane sees the stone of a thirteen-year-old boy named Daniel Skinner. McGuane hints that it was John who killed the boy and this story is perpetuated until the end of the book when Will will learn that it was actually Ken who killed Daniel. In fact, Will's father paid John's father five thousand dollars to arrange for John to take the blame. John says that Mr. Klein actually believed he was doing John a favor by making sure that he was in foster care and away from his abusive father. There is another clue to the story given in the fact that John has flowers and puts them on a grave while he is meeting with McGuane. That grave is probably Julie Miller and it is later revealed that Julie is the only person who ever showed true care for John and that he cares for her even while his psychopathic nature makes it possible for him to kill indiscriminately.



Chapters 7 through 10

Chapters 7 through 10 Summary

In chapter seven, Squares and Will head back to Will's apartment and Will tells about the information he got from Pistillo. Will was with his parents the previous weekend and Nora had called him. He believes she was in New York but knows he cannot confirm that and that it is possible that she lied to him. At home, Will goes through Nora's computer and finds nothing, including filed e-mails or history of sites she has visited. Melissa calls and tells him that he is needed at their father's house where the family is still gathered. Will decides he can do nothing at his apartment and goes to his father's house. There he shows Melissa the photo of Ken. She says that as far as she is concerned, Ken is dead. Will stands up for Ken, saying that Ken might not be guilty of the murder and might not be dead either. Melissa asks if it means nothing to Will that the authorities say that Ken was having sex with Julie on the night of her death. Will immediately says that he and Julie had broken up nearly a year before but Melissa counters, saying that she knows Will was not over Julie. Will decides not to tell his father about the picture of Ken.

Back at home that night, Will finds a telephone number he believes belongs to Nora's mother. This is another place where the plot becomes confusing because Will believes Nora to be Sheila Rogers. He calls Mrs. Rogers and she says that she has not been in touch with her daughter for years and asks Will if he knows where Carley is. He asks who Carley is and Mrs. Rogers advises him to forget that he had ever known her daughter.

In chapter eight, Squares calls and asks if Will wants to go out looking for street kids to help. Will agrees but they stop first by Squares' yoga school, called Yoga Squared. There, he encounters Squares' girlfriend, Wanda. She is black and asks for a moment with Will. She tells him that she is pregnant and that Squares is not taking it well. She says that Squares is spending most nights out looking for runaways. When Will and Squares are back out on the street, Squares knows that Wanda has told Will about the pregnancy. While they are out that evening, they meet a cross-dressing boy named Roscoe who prefers to be called Raquel. Will provides Roscoe a photo of Nora—whom he still believes to be Sheila Rogers—along with the information that she might once have been a prostitute for a man named Louis Castman. Roscoe provides an address where he says they might find Castman and asks to keep the picture of Nora.

In chapter nine, Squares and Will go to the address Roscoe provided and get a girl named Tanya to open the door and allow them in. She is horribly disfigured and points to a doorway, telling Will and Squares that she has "never hurt him." Not knowing what to make of that statement, they enter the room and find him on the bed. He has been paralyzed by a bullet to the spine, was responsible for Tanya's disfigurement and is surrounded by photos of Tanya when she was still beautiful. Castman says that he had met Nora—though he also knows her as Sheila—soon after her arrival to the city. He



says that he had used her for awhile but that she had been arrested on a drug charge and that a famous mob attorney had represented her. Castman says that after that he took the hint to leave her alone. He tries to convince Squares and Will to tell the authorities he is being held against his will and also tries to anger them into killing him, but they both walk away without doing either.

In chapter nine, Sheila has the thought that she wants to die alone but that "he" is still with her. She believes she remembers seeing Carley but thinks it might have been a figment of imagination. She tries to cope with the pain and as she dies, she pleads with him to "go away."

Chapters 7 through 10 Analysis

Will is angry that Melissa "ran away." He says that she was married at the time of Julie's murder and already had a baby. After the murder, she and her family moved to Seattle. Will calls it running away in an effort to escape the situation and the stigma of being Ken's sister. Melissa's initial reaction to Will's accusation is that she had moved because her husband got a job. However, she also tells Will that he, in his own way, had also run away. Melissa seems to be referring to Will's refusal to consider that Ken might be guilty. Melissa says that Will may not remember anything except Ken's tendency to come to Will's rescue whenever there was trouble, but that she remembers that Ken was drawn to violence. Over the coming days, as Will struggles with the emerging situation, he will remember all the times that Ken came to his rescue. He will recall that once he had gotten knocked down in a disco club and that Ken had rushed to his defense, getting into a horrible fight that left him beaten and with a broken arm. Will calls this a sacrifice on Ken's part because Ken had been a rising star in the tennis circles and his serve never recovered from the break. However, with Melissa's insight and the information that comes later, it seems more likely that Ken wanted to fight and took the opportunity that presented itself. Even when he came out the loser, he wanted to be part of violent situations.

Will has come to the conclusion that his mother knew all along that Ken was alive, that she helped Ken stay hidden, probably by giving him money, and that she only revealed the situation to Will on her death bed because she wanted someone else in the family to know. However, this is not the case. It will later be revealed that Nora knew Ken when they were both living in Stockholm, Nora hiding from an abusive husband and Ken hiding from men who want to kill him. Nora actually tells Will's mother that Ken is alive and provides her with the photo. She will later tell Will that she did it and he approves of the situation, knowing that his mother wanted Ken to be alive more than almost anything.

Chapter nine is another case of misdirecting. The reader has been led to believe that Nora is Sheila. In this case, the "Sheila" being referred to is the real Sheila Rogers. She is really dying and her body will soon be found by authorities. The reader is given no clue about the identity of the man with her but it is Ken. She says that, faced with immediate death, she sees the truth and wants to be alone, away from "him." In fact, it



seems likely that she is realizing the lies she has lived all this time have brought her to this point and that she is paying for having lived those lies. Sheila has posed as Carley's mother but she is actually not. She has lived with Ken who is a cold-blooded murderer and has died because killers were looking for him. It is here that the plot becomes incredibly twisted because the reader believes that Will's girlfriend has died. In fact, it is the real Sheila Rogers and Ken's girlfriend, Nora, is still in New York.



Chapters 11 through 20

Chapters 11 through 20 Summary

In chapter eleven, Will says that if he were a "better person," he might find a way to care about Castman but he and Squares walk away, leaving Castman with nothing to do all day but stare at the photographs of Tanya and depend on her for his very life. At home, there is a message on his answering machine from Katy Miller, Julie's little sister. He remembers Katy as a youngster, jumping out from behind a trunk in the basement while Will and Julie were making out and Will and Julie laughing about it. He knows that she is now "seventeen or eighteen," and wonders why she is calling. It is about four in the morning and Will does not call her back then, but goes to bed remembering that the last time he had seen her was at the graveyard after Julie's funeral.

