

Hide & Seek: A Novel Study Guide

Hide & Seek: A Novel by James Patterson

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Plot Summary

Hide and Seek is a novel by popular writer James Patterson. In this novel, Maggie Bradford, a famous singer and song writer, is accused of killing her second husband, Will Shepard. This is the second time Maggie has been involved in the death of her husband and the third in which a lover has died in unverifiable circumstances. As Maggie waits for her trial to begin, she writes down her story not only to convince the world of her innocence, but to convince herself as well. Hide and Seek is a typical Patterson novel, filled with his unique style and quick pace that will leave readers, old and new alike, breathless until the final page.

Maggie and her daughter, Jennie, hide under the front porch of their home in West Point as Maggie listens to her husband, Philip, search the house for them. Maggie is injured, having suffered a beating at her husband's hands, and convinced he will kill them both should he find them. Maggie listens for hours, begging the baby in her arms to remain silent. Eventually, however, the child cries out and Philip finds them. Philip fires a shot at them, misses. Maggie pulls the gun she has hidden and fires three shots, killing Philip.

Maggie moves her daughter and herself to New York City where she has an appointment to show her songs to the famous singer Barry Kahn. Maggie believes she has blown the interview and that she should move on to other song producers. However, Barry loves Maggie's music and offers her a job. At first it is a menial job, getting coffee for the staff, but Maggie learns a great deal about music. Barry also helps Maggie hone her craft until finally Barbara Streisand buys one of her songs.

Maggie and her daughter move to Bedford, a small community outside the city, where they settle into a quiet life. Maggie meets and falls in love with Patrick O'Malley, a hotel entrepreneur. They have a child together and settle into the good life, until one afternoon Patrick dies while alone, sailing his yacht with Maggie. Maggie is heartbroken and feels more alone than ever. To make matters worse, Patrick's son accuses her of murder when he learns that Maggie and her children have inherited a large portion of Patrick's estate.

As Maggie lives her life in New York, Will Shepard is growing more successful and more insane in England. Will Shepard is an American who was raised by his aunts after his father's suicide. Will hates England and turns to football in order to have an outlet for his anger. Will is a wonderful football player and soon finds himself accepting an offer to play professionally. As Will's skill on the football field grows, his wild behavior begins to grow off the field. Will dates many women, often married women, and treats them with indifference. Once Will becomes so angry at a woman for taunting him sexually that he rapes her. Later, after losing the World Cup, Will murders a woman.

Will listens to Maggie Bradford's music and comes to believe that she can see into his soul, that she can save him. Will meets Maggie at a party, but offends her with his self confident come-on. Later, however, Will goes to New York with the purpose of seducing Maggie Bradford. Will succeeds, despite the fact that behind Maggie's back he



continues to see other women, often brutalizing them to satisfy the hunger of his insanity.

Maggie and Will's marriage seems idyllic at first, but the cracks soon begin to show. Will has an affair with an actress while filming his first feature film, leaving the woman cut and bleeding when she ends the affair. Later, Will begins disappearing for days at a time, leaving Maggie frantic for his safety. Finally, Maggie decides to do a concert in San Francisco and is shocked when Will hits her during an argument over the trip. Maggie decides to divorce Will and begins making preparations with her lawyers. On the day Maggie wants to tell Will to move out, she finds him in her daughter's bedroom.

Maggie orders Will out of the house and follows, carrying his shotgun, to make sure he really leaves. Maggie searches the yard for Will and is suddenly attacked from behind. Will beats Maggie and the gun goes off. When Maggie wakes, she discovers that Will is dead and she is accused of his murder. At trial, Maggie is found guilty. However, it is later discovered that Maggie's lawyer had knowledge of a secret group Will was a part of that paid the local chief of police to ignore any illegal activity on their behalf. Maggie is granted a re-trial and is found innocent.

Months after Maggie returns home to her family, Will resurfaces. Will killed his brother Palmer to get out from under blackmail payments made regularly to him and to escape his fame. However, Will is unhappy that Maggie has not been punished for not fixing him. Will breaks into Maggie's home with the intention of killing her and the children. However, Maggie manages to get the gun and shoots Will instead. Will survives, but a head wound has left him with the inability to communicate.



Prologue: Chapters 1-2

Prologue: Chapters 1-2 Summary

Maggie Bradford is a popular singer who has been accused of murdering her second husband. During the pretrial publicity, it comes out that Maggie shot her first husband in a domestic dispute and that her lover died alone, on a boat, with only Maggie as a witness. Maggie is writing down her story to clarify to herself the idea that she might be capable of murder.

In chapter one, Maggie and her three-year-old child, Jennie, are hiding under the porch of their home, listening to Maggie's husband, Philip, search the house for them. Philip, a teacher at West Point, has many guns in the house and Maggie is frightened for her life. Maggie holds a hand lightly over her daughter's mouth, begging her to remain quiet. After several hours, however, this becomes impossible and Jennie cries out. Philip finds them and fires a single shot. Maggie pulls a gun from where she has had it hidden and fires as well.

In chapter two, Maggie describes how she has always felt marked by Philip's murder. However, now that she has been accused of killing her second husband, Maggie is beginning to question her own sanity, her own understanding of what has happened. Maggie decides to write down her story in hopes of bringing some clarity to her own understanding of the events surrounding her second husband's death.

Prologue: Chapters 1-2 Analysis

Maggie Bradford is a scared mother, an abused woman who is frightened not only for her own life but that of her daughter's when the novel begins. Maggie is hiding from her abusive husband, listening to him search for her and their daughter in the house above her. Maggie knows she is going to die. Therefore, showing the reader how strong and determined to live she is, Maggie kills her husband before he can kill her. The reader goes on to learn, however, that Maggie is now accused of killing her second husband. This fact leaves the reader questioning Maggie's actions in the death of her first husband, Philip. It also leaves the reader wondering what kind of man Maggie attracts and how a woman who was so terribly abused could find herself in a similar situation again. This is the conflict that will propel the plot as it begins to develop.



Book One, Star-Crossed: Chapters 1-8

Book One, Star-Crossed: Chapters 1-8 Summary

In chapter one, Maggie is on her way to see Barry Kahn, a famous singer and music producer, a year after Philip's death. Maggie was not charged with murder because of the abuse, and the entire scandal was covered up by West Point in order to save their image. Maggie hopes to show Barry some of the songs she has written and to get a job with him.

In chapter two, Maggie arrives at Barry's office late and he reprimands her for it, stressing that his time is precious. Then Barry refers to Maggie's letter writing skills, leading her to recall how she wrote him nearly weekly while recovering from her injuries after Philip's death and how he finally responded with a letter inviting her to make an appointment to meet him.

In chapter three, Barry invites Maggie to sing one of her songs for him. Maggie sings one inspired by one of Barry's own songs, causing Barry to accuse her of being unoriginal. Maggie then pulls out another song that she feels is more original and convinces Barry to listen. Barry criticizes a rhyme in this song, causing Maggie to storm out of his office, intent on finding someone else to publish her music.

In chapter four, Maggie spends the afternoon with her daughter, Jennie, and then returns to their rundown brownstone. On the landing, Maggie finds a bouquet of roses from Barry and a note offering her the job.

In chapter five, Will Shepard wakes in his San Diego home in 1967 when he is only six. Will's mother has recently abandoned the family, but Will tries to convince himself it does not matter. Will eats breakfast and then goes to investigate the sound that woke him, a splash in the family pool. There, Will finds his father has committed suicide by drowning. Due to the fact that their mother does not want them, Will and his brother Palmer are sent to live with aunts in London.

In chapter six, Will meets his Aunt Eleanor and finds her to be a strict bore. When Will sees his Aunt Vannie, he is instantly struck by how much she resembles his mother.

In chapter seven, Will has trouble adjusting to school, but finds sports to be a release for all the anger building inside him. One day, Will is walking in the park and finds a stray dog. Will kills the dog with a rock from the pond.

In chapter eight, Will becomes an outstanding football star for his school team, helping them win every game. Will believes football is his way out, his salvation.



Book One, Star-Crossed: Chapters 1-8 Analysis

The reader gets to know Maggie Bradford's passion in these chapters. Maggie writes songs. Writing songs, in fact, has gotten her through the worst experience of her life. As a result, Maggie hopes to find employment in the music industry but has a difficult time at her first interview. Maggie gives up a little too soon, unaware of the impact of her deep and meaningful lyrics. However, Maggie gets the job and a new beginning.

The reader also meets Will in these chapters. The point of view changes when the focus moves from Maggie to Will. Maggie talks to her readers in the first person, but Will's story is told in the third person, implying that Maggie is telling his story as well as her own. Will's story begins with the death of his father, a suicide for which the six-year-old boy wrongly takes the blame. Will is then uprooted and shipped to England when his mother refuses to take custody. This leaves Will feeling unloved and unwanted, a situation that leads him to focus on sports as a way to stand out, to get the love he desires. However, there is a darkness in Will that reveals itself early in his life when he kills a dog who has attempted to love him. This foreshadows an insanity in Will that will reappear often as he grows older.



Book One, Star-Crossed: Chapters 9-16

Book One, Star-Crossed: Chapters 9-16 Summary

In chapter nine, Maggie works for Barry for more than a year, learning the craft of song writing as well as playing gofer for his employees. In chapter ten, Maggie learns that Barry has sold one of her songs and that Barbara Streisand wants to sing it.

In chapter eleven, Maggie and Jennie fly to Los Angeles where they are put up in a bungalow behind Hollywood's famed Beverly Hill's Hotel. In chapter twelve, Maggie watches, both frustrated and excited, as Barbara Streisand records her song. Afterward, Barbara gives Maggie advice, assuring her she will be a star someday soon.

In chapter thirteen, Barry takes Maggie out to dinner to celebrate her success. Maggie tells Barry that writing music was her way of surviving, first her father's abandonment of the family and her mother's death, and later Philip's abusive behavior.

In chapter fourteen, Maggie is to perform live for the first time as the warm-up act for a popular rock band who recorded three of her songs. The lead singer introduces Maggie with a great deal of praise for her songwriting abilities. In chapter fifteen, Maggie performs a song about domestic abuse to a wildly accepting crowd.

In chapter sixteen, Maggie tells the reader how as part of her upcoming murder trial a psychiatrist comes to speak to her. Maggie speaks freely to the doctor, whom she likes, for three sessions. However, not once does Maggie mention Will.

Book One, Star-Crossed: Chapters 9-16 Analysis

These chapters describe Maggie's rise to fame. Maggie begins as a gofer, getting coffee and sandwiches for Barry's employees. This is a humiliating job, but Maggie does it because she has nowhere else to go, no one else to turn to. In the end, it pays off and Maggie becomes a superstar. This shows the reader that Maggie is determined, that she will do what it takes to survive.

In chapter sixteen, Maggie brings the reader forward in time, reminding the reader that the plot is happening in the past, rather than the present, at this point. It also reminds the reader why Maggie is telling this story, that Will is dead. Maggie's unwillingness to talk about Will is curious, leaving the reader wondering what their relationship was like.



Book One, Star-Crossed: Chapters 17-23

Book One, Star-Crossed: Chapters 17-23 Summary

In chapter seventeen, Will becomes ill and is cared for by his Aunt Vannie rather than Aunt Eleanor, who normally cares for him in illness. Vannie brings Will food and tea, spending time playing chess with him while he convalesces in bed. On the sixth day Will is better, but he pretends to be sick still to continue to gain Vannie's undivided attention.

In chapter eighteen, Will and Vannie play one last game of chess in which Will nearly beats Vannie. Afterward they embrace and Vannie kisses Will. Will, who does not know what to do, finds himself being seduced by the older and wiser Vannie. Afterward, Vannie tells Will his irresistible quality will take him far, but Will wonders if that is not a bad thing.

In chapter nineteen, Will is signed to play football for Hammersmith Rangers. After two years, Will is traded to Liverpool. Will is an outstanding player who receives a great deal of accolades in the press.

In chapter twenty, Will is having an affair with the wife of the owner of his football team. One day Will goes to their home and forces the wife to model all her clothing for him before tying her to the bed and making love to her. Will then leaves her tied to the bed to be found by her husband. Will is transferred to another team.

In chapter twenty-one, Will tries to hire his brother Palmer to be his personal assistant, but Palmer refuses. Will feels as though Palmer and Maggie Bradford's music are his only salvation.

In chapter twenty-two, Maggie is in London on a European tour when she is invited to a costume party. In chapter twenty-three, Maggie arrives at the party and becomes an immediate target of Will Shepard. However, when Will crudely suggests they go to his place and have sex, Maggie slaps him, causing a scene in front of everyone. Maggie is mortified, but is reassured by her hostess that all women have wanted to do that a time or two.

Book One, Star-Crossed: Chapters 17-23 Analysis

Will is seduced by his aunt, the one who looks so much like his mother. This goes both to Will's obsession and her inability to love him as well as a sexual indifference toward women that will quickly develop as his sports career takes off. Will is already an angry, disturbed young man. Adding sexual inappropriateness on his aunt's part only adds to Will's difficulties. The reader can see how confused and disturbed Will was as his career takes off and he begins to use women like they were disposable. Even Will can sense how screwed up he is, as witnessed by his attempt to have his brother work with him to



straighten out his behavior. Palmer refuses, however, leaving Will convinced his only salvation is Maggie Bradford's music, music that speaks to his wounded soul.

Maggie meets Will at a party and it does not go well. Maggie is a strong, independent woman who does not fall to pieces when a good looking man suggests he wants to sleep with her. Maggie is like no woman Will has ever met. Maggie stops Will from seducing her in his crude way, showing the reader and Will that Maggie is different, that maybe she is his salvation. However, the reader knows Maggie is accused of killing Will and that she has refrained from thinking and speaking about him in jail, suggesting the relationship was not as wonderful as Will might have thought it could be.



Book Two, Calm Before the Storm: Chapters 24-31

Book Two, Calm Before the Storm: Chapters 24-31 Summary

In chapter twenty-four, Maggie is being led into the courthouse when a reporter asks if she killed Patrick too. Maggie spits in her face.

In chapter twenty-five, Patrick O'Malley argues with his accountant while walking through his new project, a luxury hotel. Patrick announces he has decided to call the hotel, the Cornelia Hotel, in honor of his wife who has passed away. Patrick and Cornelia had a close relationship, filled with love, and he feels this is a good way to honor her.

In chapter twenty-six, Cornelia's father did not want them to marry, but Cornelia defied him and they lived happily together for twenty years. Now Patrick buries himself in his work to fight off his loneliness and grief.

In chapter twenty-seven, Maggie buys a house in Bedford so that thirteen-year-old Jennie can have a normal life. Maggie and Jennie rarely get visitors, so when Patrick knocks on the door in hopes of using the phone, Maggie nearly refuses to open it. Patrick tells Maggie how his car broke down, so she shows him to the den to make his call while she gets him a drink. When Maggie returns, Patrick is sound asleep on the couch.