In chapter twelve, Sheriff Bertha Farrow is in Belmont, Nebraska, where a body has been found dumped along the side of a highway. The woman was obviously tortured brutally prior to her death and there is no identification so Farrow runs the fingerprints through the national data base to find the identity.

In chapter thirteen, Will is wakened the next morning by the phone. It is Katy. She says she wants to see Will and he agrees to meet her in a short time. In chapter fourteen, John is watching as Will leaves the apartment and knows where Will is going but does not follow. Instead he breaks into the apartment. Will goes to Livingston High School and meets Katy at the basketball courts. He is shocked at her appearance and notes that she looks so much like Julie that it is very strange. They talk in generalities for a short time with Katy apologizing for her father's reaction on the day Will was at the house and Will apologizing for going by there. Katy says that the basement is exactly as it was at the time of Julie's murder and thinks it is because her parents cannot stand to move on. She also notes that her father can barely stand to look at her because of the resemblance to Julie. Katy now tells Will that she saw Ken the day before at the cemetery near Julie's grave. She says that Ken said he was innocent and was going to prove it. Katy says that if this is true, that Ken is innocent, someone else killed Julie and that she wants to find out the identity of the real killer. They agree to work together.

In chapter fifteen, Sheriff Farrow in Nebraska is waiting for results of the autopsy and for an identity of the woman found dead on the highway. She learns that the dead woman was "wanted by the FBI," though the identity is still not revealed in this chapter. In chapter sixteen, Will and Katy part and Will goes back to his father's house. Mrs. Miller shows up with a casserole and Mr. Klein angrily tells her to leave. He says that she was horrible to Mrs. Klein after Julie's murder and Will points out that she had just lost a daughter. Mr. Klein says that Mrs. Miller should have made some overture to Mrs. Klein prior to her death and that offering a casserole now is too little, too late.

In chapter seventeen, Agent Claudia Fisher learns that Sheila Rogers has been found dead and that she was tortured before being killed. She and Pistillo discuss Will's



possible involvement. She suggests that Will might have needed to silence Sheila for "whatever happened in Albuquerque" but she and Pistillo agree that the theory is weak, at best. They do, however, believe that Will knows something that he has not told them and that they will question him again. Pistillo says that he will call Squares and ask Will to come in voluntarily.

In chapter eighteen, Will arrives home and finds that his apartment door is open and that there is music playing. He is worried but knows that his mind has been somewhat scattered, which could explain the music. He does not believe he would have left the door open. He goes inside and realizes the song is a favorite of Ken's and that he does not own the CD, which means the person who has broken into his apartment brought his own music. Will goes into his bedroom and is attacked by John who demands to know where Ken is. John breaks Will's nose. Will is afraid because he knows the rumors that John killed Daniel Skinner when John was only ten. John tells Will that he had better turn Ken over or that someone close to Will, perhaps Melissa or Katy, will pay the price.

In chapter nineteen, Squares tells Will that Pistillo wants to see him. Meanwhile, Edna and Neil Rogers are in the coroner's office in Nebraska. They identify the body found on the side of the highway as that of their daughter, Sheila Rogers. In chapter twenty, Pistillo notes Will's bruises and his broken nose and asks what happened to him, but Will makes a joke and refuses to divulge anything about John's visit. Pistillo questions Will about the time leading up to Nora's disappearance, though he is still referring to her as Sheila. Pistillo asks if Will knows anyone in New Mexico and points out two phone calls made to Will's apartment from a pay phone in New Mexico. Will denies knowing anything about the calls. Claudia Fisher's phone rings and she listens for a moment before nodding at Pistillo. He tells Will that they have just had confirmation from Edna and Neil Rogers and that the body found along a Nebraska highway was that of Sheila Rogers.

Chapters 11 through 20 Analysis

There is another case of misdirection as John is watching Will leave his apartment. John says that he can remember Julie Miller, that he remembers the feel of her naked body and that it was warm at first but slowly began to cool. This seems to indicate that he killed her but in fact he was only present after Ken murdered Julie.

Katy tells Will that she saw Ken at the cemetery near Julie's grave, but that will later be revealed as a lie. In fact, Katy is working with John to try to flush Ken out into the open. Katy wants to be sure that Ken is punished for murdering her sister. John's motives are more obscure at this point. It seems that he and McGuane want to make sure that Ken is killed before he can work with authorities. In fact, John wants to make sure that the little girl Ken has claimed as his own—Carley—is turned over to her rightful family. John's motives go back to the fact that Julie cared about John and is apparently the only person who ever did. This made an impact on John and he now wants to do right by Julie's child.



Chapters 21 through 28

Chapters 21 through 28 Summary

In chapter twenty-one, Pistillo gives Will only the bare facts, adding that if Will had been more forthcoming with his information, Sheila might have been saved. Will cannot help considering that "for the second time someone had murdered the woman I love." In chapter twenty-two, Katy walks in on an argument between her mother and father. Mr. Miller is angry that Mrs. Miller took a casserole to the Klein house. Katy notes that, as a rule over the years, every time there is an argument between them involving Julie's death, her parents walk away from each other and refuse to talk about it. This time is no different and she can hear her father sobbing in the room that was once Julie's bedroom but that her father has turned into an office. Katy packs a bag and prepares to leave home. Meanwhile, Will is alone in his apartment when Mrs. Rogers calls. She talks for a time about Sheila and Will listens, knowing that her words are her way of dealing with the grief. She says that she plans to fly to New York and he tells her that there is to be a memorial service at the Covenant House. She says she wants to come. That night someone rings Will's doorbell. He expects Squares or maybe John and cautiously peers out before opening the door. It is his father and Will collapses into his father's arms, clinging to him for support.

In chapter twenty-three, Morty Meyer is in Las Vegas at the gambling tables. He is winning for a time but then begins a losing streak. A man leans over to him and whispers that Morty should quit now. Morty looks at the man who has gray eyes and skin that is almost translucent. The man tells Morty that they need to talk about someone who recently used Morty's medical knowledge to help a woman. The man asks if Morty saw anyone else in the car.

In chapter twenty-four, the memorial service draws a crowd of kids who had come to love the woman they believe to be Sheila Rogers. Mrs. Rogers is present and believes, as does Will and everyone else, that they are talking about her daughter. Mrs. Rogers asks to talk to Will alone following the service and learns that the woman she still believes to be her daughter was a volunteer at the Covenant House. Mrs. Rogers is nasty to Will, saying that obviously Sheila was "sleeping with the boss." She then tells him that Sheila had a daughter, a child named Carley, and that she wants to find that child now.

In chapter twenty-five, Will arrives home to find Katy at his door, waiting for him. He tells her briefly about the situation, still believing that his girlfriend is dead. Katy says that she has been doing some research and that she found out that Julie had dropped out of college shortly before her death. The doorbell rings and Katy answers to find a delivery man with a fruit basket from the kids at Covenant House. There is a note and it is then that Katy sees the name Sheila Rogers. She is obviously startled but refuses to answer Will's questions about her reaction and leaves. Will tells Squares that he wants to



continue his quest into Sheila's past in an effort to find Carley though they both know it might lead to something Will would rather not know.