In chapter twenty-eight, Patrick sends a note apologizing to Maggie for falling asleep and invites her to dinner. In chapter twenty-nine, Maggie and Patrick begin seeing one another regularly. However, Patrick notices how Maggie tenses when he tries to show affection. In chapter thirty, Maggie goes to Patrick's house for dinner and he asks her to stay the night. At first Maggie panics, recalling her husband's abuse. However, Patrick is so gentle that Maggie consents. In chapter thirty-one, Patrick begs Maggie to trust him and she finally feels she can.

Book Two, Calm Before the Storm: Chapters 24-31 Analysis

Maggie takes the reader back into the present again by relating how a reporter asks if she killed someone named Patrick. Maggie reacts violently, spitting at the woman, suggesting to the reader that Patrick is someone who is deeply important to Maggie. Patrick turns out to be a hotel entrepreneur who lives down the street from Maggie and becomes her first lover after her marriage to Philip. Patrick is a kind, gentle man who was once married to the love of his life. Due to this, Patrick is able to give Maggie the

time she needs to learn to trust him and overcome her fears that began with her marriage to Philip. This shows the reader not only what a good man Patrick is, but how deeply the scars from her first marriage run for Maggie.



Book Two, Calm Before the Storm: Chapters 32-43

Book Two, Calm Before the Storm: Chapters 32-43 Summary

In chapter thirty-two, Will attends one of Maggie's concerts in London, but he is so high that his perception is skewed. Afterward, a reporter follows Will out of the concert hall, reminding him that she attended with him.

In chapter thirty-three, Will is approached by Winnie Lawrence, a promoter of American soccer. Lawrence wants Will to play for the American team in the World Cup playoffs. Will agrees with the hope of taking the team to the World Cup with the help of a German coach.

In chapter thirty-four, Will and his team have made it to the World Cup. Will is in his hotel room in Rio the day before the game, reading about himself in Sports Illustrated. A girl lies naked in his bed. The girl taunts Will, wanting to make love again, but he refuses. The girl suggests Will cannot satisfy her again. Will forces himself on her, raping her.

In chapter thirty-five, Will arrives on the field for the World Cup convinced he will be the sole force that will win the game for America. In chapter thirty-six, the game begins and the Brazil team makes three goals in the first half. The coach tells Will to be a man and go out there to win. Will makes a goal almost immediately. Will makes a second toward the end of the half, leaving only two minutes to make the third that will tie the game. In chapter thirty-seven, Will plays hard, but takes his time in setting up the last shot. Will makes the shot and falls to the ground, waiting for the announcement on the loudspeaker. However, Will's shot missed and the game is over.

In chapter thirty-eight, Will takes a girl back to his hotel. Instead of making love to her, however, Will kills her and then allows her blood to pool in a glass. Will toasts the girl, drinks the blood, and imagines what it will be like in prison.

In chapter thirty-nine, Maggie tells Patrick she is pregnant. Patrick is thrilled. That night, however, Maggie dreams of Philip and a day when she first pulled a gun on him. In chapter forty, Maggie gives birth to a son. Maggie names him Allen. In chapter forty-one, Patrick visits Maggie, overjoyed at the birth of his child. That night Maggie sings to Allie for the first time.

In chapter forty-two, Maggie and Patrick take out Patrick's yacht for the first time since Allie's birth for some alone time. Not long after they leave the harbor a storm engulfs them. While attempting to move the sails in order to turn the boat, Patrick suffers a heart



attack. In chapter forty-three, Maggie holds Patrick's body until the Coast Guard finds them.

Book Two, Calm Before the Storm: Chapters 32-43 Analysis

As Maggie finally finds happiness with Patrick, Will's career reaches its pinnacle. Will has given the opportunity to play for the World Cup on the American team. Will takes the team all the way to the big game, but fails to win it. Will is heartbroken and angry. Will's insanity takes a new turn both the night before and the night of the game. Will rapes a girl who taunted him, then he murders a girl simply to work off his anger and disappointment at losing the game. Will is convinced his life is over, that he will go to prison now. It seems that Will is almost relieved. The reader is left with the impression that not only does Will know that there is something wrong with him, but that he wants someone to tell him how to fix it.

At the same time, Maggie has a child with Patrick and is hoping to marry him. However, a heart attack steals Patrick away. The heart attack comes at a time when Patrick and Maggie are away from home, alone on a boat with no way to call for help. Perhaps it is these circumstances that will later leave Maggie accused of murdering the one man who truly loved her and never meant her any harm. If Maggie is lying, the reader must wonder how she could be so cruel as to kill such a good man.



Book Three, Will: Chapters 44-53

Book Three, Will: Chapters 44-53 Summary

In chapter forty-four, Palmer comes to Will's room in Rio and sees the dead girl in the bathroom. In chapter forty-five, Will is in New York after spending some time in a mental hospital, undergoing what the press believes to be substance abuse therapy. Palmer has encouraged this move in his deal with Will that also includes yearly blackmail payments.

In chapter forty-six, Maggie has become a recluse in the time since Patrick's death, so she is surprised when Nathan Bailford, Patrick's attorney, comes to visit. Nathan is there to explain to Maggie the details of Patrick's will. Patrick has left Maggie, Jennie, and Allie the majority of his estate instead of leaving it to his difficult son, Peter.

In chapter forty-seven, Will carries Jennie into Maggie's house after she twisted her ankle while jumping out of the way of his speeding car. Maggie recalls Will's unpleasant come-on and is polite but insistent that he leave.

In chapter forty-eight, Maggie attends a party at Lake Club, a country club that happens to share a border with her property. Maggie is overwhelmed with emotion and sneaks away to the garden to be alone. In chapter forty-nine, Will Shepard has joined Maggie in the garden. Maggie makes Will recall their first meeting and he apologizes, claiming he was under the influence of drugs at the time. They discuss Patrick briefly and Maggie feels that Will is sincere in his compassion.

In chapter fifty, Will becomes more determined than ever to seduce Maggie because he believes she can save him. In chapter fifty-one, Will writes Maggie multiple letters, telling her about his childhood and the things he believes they have in common. When they meet again, Maggie agrees to go on a date with Will.

In chapter fifty-two, Will leaves Maggie after a romantic date and goes straight to the apartment of a woman he has been sleeping with. Will sneaks into the apartment and forces himself on the woman without saying a word.

In chapter fifty-three, Will returns from a screen test in Los Angeles excited about the possibility of being an actor. After a date that night, Will and Maggie make love for the first time.

Book Three, Will: Chapters 44-53 Analysis

Palmer takes care of Will's problem in Rio, setting up a situation in which Palmer is now blackmailing Will. This seems like a good situation for Will at the time as it keeps him out of prison. However, over time the blackmail money will add and will cause tension between the brothers.



Will moves to New York at his brother's request that he not live in London any longer. Will has chosen New York because Maggie Bradford is there. Will has become convinced that Maggie will save him, so he sets out to seduce her despite the come-on that left her cold where he was concerned. Will turns on the charm and seduces Maggie, making her trust and care for him with his stories of his sad childhood. Eventually Maggie does begin to trust Will, creating the romance that the reader is sure will end in Maggie's death.



Book Three, Will: Chapters 54-64

Book Three, Will: Chapters 54-64 Summary

In chapter fifty-four, Will and Maggie spend a romantic weekend in Las Vegas. In chapter fifty-five, Will and Maggie spend the following weekend with the kids, touring New York and doing whatever the kids want. Will takes Allie for a ride on one of the horses, making it appear that he wants to be a devoted father. In chapter fifty-six, Will asks Maggie to marry him.

In chapter fifty-seven, Will spends the night before his wedding to Maggie with a want-to-be model. In chapter fifty-eight, the wedding is huge, with a large number of high profile guests. Maggie is nervous, but Will is calm when he comes to see her before the ceremony.