In chapter twenty-six, Pistillo and Claudia Fisher arrive at McGuane's office. The meeting is brief but Pistillo's confidence that McGuane is about to face charges shakes McGuane's confidence slightly. After they leave, John called McGuane, saying that he is back from Las Vegas and that there was a little girl in the car with Ken and Sheila.

In chapter twenty-seven, Katy leaves Will's house and he is picked up a short time later by Squares who takes Will to meet Roscoe. Roscoe sends them to Goldberg Pharmacy. There Sadie and Abe Goldberg take Will and Squares to a basement workshop where Abe makes false identities for people who want to hide. He says that it is easy the way he does it. He "buys" the identity of a street person and says that the crack addict who is living in an alley has no need for his social security number, is not going to apply for credit and that the identity will never be reported stolen. Abe says that Will's girlfriend, identified by a photo Will had given Roscoe, had been there to buy a new identity just a few days earlier and that they had given her the name Donna White. The Goldbergs say they keep their clients' information secret and would never have told Will about Donna except that they fear she might have been killed because of the fake identification they had provided. They say they want to help Will find the little girl.

In chapter twenty-eight, Katy arrives back at her house and is shaking from the shock of seeing the name Sheila Rogers. She makes her way to the basement where Julie's possessions are packed up in a truck and begins going through them. She is interrupted once by her mother but when Katy says that she has a right to want to know more about Julie, her mother understands and leaves her alone. It takes her an hour to find what she is looking for.

Chapters 21 through 28 Analysis

Will seems to really stagger under the blow when he learns that Sheila Rogers is dead. The reader must remember that he believes this to be his girlfriend, the woman he lives with. He does not yet know that the woman who is dead is the real Sheila Rogers and that his girlfriend Nora Spring has only been using the identity of Sheila Rogers as a cover.

The man who confronts Morty at the gaming table is obviously John. John specifically asks if there was anyone else in the car. It is evident that John wants to know that Ken and Sheila had Carley with them and it seems certain that Morty had seen the little girl with them. This is another instance where the author builds suspense in that it seems there is some sinister plot to capture the child. Her role up to this point has been very vague but in actuality, John knows who the girl's biological parents are and wants to ensure that she gets back to them.

The truth about McGuane, Ken and John is about to come out by the time Pistillo visits McGuane's office in chapter twenty-six. Here, the reader learns that McGuane has killed



many people and has ordered a number of deaths. As kids, Ken, McGuane and John ran around together, though they were very different on the outside. John grew up in an abusive home and is sent to juvenile detention and held in foster care for awhile. Ken is a tennis star with all-round good looks and has a great many friends. McGuane is a class officer and is admired for his drive. However, McGuane says that the three of them were all violent youngsters, filled with rage. He compares them to the school shooters and says that if the three of them had grown up in a different time period, they might very well have been on the news for a killing spree at a school. It is also here that another twist in the plot begins to be seen. Ken, John and McGuane had worked together after school. McGuane, quickly rising to star status among the drug dealers, was running a large organization. Ken was selling drugs and setting up pushers for McGuane and John was handling the killing that has to be done to keep the business intact. It was in this time period that Ken set up Julie as a pusher and he soon had her hooked on the drugs as well. It will be eventually revealed that Ken's idea was simple—there are plenty of pushers fighting for a position on a street corner but a pusher in a high-end rich kids' college can make a fortune with no competition. When Ken is caught, he is supposed to turn state's evidence against McGuane and the organization. This is why McGuane wants Ken dead and the reader continues to be led to believe that John wants Ken dead for the same reason.



Chapters 29 through 36

Chapters 29 through 36 Summary

In chapter twenty-nine, Will goes home and begins surfing the Web in search of information about the two men who were found dead in Albuquerque. He finds a brief story by a woman named Yvonne Sterno, a reporter for the Star-Beacon, with the information that the house where the two men were found belonged to Owen Enfield and that there was little information at that time. Will continues the search but finds nothing else. Will finds that Yvonne is not at work and looks up her home phone number. He finds her at home and she says that she was "shut down" on reporting the story. She says there were federal officers on the scene by the following morning and she was not allowed to do any follow-up investigating. She is reluctant to say more but Will convinces her by saying that he has some information. Without saying a great deal, he tells her that he knows police found a woman's fingerprints at the scene and that the woman's body has been found. He gives her the name Sheila Rogers and she says that there was a pre-teen girl living at the house. Will believes the girl to be Carley.

In chapter thirty, Will is napping when the phone rings. It is Lieutenant Tim Daniels from the police department that covers the neighborhood where Will grew up. Tim says that Katy Miller is with him and that she is drunk. Tim says he will not lock her up if Will will come get her. Will agrees.

In chapter thirty-one, Squares goes home and Wanda demands to know if he wants her to end the pregnancy. She reminds him that she had thought she could never conceive and that there is no guarantee she will be able to carry the child to term. Squares says that, for the sake of her health, they should consider ending the pregnancy and then walks out without giving her a chance to talk any more. Will arrives at Livingston Police Department and picks up Katy. She tells him that she recognized the name Sheila Rogers and that she went through Julie's things and found that the two girls went to the same college and were roommates for a time. In chapter thirty-two, Squares arrives at Will's apartment and he and Will discuss that the fact that Julie and Sheila Rogers were roommates could be a matter of coincidence though neither think it is likely. Yvonne calls Will and says that she has followed Owen Enfield back to a dummy corporation called Cripco. She believes the situation involves the witness relocation program. Yvonne says neighbors say they saw Owen Enfield at a local convenience store on the afternoon of the murders and she believes his face might be on the security camera there, but says she cannot get access. Squares happens to know someone who might help them get that access.

In chapter thirty-three, Katy and Will drive to Haverton College in search of information about Julie and Sheila. They find Rose Baker, the former house mother for the Chi Gamma sorority the girls had belonged to. She reveals that there was another member of the sorority murdered several months before Julie, a girl named Laura Emerson. She also says the police know about this. In chapter thirty-four, Will heads to Pistillo's office



to demand answers. Pistillo does not concede anything but tells Will that both he and Katy are in danger and that they have to stay out of the investigation. In chapter thirty-five, Katy says that she had not known Will was outside the Miller house on the night of the murder. Will tries to reassure her that he did not kill Julie. She asks how that came to be and Will says that Ken had asked him that night if he was over Julie and he had said he was. Will says that Katy cannot possibly understand that he felt he owed Ken a great deal for standing up for him all during their childhood but Katy says she does.

In chapter thirty-six, Katy sleeps on the couch at Will's house. Will is quickly sound asleep but wakes in the middle of the night to an attack. There is someone on top of him and he is quickly handcuffed to the bed. He has trouble orienting himself as he tries to come awake but he suddenly realizes that the attacker has left the bedroom and returned to the living room where Katy is. He hears her scream the name "John" but, handcuffed as he is, is powerless to stop the attack. He finally recalls a yoga move shown to him by Squares and flips himself up and over the head of the bed so that he is standing behind the bed. He is still handcuffed but he uses his weight to ram the bed into the wall several times until it breaks. He rushes to the living room and tackles the attacker. He recalls that Squares gave him a gun and that Will had put it in the living room. He grabs the gun and fires wildly and the man stops for a second. Will fires again, taking better aim, and continues to fire as the man runs from the room. When Will looks at Katy, she is not moving.

Chapters 29 through 36 Analysis

As Will is arguing with Pistillo about the investigation into Julie's murder, Pistillo brings up a question about the investigation. He says that Will had, at the time, reported another man outside Julie's house. He asks why Will was outside Julie's house if he and Julie had really broken up and were no longer together. He suggests that Will had seen Ken and Julie together, flown into a jealous rage and killed Julie, then injured or killed Ken. What Pistillo does not bring up are the allegations that Katy made at the time, that she had actually been in the basement when Julie was murdered and had seen it. Katy was six at the time of Julie's murder and the prosecution dismissed her statements, saying that she did not know the difference between the throes of passion of a couple making love and the pain of being strangled to death. Will then spends time trying to reassure Katy that he did not kill Julie when Julie knows all along that Ken did it.

Chapter thirty-six shows another example of the misdirection used to frequently by this author. In this chapter, Katy is attacked. While she is being attacked, she screams out "John" and Will takes this to mean that John is the attacker. In actuality, Katy has been working with John in an effort to find Ken and she is calling to John to save her. This misdirection adds a level of suspense, not only in this chapter but in a following chapter.

There is not a great deal of attention focused on the reason Will is handcuffed to the bed prior to Katy's attack but it is reasonable to assume that the attacker wants to be certain that Will is unable to interfere with the attack. It is only later presented as likely

that Ken is the attacker and that he handcuffed Will in an effort to ensure that he did not try to save Katy and end up getting hurt.



Chapters 37 through 43

Chapters 37 through 43 Summary

In chapter thirty-seven, Will is being questioned in the hospital. Though he is injured and has a dislocated shoulder from his flip over the head of the bed, Pistillo arrives and says that he is going to hold Will for attacking Katy. Will says that it is an attempt to frame him; Pistillo says that he will make sure Will remains in jail for Katy's attack and that if he has to, he will create evidence to frame Will himself. He then says that Will is welcome to share this information with an attorney but that Pistillo will just deny it. As Pistillo is about to leave the room, Will asks what he is "really after." Pistillo says that Will should ask Ken.

In chapter thirty-eight, Will is held overnight in the jail at Midtown South. He says that even with the vomit and urine from the drunks being held there, the smell was a step up from the "flight attendant cologne" he had been subjected to in the hospital. Will calls Squares who says that he has access to the security tapes from the convenience store where Owen Enfield was reportedly seen by neighbors. Squares says he will get Will an attorney and the next morning Will is in court with Hester Crimstein, a high-profile attorney. The district attorney requests that Will be held without bail, saying that he is a flight risk because his brother has been a fugitive for years. Crimstein says that comparison is like saying someone who has a sibling with permed hair will also get a perm. The judge agrees and releases Will on thirty thousand dollars bail.

In chapter thirty-nine, Will knows that Katy's father will not allow him to see her and that there is an armed guard at her door so he settles for sending her flowers. Squares takes Will to the offices of Ian and Noah Muller who own the convenience store where Owen Enfield was reportedly seen and the tape is waiting for them at the Mullers' offices. They arrive and the Muller brothers say that the tape is cued to near the time Owen was reportedly in the store. Will sees a man with a crew cut enter and when he turns toward the camera, Will sees that that Owen is really Ken Klein.

In chapter forty, attorney Joshua Ford and his assistant Raymond Cromwell arrive at McGuane's office. He has Ford come in while Cromwell is left in the waiting room. McGuane asks, "Where is he?" and Ford says he does not know who McGuane is talking about. Without warning, John attacks and brutally beats the attorney who continues to refuse to talk. John says that they know Ken was in Las Vegas where he sought out medical help for Sheila Rogers, and that there was a significant out-of-state phone call on a nearby pay phone to Ford. McGuane then calls Cromwell in and John kills him in front of Ford when Ford continues to refuse to divulge Ken's whereabouts.

In chapter forty-one, Will is struggling to figure out what the information all means. He recounts that his brother was living in New Mexico under an assumed name and that Sheila Rogers' fingerprints were in the house where he lived. He finds his aunt and uncle at the house and they say Mr. Klein has gone for a walk. Will knows where to find



him and catches up with him at the Little League field. Will says that he knows that Ken is really alive. Mr. Klein says that Ken was not "all good," and says that he was in some kind of trouble when he had come home just before Julie's murder. Mr. Klein says that Ken was "mixed up" with McGuane and when Will asks if John was also involved, Mr. Klein visibly stiffens. As the two men walk from the field, they encounter John. John tells Will that he had had one visitor during his time in a "hospital." When Will asks John if he killed Julie, John says that Will is to blame because Will was supposed to protect her.

In chapter forty-two, Mr. Klein refuses to talk to Will about the encounter. Will gives up and returns to the city but goes to Tanya's apartment rather than going home. He knows that she attended the memorial service at the Covenant House and hopes she can offer some insight into Sheila's life. It is Tanya who says that Ken had been the "big time gangster" who had hired the expensive lawyer to defend Sheila, and that he had set Sheila up to deal drugs at the college.

In chapter forty-three, Will arrives home to find there are two messages, one from Edna Rogers telling him when the funeral is to be held and the second from Yvonne Sterno. Yvonne says that she believes that Owen Enfield is a high-level criminal being held in the witness relocation program. She then tells Will that it is his turn to give her some information and he is debating whether to tell her that Owen is really Ken when the line goes dead and the police are knocking on his door. Claudia Fisher enters and almost cuffs him, but offers to let him go peacefully. He agrees.

Chapters 37 through 43 Analysis

John was "hospitalized" once as a child for stabbing Daniel Skinner to death, though it was actually Ken who killed the boy. However, to understand the suspense of the book, remember that the author has not yet revealed this important detail. The interesting thing is that John knows that Mr. Klein paid his father to have John take the fall for it. This explains Mr. Klein's reaction when they encounter John on the path near the ball field. He fears that John is going to tell.

Tanya seems to be seeking revenge for Louis Castman and all he did to her but her real story is that she is doing penance for her own wrongs. She tells Will that Louis had put himself in a position to talk to girls who arrived in the city from their country homes, usually running away or looking for fame and fortune. Will already knew this and that Louis had said that he reached a lot of these girls with promises of photos and help making a big break into modeling or acting. However, Tanya now says that the real reason Louis was so successful at this was because he had her—a woman—along, which helped him appear more trustworthy.