In chapter fifty-nine, the wedding goes off without a hitch. The reception is huge. The only blight on the day is Peter O'Malley who somehow got an invitation. Peter accuses Maggie of murdering his father for his money and throws a glass of wine in her face.

In chapter sixty, Will learns that he has gotten the movie part he auditioned for. In chapter sixty-one, the cast and crew of *Primrose*, Will's movie, assemble in Perth, Australia. Will wants to look authentic and encourages the director to help him do well at his acting. As Will is doing the final take on a scene in which he delivers a colt and presents it to the woman playing his wife, the actress Suzanne Purcell flashes her breasts at him off camera.

In chapter sixty-two, Maggie is in New York working on a new album while Will is in Perth. After shopping, Maggie is stopped by a reporter wanting to know what she thinks of Will's affair with Suzanne Purcell.

In chapter sixty-three, Will and Suzanne tape a scene in which Will's character attempts to convince Suzanne's character that she is still sexy even though she is pregnant. Will is not acting, however, he is actually arousing Suzanne. After the scene is over, Will takes Suzanne into his trailer to have sex with her.

In chapter sixty-four, shooting on *Primrose* is over, so Suzanne explains to Will that their affair is over too. Will becomes angry. Will ties Suzanne up in the bathtub and cuts her, watching as she bleeds. The following day, the director finds Suzanne cut and left for dead on her bed. Suzanne refuses to admit Will did it.

Book Three, Will: Chapters 54-64 Analysis

Will and Maggie get married, creating the relationship that will take Maggie one step closer to being tried for Will's murder. At the wedding, Peter O'Malley accuses Maggie of killing Patrick for his money. Maggie hotly denies this and Will comes to her defense as

any husband should. However, the accusation is still there, leaving the reader curious about the possibilities.

After the wedding, Will begins shooting a movie and immediately begins an affair with the lead actress, Suzanne Purcell. Maggie hears rumors about this affair, but does not believe them. In the end, Suzanne ends the relationship much like Will has always done in the past, but Will does not take it well. Will cuts Suzanne, leaving her convinced he is capable of murder, which the reader already knows. It appears to the reader that Will is accelerating in his violence, suggesting something dark coming Maggie's way.



Book Four, Dark Side of the Moon: Chapters 65-74

Book Four, Dark Side of the Moon: Chapters 65-74 Summary

In chapter sixty-five, Maggie is taken in front of the judge to make her plea. Maggie wonders how she got here. Maggie pleads not guilty.

In chapter sixty-six, it is a year after Maggie and Will's wedding. They are in a line of cars waiting to arrive at the premiere of Primrose. Will is nervous. The director joins them and he is nervous too, so Maggie and Jennie leave them alone and join the director's wife in his car. In chapter sixty-seven, Maggie wonders if Will did have an affair with Suzanne Purcell as she watches the scene in which he convinces her she is sexy despite her pregnancy.

In chapter sixty-eight, the reviews arrive at the after party. Will reads what the reviewer has said about him, advising him to return to sports, and leaves the party angry and humiliated.

In chapter sixty-nine, Maggie is frantic because Will has been gone for two days. In chapter seventy, Will returns home, contrite and promising to never disappear again.

In chapter seventy-one, Will is beginning to have fantasies of hurting Maggie and the children. Will spends as much time away from the house as he can without causing Maggie worry. Will is tired of the fame and wants to change his life.

In chapter seventy-two, Will goes to a bar instead of the movie set where he is expected. Will starts a fight with a German who criticizes him. Later Will is attacked and beaten by a group of men. In chapter seventy-three, Maggie is called to the hospital where Will is recovering from extensive wounds as a result of a severe beating. Will has to be replaced on his new film.

In chapter seventy-four, Maggie feels as though she is losing her mind. Maggie wonders if she knows her husband at all. Later, at the hospital, Maggie cannot accept Will's apology.

Book Four, Dark Side of the Moon: Chapters 65-74 Analysis

Maggie again brings the reader forward in time to show her plea in court. Maggie is more convinced than ever that she is not a murderer, but the reader must wonder if Maggie is trying to convince herself or the reader.



Maggie and Jennie accompany Will to his movie premiere. The movie is good and the critics like it, but they do not like Will's performance. Will is horrified at the review that suggests he return to sports. Will disappears for several days, doing what the reader can only guess is violent and homicidal. Afterward Will promises to Maggie he will never run off again, but Will becomes so tired of his life, so tired of his fame and living in Maggie's shadow, that he blows a movie role in order to spend a day drinking. Will is beaten and loses his role, leaving Maggie unsure who he is. Maggie is now doubting her own sanity, causing the reader to wonder if she could have had a breakdown and killed Will then.



Book Four, Dark Side of the Moon: 75-86

Book Four, Dark Side of the Moon: 75-86 Summary

In chapter seventy-five, Will returns home and begins having bad thoughts constantly about Palmer, Maggie, and the kids. In chapter seventy-six, Maggie tells Will she is going to San Francisco to do the first concert she has done since Patrick's death. Will tells her she cannot go. They argue and Will slaps Maggie twice.

In chapter seventy-seven, Maggie takes Jennie and Allie with her to San Francisco. When they arrive, Maggie finds a fax from Will wishing her luck. In chapter seventy-eight, Maggie is on a helicopter with the children and Barry. Maggie wants to stay up there forever, where she feels safe, but knows she cannot. When Maggie goes on stage to perform, she becomes emotional and cannot continue.

In chapter seventy-nine, Will attends an after hours, exclusive party at the Lake Club with Peter O'Malley and several other prestigious men.

In chapter eighty, Maggie realizes it is time to end her marriage. Maggie begins quietly making financial and legal arrangements. During this time, Maggie is called to Jennie's school and told that Jennie's grades and attendance have been slipping. In chapter eighty-one, Maggie takes Jennie on a hike and asks about her grades. Jennie says she cannot explain it to her mother because she does not understand it herself.

In chapter eighty-two, Maggie is working in the garden when she hears gunfire. Maggie follows the sound and finds Will shooting a rifle on the edge of their property. Maggie orders him to get rid of the gun.

In chapter eighty-three, Maggie decides it is time to tell Will about the divorce, but he leaves the house early and does not return. In chapter eighty-four, Will returns late in the night, waking Maggie with a touch on the cheek. Will leaves the room and Maggie gets up to follow. Maggie cannot find him, so she goes upstairs. The rifle is on the stairs. Maggie picks it up when she realizes Will is in Jennie's room.

In chapter eighty-five, Maggie rushes into Jennie's room and confronts Will. Will asks Maggie to join him and Jennie for a ménage a trois. Maggie orders Will out of the house, then follows to make sure he leaves. Maggie listens to Will's footsteps move around the house, but then they stop. Maggie continues to listen and is suddenly attacked from behind. Will beats Maggie about the face, knocking her to the ground. The gun goes off and Maggie loses consciousness.

In chapter eighty-six, Maggie wakes in her bed to find the chief of police beside her. The chief of police tells Maggie she is under arrest for the murder of Will Shepard.



Book Four, Dark Side of the Moon: 75-86 Analysis

The reader can see how dark Will's insanity is getting when he begins to dream of killing Maggie, the children, and his brother, Palmer. It is important at this point that the reader notice Palmer is included in these thoughts, suggesting a time in the future when Palmer will become a target to Will's insane fantasies. It is also important for the reader to note the physical assault Will perpetrates against Maggie and her intense reaction. In fact, Maggie is so emotional that she has an emotional collapse during a concert. This reaction could suggest that Maggie's own mental state is also beginning to become fragile.