Chapters 44 through 52

Chapters 44 through 52 Summary

In chapter forty-four, Will is taken to a residence and learns that it is Pistillo's sister's house. Pistillo says that his sister is a widow, that her husband was an officer, and that Ken was there when he was executed. Pistillo then says that Ken and John were working for McGuane and that Ken had been caught. He had agreed to turn specific information over to the police in return for a deal and that Julie, who was also involved in the illegal activities, was helping him. Pistillo says that the theory is that John found out and tried to kill both Ken and Julie to keep them quiet. Will is furious, saying that Pistillo has known all these years that Ken was not guilty but that he put the families through hell by keeping up the ruse that Ken was a suspect. Pistillo says that having Ken as a wanted man means someone will turn him in wherever he is and that having Ken in custody again will give them what they need to arrest McGuane. Pistillo says that an agent who was vacationing in Stockholm saw Ken and brought him back to the United States.

In chapter forty-five, John and McGuane are in McGuane's office. Cromwell's body is gone but Ford is still on the floor, barely alive but conscious. John says they will use Katy to get to Will.

Chapter forty-six reverts back to the scene with Will and Pistillo. Pistillo says that McGuane had sent two men to kill Ken but that they had been killed. He also says that there were two phone calls made to Will's apartment from a pay phone in the area where Ken was staying in New Mexico. Pistillo says that both calls went on for several minutes and Will realizes that Nora must have answered. Pistillo says that charges against Will have been dropped and he pretends to agree to help them find Ken. Pistillo says that they are no longer interested in Ken as a suspect in Julie's death but that they need him as a witness against McGuane.

In chapter forty-seven, Squares says he got a girl pregnant before, that they had a child who was three years old when his mother crashed their car, killing them both. He says that he made bad decisions regarding that child and is not ready for the responsibility of another. Will can think of nothing to say that will change how Squares feels, but he says, "You're wrong."

In chapter forty-eight, Will and Squares board a plane for Boise, Idaho, where the funeral for Sheila Rogers is to be held. At this point, both Squares and Will believe that they are attending the funeral of the woman Will lived with. Mr. Rogers is tall and handsome and hugs Will. Mrs. Rogers holds onto Will's arm and seems happy to see him. They make their way to the casket and Will dreads looking inside but makes himself. He says that there are always comments about how good a corpse looks and that people are always saying that the corpse does not even look dead. He says that in



Sheila Rogers' case, there is no doubt that she is dead. However, what is now obvious is that the woman he was living with was not Sheila Rogers.

In chapter forty-nine, Squares and Will cannot figure out a way to gracefully leave the service so they remain for the rest but decline the invitation to go back to the Rogers' home. Will says that, looking back on what he knew of the woman he loved and believed to be Sheila Rogers, she had adamantly refused to call home because the Rogers were not her parents. He says that he had always thought her reluctance was because of an abusive past. They come to realize that the fingerprints found in New Mexico did not belong to the woman Will was living with, though they do not yet know her name is Nora.

In chapter fifty, Squares goes home and promises to start working to find Donna White, the alias being used by Nora. Katy stops at Will's apartment and says she is alright. She denies remembering that she yelled out "John" during the attack and claims not to know who attacked her. Will, remembering Pistillo's warning about the danger, tells Katy to stay out of it and she leaves angry. She walks out and is soon panicked, fearing another attack. Then John steps out of an alley and grabs her arm.

In chapter fifty-one, Squares says he has found "our Sheila," referring to Nora Spring. She had used an ATM card and the detectives hired by Squares had simply called all the hotels in the area, asking for Donna White, until someone said they would connect the caller to her room. Squares says that she is at the Regina Hotel and Will goes there. He asks for her room number but the receptionist refuses to give him that information so he sits down to wait for her. She comes in and he tries to catch up with her but she is in the elevator before he can get there. He tries to follow but loses her and goes back out to the street. A few minutes later she comes out to him and they stand, holding onto each other.

In chapter fifty-two, she reveals that her real name is Nora Spring. She says that she had heard about the real Sheila Rogers' murder and had wanted to tell Will the truth but that Ken had told her that the truth might get Will killed, so she had remained silent. She believes that he will be angry but he says that he almost lost her once and that they will get past anything in order to be together. She then tells him that she had been in an abusive marriage and her husband, a cop, had finally gone too far. She had fled to Stockholm where she met another young American woman, Sheila Rogers. Nora and Sheila had become friends and she had met Ken. She says that Ken talked constantly about Will so that when Nora finally left Stockholm, she had decided to find Will just to see if all the things Ken said were true. She says she had fallen in love with him immediately though admitted that she might have already loved him just from Ken's words. When Nora was leaving Stockholm, she and Sheila Rogers had traded identities in order to "add a layer" to their ability to evade the people who were searching for them. Nora says that while Will's mother was nearing death, she had talked about Ken and Nora had revealed that Ken was alive, and had provided Mrs. Klein with the photo. She says that "it all started to go wrong" when Ken called saying that Sheila had been attacked and tortured. She says that Ken had said she would put both Carley and Will in added danger by telling Will the entire story, so she had run away instead. While they



are talking, Will's cell phone rings. It is Katy's number but John is on the other end and tells Will that he will kill Katy unless he agrees to come where Katy is being held. John agrees to meet a short distance from where he is with Nora.

Chapters 44 through 52 Analysis

There is a long and interesting conversation between McGuane and John while Cromwell is dying on the floor of the office. John seems philosophic and asks McGuane what it is that sets them apart, makes them willing to kill. He points out that even with the two of them, both ruthless, McGuane does what he believes to be necessary but John enjoys killing. It is here that McGuane says that he does not believe John is back in the area just because he is looking for Ken. McGuane correctly guesses that John is back because of Carley. John does not disagree but says that they have still got to find Ken. He says that it seems they will have to have Will's help. They agree that they will use Katy to get to Will. This is another case of misdirection and the reader is led to believe that Katy is actually in danger. In fact, Katy has been working with John all along in her effort to find Ken. It is not clear what her intentions are but she later reveals that she and her family had known that Ken was likely to receive a very lenient deal in return for his testimony and that they had not been willing to allow him to escape punishment for Julie's death.

Chapter fifty ends with John stepping out of the alley and grabbing Katy. The reader is to assume that he is following up on his attack but in actuality, he and Katy are now working together to try to locate Ken.



Chapters 53 through Epilogue

Chapters 53 through Epilogue Summary

In chapter fifty-three, Claudia tells Pistillo that the undercover agent, Raymond Cromwell, has failed to report in after a meeting with McGuane. Cromwell was assigned to Ken's attorney, Joshua Ford, both had gone to McGuane's office and now both are missing. Will is blindfolded and taken by car to a wooded area where Katy is being held. John is there and tells Will that Ken contacts his attorney by instant messenger. He says that Will is to convince Ken to come out of hiding and face John. Will knows that he, Katy and Ken will all be killed unless he takes some action. In chapter fifty-four, Pistillo arrives at McGuane's office, reveals that Cromwell was an undercover agent, and arrests McGuane. McGuane is outwardly indignant but wonders if he might have made a fatal mistake at some point in this situation.