The reader finally gets to see how Will was killed. Maggie is convinced that Will is sexually abusing her daughter, as he was abused himself, and this causes her to kick him out of the house. Will attacks Maggie and the gun goes off, but the reader and Maggie both have no clue how it went off, who might have fired it, or how Will ended up dead. This is a mystery that will have to be played out in court as the plot continues to unfold.



Book Five, Trial and Error: Chapters 87-100

Book Five, Trial and Error: Chapters 87-100 Summary

In chapter eighty-seven, Barry Kahn calls Norma Breen, an investigator, and hires her to investigate Will's murder, hopefully finding evidence to help in Maggie's defense. In chapter eighty-eight, Norma is aware of the publicity about Maggie's case, but does not believe most of it. However, Norma does believe there is something wrong with the case. At the same time, Peter O'Malley writes a letter about his father's murder.

In chapter eighty-nine, the prosecutor, Dan Nizhinski, is confident that not only did Maggie kill Will, but that she killed her first husband and she will kill again if released.

In chapter ninety, Maggie begins to question her own innocence.

In chapter ninety-one, Maggie is marched through the barrage of media on her way to the first day of her trial. In chapter ninety-two, Norma watches the beginning of the trial and wonders what is missing, what is wrong with the crime scene.

In chapter ninety-three, Maggie recalls meeting Dan Nizhinski at a party where he confessed to being a huge fan of her music. However, he makes it clear to the jury now that Maggie's celebrity has nothing to do with her crime and that he fully believes she killed Will.

In chapter ninety-four, Nathan Bailford makes his opening remarks, implying that Maggie plans to testify. Maggie becomes upset because she has already refused to testify. In chapter ninety-five, Norma Breen calls Palmer Shepard and learns that Will was a bad person. Palmer agrees to testify if necessary.

In chapter ninety-six, Norma and Barry visit Maggie in jail and ask about Palmer. Barry knows that Maggie is holding something back. During their discussion, he finally realizes that Maggie is hiding the fact that Will was molesting Jennie.

In chapter ninety-seven, Peter O'Malley testifies, claiming that his father was a member of an after hours group at the Lake Club that would often indulge in young prostitutes. Peter claims Maggie knew about this behavior and implies she killed him for it. Peter also claims Will was a member of this same club and this is motive for Maggie killing him too.

In chapter ninety-eight, Norma, who has become a good friend to Maggie, comes and asks her to see Jennie. In chapter ninety-nine, Norma goes to interview Maggie's nanny, Mrs. Leigh. Mrs. Leigh tells Norma that she saw Will walking across the club property to the house, carrying his rifle. Mrs. Leigh claims Will kept the rifle at the club for skeet



shooting. Mrs. Leigh also claims to have told this to the police during the initial investigation.

In chapter one hundred, Norma calls Barry and tells him what she suspects.

Book Five, Trial and Error: Chapters 87-100 Analysis

Barry calls in Norma Breen, an investigator, to help with Maggie's case. Norma is an impartial party who immediately becomes convinced there is something wrong with the case. Norma begins interviewing people and checking the crime scene photos, soon learning things that the police apparently kept out of their reports or failed to believe from witnesses. This clearly will have an impact on the case, but the reader is unsure at this point what that impact will be.

Maggie is determined not to testify in her own behalf, but does not explain why. At first the reader wonders if it is because Maggie does not recall how Will got shot. However, as the plot continues to develop, it becomes clear that Maggie is once again attempting to protect her daughter. This could cause Maggie trouble because it could make her look even more guilty. When people like Peter are coming out to claim other crimes against Maggie, it does not take much to make her appear more guilty than she already does.

Finally, it is important for the reader to recall Peter O'Malley's testimony. The reader might suspect at this point that his claims are motivated by greed and disappointment that his father chose Maggie over him, but they could also be motivated out of love and truth. At the same time, it is important that the reader recall what Peter has mentioned about the secret after hours club he and Will both belonged to because it will prove important as the plot continues to develop.



Book Five, Trial and Error: Chapters 101-113

Book Five, Trial and Error: Chapters 101-113 Summary

In chapter 101, Jennie comes to visit her mother and convinces her that Will never touched her. Not only this, Jennie convinces Maggie to allow her to testify on her behalf.

In chapter 102, Norma Breen speaks to the groundskeeper at the club and tries to convince him to tell her about the members of the after hours group. In chapter 103, Norma and the groundskeeper go into the area of the club where the afterhours group meets. The groundskeeper finally breaks down and gives Norma a list of the members of that club.

In chapter 104, Jennie testifies and it goes well until the prosecutor cross-examines her. The prosecutor forces Jennie to admit that she had a crush on Will and wanted to seduce him. However, Jennie insists nothing ever happened.

In chapter 105, Norma watches the final arguments, wondering if she should move on her information or not. Norma decides it would be better to wait until after the verdict. In chapter 106, the prosecutor celebrates his victory in the Bradford case.

In chapter 107, Maggie is shocked to be found guilty. In chapter 108, Maggie wakes to find she has been summoned to the judge's chambers. In chapter 109, Maggie attends a meeting with the judge, her lawyer, Barry, and the prosecutor where Norma announces that the after hours club at the Lake Club paid the local chief of police to keep quiet about their activities. Maggie then announces that Nathan Bailford is one of these men.

In chapter 110, Maggie's trial is declared a mistrial and she is released on her own recognizance. In chapter 111, Maggie is retried several months later. In chapter 112, Maggie is declared not guilty. In chapter 113, the real murderer watches as Maggie leaves the courthouse.

Book Five, Trial and Error: Chapters 101-113 Analysis

Jennie testifies as Norma continues to investigate, but it does not look good for Maggie. The prosecutor tears Jennie to pieces on the stand. However, it becomes clear that Jennie was not molested by Will, which is great news for Maggie. Unfortunately, this news takes away any defense Maggie might have had.

Norma learns more about the after hours club at the Lake Club. When Norma finds out who the members are, she uses the information to have Maggie's case thrown out. It turns out Maggie's own lawyer was a member, which means he had a conflict of interest

and he could have information that might have helped Maggie, but chose not to use it to protect himself. Now, despite a guilty verdict, Maggie has a second chance. With a better lawyer and a stronger defense, Maggie is found not guilty and allowed to go home. However, the real killer is watching. This shows the reader not only is Maggie truly innocent, but that someone might be out there to hurt her.



Book Six, Hide and Seek—Again: Chapters 114-120 and Epilogue: Chapters 121-123

Book Six, Hide and Seek—Again: Chapters 114-120 and Epilogue: Chapters 121-123 Summary

In chapter 114, Will walks down the streets of New York, his hair dark and eyes blue. Will goes to a lawyers office and claims to be Palmer Shepard, there to discuss an inheritance.

In chapter 115, Maggie and Jennie throw Allie a party for his fifth birthday. In chapter 116, Barry invites Maggie to his office and talks her into performing at a concert.

In chapter 117, Will watches Maggie on the streets of New York. Will goes to Bedford and has a drink at a bar, trying to pretend he is a normal guy. From there, Will plans to go to Maggie's house. In chapter 118, Will sneaks into Maggie's house and goes straight to Allie's room.

In chapter 119, Maggie hears a noise. Maggie wonders the house, looking for the source of the noise. When Maggie cannot find the children in their rooms, she begins to panic.

In chapter 120, Maggie finds the children in the den, being held at gunpoint by Will. Jennie begins to argue with Will. Maggie follows her lead, distracting him long enough to get the gun. Maggie orders the children to run, but they refuse to leave. Maggie tells Will she knows that he is there to kill them and himself. Maggie knows he wants her to shoot him. Maggie does, shooting him in the leg. However, this does not stop Will. Will lunges at Maggie. Maggie fires again.

In chapter 121, Maggie drives to Connecticut with Norma. Maggie is there to visit with Will, who has been confined to a mental hospital. Maggie needs to confront Will, to confront her fears. Will is unable to communicate, however, the result of a bullet that bounced off his skull and left him brain damaged. Will tries to talk, but his words are incomprehensible.

In chapter 122, Will becomes hysterical when Maggie is told to leave. Orderlies come in to sedate him as Maggie leaves. In chapter 123, Maggie suddenly realizes that Will is completely intact inside, he simply cannot communicate.



Book Six, Hide and Seek—Again: Chpaters 114-120 and Epilogue: Chapters 121-123 Analysis

In a surprise twist, the reader discovers that Will is still alive. It turns out that Will killed Palmer and made it look as though it was him so that Maggie would be sent to jail. When this plan fails, Will goes after Maggie himself. However, Will underestimates Maggie's strength and ability to protect herself and her children. Maggie once again shoots to kill to protect herself from an insane man. Will is not killed, however, but badly injured, leaving him where he should have been all along, in a mental hospital. Will appears to be brain damaged, but in reality the only thing damaged is his ability to communicate. It is an ironic turn of events for a man who used his beauty and charm to hurt so many people.



Characters

Maggie Bradford

Maggie Bradford is a famous singer accused of murder when the novel begins. Maggie begins writing the story of her life in order to figure out for herself if she is justly accused of this murder. The reader quickly learns that Maggie once killed her husband in order to protect herself from abuse. This history fuels speculation and accusations when Maggie's second husband, Will Shepard, is killed.

Maggie is a gentle, caring woman, who is only trying to make a life for herself in the face of tragedy. Maggie raises her daughter alone and falls in love with a good man, only to lose him to a heart attack shortly after the birth of their son, Allan. This leaves Maggie devastated and vulnerable. In fact, Maggie is so vulnerable that she quickly becomes involved with and married to Will Shepard, a man she believes she knows, but really does not. When Maggie comes to realize her husband is not the man she thought he was, she begins to prepare for a divorce.

The night Maggie decides she will tell Will their marriage is over, she finds him in her daughter's room. Maggie is a good mother, a mother who wants and needs to protect her children. Maggie throws Will out of the house, but a conflict in the yard leaves Maggie beaten and Will dead. Now Maggie finds her entire life under a microscope as she faces trial for murder.

Will Shepard

Will Shepard is only six when his mother leaves the family and his father commits suicide. Too young to understand the complicated relationship between his parents, Will feels to blame for his father's death and as though he will end up the same way. Will is then shipped off to England, where he feels like an outsider in a world he does not understand. Will's only solace is football, as soccer is known in England. Will puts all his effort into his football career, but soon becomes spoiled by his success.

Will has always felt as though he has two personalities, the good Will and the bad. The bad Will begins coming out more and more the older Will becomes. Will rapes a woman who accuses him of being incapable of satisfying her sexual needs and then he murders a woman on the night he loses the World Cup. Will accepts that he will be caught and that he will go to prison, but he is saved when his brother arrives and covers up the crime for him. Will continues to act out his violent fantasies, hurting women for the smallest infractions.

Will comes to believe that only Maggie can save him. Will has listened to Maggie's songs and hears in them a truth that leads him to believe Maggie will be able to see the real him and heal what is broken inside. However, when Maggie is unable to fix Will, he continues to act out his fantasies and begins to have fantasies about hurting Maggie



and her two children. In the end, it turns out that Will faked his death. When Will sees Maggie walk away from murder charges, he decides to kill her and her children to punish them for not fixing him.

Jennie Bradford

Jennie Bradford is Maggie's daughter. Jennie is only three when Maggie hides under the porch to stop her first husband from beating the two of them to death. Philip, Maggie's husband, finds them and fires a shot at them with his gun. Maggie retaliates with three shots of her own, killing Philip. Due to the fact that Jennie is badly beaten when the police find them, Maggie's story of domestic violence is believed and Maggie is not charged with Philip's murder.

Jennie and Maggie move to New York, where they remain best friends. Jennie is Maggie's inspiration, her reason for fighting for their new life. As Jennie grows, she becomes a typical teenager. Jennie begins having trouble in school shortly after Maggie marries Will. This, coupled with Will appearing in Jennie's bedroom in the middle of the night, leads Maggie to believe Will is sexually abusing her daughter. However, Jennie admits to Maggie and later in open court that she never had a sexual relationship with Will Shepard. This testimony should help Maggie, but does not because the prosecution turns Jennie's own words against her.

Philip Bradford

Philip Bradford joined the army to become a fighting soldier. However, Philip was assigned to be a math teacher at West Point instead. This causes Philip to become an angry man who has no outlet for this anger. Philip begins to beat his wife early in their marriage, and the beatings only grow worse as Philip's drinking habit increases. Eventually Philip gets it into his head that he needs to kill his wife and child. Maggie hides with their three-year-old daughter, but Philip finds them. Maggie is forced to kill Philip in self defense. This death is resolved and settled in West Point at the time in which it occurs. However, years later, Maggie is again accused of shooting her husband. When this happens, the press digs up Philip's murder and accuse Maggie in the press of being a black widow.

Patrick O'Malley

Patrick O'Malley is a tough business man, but he is a kind, gentle man who once had a great love affair with the love of his life, his wife. When Cornelia became sick and died, Patrick was devastated, convinced he would never love again. However, when Patrick meets Maggie Bradford, he falls head over heels for her. Patrick is perfect for Maggie, gentle and kind enough to wait for her to overcome her fears, fears caused by her first husband's cruelty, and to learn to trust in him. Eventually Maggie and Patrick move in together and have a little boy. Unfortunately, shortly after the baby's birth, Patrick and Maggie go out on his yacht together, where Patrick has a fatal heart attack and dies.



This death becomes a suspicious death when Maggie is accused of Will Shepard's murder, playing in the press in such a way that it appears Maggie is a three time murderer of the men in her life.

Nathan Bailford

Nathan Bailford is Maggie's attorney. Maggie meets Nathan through Patrick. All through Maggie's trial, Nathan tries to find a reasonable doubt to protect her from prison. However, the trial goes badly and Maggie is convicted. In the immediate aftermath, it is discovered that Nathan Bailford had inside information in Maggie's case that he did not reveal to the court as well as a conflict of interest. It turns out Nathan Bailford was a part of a private after hours group at the Lake Club that frequently included Will Shepard. Nathan is arrested and Maggie is granted a new trial.

Palmer Shepard

Palmer Shepard is Will's little brother. Palmer has none of the mental problems his brother suffers because he was too young to be aware of the volatile atmosphere of the family home before his father's suicide. This causes Will to dislike Palmer and the two are never really close. However, Palmer comes to Rio when Will plays in the World Cup and is the only one to discover Will's murder of a young Brazilian girl. Palmer covers it up and forces Will to pay him blackmail money for the rest of his life. Will becomes tired of paying this money and he kills Palmer, making it look as though he were Will, killed by Maggie. Will then takes Palmer's identity and lives as his brother for several months before going after Maggie in her own home.

Aunt Vannie

Aunt Vannie is the youngest sister of Will's mother. Aunt Vannie takes custody of Will and Palmer with her sister, Eleanor. Vannie pays little attention to the boys most of the time, spending a great deal of her free time on dates with various men. However, when Will is a teenager, Aunt Vannie cares for him during a bout with the Asian flu. When Will is nearly recovered, Aunt Vannie seduces him, taking his virginity and changing the way Will looks at women for the rest of his life.