In chapter fifty-five, Katy says that they are near the South Orange Water Reservoir and that she knows the way to the nearby road. When the time comes, John talks to Ken via instant messenger and tells him that Will and Katy will be killed unless he meets them in three hours. In chapter fifty-six, Nora updates Squares and says that she can also reach Ken by instant message on a particular message board. Meanwhile, John receives a phone call, sounds irritated and leaves Will and Katy alone with a single guard. Will and Katy slip away but the guard chases and Will turns to fight, armed with a broken bottle. He cuts the man who falls to the ground and urges Will to just go. When Will and Katy reach the edge of the woods, John is watching from a short distance away. John hesitates for a moment but then drops a package into a slot and heads back into the woods.

In chapter fifty-seven, five days pass and Will says they are an eventful five days. Pistillo has the video and is working on prosecuting McGuane. Will and Ken have kept in touch through instant messages and have arranged a reunion at Camp Millstone where Ken and Will had attended summer camp as youngsters. Since then, Squares has purchased the property and the place is secluded and perfect for a reunion. Ken, Melissa, Will and Mr. Klein plan to spend an evening together with Nora and others joining them the following day. The reunion is joyful and then the four go outside for a walk in the evening. Ken tells Will that it is his fault that Julie got hooked on drugs. Ken says that Julie was to help him smuggle out the information needed to make good on Ken's deal with Pistillo but that John had caught them in the basement, killed Julie and shot Ken in the shoulder. He says he picked up Sheila and their infant daughter, Carley, and that being a family of three had made it easier to hide because everyone was looking for a single man on the run.

Then Ken mentions where he was on the afternoon of their mother's funeral and Will questions it, saying that Katy had said she saw Ken near Julie's grave that afternoon. As he says it, Katy steps out of the woods and says that she had lied about that in order to gain Will's help. Katy counters Ken's story, saying that he had strangled Julie in an effort



to frame John for it. Katy says that it was John who had told her that Ken had been captured and that he was going to be given a deal which would mean he would not be punished for Julie's murder. Katy says she could not let that happen. Katy then says that what really happened in the basement was that Ken and Julie had worked together to get information on McGuane but that Ken had then decided that he was going to frame John for killing Laura Emerson, the sorority sister who had found out about the drug sales and threatened to tell. Julie balked at that and Ken had killed her.

Just at this point, Katy points a gun at Ken and fires but Mr. Klein steps in front of the bullet and is shot in the leg. There is a scuffle and Ken winds up with a gun to Will's forehead, but he finds he cannot pull the trigger and begins to cry. Melissa has called for help on her phone and the police arrive, pulling Ken off Will and taking him away.

Four days later, Carley is due to arrive at the airport any moment. She is going to live with Will and Nora. Squares has decided that he is going to support Wanda and their child and jokes that both he and Will are about to become fathers. As Will and Nora are at the airport, John catches Will's eye. Will, knowing that he cannot run from John forever, goes to him and John provides copies of both Sheila's and Julie's autopsy reports, pointing out that the autopsy had revealed that Sheila had not given birth but Julie had. He says that Julie had worried about Will's reaction to a child and that is why she had not told him. He tells Will to remember that the Millers are Carley's grandparents and to make sure that she has contact with them as well. He then slips a piece of paper into Will's pocket and disappears into the crowd as Will meets his daughter for the first time.

In the epilogue, Will remembers the paper in his pocket and opens it. It is a newspaper clipping about the death of an off-duty cop, Cray Spring, who had been the apparent victim of a mugging.

Chapters 53 through Epilogue Analysis

The package John drops "through a slot" is actually a video tape. McGuane has a large number of security features in his office. Among these is a series of cameras and a particular shade of green in the halls. This green is the same as is used in movie production and through some simple video manipulation, McGuane can show anyone who comes into the building as they are leaving, even if they never actually left. In this way, he is been able to avoid prosecution for any number of murders committed right in his offices. He kills the people, manipulates the video and produces the video as "proof" that the people left his building alive. John has a real copy of the video feed that will prove McGuane's guilt in the murders of Cromwell and Ford. It is this video that he has mailed to Pistillo.

The meaning of the epilogue is left to the reader but it seems evident that John is wrapping up the only loose end he can see and that he has murdered Cray Spring.



Characters

Will Klein

Brother of accused murderer Ken Klein, Will has lived most of his life with the stigma of that association. He works as a director of a youth shelter called Covenant House and lives with his girlfriend, Nora Springs, though he does not know her real name until near the end of the story. Will is a kind person who throws himself into his work with youthful runaways. He notes that the children are basically unlovable and unloving, and that the only option is to show consistent caring in the hope that some will come to trust. Toward that end, he sometimes spends his nights on the streets with a friend, handing out sandwiches, blankets and phone cards, and listening to the stories of any who are willing to talk. Though Will continues to believe in Ken's innocence, he does come to a point when he refuses to talk about it. He blames his mother's failing health and her death on Ken's situation, though he puts most of the blame for that on the police who pursued him so relentlessly for Ken's decision to run away. Will is basically a trusting person as is seen when he learns that his girlfriend, Nora, is not who she says she is. When he does catch up to her, he knows that he still loves her no matter what has happened and that he still wants to marry her.

Nora Spring

Nora is an adult running away from an abusive marriage to a cop when she comes to realize that leaving the country is the only option for her. She moves to Stockholm and it is there that she meets Sheila Rogers. The two Americans in a foreign country eventually become friends and Nora helps raise Carley who is being passed off as Sheila's daughter. It is also in Stockholm that Nora meets Will's brother Ken. Ken talks in such glowing terms about Will that Nora decides to find him upon her return to the United States. When she makes the decision to leave Stockholm, she and Sheila trade identities in order to help both of them hide from those who might be looking for them. When Sheila is killed, Ken tells Nora that she—living with Sheila's identity—will be sought by both the killers looking for Ken and the police. Nora volunteers at Covenant House and falls in love with Will. It is Nora who tells Will's mother that Ken is alive though Will's mother is very near death and does not live for the reunion or the fallout from that event. Nora is a kind woman and genuinely loves Will.

Ken Klein

Brother of Will Klein, he is a fugitive running from a murder charge for most of his adult life. Will remembers Ken's teen years as filled with tennis and that Ken always stood up for Will whenever there was trouble. In truth, Ken was a psychopath who murdered a young girl and kidnapped his niece in order to better hide from police.



Julie Miller

Childhood sweetheart of Will Klein, she becomes hooked on drugs provided by Will's brother Ken. Julie gives birth to a daughter fathered by Will, Carley, who is later taken by Ken. Julie is murdered by Ken, creating a rift between their two families. Julie is supposed to turn documents over to Ken and when she refuses, he kills her.