Barry Kahn

Barry Kahn is a famous singer living in New York. While Maggie is in the hospital recovering after her first husband's death, she writes multiple letters to Barry, telling him about her song writing. Barry finally tires of the deluge of letters and writes Maggie back, inviting her to visit him and sing him one of her songs. When Barry hears the first song, he accuses Maggie of not being original. However, the second song Maggie presents to Barry leaves him speechless. Barry hires Maggie, spending long hours working with her on her song writing and her singing. Eventually, Barry helps sell one of



Maggie's songs to Barbara Streisand, launching Maggie's musical career. Barry and Maggie remain good friends and Barry is instrumental in getting Maggie out of prison after Will is assumed murdered.

Norma Breen

Norma Breen is an investigator who often works for lawyers in criminal cases. Norma is hired by Barry Kahn to investigate the murder of Will Shepard in the hopes of learning something that will help free Maggie. Norma Breen focuses on the Lake Club quickly into her investigation when she discovers that Will would often go there after hours for some kind of private party with a select group of members. When Norma learns that Nathan Bailford is a member of this exclusive club, she sits on the information until after Maggie is found guilty. Then Maggie goes to the judge with what she knows, causing a mistrial that leads to a new trial and a finding of not guilty.



Objects/Places

Songs

Maggie has written songs all her life, but they become especially meaningful during her recovery after the death of her first husband, Philip. These songs eventually lead to a job with singer Barry Kahn and a successful singing career of her own.

Shotgun

Will Shepard is presumed murdered by a shotgun he owned and kept at the Lake Club. This gun was brought to the Bradford-Shepard home the night of the murder by Will himself.

Rebellion

Rebellion is Patrick O'Malley's yacht. While preparing to turn the boat around because of an impending storm, Patrick has a heart attack on her deck and dies in Maggie's arms.

Primrose

Primrose is Will's first movie. The reviews of Will's performance in this movie are so bad that he disappears for several days to deal with the crushing blow.

The Cornelia Hotel

The Cornelia Hotel is Patrick O'Malley's final project, a luxury hotel named for his beloved first wife, Cornelia.

World Cup

The World Cup is the championship game in soccer. Will plays for the American team and goes to the World Cup, but plays poorly in the first half and misses the goal that would have tied the game in the final seconds of play.

San Francisco

Maggie is to have a big comeback concert in San Francisco after not performing live in the three years since Patrick's death. However, Maggie is upset about some physical abuse suffered at Will's hands and has a mini breakdown on stage.



Rio

Will and his team lose the World Cup in Rio de Janeiro, causing Will to fall into a depression that ends with his first murder of a young local girl. Palmer blackmails Will for several years in regards to this murder.

Perth

Will films a movie in Perth where he has an affair with his co-star. However, when the woman tries to break off the relationship, Will ties her up and cuts her badly with a knife.

West Point

Maggie was once married to Philip Bradford, a military officer who taught math at the academy. Philip is an abusive husband and Maggie kills him in self defense.

Greenbriar Road

Maggie buys a house on Greenbriar Road that turns out to be up the street from Patrick O'Malley, the famous hotel owner and Winnie Lawrence, Will Shepard's manager. This brings both Patrick and Will into Maggie's life.

Lake Club Country Club

Lake Club is a country club that happens to share a border with Maggie's house. Lake Club is an exclusive club for men that both Patrick and Will belonged to. The club also has an after hours membership that includes Nathan Bailford, a fact that forces a mistrial in Maggie's murder trial.



Themes

Physical Abuse

Maggie Bradford is horribly abused by her first husband. Maggie's husband, Philip, is a soldier who signed up to fight, but finds himself teaching math instead. Philip is frustrated and unhappy, so he takes it out on Maggie. Maggie puts up with the abuse for a time, but when Philip beats her three-year-old daughter, Jennie, too, Maggie has to put an end to it. Maggie hides under the front porch of the couple's house and listens for hours as he searches for her in the house. Finally he finds them and fires a shot from his pistol at them. Maggie pulls a gun that she has had hidden and hits Philip with three shots, killing him. Maggie is not charged with the murder based on the fact that Philip made her feel as though her life were in danger.

Maggie goes on with her life and finds true love with Patrick O'Malley. Through these years, Maggie is unaware of the growing success and growing madness of Will Shepard, an English football star. Will watched his father beat his mother continuously until he was six and his mother finally walked away. A short time later, Will wakes to the sound of a splash in the family pool and finds that his father has committed suicide. This, coupled with sexual abuse from an aunt, causes Will to become a functioning psychopath. Will begins abusing women, first with violent sexual interludes, but quickly progressing to attacks with knives and murder. Will's insanity only escalates as he grows older, causing him to commit more and more crimes against women. During this time, Will becomes obsessed with Maggie's music and the idea that she can save him.

Will meets and seduces Maggie, all the time violating women without Maggie's knowledge. They marry and appear to have a good marriage despite Will's continued violence and sexual affairs with other women. However, Will's insanity has grown to such a degree that he can no longer hide his violent streak from Maggie. They argue one day and Will slaps Maggie, the look on his face telling her that he is dangerous and will one day do more than that to her. Maggie decides to divorce Will, but before she can have him removed from her house, she finds him in her daughter's bedroom. Maggie orders him from the house and follows to be sure he is gone. Will attacks Maggie, beating her viciously, but the shotgun she was holding goes off and Will appears to have been murdered.

Love

Maggie is a young woman who had an alcoholic father who left the family when she was young and a mother who worked hard, dying of a heart attack when Maggie is still a young girl. As a result, Maggie turns to the first man who confesses to love her. However, this man is horribly abusive and Maggie eventually finds herself forced to kill or be killed. This leaves Maggie alone with a small child to raise and no one to care for her needs. Maggie finds herself reluctant to move into a new relationship, but



desperately lonely. Eventually Maggie finds Patrick O'Malley, a gentleman who has already had a great love and who is caring and patient enough to wait for Maggie to be ready to accept his love.

At the same time, Will has been abandoned by the mother who once swore to love him and a father who was abusive and selfish. Will moves in with two aunts he does not know, alone in a new country and a new world. As Will matures, he becomes sexually aware. This leads to a fascination with his Aunt Vannie, who is young, beautiful, and closely resembles his mother. Will has a sexual affair with Vannie. This leads Will to a distorted understanding of sex and love, leading him into multiple affairs that eventually become violent. All Will really wants is love, but he is so emotionally and mentally confused by the events of his early childhood and his relationship with Vannie that he cannot participate in a healthy, loving relationship.

As time passes, Will becomes obsessed with Maggie's music and the idea that she is only woman who can save him. At the same time, Maggie has lost Patrick to a heart attack and is lonelier than before. When Will comes into her life, Maggie is vulnerable. Will knows how to charm and he quickly wins Maggie's heart. However, Will's insanity has grown over the years and he cannot find healing in Maggie as he thought he would. Love does not overcome all for Will and he eventually reverts back to his violent ways.

Mental Instability

Will's mental instability is a huge theme in this novel. Will begins showing signs of mental instability when he is only six and he finds his father in the moments after his suicide. Will becomes obsessed with the idea that the suicide is somehow his fault and that he will eventually end up like his father. This thought drives Will throughout his childhood, causing him to indulge in dangerous behavior, including the murder of a stray dog.

As Will grows older, his instability becomes more and more pronounced. Will has an affair with his boss's wife and leaves her tied to the bed to reveal the affair to the boss. Later, Will attacks a woman who questions his ability to satisfy her sexual needs. Finally, after losing the World Cup, Will murders a young Brazilian girl who only wanted to make love with a real sports hero. Over the next few years, Will begins to indulge his violent fantasies more and more often, raping and beating women at will.