Katy Miller

Julie's younger sister, Katy is very much like Julie in appearance. Katy tells Will that she needs closure and seeks to find answers about Julie's murder though she is actually trying to locate Ken, whom she knows to be guilty. Katy actually witnesses the murder though she is only six and the authorities effectively cover up her testimony.

Sheila Rogers

A woman who is hired by Ken Klein to peddle drugs on an exclusive college campus, she quickly gets Julie Miller hooked on the drugs. Sheila eventually runs away and is living in Stockholm when she meets Nora Spring. The two women trade identities in an effort to keep those searching for them off the track. She lives with Ken, pretends that Carley is her biological daughter and dies after being brutally tortured.

Mr. Klein

Mother of Ken, Will and Melissa, he is a devoted father. Will notes that his father is willing to do everything for his family but it is almost as if he turns off all caring when it comes to people outside the family. He is overly devoted to Ken and Will eventually learns that Mr. Klein bought Ken's way out of a brutal stabbing that resulted in a boy's death when Ken was just a child.

John Asselta

Known as "The Ghost" because of his light coloring but also because of his ability to vanish into crowds, he is a childhood friend of Ken Klein. John is looking for Ken and Will believes it is to get revenge for Ken's decision to turn state's evidence against John but it is actually because John wants to right a wrong against the only person who ever really cared for him—Julie Miller. It is John who turns in information to convict Philip McGuane and who kills Nora's brutally abusive husband. It is also John who tells Will the truth about his relationship with Carley. John is a psychopath and is convicted as a child killer though it was actually Ken who committed the crime.



Squares

Nicknamed Squares because of an odd tattoo on his forehead, he works with Will at the Covenant House and teaches yoga. He is the owner of an exclusive yoga club known as Yoga Squared. He was a white supremacist in his youth but is now living with a black woman and works hard at trying to help get children off the streets. He is very wealthy and well-connected and helps Will a great deal as Will is searching for Nora and Ken.

Philip McGuane

A childhood friend of Ken and John, Philip is the head of a crime organization. He is ruthless and organized to the point that he has an elaborate network of security surrounding him. He kills in his offices on a regular basis and manipulates video to provide proof that the dead men left his office alive. District Attorney Joseph Pistillo is determined to bring him to justice.



Objects/Places

New Jersey

Where the Kleins live and where Will grows up.

Burnett Hill Elementary School

Where Ken and Will attend grade school.

97 Coddington Terrace

Where Julie is murdered and where her parents live.

Covenant House

Where Will Klein works as a director and where he meets Nora Spring.

New York City

Where Will and Nora live.

Camp Millstone

Where Ken and Will go to camp as children and where they hold their reunion with Ken upon his return.

The Regina Hotel

Where Nora is staying when Will finally finds her.

South Orange Water Reservoir

Where Will and Katy are apparently held by the Ghost.

Stockholm

Where Nora and Sheila met and where Ken is captured for return to the United States.



Yoga Squared

The name of the yoga institution founded by Squares, Will's best friend.

Las Vegas, Nevada

Where Morty Meyers lives and where he is when he treats Sheila Rogers for her injuries.

Goldberg Pharmacy

Where Abe and Sadie Goldberg create fake identities for people looking to hide.

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Where Sheila Rogers and Ken Klein live after their return to the United States and where Sheila is tortured.



Themes

Rage

Rage is an emotion seen in several characters throughout the book though it seems most prevalent in the lives of McGuane, John and Ken. McGuane talks about a school shooting and says that there are all kinds of explanations offered about the boys' home lives, that they were bullied, that they were abused or that they played too many video games. McGuane says that there is no reason—some people are simply filled with rage. Melissa recalls that in Ken, though she says that Will only remembers the hero Ken was in Will's eyes. John is a study in rage. While John is framed for several murders, including the death of young Daniel Skinner and the attack on Julie, he is actually guilty of many more than that. John's rage is well-controlled, as seen in his brutal murder of Raymond Cromwell and Joshua Ford. John has apparently been away from the area for some time and his return is prompted by rage at an injustice done to Julie Miller's child, Carley. John's attempts to find Ken are less because he wants revenge for what Ken did and more because he wants to find Carley and ensure that she is returned to her rightful family. This is another instance where John's rage is well controlled and aimed at a particular goal. Finally, Tanya is an interesting character exhibiting this theme. She is living in a closed environment with the man who brutally disfigured her, Louis Castman. Will believes it is her rage against Castman that keeps her there but she says that it is actually rage against herself for having committed the crimes of helping Louis put young women into prostitution.

Parental Devotion

Mr. and Mrs. Klein and Mr. and Mrs. Miller are the main characters that exhibit the theme of parental devotion. Will notes that his father is fully willing to do anything at all for his children though he does not really care for anyone outside the immediate family. This is seen when Will learns of Sheila Rogers' death and believes that Nora is dead. While Will is suffering alone, his father arrives. Will says that he would have collapsed on the floor but his father holds him up. Mr. Klein's devotion goes too far in the case of Ken's childhood murder of a thirteen-year-old bully named Daniel Skinner. Ken had stabbed the boy to death and Mr. Klein, apparently learning of the murder, convinces John Asselta's father to arrange for John to take the blame. John says that Mr. Klein even convinced himself that having removed John from his abusive home was a good thing, regardless of whether it was right.

Katy talks about her parents and their inability to deal with Julie's death, even years afterward. She says that her parents have never changed the basement where Julie was murdered and that they refuse to talk to Katy either about the murder or about their feelings. In the case of the Millers, it seems that they believe that moving on with their lives would be a lack of devotion to their daughter's memory.



Love

Will is in love with a woman whom he believes to be named Sheila Rogers. He believes her to be a runaway from an abusive home in Idaho and that she does not like to talk about her past because of the abuse. When he thinks she is dead, he is devastated. When he learns that she is not dead, he sets out to find her. It is not that difficult to locate her and they come together like the lovers they are. Will holds tight to Nora and she seems unable to believe that he can forgive her lies. He is so happy to have her back that he pledges that nothing will come between them again, and that he will never let her go. She tells her real story then and he renews his vow to love her forever.

This theme is seen in several other characters as well. In the case of Ken, the love is all but hidden but when he is given the chance to kill Will, he cannot bring himself to do so. It is obvious that he loves his brother though he knows that his actions have hurt Will horribly over the years. Naturally, parental love is also seen throughout the story. Mr. and Mrs. Miller are devastated by the loss of their daughter Julie. Mr. and Mrs. Klein also love their children and Will notes that in the case of Mr. Klein, that love is all-consuming. That love goes so deep that Mr. Klein pays to have someone else pay the price for Ken's murder of Daniel Skinner.



Style

Point of View

The story is presented in a combination of first person and third person and moves from a limited perspective to an omniscient perspective. The twists of the plot make this an option available to the author and it is used without a great deal of confusion. The book opens in first person from Will Klein's perspective. When the action moves away from Will's immediate view, the story switches to third person and an omniscient perspective. This is necessary because it is the only way for the reader to learn what is going on in other situations related to the plot of the story. For example, the reader is watching the story unfold from Will's perspective but then Claudia Fisher reports to Pistillo that the undercover agent, Raymond Cromwell, has failed to check in and has apparently disappeared. Without this switch in perspective, the reader would not know that Pistillo is closing in on McGuane's operation. The author could conceivably have presented the entire story in third person from an omniscient perspective but this would have eliminated the use of first person to build suspense. For example, John discovers that his apartment door is open but does not want to call the police for fear of looking stupid. As he steps inside, he hears music and knows that it is not a CD he owns. The implication is that it might be Ken, only because of Will's perceptions and reactions.

Setting

The overall setting is real, though the specifics probably exist only in the imagination of the author. For example, Julie and her family lived in New Jersey at the time of her death. The overall setting of New Jersey does exist but it is likely that the specific address—97 Coddington Terrace—does not. The same is probably true of Will's address where he lives with his girlfriend and of where he works. New York City is real and there are apartments such as the one where Will lives, but the specific apartment at the specific address probably does not. There is, however, an organization called Covenant House aimed at helping young runaways find shelter and direction. There are some other settings that are real, including Las Vegas, Nevada, where Morty Meyer lives and uses his medical background to treat those who cannot go to the hospital. Ken and Sheila Rogers meet Nora Spring in Stockholm, and Ken and Sheila go to Albuquerque, New Mexico, when they return to the United States. The fact that these settings are real lend an air of credence to the story that might not otherwise exist. The places are also large cities where anonymity is possible. The story is set in contemporary times, as is evidenced by the use of cellular telephones and instant messages. The story is copyrighted in 2002 and it seems likely that the story is set in that time period.



Language and Meaning

The story is written in a straight-forward manner that is engaging and easy to understand. This is contradicted by the convoluted plot that contains a great many twists and deliberate misdirections. The purpose of misdirection is to provide suspense and the author does this very well. There are few words that would be unfamiliar to most readers. The biggest challenge of the story is tracking the clues and figuring out what is real and what is another misdirection imposed by the author. For example, there is a scene in which John recalls Julie's body, warm at first and then growing cold in his hands. The purpose is to make the reader think that John is the murderer but he was actually only there and knows that Ken was the killer. The story flows easily and the author does not get caught up in cumbersome descriptions. The story is divided appropriately between dialogue and narrative. Both are informal and believable.

Structure

The story is divided into fifty-eight chapters and an epilogue. The chapters vary in length though many of them range between four and six pages. Chapter eighteen, however, is ten pages in length while chapter ten is only two pages. The chapters roughly cover a single event or scene. For example, chapter ten covers the final moments of Sheila Rogers' life and her fear at having "him" in the room with her as she is dying. Chapter thirty-seven covers Will's return to the city after learning that a third sorority sister had also been murdered and his conversation with Pistillo on the subject. Chapter thirty-nine describes Will and Squares watching the video tape and their discovery that Owen is really Ken. There are some exceptions. For example, chapter fifty-three begins with Claudia Fisher's announcement that the agent named Raymond Cromwell has not checked in and that both he and Joshua Ford are missing. This takes up only a couple of paragraphs at the beginning of the chapter, then the action moves to Will who is being taken to where John is holding Katy. The epilogue is very brief and contains only the fact that Will remembers to look at the paper John has slipped into his pocket. The paper is a newspaper clipping and it contains a very brief story outlining the death of Nora's abusive husband, reportedly at the hands of a mugger.



Quotes

"It was an awful cliché to say that a part of her died when they found Julie Miller's body, but the thing about clichés is that they're often dead-on. My mother's crackle quieted, smothered." Chapter 1, p. 11.

"I like to think of us as neutral. Switzerland for the runaways." Chapter 4, p. 24.

"We tiptoe around upstairs, you know, like we're living on ice and we're afraid the floor is going to crack and we're all going to fall down into that basement." Chapter 14, p. 115.

"I never really understood why my parents had not moved either. I mentioned before the link between comfort and self-inflicted pain, the desire to hold on because suffering was preferable to forgetting." Chapter 14, p. 116.

"So this is the part where you tell me I can step away at any time? Right, and then this is the part where you say you'll stick with me to the end. Cue the violins. Squares said." Chapter 25, p. 179.

"It may have been them—Ken, John and McGuane—because the truth is, it does not matter if you are financially comfortable or loved by your parents or if you keep to yourself or fight to stay afloat in the mainstream. Some people have that rage." Chapter 26, p. 182.

"Save your breath because—and you're not going to like this—I don't care if you did it or not. I'm going to find enough evidence to convict you." Chapter 37, p. 261.

"I spent the night in the precinct holding pen at Midtown South on West 35th Street. The cell reeked of urine and vomit and that sour-vodka smell when a drunk sweats, it was still a step up from the aroma of flight-attendant cologne." Chapter 38, p. 263.

"Out here, you see guys slicing up each other's intestines for a spot on a street corner. But a fancy rich-kid school, if you could move in and control that, you could score an easy mint." Chapter 42, p. 294.

"I watched her last breath. Yet I was still tempted to check the casket that day, just to make sure, just in case maybe God had changed his mind." Chapter 48, p. 332.

"He might have been a hero to me, but my sister, Melissa, had pointed out that he was drawn to violence. I might amend that to say he craved action, the enticement of the edge, but that's just semantics." Chapter 53, p. 362.

"I had, of course, been crushed to learn the truth about my brother, and yet—and this is going to sound odd—it was somehow okay. The ugliest truth, in the end, was still better than the prettiest of lies." Chapter 58, p. 411.



Topics for Discussion

How does Will believe Julie is murdered? What really happened to her? What are the aspects of her life Will does not know about? What is his reaction when Julie breaks up with him?

Who is Sheila Rogers? Nora Spring? How do the two women come to know each other? What is their connection? Compare the personalities of the two women.

Who is John Asselta? Who is McGuane? How are they connected to Ken? To Will? What are their lives like? What are their eventual fates? How do they come to those fates? What do McGuane and John say about their willingness to be ruthless?

Describe Will Klein. What is his relationship to Ken? How are the two similar? How are they different? What attitude does Will always hold regarding Ken's guilt in Julie's murder? How is this attitude changed?

Who is Katy Miller? What is Katy's life like after the death of Julie? How does Katy come to be in contact with Will? What does she tell him to entice him to help her look into Julie's past in an effort to find Julie's killer? What is her real motive?

Who is Carley? How does she come to be a major part of the plot though she is a minor character? What is John's connection to her? What is Ken's relationship? Why does Ken raise her for the years he is on the run from the law? How does Will learn the truth?

Who is Daniel Skinner? How does he die? What is the rumor around his death? What role does Mr. Klein play in the punishment of the person guilty of the crime? How does Will learn about this?

Give an overview of the plot of the story. What are the major twists to this plot? How are they presented? Is the author's presentation effective? Support your answers.