Even as Will indulges in his violent behavior, he becomes aware that there is something wrong with him. Will wants to be normal, to find love and be loved. As a result, Will becomes focused on Maggie Bradford because her music sings to his soul. Will becomes convinced that Maggie can save him. However, marriage to Maggie not only does not save Will, but it makes him want to hurt her and her two children. Will decides he must leave, the only sane thing he has ever done, but Will's insanity causes him to leave in such a way that Maggie will pay for everything she failed to do for him. When this scheme does not work, Will goes after Maggie, intent on killing her and her two

children. In the end, Will ends up in a mental institute, stuck inside his own head because of a bullet wound to his head.

Style

Point of View

There are two different points of view in this novel. The first point of view used by the author is the first person point of view. This point of view is a fairly narrow point of view that shows the actions of the plot through only one character's eyes. In this novel, the first person point of view narrator is Maggie Bradford, one of the main characters. Maggie shares her story with the reader as though she is writing it down while in prison, awaiting trial for the murder of her husband, Will Shepard. The second point of view used in this novel is the third person omniscient. This point of view follows the life of Will Shepard from the time he is six until the novel closes. Will is not the narrator, but he is the focal character. In fact, in this point of view the authorial voice is clearly heard, as though Maggie is telling what she knows of Will Shepard's life in order to explain to the reader how their lives collided, bringing her into this ordeal.

The points of view in this novel are dramatically different. The first person point of view allows the reader an intimate relationship with Maggie Bradford, drawing the reader deeply into her story as she tries to explain how she came to be accused of her husband's murder. At the same time, the third person point of view allows an intimate view of Will Shepard's life, but keeps some distance between the reader and Will. Not only this, but there is clearly an authorial voice in this viewpoint that suggests someone other than Will is telling the story. Will's story is complicated and much of it is highly personal, but Will has allowed others to become aware of each instance that is reported in this novel, explaining how someone other than Will could tell the story. In the end, it appears Will's story is actually being told by Maggie in her attempt to not only share her only story with the reader, but to understand it herself.

Setting

The novel begins in West Point where Maggie Bradford once lived with her husband, Philip, and daughter, Jennie. Maggie moves to New York after the death of her husband and begins to work for singer, Barry Kahn. After time, Maggie becomes a famous singer and moves to Bedford, where she buys a house and raises her family. At the same time, Will Shepard's story takes the reader from Los Angeles to London to Rio.

The novel's settings are all different in both their location, atmosphere, and purpose. In West Point, Maggie should have found safety and security, but instead found herself forced to take the life of her husband to protect herself and her child. In New York, Maggie should have found danger and a lack of compassion, but instead found encouragement and success. Finally, in Bedford, Maggie should have had love, family, and safety. Instead, Maggie finds herself accused of murder. All these settings contrast with what is happening in the novel, adding to the complexity of the plot. At the same time, Will lives in L.A. and London while traveling to exotic locales, including Rio. These



settings present an international thrill ride that most people dream of taking. However, Will never finds satisfaction on this thrill ride, but instead lives a lonely, insane life that leads him to a dark place, a darkness that will eventually collide with Maggie's sad, but content existence.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple English. The language contains few foreign words or phrases, keeping the language simple enough for even the younger readers. The novel also contains little slang, but at points the grammar tends to be a little less formal, allowing for the expression of emotion in a way that will get across to the reader the depth of that emotion without so much the use of words, but more the way those words are used.

The language of this novel suits the plot because it is simple enough for the reader to comprehend, but it also suits the education and experiences of the characters. The language remains simple enough for readers of all ages to understand, but is formal enough to show the reader that the characters are not uneducated or indiscriminate about their speech. Therefore, the language of this novel is appropriate to its characters and its plot.

Structure

The novel is written in six books, a prologue, and epilogue. The novel is divided into 125 chapters, including the chapters in the prologue. Each chapter is short, usually only showing one scene or a partial scene to the reader. The novel is told in both exposition and dialogue, including many examples of flashbacks as Maggie tells her story. In fact, the majority of the novel takes place in flashbacks.

The novel contains two major plots. The first is the story of Maggie Bradford as she starts her life over after the death of her first husband, becomes a star, and marries Will Shepard. The other major plot is the story of Will Shepard, how he grew up without his parents, became an athlete, and led the American soccer team to the World Cup. Both these plots collide, bringing Will and Maggie together in a marriage that ends with what appears to be Will Shepard's death. The climax of the novel comes in the final pages when the reader learns that the entire trial of Maggie Bradford was a farce orchestrated by Will Shepard.



Quotes

"I knew I was going to die soon, and so was my baby girl." Chap. 1, p. 3

"Sometimes, I feel as though I'm wearing a horrifying scarlet letter—only the letter is M, for Murderess." Chap. 2, p. 7

"Did you ever want to say, even to shout out loud, He, I'm smart. I'm an okay person. I have some talent." Chap. 4, p. 25

"Will knew from the start that he had greatness in him, and that he wasn't really impressed by it. But others sure were." Chap. 8, p. 41

"To be irresistible. Was that good, or was it very, very bad?" Chap. 18, p. 76

"He saluted the woman with her own blood." Chap. 38, p. 151

"It was all very romantic in the beginning. It all came very slowly. It felt right." Chap. 51, p. 194

"He had scared her that badly. She believed that Will was capable of murder, of anything." Chap. 64, p. 236

"I am Not a murderer." Chap. 65, p. 239

"My world seemed to be falling apart again." Chap. 80, p. 286

"I fired a second time." Chap. 120, p. 417

"Mmahhlah was I'm alive. He could think and understand. He just couldn't mouth the words clearly." Chap. 123, p. 429



Topics for Discussion

Why does the novel begin with the death of Philip Bradford? What does this death have to do with Maggie's current situation? How did Philip Bradford die? Why? How could this death have been avoided? Why did Maggie not leave Philip sooner? Why did Maggie not tell anyone of her husband's abuse? Does this affect public opinion later?

Why is Maggie Bradford in prison when the story begins? What is she accused of? Did she commit this crime? Why does Maggie not know for sure what happened that fateful night? Does Maggie believe she could have committed this crime? Why? Why does Maggie feel the need to tell her story now? Who is Maggie telling the story to? For what purpose?

Who is Barry Kahn? What does he do for a living? Why does Maggie turn to him from the hospital in West Point? Why does Maggie go to see Barry in the opening pages of the first part of the novel? How can Barry help Maggie? Does he? Do they develop a relationship? What kind of relationship? How does this relationship help or harm Maggie while she is in jail?

Who is Patrick O'Malley? What is his relationship with Maggie? How does Patrick treat Maggie? How is Patrick different from the other men in Maggie's life? How does Patrick die? Why does this death come up while Maggie is in jail? Who accuses Maggie of killing Patrick? For what reason? Did Maggie kill Patrick? Why would Maggie kill Patrick? Explain.

Who is Will Shepard? Why does Will blame himself for his father's death? Why does Will believe he will end up like his father? Why did Will's mother leave the family? Why does she refuse to take custody of her children? Where does Will go to live? How does Will's relationship with his Aunt Vannie change over the years? Is what Aunt Vannie does with Will constitute sexual abuse?

Why does Will turn to soccer/football? Is Will really a good player? How does this change Will's life? Why does Will begin having affairs? Doing drugs? How does Will end up killing a woman? Why is this murder covered up? What might have been different if the murder had not been covered up? Why does Will not seek help? Why does Will become obsessed with Maggie's music? What does Will hope Maggie can do for him?

Who is murdered at Maggie's house on that December night? Did Maggie pull the trigger? Was it an accident? Why is Maggie tried twice for this crime? Why is Maggie found innocent the second time? Who breaks into Maggie's home a short time later? What does he want? Why does Maggie shoot him? Should she have walked away? Why did she not? What happened to him? Is this a fitting end to the story?